IFA PRIVATE OFFICE

ifa.ae

Moving from the UK to the UAE: 10 Financial Priorities

A pre departure checklist for those relocating to Dubai, Abu Dhabi and the wider Gulf. Work through it before you leave, because UK residence, pensions and protection all need attention on the way out.

1. Break UK residence properly, and document it

Leaving the country is not the same as ceasing to be UK tax resident. Understand split year treatment, the day count limits that apply to you and the work related ties, and keep contemporaneous evidence of travel and accommodation from day one.

2. Understand what stays inside UK tax after you go

UK rental income, UK pensions, certain UK employment income and UK residential property gains remain within scope. Register for the Non-Resident Landlord Scheme where relevant, and continue filing where required.

3. Do not assume your UK pension should be transferred

Zero income tax in the UAE does not automatically make a QROPS or international transfer the right answer, and it rarely does for those who may return. Model the outcome of leaving benefits in place before agreeing to any transfer.

4. Review the ISAs, GIAs and platforms you leave behind

You cannot subscribe to an ISA as a non-resident, and many UK platforms restrict or close accounts for overseas addresses. Decide what to keep, what to move, and where reporting fund status matters.

5. Be extremely careful with UAE sold investment products

Long term regular savings plans, indemnity commission structures and locked in offshore bonds are still marketed heavily in the region. Understand every charge and every exit penalty in writing before signing anything.

6. Plan your currency and salary structure

Your income arrives in AED, pegged to the US dollar, while much of your long term liability may remain in sterling. Match the currency of your savings to the currency of your future spending rather than defaulting to one or the other.

7. Set up UAE banking, and keep the UK footprint you need

Salary transfer accounts, cheque requirements and end of service arrangements differ from UK norms. At the same time, keep a functioning UK account and credit footprint, because rebuilding one on return is slow.

8. Get protection cover that actually pays in both countries

Life cover, critical illness and income protection written for a UK resident may not respond as expected once you live abroad. Check residency clauses, jurisdiction of the trust, and whether the policy remains in force on return.

9. Write a DIFC or UAE will and align it with your UK will

Without a registered will, UAE assets and guardianship of children can fall under local succession rules. Register the appropriate will, and make sure it does not accidentally revoke your UK will.

10. Keep inheritance tax on the agenda from year one

Leaving the UK does not switch off UK inheritance tax. Long term residence rules mean exposure can persist for years, so track your position annually rather than assuming departure solved it.

Talk it through with a UK qualified adviser

This checklist is general information, not personal advice. Every cross-border move turns on your own dates, assets and family position. Book a free, no obligation consultation at ifa.ae/assessment and we will map your timeline before it costs you money.