

An Introduction to Financial Planning

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"Learn from the past, set vivid, detailed goals for the future, and live in the only moment of time over which you have any control: now."

Denis Waitley



An Introduction to Financial Planning

Imagine yourself in the future. What are you doing? Who are you with? Where are you travelling to? Achieving your goals doesn't happen by accident. A good Financial Plan will allow you to become the architect of your own ideal lifestyle.

Financial planning is at the heart of everything we do, and covers so much more than selecting the right pension and making sound investment choices.

We start with your goals and objectives, and work with you to nail down exactly what you want to achieve. Every financial decision we advise you to take, no matter how small or how complex, will be in pursuit of a single aim – to bring you closer to the lifestyle you desire.

Our process will then identify any shortfalls or gaps in your plan. For example, perhaps you need to save a bit more. A coffee a day can soon add up, and by investing this money instead of spending it, maybe you could retire a bit earlier or take the holiday of a lifetime.

And while it's not a pleasant subject, we can also help you uncover any risks that might threaten your family's financial security. A long-term illness can be devastating, but there are ways to lessen the financial impact should the worst happen.

Within the bigger picture, you can then leave it to us to work out the details – the best use of tax allowances, the most advantageous products to use, and the asset allocation of your investments. These decisions are not financial planning in themselves, but are simply the tools we use to make your Financial Plan more efficient.

Your circumstances will change, as will legislation, tax rates, investment values, inflation and any number of other factors outside our control. For this reason, we recommend regular reviews so that your plan stays relevant. A Financial Plan is not a finished product that guarantees financial security. It is an ever-evolving work in progress that will only achieve its purpose if it is nurtured, tweaked, and referred to often.

The Financial Planning Process

There are six main stages in the financial planning process:

1. Getting to Know You

We will start by asking a lot of questions, and you should do the same. This stage is all about establishing your objectives and defining the basis upon which we will work together. There will be a bit of paperwork to deal with, but we will keep it concise and to the point.

2. Building a Picture

Once we are both clear on where you want to be, we need to gather vast amounts of data to establish where you are now. If any of the information can be obtained from third parties (such as your employer or pension provider) we will ask them first, with your permission. Our expert admin team will keep this process as stress-free as possible.

3. Evaluating Your Position

The next step is to establish whether your existing financial situation is working for you, and what changes need to be made. This will involve a detailed review of your existing pensions, investments and insurance, covering everything from charges to portfolio diversification.

4. Creating a Plan

With the building blocks in place, we can start to create your Financial Plan, a comprehensive document that will describe all the actions you need to take now, to set you on the path towards your goals. Our recommendations will be specific, actionable, and backed up by solid reasoning.

5. Setting the Wheels in Motion

As far as possible, we will implement the recommendations on your behalf. This means you don't need to speak to insurance underwriters to find out if your health condition is covered, nor do you need to decipher pages and pages of pension paperwork. We will take care of that for you. And while you may need to undertake some actions yourself (for example dealing with your bank or your employer) we will provide as much support and guidance as you need.

6. Staying on Track

While we can make well-evidenced assumptions regarding investment growth, inflation and tax rates, the only thing we can say with any certainty is that none of these factors will play out exactly as we have estimated. It is vital that your plan is reviewed regularly so that any small adjustments can be made in plenty of time, and so we can help you take advantage of any opportunities that arise.

How We Can Help You

Here are some ways in which financial planning could work for you:

- We can tell you the exact amount you need to save each month towards each of your goals, and the best place to save it. In most cases we will also save you tax.
- We can tell you exactly how much life insurance, income protection, and critical illness cover you need to ensure that your family remains financially secure, even if the worst happens. We will shop around for the best price, but more importantly, the most suitable cover.
- For business owners, we can help you build a succession strategy, and identify exactly what you need your business to do for you, approaching retirement and beyond.
- If you are retired, we can create an income distribution strategy that aims to ensure that you never run out of money, that you pay the least amount of tax possible, and that you leave some money to your family if that's what you want to do.
- By establishing exactly what you need to secure you own future, we can help you create a legacy, or plan a series of gifts, either to your family or your most valued charitable causes. This will ensure that your money finds its way to your desired beneficiaries with minimal tax.

Financial planning can be complex, but we aim to make it simple by taking on the mundane details, giving you more time to focus on the things that matter most to you.

Contact us to find out how financial planning can help you achieve your goals.

*"Planning is bringing the future into the present
so that you can do something about it now."*

Alan Lakein

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