

Adoption / Carers Factsheet on the Child Trust Fund (Northern Ireland)

What is the Child Trust Fund?

- A long-term savings and investment account for children, where eligible children receive £250 (£500 for those in lower-income families) from the Government.
- The Government will make a further contribution of £250 directly into the account of eligible children when they are 7, with looked after children and those in lower-income families receiving an additional £250.
- The child (and no one else) can withdraw the money when they turn 18.
- Neither parent nor child pays tax on the income and gains.

Who is eligible for the Child Trust Fund?

- Every child born on or after 1st September 2002 is eligible for a Child Trust Fund account, if they live in the UK, Child Benefit has been awarded for them and they are not subject to immigration restrictions.
- Special arrangements are in place to ensure that looked after children, who do not have Child Benefit awarded for them, do not miss out. If a child enters care before a Child Benefit award has been made for them, then the Government will open a Child Trust Fund account for them with a special payment of £500.

Who manages the Child Trust Fund account?

- Only a person with parental responsibility for a child can manage that child's Child Trust Fund account. Once registered with the provider of the account, this person (known as the 'registered contact') is the only person that can manage the account and can move the account or change the type of account.
- The child can manage their own account when they turn 16.
- An adoptive parent can manage their child's Child Trust Fund account once they have formal parental responsibility for their child (usually when the Adoption order is made).
- Foster parents do not have parental responsibility for their foster child so they cannot manage that child's Child Trust Fund account.
- The Official Solicitor manages the Child Trust Fund accounts of those children who have no one appropriate with parental responsibility. The Official Solicitor is an officer of the Court who assists young people in some legal matters where there is no other suitable person or agency. Visit www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Services/Child+Trust+Fund/?UserPref=culture%5Een-GB for more information about the role of the Official Solicitor as regards Child Trust Fund accounts.

How do I take over the management of a Child Trust Fund account?

- If you have parental responsibility for the child, then you should contact the Child Trust Fund helpline (0845 302 1470) who will be able to tell you which provider (e.g. bank or building society) holds your child's Child Trust Fund. You will need

to answer some security questions to confirm that you have parental responsibility for the child before any information is given out.

- You should then immediately contact the provider to become the 'registered contact' to be able to manage the account. You will need to prove that you have parental responsibility for the child, for example, with an adoption certificate.
- If the provider informs you that the Official Solicitor is looking after the account, then you will need to contact the Official Solicitor (tel: 028 90724734) to become the 'registered contact'. Again, you will need to prove that you have parental responsibility for the child, for example, with an adoption certificate.
- Once you are the 'registered contact', you can move the account to a different provider or to a different type of account whenever you wish.
- An adopted child's account may have been set up in the child's previous name, so you will need to know this name when asking about the account. Once you have taken over management of the account, then you can ask the provider to change the child's name on the account and ensure that the correct address details are held.

What should I do if I receive a CTF Voucher?

- The CTF voucher is issued following a claim to child benefit so you may receive a voucher once you make your claim to child benefit.
- Please contact the Child Trust Fund helpline on the number below who will ensure that the records for your child's account are correct and explain any action you need to take.
- As the existing account may have been in the child's previous name and the voucher in their new name please provide both names when you contact the office.

How do I contribute to a Child Trust Fund account?

- Anyone can contribute to a child's Child Trust Fund account, up to a total of £1,200 between all contributors per year.
- If you have parental responsibility and you do not have details of your child's Child Trust Fund account, then you can contact the Child Trust Fund helpline (0845 302 1470) to find out which provider holds the account. You will need to answer some security questions to confirm that you have parental responsibility for the child before any information is given out.
- If you do not have parental responsibility, then you should contact the Child Trust Fund Liaison Officer in your Health and Social Services Trust (your social worker should know who the Child Trust Fund Liaison Officer is) who will be able to find out the details of the account so you can contribute to it.
- Money cannot be taken out of the Child Trust Fund once it has been put in – when the child is 18 they will be able to decide how to use the money.

Where can I get more information about the Child Trust Fund?

- You can phone the Child Trust Fund helpline on 0845 302 1470 or visit www.childtrustfund.gov.uk