

Warwickshire County Council

Local Kinship Offer

Our approach and helpful guidance in supporting and promoting the needs of children and young people in care living with extended family and/or friends.

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Introduction:

Sometimes children are unable to live with their parent/s for a variety of reasons. Whatever the reason it is likely to be a difficult time for everyone involved, working together with family and friends can often help identify a positive solution for children reducing the amount of disruption experienced by all.

For many Kinship Carers caring for a child full time, even if for a short term/temporary period, will be new and may be daunting, this offer provides you with details of how Warwickshire will support you, providing links to advice and support services to help you navigate the role of a Kinship Carer.

Values, Principles and Objectives:

Kinship Carers will be made aware of the support that they are entitled to, we will actively work with our Kinship Carers to address any barriers that carers face in accessing support.

Warwickshire will work with Kinship Carers to identify their specific needs to enable appropriate support provisions to be put in place.

Through our relational practice approach Kinship Carers will be supported to build strong trusted relationships with key professionals and contacts that offer support and guidance.

Statutory Obligations

A key principle of the Children Act 1989 is that children are best brought up within their families and, for the purposes of the Act, the term 'family' could include relatives, friends and other significant people in the child's life. The child's welfare is paramount along with the child's family being involved in the decision making and the planning for their future.

The children's legal framework emphasises the need to explore the child's family and friends' network so children can grow up with familiar people, who are deemed the most realistic caring option, to meet the child's changing and developing needs into adulthood.

Kinship Care is referred to in statute as 'Connected Persons'. Legislation defines "connected person" as a relative, friend or other person connected with a child and has a pre-existing relationship with the child. Relative is defined as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (including those by marriage or civil partnership) or step-parent.

Where possible, children should be supported to live safely within their family. Where a child cannot remain in the care of their parents, research has consistently found that children placed in kinship care generally do as well, if not better, than children in unrelated foster care, particularly regarding the stability of the placement. It is essential that if a child may not be able to live safely with their parents, practitioners identify potential carers from within the child's network of family and friends and determine whether they will be able to provide safe care to meet the child's needs, until they reach adulthood.

Visits and Your Assessment – What to Expect.

You will have a number of professionals visiting you, there will be a Kinship Assessing Social Worker who will visit you 6-8 times to complete the assessment. Once you have the child living with you or you have been approved as a Kinship Foster Carer then you will also have a Supervision and Support Social Worker who will support you with fostering tasks. They will visit every 4 weeks and contact you in between to ensure that you are having the support you require. You will also be visited by the Child's Social Worker. In addition to this you may have a family support worker, depending on your needs. You will also be required to attend All About Me Review meetings (AAMR) and this is chaired by the Child's Independent Reviewing Officer, their role is to ensure the care plan for the child is carried out. This can feel overwhelming at the beginning; we cannot reduce the number of professionals involved. However, we will work with you to manage everyone's time effectively.

Definition of types of Kinship Care;

Language is ever evolving and you may see terminology such as connected persons, Special Guardianship Order (SGO) carer or private foster carer, these all mean Kinship Carer.

- **Informal kinship care arrangements** are when a close family member or friend look after a child for a temporary or permanent amount of time. This arrangement is agreed privately with the parents and parental responsibility for the child remains with the parents.
- **Kinship Carers with a Child Arrangements Order (CAO).** Child Arrangements Orders are granted by the family court and determine who a child can live with and/or who a child can stay with and for how long. The Kinship Carer shares parental responsibility with the child's parents, or others with parental responsibility, until the age of 18 unless the court states otherwise. In 2014, Child Arrangements Orders replaced Residence Orders and Contact Orders.

- **Kinship Carers with a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)** have parental responsibility for a child following an order made by the family court. Kinship Carers live permanently with their children but need permission from the court to make important decisions, such as changing the child's surname.
- **Kinship foster carers** look after children who are "looked after" by the local authority following a voluntary agreement with the parent/s, if a child spends more than 24 hours in local authority care under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 or if a Care Order is made by the family court.
- **Private foster carer** is a private arrangement made by a parent (or person with parental responsibility) for someone else to care for their child because they are unable to do so. In some circumstances, a young person may have decided to live elsewhere. If the person the child/young person is living with is not a direct relative and the placement lasts 28 days or more, this is called private fostering. The child/s parent/s retain parental responsibility under this arrangement.

Glossary of Terms used in Kinship Care

(WCC have a dictionary of care, all Kinship Carers should be provided with a copy of this)

Term	What/Who this is	In a Kinship Carer's words what this means for us
Kinship Care	Kinship care aims to keep children within their existing support network, often with relatives or close family friends.	Keeping a child you're connected to (through both family and friendship) safe and living with someone they know rather than with strangers
Family Time	Family time (which is sometimes referred to as 'contact') is about providing opportunities for children and adolescents in foster care to keep in touch with their family and friends, and other people who are important to them.	Family time is usually when the child sees their parents or other close family members who aren't allowed unsupervised contact – sometimes this is supervised by the local authority, sometimes by the Kinship Carer, depending on the situation
Adoption Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF)	A UK government fund providing financial support to local authorities and regional adoption agencies (RAAs) to pay for essential therapeutic services for adopted children and those under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or Child Arrangement Order (CAO)	This means that Kinship carers can access psychological support if the child in their care has been previously looked after by the Local Authority
Assessment	You must pass an assessment by a social worker to become a kinship foster carer. They will ask for practical information and details about your parenting experience, relationships and childhood. All adults in your house will need to pass police checks.	This is a vital part of the process to ensure the child will be living with someone who can keep them safe and prioritise their safety, health and wellbeing – it also ensures you will prioritise them over any existing relationships with the child's parent(s)

<p>SGO Support Plan</p>	<p>A planning tool that can be used after the initial assessment and planning process to set out the support provided to you, the child and their family.</p> <p>The support plan is crucial to getting the support you need as a special guardian. It is an important document. It should clearly set out the support that will be provided to meet the child's needs.</p>	<p>This is only for Kinship Carers who go down the SGO route – which is optional – but if you do, it helps to clarify expectations both of you and others before agreeing to an SGO – you need to think about all future scenarios that may occur (good and bad) and ensure the support plan provides you and your child with the support you may need should any of these scenarios come to light. While you may initially think everything will be fine as you have strong relationship with the child's parent(s), be aware that being a Kinship Carer will challenge you in ways you never expected, so considering and planning for all possible scenarios will help make things easier for you in the long-term to ensure you have the support you may need already in place.</p>
<p>SGO Support Plan Reviews</p>	<p>A worker from the SGO Support Team will contact SGO carer via email the month that their SGO is granted to advise of their eligibility for a review. As the SGO is a private order the decision on whether to have a review is with the carer.</p>	<p>Every SGO holder has the right to an annual review of their SGO support plan, but the carer has to request this – this is a good opportunity to ask questions and raise any concerns about how the current plan is or isn't working.</p>
<p>Assessing Social Workers</p>	<p>A kinship assessing social worker is a professional who evaluates the suitability of relatives, other connected people like close friends (Kinship Carers) to care for a child when the parents are unable to do so. This assessment involves gathering information about the prospective carer's capacity to meet the child's needs, ensuring the child's safety and well-being, and identifying any necessary support.</p>	<p>The assessing social worker may have to share some very difficult information with you about the child's parents and potentially wider family to ensure you are aware of all the potential risks to the child, as difficult as this may be, take heed, as unfortunately, there's a high chance that what they suggest might happen in the future, however good your relationship is now, will</p>

		happen – so it's their job to ensure you will prioritise the child's safety above all else
Supervising Social Worker	A Supervising Social Worker (SSW) in fostering is a qualified social worker who supports and supervises foster carers, ensuring they can provide a safe and nurturing environment for children in their care. They act as a key link between the foster carers, the fostering service, and the child's social worker, providing guidance, training, and support to help foster carers meet the child's needs and adhere to regulations.	Someone you can turn to for advice on anything you are unsure of regarding your role as a Kinship Carer, including if you're having difficulties with others in the local authority or family members /close friends of the child. You can share your concerns with them and they will provide you with advice and guidance and will support you when you need it.
Family Support Worker – Kinship/Fostering	Family support workers play a crucial role in providing support to foster families. They offer practical and emotional assistance, guidance, and access to resources to help foster carers navigate their roles and ensure the well-being of the children in their care.	Family support workers often supervise family time between the child and the parent / family member who is not allowed unsupervised contact with the child – they will update you as the Kinship Carer on how the family time session went and anything that may affect the child later in any way eg. What they ate during family time and anything that was said to them by their parent that may upset them when they think about it
Children's Social Worker	Child and family social workers provide assessments, interventions and support to ensure the well-being and safety of children and families.	Their focus is on the safety and wellbeing of the child – they are usually very good at interacting with children, however, your child's allocated children's social worker may well change quite frequently which can be challenging
Family Support Worker – Children's Team	They work in families' homes and in community venues providing a range of interventions tailored to meet the needs of the child.	

Life Story Work	Involves helping children understand their past experiences, especially separations from birth families, and build a positive self-image. This work is crucial for fostering a sense of identity and emotional well-being. It often involves creating a "life story book" or using other creative methods to explore a child's history, memories, and feelings.	This can also provide the child with a physical 'book' to look at to see photos of their family members and friends which can both help and upset them when they're missing parents, however, it does provide the child with a good background explaining why they are in kinship care – which can be difficult for a Kinship Carer to explain
Fostering Panel	Fostering Panel is a group of experienced professionals and carers who review the suitability of individuals to become foster carers for Warwickshire County Council. The panel makes a recommendation to the agency decision maker, who then decides whether to approve the applicants as foster carers.	The people who decide whether or not you are ready / suitable to be a kinship foster carer – when you first agree to be a kinship foster carer, the fostering panel is usually the final stage of the official assessment process.
Financial And Benefits Assessment (FABA)	This assessment determines the level of financial support, if any, that the special guardian may be eligible for.	This assessment only takes place if you choose to apply for an SGO and they use it to determine whether or not you're financially able to support a child, but also to determine how much to offer to pay you as part of the SGO agreement if you haven't agreed this amount separately.
Child In Care (CiC)	A child who has been in the care of the local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a child in care.	The child you're looking after is a child in care along with all other children in foster care, however, if you take out an SGO then the child is no longer in the care of the local authority, but once they have been a child in care, they may still be referred to as a child in care in some situations – this can provide access to certain support as they grow up that they would not otherwise have access to.

<p>Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)</p>	<p>IROs are social workers. All local authorities have a duty to appoint an IRO to every child in care. IROs are required to oversee and scrutinise the Care Plan of the child/ young person and ensure that everyone who is involved in that child's/ young person's life fulfils his or her responsibilities.</p>	<p>You only usually see the IRO as part of the AAMR (All About Me Reviews) and they are there as an independent advisor to the local authority, but if you feel the need to speak to them outside of the AAMR, you can contact them directly.</p>
<p>All About Me Review (AAMR)</p>	<p>A meeting to ensure that appropriate plans are in place to safeguard and promote the overall welfare of the child in care in the most effective way and achieve long term care. This meeting is chaired by an IRO, independent reviewing officer, they supervise and scrutinise the care plan and everyone involved fulfils their responsibilities.</p>	<p>Literally every professional involved in your child's life will likely be invited to the AAMR – social workers, nursery / school representative, health care worker, you as the Kinship Carer, the child's parent(s) and the IRO. This meeting can be quite difficult as a Kinship Carer if relationships within the family are 'challenging' as everything relating to your child's situation is up for discussion. This is also where changes to the existing care plan including frequency of family time, who supervises family time etc. is often discussed.</p>
<p>Family Network Meeting (FNM)</p>	<p>Formerly known as Family Group Conference (FGC), is a family led meeting in which the family and friends network come together to make a plan for a young person.</p>	<p>The initial FGC is usually scheduled to bring everyone together who is willing to make a commitment to support the child in some way. The intention is for all to agree together what each person will do (albeit words and actions don't always align). Further down the line, the purpose of an FGC is often to bring key people (eg. family members and you as the foster carer) together to try to work through any difficulties and / or breakdown in relationships in an attempt to create more of a united front with a focus on the</p>

		child's welfare and maintaining family relationships and contact.
Virtual School	<p>The Virtual School is a Local Authority service which promotes the education of Children in Care, previously in care, those with a social worker and those in formal kinship care.</p> <p>Formal kinship carers, where there is an SGO or CAO, can contact the Virtual School directly for information and advice relating to education.</p>	<p>The Virtual School supports current and former children in care, irrespective of which school they are (or are not) attending in Warwickshire. It's a good resource for any carers with questions about the education of the child they're caring for.</p>
Agency Decision Maker	<p>The agency decision maker (ADM) reviews the foster carer report and panel minutes and decides whether to approve the applicants as Kinship Carers.</p>	<p>NB/ My suggested text below is guesswork as I'm unsure if the ADM is what I think it is or not:</p> <p>The person who reviews the fostering panel's assessment report of you and makes the final decision on whether they feel you are a suitable candidate to be a kinship foster carer.</p>
Care Plan	<p>A document that outlines the reasons a child is in care, the goals for their time in care, and their long-term plans. It details how the child's needs will be met, including health, education, and contact with family. Kinship Carers play an active role in shaping and reviewing the care plan.</p>	<p>This will be referenced to a lot by social workers, so is a key document to keep to hand. It also includes lots of important reference information about your child and their parent(s) and explains why your child no longer lives with their parent(s). It also includes details around family time (when they see parents and other family members who have supervised contact and how often).</p>

Delegated Authority	The practice of granting foster carers the power to make everyday decisions for children in their care, similar to what a parent would do.	While this is similar to what a parent would do, it doesn't give you, as a foster carer, parental rights, so you (may) still have to get approval for things like cutting the child's hair, taking them on holiday etc.
Pathway Plan	A document that records needs, identifies actions to be taken, and resources that need to be put in place to support young people during their transition to adulthood.	This is a commitment to support the child and details what support the child needs or may need in the future
Placement Planning Meeting	A meeting held before or shortly after a child is placed with a foster family to discuss the child's needs, the placement plan, and ensure everyone is prepared.	As a Kinship Carer, this is often not the same as a mainstream foster carer, as Kinship Carers are often new to fostering and become Kinship Carers with a very short lead time. As a Kinship Carer, there is also a good chance that you may well have a better understanding of the child's needs than the social workers
Statutory Visit	Visits that social workers are required to do, where a child is subject to a child protection plan, or where they are a child in care.	The frequency of these reduces when a child remains with you for the long-term, but to begin with, these can be quite challenging to maintain if you also have a full-time job to attend (as many Kinship Carers do), but they are in place to ensure the child is safe and hopefully happy and comfortable living with you
Supervision	Fostering supervision involves regular visits and support from a dedicated social worker to ensure the well-being and safety of children in foster care and to support the kinship/foster carers.	This is when your social worker visits you and they will run through the same questions each time, all relating to the TSDs to ensure all areas of the child's safety and wellbeing are being considered and reviewed each time. These are designed to last two hours and take place frequently (every four weeks) to begin with, but

		again do reduce over time if your child remains with you for the long-term.
Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDs)	<p>These Standards have been adapted from the Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Carers, to reflect the distinct role of Kinship foster carers. The areas that Kinship foster carers are required to evidence have been selected taking into account the nature and context of the kinship caring role. Kinship carers are expected to complete the standards within 18 months of approval (National Minimum Standards – Fostering Services: April 2011).</p>	<p>The kinship TSDs can be quite daunting in terms of time commitment and the need to complete them within 18 months if you're working full-time as well as looking after your child. However, the various free training workshops and courses on offer and included as part of the mandatory requirement can be really helpful and provide you with useful techniques and insights that can help you to better understand and support the child you are looking after. If you go on to complete skills level 1 (which the TSDs are a key part of) you will gain new skills, knowledge and insights which can be both useful and helpful, but can also be financially beneficial to you as a Kinship Carer.</p>
Family Information Service (FIS)	<p>Help you access information and services that can support you. https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/children-families</p>	No further explanation needed

Early Support/Early Help Offer:

Below are details of 'universal support' or 'early help' services that are freely available to all families.

Warwickshire's Early Support locality-based teams work with children, young people, and families facing various challenges. These teams include:

- Family Information Service,
- Youth and Community Centres,
- Early Support Family Support Workers,
- Early Support Officers,
- and the Domestic Abuse team.

Early help locality teams work with families empowering them through providing tools and strategies to support families to find their own solutions, seek wider support, and help children be safer, healthier, and happier.

Family Information Service (FIS)

Kinship Carers can access Warwickshire's Family Information Service (FIS). This is a free, impartial service provided by Warwickshire County Council to support families with children and young people. FIS provides information, advice and guidance on a variety of services related to childcare, family support and other issues.

FIS Contact details:

- **Website:** [Children and families – Warwickshire County Council](#)
- **Social Media:** <https://www.facebook.com/WarwickshireFIS>
- **Email:** fis@warwickshire.gov.uk
- **Phone:** 0800 408 1558 or 01926 742 274

Support groups:

Kinship Carers may sometimes feel isolated particularly if they are managing the complex needs of vulnerable children for which they had not planned. The council promotes opportunities for carers to come together, talking with other carers in similar situations provides carers with an informal safe space to talk, share experiences and learn from experiences of others.

Informal support groups provide more than informal practical advice they provide emotional support for carers, offering reassurance from their experiences is often an invaluable source of support for carers.

Support groups and opportunities are located within this offer and our dedicated team of social workers will be able to discuss with you any new or additional support groups which might be available

Warwickshire Children & Family Centres

Warwickshire's children & family centres can be accessed by Kinship Carers to offer support with young people aged 0-19 (25 with additional needs).

Services are primarily on offer across children and family centres and outreach venues in Warwickshire. Support is on offer for all children and families, with an extra focus on pregnancy and the early years of a child's life.

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilycentres>

Nuneaton and Bedworth

Children and family centre	Address	Opening times	Telephone
St Michael's Children and Family Centre	Hazel Grove, Bedworth, Bedworth CV12 9DA	Monday to Thursday - 8.30am to 4pm Friday - 8.30am to 12pm	024 7649 4171
Camp Hill Children and Family Centre	Hollystitches Road, Nuneaton CV10 9QA	Monday to Friday - 9am to 4.30pm	024 7634 4334
Riversley Park Children and Family Centre	Coton Road, Nuneaton CV11 5TY	Monday to Friday - 9.30am to 4.30pm	024 7637 8600
Stockingford Children and Family Centre	St Paul's Road, Nuneaton CV10 8HW	Monday to Friday - 8.30am to 5pm	024 7638 3708

North Warwickshire

Children and family centre	Address	Opening times	Telephone
Atherstone Children and Family Centre	Kings Avenue, Atherstone CV9 1JZ	Monday to Friday - 9am to 5pm	01827 718723

Rugby

Children and family centre	Address	Opening times	Telephone
Boughton Leigh Children and Family Centre	Wetherell Way, Rugby, CV21 1LT	Monday to Friday - 8.30am to 4.30pm	01788 570347
Long Lawford Children and Family Centre	Holbrook Road, Long Lawford, Rugby, CV23 9AL	Monday to Friday - 8.30am to 4.30pm	01788 568554
Claremont Children and Family Centre	Claremont Road, Rugby, CV21 3LU	Monday to Friday - 8.30am to 4.30pm	01788 579488

Stratford

Children and family centre	Address	Opening times	Telephone
Stratford Children and Family Centre	Drayton Avenue, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9PB	Monday to Friday - 9am to 5pm	01789 266624
Alcester Children and Family Centre	St Faith's Road, Alcester, B49 6AG	Monday to Friday - 9am to 5pm	01789 764093
Lighthorne Heath Children and Family Centre	Stratford Road, Leamington Spa, CV33 9TW	Monday to Friday - 9am to 5pm	01926 691105

Warwick & Leamington Spa

Children and family centre	Address	Opening times	Telephone
Kingsway Children and Family Centre	Kingsway School, Baker Avenue, Leamington Spa, CV31 3HB	Monday to Thursday - 9am to 5pm Friday - 9am to 4.45pm	01926 336793
Lillington Children and Family Centre	3 Mason Avenue, Lillington, Leamington Spa CV32 7QE	Monday to Friday - 9am to 4.45pm	01926 337506
Westgate Children and Family Centre	Bowling Green Street, Warwick, CV34 4DD	Monday to Friday - 9am to 4.45pm	01926 490629

Details of services and activities delivered by our Children and Family Centre providers and partners in Bedworth can be found on the [St Michaels CFC Linktree page](#) and throughout the rest of the county via the [Coventry and Warwickshire Barnardos page](#).

More information can also be found through the social media links:

[Nuneaton Children and Family Centres on Facebook](#)

[North Warwickshire Children and Family Centre on Facebook](#)

[St Michael's Children and Family Centre - Bedworth on Facebook](#)

[Rugby Children and Family Centres on Facebook](#)

[Warwick Children and Family Centres on Facebook](#)

[Stratford Children and Family Centres on Facebook](#)

Centre activity timetables can be found via the Facebook pages above.

Family support workers are also available across Warwickshire to listen, support and offer advice and guidance to families and professionals.

To speak to a family support worker over the phone or book a face-to-face consultation:

- **Call:** 01926 412412, Monday to Friday between 9am - 4pm.
- **Or email:** earlysupport@warwickshire.gov.uk

Family and relationship offer (Parenting programmes and workshops)

In Warwickshire, parents to be, parents, carers and grandparents have access to a variety of parenting resources and advice. Support can be accessed online, face-to-face through informal advice, one-to-one consultations, group programmes and workshops.

- Please access the following website to book events and workshops:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/warwickshire-parenting-support-71623337213>
- For more information, email: ehparenttrainers@warwickshire.gov.uk

Online courses

The online courses are designed to increase the confidence of parents-to-be, mums, dads, grandparents, and carers. These courses have been developed by NHS experts and parents through an evidence-based model known as the Solihull Approach.

All the courses can be completed flexibly, at your own pace. Each of the course modules takes around 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Each course contains several modules.

All the courses are FREE for Warwickshire residents and carers using the access code BEAR.

There's also a selection of other online and face-to-face courses for parents, covering a wide range of topics.

Details:

- Website to book courses: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/parentguides>

Other organisations offering support

Kinship.org also offers important signposting towards support groups and workshops that Kinship Carers can attend in and around Warwickshire. This includes peer support groups and events such as 'meet and walk':

- [Support Groups near you](#)
- [Workshops & events near you](#)

Legal help for Kinship Carers:

Kinship.org offers Kinship Carers information and signposting towards legal advice that will help carers understand what their rights are and includes information such as:

- [Why you should get legal advice as a Kinship Carer](#)
- [Finding a Solicitor](#)
- [How to access legal aid](#)
- [Organisations offering legal support](#)

Family time and contact with birth parents/family

The Local Authority has a duty to promote family time for all children in need, with their families. However, depending on the legal status this duty is different. The Children Act 1989 states Every Local Authority shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable where any child within their area who is in need and whom they are not looking after, is living apart from their family –

- a) to enable them to live with their family and
- b) to promote contact between them and their family, if in their opinion it is necessary to do so, in order to safeguard or promote his welfare.

If the child or young person is cared for by the Local Authority the Children Act states the authority shall unless it is not reasonably practicable or consistent with their welfare, endeavour to promote contact between the child and –

- a) their parents;
- b) any person who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for them; and
- c) any relative, friend or other person connected with them.

We recognise that the organisation and supervision of family time can cause anxieties and present challenges for those involved. Where ever possible, the local authority would support families making arrangement for family time themselves, our position is that family time should look as 'normal as possible', however where there are challenges, the local authority will support and help to navigate these and where appropriate to do so, make alternative arrangements.

If you need to discuss family time or need support with arranging this please speak with your social/support worker.

Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Support Offer

For the first three years following the making of the SGO, the local authority that placed the child is responsible for assessing and providing special guardianship support services.

This obligation applies regardless of where the child or guardian lives during that period.

Once the three-year period has passed:

- The responsibility for assessing and providing support transfers to the local authority where the Special Guardian lives.
- An assessment may be requested by a Special Guardian, a parent or the child who have a right to challenge the outcome.
- Special Guardians can still request an assessment for support services, but the local authority is only required to consider the request and decide whether to carry out an assessment.
- There is no automatic entitlement to support after three years; it becomes needs-based and subject to assessment under Regulation 11 of the Special Guardianship Regulations.
- Each case must be considered on its own facts. The outcome of the decision to assess or not must be notified to a Special Guardian who has a right to challenge it.

SGO Support Social Worker

The SGO support team can allocate an SGO Support Social Worker to offer social work support which may include work alongside Early help, Child in Need, Child Protection Plans and Section 20 accommodated children. They will complete an SGO Needs Assessment to ascertain the therapeutic support needs of the family.

The SGO support team can complement and add to care planning and support. The team can also access ASGSF funding to support the therapeutic needs of SGO caring families. Therapeutic support can be accessed for the SGO carers themselves or for the children they care for.

It is important to ascertain that the children SGO carers are caring for were previously looked after children as this is an eligibility criteria for SGO Support and for ASGSF funding.

Details:

SGO support details:

Available Monday – Friday, 9am-5pm

Email sgo@warwickshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01926 742228

SGO Support Duty Line

Warwickshire’s SGO team provide a support line that can be accessed Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, where carers can speak with experienced SGO social workers on any matters relating to SGO support. The support line offers advice, guidance and signposting to other services or a referral into the team to offer specific support around an Adoption Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) Application.

In addition to this Warwickshire offer an out of hours Foster Carer Support line. This is available across all fostering households including Kinship Carers.

Details:

SGO support details: Available Monday – Friday, 9am-5pm Email sgo@warwickshire.gov.uk Tel: 01926 742228	Children in Care Support Line Available: 5:30pm until midnight from Monday to Friday, and from 9am until midnight on Saturdays, Sundays, and Bank Holidays Email cicsl@warwickshire.gov.uk Tel: 01926 742800
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Financial support

SGO carers and Kinship Carers receive financial support via allowances where they are caring for a child, these allowances are reviewed annually.

SGO and Kinship payments are made fortnightly, and payments continue to be made up until the young person’s 18th birthday, if the young person is in education, allowances will be paid until the last day of the education term post the young person’s 18th birthday.

The process to access payments –

Carers are contacted by the FABA each January and are asked to complete paperwork around their finances with a return of paperwork to FABA by the end of February.

Carers will **receive one reminder** letter in March to return their paperwork if it has not been received at the end of February.

Upon assessment of the completed financial paperwork allowances will continue or be adjusted for the next financial year from April.

If the financial paperwork is not returned to FABA in the outlined timescales above, this will result in allowances stopping from April, until the completed paperwork is returned and assessed.

Please speak to your allocated social worker for further support regarding financial arrangements.

Details:

- Fbaadmin@warwickshire.gov.uk

The SGO Support Team can support and advocate for carers when SGO carers are experiencing financial challenges. Considerations will be made on an individual basis regarding one-off payments to support carers, decisions around additional support payments are made by the Children's Team the child's social worker was allocated to.

Further financial support is available through applications to adaptations panel for extensions or alterations of property and/or cars to support the needs of carers and children.

SGO Support Events

There are specific events for SGO carers and their children, these are organised twice a year in April and October 2025, to coincide with Easter and October half-term. SGO carers can also attend relevant fostering events which WCC will advertise through various communication channels.

SGO carers will be updated about dates and themes of these events in the SGO newsletter that is sent quarterly to all the carers we have an email address for.

SGO Support Groups

Warwickshire host monthly coffee mornings for Kinship Carers who hold an SGO. This enables Kinship Carers to meet others and share experiences. They are facilitated by Family Support Workers and are held in the North, South and East of the county.

SGO and Kinship Carers are invited to attend other events hosted for WCC carers bringing further opportunity to widen support networks and share experience and learning.

Details:

For detailed information please email fosteringduty@warwickshire.gov.

Private fostering

As a part of our initial contact and assessment of the carer/s, the Fostering Social Worker will ensure that the prospective private foster carer/s has received a copy of Warwickshire's Guidance and Standards for Private Fostering and that they are aware of their duties and responsibilities as a private foster carer/s.

The Private Foster Carer/s will be advised of the annual foster care training plan by the Fostering Services and invited and encouraged to attend some of these courses (e.g. "Child Protection" and "Promoting Equality"). This offer of training is generally not mandatory but is available should private foster carers wish to access it.

Whilst undertaking the private foster carer's assessment, the social worker may consider it appropriate to stipulate attendance at a specific training programme for the suitability of a specific placement. If this is the case, the social worker will discuss the matter with the private foster carer/s and will make a clear recommendation in their assessment report to the Fostering Service Manager.

Education Support for Kinship Carers

Advice and guidance on education matters for children living with Kinship Carers will be provided by your social worker.

Young people aged 16–19 in Kinship Carer arrangements may be entitled to the Government funded bursary scheme and some universities may offer Care Leavers accommodation support schemes. Carers would need to contact relevant university institutions to understand what options might be available to them and the young people they care for.

Priority schools' admissions are available for those children who have been cared for but who are now living with their family under a Child Arrangements Order, Special Guardianship Order or Adoption Order.

Warwickshire Virtual School offers guidance and information to Kinship Carers with children under Special Guardianship and Child Arrangements Orders.

The Virtual School will help carers navigate the education system and advocate effectively for their Young People, providing both simple answers and in-depth consultations.

Details:

- **Email:** Virtualschool@warwickshire.gov.uk
- **Call:** 01926 412998 (Monday – Friday, 8am – 4:30pm)
- **Website:** [Warwickshire Virtual School – Warwickshire County Council](#)

The Government provide 15hours childcare for all children aged 3-4yrs in England, children in Kinship care are eligible for this offer of support. For more information and to check eligibility for free 30hours childcare for working families in England (children aged 9months to 4yrs) please click on the link - [15 and 30 hours childcare support | Childcare Choices](#)

Training for Carers

Bespoke Kinship Carers training

Kinship foster carers, like other foster carers, must complete the Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards within 18 months of approval. These standards act as a national benchmark, outlining the knowledge, understanding, and skills kinship and foster carers should demonstrate within that timeframe. They ensure Kinship Carers receive necessary induction, training, and ongoing support to meet the specific needs of the children they care for.

Your allocated social worker will discuss TSDs with you and talk you through what these are in more detail and will support you to complete them.

Key aspects of TSDs for Kinship Carers:

- **National Minimum Standard:** The TSDs establish a national minimum standard for all foster carers, including Kinship Carers, ensuring a consistent level of training and support.
- **Induction and Training:** Kinship Carers receive induction training to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills for their role.
- **Ongoing Development:** TSDs emphasize the importance of ongoing professional development, ensuring carers can adapt to the evolving needs of the child.
- **Meeting Specific Needs:** The training and support provided through TSDs should help Kinship Carers address the unique needs of the child they are caring for.
- **Evidence of Meeting Standards:** Kinship Carers need to provide evidence that they have met the TSD standards within the specified timeframe.
- **Workbook and Support:** There are specific workbooks and guidance available for Kinship Carers to document their progress and for social workers to support them.
- **Local Authority Support:** Local authorities are responsible for providing the necessary training and support to Kinship Carers, including access to the TSD standards.

Completing TSDs provides additional financial benefits for Kinship Carers which many of our Kinship Carers benefit from where their employment status/role has had to be reconsidered to enable them to fulfil their role as a Kinship Carer.

Core Training Warwickshire County Council offer six core courses for all carers in Warwickshire, for approved Kinship Carers these are Child Protection Safeguarding, Equality Diversity and Inclusion, Paediatric First Aid, Attachments, Recording and Safer Caring Skills, the sixth course is a bespoke training called Kinship Carer which aims to support new Kinship Carers to understand more about being a Kinship Carer and help carers understand the support that is available to them. This training is hosted at least 6 times per year, whilst further bespoke training for SGOs is also hosted at least 3 times per year.

The core training course available solely for Kinship Carers offers an opportunity for carers to meet other carers with similar experiences providing opportunities to make new connections and access peer support. The course specifically supports Kinship Carers to understand their role and responsibilities as a Kinship Carer and gain wider understanding of key contacts and professionals involved in supporting them alongside learning strategies and tools available to help caring for children. This course is linked to Training, Support and Development standards (standard 1,3 and 6).

In addition to the core and bespoke training offer Kinship Carers can access other foster carer training.

Warwickshire's fostering service offers a variety of training courses that can be accessed by Kinship Carers that cover many topics including therapeutic parenting, child development, connections through communication, neurodiversity, keeping children and dogs safe in the home, vicarious trauma, self-harm, managing challenging behaviours, prevent training, child sexual exploitation etc. Further details can be found on WeLearn for Kinship Carers or via the SGO newsletter.

Details:

- **Website:** <https://fostering.warwickshire.gov.uk/fostering-warwickshire/training-professional-development>
- **Social Media:** <https://www.instagram.com/warwickshirefostering/?hl=en>
<https://www.facebook.com/fosterforwarwickshire/>
- **Email:** SGO@warwickshire.gov.uk
- **Phone:** [0800 408 1556](tel:08004081556)

Kinship: Home | The Kinship care charity | England and Wales

The Kinship Charity offer a variety of over 35 in person or online events and workshops for Kinship Carers in Warwickshire. Covering many topics such as financial support, understanding trauma and attachment as well as managing contact for kinship families.

- [Training and events](#)

Carer specific support from Warwickshire's Fostering Service

The wellbeing of our carers is important, in Warwickshire we work with our carers to understand their needs and where we can better support wellbeing enabling them to continue to care for children.

Wellbeing Day

Kinship Carers and private fostering carers are invited to a well-being day. This can be used once a year to take time away from their caring role and embark on an activity such as; learning a new skill, volunteering or visiting a charity, giving carers a sense of wellbeing and empowerment by taking steps to look after your health and wellbeing.

Details: Please consult with your social worker.

Carers Wellbeing Conversation

The carers wellbeing conversation is an assessment designed to formalise the process of evaluating the needs of parent's or carers who provide care, support, or assistance to children with disabilities, chronic illnesses, or other specific needs as defined in the Children & Families Act 2014. The conversation establishes a structured framework for identifying the physical, emotional, and social needs of parent's or carers, with the aim of providing appropriate information, advice, guidance, support and potentially resources to assist them in their caregiving roles while ensuring their own wellbeing.

Details:

To access a carers assessment via the [Caring Together Warwickshire](#) service. Please visit the website or call 0800 197 5544 for information and advice.

Useful organisations and Support Services:

Coram BAAF - supports agencies and professionals who work with children and young people in care.

Website: [Homepage](#) | [CoramBAAF](#)

Family Fund Trust - helps families with severely disabled or seriously ill children to have choices and the opportunity to enjoy ordinary life. Gives grants for things that make life easier and more enjoyable for the disabled child and their family. [Family Fund](#) Tel: 0845 130 4542 Email: info@familyfund.org.uk

The Fostering Network - supports Warwickshire foster carers and anyone with an interest in fostering to improve the lives of cared for children. Publishes resources and runs Fosterline, a confidential advice line for foster carers including concerns about a child's future, allegations and complaints, legislation and financial matters. [Home](#). Email: info@fostering.net Tel: 020 7620 6400. Fosterline: 0800 040 7675

Kinship - champions the role of Kinship Carers and the wider family in children's lives, providing support and training opportunities and local/ national updates. [Kinship: Home](#) | [The Kinship care charity](#) | [England and Wales](#)

'Someone Like Me' - Someone Like Me is a free service where you can speak to a specially trained Kinship Carer volunteer on the phone. Someone who can listen, understand and support Kinship Carers.

Details:

- Any Kinship Carer in England and Wales can join Someone Like Me. Carers can register by completing our registration form. The service aims to match carers with another Kinship Carer in 10 working days.
- Carers can then have up to 3 phone calls with the volunteer that you have been matched with.

Website & Sign up form: <https://kinship.org.uk/support-and-advice/talk-to-someone/someone-like-me/>

TalktoFrank - The government's national drugs helpline which offers free confidential drugs information and advice 24 hours a day. Information and advice is also available via the website - [Honest information about drugs | FRANK](#). 24 hour advice line: 0800 77 66 00 Text: 82111 Email: frank@talktofrank.com

Young Minds - works to improve the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people and empowering their parents and carers. [YoungMinds | Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People | YoungMinds](#) Address: 48-50 St John Street, London, EC1M 4DG Tel: 020 7336 8445

If any links do not work please contact fosteringtraining@warwickshire.gov.uk