



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



# Valuing Kinship Care in England

**#ValueOurLove**

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# FOREWORD



For too long, the enormous value which kinship carers provide to children, to their communities, and to society has gone without due recognition.

Kinship carers step up out of love to provide a safe and stable home for a relative or friend's child. Whilst their efforts are keenly felt each day by those whose lives they transform, the extent of their collective sacrifice by contrast goes unnoticed.

That's why we're grateful to the expert team at the Centre for Care for working alongside us to publish *Valuing Kinship Care in England*. We hope that illuminating the significant economic contribution provided by kinship carers will

build on growing political and public understanding of the power of kinship care and focus attention on the urgent need to improve support for all kinship families.

For more than two decades, Kinship has provided information and advice and has pioneered evidence-led support programmes for kinship carers of all types across England and Wales. Since 2022, our [#ValueOurLove campaign](#) has led the way in securing more recognition of and support for kinship families than ever before, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with kinship carers who have pushed the government and their local authorities on the changes they want to see.

We do this because, in stepping up to provide a child they love with a safe and stable home, kinship carers make huge personal sacrifices. But unlike foster carers and adoptive parents, most have few rights to financial, practical and emotional support, and taking on the care of a child they love often pushes them into poverty, unemployment and ill health.

In October last year, our evidence and campaigning led to a landmark £40 million investment in the government's 2024 Autumn Budget to [trial a kinship allowance](#) in up to 10 local authorities in England, due to start later in 2025. However, whilst this is a welcome step forward, the pace and scale of reform continues to be too slow.

To truly value the love within kinship families, we need the government to step up – just as kinship carers do every single day – and deliver additional investment in the forthcoming Spending Review to guarantee financial allowances for kinship carers across England.

It makes sense to invest in kinship care. It delivers good long-term outcomes for children,<sup>1</sup> and can help to relieve pressure on overstretched local authority budgets. Previous research commissioned by Kinship has identified that, for every 100 children looked after in well-supported kinship care rather than local authority care, the state saves £4 million per year and increases the lifetime earnings of those children by £2 million.<sup>2</sup> The Independent Review

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1 Sacker, A., Murray, E., Lacey, R. and Maughan, B. (2021) [The lifelong health and wellbeing trajectories of people who have been in care. Findings from the Looked-after Children Grown up Project](#). Nuffield Foundation.

2 Nicol Economics for Grandparents Plus (2020) [Kinship Care: The Opportunity](#)

of Children's Social Care recommended in 2022 that extending financial allowances to kinship carers would deliver savings for the public purse after only 3 years.<sup>3</sup>

We must not – and cannot – do nothing. Our most recent annual survey found that 13% of kinship carers were concerned about their ability to continue caring for their kinship children in the next year if their situations didn't improve.<sup>4</sup> There is a real and urgent risk associated with maintaining the status quo.

We urge the government to embrace the unique opportunity ahead of them to change the futures for thousands of children and generate significant cost savings in a difficult climate. It's time to recognise the immense economic contribution which kinship carers make and invest in what we know works. It's time to value their love.

**Dr Lucy Peake**  
**Chief Executive**  
**February 2025**

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<sup>3</sup> MacAlister, J. (2022) [The Independent Review of Children's Social Care: Final report](#). Department for Education

<sup>4</sup> Kinship (2024) [Make or Break: Annual survey of kinship carers 2024](#)

# INTRODUCTION

Across the country, thousands of grandparents, aunts and uncles, other family members or friends provide a home for children and young people whose parents are no longer able to do so.<sup>5</sup> This often occurs due to circumstances such as parental death, illness, imprisonment or substance abuse, or where children have experienced neglect or abuse. As kinship carers, family members and friends seek to offer a safe and stable environment, rooted in love, belonging, and familial identity, to children and young people who have experienced significant early life adversity, loss, trauma, or neglect.

Kinship care is an important but often invisible pillar of the children's social care system. For context, out of the 12 million children living in England, just under 400,000 (3%) are in the social care system (i.e. known to children's social services) at any one time.<sup>6</sup> In 2021, when the Census data was gathered, more than 80,000 of these children were in care (known as 'looked after children'). This included over 57,000 children living in foster care<sup>7</sup> and almost 12,000 children living in residential care<sup>8</sup> in England. However, a previous estimate by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)<sup>9</sup> suggests that there are more than twice the number of children living in kinship care (over 121,000) as there are in foster care - demonstrating the scale of the contribution made by kinship families in avoiding these children from entering state care.

Kinship families are more likely to live in the most deprived areas and to experience deprivation in terms of employment, education, housing and disability.<sup>10</sup> Unlike children in foster families, most kinship families receive little or no financial, practical or emotional support, pushing many to breaking point.<sup>11</sup> Kinship's most recent annual survey found that kinship carers were more than twice as likely to be using food banks than other UK adults and more than four times as likely to have had a bill they weren't able to pay in the last month.<sup>12</sup>

Kinship's [#ValueOurLove campaign](#) calls on the UK government to equalise support between kinship families and foster and adoptive families. In support of this campaign, in this report we highlight the substantial economic value provided by kinship carers in England. We calculate this economic value through a novel analysis, using Census 2021 data to create a robust estimate of the number of kinship carers in England, and combining this with specific local authority costs of alternative forms of care - as detailed fully in Appendix A. Of course, the true value of kinship care to those who experience it is impossible to quantify; nonetheless, efforts to estimate the economic value serve as a compelling way to highlight the profound—and, to date, largely invisible and overlooked—contributions of kinship carers to society.

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5 Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2023) [Kinship care in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

6 Ofsted (2022) [Main findings: children's social care in England 2021](#)

7 Of which nearly 12,000 are in foster care placed with family and friends. Department of Education (2023) [Children looked after in England including adoptions: Table - Number of children looked after on 31 March, 2019 to 2023, England](#)

8 Types of residential placements include: (1) Secure units, children's homes and hostels; (2) Residential Schools. [Department of Education \(2023\). Children looked after in England including adoptions: LA CLA on 31st March by Characteristics](#)

9 This estimate is for households of 5 people or fewer. Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2023) [Kinship care in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

10 Hunt, J. (2020) [Two decades of UK research on kinship care: an overview](#), Family Rights Group

11 Kinship (2023) [Breaking Point: kinship carers in crisis](#)

12 Kinship (2024) [Make or Break: Annual survey of kinship carers 2024](#)

## A glossary of children's social care arrangements in England

- **Kinship care:** 'Kinship care' is an umbrella term for anyone who looks after the child of a family member or friend. Other terms used include 'family and friends' care and 'connected carers'. There are several types of kinship care arrangements, and people's situations may change over time. Kinship carers' rights, responsibilities and the financial and other types of support they can access will depend on their specific circumstances. Types of kinship care include informal kinship care, kinship foster care, private foster care, special guardianship, child arrangements orders, and Testamentary Guardianship. The majority of kinship carers are informal, meaning that they do not have a legal arrangement in place.
- **Foster care:** Foster carers look after children when their birth parents are not able to, either on a long term basis until they are an adult, or short term for a few weeks or months while plans are being made for their future.<sup>13</sup> This may be for a variety of reasons. Foster carers are eligible for publicly funded support, including a foster care allowance to cover the cost of caring for a child.
- **Residential care:** Residential care refers to group care for looked after children, in a facility where care is provided by teams of paid staff.<sup>14</sup> It includes children's homes, secure children's homes, residential special schools and short break homes. This may be arranged under a care order or a voluntary accommodation arrangement. Residential care is an alternative to foster care or kinship care, which are more common placements for children who cannot live with their birth family. Compared with their peers in foster care, children are more likely to be older and male, and to have experienced multiple previous placements which have broken down. They tend to have experienced greater adversity and have more complex needs.<sup>15</sup>

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13 UK Government (2025) [Becoming a foster parent in England](#)

14 What Works for Children's Social Care (2024) [Study review: Residential care](#)

15 Ofsted (2022) [Why do children go into children's homes?](#)

# FINDINGS

In this report, we define 'economic value' as the monetary equivalent of the contributions made by kinship carers, reflecting the level of support they provide in caring for children who cannot live with their birth parents. In this section, we calculate this economic value in two stages: first, we estimate the number of kinship carers in England in 2021; we then assign a value to the care provided to each child based on the average weekly costs of foster care placement in their local authority, which are combined to estimate the overall economic contribution of kinship carers.

## How many children live in kinship care in England?

There is no definitive estimate of the number of children growing up in kinship care in England, and – as highlighted below – much more needs to be done to improve the collection of data on kinship families, so that we can better understand this population and their needs. Currently, our best estimate relies on Census 2021 data, which has some limitations.

The ONS identifies kinship care arrangements in the Census data when a child was reported as living in the household but not as a son or daughter of other adult household members. For instance, the child might be reported as a grandchild, niece, nephew or other relative of the adults in the household.

More specifically, the ONS defines children living in kinship care as:

*'people aged 17 years and under on Census Day who lived in households without a parent present, but with adults aged 18 years and over who were their sibling(s), grandparent(s), or other relatives, such as their aunt(s), uncle(s), or cousin(s).'*<sup>16</sup>

The ONS finds that 1.1% of children (aged 0–17 years)<sup>17</sup> living in households of five people or fewer were in kinship care – this is a total of 113,695 children in England.

While invaluable, the Census 2021 data on kinship care is subject to several significant limitations:

- The ONS excludes children living with adults who are unrelated to them, such as those in the care of family friends. This is not because the ONS dispute that family friends play an important role as kinship carers, but simply because it is too difficult to identify them in the Census data. In this report, we are not able to provide an estimate of the number of unrelated kinship carers, but we do acknowledge the importance of their contribution.
- The Census does not fully document the relationships between members of households with six or more people – leaving a gap in the kinship data for these larger households. In this report, we have calculated our own estimate for the number of kinship families in larger households (described more fully in Appendix A).

<sup>16</sup> ONS (2023) [Kinship care in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

<sup>17</sup> ONS (2023) [Kinship care in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

As a result, the Census 2021 data fails to capture the real number of children living in kinship care, particularly in communities where multigenerational or extended family living arrangements are common. These limitations demonstrate the need for the UK government to invest in improved methodologies and supplementary data collection in order to provide a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the full range and diversity of kinship care arrangements.

We use Census data from 2021 to estimate the number of children living in kinship care in England (See Appendix A.1 for more details).

In our analysis:

- We do not include estimates for children living with non-relatives (e.g., family friends), due to the lack of reliable data, acknowledging that this exclusion likely underestimates the total contribution of kinship care.
- To address the lack of data on larger households (six or more members), we provide our own estimation of the number of children living in kinship care within these households. This is done by assuming that the proportion of children in kinship care observed in smaller households also applies to larger households.<sup>18</sup> (for more detail please see Appendix A.1).

**We estimate that the total number of children living in kinship care arrangements in England is 132,818.**

# 132,818



**Children living in kinship care arrangements in England.**



**This is over twice the number of children living in foster care.**

## How much would alternative care cost?

If these children were not looked after by their kinship family, they would require alternative forms of care, most commonly foster care, as they cannot live with their birth parents. Both kinship and foster care are forms of family-based care, offering a nurturing environment within a household setting.<sup>19, 20</sup> Residential care is typically for children and young people who would not thrive in a foster family environment and would benefit from intensive

<sup>18</sup> ONS (2023) [Kinship care in England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

<sup>19</sup> Department for Education (2024) [Kinship Care: Statutory Guidance for local authorities](#)

<sup>20</sup> Winokur, M. A., Holtan, A., & Batchelder, K. E. (2018) [Systematic Review of Kinship Care Effects on Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being Outcomes](#). Research on Social Work Practice, 28(1), 19-32.



therapeutic support.<sup>21, 22</sup> Arguably, a child who needs residential care is unlikely to be in kinship care arrangements, making foster care the most appropriate and realistic alternative considered in this report.

For this reason, we estimate the economic value of kinship carers by using the weekly cost of foster care as a proxy for the cost of care kinship carers provide. The cost of foster care (measured by the Department for Education) includes foster carer allowances, training for foster carers, ongoing support services, administrative expenses, and the costs of social workers and other staff supporting foster families.<sup>23</sup>

**We estimate that, in England, the total value of kinship care is:<sup>24</sup>**

**£4.3 billion per year**

**£360 million per month**

**£83 million per week**

**£0.5 million per hour**



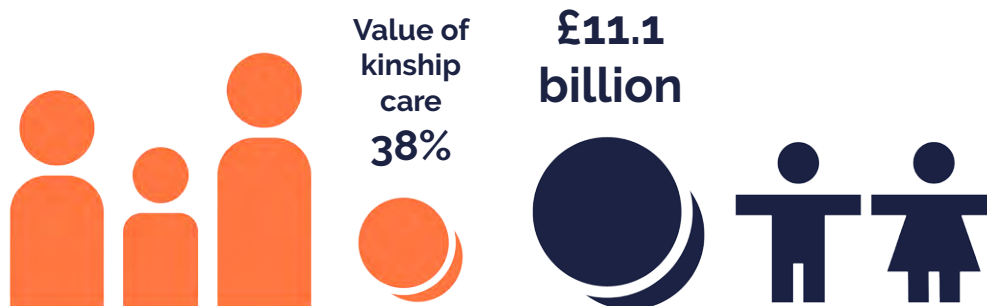
21 Holmes, L. (2021) [Reimagining residential children's homes: Residential care for adolescents. Right place, right time?](#) Research in Practice evidence review.

22 Holmes, L., Connolly, C., Mortimer, E., & Hevesi, R. (2018) [Residential Group Care as a Last Resort: Challenging the Rhetoric.](#) Residential Treatment For Children & Youth, 35(3), 209–224.

23 Unit cost by local authority obtained from Department for Education, Children's Services Finance data. [Local authority interactive tool](#)

24 For more details on the calculation please refer to [Appendix A, Table A.1](#).

This is equivalent to 38% of the entire children's services budget for England, which was reported to be £11.1bn for 2020/21.<sup>25</sup>



**Note on the cost of alternative care:** we have adopted a simple and conservative approach based on using foster care as the most likely form of alternative care provided by the state.

In reality, given the high number of children in kinship care, it would not be feasible for all children currently in kinship care to be placed in foster care, and a proportion of children might therefore otherwise be living in residential care, which is significantly more expensive than foster care. This issue is exacerbated by a crisis in recruitment and retention of foster carers. Since 2019, the number of fostering households in England decreased by 1,045, while the number of children in care has increased by 5,690.<sup>26</sup>

To take this possibility into consideration we have included a second estimate of the value of kinship care using both foster and residential care as replacement cost based on the current proportions of each form of care in each local authority (please refer to Table B.1). This replacement cost is notably higher than the headline figure presented in the main report.

<sup>25</sup> Department of Education (2021) [LA and school expenditure \(Financial Year 2020-21\)](#)

<sup>26</sup> The Fostering Network (2024) [More children to end up in unsuitable homes if more foster carers aren't urgently recruited.](#)

# CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis presented in this report provides further evidence of the major contribution to society that is made by kinship carers. The scale of this contribution is significant, with over 132,000 children living in kinship care arrangements in England in 2021 - considerably more than twice the number of children in foster care at that time. Our novel analysis places an economic value on this care of £4.3bn a year - equivalent to well over a third of the entire national children's services budget for England.

If this care was no longer provided, our child protection and welfare systems would simply not be able to cope. This is not just because of the amount of money that would be required to provide alternative care, but more so due to the system's lack of capacity to respond. It is highly unlikely our systems would be able to find the mainstream foster care or residential care placements for this number of children.

Kinship care is provided from a basis of love, duty and compassion, embodying an unyielding commitment to the children they care for. However, this love and duty should not be taken for granted, nor seen as a cheap option. Instead, we must recognise the value of kinship care as equivalent to foster care, and support kinship carers accordingly. Only by doing so can we maintain the wellbeing of the kinship carers we rely so heavily upon, and ensure the best possible outcomes for the children and young people they care for.

The risk of inaction is significant. In Kinship's most recent annual survey, 13% of kinship carers said they were concerned about their ability to continue caring for their children in the next year if their situations didn't improve. This would come with devastating consequences for children, families and the state. It's welcome that governments and local authorities are recognising the importance of kinship care within the children's social care system, but much more needs to be done to ensure that all kinship families get the financial, practical and emotional support they need and deserve.

Kinship's #ValueOurLove campaign calls on the UK government to equalise support between kinship families and foster families, arguing that the support needed for kinship families to thrive includes:

- **Investment in financial support for kinship carers**
- **Robust data collection which helps us understand people's needs**

Our analysis supports these claims. In particular, we make the following **recommendations**:



**1) Investment in financial support for kinship carers - recognising their role as equivalent to foster care**

- The government should accelerate its plans to deliver a trial of a kinship allowance in up to ten local authorities and take further steps to improve the financial support provided to kinship families across England. All kinship carers should receive a financial allowance at least matching the minimum fostering allowance to help cover the costs of raising a child, and the government's forthcoming multi-year Spending Review should allocate the necessary funding to enable this.
- In the interim, local authorities should follow the example of those who already provide non-means-tested allowances to some kinship carers.<sup>27</sup> This would help ensure financial barriers do not hinder families from pursuing the kinship arrangements best suited to their situation and reduce risks to permanence or family breakdown.



**2) Robust data collection to understand the population and needs of kinship carers**

- The government must ensure robust, accurate data is collected on kinship families, similar to the data available for other areas of children's social care, such as fostering and adoption.
- Existing data sources across government departments should be utilised in the interim to improve our understanding of kinship families. For example, the Department for Education's School Census should include a marker identifying all forms of kinship children, enabling better policymaking and service delivery.

For additional and regularly-updated information on kinship care policy in England, including current activity, our verdict and what should happen next, please visit Kinship's online [kinship care policy tracker](#).

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27 McGrath, P. (2022) [Developing Good Practice in Financially Supporting Special Guardians: a guide for local authorities](#). Kinship.

# APPENDIX A: DETAILED METHODOLOGY

## 1) Data sources

### i) Census 2021 (ONS) - numbers of children living in kinship care

The Census 2021 asks detailed questions about the relationships between household members, such as whether they are parents, children, siblings, or other relatives. Respondents indicate the nature of their relationship to the household reference person (the individual completing the form on behalf of the household).

Kinship care arrangements are identified when a child who was 17 years and under was reported as living in the household but not as a son or daughter of another adult household member. For example, a child listed as a grandchild, niece / nephew, or other relative under the care of adults who are not their parents is flagged as being in a kinship care arrangement.

The relationships between household members were fully documented only for households with up to five members. Therefore, children in kinship care are counted exclusively in households of this size or smaller. We have therefore included our own estimate of the number of children in kinship care in households with six or more members.

### ii) Department for Education (DfE), Children's Services Finance data - unit cost of foster care (financial year 2020/21)

The Department for Education collects and publishes detailed financial data on children's services, including the costs associated with foster care. In this report, we use the weekly unit cost of foster care identified in the Department for Education 'Children's Services Finance' data.<sup>28</sup>

Weekly unit costs represent the average expenditure incurred per child in foster care per week for each local authority. These costs encompass various elements such as fostering allowances, administrative expenses, support services, and training for foster carers. In particular, unit costs include all in-house provision, fostering services purchased externally, fees and allowances paid to foster carers and the costs of social worker and other support staff who support foster carers. This includes: mainstay placements, link placements, permanence placements, temporary /respite fostering, and associated independent visitor costs and relevant contact payments under sections 20/34 of the Children Act 1989.

To determine the weekly unit cost, the total annual expenditure on foster care is divided by the number of child-weeks of care provided during the year. This calculation yields an average cost per child per week, offering insights into the financial resources allocated to foster care services.

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<sup>28</sup> Department of Education (2023). [Local authority interactive tool](#) (Children's Service Finance). In the dashboard, set the "content" to "All LA content" and set the "topic" to "Children's Service Finance". The unit cost of foster care can be selected from the indicators drop down menu.

## 2) Methodology

We measure the value of kinship care by adopting a **replacement cost approach**. This involves estimating the likely cost to the state of replacing kinship care with an alternative – using the unit cost of foster care as a proxy for the unit cost of kinship care.

Our analysis took the following steps:



### 1) We used Census 2021 data to estimate the number of children living in kinship care in each local authority in England.

The Census excludes households of six or more people (due to incomplete information about the relationships between household members). Therefore, we estimate the number of children living in kinship care in larger households as follows:

- a) We calculated the proportion of children in kinship care living in households of five or fewer people. This involves dividing the number of children in kinship care in households of five or fewer people by the total number of children in such households<sup>29</sup>. This gives us the “rate” of kinship care in smaller households. We calculated the rate for each local authority.
- b) We calculated the proportion of children in kinship care living in larger households (6 people or more). We assume that the proportion of children in kinship care in smaller households also applies to larger households.<sup>30</sup> We use the total number of children living in larger households and multiply the proportion calculated in the previous step. We do this for each local authority.
- c) We combined the totals - adding the number of children in kinship care in larger households, to the number already reported for households with five or fewer people. This gives us a total estimate of children in kinship care across all household sizes in each local authority.

For more details on the aforementioned calculations, please see Table A.1.



### 2) We estimated the unit cost of placing children in replacement care instead of kinship care for each local authority.

The weekly unit costs for foster care were obtained from the 'Children's Service Finance' data provided by the Department for Education. The average unit cost is £615 per week in England in 2020/21 and the cost varies by local authorities, ranging from £120 and £1,190. We used the bespoke cost for each local authority in our estimation.



### 3) We calculated the economic value of kinship care in each local authority by multiplying the number of children in kinship care by the unit cost of replacement care for the respective local authority.

For each local authority, we multiplied the number of children who would otherwise have been living in foster care (the overall number of children living in kinship care as per Census 2021 data) by the weekly unit cost of foster care.

<sup>29</sup> Data on the number of children by household size available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/RM057/editions/2021/versions/3/filter-outputs/f42dd74d-96b5-4ea8-bb27-8b194d599614#get-data>

<sup>30</sup> The assumption about the proportion of children in kinship care living in larger households is also adopted by ONS publications. See Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2023) [Kinship care in England and Wales: Census 2021](#).

## Assumptions and limitations

- **Lower tier and upper tier local authorities** – the ONS estimates the number of children in kinship care at the geographical level of 'lower-tier' local authorities (district councils). However, the Department for Education uses 'upper-tier' local authorities (county councils) for sub-regional data. Therefore, before the final multiplication, we derived the number of children in kinship care at the upper-tier level by adding the numbers from the corresponding lower-tier local authorities.
- **Children in kinship foster care** – at 31 March 2021, approximately 12,400 children were living in kinship foster care arrangements with a relative or friend; these children are looked after by the local authority. Their kinship carers are known as kinship (or family and friends) foster carers and they are entitled to receive a foster care allowance and other support. Our aim is to quantify the total economic contribution of all kinship carers in all types of arrangement, and given the absence of robust data on the proportion of children in kinship foster care within the wider cohort of kinship children identified through the Census 2021, our analysis therefore does not exclude children in kinship foster care when considering replacement cost. Our analysis also does not consider where other kinship carers may receive some financial or other support paid for by the local authority; this is highly variable and dependent largely on the type of arrangement and the child's journey into kinship care.<sup>31</sup>
- **Kinship carers who are unrelated ('friends')** – a small proportion of kinship carers are not related to the child they care for. We have only been able to include kinship carers who are family relations in our analysis, as currently the estimates of unrelated kinship carers are not reliable enough, since these relationships are too difficult to identify in the Census data. This limitation will lead to an underestimate of the population, and therefore the total economic value.
- **Alternative care** – we have taken a simple and conservative approach to estimating the cost of alternative care, by looking at the unit cost of foster care as the most likely alternative form of care provided by the state. In England, the majority of children who are removed from their birth parents are placed in foster care (approximately two thirds). However, some are placed in residential care (including children's homes, secure homes, special schools and others). We could therefore assume that if there were no kinship carers, then a proportion of children might also enter some form of residential care. Since residential care tends to be much more expensive than foster care, this would lead to significantly higher costs. In Appendix B we have estimated the cost of this based on an assumption about the likely proportions in each form of alternative care, but for the headline figures of this report we have focused on foster care alone as an alternative. In reality, there is a shortage of foster carers and growing concerns about their recruitment and retention.<sup>32</sup> In the current system, it is highly unlikely that enough foster carers could be recruited to replace kinship carers should they be unavailable. This could mean that even more children enter residential care. We have not made any assumptions about this scenario, since it would be too speculative - but we believe it is imperative for decision makers to consider, given the extreme pressures that many kinship carers are under.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Foundations (2023) [Understanding the variation in support for kinship carers: a survey of local authorities in England](#).

<sup>32</sup> The Fostering Network (2024) [More children to end up in unsuitable homes if more foster carers aren't urgently recruited](#)

<sup>33</sup> Kinship (2023) [Breaking Point: kinship carers in crisis](#)

TABLE A.1: THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF KINSHIP CARERS

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Number of children in small households (SH)	Number of children in large households (SH)	Number of children in kinship care in SHs	Proportion of children in kinship care in SHs	Estimated number of children in kinship care in LHs	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>East Midlands</b>	<b>858,472</b>	<b>128,214</b>	<b>10,015</b>	<b>1.20%</b>	<b>1,505</b>	<b>11,520</b>	<b>354,635,060</b>
Derby	46,551	12,015	580	1.20%	150	730	29,798,600
Derbyshire	137,395	13,617	1,685	1.20%	167	1,852	69,338,880
Leicester	62,800	24,173	700	1.10%	269	969	24,186,240
Leicestershire	126,349	14,029	1,215	1.00%	135	1,350	38,961,000
Lincolnshire	127,920	15,975	1,705	1.30%	213	1,918	34,907,600
Northamptonshire	150,095	19,875	1,600	1.10%	212	1,812	46,169,760
Nottingham	53,103	12,693	730	1.40%	174	904	35,961,120
Nottinghamshire	147,784	15,298	1,750	1.20%	181	1,931	72,798,700
Rutland	6,475	539	50	0.80%	4	54	2,513,160
<b>East of England</b>	<b>1,169,074</b>	<b>156,509</b>	<b>10,820</b>	<b>0.90%</b>	<b>1,539</b>	<b>12,359</b>	<b>502,356,400</b>
Bedford	35,529	5,839	330	0.90%	54	384	14,177,280
Cambridgeshire	119,498	13,317	990	0.80%	110	1,100	47,190,000
Central Bedfordshire	57,960	5,909	515	0.90%	53	568	19,936,800
Essex	280,178	32,573	2,420	0.90%	281	2,701	143,963,300
Hertfordshire	241,177	26,089	1,575	0.70%	170	1,745	65,332,800
Luton	41,202	17,733	560	1.40%	241	801	32,905,080
Norfolk	147,826	18,710	1,675	1.10%	212	1,887	71,139,900
Peterborough	43,427	10,123	585	1.30%	136	721	25,307,100
Southend-on-Sea	33,932	4,230	330	1.00%	41	371	13,215,020
Suffolk	130,153	16,019	1,405	1.10%	173	1,578	48,002,760
Thurrock	38,192	5,967	435	1.10%	68	503	21,186,360



VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Number of children in small households (SH)	Number of children in large households (SH)	Number of children in kinship care in SHs	Proportion of children in kinship care in SHs	Estimated number of children in kinship care in LHs	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>Inner London</b>	<b>517,068</b>	<b>133,999</b>	<b>5,835</b>	<b>1.10%</b>	<b>1,572</b>	<b>7,407</b>	<b>284,039,860</b>
Camden	30,383	6,037	275	0.90%	55	330	13,127,400
Hackney	40,222	15,222	590	1.50%	223	813	26,633,880
Hammersmith and Fulham	27,390	4,433	255	0.90%	41	296	9,773,920
Haringey	43,788	10,608	545	1.20%	132	677	25,698,920
Islington	30,864	5,628	360	1.20%	66	426	16,835,520
Kensington and Chelsea	18,964	3,970	170	0.90%	36	206	10,497,760
Lambeth	45,491	9,139	635	1.40%	128	763	31,145,660
Lewisham	54,399	10,303	600	1.10%	114	714	31,558,800
Newham	56,491	27,232	800	1.40%	386	1,186	20,660,120
Southwark	48,267	9,162	610	1.30%	116	726	31,522,920
Tower Hamlets	44,001	19,541	395	0.90%	175	570	27,713,400
Wandsworth	51,733	7,567	385	0.70%	56	441	27,289,080
Westminster	25,075	5,157	215	0.90%	44	259	11,582,480
<b>Nort East</b>	<b>467,785</b>	<b>56,822</b>	<b>8,680</b>	<b>1.90%</b>	<b>1,066</b>	<b>9,746</b>	<b>266,487,260</b>
County Durham	90,167	8,702	1,530	1.70%	148	1,678	50,608,480
Darlington	20,087	2,111	315	1.60%	33	348	10,948,080
Gateshead	33,601	4,805	615	1.80%	88	703	15,170,740
Hartlepool	17,601	2,215	430	2.40%	54	484	11,325,600
Middlesbrough	27,550	5,899	680	2.50%	146	826	21,476,000
Newcastle upon Tyne	48,491	8,991	685	1.40%	127	812	22,167,600
North Tyneside	39,010	2,906	650	1.70%	48	698	18,510,960
Northumberland	53,333	4,984	785	1.50%	73	858	25,208,040
Redcar and Cleveland	24,362	2,884	595	2.40%	70	665	18,327,400
South Tyneside	27,149	2,500	525	1.90%	48	573	20,112,300
Stockton-on-Tees	37,654	5,570	745	2.00%	110	855	16,672,500
Sunderland	48,780	5,255	1,125	2.30%	121	1,246	35,959,560

VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Number of children in small households (SH)	Number of children in large households (SH)	Number of children in kinship care in SHs	Proportion of children in kinship care in SHs	Estimated number of children in kinship care in LHs	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>North West</b>	<b>1,331,441</b>	<b>227,703</b>	<b>17,995</b>	<b>1.40%</b>	<b>3,169</b>	<b>21,164</b>	<b>578,797,180</b>
Blackburn with Darwen	29,640	9,993	490	1.70%	165	655	17,881,500
Blackpool	23,851	3,904	465	1.90%	76	541	15,613,260
Bolton	54,944	16,432	725	1.30%	217	942	22,777,560
Bury	35,807	7,932	395	1.10%	88	483	12,809,160
Cheshire East	71,250	6,775	650	0.90%	62	712	31,655,520
Cheshire West and Chester	63,384	6,032	640	1.00%	61	701	21,871,200
Cumbria	81,211	8,389	1,095	1.30%	113	1,208	41,458,560
Halton	24,662	2,836	345	1.40%	40	385	9,909,900
Knowsley	30,535	3,182	525	1.70%	55	580	11,913,200
Lancashire	215,066	34,345	3,010	1.40%	481	3,491	94,396,640
Liverpool	81,166	11,460	1,370	1.70%	193	1,563	34,135,920
Manchester	94,945	31,711	1,485	1.60%	496	1,981	67,472,860
Oldham	45,162	16,771	645	1.40%	240	885	20,478,900
Rochdale	43,753	10,853	570	1.30%	141	711	20,149,740
Salford	46,333	12,205	650	1.40%	171	821	16,863,340
Sefton	47,403	5,519	640	1.40%	75	715	16,916,900
St. Helens	33,399	3,322	560	1.70%	56	616	16,816,800
Stockport	56,459	5,862	560	1.00%	58	618	19,442,280
Tameside	44,035	7,098	635	1.40%	102	737	21,269,820
Trafford	48,563	6,226	430	0.90%	55	485	11,096,800
Warrington	39,419	3,688	385	1.00%	36	421	13,573,040
Wigan	61,689	6,397	935	1.50%	97	1,032	23,343,840
Wirral	58,765	6,771	790	1.30%	91	881	16,950,440

VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Number of children in small households (SH)	Number of children in large households (SH)	Number of children in kinship care in SHs	Proportion of children in kinship care in SHs	Estimated number of children in kinship care in LHs	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>Outer London</b>	<b>1,012,501</b>	<b>230,242</b>	<b>8,755</b>	<b>0.90%</b>	<b>2,091</b>	<b>10,846</b>	<b>404,396,720</b>
Barking and Dagenham	48,588	14,868	615	1.30%	188	803	28,602,860
Barnet	70,772	18,433	530	0.70%	138	668	25,878,320
Bexley	49,732	6,967	505	1.00%	71	576	20,816,640
Brent	51,405	21,617	615	1.20%	259	874	22,042,280
Bromley	66,373	6,060	435	0.70%	40	475	18,154,500
Croydon	75,849	14,243	695	0.90%	131	826	23,838,360
Ealing	63,177	17,240	480	0.80%	131	611	27,641,640
Enfield	65,822	16,314	630	1.00%	156	786	21,049,080
Greenwich	53,783	12,009	690	1.30%	154	844	36,865,920
Harrow	43,218	14,488	275	0.60%	92	367	13,167,960
Havering	50,498	8,029	455	0.90%	72	527	20,278,960
Hillingdon	57,729	13,587	465	0.80%	109	574	21,341,320
Hounslow	51,823	14,376	515	1.00%	143	658	29,083,600
Kingston upon Thames	32,938	3,534	180	0.50%	19	199	8,433,620
Merton	40,002	7,136	300	0.70%	54	354	15,094,560
Redbridge	57,260	19,273	425	0.70%	143	568	23,776,480
Richmond upon Thames	40,856	3,079	150	0.40%	11	161	6,697,600
Sutton	44,197	4,857	285	0.60%	31	316	16,103,360
Waltham Forest	48,479	14,132	510	1.10%	149	659	25,529,660

VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Number of children in small households (SH)	Number of children in large households (SH)	Number of children in kinship care in SHs	Proportion of children in kinship care in SHs	Estimated number of children in kinship care in LHs	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>South East</b>	<b>1,703,351</b>	<b>212,016</b>	<b>14,920</b>	<b>0.90%</b>	<b>1,890</b>	<b>16,810</b>	<b>603,349,500</b>
Bracknell Forest	24,585	2,323	210	0.90%	20	230	7,893,600
Brighton and Hove	43,117	3,665	375	0.90%	32	407	14,920,620
Buckinghamshire	107,939	14,311	735	0.70%	97	832	25,309,440
East Sussex	89,889	11,319	995	1.10%	125	1,120	38,438,400
Hampshire	252,411	26,447	2,315	0.90%	243	2,558	86,460,400
Isle of Wight	20,739	2,818	300	1.40%	41	341	8,068,060
Kent	294,128	39,034	2,890	1.00%	384	3,274	143,859,560
Medway	55,837	7,784	620	1.10%	86	706	28,084,680
Milton Keynes	60,060	9,437	615	1.00%	97	712	20,363,200
Oxfordshire	127,732	15,862	885	0.70%	110	995	32,854,900
Portsmouth	36,242	5,115	440	1.20%	62	502	18,794,880
Reading	30,782	5,390	305	1.00%	53	358	16,940,560
Slough	31,629	12,167	260	0.80%	100	360	12,448,800
Southampton	42,154	7,201	485	1.20%	83	568	18,755,360
Surrey	234,208	21,788	1,465	0.60%	136	1,601	54,113,800
West Berkshire	30,324	3,060	270	0.90%	27	297	7,644,780
West Sussex	155,583	17,264	1,345	0.90%	149	1,494	53,604,720
Windsor and Maidenhead	28,517	3,658	200	0.70%	26	226	6,874,920
Wokingham	37,475	3,373	210	0.60%	19	229	7,918,820

VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Number of children in small households (SH)	Number of children in large households (SH)	Number of children in kinship care in SHs	Proportion of children in kinship care in SHs	Estimated number of children in kinship care in LHs	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>South West</b>	<b>962,018</b>	<b>114,347</b>	<b>9,860</b>	<b>1.00%</b>	<b>1,187</b>	<b>11,047</b>	<b>391,732,380</b>
Bath and North East Somerset	32,390	2,851	270	0.80%	24	294	10,166,520
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	65,783	6,965	690	1.00%	73	763	22,813,700
Bristol, City of	78,241	13,251	865	1.10%	146	1,011	29,177,460
Cornwall	92,511	12,088	1,020	1.10%	133	1,153	44,667,220
Devon	128,714	15,374	1,280	1.00%	153	1,433	49,925,720
Dorset	57,596	6,488	640	1.10%	72	712	25,546,560
Gloucestershire	113,219	12,359	1,045	0.90%	114	1,159	43,392,960
North Somerset	39,139	3,647	340	0.90%	32	372	12,960,480
Plymouth	46,069	5,428	550	1.20%	65	615	25,903,800
Somerset	95,749	11,590	1,100	1.10%	133	1,233	42,637,140
South Gloucestershire	53,874	5,303	480	0.90%	47	527	20,415,980
Swindon	45,112	6,342	435	1.00%	61	496	17,409,600
Torbay	21,811	3,414	330	1.50%	52	382	14,997,320
Wiltshire	91,810	9,247	815	0.90%	82	897	31,717,920

## VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Number of children in small households (SH)	Number of children in large households (SH)	Number of children in kinship care in SHs	Proportion of children in kinship care in SHs	Estimated number of children in kinship care in LHs	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>West Midlands</b>	<b>1,064,002</b>	<b>224,207</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>1.20%</b>	<b>2,832</b>	<b>15,832</b>	<b>469,827,800</b>
Birmingham	202,118	84,485	2,565	1.30%	1,072	3,637	114,420,020
Coventry	62,645	13,835	800	1.30%	177	977	29,974,360
Dudley	58,654	9,776	655	1.10%	109	764	19,069,440
Herefordshire, County of	30,271	3,444	335	1.10%	38	373	15,516,800
Sandwell	65,317	19,742	865	1.30%	261	1,126	29,861,520
Shropshire	50,351	7,142	540	1.10%	77	617	8,502,260
Solihull	41,957	4,970	395	0.90%	47	442	11,721,840
Staffordshire	150,860	17,614	1,740	1.20%	203	1,943	68,704,480
Stoke-on-Trent	48,279	10,191	855	1.80%	180	1,035	28,255,500
Telford and Wrekin	34,899	6,331	460	1.30%	83	543	15,812,160
Walsall	55,108	13,130	855	1.60%	204	1,059	29,736,720
Warwickshire	107,403	11,221	1,165	1.10%	122	1,287	41,827,500
Wolverhampton	51,058	10,678	640	1.30%	134	774	23,142,600
Worcestershire	105,082	11,648	1,130	1.10%	125	1,255	33,282,600

## VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Number of children in small households (SH)	Number of children in large households (SH)	Number of children in kinship care in SHs	Proportion of children in kinship care in SHs	Estimated number of children in kinship care in LHs	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>Yorkshire and The Humber</b>	<b>980,316</b>	<b>162,400</b>	<b>13,815</b>	<b>1.40%</b>	<b>2,272</b>	<b>16,087</b>	<b>446,892,420</b>
Barnsley	45,227	4,823	850	1.90%	91	941	30,827,160
Bradford	102,870	37,341	1,385	1.30%	503	1,888	36,325,120
Calderdale	38,449	6,549	480	1.20%	82	562	15,780,960
Doncaster	56,858	7,097	1,075	1.90%	134	1,209	35,834,760
East Riding of Yorkshire	55,710	5,523	660	1.20%	65	725	27,709,500
Kingston upon Hull, City of	51,059	8,051	825	1.60%	130	955	24,333,400
Kirklees	80,055	17,826	965	1.20%	215	1,180	37,736,400
Leeds	147,313	23,024	1,845	1.30%	288	2,133	51,021,360
North East Lincolnshire	29,332	3,689	565	1.90%	71	636	13,394,160
North Lincolnshire	29,701	4,350	525	1.80%	77	602	16,591,120
North Yorkshire	101,466	9,601	1,095	1.10%	104	1,199	24,939,200
Rotherham	49,303	7,049	915	1.90%	131	1,046	39,434,200
Sheffield	95,778	16,652	1,310	1.40%	228	1,538	51,184,640
Wakefield	65,228	8,321	1,010	1.50%	129	1,139	32,575,400
York	31,967	2,504	310	1.00%	24	334	9,205,040
<b>England</b>	<b>10,066,028</b>	<b>1,646,459</b>	<b>113,695</b>	<b>1.13%</b>	<b>19,123</b>	<b>132,818</b>	<b>4,302,514,580</b>

**Note:** Authors' calculations based on Census 2021. Columns 1 and 2 report the number of children in smaller (five people or fewer) and larger (six people or more) households, respectively, based on Census 2021 data<sup>34</sup>. Column 3 shows the number of children in kinship care in small households according to Census 2021. Column 4 presents the percentage of children in kinship care living in small households, calculated as the ratio between the number of children in kinship care (Column 3) and the total number of children in small households (Column 1). Column 5 applies this percentage to the number of children in larger households (Column 2) to estimate the number of children in kinship care living in larger households. Finally, Column 6 reports the total number of children in kinship care across both small and large households. Column 7 reports the annual value of kinship care. These figures are based on raw values, which reflect differences in population size, demographics, and local authority (LA) practices rather than standardised measures. Variation in LA practice can arise from differences in local policies, resource allocation, and population needs. For a detailed exploration of such variation, refer to a recent report by Foundations.<sup>35</sup>

34 ONS data available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/RM057/editions/2021/versions/3/filter-outputs/f42dd74d-96b5-4ea8-bb27-8b194d599614#get-data>

35 Foundations (2023) [Understanding the variation in support for kinship carers: a survey of local authorities in England](#).

# APPENDIX B: ANALYSIS INCLUDING RESIDENTIAL CARE

In this section, we present an alternative method for calculating the value of kinship care by accounting for the possibility that some children might be placed in residential care. This approach involves the following steps:



## 1) We used Census 2021 data to estimate the number of children living in kinship care in each local authority in England.

The Census excludes households of six or more people (due to incomplete information about the relationships between household members). Therefore, we estimate the number of children living in kinship care in larger households as follows:

- a) **We calculated the proportion of children in kinship care living in households of five or fewer people.** This involves dividing the number of children in kinship care in households of five or fewer people by the total number of children in such households. This gives us the 'rate' of kinship care in smaller households. We calculated the rate for each local authority.
- b) **We calculated the proportion of children in kinship care living in larger households (6 people or more).** We assume that the proportion of children in kinship care in smaller households also applies to larger households. We use the total number of children living in larger households and multiply the proportion calculated in the previous step. We do this for each local authority.
- c) **We combined the totals** - adding the number of children in kinship care in larger households, to the number already reported for households with five or fewer people. This gives us a total estimate of children in kinship care across all household sizes in each local authority.



## 2) We estimated what proportion of children would likely be placed in either foster or residential care in each local authority, if there was no kinship care or other placement options available.

- a) This calculation used the actual number of children in foster and residential care<sup>2</sup> in 2021 for each local authority, based on the 'Children Looked After in England Including Adoptions' data from the Department for Education.
- b) We added the number of children in both foster and residential care in each local authority. In each local authority, we assume that children currently in kinship care would enter foster and residential care at the same rates as they currently do. To calculate the proportion of children in foster care, we divided the number of children in foster care by the total number of children in both foster and residential care. We applied the same method for residential care by dividing the number of children in residential care by the total number of children in both categories. This gave us the percentage breakdown for each type of state care.



**3) We estimated the unit cost of placing children in replacement care instead of kinship care for each local authority.**

- a) This estimate used the weighted average of the weekly unit costs for foster care and residential care in 2021. The weights were based on the proportions calculated in the previous step.
- b) The weekly unit costs for foster and residential care were obtained from the 'Children's Service Finance' data provided by the Department for Education.<sup>36</sup>

**4) We calculated the economic value of kinship care in each local authority by multiplying the number of children in kinship care by the unit cost of replacement care for the respective local authority.**

- a) For each local authority, we multiplied the proportion of children who would otherwise have been living in residential care - if kinship care had not been available - by the unit cost of residential care. Similarly, we multiplied the proportion of children who would otherwise have been placed in foster care by the unit cost of foster care. We then added these two values to obtain the total economic value of kinship care.

## Addressing missing values in the dataset (data imputation)

It is important to note that some data from the Department for Education used in this section required imputation. Data imputation is a process used to fill in the missing values in a dataset. This involves trying to estimate or replace this missing data with reasonable values so that the dataset is complete for the analysis. This ensures that the missing data does not affect the accuracy or results of the analysis.

There are two reasons why some data is missing in our datasets:

- 1) **Not applicable:** this means that a particular data point doesn't apply to the situation. In this scenario we cannot do any data imputation and have no way to fill in the gap. For example, it might mean that this local authority does not have any children in residential care.
- 2) **Protecting confidentiality:** to protect confidentiality, data from the Department for Education were suppressed (not made publicly available) if the number of children in a particular category was less than five. This can happen in local authorities with small populations (e.g. the City of London). Consequently, the information regarding the number of children living in residential care in 2021 is missing for some local authorities.

The process of imputing the missing local authority-level figures for a specific region is as follows:

- 1) Regional-level and national-level totals were released by the Department for Education (rounded to the nearest 10), which provides additional information to facilitate the imputation process. We subtracted the sum of the non-missing local authority figures from the regional total to obtain the combined total of the missing figures.
- 2) We divided this combined total by the number of missing local authorities, assuming uniform distribution within the region. We rounded down these regional averages to the nearest integer.

<sup>36</sup> Department for Education (2023), Children's Services Finance data. [Local authority interactive tool](#)

3) We used these rounded figures to impute the missing values for each local authority.

This only affects a very small proportion of local authorities in England<sup>37</sup>.

### Geographical inconsistencies

It should be noted that the geographical level used by the ONS to estimate the number of children in kinship care is the 'lower-tier' local authorities. However, the Department for Education uses 'upper-tier' local authorities for sub-regional data. Therefore, before the final multiplication, we derived the number of children in kinship care at the upper-tier level by adding the numbers from the corresponding lower-tier local authorities.

### Findings

Table B.1 presents the number of children in kinship care according to the 2021 Census, adjusted by children in larger households. It also provides the number of children in foster care and residential care based on Department for Education 2021 data, along with the corresponding proportions of children in each type of care, as calculated by the authors. Table B.2 presents the weekly unit costs of residential and foster care. It estimates the potential costs of residential and foster care based on the proportion of children who would likely be placed in either type of care within each local authority, assuming no kinship care or alternative placement options were available. Finally it reports the value of kinship care as the sum of these two values to obtain the total economic value of kinship care.

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<sup>37</sup> Residential care has two components: (1) The majority consists of "secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living accommodation" with only one local authority imputed (0.6%). (2) A small proportion of children are in residential schools. However, since the overall number is very low (only 120 children in the entire country), 51.3% of LA were imputed.

TABLE B.1: NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE IN SMALL AND LARGE HOUSEHOLDS, FOSTER CARE AND RESIDENTIAL CARE IN 2021

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Number of children in foster care	Number of children in residential care	Proportion of children in foster care	Proportion of children in residential care	Value of kinship if replacing foster care	Value of kinship if replacing residential care	Total value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>East Midlands</b>	<b>11,520</b>	<b>4,452</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>293,129,876</b>	<b>456,222,520</b>	<b>749,352,448</b>
Derby	730	460	87	84%	16%	25,059,164	29,402,672	54,461,836
Derbyshire	1,852	633	155	80%	20%	55,699,904	94,431,064	150,130,968
Leicester	969	434	66	87%	13%	20,993,648	43,166,396	64,160,044
Leicestershire	1,350	479	109	81%	19%	31,738,616	55,436,524	87,175,140
Lincolnshire	1,918	471	84	85%	15%	29,624,296	53,889,784	83,514,080
Northamptonshire	1,812	816	119	87%	13%	40,293,604	48,808,032	89,101,636
Nottingham	904	464	143	76%	24%	27,489,228	45,792,552	73,281,780
Nottinghamshire	1,931	669	143	82%	18%	59,978,256	84,968,728	144,946,984
Rutland	54	26	3	90%	10%	2,253,160	326,768	2,579,980
<b>East of England</b>	<b>12,359</b>	<b>4,747</b>	<b>1,079</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>405,669,524</b>	<b>514,083,908</b>	<b>919,753,484</b>
Bedford	384	204	38	84%	16%	11,951,108	14,454,544	26,405,600
Cambridgeshire	1,100	455	137	77%	23%	36,269,324	58,574,464	94,843,788
Central Bedfordshire	568	227	57	80%	20%	15,935,400	30,855,240	46,790,640
Essex	2,701	762	250	75%	25%	108,399,252	118,489,020	226,888,272
Hertfordshire	1,745	690	144	83%	17%	54,052,336	73,323,120	127,375,456
Luton	801	275	27	91%	9%	29,963,232	17,055,272	47,018,504
Norfolk	1,887	768	226	77%	23%	54,965,248	112,887,996	167,853,244
Peterborough	721	263	32	89%	11%	22,561,916	25,031,968	47,593,884
Southend-on-Sea	371	201	49	80%	20%	10,624,900	16,505,060	27,129,960
Suffolk	1,578	671	70	91%	9%	43,468,100	31,161,364	74,629,464
Thurrock	503	231	49	82%	17%	17,478,760	15,745,912	33,224,672

VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Number of children in foster care	Number of children in residential care	Proportion of children in foster care	Proportion of children in residential care	Value of kinship if replacing foster care	Value of kinship if replacing residential care	Total value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>Inner London</b>	<b>7,407</b>	<b>2,880</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>217,279,244</b>	<b>427,019,060</b>	<b>644,298,356</b>
Camden	330	105	70	60%	40%	7,876,440	29,961,360	37,837,800
Hackney	813	301	87	78%	22%	20,661,836	40,192,724	60,854,560
Hammersmith and Fulham	296	168	54	76%	24%	7,396,480	13,104,000	20,500,480
Haringey	677	270	78	78%	22%	19,938,828	28,169,284	48,108,112
Islington	426	250	66	79%	21%	13,319,228	24,683,360	38,002,588
Kensington and Chelsea	206	50	45	53%	47%	5,525,156	24,507,912	30,033,068
Lambeth	763	282	61	82%	18%	25,606,620	41,842,580	67,449,200
Lewisham	714	354	79	82%	18%	25,800,944	38,103,364	63,904,308
Newham	1,186	282	69	80%	20%	16,598,712	72,559,500	89,158,212
Southwark	726	338	83	80%	20%	25,308,192	47,224,528	72,532,720
Tower Hamlets	570	197	64	75%	25%	20,917,780	23,584,808	44,502,588
Wandsworth	441	183	57	76%	24%	20,807,904	18,599,308	39,407,212
Westminster	259	100	54	65%	35%	7,521,072	24,486,384	32,007,508
<b>North East</b>	<b>9,746</b>	<b>4,170</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>229,228,948</b>	<b>325,211,744</b>	<b>554,440,692</b>
County Durham	1,678	672	106	86%	14%	43,713,228	56,112,992	99,826,272
Darlington	348	189	33	85%	15%	9,320,688	11,069,136	20,389,772
Gateshead	703	352	40	90%	10%	13,622,700	16,487,484	30,110,184
Hartlepool	484	255	34	88%	12%	9,993,152	11,518,052	21,511,256
Middlesbrough	826	403	73	85%	15%	18,182,424	35,966,008	54,148,380
Newcastle upon Tyne	812	522	48	92%	8%	20,300,852	17,742,972	38,043,824
North Tyneside	698	198	43	82%	18%	15,208,180	29,336,528	44,544,708
Northumberland	858	274	45	86%	14%	21,652,072	22,846,460	44,498,532
Redcar and Cleveland	665	234	33	88%	12%	16,062,228	25,237,576	41,299,804
South Tyneside	573	229	31	88%	12%	17,714,320	18,171,556	35,885,824
Stockton-on-Tees	855	411	71	85%	15%	14,216,592	19,483,516	33,700,108
Sunderland	1,246	431	99	81%	19%	29,242,564	61,239,464	90,482,028

VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Number of children in foster care	Number of children in residential care	Proportion of children in foster care	Proportion of children in residential care	Value of kinship if replacing foster care	Value of kinship if replacing residential care	Total value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>North West</b>	<b>21,164</b>	<b>10,185</b>	<b>1,901</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>490,140,404</b>	<b>736,555,508</b>	<b>1,226,695,964</b>
Blackburn with Darwen	655	244	42	85%	15%	15,255,552	20,782,580	36,038,080
Blackpool	541	438	88	83%	17%	13,001,144	22,191,104	35,192,300
Bolton	942	419	76	85%	15%	19,280,404	35,272,432	54,552,836
Bury	483	232	44	84%	16%	10,767,120	12,872,860	23,639,980
Cheshire East	712	341	73	82%	18%	26,073,736	30,193,800	56,267,536
Cheshire West and Chester	701	329	86	79%	21%	17,338,880	32,141,876	49,480,756
Cumbria	1,208	520	91	85%	15%	35,283,872	29,423,264	64,707,188
Halton	385	203	57	78%	22%	7,737,340	21,352,500	29,089,840
Knowsley	580	212	50	81%	19%	9,639,708	26,390,000	36,029,708
Lancashire	3,491	1,267	114	92%	8%	86,604,284	62,638,420	149,242,704
Liverpool	1,563	987	228	81%	19%	27,730,144	67,641,704	95,371,848
Manchester	1,981	919	191	83%	17%	55,862,664	78,701,168	134,563,832
Oldham	885	343	76	82%	18%	16,764,332	37,896,768	54,661,100
Rochdale	711	387	51	88%	12%	17,803,552	19,200,116	37,003,668
Salford	821	367	73	83%	17%	14,065,584	34,954,556	49,020,140
Sefton	715	413	72	85%	15%	14,405,508	22,712,768	37,118,276
St. Helens	616	336	50	87%	13%	14,638,468	19,356,116	33,994,584
Stockport	618	289	60	83%	17%	16,099,772	22,485,996	38,585,768
Tameside	737	397	113	78%	22%	16,557,112	44,877,040	61,434,100
Trafford	485	258	42	86%	14%	9,543,248	16,171,064	25,714,312
Warrington	421	258	53	83%	17%	11,259,924	16,191,656	27,451,580
Wigan	1,032	441	80	85%	15%	19,759,376	38,193,116	57,952,492
Wirral	881	585	91	87%	13%	14,668,628	24,914,708	39,583,336

VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Number of children in foster care	Number of children in residential care	Proportion of children in foster care	Proportion of children in residential care	Value of kinship if replacing foster care	Value of kinship if replacing residential care	Total value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>Outer London</b>	<b>10,846</b>	<b>3,936</b>	<b>1,049</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>318,233,604</b>	<b>463,926,528</b>	<b>782,160,184</b>
Barking and Dagenham	803	270	36	88%	12%	25,237,836	24,636,040	49,873,876
Barnet	668	201	100	67%	33%	17,280,848	58,855,004	76,135,904
Bexley	576	162	31	84%	16%	17,473,040	16,381,248	33,854,288
Brent	874	181	74	71%	29%	15,645,708	52,689,364	68,335,072
Bromley	475	250	60	81%	19%	14,640,704	10,852,088	25,492,792
Croydon	826	571	75	88%	12%	21,070,764	20,071,428	41,142,192
Ealing	611	233	56	81%	19%	22,285,484	20,778,212	43,063,696
Enfield	786	285	21	93%	7%	19,604,520	10,911,212	30,515,784
Greenwich	844	330	64	84%	16%	30,877,548	28,195,232	59,072,832
Harrow	367	129	48	73%	27%	9,596,964	16,561,012	26,158,028
Havering	527	141	57	71%	29%	14,441,076	26,625,456	41,066,532
Hillingdon	574	185	137	57%	43%	12,261,340	42,352,180	54,613,520
Hounslow	658	153	83	65%	35%	18,855,044	41,576,080	60,431,124
Kingston upon Thames	199	80	34	70%	30%	5,918,328	11,542,544	17,460,872
Merton	354	117	21	85%	15%	12,797,564	14,790,412	27,587,976
Redbridge	568	171	9	95%	5%	22,587,656	8,462,064	31,049,720
Richmond upon Thames	161	73	43	63%	37%	4,214,860	14,089,504	18,304,364
Sutton	316	167	48	78%	22%	12,508,184	17,920,812	30,428,996
Waltham Forest	659	237	52	82%	18%	20,936,084	26,636,532	47,572,616

VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Number of children in foster care	Number of children in residential care	Proportion of children in foster care	Proportion of children in residential care	Value of kinship if replacing foster care	Value of kinship if replacing residential care	Total value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>South East</b>	<b>16,810</b>	<b>7,299</b>	<b>1,864</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>479,954,488</b>	<b>839,793,812</b>	<b>1,319,748,404</b>
Bracknell Forest	230	97	34	74%	26%	5,844,904	12,416,508	18,261,360
Brighton and Hove	407	278	64	81%	19%	12,128,480	17,960,956	30,089,384
Buckinghamshire	832	354	108	77%	23%	19,392,932	41,061,488	60,454,420
East Sussex	1,120	423	134	76%	24%	29,191,084	73,908,328	103,099,464
Hampshire	2,558	1,193	201	86%	14%	73,993,712	99,733,400	173,727,112
Isle of Wight	341	172	38	82%	18%	6,608,108	12,064,520	18,672,628
Kent	3,274	1,138	313	78%	22%	112,827,156	154,244,012	267,071,116
Medway	706	349	68	84%	16%	23,504,936	27,688,076	51,193,012
Milton Keynes	712	275	50	85%	15%	17,230,408	23,666,864	40,897,272
Oxfordshire	995	493	184	73%	27%	23,925,356	70,873,868	94,799,224
Portsmouth	502	274	45	86%	14%	16,143,556	21,854,924	37,998,532
Reading	358	175	23	88%	12%	14,972,724	13,028,860	28,001,584
Slough	360	157	41	79%	21%	9,871,004	16,804,060	26,675,064
Southampton	568	378	60	86%	14%	16,186,144	25,894,596	42,080,688
Surrey	1,601	701	207	77%	23%	41,777,268	81,895,476	123,672,796
West Berkshire	297	100	29	78%	22%	5,926,180	13,418,912	19,345,092
West Sussex	1,494	580	224	72%	28%	38,670,060	114,390,744	153,060,804
Windsor and Maidenhead	226	94	22	81%	19%	5,571,072	11,021,556	16,592,628
Wokingham	229	68	19	78%	22%	6,189,404	7,866,820	14,056,224

VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Number of children in foster care	Number of children in residential care	Proportion of children in foster care	Proportion of children in residential care	Value of kinship if replacing foster care	Value of kinship if replacing residential care	Total value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>South West</b>	<b>11,047</b>	<b>4,615</b>	<b>937</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>326,466,140</b>	<b>489,593,936</b>	<b>816,060,024</b>
Bath and North East Somerset	294	122	26	82%	18%	8,380,528	28,441,868	36,822,396
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	763	315	25	93%	7%	21,136,232	22,697,012	43,833,244
Bristol, City of	1,011	517	80	87%	13%	25,267,580	36,844,444	62,112,024
Cornwall	1,153	369	46	89%	11%	39,716,144	44,526,352	84,242,496
Devon	1,433	608	145	81%	19%	40,311,856	53,808,872	94,120,728
Dorset	712	320	87	79%	21%	20,085,728	37,275,992	57,361,720
Gloucestershire	1,159	555	157	78%	22%	33,824,596	64,254,424	98,078,968
North Somerset	372	148	35	81%	19%	10,481,692	29,763,864	40,245,556
Plymouth	615	335	86	80%	20%	20,612,280	33,937,540	54,549,820
Somerset	1,233	357	92	80%	20%	33,900,776	59,512,232	93,413,008
South Gloucestershire	527	163	32	84%	16%	17,065,672	17,628,520	34,694,192
Swindon	496	226	46	83%	17%	14,465,308	18,908,760	33,374,068
Torbay	382	250	40	86%	14%	12,928,708	12,192,388	25,121,096
Wiltshire	897	330	40	89%	11%	28,288,936	29,801,720	58,090,708



VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Number of children in foster care	Number of children in residential care	Proportion of children in foster care	Proportion of children in residential care	Value of kinship if replacing foster care	Value of kinship if replacing residential care	Total value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>West Midlands</b>	<b>15,832</b>	<b>8,083</b>	<b>1,471</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>395,221,892</b>	<b>602,558,944</b>	<b>997,780,888</b>
Birmingham	3,637	1,372	294	82%	18%	94,228,264	141,509,264	235,737,528
Coventry	977	541	128	81%	19%	24,239,332	50,108,396	74,347,728
Dudley	764	474	59	89%	11%	16,958,552	18,975,892	35,934,444
Herefordshire, County of	373	222	49	82%	18%	12,711,192	15,869,308	28,580,448
Sandwell	1,126	649	55	92%	8%	27,528,592	20,813,416	48,342,008
Shropshire	617	358	82	81%	19%	6,917,768	27,265,576	34,183,292
Solihull	442	391	63	86%	14%	10,095,228	14,161,004	24,256,232
Staffordshire	1,943	878	199	82%	18%	56,009,772	94,930,212	150,940,036
Stoke-on-Trent	1,035	761	87	90%	10%	25,356,656	25,150,996	50,507,652
Telford and Wrekin	543	315	47	87%	13%	13,759,200	17,340,180	31,099,380
Walsall	1,059	501	71	88%	12%	26,045,604	31,955,352	58,000,956
Warwickshire	1,287	576	155	79%	21%	32,958,484	68,114,176	101,072,660
Wolverhampton	774	408	31	93%	7%	21,508,396	14,963,728	36,472,124
Worcestershire	1,255	637	151	81%	19%	26,904,852	61,401,548	88,306,400

## VALUING KINSHIP CARE IN ENGLAND

Local authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Total number of children in kinship care (LH+SH)	Number of children in foster care	Number of children in residential care	Proportion of children in foster care	Proportion of children in residential care	Value of kinship if replacing foster care	Value of kinship if replacing residential care	Total value of kinship Care (£ per year)
<b>Yorkshire and The Humber</b>	<b>16,087</b>	<b>6,625</b>	<b>1,079</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>385,758,204</b>	<b>517,976,108</b>	<b>903,734,312</b>
Barnsley	941	243	19	93%	7%	28,591,628	15,808,572	44,400,200
Bradford	1,888	930	210	82%	18%	29,633,656	84,185,920	113,819,576
Calderdale	562	212	38	85%	15%	13,382,252	18,789,888	32,172,140
Doncaster	1,209	374	113	77%	23%	27,519,908	58,787,404	86,307,312
East Riding of Yorkshire	725	237	36	87%	13%	24,055,512	43,102,280	67,157,792
Kingston upon Hull, City of	955	660	131	83%	17%	20,303,452	35,323,600	55,627,052
Kirklees	1,180	509	58	90%	10%	33,876,232	28,088,164	61,964,396
Leeds	2,133	1,016	87	92%	8%	46,997,028	40,068,548	87,065,524
North East Lincolnshire	636	439	76	85%	15%	11,417,536	18,570,396	29,987,932
North Lincolnshire	602	169	18	90%	10%	14,994,096	17,582,136	32,576,232
North Yorkshire	1,199	320	33	91%	9%	22,607,780	15,125,136	37,732,916
Rotherham	1,046	433	52	89%	11%	35,206,184	24,959,740	60,165,976
Sheffield	1,538	468	127	79%	21%	40,259,492	85,096,492	125,355,984
Wakefield	1,139	431	57	88%	12%	28,770,508	27,948,804	56,719,312
York	334	184	24	88%	12%	8,142,940	4,539,080	12,681,968
<b>England</b>	<b>132,818</b>	<b>56,992</b>	<b>11,812</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>3,541,082,272</b>	<b>5,372,942,120</b>	<b>8,914,024,756</b>

**Note:** Authors' calculations based on Census 2021 and Department for Education - Children's Services Finance data. For more details on the number of children in kinship care in small and large households please refer to Appendix A - Table A.1. These figures are based on raw values, which reflect differences in population size, demographics, and local authority practices rather than standardised measures. Variation in local authority practice can arise from differences in local policies, resource allocation, and population needs. For a detailed exploration of such variation, refer to a recent report by Foundations.<sup>38</sup>

## CENTRE FOR CARE

The Centre for Care is a research-focused collaboration between the Universities of Sheffield, Birmingham, Kent, Oxford and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the Office for National Statistics, Carers UK, the National Children's Bureau, and the Social Care Institute for Excellence. The Centre for Care is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, award ES/W002302/1), with contributions from the Department of Health and Social Care's National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and partner universities. The views expressed here are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the ESRC, UKRI, NHS or NIHR.

Led at the University of Sheffield by Centre Director Professor Kate Hamblin and Deputy Director Professor Nathan Hughes, our work aims to make a positive difference in how care is experienced and provided in the UK and internationally by producing new evidence and thinking for policymakers, care sector organisations and people who need or provide care.

The Centre works with care sector partners and leading international teams to provide accessible and up-to-date evidence on care – the support needed by people of all ages who need assistance to manage everyday life.

In studying care, we focus on ways of improving wellbeing outcomes and on the networks, communities and systems that support and affect people's daily lives, working closely with external partners.



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## KINSHIP

Kinship is the leading kinship care charity in England and Wales. We're here for kinship carers – friends or family who step up to raise a child when their parents aren't able to.

We are made by and for our community of kinship carers. Like family, relationships run deep. And we hear their experiences; for too long they have been isolated without the help they need.

We support, advise and inform kinship carers. Connecting them so they feel empowered.

Because a child needs the love and warmth of a thriving family.

We develop research, campaigns and policy solutions. Creating positive change across society.

Because for kinship families, love alone is not enough.

Through our work we harness frustrations to fuel passion for change. And tough experiences to inspire ideas that transform lives.

And as we see momentum building, we keep using evidence to demonstrate the value of kinship care. Helping kinship carers navigate challenging circumstances. Believing in a child's potential.

Join us. Together, let's commit to change for kinship families.



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