



The kinship local offer - local authority briefing

This briefing is intended to support local authorities to develop a kinship local offer which reflects local kinship families' needs and goes beyond legal definitions.

Kinship urges all local authorities to develop their kinship local offer in collaboration and conversation with kinship carers.

What is the kinship local offer

Kinship care refers to arrangements where a child is being raised by relatives or close family friends when their parents cannot care for them, whether formally (e.g. special guardianship) or informally.

The kinship local offer should provide information about all support and services available to kinship carers in the local area.

It needs to be relevant to all types of kinship care arrangement, and it should be underpinned by the principle that support should be based on the need of the child, not merely by legal status.

It should be clearly expressed, regularly updated and made freely, and widely, available including on a local authority's website.

The local offer replaces the family and friends care policy which your local authority may/will have had in place.

Ensuring the kinship local offer meets the needs of kinship carers

Here is a range of ways to ensure your kinship local offer meets the needs of kinship carers in your area.

- Co-produce the local offer, don't just consult once decisions are made - kinship carers and the children they are raising are experts in their own experience, true co-production leads to better, more trusted services
- Ensure that your kinship local offer is a living system of support that reflects the communities needs and evolves with them
- Map out who your kinship carers are, including informal carers, look at how you are reaching these and how you can reach those that are not on your radar yet
- Use tools to reflect how your local offer is working for children, carers and your workforce, through feedback and stories of change
- Make your local offer so local its accessible to all. Partner into other services such as housing, schools, family hubs and third sector support



- Get backing from the whole department to ensure the local offer runs deep throughout all services with system wide backing
- Capture kinship data and needs at every point in the system, from early help to care leavers support to ensure services are the front door to lifelong links
- Feedback what you hear and change course when things aren't working
- Make peer support a central pillar of your offer either through a service you fund and sustain, or through partnerships with Kinship
- Be transparent and make your offer accessible to all kinship carers with a named contact or team available on your website.

Newly updated statutory guidance for local authorities

In October 2024, the Department for Education published updated statutory guidance on kinship care for local authorities in England. Whilst the new guidance does not place new responsibilities on local authorities, it does reposition previous guidance into a clear framework supported by updated factual information and legal guidance.

The overarching message is that:

- 'It is essential that services are not allocated solely on the basis of a child's legal status'
- 'No child should have to become a looked after child for the sole purpose of enabling financial, practical or other support to be provided to the child's carer'
- 'Local authorities should seek to establish trusting and supportive relationships and new and existing kinship carers'

The guidance sets out the governance principles, types of support and types of arrangements associated with the kinship local offer requirement. The government's [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#), currently progressing through Parliament, seeks to strengthen this kinship local offer requirement to become a new legal duty on local authorities.

Next steps

The questions above should give you the prompts you need to begin planning and creating your local authority's local offer. Below are Kinship's suggestions to creating a local offer that has kinship carers at the heart.

- Work with kinship carers in your area from the start – co-produce the local offer together
- Get buy-in across your local authority for the local offer
- Look at how you can improve the offer for kinship carers
- Establish a working group including kinship carers and young people
- Review your current offer for gaps and accessibility
- Secure leadership sponsorship across departments
- Create a timeline for development, launch and review.

Tim Fisher, Kinship's practice lead can support you with developing your local offer. You can get in touch with Tim at tim.fisher@kinship.org.uk