



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



## Checklist: questions to ask children's services

Kinship carers' experiences of working with children's services and local authorities form the basis of these questions. All questions might not be relevant to you. But we hope this will help guide conversations you might have and help you understand your rights and responsibilities.

### *Understanding options*

- What are my options? How will the different types of kinship care impact my rights, responsibilities and the financial support I'm entitled to?
- How will you support me, my family and the child – physically, emotionally and financially? How long will this support be for? What section 17 support might we be entitled to?
  - If you have a special guardianship order, work with your social worker to put this in a support plan. The plan should cover areas like finances, parent contact, childcare, finding suitable housing, respite, therapy, bereavement counselling, and education.
- How long will the process of becoming a kinship carer take?

### *Support*

- Who will be my main contact?
- How often will we meet?
- How will I be kept informed of any updates?
- Can I see details of your kinship local offer/family and friends care policy?'
- What courses and training are available to help me in my role now and in the future? Are these mandatory?
- What independent support is available that can support me as a kinship carer? (such as support groups)
- If issues arise for me in the future, will you support me? (such as through mental health support)
- How will you support me in staying in my job?

### *Funding*

- Is there any financial support? If so, how much and is it means-tested? How does this change depending on the type of kinship carer I am?
- Do you offer payment towards a solicitor if I am going for a special guardianship order? Is this from a specialist in child law?
- What funding is available for therapy for the child now and/or in the future? Is it means-tested?
- Is there funding or support available for respite? Is it means-tested?

- Can you tell me how can I access funding for things such as uniform, clothes, bedroom furniture, car seats, and cots? Or if there are other ways to get these or other similar essential items?
- If I need a bigger house, are you able to help? If so, how?

### *Child's background and history*

- Why has the child been removed from their parents?
- How has trauma affected the child so far?
- Can you support us with life story work?

For more information about emotional support for your kinship child, including life story work, see chapter 9.

### *Contact and parental responsibility*

- What and how often are you expecting contact meet ups to happen with the parents? When will this be established? How will it be managed and by who?
- Who's responsible for supervising parental contact?
- What parental responsibility do I have?
- Who's financially responsible for the child?

For more information about contact, see chapter 10.

### *Other tips from kinship carers*

- Get any support that is agreed put in writing: include the length of time they're committing to that support
- Do not let anyone pressure or guilt trip you into making a quick decision

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Registered office: The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London SE11 5RR.