

PERSONAL

Address:

Institute for Fiscal Studies

7 Ridgmount Street

London WC1E 7AE

Phone: 020 7291 4800

Email: laurence.obrien@ifs.org.uk

Web: <https://sites.google.com/view/laurenceobrien>

Citizenship: British

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

Institute for Fiscal Studies

- Senior Research Economist (April 2025-)
- Research Economist (October 2020-March 2025)

PAST EMPLOYMENT

The University of Chicago Booth School of Business

- Research Professional for Prof. Eric Zwick (2019-2020)

EDUCATION

MPhil/PhD in Economics, University College London (2023-)

MRes in Economics, University College London (2021-2023)

MPhil in Economic Research (Distinction), University of Cambridge (2018-2019)

BA(Hons) in Economics (1st Class), University of Cambridge (2015-2018)

WORKING PAPERS

“Ethnic differences in retirement wealth accumulation in the UK”. 2025. With Jonathan Cribb and David Sturrock. IFS WP 25/02.

“Why does raising the early retirement age affect employment?”. 2025. With Courtney Coile, Jonathan Cribb and Carl Emmerson. IFS WP 25/01.

“The effect of tax incentives on retirement saving”. 2024. IFS WP 24/45.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“Wealth transfers over the lifecycle”. With Arjan Lejour, Kate Smith and David Sturrock.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2024: Netspar International Pensions Workshop, Leiden; Work, Pensions and Labour Economics (WPEG) Conference, Sheffield.

2023: Family Finance Surveys User Conference, online.

2022: Netspar International Pensions Workshop, online; Royal Economic Society Annual Conference, online; EEA-ESEM Annual Congress, Milan.

POLICY PUBLICATIONS

“Small pension pots: problems and potential policy responses”. 2025. With Jonathan Cribb, Carl Emmerson and David Sturrock. IFS Report.

“Policies to improve employees’ retirement resources”. 2024. With Jonathan Cribb, Carl Emmerson, Paul Johnson and David Sturrock. IFS R332.

“Adequacy of future retirement incomes: new evidence for private sector employees”. 2024. With Jonathan Cribb and David Sturrock. IFS R331.

“Private pensions for the self-employed: challenges and options for reform”. 2024. With Jonathan Cribb, Carl Emmerson and David Sturrock. IFS R330.

“Pensions: five key decisions for the next government”. 2024. With Jonathan Cribb and Heidi Karjalainen. IFS R328.

“Recent trends in public sector pay”. 2024. With Jonathan Cribb. IFS R305.

“Challenges for the UK pension system: the case for a pensions review”. 2023. With Jonathan Cribb, Carl Emmerson, Paul Johnson and Heidi Karjalainen. IFS R255.

“Data on private pension saving in UK surveys”. 2023. IFS R251.

“The gender gap in pension saving” 2023. With Jonathan Cribb and Heidi Karjalainen. IFS R250

“When and why do employees change their pension saving?”. 2023. With Jonathan Cribb. IFS R246.

“Public spending, pay and pensions”. 2022. With Bee Boileau and Ben Zaranko. In IFS Green Budget 2022.

“How did increasing the state pension age from 65 to 66 affect household incomes?”. 2022. With Jonathan Cribb. IFS R211.

“Changing patterns of work at older ages”. 2021. With Rowena Crawford, Jonathan Cribb and Heidi Karjalainen. IFS R191.

“Life-cycle patterns in pension saving”. 2021. With Rowena Crawford. IFS BN327.

“When should individuals save for retirement? Predictions from an economic model of household saving behaviour”. 2021. With Rowena Crawford and David Sturrock. IFS BN326.

TEACHING

Public Economics guest lecturer (2023-)

- Undergraduate courses at University of Cambridge, University of Oxford, University College London.

AWARDS

2019: Stevenson Prize for outstanding performance in the MPhil in Economic Research (1st out of 44 students)

2018: Economic and Social Research Council studentship for MPhil/PhD study

2018: Adam Smith Prize for best final year undergraduate performance in Economics (1st out of 151 students)

2017: Turner Prize for Labour Economics in second year of undergraduate degree

2016: Pigou Prize for best first year undergraduate performance in Economics