



What is kinship care?

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 a range of different arrangements, we call this kinship care (and sometimes family and friends care). This could be for a short period of time while family members have support to make changes or over a longer-term arrangement.



kinship telford

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 family group decision making forums.

Many people become kinship carers, and can include grandparents, brothers and sisters, aunts, 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.'

What kinship arrangements there are?

The various kinship arrangements include:

Arrangements made within the family 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 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. You can find out more about private fostering here: https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20223/family_connect/279/private_fostering

Child Arrangement Order (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.

Special Guardianship Order (SGO) – This is 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.

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.

What we have in Telford to support Kinship carers?

Telford and Wrekin Children's services actively encourages and supports kinship care as a positive alternative to children becoming looked after. Most kinship arrangements work well and meet the needs of the child/young person, with the support of universal services such as health, education and housing and take place without the involvement of statutory services. However, 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. This advice can be accessed from a variety of sources including the [Family rights group](#) and [Kinship](#). Support and advice can also be provided by the Local Authority if the child/young person is being supported via Children's services. Advice and guidance can also be obtained by a professional working alongside the child or Family Connect. Within children's services support is available for kinship carers post order and for prospective Kinship carers where the child/young person is supported by Children's Services.

What agencies and practitioners should do?

Agencies working alongside kinship carers should acknowledge not only the positives of kinship care but also the challenges that can be encountered.

Practitioners should encourage kinship carers to access all the universal services available to them, both locally and nationally including any universally available benefits and allowances, and to seek advice when the child's needs exceed these by contacting the Kinship Care Team.

Key contacts and contacts and more information

The [Family rights group website](#) offers information, support and advice for families and practitioners on kinship care, as well as other aspects of the children's social work and looked after system. Families can use their advice and advocacy services in a number of different ways, including via their helpline: 08088 010366 (available Monday to Friday).

