



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

# #ValueOurLove campaign

Briefing for MPs and Peers – February 2026

We look forward to welcoming you along to our parliamentary reception:  
**2 to 4pm | Wed 11 Feb | Churchill Room, House of Commons**

## About kinship care

Kinship carers are family or friends who step up, often during an unexpected crisis, to care for a child when their parents aren't able to. The best estimate we have suggests there are **more than 141,000 children living in kinship care in England and Wales** – three times the number in unrelated foster care.

Grandparents are most commonly kinship carers, but they can also be older siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins and family friends. Kinship care can take many forms, and the rights, responsibilities and support available to kinship families depends largely on the type of arrangement they have.

Most children in kinship care have experienced trauma, adversity and loss. Children typically enter because the parent has died, is unwell, has gone to prison, is experiencing problems with drugs and alcohol, or are neglectful or abusive. A kinship carer provides a stable and loving home life where a child can grow and develop in a safe, positive environment. They also get to stay in their existing family network, which helps maintain their sense of identity and family relationships.

**It makes sense to invest in kinship care.** Evidence shows that it delivers good experiences and outcomes for children and families as well as cost savings for the public purse. For every 100 children looked after in well-supported kinship care rather than local authority care, the state saves £4 million per year and increases the lifetime earnings of those children by £2 million.

## About Kinship

Kinship is the leading kinship care charity in England and Wales. We're here to change lives and change the system. We provide advice and support to thousands of kinship families each year through our specialist advice service, network of more than 160 peer support groups, and free in-person and online events and workshops. Working closely with kinship carers, local authorities and other partners, we develop research, campaigns and policy solutions – creating positive change across society.

### 5 top links for parliamentarians

1. Download our **information pack for MPs** for everything you need to know to support kinship families in your constituency and in Parliament.
2. Visit our **kinship care policy tracker** to stay updated kinship care policy in England, including what's happening now, our verdict, and what we think should happen next.
3. Read our collection of **reports and briefings** for further evidence and policy recommendations based on our unparalleled reach with kinship carers.
4. Learn more about the kinship families in your constituency and region at our **kinship care constituency map**.
5. Discover Kinship's support for kinship families in your constituency or local area by using our **Kinship Compass tool**.

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## About the #ValueOurLove campaign

For too long kinship care has been overlooked and undervalued. That's why our [#ValueOurLove campaign](#) is calling on politicians to increase emotional, practical and financial support for kinship families. Since launching in October 2022, we've mobilised a community of kinship carers across England and Wales to take actions which have secured significant changes to policy and practice, including the first-ever national kinship care strategy for England in December 2023.

**Our current policy priorities are:**

### 1. Ensuring all kinship families have access to financial support.

Financial insecurity remains a core part of too many kinship families' lives. Kinship carers are more than twice as likely as other adults to be [using credit more than usual](#) to cope with the cost of living. Unlike foster carers, most kinship carers do not receive any financial support when they unexpectedly take on the care of a relative or friend's child. The current system [creates perverse incentives](#) which keeps children looked after in care and prevents families moving to the right kinship arrangement for them, with significant implications for children, families and the public purse.

**Current status:** We are imminently expecting further information about launch of the government's [long-awaited Kinship Allowance Pilot](#). Whilst this is a good step forward, it risks paralysing progress towards equalising financial support more widely. We want to see the government work at pace to outline how the pilot could lead to a further rollout, and the Department for Education should encourage – and challenge – non-participating local authorities to improve their financial support alongside the pilot.

### 2. Securing a new right to paid kinship care leave.

Nearly half of kinship carers in work [lose their jobs after taking on their caring role](#), and 8 in 10 never return to work. Unlike adoptive and other working parents, kinship carers have no right to paid leave from employment after taking on the care of babies and children. This unnecessarily forces them out of work and into poverty and the benefits system, and robs them of protected time to help settle their children.

**Current status:** We were successful in [securing the inclusion of kinship carers](#) within the scope of the government's parental leave review last year. But it's vital this leads to a new right to paid kinship care leave. On the day of the reception, we'll be publishing our proposals for a new statutory entitlement, developed alongside kinship carers and workplace leaders, and attending parliamentarians will have the chance to learn more from kinship carers and employers about why this is needed.

### 3. Improving educational and therapeutic support for kinship children.

Children growing up in kinship care have typically experienced trauma, separation and loss. As a result, they have levels of special educational needs comparable to children in care. But unlike their counterparts in the care system, most [don't have access to vital help](#) at school or with their mental health. For those kinship carers [concerned about their ability to continue](#) in the next year, the most common reason is the lack of support for their children's [social, emotional and mental health difficulties](#).

**Current status:** Steps taken through the [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#) and elsewhere have been insufficient to support children in kinship care. Last year's [changes to the adoption and special guardianship support fund](#) (ASGSF) were chaotic and poorly considered, and we eagerly await further information about the governments "public engagement process" for determining the fund's future.

To learn more about current policy in kinship care, what's happening and our verdict and evidence, read our most recent [Handle With Care](#) report based on the findings from our 2025 annual survey of kinship carers, and visit our [kinship care policy tracker](#).

Why not meet with kinship carers in your constituency or visit a local peer support group to learn more? [Get in touch](#) and we can help to arrange.