

From 31st December 2012 new rules came into force with the aim of improving the quality of advice investors receive from their financial advisers.



The changes should mean that investors:

- Obtain better quality advice from better qualified advisers
- Know from the outset how much they will be charged
- Have a clearer idea of the nature of the advice they are receiving

This improved investor focus has been brought about by what is known as the Retail Distribution Review (RDR), an initiative set up by the Financial Services Authority (FSA), now the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

#### Better quality advice to guide investors in a complex world

To provide investors with more confidence in the advice they receive about often complex financial matters, the RDR sets out new levels of qualifications and professional development that all advisers must meet. This currently stands at QCF (Qualifications and Credit Framework) Level 4. This should help investors feel they are

being looked after by more knowledgeable advisers and are receiving the best quality advice possible.

All advisers need to hold a Statement of Professional Standing (SPS) endorsed by an accredited body such as the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment (CISI) or the Chartered Insurance Institute (CII). This shows they have the qualifications and

training to meet the new higher standards set out in the RDR.

#### Continuous development

As well as holding the higher minimum qualifications, advisers must show they are keeping their knowledge and skills up to date through Continuous Professional Development.

#### Know the fees you pay from the outset

Under the new rules, consumers pay an Adviser Charge for the advice or personal recommendation they receive. This fee must not be dependent on any product they buy and is the main way advisers can be remunerated – they can no longer be paid by product providers, although remuneration may still be payable on certain products.

Advisers must disclose the Adviser Charge to the client and agree it before advice is given. It must be disclosed in cash terms in order that the client is aware how much the advice costs and also knows the terms under which it is to be paid.

Existing arrangements may be an exception

Where products have been purchased before the introduction of the new RDR rules, there are cases where advisers can continue to be remunerated by product providers.

Explaining the nature of the advice being offered

The RDR has redefined the way advisers can describe their services – clients must now be told whether the advice they receive is ‘independent’ or ‘restricted’.

### Independent

When an investment manager or financial planning firm is said to be ‘independent’ under the new rules this means they must offer the widest range of investment advice. They must have the capabilities to analyse all the products on the market to see if they are suitable for their clients.



### Restricted

A ‘restricted’ adviser on the other hand, does not provide an inferior quality of advice - however they cannot offer

advice on all retail investment products in the market on each occasion.

McCrea Financial Services are fully independent which means we can provide “real independent advice”.

## Why McCreas?

At McCreas we pride ourselves on being independent, professional, approachable and committed to providing a first class service to our clients. We pride ourselves on NOT being just another firm of Independent Financial Advisers.

### We are :

**INDEPENDENT** - not tied to any particular company, bank or insurance company. We are authorised, regulated and approved by the FCA.

**PROFESSIONAL** - the staff at McCreas have many years of experience and all McCreas employees have Personal Development Plans which include improving their technical knowledge through CII Examinations.

**COMMITTED** - Our business is all about looking after you, the client - each client has a designated Independent Financial Adviser and support allowing you to build a professional and personal relationship over the years.

A **GREAT TEAM** - dedicated professional advisers backed up by superb administrators with sophisticated systems allowing us to provide a quality personalised service to you the client!

## How are we different?

How many IFAs work and encourage their staff to develop their skills that they gain unique awards? - We were the first IFA in the UK to achieve GOLD standard in Investors in People.

How many IFAs appreciate that when looking after peoples financial affairs it is about building trust and working together for decades not weeks.

How many IFAs obtain the majority of their new clients from referrals from happy existing customers who are comfortable passing their friends and families on to a firm they can trust.

How many other IFAs spend time and effort working for, running events and raising funds for charity?

How many IFAs do you know support and sponsor local sportsmen and women and help promising children in sport to achieve their goals?

**Most of all, we care - about the important things in life, and about you - our clients.**