



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

Raised by Relatives: the experiences of Black and Asian kinship carers

Calls to action

November 2025



LAURELLE BROWN
TRAINING & CONSULTANCY

TPXimpact





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

Contents

1. Acknowledgements
2. Introduction
3. Background & context
4. Workshop aims & attendees
5. Workshop outputs
6. Next steps





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

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements



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

Thank you to all the kinship carers who took the time to participate in this workshop. We are grateful to you for sharing your voices, experiences and insights, which are needed to move towards meaningful change.

We are also grateful to the stakeholders who attended this workshop for contributing their time and expertise from across the children's social care sector. This included representation from: CoramBAAF, Coventry City Council, Families in Harmony, Foundations – What Works Centre for Children and Families, KPMG Foundation, Nuffield Family Justice Observatory, Rees Centre at the University of Oxford, Research in Practice, and Wandsworth Borough Council.

The Rees Centre was commissioned by Kinship to deliver the [research project](#). Laurelle Brown Training and Consultancy and TPX Impact were commissioned to design and deliver a co-production workshop to translate research findings into actionable steps. Kinship is hugely grateful to the KPMG Foundation for their support for this programme of work.

With thanks also to Sandra Howgate, visual storyteller, to whom all sketches of the workshop are attributed.



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

Introduction

Introduction



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

In 2023, Kinship commissioned Dr Priya Tah and Professor Julie Selwyn from The Rees Centre at the University of Oxford to undertake research into the needs and experiences of Black and Asian kinship carers. The research was supported by the KPMG Foundation. The report 'Raised by Relatives: the experiences of Black and Asian kinship carers in England' was published in April 2025, and is available to read in full online at www.kinship.org.uk/our-work-and-impact/research/raised-by-relatives.

The report made a series of recommendations about how Black and Asian kinship families can be better supported in the future.

To maximise the impact of this research, Kinship commissioned the design and delivery of a workshop that would bring Black and Asian kinship carers and a wide range of stakeholders from the children's social care sector together to explore the recommendations and develop a series of 'calls to action'.

This report captures the outcomes of that workshop and represents an important step forward in our work to amplify and better address the needs of Black and Asian kinship families.

We hope that you will join us.

What we did



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

To support the development of the workshop, our partners:

- Conducted a **rapid evidence review** drawing on existing research and data to inform stakeholder engagement and ecosystem mapping
- Produced an **ecosystem map** to support stakeholder engagement and the development of calls to action
- Held an **online advisory session** with key stakeholders to help shape our approach
- Held an online **listening session** with Black and Asian kinship carers to prepare them for the workshop and get their input into its design





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

Background & context

Background & context



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

The rapid evidence review (RER) revealed gaps in knowledge about, and support for, Black and Asian carers. Little is understood about the needs of Black informal kinship carers, who do not have a legal order in place, such as a special guardianship order (SGO). This is important as Black families are more likely to be in informal kinship arrangements.

Similarly, very little is known about Asian carers. Data indicates that Asian families are much less likely to be bringing up children in kinship arrangements, but this assumption needs to be explored further..

While initially undertaken as an internal design activity, the RER has been made available to read in full [online](#).

There are significant racial and ethnic inequalities in the care and kinship system. Service provision and policy making do not focus on the specific needs of Black and Asian Kinship carers.

Future understanding of Black and Asian kinship carers must take an intersectional approach (1), recognising how overlapping identities, such as age, gender, ethnicity and disability, shape their experiences. This includes the compounding effects of discrimination like racism, ableism and ageism. For example, many kinship carers are older women, highlighting the need for a more nuanced understanding of the specific barriers they face.

What we know



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

According to the most recent census (2021), one child in every four living in kinship care in England is being raised by kinship carers from Black and minoritised ethnic backgrounds (2).

Children living in kinship care were more likely to identify as "Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean" than children living with at least one parent (3). More Black children are in informal kinship care than kinship fostering or SGOs and this is most likely where there are gaps in knowledge and provision (4). But there are gaps in what we know about these families and there are gaps in services and policies which are not tailored to their needs.

According to current data, Asian children are significantly less likely to be in kinship care than other ethnic groups, although this likely does not reflect some informal arrangements. This represents another gap in knowledge and tailored provision (5).

Very little seems to be understood about kinship care patterns in any Asian ethnic group. Anecdotally, there is no doubt that Asian carers are raising their relatives, but data is hard to find and research suggests this may be down to a lack of trust of social care services and stigma within communities (6).

Gaps in support and policy



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

Gaps in support for informal kinship families disproportionately affect Black families who are more likely to have these arrangements. Research has found significant gaps in support for informal kinship carers. For example, social workers do not feel they have time to support informal carers as well as those fostering or on SGOs (7).

The Department for Education does not require Virtual School Heads to provide support for children in informal kinship care (8), although they must support children on SGOs or in kinship fostering. Only 10% of local authorities (LAs) provide specific support for informal kinship carers (9) and LAs sometimes prefer

informal arrangements as there are no costs or statutory obligations (10). Children in these arrangements are significantly more likely to be from Black Caribbean or mixed Black backgrounds, meaning they are excluded from formal systems of recognition and support that could otherwise offer stability and resources.

While the appointment of a National Kinship Ambassador is welcome, neither the government's 2023 strategy *Championing Kinship Care: The national kinship strategy* (11) nor its 2024 statutory guidance *Kinship Care: Statutory guidance for local authorities* feature any support or guidance specifically for Black and Asian carers (12).

Systemic racism



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

These gaps compound existing racial inequalities and discrimination experienced by Black and Asian children across multiple areas of life, including:

- education, where Black children are more likely to be adultified, disciplined more harshly and disproportionately excluded from school (13)
- the criminal justice system, where they are more likely to be stopped and searched, subjected to use of force, and overrepresented in youth custody (14)
- health and wellbeing, where there are racial disparities in the identification, diagnosis, and treatment of special educational needs, disabilities, and mental health conditions (15).

"There is no place for racism in our charity." - Kinship



PEOPLE NEED EQUITY,
FAIRNESS & JUSTICE

LET'S USE TODAY TO
MAKE CHANGE!

Acknowledgement of Racism
as context for this work



Raised by Relatives



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

Raised by Relatives: the experiences of Black and Asian kinship carers in England found that some Black and Asian carers involved in the research had experienced racism from services. These experiences caused difficulties and negatively affected their experience of caring for their children. A summary of key findings is shown to the right.

It also highlighted where experiences common to kinship carers were compounded by experiences of racism and racialised service provision and policymaking which is not tailored to their needs.

- Black and Asian kinship carers are significantly underrepresented in official data sources
- some Black and Asian kinship carers experienced systemic discrimination from social workers, the family court system and at school
- systemic racism has a significant impact on Black and Asian kinship carers' experiences.
- they experienced stigma and shame and a feeling of being judged
- decisions made about their families did not show cultural curiosity or humility.

Ecosystem map

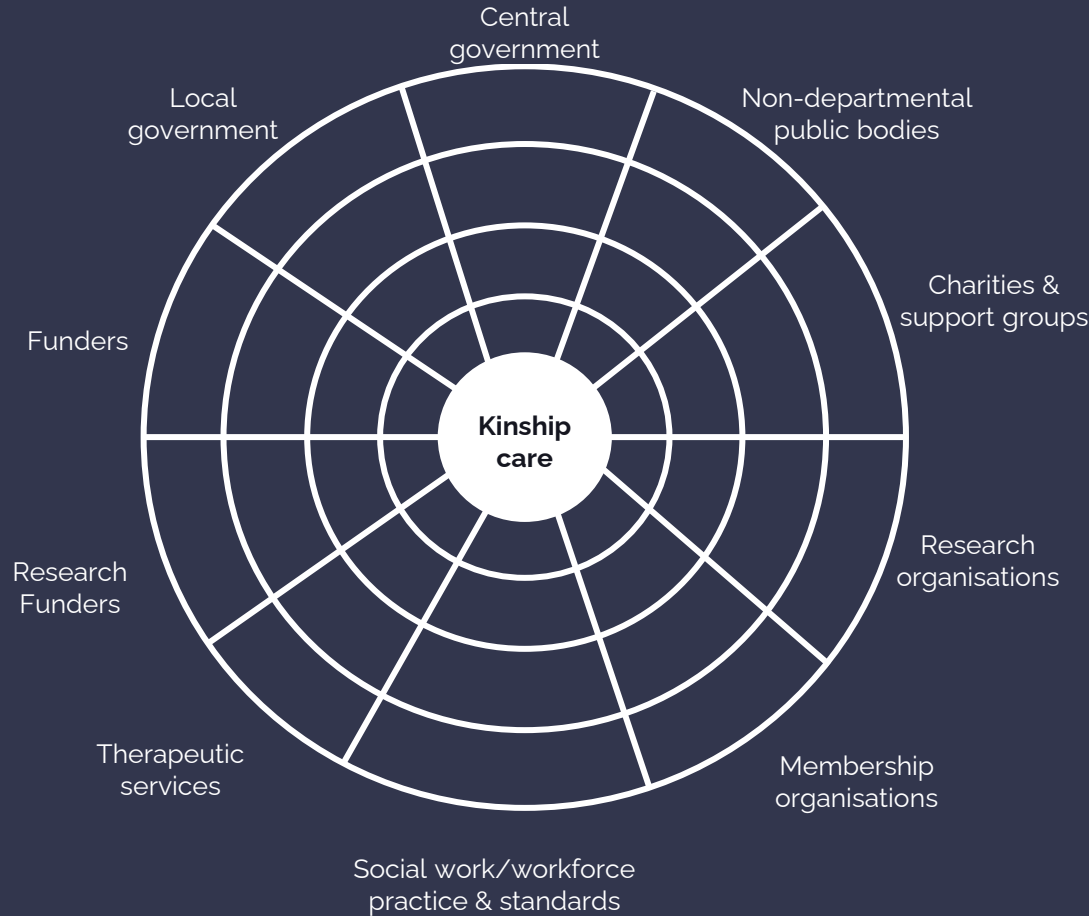


For family or friends who
step up to raise a child.

We used insights from the rapid evidence review to create an ecosystem map of the kinship care sector.

The map identified ten key segments of the sector and mapped organisations across these. This helped us to identify key stakeholders for the workshop. The ecosystem map was also used to inform the development of calls to action within the workshop, with each call directed towards one of the ten key segments identified.

The map was updated throughout the design process based on input from stakeholders.



The map was based around four concentric rings indicating:

Central ring: Organisations whose core purpose is to support Black and/or Asian kinship carers/families

Second ring: Organisations whose core purpose is to support kinship carers/families

Third ring: Organisations with some focus on or responsibility for kinship carers/families

Outer ring: Organisations without a direct connection to kinship carers who may be able to support action on the recommendations



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

Workshop aims & attendees

Workshop aims

The workshop aimed to:

- Socialise the *Raised by Relatives* study amongst kinship carers and sector stakeholders
- Engage participants in prioritising the recommendations that would have the greatest impact for Black and Asian kinship carers
- Support participants to develop and prioritise tangible ideas for action to deliver on the recommendations, identifying which parts of the sector would be responsible.



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



Workshop attendees



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

A total of **31 participants** attended the workshop. This included **14 sector stakeholders** representing charities, local government, research organisations and funders, and **17 Black and Asian kinship carers**. Where participants were representative of both categories they have been recorded here as kinship carers.

Some of the kinship carers who participated had previously been involved in the Raised by Relatives study, but the majority were engaged to take part for the first time. Efforts were made to address gaps in representation within the research around informal, Black African and Asian Bangladeshi kinship carers.

Kinship carers were representative of the following ethnicities:

41% Black or Black British - Caribbean

23% Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi

12% Black British

12% Asian or Asian British - Indian

6% Black or Black British - African

6% Asian or Asian British - Other Asian background



No-one was talking about what **WE** as African & Caribbean people do to care for our families

SHARON'S STORY

Families in Harmony
charity founder

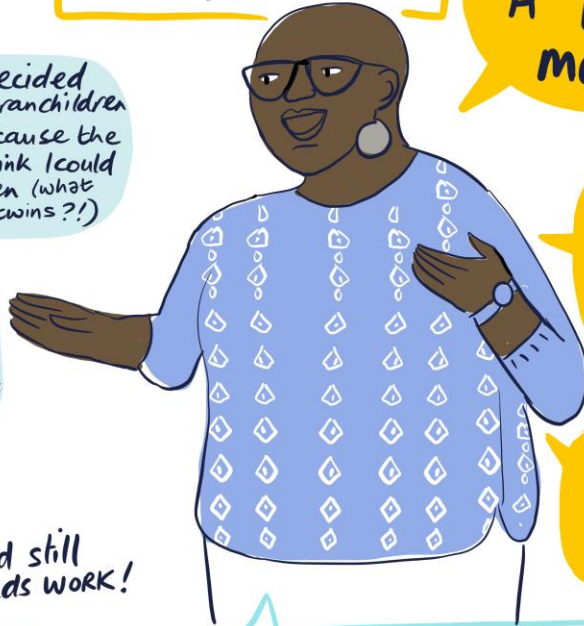
TODAY IS
A **LANDMARK**
MOMENT!

The system decided to put one of my grandchildren up for adoption because the local authority didn't think I could look after two children (what happens if people have twins?!)

My grandson didn't get the mental health **support** he needed even when we told them, and he eventually **died** as a result

The whole **SYSTEM** was broken — and still needs work!

We were inundated with calls for **HELP** to our charity during the pandemic



Important to
GALVANISE
kinship care

I'm not a **COLOUR**
I'm a **person**

Recognise the uniqueness of each person

RACIAL EQUITY & **REUNIFICATION**
is so important

CULTURAL HUMILITY

Being more culturally inclusive
eg how to comb her hair: skin and hair pride for my niece and all people from my heritage



Better training for social workers & culturally aware support

VISIBILITY

The staff in the system should reflect me



I feel more at ease!



Don't mix up **CULTURE** with religion

Also pride in religion and a collective community



CARE, LOVE

KINDNESS & JOY
with being brought up in a community



pastoral care & values

What does a kinship care system that works for Black and Asian carers look like for you?

UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF THE **ELDERS**



Understand different parenting practices

FAMILY SEPARATION CONTINUES THE EXISTING **NARRATIVES**



UNDER-RECOGNISED GROUPS NEED VISIBILITY

An honest and inclusive system



Fair & equal treatment for all carers

TACKLE COLONIALISM'S LEGACY

Don't introduce and 'divide'
Kinship carers here Professionals here



TREAT US HUMANELY

please don't call us by a **COLOUR** but use our heritage: eg African, Caribbean

I'm a person not a colour!



UNDERSTAND OUR HERITAGE



But don't label us...



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

Workshop outputs

Prioritised recommendations



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

Workshop participants prioritised five recommendations they believed would have the greatest impact for kinship carers. During this process, two similar recommendations related to social work were merged following discussions amongst the group. Where there was a 'tie', the votes of kinship carers took precedence.



OUR 5 PRIORITIES

Calls to action

Participants were supported to develop a series of calls to action based on each of the prioritised recommendations.

Each call to action identified a specific part of the sector that would be responsible for delivering on it.

A total of 14 calls to action across the five prioritised recommendations were developed. These have been captured here in participants' own words as far as possible.



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



make existing sources of information and support easy for kinship carers to find



LOCAL GOVERNMENT CALL TO ACTION:

Community Champions Model

VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADS CALL TO ACTION:

Kinship Awareness Training in Schools



CHARITY & VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS CALL TO ACTION:

Make the information accessible

Make existing sources of information and support easy for kinship carers to find

We call on local government to:

Ensure the kinship local offer explicitly addresses how local authorities will effectively engage with, support and meet the needs of Black and Asian kinship carers, to ensure they are aware of and can access existing sources of information and support.

One of the key ways local governments may want to do this is through a community champions model, where people with lived experience of kinship care in a local area reach out to new kinship carers door to door, via email, or via existing community groups or spaces. This should be delivered in partnership with local voluntary and community organisations.

We call on Virtual School Heads to:

Ensure that kinship care awareness training is put in place within schools for the entire school workforce - from teachers to school meals supervisors - to normalise kinship care in the day to day language of young people from an early age.

By building this awareness amongst young people, schools can help identify where support may be needed, and can play a role in signposting young people and their families towards existing sources.



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

Make existing sources of information and support easy for kinship carers to find

We call on charities and voluntary organisations to:

Ensure that advice, information and support are provided in a way that reflects the communication needs of marginalised communities.

This should include translation of information into different languages and the use of clear, plain language in all materials.



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

Provide financial support to all kinship carers



CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CALL TO ACTION:
Ensure financial parity for kinship carers with foster carers



CHARITIES CALL TO ACTION:
Create a financial pot for kinship families



CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CALL TO ACTION:

Provide fully funded legal support through local authorities until the child turns 25

Provide financial support to all kinship carers

We call on central government to:

Provide fully funded, legally binding legal support for Black and Asian kinship families through local authorities, extending until the kinship care-experienced child turns 25:

- Cover all legal needs, including translation and culturally specific support.
- Ensure access to independent, culturally specific legal support.

We call on central government to:

Ensure financial parity for kinship carers with foster carers, acknowledging the distinct ethos, practice, and model of kinship care.

- Provide funding that follows the child throughout the duration of their kinship care-experience.



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

Provide financial support to all kinship carers

We call on charities to:

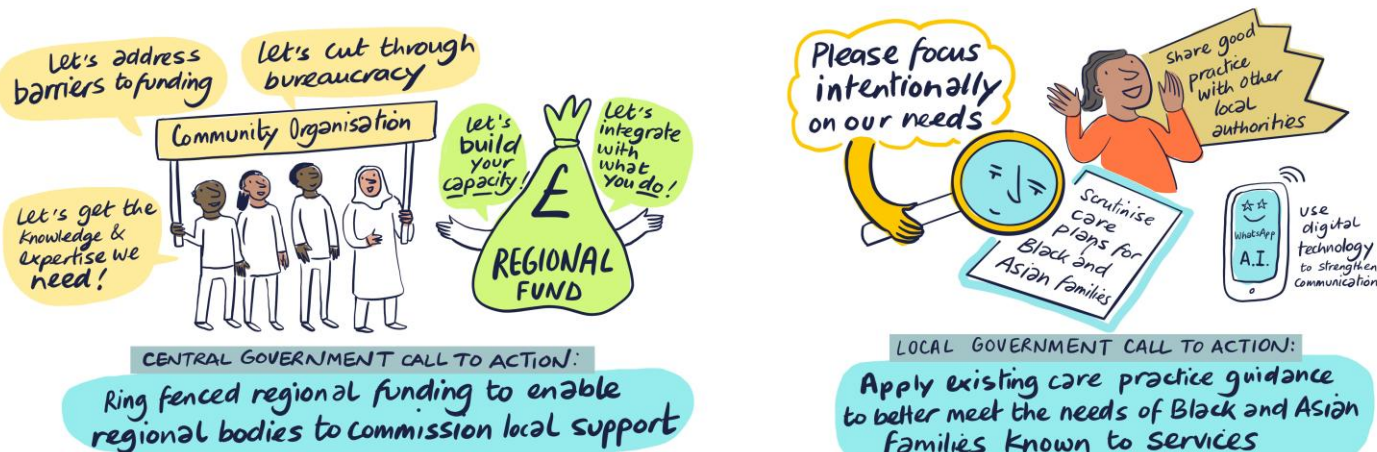
Create a financial pot for kinship families that is focused on the child's development, identity and current living arrangements.

- Include funding for cultural contact, support services, and holidays that consider culture.
- Ensure the financial pot evolves with the child's developmental needs, family context, cultural background, and changes in living standards.
- Guarantee ongoing legal assistance throughout the full journey of the kinship family.
- Establish financial rights for kinship carers that are equal to those of foster carers.



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

Provide kinship carers with a point of contact within their Local Authority



Provide kinship carers with a point of contact within their Local Authority

We call on local government to:

Apply existing kinship care practice guidance to better recognise and meet the needs of Black and Asian families known to services.

- Intentionally focus on their needs
- Scrutinise and analyse care plans for Black and Asian families
- Use existing tools and guidance to self assess for impact
- Use accessible digital technology to strengthen communication such as WhatsApp and considering the ethical use of AI.

Share good practice approaches with other local authorities.

We call on central government to:

Establish ring fenced regional funding to enable regional bodies to commission local support and services specifically for Black and Asian kinship families.

Commissioning approaches should:

- Address barriers to funding access experienced by community organisations, including funding systems, bureaucracy and knowledge and expertise
- Integrate with community organisations
- Build capacity of community organisations



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

Provide kinship carers with a point of contact within their Local Authority

We call on charities to:

Coordinate a local offer for Black and Asian kinship carers:

- Work with Black and Asian communities to build a trusted network of Black and Asian-led organisations and services across local areas.
- Recognise the diversity within Black and Asian communities, raise awareness, and establish clear referral pathways that actively involve a wide range of services, including community groups and hubs, schools, GPs, churches, advocacy services, and social prescribing.
- Share and scale good practice to ensure consistent support that meets specific needs.



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

Improve social work, education and training to better support kinship carers

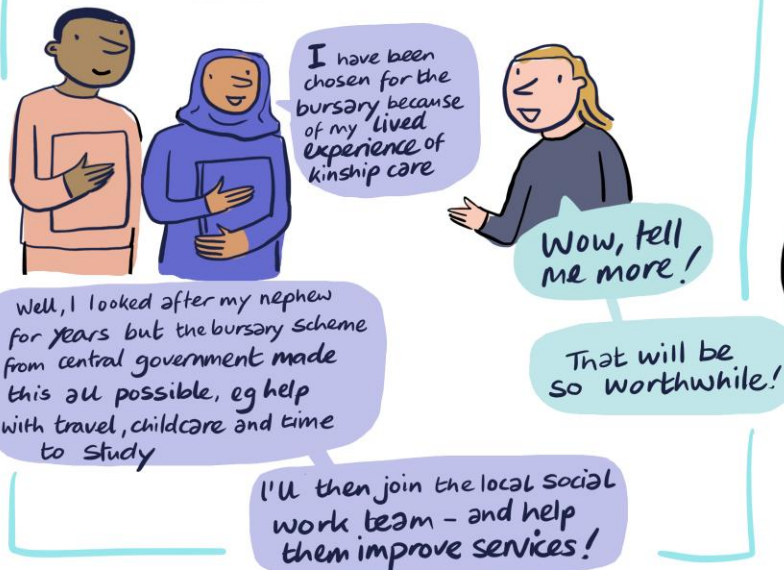
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CALL TO ACTION:

create a 'support officer' within social work teams working with kinship carers

SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION PROVIDERS CALL TO ACTION:

mandatory inclusion of module on kinship care for all social work qualifying courses

FRESHERS WEEK



Co-produced, co-delivered module on kinship care



Improve social work education, training and practice to better support kinship carers

We call on local government to:

Create a 'support officer' or 'Kinship Navigator' role within social work teams working with kinship carers

Train at least one person with lived experience of kinship care from a Black or Asian background to become a social worker.

Central government to enable local authorities to achieve this by providing a bursary scheme which includes additional non-means tested support with childcare, travel costs and kinship carer leave.

We call on social work education providers to:

Make it a requirement for all social work qualifying courses to include a module on kinship care. Teaching should be co-produced and co-delivered with those with lived experience of kinship care and from a Black or Asian background. At a minimum, the module should cover:

- legal frameworks and responsibilities,
- assessment process,
- the emotional experience of becoming a kinship carer,
- understanding racial disparities within kinship care
- how to mitigate racial disparities in social work assessments and intervention.



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

Support kinship carers to find a suitable home



CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT CALL TO ACTION:
Prioritise social housing for kinship carers

Support kinship carers to find a suitable home

We call on charities to:

Build relationships with corporations to generate practical support for kinship families.

- Collaborate with corporations to provide starter kits for kinship-care leavers (e.g. IKEA-style care-leaver kits for kinship care-leavers).
- Encourage housing developers to embed social good clauses - donating 1-5% of their time, skills or resources to benefit kinship families.
- Team up with distribution-focused organisations like 'Baby Bonus'.
- Share and platform models of kinship family housing and support schemes, such as Plaza West in Washington DC

We call on central and local government to:

Prioritise social housing for kinship carers.

- Prioritise local authority pilots in London boroughs disproportionately affected by the housing crisis.
- Identify and showcase local authorities with good practice, sharing practice that can be scaled.
- Introduce legislation that recognises the right of kinship families to suitable housing.
- Ensure kinship families are aware of their right to housing assessments and prioritisation, with a national awareness campaign.
- Highlight the interaction of ethnicity and housing conditions and considerations in the kinship carer community.



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

Support kinship carers to find a suitable home

We call on local government to:

Develop a needs assessment of suitable housing which is centered on home and life that:

- Considers the long term housing situation of kinship families (e.g. unlike foster carers, kinship carers may not have a spare room but still provide a home)
- Has standardised assessment questions, co-produced with kinship carers.
- Encourages social workers to be curious about both the current and long-term dynamics of family life.
- Takes into account the importance of community life, ensuring housing offers enable continued access to existing networks



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



Workshop feedback



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

Having people looking like me, taking part, being able to speak openly, the kindness, support of everyone professional as well as carers. It was a phenomenal experience.

The whole workshop was very informative and positive for me. Meeting other Kinship carers and professionals that want to positively change the existing system to better the services that Kinship carers provide for the children, especially, the Black and Asian.

I felt that the workshop was very engaging and highlighted the journey Kinship and other organisations have been on to improve racial disparities in kinship care.

I'm extremely proud to be part of the research and the workshop.



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

Next steps

Next steps



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



This next stage of our work is about moving from research to real change. The Raised by Relatives study has given us clear evidence that ethnicity plays a significant role in shaping the kinship care journey, and that too many Black and Asian kinship carers are being failed by systems that don't recognise or respond to their specific needs. Now, with kinship carers, local authority and sector colleagues, we have co-produced practical steps to turn that evidence into equitable support on the ground.

Our aim is to embed racial equity in our work at Kinship and to encourage others to do the same. We are working with local authorities to embed racial equity into their local offers for kinship families - ensuring that cultural humility, representation and meaningful partnership become standard practice across the sector. This is not a one-off project, but a commitment to long-term systemic change that honours the lived experience of all kinship carers.

Lucy Peake
CEO, Kinship

Next steps



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



Change happens when evidence, lived experience and practice come together. Our next steps are about supporting local authorities to apply the lens of racial equity to their service delivery. By asking the right questions and listening deeply to the voices of kinship carers and children, we can act collectively to transform insights into lasting, systemic change that truly reflects the diversity of kinship families.

Anam Raja
Research Manager, Kinship



This work is vital because we know kinship care is prevalent in Black and Asian communities but there is a gap in our knowledge of their experiences. With a focus on kinship care like never before we need to ensure we are designing services that are attuned to the needs of Black and Asian families.

Beverley Barnett-Jones
Trustee, Kinship

Next steps



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



Families In Harmony are working in collaboration with Kinship Charity in relation to the DfE peer support contract. We are pleased this partnership ensures kinship carers of Black African, Caribbean and Black Mixed heritage living outside of London have access to culturally specific peer support groups. The aim is that these groups offer a safe space where discussions relating to identity, heritage, racialised trauma or bias, can be infused with kinship care conversations, generating lived experienced solution focused support outcomes. These groups also provide a safe space for informal carers to engage and request assistance, without being concerned that social work professionals will be compiling records of their interactions. It is important that kinship carers from racially minoritised communities experience actual progress in policy, practice and support; such as that seen in this model of peer support, driving forward the racial equity agenda for change in kinship care.

Sharon McPherson
Co-Director, Families in Harmony

Next steps



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



We know that informal kinship families are more likely to be missing out on vital financial, practical and emotional support, despite their similar needs, experiences and strengths to those kinship families with more formalised arrangements. Given the likely overrepresentation of Black and Asian kinship families in informal kinship care, investing in sufficient financial support which reaches all types of kinship family will ensure we don't further embed racial inequity in the provision of support for kinship carers and their children.

Sam Turner

Associate Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Kinship



The challenge is clear: we need practice that is curious about lived experience, rooted in cultural humility, and bold in resourcing equity. That means designing with - not for - Black and Asian kinship carers, and delivering tangible, lasting support.

Tim Fisher

Practice Lead, Kinship

References



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

1. Crenshaw, Kimberle (1989) Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics
2. Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2023) [Kinship care in England and Wales: Census 2021](#).
3. Ibid
4. Ibid.
5. What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (2022) [Understanding Formal Kinship Care Arrangements in England Analysis of Administrative Data](#)
6. Tah, P. and Selwyn, J (2025) *Raised by Relatives: the experiences of Black and Asian kinship carers in England*
7. Foundations (2023) [A Survey of local authorities in England: Understanding the variation in support for kinship carers](#)
8. Department for Education (DfE) (2023) [Championing Kinship Care: The national kinship care strategy](#)
9. Foundations (2023) [A survey of local authorities in England: Understanding the variation in support for kinship carers.](#)
10. Tah, P. and Selwyn, J (2025) *Raised by Relatives: the experiences of Black and Asian kinship carers in England*
11. Department for Education (DfE) (2023) [Championing Kinship Care: The national kinship care strategy](#)
12. Department for education (2024) [Kinship Care: Statutory guidance for local authorities](#)
13. Lewis, K. and Demie, F., 2019. The school experiences of mixed-race white and black Caribbean children in England. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 42(12), pp.2065-2083.
14. Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (2022) [Annual statistics: A system failing Black children](#)
15. Teagle, W.L., Norris, E.T., Rishishwar, L., Nagar, S.D., Jordan, I.K. and Mariño-Ramirez, L. (2022) Comorbidities and ethnic health disparities in the UK Biobank. *JAMIA Open*, 5(3), p.oaac057



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

www.kinship.org.uk