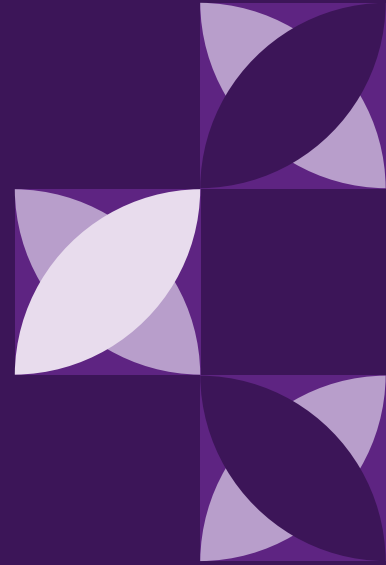


Saving for Their Future

The growing family effort behind children's financial security

New research from Saffron Building Society exploring how families are saving, planning and supporting children's futures.

June 2026



Foreword

For many families, saving for children is about much more than putting money aside. It is about children's choices, helping them learn good habits and creating a little more confidence about the future.

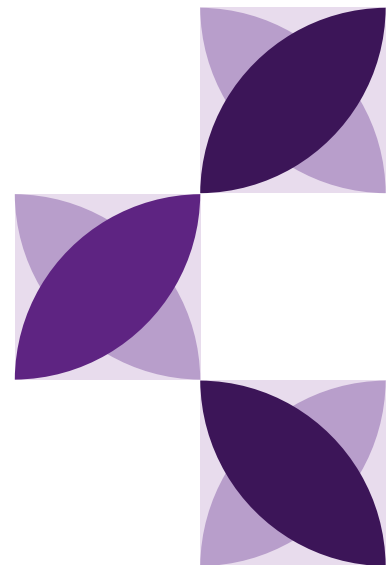
That doesn't mean families are finding it easy. Household budgets remain under pressure and many parents, grandparents, godparents, aunts and uncles are balancing what they'd like to save with what they can realistically afford.

But this research shows something encouraging: children's savings are increasingly becoming a family effort. Parents remain central, but grandparents and wider family networks are playing a bigger role in helping children build stronger financial foundations.

This report looks at the small, everyday ways families are helping children get ready for the future, from grandparents opening accounts, to parents setting aside what they can, to children learning their first lessons about money at home.

At Saffron, we believe children's financial confidence starts early. Saving doesn't have to begin with large sums. It can begin with small habits, regular conversations and support from the people closest to them.

Marcus Buck,
Head of Marketing



Key findings at a glance



35 million

adults save regularly for a child in their family



£19bn

is the estimated amount contributed to children's savings each year



52%

say rising costs stop them saving more



£10,148

is the average amount families expect children to have saved by age 18



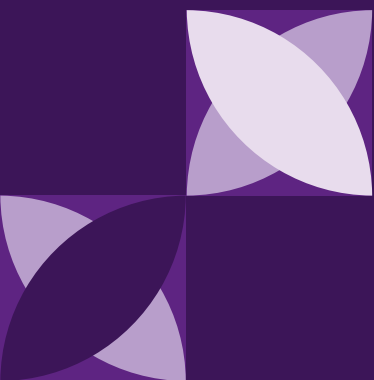
69%

say parents have the biggest influence on children's money habits



59%

of Saffron children's savings accounts are opened by grandparents



The small savings building children's futures

Across the UK, families are quietly putting money aside to help children take their first steps into adult life. These savings may start small – birthday money, a monthly contribution, or a grandparent opening an account – but together they add up to a major family savings economy.

Around 35 million adults already contribute regularly towards children's savings, with average annual contributions reaching £542 – roughly £10 per week, which is less than the cost of a family trip to the cinema each month.

Taken together, this equates to an estimated £19bn every year being set aside for children's futures. That's the equivalent of 664,000 three-year university tuition fee packages (based on £9,535 per year, or £28,605 over three years), or 14 million full sets of driving lessons (based on 45 hours of lessons at £30 per hour).

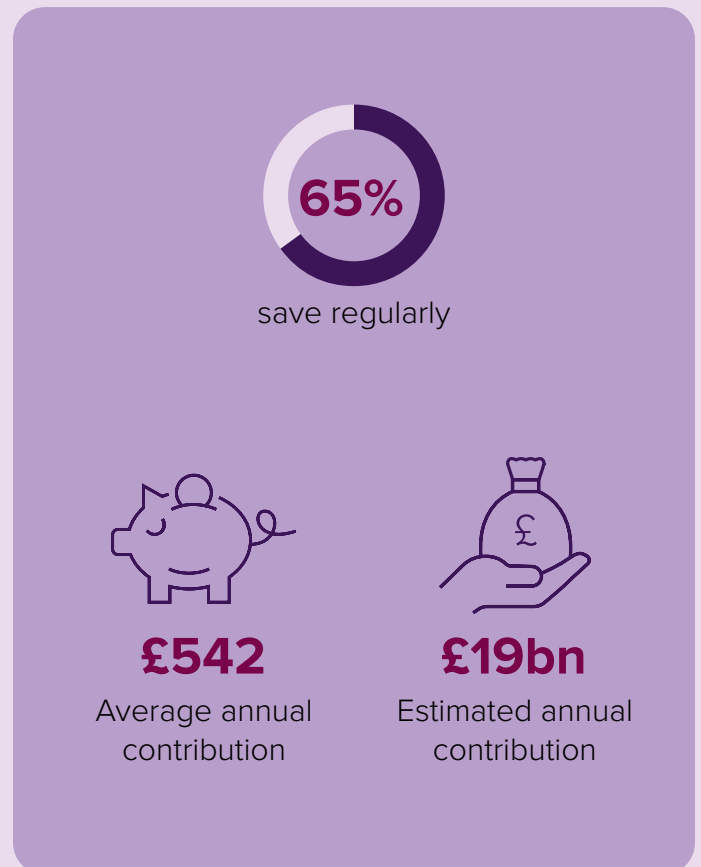
Behind the number is a simple idea: many families want to give children a stronger start, whether that means help with education, driving lessons, a first car, travel, or one day a first home.

What this looks like at home

For most families, children's savings are not built through large one-off gifts, but through small regular contributions; £10 from a parent, birthday money from grandparents, or a monthly standing order that quietly grows over time.



Claire Schofield, Saffron member: "I have always tried to save, and began putting savings aside for my daughter when she was a couple of years old. My mum also puts aside £20 each month. Small savings like this slowly build up to something much more impactful."



When good intentions meet household pressure

The desire to save is strong, but the reality for many families is more complicated. Rising household costs are making it harder to save as much as people would like, even when children's futures remain a priority.

More than half of families say the cost of living prevents them from saving more. For many, children's savings sit alongside food bills, energy costs, childcare, mortgages, rent and other day-to-day pressures.

This creates a growing gap between what families hope to provide and what they can realistically set aside, and many are trying to do the right thing in a much tougher financial environment.

The reality for many families

A parent may want to save every month, but rising food, energy and childcare costs mean children's savings are often the first thing to be paused when household budgets tighten.

-  **52%** say cost of living prevents them from saving more
-  **39%** cannot afford to save more
-  Women more likely than men to report financial pressures



Kate Husband, Saffron member: “Having to financially support my child at university for three years, while balancing the general cost-of-living has made saving challenging. I’ve not been able to save as much as I would have wanted, and have had to cut back on treats and nicer things to do, like days out.”

The £10k expectation gap

What families hope to save, and what many children actually receive, are often very different stories. Families expect children to receive an average savings pot of more than £10,000 by age 18. That ambition shows how important children's financial futures have become, but the reality for many families may look very different.

According to Saffron's own savings account data, only a small proportion of children's savings pots currently grow to £10,000, while many never reach £1,000. Typical savings journeys are also quite short, suggesting that some families may start later, stop and restart, or struggle to save consistently over time.

The gap matters because families often attach real hopes to children's savings. For some, the goal may be university costs. For others, it may be driving lessons, a first car, a rental deposit or early help towards a home of their own.



Average expectation: **£10,148**



Only **9%** exceed **£10,000**



Half never exceed **£1,000**



Average savings journey:
6.5 years

The expectation gap

Many families hope to give children a meaningful pot by 18. But without regular contributions over time, that ambition can be difficult to reach. This is where starting small, starting early and involving the wider family can make a difference. Putting away £50 a month for 18 years would result in a pot of £10,000, showing the value of regular small savings.

While every family has different goals, children's savings are often intended to provide a financial head start at key life stages.

A savings pot of £10,000 could help cover:



Driving lessons and a driving test
(£1,500–£2,000)



A first car and insurance contribution
(£3,000–£5,000)



A gap year or extended travel
(£3,000–£8,000)



A rental deposit and moving costs
(£1,500–£3,000)



University living expenses or accommodation costs



A contribution towards a first home deposit



Kate Husband, Saffron member: “The savings I have for my children are to help them out once they’ve finished university, whether that be towards a car, a house deposit, to pay off student debt, or help with a wedding.”

It takes a family to build a future fund

Saving for children is no longer seen as something parents have to do alone. Grandparents and wider family networks are becoming an important part of how children's savings are started, topped up and maintained over time.

Saffron's own data shows grandparents open the majority of children's savings accounts. This points to a more collective approach, where families pool small acts of support to help children build stronger financial foundations.

For grandparents in particular, saving for a child can be a practical and lasting way to support the next generation. It gives birthday gifts, Christmas money and occasional contributions a clearer purpose and allows grandparents to have conversations with their grandchildren about money and how it works.

Grandparents' role

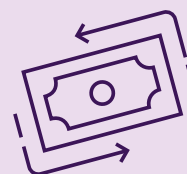
For grandparents, opening or contributing to a savings account can be a practical way to support a child's future, especially when parents are juggling day-to-day costs.



Of accounts opened by grandparents



£19bn family savings economy



Families expect children to receive **£10k+**

Children learn money habits at home

The research suggests children's money habits are shaped most strongly at home. Parents are seen as the biggest influence on how children think about saving, spending and planning ahead, far ahead of schools.

That makes children's savings about more than the final balance. A savings account can become a way to start simple conversations about money: why we save, how small amounts grow, and why it can be useful to plan ahead. Bringing children into a local building society branch, showing them how their savings are growing and involving them in small financial decisions can help make money more tangible and build confidence from an early age.

As children grow up in a world of digital payments, online spending and financial pressure, early conversations at home may play an increasingly important role in helping them build confidence with money.

Money lessons start small

A child seeing birthday money paid into savings, or choosing to put part of their pocket money aside, can be an early step towards understanding the value of money.



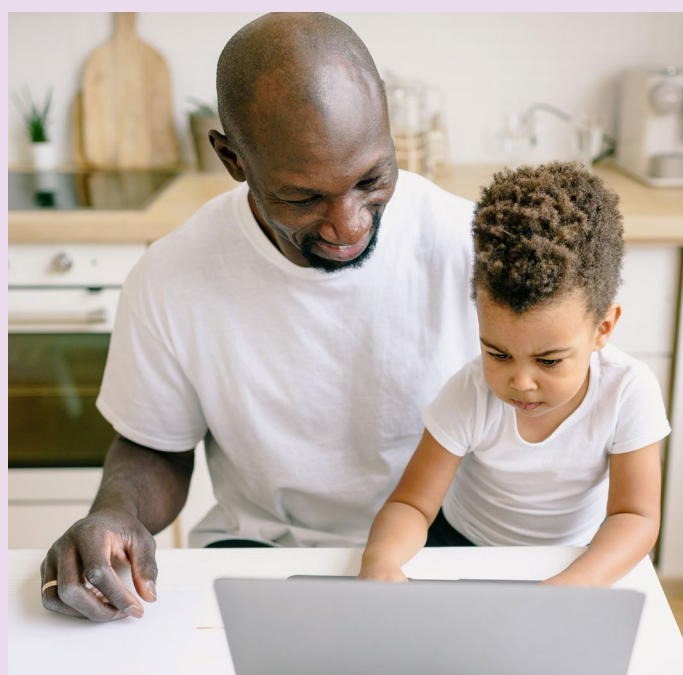
69% say parents are biggest influence



Only **6%** say schools



68% think children should begin saving by age 10



James Bell, Saffron member: "I love to teach my kids about money and financial habits. Small things can make a massive difference. For example, even a simple understanding of credit vs. debit, overpayments, ISAs, savings, can really help and it's something that is essential nowadays."

What this means for families

The findings show that families remain deeply committed to helping children build stronger futures, but they are doing so in a more pressured environment. The takeaway for families is not that they need to save large sums straight away. It is that small steps, started early and supported by the wider family, can help children build confidence over time.

1

Start small, but start early

Even modest regular savings can help children build a financial foundation. The habit matters as well as the amount.

2

Make saving a family habit

Parents, grandparents, godparents, aunts and uncles can all play a role, whether through regular contributions or occasional gifts.

3

Talk to children about money

Saving is not just about the final pot. It can help children understand choices, patience and planning ahead. Bringing children into a local building society branch, involving them in conversations about saving and helping them track progress towards a goal can make money more tangible and build financial confidence from an early age.

4

Keep the goal visible

Whether families are saving for education, driving lessons, a first car, travel or a future home deposit, having a clear purpose can make saving feel more meaningful.

5

Show the rewards of saving

Children are more likely to develop positive saving habits when they can see what they are working towards. Setting a simple, achievable goal, whether that's a new toy, a day trip, a bike or a special activity, can help children understand how saving works in practice. Celebrating milestones along the way can make saving feel more rewarding and help build confidence that good habits today can create opportunities in the future.

The research shows that children's financial confidence starts long before adulthood. It is built through habits, conversations and small decisions that develop over many years.

At Saffron, we believe building those foundations should be simple, accessible and something the whole family can support. That's why we've refreshed our children's savings proposition, making it easier for families to start saving, involve children in the journey and build positive financial habits from an early age.

Whether opening a first savings account, encouraging regular saving habits or helping children understand the value of money, small steps taken today can help create stronger financial foundations for tomorrow.





Research conducted by Censuswide between 20–23 April 2026 among 2,000 UK adults with children aged 16 or under in their family, including parents, grandparents, godparents, aunts and uncles. Research supplemented with internal Saffron Building Society data.

