

# Kinship Local Offer

September 2025



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# Welcome

If you are caring for a child as a grandparent, aunt, uncle, sibling, or close family friend, you are making a huge difference in that child's life. We know this can be both rewarding and challenging.

This guide is here to help you understand the support available, your rights, and where to turn for advice.

We are committed to working alongside you to make sure every child in Kirklees has the love, stability, and opportunities they deserve.

## Introduction

Sometimes parents can't look after their children for a while, or even longer-term. When this happens, family members or friends often step in to help. These arrangements are called "kinship care." You might also hear terms like "connected persons" or "family and friends care." Whatever the name, you are providing stability, love, and continuity for children. Children who stay with people they know often do better than those who go to live in other care arrangements

Children may be cared for through different types of kinship arrangements, including:

- Informal care from family and friends
- Private fostering arrangements
- Family and friends foster care (also called 'Connected Persons')
- Child Arrangements Orders
- Special Guardianship Orders
- Adoption Orders
- Homes for Ukraine

This Kinship Local Offer has been developed in partnership with the Connected Persons Support Team and shaped by feedback from carers. We recognise that the best support comes from listening to those with lived experience. To ensure our Kinship Local Offer remains relevant and effective, we will consult with carers annually, gathering their views and suggestions to inform future updates. This ongoing engagement and review process will help us continually refine and improve our support, ensuring it meets both statutory requirements and the evolving needs of kinship families in Kirklees. We are here to support you, listen to your experiences, and make sure you have the help you need.

# Summary of kinship support arrangements

**Informal Family & Friends Care** - Arranged by parents with close relatives/friends.

- Support available: Universal services, early help, financial support (Section 17)
- Contact point: Duty and Advice, 01484 456848

**Private Fostering** - Non-close relatives for >28 days.

- Support available: Assessment, safeguarding
- Contact point: Duty and Advice, 01484 456848

**Family & Friends Foster Care (Connected Persons)** - Approved by Local Authority.

- Support available: Fostering allowance, training, supervision, financial support
- Contact point: Connected Persons Assessment Team CPAT@Kirklees.gov.uk

**Child Arrangements Order - By Court Order.**

- Support available: Discretionary legal advice, discretionary assessed financial support
- Contact point: Legal Services, 01484221000

**Special Guardianship Order (SGO)** - By Court Order.

- Support available: Discretionary SGO allowance, legal advice, therapeutic support
- Contact point: Legal Services, 01484221000, Connected Persons Support Team CPST@Kirklees.gov.uk

**Adoption Order** - By Court Order.

- Support available: Post-adoption support
- Contact point: One Adoption West Yorkshire, 0113 378 3535

## Relevant guidance

[Children Act 1989: Family and Friends Care](#): Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities about family and friends providing care for children who cannot live with their parents.

[Championing Kinship Care: The National Kinship Care Strategy](#)

[Family Rights Group, Initial Family and Friends Care Assessment](#): A Good Practice Guide outlines what a viability assessment for family and friend carers should look like, what social workers should consider and how to undertake international assessments.

[Looking After Someone Else's Child](#): Government advice on the support and financial help you can get if someone else's child is living with you full-time.

[Promoting the Education of Children with a Social Worker and Children in Kinship Care Arrangements: Virtual School Head Role Extension](#): Non statutory guidance for local authorities about the development of Virtual School Head's strategic leadership role in promoting the educational outcomes of children in kinship care arrangements.

## Purpose and scope

This Kinship Local Offer is published in accordance with the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education in October 2024. The guidance requires all local authorities in England to publish a clear and accessible Kinship Local Offer that outlines the support available to kinship carers and the children they care for.

This Kinship Local Offer is published in line with government guidance. It is here to provide clear information on how Kirklees Council and our partners will support children and young people living with extended family and friends in kinship arrangements. These can be informal (arranged by parents) or formal (arranged by the council).

## Values and principles

We believe children should be supported to live within their families whenever it's safe and in their best interests. We are committed to helping children remain with their families and will provide services to support you in this important role.

# Private and informal arrangements for children

If you are caring for a child through an informal or private arrangement, it's important to know that the child isn't classed as 'looked after' by the council. You might want to get independent legal advice to help you decide what's best for the child and your family.

## What is Informal Kinship Care?

Informal kinship care is when a close family member—like a grandparent, aunt, uncle, or sibling—looks after a child, either for a short time or permanently. These arrangements are made privately with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility, and the parents keep their parental responsibility throughout.

Most informal arrangements work well, with children and young people getting the support they need from health services, schools, and other universal services.

## When Kirklees Council gets involved

Kirklees Council will only step in to assess the needs of children living informally with family or friends if it's needed to keep the child safe and well, or if we need to follow private fostering regulations.

If our social work team does carry out an assessment, we'll talk to the parents (or those with parental responsibility) about what to expect, how long things might take, and what the possible outcomes could be. We'll also share information about other types of help and support that might suit your situation.

## What help and support looks like

If the council decides a child needs extra support to stay with family or friends, we'll work with you to create a Child in Need plan or, if needed, a Child Protection plan.

**Child in Need Plan:** This sets out practical help and support, including financial assistance under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. It also explains what the parents and carer's role and responsibilities are.

**Child Protection Plan:** This is a formal agreement for children who may be at risk of significant harm (under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989). It lays out the steps needed to keep the child safe and well, and involves working together with professionals and family members—including kinship carers—to make sure the child's needs are met and any risks are managed.

## Formal arrangements

Formal kinship care refers to arrangements where children are cared for by relatives or close family friends, but with the involvement and support of the local authority or the courts. This means the arrangement is officially recognised and overseen—often through a legal order and carers may receive financial support, training, and guidance from the council.

## Private fostering

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Private fostering is when a child under 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability) is cared for by someone who isn't a close family member for 28 days or more. This arrangement is made between the child's parents and the carer, and the parents keep their parental responsibility.

It's really important to let Kirklees Council know about any private fostering arrangement—this is a legal requirement, and not reporting it is an offence. By letting us know, we can make sure the child is safe, well cared for, and getting the support they need.

Children in private fostering arrangements may need extra support because their circumstances can be more complex. Kirklees Council has a duty to check in and monitor these arrangements to make sure the child's welfare is protected. Children in these situations are considered "children in need" under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, which means we can offer support and services to help keep things stable and positive.

### What birth parents need to do

- Tell Kirklees Council about the private fostering arrangement.
- Stay involved in all decisions about their child's care.
- Share important information with the carer, like health needs, dietary preferences, school details, hobbies, religion, and ethnicity.

### What Private Foster Carers need to do

- Let Kirklees Council know about the arrangement at least six weeks before it starts, or within 48 hours if it's an emergency.
- Inform the council when the child leaves their care, including where the child is going and why.

### How Kirklees Council supports you

- We will visit the child and carry out an assessment to make sure the arrangement is safe and suitable.
- Allocate a social worker to support both the carer and the child.
- Offer advice, training, and signposting to support networks and benefits.
- The arrangement will be supported under Section 17 of the Children Act, and the child will be recognised as a child in need.

Any financial agreement is made directly between the parent(s) and the carer, and should ideally be written down so everyone is clear. Private foster carers may be able to claim Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit, or Disability Living Allowance, depending on the circumstances. If you're already receiving benefits, it's important to inform the Department for Work and Pensions about the change. between the private foster carer and the parent(s) and will not involve the council. These arrangements should be included in a written agreement.

Find out more information on how Kirklees supports private foster carers and children here: [Private Fostering - Looking after someone else's child? - KSCP](#)

## Child Arrangement Order

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A Child Arrangements Order is when a family member or friend is given parental responsibility for a child by a family court. This means you share parental responsibility with the child's parents, and you are recognised in law as someone who can make important decisions about the child's care and wellbeing.

If you've been awarded a Child Arrangements Order because the child was previously looked after by the council, you may be entitled to financial support to help you in your caring role.

If you'd like to know more about financial allowances or need advice about Child Arrangements Orders, please get in touch with the Connected Persons Assessment Team at:

[CPST.Support@Kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:CPST.Support@Kirklees.gov.uk)

## Connected Persons Foster Carer

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Connected Persons Foster Carers—sometimes called Kinship Foster Carers—are family members or friends who have been assessed and approved to care for a specific child they know. The child is looked after by the local authority, either with the agreement of the parents (Section 20) or through a court order (Interim Care Order or Full Care Order).

If you are put forward as a Connected Persons Foster Carer, a social worker from the Connected Persons Assessment Team will carry out an initial assessment (called a Regulation 24 assessment). If this is positive, this gives you temporary approval to care for the child, usually for up to 16 weeks. In exceptional cases, this can be extended for another 8 weeks. After that, a formal decision is made by the fostering panel about full approval. If temporary approval goes beyond 24 weeks, the arrangement is considered unregulated and will be closely monitored with extra checks and reviews.

Your social worker will support you throughout this process, they will be your supervising social worker and will complete the full fostering assessment and prepare you for the fostering panel. You will receive financial support in the form of an allowance for each child you care for, with the amount based on the child's age and paid weekly according to the Fostering Finance Policy.

A home arrangement plan (placement plan) will be created by your social worker and supervising social worker. This will set out what's expected of you and what support you will receive to help you care for the child.

If you are fully approved as a connected persons foster carer at foster panel, then you will have a supervising social worker from the fostering service to provide ongoing support and supervision. You will continue to receive fostering allowances for as long as you care for the child as a foster carer.

As a foster carer, you'll be involved in all the processes that help make sure the child gets the best possible care—like attending reviews of the child's care plan, working with the child's social worker, and supporting their education and health needs.

When you are approved, you will get a copy of Kirklees Council's Fostering Handbook and be asked to sign the foster care agreement, which explains your responsibilities and the standards you need to meet. You'll also be expected to complete your Training, Skills and Development workbook within 18 months to show you've met the required standards and to work to the expectations of these standards and Council expectations of connected persons foster carers.

Family and friends foster carers have equal access to all training opportunities, support groups, forums, to non-related foster carers.

## Special Guardianship Order

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A Special Guardianship Order (SGO) is a legal order made by a family court that gives a carer—often a family member or someone close to the child—special guardianship of a child until they turn 18. This is a way to give children a safe, permanent home when they can't live with their birth parents, but it doesn't completely cut ties with their family like adoption does.

As a Special Guardian, you'll have enhanced parental responsibility. This means you can make most day-to-day decisions for the child, even though the parents still keep their parental responsibility too.

If the child was looked after by the local authority before the Special Guardianship Order was made, Kirklees Council will assess what support you, the child, and the birth parents might need. A social worker will prepare a Special Guardianship Report and Support Plan, and this plan will be reviewed every year by the Connected Persons Support Team to make sure you're getting the right help.

If you become a Special Guardian in these circumstances, you'll be entitled to a non-means-tested Special Guardianship Order allowance, in line with the Kirklees Special Guardianship Order Policy. This is part of our commitment to helping children stay within their wider family whenever possible, as we know this often leads to better outcomes for children.

Sometimes, families arrange a private Special Guardianship Order themselves, without the child being looked after by the local authority. The assessment will still be carried out by the local authority- the Connected Persons Assessment Team and in these arrangements Special Guardians still have important responsibilities and can access support.

Support for private Special Guardians can include a Special Guardianship Support Plan, which may offer financial help, and help from the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund. Kirklees Council may also provide means-tested financial support for private Special Guardians who have stepped in to prevent a child from coming into care.

For full details about Special Guardianship, including your rights and the support available, please see the Kirklees Special Guardianship Order Policy or contact the Connected Persons Support Team on [CPST.Support@Kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:CPST.Support@Kirklees.gov.uk)

## Adoption

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Adoption is when all parental rights and responsibilities for a child are permanently transferred to an adoptive parent by a court. This means the child legally becomes part of their adoptive family, with all the love, security, and stability that brings.

Sometimes, a relative or foster carer (who is a 'Connected Person') may be granted an Adoption Order for a child already living with them. This can be a positive and permanent outcome for a Child in Need or a child who has been looked after by the council.

There is a wide range of support available for adoptive families. During the adoption process, the needs of the child, the adoptive parents, and their family are carefully assessed. An Adoption Support Plan is created to make sure everyone gets the help they need, which can include financial support and access to specialist services.

If you'd like to know more about adoption or the support available, please reach out to Kirklees Council or One Adoption West Yorkshire: [One Adoption West Yorkshire adoption support | One Adoption](#)

## Ukrainian children and young people

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If you are caring for a child or young person from Ukraine, there are a few important things to know. Since the war in Ukraine began, the UK government has created three visa routes for Ukrainians coming to or staying in the UK:

- Ukraine Family Scheme
- Homes for Ukraine
- Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) Scheme - [Applying to the Ukraine Permission Extension scheme - GOV.UK](#)

UPE is only for Ukrainian guests who arrived in the UK on a Homes for Ukraine Scheme visa. UPE can only be applied for when the guest is in the UK.

## Children and Minors applying without parents or legal guardians

[Homes for Ukraine: Guidance for sponsors \(children and minors applying without parents or legal guardians\) - GOV.UK](#)

As these children and young people may be more vulnerable, any child under 18 who arrives without a parent or close family member and is living with a sponsor must be considered under private fostering guidance. This is a legal requirement.

The council must follow legal checks and procedures to make sure the child is safe and supported. Parents have to complete documents to be shared with the Home Office and local authority. These checks include looking at the sponsor's suitability, and carrying out an assessment before a visa is issued for the child. a visa,

Resources and guidance are updated regularly, so please always check the latest information before making decisions. Helpful links include

[Homes for Ukraine scheme | Kirklees Council](#)

[Family Rights Group](#)

[The Ukraine Advice Project UK](#)

## Supporting kinship carers to stay in work

Sometimes, family members step in to care for children in an emergency. This can mean taking unpaid time off work or even a career break to help the child settle and adjust. We understand this can be a big change.

It's not always possible—or best—for you to reduce your hours or stop working altogether. Doing so might cause financial stress, which could affect the care you're able to give.

If you're employed, your workplace may offer parental leave or other support. Speak to your employer to find out what's available.

You can also visit [www.gov.uk/time-off-for-dependants](http://www.gov.uk/time-off-for-dependants) to learn more about your rights to time off for family and dependents.

## Advice, support and services available to all kinship families

In Kirklees, there's a wide range of services to support you and your family—whether you need help with early years, education, health, leisure, finances, or youth services.

### Kirklees Families Together

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Families Together brings lots of services together to support families from pregnancy, through childhood, and into adolescence (up to age 25 if your young person has SEND—special educational needs and/or disability). You can get information, advice, and practical help, including:

- Support with parenting and caring
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health support
- Services for children under 5
- Activities and support for children and young people
- Adult learning and help with finding work

For more information, visit: [Families Together - Support for children, young people and families | Kirklees Council](#)

### Education services

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Whether you need help with early years, schools, or post-16 education, there's lots of information available here: [Schools and education](#)

## Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

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The Kirklees SEND Local Offer explains all the support and services available for children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs or disabilities.

Visit: [Local Offer Home](#)

## Youth Justice Services

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Youth Justice Services help children who are at risk of offending or have committed an offence to make positive changes. They listen to the child's wishes about where they want to live and work with professionals to make sure living arrangements are safe and in the child's best interests.

Learn more [Kirklees Youth Justice Service - KSCP](#)

## Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

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CAMHS supports children aged 5-18 with mental health needs. They offer assessment, treatment, and support for young people and their families, including therapy, care coordination, and referrals to other services. The team includes nurses, social workers, therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and more.

Find out more: [Child and adolescent mental health service \(CAMHS\) \(Kirklees\) - South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust](#)

## Family Group Conferencing

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Family Group Conferences help families make safe plans and decisions for their children. These meetings bring together family members and professionals to find solutions and build a strong support network. If a child becomes looked after in an emergency and a meeting hasn't happened yet, we'll arrange one as soon as possible.

Learn more: [Family Group Conference Service](#)

## Supporting children with complex health and disabilities

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The Children with a Disability Service (CWD) is a specialist children's social care service with a focus on providing advice, support and services to disabled children and their families.

CWD provide support to families living in the Kirklees area who have needs that they are unable to meet as a family or have concerns about a child or young person who has learning, physical or complex health needs.

This support can include respite for families, carer support and help for a young person with disabilities to access sports and leisure facilities locally.

The Children with a Disability Service is made up of an Early Support and Inclusion Team and a Social Work Team. The teams can provide information, guidance and signposting to other services and/or carry out an assessment of need in order to ensure that a family gets the right support or service at the right time.

## Who is the service for?

The Children with a Disability Service consider the needs of disabled children and young people from birth up to the age of 18 years old. These may include:

- a diagnosed physical or mental impairment which is likely to have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities,
- a sensory impairment, a learning disability, or an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) which impacts on day-to-day life,
- complex health needs.

For further details please refer to the Children with a Disability Service eligibility criteria which can be found on the [Children with a Disability Service web page](#).

CWD are contacted via Children's Service's Duty and Advice Team on 01484 456848 in the first instance and you will be required to consent to sharing of information.

The Children's Service Duty and Advice Team ask several questions to ensure that the Children with a Disability Service is the right team to refer you through to.

The CWD team will:

- Consider completing a Child & Family or Early Support Assessment. (This will be discussed with you when you call Duty and Advice).
- Early support assessment undertaken by a family support worker.
- Child and Family assessment undertaken by a social worker.
- Listen, offer a good conversation and work in partnership with you to help identify solutions.
- Help to co-ordinate multiple services if required.

## Diversity and inclusion – supporting children's identity

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Every child is unique. Their identity is shaped by things like their ethnicity, religion, language, gender, sexuality, family relationships, and the community they live in.

If your child lives in a diverse area, they may see more people who share their background. This can help them feel more confident and accepted.

But identity isn't just about background—it's also about daily life. Things like:

- the food they eat,
- how their hair is cared for,
- the activities they enjoy,
- the school they go to.

These all play a big part in helping a child feel proud of who they are.

We know that sometimes carers may feel unsure about how to support a child's identity—especially if it's different from their own.

If you have a social worker, they can help guide you. If you're caring under an Special Guardianship Order you can also ask the Connected Persons Support Team for advice and support.

You can also contact:

- [www.fosterline.info](http://www.fosterline.info) – for free, confidential advice
- [www.kinship.org.uk](http://www.kinship.org.uk) – for support and resources for kinship carers

or visit: [The Brunswick Centre - LGBTQ+ yOUTH](#)

## Targeted support for formal kinship arrangements

### Virtual School

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Kirklees Virtual School is committed to championing the education of children living in kinship care arrangements. They provide advice and information to Kinship carers to navigate the education system.

Whether you are a carer, parent, or practitioner, we are here to provide guidance.

For more information please contact: [kirklees.virtualschool@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:kirklees.virtualschool@kirklees.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01484 225180

### Learning and development

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Kirklees Council offers a range of training opportunities for:

- Private foster carers
- Special Guardianship Order (SGO) carers

- Connected persons foster carers

Each year, the Kirklees Learning & Organisational Development Team publishes a training manual with details of available courses. These courses are designed to support families with a variety of needs, including:

- Alcohol and drug awareness
- Autism and behaviour support
- Understanding child abuse and neglect
- Supporting birth children in foster families
- Attachment and bonding
- Managing family time for looked after children
- First aid for children and young people
- Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
- Creating memory books and boxes
- Youth mental health first aid

Some courses are mandatory for family and friends foster carers.

All training is optional for Special Guardianship Order carers.

If you're eligible and would like to access training, please get in touch to request a course manual at: [learning.matters@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:learning.matters@kirklees.gov.uk)

## Family time

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When children are looked after and living in kinship arrangements, Kirklees Council may help to facilitate and supervise family time between the child and their birth parents, siblings, or extended family.

For children under a Special Guardianship Order there is an expectation that carers will manage and promote family time themselves. However, we understand that this can be challenging—especially when family relationships are complex.

In these situations, the Connected Persons Support Team or the Connected Persons Assessment Team can offer help. This might include:

- Supporting carers to take part in family meetings.
- Organising a Family Group Conference to explore who else in the wider network could help with family time.

If there's a high level of risk that family time could disrupt the child's living arrangements, the local authority may be able to offer additional support. This could include helping carers to facilitate or supervise family time in a way that's positive and safe for the child.

Please note: This support is usually only available when directed by the court, or when professionals working with the child have identified a clear need.

## Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund

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Children who are adopted or under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and were previously looked after may be able to access therapeutic support through the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF).

This is a national fund that helps children in Special Guardianship arrangements get the therapy they need.

### How to access support

To find out if a child qualifies, an assessment must be completed. This can be done by:

- A worker from the Connected Persons Support Team.
- A lead professional already working with the child.

If you'd like to request an assessment or find out more, you can contact the Connected Persons Support Team to make a referral at [CPST.Support@Kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:CPST.Support@Kirklees.gov.uk)

Further information on the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund can be found at [Adoption and special guardianship support fund \(ASGSF\) - GOV.UK](#)

## Carers Constitution

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The Family and Friends Carers Together Constitution was created by carers to help connected persons foster carers, Child Arrangement Order carers, and Special Guardianship Order carers get more involved in the support available for carers and their children.

This group meets regularly to:

- Talk about topics that matter to kinship carers
- Plan activities and events for families across Kirklees

Events include:

- Coffee mornings
- Children's parties
- Family outings

It's a great way to connect with other carers, share experiences, and enjoy time together as a community. For more information about the constitution or the peer support available please contact [familyandfriendscarerstogether@gmail.com](mailto:familyandfriendscarerstogether@gmail.com)

## Connected Persons Support Team

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Kirklees Council has a dedicated team offering support to families where children are subject to a Special Guardianship Order. The type of support available depends on the child's individual needs and family circumstances.

## What support is available?

The team provides tailored support, which may include:

- Practical parenting advice
- Help with managing family time
- Signposting to useful services and agencies
- Access to training opportunities
- Support groups for carers and children
- Peer support from other carers
- Help accessing the Adoption Support Fund (for eligible children)
- WhatsApp and Facebook support groups
- A Max Card for discounts on family activities

You're not required to take up support if you don't feel it's needed. However, carers can self-refer to the Connected Persons Support Team at any time while the child is under 18.

## Need more help?

If you or your family need additional support beyond what's included in your Special Guardianship Support Plan, you can contact the Duty Service which runs Monday-Friday 9am-4.30pm, to discuss your needs on 01484 221000 or via email on [CPST.Support@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:CPST.Support@kirklees.gov.uk)

## Support groups

The Connected Persons Support Team runs a monthly support group for all Special Guardians in Kirklees, held at local venues.

These groups offer both emotional and practical support, with benefits including:

### **Peer support & shared experience**

- A safe space to share challenges, successes, and experiences.
- Reduces isolation by connecting carers with others in similar situations.

### **Education & guidance**

- Information on fostering regulations, legal responsibilities, and child development.
- Helps carers understand the assessment process and transition to becoming approved foster carers.

## Empowerment & advocacy

- Encourages carers to speak up for the needs of the children in their care.
- Builds confidence in working with professionals and navigating social care systems.

## Early intervention & stability

- Support with managing complex behaviours and trauma.
- Promotes stability at home through practical strategies and resources.

# Emotional Wellbeing Service

The Emotional Wellbeing Team offer additional emotional wellbeing support to Special Guardians and Connected Persons foster carers to help you in your role.

You will have access to reflective training groups run by our Emotional Wellbeing Service (which include input from a CAMHS clinician). These groups run twice a year for around 12 weeks and are designed to help you build safe, trusting relationships with the child or young person you care for—especially if they've experienced trauma or attachment difficulties.

You can also get advice and support from the Emotional Wellbeing Service Family Support Worker, and if needed, more specialist input through a clinical consultation.

If you'd like to know more or talk to someone about this support, please contact us at [cpst.support@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:cpst.support@kirklees.gov.uk).

# Care First

If you are a Connected Persons foster carer in Kirklees, you are entitled to access Care First—a free, confidential support service provided by the council to help you look after your own wellbeing while you care for others. Care First offers:

- 24/7 emotional support via a confidential helpline.
- Counselling services (telephone or face-to-face).
- Practical advice on a wide range of topics including finances, relationships, housing, and legal matters.
- Online wellbeing resources, including self-help tools and articles.
- Whether you're feeling overwhelmed, need someone to talk to, or just want advice on everyday challenges, Care First is here for you. It's completely free to use and available whenever you need it.

To access Care First, speak to your supervising social worker.

# Financial support for Kinship Carers

We understand that caring for a child can bring financial pressures. There are several types of support available:

## **Informal arrangements & Private Fostering:**

Discretionary financial support may be available under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, following an assessment of the child's needs and family circumstances.

## **Connected Persons Foster Carers:**

Entitled to fostering allowances in line with the Kirklees Fostering Financial Policy. These allowances are regularly reviewed and meet national minimum standards

## **Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Carers:**

Public SGO carers (where the child was previously looked after):

Eligible for a non-means-tested allowance, aligned with fostering rates

## **Private Special Guardianship Order carers**

May be eligible for non-means-tested financial support where the arrangement prevents the child from becoming looked after.

Support plans may include access to therapy, family time support, and the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund.

## **Adoptive families**

May be entitled to a means-tested adoption allowance, based on the child's needs and family circumstances

## **Discretionary support**

Requests outside standard policy are considered by the Family and Friends Finance Panel. The panel ensures fair decisions and monitors the impact of financial support on the child's care plan.

# Complaints

If you are a family or friends carer and you're not satisfied with the support you're receiving to help care for a child, you have the right to use Kirklees Council's complaints process.

Our aim is always to resolve any concerns informally and as quickly as possible. However, if that's not possible, a formal investigation can be arranged to look into the issue properly. We're here to listen and work with you to make sure you feel supported in your role as a carer. Full details can be found at: [Children and Young People's Service compliments and complaints](#).

# Appendix – Glossary of terms

## **Looked After**

A child is considered “looked after” when they are cared for by the local authority under legal arrangements. This includes situations where the child is placed in foster care, residential care, or with approved family and friends foster carers (also known as “Connected Persons”). The child may be looked after under Section 20 (voluntary accommodation) or Section 31 (care order) of the Children Act 1989. Being “looked after” means the local authority has legal responsibilities to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare, including providing support, accessing services, and maintaining family contact where appropriate.

## **Connected Person**

A relative, friend, or someone who already has a meaningful relationship with the child. This could include professionals like a childminder, teacher, or youth worker.

## **Private Fostering**

When a child under 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative, for 28 days or more. This is a private arrangement made between the parent and the carer. Close relatives include grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and step-parents.

## **Children in Need**

This law outlines the Local Authority’s duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need. Support under Section 17 can include financial help.

The remit of this is children under 18 who:

- Need support to maintain a reasonable standard of health or development
- Need help to prevent harm to their health or development
- Are disabled

## **Interim Care Order**

A temporary court order that gives the Local Authority shared parental responsibility for a child while further assessments are carried out.

## **Full Care Order**

A court order that gives the Local Authority parental responsibility for a child until they are 18, unless the order is ended earlier.

## **Fostering Panel**

A group of professionals and independent members who review and make recommendations about fostering assessments, approvals, and reviews.

## **Supervising Social Worker**

A social worker assigned to support and supervise foster carers, including connected persons foster carers. They help ensure the home arrangement is safe and successful.

### **Child Protection Plan**

A plan created when a child is at risk of significant harm. It outlines how professionals and family members will work together to keep the child safe.

### **Child Arrangements Order (CAO)**

A legal order that decides where a child lives and who they spend time with. It gives the carer parental responsibility while the order is in place (usually until the child is 16 or 18 in exceptional cases). Birth parents still have parental responsibility but with limited decision-making power.

### **Special Guardianship Order (SGO)**

A legal order that gives one or more individuals parental responsibility for a child who cannot live with their birth parents. It does not end the legal relationship with birth parents. Parents need court permission to change or end the order.

