

THE
INVESTMENT
ASSOCIATION

ISA BAROMETER 2026:
ISAS AS A GATEWAY TO INVESTING

TURNING SAVERS INTO INVESTORS

June 2026



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The IA champions UK investment management, supporting British savers, investors and businesses. Our 250 members manage £10.0 trillion of assets. Our mission is to make investment better. Better for clients, so they achieve their financial goals. Better for companies, so they get the capital they need to grow. And better for the economy, so everyone prospers. Our purpose is to ensure investment managers are in the best possible position to:

- Build people's resilience to financial adversity
- Help people achieve their financial aspirations
- Enable people to maintain a decent standard of living as they grow older
- Contribute to economic growth through the efficient allocation of capital.

The money our members manage is in a wide variety of investment vehicles including authorised investment funds, pension funds and stocks and shares ISAs. The UK is the second largest investment management centre in the world, after the US and manages £5.1 trillion on behalf of overseas clients

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INTRODUCTION

'Turning Savers into Investors' is the second report in the IA's 2026 ISA Barometer series, exploring how the familiarity of the ISA brand could be used as a gateway to encourage more people to start investing.

The UK has long been characterised as a nation of cash savers: UK adults hold the smallest amount in equities and mutual funds of any G7 country¹, and recent estimates suggest that UK savers hold £610bn in cash that could be invested.²

However, we know that reliance on cash for meeting long-term financial goals brings its own risks as inflation erodes spending power over time. If a saver had put £10,000 in a Cash ISA a decade ago, it would be worth around £8,400 today due to inflation. If they had invested that same £10,000 in an average Global Equity Fund, it would now be worth over £19,700.³ For those who have built up an emergency savings buffer and choose not to invest, this can result in missed opportunities to build financial resilience and prepare for long-term goals such as retirement.

The research in this report compares data from two surveys carried out in March 2026, in partnership with Opinium, of 1,000 investors and 1,000 Cash ISA holders. In our sample of 1,000 investors, the majority (65%) hold a Stocks & Shares ISA, but we have kept the whole sample broader to allow more in-depth demographic analysis and to retain comparability of investor groups

year-on-year. Similarly, our sample of Cash ISA holders is made up of 50% who are cash savers only and 50% who hold a Cash ISA alongside investment products.

We look at how financial goals and saving habits differ between those using Stocks & Shares ISAs and those using Cash ISAs, and consider the behaviours, barriers and constraints that keep many cash savers on the sidelines of investing. In particular, as we head towards the planned reduction of the Cash ISA limit to £12,000 for under-65s from April 2027, a policy move designed to nudge more people into investing, we consider which groups could be best placed to benefit from channelling some of their capital into investments.

The findings are also set against a backdrop of macroeconomic and geopolitical uncertainty which continues to influence household spending and decision-making. This year's research was fielded at the start of March as the US commenced attacks on Iran; results must therefore be read in light of heightened domestic concerns about rising energy prices, inflation and the cost-of-living.

By exploring the financial goals and motivations of savers and investors across the UK, we are able to uncover where cash savings could be working against long-term ambitions, and how we can help more savers to take the first step on their investment journey. The ISA brand has the potential to be a strong tool in achieving this and can act as the bedrock of a new investment culture. Turning savers into investors is not about removing choice, but about ensuring that people are equipped, supported and confident enough to make financial decisions that align with their goals over time.

ISAs as a Gateway to Investing

The 2026 ISA Barometer is delivered as a three-part research series, 'ISAs as a Gateway to Investing', providing a comprehensive view of how UK adults engage with ISAs across the saving and investment journey.

- (1) Awareness & Understanding of ISAs:** examines headline awareness of ISA wrappers, perceived and tested knowledge, and understanding of ISA rules and tax benefits. The report identifies key knowledge gaps and explores how policy change can influence confidence and engagement with the ISA landscape.
- (2) Turning Savers into Investors:** focused on the behavioural and structural barriers that prevent cash savers from investing, this report looks at how financial goals and saving habits differ between those using Stocks & Shares ISAs and those using Cash ISAs. It also considers the entrenched behaviours, barriers and constraints that keep many cash savers on the sidelines of investing.
- (3) Investing in Britain: UK investment in a changing ISA landscape:** explores how investors are using ISAs to direct capital and how confident the broader population feels about investing in their home market. As Long-Term Asset Funds are brought into the Stocks & Shares ISA wrapper for the first time, it also considers how sentiment towards private markets and real assets has evolved over the last 12 months.

¹ aberdeen, 'Tell Sid & tell him again', January 2025

² Barclays, 'The UK Investment Gap', September 2025.

³ Analysis based on the IA Global Sector average return, April 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report explores four key themes:

- **Part 1** looks at how savings goals differ between Cash ISA holders and Stocks & Shares ISA holders.
- **Part 2** examines the barriers to investing that exist amongst cash savers, and considers what risk means to different demographic groups.
- **Part 3** looks at average ISA contribution levels and how financial habits diverge between those with a Cash ISA and those with a Stocks & Shares ISA.
- **Part 4** explores whether savers and investors have different financial habits when it comes to their ISAs, and where Cash ISA holders and Stocks & Shares ISA holders would go to find out more information about investing.

'Turning Savers into Investors' considers how the strength and familiarity of the ISA brand position it to act as a stepping stone between saving and investing and to help create a better culture of retail investment in the UK. We position the data alongside information about recent government-backed initiatives such as The Risk Warnings Review and Invest for the Future campaign to show that moving the needle will require reframing investing as accessible and incremental, with jargon-free communications and relevant, contextual information that supports savers to make financial decisions that align with their long-term goals.

KEY FINDINGS

Part 1: Saving & Investing Habits

Cash ISAs are prioritised for accessibility and perceived safety, whilst Stocks & Shares ISA use is focused on growth and returns. Cash ISA holders are primarily motivated by liquidity, low risk and ease of understanding, with almost half citing instant access as the key benefit. In contrast, Stocks & Shares ISA users are focused on long-term returns and inflation-beating growth, reflecting a more intentional and outcome-driven approach to saving.

A significant minority are defaulting to Cash ISAs at the expense of long-term outcomes. Our research shows that nearly a third of savers are using Cash ISAs to fund retirement, including almost 1 in 5 Gen Z. This suggests that many are forgoing the long-term growth potential of investing despite substantial time horizons. Equally, just over a quarter of investors are using a Stocks & Shares ISA to save for a rainy-day fund – a savings goal that could be better suited to the guaranteed liquidity and stable value of cash savings.

Part 2: Understanding risk & the barriers to investing

The average savings amount those who don't invest feel like they would need before they could start investing has increased year-on-year. The average savings threshold required before beginning to invest has risen to almost £95,000, with nearly half of cash savers now stating that no level of savings would make them comfortable investing. These 'never investors' are disproportionately female, older and lower income.

Risk perception is the single biggest constraint on investment participation amongst Cash ISA holders. Cash ISA savers significantly overestimate downside risks, with many fearing total loss of capital or a lack of access to funds. In contrast, investors demonstrate a more nuanced understanding of risk, focusing on market conditions and geopolitical headwinds. This disconnect highlights the importance of more effective, balanced risk communications to help bridge the gap between saving and investing.

Part 3: ISA Contribution Patterns

Average contributions to Cash ISAs have increased substantially year-on-year, whilst we have seen a slight fall in average Stocks & Shares ISA contributions. This is a reversal of the data seen in our 2025 ISA Barometer. The increase in Cash ISA contributions year-on-year could be the result of individuals saving more into Cash ISAs whilst they can still make use of the full £20,000 allowance, and greater geopolitical uncertainty over the last 12 months prompting people to increase cash holdings.

Those who saved or invested less into their Cash ISA or Stocks & Shares ISA over the 2025-26 tax year have been most impacted by cost-of-living pressures. High energy bills, food and transport costs have been the top reason for contributing less to both ISA wrappers over the last 12 months. Looking ahead to the 2026-27 tax year, encouragingly, almost half of both those with a Cash ISA and those with a Stocks & Shares ISA plan to keep their contributions consistent despite external headwinds.

Part 4: Do Cash ISA savers and Stocks & Shares ISA investors have different financial habits?

Saving and investing habits expose generational gaps in ISA use. Younger generations are significantly more likely to contribute more regularly to both Cash ISAs and Stocks & Shares ISAs, reflecting automated and habit-based saving likely the result of regular incomes. In contrast, older cohorts are more likely to contribute on an ad hoc or annual basis, linked to life stage and financial advice patterns.

Younger generations are digital-first when engaging with investing. Gen Z savers are significantly more likely to turn to friends and family, social media, YouTube and emerging tools such as AI if they want to find out more about investing. In contrast, older cohorts favour more traditional and formal channels such as consumer websites, financial advisers and banks. These generational differences highlight the need for a more diversified, multi-channel approach to investor engagement.

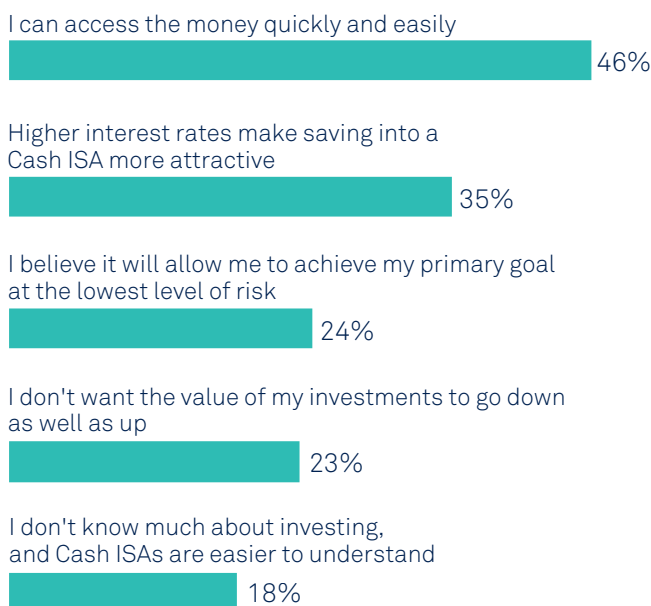
PART 1:

SAVING & INVESTING HABITS

2026 is the second year that our research has looked in detail at the differences in financial habits and saving goals between Cash ISA and Stocks & Shares ISA holders. The UK has a long-standing preference for saving in cash: looking at HMRC data on ISA subscriptions, Cash ISAs outpace Stocks & Shares ISAs annually, with over 9.9 million Cash ISA accounts subscribed to in the 2023-24 tax year and almost £70 billion saved, compared to 4 million Stocks & Shares ISA accounts and £31 billion saved.⁴ The most recent FCA Financial Lives Survey also uncovered that 61% of people with more than £10,000 in investible assets hold at least three-quarters of their savings in cash.⁵

Recent policy momentum behind creating a culture of retail investment in the UK hopes to change this. By understanding the motivations and financial goals of those who don't currently invest, and how this compares to those that do, our research aims to support industry and policymakers to deliver targeted interventions to encourage more individuals to shift towards investing to build long-term wealth. We believe that the familiarity of the ISA brand can play a key role in this shift.

CHART 1: TOP FIVE REASONS FOR USING A CASH ISA (2026)



Source: The IA & Opinium, what is your motivation for saving into a Cash ISA?
Base: 1,000

However, as ongoing conflict in the Middle East renews inflation fears and cost-of-living pressures, we are operating in an environment where households may prioritise short-term access to savings and investments or the perceived stability of interest on cash over long-term growth. For groups already hesitant about investing, this could further encourage cash first behaviour and raise the bar for feeling ready to invest. Crucially, this means that without stable policy signals and clear support, external shocks could pose a strategic challenge to driving a step-change in our investment culture.

Before looking into the financial goals of savers and investors, we asked both Cash ISA holders and Stocks & Shares ISA holders their top reasons for saving or investing with each type of ISA. By looking first at the motivations behind choosing each wrapper, we are able to set the scene on how saving and investing is viewed, and how people view risk, reward and returns. We found that Cash ISA holders prioritise liquidity and low-risk saving, whilst those using Stocks & Shares ISAs are looking for better long-term returns and inflation-beating growth.

CHART 2: TOP FIVE REASONS FOR USING A STOCKS & SHARES ISA (2026)



Source: The IA & Opinium, what is your motivation for saving into a Stocks & Shares ISA? Base: 651

⁴ HMRC Annual Savings Statistics 2025

⁵ FCA Financial Lives Survey 2024

Charts 1 and 2 compare the motivations of Cash ISA holders and Stocks & Shares ISA holders for using each wrapper. We also asked this question to comparable samples in 2025 and found that the top five responses for both groups have stayed consistent year-on-year. Responses for 2026 showed:



Cash ISAs are primarily used for liquidity and short-term security, with almost half (**46%**) choosing **being able to access the money quickly and easily** as their top reason for using the wrapper.



The second most popular response, chosen by a third (**35%**) of Cash ISA savers, is the **attraction of higher interest rates**. This may become more prominent if the Bank of England raises rates as anticipated in response to US-Israeli attacks on Iran.



The other top drivers for Cash ISA savers are **achieving their primary goal at the lowest level of risk (24%)**, wanting to **avoid investment volatility (23%)** and finding Cash ISAs **easier to understand (18%)**.



In contrast, the top response for over half of Stocks & Shares ISA holders (**54%**) is **achieving better long-term returns** than in a Cash ISA.



Just under a third (**28%**) of investors are **concerned about the impact of rising inflation on cash savings**, another issue which could become more prominent if conflict in the Middle East continues.



The other top drivers of behaviour for Stocks & Shares ISA investors are wanting to **invest in innovative companies tax-efficiently (20%)**, being able to **access the money before retirement (17%)** and **investing in sustainable companies tax-efficiently (13%)**.

These responses suggest that for some, Cash ISAs are seen as a default saving option, particularly in an environment of ongoing cost of living pressures where they may need quick access to savings and greater macro uncertainty. In contrast, Stocks & Shares ISA use shows more intentional engagement, with investors seeking specific types of investment and looking to outpace inflation.

After establishing motivations for choosing either the Stocks & Shares or Cash ISA wrapper, we also looked into the specific savings goals associated with each product.

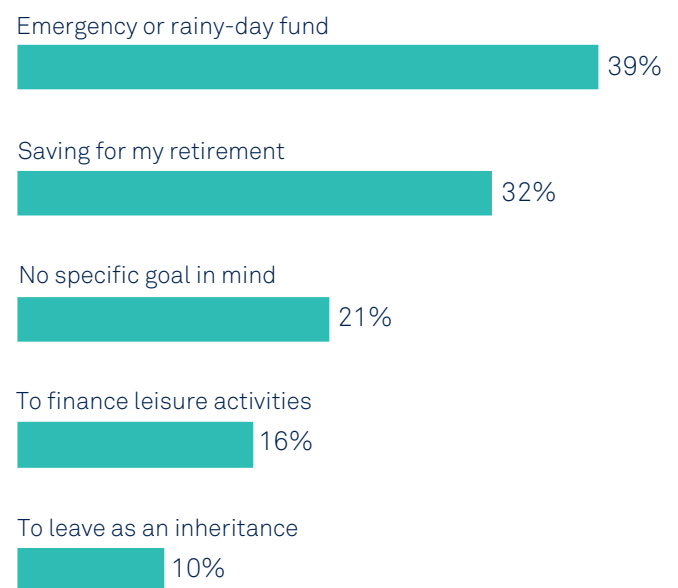
The top motivation for using a Cash ISA (Chart 3) is saving into an emergency or rainy-day fund (39%), a goal in line with the lower-risk, easily accessible nature of cash savings. However, a similar number (32%) are using the product to save for retirement. This is concerning when you consider that over longer time horizons, returns on cash have historically struggled to keep pace with inflation meaning the real value of savings can be significantly eroded. Using a Cash ISA to save for retirement risks leaving individuals materially worse off over the long-term.

The number of people using Cash ISAs to save for retirement increases to almost half (48%) of Gen X, the majority of whom are in their 40s and 50s and who could still reap the benefits of investing over a significant time period before retirement. Concerningly, it also remains high at 1 in 5 (19%) Gen Z, who could have over 40 years to save for their retirement.

These data points underscore the need for clearer, more accessible education and guidance to help people understand the implications of using cash for long-term saving goals such as retirement, and to support more informed decisions about when investing could better align with financial goals.

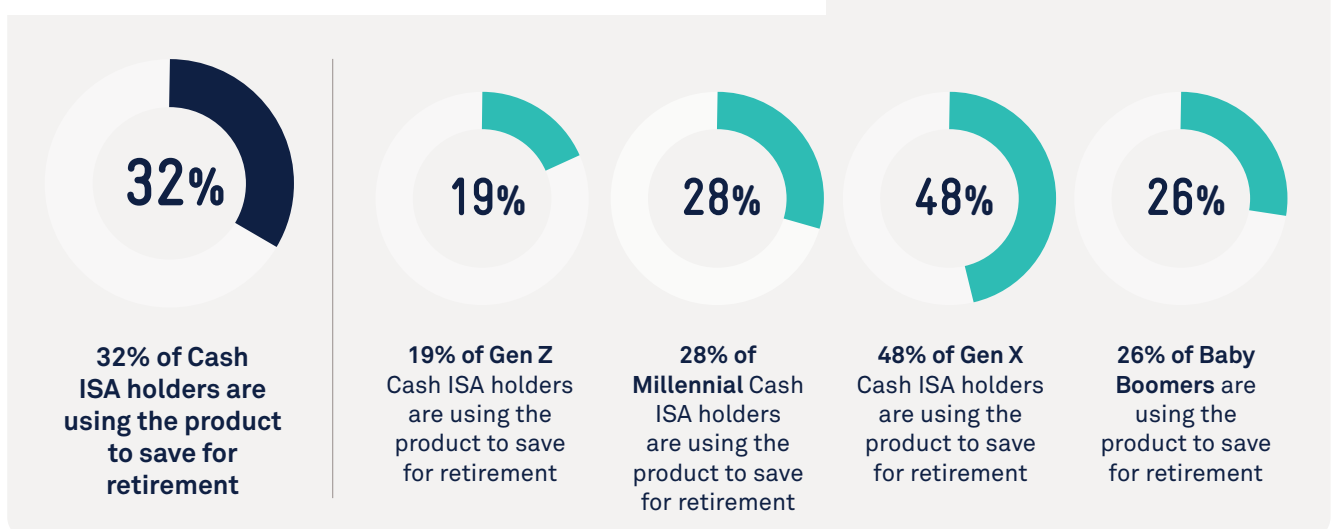
Other significant savings goals for Cash ISA savers include financing leisure activities (16%) and to leave an inheritance (10%), whilst 1 in 5 (21%) have no specific savings goal in mind.

CHART 3: TOP FIVE SAVING GOALS FOR CASH ISA SAVERS (2026)



Source: The IA & Opinium, What are you saving into a Cash ISA for? Base: 1,000

NUMBER OF PEOPLE USING CASH ISAs TO SAVE FOR RETIREMENT

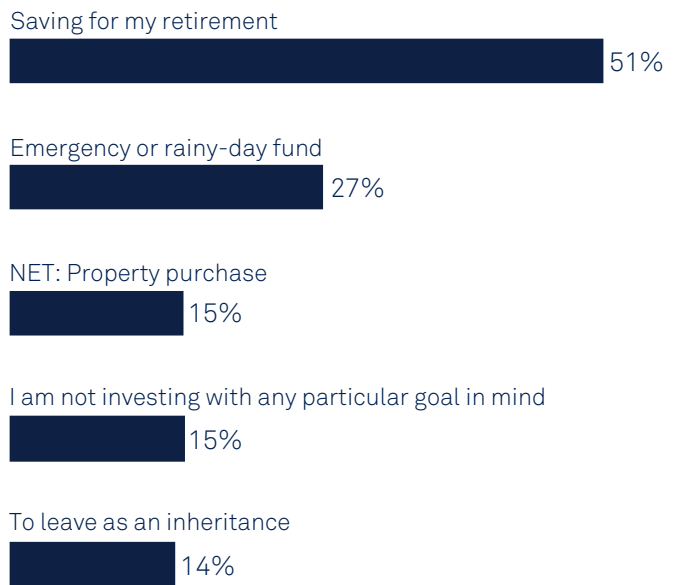


For Stocks & Shares ISA investors (Chart 4), retirement is the primary use case by a significant margin, chosen as the top option by over half of investors (51%). This includes 38% of Gen Z, 54% of Millennials and 69% of Gen X.

However, the second most popular response for over a quarter (27%) is saving for an emergency or rainy-day fund, a goal that is also misaligned with the long-term growth investing aims to achieve. 14% of investors with a Stocks & Shares ISA are saving for property, which rises to 28% amongst Gen Z respondents.

Fewer are investing without a specific goal in mind (15% vs. 21% of Cash ISA savers), suggesting Stocks & Shares ISA use is more intentional.

CHART 4: TOP FIVE SAVING GOALS FOR STOCKS & SHARES ISA INVESTORS (2026)



Source: The IA & Opinium, What is your motivation for saving into a Stocks & Shares ISA? Base: 651

The findings in this section highlight that whilst Cash ISAs remain a familiar and accessible entry point for building savings, their widespread use for longer-term goals reveals an educational gap when it comes to investing. We know from the first report in this year’s ISA Barometer series, ‘Awareness & Understanding of ISAs’ that the ISA wrapper is widely recognised and known across the UK. It has clear potential to act as a gateway between saving and investing, but realising this opportunity will depend on addressing the perceptions and behaviours that keep many savers anchored in cash. In particular, understanding how individuals perceive risk and the barriers they face in taking the first step into investing will be central to unlocking more effective engagement.

PART 2:

UNDERSTANDING RISK & THE BARRIERS TO INVESTING

Over the last 12 months, turbulent geopolitics have consistently made front-page news: from Trump's 'Liberation Day' tariffs, to intense speculation in the run-up to the UK Autumn Budget and recent US-Israeli attacks on Iran, the macroeconomic picture has been volatile.

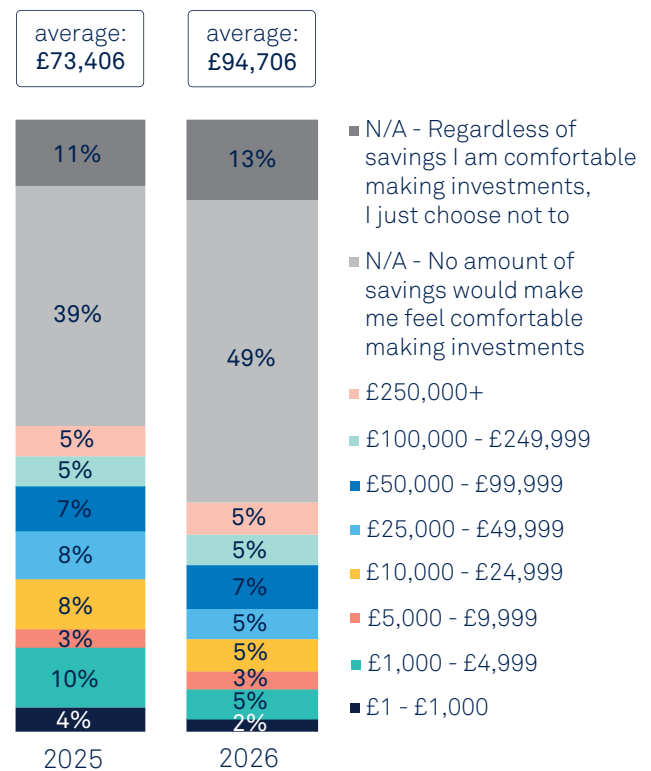
Against this backdrop, amplified concerns about market timing and near-term losses increase the emotional and psychological barriers to investing. For cash savers, this can reinforce a preference for perceived safety and liquidity over long term growth. In this section of our 'Turning Savers into Investors' report, we explore why the financial barrier to investing is so high amongst savers, and consider what risk means to those who are not currently investing.

Last year when we spoke to Cash ISA savers open to the idea of investing, the average savings threshold cited before they would feel comfortable doing so was high at £73,000. As shown in Chart 5, when we asked the same question in this year's survey, this figure increased by 29% to almost £95,000.

Our survey was fielded in the first week of March, coinciding with the outbreak of renewed conflict in the Middle East. Interpreting this year's results, we must therefore factor in the near-term impact of market uncertainty, news about rising energy prices and fear of an inflation shock. However, the common misconception that investing requires significant capital to get started has undoubtedly become further ingrained over the last 12 months. IA research from October 2025 found that just 36% of UK adults agreed with the statement 'investing is for someone like me'.⁶

Saving £95,000 in cash is well beyond the reach of most UK households and far exceeds typical emergency fund guidance. This figure suggests not only that investing is seen as a high-wealth activity, but that the bar is being set unrealistically high as a form of self protection in the face of perceived risk, uncertainty and fear of loss.

CHART 5: AMOUNT CASH SAVERS WOULD NEED TO HAVE SAVED UP TO FEEL COMFORTABLE INVESTING (2025 VS. 2026)



Source: The IA & Opinium, 'How much money, if anything, would you need to have saved up to feel comfortable making investments with your money?'
Base: 407 2025, 495 2026

The overall jump in average savings needed in 2026 is driven both by a decrease in the number of people willing to invest with smaller amounts in savings, and an increase in the number of people who say that no amount of savings would make them comfortable investing.

In 2025, 18% of respondents were willing to invest with less than £10,000 in savings. In 2026, this dropped to 10%. This suggests that even amongst those who are open to investing, macroeconomic uncertainty and market volatility have reinforced caution over the last 12 months. The average required savings threshold also rises with age, reaching £133,000 for Baby Boomers in 2026.

⁶ Consumer Pulse Survey: Budget Season, 2025 (October 2025)

Notably, the number of respondents who said ‘no amount of savings would make me feel comfortable making investments’ has also increased this year, rising from 39% in 2025 to 49% in 2026. So, who are this group of ‘never investors’ and what could be influencing this sentiment?

Those who say ‘no amount of savings would make me feel comfortable making investments’ are disproportionately older, lower income, female and asset poor:



Over half
are Baby Boomers



3 in 5 (60%) are only educated to school or college level

£££ **Over two-thirds** (69%) earn less than £30,000

Two in five



(41%) have less than £24,999 in savings, the smallest savings bracket in our survey

Whilst we don’t have data on the number of retired people in this cohort, less than half (45%) say they are saving into a workplace pension and none hold a SIPP. This corresponds with the higher number of Baby Boomers and suggests a substantial minority could be using their cash savings to fund retirement.

Responses to this question highlight the complexities of ensuring long-term savings adequacy. If savers believe they need almost £95,000 before investing, many will never start. Retirement outcomes are likely to worsen for those groups who may already have lower financial resilience, such as women, renters and lower-income households.

Whilst FCA-based industry guidance recommends having at least £10,000 in cash savings before investing, recent research from Nest Insights focused on investing amongst low- and moderate-income households has made the case that a £2,000 savings threshold could provide a more practical and evidence-based starting point.⁷ Whilst it recognises that building emergency savings should be the immediate priority for a large proportion of people in low- and moderate-income households, the ‘Beyond the Buffer’ report suggests that holding savings at this level is associated with a significantly lower risk of falling into debt, making it an appropriate indicator of short-term financial resilience.

As our research shows, for many people, investing is not viewed as a gradual, long term habit, but instead is seen as something that requires wealth and certainty. The research from Nest Insights points to the potential benefits of a different model of financial behaviour, where saving and investing are not sequential stages but complementary activities that can develop in parallel over time.

More encouragingly, amongst those who don’t currently invest, there is a substantial minority who could be persuaded: just under 2 in 5 (37%) do feel like they could invest once reaching a certain savings threshold. Better education on risk, volatility and challenging the perception that a lot of money is needed to start investing will be critical to bringing this group on board.

Without clearer guidance on what constitutes a sufficient savings buffer and reassurance that investing can begin with smaller amounts, many individuals risk remaining in cash indefinitely, with implications for their long-term financial outcomes.

⁷ Nest Insights, *Beyond the buffer: An assessment of retail investment participation among low- and moderate income households in the UK*, April 2025

WHAT ARE THE MAIN BARRIERS TO INVESTING FOR CASH SAVERS?

In order to understand what holds people back from investing, we asked our sample of Cash ISA holders who don't currently invest what they see as the main barriers to getting started. To build on the analysis shown in Chart 5, in this section we have split responses between those who say they would never invest, and those who say they could invest once they reach a certain savings threshold.

Chart 6 shows that amongst those who could invest, better education around the benefits of investing, improved communication of risk and reward and reinforcing that you can start investing with small amounts of money will be key.

As shown in Chart 6, risk is the top barrier across both groups of Cash ISA holders who don't currently invest, cited by over half (53%) of 'never investors' and 47% of those who would consider investing once they reach a certain savings threshold.

Not understanding enough about investing is also a key concern for both groups, cited by 29% of 'never investors' and a quarter (24%) who could invest once they reach a certain savings threshold.

However, there are two key differences between the groups:

- A lack of interest in investing is the second most popular response amongst 'never investors', chosen by over a third (34%). In contrast, this drops to just 7% amongst those who would consider investing – a positive signal that this cohort could be engaged and would like to find out more.
- Those who would consider investing are more likely to be deterred by competing financial pressures. Just under a third (30%) believe that they don't have enough money to invest compared to 19% of those who would never invest, and a fifth (21%) say they have other financial priorities, compared to just 10% of 'never investors'.

Across responses to this question, we see that for Cash ISA savers who are open to investing, the primary barriers are not a lack of interest but a combination of risk anxiety and a belief that they must first reach a 'safe' level of savings. The data suggests that many people treat investing as something you do only once you feel financially ready and have a large cash buffer,

rather than getting started and building a pot gradually over time.

CHART 6: BARRIERS TO INVESTING FOR CASH SAVERS (2026)



Source: The IA & Opinium, 'Which do you feel are the main barriers for you to start investing, if any?' Base: 245 uncomfortable making investments regardless of money, 184 would invest once a certain amount of savings is reached

This supports the data in the first ISA Barometer Report 'Awareness & Understanding of ISAs' which found that Stocks & Shares ISA use is concentrated amongst those who are more financially resilient, such as homeowners and higher earners. Shifting the behaviour of cash savers will therefore depend on reframing investing as incremental and accessible, and providing practical reassurance that volatility can be managed over time rather than avoided altogether.

WHAT DOES RISK ACTUALLY MEAN TO SAVERS AND INVESTORS?

With risk identified as the top barrier to investing amongst Cash ISA savers who don't currently invest, we wanted to understand what risk means to savers and investors, and whether there are any differences between the two groups. Whilst savers fear losing everything, our research found that investors are more concerned about macroeconomic and geopolitical influences.

In Chart 7, we compare risk perception amongst our investor sample with risk perception amongst Cash ISA savers who don't currently invest because they are worried about risk.

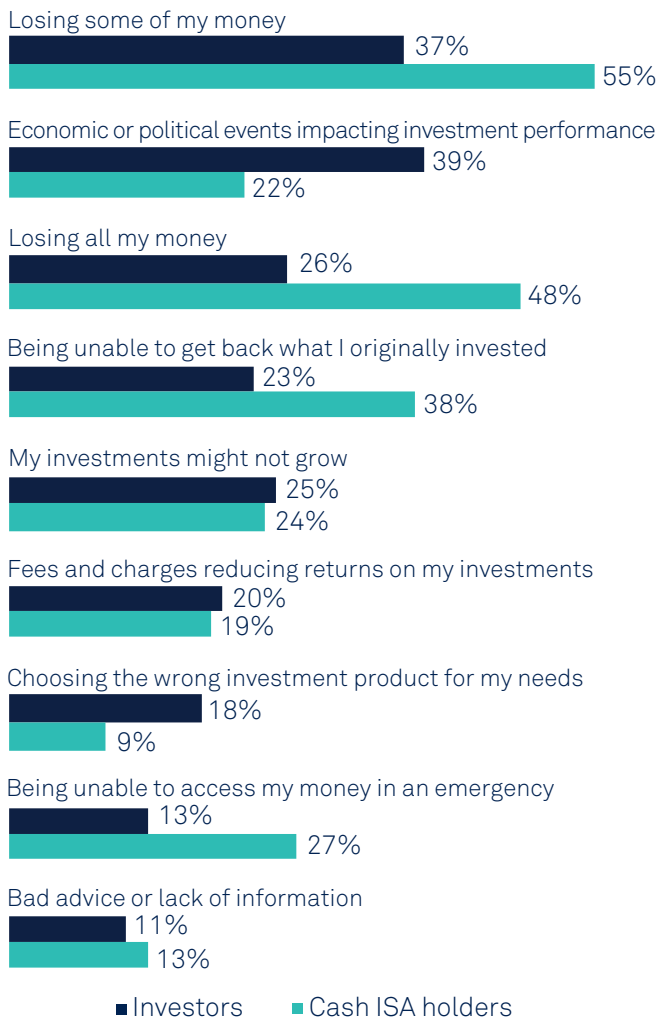
For these Cash ISA savers, the main risks of investing are losing some of their money (55%), losing all of their money (48%), and being unable to get back what they originally invested (38%). Being unable to access their money in an emergency is also a significant concern, cited by over a quarter (27%) of those with a Cash ISA compared to just 13% of investors.

In contrast, investors are almost twice as concerned about economic or political events impacting investment performance (39% compared to 22%). Losing some of their money comes in a close second at 37%, but this is significantly lower than the 55% of Cash ISA savers who fear the same thing. In addition, the number of investors concerned about losing all their money is significantly lower (48% vs. 26%).

Looking in more detail at our investor demographic:

- Older investors are more concerned about economic or political events impacting investment performance: responses rise to 48% of Baby Boomers compared to 33% of Gen Z. This could be linked to potentially shorter time horizons increasing volatility risk for those who are nearing retirement or who are already in the decumulation phase.
- More experienced investors and those with a higher value investment portfolio express greater concern about economic or political events impacting investment performance: 45% of those who have been investing for longer than 12 years and 56% of those who have invested over £250,000 cite geopolitical risk as a top barrier.

CHART 7: WHAT DOES RISK MEAN TO INVESTORS AND CASH ISA SAVERS? (2026)



Source: The IA & Opinium, 'Which do you think are the main risks of investing for you, if any?' Base: Cash ISA holders who don't invest because they are worried about the risk 239, Investors 1,000

- In contrast, those with less investment experience are more concerned about losing everything – this rises to 40% of those who have been investing for less than 12 months, suggested this group are less accustomed to the ups and downs of markets.

For investors, as we face into an uncertain era of geopolitics, it will be important to reassure on the value of staying invested. For Cash ISA savers who don't currently invest, education to contextualise volatility and address fears of total loss, alongside explaining the erosive impact of inflation on cash savings will be key.

THE IMPACT OF THE RISK WARNINGS REVIEW

Contextualising risk has been a key pillar of government and industry reform of retail investing. In July 2025, the Chancellor commissioned *The Risk Warnings Review* as part of the Leeds Reforms to assess how risk is communicated on retail investment products and the impact this has on how consumers engage with investing.

Its ambition was to reframe generic risk warnings – such as ‘capital at risk’ – to provide potential investors with more balanced, contextualised information on both the risks and long-term benefits of investing. It found that standardised, loss-focused warnings have become a compliance default rather than a tool for understanding and are often misunderstood in ways that amplify fear of loss and deter appropriate long-term investing. Research conducted by The Wisdom Council for the Risk Warnings Review echoes our ISA Barometer findings: when presented with “capital at risk”, almost 2 in 5 (38%) savers and investors thought they could lose everything, and 3 in 5 (59%) took away the message that investing is risky.⁸

Consumers often overestimate the downside risks of investing and underestimate the long term risks of holding cash. We know that over time, cash is exposed to the eroding impact of inflation whilst investment is likely to deliver better long-term returns. Shifting behaviour will require communication that helps consumers to calibrate risk realistically, including the fact that investing can rise and fall, but also that over long horizons it can better support long-term growth than cash.



⁸ The IA & The Wisdom Council, *Testing Alternatives to Capital at Risk*, January 2026

The research in this section highlights that the barrier to investing is less about an inherent aversion to risk, and more about how risk is understood and framed. A significant proportion are open to the idea of investing but remain held back by fear of loss and a belief that they must first reach a high savings threshold before being able to start investing. With clearer communication that normalises investing as a gradual, manageable step, alongside better support to help savers understand risk, volatility and how investing can sit alongside short-term financial needs, a significant proportion of cash savers may be more willing to consider investing than headline figures initially suggest.

PART 3:

ISA CONTRIBUTION PATTERNS

Data from the Bank of England shows a significant uptick in the amount of cash flowing into Cash ISAs from September 2022 onwards. Between September 2022 and February 2026, over £168 billion has been saved into Cash ISA accounts.¹⁰ Whilst rising interest rates following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine – which peaked at 5.25% in May 2024 – will have been a significant influence on behaviour, as interest rates have dropped down to 3.75% in the months since, cash inflows have remained elevated. In contrast, IA fund flow data shows that £2.3 billion was withdrawn from investment funds over 2025.¹¹

In this section, we look at how contribution patterns and saving habits differ across different ISA wrappers, what this means for our ambition to encourage more people to start investing, and how the ISA brand can play a role in achieving this goal.

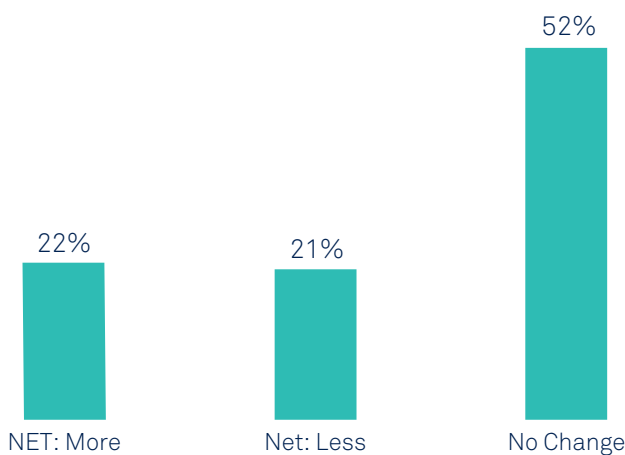
Before asking respondents how much they contributed to their ISA over the 2025-26 tax year, we first probed on whether Cash ISA holders (Chart 8) and Stocks & Shares ISA holders (Chart 9) maintained, increased or decreased their ISA contributions over the 12-month period compared.

Whilst the majority in each group say they made no change to their contribution level, just over a quarter (27%) of those with a Stocks & Shares ISA said they increased their contributions over the tax year compared to 22% of those with a Cash ISA. There is also a slightly higher number of Cash ISA savers (21%) who contributed less compared to Stocks & Shares ISA investors (16%). This could be consistent with concerns about cost-of-living pressures, particularly in light of recent conflict in the Middle East and competing short-term demands on cash.

Encouragingly, younger generations with Cash ISAs and Stocks & Shares ISAs say they contributed more over the 2025-26 tax year compared to the 2024-25 tax year: 42% of Gen Z with a Cash ISA and 66% with a Stocks & Shares ISA say that they increased their annual contributions.

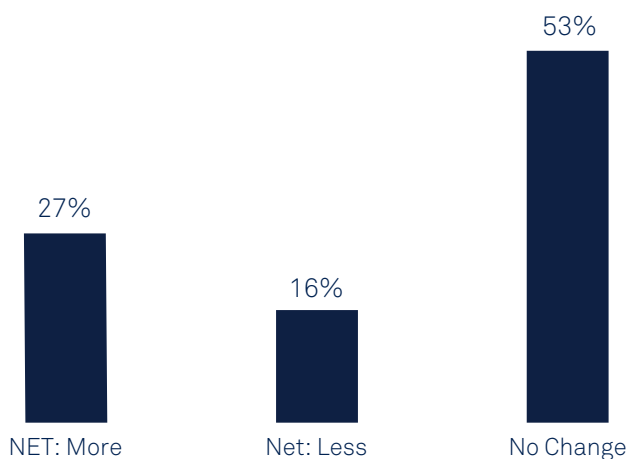
Overall, the fact that the majority of respondents for both Cash and Stocks & Shares ISAs kept their contributions equal year-on-year is encouraging given the external headwinds at play.

CHART 8: DID PEOPLE CONTRIBUTE MORE OR LESS TO THEIR CASH ISAS IN THE 2025-26 TAX YEAR? (2026)



Source: The IA & Opinium, By the end of the current financial year from April 2025 to April 2026, will you have saved more or less through a Cash ISA than in the previous financial year 2024/2025? If you’ve only just started investing in a Cash ISA in this financial year (April 2025 to April 2026) select N/A. Base: 1,000 Cash ISA holders

CHART 9: DID PEOPLE CONTRIBUTE MORE OR LESS TO THEIR STOCKS & SHARES ISAS IN THE 2025-26 TAX YEAR? (2026)



Source: The IA & Opinium, By the end of the current financial year from April 2025 to April 2026, will you have saved more or less through a Stocks & Shares ISA than in the previous financial year 2024/2025? If you’ve only just started investing in a Stocks & Shares ISA in this financial year (April 2025 to April 2026) select N/A. Base: 651 Stocks & Shares ISA holders

¹⁰ Bank of England, *Monthly changes of monetary financial institutions’ sterling Cash ISA deposits from household sector, seasonally adjusted*
¹¹ *IA Fund Flow Data, December 2025*

AVERAGE ANNUAL ISA CONTRIBUTIONS

Whilst Charts 8 and 9 show that those with a Stocks & Shares ISA are more likely to say they contributed more to their ISA than those with a Cash ISA over the 2025-26 tax year, when we ask people to estimate how much they actually contributed (Chart 10) we see the opposite:

- The average **Cash ISA contribution** for the 2025-26 tax year was **£8,977**
- The average **Stocks & Shares ISA contribution** for the 2025-26 tax year was **£8,267**

Average contributions to Cash ISAs have increased substantially year-on-year by £1,642 to £8,977, whilst we have seen a slight fall in average Stocks & Shares ISA contributions from £8,695 to £8,267 for investors.

This differs from our 2025 research, which showed Stocks & Shares ISA contributions outpacing Cash ISA

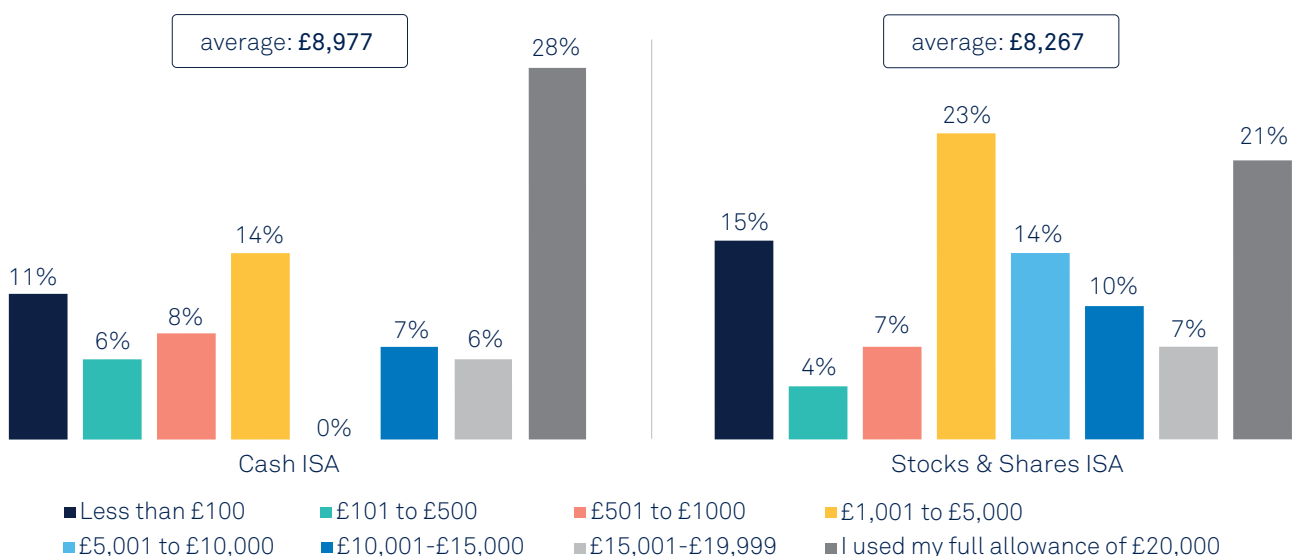
contributions. The average investment into a Stocks & Shares ISA in 2024/25 was £8,695 whilst Cash ISA contributions stood at £7,335.

We have several years of historic data on Stocks & Shares ISA contributions which allows us to track the rise and fall of money into the wrapper. Contributions rose by 23% between 2023/24 and 2024/25 as markets stabilised post-covid and following the initial shock of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Between 2024/25 and 2025/26, Stocks & Shares ISA contributions decreased by 5%.

The slight drop in average Stocks & Shares ISA contributions over the last 12 months whilst average Cash ISA contributions increased could in part be the result of the confirmed reduction in the Cash ISA allowance to £12,000 for under-65s in 2027. Those who use Cash ISAs could be taking advantage of their last year with a higher allowance. Greater geopolitical uncertainty over the last 12 months might also have prompted people to liquidate some of their savings into cash.

Chart 10 also highlights that relatively few people used the full ISA allowance of £20,000 in the 2025-26 tax year. Just under a third (28%) of those with a Cash ISA and a fifth (21%) of those with a Stocks & Shares ISA saved £20,000 into the wrapper.

CHART 10: CONTRIBUTION AMOUNTS TO CASH ISAS AND STOCKS & SHARES ISAS (2025-26 TAX YEAR)



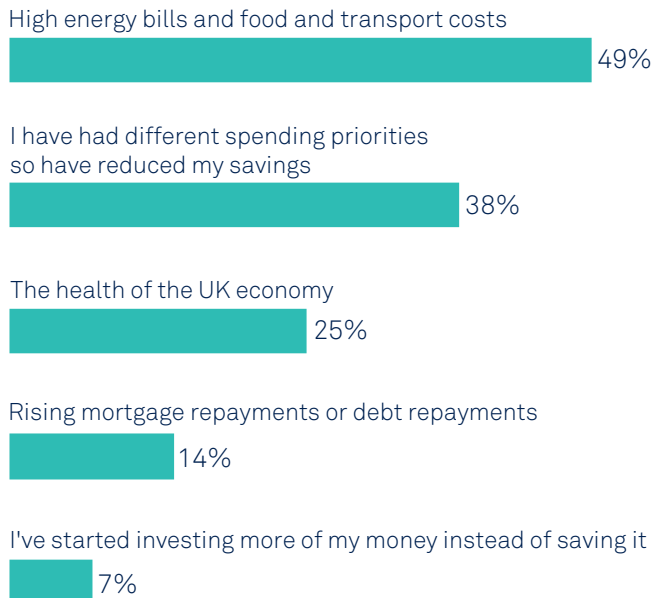
Source: The IA & Opinium, How much have you invested into your Stocks & Shares ISA over the 2025-26 tax year? If you don't know for sure, give your best estimate. Base: 651 & How much have you invested into your Stocks & Shares ISA over the 2025-26 tax year? If you don't know for sure, give your best estimate. Base: 1,000

WHAT INFLUENCED ISA CONTRIBUTIONS OVER THE 2025-26 TAX YEAR?

As we will see below in Charts 11 and 12, for those contributing less to either a Cash ISA or a Stocks & Shares ISA in the 2025-26 tax year, cost-of-living pressures are top of mind. High energy bills, food and transport costs were the top reason for both Cash ISA holders (49%) and Stocks & Shares ISA holders (30%) contributing less into their ISAs in the 2025-26 tax year.

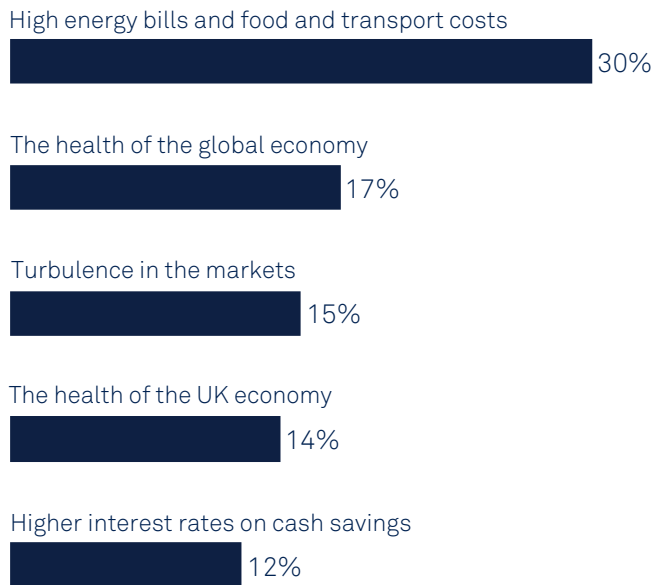
Cost-of-living pressures are a more significant influence for Cash ISA savers (49%) compared to those saving less into a Stocks & Shares ISA (30%). This could suggest why, as we saw in Chart 8 and 9, those with a Cash ISA were more likely to say they saved less over the tax year than Stocks & Shares ISA investors.

CHART 11: REASONS FOR SAVING LESS INTO A CASH ISA OVER THE 2025-26 TAX YEAR



Source: The IA & Opinium, You said you have been investing less into your Cash ISA this year, compared to the previous. Why is this the case? Base: 211

CHART 12: REASONS FOR SAVING LESS INTO A STOCKS & SHARES ISA OVER THE 2025-26 TAX YEAR (2026)



Source: The IA & Opinium, You said you have been investing less into your Stocks & Shares ISA this year, compared to the previous. Why is this the case? Base: 106

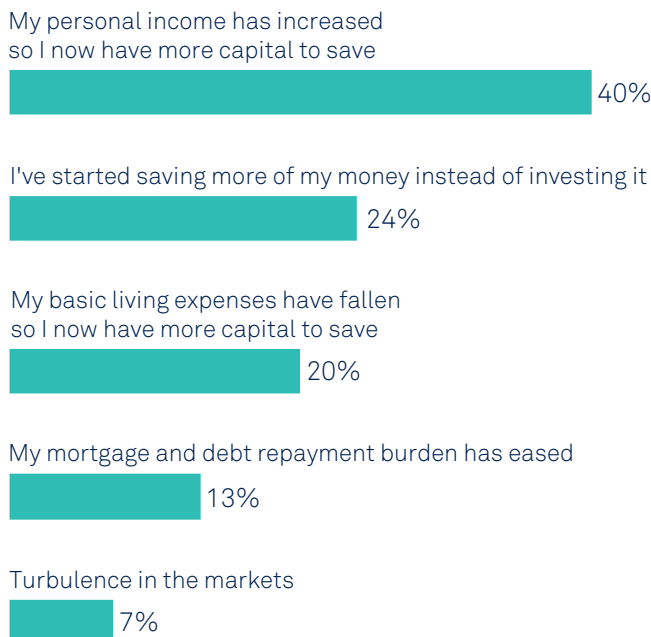
Looking in more detail at Charts 11 and 12, beyond the topline pressure of high energy bills, food and transport costs, we can see that contributing less is driven by financial pressure for cash savers but by risk assessment and uncertainty for investors.

Almost 2 in 5 (38%) Cash ISA holders say they are saving less due to different spending priorities, and 14% cite rising mortgage or debt repayments. A quarter of Cash ISA savers have contributed less due to concerns about the health of the UK economy – up from 18% in 2025.

For those with a Stocks & Shares ISA, the health of the global economy (17%) and turbulence in the markets (15%) are the second and third biggest influences on decreasing contributions. In our 2025 survey, the top reason for investing less into a Stocks & Shares ISA was higher interest rates on cash savings (23%), which coincides with the steady decline in Bank of England interest rates from a peak of 5.25% in June 2024. High interest rates were a factor for just 12% of Stocks & Shares ISA holders this year.

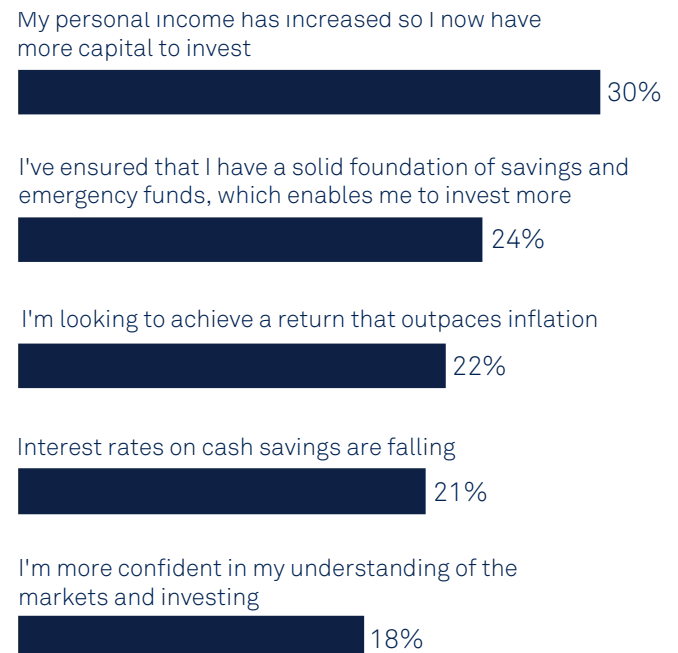
Charts 13 and 14 examine the influences driving those who said they saved more into a Cash ISA or invested more into a Stocks & Shares ISA over the 2025-26 tax year. For both ISA savers and investors, the ability to put more money away over the 2025-26 tax year was tied to increased financial capacity, with rising personal income the top response for both groups. It was cited by 40% of Cash ISA savers and 30% of those with a Stocks & Shares ISA. This was also the top result for both groups in our 2025 survey.

CHART 13: REASONS FOR SAVING MORE INTO A CASH ISA OVER THE 2025-26 TAX YEAR



Source: The IA & Opinium, You said you have been investing more into your Cash ISA this year, compared to the previous. Why is this the case? Base: 220

CHART 14: REASONS FOR INVESTING MORE INTO A STOCKS & SHARES ISA (2026) OVER THE 2025-26 TAX YEAR



Source: The IA & Opinium, You said you have been investing more into your Stocks & Shares ISA this year, compared to the previous. Why is this the case? Base: 178

Notably, the second most popular response for those saving more into a Cash ISA was that they were saving more of their money rather than investing it (24%). This didn't rank in the top five responses last year, suggesting that external geopolitical headwinds have pushed more towards cash. Market turbulence was also cited as a driver for increasing Cash ISA contributions by 7% of respondents.

Other top reasons for increasing Cash ISA contributions were a fall in basic living expenses (20%) and an easing of mortgage and debt repayments (13%).

Those investing more in a Stocks & Shares ISA over the 2025-26 tax year were driven by more intentional behaviour: encouragingly, a quarter (24%) built up a solid foundation of savings and emergency funds and a fifth (22%) were looking to beat inflation. The other top reasons for saving more for Stocks & Shares ISA

investors is falling interest rates on cash savings (21%) and greater confidence in understanding markets and investing (18%).

Asking people to think about their contributions over the next tax year, encouragingly, the majority with either a Cash ISA (45%) or a Stocks & Shares ISA (49%) expect to maintain their saving and investment levels. A fifth (21%) of Cash ISA savers responded, 'I don't know yet', compared to 12% of investors, suggesting cash savers could be more concerned about competing short-term demands on cash if inflation rises and threats to global energy supply continue.

However, the conviction that a significant number of both Cash ISA savers and Stocks & Shares ISA investors plan to maintain their ISA contributions is encouraging given the backdrop of macroeconomic uncertainty of this year's survey.

The data in this section shows that contributions to Cash ISAs have increased materially year-on-year whilst Stocks & Shares ISA contributions have slowed slightly, reflecting a shift towards liquidity and lower-risk behaviour amidst cost of living pressures and geopolitical uncertainty. However, underlying behaviours remain resilient, with many maintaining or increasing contributions despite external pressures. This reflects the strength of the ISA wrapper as a tool for building consistent savings and investments. By encouraging regular saving within a tax-efficient structure, we believe that ISAs could create the conditions for gradual progression from cash into investment, supporting longer-term engagement and helping to embed a more investment-oriented culture over time.

PART 4:

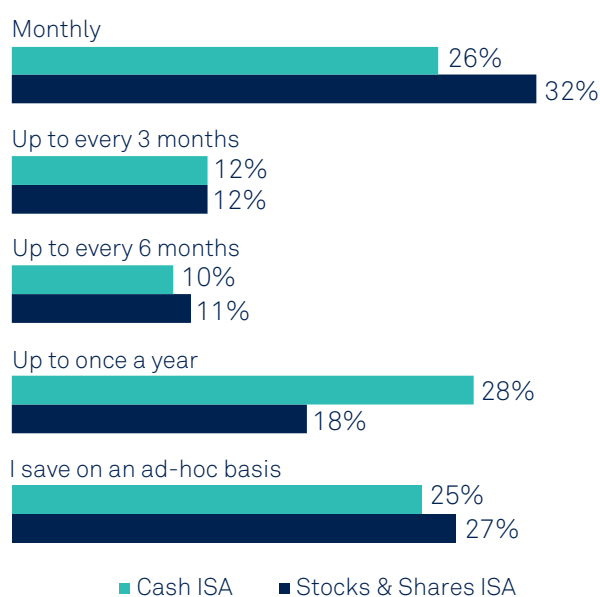
DO CASH ISA SAVERS AND STOCKS & SHARES ISA INVESTORS HAVE DIFFERENT FINANCIAL HABITS?

To build a nation of investors in the UK, it is important to understand not just what products people use, but how they use them. Saving and investing habits, planning horizons and the mechanisms people use to put money aside all influence long-term financial outcomes.

In this section, we explore whether savers and investors have different financial habits when it comes to their ISAs. We look at how frequently people contribute to Cash ISAs and Stocks & Shares ISAs, what prompts them to do so and how these behaviours vary across different products and demographics.

First, we asked both Cash ISA holders and Stocks & Shares ISA holders how often they contribute to their ISA. Looking at the frequency of contributions shown in Chart 15, we can see that Stocks & Shares ISA investors are more likely to save regularly into their ISA, with a third (32%) making monthly contributions compared to a quarter (26%) of Cash ISA savers.

CHART 15: HOW OFTEN DO YOU PAY INTO YOUR ISA? (2026)



Outside of this core group, however, investment regularity drops, with 12% contributing to a Stocks & Shares ISA every three months, on par with Cash ISA contributions, and 11% doing so every six months, compared to 10% of Cash ISA holders.

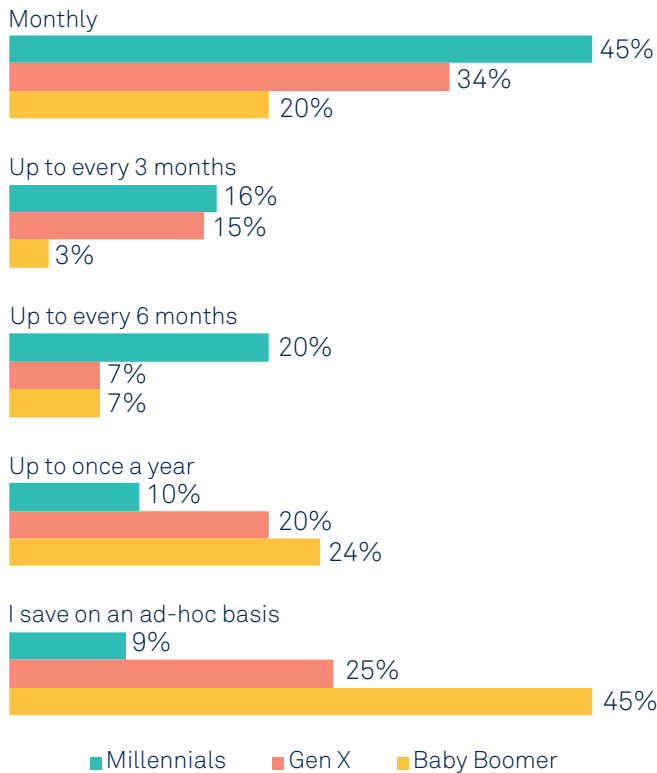
A fifth (18%) are contributing to their Stocks & Shares ISA once a year, whilst just over a quarter (27%) do so on an ad-hoc basis. Those with a Cash ISA are more likely to contribute annually (28% vs. 18%) and a quarter (25%) contribute to their Cash ISA on an ad-hoc basis.

Looking at this headline data, behaviour seems similar across the two products. However, when we look at generational responses to this question some significant differences emerge.

As shown in Chart 16, which looks at the regularity of Stocks & Shares ISA contributions by generation, younger generations tend to be more regular investors, whilst Baby Boomers are the least likely to contribute to their Stocks & Shares ISA on a regular basis. Whilst we have not included responses from Gen Z in Chart 16 due to a small sample size in response to this question, indicative data suggests that almost half of Gen Z (47%) are contributing to their Stocks & Shares ISA monthly, on par with responses from Millennials (45%). This compares to just 1 in 5 (20%) Baby Boomers.

Source: The IA & Opinium, 'On average, how often do you pay into your Cash ISA?' Base: 1,000 'On average, how often do you make an investment into your Stocks & Shares ISA?' Base: 651

CHART 16: HOW OFTEN DO YOU PAY INTO YOUR ISA? (2026)



Source: The IA & Opinium, 'On average, how often do you make an investment into your Stocks & Shares ISA?' Base: Millennial 188, Gen X 186, Baby Boomer 229*

Millennials are also the most likely to be contributing to their Stocks & Shares ISA every three months (16%) and every six months (20%), higher than both Gen X and Baby Boomer cohorts.

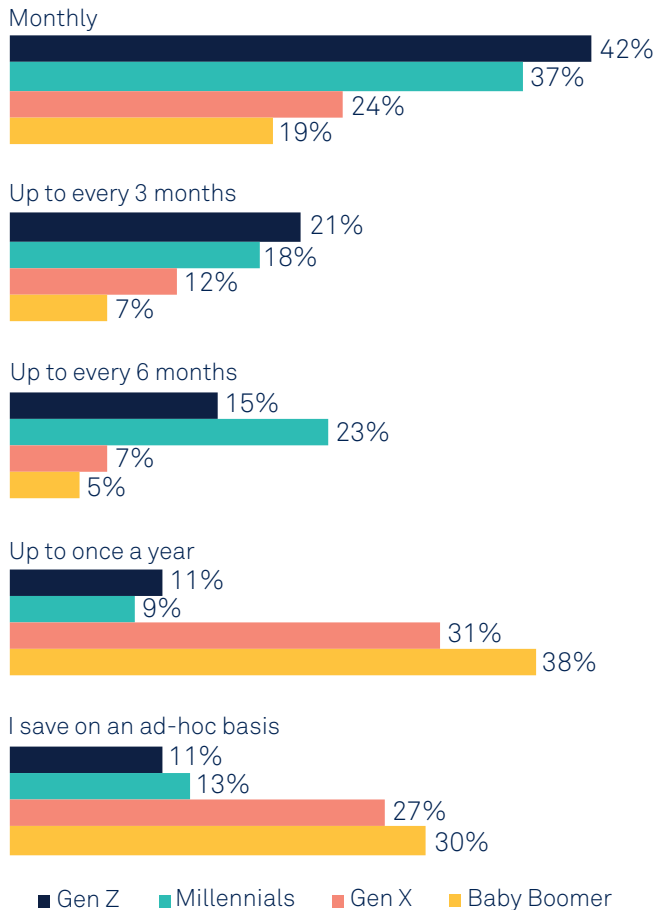
Baby Boomers stand out as the most ad hoc investors and are the most likely to only invest once per year. A quarter (24%) of Baby Boomers and a fifth (20%) of Gen X invest into a Stocks & Shares ISA annually, compared to just 10% of Millennials. Almost half (45%) of Baby Boomers say that they save on an ad-hoc basis, compared to 9% of Millennials.

Younger investors are more likely to be earning an income than those in the Baby Boomer generation who might be retired, putting Gen Z and Millennials in a position to make more regular contributions to their ISAs. These younger cohorts are also more likely to use platform-based regular investing, automated contributions, or payroll-linked budgeting. For older investors, particularly those who are no longer working, contributions could be more closely tied to tax planning or portfolio rebalancing.

We also know from the FCA Financial Lives survey that the semi-retired and those aged 55+ are amongst the most likely to have received regulated financial advice – suggesting that the lower frequency investments we see amongst Gen X and Baby Boomers could be a function of advice models, as more structured, periodic investing replaces the regular, habit-driven contributions seen with younger cohorts.¹²

¹² FCA Financial Lives 2024, *Financial Advice & Support*, May 2025

CHART 17: HOW OFTEN DO DIFFERENT GENERATIONS PAY INTO A CASH ISA? (2026)



Source: The IA & Opinium, 'On average, how often do you make an investment into your Cash ISA?' Base: Gen Z 53, Millennial 218, Gen X 296, Baby Boomer 382

Looking at the demographic data on Cash ISAs tells a similar generational story. Chart 17 shows that younger savers are putting money away more regularly into a Cash ISA whilst older cohorts tend to save either annually or on an ad-hoc basis. Our sample of Cash ISA holders included a higher number of Gen Z respondents, so we have been able to include their answers in Chart 17.

Over 2 in 5 Gen Z (42%) and 37% of Millennials make a monthly contribution to their Cash ISA, compared to 24% of Gen X and 19% of Baby Boomers. In contrast, 38% of Baby Boomers and 31% of Gen X are contributing to a Cash ISA once a year, which drops to 11% of Gen Z and 9% of Millennials.

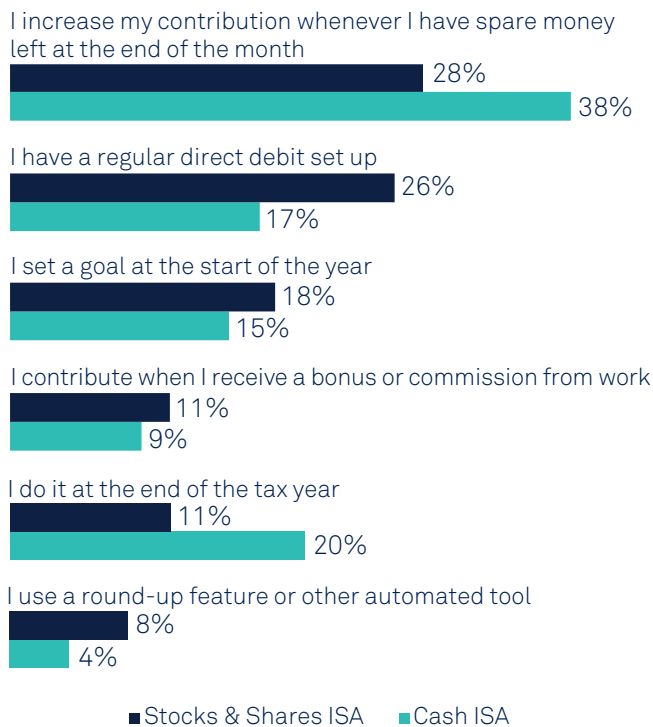
Mimicking the pattern we saw with Stocks & Shares ISAs, older generations are also the most likely to make contributions on an ad-hoc basis, at 30% of Baby Boomers and 27% of Gen X, compared to 13% of Millennials and 11% of Gen Z.

WHAT PROMPTS PEOPLE TO SAVE OR INVEST INTO THEIR ISA?

We also asked both Cash ISA savers and Stocks & Shares ISA investors how they save into their ISAs – for example, do they have automated mechanisms in place, or do they contribute in response to a financial milestone or life event?

As we see in Chart 18, amongst both those with a Cash ISA and those with a Stocks & Shares ISA, the top response is to increase their contribution whenever they have spare money left at the end of the month, cited by almost 2 in 5 (38%) Cash ISA savers and just over a quarter (28%) of those with a Stocks & Shares ISA. However, this response is ten percentage points higher amongst cash savers, suggesting that Stocks & Shares ISA saving could be more intentional.

CHART 18: SAVING MECHANISMS FOR CASH ISAS & STOCKS & SHARES ISAS



Source: The IA & Opinium, 'How do you typically save into your Cash ISA / Stocks & Shares ISA?' Base: 1,000 Cash ISA holders, 652 Stocks & Shares ISA holders

In contrast, a quarter of Stocks & Shares ISA investors have a regular direct debit set up (26%), compared to less than a fifth (17%) of Cash ISA holders. Stocks & Shares ISA investors are also slightly more likely to set a goal at the start of the year than those with a Cash ISA (18% vs. 15%).

This suggests that Cash ISA saving is more opportunistic and timing driven: whilst a higher number (38%) make contributions with spare money at the end of the month, a fifth (20%) are focused on tax-year end. Cash ISA contributions are almost twice as likely to be made at tax-year end than Stocks & Shares ISA contributions (20% vs. 11%). Looking at Stocks & Shares ISAs, investors are twice as likely to use a roundup feature or automated tool (8% vs. 4%).

Similar to the saving and investing habits shown in Charts 16 and 17, younger savers and investors are more likely to have a direct debit set up (36% of Gen Z with a Cash ISA and 28% with a Stocks & Shares ISA) and set a goal at the start of the year (26% of Gen Z with a Cash ISA and 34% with a Stocks & Shares ISA).

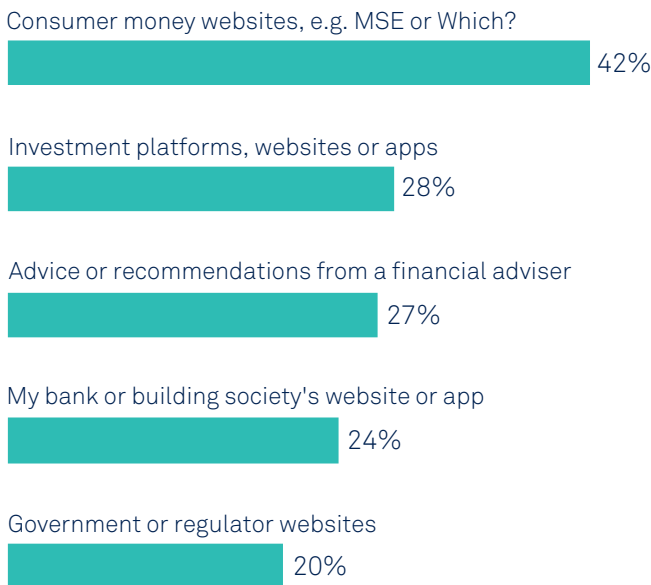
WHERE WOULD CASH ISA AND STOCKS & SHARES ISA HOLDERS GO TO FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT INVESTING?

To find out more about how financial habits and motivations might be formed, we also asked Cash ISA holders and Stocks & Shares ISA holders where they would go if they wanted to find out more information about investing. Charts 19 and 20 compare the top five responses from each group.

In particular, understanding how and where Cash ISA savers seek information will be critical to supporting engagement and helping more individuals take the next step into investing, ensuring that guidance is accessible, relevant and aligned with existing behaviours. Therefore, we have also looked in detail at responses from Cash ISA savers by generation, shown in Chart 21.

For those with a Cash ISA, using consumer money websites such as Which? or Money Saving Expert was the top response by a significant margin, cited by just over 2 in 5 (42%) respondents. This was followed by 28% who would look at investment platforms, websites

CHART 19: TOP FIVE PLACES CASH ISA HOLDERS WOULD GO FOR INFORMATION ABOUT INVESTING



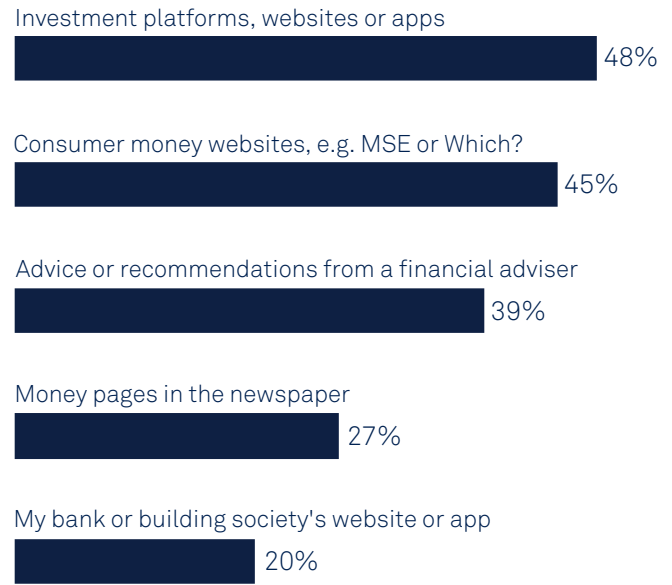
Source: The IA & Opinium, If you wanted to learn more about investing, where would you be likely to go for information? Base: 1,000 Cash ISA Holders

or apps and 27% who would seek recommendations from a financial adviser. However, given 1 in 4 (25%) of those who selected this option have under £100,000 in savings, it's likely they are unaware of the cost and minimum asset threshold typically needed for paid financial advice. According to the most recent FCA Financial Lives Survey (2024), just 9% of adults had received regulated financial advice in the last 12 months.¹³

In addition, a quarter (24%) of those with a Cash ISA would look on their bank or building society's website or app, and 1 in 5 (20%) would turn to government or regulator websites.

Looking at responses for Stocks & Shares ISA holders, four of the top five answers are the same as Cash ISA holders. However, responses are much more closely grouped together for the top three options: 48% of Stocks & Shares ISA holders would look at investment platforms, websites or apps, 45% would

CHART 20: TOP FIVE PLACES STOCKS & SHARES ISA HOLDERS WOULD GO FOR INFORMATION ABOUT INVESTING



Source: The IA & Opinium, If you wanted to learn more about investing, where would you be likely to go for information? Base: 651 Stocks & Shares ISA Holders

use consumer money websites such as Which? or Money Saving Expert, and 39% would take advice or recommendations from a financial adviser.

The key difference between the two groups is that whilst 20% of those with a Cash ISA would turn to government or regulator websites, just over a quarter (27%) of ISA investors would look at money pages in the newspaper. Investors are also slightly less likely to turn to their bank or building society than Cash ISA savers (24% vs. 20%).

Whilst responses to our survey question focused on curated information options, Nest Insights research into investors in low- and moderate-income households found that amongst those who did seek information about investing, online searches were the most common route. Just under a third (30%) of investors in low- and moderate-income households and 37% of investors in higher-income households used Google searches as a source of information.

¹³ FCA Financial Lives Survey 2024

More significant differences emerged in the use of more formal information channels such as those explored in our ISA Barometer research: investors in higher-income households were far more likely to use private-sector advice websites (30% vs 18%), online investment platforms (28% vs 13%), and company or investment websites (both 24% vs 13%), and were also more likely to consult traditional media and financial professionals.¹⁴

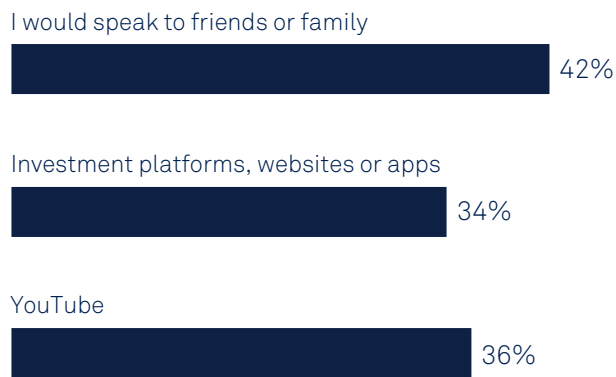
Viewed alongside our data, the Nest Insights findings reinforce how differences in investment behaviour are closely linked to access, confidence and financial capacity, underlining the importance of providing accessible, trusted and lower-barrier information if more cash savers are to progress along the ISA journey into investing.

Thinking more specifically about how we can support more Cash ISA savers into investing, we have also looked at responses from Cash ISA holders by generation. The data in Chart 21 helps us understand how we can target different demographic groups who could be in a position to take the first step on their investment journey.

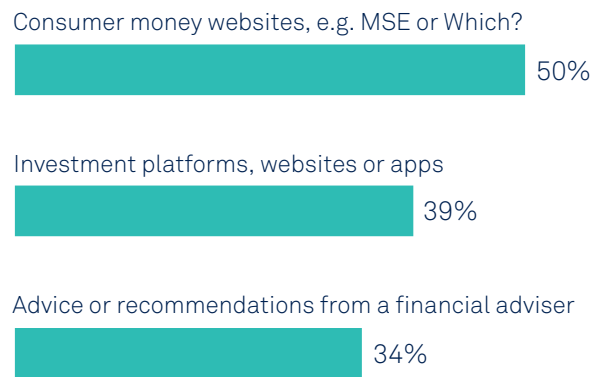
For Gen Z Cash ISA holders, the top information sources about investing differ from the wider sample: over 2 in 5 (42%) would speak to friends and family, a third (34%) would look at investment websites and apps, and 36% would turn to YouTube. It's also worth noting that amongst this cohort, 30% would turn to Chat-GPT or AI for information about investing, double the amount of any other generation (followed by 14%

CHART 21: TOP THREE PLACES SAVERS WOULD GO FOR INFORMATION ABOUT INVESTING BY GENERATION (2026)

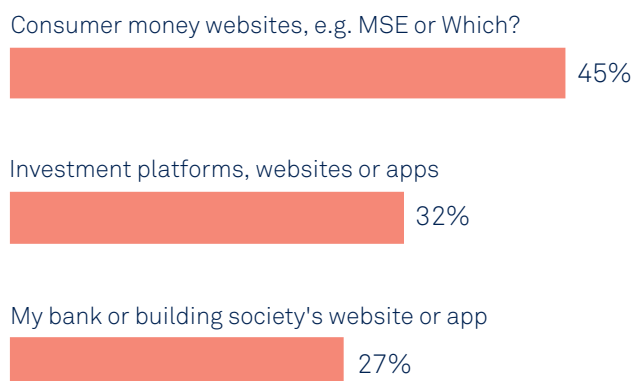
Gen Z



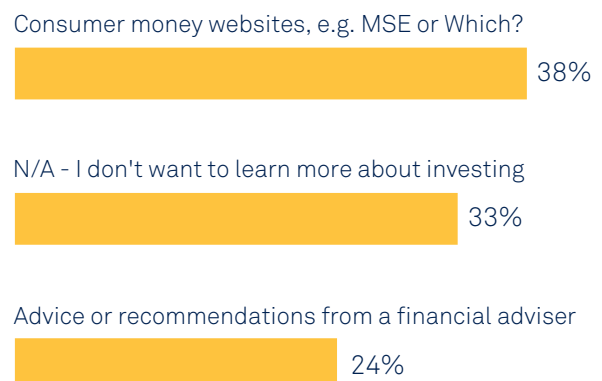
Millennial



Gen X



Baby Boomer



¹⁴ Nest Insights, *Beyond the Buffer: An assessment of retail investment participation among low- and moderate income households in the UK*, April 2025

of Millennials). Over a fifth (23%) would use social media, again significantly higher than any other cohort (followed by 12% of Millennials).

In contrast, older generations follow more traditional routes. Millennials favour consumer money websites (50%), investment platforms (39%) and financial advice (34%). Whilst Gen X are also most likely to turn to consumer money websites (45%) and investment platforms (32%), banks and building societies are a more valued information source (27%) for those cohort.

A third (33%) of Baby Boomers responded that they don't want to learn more about investing. This is consistent with earlier findings about reluctance to invest amongst older generations. Sentiment towards this statement is also stronger amongst those earning

less than £30,000 (28%) and those only educated to school or college level (31%) – again, matching the demographic profile of those who said that no amount of money would make them feel comfortable investing identified in Part 2 of this report.

We can see that information-seeking behaviour is strongly shaped by age, confidence and familiarity with different platforms and mediums. Younger savers more likely to rely on peer networks, digital platforms and emerging technologies, while older cohorts gravitate towards established and trusted sources – or disengage entirely. This fragmentation reinforces the need for a multi channel approach to investor education, combining credible, accessible information in traditional settings with clear, engaging content delivered through the platforms and formats people already use.

'INVEST FOR THE FUTURE' CAMPAIGN

April 2026 saw the launch of the 'Invest for the Future' campaign in the UK, aiming to make investing feel more relevant, accessible and something that millions more people can see themselves doing.

Backed by 20 of the UK's leading financial services firms with support from HM Treasury, the Financial Conduct Authority and the Money and Pensions Service, the 'Invest for the Future' campaign, announced by the Chancellor as part of the Leeds Reforms, is the first coordinated industry wide effort to drive a step change in how investing is understood, discussed and adopted.

The campaign aims to help shift long-standing perceptions and support more people in seeing investing as something for them. By breaking financial goals down into achievable steps, the campaign positions investing as a progression rather than a leap - helping people build to confidence over time.

Bringing this to life is Savvy the Squirrel, a distinctive and relatable character inspired by the familiar idea of 'squirrelling money away'. Representing someone who has already taken that next step, Savvy offers a calm, long-term view of money and aims to make investing easier to engage with.

Research carried out for the campaign found that 44% of people with savings but no investments – some 10.1 million people in the UK - say they want to learn more.

Sitting alongside a range of reforms and initiatives including the Risk Warnings Review and Targeted Support, 'Invest for the Future' is a significant opportunity to shift the UK towards a more confident, long-term investing culture. By improving understanding and encouraging more open conversations, the campaign aims to make people feel that investing is relevant to them and to take the next step when it is right for their circumstances.

**INVEST
FOR THE
FUTURE**



CONCLUSION

'Turning Savers into Investors' highlights clear and persistent differences in confidence and potential long-term outcomes between those who invest and those who remain in cash. This is in spite of both groups sharing similar financial goals and ambitions. Our research shows that many savers are not disengaged and would like to find out more, but view investing as something complex, risky and requiring significant sums of money to get started.

For millions of savers already using Cash ISAs, the behavioural shift required to start investing is not to engage with an entirely new system, but to take a next step within a familiar, trusted and tax-efficient framework. Unlocking the potential of this gateway will require a coordinated approach across industry, regulators and government. Significant progress has

already been made with the work of the Risk Warnings Review, introduction of Targeted Support and the launch of the 'Invest for the Future' campaign, but as these initiatives move forward it will be critical to ensure that implementation takes place throughout the customer journey to reach different demographic groups.

If the ISA is positioned not just as a savings vehicle but as a building block to move from cash to investment, it can play a central role in shaping a stronger investment culture and help more individuals across the UK to build a more resilient financial future.

METHODOLOGY

In March 2026, the IA partnered with Opinium to conduct research about saving and investing habits in the run up to the end of the 2025-26 tax year. This is the fourth year that we have conducted our ISA Barometer research, and each year we have built on the previous year's data to better understand the motivations and financial behaviours of UK adults and investors as they think about their ISA allocations.

The 'Turning Savers into Investors' report is one of three in our 2026 ISA Barometer series and uses data from three surveys of 1,000 UK investors and 1,000 Cash ISA holders.

The survey fieldwork was conducted between 5 March and 13 March 2026. The regional breakdown of survey respondents can be found in Figure One.

Figure Two compares the key characteristics of the investor sample with the Cash ISA sample, and Figure Three looks at the investor sample in focus.

FIGURE 1: MAP OF SURVEYED INVESTORS, CASH ISA HOLDERS AND A NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE OF UK ADULTS (2026)

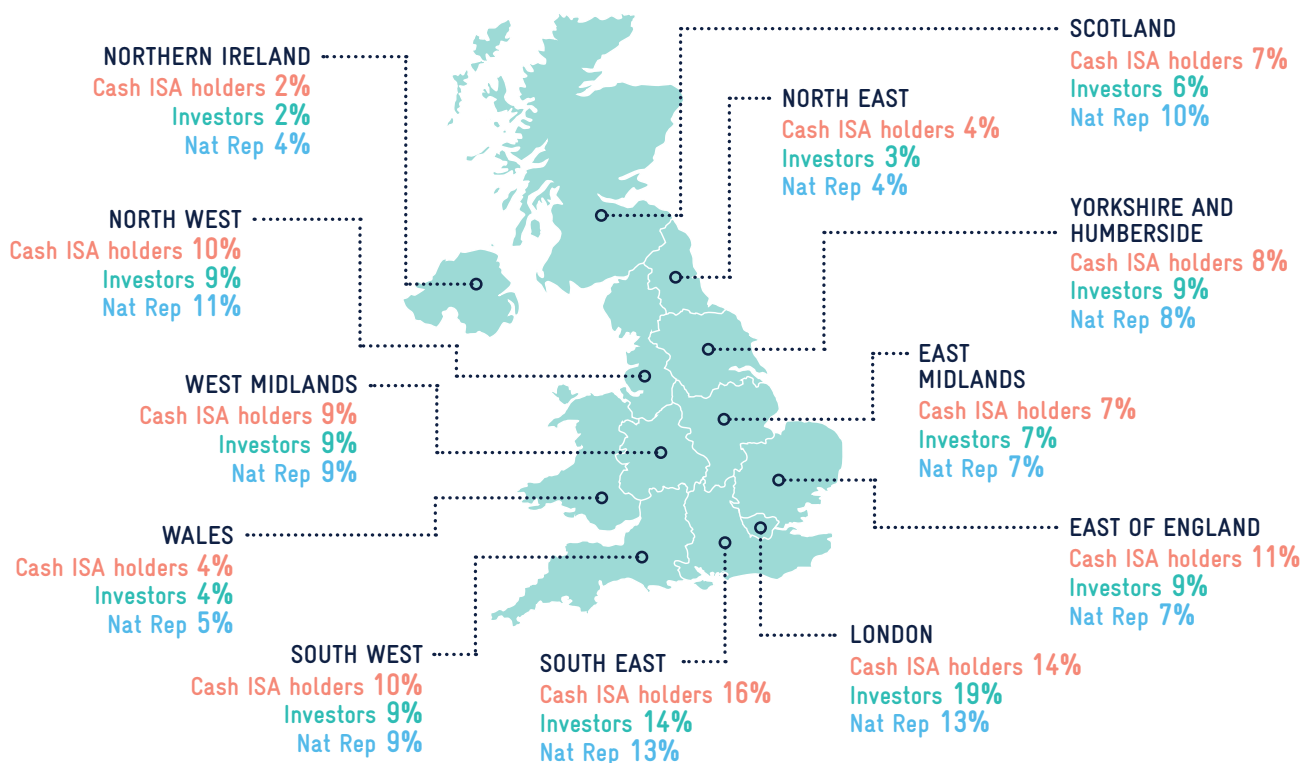
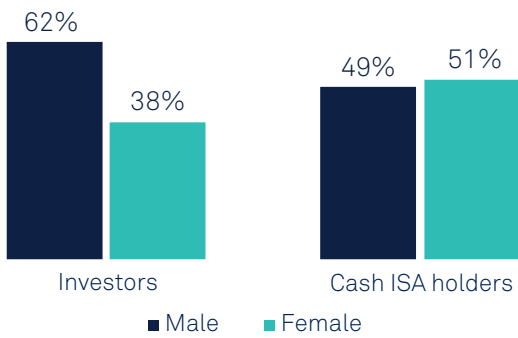
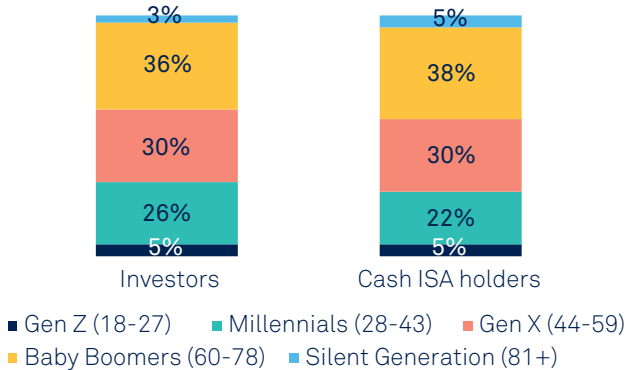


FIGURE 2: INVESTORS VS. CASH ISA HOLDERS SAMPLE (2026)

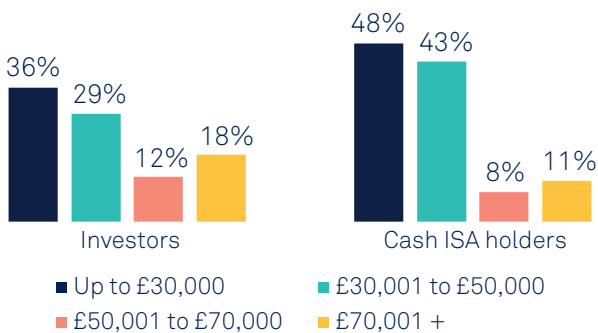
GENDER DISTRIBUTION



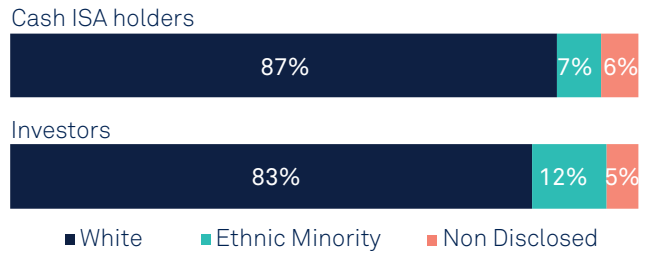
GENERATIONAL SEGMENTATION



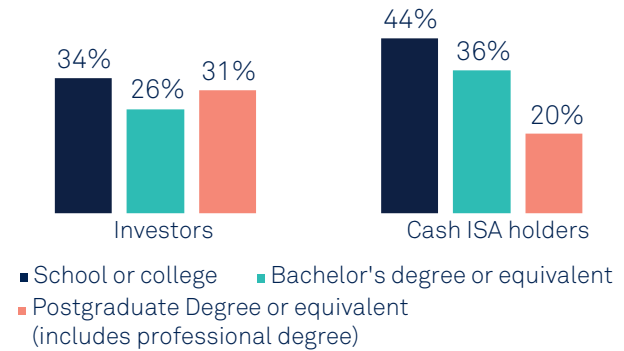
PRE-TAX ANNUAL INCOME



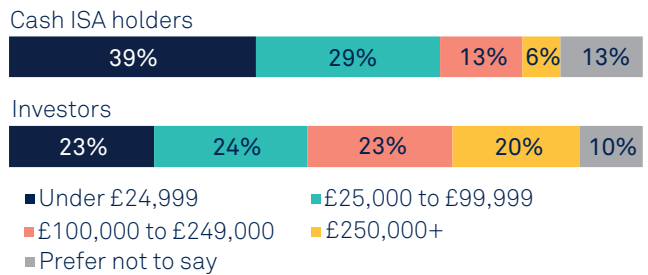
ETHNIC REPRESENTATION



HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION



COMPARISON OF VALUE OF CASH SAVINGS FOR CASH ISA HOLDERS VS. INVESTMENT VALUE FOR INVESTORS



HOUSING TENURE

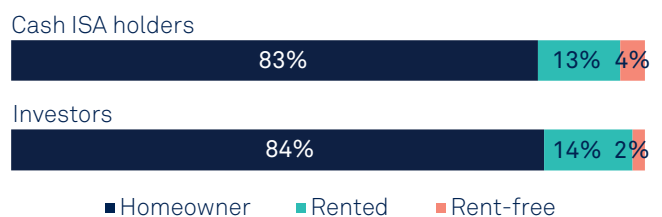
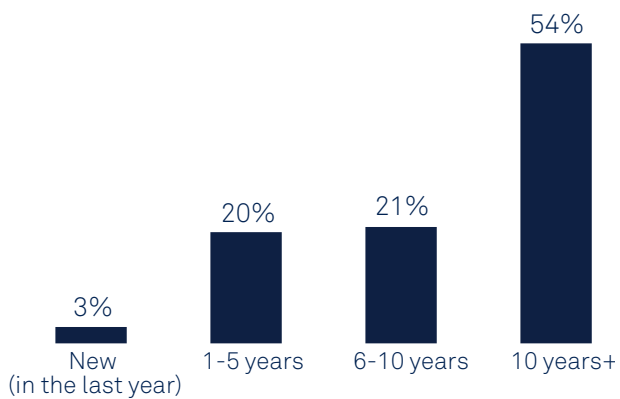
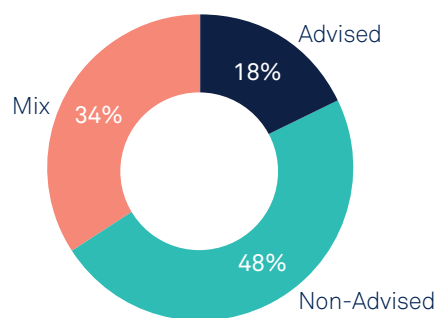


FIGURE 3: INVESTORS IN FOCUS**INVESTMENT EXPERIENCE****INVESTMENT SELECTION APPROACH – ADVISED, NON-ADVISED, MIX**



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