SUFFOLKLIFE
THE INTELLIGENT APPROACH

SIPP

Less than a year to go – opportunities abound for advisers

22 June, 2009

Suffolk Life, one of the UK's leading providers and administrators of SIPPs, has commented on the opportunities for advisers as clients near retirement age, in particular those reaching age 50 this tax year.

With less than one year to go until the normal pension age of all schemes must rise to 55, this year may be a busy time for advisers with clients considering vesting part or all of their accumulated pensions. Given the current financial conditions it may be a difficult decision. This is especially true for those members reaching age 50 this tax year, who, if they don't take benefits before April 2010, may have to wait almost 5 years to do so.

For those who are uncertain if they will need an income in the next few years, unsecured income may be the answer. Since A-day it has been possible to take the pension commencement lump sum and nil income. This gives clients the flexibility to have income if required but remain invested until they need to do this, making further contributions and where the scheme has only been partially vested, also the option to contribute to take advantage of market conditions.

Advisers also need to bear in mind that some individuals are still allowed to retire prior to the normal pension age; e.g. those in certain professions who had unqualified rights under this scheme to retire earlier such as professional sportspeople. However, those that choose to take this option will have their lifetime allowance reduced by 2.5% for every year they take their benefits before normal pension age. With care and planning the preservation of early retirement ages is possible but it is easy to fall foul of the rules.

It is also possible for an individual to apply to take their pension early on the grounds of ill health. They must supply their scheme administrator with acceptable qualified medical advice that satisfies the ill-health condition that they are and will continue to be, medically incapable of continuing their current occupation. Serious ill-health lump sums can be paid tax free provided the sum does not exceed their personal lifetime allowance.

Commenting, John Moret, Director of Sales and Marketing, Suffolk Life said: "Clearly the area of pension ages is complicated. However, this year provides advisers with an ideal opportunity to revisit clients who are aged or close to 50-55 to establish their current needs prior to the change in legislation."

Further details on Suffolk Life can be found at www.suffolklife.co.uk

Ends

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About Suffolk Life

Suffolk Life is one of the UK's leading providers and administrators of specialist pension products, primarily Self Invested Personal Pensions (SIPPs). It has established over 15,000 self-invested plans and total assets exceed £3 billion. Suffolk Life has acquired over 1,600 properties for over 2,500 SIPP investors.

Established in 1971 and based in Ipswich, Suffolk Life employs around 200 people and has built an enviable reputation based on its expertise and knowledge of the SIPP market.

This has been recognised through numerous awards including:-

Technology, Admin and Service award, Income drawdown – Pensions Management 2008
Technology, Admin and Service award, SIPPs – Pensions Management 2007 & 2006
Best SIPP Provider - Professional Adviser 2006
Best SIPP Provider - Professional Pensions 2006 & 2005
Best SIPP Product - Moneyfacts 2005
Best Buy - Investors Chronicle 2005
Admin & Service awards, SIPPs – Pensions Management, wins in 2002, 2003 & 2004, commended in 2005

Financial Adviser 5 star service award 2008

Investor in Customers 2 star award for 2006 & 2008

Suffolk Life was acquired by Legal and General in May 2008