



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

Peer Support and Community Network Agreement

January 2025





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Overview

We've been listening closely to the needs of volunteer group leaders, and we're committed to providing deeper, more tailored support for every group. This includes existing and new groups — whether developed with the Kinship peer support team or independently.

To better support challenges like outreach and fundraising, we'd like to introduce an agreement between Kinship and groups — the Network Agreement.

This agreement, created in consultation with group leaders, is designed to provide clarity and strengthen our relationship, ensuring every group in the network, as well as those joining in the future, are aligned to the mission, vision, and values you've worked so hard to foster.

What is the 'Network Agreement'?



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The Network Agreement provides a clear, shared foundation for how groups and Kinship work together. It establishes a minimum standard to ensure groups can safely and effectively support kinship carers.

It also:

- **clarifies the relationship** between support groups and Kinship, no matter how the group was originally formed
- **protects and promotes** the independence and sustainability of local groups while maintaining alignment with shared values
- sets out **mutual expectations and commitments** – what groups can expect from Kinship, and what Kinship expects in return
- **encourages consistent collaboration** that raises the profile of kinship care and strengthens trust in Kinship as a brand and a national network
- **ensures that all groups benefit equally** from being part of the network, increasing reach and impact for more kinship carers across the country

This agreement forms the basis for a strong, respectful partnership rooted in shared purpose, while allowing local support to remain community-led and authentic.

Mission, vision and values



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In everything they do, groups and Kinship will do all they can to live up to the mission, vision and values of the charity, both practically and in spirit:

Mission – ensuring kinship carers and the children they care for get the support and recognition they need

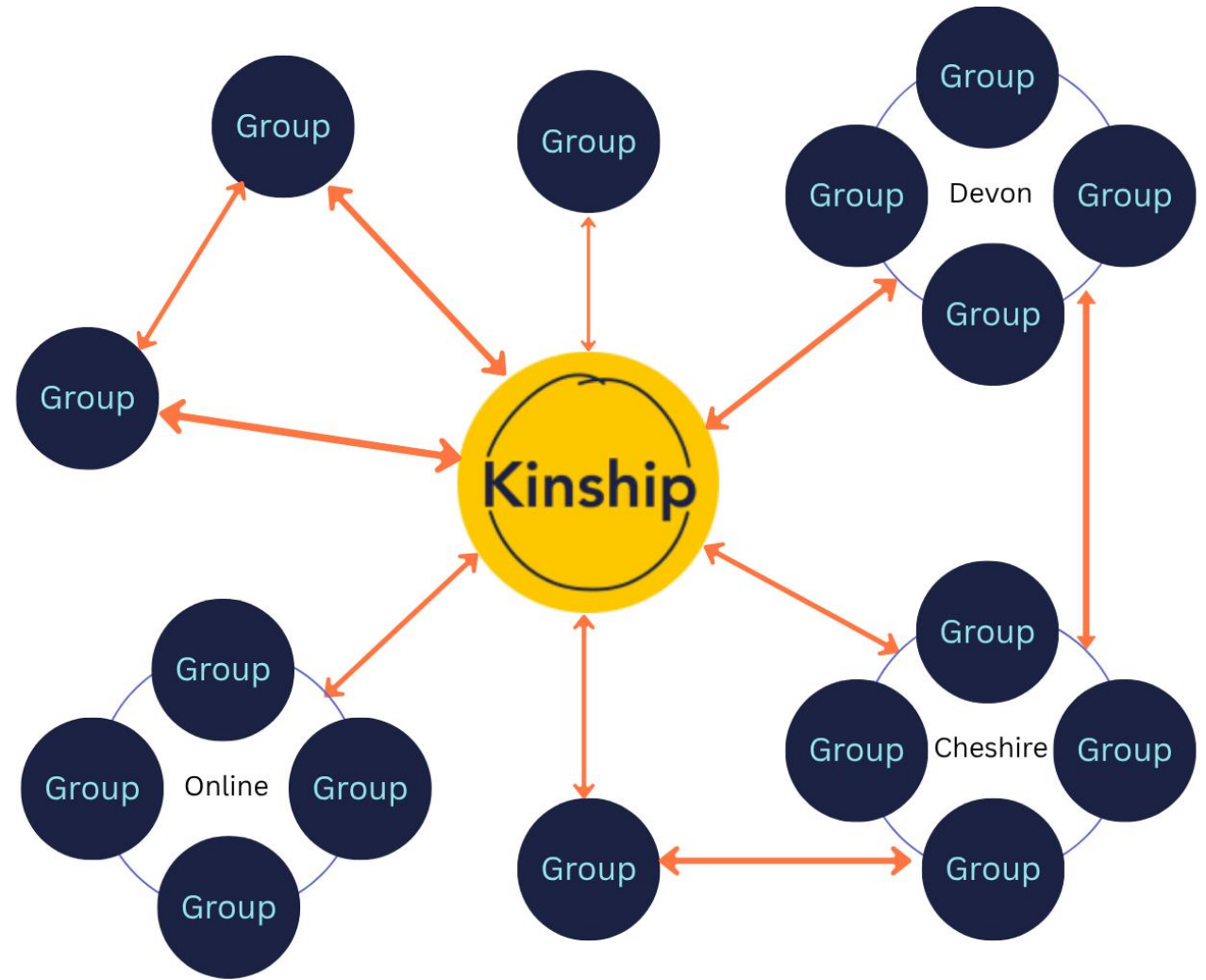
Vision – creating a society in which kinship carers and the children they care for are recognised, valued and supported

Values – Be bold, stronger together, put people first and step up (inspired by kinship carers)

Our network

The network promotes collaborative working, not only between groups and Kinship, but regionally or thematically.

It helps groups support one another and amplify their messaging together, safe in the knowledge they share a similar mission, vision and values.



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Commitments

The Network Agreement is based on 10 commitments

1. Collaboration
2. Safeguarding
3. Safety
4. Funding and finances
5. Status transparency
6. Branding
7. Equality, diversity and inclusion
8. Resolving complaints
9. Reporting
10. Data management



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1. Collaboration

The group will...	Kinship will...
• act in the best interests of its members and the network • lend its local expertise and insights to Kinship to influence plans and support local and regional development • help shape and influence the growth and development of peer support, ensuring that as many kinship carers as possible can benefit and contribute to the service	• act in the best interests of kinship carers and the network • inform groups of developments and plans for their area, not just within peer support but across services • wherever possible, involve groups in planning and priority setting for services within their area • support groups to influence decisions and policies on a local, regional and national level through the sharing of information, opportunities and support



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2. Safeguarding

The group will...	Kinship will...
• ensure there is sufficient competence and confidence within the groups to effectively manage safeguarding i.e. knowing how to identify and report concerns • ensure that every effort is made to guarantee each meeting is attended by a volunteer competent in safeguarding • make all group members aware of how to report concerns to Kinship • report any causes for concern in line with Kinship's safeguarding policy • nominate someone as a preferred point of contact for safeguarding	• provide tailored introductory safeguarding training and guidance • provide easily digestible guidance for group volunteers and all group members • provide support and guidance in response to safeguarding concerns • provide updates and refresher training • share relevant and appropriate information that could impact a group, involving the group's nominated volunteer wherever possible



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3. Safety

The group will...	Kinship will...
• complete and maintain a risk assessment for their activities • record and respond to any accidents, incidents or near misses, informing Kinship via the Hub • work with Kinship to review and update assessments and ways of working on a regular basis – at least annually – or in response to any issues	• support groups to create and maintain their risk assessment • provide access to its public liability insurance for network groups free of charge • provide templates, guidance and optional training focused on safety • support groups to review and maintain their risk assessments, keeping everyone safe



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4. Funding and finances

The group will...	Kinship will...
• be free to raise funds for the running of their activities, but it must be clear to anyone giving money, resources or time that they are giving them to the group and not to Kinship the charity – this is in line with fundraising and charity regulations • be responsible for any funds it has or any bank account it holds, unless specifically done in partnership with Kinship on a case-by-case basis • not use the Kinship charity number when fundraising for their own group	• provide advice and support for groups engaged in fundraising • provide practical guidance and support to the group to set up an appropriate bank account for example, advising which banks and building societies offer accounts for community groups • consider groups when planning and carrying out its own fundraising • offer support when a charity number is requested, and work collaboratively to find solutions



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5. Status transparency

The group will...	Kinship will...
• inform Kinship if it wishes to incorporate itself as a legal entity. Most groups operate as unincorporated associations – in plain language, a group of people coming together for a common purpose that is not to make profit	• provide guidance and support to groups considering becoming incorporated • connect interested groups with groups who have already changed their operating model



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6. Branding

The group will...	Kinship will...
• comply with Kinship's brand guidance if it wishes to use the Kinship brand or Kinship branded materials – by using the branded materials that are provided and not altering the design or core information about Kinship • ensure when using Kinship's brand (materials and merchandise) that you do so only when undertaking activities relevant to supporting kinship families, and in a way that does not risk Kinship's reputation	• provide groups with access to marketing and promotional materials (that can be personalised) to help with awareness raising, attracting more kinship carers, fundraising, campaigning and other activities • supply a point of contact if any further resources are required/ provide training to support the above activities to promote the group and raise awareness



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7. Equality, diversity and inclusion

The group will...	Kinship will...
• support Kinship's anti-racism and equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) framework • not tolerate discrimination from anyone attending group meetings or activities NB. Groups may set up as 'special interest groups', offering tailored, targeted support for underserved communities.	• provide proactive guidance, optional training and ongoing support to promote EDI • support groups to address challenges, manage and learn from issues • help set up special interest groups for underserved communities



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8. Resolving complaints

The group will...	Kinship will...
• in the first instance try to resolve any issues or complaints locally • make Kinship aware of any concerns that can't be resolved locally with fairness and impartiality • make all members aware that they can approach Kinship directly if they have any concerns or complaints about the group, or about the behaviour of any individual within the group	• provide optional training on managing group dynamics and dealing with conflict • offer support to groups dealing with issues, conflict and complaints • provide guidance as to how group members or third parties can get in touch to raise any concerns • consider complaints brought directly to Kinship by group members or third parties – and pass complaints back to group volunteers to resolve in the first instance, if appropriate



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9. Reporting

The group will...	Kinship will...
• designate a 'primary contact', who will liaise about how best to fulfil this requirement • be responsive to Kinship's requests for the number of carers attending, including details of members where the carer consents. This might be used to support group outreach, identify training opportunities, improve services and Kinship's offer, and demonstrate the strength of the network	• outline what information is required for reporting purposes and provide an explanation of what the information will be used for • minimise the amount of information required from groups as reasonably and practically as possible • support groups by ensuring that information is gathered in a way that is accessible and not unnecessarily onerous



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10. Data management

The group will...	Kinship will...
• be responsible for guaranteeing appropriate consent and controls are in place to manage any local data, ensuring it complies with relevant regulations, including the general data protection regulations (GDPR)	• provide support to groups in protecting their data, including optional training. • ensure that it complies with its policies and GDPR in respect to data it processes



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What changes does this mean for your group?

- attend Kinship's training to support with safeguarding, inclusion and GDPR
- complete a risk assessment for your meet
- report the number of members who attend each meet, including names where the kinship carer consents



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Benefits for your group

- Support with finding more kinship carers in your community
- Buddying with other leaders
- Use of the Kinship brand and *in partnership with Kinship* merchandise
- Training and advice
- Public liability insurance
- Collaborative input into Kinship services
- Online workshops and guest speakers



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Check out our frequently
asked questions document for
more information

If you still have questions,
email
peersupport@kinship.org.uk





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www.kinship.org.uk