



# FINANCIAL VIEWPOINT

MAPLE FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS LTD

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# Five tips for investing in uncertain times



It's easy to worry about your investments when markets are volatile and the news is filled with uncertainty. And it's normal to be concerned, but taking a measured approach can help you ride out uncomfortable periods and maintain good financial health. Here are five ways to stay calm and focused during periods of volatility.

## 1. Focus on your long-term goals

It's important to remember why you started investing in the first place. Whether you're saving for retirement, funding a child's education or simply building your wealth, your long-term goals are precisely that: long-term and markets have historically shown resilience to short-term pressures. Staying committed to your objectives can help you avoid hasty decisions that could jeopardise future returns.

## 2. Diversify your portfolio

Diversification means spreading your investments across a variety of sectors, asset classes and regions. When you diversify, losses in one area may be offset by gains in another, helping to balance your portfolio and increase its resilience. Diversification can act as a buffer against the full impact of volatility, and the knowledge that your eggs are spread across many different baskets can be helpful if market conditions become challenging.

## 3. Stick to a consistent investment schedule

Committing to regular investments can be an effective way to keep your portfolio on track by taking emotion out of the equation and allows you to buy assets at various price points which smoothes out the effects of volatility. You pay more when times are good and less when the market dips, but the cost will average out over the long-term and your portfolio will continue to grow. This is often referred to as pound cost averaging.

## 4. Keep cash reserves on hand

Easy access to cash can provide a sense of stability in uncertain times. Cash reserves can help you avoid selling assets at a loss if you need emergency liquidity, but they can also give you the flexibility to act if an opportunity arises. For some investors, a mix of cash and short-term fixed-income investments help balance their portfolio's risk profile and provides easy access to funds without having to sell when prices are low.

## 5. Reevaluate your risk tolerance

It's normal to worry about your portfolio when things are uncertain, but if market volatility has you losing sleep it could be a sign that your investments aren't aligned with your risk tolerance. Consider adjusting your portfolio to reflect a level of risk you are comfortable with.

**We can help you stay focused on your goals through periods of volatility.  
Please get in touch if you want to talk about your investments.**

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



# Overpaying your mortgage: should you do it?

**Hardly a day goes by without the cost of living hitting the headlines.**

For many homeowners the increasing costs of owning and running a home is having a huge impact on household budgets. Even if you are near the top end of your monthly budget or are expecting a 'payment shock' when you come to remortgage next, you may be wondering whether it's worthwhile paying more than the minimum repayment each month, with the aim to save money in the long run.

So, what are the benefits of making mortgage overpayments?

- **Mortgage-free sooner**  
Overpayments can either be a one-off lump sum or a regular overpayment made throughout the year. Overpaying on your mortgage means you can potentially clear your mortgage balance quicker.
- **Reduce the amount of interest you pay**  
It could also make sense to overpay on your mortgage rather than keep your money in a savings account, because you may earn more in interest savings on your mortgage than you could earn in a typical savings account.
- **Access to better rates in the future**  
Lenders will offer you better rates if you have a lower loan to value. The more you can pay to reduce your mortgage, the potentially lower interest rates you'll have when you come to remortgage to a new deal.

## Are there any downsides to overpaying your mortgage?

Overpaying on your mortgage might not be right for everyone. Using savings to overpay on your mortgage could leave you with less cash to fall back on in an emergency.

Not all lenders have the same rules for overpaying and there may be a penalty fee called an Early Repayment Charge (EPC) if you overpay too much.

You should only make overpayments if you're sure you can afford them. It's a good idea to make overpayments if you already have an emergency fund, and you don't have any other, more pressing debts that need to be repaid.

It's always a good idea to discuss your options with an adviser, we can help guide you through all your mortgage options including advice on making overpayments.

**YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE.**

# Here's how financial protection can offer security for parents

Serious illness can place immense stress on our families. The cost of caring for an unwell child, worry over access to essential services, and the emotional toll of serious illness are all things that no parent wants to think about.

We can't predict what the future will hold for the health of our families, but we can take proactive steps to prepare for the risk that we or our children might become critically unwell.

Appropriate financial protection can be a vital safety net for parents, providing essential cover for children and easing the pressure of caring for them.

## Critical illness payouts can help you care for your child

No parent wants to consider the possibility of their child becoming seriously ill, but planning for the worst can offer the greatest peace of mind. Robust and appropriate financial protection can help shore up your finances and allow you to focus on caring for your child.

Critical illness cover pays out a lump sum if you are diagnosed with an illness covered by the policy. Many of these policies include cover for a child of the policyholder, paying out a proportion of the full amount if they become seriously ill. This payout provides a financial safety net, covering your expenses and allowing you to take time away from work to care for your child.

Critical illness cover may also come with other benefits that can offer further support for your family, such as:

- A payout if your child is hospitalised because of an accident.
- Cover for the cost of accommodation so that you can be close to your child if they're in hospital.
- Childcare costs if you're diagnosed with a serious illness that's covered by your policy.

The cost of critical illness cover varies depending on how large you want a potential payout to be, as well as other factors like your age and general health. It's important to note that you'll only be covered as long as you keep paying your premiums.

Children are often automatically included in critical illness cover but this isn't guaranteed. Contact your provider for clarification and be aware that your premiums could rise if you add a child to a policy that doesn't already cover them.

Cover for a child typically starts from the first few weeks after birth and lasts until they're 18, or 21 if they're in full-time education, but this can vary between providers. There may be other restrictions to critical illness cover that you should be aware of – some policies will only allow

one claim per child whilst others might exclude certain conditions that are present from birth.

It's important to check the details of critical illness cover thoroughly when comparing your option to make sure that you're buying the right cover for your circumstances.

## Private medical insurance could help provide better care for your family

You may want to consider taking out private medical insurance to compliment the security that financial protection could offer you. The Guardian reports that the private health insurance market has grown by £385 million in the last year. At the same time, rising wait times and staff shortages are causing public satisfaction with the NHS to slump according to the long-running British Social Attitudes survey.

Private medical insurance can help to put your mind at ease by reducing waiting times for a range of services (like tests and consultations) whilst giving you a wider choice of treatment providers. It could also help to cover the cost of a private room, giving you and your family greater privacy if you need to stay in hospital overnight.

Private health insurance can cover much more than just physical illness. Some providers offer access to counselling and mental health services which are becoming increasingly important for the wellbeing of younger generations – the number of children and young people seeking support for their mental health increased by 25% from 2022 to 2023 according to data from Aviva.

The cost of private health insurance and the level of cover you'll receive are influenced by a range of factors, including who you want the policy to cover, your lifestyle, and family medical history. It's important to take the time to understand how comprehensive your options are and any exclusions that might affect your family.

## Talk to us to see how we can help protect your family

Financial protection is just one way that you can prepare for the unexpected. Get in touch if you'd like to know more about financial protection for your family against serious illness.

**Please note:** Financial protection plans typically have no cash in value at any time and cover will cease at the end of the term. Cover will lapse if premiums are unpaid. Cover is subject to terms and conditions and may have exclusions. Definition of illnesses vary between providers and will be explained in policy documentation.