INDEPENDENT WOMEN

Your financial plan

Taking the *first steps*

A very warm welcome

Thank you for contacting us to discuss your financial situation. We are looking forward to meeting you soon and exploring together how we can help you with your finances.

We offer an introductory meeting to get to know you and to allow you the opportunity to get to know us, too. This initial meeting is designed to be an informal chat in a relaxed setting, and the opportunity for some insight from an expert.

We can offer a number of options depending upon which suits your situation best - either a coffee and a chat face to face, or via a video or telephone call. We understand that virtual meetings provide great flexibility to fit in with busy lives, but equally we know that valuable connections can be made face to face. We aim to provide you with flexibility and choice so whichever option would suit you best, we are happy to arrange.

And if you require any particular arrangements for your appointment, please do let us know - we will do our best to accommodate.

It is important that we take the time to get to know you, so that we can provide you with the very best advice and create a plan that suits your unique situation and goals.

To help us achieve the most from our time on the day, there are a few things which would be useful if you could gather or consider prior to your appointment. We have pleasure in detailing these within the following pages.

By preparing these documents and information in advance, it means that we can get straight into our discussion, and give you the very most of our time.

For some general information about our company and our services, please feel free to visit our website - www.independentwomen.co.uk

And feel free to visit us on LinkedIn and social media - we'd love to connect.

If you have any questions before our meeting, please don't hesitate to contact us any time.

Many thanks, and we look forward to seeing you very soon.

Warm regards,

From all the team at Independent Women

Your first meeting

What to expect

Your first meeting with a financial planner is an important step in your financial journey, so we want to ensure that you have a useful and positive experience.

Our aim is to provide a welcoming and nurturing environment, where you can openly discuss your life and your finances, as the two are often interlinked. You can expect an informal discussion with an expert: a coffee and a chat in a non-pressured setting.

What we will cover in the first meeting

We want to know you, so that we can provide you with the best advice to suit your situation. We explore what's important to you and what you would like the future to look like, as well as past experiences and what has/not worked for you previously.

We encourage you to share as much information as you feel comfortable with at this early stage. There is nothing which is irrelevant or too much detail - it all helps us to shape our understanding of you and therefore, how and where we can help. We welcome any questions and you should feel free to ask as many as you like. We will actively listen to you and will ask questions, too, to help inform our understanding.

If you aren't sure about anything yet, that's ok, too. We can help you to make better sense of your finances and clarify your priorities.

We will also tell you about Independent Women and how our services will work for you, and how we can work together. We will highlight which of our services may suit your situation and how this will help. We will provide you with as much general information as possible and raise any points which it might be useful for you to consider.

What we cannot cover in the first meeting

We are unable to provide you with definitive advice at this stage. Financial advice is complex and requires a significant amount of research and analysis before we can say with confidence a course of action for you. Our industry is highly regulated, and our advice has to be well researched and documented - so you can feel assured that we will only recommend something to you once we know that it is absolutely right for you. And because we care about integrity, we will also tell you if you the best course of action is to do nothing.

We won't ask you to sign anything or to make any decisions at this stage.

Duration

Our first meeting normally lasts between 30 minutes to 1 hour, depending on our availability and the nature and complexity of your queries. We recommend booking for 30 minutes initially and if additional time is needed, your planner will be happy to arrange this with you

Complimentary

Our first appointment is a discovery meeting designed to get to know you and explore whether we can help you with your financial query. For that reason, we offer our first meeting at our expense and will not charge you a fee for our time. During our meeting, we will provide you with information regarding the fees you can expect to pay, should you decide to proceed further. You can consider this at your convenience along with any other information we provide, before deciding any next steps.

Preparing for your appointment

We would like you to gain the maximum benefit from your appointment. To make our first meeting as productive as possible, it is useful if you could collate some information and either bring this with you on the day or send this to us any time prior. We can read through any information beforehand, which will leave us with more time for discussion on the day.

To help you prepare, we're pleased to provide a checklist of essentials overleaf.

In addition, we would be grateful if you could register online for your personal finance portal. This secure gateway allows us to communicate securely, providing you with peace of mind that any personal or financial details which you share with us are always handled safely.

Preparing for our meeting

Step 1 - Checklist of useful information

We've prepared a handy checklist of useful information to help you to prepare and to make the most of our discussion time. If you could share any of the following information with us by uploading to your personal finance portal (see details on the next page), or bring along to your appointment, we would be very grateful.

Alternatively, if you would prefer to meet with us first before sharing personal or financial information, please do let us know. We are very happy to work with you in a way with which you feel comfortable.

☑ **ID (essential item)**
We are required to verify your identity for anti-money laundering purposes, so could you share with us original documents of:

1. photographic ID (such as a driving licence or passport) ; and
2. proof of address (such as a utility bill or bank statement dated from within the last three months)

☐ **Your national insurance number**

☐ **Pensions and investments**
Any recent statements from your pension or investment providers, or an overall portfolio valuation, are ideal. If you hold a final salary scheme through your employer, the amount of income you expect to receive in retirement and any partner/spouse entitlements would be useful. An idea of whether you are entitled to the full State pension would also be useful. You can check this online at https://www.gov.uk/check-state-pension

☐ **Incomes and expenditure**
Understanding your financial commitments and surpluses helps us to understand the priorities and action you can take. If you are unsure or it has been some time since you have looked at your income and expenditure in detail, we can help.

☐ **Assets and liabilities**
One of the more important steps is to bring a list of the major assets you own, so we can understand the value of your estate for tax purposes as well as how your asset portfolio is balanced. This can be anything from premium bonds to paintings, as well as any property you own (and any mortgage that you might have on them). Equally important are your liabilities: these may include car loans, or are you a guarantor for your child's rental property, for example?

☐ **Your goals and aims**
Prior to our meeting, take a few moments to think about what your financial objectives are, both short and long term. These can be intangible and don't need to be in purely monetary terms. For example, 'I want to know if I can retire in 5 years' time', or 'I want to ensure that my family's future is secure'. If you are unsure and only know that you need to do something with your finances, this is also fine and we will help you to identify and understand your goals.

☐ **Insurance information**
For example, if you have any life insurance, private medical insurance, critical illness or income protection policies, information about the costs and levels of cover would be useful. Some pension funds include an element of life insurance, so it is also useful to check this, too.

☐ **Benefits of current employment**
This may include a company bonus or workplace pension, life cover, critical illness, company car, or other benefits. Approximate amounts are fine at this stage, just to give us a rough idea for calculations and to understand the cover that you already have in place.

☐ **Anything else**
Please feel free to bring anything else that you feel would be useful.

Preparing for our meeting

Step 2 - Registering for your personal finance portal

Your personal investment portal is your secure store of personal and financial information. By registering for the portal at this stage, we can share confidential information securely and conveniently. In addition, as we work together, over time your portal will provide you with direct access to your portfolio, including real time values and detailed investment information.

We would be very grateful if you could take 5 minutes before your appointment to register for your personal finance portal.

To register, there are just a few short steps to complete:

1. Visit your Personal Investment Portal registration page by clicking here or visit https://independentwomen.gb.pfp.net
2. Fill in your profile details
3. Complete the GDPR consents and view our privacy statement
4. Upload your photographic ID and proof of address (dated from within the last 3 months)
5. Let us know if you have any questions or would like any further information

Thank you

We are here to help and support with anything you need.

We look forward to seeing you very soon.

After your first meeting
What to expect

Once our first meeting is complete, we will have formed an early understanding of you and how we may help.

Now, our work really begins. We will gather the information which you have shared with us and with your permission, may contact your existing investment and pension providers to obtain finer details.

This helps us to create a full and informed picture of your existing situation, so that we can provide you with advice and suggest any other options for you to consider.

We follow a six-step approach which is designed to provide you with simplicity and clarity throughout our financial journey together:

Step 1.
Getting to know you

We actively listen to you to understand your goals, responsibilities and what's important to you.

We help you to identify your needs and goals, and to visualise what you would like to achieve in the future.

We will fully explain how our service works and answer any questions you may have before you agree to us carrying out any next steps.

After our initial meeting, we will provide you with an early summary of our thoughts along with the next steps on how will work together. We allow you time to consider this and our earlier conversation, and are available to answer any questions you may have.

if you decide you can benefit from our service, we will invite you to a second meeting so that we can explore your cashflow together: your cashflow is your personal, interactive insight into the future, and demonstrates whether your financial plan is on track, identify any gaps or shortfalls to consider, and allows you to see the impact of any life changes or unexpected events over time.

In this way, we can help you to create a plan which takes care of you today, but also provides peace of mind for your future.

At this stage, we will also gather finer details from your existing pension and investment providers, so that we have a full and informed picture of your existing situation. In most instances, this will require your written permission, and we will provide you with any necessary documentation.

We will take care of any background research, so you can relax knowing that our team is confidently and expertly carrying out the necessary steps on your behalf.

For more information, please see the Your Journey document which is enclosed within your welcome pack. This document explains in more detail how we can work together and what you can expect as a client of Independent Women at each stage of our journey together.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us any time - we are delighted to help and to provide you with any information you need.

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