



For family or friends who step up to raise a child.

# Make or Break

## Annual survey of kinship carers 2024

### Executive summary

*Make or Break*, published during Kinship Care Week 2024, shares key findings from Kinship's 2024 annual survey of more than 1,300 kinship carers to provide an updated 'state of the nation' overview of kinship families. It offers new insight into the lives of kinship carers, the financial circumstances of kinship households and local authority information and support, and highlights the stark realities facing kinship families in 2024.

### Key findings

#### The lives of kinship carers

Kinship carers are more likely than other adults to be disabled, to report having poor health, to feel lonely and anxious, and to be providing unpaid care alongside their kinship caring responsibilities.



**4 in 10**

kinship carers were disabled

**1 in 8**

kinship carers said their health was bad or very bad

**36%**

of kinship carers were also unpaid carers

#### Finances

Kinship families in 2024 are continuing to face significant hardship, and their greater reliance on welfare support leaves them vulnerable to financial insecurity.



**Four times**

more likely to have had a direct debit, standing order or bill they weren't able to pay in the last month

**8%**

of kinship carers were using food banks because of increases in the cost of living

**46%**

of working-age kinship carers were receiving Universal Credit

#### Local authority support

There are some positive signals that local authority support and information is improving, but kinship carers still tell us this is far from good enough.



**8pp**

more likely to say local authority support was excellent or good than in 2023

**A third**

of kinship carers rated their local authority's information as very poor

**44%**

of kinship carers did not trust their local authority at all

## Family stability

Too many kinship families remain at breaking point, and continued inaction risks significant consequences for children and for the state.



### **More than 1 in 8**

kinship carers were concerned they might have to stop caring for their kinship children

### **17%**

of kinship carers had been unable to take on the care of a brother or sister to a kinship child in their care

## Recommendations

### Equalising financial support

The UK and Welsh Governments should equalise financial allowances between foster carers and kinship carers, ensuring kinship families across England and Wales receive a non-means tested allowance at least equivalent to the national minimum fostering allowance.

In the interim, local authorities should emulate leading practice in the provision of allowances and ensure financial issues are never the reason for a kinship arrangement ceasing or changing to a different type when in the child's best interests.

The UK Government should also introduce a statutory right to kinship care leave and pay, at least on a par with that given to adoptive parents.

### Improving support for kinship families

All local authorities should ensure they provide up-to-date, accessible and visible information about the support available to kinship families of all types, including signposting to support from Kinship. Forthcoming kinship care statutory guidance for England should reaffirm the requirement for local authorities to publish a specific family and friends care (kinship) policy and a clear, joined-up local offer of support.

All kinship carers should be offered free and independent advice, including legal advice facilitated by extended eligibility for legal aid, from the moment they are considering becoming kinship carers and throughout their journey.

Local authorities should ensure the provision of tailored and accessible local training and support services, including peer support, for all kinship carers, and signpost to Kinship's new national offer of training and support in England.

### Building a new kinship care system

Future policy development should build on testing of family network support packages and family group decision making in England to improve early support for kinship families. The Law Commission's project should explore the potential for bespoke kinship care pathways.

Local authorities should establish specialist kinship teams with the breadth of skills necessary to deliver high-quality social work support where these do not exist already.

The UK Government must not delay significant additional investment in kinship care and children's social care at the next fiscal opportunities – particularly within the forthcoming Autumn Statement and as part of the next Spending Review.

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Please visit [kinship.org.uk/make-or-break-report](https://kinship.org.uk/make-or-break-report) to download the full report.