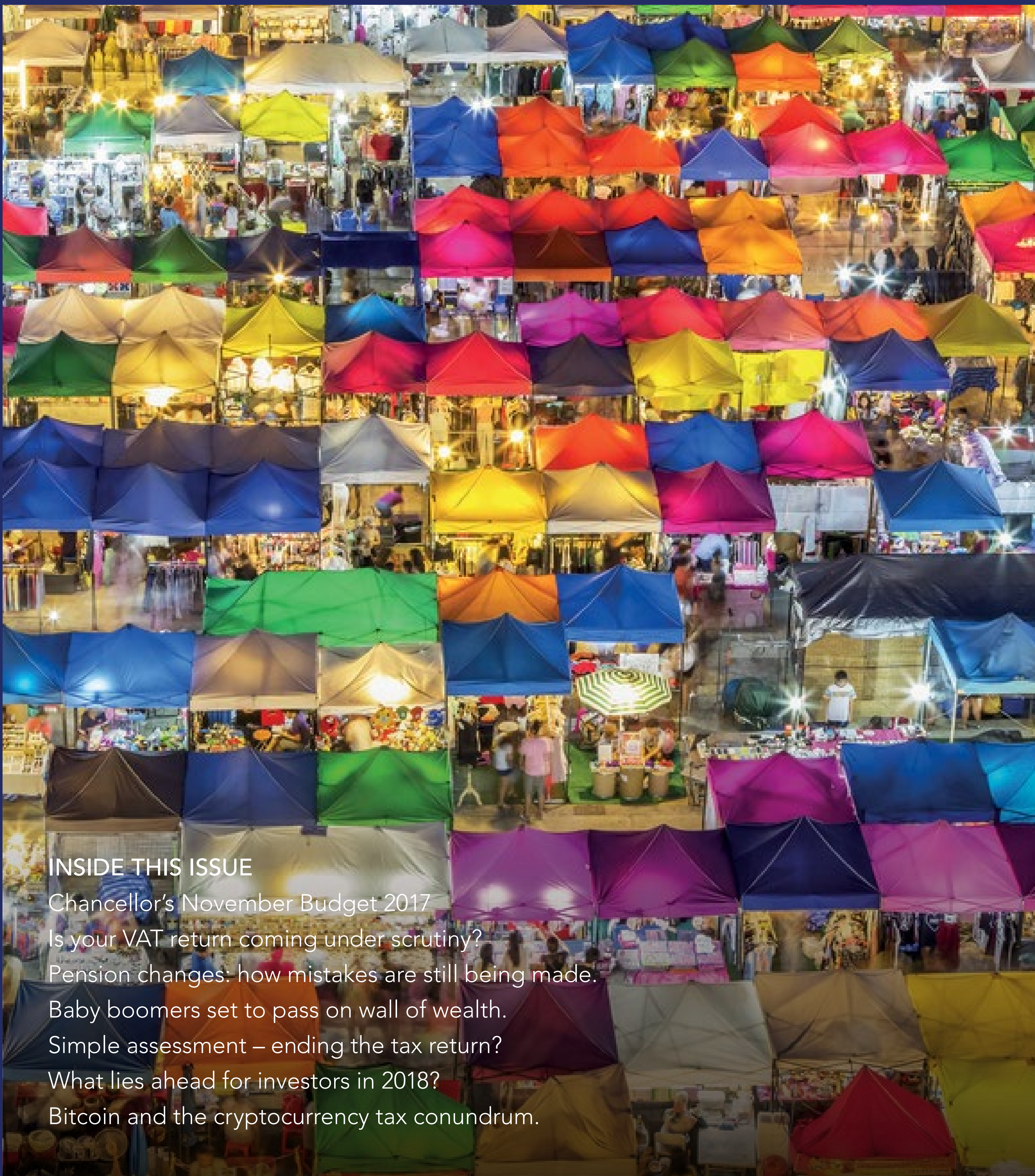
MARTIN AITKEN
FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED

MARTIN AITKEN &CO
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS & BUSINESS ADVISERS

# Financial & Tax Acuity

Issue 4



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



**UK Budget 2017 and the Scottish Budget 2017**
Get the full lowdown, and the impacts on you and your business, on maco.co.uk and mafsltd.co.uk

# Autumn Budget 2017: steady as she goes

First budgets of a new parliament are traditionally the dramatic ones in which the Chancellor dispenses the unpalatable medicine of tax increases, because they are at the furthest point from the next election. However, for a variety of reasons, Mr Hammond did not follow the norm. Far from increasing the Exchequer's income, the Budget Red Book reveals a net tax giveaway of just under £1.6 billion in the coming tax year.

His main headline-grabbing move was to give first time buyers an exemption from stamp duty land tax on the first £300,000 of consideration for properties worth up to £500,000. Some move on this front had been widely expected, and it accounts for over a third of the giveaway. The Chancellor was less generous on the income tax front, increasing both the personal allowance and the higher rate threshold by 3% – the standard inflation-linked increase. We will have to wait until 14 December when the Scottish Budget is due to be announced in the Scottish Parliament to see if these increases will also be applied in Scotland. He gave nothing away to individual savings account (ISA) investors, freezing the main ISA and lifetime ISA investment limits. Pension savers were luckier, with an increase in the lifetime allowance – the first since 2010 – and no changes to the annual allowance.

Venture capital schemes were again in the firing line, with a raft of measures designed to introduce a greater emphasis on risk investment to venture capital trusts, enterprise investment schemes and seed enterprise investment schemes. However, he took no action on inheritance tax business relief, which had been expected in some quarters.

If commentators suggest that this was a dull Budget, Mr Hammond will probably be pleased. After his national insurance U-turn following his March Budget, a steady-as-she-goes, broadly neutral Budget was likely to be his goal.

## Key Highlights

– get the full Budget commentary on maco.co.uk

First time buyers of residential property outside Scotland will pay no stamp duty land tax on the first £300,000 of the purchase price for a home, provided its value does not exceed £500,000. The Scottish Budget is due to be published on 14 December so we will have to wait until then to find out if this measure is to be enacted in Scotland.

The personal allowance will rise to £11,850 and the higher rate tax threshold for the UK (excluding non-savings, non-dividend income in Scotland) will rise to £46,350 for 2018/19.

The pension lifetime allowance will be increased from £1 million to £1.03 million from April 2018. There will be no change to the annual allowance.

Venture capital trusts, enterprise investment schemes and seed enterprise investment schemes will be required to focus more on companies where there is a real investment risk.

The diesel supplement for company cars will be increased from 3% to 4% from April 2018.

Online marketplaces will become jointly and severally liable for unpaid VAT of UK traders as well as overseas traders.





## Personal Taxes

The personal allowance will increase to £11,850 and the higher rate threshold will rise to £46,350 for 2018/19. The Scottish tax bands and rates for non-savings, non-dividend income will be announced in the Scottish Budget due on 14 December.

Following reform in April 2017 of the off-payroll working rules (IR35) for public sector engagements, the government will consult on extending the legislation to the private sector.

The government will delay the implementation of the NIC reforms by one year as previously announced. Consequently, Class 2 NICs will continue to be payable in 2018/19.

From April 2018, there will be no benefit in kind tax charge on electricity that employers provide where employees recharge their personally-owned electric or hybrid vehicles at their workplace.

A consultation document will be published in 2018 on how to make the taxation of trusts simpler, fairer and more transparent.

## Pensions, Savings & Investments

The ISA annual subscription limit for 2018/19 will remain unchanged at £20,000 and the lifetime ISA (LISA) annual subscription limit will stay at £4,000. The annual subscription limit for junior ISAs (JISAs) and child trust funds (CTFs) for 2018/19 will rise to £4,260.

The lifetime allowance for pension savings will increase to £1.03 million for 2018/19. There is no change to the annual allowance. The lifetime allowance will rise by £30,000 from 6 April 2018. If you plan to draw from your pensions and already have funds exceeding the current £1m lifetime allowance limit, you may want to wait before taking your pension benefits.

The maximum an individual may invest under the EIS in a tax year will double to £2 million, where an amount of over £1 million is invested in one or more knowledge-intensive companies. The annual investment limit for knowledge-intensive companies receiving investments under the EIS, and from VCTs, will also double to £10 million, but the lifetime limit will remain at £20 million.

Knowledge-intensive companies will be allowed to use the date when their annual turnover first exceeds £200,000 to determine the start of the initial investing period, instead of the date of first commercial sale. The changes will have effect from 6 April 2018, subject to state aid rules.

## Business taxes

The rate of the tax credit for (R&D) expenditure will rise from 11% to 12% from 1 January 2018. A new advance clearance service will be piloted for claims for R&D expenditure credit, to provide pre-filing agreement for three years. Your business might be entitled to a valuable R&D tax credit – even if it doesn't make a taxable profit. Check out the position as you might be surprised what expenditure can qualify and how much it could be worth to you.

The government will extend the first year allowances for zero-emission goods vehicles and gas refuelling equipment to March/April 2021.

The company car benefit in kind diesel supplement will rise from 3% to 4% with effect from 6 April 2018, except for cars that meet the real driving emissions step 2 (RDE2) standards. The fuel benefit charge and van benefit charge will increase by the September 2017 RPI from 6 April 2018.

Until 31 March 2020, the taxable turnover threshold for registration for value added tax (VAT) will remain at £85,000 and the deregistration threshold will stay at £83,000. The registration and deregistration thresholds for relevant acquisitions from other EU member states will remain at £85,000. The government will consult on the design of the VAT threshold.

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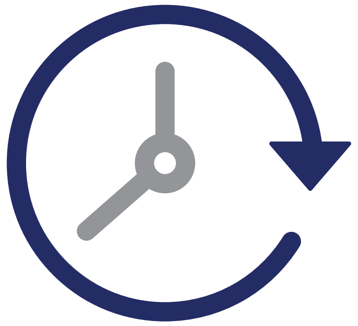
# What lies ahead for investors in 2018?



**2017 has so far been interesting, to say the least. We have all become much better at expecting the unexpected; experience has certainly taught us that.**

Many investors are getting used to a variety of political, financial and economic factors and hopefully learning to look through the 'noise' to focus on what really matters. What we do know is that market volatility will continue and areas of value exist, which makes asset allocation a key tool when planning your portfolio.

### A healthy investor appetite

Investors started the year confidently as the 'Trump reflation rally' continued from the tail end of 2016. Although fading a little more recently, global equity markets hit all-time highs in the summer with over $10 trillion added to their value in the first half of the year, exemplifying a healthy investor appetite. Based on measures of volatility, investors' tolerance for risk across many different asset classes was at a three year high in the summer.

### Domestic focus

With a backdrop of modest global growth at home, there are mixed signals of growth for the UK economy. We, of course, have the added complication of ongoing Brexit negotiations to contend with. Weak sterling remained the key driver of UK blue chip companies with high overseas earnings, nudging the FTSE100 higher.

The FTSE250 has experienced more modest growth; its domestic focus benefitting less from the uplift of weaker sterling. The weaker currency has particularly benefitted those industries which export goods and services.

### What really matters?

As traditional macro concerns return to the fore, portfolio diversity holds the key to approaching your investments and managing risk. Having different assets in your portfolio from different sectors and global regions is helpful in achieving this. It is important to think about longer-term timescales instead of focusing too intently on short-term events and market fluctuations. What is clear is that financial advice is essential to help position your portfolio in line with your objectives and attitude to risk. Remember to get in touch if you have any changes in your personal circumstances which may affect your objectives, risk and capacity for loss.

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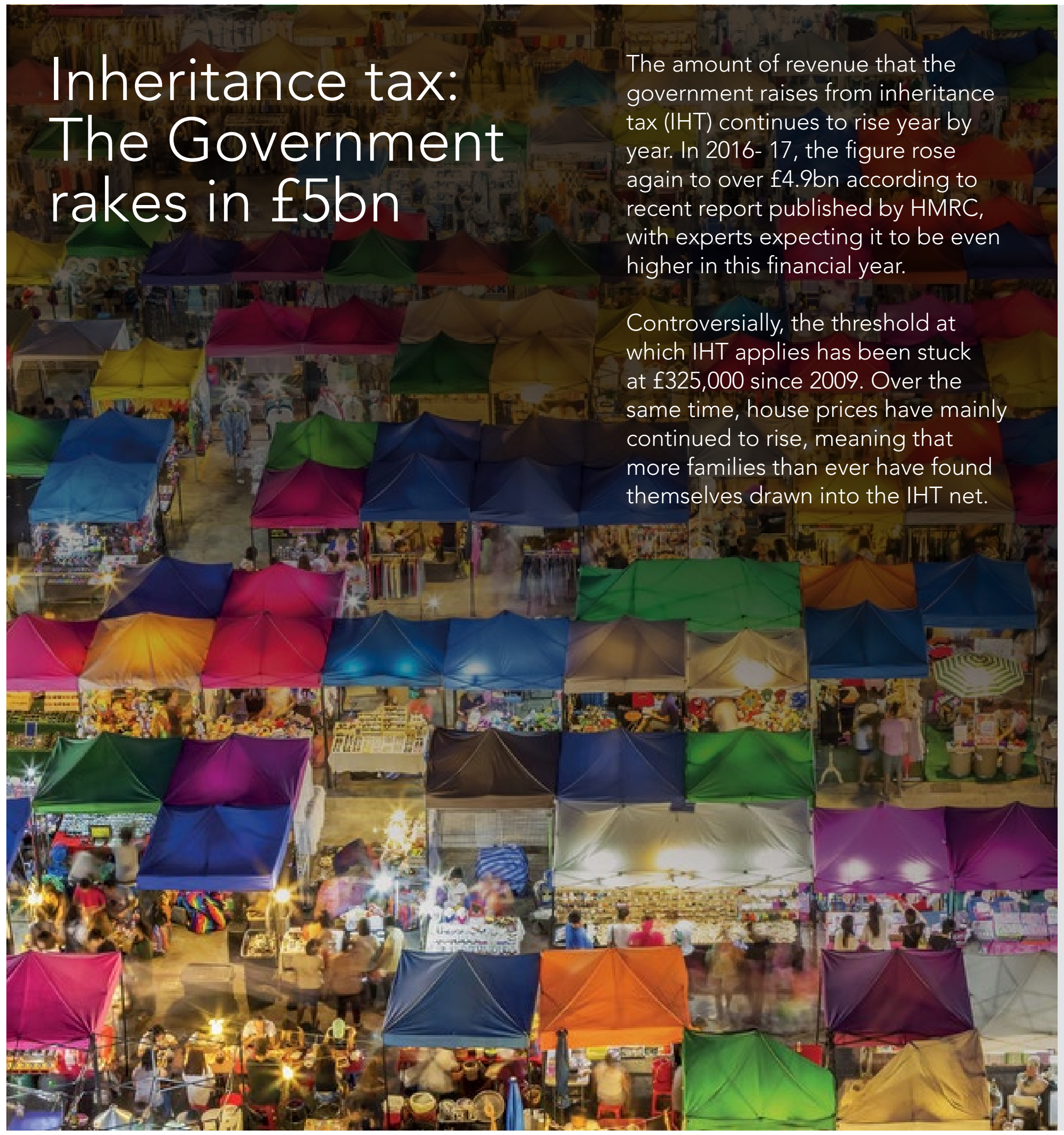

# Inheritance tax: The Government rakes in £5bn

The amount of revenue that the government raises from inheritance tax (IHT) continues to rise year by year. In 2016- 17, the figure rose again to over £4.9bn according to recent report published by HMRC, with experts expecting it to be even higher in this financial year.

Controversially, the threshold at which IHT applies has been stuck at £325,000 since 2009. Over the same time, house prices have mainly continued to rise, meaning that more families than ever have found themselves drawn into the IHT net.

Help has come in the form of the family home allowance that reduces the amount of IHT payable on a main residence being left to defined direct descendants. Referred to as the 'main residence nil rate band', it is being introduced in stages over four years, with a limit of £100,000 applying from April 2017, rising each tax year until it reaches £175,000 per person in 2020. This is in addition to the individual allowance for IHT of £325,000.

### Why early planning matters

There are several ways in which you can reduce your potential liability to IHT. Many families consider giving assets away during their lifetime. However, you must outlive the gift by seven years, if not they count as part of your estate, although taper relief applies so that if you die, say, within six years the tax would be less.

### Using your annual allowances

Each financial year you can make gifts of up to £3,000 (in total, not per recipient) and if you don't use this in one tax year, you can carry it over to the next year but not beyond, which means you could give away £6,000.

Gifts of £250 per recipient per tax year to any number of people are exempt. Each parent of a bride or groom can give up to £5,000; grandparents or other relatives can give up to £2,500 and any well-wisher can give £1,000. Gifts to registered charities and political parties are also exempt.

Every family's circumstances are different, so taking bespoke professional advice is essential in planning your estate.

### Tax Planning for Life 2017-18

You'll find more tax planning recommendations and planning tips in the latest edition of Tax Planning for Life. Download your copy from maco.co.uk

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# Is your VAT return coming under scrutiny?

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) collected an extra £3.4 billion from small and medium-sized businesses through inquiries into the under-payment of VAT in 2016/17, according to tax investigation insurer.

VAT revenue from SMEs accounted for almost half (49%) of the additional tax take from investigations into small and medium-sized businesses by HMRC's compliance teams. PfP, a company which provides tax support and insurance to accountancy firms, said this is a higher proportion of the total VAT take compared with last year, when the figure stood at 45%.

As part of its ongoing crackdown on tax evasion, HMRC is increasing pressure on SMEs to maximise tax revenue. According to PfP, the long-term trend of high tax take from SMEs is likely to continue.

The small number of businesses looking to avoid tax are also putting those who make small mistakes on their tax returns under scrutiny.

HMRC's inquiries can be particularly costly, time-consuming and disruptive for SMEs which do not have contingency plans in place to deal with a long tax investigation.

In order to avoid inquiries and fines from HMRC, SMEs need to ensure they are fully compliant and submitting accurate and timely paperwork.

It is very apparent that these types of investigations are not going to go away, if anything we are likely to see more scrutiny over SME's tax affairs over the next couple of years and we would advise you to consider subscribing to our Tax Investigations Service.

A typical tax enquiry can cost upwards of £5,000 to resolve – our Tax Investigations Insurance service is designed to provide our clients with protection against the representation costs of an enquiry.

**If you want to protect yourself and your business against the costs of an HMRC investigation, get in touch with me, or your usual contact to arrange an appointment.**

**Iain Stirling, Assistant Tax Manager**
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# Alternative approach to business finance

Small businesses struggling to access finance from major banks have received almost £4 million of funding thanks to an innovative scheme.

Over the past nine months, 230 small businesses from beauticians to forklift truck training companies, which were rejected for loans by some of the UK's best-known banks, have received £3.8 million from alternative lenders.

The government-backed referral scheme, launched at the end of 2016, requires nine of the UK's largest banks to pass on the details of small businesses they have turned down for loans to three finance platforms: Funding Xchange, Business Finance Compared and Funding Options. The nine banks are: RBS; Lloyds; HSBC; Barclays; Santander; Clydesdale and Yorkshire Bank; Bank of Ireland; Danske Bank and First Trust.

These platforms then share their details with alternative finance providers and go on to facilitate a conversation between the business and any provider who expresses an interest in supplying finance to them.

"Small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of Britain's economy and it is right they have access to a wide range of sources of finance," said Stephen Barclay, Economic Secretary to the Treasury." A refusal from a big bank should not be the end of the line for a small business and, thanks to our match-making scheme they have another avenue to try for funding," he added.

**Spreading your options**

Loans resulting from this scheme ranged from £200 to £500,000 in size, with the average amount standing around £16,000. Business sectors which have benefited from the initiative include construction, retail, technology and science. A fourth finance platform, Alternative Business Funding, joined the scheme from 1 November 2017 to extend the options available to businesses.

According to HM Treasury, research shows that 71% of businesses seeking finance only ask one lender and, if rejected, may simply give up on looking for the required cash injection rather than seek alternative options.

"The most common response from smaller businesses when they do not get the full amount of finance applied for is to give up or cancel their plans. This can mean businesses missing potential expansion opportunities, with a knock-on for UK economic growth," pointed out Keith Morgan, chief executive officer of the British Business Bank.

If you are looking to raise finance and would appreciate an early conversation to discuss all of the options that may be available to you, including accessing business grant funding give me a call or send me an email and I'll arrange a time to meet with you.

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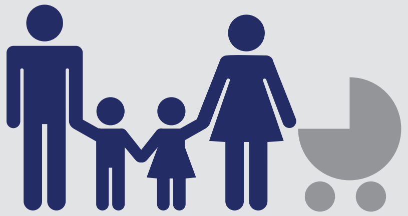
# Baby boomers set to pass on a wall of wealth



A recent research study shows that Britain's grandparents hold over £400 billion in wealth. The bulk of this wealth has arisen as a result of the continuing rise in property values.

Elderly couples with homes will pass down on average property worth £400,000 to £500,000 to their offspring, with the money they leave behind set to benefit four or five recipients. Based on just over a million people who fall into this category, this equates to a substantial "wall of wealth", much of which will be passed on to grandchildren, though with elderly care costs potentially eroding this in some cases.

Contrary to public opinion, there is little evidence that these grandparents are planning on spending their kids' inheritance. In fact, they feel under pressure to help the next generations and are more focused on passing money on than they are on consuming it themselves.

It seems that this cohort is acutely aware of the challenges faced by the millennial generation and is keen to help them with the big financial challenges in their lives, like getting onto the housing ladder.

**Generation rent disadvantaged**

Those millennials lucky enough to have home-owning parents and grandparents are in the fortunate position of being able to buy a property themselves. However, this doesn't apply to all, and many who form part of what has been dubbed "Generation Rent", may find themselves in this position for many more years than would have been the case a few years ago.

Since the early 2000s, high house prices, weak growth in real incomes and greater controls over lending have all combined to make home ownership harder, despite a long period of low interest rates, competitive mortgage deals and various government policies designed to help first-time buyers. The number of 25 year olds who own their own home has more than halved in the last 20 years.

**It's never too early, but it can be too late**

It's never too early to consider how you wish to pass on your wealth to the next generation to ensure that you don't pay HMRC a penny more than owed, nor a day before it is due.

Our financial advisers and tax experts will guide you on how you can pass on your wealth to the next generation in a tax efficient manner. If you would like advice on how to pass your wealth on to the next generations, then do get in touch.

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# Will your pension go to the wrong person?

It can come as a surprise to many people to learn that their pension doesn't form part of their estate on death. Unlike property, savings and investments which can all be dealt with under the terms of your Will, who gets your pension savings depends on who you nominated when you were asked to complete an 'expression of wishes' form by your pension provider.

As it isn't compulsory to provide beneficiary details and return the form, some people overlook this important step. This can mean a considerable delay in the payment of pension benefits to dependants.

Other complications can arise. If you nominated a previous spouse to receive your pension benefits but subsequently remarry and don't update the form, then this could mean that your ex-spouse would end up benefitting instead. It could also mean that children and stepchildren may not be provided for.

**Investigations**

If on your death the situation isn't clear, then pension scheme trustees and administrators can carry out their own investigations to decide who should receive your pension benefits. They can consult the Will, contact family, friends and colleagues to establish your personal circumstances. However, this can be a lengthy process.

The best way to guard against your pension savings going to the wrong person is to make sure you keep your pension nomination form updated, otherwise there is no guarantee that the decision reached by your pension company will be what you had intended to have happen.

**Pension Freedoms**

Following the changes to the rules governing defined contribution pensions in April 2015, your pension savings can be passed to anyone you choose to nominate, and that doesn't have to be your spouse or dependants. In the event of your death before age 75, the money will be passed on free of tax, and if death occurs after age 75, then income tax is payable when your beneficiaries start to withdraw the money, at their marginal rate.

**Making life easy for those you leave behind**

When completing the nomination form, it's a good idea to provide the full names of all your intended beneficiaries, so rather than just nominating your children, for example, it makes sense to name them individually. Make sure you have a current copy of your nomination form and keep it in a safe place with your Will and other important documents.

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# Auto-enrolment moves to the next stage in April

From next April employers and employees will find their auto-enrolment contributions rising. Are you ready for the changes?

Over the last three years over 8.5 million people have begun saving for their retirement and almost 800,000 employers have successfully enrolled their employees and complied with their auto-enrolment duties. The success so far has outperformed many predictions.

April 2018 sees auto-enrolment move on to its next stage.

The minimum total contribution required to date has been just 2% of band earnings (that is, earnings between £5,876 and £45,000 a year in 2017/18). Of this, the employer must pay at least 1%. For an employee earning £25,000 a year, a typical minimum 1% contribution works out at £12.75 a month after basic rate tax relief.

**Increased contributions**
Next April, the minimum contribution will rise to 5%, with the employer paying at least 2% of this total. Most employees' contributions will triple to 3%. There's another 3% increase in 2019, meaning the employer will pay a minimum 3% and most employees 5%. Based on this year's rates, that £12.75 a month in March 2017 will have increased to £63.75 a month by May 2019.

The new tax year in April generally sees changes to the personal allowance and national insurance contribution levels. Both generally boost employees' net pay and so hide some of the increased deduction from earnings.

If you're an employer, you should ensure you have budgeted for your contributions increases in 2018/19 and then again in 2019/20. And you should alert your employees to their contribution increase before it takes effect.

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# Pension changes – how mistakes are still being made

Thanks to the changes in pension legislation that came into effect in April 2015, those who have defined contribution pension plans have more choice available to them than ever before.

When they reach 55 they have a variety of options; they can leave their pension plan untouched, purchase an annuity, take an adjustable income (flexi access drawdown), take their cash in instalments (uncrystallised funds pension lump sum), or take their entire pension pot in one lump sum.

Many people are still finding the options open to them confusing and some are making choices that may not be the best options for their circumstances. Here's some general guidance on accessing your pension.

**Don't take out too much cash**
Some people are withdrawing considerable sums from their pension and putting the cash into a deposit account. With interest rates low and inflation rising, this will erode the value of their savings. Options like income drawdown allow you to take the amount of money you need, leaving the rest invested in your fund.

Taking your whole pension pot as a lump sum could be a very expensive mistake. Although the first 25% will be tax-free, the rest will be added to your income for that tax year and could mean that you find yourself paying a much higher rate of tax and you will be left with a lot less money for your retirement years.

**Annuities may not be your best option**
Before the rules were introduced, it was in effect compulsory for most people to take an annuity, but this is no longer the case. Annuities have become steadily less attractive as rates have dropped substantially. There are other options to consider, such as only using part of your pension to buy an annuity to produce a secure income to cover your essential outgoings and considering other ways to produce a retirement income, such as income drawdown.

**Don't underestimate how long you may live**
Don't be tempted to take high levels of income from your pension, or withdraw large lump sums or make choices that will help your family more than you. When making decisions, you need to think about your income needs for the rest of your life and possibly your spouse too. With life expectancy on the rise, you could have many years ahead of you.

Your pension pot is probably your biggest asset after your home, so it makes sense to get good advice when you're thinking about taking money out. Our advice will help you see the bigger picture and plan effectively for the future.

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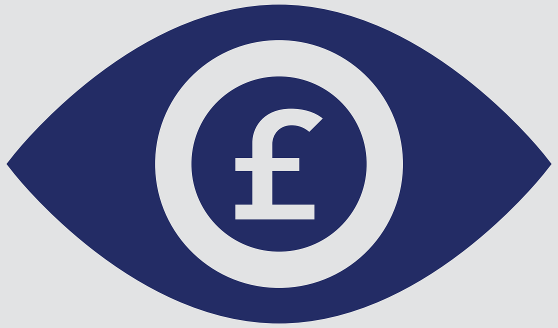

# Why it pays to keep an eye on your portfolio

Whether you are a newcomer or a seasoned investor, one of the keys to successful investing is having an annual portfolio review. It's essential if you want to ensure that the stocks and shares you hold are still in line with your investment objectives.

Failing to keep an eye on your investments might mean that you are exposing yourself to more risk than you would like. When your portfolio was set up, your holdings would have been selected in line with your risk profile; however, with the passage of time, their performance might signal a need for change.

Some elements of your portfolio may have fared better than others and as a result the proportions of various assets may have altered from your initial allocation. A review might show that you are holding poorly-performing shares that are dragging down overall performance and it could be time to dispose of them. You might also want to sell some assets that have made a good profit and look for new opportunities that increase the spread and diversity of your portfolio.

**Your changing needs**
If your situation has changed, then perhaps your investment goals have too. If you have experienced major changes in your life, like getting married, having children, redundancy or divorce, then your attitude to risk may have changed. If you're approaching retirement, you may want to change your focus from investing for long-term growth to investing for income instead. While investing means looking at a five to ten-year horizon, and not letting short-term market volatility cause you too much concern, forgetting to review your portfolio could be foolish. If it's been a while since you last looked at your investments, why not contact us to arrange a review?

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# Simple assessment – ending the tax return?

Around 11 million people currently have to complete a tax return every year to provide HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) with information about their income.

With greater use of existing data, HMRC can now find the information for some of those taxpayers elsewhere without needing them to complete a tax return. This new system is called simple assessment, and HMRC have just begun issuing assessments for the 2016/17 tax year.

This new approach will only be used where a taxpayer's tax affairs are straightforward and HMRC already has all the relevant information. The initial focus is on: new state pensioners with income more than their personal allowance; and, taxpayers who have underpaid tax and this cannot be collected via their PAYE tax coding.

Existing state pensioners will be brought within simple assessment for the 2017/18 tax year. Anyone receiving a simple assessment (form PA302) will need to check that the information is correct. Assuming so, they can then pay the tax due online or by cheque by the normal date – 31 January 2018 for 2016/17.

However, if any information is incorrect, a taxpayer has just 60 days to query this with HMRC. For example, the figures used might be wrong or HMRC has not acted on information received.

Be warned that after the 60 days are up, the assessment becomes binding and the tax liability becomes payable. Should a taxpayer be unhappy with a follow-up response from HMRC, they have 30 days to appeal against the decision.

Although the aim of simple assessment is to remove the need to file a tax return, a taxpayer should still notify HMRC if they have other income or gains chargeable to tax which need to be declared under self-assessment – such as disposing of shares or other investments subject to capital gains tax.

Taxpayers with more complex tax affairs will continue to submit self-assessment tax returns. HMRC plans to streamline the process in the future so that it is only necessary to provide the information that they do not already have. Given the problems with the launch of making tax digital, it remains to be seen whether this will work out as intended.

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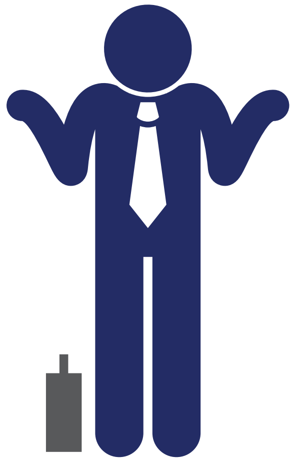


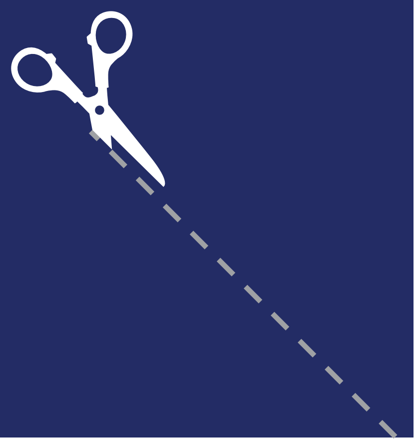
# Cut in money purchase allowance retrospective

When the snap general election was called in May, several measures were withdrawn from the Finance Bill pending the outcome. One was the reduction in the money purchase annual allowance from £10,000 to £4,000 a year.

The Treasury has now confirmed the reduction will be back-dated to the start of the current tax year, meaning that those over 55 who have accessed their pension savings will now find that the amount they can contribute to their money purchase pension will be restricted to £4,000. This limit includes tax relief and employers' contributions.

However, in most cases those who have yet to access their pensions savings will still have an annual allowance of £40,000 on which they will continue to be able to claim tax relief, though this allowance is tapered for high earners (£150,000+ per year).

Those most likely to be affected by this move are those still in work who have decided to dip into their pension early. But if they have only taken their 25% tax-free lump sum and nothing else, then this restriction won't apply.







# The Bitcoin and cryptocurrency tax conundrum

At the start of the year, one Bitcoin was worth just under $1,000, but the price has since peeked at nearly $8,000. Some other cryptocurrencies, of which there are now more than 1,200, have resulted in gains of a much higher magnitude for those investing in the currency's initial coin offering (ICO).

'Cryptocurrencies' is the term used to describe secure digital currency. The decentralised nature of a cryptocurrencies has presented tax collection agencies around the world with the problem of how to tax the gains made. For example, a person could buy Bitcoin using a UK bank account, use the Bitcoin to invest in various ICOs, and then cash the profits into a Japanese account. Or the cryptocurrency could be added on to one of the new Visa cards being launched and simply spent anywhere in the world.

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) issued guidance on how Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies should be taxed in 2014, but this has not kept up to date with cryptocurrency evolution. For example, just this August, most owners of Bitcoin would have received free Bitcoin Cash when the currency was essentially split into two.

HMRC's guidance states that each gain made when a cryptocurrency is converted back into pounds sterling must be considered on a case-by-case basis. A highly speculative transaction, such as the initial investment in an ICO, could be considered akin to gambling and therefore exempt from tax – but with no relief for any losses.

As cryptocurrencies have become more mainstream, however, and with the amount of investment advice available, such treatment is now likely to apply to only a few currencies. Gains will therefore normally be subject to capital gains tax. After the £11,300 exemption, the rate is 10% where a gain falls within a person's basic rate tax band, and 20% thereafter. The calculation for Bitcoin Cash received for free will involve a minimal cost figure, so any disposal will be pure gain.

Detailed charts for cryptocurrencies along with useful links and other information for each currency can be found at www.coinmarketcap.com/all/views/all/

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# Cheetham & Co joins Martin Aitken & Co

Chartered Accountants Cheetham & Co has joined Martin Aitken & Co Chartered Accountants & Business Advisers with effect from 1 November 2017.

Cheetham & Co staff have relocated from their offices in Quarriers Village, Bridge of Weir to Martin Aitken & Co's offices in Glasgow. David Cheetham has joined Martin Aitken & Co as a Director.

The combined firms will have 8 Directors and over 80 staff providing accountancy, tax, corporate finance and business advisory services to SMEs, charities and private individuals across Scotland.

Adrienne Airlie, Chief Executive of Martin Aitken & Co said: "I'm delighted that David and the team from Cheetham & Co have joined us. They share our ethos of building close, mutually beneficial relationships with clients and providing the highest standards of client service. The merger is a good fit for both firms and is another good step forward in our continued growth and expansion".

David Cheetham commented that he too was delighted with the merger. The two firms have a great deal of common ground in terms of strategy and culture. The merged firm will further strengthen our offering to the former Cheetham & Co clients by giving them access to specialists in areas such as corporate finance and financial services, where clients require high-level technical support.

All 7 staff from Cheetham & Co, who have all been with the firm for between 7 and 19 years, have transferred to Martin Aitken & Co giving them greater opportunities for development and progression, and providing clients with continuity of service from the same staff that they have known for years and who know the clients business.

David Cheetham established Cheetham & Co in 1998 and operated as a sole practitioner employing three chartered accountants including himself, a senior tax associate and support staff servicing a mixed portfolio of SME and owner-managed business clients predominantly in the Glasgow & Renfrewshire area.

Left-to-Right: Adrienne Airlie, Chief Executive, David Cheetham, Director & Ewen Dyer, Managing Director, Martin Aitken & Co.



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