

corporate adviser

V.1 2026

PRINT SPEC CARD

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NOTE

THE SPECS ON THIS CARD APPLY TO THE CA MAGAZINE, REPORTS, GUIDES AND SUPPLEMENTS

Advertising specifications

Quarter page	(depth x width)
Trim	70mm x 210mm
Bleed	72.5mm x 220mm

Half page	(depth x width)
Trim	140mm x 210mm
Bleed	145mm x 220mm

Full page	(depth x width)
Trim	280mm x 210mm
Bleed	290mm x 220mm

DPS page	(depth x width)
Trim	280mm x 420mm
Bleed	290mm x 430mm

DPS submission note: Supply as two full-page ads.

Production notes:

- Files must be supplied as a high-res 300 dpi, print-ready, CMYK pdf, version 1.3.
- Trim and bleed marks **must be included**.
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Bleed: 218mm deep x 430mm wide (5mm bleed all round)

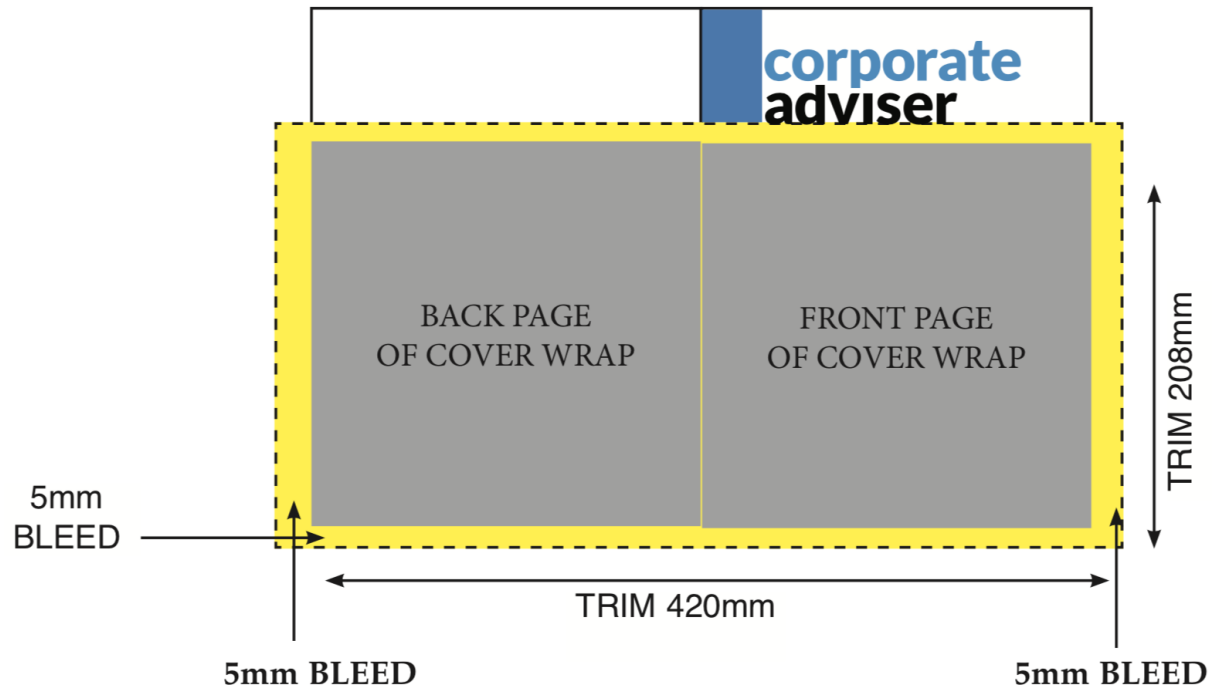
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Artwork should be supplied via email. Files must be supplied as a high-resolution PDF (v1.3) with all fonts embedded and all images saved as CMYK files.

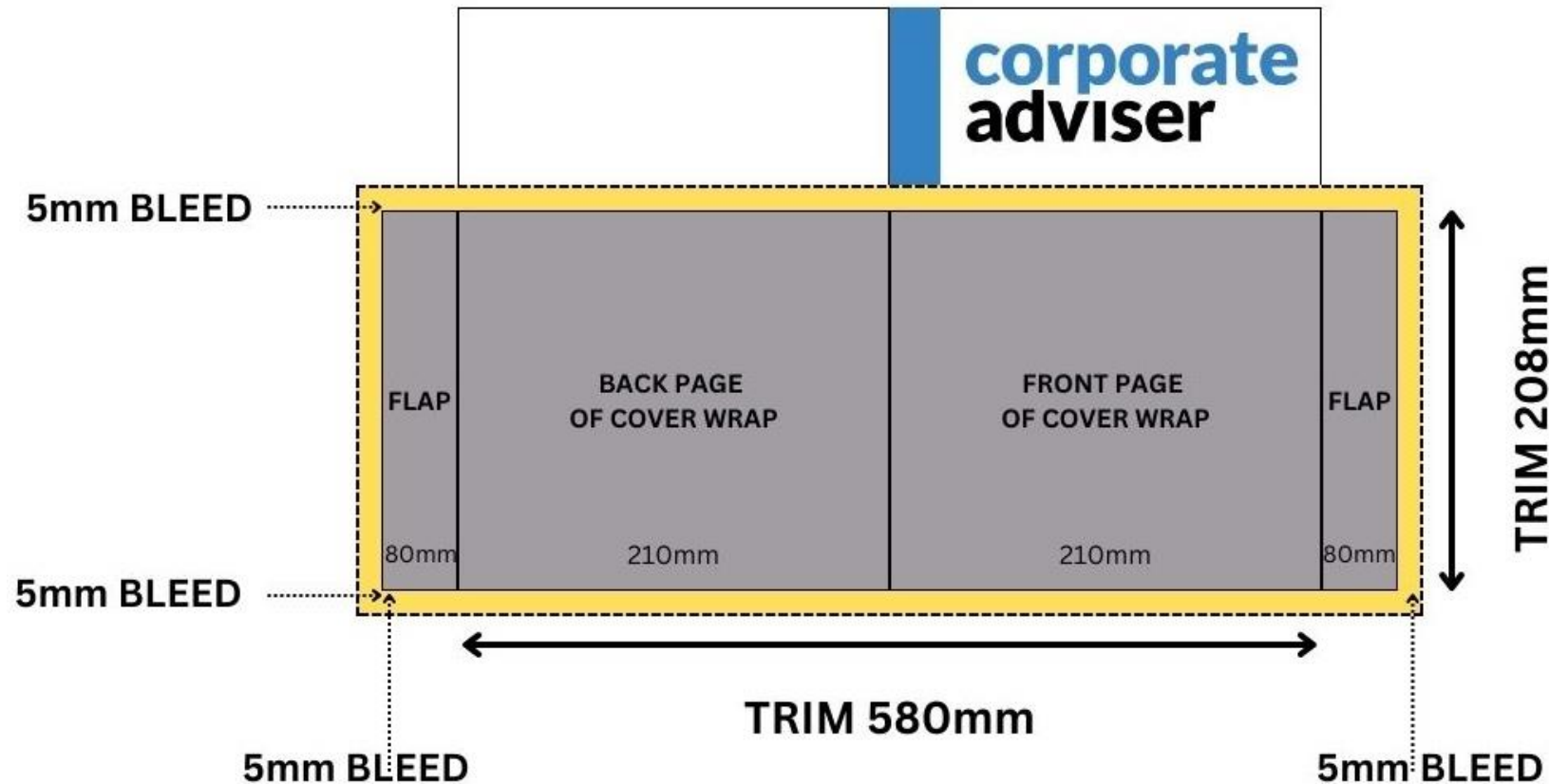
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¾ Cover wrap with barn doors specs printed by Corporate Adviser



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OPINION

HEADLINE

» AUTHOR'S NAME, Company & job title

AUTHOR'S
PHOTO

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OPINION

CORONAVIRUS STRENGTHENS FAITH IN WORKPLACE DEFAULT STRATEGIES

» Nick Dean Agon Investment Director

Despite turmoil in the markets, we should all be heartened by the response of workplace lifestyle strategies to the Coronavirus pandemic.

In some respects, recent events have turned Pensions Freedoms on their head, as old style annuity targeting default funds have benefited from the upturn in gilt values in the 'rush to safety'. Long gilts were the star performer in quarter one 2020, with gains of around 11% while UK equities fell by -25%.

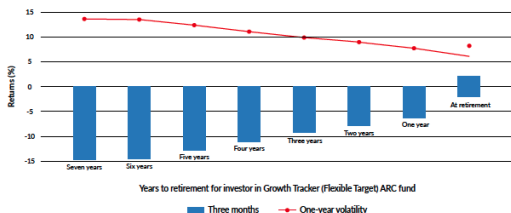
Coupled with this, the increase in gilt values has been greater than the corresponding decline in annuity rates, meaning those near retirement have avoided the pain of the crisis. We must be mindful however that

The chart below shows improving returns and decreasing volatility as investors approach their retirement point, precisely what a lifestyle glidepath is designed to achieve in stressed markets

It's unlikely such returns will be sustained going forward as they're a symptom of a one-off adjustment.

Those in default funds with flexible outcomes, designed to keep income options open as retirement nears – typically with a glidepath ending in a cautious multi-asset portfolio with 25%-35% equity – have also fared better than market headlines suggest. Taking Agon's own Growth Tracker (Flexible Target) fund as an example, those close to retirement suffered a loss of around -8% in quarter one 2020. The chart below shows improving returns and decreasing volatility as investors approach their retirement point, precisely what a lifestyle glidepath is designed to achieve in stressed markets.

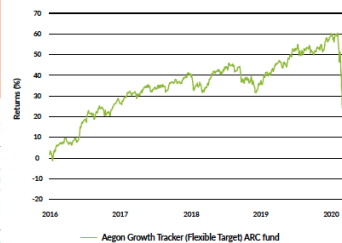
Returns since inception for an investor in the growth stage



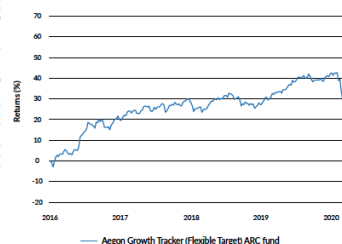
The value of investments can fall as well as rise and isn't guaranteed. Investors may get back less than they invest. Past performance is no guide to future performance. The opinions expressed in this article shouldn't be taken as the basis for investment recommendations or decisions. All figures from Financial Express, produced by Agon. Figures in £s net of Agon Retirement Choices fund charges (product charges will also apply), on a bid-to-bid basis with gross income reinvested to 31 March 2020.



Returns since inception for an investor in the growth stage



Returns since inception for an investor retiring in March 2020



Fund launched 27 January 2016

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Q&A

ALTERNATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

» Annabel Tonry J.P. Morgan Asset Management DC client adviser



DC defaults need to look beyond traditional asset classes if they are to fully optimise investment outcomes for members says J.P. Morgan Asset Management DC client adviser Annabel Tonry.

Are the typical default strategies offered by today's DC pension schemes letting down investors, and if so in what ways?

To be fair to schemes operating in the auto-enrolment market, they have spent most of the last six years working on getting compliance right and consequently, investment design has not been high up the priority list.

Competition for winning mandates in the master trust sector has definitely been largely price-led to date, which has led to a lack of diversification, with some defaults just passively allocating to equities and bonds. This has been fine while markets have been rising, but looking at our long-term capital market assumptions, we're set to be in a lower return environment for longer and getting the benefits of diversification and additional sources of alpha from active management will be critical.

DC funds are mostly set to experience net inflows for the next few decades. How can they maximise illiquidity premia?

There are several asset classes currently not typically used within DC that would be potentially attractive for pension investments, such as infrastructure or private credit. We see interest from the consultant community in how to bring the best techniques from defined benefit into the defined contribution sector. The barriers are mostly operational - most of the platforms in the DC arena are still wedded to daily pricing, even though there is no regulatory requirement for it. Diversified growth funds can help to offer exposure to some of the more esoteric asset classes in a cost efficient manner.

What alternative approaches should schemes be adopting to improve return outcomes for members?

We are beginning to see alternative risk premia approaches being used within DC defaults. Hedge fund risk premia, systematically

accessed at lower cost, and multi-asset credit are both being used in the growth phase, as a diversification move away from 100 per cent passive equity. If trustees are worried about the potential for equity markets to become increasingly volatile in coming years then alternative risk premia, also known as alternative beta, offer a way of mitigating that risk at a relatively low cost.

What proportion of a default should be devoted to alternative strategies?

The UK DC market is still grappling with the inclusion of truly illiquid alternatives, largely due to operational considerations. If schemes are able to access illiquids, there is no hard and fast rule about the optimal proportion of alternatives but this will typically be governed by how much investment budget the scheme has. Allocations are likely to be around the 10-15% mark, offering DC plans diversified sources of return and diversification of risk.

Can innovations be introduced within the price cap and should consultants, advisers, trustees and IGC members be more open to increases in cost that are justifiable in terms of performance?

After contribution levels, how member savings are invested is arguably the second most important lever a plan can pull with respect to getting as many savers across the retirement finish line. With most defaults in the market well below the 75bps charge cap, there is clearly scope for plans to be spending more on investment but there is an understandable reticence around communicating increasing costs to members.

The Pensions Regulator's DC Code says that cost is only one of six factors that schemes should think about when constructing their default, yet it seems to be the factor that attracts most attention and has often been looked at as synonymous with value. I think there is room for the regulator or government to give trustees further support by making clear that they can spend more than they are doing at the moment on investment if they believe this can lead to a greater number of members

experiencing positive outcomes in terms of returns, outweighing the cost paid.

In the future, as schemes get bigger, costs will naturally come down anyway. We have seen this in the US, and the rapid projected growth of UK master trusts means it should be a similar story here.

How will transaction cost reporting impact the delivery of innovation in default fund construction?

We are at the beginning of a journey on investment charge transparency and new requirements on charges disclosure are only just coming in. My concern is how all this new information will be presented to trustees and independent governance committees. We need to avoid a situation where 'low transaction costs' is synonymous with good member outcomes. It will be important that trustees understand that whilst one fund might have higher transaction costs than another, it may be that it is more likely to deliver higher levels of income replacement for members over the long-term. ■

J.P.Morgan
Asset Management

Editorial Q&As

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November	October 21
December	November 20