



Balance:
Wealth Planning

What we do and how we charge

A guide of what to expect from us

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to explain who we are, what we do, and how we charge. It is not specific to you and your situation, but it is still important. If there is something you don't understand please ask us to explain it.

Financial planning – what to expect

We provide our clients with a clear and focused financial planning service. It has been carefully designed to help you identify what you want to achieve, then to arrange your finances to put you in the best possible position to succeed.

We listen carefully to what you need and tailor our advice to suit you.

Discovery stage

Before committing to anything, we want to be sure we share the same principles and are ready to work together for the long term. It is important that you work with a financial planner you like and trust.

At this stage we will get to know each other, with initial exploratory meetings and calls, when you can explain what has prompted you to seek financial planning advice and tell us about your background. We will ask questions to help understand what is important to you and what you want to achieve in your life, in the short and long term. We will also ask about your financial situation. We will set out how we work and what you can expect from our process. There is no cost to this stage.

Advice stage

After you have engaged with us, we will give careful consideration and exploration of your situation and what you want to achieve. We will then clearly set out our advice to you in a report. This will include an action plan of what to do and when.

Our advice is focussed on helping you achieve your goals

Depending on your circumstances, our advice might include details about restructuring your wealth, updating your investment portfolio, tax planning, reducing costs and improving your options.

Action stage

When you are ready, we will work with you to start making the changes we recommended. We will do as much as possible for you. We will also work closely with your other professional advisers like your lawyer, accountant, property agent, or tax adviser as needed.

Review stage

Your situation will change over time and it is important that your financial plan is regularly adjusted. We will usually fully review your wealth and objectives and meet with you at least once a year, based on what you would prefer.

We will be in touch from time to time throughout the year to check how you are. You should contact us if there is ever anything we can help with or any concerns that we can address. We offer meetings face to face or via Skype, plus regular contact by phone, email or letter - it's all included in our monthly fee if you take up our ongoing service.

Our advice

Accurate information

In order that you can receive the best financial planning advice, it is important to allow us to understand your whole situation, giving us accurate and up to date information about your circumstances and objectives when we request it. If you don't want to discuss or receive advice about a particular area of financial planning, you can ask us to exclude it from our considerations, although that can have a bearing on the advice we might otherwise have given.

Financial products

We offer independent financial planning advice, and as part of that we may recommend financial products. We consider a wide range of financial strategies and products for our clients and are constantly reviewing the market to ensure that the services and products we offer are appropriate.

We are independent financial planners

Before we recommend any financial product, we will consider your personal circumstances, your financial goals, the services you need, the cost of investing, how much risk you are prepared to accept in an investment product and how much of a drop in its value you could withstand. We will ensure what we recommend is suitable for you and in your best interests.

The financial products we can advise on include:

Investments

- Open ended investment companies
- Unit trusts
- ISAs
- Investment bonds
- Investment trusts
- Exchange traded funds
- Enterprise investment schemes
- Structured products and deposits
- Venture capital trusts

Pensions

- Pensions
- Annuities
- Phased retirement
- Income drawdown

Protection

- Term assurance
- Critical illness cover
- Income protection

We don't provide advice in relation to individual share holdings, options, futures and other derivative contracts. If this is something you need assistance with, we can refer you to a stockbroker.

When we provide protection, or contingency planning services we will act as an insurance intermediary and will provide advice which is based on a fair and personal analysis of the market.

How you will receive our advice

Our financial planning advice will always be in writing in a letter or report, and we will set out details of any special risks that may be associated with the products or investment strategies we have recommended. This might be sent to you in paper form, by email or as an internet link. You should read these documents and ask us any questions before you make any decisions.

We discuss our written recommendations with you, and help you decide what to do next

We will usually arrange to go through our advice with you together, so we can discuss our recommendations, identify obstacles or concerns and help you decide what to do next. As part of this discussion we may decide to think about alternatives to the advice originally suggested. If that's the case, we will revisit our advice and send you a revised financial planning report.

Investments

We may agree to provide you with an ongoing service that includes reviewing any investments we recommended, to make sure they are still suitable for you. We will usually carry out this review at least annually unless we agree otherwise. As part of our ongoing service and planning review we will make contact to check whether the information we hold about you is still accurate and up to date.

We may provide an ongoing service that includes reviewing your investments

We will tell you in writing whether we feel the investments are still suitable for you and, if relevant, we will give you our recommendations for any changes.

We may recommend holding some or all your investments with a discretionary fund manager (also known as a DFM or a discretionary investment manager). A discretionary fund manager is a professional investment management company who would be appointed to monitor your portfolio and make investment decisions on your behalf. If we recommend a discretionary fund manager, we will explain to you what their role and responsibilities are.

Sometimes we may need to act as your 'agent' in relation to the part of your portfolio held with a discretionary fund manager. This means that you won't have a direct contractual relationship with them and instead the discretionary fund manager will treat our firm as its client. Before setting up this type of arrangement we will explain the implications to you.

We may occasionally recommend investments that may not be possible to sell easily or quickly. We will only do this where appropriate but, if we do, we'll draw your attention to the risks associated with the investments in our detailed advice report.

Investment risks

Please be aware that investments can fall, as well as rise, and that you may not get back the full amount invested. The price of investments we may recommend may depend on fluctuations in the financial markets, or other economic factors, which are outside our control. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance.

Specific warnings relevant to the investments, investment strategies or other products we arrange are set out in the relevant product literature which will be provided at the time of our recommendation.

Cancelling financial products

Full details of any financial products we recommend to you will be provided in the relevant product information you will receive. This will include information about any product cancellation rights along with any other early termination rights and penalties.

You will receive full written details of the products recommended and the risks involved

Legal and accounting advice

We are not qualified to provide legal or accounting advice or to prepare any legal or accounting documents. This means that it's your responsibility to refer any legal or accounting matter to a suitable specialist in that field. We can usually recommend someone to help you.

Paying for our services

Proposals

If you ask us for financial planning advice and explain what you need, we will give you a written proposal. That proposal will set out what we can do to help you and what the cost will be. We may give you more than one service level to choose from.

Our bespoke proposal sets out what we can do to help you and what the cost will be, in pounds and pence

Service Agreement

We both commit to a Service Agreement before any chargeable work starts

If you accept our proposal, we both agree to the terms of a Service Agreement, which commits us to provide the services it describes, and for you to pay our fees, which are expressed in pounds and pence. If we make a change to the scope of our service or the associated costs, that will be covered in a Supplemental Service Agreement.

We will never carry out any services that will incur a cost without a Service Agreement in place that has been accepted by all parties. We will treat a Service Agreement as being accepted if it is signed and returned to us, or if you email us to confirm that you accept it. Our service will start from the date of the Service Agreement between us.

How we are paid

We charge fixed fees for our services. Initial fees can be paid by cheque or transfer from your bank account, or can often be taken directly from a pension or investment portfolio. Ongoing fees can be paid by standing order from your bank account or taken directly from a pension or investment portfolio. Where we are paid by deduction from a pension or investment, this will reduce the amount you have left to invest, it can mean that money is kept in cash for that purpose when it could have been invested, and may have other consequences, depending on your circumstances. We will explain these options and recommend the most suitable for you. We cannot accept payments by cash, credit card or debit card.

We charge fixed fees for our services

We will not ever be paid a commission for a new investment or pension plan we arrange. We will usually suggest being paid in commission for insurance products as compared to charging an up front fee. However, we will give you the option of paying a fee if we think it will suit you better than any alternative and tell you how much it is. If the commission is less than £500 we may ask you to pay the difference.

If you have plans that you appoint us to manage but were arranged by another adviser, these may be set up to pay commission on an ongoing basis. If it is possible to stop that commission and to use it to enhance your investment or reduce your premiums paid, we will do so. If that is not possible, we will retain the commission, put it towards our annual fee and will tell you how much it comes to every year. If it is higher than our annual fee, we will refund you the difference.

How we calculate our fees

We usually calculate our proposed fees based on the complexity of your circumstances, the scope of the advice proposed, and the anticipated time cost of providing you with the service you need on an initial and ongoing basis. In estimating the time costs, we refer to our hourly charges, which are:

Financial planning: £300 Research and technical support: £150 Administrative Support: £90

We do not categorise our clients or offer 'off the shelf' services. Instead, the scope of advice can be tailored to suit - ranging from a light-touch to a more intensive service.

In some circumstances we will charge an initial fee that reflects the risk or complexity of the advice required. This includes providing advice about defined benefit pension transfer or opt outs. We will occasionally agree a different charging basis for ongoing services, such as a time costed fee in arrears, or a percentage of assets under advice. We typically will only do that in order to provide consistency for clients moving to us from another adviser.

Initial meetings and discussions that we have before the Service Agreement is signed are free of charge.

What the initial service includes

Our initial service typically includes the following:

- Help you identify what you want to achieve, in the short and long term.
- Carry out a comprehensive analysis of your existing finances, including all your savings, pensions, investments, personal protection and tax planning arrangements.
- Forecast your wealth over your lifetime to identify issues over the long term.
- Stress-test your situation, looking at scenarios such as serious illness, death, loss of income and poor investment performance.
- Present our recommendations and draft action plan to you, identify any obstacles and discuss them with you. We will make revisions as needed, until we are all agreed.
- Provide a clear and detailed recommendation report with an action plan to follow.

Our initial service typically includes a comprehensive analysis of your financial situation

When you are ready to start putting the recommendations into action, we will do as much of that as we can on your behalf and will help you with your own actions as far as possible, unless we agree otherwise. We will:

- Liaise with your other professional advisers as required.
- Help you complete any paperwork and submit it to third parties as required.
- Follow everything through to completion and keep you up to date with our progress.

Ongoing service

Our ongoing service is optional, and typically includes the following:

- Meet with you annually with the aim of helping you to achieve the personal objectives you have set.
- Review your long term financial plan with you at least every year, including updating your goals and objectives.
- Regularly identify where you might want to make changes to your financial plan.
- Make use of ongoing tax planning opportunities.
- Recommend changes to your savings and investment strategy where required.
- Assess your investment performance against the targeted rate of return.
- Ensure your portfolio is rebalanced and maintained as required to ensure it remains appropriate.
- Let you know about any changes in legislation that may affect you.
- Be on hand for all calls, discussions and correspondence to update each other on any changes or to ask questions.
- Review your contingency plans and recommend changes as needed.
- Stay in touch with updates, news and invitations that may interest you.
- Maintain our records.
- Liaise with your other professional advisers as needed.
- Between our regular reviews, you have unlimited access to our advice and support on any financial issues at all. All questions are welcome and we like to keep in regular contact with you.

Our ongoing service typically includes an annual review

What the initial service costs

We will charge an initial fee for our initial service, irrespective of whether any financial products have been recommended. Because we typically work on a holistic basis, and each person's circumstances and requirements can differ greatly, the cost can vary widely too. Fees can range between £1,000 - £12,000 but typically our fee is between £3,500 - £7,500.

Our typical initial fee is £3,500 - £7,500

What the ongoing service costs

We charge a fixed monthly fee to provide ongoing services where they are required. The depth of ongoing service can vary greatly, so our fees reflect that. Fees can range between £40 - £750 per month but typically our fee is between £200 - £500 per month.

Our typical ongoing fee is £200 - £500 per month

Examples

Anne and Ben have two pension plans between them that they want to review, a stocks and shares ISA each that Ben has been managing himself, and they want to invest an extra sum from their savings. They need to put in place some more personal insurances. They are some way off retirement, and are at a stage where they want to focus on accumulating wealth for the future, repaying debt and having a good work/life balance. They want to meet once a year for a full planning review. Their total investments and pensions managed by us will total £350,000.

Initial fee - £3,730 (equivalent to 1.06% of their invested wealth)

Ongoing fee - £265 per month (£3,180 a year) (equivalent to 0.91% a year of their invested wealth)

Charlie and David are both planning retirement next year. They have eight pension plans between them and six investment pots, including ISAs and investment bonds. They want to get everything into good shape so it's as simple as possible in retirement and they don't pay any more tax than necessary. They have a substantial estate including several properties that will be subject to inheritance tax on death so they want a strategy of managing that through a programme of gifts to their children and short term insurances, among other things. They want to meet once a year for a full planning review. Their total investments and pensions managed by us will total £700,000.

Initial fee - £5,920 (equivalent to 0.85% of their invested wealth)

Ongoing fee - £440 per month (£5,280 a year) (equivalent to 0.75% of their invested wealth)

Eva and Frank have two pension plans each, a stocks and shares ISA each, and they run their own business through a limited company. Eva is close to the pensions lifetime allowance and they are both working towards retirement. They want to explore moving their business property into their pension, as well as minimising taxes now and creating a strategy for selling their business in the next five years. They want to meet once a year for a full planning review. Their total investments and pensions managed by us will total £1,500,000.

Initial fee - £7,600 (equivalent to 0.51% of their invested wealth)

Ongoing fee - £570 per month (£6,840 a year) (equivalent to 0.46% a year of their invested wealth)

Other charges

Depending on the services we provide, there may be costs and charges (including taxes), not charged by us, but related to the financial products we arrange for you. These charges may be one-off (payable up front) or payable on an ongoing basis.

For example:

- Service costs: If your investments are held on a wrap platform (an online investment administration service) or managed by a discretionary fund manager, they may make a charge for their services.
- Investment costs: These are the costs relating to the manufacturing and managing of your investments – for example, fees charged by the investment fund manager, costs relating to investment transactions.
- We will always disclose any third party costs as part of making our recommendations.
- Part of our fees may occasionally be subject to VAT, depending on the type of work we have carried out.

Aggregated costs and charges

Before we provide you with our advice we will add together all the costs and charges payable so that you are able to understand the overall costs of our services and recommendations. This is referred to as aggregated costs and charges information.

We will give you aggregated costs and charges information

When our fees are due

Our initial fees become due when our financial report has been received by you. Where you intend to pay by cheque or bank transfer, we ask for payment within 30 days. Where you intend to pay out of transferred investment or pension funds we appreciate that does not always happen quickly and will generally wait until the transfer has taken place to collect our fee through that method. If after 60 days it has not been possible to collect our fee through your pension or investment as intended, we will request that you settle the fee personally.

If our fees are not paid when they fall due, we have the right to suspend our services and to retain any of your documents until the fee has been paid. If we incur costs in pursuing any outstanding fee we also reserve the right to recover those from you. We may also charge interest on overdue amounts, including expenses and VAT, from the due date until payment is received in full. For personal clients, we will charge 3% above the Bank of England base rate.

Your protection

Our regulatory status

We are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) under reference 629329.

We are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

We are permitted by the Financial Conduct Authority to advise on and arrange pensions, savings and investment products and non-investment insurance contracts. You can check our details and the areas in which we are permitted to give advice on their register: www.fca.org.uk/firms/system-reporting/register or by contacting them on 0800 1116768. You can also write to the FCA at 25 The North Colonnade, Canary Wharf, London E14 5HS.

Unless we tell you otherwise, we will treat you as what the FCA define as a 'retail client'. This means that you have the highest level of protection under the regulatory system and should have the right to take a complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

The FCA regulates the financial services industry in the UK but does not regulate all financial products. It also does not regulate tax advice. Most of the products we recommend are regulated by the FCA although we do also recommend products which are not regulated by them.

If things go wrong

If you are ever unhappy with our advice or any aspect of our services, please let us know straight away. We will do our best to resolve your concerns quickly. You can do that by email, letter or phone. Our contact details are at the end of this document.

We will do our best to resolve any concerns quickly

We have a complaints guide that is available upon request. If we are not able to resolve your complaint, you may be able to ask the Financial Ombudsman Service to help. The Financial Ombudsman Service settles disputes between financial services businesses and their clients. Whether you have the right to do so depends on exactly what the complaint is about. More information about the Financial Ombudsman Service is available from www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk.

You may also be able to claim compensation from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme if you have suffered a financial loss due to our actions and we are not able to compensate you, perhaps because we have gone out of business. The amount of compensation depends on the work we have done for you and the circumstances of the claim.

You can contact the Financial Services Compensation Scheme or see www.fscs.org.uk/what-we-cover/products for more information. Claims about most types of investments are covered for up to a maximum limit of £50,000. Claims about individual securities, including Exchange Traded Funds or Investment Trusts, are usually not eligible for protection at all. Claims about arranging or advising on protection products or insurance is covered for 90% of the claim, with no upper limit. Claims about some pensions and annuities are protected completely, with no upper limit.

Conflicts of interest

We always aim to act in your best interests. However, sometimes we, or one of our other clients, could have an interest in something we are arranging for you. If we are aware of any conflict of interests we will obtain your consent before we carry out your instructions, and explain what we will do to ensure you are treated fairly, although we cannot guarantee that we will be able to identify all situations where there may be a conflict of interest before agreeing to work with you. You should let us know straight away if you become aware of any potential conflicts which could affect our work or service to you and we will do the same.

We always aim to act in your best interests and will quickly address anything that might prevent that from happening

Balance: Wealth Planning Limited wholly owns Balance: Trustees Limited which is a non-trading company that can act as a corporate trustee or executor. That relationship does not change our responsibility to provide you with impartial advice. If Balance: Trustees Limited is acting as a trustee or executor for you and Balance: Wealth Planning Limited is also appointed as a financial planner, we will assess whether there is a conflict of interests and provide you with our solution.

We have a conflicts of interest policy. If you want to see a copy, please ask us.

Under the rules of our regulator, the FCA, as a firm providing independent advice we are unable to accept payments or benefits from other firms (such as product providers) as this would conflict with our independent status.

From time to time we may attend training events funded or delivered by product providers, fund managers and investment platforms. These events are designed to enhance our knowledge and enhance the quality of service we provide to our clients. As such this doesn't affect our obligation to act in your best interests. Please ask us if you want further details.

Protecting your personal information

To provide our services properly, we collect information about your personal and financial circumstances. We take your privacy seriously and will only use your personal information to deliver our services.

*We take your
privacy seriously*

Processing your personal data is necessary for us to deliver our contract for services with you. Generally, this is the lawful basis on which we intend to rely for the processing of your data. Our policy is to gather and process only personal data which is necessary for us to conduct our services appropriately with you.

However, there are certain categories of personal data that are sensitive by nature. The categories include: data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership and data concerning health. Depending on the nature of the products and services that you engage us for we may need to obtain your sensitive personal data particularly in relation to health. Our policy is that should we require any special category of personal data we will only gather this with your explicit consent and to the detail required.

We adopt a transparent approach to the processing of your personal data. Sometimes we may need to pass your personal information to other organisations. If you apply to take out a financial product or service we will need to pass certain personal details to the product or service provider.

We may engage the services of third party providers of professional services, so we can enhance the service we provide to you. These parties may also need to process your personal data in the performance of their contract with us. Your personal information may be transferred electronically (for example by email or over the internet) and we, or any relevant third party, may contact you in future by what we believe to be the most appropriate means of communication at the time (such as phone, email or letter).

The organisations to whom we may pass your details also have their own obligations to deal with your personal information appropriately. Sometimes a product or service may be administered from a country outside Europe. If this is the case, we must put a contract in place to ensure that your information is adequately protected.

As part of our Service Agreement we will ask you to consent to the transfer of sensitive personal information in accordance with the protections outlined above.

We have a detailed Privacy Policy which provides more information about the nature of our personal data processing activities and includes details of your rights of access to the personal information that we hold on you. You can find it here: www.balancewealth.uk/privacy-policy.

If you are concerned about any aspect of our privacy arrangements, please speak to us.

Other policies and controls

Best execution

Where we send applications on your behalf to third parties (for example, to make an investment, or make a change to a pension plan) we will take sufficient steps to ensure we obtain the best possible result for you by processing that application accurately and in good time. This is called 'best execution'. We have a best execution policy. If you want to see a copy, please ask us.

Communicating with you

We will communicate with you in English, by phone, email, remote meeting or video conferencing tools, and text message unless you ask us not to. We may ask you to confirm your verbal instructions to us in writing, to make sure we are both clear about what is required.

Recording our communications

We may record our phone calls or meetings for regulatory purposes and to enable us to listen back to our conversations without needing to write notes at the time. These recordings are for our own internal use and will not be shared with any other party. Copies are available on request.

Identification and financial crime

We have controls in place to make sure our business cannot be used for money laundering and other forms of financial crime.

By signing a Service Agreement, you give us permission to electronically identify you

At the start of our working relationship, we will check your identity and ensure that the information we hold is up to date. To do this, we may ask you for original identification documents, or we may use electronic identity verification systems similar to those used for credit checks. We may conduct these checks from time to time throughout our relationship, not just at the beginning. Although these will leave a footprint on your credit records, it will not affect your credit score.

By signing your Service Agreement with us, you give us permission to carry out these checks.

Changes to our relationship

Cancellation

We may end our relationship with you at any time, without penalty, and you may do the same. Notice of this termination must be given in writing and will take effect from the date of receipt. Any transactions already started will be completed according to our Service Agreement unless otherwise agreed in writing. You will be liable to pay for any services we have provided before cancellation.

You can cancel your relationship with us at any time without penalty

Amendments

From time to time it may be necessary to amend the terms set out in this document. An up to date copy of this document will always be available on request and on our website. If the change is what we consider to be material and you are engaged as our client, we will send you a copy by email at least 28 days before the new terms take effect. Any changes to the specific services we provide to you and the associated costs will be covered in a personal Supplemental Service Agreement which we will send to you at least 28 days before the new terms take effect.

Questions

If you have a question about any aspect of our services, please contact us using any of these methods.

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