riverglen

Independent Financial Advice

Registering Your Trust

A Client Guide to the Process

Riverglen Financial Associates Ltd.
35 North Street, Bourne, Lincs, PE10 9AE
Tel: 01778 421122 | **Email:** general@riverglenifa.co.uk
Website: www.riverglenifa.co.uk

Why Trust Registration Matters

If you have set up a trust as part of your financial planning — for example an investment bond written into a discretionary trust, a discounted gift trust, or a loan trust — HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) will usually require that trust to be recorded on its Trust Registration Service (TRS).

The TRS is an online register of trusts, introduced to meet UK anti-money laundering requirements. It records details of the trust, its trustees, its settlor(s) and its beneficiaries.

The 90-day rule

Most trusts must be registered within 90 days of being created, or within 90 days of a trust first becoming liable to tax, if that is later. The same 90-day window applies whenever registered details need updating — for example a change of trustee, beneficiary, or address.

> **Why the deadline matters**
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> Missing the 90-day deadline can lead to HMRC penalties, and banks, investment providers and solicitors will often refuse to deal with a trust that cannot show proof of registration. Registering promptly avoids delay when the trustees need to act.

Two ways to get it done

There are two routes to registering your trust, and this guide covers both:

- Route A — You register the trust yourselves, as trustees, directly with HMRC (page 3).
- Route B — You authorise Riverglen to register the trust on your behalf, as your appointed agent (page 5).

Whichever route you choose, the trustees remain jointly legally responsible for making sure the trust is registered and kept up to date — the rules are the same either way. This guide is intended as general, factual information about the TRS process and is not a substitute for individual advice about your own trust.

Route A — Registering the Trust Yourselves

If you would prefer to handle the registration directly, here is the process the trustees will need to follow.

Step 1: Agree the lead trustee

All trustees are equally responsible in law, but one trustee must be nominated as the 'lead trustee'. This person becomes HMRC's main point of contact for the trust and will hold the Government Gateway login for it going forward.

Step 2: Gather the trust information

Before starting, collect together the details set out in the checklist on page 5 — the trust deed, and the names, addresses and dates of birth of the settlor, trustees and beneficiaries.

Step 3: Set up a Government Gateway account for the trust

The lead trustee registers for a Government Gateway account (if they do not already have one for this purpose) via GOV.UK, then uses it to access the Trust Registration Service.

Step 4: Complete the online registration

Work through the TRS questions online, providing details of the trust, its trustees, settlor(s) and beneficiaries. Progress is saved for up to 28 days, so the registration can be completed in more than one sitting if needed.

Step 5: Submit within 90 days

Submit the registration within 90 days of the trust being created (or of it becoming liable to tax, if later). If any information is genuinely not yet available, HMRC allows this to be added afterwards, but still within the same 90-day window.

Step 6: Receive your reference number

For a trust with a tax liability, HMRC will issue a Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR), usually within 15 working days. For a non-taxable trust, the lead trustee can obtain the trust's Unique Reference Number (URN) by signing back into the online service after submitting.

Step 7: Keep a record

Download and keep the proof of registration document. Banks, providers and solicitors will often ask to see this before they will act on the trustees' instructions.

Route B — Riverglen Registers the Trust For You

Many clients prefer us to handle the registration on the trustees' behalf. Here is what that involves from your side.

Step 1: Authorise us as your agent

We will ask the lead trustee to set up (or confirm) a Government Gateway account for the trust, and then to authorise Riverglen as the trust's agent for the Trust Registration Service. We will send you clear instructions for this step, which only takes a few minutes.

Step 2: Provide the trust information

We will send you the checklist on page 5 and ask you to confirm the details of the trust, its trustees, settlor(s) and beneficiaries, along with a copy of the trust deed if we do not already hold one.

Step 3: We complete the registration

Once authorised, we prepare and submit the registration on the TRS on your behalf, using the information you have provided.

Step 4: We confirm your reference number

Once HMRC has processed the registration, we will pass on the trust's Unique Taxpayer Reference (for taxable trusts) or Unique Reference Number (for non-taxable trusts), together with a copy of the proof of registration document, for your records.

Step 5: We help keep it up to date

As your agent, we can also update the register for you when circumstances change — for example a new trustee, a change of beneficiary, or a change of address — and can support the annual declaration required for taxable trusts.

What we need from you

Agent authorisation from the lead trustee, the completed information checklist, and a copy of the trust deed. Once we have these, we take care of the rest.

Information You Will Need to Provide

Whichever route you choose, HMRC's Trust Registration Service asks for the same core information. Having this ready in advance will make the process quicker, whoever completes it.

About the trust

- The trust's name and the date it was created
- A copy of the trust deed
- Whether the trust has, or is expected to have, a UK tax liability

About the settlor(s)

- Full name, date of birth and country of nationality/residence
- National Insurance number or address, if no NINO is held

About the trustees

- Full name, date of birth, nationality and address for each trustee
- Confirmation of who will act as lead trustee

About the beneficiaries

- Named individuals, or a description of the class of beneficiary (for example, ‘children and grandchildren of the settlor’) where individuals are not yet known
- Date of birth and NINO/address, where the beneficiary is a named individual

Keeping the Registration Up to Date

Registering the trust is not a one-off task. The trustees must also:

- Update the register within 90 days of any change — for example a new or retiring trustee, a change of beneficiary, or a change of address.
- Complete an annual declaration for taxable trusts, confirming the details on the register are still correct, even where nothing has changed.
- Provide an up-to-date proof of registration document whenever a bank, solicitor or investment provider asks for one.

If Riverglen is acting as your agent, we will help you stay on top of these ongoing duties as part of our service to you.

A few key terms explained

- Lead trustee — the single trustee nominated to act as HMRC's main point of contact for the trust.
- UTR (Unique Taxpayer Reference) — issued for trusts that are liable to tax, used for Self Assessment.
- URN (Unique Reference Number) — issued for trusts that are not liable to tax, in place of a UTR.
- Agent authorisation — the process by which a lead trustee gives Riverglen permission to act for the trust on the TRS.

This guide reflects our understanding of HMRC's requirements at the time of writing. Trust registration rules are updated from time to time, so please speak to us if you are ever unsure whether or when your trust needs to be registered or updated.

Notes