

Appointeeship service closure - frequently asked questions for families

Appointeeship

Q1. What Is an Appointee?

A. An appointee is a person or organisation that is allowed to receive someone's benefits when they are unable to manage their own money due to disability, illness or special needs.

Q2. What does Hft's Appointeeship service cover?

A. Hft's Appointeeship service has defined responsibilities to the people who we support in respect of their benefits:

- to claim all benefits available
- to receive the cash
- to ensure that any necessary payments are made towards their support fees (as calculated in line with their claims) and
- to pay remaining benefits to the people we support.

Q3. Does Appointeeship cover everything to do with the money of people who we support?

A. No this only covers where we apply for benefits on the behalf of the people we support and ensure the right amount of benefit money is both received and spent accordingly.

Q4. Will Hft continue to support my relative to manage their money day-to-day?

A. Yes, support staff will continue to still support your relatives manage their money by either receiving sufficient funds from the appointee to enable their relative to carry on with their weekly activities; or withdrawing the money from the bank. All support required for your relative in this way will not change, the only change will be where Hft access money from on behalf of the person we support. The money will then be held in the person's money wallet where it will be reconciled monthly to ensure there are no financial discrepancies. Where a family member becomes the appointee, we will need to receive a copy of the bank statement to ensure there are no financial discrepancies with the person's money.

Q5. Is Appointeeship the same as Deputyship?

- A.** No. A deputy will have the responsibilities of an appointee as well as the many other duties and responsibilities that a Court of Protection approved deputy must undertake.

Changes to Hft's Appointeeship service

Q6. Why has Hft decided to stop providing Appointeeship services?

- A.** There is increasing regulation and complexity around this provision with the development of Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit, and we are at a point where significant investment is required in systems, processes and personnel for Hft to continue to deliver an excellent, but unfunded, service. We are also under pressure from local authorities who support best practice guidelines for a separation of Care and Appointeeship.

For this reason Hft has decided to cease to offer an Appointeeship service as from 31 December 2020.

Q7. What other options did you consider?

- A.** A number of other options were considered including continuing as we are, beginning to charge people supported by Hft for the Appointeeship service we provide and, in addition, sourcing a new Appointeeship system. It was decided that all of these other options were not viable for the reasons outlined above.

Options

Q8. What options will my family member have with regards to their Appointeeship?

- A.** There are a number of options available to your relative in terms of Appointeeship and the choice should be made by them, where possible, with support from you if needed. The options include:
- an opportunity for you as a family member, or a friend, to apply to become appointee for your relative
 - in some areas the local authority will provide this service, and we can assist in contacting them or
 - alternatively your relative can choose a third party supplier.

There are a number of organisations available that can provide this service. We have reviewed some of these options and have identified a national, independent organisation called The Money Carer Foundation as our provider

of choice. They can provide a professional, contemporary and affordable solution.

Q9. What would I be expected to do if I took on the Appointeeship for my relative?

A. As an appointee you're responsible for making and maintaining any benefit claims.

The Government website states that you must:

- sign the benefit claim form
- tell the benefit office about any changes which affect how much the claimant gets
- spend the benefit (which is paid directly to you) in the claimant's best interests
- tell the benefit office if you stop being the appointee, for example the claimant can now manage their own affairs.

Becoming an appointee for your family member is subject to approval by the Department of Work and Pensions

DOSH has a series of useful guides that are aimed at families who are considering becoming an appointee: <https://www.dosh.org/being-an-appointee/>
<https://www.dosh.org/being-an-appointee-part-2/>.

For more information please visit the Government's webpage:
<https://www.gov.uk/become-appointee-for-someone-claiming-benefits>.

You can also speak to our Family Carer Support Service for general information about becoming an appointee. Freephone: 08088010448 or email familycarersupport@hft.org.uk.

Money Carer Foundation

Q10. How was the Money Carer Foundation chosen as Hft's provider of choice?

A. We reviewed a number of third party providers for what they were able to provide to the people we support against a list of key criteria including; scope of services, minimisation of risk, feedback from users, response times to queries and overall value for money. The Money Carer Foundation were the largest professional organisation with demonstrable back office and customer services capacity, who were able to support those people we support with no access to bank accounts, in a secure and risk-managed way, and their fees for the services provided were reasonable. They have produced a really informative video on their dedicated webpages that give a great introduction into the service that they can provide. A copy of the video along with further details can be found via their website: <http://moneycarer.org.uk/hft>.

We recognise that there are other providers of these services including local authorities where there is a much smaller (or no) charge, however this does not give access to banking for those with limited capacity.

Q11. Is there a charge to use the Money Carer Foundation service?

- A.** The cost for their services is £65 per calendar month for supported living services and £35 per calendar month for residential services. Please note that the Money Carer Foundation's website advertise these prices differently but Money Carer Foundation have agreed this is the cost to Hft families transferring their Appointeeships at this time.

Money Carer Foundation have said that in most cases local authorities accept their fees as Disability Related Expenditure (DRE). DRE is an expense that disabled people incur to pay for specialist services or items to help them to manage or cope with their disability. Social care funding is rarely free, so local authorities conduct a financial assessment to determine how much a person would pay towards the cost of their care. When doing this they should deduct the cost of any Disability Related Expenditure (i.e. Money Carer Foundation's fees) from the amount the person is asked to pay towards their care. Where applicable, Money Carer Foundation will request that the local authority does so. To discuss this further, please contact Sean Tyrer at the Money Carer Foundation on: 078415 80634 or email: seant@moneycarer.org.uk.

Q12. If we do decide to use the Money Carer Foundation can my family member have a bank account and how will they get access to this?

- A.** Yes they can. As we know, it is becoming increasingly complex for adults with learning disabilities to have access to their own money in bank accounts, due to accounts being locked because of concerns relating to mental capacity and also the effect of banks closing branches. However the Money Carer Foundation offer bank accounts specifically designed for adults with learning disabilities. This would provide your family member with their own bank account and also the option of a carer card for general usage with a weekly set budget, based on individuals personal budgets.

There is also an app available for the bank account. Please note there are additional costs associated with the banking services that the Money Carer Foundation provide. Further details can be found via their website: <http://www.moneycarer.org.uk>.

Q13. What sort of query response rate can I expect from the Money Carer Foundation?

- A.** The Money Carer Foundation response times to any queries from people we support or families are up to seven days, although queries are generally resolved sooner than that.

Next steps

Q14. When will the Appointeeship provision stop for my family member?

- A.** Following a pilot that took place in the spring, we will now begin this service transfer throughout Hft which will take place over the next six months, with the aim of having transferred all Appointeeships before 31 December 2020.

Q15. When will my family member be informed?

- A.** We will communicate in detail with your family member once they enter the transfer stage. Your family member will receive an easy-read letter and information booklet telling them about what's happening and what they need to do next. If you would you like a copy of this information in advance, please let us know.

Q16. How will the people Hft currently provide Appointeeship services for be supported through this process?

- A.** We will first conduct a rigorous capacity assessment and, where appropriate, best interests meeting with the people we support and their families or local authority representative, so that the people we support can then choose who they want to be their appointee. We realise that this is a difficult time given the Covid-19 pandemic particularly as face-to-face meeting with family members were initially part of our plans. However this planned closure has a set timeline that we need to adhere to, as we can only continue to provide an Appointeeship service for a set period of time. Where face-to-face meetings are unable to happen we will conduct meetings with family members either virtually online or via telephone as an alternative.

Q17. What do my family member and I need to do next?

- A.** We will first conduct a rigorous capacity assessment and, where appropriate, best interests meeting with your family member and either you or a local authority representative, so that your relative can then choose who they want to be their appointee.

We will be in touch with further information once your family member's service enters the transfer service. When that time comes we'll send their staff team a support pack of information which they'll need to complete with your family member.

Q18. Who should I contact if I have any further queries?

- A.** If you have any further queries about this change, please contact our Families Mailbox: families@hft.org.uk or alternatively you can contact the Communications and Marketing Team on 07443448518.