

Managing personal finances when living with Dementia



Community Mental Health Team for Older People

Practical advice on money management

After receiving a diagnosis, it is useful to consider if the person living with dementia has any difficulties calculating money or remembering to pay bills. For some people there may be very few difficulties but it is important to consider if help is needed now or if it might be required in the future.

Useful things to do;

- Get together any financial paperwork such as details of: bank accounts, mortgage, insurance policies, regular bills (like electricity, phone, gas, rent)
- Direct debits can be useful to make sure regular bills are paid on time.
- Social security benefits can be paid directly into a bank or building society account.

It is safer to avoid having large amounts of cash on your person or within the home.

How can a person living with dementia get help managing money matters when they are no longer able to manage their own financial affairs?

It is important to plan for when the management of financial affairs may become too difficult and help is needed. There are several legal ways to help in managing money matters if a person is no longer able to do it.

Benefits:

APPOINTEE FOR SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

Once a person living with dementia is no longer able to manage their own benefits they may need a trusted relative or friend to do so on their behalf. This is called an 'Appointeeship'. An appointee can be given the legal right to both claim and manage benefits for the person with dementia.

The Social Security Agency will need a Form BF36 to be completed. They will then visit the person living with dementia to ensure they are no longer able to manage their benefits and arrange an interview with the person applying to become the Appointee.

No one can be made an appointee if the person with dementia is able to manage their benefits but just needs some general help getting their benefit. An application for an Appointee cannot be made just because it seems the more convenient way of helping someone.

Responsibilities of an Appointee:

An Appointee takes on full responsibility for making and maintaining any claim and managing the spending of the benefit. This means they:

- Sign the claim form instead of the person claiming the benefit.
- Are responsible for telling the Benefit Office of any change which might affect the amount of money the person receives.
- Have to claim any benefit to which the person may be entitled.
- Must spend the person's benefit in their best interest. Although paid to the Appointee the benefit is not the Appointees to spend on themselves.
- Can be responsible for any over-payments if the Appointee knowingly provides wrong information.

Payments:

If you are acting as an Appointee, benefit payments will be made to you. The payments do not have to go to the Appointee's account, if there is an existing account belonging to the person to which the Appointee has access. If the person has an existing Post Office Card Account their benefit cannot be paid into this account after arrangements have been made to create an Appointee.

If you would like a personal benefit assessment 'Make the Call' and ask to speak to a Benefit Adviser on 0800 232 1271 9-5pm Monday to Friday

Enduring Power of Attorney

A person living with dementia is very likely to become unable (the legal term is "incapable") of managing their property and financial affairs as their illness progresses.

It is preferable for the person with dementia to decide who in the future they would want to trust with managing their property and affairs if in the future they are no longer able to do so themselves.

An **Enduring Power of Attorney** is a legal document giving someone else the authority to make decisions on behalf of another person in relation to their **property and money matters** when they become mentally unable to manage their own finances. The types of things that such an attorney can do include:

- take money directly out of the person with dementia's bank account or open or close bank accounts on the person with dementia's behalf.
- pay bills for the person with dementia by setting up direct debits from the person with dementia's bank account.
- Sell property that belongs to the person with dementia if that needs to be done.

Giving someone this type of authority requires careful thought and a lot of trust so you may wish to seek legal advice. A solicitor may decide he/she needs a doctor to give an opinion about whether a person with dementia is still able to understand and decide about making someone their “attorney”. For a doctor to give this opinion requires a separate type of assessment (called a medicolegal assessment) to the assessments focusing on a person’s health. Medicolegal assessments aren’t part of the NHS and are usually charged for – you can ask your solicitor to find out about the cost in advance.

Once an ‘attorney’ believes that the person living with dementia is no longer capable of managing their property and affairs, the Enduring Power of Attorney needs to be registered with the Office of Care and Protection, a section of the family division of the High Court. If the Office of Care and Protection accept this then the attorney **takes over full responsibility and authority** for managing money matters for the person with dementia.

The Office of Care and Protection (NI)

The Office of Care and Protection is part of the Family Division of the High Court. The Office of Care and Protection is authorised to take responsibility (or authorise someone else -a “Controller” – to take responsibility) for the management of a person’s property and affairs when they are incapable of doing so themselves because of a condition like dementia.

An application to the Office of Care and Protection may be required when a person living with dementia is no longer capable of managing their property and financial affairs and did not make any legal arrangement when they were still able to do so e.g. by creating an Enduring Power of Attorney. There is a cost involved in making an application. More information and the forms used are available on the website: <http://www.courtsni.gov.uk>

What social security benefits are available for those living with dementia and their carers?

Listed below are some of the benefits people living with dementia and their carers may be able to apply for, along with the application details. Some organisations (such as Citizen's Advice) may be able to offer assistance with completion of application forms for certain benefits. When applying for a social security benefit, it is worthwhile keeping your own copy of the application forms/letters.

Attendance Allowance

Attendance allowance is available to those over the age of 65 years who require help with personal care because of a physical or mental disability. This could apply to a person living with dementia. Attendance Allowance is not usually affected by any savings or income you may already have.

Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is available to carers who spend 35 hours a week or more caring for someone who is ill or has a disability. The person being cared for must be receiving either Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance. Carer's Allowance is not affected by any savings but will not be paid to:

- a carer who earns more than £100 per week after expenses are deducted or
- to a carer who is on a course of full-time education.

The 35 hours of care provided may be delivered anytime during the 7 day week and the carer does not have to be related to or living with the person living with dementia.

Benefits in hospital

If a person with dementia or their carer is admitted to hospital for a lengthy period, their benefits may be affected. It is important to seek advice from your local social security office or from the hospital social worker.

Making an application for Benefits

You can;

- Download and complete an application form through www.nidirect.gov.uk
- Contact the Benefit Enquiry Line Tel: 0800 220 674
9.00am-5.00pm weekdays, except Thursday 10.00am-5.00pm
- Contact the Disability and Carers Service, Castle Court, Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1HR
- Attendance Allowance Tel: 028 9090 6178
- Disability Living Allowance Tel: 028 9090 6182
- Carer's Allowance Tel: 028 9090 6186
- Textphone: 028 9031 1092 (for deaf and hard of hearing users)

STATE PENSION, PENSION CREDIT AND OVER 80 PENSION

State Pension:

A state pension is paid to people who reach 'State Pension Age' if they have made national insurance contributions during their working life. It is taxable. The State Pension Age for men is currently 65 yrs. The State Pension ages for woman born on or before 5 April 1950 is 60 yrs. The Pension age for men and women is gradually rising so that by 2020 it will be 66yrs. After this date it will rise to 68yrs for both men and women.

Pension Credit:

If you are unable to claim the State Pension, or it is not enough for you to live on, you may be entitled to claim other benefits such as Pension Credit.

Pension Credit is an income related (means tested) benefit that comes in two parts. Guarantee Credit tops up your weekly income to a guaranteed minimum level. Savings Credit can give you extra money even if you have some savings or a second pension.

The minimum age to claim Guarantee Credit is rising. At present you may claim if you are 62 years or over. The minimum age to claim Savings Credit is 65 years.

Example: At present the government believes that a single person needs a weekly income of £148.35, so if you receive a state pension of £100 per week you will receive £48.35 of pension credit.

If you claim Pension Credit, you may get a cold weather payment or you may also get Housing Benefit. If you are a carer you may get the carer premium.

Over 80 Pensions

The over 80 Pension is a State Pension for people aged 80 years or over who have little or no state pension. Unlike the State Pension it is not based on National Insurance Contributions.

To obtain further information contact:

NI Pension Centre, P.O Box 42, Limavady, BT49 4AN

Enquiry Telephone: 08456018821

Claim Line: 08081002658 (open Monday- Friday 9am-5pm)

Can a person with dementia make a Will?

A person living with dementia may wish to make or change their Will. A solicitor will need to be sure that the person has ‘testamentary capacity’ which is the legal capacity to make or change a Will. Often a solicitor will seek medical advice on this. Assessing a person for their capacity to make a Will is not part of NHS practice and if a solicitor arranges for a doctor to make this assessment there will be a cost. You can ask the solicitor to find out in advance what this cost will be.

If a person does not have “testamentary capacity” they cannot make or change their Will and no other individual can do this on their behalf. However in some cases the Office of Care and Protection can make a special type of Will (called a “Statutory Will”) on behalf of a person who can’t make a Will for themselves. A solicitor should be able to advise on this.

Information and support provided by other organisations

AGE NI

The Age NI Advice and Advocacy Service offers free, independent and confidential support to older people, their families and carers on a range of issues including welfare benefits.

They provide a freephone advice line on 0808 808 7575 available from 8.00am-7.00pm, 7 days a week, 365 days a year
Website: www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland/

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

The Northern Ireland Citizens Advice Bureau can provide information and advice in confidence on a range of welfare benefit issues.

Website: www.citizensadvice.co.uk

The location and contact details of the bureaux within Belfast are listed below;

North Belfast	40-44 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GG
Central Belfast	Merrion Business Centre, 58 Howard St, Belfast, BT1 6PJ
East Belfast	The Arches Centre, 1a Westminster Ave North, Belfast, BT4 1NS
Belfast - Falls	8 Springfield Road, Belfast, BT12 7AG
Belfast - Shankill	Spectrum Centre, Unit 2, 331-33 Shankill Road, Belfast, BT13 2AA
Belfast – Suffolk	208 Andersonstown Road, Belfast, BT11 9EB and Andersonstown

All can be contacted on tel: 0300 1 233 233 available 9.00am-12.30pm and 1.00-4.30pm.

The Office of Care and Protection

Rm 2.2A, Second Floor, Royal Courts of Justice, Chichester Street, Belfast, BT1 3JF
Telephone 028 9072 4733

Northern Ireland Courts Service Website

<http://www.courtsni.gov.uk>

The Law Society of Northern Ireland

The Law Society of Northern Ireland have produced a leaflet on Enduring Powers of Attorney and this can be accessed at the following website address

<http://www.lawsoc-ni.org/publications>

Tel: 028 9023 1614 available 9.00am-5.00pm

The Law Society does not provide individual legal advice

Alzheimer's Society

The Alzheimer's Society has produced 2 factsheets:

- Financial and Legal Affairs and
- Managing Your Money

which provide additional information, available on www.alzheimers.org.uk

Unit 4, Balmoral Business Park, Boucher Crescent, Belfast, BT12 6HU

Tel: 028 9066 4100

How to contact us:



Community Mental Health Team for Older People Tel: (028) 9504 0346

operates from Monday to Friday
9am to 5pm

We also offer an extended telephone advice
and support service for people living with
DEMENTIA and their carers operating:
Monday to Friday until 8pm
Saturday to Sunday 10am to 2pm

If you need to speak to someone
outside these hours please contact:
Regional Emergency Social Work Service
(028) 9504 9999

**[www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/services/
CommunityMentalHealthTeams](http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/services/CommunityMentalHealthTeams)**