

Industry

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voice

Analysis. Commentary. Trends.

LIFE STAGE FLEXIBILITY AND THE RISE OF THE 40 YEAR MORTGAGE TERM

Carlo Pileggi
Nationwide

GREEN RESILIENCE

Jonathan Evans
Skipton Building Society

REFRAMING THE MORTGAGE CONVERSATION

Andy Philo
Vitality

PROTECTING MORE THAN THE MORTGAGE

Gifford Clay
National Friendly



“

When protection is framed as a product moment, it's forgettable. When it's framed as a people moment, it sticks.

”

REFRAMING PROTECTION CONVERSATIONS

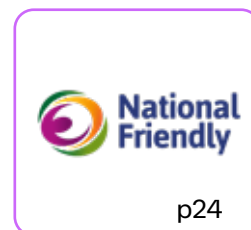
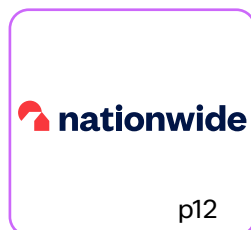
Jonathan Cater, Protection Product Manager, Aviva

The resilience edition



Industry voice

This issues featured contributors



Welcome

Welcome to this edition of Industry Voice - now with a brand new look for 2026!

Presenting the resilience edition: Bridging the gap between homeownership and financial security.

The industry's success is no longer measured solely by the volume of completions, but by the long-term tenure of the borrower. This edition explores how we must integrate financial resilience into the very foundations of the mortgage journey, ensuring the "modern borrower" is protected against a longer, more volatile path to debt-freedom.

With a brand new look to go along with the insightful articles from all of our contributors, we hope you enjoy the first edition of the Industry Voice for 2026!

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Warren O'Connell
Head of Business
Development - Sourcing
iress

Solving the problem with Protection

“
41% of people believe they are protected. In reality, just 19% are.
”

The FCA's Protection Review is a timely opportunity to rethink how we deliver truly holistic advice, says Warren O'Connell, Head of Business Development, UK Sourcing at iress.

The FCA's Pure Protection Market Study has sparked plenty of debate and, understandably, some trepidation. But rather than creating a new problem for advisers, it has exposed an old one: protection is still too often treated as a bolt-on sale.

That's not a failing of advisers. Far from it. The profession is doing more than ever to support clients. But the data is clear: we're having the conversations, yet they're not cutting through.

Too easy to ignore

AMI figures show 82% of mortgage advisers now discuss protection - a significant increase on previous years.

Yet fewer than four in ten mortgage holders recall those conversations, and nearly half of clients drop out after receiving a quote.

This isn't a conversation problem. It's a framing problem.

When protection is introduced at the end, after the mortgage is secured, stress levels are high, and decisions feel 'done' - it is perceived exactly as it's positioned: optional,

deferrable, easy to ignore.

But the moment of maximum relevance is right in front of us.

The missed moment of opportunity

Taking out a mortgage is the largest financial commitment most people will ever make. It's also when clients are most aware of risk, responsibility and long-term consequences.

Our research, the iress Financial Readiness Index, highlights the scale of the disconnect:

- The UK faces a 22% protection gap.
- 41% of people believe they are protected
- In reality, just 19% are
- Only 32% seek advice when setting up protection

Yet 27% of policyholders say taking out a mortgage triggered their decision to buy.

The signal is clear: the mortgage moment is the protection moment.

And still, too often, we separate them.

If the FCA wants better consumer outcomes - and it does - then we have to stop treating protection as a product and start treating it as part of the outcome. Because the real



The mortgage moment is the protection moment.

objective isn't just securing a mortgage, it's ensuring a client can keep their home if the worst happens.

That requires a shift in how advice is delivered.

From conversation to conversion

Protection should be introduced at the start, not the end. Quoted alongside the mortgage, not after it. Positioned as the safety net, not an optional extra.

When that happens, outcomes improve. We've seen it ourselves: embedding protection into the mortgage journey increases uptake - not because clients are pushed, but because the value is clearer, earlier.

Embedding protection in the mortgage journey resulted in almost 5% more policies being sold

It's why we're investing so much in

developing our mortgage and protection sourcing platform, Xplan Mortgage (XPM). With XPM, protection quotes can be automatically generated alongside the mortgage application without rekeying or switching systems. Consequently, 46% of firms using Xplan Mortgage now sell protection alongside a mortgage (up from 39% three years ago). This is the future of sourcing, and we expect adoption to increase further.

Words shape decisions

But sometimes, there are things only a human can do. AMI research shows 71% of consumers say human connection is important when deciding to buy protection, a powerful reminder that it's not just what we talk about, but how we talk about it.

'Insurance' is abstract and often carries negative connotations. "Keeping your home if your income stops" is not.

The industry has long known that people insure what they emotionally connect to - it's why pet insurance is so popular. The challenge isn't just awareness; it's relevance. And relevance is highest when the conversation is anchored to something tangible, like a mortgage.

One conversation

Ultimately, this is what the Protection Review is really about. Not more process. Not more pressure. Just better alignment between what clients need and how we deliver it.

The future of advice isn't about selling more products. It's about structuring more holistic conversations.

And that means one thing:

Mortgage and protection shouldn't be two conversations.

They should be one.





At Iress, our focus is on removing the ‘friction of advice’ by integrating protection directly into the heart of the mortgage journey. We don’t just want to provide a quote portal; we want to provide the engine room for real-time resilience.

Our data shows that the industry is already stepping up. Since the second half of 2024, we’ve seen a consistent upward trend in engagement, and today, approximately 50% of firms using our mortgage sourcing products are now actively quoting protection alongside the mortgage. This is a significant milestone; it proves that the ‘integrated journey’ is no longer a theoretical goal, but a daily reality for half the market.

But we can’t stop there. In this new era of ‘marathon mortgages’ and 40-year terms, our technology must be the constant that ensures the finish line is always within reach for the borrower. By removing the barriers between sourcing a mortgage and securing a life, we empower advisers to have more meaningful conversations. The appetite for holistic advice is clearly there; our job is to ensure the technology keeps pace, providing a seamless ‘engine room’ that turns a mortgage completion into a long-term tenure guarantee.



Jane Irwin
Product Lead - Protection
Iress





From mortgage to mindset: reframing protection conversations

Jonathan Cater
Protection Product Manager
Aviva

“
The question isn't whether protection should sit alongside mortgage advice - it's how we help it belong there, naturally and confidently.”

Jonathan Cater, Protection Product Manager at Aviva, discusses how advisers and insurers can work together to reframe protection conversations and support better long term customer outcomes.

The FCA's Pure Protection Market Study^[1] has reignited an industry conversation that many advisers will recognise immediately. Regulation is now cited as the number one concern for 53% of advisers^[2]. But beneath the headlines, the direction of travel is clear. The focus is on outcomes, rather than process alone.

At its heart, the FCA challenge asks whether the industry is ready to move beyond transactional advice towards something more holistic. Increasingly, a mortgage without a resilience plan is being viewed not simply as incomplete, but as a poor outcome for customers.

So, the question isn't whether protection should sit alongside mortgage advice - it's how we help it belong there, naturally and confidently.

From transactions to resilience

For many customers, buying a home is one of the biggest emotional and

financial commitments they'll ever make. Yet protection is still too often positioned as an afterthought - something discussed once affordability has been exhausted, energy is low, and decisions feel final.

That approach doesn't reflect how people actually think about risk.

Protection works best when it's framed as part of long-term financial wellbeing - not a product add on, but a way of protecting the life customers are building. When advisers lead with resilience rather than features, protection moves from "optional" to essential.

Awareness remains the biggest barrier

Recent insight from CIEExpert illuminates the scale of the challenge for advisers^[3]. Without regular exposure, protection products remain largely invisible to the very people who need them most. This places advisers in a dual role - not just advising, but educating and rebuilding understanding.

Customers aren't asking for technical explanations or product heavy brochures. What resonates most are real stories, real claims, and ex-

amples that feel familiar. Protection resonates when it feels human - when it's about people, not policies.

That's why trust matters so much. As insurers, one of the most important ways we can support advisers is by demonstrating - consistently and transparently - that paying claims is fundamental to what protection exists to do.

Technology can help - but it can't replace trust

AI and data tools are often positioned as the answer to protection engagement. And they do have a role to play. Used well, technology can improve access to information, personalise journeys, and support better conversations.

But customers are clear on one thing: technology alone isn't trusted to close the awareness gap.^[4]

People still value explanation, confidence and reassurance - especially when conversations touch on health, income and the future of their family. The opportunity for advisers isn't to replace human guidance with tools, but to use those tools to strengthen the advice relationship.

The challenge becomes: how do we meet customers where they are - digitally capable and increasingly informed - while still providing the clarity and reassurance they expect from professional advice?

Why protection conversations still don't land

Most advisers report discussing protection as part of the mortgage process. Yet these conversations often fail to land. Customer recall remains low: 39% remember protection being mentioned - an increase



When protection is framed as a product moment, it's forgettable. When it's framed as a people moment, it sticks.





from 35% in 2020, but still less than desired given that 82% of advisers say they provide advice directly^[5].

This disconnect suggests the issue isn't whether protection is discussed - but how.

When protection is framed as a product moment, it's forgettable. When it's framed as a people moment, it sticks. Advisers who make the biggest impact anchor protection in the customer's life, their goals, worries and responsibilities, not in features or terminology.

“Here's how you keep the dream”

Timing matters.

Customers are most open to protection conversations earlier in the journey. Ideally before mortgage affordability is finalised, when customers are thinking not just in numbers but in emotions, lifestyle, and the future they're building. Before the final numbers are locked in. Before the stress sets in.

This is where advisers have a powerful opportunity to shift the tone. When customers are talking about their new home, advisers can naturally introduce the question:

“What would happen if life didn't go to plan?”

Or more positively - “Here's how you keep it.”

Placed in the right moment, protection feel like part of the home buying journey, not a detour. It feels like care.

Reframing protection - together

Ultimately, new technologies or applications aren't the driver to have the right conversation at the right time. It's about reframing protection itself.

When advisers feel confident saying “Alongside finding the right mortgage, part of my role is helping you think about how you'd keep this home if life changed.” Protection

becomes part of the journey, not an afterthought.

At Aviva, we believe protection works best when it's human, understood, and introduced at the right time. By supporting advisers with insight, evidence and clarity, we can help protection take its rightful place - as a cornerstone of good financial advice.

Because when resilience is built in from the start, everyone is better prepared for whatever life brings.

Sources

- 1) Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), MS24/1: Market study into the distribution of pure protection products – Interim Report, January 2026. [Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.](#)
2. Association of Mortgage Intermediaries (AMI), Protection Viewpoint 2025: The Next Chapter – Protecting tomorrow, today, published November 2025.
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Life stage flexibility and the rise of the 40 year mortgage term



Carlo Pileggi

Head of mortgage products
Nationwide

“

Mortgage terms are being lengthened to help with affordability at the time of application. In theory this means a term into retirement, in reality retirement may be later or more fluid, whilst mortgage circumstances will change repeatedly.

”

Market pressures drive longer mortgage terms

The structure of the UK mortgage market has shifted markedly. Rising house prices relative to incomes and more recently, higher interest rates have constrained affordability.

Before the financial crisis, under 15% of first time buyers were taking mortgage terms of 30 years or more. In 2025, around half did. That is down slightly on 2023 and 2024 when more were taking longer terms in response to higher rates. For first time buyers in this market, a longer term is often the solution to keep payments manageable.

Mortgages into retirement

First time buyers also face a challenge raising their deposit and, especially for those without help this can lead to buying later – the average first time buyer is now over 33 years old.

Borrowing later and for longer means more borrowing into retirement - a long way from the traditional 25 year mortgage term, designed around a working life spanning from early adulthood to the mid 60s.

Illness, injury, redundancy, or caring responsibilities are more likely to occur between 50 to 70. Historically, first time buyers might have expected their debt would be paid off before this.

These borrowers may face affordability stress exactly when income flexibility is constrained. No mean feat when first time buyer mortgage payments stand at around a third of take-home pay.

Should we be concerned?

But all this assumes that retirement is a cliff-edge around age 70 and a first time buyer's mortgage circumstances won't change over decades. The reality will be very different. Mortgage terms are being lengthened to help with affordability at the time of application. In theory this means a term into retirement, in reality retirement may be later or more fluid, whilst mortgage circumstances will change repeatedly. Over the life of that original mortgage term, first time buyers would hope to see their income increase, they'll switch products, overpay, upsize, downsize, increase their borrowing, change their term. Each of those events may change their residual balance, and they'll likely speak to their mortgage intermediary at multiple points.

So we shouldn't assume mortgage terms which extend into retirement at application are a sign of borrowers committing to mortgage payments in retirement. Both their retirement and their mortgage will look very different in forty years.

What should we change?

Shortening mortgage terms will



We shouldn't assume mortgage terms which extend into retirement at application are a sign of borrowers committing to mortgage payments in retirement

constrain first time buyers' affordability, preventing more from getting onto the property ladder and/or reducing their disposable income. This trades one risk for another; the risk of borrowing into retirement for the risk of not borrowing at all. Or buying later in life, reducing security of tenure and ability to build equity; equity which is increasingly useful for retirement.

That said, there are ways the market can evolve to support these customers.

1. Later-life mortgages: simplicity, understanding and accessibility

For those that do need borrowing past retirement, later life mortgage options, including equity release and retirement interest only, will be increasingly important – to repay outstanding debt, or release equity to help fund retirement. It's key that the industry continues to evolve to make these products more widely

understood and accessible.

2. Interest only: another lever to manage payments

Few first time buyers take, or are eligible to take, interest only borrowing, but this could be another way of helping affordability. Interest only borrowing could help certain first time buyers onto the ladder, and over time, as their income increases, convert to repayment.

The FCA is consulting on how this might work - a discussion thought-leaders from Nationwide have fed into.

3. Continued product innovation

Lenders can design and evolve mortgage products to meet the changing needs of borrowers. Nationwide is proof of this, showing the ability to [innovate products](#) for a specific audience and commitment to continual improvements.

Over the last 5 years, product have iterated to address various needs, as the needs of customers change through life events you can expect products and features to adapt too.

Working together to support borrowers

At Nationwide, we believe in a mortgage market that supports the financial wellbeing of our customers across every life stage and are committed to developing products that help navigate those events with confidence and flexibility.

As needs and circumstances change, our responsibility – and that of customers' financial advisers, is to ensure borrowers understand the risks and trade-offs they're making and how these change over time too.



**Fleet
Mortgages**



Steve Cox
Chief Commercial Officer
Fleet Mortgages

Green resilience is quickly becoming a core part of how risk is assessed in buy-to-let. EPC ratings are no longer a box-ticking exercise; they are increasingly linked to affordability, tenant demand and the long-term sustainability of an investment. A property that is cheaper to heat is not just more attractive to tenants, it is more likely to deliver stable rental income and lower arrears risk. That brings energy efficiency directly into lending decisions, not as a bolt-on, but as part of the core assessment. The challenge now is moving beyond simple pricing incentives. As a market, we need to think more holistically about how we support landlords through retrofit decisions and ensure those properties remain viable over time. That means joining up lending, advice and protection, rather than treating them as separate conversations.



Rod McPherson
Head of Distribution
LendInvest Mortgages



lendinvest
Mortgages

Our research conducted in September 2025 shows that the “one-size-fits-all” approach to income often leaves deserving borrowers behind. Over a third (35%) of people have felt discouraged from applying for a mortgage at a high street bank due to their employment status or income streams; it’s even stronger among 18-34-year-olds, where 40% feel discouraged.

With hundreds of mortgage products on the market, it’s no surprise that many respondents in the research feel overwhelmed. Brokers that have an understanding of the diverse range of mortgage products available, from specialist lenders for those with non-traditional income streams, are better equipped to support their clients and get them on the path to homeownership.

By focusing on education, trust, and tailored guidance, brokers can do more than just facilitate a transaction; they can become the catalysts that turn a dream of homeownership into a reality for those currently sitting on the sidelines.

[Research conducted in September 2025]



25 years to life? Not a sentence, but increasingly the reality of how we borrow.

The “standard” 25-year mortgage is no longer the default. We’re living longer, working longer and, as a result, borrowing for longer too. Is this an issue - or simply a means to an end?

We understand the shift: sustained house price growth, affordability pressures and the ever-present challenge of monthly repayments. For many, considering a longer term isn’t a luxury, it makes dreams of home ownership reality.

Wage growth, coupled with lender innovation - from low-deposit options to more creative policy - has certainly helped. But affordability constraints haven’t disappeared; they’ve just evolved.

Extending the term can ease monthly payments, but we need to keep in mind a lot can change in 25 years, let alone 40 years!

For me this debate clarifies one thing. The value of Brokers. Flesh and blood brokers. Helping their clients understand not just what’s possible, but what’s sustainable. Guiding them through the options, the trade-offs, and ensuring protection isn’t an afterthought, its fundamental.

A broker is for life not just for a mortgage term.



AimieJo Shutt
National Key Account
Manager
Santander



The FCA’s focus on the protection gap provides a valuable opportunity for the industry as it challenges us to think about what good looks like when it comes to meeting consumer protection needs. Securing a mortgage offer without protection in place should no longer be an option as it leaves clients financially exposed and advisers vulnerable to scrutiny. This focus should encourage more advisers to shift from transactional sales to genuine, holistic advice. To do this we need to ensure advisers are supported with the right tools and technology to take the heavy lifting out of protection conversations. That means recognising mortgages as a key life-event trigger and using every stage of the journey to help clients understand and plan for long-term resilience.



Jamie Page
Head of Protection
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The Exeter

Green Resilience: Energy Efficiency as a Foundation for Financial Stability



Jonathan Evans
Senior National Accounts
Lead
Skipton Building Society



The opportunity ahead is not about launching ever more complex products. It's about aligning lending, advice and protection around a shared goal: long term household sustainability.

Energy efficiency has quietly moved from the margins of mortgage conversations to the mainstream. An EPC rating is no longer just documentation completed at point of sale; it is becoming one of several indicators lenders and advisers use to understand the long term sustainability of a household's finances.

This is not about redefining risk overnight. Rather, it reflects a broader industry shift towards viewing affordability as something that plays out over time, not just at completion. A home that is cheaper and more predictable to heat supports a more stable monthly budget, which in turn supports a more durable homeownership journey.

In that context, the emergence of energy adjusted affordability is less revolutionary than evolutionary. It acknowledges that running costs matter, and that homes with better energy performance offer households greater insulation from external shocks such as energy price volatility and climate related disruption.

Energy resilience also extends beyond the property itself. As career paths become more fragmented, with more people combining employment, self employment and contract work, income predictability is changing. When paired with a more energy efficient home, where baseline living costs are lower and more controllable, this creates a reinforcing effect: households that are

better equipped to absorb change.

While many lenders are increasingly supportive of this direction, mass adoption has been gradual, shaped by practical considerations such as competing strategic priorities and, in some cases, the need for underlying system changes, meaning that more immediate or revenue critical projects can understandably take precedence over embedding energy adjusted affordability at scale.

Moving Beyond Green Discounts

Early green lending initiatives understandably focused on simple incentives: modest rate discounts or cashback tied to EPC bands. These helped signal intent, but they were never designed to be the end state.

If energy efficiency is to genuinely enhance household resilience, the industry must evolve from selling green features to supporting green outcomes. That means creating retrofit and protect journeys rather than standalone products.

Skipton Group's Big Retrofit Pro-

ject offers an instructive example. By retrofitting a typical UK property and sharing the lived experience, costs, disruption and benefits, the project highlighted that progress is often practical and incremental. Insulation, ventilation and heating improvements deliver real comfort and bill reductions, but only when homeowners understand how changes worked together.

Crucially, the project prioritised education over prescription. It showed that consumer confidence grows when advice is transparent, realistic and trusted, not when solutions are over engineered or over marketed.

Education Before Innovation

The opportunity ahead is not about launching ever more complex products. It's about aligning lending, ad-

vice and protection around a shared goal: long term household sustainability.

Policy recommendations should focus on:

- Embedding EPC improvement education early in the home buying journey.
- Supporting trusted retrofit advice, not just finance.
- Joined up approaches across mortgage, protection and advice.

Household energy resilience is not a marketing trend. It is a quiet recalibration of how the industry supports people to live and stay securely in their homes over the long term.





Reframing the mortgage conversation:

Why closing the protection gap needs a rethink



Andy Philo
Director of Strategic Partnerships
Vitality

“
Recent polling showed that only 15% of homebuyers consider protection insurance a top priority during the homebuying process.”

Many homebuyers fear losing their home but still don't prioritise mortgage protection. With this in mind, Vitality's Andy Philo, Director of Strategic Partnerships, explores why traditional protection conversations aren't always cutting through

In the UK, we're obsessed with housing. We debate base rate movements endlessly and rarely a week goes by where house prices aren't in the news. Yet, once the keys are handed over, something strange happens.

We seem to spend more time worrying about what our home might be worth in the future, than whether we could actually keep it if life took an unexpected turn.

In fact, recent polling showed that only 15% of homebuyers consider protection insurance a top priority during the homebuying process. For the majority, it ranks in last place, behind new furniture and décor¹.

This is despite the fact that when challenged on it, many homeowners admit that their biggest fear is losing the home if they became too ill to work and couldn't keep up with the mortgage repayments¹.

It's a contradiction that sits at the heart of the UK's protection gap. Homeownership remains an aspi-

ration for millions of people, but we are far less engaged with actually protecting the home we've worked so hard to buy.

The behavioural reality behind the protection gap

This isn't about consumer ignorance or advisers failing to do the right thing. It's about behaviour.

Many of the decisions we make, whether buying a home or in our day-to-day lives, are driven by unconscious, often irrational biases, that don't always serve our best interests.

People are, by nature, optimistic. They don't think bad things will happen to them. They also favour immediate gratification over distant, uncertain benefits.

Buying a property is an emotional and stressful time. It's also a happy and positive moment in someone's life. It's understandable that death and illness are not at the forefront of their mind and furnishing their new home delivers far greater immediate satisfaction than spending money on insurance that may payout in future.

In this environment, it's unsurprising that long-term risk planning and financial protection are easily deprioritised, even though the need is

obvious – for most people, a mortgage will be the biggest financial liability.

Why traditional protection conversations aren't cutting through

According to the recent Viewpoint research from Association of Mortgage Intermediaries (AMI), 99% of advisers say they are now having protection conversations with their clients².

However, many homeowners say they don't recall having those conversations at all². This disconnect should give the industry pause.

Talking about the importance of holistic protection advice, that protects the client's home and their

wider lifestyle, only gets us so far if the conversation isn't resonating with people.

Protection has historically been framed around offering the intangible peace of mind and cover for when things might go wrong, in the future. But this messaging struggles to compete with people's immediate priorities and the excitement of buying a home.

To shift behaviour and move the dial, protection needs to be reframed, as a practical enabler of both staying in the home they're emotionally invested in and securing the life they're building in it.

The question isn't 'what happens if something goes wrong', it's 'how do



If we want different outcomes, we need different conversations – ones designed around behaviour, emotion and what clients really want in the real world, not just rational logic.





we keep this home for you and your loved ones if life doesn't go exactly to plan'. This subtle shift can make a big difference.

Nor can we rely on protection being introduced as an add-on to the end of the mortgage conversation. At this point, it's already facing a losing battle.

This is about shifting away from a transactional approach to protection, where it feels optional or secondary, to embedding it as a natural part of the mortgage journey itself.

Changing consumer expectations

Consumer expectations are also evolving. People increasingly value experiences and services that improve their lives in the present, not just a financial safety net for the distant future.

With the cost of living back in the

spotlight, they're also much more likely to scrutinise what they're getting for their money.

This is creating challenges and opportunities for advisers. Affordability is clearly a key consideration. However, with the growing range of benefits offered through protection plans, advisers can have more meaningful conversations with clients about the value they're getting throughout the life of the policy, not just at the point of claim. Not only that – there is the promise to help support their lifestyle and maintain good health and wellbeing every day (and stay fit enough at work to keep up the mortgage payments).

By shifting the emphasis to the positive benefits of cover and the value the client is getting right now, we can tap into those behavioural biases in a way that drives more successful protection conversations.

If we want different outcomes, we need different conversations – ones

designed around behaviour, emotion and what clients really want in the real world, not just rational logic.

1 Research carried out by Opinium on behalf of Vitality with 2,000 homeowners with a mortgage between 17-26 October

2 'Viewpoint: The Next Chapter, Protecting tomorrow, today', The Association of Mortgage Intermediaries, November 2025



Lendhub



Alan Fitzpatrick
BTL Credit &
Operations Lead
Lendhub

Homeownership remains out of reach for millions. House prices in England sit at circa 8 times average earnings, and the PRS now houses 32% of 25 to 34 year olds. That is not a temporary pressure point. It is a structural reality that demands a professional, well-financed and resilient private rental sector.

What we are seeing is exactly that professionalisation taking shape. A record 66,587 new BTL companies were formed in 2025, a 363% increase over the past decade. Professional landlords are not retreating. They are restructuring, releasing equity to acquire higher-yielding, more energy-efficient stock and disposing of assets that no longer perform.

The 2030 EPC C deadline accelerates this. With 2.5 million rental homes requiring improvement, the landlords who plan and invest now will own the portfolios that sustain both tenants' expectations and returns through the next decade.



Brendan Crowshaw
Head of Mortgage &
Savings Distribution
Vernon Building Society

Longer mortgage terms and JBSP structures are now central to how affordability is being achieved. We've seen this in our own lending, with nearly a quarter of residential completions last year on terms of 30 years or more, and the recent launch of a JBSP-specific product reflects how mainstream these arrangements have become. But extended terms bring extended exposure, as does reliance on an older supporting party. Borrowers are increasingly carrying debt into their 50s and 60s, when income-impacting life events become more likely, particularly for those with complex or self-employed income and no traditional safety net. While longer terms can make protection feel harder to prioritise, they shouldn't deter buyers. Renters face the same life-event risks, plus rising rents and no equity.

Therefore, the "protection gap" shouldn't deter advisers from these structures; handled well, they can improve outcomes and represent a real opportunity to build long-term resilience.



The rise of the multi-income borrower (MIB) reflects a structural shift in how people earn, save and buy homes. For many, income is no longer linear or singular. It's layered, diversified and in many cases, more resilient than it first appears.

The challenge isn't the income itself, but how it's interpreted. Traditional models often struggle to assess borrowers with multiple streams or lower equity, particularly where there's no corporate safety net like sick pay to fall back on.

We're seeing the industry adapt by moving beyond rigid templates toward a more holistic view, assessing income across past, present and future, and focusing on sustainability rather than simplicity.

For brokers, the role is increasingly about articulating that story clearly. As MIBs become the norm, success will depend on combining flexible underwriting with a sharper focus on long-term financial resilience.

Tony Hall

**Head of Business Development
Saffron Building Society**



The "New Professional": Solving for Complex Income & Low Equity

The UK workforce is evolving, with 'contingent' workers - freelancers, contractors, consultants, and agency staff - now making up around 18% of employment.

Lenders need to take a flexible approach to these income types, focusing on overall track record and stability rather than strict minimum time-in-role requirements.

Lenders also must respond to growing demand from UK nationals earning in foreign currencies. Borrowers paid in US dollars or euros have historically had limited options, so widening criteria is helping brokers better support these clients.

To manage risk, foreign currency income is assessed with a 20% reduction for exchange rate movements and reviewed on a UK tax calculation basis.

These enhancements reflect how the industry is adapting to modern income patterns - broadening affordability while maintaining prudent risk management and improving access to finance.

David Binney
**Head of Sales
Norton Home Loans**

Protecting more than the mortgage: A wider conversation



Gifford Clay
Head of Intermediary Sales
National Friendly

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The challenge isn't always about introducing protection, it's about how we bring it to life.

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The FCA's Pure Protection Market Study has put the “protection gap” back into focus. But there's a broader question worth exploring: Are we missing an opportunity to rethink and make protection feel like a natural part of the advice journey?

Many advisers would say they already take a holistic approach, and in many cases, that's true. But in reality, protection can still end up as something we “come back to later” often after the mortgage is done.

The challenge? Expectations are shifting. There's a growing sense that a mortgage without a resilience plan isn't quite a complete outcome anymore. So rather than waiting until completion, is there more we can do to position protection as part of the journey from the very start?

Are clients already ahead of us?

We can see some encouraging shifts in client expectations. Three in four consumers now expect advisers to discuss accident and illness protection. Among Millennials, 67% believe Accident Only Income Protection should be included in that conversation.

That suggests the challenge isn't always about introducing protection, it's about how we bring it to life.

Everyday disruption is often front of mind for clients. While long-term illness is a concern, many are just as focused on what happens if they're unable to work for a few weeks or months. For those with limited sav-

ings, that short-term interruption can have an immediate impact.

Framing protection around these more immediate, relatable risks can help make the conversation feel more relevant and easier to engage with.

Not every client starts in the same place

Traditional long-term Income Protection remains incredibly important, but it won't always be the right starting point for every client, and if that's the only solution we lead with, we risk missing a large part of the market. Data shows that a significant proportion of claimants, particularly for shorter-term or accident-focused cover, are earning below the UK median salary. In many cases, these are the clients who can least afford a gap in their income.

For some, alternative options like accident-only or short-term protection can provide a more accessible entry point. Not as a replacement, but as part of a broader protection journey that evolves over time.

Take, for example, a younger client with a variable income and limited savings. A long-term policy might feel out of reach today, but a more immediate, affordable solution could still offer meaningful protection, and help build that protection mindset early.

A wider conversation: the role of family

There's also a wider angle that's easy



Making protection a more natural part of the journey isn't just down to advisers. As providers, we have to take our share of responsibility too.

to overlook. We often talk about the “Bank of Mum and Dad” when it comes to deposits. But there’s also a case for thinking about the “Protection of Mum and Dad.”

Parents are often highly aware of financial risk, particularly when supporting their children onto the property ladder. Bringing them into the conversation, where appropriate, can help highlight the value of protection and encourage longer-term thinking.

It shifts protection from a transactional decision to something more personal. More emotional. And often, more compelling. Because in reality, this isn't always just a one-client conversation. It's a family one.

Making it easier for everyone

Of course, making protection a more natural part of the journey isn't just down to advisers.

As providers, we have to take our share of responsibility too.

Complex processes, underwriting delays and inconsistent service levels all add friction. And when things feel difficult, it's no surprise that protection can slip down the priority list.

Technology, data and even AI will help, but they're only part of the answer. The fundamentals still matter: making products easier to understand, quicker to access, and more reflective of how people actually live and work today.

And importantly, keeping the human element where it really counts, especially in underwriting and supporting more complex cases.

A small shift, a big difference

The protection gap isn't a new conversation. But it does feel like the context is changing.

Clients are increasingly open to these discussions. A wider range of solutions exists to meet different needs. And there's a shared interest across advisers and providers in delivering better outcomes.

So maybe this isn't about reinventing the advice process and more about a series of small shifts to make protection feel natural in the advice process:

Starting the conversation earlier. Making it more relevant to their lifestyle.

And recognising that protection isn't an add-on, it's part of the foundation.

For more information on an inclusive range of protection products, please [visit our website.](#)





As an industry we assume that we know what consumers want. We also believe we know what consumers understand in terms of protection products. The recent CT26 research suggests these beliefs are unfounded.

Advisers remain in fifth place in terms of where consumers would look for advice on critical illness or income protection. These products are complex and, arguably, shouldn't be purchased without advice yet online searching is the most popular method.

68% of those with an opinion believed a joint life plan to be better than two single life plans yet only 12% stated that they understood the difference.

19% of consumers believe that an income protection plan ends after a claim which is mirrored by 21% stating they would use a critical illness (CIC) payout to replace lost income. Also, only 17% knew that having two single life plans can mean a double payout on children's critical illness cover.

The main trigger for respondents taking out a CIC plan was real life examples of people who have successfully claimed, closely followed by somebody of their age or life-stage explaining why it matters. Of those with a critical illness plan only 19% took advice

This all suggests that consumer ignorance leads to a lack of action and also that when action is taken it is delivered through a fog of ignorance which ultimately could lead to an undesirable outcome.

This must act as a wake-up call to advisers in particular as they are best positioned to engage in meaningful conversations where false beliefs can be swept aside.



Alan Lakey
Director
CIExpert

Building adviser confidence: The key to a more financially resilient Britain



Vicky Churcher

Executive Director
Income Protection Task Force
(IPTF)

“
Advisers are the bridge
between financial
products and real lives.
By continuing to invest
in adviser support, we
can ensure that bridge
becomes stronger,
wider and capable of
protecting many more
households in the years
ahead.”

It's never been more important to support financial advisers so that they are confident and informed enough to provide high quality advice to clients. Against a background of increasingly lengthy mortgage terms and careers that are more complex and less likely to take a traditionally linear route, advice has never been more critical in securing the most appropriate customer outcomes.

The modern mortgage journey looks very different from the one many of today's advisers entered the industry to support. Mortgage terms now stretch to 35 or even 40 years. First-time buyers increasingly rely on the “Bank of Mum and Dad”, and a growing proportion of borrowers are self-employed, freelance or working multiple jobs. At the same time, regulators are rightly focusing on good outcomes and the need to address the persistent protection gap.

All of this means one thing: financial resilience must sit in the middle of the homeownership conversation.

Income protection, in particular, plays an important role. A mortgage may be the largest financial commitment most people ever take on, yet for many households their ability to repay that commitment relies entirely on continued income. If illness or injury prevents someone from working, the consequences can be immediate and severe.

Advisers understand this risk. Yet despite widespread recognition of

the importance of protection, many still tell us that writing income protection consistently remains one of the most challenging parts of the advice process.

This is where support, confidence and collaboration across the industry become critical.

At the Income Protection Task Force (IPTF), one of our core priorities is ensuring advisers have the resources, insights and practical tools they need to engage confidently in protection conversations. For many advisers entering the market, protection can feel complex. Differences between providers, product features and updates, underwriting approaches and claims philosophies can make it difficult to know where to start.

Our Adviser Support hub on the IPTF website was created specifically to address this challenge. Within this area, advisers can access practical guidance, educational content and real-world case studies designed to demystify income protection and help advisers translate product knowledge into meaningful client conversations. This includes resources such as the 7 Families case studies, which illustrate the real-life impact of income protection when illness or injury strikes, as well as guides, insights and industry reports designed to help advisers understand the wider protection landscape.

By making these resources accessible in one place, we aim to reduce



Ultimately, the protection gap will not be closed through product innovation alone. It will be closed when advisers feel confident having protection conversations with every appropriate client”

barriers to entry and make protection easier for advisers who may be newer to the market. However, supporting advisers is not just about helping them start. It is equally important to help them stay in the protection market and build long-term confidence.

Advisers face increasing pressures, from regulatory expectations to time constraints within the mortgage advice process. Protection conversations can sometimes feel like an additional step in an already busy client journey. Yet when positioned correctly, protection should not sit outside the mortgage conversation. It should be an integral part of it. After all, a mortgage offer without a resilience plan can leave borrowers exposed to the very risks that could ultimately threaten their ability to keep their home.

This is why the industry must continue working together to provide advisers with better tools, clearer messaging and stronger education

around income protection. Technology will also play an important role. Digital tools, data insights and AI-driven support have the potential to make protection recommendations more seamless within the advice process, helping advisers identify risks and present solutions more clearly and efficiently to clients.

Ultimately, the protection gap will not be closed through product innovation alone. It will be closed when advisers feel confident having protection conversations with every appropriate client.

This means the industry must continue to support advisers with:

- Clear and accessible education
- Real-life examples that demonstrate the value of protection
- Practical tools that integrate protection into the mortgage journey
- Collaboration between providers, distributors and advisers

Encouragingly, we are already seeing progress. Across the industry, there is growing recognition that improving financial resilience is a shared responsibility.

At IPTF, we see our role as bringing the industry together to support advisers in this mission. Because when advisers feel confident discussing income protection, more customers understand their risks, more families have a financial safety net, and the UK becomes a more resilient nation.

Advisers are the bridge between financial products and real lives. By continuing to invest in adviser support, we can ensure that bridge becomes stronger, wider and capable of protecting many more households in the years ahead.

Learn more about the IPTF Adviser Support hub:

<https://iptf.co.uk/adviser-tools/>





As mortgage terms extend beyond the traditional 25 years, brokers and advisors must address the growing life-stage risks of 'marathon mortgages'. While a 40-year term can feel manageable for a 25 year old, life can happen and plans change. The real risk often emerges when borrowers reach their 60s and face challenges such as reduced income or an inability to work.

"It's critical to identify the pitfalls of lending into later life by exploring what contingencies customers have in place if their circumstances change. Advisers should highlight gaps and provide clear, proactive guidance, particularly around the importance of life cover and income protection.

"We take a broad view as a lender. While the cut off in our policy for employed income is at 75, we will look at Savings, investments and property income to ensure long-term sustainability.



Caroline Mitchell
Mortgage Distribution
Manager
Monmouthshire
Building Society



Josh Hart
Senior Business
Development Manager
Iress



The rapid evolution of AI presents a pivotal opportunity to bridge the UK's persistent and long discussed protection gap. Traditionally, protection discussions have been viewed as dull or transactional however with the utilisation of AI, this allows advisers' recommendations to shift towards a more holistic, personalised approach.

By leveraging new AI tools coming to market, advisors can tailor conversations using specific data points such as lifestyle statistics, occupational risks, life goals, and also gaining earlier understanding into a client's medical profile and how this could impact any premiums. This enables advisors to provide clearer indicative outcomes much sooner, allowing for a more personalised approach regarding the value and need for cover.

AI driven tools allow advisors to move beyond one off sales and instead they can deliver an even more bespoke recommendation that resonates more deeply with the client's unique circumstances. This transition from transactional to meaningful engagement is essential for improving consumer trust and ensuring the protection gap finally begins to narrow.



Resilience in today's housing market isn't about riding out uncertainty, it's about removing it where you can.

For too long, borrowers have been asked to make long-term decisions with short-term products. That disconnect is where financial insecurity creeps in. When payments can change every few years, confidence naturally drops and so does flexibility at different life stages.

Bridging the gap between homeownership and financial security starts with certainty. Give borrowers a clear, stable path, and everything changes. They plan ahead. They build equity. They stay in control.

But resilience isn't just about fixing rates for longer. It's about designing mortgages that flex with real life too, whether that's moving home, overpaying, or benefiting as their loan-to-value improves.

At April, we believe real resilience comes from combining both: longer-term certainty and modern flexibility.

Because when a mortgage works with you, not against you, homeownership becomes something you can truly rely on.



Rachael Hunnisett
Director of Mortgage
Distribution
April Mortgages



Mike Farrell
Protection Sales &
Marketing Director
LV=



When advisers have their initial conversation with a client about a mortgage, in most cases it'll be their first exposure to protection. This presents an opportunity to position protection as a 'must have' at outset rather than an 'optional extra', highlighting that securing their home is just as important as purchasing it. Protection should be bought into the conversation early and quoted as part of the overall cost of purchasing a home. It's clearly a key element of financial planning and reinforced throughout the entire advice process, enabling advisers to move towards a more holistic approach. Our [Reaching Resilience research](#) highlights how important this conversation is in safeguarding their future and also examines the protection needs of first-time buyers.

Advisers can use tools including an initial fact find, finding out who and what matters most to their client and the [LV= Risk Reality Calculator](#), to showcase how important protection is.

The new professional: navigating income complexity and ownership barriers



Paul Adams
Sales Director
Pepper Money

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30% of UK adults have experienced adverse credit at some point in their lives, rising to 16.6 million people.

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Today's borrower looks very different from the one historic affordability models were originally designed around. Income is less predictable, career paths are less linear, and routes into homeownership are more varied. What was once considered non-standard is increasingly the norm. This is the rise of the “new professional” borrower.

Our latest Specialist Lending Study highlights how widespread this shift has become. One in ten UK adults have taken on a side hustle in response to financial pressure, while many others have moved into self-employment or portfolio careers, trends that have accelerated since the pandemic. These borrowers are financially active, but their income doesn't fit neatly into traditional assessment models. As a result, 76% of self-employed individuals believe their work status makes it harder to secure a mortgage.

At the same time, access to homeownership is changing. For many buyers, particularly in higher-value regions such as London and the South East, lower-deposit options such as Shared Ownership are becoming an increasingly important route onto the property ladder. Beyond improving access, recent analysis from the National Audit Office found that shared ownership is forecast to be cheaper than private renting in 93% of areas across England over a ten-year period, highlighting its potential to make homeownership more financially manageable in the long term.

These models play a vital role in widening access, but they also introduce greater financial complexity. Customers aren't just taking on a mortgage, but managing a combination of commitments, including rent, and the potential future costs of increasing their share. This makes it increasingly important that affordability is understood over the full lifecycle of ownership, not just at the point of entry to the market. In this context, the role of the adviser is more valuable than ever, helping customers navigate these structures with clarity, understand how costs may evolve over time, and make informed decisions based on their individual circumstances.

The rise of more complex routes into homeownership, alongside the growth of new employment models, means the industry must continue to adapt. Historically, stability was closely linked to employment type. A salaried borrower with predictable income and access to employer benefits such as sick pay was seen as lower risk. Today, that framework is increasingly outdated. Income is more fluid; financial commitments are more layered, and customers often have fewer traditional safety nets to fall back on.

This doesn't mean borrowers are inherently higher risk. It means borrowers are simply more complex and require a more holistic approach to assessment and advice.

Encouragingly, the market is evolving, with lenders becoming more

flexible in how they assess income, recognising multiple sources of earnings, and taking a broader view of affordability. There's also growing recognition that past credit issues shouldn't automatically define future borrowing potential.

30% of UK adults have experienced adverse credit at some point in their lives, rising to 16.6 million people. This is no longer a marginal segment of the market; it's a significant and growing cohort.

The challenge for brokers lies in navigating a more complex landscape, where no two cases are the same and where clear communication is as important as technical knowledge. The opportunity is to move beyond transactional advice and towards a more strategic, planning-led approach.

This is particularly important for borrowers with lower equity or layered financial commitments. In

these cases, advice should not stop at securing a mortgage. It should extend to helping customers understand how their financial position may evolve, how costs may change over time, and what flexibility they have as their circumstances develop.

It also requires a greater focus on resilience. With mortgage terms extending and financial volatility still present, success should not be measured at completion, but over the life of the loan. That means assessing not just whether a mortgage is affordable today, but whether it remains sustainable over time.

Brokers are central to achieving this. Nearly 9 in 10 of mortgages are now arranged through intermediaries, highlighting the critical role advisers play in guiding customers through increasingly complex decisions.

As the market continues to evolve, so must our definition of successful

lending.

The "new professional" borrower is not an exception; they're becoming the core of the market. Supporting them effectively will require financially responsible flexibility from lenders, insight from advisers, and a shared focus on transparency, education, and informed decision making. The role of the industry is not just to enable access to homeownership, but to ensure customers are equipped with the understanding and support they need to navigate it with confidence over time.



Nearly 9 in 10 of mortgages are now arranged through intermediaries, highlighting the critical role advisers play in guiding customers through increasingly complex decisions.







Risk of the 40 year term?

I think perhaps the risk and opportunity of longer term mortgages needs to be explored further with some clever product design.

While the initial thought of a longer term mortgage can be daunting it is really to help spread the cost in the early years when earnings are lower.

A fixed rate for a longer term (e.g 10 yrs or more) can provide peace of mind but with the option to review it after 5 yrs.

The ability to port the rate to a new property is already there, but to include the option to refund any ERC if you were to sell the property and return to the lender within 24 months would also lessen the risks to the applicant in the event of unexpected life changes that occur.

So is it really a risk to keep a mortgage rather than restart the term each time you move?



Chris Henry
Business Development
Manager
iress



Andrew Sykes
Senior Corporate
Account Manager
Leeds Building Society

The new professional: Why modern income needs a modern approach to mortgage affordability

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Lenders will keep innovating. But it's brokers - listening, advising, and advocating - who will remain at the heart of helping customers achieve sustainable homeownership.

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As income patterns become increasingly complex and customer demographics evolve, lenders and brokers must continually reevaluate how affordability is assessed. Understanding the multiple income sources of so-called new professionals demands a more nuanced, flexible approach to make sure it continues to meet the needs of aspiring homeowners.

The new landscape for first time buyers

Over the past five years, the UK mortgage market has been increasingly focused on supporting first time buyers (FTBs). Higher LTVs, longer mortgage terms and innovative family-assisted schemes have all helped open the door for more aspiring homeowners.

Despite recent fluid economic conditions, assuming we can return to the level of market stability and increased product availability that was anticipated only a recent time ago, 2026 is still expected to offer continued opportunities for FTBs.

These customers aren't simply an entry-point demographic. Today's FTBs become tomorrow's home movers and future remortgages -

and demand is set to rise.

[UK Finance](#) forecasted external remortgaging to grow 10% to £77bn in 2026, supported by an estimated 1.8 million fixed-rate deals due to mature during the year. Ensuring ongoing support across the entire homeownership journey has never been more important.

Affordability in a changing income world

Across FTBs, home movers and remortgages, one constant remains: the centrality of affordability. But what defines 'income' has fundamentally shifted.

The traditional PAYE borrower is no longer the norm with it being reported that some adults are taking on gig work at often alongside a salaried role.

Likewise, [according to ONS figures](#) whilst the number of self-employed people may have dropped from the pre-Covid high, the last couple of years has seen growth begin to return and has increased significantly over the last 20 years. And for many borrowers, income now comes from multiple sources: contracting, second jobs, freelance work, or hybrid



These customers aren't simply an entry-point demographic. Today's FTBs become tomorrow's home movers and future remortgages - and demand is set to rise.

self-employed/employed roles.

Add to this the reality that customers' circumstances change over time - sometimes through opportunity, sometimes through necessity. A borrower may move from PAYE into consultancy, take on gig work to supplement earnings, or reduce hours after a life event. Static, uniform affordability models simply can't keep pace with the dynamism of modern working life.

Why brokers matter

This evolving income landscape makes the lender-broker partnership more valuable than ever.

Brokers are uniquely positioned to interpret the complexity behind each client's income story. They take the time to look at their customers individually, bringing the human element that automated journeys may not as easily pick up, understanding sector patterns, stress testing real

world income volatility and matching clients to lenders who recognise their full earning capacity.

A good broker will also consider resilience planning as integral to good customer outcomes - not just arranging loans to help customers into their dream homes, but also ensuring their customers are covered regardless of what life throws at them, safeguarding their long-term financial stability.

A future built on flexibility and resilience

Income patterns will continue to evolve. The gig economy, portfolio careers and self-employment will continue to become more mainstream. And as people navigate these shifts, the mortgage industry must do the same.

At Leeds Building Society, our purpose - to put homeownership within reach - means adapting to the real-

ities of how people live and work today. Our lending approach already considers a broad range of income types, and we continually review our affordability models to make sure they reflect modern working patterns.

Lenders will keep innovating. But it's brokers - listening, advising, and advocating - who will remain at the heart of helping customers achieve sustainable homeownership.

To find out more about Leeds Building Society's high LTI proposition Income Plus and how it supports modern, complex income borrowers, visit:

www.leedsbuildingsociety.co.uk/intermediaries/unlocking-the-next-step/





Jamie Leong
Team Leader
Walsham Brothers

You secured their mortgage, but did you secure their future? Because a mortgage without protection is not the end solution – it is exposure. The FCA's Protection Gap agenda is forcing a long-overdue shift. With regulation now a top concern for advisers, the focus is moving beyond transactions to secured outcomes. A mortgage without a resilience plan is increasingly viewed as a potentially poor outcome, because without protection your client's home is built on foundations of hope, hope that they don't fall sick, hope that they are not made unemployed, and hope doesn't pay the bills. The time has come to reframe advice away from simply arranging the mortgage but to actually planning and managing for long-term resilience. Protection should be intrinsic, not optional. An open, accessible marketplace powered by data can highlight gaps in client protection and seamlessly deliver personalised recommendations throughout their journey. The future of advice isn't just approvals, it's durability.



Rob Bowes
Product Lead - Mortgages
iress

Balancing household finances in the UK is becoming more challenging. With the erosion of traditional safety nets like guaranteed Defined Benefit pensions and the growing length of borrowing terms (often 40 years), the financial burden on the individual has intensified. Successive systemic shifts have left borrowers carrying more personal risk for greater durations, making the need for certainty paramount.

As the data shows, the industry is responding. A mortgage is no longer a standalone transaction; it is the cornerstone of a client's financial wellbeing. In an environment of constant macro and micro volatility, advisers are stepping into the role of resilience coaches, moving beyond basic product sourcing to help clients navigate the unexpected.

This is where intelligent technology becomes indispensable. With personalised, data-driven insights, we can map out a dynamic safety net for the consumer. When tech handles the heavy lifting, it frees the adviser to deliver the empathetic, holistic advice that ensures a family's home is protected, no matter what the market or life throws at them.



Jo Wilkie
Senior Manager - Strategic
Partnerships
Cirencester Friendly

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In the latest AMI Protection Viewpoint report, only 39% of respondents recalled their broker asking about protection insurance, but 99% of brokers said they asked their clients about it

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Talking protection – think marathon not sprint

What is the difference between a house and a home? A house is a building, bricks and mortar, an empty, inanimate object. A home has a soul. It is a place that feels safe and welcoming. It's filled with emotions, memories and connections. It is easy to forget a house; a home stays with you forever.

A home is a foundation from which you can build your life. It binds families together, providing vital security and stability from which to prosper. When you think of a home in these terms, it makes perfect sense to protect it. This thought should be front of mind, so why is it so often an afterthought?

In the latest AMI Protection Viewpoint report, only 39% of respondents recalled their broker asking about protection insurance, but 99% of brokers said they asked their clients about it. This represents an enormous disconnect. Why is there such a chasm between what consumers and advisers remember?

These results indicate the protection conversation happens as an afterthought, tacked on to the end of the discussion, part of a tick box exercise. There is a tendency for advisers to concentrate on the bricks and mortar part, helping people with the finances to buy a house. There is far too little discussion about the emotion attached with that move, what that home will mean and why it is so

important to protect it.

This lack of consumer recall means that protection is ignored or forgotten, with too many people not having the cover they need to be financially resilient in the face of the mishaps and misfortunes that are part of daily life. To change this, we need to talk about homes and what they mean.

Let's face it, conversations that centre around hard facts and numbers can feel sterile, cold and a little dull. Over a third of UK adults say they find understanding financial documents hard. Moving the discussions away from figures and focusing on feelings will not only make it easier for people to engage with the topic, but it will also make those conversations feel far more relevant and memorable.

Stories are what people connect with. They need to know how protection works in practice. Real world examples go beyond the figures, showing how ordinary people have benefited from safeguarding the

things that matter most to them.

Protection is not an impulse purchase. People need time and space to digest what it covers, how it works and if it is right for them. In all likelihood they will have questions and will want to know more information, before going further. One conversation is unlikely to be enough. It needs to be part of an ongoing dialogue.

While AI can help with some of these questions, providing useful background information, it needs to work alongside face-to-face contact, not replace it. People need that personal connection to have complete confidence that they are buying the right policy to protect them and the things they love.

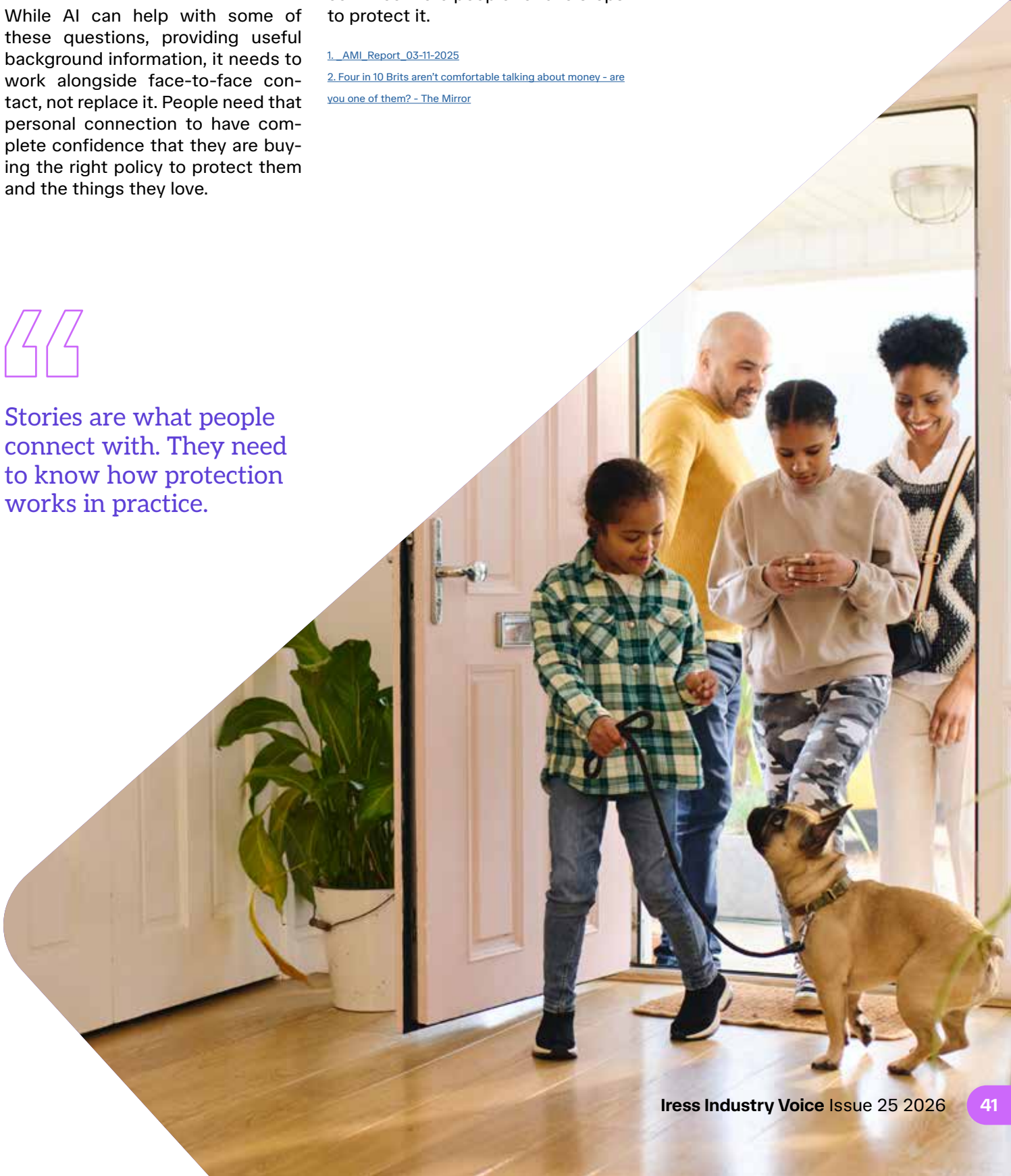
If the protection gap is to be closed, the conversation needs to happen from the start and be an integral part of the process. Thinking about how to stay in a home needs to be given the same level of importance as how to purchase that home in the first place. This conversation needs to be based on real world experiences and tap into the emotions that relate to the home. It is thinking about these feelings that will convince more people to take steps to protect it.

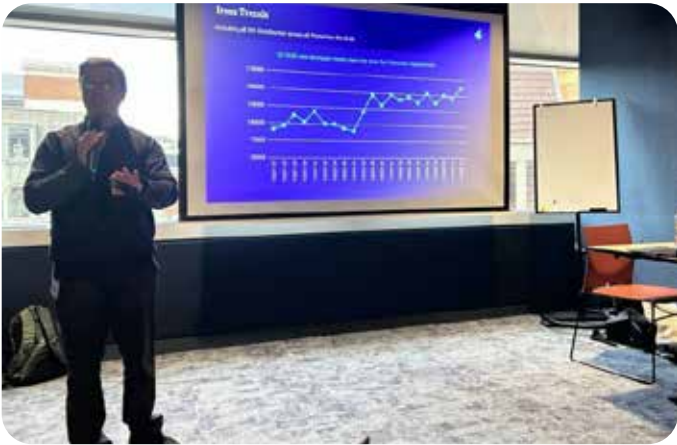
[1. AMI Report 03-11-2025](#)

[2. Four in 10 Brits aren't comfortable talking about money - are you one of them? - The Mirror](#)



Stories are what people connect with. They need to know how protection works in practice.





Watercooler to real world problem solving: How unfiltered collaboration is the cornerstone of Iress product strategy



Jacqueline Durbin
Global Head of Product -
Sourcing
Iress

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For us, “Collaboration” isn’t a buzzword; it’s our R&D engine, it’s our commitment to our clients.

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Cast your minds back to the business aftermaths of the pandemic, businesses felt fragmented. For the financial services and the advice industry, the sudden shift to digital was a necessity, but it came at a cost: the loss of the “watercooler moment”; those spontaneous, messy, and vital conversations where real problems are identified and solved.

It was against this backdrop that we hosted our first client focused get-together at our newly opened Cheltenham head office. It wasn’t a product launch or a sales pitch; it was an experiment in open dialogue. We wanted to hear, unfiltered, what our customers were facing.

What started as a few chairs in a meeting room has now evolved into a cornerstone of the Iress Sourcing product strategy: the Iress Forums.

The Power of the Room

Today, those small gatherings have grown into high-impact events across the UK - from the tech-forward halls of AWS Experience Centre to our most recent sessions at the Quilter and Hannover Re offices in London.

But the scale isn’t what matters; it’s the ecosystem. By bringing together lenders, reinsurers, life companies, advisers and tech partners, we are breaking down the “silos” that have historically slowed our industry down.

Looking Ahead: The Future of Advice

For us, “Collaboration” isn’t a buzzword; it’s our R&D engine, it’s our commitment to our clients. These forums allow us to stress-test our roadmap in real-time against the economic challenges and shifting regulations our users face daily. Whether we are discussing mortgage connectivity or protection innovation, these sessions ensure our technology solves real-world friction.

As we look to the future, the role of these forums will only expand. We are moving from “sourcing products” to “solving problems.” The best way to navigate a changing landscape and predict the future of advice is to build it together.



The rise of the ‘new professional’ means borrower risk shouldn’t be defined by employment type alone. Today, UK professionals aren’t always working a traditional 9-5, some are moving across borders or working on a rotational or contract basis. For example, expats often face challenges when applying for a mortgage, even with a stable and well evidenced income. The fact that the majority of our active expat mortgages are Buy to Let highlights just how many UK nationals overseas are investing in UK property.

At the Marsden, we believe it’s time to shift from viewing complex income as an exception, to recognising it as a typical income path when assessing affordability. This requires assessing income durability beyond the PAYE safety net, as well as adapting product criteria based on real scenarios to better support complex income cases.



Katie Broome
Product Manager
Marsden Building Society



Andrew Sadler
Key Account Manager
Suffolk Building
Society



Longer mortgage terms can open doors to home ownership otherwise closed but can also carry some risk for clients, as there’s more chance of life throwing curve balls. Products with flexible features built in from the start can help mitigate these risks. For example, lenders can allow overpayments as income and/or bonuses increase over the mortgage term, or when an inheritance arrives.

In the event of separation or divorce, does the product allow for portability, additional borrowing, and the ability to transfer equity? Are maturity products guaranteed, ensuring clients don’t end up trapped on a high SVR?

The best advisors will use each product transfer window to re-evaluate, and perhaps reduce the term.

As clients age into later life, product features such as ‘no Early Repayment Charge on death of client’ soften financial shock. Giving early advice around Lasting Power of Attorney also supports older borrowers seeking more resilience.



There is an increased demand of mortgages with a term longer than 25 years, known as the rise of “marathon mortgages”. These mortgages create differing risks throughout the term as life events happen and income changes. It’s key that brokers explore this when providing advice to enable them to recommend the most suitable term for their client’s needs and circumstances.

Our product design considers the changes a borrower may experience through the life cycle of their mortgage, flexibility is key to ensure customers can choose to overpay, port, adjust their term, scheme and repayments as their circumstances change. For younger borrowers, distant risks can feel unimportant, however Brokers can help them understand how their mortgage may evolve over time.

We work with brokers to support cases that need a common sense, flexible, manual underwriting approach this enables us to supporting brokers and borrowers throughout increasingly complex and extended mortgage journeys.



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For owner occupiers, the growing recognition that energy efficient homes cost less to run - and therefore improve affordability assessments - is a welcome shift away from the historic “one size fits all” approach.

For Buy to Let, the picture is more complex. Landlords aren’t usually the ones paying the energy bills, so applying the same affordability logic used in residential lending is far less straightforward. Lenders are keen to offer retrofit products to help landlords improve the efficiency of their portfolios, but landlords are facing significant day to day financial pressures. As a result, EPC upgrades often fall down the priority list.

With government deadlines for achieving EPC C+ repeatedly removed, and a high interest rate environment that now looks likely to persist, many landlords are understandably reluctant to take on additional borrowing for energy efficiency improvements. Motivating the wider landlord population to invest in EPC upgrades remains a real challenge and requires certainty around legislative policy from central government to see larger-scale landlord support.



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