

# Precarious Lives and Financial Behaviour: An Investigation into the Impact of Insecurity on Saving and Pension Planning

*Conditions of precarity at work and at home shape and/or limit financial choices.*

**Background:** Precarious working conditions have risen markedly in the last two decades and include a lack of workers' rights and employer benefits. This rise in precarious work coincides with a cost of living crisis and a UK pension context that favours permanent and long-term forms of employment.

## Methods

Mixed Methodology with 24 Precarious Workers: Semi-structured Interviews (41) & Financial Diaries (23).

### **Result 1:** Financial inconsistency is a pervasive feature of precarious work:

"... because I am on my computer a lot with it, I am very quick at spotting the good orders and grabbing them quickly. Erm, but it is also very up and down. So, last month I only made 700 quid. This month, we are halfway through the month, and I have got 950 quid in already. So ... there is just no guarantees."

– Steph, 36, freelance CV Writer and Music Therapist.

"But I think, with it being a charity, you just have to hope for the best and hope the funding does come through."

– Caroline, 36, fixed-term and part-time Debt Advisor.

### **Result 2:** Wider conditions of precarity, such as housing costs, intensify insecurity:

"... because we were renting you had to kind of either have a guarantor or you had to pay 6 months in advance, and because it was London that was like 12 grand or something. [...] Of all of the effects on my life that precarious work has had, that one was just massive."

– Ivy, 40, fixed-term Wellbeing Researcher.

"... we don't quite know if [the budgeting] is going to help because the interest rates are going up... [If our rate is] coming up then we have to reassess whether I do need to put more hours in at work..."

– Joyce, 40, fixed-term and part-time Health Promoter.

### **Result 3:** Financial relations (intimate and intergenerational) offer a sense of security for some workers:

"... my parents ... have been quite generous to me at various times, like, giving me a few grand here and there. I don't mean like every week or something, but like every few years, I guess, so that I could do things like go travelling or buy a house or do my masters, like the big things that I wanted to achieve in the first half of my life basically they have helped me to do that."

– Ivy, 40, fixed-term Wellbeing Researcher.

### **Result 4:** Variated precarious contexts categorise workers into three financial mindsets:

- (1) **Surviving:** Prioritising of essential and curbing of non-essential consumption, with low financial resilience.
- (2) **Securing:** Available finances are applied to seeking securer working conditions or becoming homeowners.
- (3) **Saving:** Savings are commonly reserved and utilised for short-term needs to build financial resilience.

**Limitation:** Covid-19 placed limitations on data collection, future research might benefit from face-to-face interviewing.



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