

## Taking charge of your retirement

Empowering your future with greater pension freedom

Planning for retirement is a crucial step in securing your financial stability for the years ahead. For those seeking greater involvement in how their pension savings are invested, a Self-Invested Personal Pension (SIPP) can offer a flexible and innovative option.

Unlike many standard personal pensions, where investment decisions are typically made by a third-party fund manager, a SIPP allows you to choose from a wide range of permitted investments offered by the provider. This flexibility can help you shape your pension portfolio to match your financial objectives and attitude to risk, but it also places greater responsibility on you to monitor and manage those investments.

### TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR RETIREMENT FUNDS

The primary appeal of a SIPP is its wide range of investment options. Investors can choose from individual stocks and shares, investment trusts, corporate bonds and even commercial property. This flexibility enables you to build a highly diversified portfolio aligned with your market outlook.

Alongside this freedom comes a generous framework of government tax incentives. When you pay into a SIPP, you receive tax relief on your contributions, which effectively boosts the size of your retirement pot without any extra effort on your part.

### UNDERSTANDING THE TAX ADVANTAGES

Basic rate taxpayers currently receive a 20% government top-up. This means that if you contribute £80, the government adds £20, bringing the total investment to £100. Higher and additional rate taxpayers can claim back even more through their annual self-assessment tax returns, making it a highly tax-efficient way to save for the future.

Furthermore, the investments held within your SIPP grow entirely free of UK Capital Gains Tax and Income Tax. Once you reach the qualifying retirement age, you can usually take up to 25% of your total pension pot as a tax-free lump sum (within allowable limits), providing significant financial flexibility when you retire.

### WEIGHING UP THE RESPONSIBILITIES

While the benefits are clear, managing your own pension requires time, market knowledge and dedication. Because you make the underlying investment decisions, you also bear the risk. The value of investments can fall as well as rise, meaning you might get back less than you originally invested.

It is also vital to keep a close eye on the administrative costs of running a SIPP. We can provide professional advice to help you navigate these complexities and make informed decisions about your pension investments.

### SECURING YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

If appropriate, a SIPP can be a very effective wealth-building tool for those willing to take an active role in their retirement planning. However, because pension rules change and markets can be complex, a self-managed approach is not always the right choice for every investor. Seeking professional guidance helps you make the most of your annual allowances while protecting your hard-earned wealth. ■

### READY TO PLAN YOUR NEXT STEP?

If you require further information on how a Self-Invested Personal Pension could suit your circumstances, please contact us. We can arrange a review and help you take the next step towards the retirement you deserve.

THIS ARTICLE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE TAX, LEGAL OR FINANCIAL ADVICE AND SHOULD NOT BE RELIED UPON AS SUCH. FOR GUIDANCE, SEEK PROFESSIONAL ADVICE.

A PENSION IS A LONG-TERM INVESTMENT NOT NORMALLY ACCESSIBLE UNTIL AGE 55 (57 FROM APRIL 2028, UNLESS THE PLAN HAS A PROTECTED PENSION AGE). THE VALUE OF YOUR INVESTMENTS (AND ANY INCOME FROM THEM) CAN GO DOWN AS WELL AS UP, WHICH WOULD AFFECT THE LEVEL OF PENSION BENEFITS AVAILABLE. INVESTMENTS CAN FALL AS WELL AS RISE IN VALUE, AND YOU MAY RECEIVE BACK LESS THAN YOU INVEST.