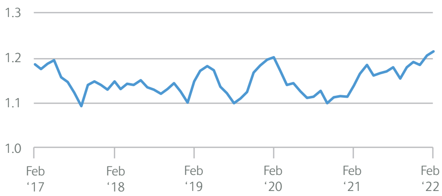
THROGMORTON
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

financial

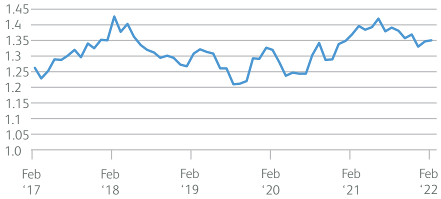
Newsletter

Edition 39 – 2022

What is the British Pound worth vs. Euro?



What is the British Pound worth vs. Dollar?



FTSE 100 Chart

Base Rate

The Bank of England base rate is currently 0.5%.

UK economic outlook

- In the period 3 to 13 February 2022, 76% of adults reported their cost of living had increased over the last month; this was up 7 percentage points from 69% in the last period (Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, 3 to 13 February 2022).
- In the week to 12 February 2022, overall retail footfall in the UK increased by 2% from the previous week and was 86% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019; this is the fifth consecutive week of increasing retail footfall and was again driven in part by weekly rises in high street footfall (Springboard).
- The seven-day average estimate of UK seated diners increased by 17 percentage points in the week to 14 February 2022, to 129% of the level in the equivalent week of 2020; this increase coincides with Valentine's Day in 2022, however, users should note that the equivalent week in 2020 does not include Valentine's Day (OpenTable).
- The volume of motor vehicle traffic on Monday 14 February 2022 was at 94% of its level in the first week of February 2020, which was broadly unchanged from the previous week (Department for Transport).
- There were 16,761 company incorporations in the week to 11 February 2022, which was broadly unchanged from the previous week (16,614) and the equivalent week of 2021 (16,882) (Companies House).

Inflation

- The Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) rose by 4.9% in the 12 months to January 2022, up from 4.8% in the 12 months to December 2021.The largest upward contributions to the January 2022 CPIH 12-month inflation rate came from housing and household services (1.37 percentage points) and transport (1.24 percentage points, principally from motor fuels and second-hand cars).
- On a monthly basis, CPIH was unchanged in January 2022, compared with a fall of 0.1% in January 2021.
- The largest upward contributions to the change in the CPIH 12-month inflation rate between December 2021 and January 2022 came from clothing and footwear, housing and household services, and furniture and household goods.

Unemployment

- The UK employment rate was estimated at 75.5%, 0.1 percentage points higher than the previous three-month period, but 1.0 percentage points lower than before the coronavirus pandemic (December 2019 to February 2020).
- The UK economic inactivity rate was estimated at 21.2%, 0.1 percentage points higher than the previous quarter, and 1.0 percentage point higher than before the coronavirus pandemic.
- The UK unemployment rate was estimated at 4.1%, 0.2 percentage points lower than the previous three-month period, but 0.1 percentage points higher than before the coronavirus pandemic.
- The total volume of online job adverts on 11 February 2022 was 146% of its February 2020 average level, which was broadly similar to the level in the previous week (Adzuna).

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10 Myths you have probably heard about life insurance

There are many myths surrounding life insurance, perhaps because the subject of death – and a subsequent life insurance claim – is not a topic that most of us want to think about. So to clear up these misconceptions about life insurance, and to help you get the cover you actually need, we've put together a handy life insurance myth-busting guide.

Myth 1: Life insurance is only for the main earner

It's a myth that life insurance is just for the 'breadwinner'. You don't need to be the main earner for your death to have a huge financial impact on your family. For example, if you take care of the children or the household while your partner is at work, a cash sum could cover childcare costs or pay for extra support around the house. This could give your partner the option to continue working should the worst happen to you.

Myth 2: Young people don't need life insurance

You'll need to be at least 18 years-old to take out a life insurance policy, but once you've reached adulthood, age in itself should not rule you out from getting life cover. Most people take out life insurance if and when they have financial dependents – this may include children, but also adults who rely on you financially, such as a partner, or in some cases, parents.

So while you may prefer to get life insurance if you're married, a homeowner or have children, who's to say this won't happen while you're young? It's also the case that if all things are equal, life insurance is cheaper when you're young. This is because insurers price life insurance on the basis of how likely it is you will die during the policy term; unsurprisingly, age is considered a risk factor.

For more information on when to consider life cover, speak to your financial adviser for further support.

Myth 3: Insurers don't pay out for life insurance

Provided a valid claim has been made, a pay out will be processed. There are a number of criteria that will need to have been met; for example, the policy must be in force, the premiums will need to have been paid; the information provided during the application stage will need to have been accurate.

Myth 4: Life insurance is too expensive

If someone tells you life insurance is too expensive, they may want to think again. Ultimately, some would say that not having life insurance could end up being more harmful than spending a relatively small amount on premiums each month.

Myth 5: Life insurance pay-outs are always taxed

Life insurance pay-outs are exempt from Income or Capital Gains Tax. Depending on the value of your estate when you die, the pay-out may be subject to Inheritance Tax (IHT).

By placing your policy in trust, it should help to ensure that any money paid out from the life policy would not be part of the estate, helping to minimise IHT. This should also help to ensure that the money paid out from the life policy can be paid to the right people quickly, without the need for lengthy legal processes.

Myth 6: I don't need life insurance because I get it through work

Some employers may provide life cover as an occupational benefit. However, even if this applies to you, it could still be a good idea to consider whether it meets your personal protection needs. For example, it is unlikely that you will be able to choose a specific amount of protection, and it may not cover your partner.

You should also consider what would happen to your Death in Service cover should you lose your job.

Myth 7: I will need annual health check-ups if I get life insurance

Another life insurance misconception is that you'll have regular health check-ups after your policy starts. Don't worry – once you have your policy in place you will not be asked to provide annual health check-ups.

Myth 8: I need life insurance for a mortgage

You aren't required to take out life insurance when you get a mortgage, but it may be a good idea. A mortgage may be one of the biggest financial obligations you ever take on, and so having life cover in place can give you peace of mind, especially if you're worried about how your loved ones would manage financially without you.

Myth 9: I will need a medical examination to get life insurance

It depends on the individual, their circumstances, and the amount of cover applied for. But in our experience, a medical examination is not always required when you apply for life insurance.

Myth 10: The insurer will run a credit check on me

Insurance providers don't require a credit check before they offer a life insurance policy. Remember, the cover you choose will depend on your circumstances and needs.

Your financial adviser will be available to offer you further information on any of the above and also help you chose the correct protection for yourself.

Author: Robert Bett, Market Development Manager – Legal & General Specialist Protection

Comfort can be found in a smoothed investment

“Inflation is as violent as a mugger, as frightening as an armed robber, and as deadly as a hitman.”

This quote, from Ronald Regan in the L.A Times in October 1978, is still very pertinent today as inflation is currently on the minds of many UK investors.

As we know, money that investors place in secure deposits, such as savings accounts or Cash ISAs, risks losing its buying power over time. This is because the interest rate paid has rarely kept up with inflation since the 2008 financial crisis.

While consumers might not feel the impact of something costing £102.60 that last year cost £100, the cumulative effect of inflation over the last 13 years means that goods and services which would have cost £100 in 2008 would cost £136.45 at the end of 2020, during which time inflation averaged 2.6% a year. Cash investors over the last 13 years have seen the real value of their capital fall year after year.

If the returns from deposits are so poor, should investors hold cash?

Financial advisers typically advise clients to hold some of their wealth as cash, with the level dependent on individual circumstances, attitudes to risk and their predicted expenditure over the coming period.

Clients holding significantly higher levels of cash will perhaps want to consider deploying this in a way that will keep pace or beat inflation over the longer term, whilst staying within their acceptable corridor of risk-tolerance.

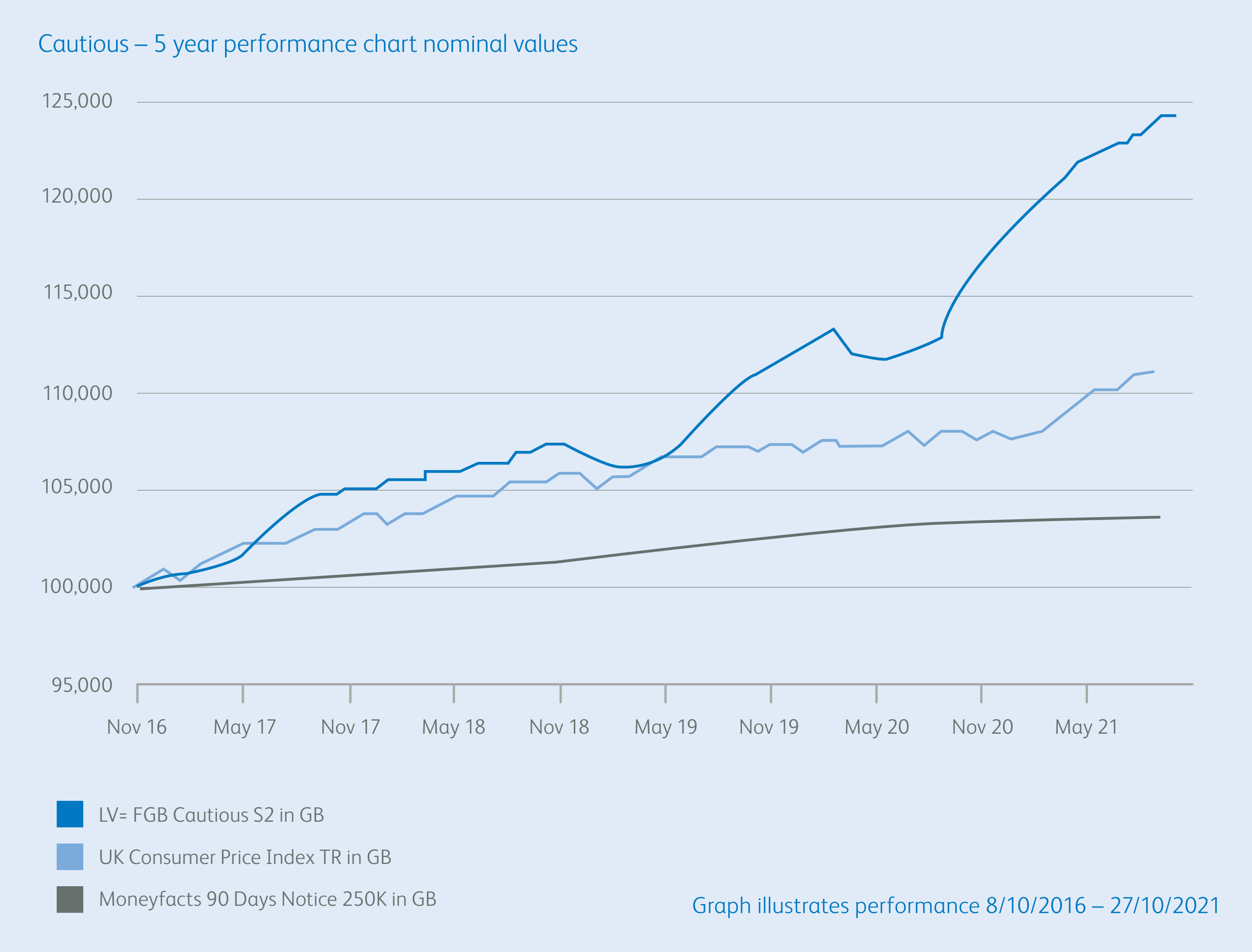
Smoothed Managed Funds could therefore be an ideal solution for clients who are uncomfortable with the usual ‘ups and downs’ of stock market investing, or who do not wish to expose their accumulated capital to undue risk, while taking action to stop inflation eroding their savings. Smoothed funds could also be suitable for those clients that want to consolidate their accumulated gains and de-risk their portfolios in late-stage accumulation or within 3-5 years of their targeted retirement age.

The chart on the right shows LV='s Smoothed Managed Cautious fund’s 5-year performance versus the Consumer Price Index and a 90-day notice savings account. It’s clear to see the negative real returns of cash deposits and the positive real returns of the Smoothed Managed Cautious fund. The step up in investment risk, and away from cash, required to achieve this is also less than many clients believe as the FE fundinfo Risk Scores (a simple measure of an investment’s risk) will attest.

FE fundinfo Risk Scores allow investors to compare the volatility of a range of individual funds or even an entire portfolio. The scores allow you to see how volatile a fund is in comparison to an index of the 100 largest UK companies, which is always scored as 100. Cash has a score of 1. The current FE fundinfo Risk Score for the LV= Smoothed Managed Cautious fund is 5, meaning the fund is only scored slightly higher risk than keeping money as cash.

Capital at risk. Please remember that past performance doesn’t reflect what will happen in the future. The value of your investment can go down as well as up.

Author: Jon Grundy, Partnership Development Manager, LV=



Cautious – 5 year performance chart nominal values
125,000
120,000
115,000
110,000
105,000
100,000
95,000
Nov 16
May 17
Nov 17
May 18
Nov 18
May 19
Nov 19
May 20
Nov 20
May 21
LV= FGB Cautious S2 in GB
UK Consumer Price Index TR in GB
Moneyfacts 90 Days Notice 250K in GB
Graph illustrates performance 8/10/2016 – 27/10/2021

How does a remortgage work?

A remortgage could help you save money if you weigh up the fees involved with the savings you could make. Here's how it works.

A remortgage is the process of moving your home's existing mortgage to one with a new lender.

People remortgage for many different reasons, including:

- Finding a better deal elsewhere – you might be on a standard variable rate (SVR) and want to move to a fixed-term rate.
- Coming to the end of a fixed-term deal on your current mortgage and wanting to lock in a lower rate with a new lender.
- The loan-to-value on the home is lower (as more of the mortgage has been repaid).
- Wanting to get ahead of a rise in interest rates, which would affect mortgage rates.

How a remortgage could help you save

One of the big reasons people remortgage is to save money on their monthly payments. If you're on a standard variable rate that is higher than the fixed-rate deals currently available, you could save by switching – either to a fixed-rate mortgage or one that 'tracks' the Bank of England's base rate.

If your home has gone up in value and you've paid off enough of your mortgage to give you a lower loan-to-value, it means you own more of your home and have less to pay off. Remortgaging could result in lower monthly mortgage payments because you're paying off less of a loan amount (and in turn, less interest on it too).

How long does the remortgage application take?

The process can take between four to eight weeks from the time you apply so it's good to start planning early. If you're coming to the end of a fixed-rate or tracker term, your lender should tell you that your mortgage will move onto their standard variable rate[1]. This could be an ideal time to move if you find a better deal elsewhere, or you may even find an attractive deal with the same lender and go through a 'product transfer' (see box).

How much does a remortgage cost?

Existing lender fees

Your existing lender could charge you a fee if you're leaving them early into a fixed period in your mortgage. This is known as an 'early repayment charge' and could be in the range of 1% to 5% of your outstanding mortgage balance. They will also charge you an 'exit' fee of around £50 to £100 to cover their administration costs.

New lender fees

Your new lender could charge you a range of fees, so before you commit it's important to check what you will pay. This will help you calculate whether a move is financially beneficial overall. Their fees could include:

- Application fee to set up your new mortgage. Could also be called an 'arrangement', 'product' or 'booking' fee. This could be around £1,000.
- Valuation and conveyancing fees. Some providers won't charge for these, but it's worth checking if you are moving to a new lender.
- Solicitor's fee covering the legal paperwork to do with managing the transfer of your mortgage.

Is a remortgage right for you?

Whether or not you remortgage all depends on your situation and the type of mortgage plan you're currently on. You may want a mortgage that lets you make overpayments, or you could be coming to the end of your current deal's fixed term and think the lender's SVR will be too high. One of the most important things you can do before you decide is gather your current mortgage paperwork, look at the fees and get some expert advice on your next steps.

Our advisers can help you work out the pros and cons of a remortgage, and what could work best for you.

[1] www.investorcoms.com

Author: 2plan

What about product transfers?

If your mortgage is coming to its maturity date but you'd prefer to stay with your current lender, you could consider a product transfer. Switching to a new mortgage product with the same lender could save you money and time. Our financial advisers can help guide you through choosing the right product to make it worthwhile and explain the logistics of transferring your mortgage product.

YOUR PROPERTY MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE

Reboot Your Life This Spring!

As winter retreats and the daffodils make an appearance, time for a spring clean. But why not apply it to your whole life, not just the cobwebs and clutter?!

Spring is on the way, which means it's the perfect time to reboot your life. A time of change, of rebirth and transformation.

Think of it as a spring clean, but rather than just cleaning the house, you're updating and preparing most aspects of your life. We're talking about your wardrobe, your garden, your finances and your health.

Apply a bit of Marie Kondo to your home…

For those that don't know, Marie Kondo is an 'organisation mogul', well-celebrated for her unique approach. The idea is that a tidy and organised home paves the way for a joyful life. Her main piece of advice when tidying is: "…does it spark joy? If not, get rid."

The KonMari Method™ of tidying is simple. It encourages tidying by category – not by location – beginning with clothes, then moving onto books, papers, miscellaneous items, and finally, sentimental items. Keep only those things that speak to the heart, and discard items that no longer spark joy: "Thank them for their service – then let them go."

Following this method will force you to be realistic about what things you actually love as well as need. Think of it as a fresh beginning. This is the start of your organised lifestyle.

Make sure you have a wardrobe overhaul, too. Be disciplined when going through your clothes. If you haven't worn it in a year, you're probably not going to wear it again. Don't hang on to things 'just in case'.

After you have Marie Kondo-ed your home, why don't you give it a little makeover? Maybe giving the walls and ceilings a fresh coat of paint will make it feel brighter, particularly as the days get longer and the sunlight sticks around more. It might be fun to rearrange your furniture – particularly if you've had the same layout for a while now – to introduce some positive change vibes.

Have a virtual declutter

On top of decluttering your physical space, your virtual space probably needs some TLC, too. Is your phone or laptop slower than it used to be? Are you having to scroll through hundreds of pictures to find the one you're looking for? Time for a sort out!

Set some time aside specifically to go through your devices – book it into your diary or you will never do it!

Sort your emails into folders – e.g. bills, work, home, social – to make it easier to keep on top of everything. While you're at it, delete those old emails and marketing messages from brands you don't even use. And do some unsubscribing.

The same applies for your mobile phone. Delete the apps you don't use anymore, especially the disused brain-puzzle games that you probably played once at some point last year. Apps can take up valuable storage space on your phone. It's also a good idea to go through your photos and videos, deleting duplicate images or those blurry photos where you can't actually see what's going on. If there are items that you want printed off or moved to your laptop so you can remove them from your phone, plan in time to do this.

After you've removed the unnecessary virtual baggage, check if your device needs an update. This will clear any bugs or delays on your phone's current software, which will bring it back to tip-top condition.

Prepare your garden

This one may seem a little obvious, given that Spring is the time to prepare your garden for lovely new bulbs. However, there is something to be said for the physical and mental benefits of gardening, particularly at such a pivotal 'fresh start' time.

On the surface, de-weeding your garden and planting seeds and bulbs means your garden is going to be pretty and full of life. It also provides you with a metaphorical 'weeding out' of negativities in your life. Envision that each weed is a negative thought, or something that's been getting you down. It will be mentally empowering as well as great exercise.

Buy new bulbs, mow the lawn, freshen any ornaments you have with a jet wash or slick of paint and chuck out any empty fertiliser bottles or old plant pots you're never going to use.

Finally, stand back and admire your hard work, and reap the benefits!

Sort your finances out

With inflation on the rise, now is a good time to assess your current financial situation. It's always a good idea to keep on top of your finances so you can always be aware of what's going on, and prepared in case of an emergency.

The first step is to create a budget. Write down your incomings, your outgoings, and your disposable income. Then you can plan accordingly how to spend your money and even add to your savings.

Tracking your spending habits is also a good way to stick to a budget. Whether you do this with physical receipts stapled into a notebook, or with one of many financial tracking apps, physically monitoring your outgoings is a good way to stay on top of your finances.

Gather together a list of all subscriptions you currently have open, and ask yourself if you need all of them. Are you paying for a Netflix account that you don't use? Are you getting magazines delivered every month that you're leaving in a pile unread? The monthly cost may not seem like a lot, but these bills all add up, and you could be saving yourself a lot of money.

Finally, keep a money box. We all have loose change in various bags and pockets, or down the side of the sofa. Every time you find a coin, pop it into your money box. Most banks now have a machine where you can put your loose chain in to add that money to your bank account. You'd be surprised at how much you could have in a year!

Take care of your health and focus on yourself

Consider booking an appointment with your doctor for a routine check-up. It seems like such a chore at the time, but would you let your car go over a year with an MOT? Of course not. It's always better to be safe than sorry, and the doctor may even recommend some vitamins or gentle exercises to do to keep you in tip top health.

Speaking of vitamins, are you currently taking any? There are many different vitamins for many different things, so it can seem overwhelming to know where to begin, but the most important ones to know are Vitamin C for your immune system, Calcium for bone strength, and Vitamin D, especially when we've currently got a lack of sunlight.

Maybe it's time to join the gym, or begin a fitness class. While these seem to be orientated around physical health, partaking in regular exercise can do your mental health the world of good. The routine, the socialising and the dopamine boosts will make you feel lighter and happier. To encourage this, why not look into practising mindfulness?

There are many free apps you can download to provide you with guided meditation, which will give you a more positive outlook on life. It can be a 5-minute breathing exercise or a sleep-inducing night-time meditation; either way, these are easy to implement into your everyday life, and you'll soon notice the benefits.

It's also a good idea to get into a regular sleep routine, to reduce fatigue and boost productivity. Sleep is one of the most important things our bodies need, and it seems rude to ignore that when they do so much for us!

Importantly, focus on yourself. Book a massage to help relieve the tension. Don't be ashamed, we're all feeling anxious on some level after the past couple of years! If you're the type of person you gets your confidence from the 'look good, feel good' mantra, book a hair appointment or get your nails done!

Plan ahead

Finally, start to plan ahead. Think about what you want out of this year, and what things you want to achieve. Whether you want to go on a weekend staycation, or you fancy running a marathon, now is the time to look into what you want to do, so you can make sure to be prepared.

Make a mini-bucket list for the year. It doesn't have to include anything extravagant – you could even put that you want to go to a swimming pool! – but it's a good way to plan some time in for yourself, and create manageable goals that will make you feel amazing.

Author: Just

Are you insured to work from home?

We all know that remote working has soared since the onset of the pandemic, with 30% of the population still working exclusively from home during the week ending 29 November 2020. But with millions of workers taking to their home offices, their kitchen tables and – let's face it – their sofas, are they adequately insured?

Although the Association of British Insurers issued a statement in the early months of the pandemic stating that office-based workers would not need to contact their insurer if working remotely during lockdown, things may now have changed. A recent survey revealed that more than two in five homeworkers have not reported to their home insurance company they are now working remotely – potentially invalidating their policy.

What if I continue to work from home?

You may need to contact your insurer if you continue to work from home, or are allowed to return to the office but choose to work from home several days per week, to tell them that your working patterns have changed.

In addition, if you are now receiving business clients in your property instead of the office, you'll likely need to check with your insurer for this, too. You may not be covered for certain aspects of your policy, such as loss of money or theft.

Will my work laptop be covered?

Your own home insurance policy is unlikely to cover business equipment such as laptops, tablets and other devices. You should check with your employer to see whether their business insurance covers equipment away from the office.

What about health and safety?

All employers are legally required to have employers' liability insurance, which covers their legal liability if employees suffer an injury during the course of their work. While some policies extend automatically to remote working, others don't – so have a word with your employer to ensure they're covered in case you have an accident while working from home.

If in doubt – check!

If you're in any doubt, check with your insurer – you don't want to risk invalidating your policy! Meanwhile, if you'd like to review your home insurance needs, just have a chat with us – we can review a wide range of policies and recommend the one most suited to your circumstances.

Author: 2plan

The State Pension: a core element of your retirement income

If you are retired – or planning to give up work soon – you'll know that every penny counts when it comes to generating a pension income. This makes the recent news that as many as 134,000 people may have been underpaid their State Pension particularly cruel.

According to the National Audit Office, errors at the Department for Work and Pensions mean that an average £8,900 wasn't paid to those affected over a period stretching back to 1985. Women have been particularly badly affected because reassessments of payments that should have been made on the death of a husband were not carried out.

The problem relates to the old State Pension system where married women could claim an extra payment worth 60% of the basic State Pension based on their husband's record of contributions. A review is now taking place to trace those affected.

A guaranteed and rising income

For most retirees, even the relatively wealthy, the State Pension forms an important part of their overall income. What makes it so valuable is not simply the money it provides – the new State Pension presently provides a maximum £179.60 per week – but the fact that it's currently guaranteed and uprated by at least the rate of inflation every year. Retirees know that it can cover essential bills even if other sources of income are uncertain and prices rise.

Of course, guaranteed, inflation-proof income can be generated in other ways. Some retirees can rely on a 'defined benefit' pension – where payments are typically based on the length of service with an employer and the final salary of the individual – but such arrangements are becoming rarer and less generous.

For those with a 'defined contribution' pension – where a pot of money has been built up over time and the individual has to use that money to fund their retirement – the only guaranteed option is to purchase an inflation-linked annuity and this can be expensive. Indeed, it would take a savings pot of £320,000 just to replicate the maximum annual income from the new State Pension of £9,339. This is based on current rates for a healthy 65-year-old purchasing a lifetime annuity that is uprated with RPI inflation.

Checking your State Pension entitlement

Finding out what State Pension you'll be entitled to – and checking the figure is correct – is therefore very important. Fortunately, you can obtain a State Pension forecast through logging into the Government's online services or by contacting the Future Pension Centre. The forecast shows an estimate of what your State Pension will be when you reach State Pension Age. It will also show the number of qualifying years you have built up within your National Insurance (NI) record and whether there are any contribution gaps (your entitlement to the State Pension is based on your NI record). For the new State Pension, you need at least 10 qualifying years on your NI record to get any State Pension and 35 qualifying years to get the full amount.

There are ways of boosting your entitlement to the State Pension if there's a shortfall – for example, your NI record can be topped up through making voluntary NI contributions. However, you can usually only pay for gaps in your NI record for the last six years and the deadline for doing so is fast approaching for many individuals. Assuming they are eligible, men born after 5 April 1951 and women born after 5 April 1953 only have until 5 April 2023 to pay for any gaps in their record between April 2006 and April 2016.

As you can see, deciding to make voluntary NI contributions isn't a straightforward choice and depends on your particular circumstances. You should therefore consult your adviser before making any decision and they will be able to discuss all aspects of the State Pension with you and help check that the forecast – or the amount you are receiving if you are already drawing it – is correct. They will of course also be able to discuss your wider retirement income needs with you and your family.

Important information

Author: Lesley Davidson, Associate Director – Strategic Accounts, at Fidelity International

2022 outlook: the perils of futurology

As multi-asset managers, clients understandably look to us for a review of the year as well as projections for next year and beyond. Our challenge is to offer more than a list of the year's greatest hits, economically speaking, and a few heavily caveated statements about the coming months.

If any profession has taken a hit over the last decade or so, it has been futurologists, with recent events underlining Danish physicist Nils Bohr's statement that 'prediction is very difficult, especially if it's about the future'. While these professional seers are typically investigating more visionary concepts than interest rates or GDP, any forecasting has to be taken with a grain of salt. This is even more the case when it comes to influencing long-term investment decisions.

However, as we look to 2022 and beyond, our view is that while interest rate hikes and tapering of asset purchases might feel concerning in the short term, they are ultimately a positive signal that the global economy is starting to reach escape velocity from the pandemic. We have come faster to the current mid-cycle point than expected, in 18 months rather than the more typical four or five years, but no one should be surprised given the unprecedented levels of monetary and fiscal stimulus used to keep the world functioning amid the pandemic.

Central banks are moving towards tightening – and there are understandable worries about how this might affect economic recovery – but they also continue to act in a very market-friendly way, ensuring changes are well telegraphed ahead of time. With the US Federal Reserve's dot plot chart now showing three hikes expected in 2022, and another five in 2023 and 2024 , higher borrowing costs are clearly already in the price and so cannot be considered a surprise when they materialise.

It is also important to recognise this tightening cycle begins at historically low levels with emergency rates rather than at the lower end of a normal range.

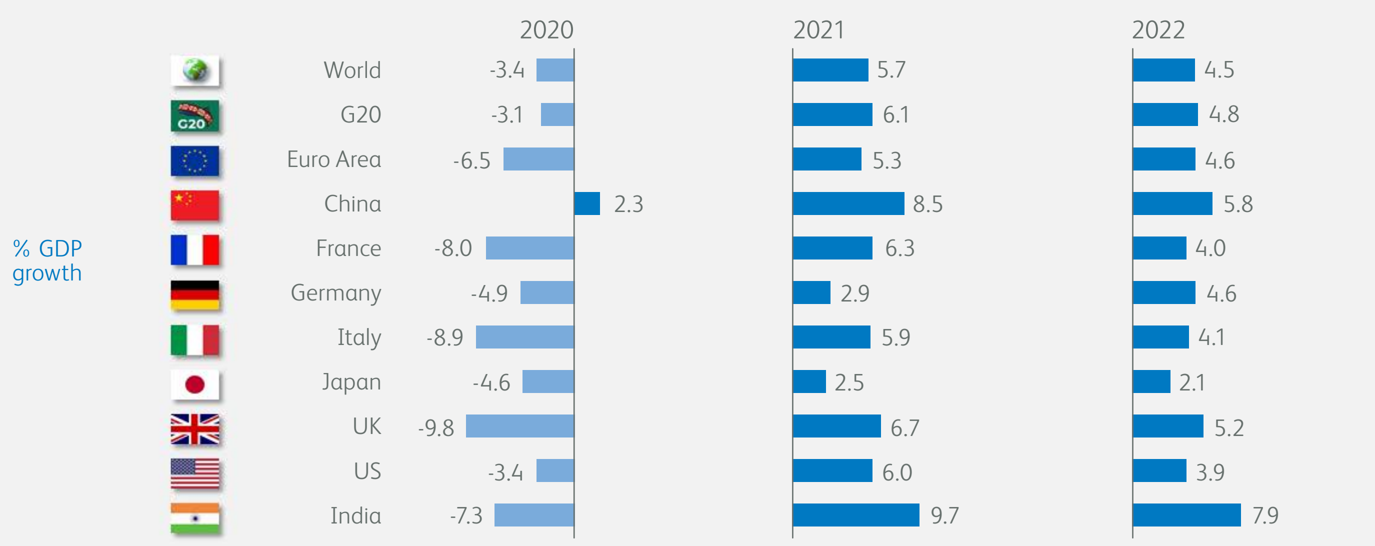
While inflation might remain elevated for part of next year, with headlines talking about a recent 40-year high in the US, we remain confident levels should drop away in the medium term as the rolling Covid base effects, with gas prices causing a spike one month and used cars the next, gradually work their way through the system. Headline inflation globally has risen sharply due to higher energy prices and temporary lockdown-driven supply shortages but the increase in core inflation has been less pronounced.

Overall, there remains a split between bulls and bears with respect to the economic outlook so we prefer to take a balanced, flexible approach where we can focus on long-term themes that perform throughout the investment cycle.

Past performance is not a guide to future performance. The value of an investment and the income generated from it can fall as well as rise and is not guaranteed. You may get back less than you originally invested.

Author: John Husselbee, Head of Multi-Asset, Liontrust

Forecasting stronger economic growth



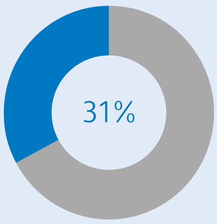
*Source: OECD, 2021, OECD Economic Outlook, 30.09.21, OECD Economic Outlook: Statistics and Projections, percentage growth, Note: *India projections are based on fiscal years, starting in April. GDP = Gross domestic product*

How the pandemic is changing the way clients engage with their advisers

The pandemic has seen a surge in the use of digital tools by clients and, as recent research from abrdn reveals, it has resulted in a shift in attitude to receiving advice this way.

One of the most revealing findings from abrdn's recent research into the behaviours of over 1,000 advised clients is that more than a quarter of those aged 66 and above have started using remote advice options for the first time, up 200% compared with pre pandemic days.

abrdn's research also reveals that, during the first lockdown due to the coronavirus crisis, almost a third (31%) of those abrdn asked say they used digital tools for the first time to receive advice remotely.



abrdn's findings underline how both advisers and clients rose to the challenge of carrying out their meetings remotely when the pandemic hit. abrdn's research also underlines how attitudes to receiving advice this way have changed compared with the time before Covid-19 struck.

Although there are many benefits to face-to-face client meetings, both advisers and clients are now embracing the benefits of remote meetings and attitudes to giving and receiving advice this way have changed.

abrdn's findings back this up and highlight how the benefits of remote client meetings mean most clients are now much more receptive to receiving advice remotely. More than half of the advised clients asked (56%) are actually happier to receive advice this way than they were before lockdown. They're happier, 57% of this group say, because they're more comfortable using tools such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom, while 47% say the convenience and flexibility of remote advice supports their lifestyles better.

The majority of the advised clients abrdn asked, 51%, are now looking for that ongoing flexibility around how they engage with their advisers and, in the future, want a mix of face-to-face meetings and remote advice. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of those asked would like some degree of remote advice in the months ahead, with just a fifth (20%) wanting face-to-face meetings only.

Perhaps the research finding of most interest to advisers is the fact that just over a fifth (22%) of the advised clients polled only want to meet remotely with their adviser in the future.

All these statistics highlight how a new, blended model for client meetings is emerging and technology is the enabler for it. Not only does technology allow for more flexibility, it saves time and cuts down on travel. For adviser firms, the pandemic has been an opportunity to increase digital touchpoints with clients and as abrdn's research findings reveal, It's translated into closer relationships with clients.

The research reveals that more than a third (35%) of advised clients contact their adviser more frequently now than they did before the pandemic, with 61% saying they now speak to their adviser more than once a month. Of this 35%, 47% say they contact their adviser more frequently because of more complex financial needs, while 56% say they appreciate the value of advice more.

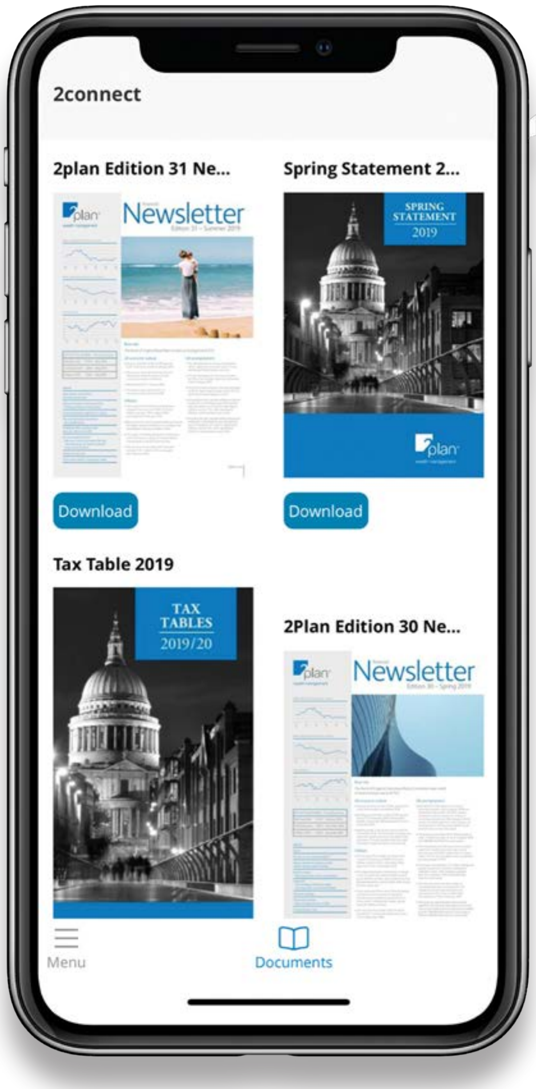
It's clear that, post lockdown, the way clients engage with advisers will never quite be the same again. The use of digital for both meetings and working will be part of all our lives, now and in the future.

The views expressed in this article should not be regarded as financial advice.

At abrdn, we empower our clients to plan, save and invest for their futures. We combine service excellence, technology and tools that enable UK wealth managers and financial advisers to look after the diverse needs of their clients.

The value of investments can go down as well as up and your clients could get back less than they paid in.

Author: abrdn



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