

Sometimes there is more than just dealing with your finances

We constantly strive to improve the proposition we offer our clients and actively provide support and encouragement to our advisers to increase and expand their knowledge base. A good example of this was at our Home Counties office in Chesham, Bucks, where the Managing Director, Gary Ross has recently been successful in achieving Full Membership of the Society of Later Life Advisers (or SOLLA).

We wanted to know more about what drove Gary to acquire this accreditation and therefore we caught up with him recently at his office. Gary has been with Perspective since 2012 where he works with three other qualified advisers, a trainee adviser and five support staff. Already highly qualified, we asked Gary why he considered the SOLLA qualification to be so important.

He explained that SOLLA was established in 2008 as a not for profit organisation dedicated to higher standards and accessibility to regulated financial advice for older people and their families. There are no shareholders and any profit is used to sustain the Society and its objectives. More importantly, as far as he was concerned, all SOLLA advisers specialise in the financial needs of older people. In his eyes, professional qualifications, whilst essential, do not always give a full picture of an adviser's experience or expertise. He continued:

"Those advisers who have taken the further step to become independently accredited with SOLLA can offer the added reassurance that they can give the practical help and guidance needed to help people make the right decisions at the right time. All full members of the Society must achieve the Later Life Adviser Accreditation and adhere to a code of practice to ensure their clients know what to expect from their services."

He then explained that as part of their ongoing process, SOLLA is committed to promoting and raising awareness amongst people, their families and professional advisers of financial issues faced in retirement and later life. It also looks to build relationships with statutory and voluntary agencies, charities, housing and social care providers, financial services firms and those organisations who are involved in the financial wellbeing of those in later life.

For Gary, it really was all about giving his clients confidence in his knowledge and ability.

"It's all about raising the standards of practice of those engaged in advising older people by promoting the highest levels of professionalism in financial advice. Over the years



Gary Ross, Managing Director of Perspective (Home Counties) Ltd

the number of options people have at retirement has increased substantially, which creates complexity and increases the need for advice. In addition, the number of people requiring some form of long-term care, either at home or within a nursing home, has also increased.

Many decisions that families need to face when looking at issues such as care funding matters, equity release or retirement income requirements need careful and considered advice. This advice should be presented in a way that helps them make the best decisions."

Gary also recognised that SOLLA was of great benefit to him as well as to his clients, as he explained:

"All advisers have to do Continuing Professional Development and SOLLA offer meetings, webinars and online learning to support this. Further to that, we not only have the option to attend an annual National Conference, but also meet and talk to other local advisers to discuss ideas and legislation changes"

Gary has recognised that many of his clients have later life issues involving either themselves or their immediate family and this is why he felt that this sort of accreditation was important to give his clients confidence when dealing with him.

Whilst qualifications are important, this form of accreditation which not only extends the knowledge of the adviser but also highlights the ability to support clients is something that we strongly encourage at Perspective and Gary is and should be proud of his achievement.

Should you wish to find out more details about how SOLLA works, please visit: <https://societyoflaterlifeadvisers.co.uk/>