Global Investor Study
Under pressure: investors' response to crisis

Schroders

Marketing material

Contents

Overview

Understanding personal behaviours and motivations when investing is important to help make the right decisions - especially when external pressures are at play. People who invest are faced with countless decisions about which investments to choose, each with unique risks and potential rewards attached. The Schroders Global Investor Study 2020 explores the behaviours and attitudes of more than 23,000 people who invest from around the world.

Overall, the results show that, against a backdrop of market turbulence, people's expectations for income and returns are still on the rise. Despite recognising that investment plans should be well-informed, most investors still rely on their own research for their financial knowledge and expertise.

About this study

In April 2020, Schroders commissioned an independent online survey of over 23,000 people who invest from 32 locations around the globe. This spanned countries across Europe, Asia, the Americas and more. This research defines people as those who will be investing at least €10,000 (or the equivalent) in the next 12 months and who have made changes to their investments within the last 10 years.

Note: Figures in this document may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Findings in a nutshell

People are over-optimistic about their investment returns over the next five years
When asked about their total investment portfolio over the next five years, respondents expect an average annual total return of 10.92%, which is 1.02% higher than was expected two years ago and a small increase of 0.22% on last year.

Covid-19 is expected to have a negative economic impact for the next two years
66% of people think this will be felt for the next six months to two years, with only 21% believing the impact will go beyond two years.

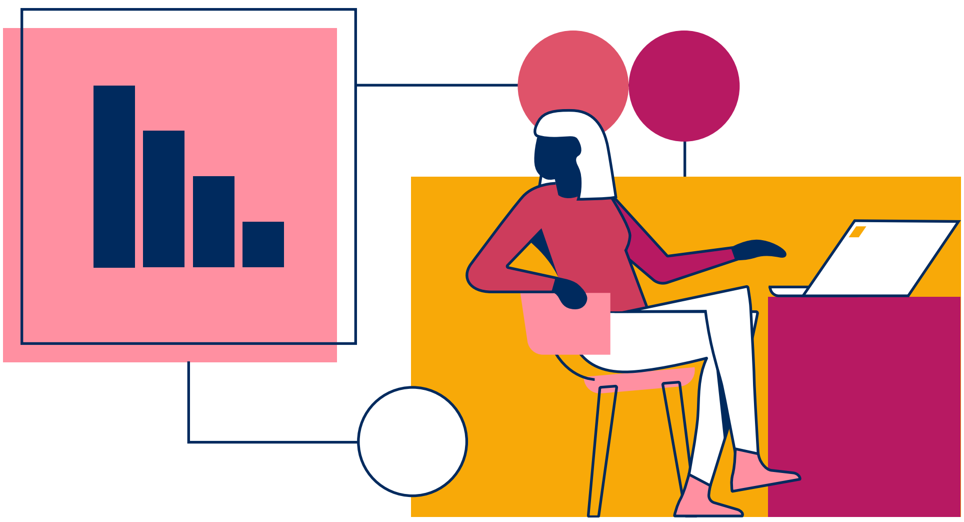
Banks and financial advisers are top for offering financial advice
People get their financial advice from various sources, but the most common two are banks (46%) and independent financial advisers (42%).

Financial education DIY
The majority of people think that acquiring financial knowledge should be a personal endeavour (68%), with another significant majority also placing responsibility on the heads of financial providers (62%). But this shouldn't downplay the role of state institutions, such as government and education systems, with almost half (48%) of people expecting them to provide sufficient knowledge on personal financial matters.

Becoming an expert
97% of people would like to have some kind of knowledge on personal financial matters, with the largest proportion of this group (46%) seeking a medium level of knowledge that enables them to really probe advice given by a financial adviser.

Preference for active over passive investing
Passive investments aim to match the performance of the market (e.g. it might track the FTSE 100 or the MSCI World index) whereas with active investing, a manager aims to beat the market through research, analysis and their own judgement.

The results show that while consumers have a general preference for active investment methods, the majority of their investment portfolio is passive and therefore at odds with their personal investment inclination.



Investment expectations

Despite recent market disruption, surprisingly, people have an over-optimistic outlook on their total investment returns. When asked about their total investment portfolio over the next five years, respondents expect an average annual total return of 10.9%. This improbable return is 1.02% higher than what was expected two years ago and a small increase of 0.2% on last year.

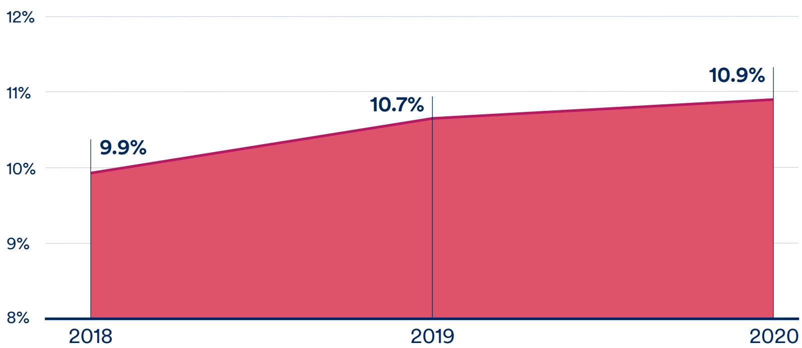
But these levels of optimism do vary according to region, painting a mixed picture of investment performance around the world.

European respondents are least optimistic about the anticipated returns of their investment portfolios (9.4%), while those in the Americas are the most positive with a very generous expected annual total return of 13.2% on average.

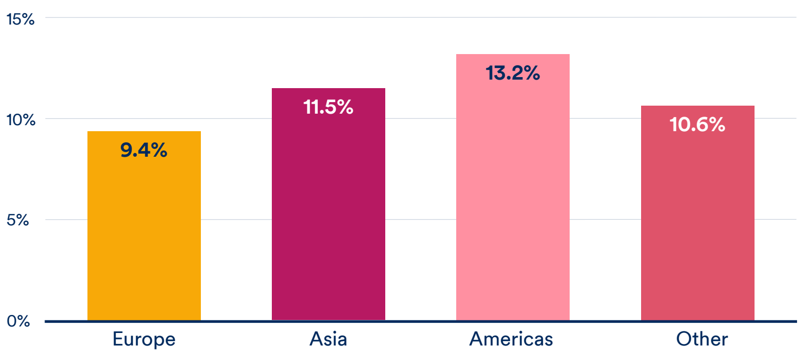
Narrowing our lens to investment expectations by country, we can see that there are significant differences in opinion regarding expected return. European countries are split into two camps, with Poland (11.19%) and the UK (11.08%) notably more positive than Italy (7.93%) and Switzerland (6.96%).

> “People have an over-optimistic outlook on their total investment returns

Expectations of average annual total return from investment portfolios, over the next five years



Expectations of average annual total return from investment portfolios, over the next five years, by region



Location	Average annual total return from investment portfolios over the next five years
US	15.38%
Indonesia	14.80%
Argentina	14.60%
Taiwan	14.03%
India	13.64%
UAE	13.62%
Brazil	13.33%
Thailand	13.02%
South Africa	12.67%
China	12.25%
Chile	12.20%
Mexico	11.99%
Poland	11.19%
UK	11.08%
Russia	11.07%
Singapore	10.93%
Portugal	10.66%
Denmark	10.62%
Hong Kong	10.28%
South Korea	10.15%
Spain	10.03%
Belgium	9.69%
Canada	9.55%
Sweden	9.23%
Netherlands	9.06%
Australia	8.94%
Germany	8.40%
France	8.31%
Austria	8.04%
Italy	7.93%
Switzerland	6.96%
Japan	5.96%

Asia is on the whole far more aligned compared to Europe, with Japan being the exception to this, coming in as the least optimistic (yet potentially most realistic) country with annual investment return estimates over the next five years at 5.96%.

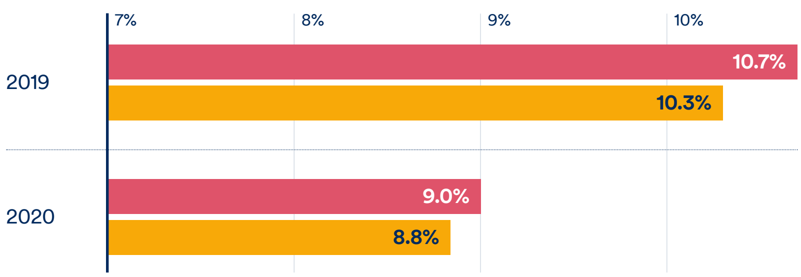
As for the Americas, Canada stands out for being significantly less optimistic than other countries with return expectations at 9.55%.

Thinking about average income from investments over the next 12 months, people are still unrealistically optimistic, but notably less so than last year. Investment income expectations are more aligned with income aspirations than they have been in previous years (8.8% vs 9% respectively).

But what is the driving force behind these attitudes and unrealistic predictions? Our results show that 80% of people are still basing their predictions on the returns they have received in the past, with a decade of strong returns potentially inflating people's expectations to unrealistic levels. 67% of people corroborate their expectation of lower returns over the next five years, stating that they believed this to be the case even before the onset of the pandemic.

Average income from investments people would like to receive vs. what they expect to receive over the next 12 months

- What is the minimum level of income you WOULD LIKE to receive?
- What is the level of income you EXPECT to receive over the next 12 months?



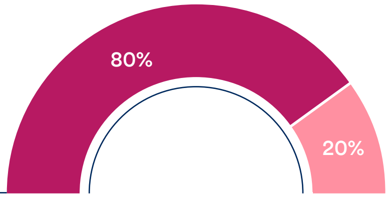
A small majority (62%) are basing their expected returns on current interest rates, unsurprising considering the Federal Reserve has vowed to keep rates low. However, this is somewhat revealing when you consider that the expected return is still higher than such low interest rates would traditionally allow.

It's also interesting to see how these judgements change according to how respondents rate their own investment knowledge. There was no notable difference for expectation of lower returns even before Covid-19 or accounting for interest rates. However, the propensity to rely on the performance of investments in previous years is dramatically increased among those who claim to be 'expert' or 'advanced' investors (85%), while only 67% of beginner/rudimentary investors agree that their investments' past performance will inform how they perform in the future.

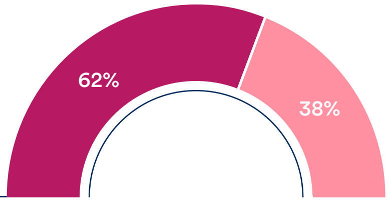
Basis of income expectation

Agree Disagree

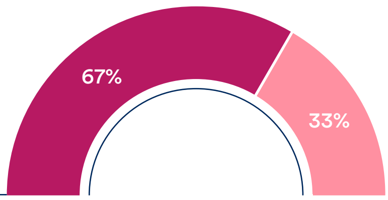
I have received these returns in the past, so it is very likely this will continue in the future



These are the returns I expect due to the current interest rates



I expect my investments to deliver lower returns in the next five years than they did in the previous five years, and was already expecting this before the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic

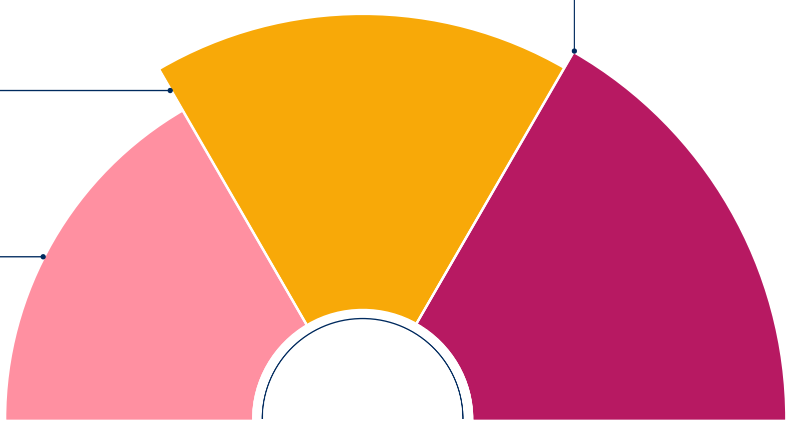


Percentage of people basing their expectations of investment income for the next five years on returns they've received in the past

85%
Expert / Advanced

80%
Intermediate

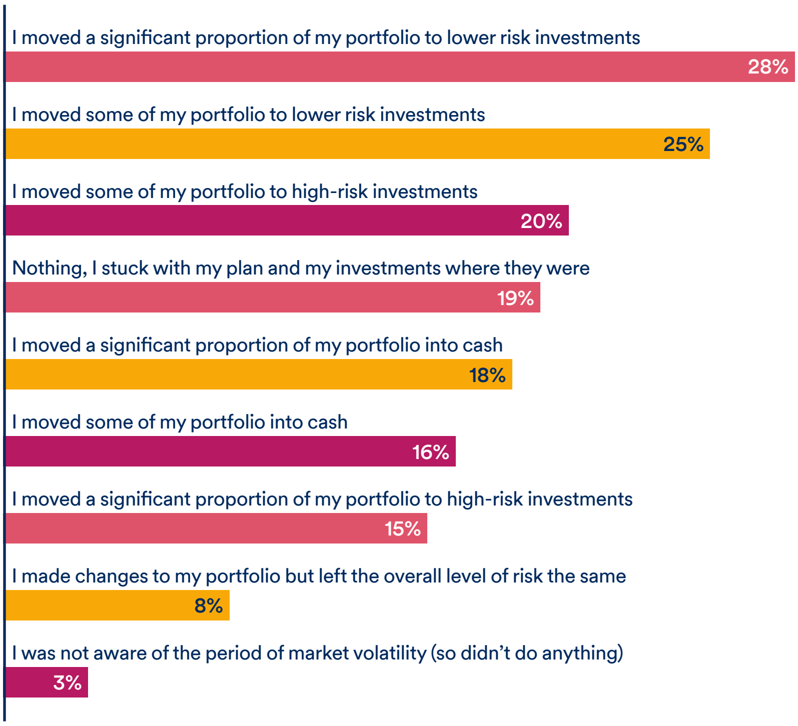
67%
Beginner / Rudimentary



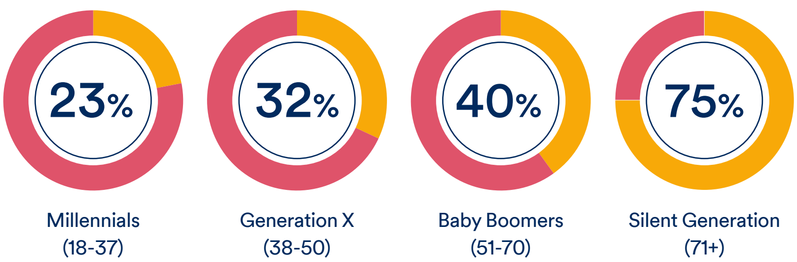
*Please note respondents identified their investment knowledge themselves

The impact of a global pandemic

Changes made to investment portfolios during February and March 2020



People who either moved their portfolio but maintained level of risk/ didn't make any changes



Covid-19 has certainly made its mark on investment behaviour even if investors aren't expecting it to impact their returns in the long term.

When asked how they approached the period of stock market volatility in February and March of 2020, a significant majority of people made changes to their portfolio. Over a quarter of people (28%) moved significant proportions of their portfolio to lower risk investments, while a fifth (20%) moved some of their portfolio to high-risk investments.

> "When asked how they approached the period of stock market volatility in February and March of 2020, a significant majority of people made changes to their portfolio

There was also a trend among different age groups, with the likelihood of either maintaining risk level or making no changes increasing significantly among older age groups. Baby boomers were almost twice as likely (40%) to maintain the risk level of their portfolio/ not make any changes than millennials (23%), while those over 71 years old were over three times more likely (75%) to do so.

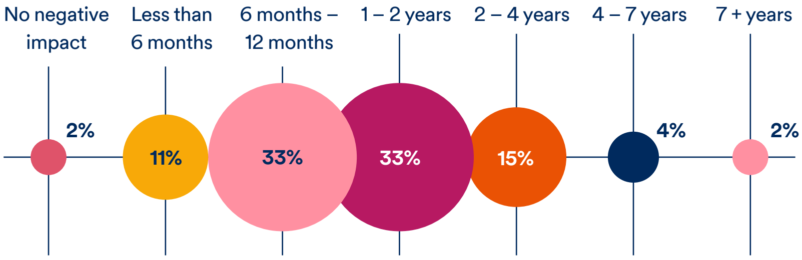
As for the negative economic impact brought on by Covid-19, 66% of people think this will be felt for the next six months to two years, with only 21% believing the impact will go beyond two years. Given this acknowledgement of the ramifications of Covid-19 for the economy, it is surprising that more respondents don't foresee this affecting the level of return on their investments over the next year. Unlike with the results for annual total return on investments for the next five years, there was no notable difference between regions, with sentiments relatively comparable across geographies.

Mindful investing

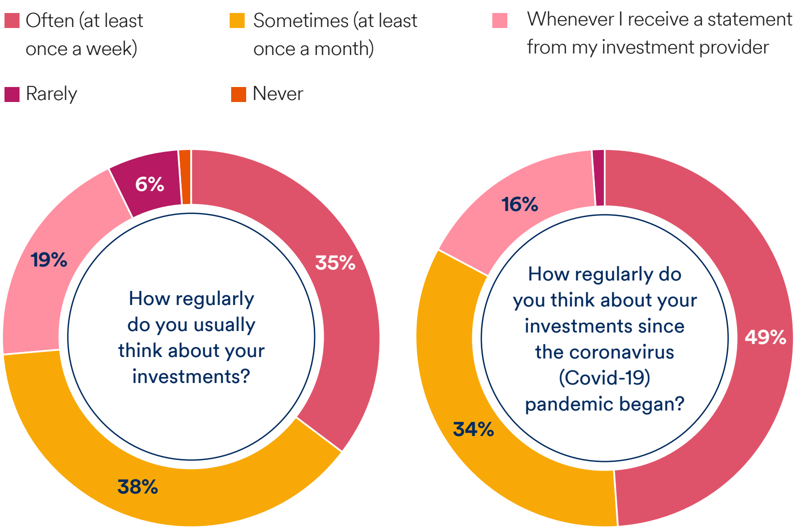
Before Covid-19, 35% of people thought about their investments at least once a week. Since the pandemic began, however, almost half of people (49%) think about their investments at least this frequently.

But with greater knowledge comes greater responsibility, and self-purported 'expert' or 'advanced' investors are almost twice as likely to think about their investments on a weekly basis than beginner/rudimentary investors (44% vs 22% respectively).

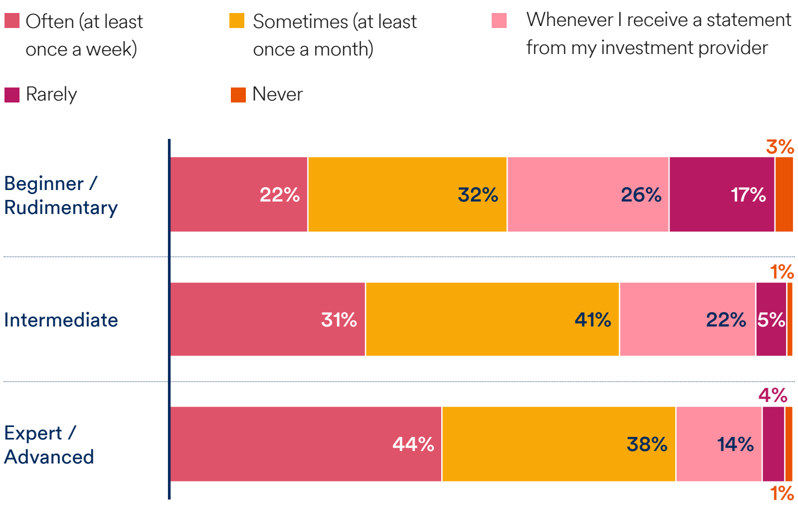
How long the period of negative economic impact caused by Covid-19 will last



How regularly do you usually think about your investments?

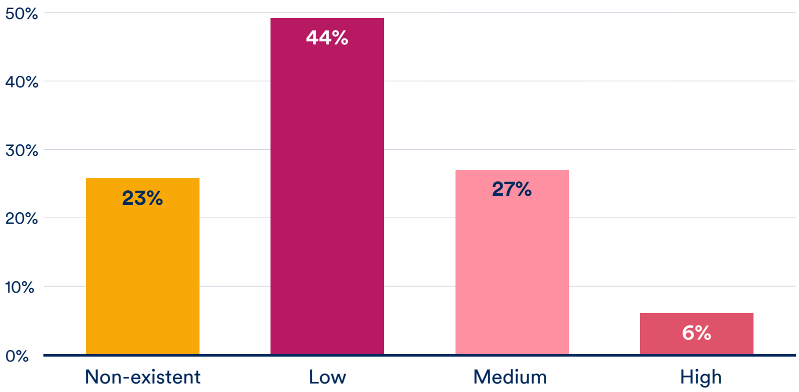


Time spent thinking about personal investments, before Covid-19

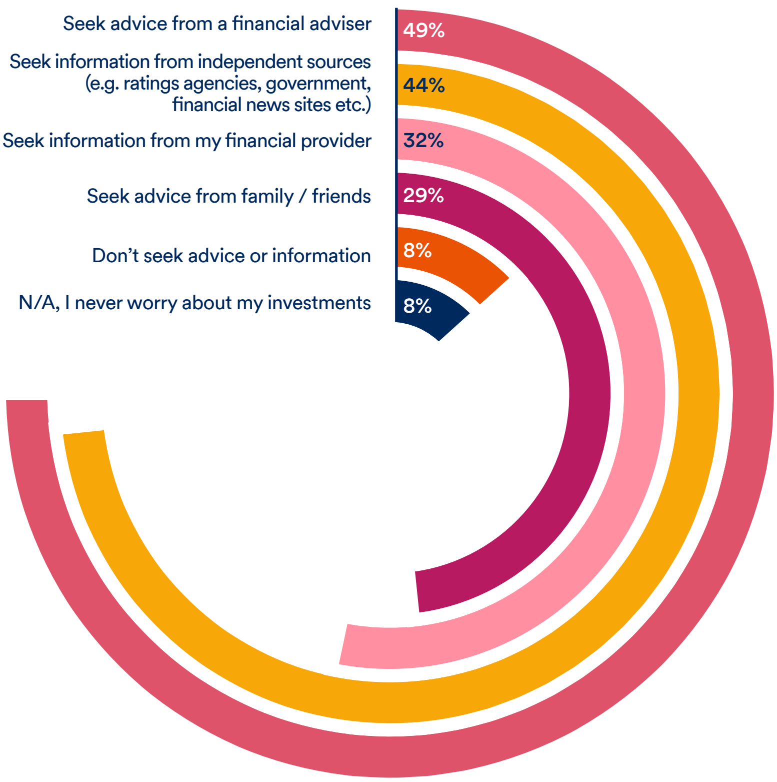


Money on your mind?

How do 'advanced' or 'expert' investors describe their level of worry if their investments drop for a short period of time?



Route taken when worried about investments



But while this additional time is spent thinking about their investments, it's important to point out that this doesn't necessarily indicate worry or anxiety. More than a fifth (21%) of investors claim they don't worry about their investments, even after a drop.

The performance of investments can be anxiety-inducing even when market pressures are at a minimum. However, 2020 has been a turbulent year, so how has this influenced investors' behavioural habits?

"Expert" or "advanced" investors are eight times more likely (16%) to say they never worry about their investments, compared to their "intermediate" counterparts (2%).

When people do worry about their investments, almost half of them (49%) turn to financial advisers for professional help. But still a significant minority (44%) seek information from independent sources like ratings agencies and financial news sites themselves.

Friendly advice

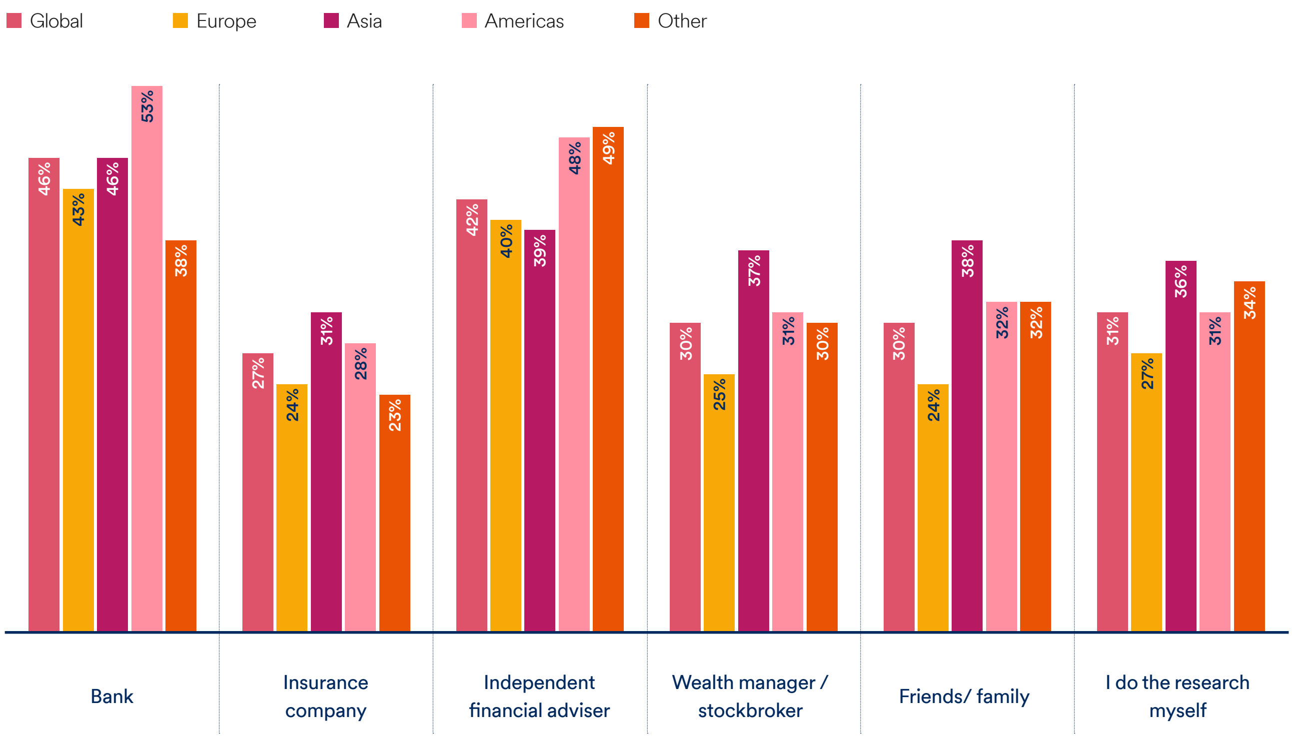
People get their financial advice from various sources, but the most common two are banks (46%) and independent financial advisers (42%). Bottom of the list are insurance companies with only 27% of respondents getting their financial advice this way.

While these global figures are representative of the results when looking at different regions, there are a couple of points of difference.

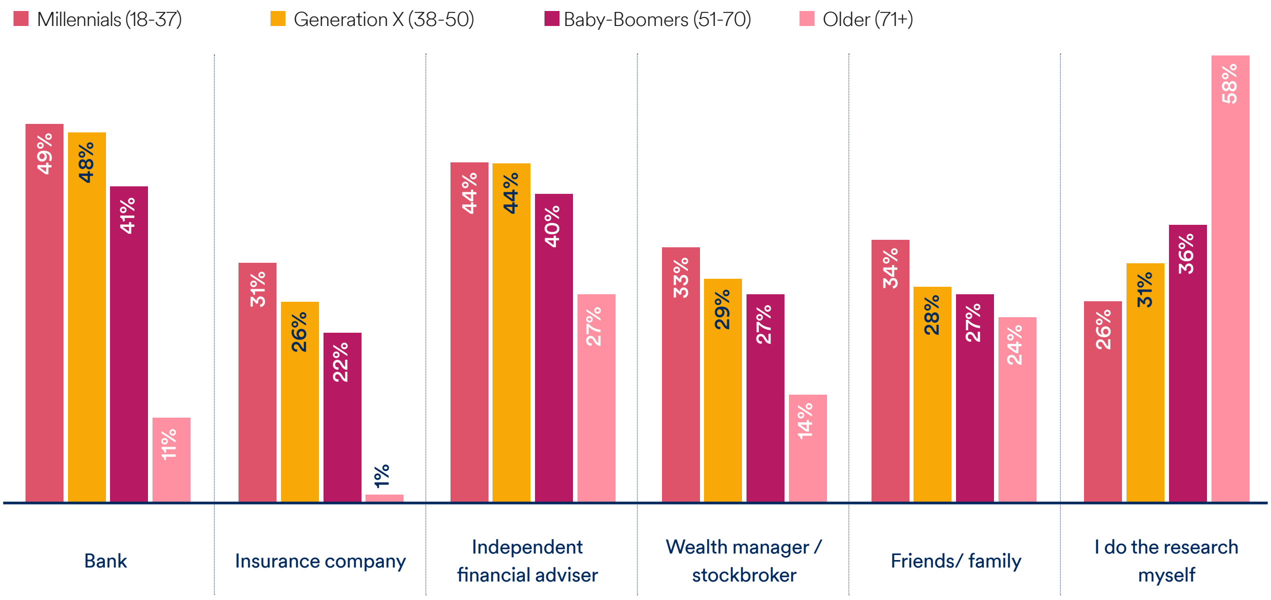
The results showed that Asia is more likely to source financial advice from friends/family (38%) compared with other regions and, while on average, few people chose to do research themselves, Europeans were the least likely to be their own source of financial advice (24%) compared with other regions.

> **Self-purported 'expert', or 'advanced' investors, receive their financial advice from a stronger mix of professionals**

Sources of financial advice, by region



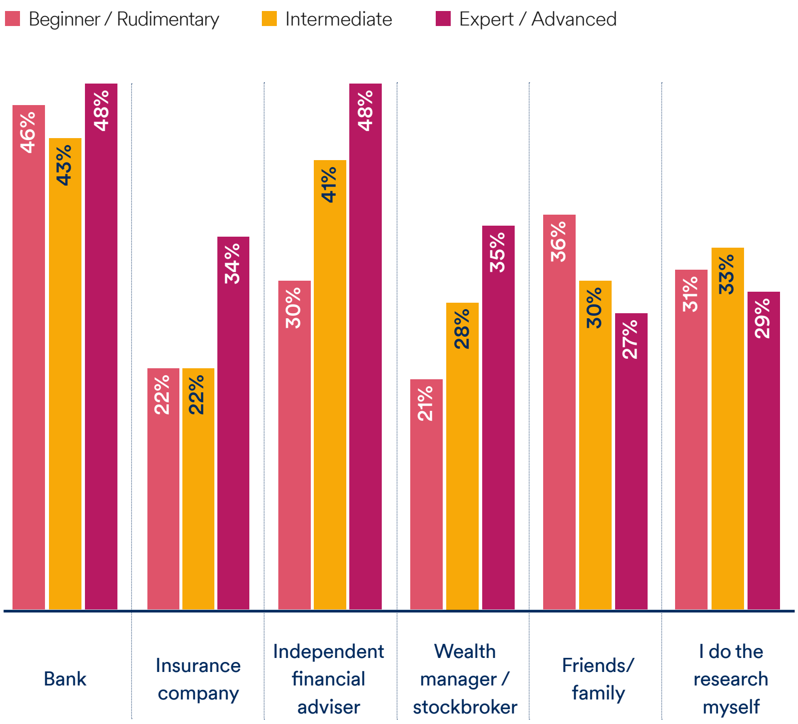
Sources of financial advice, by age



There was however, a notable pattern when considering sources of financial advice across generations. While reliance on yourself as a source of financial advice more than doubles for over 71 year-olds (58%) compared to millennials (26%), there is also a general trend where we see reliance on all sources of advice, except for 'doing research myself', decreasing as age increases.

Those who rate their investment knowledge as 'expert', or 'advanced', receive their financial advice from a stronger mix of professionals than beginners through to intermediates. They are also least likely to do research themselves (29%) and consult a friend/ family member (27%). The beginner (36%) and intermediate (30%) groups also have a stronger propensity to rely on their peers or indeed themselves (31% and 33% respectively) than the expert/ advanced investor.

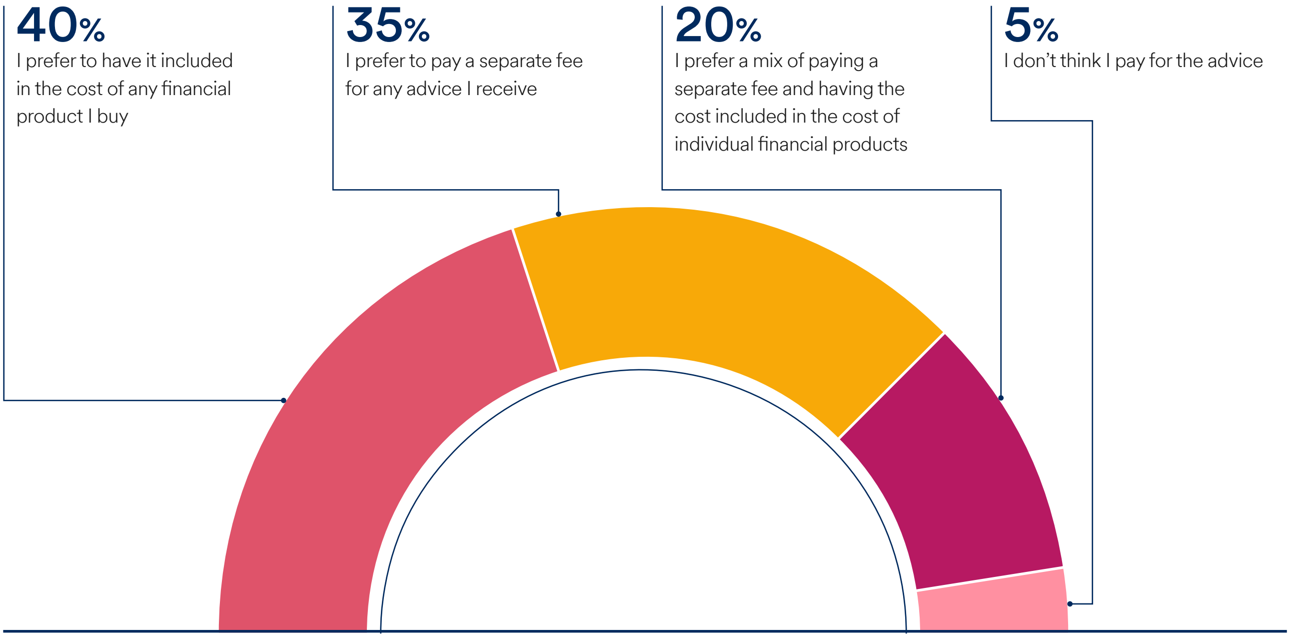
Sources of financial advice, by investment knowledge



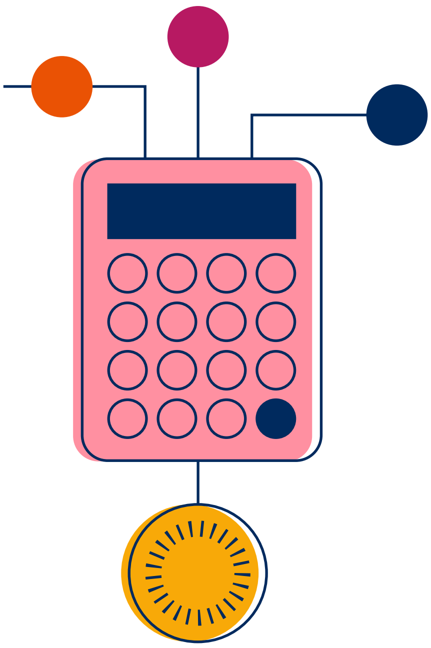
**Please note respondents identified their investment knowledge themselves*

Is the best advice free?

Advice payment preferences



And when paying for their advice, there was a clear preference across the board for this payment to be included in the cost of any financial product people buy (40%). There was an anomaly among the 'older' age category; where 5% of people don't think they pay for advice. This number jumps to 18% among the over 71-year-olds.



5%

of people don't think they pay for advice, rising to 18% among over 71-year-olds

> **"**
> **There was a clear preference for payment for advice to be included in the cost of any financial product**

Financial education: responsibility vs reality

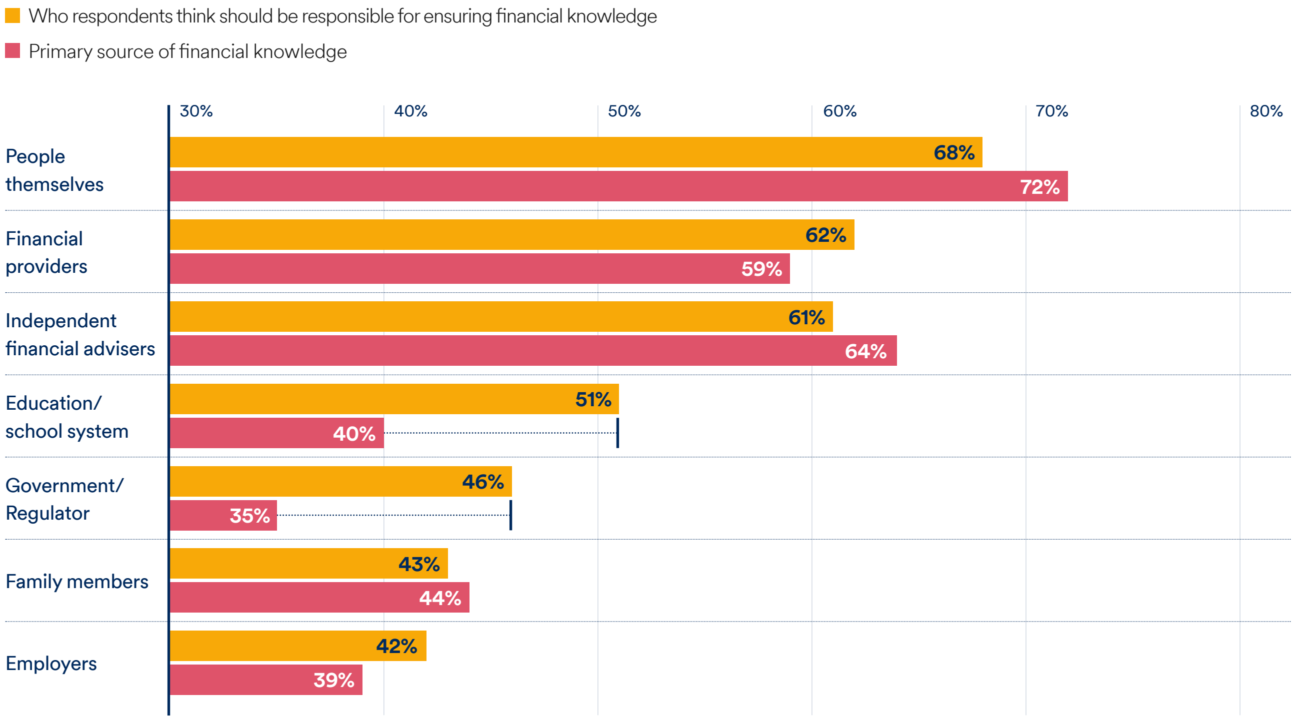
We've heard where consumers get their financial advice from, but who do they think should be responsible for ensuring that people have a sufficient level of knowledge on personal financial matters?

The majority of people think that financial knowledge should be a personal endeavour (68%), with another significant majority also placing responsibility on the heads of financial providers (62%). This is somewhat at odds with where people get their financial advice, as only a small portion (31%) took this task on themselves to research. However, when it comes to general financial knowledge, people are willing to put in the effort and hold themselves accountable (72% think they are responsible for their own knowledge).

When considering where people acquire their knowledge in reality vs who they think should be responsible, some interesting gaps start to emerge.

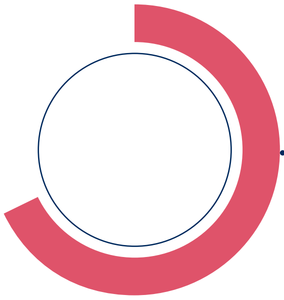
The biggest gaps were for government/ regulators and education/ school systems who appear to be most out of step with the responsibility placed on them by the consumer (48%). While 51% of people said education/ school systems should be responsible for disseminating financial knowledge, only 40% actually acquired their knowledge from these institutions. And it's a similar story for government/ regulators, with 46% of people placing responsibility on them and only 35% actually acquiring their knowledge in this way.

Responsibility vs reality



Employers and family members are also held accountable for providing financial knowledge, at least by a strong minority of millennials and Generation X. Millennials are almost three times (47%) as likely to expect employers to provide financial knowledge than the over 71s (15%), and almost twice as likely (46%) to place this responsibility on their family members than the older generation (24%).

Given that 64% acquire their knowledge from financial advisers, it's interesting to examine the dynamic here more closely, looking at how people can get the most out of their financial advisers.



68%

of people think that financial knowledge should be a personal endeavour

Who people think should be responsible for providing financial knowledge

Expert ambition?

So, given that such a large portion of us are taking financial education into our own hands, what level of financial knowledge are people trying to obtain?

97% of people would like to have some kind of knowledge on personal financial matters, with the largest proportion of this group (46%) seeking a medium level of knowledge that enables them to really probe advice given by a financial adviser.

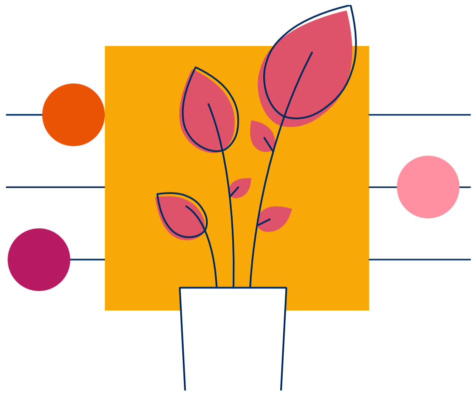
Looking at knowledge ambition by region, the Americas is the clear front-runner, with almost half (46%) of people striving for a high level of knowledge that enables them to make their own decisions, cutting out the need for a financial adviser.

52% of respondents in Asia would instead like to have a medium level of knowledge, showing that they still value the role of the financial adviser in overseeing their personal financial matters.

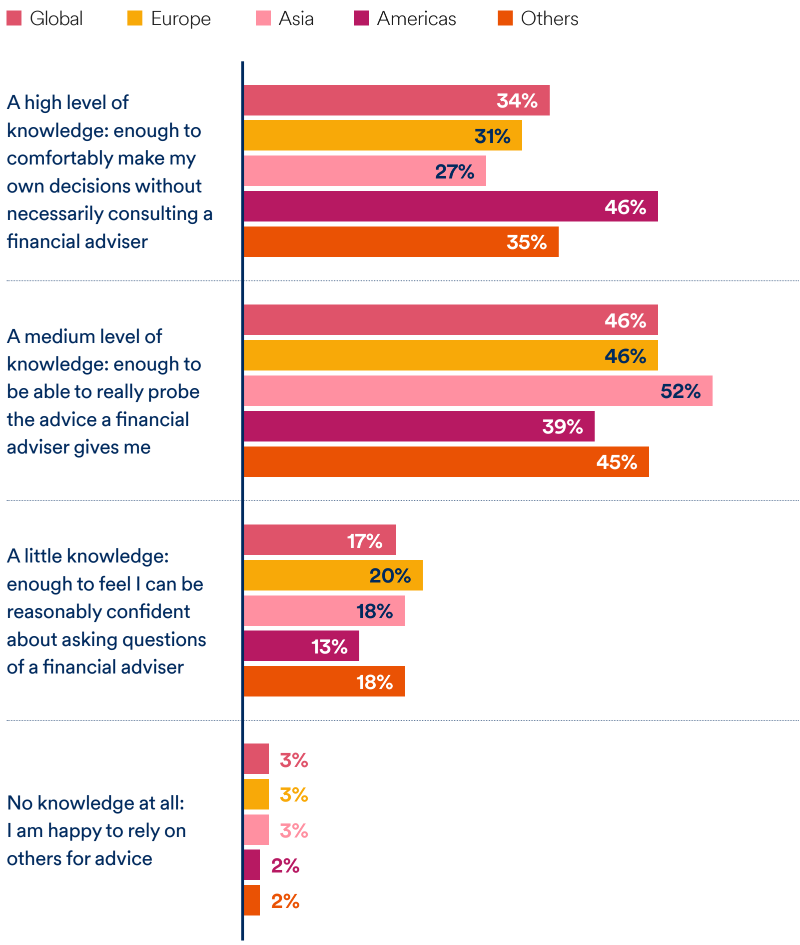
“Most people would like to have some kind of knowledge on personal financial matters

46%

of people want a medium level of knowledge that enables them to really probe advice given by a financial adviser



Desired level of financial knowledge, broken down by region



Financial knowledge in action

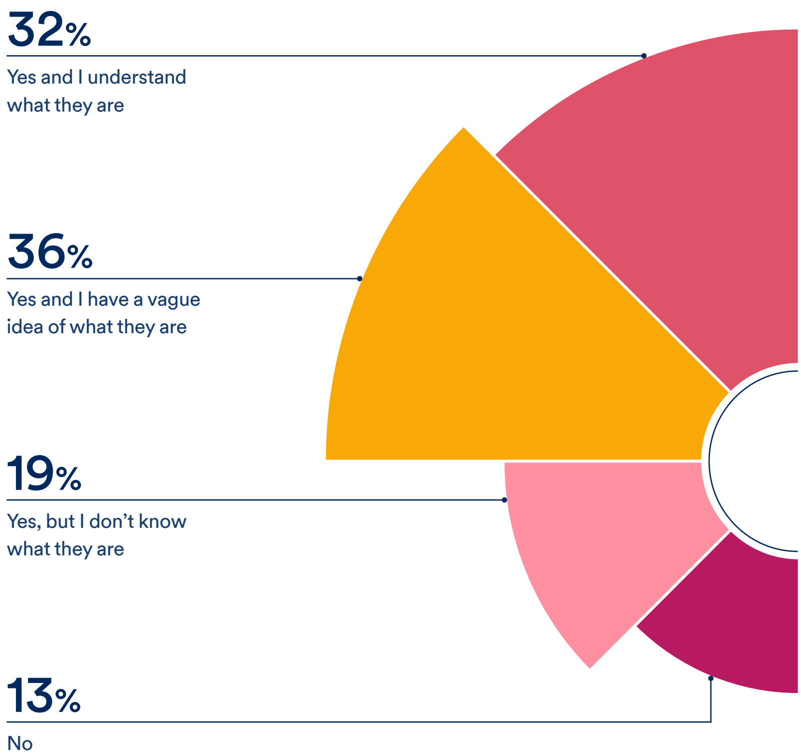
Given people's differing levels of knowledge, the accessibility of certain kinds of investment becomes even more pertinent when we consider how they acquire their financial knowledge, where this comes from and ultimately, how they are able to put their knowledge into practice.

When asked if they had heard of private asset investments for example, only 32% of people confirmed this and that they understood what they were. The remaining 68% only had either a vague understanding, didn't know what they were or hadn't heard of them at all.

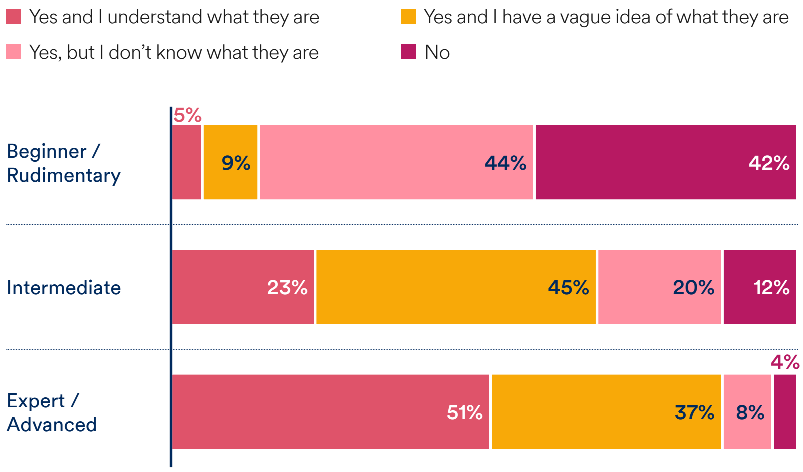
It also appears to be the case that younger generations, millennials (36%), have a clearer understanding of what private asset investments are vs non-millennials (28%).

Also surprising was that a significant minority (37%) of self-purported 'expert' or 'advanced' investors had only a vague understanding of what private asset investments are. While over two fifths (42%) of 'beginner' or 'rudimentary' investors hadn't heard of them at all.

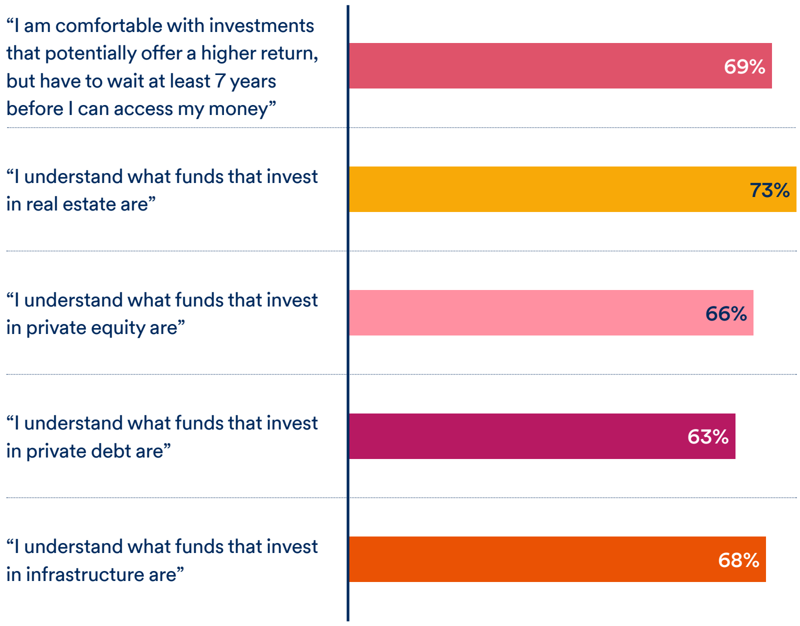
Have you heard of private assets investments?



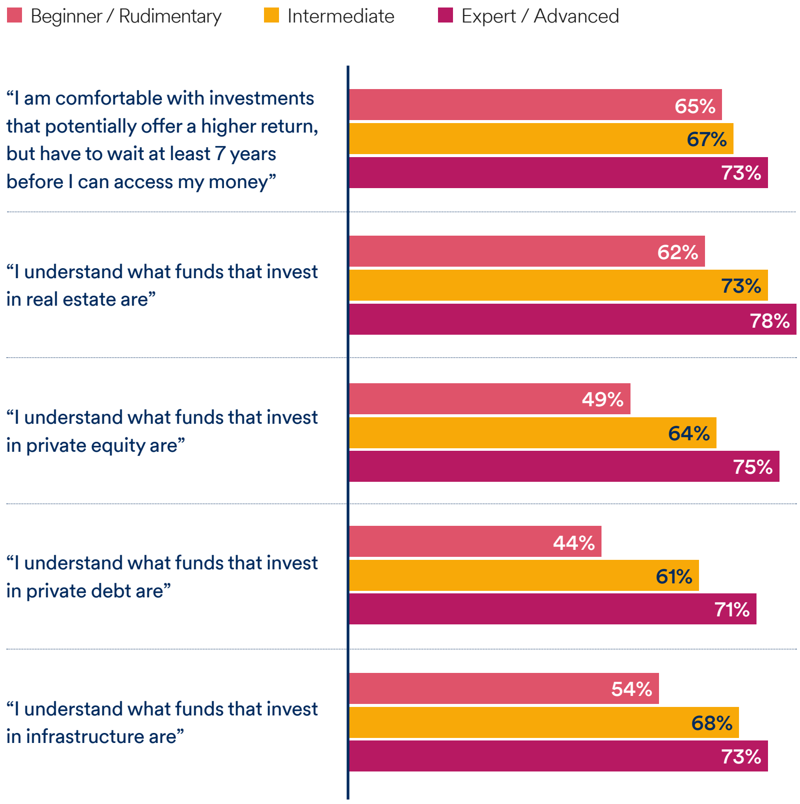
Different levels of investors' understanding of private asset investment



Understanding of private asset investments around the world



Understanding of private assets investments, by investment knowledge group



However, when we describe private asset investments more specifically, such as 'investing in real estate' or investing in private equity' for example, the majority of people understand what different funds are. 69% are also comfortable with the idea of investments that they might have to wait at least seven years before accessing their money.

Does this reveal an underlying lack of knowledge - or a discomfort around investment terminology?

As you would expect, a higher proportion of those who identify as 'expert' or 'advanced' investors understand what funds investing in private equity are (75% of expert/advanced understand what this is vs 49% of beginner/ rudimentary investors) and also private debt (71% for expert/advanced vs 44% for beginner/ rudimentary investors). The results also show us that a higher proportion of 'expert' or 'advanced' investors (73%) are comfortable with longer-term investments that potentially offer a higher return.

However, this still does not correlate with the number of experts who are completely confident in private assets - revealing a knowledge gap still exists for those who believe themselves 'expert' or 'advanced' investors.

People who claim to be 'beginner' or 'rudimentary' investors are more likely to understand funds investing in real estate (62%) than anything else.

> **"A higher proportion of those who identify as 'expert' or 'advanced' investors understand what funds investing in private equity are**

Active vs passive investing

Active
Where a manager aims to beat the market through research, analysis and their own judgement

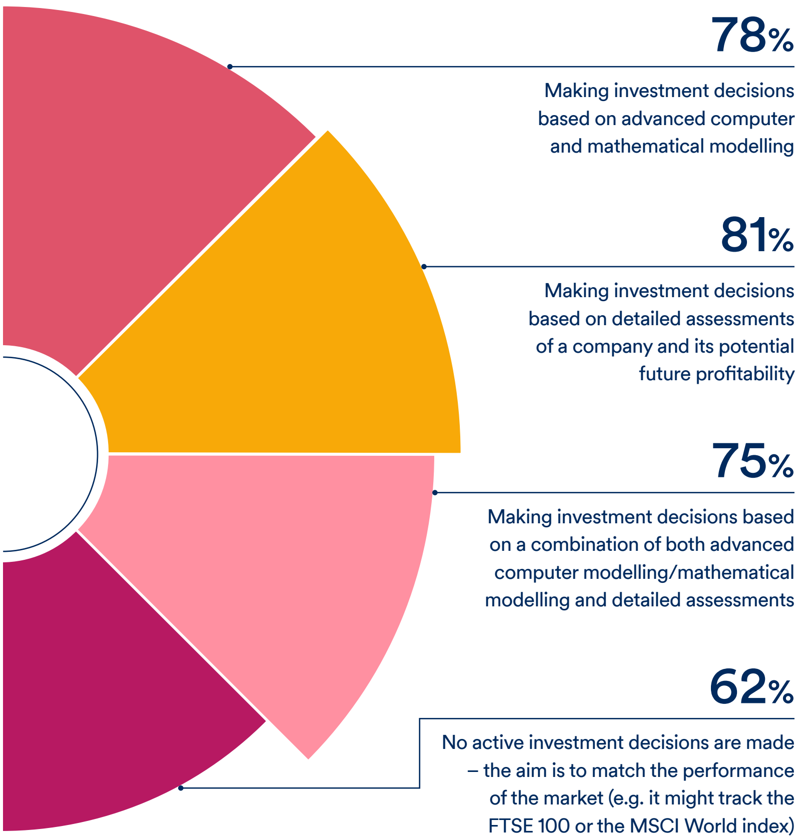
Passive
Where the aim is to match the performance of the market e.g. it might track the FTSE 100 or the MSCI World index

How much of people's portfolios are in active and passive investments?

Investments based on matching market performance appear less desirable to people, with only 62% interested in putting investment into funds that take this approach. An investment approach based on detailed assessments of a company and its potential future profitability is more appealing, with 81% of people interested in funds adopting this method.

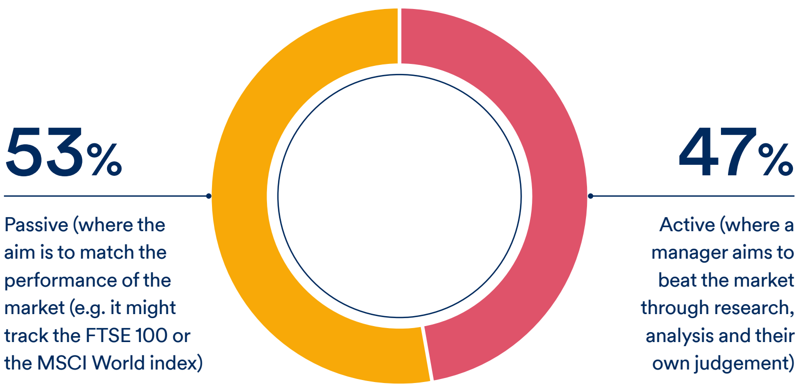
The results show that while consumers have a general preference for active investment methods, the majority of their investment portfolio is passive and therefore at odds with their personal investment inclination.

Interest in putting investments into funds that take the following approaches



> “Investments based on matching market performance appear less desirable to people

Proportion of people's portfolios that are active vs passive



Investment rites of passage

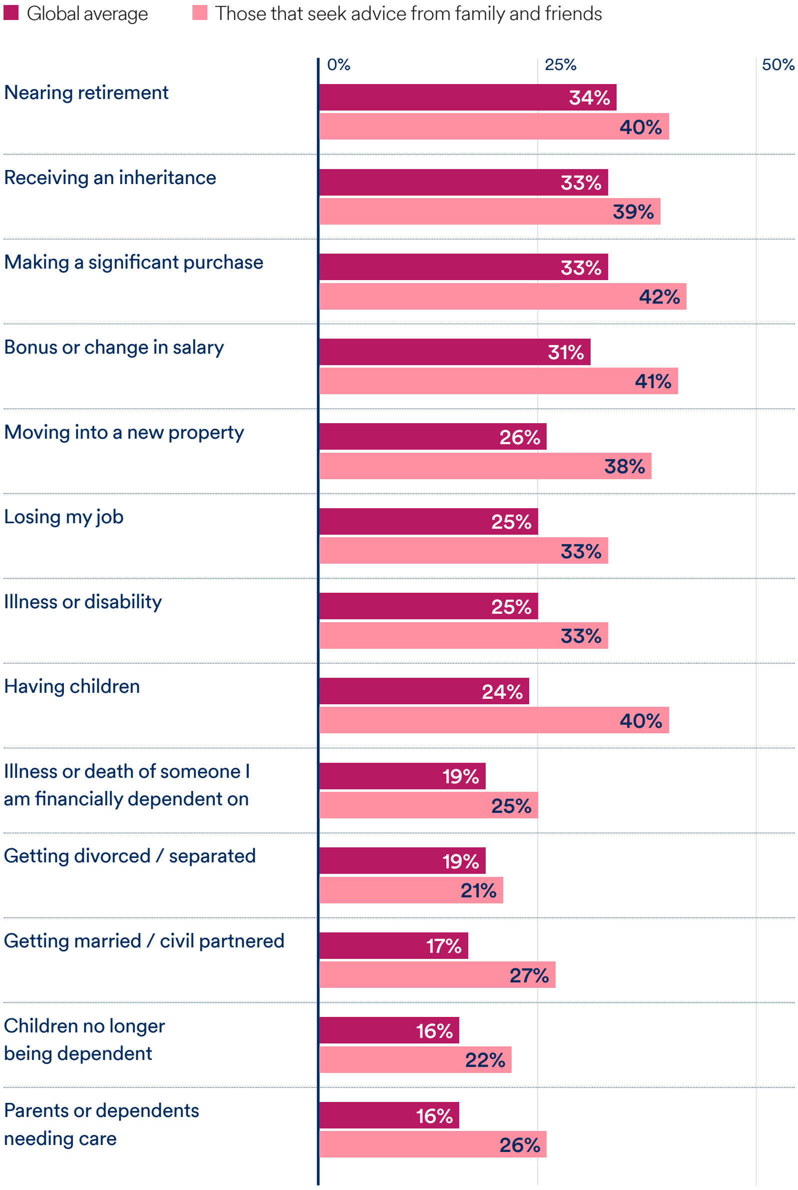
The survey revealed that people rely on their own research to help them obtain knowledge on personal financial matters (72% of respondents), but are there investment rites of passage, or triggers, that encourage people to seek help from a professional?

The answer is 'yes', with 34% of respondents claiming they would be most likely to seek professional investment advice when nearing retirement. 33% of respondents would also be likely to consult a professional when receiving inheritance, or even making a significant purchase, such as buying a new car.

Millennials were also twice as likely (46%) to seek professional financial advice when receiving an inheritance than non-millennials (23%), and twice as likely to do so when having children (34% vs 17%).

Those that seek advice from their peers were much more likely to see every life event as an opportunity to seek professional advice.

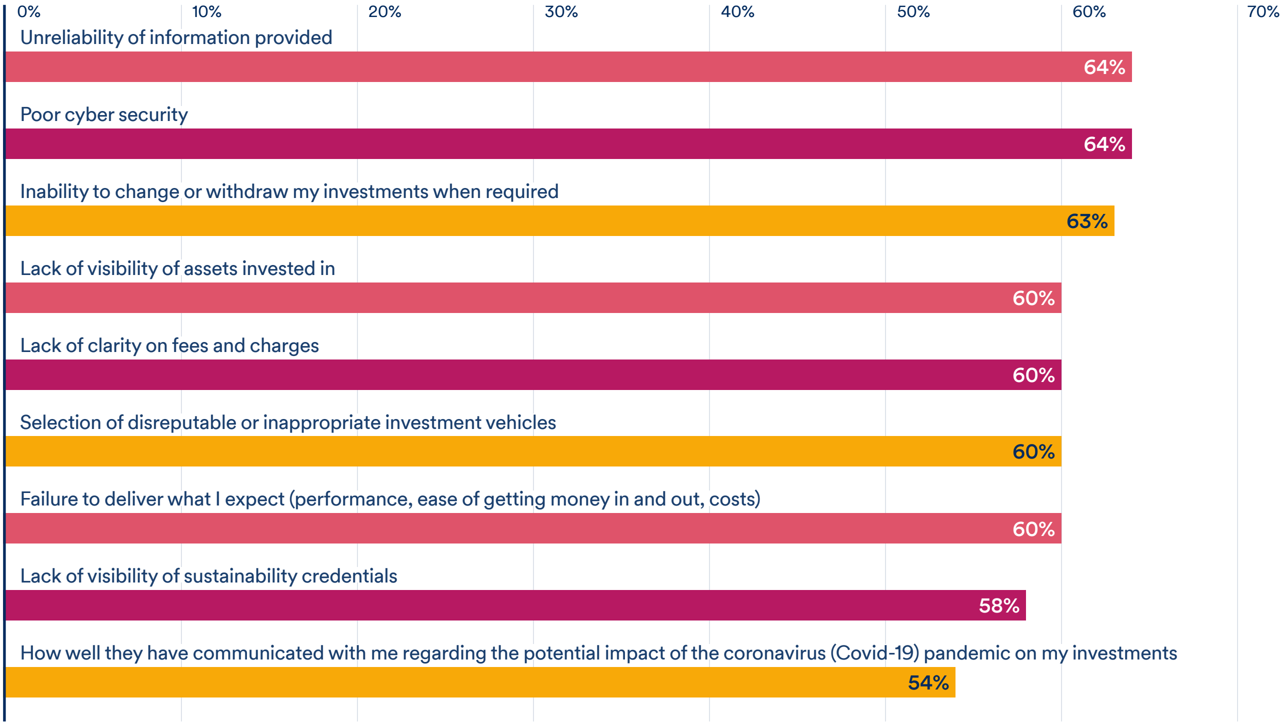
Personal life events that are most likely to cause people to seek professional financial advice



"Investment rites of passage encourage people to seek help from a professional

Is a lack of trust driving a rise in independent investors?

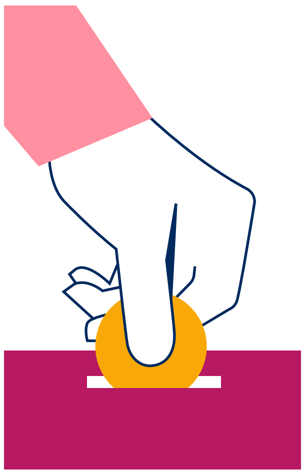
Aspects that would undermine trust in an investment provider



With so many people relying on a mixture of professional advice and personal knowledge to aid in their investment decision-making, along with younger generations increasingly likely to rely on family members for financial education, what is the role of trust in investments today?

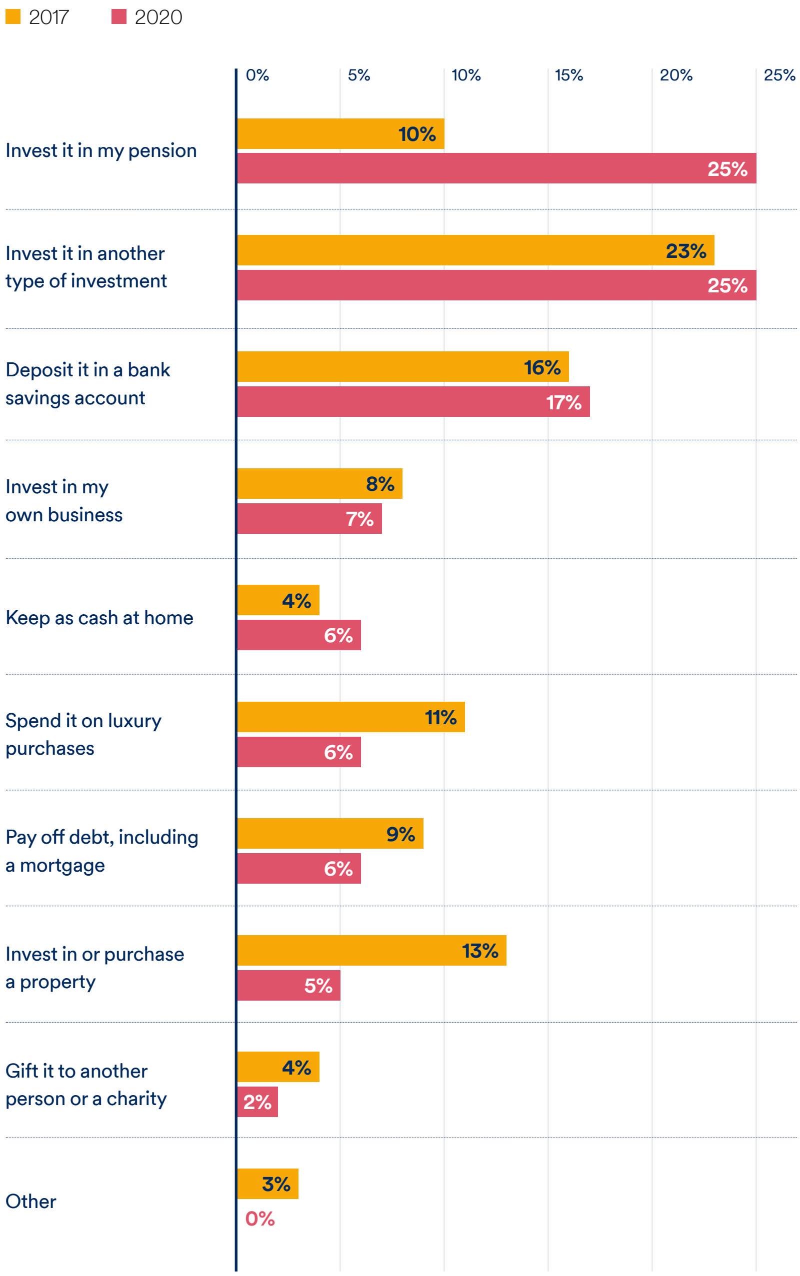
The spread of the results show that many things could undermine trust in investment providers, with unreliability of information provided and poor cyber security (64%) being the most likely aspects to cause this effect. The smallest proportion (54%) of people felt their trust would be undermined by poor communication around the potential impact of the pandemic on their investments.

> “Many things could undermine trust in investment providers



Spending habits for the year ahead

2017 vs 2020: Number one priorities for disposable income spending



Looking to the year ahead, the challenges posed by Covid-19 and its associated economic impact has meant people aren't looking to use their disposable income to change their lifestyles. Since Schroders last asked this question in 2017, spend on luxury items such as holidays and vehicles, etc. has taken a hit (11% in 2017 vs 6% in 2020) . Priority to invest in, or purchase a property has also more than halved since 2017 (13%) with only 5% of respondents prioritising this for their disposable income in 2020.

Interestingly, using disposable income to invest in general investments, deposit in a savings account and keep as cash at home also saw a rise in prioritisation for people - perhaps showing they are preparing for a period of volatility.

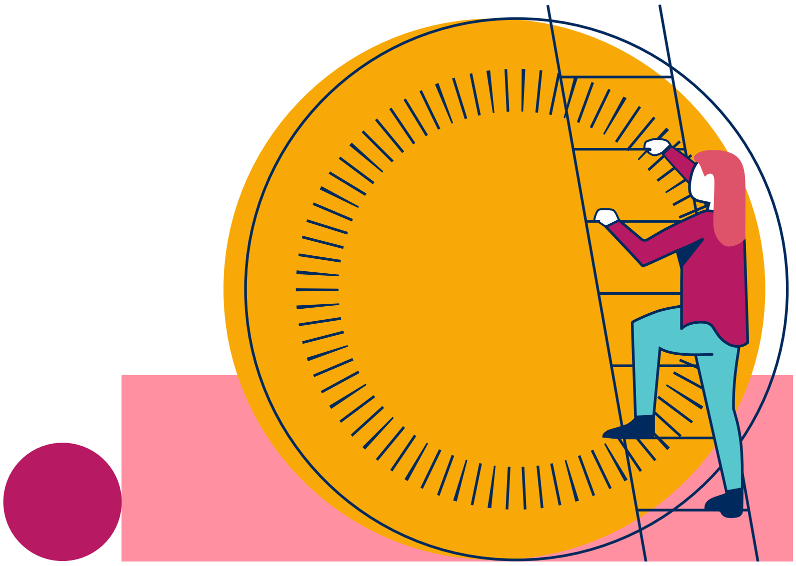
While there was a general consensus across different investment knowledge groups, there was one notable difference with beginners and rudimentary investors. 24% of this group opted to deposit their disposable income in a bank savings account, while only 14% of 'advanced' and 'expert' investors would do the same.

Unsurprisingly, those that expected the negative economic impact of Covid-19 to last a year or more were less optimistic on the average level of income they expect to receive over the next 12 months (8.08% vs 8.84%).

Would people like to upskill their financial expertise?

Whether it's pensions, or savings accounts, people want to know whether they're making the right decisions. But behavioural biases could be impacting the decisions people make about their investments - especially during difficult periods of uncertainty.

The next decade is set to deliver returns that likely don't match the expectations of investors. People around the world stated that they want to have financial knowledge, but few have the confidence to say they are experts. Addressing this lack of knowledge could be the key to empowering people to take control of their finances in difficult times, and ensure they are handling their investments in the best way.



Schroders commissioned Raconteur to conduct, between 30 April and 15 June 2020, an independent online study of 23,450 people in 32 locations around the world. This research defines "people" as those who will be investing at least €10,000 (or the equivalent) in the next 12 months and who have made changes to their investments within the last 10 years.

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