



Growing together, with integrity and respect

# State of the Platform Nation 2026

## Platform Friction & the Capacity Squeeze

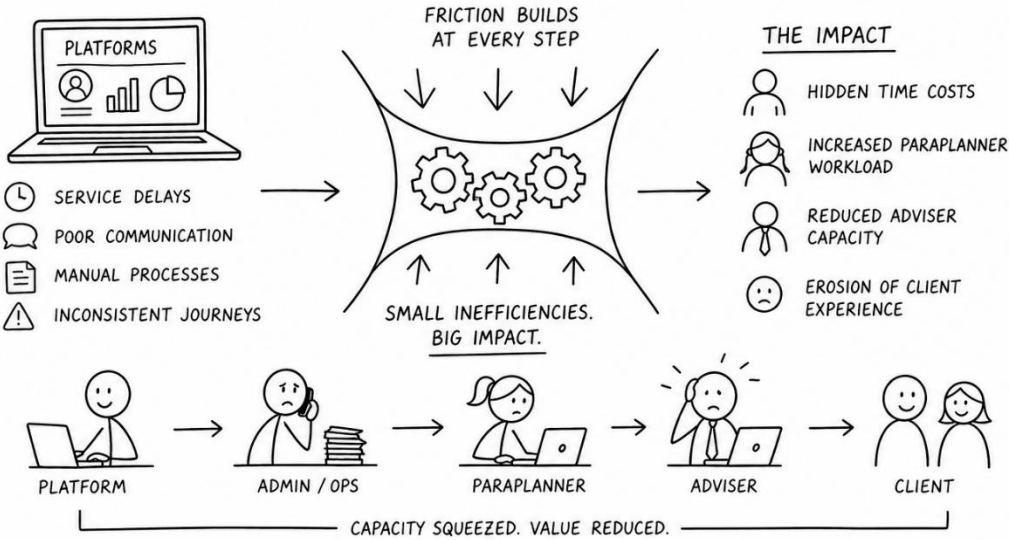
### Why Operational Drag Is Becoming the Defining Risk for Advice Firms

Board-Level Strategic Briefing  
Prepared by Money Wise UK®  
Source: State of the Advice Nation Wave Eight 2026 & Platform Nation Report

## 1. Executive Summary

### PLATFORM FRICTION = CAPACITY SQUEEZE

THE HIDDEN DRAG ON ADVICE FIRMS



★ TREAT PLATFORMS AS A STRATEGIC LEVER, NOT JUST INFRASTRUCTURE.

The UK platform market in 2026 is stable, embedded, but increasingly strained beneath the surface.

Platforms remain central to advice delivery. They are deeply integrated into firm operations, client reporting, and investment execution.

However, the emerging theme is not platform failure.

*It is platform friction.*

Service inconsistency, operational inefficiencies, and legacy processes are creating:

- Hidden time costs
- Increased paraplanner workload
- Reduced adviser capacity
- Gradual erosion of client experience

This is not a technology crisis.

*It is an operational drag risk.*

Firms that treat platforms as a strategic lever will improve efficiency and margins. Firms that tolerate friction will compound inefficiency over time.

## 2. The Core Insight

Across the advice profession, the issue is not platform capability.

It is platform friction.

Evidence shows:

- Firms rarely switch platforms due to cost
- Switching is driven primarily by service dissatisfaction
- Most firms tolerate friction rather than redesign around it

This leads to a more important conclusion:

*The real risk is not platform selection.*

*It is the silent accumulation of operational drag.*

### 3. Platform Landscape: Embedded but Imperfect

Platforms are no longer a differentiator.  
They are infrastructure.

Most firms:

- Operate primary and secondary platforms
- Rarely switch core systems
- Build processes around platform limitations

#### Board Implication

The key question is no longer:

*“Which platform is best?”*

It is:

*“How much operational drag is our current platform creating?”*

### 4. Service Friction: The Hidden Cost Centre

The most consistent theme across firms is service friction.

This includes:

- Delays in account setup
- Poor communication from providers
- Manual processes and rework
- Inconsistent digital journeys

Many firms have normalised this.

They treat friction as:

*“Part of the job”*

## Strategic Risk

Every inefficiency:

- Reduces adviser capacity
- Increases paraplanner workload
- Delays client outcomes
- Impacts perceived value

Operational inefficiency compounds quietly.

## 5. Platform Usage Behaviour: Tolerance Over Optimisation

Firms tend to:

- Stay with incumbent platforms
- Accept workarounds
- Avoid switching due to perceived disruption

Even where dissatisfaction exists.

### Why This Happens

- Switching risk (client disruption, cost, time)
- Lack of clear alternatives
- Operational inertia
- “Better the devil you know” mindset

### Money Wise View

This creates a slow erosion model:

- Small inefficiencies
- Repeated daily
- Across multiple team members

Result:

*Significant long-term capacity loss without a trigger event*

## 6. Paraplanning Impact: Where Friction Lands

Platform friction does not impact firms evenly.

It lands disproportionately on paraplanners and operations teams.

- Provider admin is a dominant friction point
- Role clarity is under pressure
- Paraplanners are absorbing structural strain

### Board Risk

If paraplanners spend time on:

- Chasing providers
- Fixing platform errors
- Managing manual processes

Then:

- Thinking time reduces
- Quality risk increases
- Burnout risk rises

### Money Wise View

Platform efficiency is not an IT issue.

*It is a capacity protection strategy.*

## 7. What Advisers Actually Want (Platform Nation Insight)

The demand from firms is not innovation.

It is the execution of the basics:

- Better integration with CRM and back-office systems
- Improved data quality and accessibility
- Easier reporting and MI extraction

This reinforces a key point:

*Most platforms already “do enough” — but not efficiently enough.*

## 8. Platform Evolution: Legacy vs Modern

The market is not split by “good vs bad platforms”.

*It is split by operating philosophy.*

### Legacy Platforms

#### Strengths

- Proven stability
- Broad capability and flexibility
- Human support models
- Embedded in firm processes

#### Challenges

- Manual processes
- Slower onboarding
- Clunky workflows
- Ongoing technology transformation

#### Reality

*Stable, but operationally heavy*

### Modern Platforms

#### Strengths

- High usability and adviser satisfaction
- Speed of onboarding and servicing
- Clean user experience
- Strong service perception

#### Challenges

- Less proven at scale
- Gaps in proposition (e.g. wrappers)
- Ongoing evolution of offering

#### Reality

*Efficient, but still maturing*

## 9. The Key Strategic Tension

Dimension	Legacy Platforms	Modern Platforms
Capability	High	Moderate
Efficiency	Lower	High
Stability	Proven	Emerging
User Experience	Mixed	Strong
Friction	Known and persistent	Lower (currently)
Risk Type	Operational drag	Scaling / structural

## 10. The Market Reality

Most firms are already operating a blended model:

- Legacy platforms for:
  - Complex clients
  - Existing books
  - Flexibility
- Modern platforms for:
  - New business
  - Simpler cases
  - Faster onboarding

This is not a transition.

It is:

*An unstructured hybrid operating model*

## 11. Technology Architecture: Complexity vs Clarity

Firms now operate:

- Platforms
- CRM systems
- Cashflow tools
- Investment systems
- AI tools

The issue is not lack of technology.

*It is lack of integration and clarity.*

## Key Risk

- Duplicate processes
- Data inconsistency
- Manual bridging between systems

## 12. Governance & Oversight: The Missing Layer

Many firms:

- Review platforms annually
- Benchmark charges
- Assess functionality

Few firms:

- Measure service performance
- Track operational friction
- Document escalation frameworks

## Board Risk

Without structure:

- Issues remain anecdotal
- Decisions remain reactive
- Value cannot be evidenced

## 13. Consumer Duty Overlay

Platforms sit directly within:

- Consumer Support Outcome
- Price & Value Outcome

### Key Risk

*Operational friction is now a Consumer Duty issue*

Because it leads to:

- Delays
- Poor experience
- Reduced service delivery
- Inconsistent outcomes

## 14. Strategic Priorities (2026–2028)

### 1. Platform Rationalisation

- Define clear platform roles
- Reduce unnecessary complexity

### 2. Service Benchmarking

Track:

- Onboarding times
- Transfers
- Response times
- Error rates

### 3. Provider Governance

- Escalation frameworks
- Defined expectations
- Service accountability

## 4. Friction Tracking

Measure:

- Admin time
- Rework
- Workarounds

## 5. Integration Strategy

- Map full tech stack
- Remove duplication
- Improve data flow

## 6. Paraplanner Protection

- Remove low-value admin
- Protect thinking time
- Improve workflows

# 15. Closing Insight

This is not a technology discussion.

*It is a discussion of capacity and resilience.*

Legacy platforms create:

*Known, accepted friction*

Modern platforms introduce:

*New, less-tested risk*

The board's role is not to choose one.

It is to:

*Design an operating model where platforms reduce friction, protect capacity, and support consistent client outcomes.*

# Final Money Wise Reflection

The profession is not under threat.

It is under load.

Platforms are one of the biggest contributors to that load.

Firms that:

- Acknowledge it
- Measure it
- Design around it

...will unlock capacity without adding headcount.

Those that do not:

...will continue to feel busy, stretched, and constrained — without fully understanding why.

# Appendix 1 – Key Pages for Board Review (Platform & Operations Focus)

**This appendix extracts the most relevant pages from the underlying research reports, links them to strategic significance, and frames the board-level question.**

## 1. Platform Friction & Switching Behaviour

**Source:** Platform Nation Report (Platform Satisfaction & Switching)

### Key Insight

- Platform switching is driven by service dissatisfaction, not cost
- Most firms tolerate friction rather than redesign operations

### Strategic Significance

- Operational inefficiency is accepted rather than managed
- Friction becomes embedded in workflows and culture
- This directly reduces:
  - capacity
  - client experience
  - profitability

### Board Question

Are we actively managing platform friction, or simply absorbing it?

## 2. Technology & Platform Friction (Operational Load)

**Source:** State of the Advice Profession Report

### Key Insight

- Platform friction creates:
  - increased cognitive load
  - reduced client-facing time
  - burnout risk

### Strategic Significance

- This is not a systems issue
- It is a capacity and resilience issue

## **Board Question**

How much invisible time is lost to provider inefficiencies?

# 3. Paraplanner Pressure (Hidden Risk Area)

**Source:** State of the Advice Profession Report

## **Key Insight**

- Provider administration is a primary friction point
- Paraplanners are absorbing operational strain

## **Strategic Significance**

- Delivery risk sits below the surface
- Quality erosion happens gradually, not suddenly

## **Board Question**

Are we protecting paraplanner thinking time, or relying on resilience?

# 4. Platform Capability vs Reality Gap

**Source:** Platform Nation Report

## **Key Insight**

- Platforms are expected to:
  - integrate with CRM
  - provide usable data
  - enable reporting
- Current delivery is inconsistent

## **Strategic Significance**

- Firms are building workarounds
- Data is not being fully utilised
- Consumer Duty MI may be compromised

## **Board Question**

Are our platforms enabling insight — or restricting it?

## 5. Provider Ratings & Market Positioning

**Source:** Platform Nation Report (P.58)

### Key Insight

- Fundment leads on:
  - usability
  - service
  - adviser advocacy (4.6/5)
- Transact:
  - strong proposition
  - strong service

### Strategic Significance

- The market is splitting into:
  - efficiency-led platforms
  - capability-led platforms

### Board Question

Are we aligned to the right platform type for our client base and workflow?

## 6. Platform Strategy & Rationalisation

**Source:** State of the Advice Profession Report

### Key Insight

- Firms should consider:
  - platform rationalisation
  - service benchmarking
  - escalation frameworks

### Strategic Significance

- Platform choice is a strategic lever, not an operational default

### Board Question

Do we have a defined platform strategy — or an inherited one?

## Appendix 2 – Minimum Reading (Board Priority Pages)

If time is limited, the board should focus on the following sections:

### Priority 1 – Platform Friction & Operational Impact

- Platform satisfaction & switching behaviour
- Technology & operational friction sections

#### **Why this matters:**

- Direct link to:
  - capacity
  - client experience
  - delivery risk

### Priority 2 – Paraplanner Capacity & Role Pressure

- Role clarity
- Operational inhibitors
- Admin burden

#### **Why this matters:**

- This is where friction actually lands
- It is the early warning system for delivery failure

### Priority 3 – Platform Data & Integration

- CRM integration
- Data quality
- Reporting usability

#### **Why this matters:**

- Critical for:
  - Consumer Duty MI
  - governance evidence
  - client reporting

## Priority 4 – Provider Ratings & Market Direction

- Platform rankings
- Adviser feedback
- Service quality trends

### **Why this matters:**

- Shows where the market is moving
- Highlights structural differences between providers

## Priority 5 – Strategic Direction (Platform Rationalisation)

- Platform strategy recommendations
- System simplification
- Provider governance

### **Why this matters:**

- Links directly to:
  - long-term efficiency
  - scalability
  - resilience

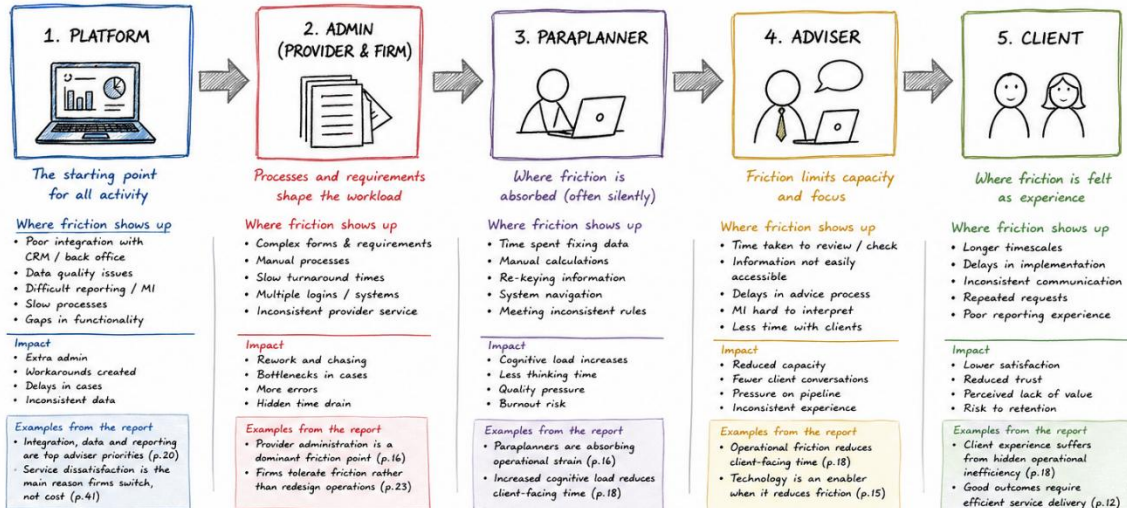
# Appendix 3: Where Friction Sits in the Advice Business

APPENDIX 3 - VISUAL

MONEY WISE  
— UK —

## Where Friction Sits in the Advice Business

Small friction at the platform creates significant drag at the client experience



### THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT



Small friction at the platform and admin stage multiplies at each step. By the time it reaches the client, the impact is significant.

### KEY MESSAGE

★ Friction anywhere in the flow reduces capacity, quality and client experience everywhere. ★  
Our role is to identify, measure and remove friction so capacity can be used where it matters most.

### BOARD ACTION FOCUS



1. Measure friction - don't assume it's low
2. Challenge provider performance
3. Simplify and rationalise platforms & systems
4. Protect paraplanner thinking time
5. Design the workflow around client outcomes



OPERATIONAL FRICTION IS NOT JUST AN EFFICIENCY ISSUE - IT IS A CONSUMER DUTY RISK. It drives delays, inconsistency and poor outcomes.