BEFORE YOU LEAVE CORPORATE

Your Personal Checklist | Karen F Burke ACMA, MAAT

Use this checklist before you hand in your notice and again on your first week of self-employment (if going there). Tick each item off as you go. The more boxes you can check before you leave, the stronger your foundation.

BEFORE YOU HAND IN YOUR NOTICE

Maximise What You Have While Still Employed

- ☐ Increase pension contributions via salary sacrifice in your final months
- ☐ Use your training and development budget - qualifications, coaching, software
- ☐ Book any outstanding medical or dental appointments on private healthcare
- ☐ Access your Employee Assistance Programme - free counselling, legal and financial advice
- ☐ Use gym membership, wellbeing allowance and lifestyle perks before your last day
- ☐ Check your holiday entitlement - you are owed pay for any accrued untaken leave
- ☐ If placed on garden leave, use the time to set up your business infrastructure
- ☐ Secure LinkedIn recommendations from colleagues and clients while still employed
- ☐ Identify 2–3 senior referees and confirm they will support your consulting career

Financial Questions to Answer Before You Resign

- ☐ Do I know my full employment package value beyond my salary?
- ☐ Do I know my personal monthly survival number and minimum revenue target?
- ☐ Do I have 12 months of living expenses accessible and liquid?
- ☐ Have I checked my state pension record and identified any National Insurance gaps?
- ☐ Have I modelled my minimum day rate or pricing floor?
- ☐ Do I have my first client, contract or committed revenue - or a timebound plan?
- ☐ Have I spoken to an accountant about moving from PAYE to self-employment?
- ☐ Do I have income protection, life cover and critical illness cover in place or planned?
- ☐ Have I opened a business bank account and set up my accounting software?
- ☐ Have I told whoever shares my financial life what the transition period looks like in numbers?
- ☐ How am I going to spend my new Monday to Friday?
- ☐ Do I see others ahead of me, what are they doing during the week?

The Honest Question

Am I leaving towards something or away from something? Both are valid. Knowing which one is true for you changes how you plan. It IS okay to stay and enjoy the perks and socialisation or go part time if you can.

WHAT TO PUT IN PLACE IMMEDIATELY AFTER YOU LEAVE

- ☐ Income protection insurance - get a quote before you leave, activate on day one, if you still need it
- ☐ Life cover - replace death in service if you have dependants or a mortgage
- ☐ Private healthcare - explore personal policies before employment ends
- ☐ Maximise your ISA allowance in the tax year you leave (£20,000 tax-free) and pension / salary sacrifice
- ☐ Set aside 20–40% of every invoice for tax from day one - do not spend it
- ☐ Open a business bank account and set up accounting software before you leave if going into business
- ☐ Locate your workplace pension - it stays invested, you can add to it or transfer to a SIPP
- ☐ Register for Self Assessment with HMRC (or within 3 months of trading)
- ☐ If earning over £50,000 self-employed from April 2026 - Making Tax Digital applies to you

KAREN F BURKE — GET IN TOUCH

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If you want to apply these questions to your specific situation — your salary, your costs, your runway and your pricing — book a Financial Clarity Session. This is exactly what I work through with people one to one.