

## Achieving financial security and independence

Getting the right financial advice can be the difference between achieving your goals or not

Whether you are saver or an investor, the credit crunch and economic downturn means that you are likely to be more aware of the types of solutions that are going to work best for you and want to know more about them. A trip into the world of investments, however, can be a bewildering experience. There are OEICs, unit trusts, ISAs, structured products, with-profits bonds and much more besides.

Figuring out what all these different terms mean and what investments might be appropriate for your circumstances is not an impossible task – provided you have the grit and determination needed to spend the hours doing the necessary research, sifting through the literally thousands of choices available to you.

An increasing number of people are recognising that the best way to plan for their financial future is to obtain professional financial advice.

### Planning for the future

While many consumers are more financially sophisticated than they used to be and the internet has made researching products much easier, a professional financial adviser will start from a very different place. Rather than trying to find the best financial product, it is incumbent upon us to do what is best for our clients – so we start with a thorough review of your current investments and requirements.

Once the initial strategies are in place, it's important that our clients review their position regularly. You should review your

financial situation at least every 12 months, and investments should be reviewed at every valuation, which should be at least every six months.

Typically, if you have a young family you will initially want to provide protection for them. Then, as you grow older and wealthier, the emphasis might shift to ensuring that you have provided for your retirement and inheritance.

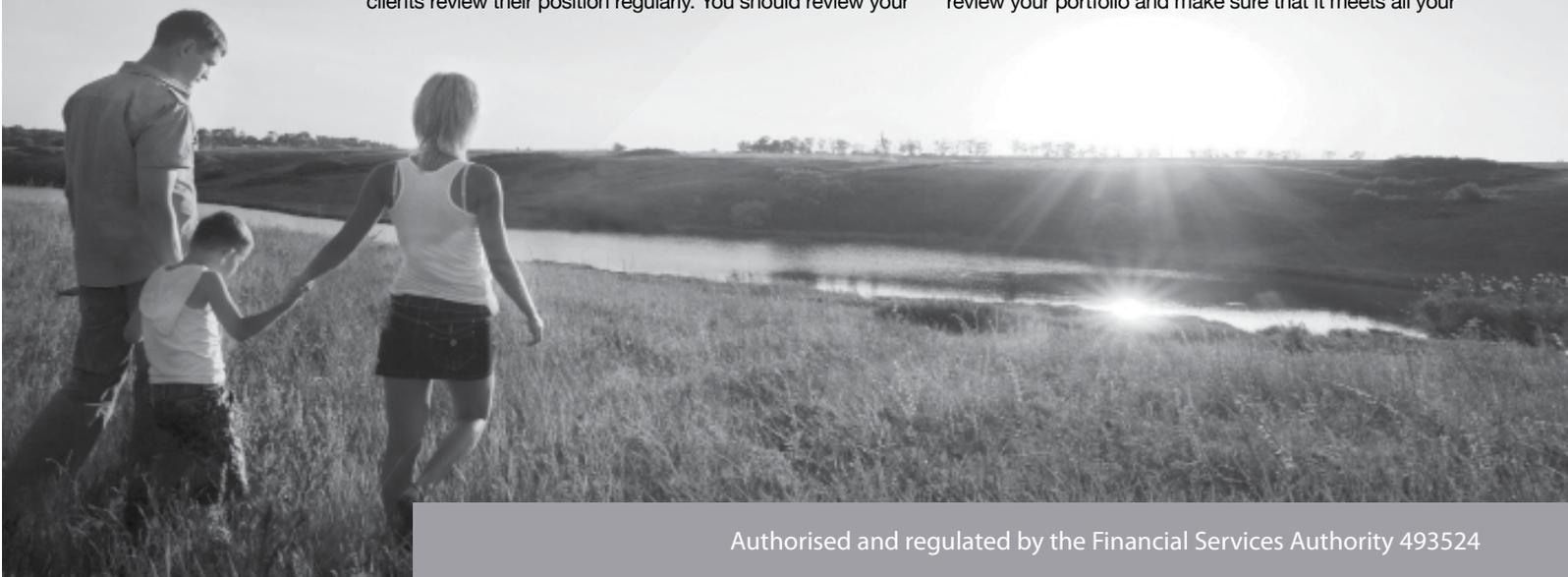
Even with the best long-term planning, there can be shocks and surprises along the way, as the global financial crisis so clearly illustrated. It's during times such as these that obtaining professional financial advice can be worth its weight in gold.

### Investment bubbles

Research into behavioural finance – the study of how human behaviour affects investment decisions and market performance – shows, for example, that investment bubbles have both a rational and irrational side to them.

In a risky and uncertain world, we are always looking for the safe option. For example, a crowd will tend to run away from danger rather than run towards it, so following the crowd is usually the best course of action if you want to survive. Once the initial strategies are in place, you should review your position regularly.

Having access to a professional adviser, who can frequently review your portfolio and make sure that it meets all your



# Clocktower

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investment objectives, should help you avoid any investment mistakes. An adviser will also help you avoid another frequent investment pitfall – putting all your eggs in one basket.

The risks involved in investing can never be understated, particularly in light of recent years. Determining your attitude towards risk is an essential part of the process of shaping your investment portfolio.

**As part of our service we also take the time to understand our client's unique needs and circumstances, so that we can provide them with the most suitable solutions in the most cost-effective way. If you would like to discuss your situation, please contact us for further information.**

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