

Dream Big

How to make your future plans a reality

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If there was nothing stopping you, how would you want to spend your time?

This is a big question, but it's one worth asking. It applies whether you're planning to retire, have retired already or are just looking to get more out of life.

As you picture what you want your future to look like, there will likely be people you want to talk over these plans with. Perhaps a partner, family or friends.

Talking to a financial expert might not be the first thing that comes to mind when opening up about your ideal future.

Yet getting some outside help with your money can be the first step to bringing those plans to life.

One of the advantages of working with a professional on your finances is they can help clarify things.

They'll take the time to understand what makes you tick, and work with you to create a clear plan for your money over the long term, and for the here and now.

Financial advice: What to expect

"As financial advisers, we'll start by understanding what's important to you so we can tailor our advice. This tends to happen naturally through a conversation, chatting about what retirement looks like for you, or holidays you want to take. Maybe you're looking to spend more time with family and friends.

It's pretty special when people feel comfortable enough to tell us their hopes and dreams. We'll then look at your full financial circumstances and explain how investing can get you to where you want to be in future. It's about getting all the pieces of the jigsaw together, to help build the bigger picture."

Lynn Taylor
Senior Financial Planning Manager, Santander

Many people find themselves in a situation where they have some money to invest, but are unsure what's suitable for them or what they'd like to put that money towards. Working with someone else on these financial decisions can provide reassurance.

The big financial questions

You may be planning for longer-term goals, such as retiring earlier than planned, a trip of a lifetime or whatever is on your bucket list.

Investing in the stock market for the first time, or looking to invest more, can be a way to make these goals a reality.

With investing there's always a risk you might not get back as much as you put in, especially if you need to access your money urgently. That's why you should only invest the money you know you won't need for something else, keep some savings in reserve for emergencies and plan for the long term.

Why think long term?

There will always be ups and downs in the market. Lower-risk investments tend to have smaller fluctuations but can take longer to recover, while higher-risk investments can have much larger fluctuations but can recover much quicker. Therefore, being able to remain invested for at least five years – ideally longer and holding on to the investment during low periods – will reduce the risk of you getting back less.





Whatever you're working towards, here are some practical questions that can crop up on your investing journey.

Should I pay into a pension or an ISA?

One benefit of using a pension to save for retirement is the tax relief it brings.

Tax relief allows you to claim money back from the government, which means your pension builds up faster. The rate for standard rate taxpayers is 20%. So for every £80 you pay in, the Government automatically tops it up to £100.

Most people can claim tax relief based on the highest rate of income tax they pay. Higher-rate taxpayers can claim 40% tax relief on their pension contributions, and additional-rate taxpayers get 45%.

When you reach your 75th birthday, tax relief stops and we can't accept any further payments from you.

If you're saving into a workplace pension, your employer will be making payments for you too.

How much can I save into a pension?

- For most people, the annual allowance is either 100% of their annual UK earnings or £60,000, whichever is lower.
- There's no longer a limit to how much money you can have across all your pension pots. However, there's a limit on how much can be paid tax-free to you from all pension schemes in your lifetime. This is known as the lump sum allowance. It's currently £268,265 but could be subject to change in future tax years.
- When you take benefits, normally you'll be able to take 25% of the amount in your pension pot as a tax-free lump sum (up to the lump sum allowance). Any lump sums that exceed the available allowance will be taxed at your marginal rate (the rate of income tax you pay). Don't forget that you can't withdraw your money from your pension until you reach age 55 (going up to 57 from 6 April 2028). You're free to transfer to another pension provider of your choice at any time.

As with all investments, your capital is at risk, and you may get back less than you invest. Investments should be held for the medium to long term (5+ years). You normally can't take your pension savings until the minimum pension age has been reached. You're free to transfer to another provider at any time.

The tax treatment of your investment depends on your individual circumstances and may be subject to change in the future.

So how does this compare with investing in an ISA?

For the 2024/25 tax year, the maximum amount you can contribute into permitted ISAs tax-free is £20,000.

With a stocks and shares ISA, you can hold shares and funds without paying tax on your returns.

An ISA could work for you if you think you might need to access your money sooner than when you retire.

If you die the funds in your ISA can be left to a chosen beneficiary as detailed in your will. If there is no will, it will be dealt with according to the intestacy rules as part of your estate.

Should I start long-term savings for my children?

As you plan for the future, your thoughts may turn to putting money away for the children in your life. It's good to make sure that your own finances are in a good place before thinking about how to help others.

For this tax year, parents can save up to £9,000 for each child in a Junior ISA.

You may also be thinking about starting a pension early for your children. In many cases you can start a pension with a one-off payment of £100 or £20 per month.



Your own personal financial trainer

"Starting out with investing is a bit like going to the gym for the first time. It can be intimidating, and everyone around you seems to know so much more than you. You might opt for a personal trainer to help you reach your fitness goals.

It's the same with your finances.

It's about finding someone who has dedicated time to learning how investing works, and who can analyse your situation. You can leave the ins and outs to us, and we'll explain our recommendations in a way that you can understand. We can then say: this is your goal, this is where you are now and this is how we're going to get you there."



Lynn Taylor
Senior Financial Planning Manager, Santander

Is financial advice right for me?

Sometimes knowing what to do about your finances can feel daunting. For specialist advice that's personal to you and your circumstances, you can speak to one of our Financial Planning Managers.

- Suitable when investing over £20,000.
- There is a charge of 2.5% if you make an investment based on their recommendation.
- Our Financial Planning Managers will advise you on a selected range of Santander products offering a diverse mix of assets.

To find out more about investing, book a free 30-minute, no-commitment chat in your local branch or by phone or secure video call, whatever works best for you.

If you have an investment of less than £20,000, our Digital Investment Adviser, can help you discover how investing can complement your savings. You can choose to purchase a personalised recommendation on which one of the four Santander funds is right for you. A fee of £20 would apply for using this. The Digital Investment Adviser doesn't provide a recommendation on the Personal Pension Account.

[Find out more](#)

If you're confident in choosing your own investments, we can help with that too.

Whatever path you choose, by making good financial decisions now it can help build the kind of life you want in the future. Visit [santander.co.uk](https://www.santander.co.uk) to learn more about investing.

