



Telford & Wrekin  
Co-operative Council

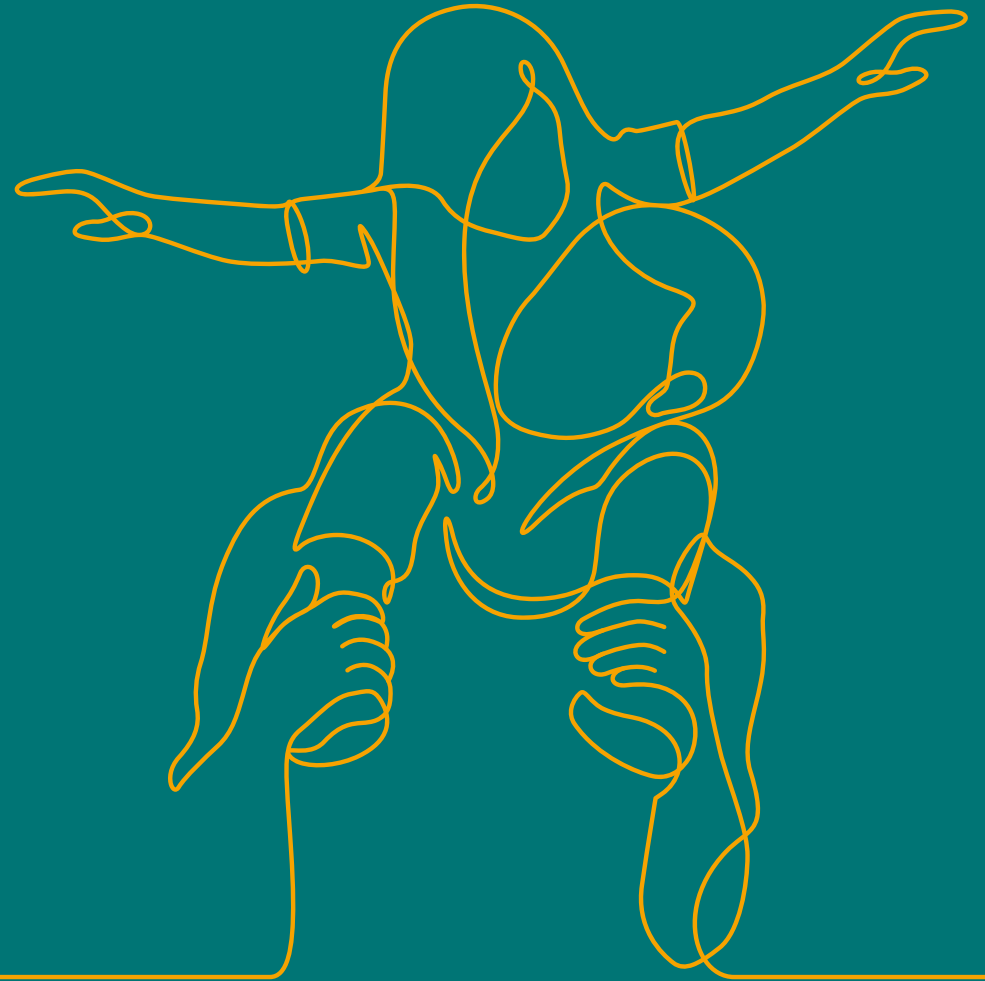
Protect, care and invest  
to create a better borough



kinship telford

# Kinship local offer

**March 2026**



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# Foreword

Following recent social care reforms and the publication of statutory guidance for local authorities, all local authorities are now required to clearly outline the support available for kinship carers in their area.

The Telford and Wrekin Kinship local offer sets out the services and support available to children and young people, parents, and kinship carers. This marks the beginning of our journey to strengthen and expand the support we provide. We are committed to developing a high-quality offer through a staged approach, with short, medium, and long-term goals. As our work progresses, we will remain flexible and responsive, adapting our offer to ensure it continues to meet the needs of families effectively.

We recognise that kinship care can provide children and young people with lifelong benefits, offering stability and continuity within their family network. However, we also understand that it can be challenging, particularly when supporting children who have experienced trauma or navigating complex family relationships. Our aim is to ensure that kinship carers receive the right support at the right time, enabling them to provide the best possible care. We know that everyone needs help sometimes, and we are committed to making sure our support is accessible, meaningful, and positively experienced, even in difficult circumstances. Support should be provided at the earliest stage by the right person at the right time who can form a trusted and meaningful relationship with the carer and the child/young person.

Practitioners seek to understand family dynamics and relational patterns, promoting sustainable change while encouraging families to identify and build on their own capabilities. They will seek to understand the impact of trauma and family history which is embedded through training programmes.

Strong relationships should be built on empathy, mutual respect, and a genuine positive regard for families. This approach helps ensure that families feel heard, valued, and empowered. It is essential that these interactions are sensitive to each family's ethnicity, beliefs, and cultural identity. Underpinning this is the core principle that, wherever it is safe, children are best cared for within their birth families and wider support networks.

We are grateful to all our partners and contributors for their dedication to supporting kinship carers. Their insights, collaboration, and challenge have shaped this local offer and strengthened our understanding of the needs of kinship families.



**Cllr Shirley Reynolds**

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning, Employment and Skills



**Jo Britton**

Executive Director, Children and Family Services



**Darren Knibbs**

Director, Children's Safeguarding and Family Support

# Introduction

## Responsibility

The local authority should identify a senior manager who holds overall responsibility for the Kinship local offer, ensuring it meets statutory requirements and is responsive to the identified needs of kinship carers. The Director of Children's Safeguarding and Family Support as well as senior managers provide leadership to ensure that all staff:

- understand the purpose and content of the Kinship local offer;
- receive appropriate training;
- promote awareness among local partners of their responsibilities to children in kinship arrangements; and
- ensure the Kinship local offer is well-publicised so that prospective kinship carers are informed and know how to access further support from relevant teams and agencies.

## Partners

In order for support to be successful this is a partnership approach with key partner agencies coming together to support kinship carers which includes, Education and Skills, Health, Police, Housing, Interfaith Council and voluntary services. We would like to thank our partners for their continued commitment and support to the implementation of this local offer and their passion for supporting kinship carers and the children they look after. We have also consulted with practitioners from various areas of Children's Services who support children and young people.

Our local offer has been informed by up to date and relevant research from organisations who support carers and birth parents including Foundations, Kinship (charity) and Pause.

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Paul Shuttleworth and Michelle Hall for their invaluable contribution at the Therapeutic Working Group. Their partnership with Kinship in developing life story work for children and their carers/network has provided us with deep insight and practical guidance. Their session was instrumental in enhancing our understanding of how to support kinship families through meaningful life story work.

We would also like to thank Anam Raja for providing us with valuable insight based on her research with Kinship into the unique challenges faced by kinship carers from culturally diverse communities.

In addition, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Kinship, particularly Tim Fisher, Practice Lead, and Janet Kay, Kinship Carer and Trustee. Their support has been instrumental throughout the development of our Kinship local offer, acting as critical friends and providing constructive feedback and guidance.

Lastly, our gratitude goes out to Jahnine Davies, the National Kinship Care Ambassador, for her valuable contributions and challenge as well as future support. This collaborative relationship will continue, helping us remain accountable and ensuring we understand the lived experience and impact of our offer.

## Coproduction

We would like to thank all kinship carers who have provided their time, expertise and ideas to aid the completion of our local offer. Their experiences are vital for us to understand and shape services that support kinship carers. We are committed to meaningful co-production, ensuring that the voices and experiences of kinship carers are heard, listened to and influence our service design and delivery. We are here to build bridges between practitioners, families, carers and children and young people to provide the best possible support we can.

We will also communicate with kinship carers where we are unable to act upon views and provide reasons for this which may be influenced by available resources or wider issues such as legislation. This is the start of our continued co-production journey alongside kinship carers.

To aid our journey we have been fortunate to have the support of our Voice of the Child Apprentices. They offer instrumental support to ensure that children and young people have access to information to help them understand their journey.

## Review and consultation

The Kinship local offer will be reviewed with partners and kinship families after six months and then again after one year.

We have consulted with kinship carers caring for children in different types of kinship arrangements in order to inform our offer.

If you have feedback or are unhappy with the particular service you have received, we are keen to hear from you. You can find information about how to share feedback or make a complaint on our [complaints webpage](#).

Children/young people and adults can also provide feedback electronically and we will have a feedback section on our webpage where you can do this.

We also plan to send a feedback form annually via post for any families that do not wish to provide feedback electronically.

# Values and principles

We are committed to ensuring that children remain within their family/wider relational network whenever it is safe and within their best interests. To support this, we offer tailored advice, guidance, and training to help families provide stable, nurturing care. This commitment is rooted in the principles of the [Family First permanence strategy](#) and the [Children's Services practice framework](#) which emphasise that every child deserves a safe, loving, and secure home, we are committed as a local authority to supporting children, young people and their parents/care givers to have the best chance to thrive.

To achieve this, we work to identify individuals who can either support the child to remain with their birth parents or provide care when that is not possible if this is within the child/young person's best interests. Our approach is based on the belief that every child deserves a stable and loving home and that a sense of belonging is essential to a child's wellbeing, identity, and resilience.

We aim to identify family members and support networks as early as possible. This may happen through the Family Group Decision Making process which we refer in Telford to as circle of support meetings, or via the child's allocated social worker. Building positive relationships is central to our practice, and we strive to demonstrate empathy, compassion, and respect in all interactions.

We also recognise and value cultural identity and heritage. Tools such as genograms help us map family relationships, values, and histories, allowing us to honour family stories and identify support systems often during times of crisis. Practitioners are expected to work in

a culturally competent and inclusive way, respecting the diverse backgrounds of the families we support.

Our work is guided by a strengths-based approach, which celebrates the progress and achievements of families. Support is delivered collaboratively, with shared accountability. Families are empowered to co-create solutions and lead their own change, supported by professionals who act as facilitators of transformation.

We also embed systemic practice, which seeks to understand family needs through the lens of relationships and broader social systems. This approach promotes sustainable change by encouraging families to take ownership of their solutions, while recognising the impact of trauma and intergenerational patterns.

## Permanence

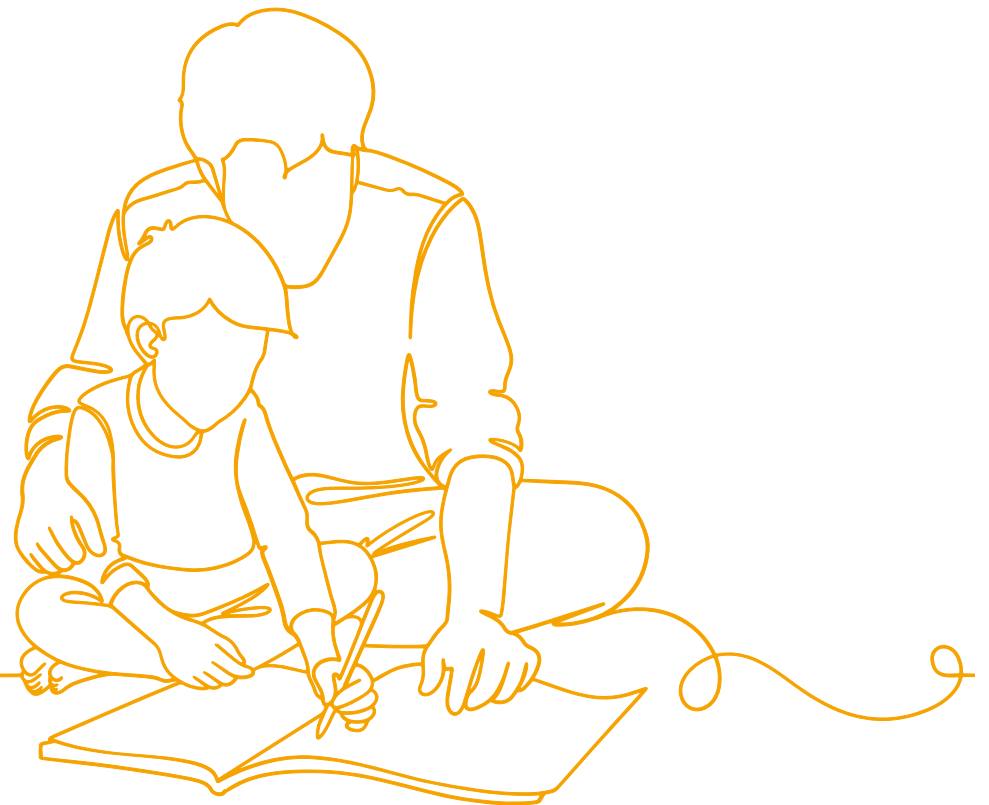
For most children who are cared for by the local authority, permanence is achieved through a successful return to their birth family/relational network, where it has been possible to address the reasons which led to the child becoming looked after, support will be provided for this to be able to happen.

If a child/young person is cared for by an alternative carer we seek to ensure that they see members of their relational network who are important to them if this is in their best interests, and these connections are supported to be the best they can be. We will also revisit these connections to see if family time or caring arrangements can change over time in line with the child/young person's best interests and individual circumstances.

Planning starts early and is reviewed regularly to avoid any drift and delay. We aim to secure legal, emotional, and relational permanence, ensuring children feel safe, stable, and that they belong.

We acknowledge that the more people who can support a child or young person, the better their outcomes will be. The child's voice, wishes, and feelings are central to all decisions made. We actively promote lifelong links with birth families, siblings, and significant others, and support family involvement in life story work to strengthen identity and belonging, where this is in the best interests of the child.

Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) play a key role in monitoring care plans, preventing drift, and ensuring children understand their rights and options. They support legal proceedings and ensure advocacy is available when needed.



# What is kinship care?

Kinship care is when children are cared for by members of their extended families, friends or other people who are connected with them, for a variety of reasons, and in different arrangements. This could be for a short period of time while family members have support to make changes or over a longer-term arrangement.

Sometimes the arrangement is made in partnership with the extended family network and the local authority but more often it is arranged within the family network only. Sometimes these arrangements are identified through a circle of support meeting (Family Group Decision Making forums FGDM).

Many people become kinship carers, and can include grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles. They could also be godparents, step-grandparents, or other adults who have a relationship with or connection to the child. These carers are often referred to as 'kinship carers', 'family and friend's carers' or 'connected persons'.

## Arrangement types:

- Arrangements made within the family/wider relational network only - the length of the arrangement is decided by the person with parental responsibility (PR) or someone who has taken out a legal order to care for the child.
- **Private fostering** – an arrangement made by the family about the care of a child or young person under 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability), who is cared for by someone who is not a parent or close relative and with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. The local authority must be informed of this

arrangement so that they can assess whether it is a safe and suitable arrangement they are required to notify the Kinship Team at the earliest opportunity. Carers who are caring for children within these circumstances are required to advise the local authority of these arrangements.

- **Child Arrangement Order** (previously known as a Residence Order) – this is a legal order granted by the court which decides where the child will live and who they spend time with.
- **Special Guardianship Order (SGO)** – a legal order granted by the court that gives a person parental responsibility for a child or young person, allowing them to care for and make decisions about the child/young person's upbringing until they turn 18.
- **Kinship foster carer** – arrangements made for children/young people cared for by the local authority where the child is placed by the local authority, and they have approved the carer who is a relative or friend of the family. The child remains cared for unless a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship order is made. Where the child remains cared for by the local authority, the carer remains a kinship foster carer.

## Private fostering

Private fostering occurs when a child/young person is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative for 28 days or more. These carers are usually extended family members or family friends. You cannot be a private foster carer if you are a close relative, which the Children Act 1989 defines as a grandparent, aunt, uncle,

sibling, or half-sibling (including those related by marriage or civil partnership).

A child is considered to be in a private fostering arrangement if they are:

- under 16 years old (or under 18 if they have a disability); and
- not in the care of the local authority.

The arrangement is made between the child's parent and the private foster carer, but the local authority must be notified. While carers make everyday decisions for the child, legal responsibility remains with the parents. The local authority will carry out an assessment of the private foster carer's ability to meet the needs of the child/young person they are caring for, and details about the assessment process are available in our leaflets on the Kinship Telford webpage.

You do not need formal approval to be a private foster carer, but a social worker will check:

- whether the carer or anyone in the household has a criminal record (via a DBS check);
- the suitability of the accommodation;
- who else lives in the home;
- plans for the child to spend time with their parents;
- school arrangements; and
- health care provisions.

Telford and Wrekin Children's Services must be notified at least six weeks before a private fostering arrangement begins, or immediately if the arrangement is due to start within a six-week period.

## Kinship foster care

Kinship foster care, also known as family and friends foster care, is when a child is placed with a relative or close family friend who has been assessed and approved as a foster carer. In these circumstances, the child is cared for by the local authority's Children's Services, who share parental responsibility with the child's birth parents. Kinship foster carers do not have parental responsibility themselves, but they provide the child's day-to-day care.

To become a kinship foster carer, you will be assessed by a social worker to ensure you are suitable to care for the child. More details about the assessment process are available in our leaflets on the Kinship Telford webpage. Once the assessment is complete, the social worker will present their recommendations to the local authority's Fostering Panel, which makes the final decision. If possible, the assessment is completed before the child moves in. The process also includes identifying any training, advice, or support the carer may need now or in the future.

In urgent situations, the local authority can grant temporary approval under Regulation 24, allowing the child to be placed with the carer for up to 16 weeks while the full assessment is completed which will include various checks and focussed assessment sessions throughout this period. This can be extended by up to eight additional weeks, but no longer.

If the assessment cannot be completed in time, children's services may place the child with another carer temporarily.

Once approved, kinship foster carers are expected to continue engaging in training and development to support their ability to meet the child's needs over time.

## Special Guardianship Order (SGO)

A Special Guardianship Order (SGO) is a legal decision made by the court that gives a special guardian extended parental responsibility for a child. While it limits the rights of the birth parents, it does not remove them entirely.

You can find more information about the [Adoption and special guardianship support fund \(ASGSF\)](#) on the UK Government website. [Telford & Wrekin Council's Special guardianship support policy](#) also provides local guidance and support options.

To become a special guardian, you must be over 18 and not the child's parent. You can apply individually or jointly with another person. You may apply without needing the court's permission if:

- you are the child's legal guardian;
- you are a relative or foster carer, and the child has lived with you for at least one year;
- the child has lived with you for at least three of the past five years;
- you have a Child Arrangements Order stating the child lives with you;
- you have the agreement of all individuals with parental responsibility; or

- the child is in local authority care, and the local authority agrees to your application.

If you do not meet these circumstances, you'll need to ask the court for permission to apply.

## Form K assessment

A Form K assessment is completed where a kinship fostering arrangement is being explored or an SGO. It holds the child/young person at the centre and the assessment explores the strengths of the prospective kinship carer to meet the child/young person's needs. The conclusions and recommendations of the assessment help to make decisions about the child/young person's future care. Further details about the assessment process are available in our leaflets, which can be accessed via the Kinship Telford webpage.

## Form K support plan

A Form K is a structured support plan created by the local authority outline the help available to special guardians and kinship carers. It is usually completed during or after the assessment process and ensures carers have the resources they need to care for the child safely. It also promotes transparency and prevents carers from feeling unsupported.

### What does form K Support plan cover?

- **Financial support** – details of any allowances or payments
- **Practical support** – assistance with housing, transport, or childcare
- **Emotional support** – access to counselling or therapeutic

services

- **Training opportunities** – such as parenting courses or trauma-informed care
- **Family time arrangements** – support with managing contact with birth family
- **Review dates** – when the plan will be reviewed and updated

## Child Arrangement Order (CAO)

A Child Arrangements Order (CAO) is a legal order given by a family court and usually lasts until the child is 18 years old.

If the order specifies that the child will live with someone other than their parent, that person is granted parental responsibility. You share parental responsibility with the child's parents but can make day-to-day decisions without parental involvement. However, for any major decisions about the child must involve the parents.

You can apply for a Child Arrangements Order if you are:

- the child's grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother or sister (including by marriage or civil partnership), half-brother or half-sister, or stepparent, and they have lived with you for more than one year;
- the child's appointed guardian following the death of a parent or special guardian;
- a kinship foster carer, and the child has lived with you for more than one year, or you have consent from everyone who has parental responsibility; or

- a private foster carer and the child has lived with you for at least three years.

You can also apply for Child Arrangements Order if you have consent from:

- everyone else who holds parental responsibility;
- Children's Services, if the child is in their care; or
- anyone who already has a residence order or child arrangements order for the child.

You must be 18 or over to apply for a Child Arrangements Order and you cannot normally apply for a child aged 16 and over. If you don't meet the criteria listed, you can still apply to the family court for permission to apply. You can apply for a Child Arrangements Order online or get help from a solicitor and it is recommended that you get legal advice and support to understand all your options before applying.

Details about this process are available in our leaflets, which can be accessed via the Kinship Telford webpage.

## Informal kinship care

An informal kinship carer is a relative or friend who looks after a child without the involvement of the local authority. The arrangement is made privately between the parent(s) and the carer.

# Advice and guidance

Kinship care can pose challenges on occasions, and it is important that any support is identified and provided as early as possible. Families may need advice and support to decide when thinking about who is best placed to care for a child/young person and the options available to them. Advice can be accessed from a variety of sources including the Family Rights Group and Kinship.

## Family Connect

Family Connect is a single point of contact or 'front door' for Telford and Wrekin Children and Families Services. Family Connect is a free, confidential service providing, impartial advice, information, guidance and support on a full range of children's services available across the borough including childcare, activities, school admissions and finance.

## Family Hubs

Family Help is an early support service designed for families who may be experiencing challenges but do not require intensive intervention. Its aim is to enable families to utilise family and community assets. They can support with family relationships, building resilience, and improve outcomes for children and young people by addressing any issues before they escalate. In Telford and Wrekin, Family Help is delivered through Family Hubs which are welcoming community spaces that offer a wide range of support services tailored to family needs. Families benefit from improved confidence, stronger relationships within the family and easier access to coordinated support, reducing stress and isolation.

## Family Hubs provide:

- information, advice, and guidance on everyday parenting challenges;
- support with infant feeding, mental health, and healthy lifestyles;
- drop-in sessions and workshops on topics such as behaviour, routines, and emotional wellbeing; and
- connections to local services and professionals, helping families access the right help at the right time.

## Support can be accessed in several ways:

- Accessing drop in's across the area
- Calling the Family Hub team on **01952 385385**
- Visiting online via the [Telford Family Hubs website](#)
- Referral by a professional, such as a teacher, health visitor, or social worker

When multiple services are involved, a lead professional may be assigned to coordinate support. This person helps complete an early help assessment, acts as the main point of contact for the family, ensures services are working together effectively, and can refer the family to Family Hubs or other relevant services.

## SEND local offer

The [SEND local offer](#) is designed to bring together essential information across education, health, and social care to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). In line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015), every local authority is required to publish a local offer that outlines the services and support available for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in one accessible place.

The SEND local offer provides:

- guidance on how schools and educational settings support children with SEND, including access to specialist services and personalised learning plans;
- information on physical and mental health services, such as therapies and assessments;
- support for key life transitions, including moving into further education, employment, and independent living; and
- assistance with transport arrangements for eligible children and young people.

## Citizens Advice

[Citizens Advice](#) is a UK-based charitable organisation that provides free, confidential, and impartial advice to help people resolve a wide range of issues. This includes:

- legal problems;
- debt and money management;
- consumer rights;
- housing;
- employment; and
- benefits and welfare.

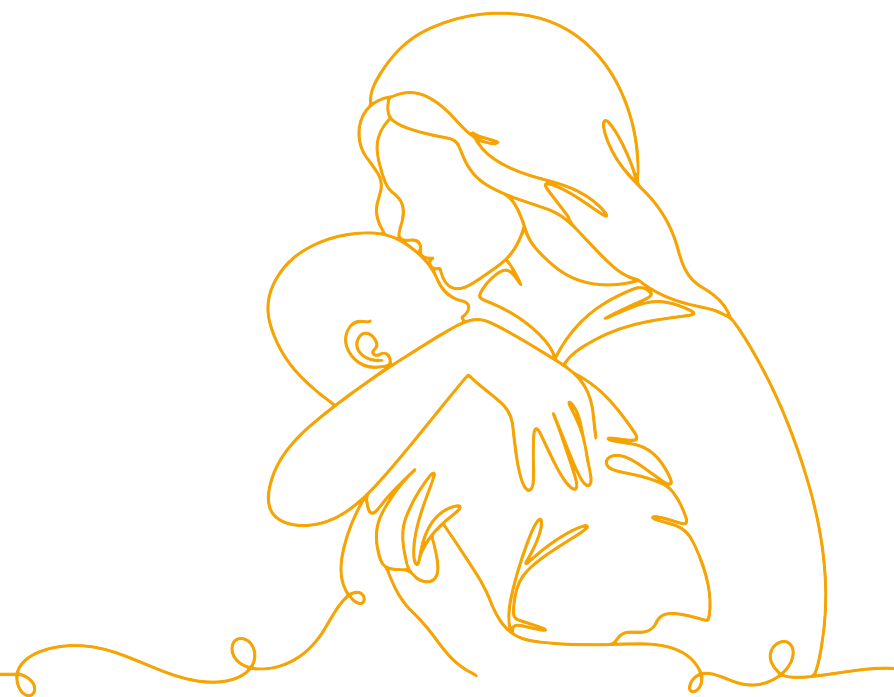
## The Traveller Movement

The [Traveller Movement](#) is a UK-wide civil society organisation that advocates for and supports Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) communities. Their work focuses on promoting equality, challenging discrimination, and improving access to services for GRT individuals and families.

The organisation offers a wide range of support, including:

- health and wellbeing: resources and guidance on topics such as mental health, COVID-19, and general wellbeing;
- family support: practical advice on parenting, education, and child development;
- LGBTQ+ inclusion: tailored resources and support for LGBTQ+ members of the GRT community; and
- youth programmes: initiatives aimed at improving access to education and employment opportunities for young people.

Support is available nationally through phone and Skype consultations, face-to-face appointments, and online resources. The Traveller Movement also works in partnership with other charities and legal centres to ensure comprehensive support is accessible to those who need it.



# Training

Kinship carers have told us they would like specific kinship training to meet unique circumstances. We have a range of bespoke training, courses and workshops for kinship carers including:

- supporting and facilitating family time arrangements;
- understanding life story support and therapeutic needs;
- understanding your role in safeguarding;
- understanding the impact of domestic abuse on adults and children;
- understanding the impact of substance misuse on adults and children;
- understanding exploitation; and
- kinship arrangement training (assessment support and legal orders) which includes:
  - the nature and impact of the various court orders and care arrangements;
  - the assessment process;
  - the team around the child; and
  - Form K support plan.

A training package is currently under development and further training will be informed by feedback received.

## Fostering

[Telford and Wrekin Fostering Service](#) offers a comprehensive training programme for all carers.

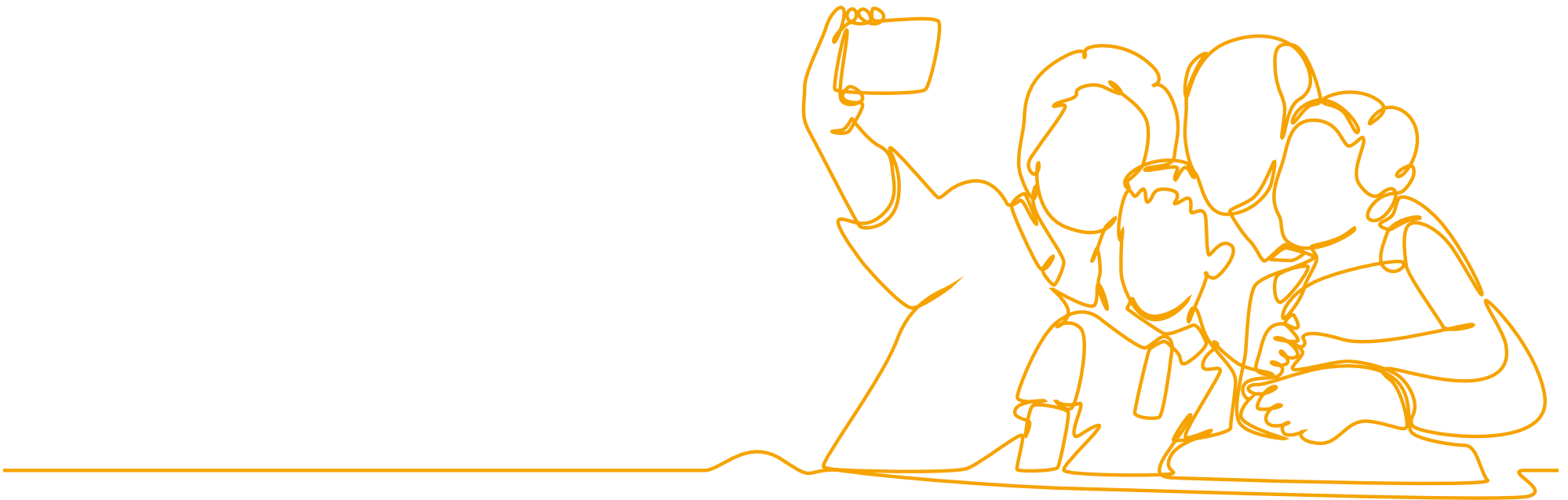
OLLIE is a regional training platform designed to support professionals and carers involved in safeguarding and children's services across the West Midlands. OLLIE offers a range of accessible, high-quality learning modules that can make a real difference. By engaging with OLLIE, carers can build their confidence, strengthen their caregiving skills, and feel more empowered in their role. For any issues with logging in or if there is a certain course that you would like to do, and cannot see on OLLIE, please email or call the Kinship Team.

## Kinship (charity)

[Kinship](#) offers various free training and workshops designed to empower kinship carers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to navigate their journey. These sessions are available online and in-person. Some of the key training topics includes:

- understanding different types of kinship care and legal arrangements;
- managing emotional challenges and trauma-informed parenting;
- financial support and benefits guidance;

- life story work to support children's identity and emotional wellbeing;
- working effectively with local authority children's services;
- online safety and managing challenging behaviour; and
- supporting children in education and navigating the school system.



# Support for carers

## Family Hubs

As part of our self-care offer for kinship carers, The Family Hubs service will be offering self-care wellbeing sessions three times per year. Sessions will centre around community and peer support as well as mindfulness and wellbeing. These sessions will give carers the opportunity to receive support and guidance on how to manage stress and how to incorporate self-care. This is a new offer and as such the feedback from carers who have attended the sessions will inform the future development.

## Childcare

Tax-Free Childcare is available for children 11 years and under. It can help pay for care outside of school hours, such as breakfast clubs or after-school clubs. It can also be used to pay for childminders and nurseries for children who are not of school age. People cannot claim Tax-Free Childcare if they are also claiming Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Universal Credit or childcare vouchers.

## Peer support

Peer support is valuable and to walk alongside someone who has been part of a similar journey is central to meaningful support. We are fortunate that a number of our carers wish to become peer supporters and advocates and we are seeking relevant training and development for carers to be able to fulfil these roles.

[Kinship](#) offers a range of local and online support groups designed to help kinship carers connect, share experiences, and access practical and emotional support. [Telford Kinship Carers](#) is a local

support group based in Telford which is led by kinship carers and is open to all kinship carers aged 18 and over in the Telford area. This group meets monthly and can be contacted via email on [telfordkinship@gmail.com](mailto:telfordkinship@gmail.com) for any questions or if you would like to join.

[Someone Like Me](#) is a free service where you can speak to a specially trained kinship carer volunteer on the phone. Whether you have just started your journey or have been looking after a child/young person for a while and are going through a difficult patch, you can use the service to talk to a trained volunteer about how you are feeling. Any kinship carer in England and Wales can register by completing the [registration form](#) on the Kinship website which aims to match you with another kinship carer within 10 working days. Once you're matched, a convenient time to have your first call will be arranged between Monday and Friday.

The Telford and Wrekin Kinship support team also facilitates a local coffee morning for all kinship carers on a bi-monthly basis. Any carer interested in joining this, can contact the Kinship Team via email or telephone.

## Support Home-Start Telford and Wrekin

[Home-Start Telford and Wrekin](#) is a UK charity dedicated to offering compassionate and confidential support to families with young children, particularly during difficult times. Their approach centres around trained volunteers who visit families at home, providing emotional and practical assistance.

For kinship families, Home-Start understands the specific challenges faced, such as financial pressure, emotional strain, and limited formal support. Through their Families Together programme, they offer targeted support including:

- advocacy and training for carers;
- financial assessments and help with accessing benefits;
- peer mentoring and support groups to reduce isolation;
- confidence-building activities for children; and
- family outings to encourage bonding and create positive shared experiences.

Additionally, Home-Start runs a free 11-week course called Something More, designed to boost confidence, self-esteem, and emotional wellbeing in a warm, supportive group setting. A free crèche is available, so your little ones are cared for while you participate. To book a place or if you have a question, you can email Home-Start Telford and Wrekin on [info@homestartandw.org.uk](mailto:info@homestartandw.org.uk) or call on **07551 205821**.

## Telford and Wrekin Digital Drop Ins

Telford & Wrekin Council, with the help of our fantastic digital champion volunteers and workplace volunteers, offers free digital drop-in sessions for all residents. They can help you feel confident using your mobile phone, tablet, laptop, or library computer. To find out more about the dates and locations of these drop in sessions, please visit: [Telford Online](#)

In addition, Learn Telford offers a range of digital skills courses for adults aged 19 and over. To find out more, call 01952 382888 or visit: [www.learntelford.ac.uk](http://www.learntelford.ac.uk)

## Tech Made Friendly

Tech Made Friendly is a six-session programme designed to help adults aged 18 and over in Telford and Wrekin build confidence using digital devices like smartphones, tablets, and laptops by offering free support. Sessions will be delivered by AbilityNet and are friendly, informal, and tailored to beginners or those looking to improve their digital skills. These sessions are delivered across multiple locations, and each session is held for 1.5 hours. To find out more please visit: [Telford & Wrekin Council Digital face to face support and learning](#). Please ensure you complete the [Tech Made Friendly booking form](#) to reserve a place on these sessions. Alternatively, you can call us on **01952 380000** to book your place.

## Live Well Telford

Live Well Telford is an online community directory provided by Telford & Wrekin Council. It is a valuable resource for kinship families, offering a central hub to access a wide range of local services and practical information. It helps kinship carers find local support groups and services that provide emotional support, respite care, and wellbeing advice.

## Telford and Wrekin CVS

### All Age Carers Centre

Telford & Wrekin All Age Carers Centre is an all-age service. They can provide a range of high-quality support for carers including information, wellbeing support groups, social respite activities and access to grants and training. The Telford All Age Carers Centre provides confidential free advice which you can access by calling **01952 240209** or emailing [admin@telfordcarers.org.uk](mailto:admin@telfordcarers.org.uk). They also offer support for young carers (under 18) and for inbetweeners (18 – 25) including age-appropriate activities and help with balancing care responsibilities with education and social life.

### Brookside Community Café

The Brookside Community Café, delivered by Telford and Wrekin CVS in partnership with local businesses, volunteers, and wellbeing organisations, is a vibrant community hub located in the heart of Brookside Community Centre. The café provides both preventative and responsive support to help individuals and families live well and safely in their community. It offers opportunities to build independence, access information and advice, and receive practical support with daily living.

Some key features include:

- training and employability programmes for those facing barriers to work;
- life skills training, such as cooking on a budget and safeguarding;
- a safe and inclusive space to reduce social isolation and offer free meals where needed; and
- intergenerational activities that bring together community members.

### All Age Autism Hub

The All Age Autism Hub delivered by Telford and Wrekin CVS, provides support for individuals of all ages using a whole-family approach. The service is available to children and young people aged between 0–18 who have a formal autism diagnosis, as well as those who are currently awaiting assessment. In addition, adults are also supported pre and post diagnosis.

The Hub offers a range of support including advice, information, and signposting to relevant services. Families can also access group workshops designed to help them better understand autism and develop practical strategies for everyday life. In addition, the Hub facilitates peer support groups, creating opportunities for parents, carers, and young people to connect with others who share similar experiences.

The Hub manages the waitlist for the clinical provider, MPFT, meaning people can self-refer and be added to the waiting list without having to go to a GP surgery.

On the third Friday of each month, CVS hosts a well-attended drop-in session that brings together a range of organisations offering support and information held at Hazeldine House. Kinship families are warmly welcomed to attend, providing an opportunity to connect with services and ask questions in a supportive environment.

## Telford Crisis Support

Telford Crisis Support offers a range of multi-bank services to support individuals and families facing financial hardship such as:

- **School Uniform Bank** – offers pre-loved school uniforms for children of all ages
- **Food Bank** – provides emergency food parcels to individuals and families facing financial hardship
- **Baby and Toddler Bank** – offers essential items for young children, including clothing, toiletries, and equipment

To apply for a food parcel you should call **01952 380400** to make an application and for general enquiries you should contact **01952 586646**, email [admin@telfordcrisissupport.org.uk](mailto:admin@telfordcrisissupport.org.uk) or visit <http://telfordcrisissupport.org.uk/>

## Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council

Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council commit themselves in a spirit of friendship and co-operation to work together as people of faith for a just and inclusive community within Telford and Wrekin. They help to keep the 'Unity' in community through building and maintaining conversation and co-operation between all faith and cultural groups.

They host a range of community events throughout the year which can be accessed through their webpage.

In addition, if you need emergency food support outside of regular food bank hours, the Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council can help. The operating hours are weekdays after 5pm and all weekends (including Bank Holidays).

Contact details:

Phone: **01952 482417**

Website: <https://www.interfaithtelford.org>

Email: [hello@InterfaithTelford.org](mailto:hello@InterfaithTelford.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Telford.interfaith.3>

## Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

The Older Adult Pathway supports individuals, where a specialist needs-led approach to supporting emotional wellbeing, is required. The multi-disciplinary team is specialists working with older adults who are experiencing a range of mental health challenges. They can provide support, treatment and interventions for older adults.

### Access Team

Access is a freephone service receiving mental health referrals for all the Trust's adult mental health services. The Access Team helps people get the right support, in the right place, at the right time. They can help you get support from a variety of services.

To contact the Access Team please see details below:

Telephone: **08081 964501**

Email: [access.shropshire@mpft.nhs.uk](mailto:access.shropshire@mpft.nhs.uk)

If you're already open to any mental health services at MPFT, please only contact Access during out-of-service hours.

If you're calling between the hours of 9am to 5pm, you will need to call the Admin Hub.

Shropshire Admin Hub (covering Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Market Drayton, Ludlow, and Bridgnorth areas) – **03003 033426**

Telford Admin Hub – **03003 031601**



## Support for birth parents

When it is in the best interests of the child or young person, the involvement of birth parents in their lives should be preserved. We understand that this can sometimes be challenging, and we're here to help. We're currently developing additional support for birth parents to make family time a positive experience for everyone involved if this is within the child/young person's best interests. We also aim to support and strengthen the relationships between kinship carers and birth parents.

To further develop the support for birth parents we are in the process of recruiting a Parent Worker who will help guide and support parents who do not have their children living with them. This may include accessing therapeutic support, a forum to discuss and to support them with maintaining family time arrangements.

We will be offering workshops specifically for parents focussing on the impact of domestic abuse on your child. The parent worker will develop peer support groups for birth parents in a similar position. They will also offer support in relation to strengthening family time, which could be in the form of a group programme.

The Parent Worker will help to enhance the parents' ability to have an increased role in the child/young person's life where possible. Birth parents will be supported to understand their journey, the journey of their child, and their hopes and aspirations for the future if this is considered as being in the child/young person's best interests.

A Parent Worker can be requested by birth parents directly, the kinship carer or a practitioner supporting the family, via the Kinship Team.

### Pause

Pause is a national charity working with women who have had or are at risk of having their children removed from their care. [Pause and Listen](#) aims to provide a platform for women to share their stories and experiences through a podcast and they are often joined by professionals and advocates. These podcasts are co-produced by women who have completed the Pause programme which is a national initiative aimed at breaking cycles of repeat child removals and supporting women to rebuild their lives. [In a Mother's Mind](#) is the main podcast series by Pause covering topics such as kinship care, domestic abuse, maternal mental health and housing instability.

### Calm Café

The Calm Café is a free, face-to-face support service for adults over 18 experiencing emotional distress or mental health challenges. It is for those feeling isolated, overwhelmed or in crisis seeking support outside of typical service hours. The calm café provides a safe, welcoming space where people can talk, connect with others, and access support from trained staff.

Calm cafes run throughout the week at various venues:

Monday – Outpost Oakengates TF2 6EP, 5 to 7.45pm

Tuesday – Donnington Community Hub TF2 7PR, 5 to 7.45pm

Wednesday – Hub on the Hill TF7 4HG, 5 to 7.45pm

Thursday – Meeting Point House TF3 4HS, 5 to 7.45pm

# Support for children and young people

There is always someone who can help if support is needed and this may be a teacher, social worker or another trusted adult.

## Young Person Kinship Forum

To ensure that young people in kinship arrangements have a safe and inclusive space, the Voice of the Child Apprentice Team is launching a Young Person Forum for children and young people aged 11 to 17 years old. The forum will offer a non-judgemental environment where young people can express their feelings, connect with others in similar situations, and help shape future activities. Forums will be guided by the interests and ideas of those that join and will be held at Parklane Centre in Woodside. For more information about these forums please email [yourvoicematters@telford.gov.uk](mailto:yourvoicematters@telford.gov.uk)

## Next Chapter Mentors Programme

The Next Chapter Mentors Programme is a volunteer-led initiative offering one-to-one mentoring for care-experienced young people in Telford and Wrekin. The programme focuses on building trusted, consistent relationships between mentors and mentees, offering both emotional support and practical guidance.

Mentors help with:

- building confidence and self-esteem;
- developing life skills (e.g. budgeting, cooking, job applications);
- setting life and career goals; and
- exploring hobbies and community connections.

While the programme is primarily designed for care leavers, we welcome enquiries from young people in kinship caring arrangements too. Each case is considered individually to ensure the right support is in place. To find out more or check eligibility, please contact Tig Poole, Volunteer Co-ordinator, at [tig.poole@telford.gov.uk](mailto:tig.poole@telford.gov.uk)

# Leisure

Leisure activities can support with physical and emotional health as it can improve sleep and fitness as well as promoting positive mental health. Shared leisure such as tennis, ice skating and swimming can help build connections between families and creates opportunities for positive memories.

The Telford Loyalty Card (TLC) offers a range of benefits designed to make leisure activities more affordable and accessible. To find out if you qualify please visit the [Telford and Wrekin Leisure Services](#) webpage. You can apply online via the Telford and Wrekin Leisure website or in person at any council leisure centre. If you have questions or need help applying, please email [mytlc@telford.gov.uk](mailto:mytlc@telford.gov.uk)

All resident TLC card holders aged under 25 are entitled to free swimming, while those aged over 50 can enjoy swimming at a 50% discount. As part of the Council's 10 by 10 initiative, children aged 5 to 10 who are unable to swim 10 metres can access free swimming lessons. In addition, teenagers and over 60s can benefit from discounted health and fitness memberships, helping them stay active and healthy.

SEND-specific sessions:

- **Swimming** – includes junior SEND swimming lessons, family disability swim sessions, and inclusive public swimming
- **Ice skating** – all public and SEND sessions are wheelchair friendly
- **Skiing and tubing** – My Options sessions are available for children with disabilities, led by trained instructors
- **Soft play** – junior and senior SEND sessions are offered to suit different age groups
- **Gym access** – Aspirations gyms feature adaptable resistance equipment and wheelchair-accessible machines

Outdoor activities:

- **Adaptive bikes** are available for children and families with mobility needs
- **Adventure golf** includes wheelchair-accessible pathways
- **Ability play areas** are designed with accessible play panels, roundabouts, and swings
- **Nature trails** are signposted with wheelchair-friendly routes to ensure inclusive access

# Webpage

The Kinship Telford webpage is designed to be an accessible and inclusive resource for kinship carers, children and young people, birth parents, extended family members, practitioners, and partner agencies.

To support diverse needs, there are plans for the webpage to have a read-aloud functionality that can be translated into multiple languages.

Hosted on the Telford & Wrekin Council website, the webpage provides direct links to related services such as SEND and Family Hubs, helping users navigate support pathways with ease. Visitors will find regularly updated information on upcoming events, including training sessions, coffee mornings, and wellbeing workshops.

A key section on the webpage will be the therapeutic offer, which outlines the different types of emotional and mental health support available, helping carers understand what support might be right for them and their family. There will be other useful information within the webpage including a glossary and helpful contacts.

## Resources

On the webpage there will be a dedicated space for resources. We are currently developing comprehensive resource packs to support kinship families. These will be accessible both digitally via our webpage and in printed form available through the Kinship Team.

Each pack will include a copy of the Kinship local offer clearly outlining the support available as well as informative leaflets covering the different types of arrangements tailored for carers and birth parents. These clearly explain each arrangement, their roles, and the

support entitlements. Business cards for carers are currently in design which will include a QR code to the webpage and will be given out to partnering agencies and to carers. Details about other services such as Family Hubs and Virtual School will also be included in these packs to help families navigate wider support.

In addition, the Voice of the Child Apprentice Team is developing child-friendly versions of leaflets, ensuring that young people can also understand their situation and the support available to them.

## Community

The webpage will also provide links for you to explore a range of newsletters that showcase what's happening locally and how you can get involved. The Community Newsletter and Healthy Telford Newsletter are excellent sources for updates and opportunities. Your local community centre is also a great place to find helpful information and take part in events. Social media noticeboards are another useful way to stay informed about activities and services in your area. Additionally, there is a Live Well Hub based in Madeley, with two more hubs launching soon. Staff at these hubs are available to guide you and help connect you with the support you may need.

## Libraries

We're excited to share that following positive discussions with the Library Service, we now have a dedicated collection of books available in libraries across the borough specifically for kinship carers, children, and young people. These books have been carefully selected to support, inform, and inspire those involved in kinship arrangements.

Reading can be a powerful tool for personal growth, emotional wellbeing, and connection. For children and young people, stories can help them understand their experiences, build empathy, and feel less alone. For adults, books can offer practical advice, emotional support, and reassurance that others have walked similar paths.

To make these resources easy to find, each recommended book will feature a special sticker, and there will be clear signage in the libraries to highlight the kinship section. This initiative not only promotes the importance of reading but also helps raise awareness and visibility of kinship care within our community.



# Therapeutic offer

We want to ensure that kinship carers have access to the right therapeutic support at the right time. Caring for children/young people who have experienced trauma can be challenging. It can lead to carer fatigue and the need for emotional support.

We understand that there is a role for formal therapy modalities, but informal therapeutically informed practice doesn't have to be a therapy, and this may suit some families more.

## Consultation

As part of the journey through the kinship assessment process, carers will have the opportunity to access support from a Systemic Practitioner. This support is offered in the form of up to two consultation sessions, designed to help reflection and thinking through any aspects of the assessment. Initially this is available to families who are supported via Children's Services, or Family Hubs and can be accessed by discussing this with the allocated practitioner. These sessions will be confidential and tailored to the needs of the kinship carer, providing a safe space to explore thoughts, feelings, and challenges the kinship carer may be experiencing. Further support could be offered via a referral from the Kinship Team which could include:

- family therapy/systemic practice;
- therapeutic life story work;
- DDP informed practitioners;

- video interaction guidance; and
- nurturing attachments

## Systemic Family Therapy

Systemic Family Therapy is a way of helping families understand and support each other better. It looks at how family members relate to one another and how these relationships affect everyone's wellbeing. Instead of focusing on one person's difficulties, it explores how the whole family works together and how small changes can make a big difference. It is a respectful and inclusive approach that values everyone's voice and helps families find their own solutions.

## DDP-Informed Practice (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy)

DDP-informed practice helps children/young people and carers build stronger, more trusting relationships, especially when children have experienced early trauma or loss. It focuses on creating a safe, nurturing environment where they feel understood and connected. Practitioners use a warm and accepting approach to support emotional healing and strengthen bonds within the family.

## Nurturing Attachments Training

Nurturing Attachments is a training programme designed to help carers understand how early experiences affect a child's behaviour and emotions. It offers practical tools and ideas to support children who may struggle with trust, relationships, or managing their feelings.

The training helps carers feel more confident and connected, and supports them in creating a calm, safe, and loving home.

## Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)

Video Interaction Guidance is a gentle and supportive way to help families strengthen their relationships. It involves filming short moments of everyday interactions, like playing, talking, or sharing a meal and then watching them back together with a trained guide. The focus is on spotting the positive things that are already happening, like emotional connection. It's a great way to boost confidence and help carers feel more connected to the children they care for.

## Therapeutic Life Story Work

Therapeutic Life Story Work helps children understand their past and make sense of their life experiences. It's a gentle and creative process that uses drawings, timelines, photos, and conversations to explore a child's journey. With the support of a trained worker, children can build a clearer picture of who they are, where they've come from, and how they fit into their family story. This can help them feel more secure, valued, and connected to the people who care for them.

Telford & Wrekin Council is currently piloting a [Storyteller App](#) which helps children capture and share their life stories using digital tools. It allows them to express their feelings and experiences, collaborate with trusted adults like carers or social workers and communicate safely with people in their support network. This app allows children to feel empowered to take ownership of their story and be supported with their emotional wellbeing and the development of their identity.

We are piloting our therapeutic offer for a period of six months and a further offer based on feedback from kinship carers will be formulated.

## Care leavers

A care leaver is defined as a young person who has been in the care of the local authority, and they are entitled to support as they transition into adulthood. Care leavers are able to access a wide range of therapeutic and emotional wellbeing support services to help them manage their mental health and wellbeing during their transition to adulthood. These services are designed to be accessible and responsive to the unique challenges faced by young people leaving care.

Among the key services available are IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies), which provides structured talking therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). In addition, [Papyrus](#) is a national charity offering confidential support and resources for young people who may be experiencing thoughts of suicide or emotional distress. Care leavers can also access the Rees Foundation's [Ask Jan](#) service, which offers app-based emotional support and guidance, tailored to the needs of care-experienced individuals. These services can be accessed independently or with the support of a Personal Advisor (PA).

In addition, care leavers are entitled to use digital mental health tools such as the [Kooth](#) and [Hapi](#) app. Kooth is a free, anonymous online platform that provides access to qualified mental health practitioners through live chat, as well as a range of self-help resources including moderated discussion forums, goal-setting tools, and a personal journal. This service is available without the need for a referral and operates during evenings and weekends. The Hapi app offers a holistic approach to wellbeing, supporting care leavers in managing their mental, physical, and emotional health. It includes guided text and audio sessions, sleep support tools, and personalised wellbeing recommendations based on a short quiz. The app also features a supportive community space and can be used without registration, allowing care leavers to begin accessing support immediately.

# Circle of support

Sometimes help is needed to strengthen relationships and ensure the best outcomes for the child/young person. Our Circle of Support offer (also known as a Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) meetings) brings together everyone important in the child's life to explore how best to support their care, wellbeing, and future. These meetings are a structured, inclusive way to make key decisions about a child's care, including where they should live, who can offer support, and how to rebuild or maintain important relationships. They are particularly helpful in identifying safe and sustainable family-based solutions, often preventing the need for more formal care arrangements.

## What happens in a Circle of Support meeting?

1. **Preparation:** a trained coordinator/practitioner meets with family members and key individuals beforehand. They explain the process, gather views, and ensure everyone feels informed and included.
2. **The meeting:** the wider family and support network come together to:
  - share information and concerns;
  - explore the child's needs;
  - identify strengths and resources within the family; and
  - discuss possible care arrangements and support options.

3. **Private family time:** the family is given time alone to talk openly and agree on a plan without professionals present.
4. **The plan:** the family's proposed plan is shared with professionals, who review it to ensure it meets the child's needs and is safe and achievable. The plan is then recorded and monitored over time.

This circle of support helps empower families to take the lead in decision-making and strengthens relationships and communication within the family. It also identifies practical and emotional support from within the child's network while respecting cultural identity and family values. This approach reflects our belief that families are often best placed to make decisions about their children when given the right support and space to do so.

# Family Network pilot

Telford & Wrekin Council is one of a select group of local authorities participating in the Department for Education's Family Network Support Package (FNSP) pilot. The initiative is part of a national programme to transform children's social care by helping more children remain safely within their family networks rather than entering care. The pilot focuses on:

- helping families supported by the pre-proceeding's framework;
- supporting families to explore a child/young person returning to the care of birth parents/relational network;
- using Circle of support/Family Group decision making forums (FGDM) to identify family members who can provide support; and
- providing funding to remove financial barriers that prevent extended family from being in a position to support.

This will be offered on an individual circumstances basis for young people supported by Telford and Wrekin Children's Services and can be discussed with the practitioner supporting the child/young person.



# Education

We want all children/young people to have the best educational experience, based on their needs and strengths. We have high aspirations for the educational achievement of children within our Borough.

## Virtual School

As part of our offer, kinship carers will have access to the [Virtual School for children in care](#) where advice and support can be sought. The Virtual School Head role has been extended to specifically include championing the attendance, attainment, and progress of all children in kinship care. This means that all children in kinship arrangements, regardless of legal status, will benefit from the adaptation of the strategic role. Kinship families with a Special Guardianship Order or a Child Arrangements Order, regardless of whether the children were previously in local authority care, will also benefit from advice and information, upon request, from the Virtual School to help them navigate the education system.

## Breakfast clubs

Schools understand the challenges and benefits of kinship carers and the children/young people they care for. Kinship carers may be able to access support through school-based breakfast clubs, which provide a structured start to the day for children and young people. These clubs can help to improve attendance, concentration, and overall wellbeing. Schools are encouraged to consider the needs of kinship families when allocating places, particularly where children may benefit from additional routine and pastoral support. Further information about wraparound childcare, including breakfast clubs, can be found on the [Telford & Wrekin Council website](#).

## Youth Offer

Children and young people in kinship care arrangements can access a range of youth services across Telford and Wrekin, including targeted support, enrichment activities, and safe spaces to build relationships and develop skills. The Youth Offer aims to promote inclusion, resilience, and positive engagement. Kinship carers are encouraged to explore local opportunities via the Telford and Wrekin [Youth Offer](#).

## Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium Plus is special funding for schools in England for children in care, or children who have been in the care of Children's Social Services. It is currently around £2,500 per pupil per year. The funding is not a personal budget for a particular child but must be spent on improving educational outcomes for children in the care of (or previously in the care of) Children's Services.

# Housing

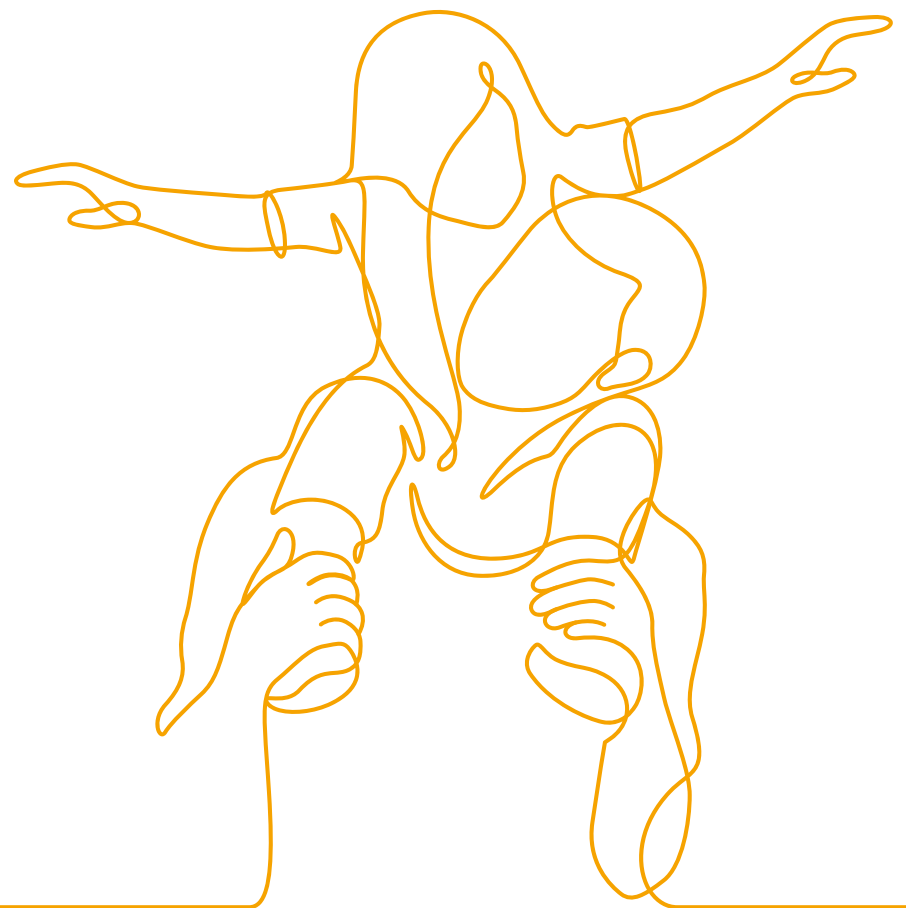
Telford & Wrekin Council recognises that housing should not be a barrier to providing safe and stable care for children in kinship arrangements.

If a kinship carer is living in accommodation that is unsuitable such as a property that is too small or lacks necessary facilities, support is available to explore alternative housing options.

Through the Council's Housing Solutions service, kinship carers can access advice and guidance tailored to their circumstances. This may include support with applying for more suitable accommodation, understanding housing rights, or being signposted to relevant services. While housing availability may vary, the Council is committed to working with kinship families to identify appropriate solutions wherever possible.

If you need support, please contact the Kinship Team, who can assist with your housing-related concerns.

In addition, Telford and Wrekin's [Housing Association](#) webpage offers links to all Registered Social Landlords.



# Financial

A kinship carer may be entitled to financial support to help with everyday living costs and the additional expenses of raising a child. This support may come through government benefits or local authority allowances, depending on the legal arrangement and circumstances.

## Universal Credit

**Universal Credit** is a means-tested benefit for people of working age who are on a low-income. Eligibility can be for people who are employed, looking for employment, have an illness or a disability, or are caring for a child or a person with a disability.

## Child Benefit

**Child Benefit** is paid to anyone bringing up a child under 16 years of age or a young person under 20 years of age who is in approved education or training. Only one person can receive child benefit and there is no limit to how many children that can be claimed for.

## Pension Credit

If a person is over State Pension age, they may be able to get **Pension Credit**, which is separate to the State Pension. It provides additional finances to help pay for day-to-day living costs, which will include looking after a child as a kinship carer.

## Guardian's Allowance

If a carer is caring for a child/young person whose parent(s) have died, they may be able to receive a **Guardian's Allowance**. A

Guardian's Allowance is tax-free and in addition to any child benefit being received.

## Child Arrangement Order (CAO)

If a local authority was involved when a CAO was made, there may have been a financial allowance agreed to support the carer. This allowance should have been agreed in writing and does not affect entitlement to other benefits like Child Tax Credit.

## Advice and support

Navigating financial support can be complex. We recommend speaking with:

- a specialist money advice service;
- your social worker/practitioner (if involved); and/or
- a solicitor, ideally early in your kinship journey.

There are also national and local organisations that offer free, confidential advice:

- Kinship UK
- Family Rights Group
- PAC-UK
- CoramBAAF

## Allowances from the local authority

Depending on the legal order, a carer may be eligible for discretionary financial support from the local authority. Please note: these allowances are not guaranteed and vary by local authority, and they are subject to regular review as they may be increased, reduced or withdrawn if circumstances change.

## Work and employment

Being a kinship carer can impact on employment and [guidance for employers](#) has been published which clarifies legal rights and responsibilities and how to support kinship carers sensitively and effectively. Support is available to kinship carers such as:

- Time off for dependents
- Unpaid leave
- Flexible working arrangements
- Some employers have schemes for kinship carers



# Legal

Kinship carers have told us that knowing their rights and options is important to them and often this can be confusing particularly at the beginning of the journey.

In order for kinship carers to understand their options and the meaning of these, the local authority can support with legal advice. You can contact the Kinship Team who can discuss this with you on an individual basis. The local authority can also provide a list of approved solicitors in the local area. Alternatively, you can contact the **Family Rights Group**, which provides a free telephone advice line available Monday to Friday, from 9.30am to 3pm (excluding Bank Holidays) by calling **08088 010366**. They also offer an online forum specifically for kinship carers, where you can seek advice, share experiences, and connect with others for support. Additional services include a webchat, an advice enquiry form, and the option to request an interpreter if needed. The Family Rights Group website features a wide range of [legal resources and guidance](#), including links to the charity Advocate, which helps connect individuals with volunteer barristers across England and Wales for legal assistance.

## Parental responsibility

It is important to understand parental responsibility as it affects who can make decisions relevant to the child/young person's life. Parental Responsibility means having the legal authority to make decisions about a child's:

- health and medical treatment;
- education;
- religion and cultural upbringing;
- name and legal identity; and
- day-to-day care and welfare.

Without parental responsibility, a carer may need the consent of someone who does hold it (usually the birth parents or the local authority) to make certain decisions. Kinship carers do not automatically have parental rights, but this can be gained through a Child Arrangements Order and a Special Guardianship Order.

# Culturally diverse communities

We acknowledge that kinship carers from culturally diverse communities face specific challenges related to accessing support. We are committed to promoting culturally sensitive practices which honour and celebrates the cultural background of all communities.

We are working in close partnership with our Equality and Diversity Officer and the Interfaith Council, which have established trusted relationships with faith organisations and culturally diverse groups across the Borough. Through this collaboration, we've gained valuable insight into some of the barriers that may prevent engagement. These include complex or inaccessible language which can make information difficult to understand as well as the stigma and fear associated with involvement from the local authority which leads to feelings of distrust. Understanding and addressing barriers is essential to ensuring that all kinship families feel seen, supported, and empowered to access the help they need. We have begun providing information in relation to kinship care and the support offered within places of worship. We have visited the local Gurdwara and hope that relationships with other faith organisations will continue to grow over time. We recognise this is just the start of our journey and we are committed to exploring and understanding the specific needs of kinship carers from culturally diverse backgrounds and seek to provide support that meets these needs.

The [Telford & Wrekin Council Corporate equality, diversity and inclusion strategy 2022-2026](#) outlines the council's commitment to creating a fairer, more inclusive Borough. It aims to promote equality and celebrate diversity, ensure services are accessible while building a diverse and inclusive workforce. In addition, we have

commissioned culturally responsive training within our organisation and partnership wide as well as launching a partnership [Cultural Competence Guidance](#).

## Race Equality Group

Established in 2020, the Race Equality Group brings together passionate representatives from across the organisation who are committed to promoting race equality and raising awareness both internally and within our local communities. The group envisions a truly inclusive workplace where everyone feels welcomed and contributions valued. Key priorities include educating the Telford & Wrekin Council workforce on race-related issues, strengthening community connections and supporting colleagues who face race-related challenges in the workplace.

Some notable achievements include:

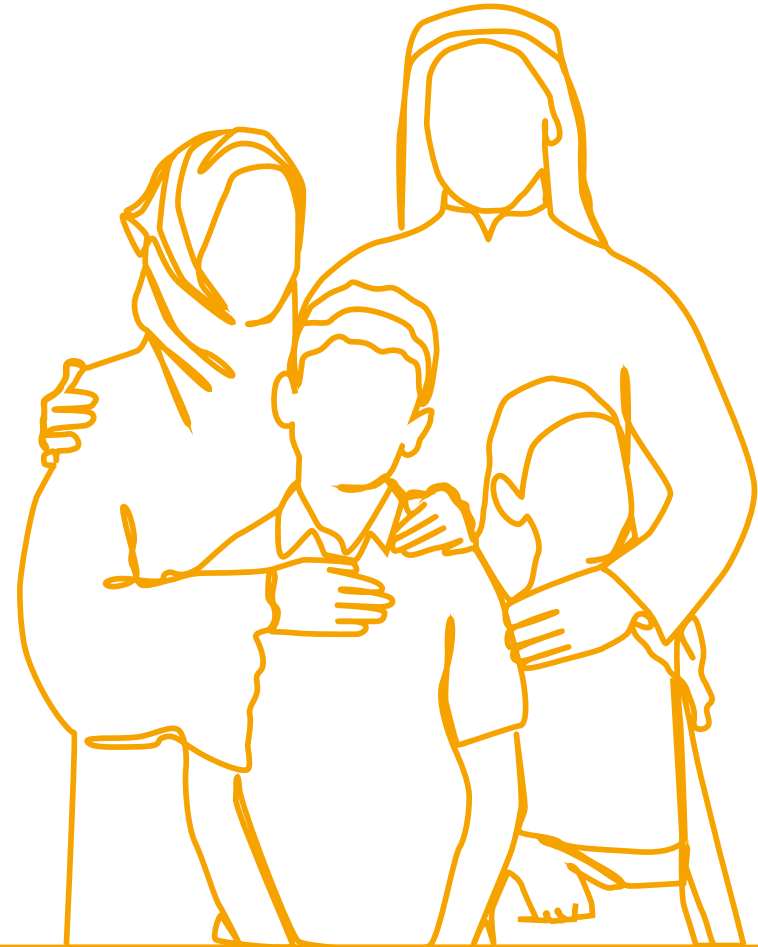
- Delivering workshops and participating in leadership forums to raise awareness of race equality
- Organising outdoor activities that engage diverse students who may not typically have access to such opportunities
- Coordinating a programme of events to celebrate significant occasions, such as Black History Month

## Research

We have also benefited from the research conducted by Kinship, which has informed our development work. In particular, the contributions of Anam Raja, Research Manager, have been instrumental in shaping recent insights, especially through her involvement in the [Raised by Relatives: the experiences of Black and Asian Kinship Carers](#) report, revealing systemic challenges such as cultural stigma, lack of culturally competent services, and limited access to support. It underscored the emotional and financial pressures faced by carers and many of whom felt they had no choice but to step in, often without adequate guidance or resources. The findings from the research have deepened our understanding of the intersection between ethnicity and kinship care and has reinforced the importance of culturally responsive and equitable support systems for all kinship families.

## Peer support

Peer support is valuable and walking alongside someone who has been part of a similar journey is central to meaningful support. We are fortunate that a number of our carers wish to become peer supporters and advocates. At this time, we are looking for culturally diverse carers to become peer supporters and advocates too. We are currently seeking relevant training and development for carers to be able to fulfil these roles. We recognise the importance of culturally diverse communities and are actively working to ensure that peer support reflects the lived experiences of carers from all backgrounds.



# Preparing for adulthood

Preparing for adulthood can bring a mix of emotions for young people. Feeling heard and involved in decisions can make the process more empowering and less overwhelming.

## Care Leavers

The [Telford & Wrekin Council's Care Leavers local offer](#) is designed to support young people aged 16 to 25 who have been in care. It outlines the rights, services, and support available to help care leavers transition into independent adulthood. The offer includes support across multiple areas:

- **Personal Adviser (PA)** – a dedicated support worker to help with planning, advice, and accessing services
- **Accommodation** – help with finding and maintaining safe housing, including financial support and tenancy guidance
- **Education, training and employment** – support to access college, university, apprenticeships, or jobs
- **Health and wellbeing** – access to physical and mental health services, leisure activities, and emotional support
- **Money matters** – financial support including grants, budgeting help, and benefits advice
- **Special circumstances support** – help for care leavers who are pregnant

## Adult Social Care

The Autism and Learning Disability Team supports young people who may be moving from [Children's Services into adult social care](#).

This transition is structured and person-centred process that begins early to ensure continuity and support outlined in the [Preparing for adulthood leaflet](#).

A Care Act assessment will be carried out by an Adult Social Care Social Worker to determine eligibility for adult services under the Care Act 2014. The assessment considers support networks, aspirations and areas of support needs. The transition process involves collaboration with social workers, education professionals, and health services (eg, nurses, therapists).

The Autism and Learning Disability Team continues to offer support while they have an EHCP (Education Health Care Plan) and may remain involved until age 25 if ongoing support is needed. If long-term support is required, they may transition to another Adult Social Care team based on their primary need. If Adult Social Care support is provided, a financial assessment is conducted to determine any contribution towards care costs.

# Kinship Telford Charter

Telford & Wrekin Council recognises and values the vital role that kinship carers play in providing safe and loving homes for children and young people where this is considered as being in their best interests. We are committed to working in partnership with kinship families to help them feel supported.

We promise to:

## ■ Recognise and respect

- Acknowledge the unique contributions of kinship carers, including grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and family friends.
- Treat all kinship families with dignity, compassion, and respect.

## ■ Support and empower

- Provide clear, accessible information about legal options, financial support, and available services.
- Offer training and development opportunities.
- Ensure carers have access to emotional wellbeing resources.

## ■ Champion diversity and inclusion

- Recognise the cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity of kinship families.

- Work to ensure services are culturally competent and inclusive.
- Engage with carers from all backgrounds to co-design support that reflects their lived experiences.

## ■ Listen and deliver a strong Kinship local offer

- Involve kinship carers in shaping documents and services.
- Promote peer support networks to amplify carers' voices.
- Respond to feedback and continuously improve our local kinship offer.
- Publish and maintain a comprehensive Kinship local offer in line with national legislation.

# Glossary

**Adoption:** a formal legal process in which all the rights and responsibilities relating to a child are transferred to the adoptive parents.

**Advocacy:** this involves supporting and promoting the rights and needs of kinship carers and the children they care for.

**Care leaver:** a young person who has been in the care of the local authority and is transitioning to independent living.

**Child Arrangement Order (CAO):** (previously known as a Residence Order) - this is a legal order which decides on where the child will live and who they spend time with.

**Connected person:** this includes relatives, friends, and other persons connected to the child.

**Co-production:** a collaborative approach where kinship carers, children, and professionals work together to design and improve services, ensuring lived experience informs policy and practice.

**Family group decision making:** a process where extended family members come together to make decisions about the care and welfare of a child.

**Informal kinship care:** an arrangement where a child is cared for by a relative or friend without the involvement of the local authority. These are private arrangements made between the parent(s) and the carer.

**Kinship care:** this is when children are cared for by members of their extended families, friends, or other people who are connected with them for a variety of reasons in different arrangements.

**Kinship foster carer:** arrangements made for children cared for by the local authority (in care), where the child is placed by the local authority, and they have approved the carer who is a relative or friend of the family. The child remains looked after unless a Child Arrangements Order or Special Guardianship order is made. Where the child remains looked after, the carer remains as a kinship foster carer.

**Local offer:** the support and services available to kinship carers within a specific local authority.

**Parental responsibility:** the legal right to make decisions about a child's care and how they are raised.

**Private fostering:** an arrangement made by the family about the care of a child or young person under 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability), who is cared for by someone who is not a parent or close relative and with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. The local authority should be informed of this arrangement so that they can assess whether it is a safe and suitable arrangement, but the decision is made by the parent or person with parental responsibility.

**Reunification:** the process of returning a child to their biological parents after they have been in foster or kinship care.

**Safeguarding:** measures taken to protect the health, wellbeing, and human rights of individuals, especially children and vulnerable adults.

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):** this is a legal term for a child or young person who has a learning difficulty or disability.

**Special Guardianship Order (SGO):** a court order that gives a person parental responsibility for a child or young person, allowing them to care for and make decisions about the child/young person's upbringing until they turn 18.

**Statutory guidance:** official advice issued by a Government department that organisations must follow.

**Therapeutic offer:** support services that provide emotional and psychological help to children and carers, often including counselling, play therapy, or trauma-informed care approaches.

**Virtual School:** This is a team of highly qualified, experienced and dedicated educational professionals. They work with all relevant partners in education, health and social care to ensure that children's opportunities in school are the best they can be.

# Useful contacts and links

## Access Team (MPFT)

Telephone: 0808 196 4501 (If you're open to any mental health services at MPFT, please only contact Access during out-of-service hours. If you're calling between 9am to 5pm, you will need to call the Admin Hub.)

Email: [access.shropshire@mpft.nhs.uk](mailto:access.shropshire@mpft.nhs.uk)

Telford Admin Hub - 0300 303 1601

## Citizens Advice

Adviceline (England): 0800 144 8848 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Telford address for drop ins: Suite 4, Syer House, Stafford Court, Stafford Park 1, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 3BD (Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9am to 4:30pm) or Wellington Library, Larkin Way, TF1 1LX (Tuesday and Thursday at 10am to 4pm)

Telephone: 0808 278 7988 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4:30pm)

Please visit the website for further support locations: Telford & The Wrekin Citizens Advice - Citizens Advice

## Coram Children's Legal Centre

[www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

## Family Connect

Telephone: 01952 385385 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Text back service: 07908680320

Email: [familyconnect@telford.gov.uk](mailto:familyconnect@telford.gov.uk)

## Family Hubs

Telephone: 01952 385385

Email: [telfordfamilyhubs@telford.gov.uk](mailto:telfordfamilyhubs@telford.gov.uk)

## Family Rights Groups

Free Advice Line: 0808 801 0366 (Monday to Friday 9.30am to 3pm, excluding Bank Holidays)

Admin Telephone: 020 7923 2628

## Fostering Network

[www.fosteringnetwork.org.uk](http://www.fosteringnetwork.org.uk)

## Home-Start Telford and Wrekin

Telephone: 07551 205821

Email: [info@homestarttandw.org.uk](mailto:info@homestarttandw.org.uk)

## **Kinship UK**

Telephone: 03300 167 235 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Email: [info@kinship.org.uk](mailto:info@kinship.org.uk)

## **Kinship Team**

Telephone: 01952 380353

For Special Guardians - [SGOsupport@telford.gov.uk](mailto:SGOsupport@telford.gov.uk)

For Kinship Foster Carers - [Connected.fostering@telford.gov.uk](mailto:Connected.fostering@telford.gov.uk)

We are currently in the process of exploring a designated email address for the Kinship Team.

## **PAC-UK**

Telephone: 020 7284 5879

Email: [advice@pac-uk.org](mailto:advice@pac-uk.org)

Webpage: <https://www.pac-uk.org/about/>

## **SEND Team**

Telephone: SEND Team - SEND - Local offer

Email: [SENDandInclusion@telford.gov.uk](mailto:SENDandInclusion@telford.gov.uk)

## **Telford Crisis Support**

Telephone: 01952 586646

Email [admin@telfordcrisissupport.org.uk](mailto:admin@telfordcrisissupport.org.uk)

## **Telford and Wrekin Leisure**

Telephone: 01952 382621 (Monday – Friday 9am-5pm) general enquiries

Email: [leisure@telford.gov.uk](mailto:leisure@telford.gov.uk)

## **Telford and Wrekin Libraries**

Telephone: 01952 382915

## **Telford Mind**

Telephone: (07434) 869248

Email: [talk2@telford-mind.co.uk](mailto:talk2@telford-mind.co.uk)

## **Virtual School Team**

Email: [virtualschool@telford.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@telford.gov.uk)

# Review and endorsement

We are proud to present this Kinship local offer as a living document, one that will continue to evolve through feedback, partnership, and the voices of kinship families.

The Kinship local offer has been reviewed and endorsed by Telford and Wrekin Cabinet members on Thursday 6 November 2025. Cabinet approval will help embed the Kinship local offer within our wider family support strategy, strengthening our ambition to deliver inclusive, responsive services that reflect the lived experiences of kinship families across Telford and Wrekin.





**kinship telford**

