

FSCS Podcast - #33 Mini-pod: Using a friend or relative to claim on your behalf

Jess Spiers 00:01

Welcome to Protect your money with FSCS, the podcast from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. Today we've got a mini-pod for you, a special bitesize episode where we talk through a particular topic to explain it all simply. In this series, we explain how we can help to protect your money so you can feel confident your money is safe. Let's get into the conversation now.

Jess Spiers 00:26

Welcome to the podcast. I'm your host, Jess Spiers, and I'm Senior Content Manager at FSCS. So today we're talking about how you can use a friend or a relative to help you claim compensation with FSCS. You might want to ask someone you trust to help you with your claim and give you some support through the process, or it could be that you would rather that person to take it all on and make the claim on your behalf.

Or maybe you're listening, and you are that trusted person that's helping someone to claim or you're making the claim for them. Whichever side you're coming from, today we'll explain how to go about it. Joining me today to explain it all is Denise Farthing, Head of Operations at FSCS. Welcome, Denise.

Denise Farthing 01:03

Hello.

Jess Spiers 01:04

Great. So, we've mentioned this topic on quite a few of the other podcast episodes, but we thought it deserved its own episode as we know that not everyone is aware of this option when claiming with us.

Denise Farthing 01:14

That's right, Jess. We always want people to claim with us direct wherever possible, because that way, you'll get 100% of any compensation that you're due. You can choose to go down the route of using a representative of course, like a claims management company or a solicitor to claim for you, but they'll charge you a fee, so some of your compensation will go towards that.

Jess Spiers 01:34

And it's also no quicker to use a representative to claim for you, is it?

Denise Farthing 01:38

That's right, there aren't any shortcuts, and the representative would follow exactly the same process as if you came direct. So, if you'd rather come direct, but don't want to claim yourself, using a friend or a relative to claim for you can be a good option.

Jess Spiers 01:51

Yeah, absolutely. And at FSCS we call this using a personal representative. So, Denise, what are some of the reasons that people don't feel they can make a claim themselves?

Denise Farthing 02:01

Well, there are all sorts of reasons. They might not be confident at using a computer or may struggle with filling in forms, they might also feel more comfortable talking to somebody they personally trust, as it can be uncomfortable talking about your financial situation.

It might be a practical reason, like if they work shifts, for example, and wouldn't be available during normal working hours to speak to us. Also, we know it can be a really stressful and anxious time when you need to make a claim. The thought of having to go through the process on top of everything else can feel like too much.

Jess Spiers 02:31

Yeah, that's right. And obviously that's completely understandable. So, could you tell us how it all works?

Denise Farthing 02:37

If you want to set up a personal representative to claim for you, you need to send us a letter to tell us who you are nominating, including their name, address and an email address. The letter needs to be signed and dated by you within the last 12 months. The person you choose can be anyone you trust, whether that's a relative, a friend, neighbour or a colleague, etc.

Once your claim is in progress, we'll use your nominated person as your contact and ask them to send us the documents we need to process your claim. They'll also get any updates and emails that we send about the progress of your claim and if we need any other information or documents to help us investigate your claim, then it's them we'll get in touch with.

Jess Spiers 03:16

Ok, so if I wanted someone to claim on my behalf, what's the first step they would need to take to start my claim?

Denise Farthing 03:23

Firstly, they'll need to check that you're eligible to claim with us on our "Check if you can claim" page – that's on our website at www.fscs.org.uk. That only takes a few minutes. When asked "Are you the claimant?", they'll need to answer "No". And next, they'll be asked, "In what capacity are you making this claim?". Here they should select "Personal representative". And from there on, we'll send all correspondence through them – but you'll need to sign the documentation.

Jess Spiers 03:50

Okay, so sounds pretty simple. And am I right in thinking that if somebody has already started their claim, and they then decide they'd like someone else to take over the process for them, that that's possible, and that person wouldn't need to start a new claim?

Denise Farthing 04:03

That's right. Anytime in the process, there's always the option to refer the claim to your personal representative to complete on your behalf. After that, your personal representative will receive all our correspondence, but you'll still need to sign the documentation, as we mentioned earlier.

How you'll sign your claim depends on if we have your email address. So, we now use a system called DocuSign, which is a software that lets you sign documents electronically, rather than having to sign with a pen and paper. So, if your personal representative has given us your email address, the claim summary form will be emailed to you via DocuSign and then you'll sign it digitally. If your personal representative hasn't given us your email, then you'll need to download the claim summary, print it off, get you to sign it, and then upload the claim.

Jess Spiers 04:46

Ok, what about someone who's already started a claim with their professional representative, so that could be a claims management company or a solicitor, who then wants to swap to using a friend or relative instead?

Denise Farthing 04:59

Well, as we said, you can change to a personal representative at any point during the claim, even if you've used a professional representative to start the claim. But, what I would say is, if you have already signed a contract with a professional representative then you'll need to refer to your contract with them if you don't want to use them anymore, as it's possible that you may still owe them money. For example, some fees for any work that they've done so far, or there may be a cancellation charge to pay.

Jess Spiers 05:24

Great, thanks Denise for explaining why somebody might want to use a personal representative and how to set it all up. I'll just add one last thing, which is to say that our friendly customer support team are always happy to answer any questions, so please do get in touch if you need to. Contact details are on our website, which is www.fscs.org.uk.

And all the information we shared with you today also lives in the "making a claim" section of our website. If you'd like to hear more from FSCS you can find all of our podcast episodes on our website and wherever you usually listen to your podcast. Give us a follow and you'll never miss a new episode. Thanks very much for listening.