Financial Viewpoint

Your Quarterly Guide to Financial Planning

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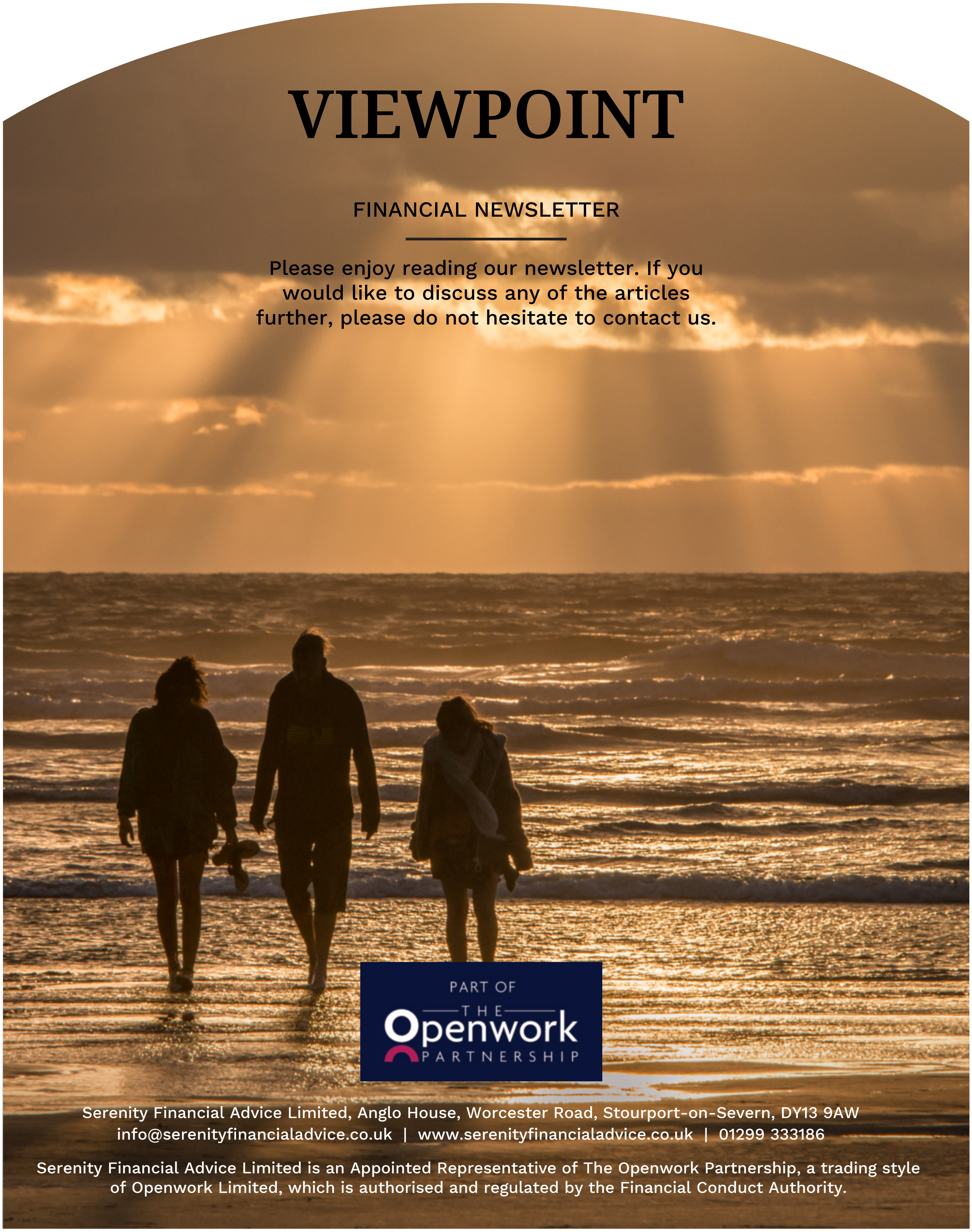

VIEWPOINT

FINANCIAL NEWSLETTER

Please enjoy reading our newsletter. If you would like to discuss any of the articles further, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Do these 5 things if you're planning for retirement

Retirement planning doesn't have to be daunting. Here are five key things you can do to start creating a comprehensive plan for life after work.

1. Start sooner rather than later

Retirement might be a long way off, but the choices you make now could have significant impact when you stop working. Start exploring all your options to ensure decisions made today benefit your finances in the years ahead.

2. Work out how much you'll have

It's worth starting with a state pension forecast (easily available from GOV.UK) to help you estimate how much state pension you'll receive. If you have a defined benefit or defined contribution pension, you can ask your provider for a forecast or more information about your retirement options.

Don't forget to include the projections from any savings or investments you have. And it's always a good idea to locate any lost pensions from previous employers through the government's free pension tracing service.

3. Work out how much you'll need

Chances are you'll have to get used to a different pattern of income and spending when you stop working, but planning can make that a less daunting prospect. Simply splitting your expenditure into two categories - essential and discretionary - is a great place to start and ensure you can cover the basics.

4. Look at your income options

You might need to decide how you're going to take your money in retirement depending on the type of pension you have. This may include an annuity, a tax-free lump sum or drawdown options.

If you have a defined benefit pension, for example, you'll probably receive a guaranteed income from your normal retirement age. If you have a defined contribution pension, you'll gain access to a pot of money that you can start drawing down from the age of 55.[1]

Remember to consider other sources of income, such as rent from property, savings or part-time work.

5. Make a plan (or contact your financial adviser)

You can start planning for your retirement once you have all this information at your fingertips. If you want more tailored support with a plan, or if you'd like help to get started, please reach out to your financial adviser.

[1.] From 2028, the age at which you can start accessing your pensions will increase to 57.

The value of your investments and any income from them can fall as well as rise. You may not get back the amount you invested.

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Human advice still matters:
What protection behaviour in 2025 tells us

In an increasingly digital world, it's easy to assume that financial decisions are best made online, through comparison tools, calculators and automated journeys. But when it comes to protection, recent research suggests something very different. Despite the growth of technology in financial services, people still value human advice, especially when decisions feel personal, emotional or complex.

The AMI Protection Viewpoint Research highlights that around 70% of consumers believe personal contact is important at every stage of the protection journey. This isn't limited to older generations either. Younger consumers, often assumed to prefer digital-only experiences, report the same preference. When the topic is protecting income, health or family, reassurance and understanding still matter.

Protection is personal, not just financial

Protection products are unlike most other financial decisions. They involve thinking about illness, injury, loss of income or even death. These are not abstract concepts, and they often come with emotional weight. For many people, that makes it harder to engage, even when they know protection is important.

The research shows that although advisers are having more protection conversations than ever before, only 39% of consumers recall having them. This suggests that while the topic is being raised, it may not always be landing in a way that feels meaningful or memorable. It also points to a wider challenge. When people feel overwhelmed or unsure, they may disengage rather than ask questions.

This is where human advice plays a crucial role. A conversation with a real adviser allows time to explore concerns, explain options clearly and put protection into the context of the everyday. It's not just about products, but about understanding what matters to you and your family and why.

Why automation alone isn't enough

Digital tools can be helpful. They can provide quick information and support research. But protection decisions are rarely straightforward. Policies differ in terms of cover, exclusions and suitability, and small details can have a big impact later on.

The AMI findings challenge the idea that younger consumers want fully automated journeys. Instead, they show a consistent desire for human input across all age groups. People want to talk through scenarios, ask questions and feel confident that what they're putting in place genuinely meets their needs and will do so as their circumstances change

In uncertain economic times, this becomes even more important. When finances feel under pressure, people want reassurance that they are making the right choices, not just the quickest ones.

The value of speaking to a real adviser

A qualified adviser can help cut through confusion and turn uncertainty into clarity. They can explain how different types of protection work, help you decide what level of cover is appropriate and ensure policies fit alongside your wider financial commitments.

Just as importantly, an adviser listens. They understand that protection is not a one-size-fits-all decision and that your circumstances, priorities and concerns are unique. That human connection helps build confidence and trust, making it more likely that protection decisions are made and maintained over time.

Putting people back at the centre of protection

The message from the AMI Protection Viewpoint research is clear. Technology has its place, but human advice remains central to how people engage with protection. Whether you are starting a family, buying a home or simply reviewing your finances, having a conversation with a real person can make all the difference.

If you're unsure where to begin or want to understand your options better, speaking to a qualified adviser is a valuable first step. Protection is about peace of mind, and that often starts with a conversation.

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Ask your adviser – your top remortgage questions answered!

According to the Bank of England, 3.6 million mortgages are set to be renegotiated over the next three years, amounting to 41% of all outstanding home loans. If you are one of those set to review your options, it's likely you'll have plenty of questions and may not even know where to start.

Not only are interest rates and mortgage deals changing all the time, but in recent years, significant shifts in the economy and economic conditions have changed the mortgage landscape. For those coming off a five-year fixed rate – or even a two-year fix – it's likely that the rates and options available to you will look considerably different. It can make the process really overwhelming and difficult to know if you're making the right decision.

Fear not! With the help of a qualified mortgage adviser, you do not have to complete this process on your own. An adviser will be able to look at your current situation and explore the options available to you – all while simplifying the process.

Below, we've pulled together some of the top remortgage questions to give you a head start before speaking to an adviser.

What exactly is a remortgage?

Remortgaging is where you switch to a new mortgage deal on your current property, usually with a different mortgage lender. By replacing your old mortgage with a new one, you might be able to access a better interest rate or lower your monthly payment. It is also a way to avoid moving onto a lender's Standard Variable Rate (SVR), which starts when your initial fixed-rate period finishes. It can often be a much higher rate than otherwise available, and therefore more expensive.

When is the right time to remortgage?

Leave it too late and you risk rolling onto your lender's SVR, which will be considerably higher than rates otherwise available through a new two or five-year fixed rate mortgage deal. Acting early gives you the best opportunity to secure the right deal for you.

How long does a remortgage take?

According to Halifax, the remortgage process can take between four and eight weeks to complete, from the moment that you apply. Alongside the application itself, there will be legal work to complete and in some cases a property valuation may be required. For anyone undertaking a remortgage, it's really important to ensure you have all the correct and up to date information, and you respond promptly to any questions or queries from your conveyancer (solicitor).

Can I remortgage too early?

Completing a remortgage before your current deal expires is likely to incur an early repayment charge (ERC) from your lender. This is the penalty you will pay if you overpay your mortgage above their specified amount, or remortgage during your fixed-rate period. While all lenders have different ERCs, they can all still be quite hefty penalties to pay so timing is really important. A qualified mortgage adviser will be able to match your remortgage with the expiry of your current deal, or advise if there is any benefit to exiting your existing deal early.

Other fees to consider during your remortgage are any product or arrangement fees, any valuation fees or legal costs.

Is loan-to-value (LTV) still important when remortgaging?

LTV still plays a critical role in your remortgage as it helps determine what rate you will be offered by a lender. A lower LTV means your outstanding mortgage balance is less than the value of the property, which means less risk for the lender. Because there is less risk, a lender is more likely to offer better remortgage deals.

As long as your house holds its value (or it increases), your LTV will naturally improve as you pay off your mortgage. This may open up new options that were perhaps not available to you when you first took out your mortgage.

What happens if my home has dropped in value?

While house prices overall have remained fairly robust, there is the chance that a property may drop in value between the purchase and the remortgage. In some cases, this can mean that you owe more than the property is worth. While remortgaging is not always as straightforward for those in negative equity, that's not to say that options don't exist. It certainly requires expert advice to navigate the potential options and the lenders who be willing to support an applicant in negative equity.

Do I always need to move to a new lender?

Not necessarily. Similar to a remortgage is a product transfer (PT) where you switch to a new mortgage deal with your existing mortgage lender. This is a popular option as it can be very quick to complete and doesn't always require fresh credit or income checks. You may miss out on better rates or deals offered by competitors though. If you're not sure which is the right option for you, your mortgage adviser will be able to run through both options with you.

As you approach the end of your current deal, your existing lender may look to reach out directly to discuss a new deal. A mortgage adviser will be able to look at this offer and compare it against other lenders, banks and building societies. Remember that an adviser will have access to a much broader range of lenders and products (including exclusive options) compared to your existing bank or lender who will only have access to their own offering.

Is it possible to borrow more money when I remortgage?

As part of the remortgage process, many people will look at the possibility of borrowing more money by increasing their mortgage. This can then be put towards home improvements for example, while others may look to consolidate other debts such as personal loans or credit card bills, or borrow additional funds for other needs.

If this is of interest, it is important to discuss this with your mortgage adviser. It is also worth remembering that increasing your mortgage also increases the debt against your home, which comes with potential risks and higher costs.

Turn confusion into clarity

It quickly becomes clear that as you approach remortgaging, there is much to consider. Whether you're looking for a straight remortgage, a product transfer or the opportunity to borrow additional funds, there are plenty of options available for all circumstances and situations. With the help of a qualified mortgage adviser, this doesn't have to be a painful or laborious process.

Using this list of FAQs, you will already be ahead of the game as you approach your remortgage. Working with your adviser will help simplify this process further, ensuring you are well prepared to navigate your new mortgage deal.

THINK CAREFULLY BEFORE SECURING OTHER DEBTS AGAINST YOUR HOME. YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE.

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