Reaching Resilience

Fuel your protection advice with insight

Released February 2026

LV=

For UK financial adviser use only

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Welcome to Reaching Resilience

Our dedicated research into financial resilience and the role of protection

Reaching Resilience is **our annual research into how UK workers feel** about their financial resilience and their ability to withstand a life-altering event.

Over the past 4 years, our Reaching Resilience research has **consistently highlighted the stark gap between people's perceptions over their level of financial resilience** and their reality. It highlights the importance of having protection in place, and the role it plays in building financial security.

A key part of the research explores what working people plan to fall back on if they lost their income, **what their worries are for their future and how they currently view protection**. In the report, we've explored how this differs for core client types including self-employed, first-time buyers and parents, and re-examined some underserved markets.

This year we've also **explored deeper into other client groups that have unique protection needs**. You'll spot a few spotlight insights around business owners and blended families.

We hope by sharing some insights into client types you might encounter, we're helping you make your conversations feel relevant and personal to their needs.

I'm pleased that throughout this year's report, we've also featured some industry experts to highlight **what this research means on a wider scale**. It's great to see the research being shared across the industry, to further our understanding of the market and help shape our approach to protection.

My challenge to any adviser reading this to consider how they can use these findings, as well as other research produced in the industry, to guide your approach to protection in 2026. One thing the research is clear on, we must work together to make sure we **continue to adapt to address consumer's worries and attitudes** in a way that feels relevant.

Mike Farrell
Protection Sales and Marketing Director, LV=

Unless stated otherwise, the data used in this report comes from a survey of 2,535 nationally representative UK workers conducted for LV= by Opinium between 28 October 2025 and 7 November 2025.

More than
4 in 10 workers
have no form of protection in place.

The average worker's income supports
3 people.

Over half
Would feel more financially resilient with insurance that protects their income, or pays a lump sum on diagnosis of serious illness.

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A look at our sample

Of those surveyed:

2,535 workers shared their views.

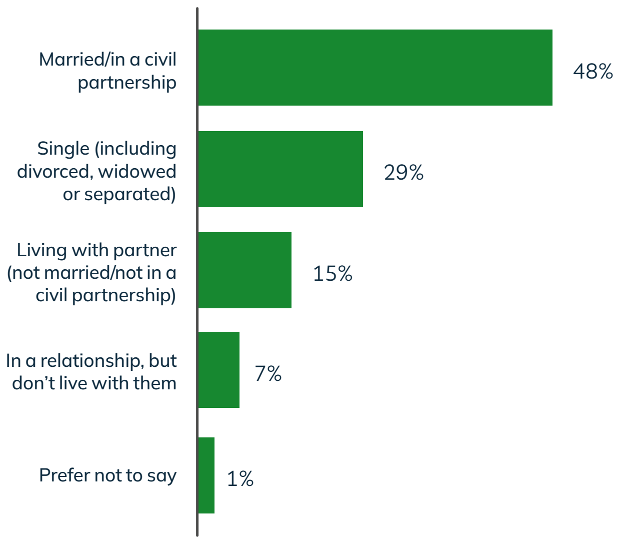
- **92%** are employed
- **8%** are self-employed.
- **11%** are business owners
- **62%** have a job which has a lower risk of injury e.g. office/desk-based work
- **38%** have a job which has a greater than average risk of injury

- **33%** have a mortgage
- **29%** are renters
- **4%** are first time buyers
- **59%** have a household income of £25k-£100k

- **48%** are parents living with a partner
- **5%** are single parents
- **32%** are young families with children aged between 0-12 years old
- **14%** are blended families (households with step children)

52% are male and **48%** are female

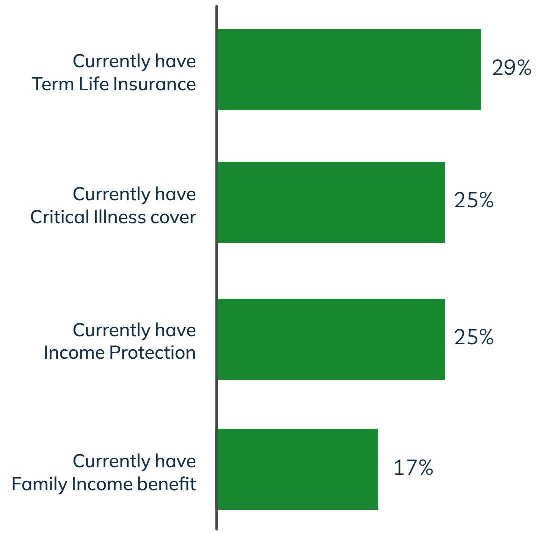
53% are aged 18-44 and **40%** are aged 45-64 years old



53% say they haven't had financial advice

47% say they have had financial advice

Protection product holdings to the right:



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Reaching Resilience, a nationally representative survey of 2,535 workers conducted for LV= by Opinium on 28 October 2025 to 7 November 2025

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A look at our core groups

This report explores the current views of the working population, but throughout we'll also be closely examining how these core groups are impacted.

First-time buyers

For many, the purchase of a first home is their initial contact with a financial adviser and so their first exposure to protection. Our insights explore the views and worries of first-time buyers, so you can use these to help frame their protection needs.

We've defined first-time buyers as those who have purchased their first home in the last 3 years.

Self-employed

Those that are self-employed are often more vulnerable to the effects of an income shock as they're not protected by employer provisions like sick pay. We explore their specific concerns and how you can help reach them with protection.

Self-employed workers are those who work for themselves rather than an employer and have unique protection needs.

Parents of young children

Clients with young children, or planning to grow their family, have more to consider in their financial futures. We'll explore their current financial resilience and how you can position the need for protection.

We have defined these families as having at least one child 12 years old or under.

Parents of older children

These clients may be closer to becoming empty nesters but, usually, they're still financially supporting their children. We look at how worries might change and how protection can offer peace of mind.

In this group are parents with a child or children aged 13-23 years old.

What do we mean by workers or the working population?

We've focused on people who defined themselves as being either employed or self-employed, on a full or part time basis.

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Section 1

Exploring financial resilience within the working population

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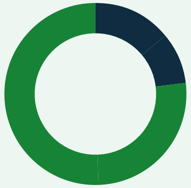
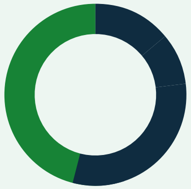
Exploring financial resilience within the working population

A snapshot view

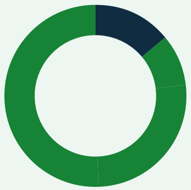
What are their perceptions?



16%
consider themselves to be **'very financially resilient'**



52%
said they feel **'quite financially resilient'.**



10%
describe themselves as **'not at all financially resilient'**

An increase of **2%** since 2023

Nearly half of the working population don't think a protection event will happen to them in the next decade.

How does this compare to the reality?

23% of the average worker's income goes towards paying off debt each month (excluding mortgages).

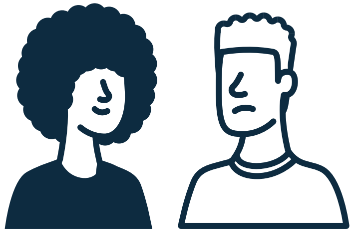
49% of UK households would only be able to survive up to 3 months without an income.

The average UK worker has **3 people** who depend on their income.

For business owners, **32%** of their monthly income goes toward repaying debt (excluding mortgages).

The protection gap

More than
4 in 10
workers have no form of protection in place.



Over half
of workers told us they'd feel more financially resilient with insurance that protects their income or pays a lump sum for a critical illness.

Just **7%** of workers said they'd lean on a personal protection policy they paid for themselves, if they were unable to for 2 months or more.

Read on to see what they plan to rely on >>

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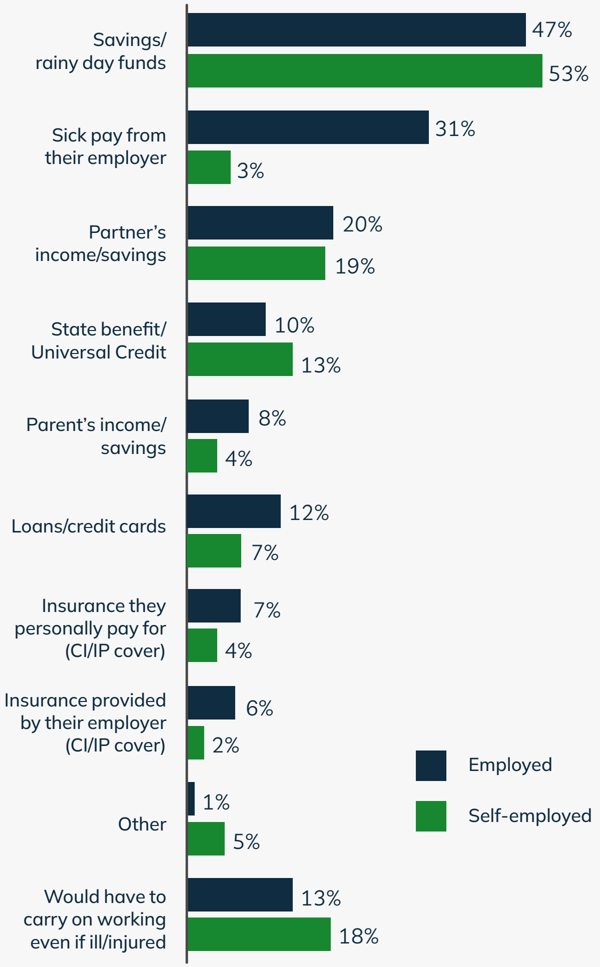
What is their plan B if they're unable to work?

What is their plan B if they can't work due to illness or injury for 2 months or more?

Sources they'd rely on to cover outgoings:



1. Savings

Many workers think they could get by on savings...

1 in 10 have **no savings** at all.

1 in 4 have **less than £1,000** in savings.

Over a third have **less than £5,000** in savings.

48% of workers have **less than £10,000** in savings.

2. Sick pay

There's a lack of awareness about sick pay arrangements...

1 in 5 employed workers don't know what their sick pay arrangements are.

Just over 2 in 3 who thought they were entitled to sick pay said they'd get 12 weeks or less.

44% of employed workers are sure they are eligible for occupational sick pay.

3. Reliance on partner or parents

Some said they'd rely on others...

41% of working couples require **both incomes** to meet their monthly living costs.

First-time buyer couples are more reliant on two incomes, with **52%** needing both incomes to meet monthly outgoings.

Just under 1 in 10 said they would rely on their parents.

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What is their plan B if they're unable to work? (continued)

4. Loans and credit cards

Just over 1 in 10 employed workers expect to use loans or credit cards if they are not able to work...

72%

of the population have some form of debt (including mortgages).

42%

of workers have credit card debt.

Almost a quarter of the average worker's income goes towards paying off debt each month (excluding mortgages).

1 in 10

of self-employed workers with debt other than a mortgage pay nothing off of it each month.

A further 25%

of self-employed workers only dedicate between 1-10% of their monthly income towards debt repayment (excluding mortgages).

5. State benefits

A fair amount think they could get by on state benefits...

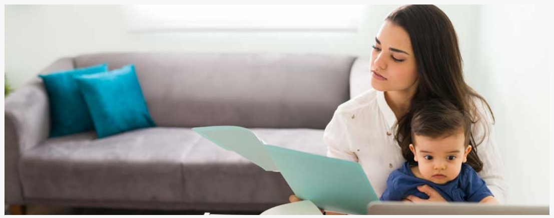
1 in 10

employees expect to rely on state benefits or Universal Credit if unable to work.

13%

of self-employed said they would rely on this if unable to work, a 5% increase from two years ago.

The weekly rate for Statutory Sick Pay is **£118.75** for the tax year ending April 2026.



Almost 1 in 2 working parents have **credit card debt.**

Positioning protection: Challenge perceptions

Ask clients: How long do you think your plan B would last you if you couldn't work?

The average length of an LV= Income Protection claim in 2025 was nearly 6 years. Many are off work for longer than they'd think.

- **Use our budget planner to discuss your client's finances and angle the conversation towards their protection needs.**

Matthew Chapman

The Protection Coach

"One of the most effective ways to position income protection isn't to start with products, but with an income stress test. When clients are helped to see what would actually happen if their income stopped — how long savings would last, what bills still need paying, and who depends on them — the vulnerability becomes clear. Framed this way, protecting income isn't something advisers have to sell. It becomes the logical foundation of financial resilience and the tool that safeguards their financial goals."

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Trends to highlight by core group

First-time buyers

79% feel they're financially resilient, up from 65% a year ago.

46% would rely on savings if unable to work, but over **1 in 4 have less than £5,000 saved**.

2 in 5 are spending up to 20% of their monthly income on debt repayment (excluding mortgages).

Half could only manage up to 2 months without their income.

Over half (52%) need both incomes to cover off their monthly living costs.

Self-employed

Savings is the top source **they'd rely on** if unable to work.

1 in 5 would have to continue working through **illness or injury** to make ends meet.

Just over 1 in 4 have savings of less than **£1,000**.

22% could manage for **less than a month** without their income.

Those saying they'd have to **rely on loans and credit cards** to pay for their outgoings if they couldn't work, due to illness or injury, has almost doubled in the last 2 years.

Parents of young children

Nearly 3 in 4 feel they are financially resilient.

1 in 2 need up to **around £2,000** to cover essential monthly outgoings.

84% have **some form of debt** including a mortgage, up from 72% last year.

1 in 10 would have to carry on working through illness or injury.

Half of couples need **both incomes** to cover all monthly living costs.

Parents of older children

66% would describe themselves as **financially resilient**.

Savings is the top source relied upon if unable to work but **1 in 4 have less than £1,000 in savings**.

Those who say they'd rely on **loans and credit cards** if unable to work due to illness or injury has grown over the last 3 years from 8% in 2022 to 15% in 2025.

Over half say having insurance that pays a salary if they were unable to work due to illness or injury would make them feel more financially resilient.

Positioning protection: Tailoring your advice? Try our Protection Matchmaker tool to explore products and features that might fit your client's unique needs.

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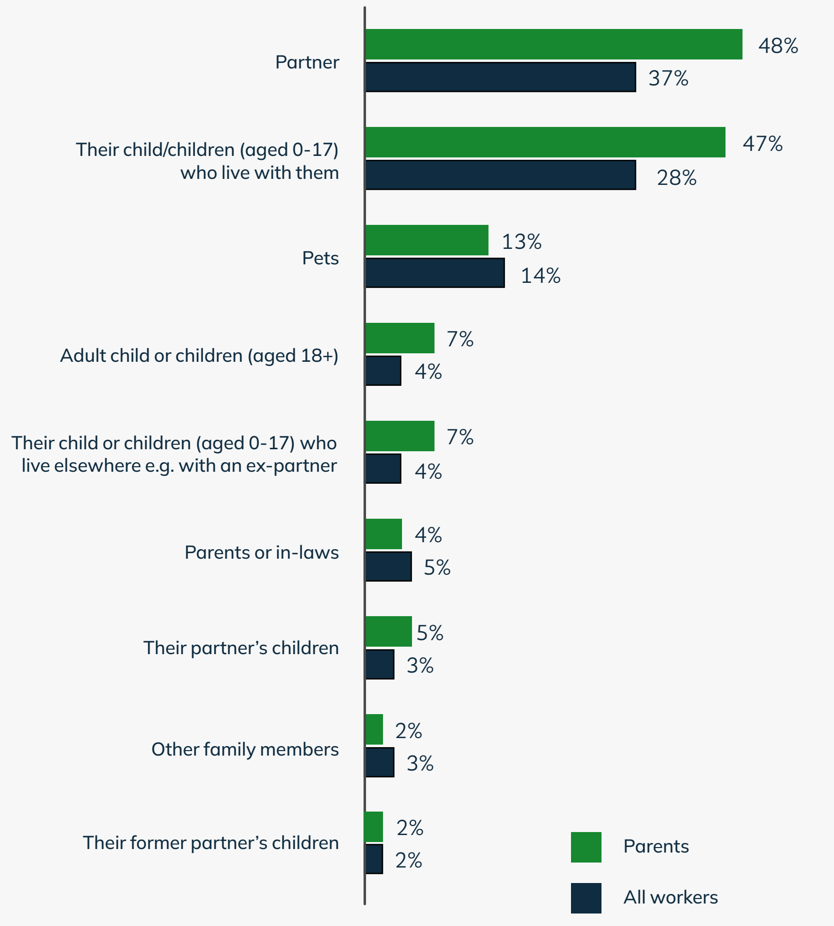
Who relies on their income?

A loss in income would impact more than just your client

We asked UK workers 'who relies on your income?'



The average working person is supporting

3 people

with their income.

14% of **families**

with adult children are still supporting them financially.

Positioning protection: Widen the conversation

Ask clients: Who does your income support?

As you can see in the graph, this can go beyond what we traditionally view as dependents. Challenge your clients and make sure they consider everyone who relies of them – even pets! How would a loss in income impact them?

Getting them to appreciate that a loss in their income can have a domino effect on their loved ones can help clients appreciate their protection needs.

Emma Vaughan
Head of Protection & Health Services, SimplyBiz

"LV's Reaching Resilience research shows the protection gap is not driven by lack of belief, but by lack of focus. Workers recognise that protection would improve their financial resilience, yet many still underestimate how exposed they are. Advisers have a critical role to play in closing this gap by moving protection from an afterthought to a core part of financial planning."

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Spotlight: Blended families

The protection needs of workers who told us they have step-children

5 people

are supported by the average worker's income, who are part of a blended family with younger children (aged 12 and below).

1 in 5 workers

who live in blended families feel **'very financially resilient'.**

Reliance on income

- **2 in 3** blended families with younger children surveyed need both incomes to meet monthly outgoings.
- **Three quarters** hold some form of debt, for 45% this was credit card debt.
- **1 in 4** with younger children say their partner's children rely on their income.
- **Over 1 in 10** blended families with younger children have children aged 0-17 living elsewhere (e.g. with an ex-partner), who they support with their income.
- For those with younger children on average, **37%** of their monthly income went towards paying off debt (excluding mortgage).

Impact of illness or injury

- **Two thirds** of blended families with younger children could only survive up to 3 months without their income.
- **30%** would have to rely on money from someone else to cover their outgoings if off work due to illness or injury for 2 months or more.
- **Nearly 2 in 5** say their children's clubs/after school activities would be impacted if they experienced an illness or injury that required 2 months or more off work.
- **1 in 4** would rely on sick pay from their employer if unable to work.

Positioning protection:
Considering different family structures

Our research found that workers in households with step-children, were on average supporting more people with their income.

It's important to consider how different family set ups can impact protection needs. For example, child support payments might be a factor for your client to consider when considering the impact a loss in income could have.

Views on protection

90% with younger children said if considering their protection needs, that online GP services (for them and their immediate family) would influence their decision.

10% don't have critical illness because they view it to be too complicated.

9 in 10 with younger children said understanding how protection supports their family would influence their decision.

92% with younger children said cover that pays out if their child were to suffer a serious illness would motivate their protection decision.

Section 2

How prepared are UK workers against their protection risks?

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What are their personal experiences?

61%

of the working population **have experienced a life event** where protection might have provided support.

Here are experiences they have faced in the last 3 years, where they might have been able to access important support through protection:

- **16%** experienced a **delay in getting a GP appointment**.
- **11%** experienced a **mental health event** for 2 months or more and **continued to work**.
- **7%** experienced being **off work for 2 months** or more through physical illness or injury.
- **5%** experienced **having to work through physical illness or injury** lasting 2 months or more.
- **5%** experienced a **fracture**.
- **4%** have taken **unpaid time out of work for their ill child**.
- **3%** experienced a **mental health event** that **led to being off work for 2 months or more.**

Positioning protection:
Talking around value-add

Many of your clients will have experienced an event where a protection policy may have supported them. This is a great reminder to focus part of the conversation on the additional benefits and product features included alongside their main cover. These benefits can make protection feel more tangible by showing them what can be accessed through the life of the policy.

We asked: If you were considering a protection policy, what would influence your decision?

1	Knowing the cost and how it fits into my budget	78%
2	Reassurance that the cover is flexible and can adapt to life changes	75%
3	Access to online GP services (for you and immediate family)	68%
4	Seeing how protection can support my family or dependents	67%
5	Access to mental health support	65%

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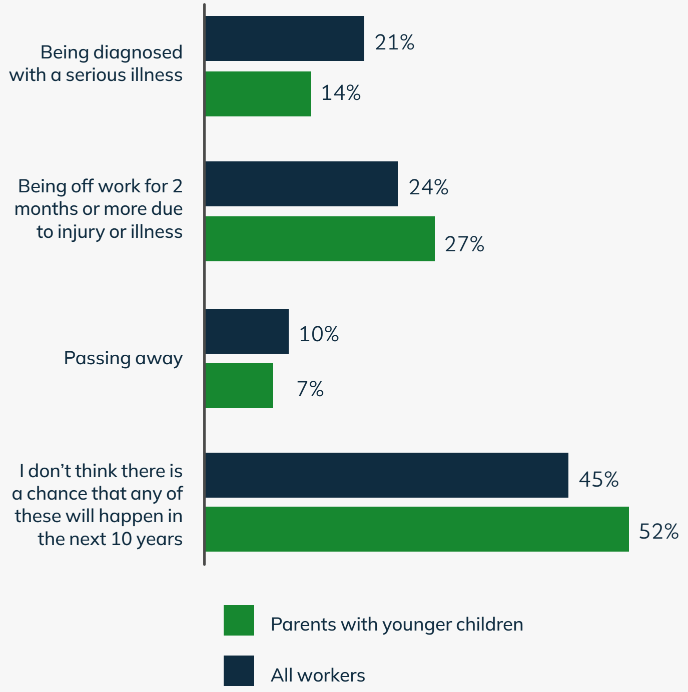
What does their future hold?

Which, if any, of the following do you think has the highest chance of happening to you during the next 10 years?



64% of workers

said seeing a personalised risk report could influence their decision to take out protection.

Nearly half

of the working population don't believe that any of the listed events would happen to them in the next decade, and this belief is slightly higher amongst parents with younger children.

Mike Farrell

Protection Sales and Marketing Director, LV=

"The LV= Risk Reality Calculator has been supporting advisers with their protection conversations for more than a decade. This is an incredibly valuable tool that advisers can use to personalise the protection conversation to the client in front of them, and one I'd encourage advisers to embed into their processes."

Positioning protection:

Ask clients: What do you think you're at risk of in your future, before retirement? Use our Risk Reality Calculator to produce a personalised risk report that breaks down their own risk of these events happening before retirement. Often it doesn't line up with their own perceptions and can help prompt the conversation around their protection needs.

Think about your own financial objectives and ask your clients what their objectives are. How would one of these listed scenarios impact those objectives?

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Can they cope financially with unexpected events?

We asked workers how confident they feel in their ability to cope with a major health problem or serious injury. Our findings showed:

- **Over 2 in 5** say their **own financial security** would be **largely impacted**.
- **1 in 3** say the **financial security of their family** would be **largely impacted**.
- **42%** said their **mental health would be largely impacted**.

We asked workers how confident they feel in their ability to cope with certain life events. Our findings showed:

- **36% don't feel they'd cope financially** with a critical illness diagnosis.
- **29% were not financially confident** to cope with an injury or illness leading to time off work.
- **Almost a quarter didn't feel confident** in their finances to cope with the birth of a child.

Nearly

1 in 5

self-employed workers

said they'd have to continue working through illness or injury to make ends meet.

Parents of young children

Almost a third

felt they wouldn't cope financially if they were to be diagnosed with a critical illness.

If they were to experience a major health problem or injury:

80% are worried about the impact on their own and their families' financial security.

80% are also worried about their families' happiness.

First-time buyers

36%

felt they wouldn't cope financially if they were to be diagnosed with a critical illness.

If they were to experience a major health problem or injury:

89% are worried about the impact on their financial goals.

85% are also worried about their financial security.

85% are worried about their mental health.

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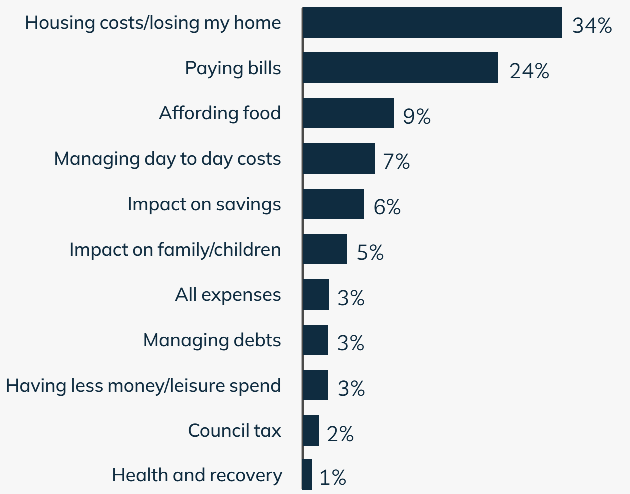
Time off work: What is the biggest financial concern?

36% say they'd have a financial concern if they were unable to work for 2 months or more due to illness or injury:

Top financial concerns



- Affording housing costs or the idea of losing their home was the biggest concern.
- Managing day to day costs, paying bills and affording food also appeared high.
- They also could see the knock-on impact time off could have to their savings and to their family that rely on their income.
- Outside of financial concerns some people said they would be concerned about their health and recovery.

"I've saved for a deposit and hoping to buy very soon so **being unable to work might cost me some savings and jeopardise a mortgage** application.

My biggest financial concern would be **covering every day living costs, especially household bills** while managing unexpected medical expenses without a stable job.

Not having a **roof over my head**.

Not able to provide and **support my family** financially.

That's a sobering thought. Losing income for an extended period could be tough. I'll say the biggest concern would be covering essential expenses like rent, food, utilities, and medical bills. **Without a steady income, it'd be challenging to maintain financial stability and meet financial obligations.** Having an emergency fund or insurance would be a big help in such situations."

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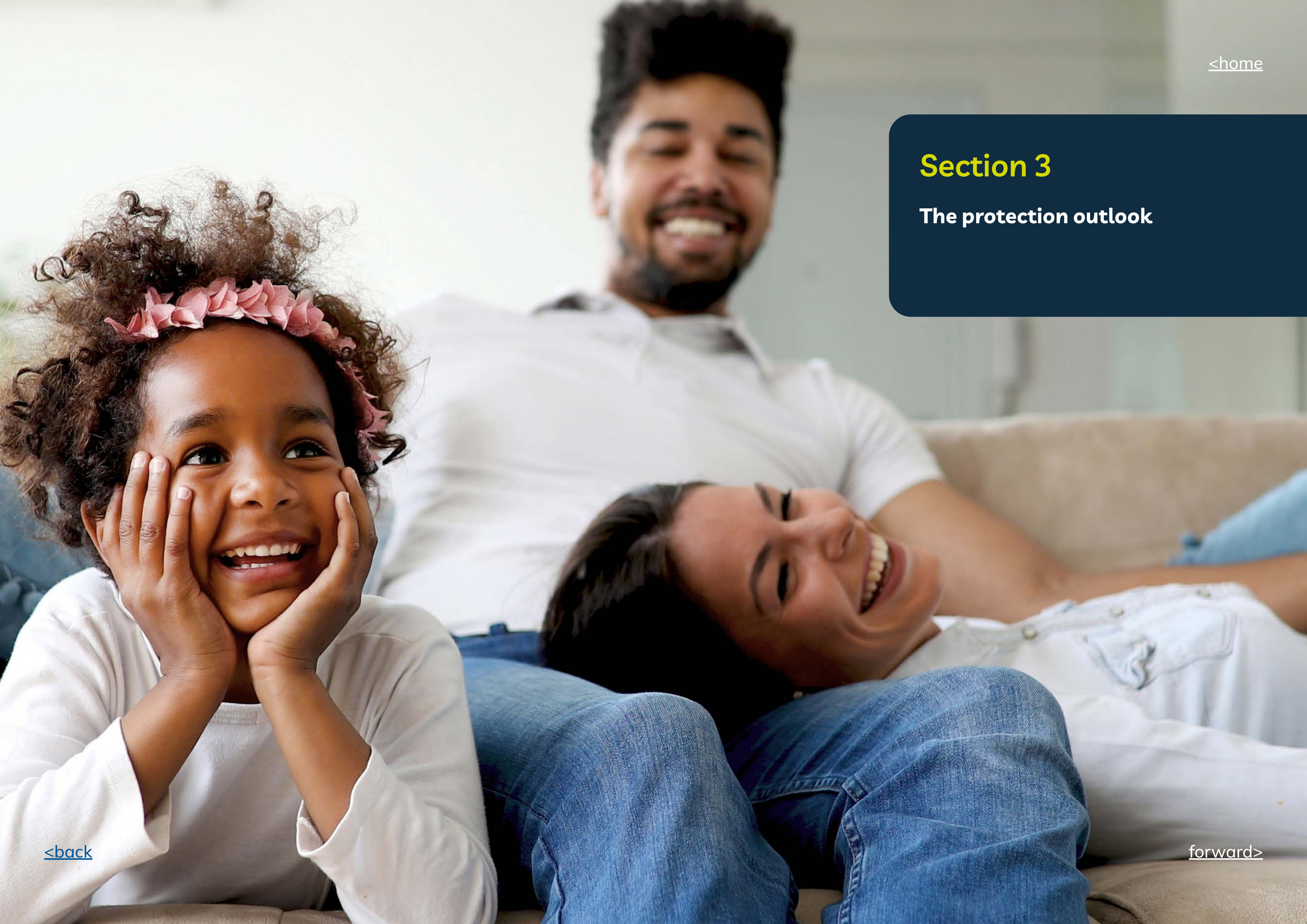
Section 3

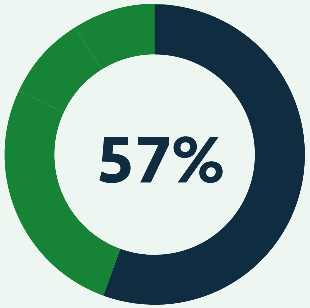
The protection outlook



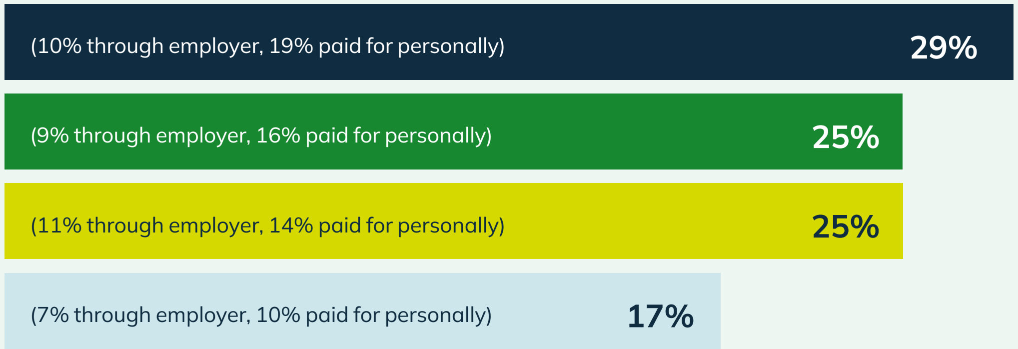
How protected is the working population?

A look into workers who already hold protection

57% of UK workers have access to a protection policy.



Holdings based on cover they have paid for themselves and cover provided by an employer:



Many that have protection have this through their employer. This leaves a considerable amount of people depending on their employer for vital cover to remain in place.

- Life insurance
- Critical illness cover
- Income protection
- Family income benefit

First-time buyers

1 in 5

have income protection cover they have paid for themselves.

Self-employed

1 in 10

currently have income protection cover.

Parents of young children

1 in 5

have income protection cover they pay for themselves.

Parents of older children

1 in 5

have critical illness cover they pay for themselves.

Reviewing protection needs

Of those UK workers that hold protection...

20% of workers with protection have made changes to their cover following a change in their circumstance.

Nearly a fifth of workers have had a change in circumstances but haven't thought about making changes to their cover.

8% didn't know reviewing their cover was an option.

What's changed since they acquired their protection cover...

8% have seen their income change.

8% have changed jobs.

8% have had or adopted a child.

6% have had a rent or mortgage increase.

5% have remortgaged.

3% have moved from full time to part time.

First-time buyers

Over 2 in 3

have **experienced at least one major change** in their circumstances since taking out their protection cover.

Self-employed

Nearly half

have had **at least one significant change happen** in their lives since their cover was taken out.

Paul Roberts
Proposition & Distribution Director, CIExpert

"With 85% of all CIExpert's Critical Illness comparisons including cover for current and future children, the importance of having the correct levels of critical illness cover for both the parents and their children cannot be underestimated.

LV's Reaching Resilience clearly demonstrates the need for parents to be encouraged, wherever possible, to take out the levels of both adult and child critical illness cover they need and can afford."

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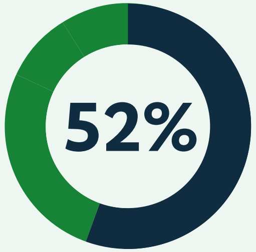
The unprotected

43% of UK workers have no form of protection

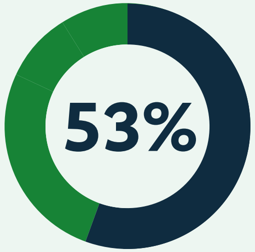
Some have received financial advice, but don't recall a protection conversation:

- **1 in 4** had received financial advice on a mortgage but don't remember their adviser speaking to them about protection.

The protection opportunity:



52% workers said they would feel more financially resilient if they had **insurance that would cover their monthly outgoings** if they couldn't work.



53% would feel more financially resilient if they had **insurance that paid a lump sum in the event of serious illness**.

Positioning Protection:

A good proportion of the working population recognise their protection needs. Instead of using specific product names early on. **Ask clients:**

Would insurance that covers your monthly outgoings if you couldn't work help you feel more financially resilient?

What about insurance that would pay a lump sum for a serious illness or death?

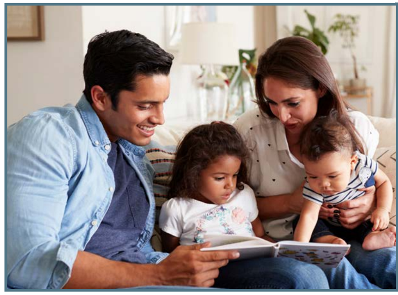
Then introduce the specific solutions available to them.

Self-employed

Nearly a quarter of self-employed people without income protection would like to take it out.

Parents of older children

30% would like to have critical illness cover in place.



Parents of young children

Nearly a quarter are **not confident** they'd financially cope with of a loss of income due to illness or injury.

28% of those who don't have income protection would like to take it out.

First-time buyers

37% didn't recall receiving protection advice alongside their mortgage.

Almost a third want to have critical illness in place, and **1 in 4** want income protection.

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Underserved markets

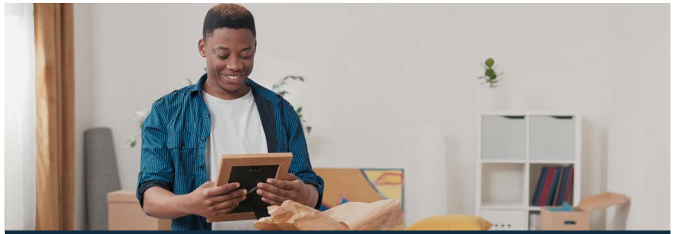
The protection gap

Single parents

55%
have **never** used a **financial adviser**.

2 in 5
single parents say they don't feel **financially resilient**.

A third
have **less than £1,000** in savings.



Renters

71%
of renters have **never** seen a **financial adviser**.

4 in 10
renters **don't feel financially resilient**.

78%
are worried about the financial impact on them and their family if they were to become ill or injured and unable to work. **1 in 4 said they would survive less than a month without income.**

Women

Only **2 in 5**
women have sought financial advice compared to half of men. **43% would be open to receiving financial advice**.

6%
less women have **income protection compared to men**. **7% less** women have **critical illness** cover compared to men.

58%
would feel **more financially resilient with a product that pays out** if they had a serious illness.

Jo Miller Co-chair, IPTF

"We are always delighted to see research that helps provide evidence to support protection conversations. This report highlights just how exposed many working households are and where we can have an impact in improving financial resilience. With 48% of workers having less than £10,000 in savings, it has never been more important to ensure that as many people as possible understand the options available to insure their income to provide long term financial resilience."

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Spotlight: Business owners

Insights into the protection needs of business owners

28%

of surveyed business owners feel **'very financially resilient'**.

70%

have received some form of financial advice.

Reliance if unable to work
(for 2 months or more)

- **2 in 3** said day-to-day costs would be impacted if they experienced an illness or injury that required 2 months or more off work.
- **54%** would rely on savings if unable to work.
- **Over 1 in 4** say they would rely on their partner's income.
- **1 in 5** say they would receive income from an income protection policy if they were unable to work.

Current worries

- **68%** are worried about quick access to a doctor's appointment if they had concerning health symptoms.
- **7 in 10** are worried about the financial impact on themselves/their family if they had an illness or injury which meant they could not work.
- **4 out of 5** say there would be an impact on their financial security if they were to experience health problems or injury.

Marcus Primhak
Business Protection Manager, LV=

"We know that Business Protection is undersold and as a result many businesses in the UK are unprotected. In turn this can to lead owners, their families and their employees being adversely impacted when the unexpected worst happens - it very rarely starts and finishes with the business. To help advisers support their clients in this area we run a regular series of webinars to deepen their business protection understanding."

Debt and savings

32% of their income is used towards repaying debts (excluding mortgages).

40% say they could survive for up to 3 months without an income.

Approaching the conversation

2 in 3 said a personalised risk report showing how likely an illness, injury, or death is to happen would influence their decision to take out protection.

Positioning Protection:

Our research shows that many business owners haven't fully considered how their business and family would cope financially if illness, injury, or death occurred. This creates a clear opportunity for advisers to start proactive protection conversations that safeguard both their clients' businesses and their personal long-term plans.

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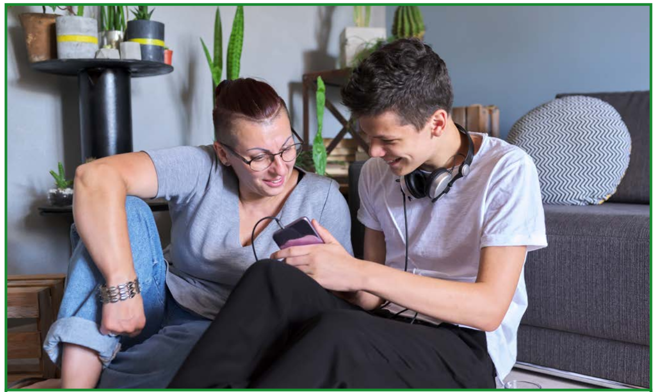
The key takeaways



Challenge perception with reality

A key theme of the research is the stark contradiction between how people view their financial security, and the reality of how quickly this would be impacted by a life-changing event. Dig deeper into your client's plan B to see how realistic this would be long-term, and how it could impact on their financial objectives.

There's awareness of the benefits of protection

Our survey shows that workers can see the benefits of holding protection. More than half said insurance that protects their income or pays a lump sum on illness or death, would make them feel more financially resilient. This shows the engagement with protection when the benefits are positioned effectively.

We need to bridge the industry gaps

Our research showed that single parents, women, and renters were less likely to have received financial advice compared to the general working population. We also see an opportunity to increase the profile of business protection amongst business owners.

Actions you can take:

1. Explore our Reaching Resilience hub for more resources to fuel your protection conversations.
2. Check out our Positioning Protection one-pager summarising the key takeaways from the report.
3. Sign up to one of our CPD protection webinars.
4. Try our range of personal protection tools and calculators.

*LV= claims data 2024

Contact us

Your team of dedicated account managers are here to support you with protection:

protectionsales@LV.com

Find your **account manager**

Visit **LVadviser.com** for more information and resources

For more resources to help you talk to your clients about financial resilience, explore our **Reaching Resilience hub**

If you'd like us to send you this document or any future correspondence in another format, such as Braille or large print, please just let us know.

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