

The Word

## DANSKE BANK URGES CUSTOMERS TO PLAN AHEAD FOR THE FUTURE

Danske Bank is encouraging customers to consider what would happen if they were no longer able to do their own banking, and to act now.

That might mean naming a friend or family member the customer would trust to take control of their bank accounts if they were to have difficulty accessing their accounts or no longer feel confident in doing so due to age, illness or other unforeseen circumstances.

To help customers prepare, the bank has launched a new 'Plan Ahead' guide.

Stephen Bloomfield, General Manager of Conduct and Customer Experience at Danske Bank explained: "There may be circumstances now, or in the future, where you may need help to manage your accounts. That can be a very difficult thing to think about. It's easy to put it off for another day or think that this is just something for older people to think about.

"I would challenge people to ask yourselves who you would want to be put in charge of your accounts, your care, your affairs - someone of your own choosing, or someone appointed by the court? Putting the right support in place now can help both you and your loved ones further down the line and will give you peace of mind."

Danske Bank has also recently launched a facility called a carer's account to support vulnerable customers who can't physically get to a branch, particularly in the current climate. This means a customer can allow a trusted friend or family member to withdraw cash or pay for goods without having to share their card details or PIN. There are protections in place for the customer such as daily spending limits, no online purchases and no access to online banking.

Veronica Gray, Deputy CEO of safer ageing charity Hourglass, praised the new initiatives, saying:

"We at Hourglass welcome the new measures that Danske Bank has put in place to protect vulnerable customers and to encourage people to plan ahead and take control of their finances. Initiatives like these are so important, not just in the way that they can play a part in preventing older people with less financial literacy from being taken advantage of, but also because



Veronica Gray, Hourglass, and Christine Cunningham, Danske Bank.

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they help us all think ahead and plan effectively. These protections are especially important now as we continue to wrestle with the long-term effects of the coronavirus on our society."

The Plan Ahead guide and carer's account are the latest initiatives from Danske Bank to support and protect customers who may be in vulnerable circumstances.

At the start of the coronavirus crisis the Bank set up a dedicated Check In and Chat team to contact its older or more vulnerable customers to check they are ok, have the support they need and just to have a friendly conversation. If needed, the team signposts customers to other organisations who can help, such as Age NI.

To date the team has contacted over 9,000 people. The Check In and Chat initiative has been so successful that the bank has expanded the team and will continue to make these outreach calls for the rest of this year.

Customers will never be asked to provide any of their confidential information or banking details on these calls.

During lockdown Danske also launched a 'Step by Step' guide showing customers how they can bank from the safety of their home, and has added new sections to its coronavirus support web pages, signposting customers to organisations who can help provide support with issues such as domestic abuse, gambling addiction and mental health conditions throughout the crisis.

The Plan Ahead and Step by Step guides can be found in the Guides section at [danskebank.co.uk](https://danskebank.co.uk). Information about support for customers during coronavirus is available at [danskebank.co.uk/coronavirus](https://danskebank.co.uk/coronavirus)

