Family Protection is different things for different people. Some people think that just having a life insurance policy is sufficient cover, this may be the case, however in many cases this will not be sufficient to ensure the family is adequately protected in the event of accident, illness or death. This may be due to a combination of factors like an insurance policy may only have been sold with your mortgage by the bank, no real opportunity or access to sit down with an adviser to discuss your protection requirements or work commitments prevent you from speaking to an adviser. However, these should be overcome and an effort should be made to get the correct protection in place to protect you and your family. The last thing you or your family would want in the event of an illness/death is to say ‘I/We should have put this in place when I/We had the opportunity’ – hindsight is not a wonderful thing sometimes.

What have you got and what do you require?
A few protection policies to consider are described below to help you fill in any gaps.

Life Insurance
Life Insurance pays out in the event of your death. This tends to be the most common type of policy and is normally sold with a mortgage, it is a decreasing term policy, ie it normally follows the ‘curve’ of the mortgage and decreases in line with the mortgage balance.

You can also get a level term policy which would be a fixed amount for the term of the policy, for example, £100,000 for 25 years, this can also be regarded as family protection, but also to cover other debts like HP agreements, personal loans, credit cards, etc. The premiums are normally fixed for the term of the cover. The policy can be arranged as a single or joint life policy. Life Insurance should be put in a Trust and most insurance providers supply a Trust form for this.

Critical Illness cover
This can be bolted onto a life insurance policy or taken as a standalone policy, however it is normally part of a life insurance policy. A critical illness policy normally pays out on the diagnosis of a critical illness, like cancer, stroke, heart attack, loss of limbs, etc. Insurance providers disclose what critical illness they would cover or not, generally most cover between 30 to 40 critical illness. There is a new insurance provider which offers a unique policy which would cover part payments on critical illness claims and would cover up to 161 serious illnesses.

Critical Illness cover can be taken as a different amount to Life insurance, for example, you can have £500,000 life insurance and £200,000 critical illness cover. Like basic life insurance the policy can be taken out as single or joint life, the policy can also be put in Trust.

Income protection
Virtually every home in the UK has an ‘ATM’, every month it pays out a set amount to the householder to pay its bills, buys food, pays school fees, etc. What would happen if it broke?

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with an NHS contract? What would be the implications on the NHS Contract if one of the partners died?

Life insurance policy for inheritance tax

The level at which inheritance tax becomes payable might have lagged behind the rate at which your wealth has increased. Property values may have increased and this may put your estate past the current threshold of £525,000 currently (Single Person, no Inheritance Tax payable under £525,000). For Married/Civil Partners this would be doubled to £650,000. (£525,000 can passed on to the surviving spouse). By ‘Estate’ this means the legal term for the total value of everything you own. Any amount over £650,000 for example for Married Couples/Civil Partners or £525,000 for single people will be liable for a 40 per cent tax charge. For example if there is £100,000 over the estate limits previously mentioned this would incur a tax charge of £40,000. This £40,000 can be covered by a life insurance policy.

Making a will

The only way of ensuring that your money goes to the people you want it to when you die is to make a Will. Dying without a will is known as ‘dying intestate’ and could cause problems for people you care about.

A solicitor that specialises in wills is the best person to draft your will and make sure it is clear and satisfies legal requirements. Basic Mirror Wills are not expensive, but can save a lot of time, money and effort in the event of death.

It is important to review what you currently have in place and what you should have in place to protect your family, and do something about it.

After all... Can you put a price on some peace of mind?

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