



Business as usual

Chief of Staff, Debbie Jukes, reflects on what has – and hasn't – changed since partnering with Sovereign Capital Partners.



“ Behind the scenes an enormous amount has been happening”

Building for tomorrow, delivering today

When we announced our partnership with Sovereign Capital Partners back in October, we made a clear promise to our clients: nothing would change in terms of the service you receive, your adviser relationships, or the way we work with you. Six months on, I’m pleased to report that promise has been absolutely kept. Your adviser remains the same. Your portfolios remain the same. Your fees remain the same. The personal, relationship-led service that has defined Equilibrium for three decades continues unchanged.

But that’s only half the story

Behind the scenes, an enormous amount has been happening. We’ve been building the foundations for national growth while ensuring that our existing clients continue to receive the same level of service you’ve come to expect. It’s been an intensive period, but one that has reinforced our belief that we made the right decision for the long-term future of the firm.

The promise

Let me start with what matters most to the Equilibrium team. Sovereign has honoured its commitment to be completely hands-off when it comes to how we look after clients. They haven’t interfered with our investment approach, our fee structure, or our team. The senior leadership remains in place within the business, and the broader team has shown remarkable stability and enthusiasm. In fact, when we offered all employees the opportunity to invest in the business alongside the management team, the take-up far exceeded our expectations. That internal vote of confidence speaks volumes about how the team views our future.

The experience has been, and will continue to be, exactly as it always has for our clients, but with improvements as we continue to invest in technology and systems to streamline our proposition. That personal approach will remain, and your adviser will focus on what is relevant to you, whether that’s retirement planning, inheritance tax planning, or your investment strategy. More to the point, that’s

helping you to live the life you want, to look after those that you love, and to leave a powerful legacy. We are determined to protect the core of what we do well while building capacity for growth around it.

The growth

While client-facing operations have remained consistent, we’ve been hard at work building the infrastructure needed to deliver on our vision. This means putting in place the governance, the people, and the processes that will allow us to scale responsibly.

We’ve appointed a new Chair (see page 8 for more details) who brings significant experience in both the financial services sector and in navigating growth in professional services firms. His role is to provide independent oversight and ensure we maintain the highest standards as we expand. We’ve also recruited a new Chief Financial Officer (profiled on page 9) who is strengthening our financial controls and reporting capabilities - crucial when you’re planning to double in size. These are strategic appointments that bring the necessary expertise we need at this stage of our journey.



“Over time, you’ll benefit from the technology improvements and service enhancements that growth makes possible”

The rhythm of the business has changed in ways you probably won’t see from the outside, but which matter hugely. We have monthly board meetings with our investors to ensure effective governance and accountability. We have weekly calls focused specifically on our acquisition strategy. We’ve created dedicated resource to manage the merger and acquisition process, with a new M&A Director joining us in April. This is all designed to ensure that when we acquire other firms, it’s done properly - and that the existing Equilibrium team remains totally focused on looking after you.

Which brings me to the most tangible evidence of progress. At the time of writing, we have made offers for two firms. By the time you read this, one or both (or maybe none!) could well be progressing through the due diligence process and further details will no doubt emerge if a deal is successful. In the meantime, I can tell you that both firms meet our strict criteria for cultural fit and quality.

Our approach to acquisition is deliberately rigorous. We’re not

interested in buying any firm simply to hit growth targets. We’re looking for businesses that share our values, that put clients first, and that will benefit from adopting Equilibrium’s systems and operating model. We want firms where the advisers are excited about joining a larger, more resourced platform while maintaining the personal service their clients value.

This is why we’re building a dedicated acquisition team. We need people whose full-time job is to identify the right firms, conduct thorough due diligence, and manage the integration process. That way, the rest of the team can stay focused on what they do best which is looking after our clients and running the business day-to-day.

The goal over the next few years is ambitious. We’re aiming to bring Equilibrium’s relationship-driven approach to more people across the UK, expanding from our North West base into new regions. But we’ll only do this if we can maintain the quality and personal touch that has always characterised our proposition.

What you can expect

So, what does all this mean for you? In the short term, very little. You’ll continue to work with the same adviser and the same client management team. You’ll continue to receive the same quality of communication and the same level of expertise and attention to your financial planning needs.

Over time, however, you should see benefits from the investment we’re making. We’re looking at how we can enhance our technology to improve your experience with better reporting tools, more intuitive client portals and more efficient processes that free up adviser time for the conversations that really matter. We’re exploring how we can expand our investment capabilities and broaden our service offering. We’re also thinking about how we continue to innovate in a fast-changing financial services market.

Of course, none of this will happen overnight. But the financial backing and strategic support from Sovereign means we can make these investments with confidence, knowing that we have the resources to do them properly.



Questions?

I know some of you will have questions, and I want to address a few of the most common ones we heard from our Client Advisory Group.

What will happen in the future?

Private equity firms do eventually exit their investments – that’s the nature of the model. But Sovereign’s approach is to build sustainable, valuable businesses, not to strip them for short-term gain. The structure we’ve put in place ensures that the management team retains significant influence and that any future transition will be managed in the best interests of clients and our team.

What does it mean for local clients when you go national?

Nothing changes. The Handforth office remains our headquarters. The team you work with remains in place. As we acquire firms in other regions, those clients will be served by their existing advisers in their locations. We’re not consolidating everything into one office, we’re creating a

national network of local teams, all operating to the same high standards.

How will this benefit clients?

In the immediate term, it provides continuity and security. You can be confident that Equilibrium will be here, strong and stable, for decades to come. Over time, you’ll benefit from the technology improvements and service enhancements that growth makes possible. You may also find that if you have family or friends in other parts of the country who need financial advice, we’ll be able to assist them more effectively through our expanding network.

Looking ahead

It’s been an interesting 12 months. Balancing business as usual with the demands of transformation including the due diligence process, the reporting requirements, and the strategic planning has required focus and discipline from the entire leadership team.

However, we’re doing this because we believe it’s the right thing for the long-term potential of Equilibrium and, by extension, for you as

clients. We’re not responding to crisis or distress. We’re seizing an opportunity to secure our future with a solid succession plan, allowing us to take our model to a wider audience.

As you are no doubt aware, the wealth management landscape is changing. Regulation is increasing, technology is evolving, and client expectations are rising. Firms that don’t invest and don’t scale will struggle. We’ve chosen to be proactive rather than reactive, to position ourselves as one of the winners in a consolidating market rather than risk being left behind.

We’re doing this in a way that protects what our clients value most, such as the personal relationships, the attention to detail, the consistency of advice and the commitment to acting in your best interests.

So yes, everything has changed in terms of ownership structure, governance and strategic ambition. But nothing has changed in terms of what you experience as a client. That’s the balance we’ve struck, and it’s the balance we’ll maintain as we move forward.