

Chief Executive, HSC Board
Director of Social Care and Children, HSC Board
Director of Finance, HSC Board
Chief Executives, HSC Trusts
Directors of Children's Services, HSC Trusts

Room D2.19
Castle Buildings
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 90 522142
Fax: 028 90 522500
Email: gerry.mullan@dhsspsni.gov.uk

CIRCULAR: CCPD 01/12
DATE: 2 April 2012

JUNIOR INDIVIDUAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (JISA) FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN: GUIDANCE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE (HSC) TRUSTS

Introduction

1. In November 2011 the UK Government announced a scheme to open Junior ISA accounts, with an initial payment of £200, for children across the UK who have been in care for 12 consecutive months and who do not have a Child Trust Fund (CTF).
2. The Share Foundation has been contracted by the UK Government to administer the scheme until the end of March 2015. The Share Foundation will select, open and manage accounts while children remain looked after. They will also seek to raise additional funding from charitable sources for distribution to the accounts and support the financial education of looked after children at appropriate times so that they can understand how best to use the financial asset of their account.

The Role of HSC Trusts in the Junior ISA Accounts

3. This guide sets out the actions that each HSC Trust will need to follow to ensure that every eligible child, who does not have a CTF, receives a Junior Individual Savings Account (Junior ISA).
 - The HSC Trust must provide The Share Foundation with a named contact for dealing with all aspects of the Junior ISA scheme.
 - The HSC Trust must respond to requests for information from The Share Foundation to enable the payment of the Junior ISA to be made.

- The HSC Trust must ensure that there are effective security arrangements safeguarding the integrity and security of the data to be sent to and received from The Share Foundation.
- Once The Share Foundation has notified the HSC Trust that an account has been opened the Trust should ensure that as an integral part of the care planning review where appropriate, the carer, parent and child are aware of the account.
- When a child stops being looked after, the HSC Trust should notify The Share Foundation and provide the necessary information to the person with parental responsibility for the child (and the child if 16 or 17 years old) so that they may take over the management of the account.

The Role of The Share Foundation

4. The Share Foundation will contact all HSC Trusts requesting information such as name, gender, date of birth and date they first became looked after for 12 months or more. Trusts must provide that data so that children who are, or have been, looked after can receive the payments to which they are entitled.
5. The Share Foundation plans to make initial contact with HSC Trusts before the end of April 2012 and make the first data request around the end of May 2012. Once initial returns have been made, further returns would be expected monthly though this may be less frequently.
6. The Share Foundation will provide HSC Trusts with an information pack on the scheme including a set of standard letters which the Trust can use with carers, parents and children as they deem appropriate. This may be so that the carer, parent or child can pay additional funds into the account and use it to build long term savings; or it may be that they request the account is changed to meet specific criteria.
7. The Share Foundation, through the Personal Finance Education Group will also provide materials to help HSC Trusts support looked after children in learning about finances and so help them make the most of their account and the financial asset they will be able to access at the age of 18.
8. When a child stops being looked after because they have reached the age of 18, the HSC Trust should use the materials provided by The Share Foundation to ensure they may access their matured accounts.
9. When a child stops being looked after before the age of 16 years, the HSC Trust should use the materials provided by the Share Foundation to ensure the person with parental responsibility for the child is aware of the account and encourage them to take the necessary steps to assume control of the account. If the child leaves care aged 16 or 17, either they or their parent or carer could assume control of the account if the child has not already done so.

Eligibility for a Junior ISA Account

10. A Junior Individual Savings Account (Junior ISA) is a long term tax advantaged savings account which will be opened for every child who has been looked after for any continuous period of 12 months or more starting on or after 3 January 2011 and who is not eligible for a CTF. CTF accounts were discontinued in 2010 for any child born on or after 3 January 2011. Children born before 1 September 2002 were also not eligible for a CTF.
11. Children are eligible for a Junior ISA if they are under 18 years, resident in the UK and not eligible for a CTF. The Government will provide an initial £200 per child to open the account. Anyone can pay money into the account but the funds cannot be accessed by the account holder until their 18th birthday. At this stage the account will mature into a standard (adult) ISA.

Who is this guidance for?

12. The HSC Board and Trusts should ensure this guidance is brought to the attention of all of the following:

- children's services social workers;
- personal advisers;
- frontline managers who have particular responsibilities in relation to care leavers and looked after children;
- directors of children's services;
- managers of services for care leavers and looked after children;
- commissioners of services for care leavers and looked after children.

Further enquiries and Sources of Information

13. The main contact for the Share Foundation initially will be Amanda Williams. Her contact details are given below along with the Share Foundation's postal address.

Amanda Williams
07834 160 449
a_e_williams@btinternet.com
amanda.williams@sharefound.org

The Share Foundation
Oxford House
Oxford Road
Aylesbury
Bucks
HP21 8SZ
www.sharefound.org

14. Further information relating to the information contained in this circular should be addressed to myself - contact details are given above.

Gerry Mullan
Child Care Policy Directorate