

Professional
Paraplanner
Awards
2022

The Paraplanner Awards

In association with

Parmenion

Provider Awards

(as nominated by paraplanners)

Inside

Editor's introduction and this year's judges

The Paraplanner Awards winners

Profiles of our 6 awards winners

Provider Awards winners

Meet the Provider winners

Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022

OUR SIXTH ANNUAL AWARDS

In association with

Parmenion

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Paraplanner of the Year (In-house)	Kat Mock - The Aspire Partnership	Rebecca Lucas - Lime Outsourced Paraplanning	Samantha Gratton - Old Mill	Alistair James Cartwright - Clarion Wealth Planning	Daniel Limb - Paradigm Norton Financial Planning	Reece Edwards - Hampshire Hill
Paraplanner of the Year Outsourced			Aleksandra Sasin - Navigatus	Nathan Fryer - Plan Works	Laura Siddall - AYCE Planning	Kim Bendall - Go Paraplanning
Paraplanner Team of the Year	Cooper Parry Wealth	Cooper Parry Wealth	Essential Wealth Management	Para-Sols	Holden & Partners	Clarion Wealth Planning
New Paraplanner of the Year			Alana Quinn - Murphy Wealth	Sean Hurst - Richard Jacobs Pension & Trustee Services	Katie Read - Capelin Financial Management	Mark O'Hara - L J Financial Planning
Administrator of the Year			Cheryl Lunn - Para-Sols	Micheala Hawkins - Navigatus	Samantha Flaherty - Plus Group	Claire Ashdijan - Granite Coast
Paraplanner Team Leader of the Year						Laura Cowling - Progeny

This year's *Professional Paraplanner Awards* were marked by one very distinctive element – we were back in person again! After the two-year hiatus caused by the pandemic it was fantastic to be presenting the awards face-to-face with people and experiencing that atmosphere of anticipation and delight as the winners were announced.

Congratulations to all the winners of our 2022 Awards.

This year we introduced two new awards: the Paraplanner Team Leader of the Year, in recognition of the growing number of paraplanners who are being promoted to

head up teams of paraplanners within their firms; and in the provider Awards, Best ESG Investment Solution provider, reflecting the importance of ESG/sustainable investing within the UK market and the growth in the number of providers now developing expertise in this area of investment.

Last year we celebrated our fifth year of awards by publishing all the winners of the Paraplanner Awards. We've decided to do so again this year, including our new Team Leader award.

People ask me if it is worth entering the awards. My answer is always 'Definitely'. Firstly, you can't win any of the awards unless you enter – our awards are self-

nominated – and secondly, if you are passionate about what you do and you do it well, you could be exactly the person the judges are looking for to win the award that year.

Many of the shortlisted candidates when I contact them are genuinely surprised to learn they are through to the interview with the judges. Then it is up to them to step up to the plate and wow the judges with their knowledge and capabilities.

So, could your name be on this list next year? That's up to you.

Rob Kingsbury
Editor
Professional Paraplanner

Judging panel

We would like to thank our judging panel for their time and expertise in helping to shortlist and identify the final winners of this year's awards – 18 interviews of shortlisted candidates were conducted to reach their decisions. This year our judges were:



Michelle Hoskin
Managing Director
Standards International



Rebecca Lucas
Founder, Lime
Outsourced Paraplanning



Martin Green
Paraplanning Manager,
Chadney Bulgin



Patrick Ingram
Head of Strategic
Partnerships, Parmenion



Caroline Stuart
Founder, Sparrow Paraplanning
and Member Director, PFS Board



Rob Kingsbury
Editor, Professional
Paraplanner



Sian Davies Cole
Director Plan Works, co-founder
The Paraplanner club

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Our sixth annual Paraplanner Awards delivered another set of strong candidates for our six Paraplanner Awards. Congratulations to everyone who was shortlisted and our 2022 winners.

This year's entries not only gave the judges a hard time in filtering down to the shortlists to the individual categories but resulted in some lengthy discussions around the (virtual) table on the eventual winners. This year saw the introduction of a new award, Paraplanner Team Leader of the Year. This award both recognises that many paraplanners are now running paraplanning teams and also complements Professional Paraplanner's Team Leader Seminars, our live insight and workshop events.

This year we were able to present the awards to the winners in person at a ceremony in London, on Thursday 9 June 2022, immediately following our London Technical Insight Seminar.

We couldn't have put on the awards

ceremony, however, without the support of our sponsor Parmenion, who have generously supported the awards for the fourth year in row. Our thanks to Parmenion and especially to Patrick Ingram and Mollie Thornton who both presented at the Technical Insight Seminar and attended the awards, with Mollie presenting the trophies to the winners.

Thanks also to our events team – often unsung heroes – for their hard work in putting our awards and seminars together.

We are already looking forward to the 2023 awards and what they may bring.

Methodology

Entry to The Paraplanner Awards was by self-nomination, with all candidates writing a 500-word essay on a set question. Shortlists are then drawn up with typically three candidates being invited to interview by the judging panel. Judges are allocated to awards categories as per their particular areas of expertise. All interviews are conducted by video.



Paraplanner of the Year (in-house):
Reece Edwards, Hampshire Hill

Paraplanner of the Year (Outsourced):
Kim Bendall, Go Paraplanning

New Paraplanner of the Year:
Mark O'Hara, LJ Financial Planning

Administrator of the Year:
Claire Ashdjian, Granite Coast

Paraplanner Team Leader of the Year
Laura Cowling, Progeny

Paraplanner Team of the Year:
Clarion Wealth Planning

The Paraplanner Awards 2022

Paraplanner of the Year (In-house)

Winner: Reece Edwards, Hampshire Hill

Also shortlisted

Andrew Masson, Acumen Financial Planning

Oliver Dennis, Partners Wealth Management

Paraplanner of the Year Outsourced

Winner: Kim Bendall, Go Paraplanning

Also shortlisted

Sian Davies Cole, Plan Works

Sasha Wakefield, Weparaplan

Paraplanner Team of the Year

Winner: Clarion Wealth Planning

Also shortlisted

Origen Financial Services Ltd

eParaplan Connect

New Paraplanner of the Year

Winner: Mark O'Hara, LJ Financial Planning

Also shortlisted

Kimberley Cassidy, Murphy Wealth Ltd

Montana Jones, Origen Financial Services Limited

Administrator of the Year

Winner: Claire Ashdjian, Granite Coast

Highly Commended: Hannah Douthwaite, Para-Sols

Also shortlisted

Martin Hunter, Murphy Wealth

Paraplanner Team Leader of the Year

Winner: Laura Cowling, Progeny

Also shortlisted

Aram Kupelian, Holden & Partners

David Lloyd, Eastwood Financial



Parmenion has been sponsor of our Paraplanner Awards since 2019. Mollie Thornton, Senior Investment Manager says: "Parmenion is proud to have sponsored the Professional Paraplanner awards for several years. We recognise and applaud the work done by paraplanners in achieving outstanding customer outcomes through the advice process. And we are grateful to the paraplanner community for recognising our service standards in the magazine's awards this year. I enjoyed celebrating the 10th anniversary of our Ethical investment portfolios at the Technical Insight Seminar. We welcome a dialogue with all paraplanners researching ESG investing, to share our team's experience in this complex but significant field."

PARAPLANNER OF THE YEAR (IN HOUSE) & (OUTSOURCED)

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Paraplanner of the Year (In house)

Reece Edwards, Technical and Research Manager, Hampshire Hill

Reece Edwards, joined Hampshire Hill in 2015, with the remit from owner Richard Hampshire to build paraplanning function from scratch within the business. Over the past seven years he has done just that. Whereas for the first few years Reece was paraplanning for the lifestyle planners in the firm, there are four (plus two mortgage advisers), he was joined in 2020 by Jack Wood, as trainee paraplanner. “Jack coming on board has helped me take a step back from the day-to-day report writing and take an oversight position, focussing on the quality of advice,” Reece says. “This includes technical support for the advisers, assessments and pre-report work.”

In addition, he conducts due diligence



on funds, portfolios and new products for the firm and he is co-chair and lead researcher for the Investment Committee, for the firm's in-house portfolios and any other investments and products. He also undertakes training within the firm.

The role of the paraplanner has changed within recent years, and Reece is an example of how paraplanners are taking

on more responsibility and influence within firms. “I think in the past, the issue for paraplanners was proving how they were adding value. Now the skill set of the paraplanners has evolved and often they are qualified to the same level as advisers. I think we will see more paraplanners take supervisory and management positions and that firms are building teams of paraplanners, with specialisms.

“I think that it can help also to have that person with a more analytical mindset, to overlook the advice, and that is a role a senior paraplanner can fulfil.”

On his win, he adds: “Working in a small office I don't have a paraplanning peer, so it is good to have external validation. And I've had lots of clients message me to say congratulations. The trophy is now in the window of the office so clients and potential clients can see it.”

Paraplanner of the Year (Outsourced)

Kim Bendall, director and paraplanner, Go Paraplanning

Kim Bendall set up her company Go Paraplanning in 2020, since when it has grown exponentially, she says. “I started with six clients and now we are up to 18 clients. It's been a whirlwind; amazing but really hard work.” The company grew so fast, mainly through referrals, that we had to look for another experienced paraplanner quite quickly, and we took on Vicki Hardy, who joined us last year, and we recently started looking for another member to join us too.” Establishing her own company, Kim says, has been highly rewarding. “I love it. It's given me a new set of challenges – running a business as well as hands-on paraplanning – but it suits me.”

Asked what makes for a successful outsourced paraplanner, she says: “I

can only speak for how we do things but first I think it's authenticity – it's having a genuine love of what we do; you've got to be a passionate about this job and to want to put in the hours. Then, it's working with the right firms, who have the same set of values as you. You have to respect the people you work with. You need empathy and diplomacy and also straight communication between you. Clients have to know they have been heard and understood and also that they are important to us.

“If there are key qualities I think an outsourced paraplanner needs, they are: the ability to multi-task and to deal with a range of advisers; experience, probably more so than qualifications, although they are important; and managing yourself. This is not a turn up and dial in job.”

On winning the award, Kim says: “My career to date has tested every technical



and life skill that I've got but in bringing Go Paraplanning to life, I felt that now was the time to go for the award. It feels really special and humbling to get the recognition from people I have lot of respect for and who know the challenges you face both as a paraplanner and a business owner.”

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New Paraplanner of the Year

Mark O'Hara, Paraplanner, LJ Financial Planning

New Paraplanner of the Year Mark O'Hara started his working life as a professional golfer. "There comes a point where you have to make the decision about your career and I decided I had to get a 'real job'. Finance had always interested me and I was able to get two weeks' work experience in an IFA firm, confirmed that I liked it and started applying for administrator roles. But I kept getting knocked back because of my lack of experience. So I Googled all the local financial planning firms in my area and wrote to them all saying who I was and what I could offer. That got me an interview here at LJ Financial Planning and I've not looked back."

That was in January 2020 and Mark became a full-time paraplanner in February

NEW PARAPLANNER OF THE YEAR AND ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR



Mark O'Hara, Paraplanner, LJ Financial Planning receives the New Paraplanner of the Year award from Parmenion's Mollie Thornton

2021. The company has around 125 financial advisers and 14 paraplanners, who work on a pooled basis. It has been an incredible training ground, Mark says. "Not only am I working with many different advisers and seeing how they work but I get to work on a wide range of cases. I could pick up an ISA top up and next a complex drawdown case.

Some advisers like to do the research and recommendations themselves while others want to get the paraplanner involved. It really has broadened and deepened my experience. Every day is a new day, and every day is a school day."

Asked what he'd say to anyone looking to become a paraplanner, he says: "There are always opportunities if you have the right attitude and show you want to progress."

Alongside winning the award, Mark passed RO4 to attain his diploma this summer – with Chartered as his next goal. "These have been real confidence boosters," he says. "Winning the award was a nice surprise and it is a privilege to be recognised in this way. I'd like to use the award as springboard to help promote paraplanning. Being a paraplanner is a great career because you really are helping people and making a difference to their lives."

Administrator of the Year

Claire Ashdjian, Senior Client Support, Granite Coast

Claire Ashdjian was an experienced administrator working in the construction industry before Covid hit. "I was made redundant and by chance my husband was talking to the owner of Granite Coast who said he had a vacancy, so I applied for it." Just over two years on she is now Senior Client Support, running the admin team for the company. "Our team is growing. We have four administrators at present and we have another two joining us next month."

Tasks are allocated to the administrators and amongst other things can include acting on emails from clients, creating analysis sheets on policies, preparing meeting packs, writing up meeting notes, checking cash balances, actioning

withdrawals and payments, through to writing suitability letters. "Some tasks are those that in other firms would be done by paraplanners. I'm also responsible for training and mentoring new recruits, spot checks and processes."

If Claire has a bugbear, it is spelling mistakes. "If you are sending a document or a letter/mail and it has a mistake in it, what impression does that send? What if you are making the same kind of mistake entering digits on a financial plan? It's about quality of service."

Asked what she likes about the job, she says: "What I like about the way we work is that everyone gets the best service and is treated in the same no matter how much money they have with us. That's important to me."

Winning the award she says "was fabulous. When I entered, I didn't have



Claire Ashdjian, Senior Client Support, Granite Coast receives the Administrator of the Year award from Parmenion's Mollie Thornton

my hopes up as we are a small firm. My boss is very proud and the award has pride of place so clients can see it when they come into the office. We've even had providers comment on my win. It was definitely worth entering."

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Paraplanner Team Leader of the Year

Laura Cowling, Paraplanning Team Leader, Progeny

Laura Cowling, winner of our first ever Team Leader award, began her career in financial services as an apprentice business administrator for a small financial advice firm in Scunthorpe. She stayed at the firm for 5 years. By 2018 she had moved to be a trainee paraplanner for a firm in Doncaster, where she obtained her Level 4 Diploma.

But a desire to travel saw her leave the job and take eight months out, with a working visa in Australia, returning in 2019. "I decided if I was going to progress my career it had to be in Leeds and I approached Progeny. They didn't have any advertised roles but I must have impressed them as they found me a role as a paraplanner," Laura says. Three months

later, when the Team Leader role was created they asked her to apply.

She now leads a team of 13 paraplanners, managing workflows, answering technical queries, ensuring procedures are up-to-date, checking files amongst other day-to-day tasks, as well as bringing on staff new to the firm, and being involved in project work, such as changing the back-office system.

Asked what she feels makes for a great team leader, she says: "Patience and a willingness to listen. You could be in the middle of something, but if someone comes to ask you a question, no matter what you are doing you have to be able to stop and answer them," she says. Other qualities she highlights are organisational skills – "as team leader yours must be the next step up", as well as empathy, kindness, and supporting people to do well. You have to be the champion of the people you work with."



Now Chartered, Laura says she sees her career at Progeny for the foreseeable future. "I wouldn't want to be a financial planner. I feel my strength is in people management and in time I would like to move up to management, probably in an operational role. But there are so many opportunities here. The group is evolving and I feel I will evolve with it."

Paraplanner Team of the Year

Clarion Wealth Planning Ltd

To celebrate the win at the *Professional Paraplanner* awards, the entire Clarion paraplanning team travelled from Cheshire to London, staying in a hotel overnight, paid for by their bosses. "It really was a team effort to win and reflected the way we work as a team in the office," says Alistair Cartwright, paraplanner and Head of Advice Delivery. The firm operates in defined teams of financial planner, paraplanner and administrator, providing financial planning to a set group of clients. "We offer a very bespoke service to our clients. This means every member of the team knows the clients, knows their goals and aspirations. The paraplanners go into the meetings with the planners."

At the same time, Alistair says, the team (paraplanner and admin) not only comes

together once a week to discuss workload and cases, "we share ideas on specific cases and we will collaborate on complex cases; we will bring other paraplanners in to look at things with a different eye and maybe come up with a new angle. Then we will bring in the financial planner to discuss what we have come up with. It's a team centric, multi-layered approach."



One of the new initiatives brought in by the team has been to create a suite of documents that outlines a family's core values and aspirations. "We have new clients complete the document, then our first meeting will all be about what they want, not what they've got. We have the client think about what their wealth is for. Then we have the client set down one, three and 10-year goals, which we can help them to achieve."

Talking about the team, Alistair says: "We're career paraplanners and we're all passionate about paraplanning. We share Clarion's ethos and really want to do well for our clients. We're all like-minded people and we socialise out of work as well."

Alistair won the In-house Paraplanner of the Year award in 2020. "We've had a lot of reaction from clients to the team award, probably more than when I won," he says. "I think that's because it effects every client. We'll definitely enter the awards in 2023."

Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022

PROVIDER AWARDS WINNERS 2022

Professional Paraplanner's awards are prized by the industry's provider because, as one provider put it, "we're not sitting in front of a panel telling them how good we are; these awards are nominated by the people who are using our services and products day in day out. If they think we deserve an award for our performance and service over the past year that says a lot."

Or, as another put it: "It's the alignment of [our] purpose with that of paraplanners to which I attribute the company's year-on-year success at the Professional Paraplanner awards."

Paraplanners are not just looking for a fund that performs, a platform that enables them to switch and transact, a software house with technology that makes their lives easier, or a pension provider with a decent range of products, they want to see consistent performance and delivery,



Blackfinch's Thomas Jaffrey accepts the award from editor Rob Kingsbury

great support – technical and day-to-day – easy access, and to see that the provider is actively looking to improve.

Congratulations to the winners of this year's awards, and those who were highly commended. Keep up the good work – or better still, keep improving.

And thank you to all the paraplanners who nominated in this year's awards. Your participation is very much appreciated.

Methodology

Every paraplanner and administrator subscriber to the magazine or website is sent a dedicated form on which they can nominate the companies they consider delivered the best service to them in each of the award categories over the past year. Results are monitored to ensure nominations are restricted to our paraplanner and administrator subscribers.

The winners of the awards are those with the most nominations.

In 2020 we introduced Highly Commended status for the Provider awards. This was to recognise companies chasing the leaders for all categories, in particular where there was a dominant company in the market.

This Year's Winners

Best Overall Service to Paraplanners - New Business

Winner: Transact
Highly commended: Parmenion

Best Overall Service to Paraplanners - Existing Business

Winner: abrdn
Highly commended: Aviva

Best Technical Support to Paraplanners

Winner: M&G Wealth
Highly commended: Quilter

Best Training Resource for Paraplanners

Winner: Bespoke Training Solutions
Highly commended: Brand Financial Training

Best Research Software

Winner: FE Analytics
Highly commended: Defaqto

Best Back-Office System

Winner: intelligflo office

Best Platform

Winner: Transact
Highly commended: Aviva

Best Third Party Support/Compliance Service

Winner: CATS
Highly commended: Threesixty Services

Best Provider Website

Winner: Fidelity Adviser Solutions
Highly commended: M&G Wealth

Best Independent Service Provider

Winner: Blackfinch
Highly commended: Moneyinfo

Best Active Investment Solution Provider

Winner: Liontrust Asset Management
Highly commended: Fidelity International

Best Passive Investment Solution Provider

Winner: Vanguard
Highly commended: Dimensional

Best ESG Investment Solution Provider

Winner: Liontrust Asset Management
Highly commended: Royal London

Best Alternative Investment Provider

Winner: Octopus Investments
Highly commended: TIME Investments

Best Outsourced Investment Firm

Winner: Tatton Asset Management
Highly commended: Investec Wealth and Investment

Best Offshore Product Provider

Winner: Canada Life International
Highly commended: Utmost Wealth

Best Retirement Solution Provider

Winner: Royal London
Highly commended: Prudential

Best Full SIPP Provider

Winner: AJ Bell
Highly commended: Dentons Pension Management

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www.transact-online.co.uk/reducing-charges-2022/

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Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022

BEST OVERALL SERVICE TO PARAPLANNERS – NEW BUSINESS

Glen Sweet, head of sales at Transact, says the firm was “delighted and gratified” to win ‘Best Overall Service to Paraplanners – New Business’ at this year’s *Professional Paraplanner Awards*.

Service has been at the heart of Transact’s proposition since its inception in 1999 and it’s an approach that has paid off, with paraplanners citing the firm’s efficient service and ease of contact as key reasons for their nomination.

Sweet says: “Paraplanners have a responsibility to understand the nuances of their clients and we are always looking at ways to improve the service we offer so that they can improve their own service for their clients.”

Transact’s customer service is organised in a way that teams deal with dedicated clients across the UK. In doing so, teams get to know those individuals and forge a deeper understanding of their needs.

“Within each team there will be generalists but there will always be pension and tax specialists too. If a client’s question or request is little more complex, we get the technical team to take a look. That service model has worked really well for us and our clients over the years,” says Sweet.

Over the past 12 months, Transact’s focus has been upon improving automation for advice firms, including the introduction of electronic signatures.

According to Sweet: “We actively go looking for bottlenecks and areas that might be time-consuming for paraplanners to see how we can improve our service. There are always nice-to-haves but our immediate focus is upon the essential areas that can make a real difference to firms, such as electronic document uploads.

“We don’t look to make changes simply because it sounds good or because we think other firms are doing



Glen Sweet and Brian Radbone collect the first of Transact’s awards from PP editor Rob Kingsbury

it, we implement change that we believe will have a real beneficial influence on advice firms.”

Looking ahead, Transact’s focus will be upon making the move of assets among linked family easier. The firm has already made changes to enable payments to be reconciled automatically to a client’s chosen wrapper, following pre-instructions from the adviser.

Sweet says: “We wanted to make things more efficient for advisers and this process reduces the time and input at their end. It’s not just a matter of moving assets from wrapper to wrapper, but across linked family accounts too, for example if a grandparent wants to invest in an ISA for a grandchild or contribute towards a family member’s pension fund.

“Systemisation is a key focus for us and one we firmly believe will improve

our service. We are always thinking about which functionalities would be of greatest benefit.”

To that end, Transact is also looking to introduce an online transfer tracker.

“One of the biggest headaches is dealing with transfers,” says Sweet. “Moving money out of old, dormant accounts or building societies can be torturous so we want to enable advisers and their clients to keep track of what steps have been completed so far and what needs to be done next. This helps to manage client expectations and allows them to understand exactly where in the transfer process they are without needing to make several calls to keep on top of what’s happening.”

What sets Transact apart, says Sweet, is the total control it has over the development of its service and the ability to prioritise changes as and when needed. “We don’t have to rely on third party providers to implement changes, we have the facility to do it ourselves which means that we can respond quickly to regulatory changes and are always ready for new developments,” he adds.



Professional Paraplanner website and daily email alert



With four dedicated subject zones to help you find the news and information you need



- ESG Zone:
Launched to help you better understand, research and recommend in the ESG/Sustainable Investing environment. Sponsored by EdenTree

- Investment Committee:
Insights and data to help you in your investment research. Sponsored by Fidelity International

- Tech Zone:
In-depth articles on key areas such as pensions, tax and trusts. Sponsored by The Prudential

- Giving paraplanners and paraplanner team leaders access to insightful and practical articles to help them in their development journey. Sponsored by Fidelity International

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Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022

BEST OVERALL SERVICE TO PARAPLANNERS - EXISTING BUSINESS

If there is an overriding principle that has helped abrdn Wrap stand out in the past year for its users, it is that as a client-led organisation, it has continued to pursue its ambition to deliver service excellence and market-leading experience, says Emily Bevens, Head of Client Enablement, abrdn.

In 2021, abrdn launched its Client Engagement Hub, with great feedback from users. “80 per cent of adviser firms contacting the hub told us they find us easy to deal with, and 95 per cent say they are satisfied with our service,” Bevens says.

“Also, we implemented Amazon Connect and Salesforce Service Cloud to make it easier for our people to support adviser firms. The technology allows the dynamic routing of calls to the team member with the right knowledge and skills to provide a personalised, one-stop shop service.”

When nominating the platform for the award, paraplanners specifically highlighted the functionality, with one saying it is “far superior to any of the other providers we are using.”

“Our Client Engagement Hub follows a digital first approach, with self-service options that we know, through detailed feedback, save adviser firms valuable time



and create more capacity within their organisations,” says Bevens.

“We have created demand analysis dashboards to help our clients better use and understand our digital services based on their previous interactions with our team. Data analytics also allows us to focus investment in areas where clients can quickly access what they need online.”

This year the platform also launched collaborate browsing to help make addressing clients’ queries as easy as possible. Bevens explains: “On-screen navigation lets our call handlers show clients how to complete each step of a process digitally, reducing the likelihood of them having to reach out with the same question and saving them valuable time in the future.”

Having access to great service levels and user support is essential for paraplanners and administrators when gathering info and wanting to transact for clients, and abrdn has made responsiveness an essential component of

its service operating model Bevens says. “Over the past year, we have consistently answered calls within an average of 30 seconds. We also gather feedback after every call on how easy our clients found us to deal with and how satisfied they were. We analyse and take action on every bit of feedback received.”

The platform’s Client Engagement Hub team are based in the same office and work together to ensure all the information paraplanners need is available in real-time, Bevens adds. “This responsive, technology-enabled approach would not be possible without our people. Sometimes there’s no substitute for a live conversation with someone who knows you and your business. Our dedicated teams answer 24,000 calls a month – answered under 30 seconds. We’ve always been here when paraplanners need a hand getting something done – and that will never change,” Bevens says.

The platform also offers tax and inheritance planning support through Techzone, compiled by a team of experts, qualified in pensions, taxation, trusts and wealth transfer. “The comprehensive website content, CPD-accredited modules and regular emails, offer valuable resources for supporting great client conversations.

“Delivering exceptional service and being as easy to work with as possible provides numerous benefits to paraplanners but, perhaps most importantly, it helps them to preserve their most precious resource – time – so they can focus on delivering better service and outcomes for clients. This is why we are committed to always getting it right first time and understanding our client needs to drive the continuous improvement of our service.”

On winning the award, Russell Bignall, Managing Director, Sales, Adviser UK says: “We’re absolutely delighted to see abrdn Wrap recognised by UK paraplanners for service. Here at abrdn we understand that providing the right support helps adviser firms focus on what’s important – their clients.”





M&G Wealth's Technical team awarded 'Best Technical Support' for the sixth year running at the Professional Paraplanner Awards



Les Cameron, Head of Technical, M&G Wealth said: "I'm delighted to win this award for the sixth year running, particularly because we are the only company to have ever won it."

"It's vitally important that we help paraplanners and financial advisers understand the tax and planning considerations when recommending our products so they can help ensure the best possible outcomes for their clients, who will ultimately become our policyholders."

"Our success is down to the collective efforts of our Marketing and Technical teams. We work hard to deliver a best-in-class service to the growing number of paraplanners throughout the country."



BEST TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO PARAPLANNERS



M&G Wealth (formerly known as Prudential) continued its winning streak at this year's awards, picking up "Best Technical Support to Paraplanners" for the sixth consecutive year.

A technical support team of five offers advisers and paraplanners across the UK help and support across all areas of the advice market and the proposition has proved increasingly popular with firms, says Vince Smith Hughes, head of business development at M&G Wealth.

Smith Hughes said: "We've had 1,500 contacts with advice firms already this year and our webinars attracted over 9,000 viewers in the first six months. What makes it such a success is that everything we present and publish is underpinned by technical expertise, led by Head of Technical Les Cameron. The team delivers a fantastic service which receives great feedback from advisers and paraplanners alike.

"It's in all our interests that advisers and paraplanners have the knowledge and information they need to get things right for the client, and we want to ensure that everyone involved in the industry is singing from the same hymn sheet."

The technical support team focuses on publishing a wealth of generic information across various topics through the use of articles and webinars. It also publishes information and updates on legislative and regulatory changes, as well as government developments such as the Budget. Smith Hughes says: "We like to speak to the market – if there is something that is going to affect advisers, we try to be one of the first out there with the news and exploring the implications. We also try, where possible, to take a bit of a different angle to what's already been published out there."



Les Cameron, Head of Technical, leads the team which has scooped the Best Technical Support award six years in a row

Importantly, the firm also helps advisers and paraplanners with client-specific queries and this has proved something of a differentiator in the market, he says. "As much as we'd like to, we can never deal with everything just by publishing generic information. Sometimes clients have very complicated situations and advisers and paraplanners need someone technical to turn to for advice and help.

"They have a lot to contend with and there will be times that they come across something complex or unusual for them. For us, however, it's often much more common to see these types of client situations, as we speak to so many advisers and paraplanners on a daily basis, so we're always very welcoming and seek to help wherever we can. It doesn't matter if it's a new or existing client, or whether the query will lead to business for us. Our aim is to ensure that advisers and paraplanners go away with

as much knowledge as they need to help them with their clients."

Looking ahead, Smith Hughes said the firm will continue to keep a steady flow of articles coming out and is set to host a series of three webinars focused on helping clients in later life, exploring themes such as lasting power of attorney. "We've already had 1,000 people sign up to these webinars so we know this topic is going to be really popular," he says.

The firm is also looking to enhance its suite of tools and calculators, with a further calculator currently in development. It is an approach that has paid off for M&G Wealth, with paraplanners continuing to consider the firm as offering the best technical support in the market.

Acknowledging the firm's winning streak, Smith Hughes says: "To win this award for a sixth year in a row feels absolutely fantastic. It's great to have acknowledgment from paraplanners and we feel very grateful and proud to have won."



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Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022

BEST TRAINING RESOURCE FOR PARAPLANNERS

Bespoke Training Solutions (BTS) scooped the Best Training Resource for Paraplanners award for a second year in a row in 2022. Luiza Todd and co-founder Jeff Scholes established the company 19 years ago “and we haven’t looked back”, Luiza says. “We are in the privileged and lucky position that we really enjoy what we do. Jeff and I have some 70 years learning and development experience between us and 38 years running BTS. It’s about passing on what we have learned to those going through the regulated exams that they must have as a minimum industry standard and beyond. Guiding and developing the people who will be the future of financial planning and the industry.”

Asked what she thinks is behind the success of the BTS, Luiza says “bloody hard work and a genuine passion for what we do. We’re about giving an incredible level of service. We constantly update our services, making sure that what we do is fit for purpose. We take and retake the exams we are training on, so we know what our candidates are going through, and we listen to feedback from candidates on what they would like to see. We work hard to make sure candidates have what they need, when they need it; as an example, recently we spent a whole weekend writing the BTS Ro6 analysis for candidates.

“To my mind, you have to be passionate about what you do. You have to want to put in the hours and put yourself through the exams to do this job properly. If you think about it, people are taking a leap of faith in using our training materials to help them



achieve their exams. And it’s a lot of people; we’ve now trained and coached over 10,000 candidates over 19 years.”

In the past year, alongside its updated study material and training sessions, BTS initiatives have included launching five e-Learning programmes to match the five multi-choice RO exams; hosting Career Pathway lunchtime information events; and going live with an AF5 study guide. They also started a collaboration with the Fairstone Group, using the BTS STEP framework of study guides, bespoke training workshops, e-Learning modules, and exam-standard practice questions. This is in addition to their work with other

Academies such as Schroders Personal Wealth and True Potential.

Luiza and Jeff have also presented at *Professional Paraplanner* Technical Insight Seminars as well as delivering exam-based webinars and writing monthly articles for the magazine and website. “In part, this is about keeping ourselves visible to people, so they know we are here to help, but it’s also about passing on some of our knowledge outside of our paid-for services; our way of giving back to the paraplanning community for the support they give us,” Luiza says.

Coming up later this year, Luiza says will be App questions to support candidates taking the CISI level 4 exams. “We are also working on AF1 and Jo2 support material. We have a lot in development, but we never put anything out that we feel isn’t top quality, so we’re not giving publication dates at present. Keep your eye on *Professional Paraplanner* for more details in due course.”

Summing up her thoughts on BTS’s award wins, Luiza says: “I’d like to thank everyone who voted for us both this year and last year to make us winners. We love working with paraplanners and we’ll be going for three wins in a row next year. We honestly believe we have the best support services for paraplanners (and others) in the market and we never rest on our laurels. We’ll continue to make sure we deserve paraplanners’ votes in 2023 and beyond.”

“You have to be passionate about what you do. You have to want to put in the hours and put yourself through the exams to do this job properly”



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Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022

BEST RESEARCH SOFTWARE

Six straight years of winning this award for FE Analytics shows just how much this software is both fundamental to paraplanning and valued by paraplanners at all levels of experience.

“Paraplanners are not all the same and you’ll have different paraplanners doing different jobs in different firms, but there are very few who won’t be able to take advantage of the efficiencies we can offer them,” says Oliver Greenspan, Head of Adviser Sales, FE fundinfo.

“That intersection between data, client, adviser and paraplanner is where we can make paraplanners’ lives easier. We enable them to fulfil a lot of the requirements of their role in one place. And that’s huge in terms of efficiency, ease of use and time saved.”

Greenspan urges paraplanners to spend time learning what FE Analytics has to offer. “FE Analytics has a lot of really useful functionality, and sometimes people are not aware of exactly what it can give them,” he says.

Getting to know the system can pay off massively, he adds. “It enables paraplanners to build automations that will allow them to do repeated tasks much more easily and refine their processes, making them far more efficient and able to service more advisers and more clients, in a compliant way.

“So, I want to say to all the paraplanners out there, if you were wondering if there is a solution to a problem, there may be a way Analytics can help. We want paraplanners and everyone at adviser firms to get the best out of the system. So please get in touch and see if we can help you.”

ESG is a major focus for FE fundinfo at the moment, Greenspan says. “We are building out our ESG content and we will be adding third-party ratings data later this year. We’ve also built an ESG questionnaire into FE CashCalc, to help advisers and paraplanners better understand the client’s views and goals



Oliver Greenspan collects FE Analytics’ sixth award in as many years

with regard to ESG, and then to take that forward to make a recommendation.

The company has also launched ESG Disclosure Reports to cover the ESG characteristics of all its portfolios, not just FE Investments’ Responsibly Managed Portfolios. The reports provide detail, for example, on where client money is invested by themes, how the portfolios align with the UN’s Principles of Responsible Investing, information on controversies involving the investments, and any exposure to industries which are usually subject to ethical screens.

“The reports give paraplanners, advisers and clients a full view of what the client’s money is invested in,” Greenspan says.

Other developments by FE fundinfo in 2021-22 have included increasing the number of providers on the Managed Portfolio Service directory to around 70, Greenspan says, “which means paraplanners using discretionary fund

managers can access the underlying holdings data for the MPS that is part of their central investment proposition.

“We’ve added a number of new data sets also, for example US equities, expanding our geographical reach.”

On the horizon, Greenspan reveals, “we are reforming our offering into what we are calling the Financial Advice Hub.

“We’re building an open architecture model whereby the advice firm can plug into FE and help streamline their overall advice process. We are talking about helping to bring together planning tools, onboarding process, cashflow forecasting, fund data, FE investments where applicable, the client portal, and associated analysis tools that are important for paraplanners, with the idea to enable paraplanners to do straight through processing from their client-facing tool.

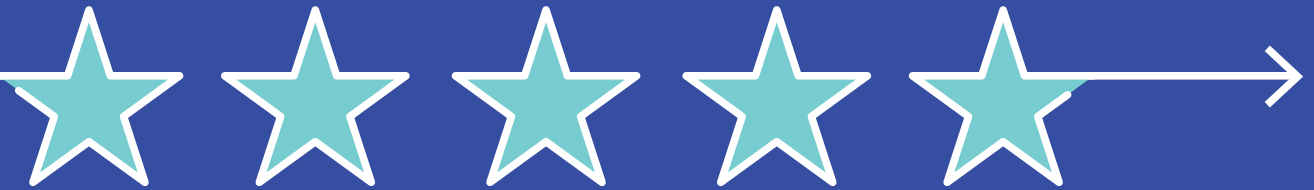
He adds: “If we can reduce rekeying – or better still get rid of it altogether – by enabling more systems to talk to one another, that is going to make advice firms more efficient, reduce time taken on back-office tasks and allow advisers and paraplanners to spend more time on client facing tasks.”



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Professional
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2022
Winner
Best Back-Office
System

Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022

BEST BACK-OFFICE SYSTEM

intelliflo scooped the Best Back-Office System award for the fifth time this year. Rob Kingsbury spoke with UK Country Head of intelliflo, Richard Wake, about the company's developments over the past year and the win.

Talking specifically to developments useful to paraplanners, he points to the launch of intelliflo planning in November last year. "This is our new powerful cashflow modelling tool that makes it quicker and easier for paraplanners (and advisers) to build, adapt and stress-test clients' plans. From solving tax, pensions and investment complexities to asset and liability modelling and wider financial strategy planning, it allows paraplanners to easily incorporate all goals and scenarios into one user-friendly financial roadmap. The cutting-edge user interface makes the solution incredibly easy to use and is further supported by the fully interactive in-application support to instantly guide any user around the tool."

intelliflo planning affords simplified data entry, detailed tax computations and transparency and swift calculation of the capacity for loss, spend and return requirements via The Goal Seek Wizard functionality, Wake explains. "Paraplanners can also view a clear audit trail of all changes logged and highlighted, as well as build detailed reports that incorporate personalised notations on each input for clarity. The integration with intelliflo office and the Personal Finance Portal with open banking reduces the impact of human error and improves the quality of data.

"The technology turns the complexities of cashflow modelling into beautifully simple graphics to help engage clients in the process and understand the impact of their decisions on their long-term goals. Most importantly, this technology has been built by paraplanners so we are confident it will deliver what they need to simplify the complexities of long-term planning."



Another launch, designed to support home working, is in-app support to help intelliflo users to quickly and more easily understand how the system operates, "putting important information at their fingertips," Wake says.

With cyber threats and security, and the increase in home usage, in mind, intelliflo also launched single sign-on capability in both intelliflo office and intelliflo personal finance portal to streamline the identity service for users.

In addition, intelliflo has continued its development of third-party integrations, "which have grown significantly," Wake says, largely through the company's Developer Hub and open API. "This means that the tools paraplanners use which complement what we do, can be more easily integrated with our services."

Work on the software's document designer, also has added a lot of capability to help in the production of advice documentation. Wake explains: "We

improved our DocuSign capability through the personal finance portal, introducing multiple documents and a joint signature capability. It takes out the pain of re-keying, double keying and formatting, and so on, to speed things up and give paraplanners and advisers more time to deal with the advice."

On the company winning its fifth award Wake says: "We believe passionately in financial advice and our purpose is to widen access to financial advice, so when the people who are right at the core of providing that service vote for us that is very humbling. It's the alignment of intelliflo's purpose with that of paraplanners to which I attribute the company's year-on-year success at the *Professional Paraplanner* awards.

"We're both focussed on helping the advice firm to deliver an outcome in the best way possible for the benefit of consumers. Paraplanners are technical, which is why they are important to us as a business. They often are the ones making most use of our system, exploring what it can do and pushing it to do more. Many paraplanners are part of our community portal and provide good ideas for enhancements."

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Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022

BEST PLATFORM AWARD

Transact was voted 'Best Platform' by paraplanners, lauded for its reliability, "excellent" online functionality and "great" customer service. Since its launch in 1999, Transact has grown its client base to 218,000, with £53.5 billion funds under direction. According to Glen Sweet, head of sales at Transact, the secret to a good platform is delivering on its promises.

"It's all good and well making promises but following through on those and delivering what clients really want is what matters. It helps if you specialise solely on being a platform – all our efforts go in the same direction," he explains.

Sweet points to the ownership structure of platforms as having an impact on the platform's business model.

"There is a growing amount of private equity money coming into the platform market which history shows tends to lean towards more short-term thinking rather than long-term and this dynamic changes the focus of the business somewhat," he says. "It will be interesting to see how



this plays out over the next few years, as private-equity funded platforms could have different commercial drivers."

For Transact, its standout feature is that it doesn't behave like a stereotypical service provider, Sweet says. As the owners of its own platform technology, Transact has total control over the developments it makes and the frequency with which it makes those.

"We believe we have an advantage over our competitors as we develop our own software. Our approach means we can prioritise what is critical and focus on the most urgent tasks first. If you outsource, it can be much harder to stop and start things as and when you need to. This increases confidence among advisers and paraplanners that we are keeping pace with changes in the

advice market and their needs. As well as creating a platform that can react quickly to market developments, we are also able to adapt to client's personal circumstances and can make changes to make sure a client's plan stays on track. We believe that level of control and flexibility sets us apart."

Transact says that any changes it makes to the platform are done so after consultation with its users.

"We are very careful to take annual client surveys into account and consider what they would like to see us implement next. Our focus is always upon understanding the ways in which we could improve our service to make their lives easier," says Sweet.

Going forward, there will be a lot of changes for platforms to consider, not least the Consumer Duty, which will ensure that good customer outcomes are at the forefront of what platforms do. "Some of the finer points around the FCA's expectations is unknown but clearly we need to start thinking about it already," Sweet says.

He points also to the growth in ESG investing in recent years. "Whilst important, to date there has been more noise than action in the UK market but the financial services sector and the wider public, are starting to appreciate the role all of us must play in respect of long term sustainability.

"As a platform specialist, we are entirely agnostic about which funds advisers and their clients choose. They can search for particular funds according to their filter but the appropriateness and suitability of the investment solution lies with the adviser."

Reflecting on Transact's award win, Sweet says: "We are humbled to win this award. We watch very carefully where advisers and paraplanners are commenting and so it has much more validity and gravitas for us to receive an award voted for by the paraplanners themselves. We are delighted to have won."



Glen Sweet (left) and Brian Radbone are presented with Transact's second award of the evening



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Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022

BEST THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT/ COMPLIANCE SERVICE



CATS received the 'Best Third Party Support / Compliance Service' award for the second consecutive year in 2022. "To win a second year in a row gives us the validation and confidence that we are offering the right support to our clients," says founder Mel Holman.

Since its inception in 2005, CATS has worked hard to provide best practice compliance service for financial planners and paraplanners throughout the UK. Mel, who was inspired to launch the business after her own experience working as a consultant at a network highlighted many firms' difficulty around compliance, believes approachability is one of the key reasons CATS continues to stand out.

She says: "We always give an answer or try to offer as much help as possible and often, what paraplanners need most is reassurance. They'll know the answer but they just want to run through a situation and get a second opinion, usually around reports."

The 15-strong team is made up of experienced professionals which CATS says helps to ensure that clients always receive the right support. Director Martyn Holman

explains: "One of our biggest strengths is that our compliance team are all qualified. Some have been paraplanners, some have been advisers, so we bring together a real plethora of knowledge and experience. When a client calls, they don't get passed from person to person - at CATS the person who takes the call will see it through, ensuring that they provide all the relevant information and support themselves."

CATS also prides itself on offering paraplanners third party support and training, particularly through webinars.

Mel says: "We constantly try to seek out third parties that have a particular expertise that we can direct clients toward to help enhance their knowledge



and understanding. Paraplanners should continue learning so that they're in a position to challenge their planner if there's something they don't agree with. Doing so will make for a much more robust client file."

To improve its service further, CATS is seeking to make improvements across its online hub, which provides clients with their own personal dashboard showing results of any completed file reviews, the ability to run their own MI reports, access to the monthly newsletter and webinars as well as access to the firm's training zone.

"A lot of what we've been doing over the last year has been behind the scenes, but we are seeking to move to a more seamless, digital offering so clients can start to do a lot of things for themselves, for example run a report in a client meeting without needing to contact us first," explains Mel.

With the FCA's Consumer Duty on the horizon, CATS says the majority of firms are fundamentally close to achieving the watchdog's requirements but must do more to document.

Mel says: "We see firms doing great things for clients but where is it all documented? Often firms write down the actual points but fail to provide any context around those points. For a lot of firms, it will simply be a matter of fine tuning what they already do.

"We would also encourage paraplanners to think more about the presentation of the data they include in their reports so that it becomes more engaging and easier for clients to understand."

Reflecting on winning their award for the second year in a row, Martyn says: "What we love about this award is that we are properly judged on the work that we do and not the pitch we make. Often awards ask you to sell yourself, but this award is given solely on the work we've already done which is why it's so special.

"We're not complacent by any stretch of the imagination but the pressure for a third win is definitely on!"

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Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022

BEST PROVIDER WEBSITE

Fidelity Adviser Solutions scooped the Best Provider Website award for the second time in three years, achieving highly commended in 2021. Paraplanners who nominated Fidelity for this year's award praised the company's technical support and materials, and in particular, it's dedicated Paraplanner Hub. As one paraplanner commented: "It shows they value our role in financial advice."

Jackie Boylan, Head of Fidelity Adviser Solutions, says they specifically look to support paraplanners "because we recognise they are a critical part of the industry who often don't get the recognition or support they should. They are helping to professionalise the industry and deliver better solutions to clients and we want to support them as much as we can.

"This includes helping with exams, training, seminars, like the *Professional Paraplanner* Technical Insight and Team Leader Seminars, and providing really easy access to technical content.



What paraplanners need to know is complex, so anything we can do to support this we will, as we know it can aid in providing better outcomes."

Other areas Fidelity has received positive feedback on from paraplanners, Boylan says, is the Sustainable Investing hub, which provides a range of materials and tools to help paraplanners get under the bonnet of this complex area.

"Providing an intuitive online experience is also critical for us," Boylan adds. "We have done a lot of work over the past couple of years on making our service easy to use, in particular getting more digital. Now paraplanners can get hold of the information or undertake the task they need to online, without having to call us if they don't want or need to. That's been really important for us to develop."

She also highlights the company's B2B reports. "Through these reports we can provide insight into clients in so many different ways. I think we have a report for absolutely everything a paraplanner could need, and the data can be manipulated so an advice firm can tailor it specifically to its requirements."

A major change for the company in the past year, was the transition from the name Fidelity FundsNetwork to Fidelity Adviser Solutions. Boylan explains: "Fidelity FundsNetwork was one of the first funds platforms and is synonymous with that market, so it was a big decision, with implications. But we wanted a name that better depicted who we wanted to be as a business, and the services we wanted to provide and develop in the future for advisers and paraplanners. That includes better ways to provide integrated solutions that provide better outcomes not just for adviser businesses but for their clients.

"It has given us more scope to look at fintechs, and where we can, use our scale, our Strategic Ventures arm and the benefit of having a global presence, to bring different ideas or opportunities to our adviser firms."

One of those opportunities has been to partner with Canadian FinTech company, Conquest, in offering new financial planning software to the UK market. "The software helps to build financial plans faster and more efficiently, whilst providing consistent and compliant outcomes for clients."

Boylan adds: "We want to thank all the paraplanners who voted for us. We are all in this business because we genuinely want to help clients build better futures, whether that is wealth creation/protection/achieving certain goals or just peace of mind - it is likely to be all of those! We strongly believe that providing resources, particularly technical content for paraplanners, really helps to achieve that."



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Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022

BEST ACTIVE INVESTMENT PROVIDER

Paraplanners who nominated Liontrust referred to the company as “an asset manager that has gone from strength to strength”. This is reflected in the significant growth the asset manager has achieved over the past five years, which saw its assets under management and administration (AuMA) increase from £6.5 billion on 31 March 2017 to £33.5 billion on 31 March 2022.

At the heart of this success, says Simon Hildrey, Chief Marketing Officer, “has been our focus on having high-quality investment teams with rigorous investment processes, strong distribution, a powerful brand, providing first-class service to our clients and investors, and regular and relevant communications.”

Over the five years to 31 March 2022, 99.0% of Liontrust’s UK-domiciled funds were in the first or second quartile of their respective Investment Association sectors and over three years this percentage was 98.0%. Asked what paraplanners researching investment solutions or sitting on their firm’s Investment Committee, should be looking for in an active fund manager, Hildrey points to the strength of the investment processes of their fund management teams.

“Performance is not predictable but investment processes are,” he says. “We believe investment processes are key to long-term performance and effective risk control.

“Staying true to their documented investment processes helps to create an in-built risk control for fund managers, especially in more challenging environments, by preventing them from investing in companies and funds for the wrong reasons and helping them to retain clarity of thought. Documenting an investment process means investors in funds and portfolios know exactly how each team manages their money.

“And when the environment is challenging, it is even more important to communicate clearly and regularly with clients whether it is through face-



to-face events, written updates and insights, or videos.”

On what makes Liontrust distinctive as an asset management company, Hildrey cites seven characteristics:

A focus on the areas of investment in which Liontrust has particular expertise – it has seven investment teams managing UK and global equities, global bonds, sustainable investment funds and multi-asset funds and portfolios.

A process-driven approach, with each fund management team applying rigorous and documented investment processes to managing funds and portfolios.

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Fund managers with the courage of their convictions to make active investment decisions, ensuring Liontrust funds and portfolios are truly actively managed for the long-term benefit of our clients and investors.

A culture where everyone in the

company is personally accountable for their commitments and actions and seeks to uphold the highest standards of integrity in all actions. In addition, having a strong and distinctive brand, “which represents our strength, conviction, independence, innovation, excellence, transparency and ethics,” says Hildrey and community engagement, with a focus on financial education, providing opportunities for young people and wildlife conservation.

Collectively, these are instrumental in making Liontrust stand out from the crowd and make it worthwhile for paraplanners to look deeper into what it provides.

On winning the award, Hildrey says: “It is very pleasing to be recognised for the excellence of our investment teams, funds, the performance they have generated over the long term and the service we provide paraplanners and their clients. While fund performance is generally seen as the key measure of receiving a positive outcome, Liontrust seeks to provide value well beyond this, including service and clear and regular communications.”

*(Source: Financial Express, as at 31.03.22, total return, net of fees, income reinvested, based on primary share classes. Excluding Liontrust Multi-Asset Funds, most of which do not have sector benchmarks, and funds in the IA Specialist sector. Funds included in the calculations make up 78% of Liontrust’s total AuMA).

LIONTRUST

21 YEARS OF INVESTING FOR A POSITIVE FUTURE

Since 2001, the Liontrust Sustainable Investment team have been seeking companies that will help to create a cleaner, safer and healthier society in the future and generate attractive returns for investors

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Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022

BEST ESG INVESTMENT SOLUTION PROVIDER

The Liontrust Sustainable Investment team were among the pioneers of sustainable investing when they launched their Sustainable Future fund range, in 2001, so it seems fitting that they should be the winners of the first Professional Paraplanner award in this category.

Simon Hildrey, Chief Marketing Officer says the asset manager is “delighted” to have been voted Best ESG Investment Solution Provider by paraplanners. “This is an incredibly important and competitive area, with investors demanding more sustainable outcome from their investments. Asset managers have a vital role to play in allocating capital to great businesses with the innovation and technology to help us tackle massive challenges like climate change.”

The Sustainable Investment team’s proposition to clients is to seek to deliver superior returns by investing in sustainable companies that are making the world cleaner, healthier and safer, Mike Appleby, an investment manager on the team, explains. “We believe these businesses have better growth and greater resilience than the market understands so we can aim to use this under-appreciated advantage to deliver outperformance from our actively managed equity, fixed income and managed funds.

“In addition, by allocating capital to these businesses and engaging with management, we can accelerate environmental and societal improvements.”

The quality and integrity of the Sustainable Investment team, built over a 21-year track record of successful investing, has enabled them to clearly differentiate themselves during a time of many new fund launches. That has been achieved by a clear focus on five attributes which, the company believes, can help paraplanners and advisers identify genuinely sustainable fund managers.

First, Appleby says, the fund manager needs to be transparent about how it



invests, as well as being open to challenge. “This should include clear and simple information explaining how the team runs money: what companies they look for under the sustainable approach and what they avoid.” This should include frequent communication giving an update on what is going on in the fund, relating back to the investment decisions and companies held. “Anyone can write a generic report on climate change but how is the portfolio positioned in light of the huge challenges that combatting this will entail?”

Experience and resource are also key, Appleby says. “As in any walk of life, we believe the experience and depth of a team is important when it comes to sustainable investing. There is nothing to say a new fund will not be a good investment and there are interesting products coming to market but our team at Liontrust has been investing sustainably for over 20 years and we currently have a team of 17.”

Sustainable investing is a specialist area and subjects like climate change are fast moving so investors need also to be confident their chosen managers have the

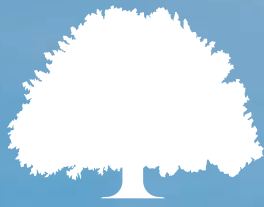
required knowledge to run money in this way. Knowledge and ongoing training therefore are essential, Appleby points out, “which can be anything from members of the team having specialist qualifications to a general focus on training to ensure people understand the latest sustainability trends.”

Fourth is activism. “Engagement is a key part of what we call sustainable investing and we feel managers should be able to highlight a track record of holding companies to account and encouraging them to improve. Managers should be able to talk in detail about their engagement priorities – whether diversity, tax transparency or plastic pollution – rather than just making sweeping statements,” Appleby says.

Finally, evidence. “Ultimately you are looking for all this knowledge and experience in sustainability being applied to investment decisions – giving meaningfully different exposure compared to more conventional funds. Are managers able to show how their sustainability views are reflected in their decisions: is it simply ESG data and reporting for the sake of it or is it actually making a difference to investment? Measuring impact is also important and we have created sustainability and impact reports for our funds to show how they affect sustainable development.”



Liontrust Asset Management’s James Klemptster picks up the company’s second award win of the evening



Tatton

Investment Management

Winner

Best Outsourced Investment Firm Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022



We are extremely grateful, to all the paraplanners who voted for Tatton for a second year running.

This award is special to us, as it is voted for by Paraplanners that trust Tatton to manage their clients' investments.

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Thank you - it means so much.



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Professional Paraplanner Awards 2022

BEST OUTSOURCED INVESTMENT FIRM

Tatton has secured the Best Outsourced Investment Firm award for the second year in a row, showing that the firm is more than a blip on paraplanners' radars. Roddi Vaughan-Thomas, Head of Communications and Marketing for the investment manager, believes this is because Tatton was set up "differently from other investment firms" to offer advice firms "investments that meet their clients objectives and service standards".

"We know first-hand how an advice firm works operationally. This means that in developing the Tatton Portal and setting out our service levels, we have targeted areas we know firms need support.

"For example, we have made significant investments to make it easy for advice firms to work with us through the Tatton Portal, by enabling advisers and paraplanners to manage and onboard their Tatton clients simply and efficiently."

Tatton also stand out for its customers, Vaughan-Thomas says, "because we're consistent and we care. Our investment process is designed to provide consistent repeatable long-term performance and our service model is to go the extra mile every time to help advice firms meet their clients' needs. It sounds easy, but it's hard work and we do work very hard to maintain our standards."

When nominating Tatton for the award, paraplanners specifically commented on the firm's performance record, and its "reliable and helpful service".

"Investment performance is, in its simplest terms, meeting clients' objectives at a competitive cost, and that's what we are set up to do," Vaughan-Thomas says. "Clients want consistent investment returns over the long term that enable them to meet their life plans. We are very disciplined when managing risk within investors' comfort zones and keeping the cost of investment low. You could say that we are conservative in our investment approach, but we are reliable and consistent



Roddi Vaughan-Thomas, Head of Communications and Marketing at Tatton Investment Management collects the firm's 2022 award

and we believe that's more important for someone planning their retirement than shooting for the moon and crash landing."

He also flags the firm's commitment to providing first-class communication and access to information. "We want our communications with investors and advice firms to be relevant, accessible and fresh. Our newsletters are written the day they are issued and our market update videos are distributed in under two hours from recording. Markets move quickly and we need to communicate quickly too, particularly when markets are going badly. For example, during periods of market volatility, we communicate in real-time not a week after it's happened.

"Similarly, our service levels for advisers in terms of onboarding, client management, even MIFID communications, are designed to enable advisers and paraplanners to do their jobs more effectively."

For advice firms looking to outsource all or part of their investment proposition, Vaughan-Thomas admits the market is

"very competitive" but suggests there are key areas paraplanners should research.

"The obvious ones are cost, performance and service. Managed Portfolio Services shouldn't be expensive in terms of manager fees or portfolio OCF, but many fees are still usurious. Performance needs to be consistent and service needs to be reliable, and the manager needs to be able to show they care. For a firm like Tatton, since we are built to work only with financial advisers, our service levels need to work, or we don't.

"The other area that is often ignored is investment philosophy. We have a robust stewardship philosophy that defines our approach to investment management. We feel the responsibility of managing the life savings of our investors very keenly and, yes, it does keep us awake at night sometimes."

Winning the award for the second year is "a big deal" for Tatton, Vaughan-Thomas says. "It means that we are delivering our service at the expected level, which we are very pleased and proud about. We know how important paraplanners are in the advice process, so to be endorsed by the people that are at the heart of the industry we serve is brilliant. However, we won't sit still and will work just as hard going forward to keep improving."





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