



Ask your workplace to become a Kinship Friendly Employer

What is a Kinship Friendly Employer?

Kinship carers currently have no right to paid leave from work when they take on the care of a child.

The Kinship Friendly Employer scheme, created by Kinship, gives employers free tools and guidance to support kinship carers in their workforce – as well as a way to share this publicly if they wish.

Employers can work towards three standards:

- Gold
- Silver
- Bronze

Organisations large and small, including John Lewis, B&Q, Card Factory, The Education Alliance, Lloyds Banking Group and Tesco have already signed up to the scheme.

You can find out more about the Kinship Friendly Employer scheme as well as find resources that are useful for sharing with your line manager or HR department on our website:

<https://kinship.org.uk/get-involved/partner-with-kinship/become-a-kinship-friendly-employer/>

Why is paid leave from employment important for kinship families?

Kinship has been calling on government to introduce paid leave from work for all kinship carers for over a decade, most recently as part of our **#ValueOurLove campaign**.

Kinship carers tell us about the challenges they and their family have faced without paid leave from work when they stepped up to become a kinship carer. Many kinship carers have to turn to benefits, are pushed into poverty, are forced out of work completely or sacrifice time to settle and build lifelong bonds with the children they love.

Paid kinship care leave would give kinship carers time to care for and bond with babies, to settle already traumatised children, arrange schooling and childcare, attend court and social work meetings, and provide emotional safety - without falling into poverty.

In June 2025, the government began a review of the parental leave system – and set out it will look at support for kinship carers. Until there is a legal right to paid time off work for kinship carers, it is up to individual employers whether staff are offered paid time off from work.



Employers who step up – because they're asked to by kinship carers

The lack of a legal right to paid leave for kinship carers hasn't stopped a number of organisations from introducing paid leave for kinship carers through our Kinship Friendly Employers scheme. Many of these were pushed to join by kinship carers in their own workforce.

Workplaces today are striving to be as inclusive as possible – so if they don't hear from you how will they learn that kinship carers need to be included in their policies? And the more workplaces that offer paid leave to kinship carers, the more the government will be persuaded to make it a legal right.

Now is a great time to get the conversation started with your employer. You have an opportunity to share with your workplace what being a kinship carer means and how all kinship carers need to be included in the organisation's family-friendly policies.

How to talk to your workplace

You could begin by having an informal chat with your line manager:

- Explain what kinship care is and what it means for you and your family. If you need more information share this link: <https://kinship.org.uk/what-is-kinship-care/>
- Explain that kinship carers could be missing from the organisation's current family-friendly policies and you would like to support them in closing the gap.
- Ask who is the best person to talk to about paid parental leave policies (this will usually be someone in your HR department, if your organisation has one).

You could then use our handy template email (see below) to contact the right person. It contains the information they need to begin to think about paid leave for kinship carers including a link to find out more and to register for a Kinship Friendly Employers guide.

Each organisation is different and the best person to contact may differ, processes may also differ for bigger and smaller organisations so don't worry if you are advised to speak to someone else other than HR.

What is in the guide for employers?

Our Kinship Friendly Employer scheme has been set up to provide a free framework and toolkit to help any employer - from any sector and of any size - to introduce Kinship Friendly policies.

We have created a guide and toolkit for employers to help them understand what kinship care is and how they can better support kinship carers in their workforce. The pack includes template HR policies, checklists, and guidance for HR and line managers.

Organisations joining the scheme will also be supported by Kinship to:

- publicise and promote their Kinship Friendly Employer status. on Kinship's website, social media channels and external communications.
- introduce them to other organisations and industry bodies to forge connections with other Kinship Friendly Employers, and share learnings and best practice



- collaborate around [Kinship Care Week](#) (each October), promoting their commitment to kinship carers during this week
- signpost kinship carers in your workforce to Kinship's free and independent advice, information and support services (available to kinship carers in England and Wales).

Making progress or need support?

Some kinship carers get a positive response from their employer and things move quickly, while others struggle to get a response. Either way, do persevere and if you need any help or support do get in touch with the Kinship campaigns team by emailing comms@kinship.org.uk. We also want to hear how things are progressing – so do send updates.

Template email to your HR department

Dear **[HR Manager's Name]**,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to suggest some potential enhancements to our organisational policies that could greatly benefit employees and their families.

My understanding of our organisational leave and wider family policies is that they provide **[outline what you think current policies allow in simple terms]**. However, there is still a crucial gap for kinship carers **[such as myself]**.

Kinship carers are family or friends who step up, often during an unexpected crisis, to raise a child when their parents aren't able to. **[If you feel comfortable to, insert your experience here]**. You can find out more about kinship care here: <https://kinship.org.uk/what-is-kinship-care/>.

The charity Kinship has a Kinship Friendly Employers award scheme, which I would like our organisation to join. It would demonstrate to your workforce, suppliers, stakeholders and prospective employees that you value, understand and support kinship carers. You will receive recognition from Kinship - the leading kinship care charity - for meeting a high threshold of support.

I'm keen to help us achieve the highest award we can. Here are some of the criteria of the Gold Kinship Friendly Employer award to give you an idea of the sort of things we'd be looking at:

- Kinship carer employees included in family-friendly policies
- Signposting to relevant support for staff
- Introducing paid kinship care leave **[in line with adoptive leave]** to provide greater security to their child/ren during an often-traumatic time in their lives

You can find the scheme's criteria in greater detail here: <https://kinship.org.uk/get-involved/partner-with-kinship/become-a-kinship-friendly-employer/>. It has already been taken up by a range of employers such as Tesco, B&Q, and the Department of Education.



Please let me know your thoughts. I'm keen to meet to discuss this matter further with you so we can identify some next steps.

Best regards,
[Your Name]
[Your Job Title]