

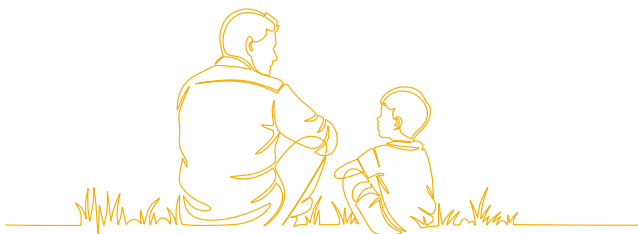
Your role in supporting your child

You're still an important part of your child's life.

When it's in your child's best interests, staying connected with you as their birth parent can make a big difference. We know this can sometimes be difficult, and we're here to support you through it. We want to help build strong, positive relationships between special guardians and birth parents.

Your involvement can help your child feel more settled, which supports their wellbeing, education, and future. Knowing that you're okay can also ease their worries.

Even small gestures such as contributing to a birthday card or gift can mean a lot. If this is something you'd like to do, it's best to speak with the Special Guardian to find the right way forward.



Useful contacts and links:

Telford & Wrekin Council, Kinship Team

Email: kinshipenquiries@telford.gov.uk

Tel: 01952 380353

<https://kinship.telford.gov.uk>

Family Connect

Tel: 01952 385385

Email: familyconnect@telford.gov.uk

PAC-UK

Tel: 020 7284 5879

Email: advice@pac-uk.org

www.pac-uk.org/about

Coram Children's Legal Centre

www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Family Rights Group

Tel: 0808 801 0366 (free advice line)

www.frg.org.uk

Can I get any help?

We understand that having your child live with a special guardian can bring up a lot of emotions. You might feel hurt, sad, or even lonely, and that's completely valid. You don't have to go through this alone. Speaking with your GP is a good first step and they can help connect you with support services that are there for you.

Looking after your emotional wellbeing can make a big difference, not just for you, but for your child too. It can help you feel more confident and present during family time and show your child that you're doing your best for them.

Telford & Wrekin Council also have a Parent Worker who can provide support, and a referral can be made through the Kinship Team.



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Special Guardianship Orders

Information for birth parents



Special Guardianship Orders Information for birth parents



What is a special guardianship order?

Special guardianship is a legal arrangement through a Special Guardianship Order, decided by the court. The person appointed to care for your child is known as a Special Guardian. They will care for your child in the event you are going through a tough time and are unable to care for them yourself.

The Special Guardian will have parental responsibility, which means they can make everyday decisions about your child's care, including things like schooling and healthcare. However, there are still some decisions that need your written permission and the court's approval such as taking your child abroad for more than three months, changing their surname, or applying to adopt.

We know that circumstances can change as children grow. If any changes to the SGO arrangement are needed, they would be decided by the court.

Assessment

To become a Special Guardian, the person must be assessed by a Social Worker to make sure they're suitable to care for your child until adulthood. This is all about making sure your child's needs will be met in a safe and loving environment.

The assessment looks at several things, including:

- how they plan to meet your child's needs;
- their thoughts and feelings about your child and the arrangement;
- what their own children (if they have any) think about the arrangement;
- what your child has experienced Information about you and your family;
- their own background and circumstances;
- how they can support during Family Time; and
- how they will make sure your child is safe.

This process helps ensure your child is placed with someone who can offer them stability, care, and support as they grow.

Family time

Where children are looked after by a Special Guardian, arrangements for family time should be agreed during the care proceedings. Family time facilitates meaningful contact between children and their families.

The Special Guardian is responsible for making sure family time is safe and positive for your child. It helps when everyone treats each other with respect and sticks to the agreed arrangements, so things run smoothly.

If things feel strained between you and the Special Guardian, it might help to ask another trusted family member to support with making the arrangements.

We're currently developing additional support for birth parents to make family time a positive experience for everyone involved, and to reinforce the important role birth parents continue to play in their child's life wherever possible.