



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

Making a Support Plan

A Kinship Care Companion

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"This guidance comes from our hearts to yours and was born from our own long hours and difficult journeys. We've walked the path you're on, and we know just how heavy it can feel. We've poured our collective experiences into these pages because we believe no carer should have to struggle in the dark. Our deepest hope is that this guide lights a smoother way forward."

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Contents

Section 1: Welcome & why this guide is here	4
The value and importance of kinship care	4
Why good support plans are so important	4
How this guide can help	5
About this guide	6
Section 2: What is a support plan and why are they important?	7
2.1: What is a support plan?	7
2.2: Why are support plans important?	8
2.3: What is often missing in support plans	9
2.4: What strong support can achieve	11
Section 3: What a kinship carer might need in their support plan	13
3.1: Planning for the early days	12
3.1.1: Existing relationship between kinship carer and child	12
3.1.2: Child's history and experiences	15
3.1.3: Setting new routines and boundaries	17
3.2: What children and young people might need	18
3.2.1: Child's age	18
3.2.2: Identity and cultural needs	22
3.2.3: Children with additional or complex needs	24
3.3: Key transition points	25
3.3.1: Starting or changing school	25
3.3.2: Entering teenage years	25
3.3.3: Transition into independence and adulthood	26
3.4: Family life and relationships	27
3.4.1: Parent contact and family time	28
3.4.2: Wider family tensions and conflict	30
3.5: Carer welfare and wellbeing	31
3.5.1: Finances	31
3.5.2: Housing	33
3.5.3: Connections, peer support, and wellbeing	34
Section 4. Revisiting a support plan	35
Section 5: Essentials every support plan should include	37

Welcome & why this guide is here

The value and importance of kinship care



Every day, relatives and friends step in to give children a loving home when their parents are unable to care for them. These kinship carers can change children's lives for the better. As well as providing care, they help keep children within their family network and maintain bonds that might otherwise have been lost.

Kinship carers tell us their role is both deeply rewarding and often very challenging. Kinship carers speak of the pride seeing the children they love grow and reach important milestones, and the fun and laughter children bring into their life.

But becoming a kinship carer also involves sacrifices - leaving work, putting retirement plans on hold, or taking on additional financial pressures. Oftentimes the children kinship carers are raising will have additional needs and require extra support in their life. Yet too often kinship families are not getting the consistent support they need and deserve.

Why good support plans are so important

A clear support plan is an important foundation for kinship care. Where a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) is being made, there is a statutory expectation that support arrangements are set out.

For connected foster carers, a specific support plan is not required in the same way but developing one remains good practice.

In reality, support planning benefits all kinship carers by setting out agreed support and responsibilities in writing, giving carers confidence they and their child's needs will be met, and helping prevent challenges from escalating over time.

Despite this, support plans are often overlooked, rushed, outdated or too generic to really meet a family's needs. This guide aims to change that by helping professionals and kinship carers create support plans that truly meet carers' needs.

How this guide can help

This guidance explores the kinship care journey and helps explain why support is important, what to consider in a support plan, and how to approach planning in a thoughtful and supportive way, whilst making kinship carers and their families feel valued and supported. It is grounded in research and the lived experiences of kinship carers from across the country and reflects what carers have told us about the challenges they face and the support that makes a real difference.

This document is part of a wider set of guidance designed to support meaningful support planning for kinship families, including:

- [Making a Support Plan: A Kinship Care Companion – Guidance for Professionals](#)
Setting out the key principles, questions, and areas to consider when developing or reviewing support plans.
- [Making a Support Plan: A Kinship Care Companion – Summary Guidance for Kinship Carers](#)
A quick, practical guide to help kinship carers prepare for and take part in support discussions.

In this resource you will find:



- **Clear explanation** of what a support plan is, why they matter, and how they can be used.
- **Real stories** and advice from kinship carers who have been there and know what it's like.
- **Prompts and tools** to help carers think ahead and plan for the support needed.
- **Reassurance that kinship carers are not alone**, there is a community of people who understand and support is available.

At its best, a support plan:



- **Helps families feel confident and supported** - making carers feel valued and reassured in their role.
- **Secures support early** - preventing problems from escalating by putting the right support in place early.
- **Ensures children's needs are met** - recognising that these will change as they grow.
- **Supports carer wellbeing** - helping carers stay healthy, maintain balance, and enjoy family life.
- **Provides accountability** - giving carers and professionals a shared record they can use to advocate for support.
- **Builds trust** - by enabling carers and professionals to be transparent, responsive, and reliable.

About this guide

This guide is **research-informed** and made **with and primarily for kinship carers**. It was developed through research led by the **University of Exeter**, in partnership with the charity **Kinship** and with support from **CoramBAAF**.

How it was created:

- Informed by interviews with kinship carers from across England and a national survey capturing carers' experiences from around the country.
- Designed with and for kinship carers, shaped by their experiences, ideas, and feedback.
- Includes input from services and the charities Kinship and CoramBAAF, to make it practical and focused on what works.

2 What is a support plan and why are they important?

2.1: What is a support plan?

A support plan is a formal document agreed between the local authority and a kinship carer. It sets out the help and support that will be provided to a kinship carer and the child/children they are caring for.



Support plans are often linked to Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs), where the law says a written plan should be shared with the court.

For connected foster carers, a formal support plan is not required in the same way but having one is still good practice.

In reality, support planning is helpful for *all* kinship carers. Writing down what support has been agreed, who will do what, and when, gives carers confidence that support is in place and will help deal with challenges early, before pressures build up.

What to include in a support plan:



- **What you and your child need** – your child's health, education, emotional, and behavioural needs. Just as importantly, what support you need as a carer, and what your wider family might need too.
- **Support commitments** – explanation of the help you and your family will receive. This could include financial support, therapeutic services, respite, or help with accessing specialist health and education services.
- **Responsibilities and timescales** – who is responsible for delivering each part of the support plan, and when it will be delivered.
- **Reviewing the plan** – how and when the plan will be reviewed, so it keeps up with your child's needs and responds to any changes in your family's circumstances.
- **Contact details** – who to contact if you have questions or need urgent help.

2.2: Why are support plans important?

At the centre of every support plan are honest conversations about what support you and your family may need. **Kay's story** shows why these conversations matter and the serious and lasting consequences when the right support isn't in place from the beginning.



Kay's Story: The Cost of Missing Support

Kay and her husband became Special Guardians for their two grandchildren, both of whom had survived abuse. From the start Kay felt shut out of decision-making. She was not given enough information about the children's trauma, was not involved in the court process, and had little say in her support plan.

Once the SGO was granted, the right support didn't follow. The children's trauma soon showed through defiance, angry outbursts, and serious mental health struggles, including self-harm.

Delays in accessing therapy for the children made things harder and tensions at home increased with Kay and her husband left feeling isolated and unsupported.

Eventually the pressure became too much. The siblings had to be separated, and her grandson went into foster care.

Kay's experience shows what is at stake when the right support is not put in place early. From the very beginning, support planning needs to be open and inclusive with carers; giving them clear information about children's experiences and the support they'll need. Without this, carers can quickly become overwhelmed and children face the risk of further instability and loss.

“There is so much time that is wasted going round and round in circles, when it just needs to be an honest conversation from the start.”

Kay, kinship carer for her granddaughter



Advice for kinship carers

If you don't have the information you need about your child's history or support plan:

- **Ask your social worker** for more detail and explanation about what you can be told regarding your child's history and experiences
- **If information is withheld, ask why** - sometimes this is due to privacy, legal, or court restrictions.
- **Request a meeting** to go through your support plan in detail and make sure your voice and insights are included.

2.3: What is often missing in support plans

Kinship carers often feel support plans are treated as an afterthought - discussed at the end of a long, intrusive and exhausting assessment process.

Many felt their plan was rushed, too generic, or didn't represent the realities of their family life.

Trust is also often missing for carers. Many do not feel able to be open about their need for help, worrying they'll be judged as unable to cope and putting their care arrangement at risk.

A good support plan should therefore be built on honesty. Carers should feel able to talk openly about what's really happening and ask for the help they need.

“People just think it's an ending to the whole assessment process. But it needs to be explained the significance your support plan has moving forward, the domino effect.”

Mark, kinship carer to his three nieces and nephews



Getting Support Plans Right: Lessons from Carers on Common Pitfalls

Here are some key areas kinship carers told us support plans fall short:

- **Carers feeling rushed and excluded**
Many carers said they did not feel meaningfully involved in shaping their support plan because it felt rushed and last minute. This left them with a plan that felt out of touch with their child's needs and day-to-day family life. By actively involving carers and having open conversations that prepare carers for the challenges ahead, support plans become more relevant and genuinely helpful.
- **Not acknowledging and addressing family tensions**
Kinship care affects the whole family. Carers are often contending with multiple pressures: from managing parent contact, to shifting family roles and identities, and wider family conflict. Carers are better equipped to manage these challenges when family difficulties are openly discussed and addressed.
- **Overlooking support networks**
Many kinship carers say the people who help them most are friends, neighbours, and family. These everyday lifelines are often left out of support plans, even though they play a big role in keeping families going. Good support planning recognises and strengthens these networks, supporting carers to keep those connections and build new ones.
- **Plans not being reviewed**
Many carers told us their support plan was written but then never revisited. Without regular reviews, it can feel like the promises made at the start are left behind or become outdated.
- **Lack of trust**
Kinship carers can worry about sharing the need for help and support, concerned this might put their care arrangement at risk. A good support plan should be built in an atmosphere of openness and reassurance, so carers can be honest about what is really going on and get the right help.
- **Limited understanding of kinship care**
Carers said that not all professionals understood what kinship care is really like or the resources and support available locally. This lack of awareness made it harder to access services and added extra pressure.

“I wouldn't have had the confidence to ring the council for help, because they are going to think I can't look after my granddaughter, they'll just take her away. And I was frightened.”

Maeve, kinship carer for her grandson

2.4: What strong support can achieve

In our discussions with kinship carers, it was clear that those with a strong supportive network of friends, family, community, and services found it easier to cope. A strong support network eases everyday pressures by providing practical help, emotional encouragement, and respite.

A strong support network also helps children feel safe, understood, and secure. Children in kinship care may require additional support due to difficult or traumatic experiences, particularly with learning, confidence, relationships, and emotional wellbeing or identity.

Diana's story highlights the positive impact a well-thought-out support plan can have on family life.



Diana's Story: When Support Plans Work Well

Diana and her husband care for their young niece and nephew alongside their 8-year-old daughter. For four years she has been a connected foster carer and is now moving towards a Special Guardianship Order.

From the beginning, Diana felt genuinely supported by her local authority. Her social worker was experienced and knowledgeable about kinship care, took time to explain the legal options clearly, and made initial assessments feel manageable. Diana knows this is not everyone's experiences, and it made a huge difference to be listened to and informed.

Diana worked with her social workers to develop a support plan focused on what mattered most to her: having a sense of community and addressing practical issues at home. She was welcomed into a local network of foster and kinship families giving her advice, companionship, and a place for the children to belong. Because space had run out at home and the children had to share bedrooms, the local authority helped Diana find a larger home.

This mix of emotional and practical help eased pressures, strengthened stability, and helped make the care arrangement more sustainable.

3 What a kinship carer might need in their support plan

Kinship carers often find it hard to know what support to ask for. This can happen for many reasons. Some carers are looking after a young child for the first time, others are caring for a child they do not yet know well, and some may not have been given full information about the child's needs.

The following draws on what kinship carers shared about the issues they faced and the support that made a difference. We provide stories, reflective questions, and examples to help carers and professionals consider what support may be needed now and in the future.

3.1: Planning for the early days

The early days are often a time of major change. It's normal for children, carers, and families to need time and support to adjust to new routines.

This section looks at the experiences and perspectives of kinship carers at the start of their journey, and what could be included in a support plan to help at this critical stage.

3.1.1: Existing relationship between kinship carer and child

It is often assumed kinship carers and children already have a strong bond, but this is not always the case. Some kinship carers have spent little time with the child before they move in, making the change significant for everyone.

Even when a close relationship exists, kinship care brings major changes in roles, routines, and identities. Children may also be coping with trauma and loss. Other children in the household can also feel these changes too and need their own time and support to adjust.

"I wouldn't have known what to ask for or anything because I had never been in that position before."

Maeve, kinship carer for her granddaughters

"You don't know what to ask for because you don't really know what you're getting into, it's a complete whirlwind."

David, kinship carer for his grandson

"It was very hard to adjust at the beginning. For the first month or so, you feel a bit lost."

Saz, kinship carer for her grandson

Support planning should discuss existing relationships and how trust and attachment can be nurtured.

Casandra's story shows how demanding the early days can be and that strong, trusting bonds take time to grow.



Casandra's Story: Supporting Her Nephew Through Bereavement

Casandra became the carer for her 17-year-old nephew, Karl, after her sister passed away from cancer. As the 'reliable one' in the family, it was assumed that Karl would come to live with her when no one else could step in.

However, Casandra spent little time with Karl while he was growing up, and they did not know each other well. Karl was grieving the loss of his mother and Casandra found it difficult to access bereavement support suitable for his age.

At the time Casandra was unsure of the benefits of a legal order so close to Karl turning 18, so the arrangement remained informal. Social workers had been involved in Karl's life before but could offer little support because he was so close to adulthood.

The change was significant for Casandra and her husband. Their children had recently left home, and they had been looking forward to more freedom and their retirement plans, but suddenly found themselves parenting again. The strain caused tension at home, and Karl himself found the transition hard, becoming withdrawn. Casandra often feels she is struggling to reach him and establish a routine that works for everyone.

Casandra's experiences highlights that kinship care does not always begin with strong, pre-existing bonds. Carers and young people may be starting from scratch, and need time, empathy, and support to build a new family life together. Casandra also believes age-appropriate bereavement support should be part of support planning when children or young people have experienced loss.



Things to Think About for a Support Plan

- **Adjustment time and reflection points**
 Set realistic expectations from the outset about the time needed to build trust and connection. The support plan and review process can be used as points to pause, reflect, and recognise how relationships are developing and where extra support may be needed.
- **Gradual introductions and protected bonding time**
 Where possible gradual introductions or transitional contact (e.g. overnight stays or shared activities) can help ease the move. Even when an arrangement happens suddenly, it may be possible to recreate some of this through protected time for the carer and child to get to know each other.
- **Creating opportunities for connection**
 Small, shared experiences often make the biggest difference. Support plans can consider ways for carers and children to spend time together outside everyday routines - through activities, short breaks, or community and peer groups. Identifying local resources or funding to support this can help make this possible.
- **Being sensitive to the reasons for kinship care**
 Many children enter kinship care because of bereavement, trauma, or family breakdown. Support planning should acknowledge this and consider what emotional support may be needed from the start e.g. age-appropriate bereavement services or guidance for carers on how to respond to trauma.
- **Supporting communication and access to therapeutic help**
 It can take time and support for carers and children to talk openly, especially where there has been trauma or limited contact. Support plans can include access to therapeutic family support, mentoring, or safe spaces for conversation. Where specialist services are delayed, the plan can note what interim support might be available - such as school-based help, community groups, or trusted family and friends. If referrals are made, it helps to note who is responsible for follow-up.
- **Recognising the wider family's adjustment**
 Change affects everyone in the household. Children are adapting to new routines, while carers and children adjust to new roles and relationships. Support planning should consider how each family member is experiencing this shift and what will help them settle.
- **Celebrating existing strengths and connections**
 Support planning can also focus on affirming and strengthening the positives, encouraging carers to notice and build on shared interests, family traditions, or other small signs of connection and trust. Recognising and celebrating these can help strengthen relationships and give families confidence in the bonds they are building.

3.1.2: Child's history and experiences

Because of the way court processes work, kinship carers are not always given the full background of what a child has experienced. It is vital that support planning acknowledges this.

Children joining a kinship family may have experienced neglect, abuse, loss or family breakdown. These experiences can shape how children feel, behave, and relate to others. It will also have a bearing on the early days of the child settling in.

Carers should be prepared for the possibility of needs and challenging behaviours emerging in time. If challenges do arise or children need therapeutic support it is important they have access to the right services.

Talking about a child's past isn't only about recognising trauma or difficult experiences - it's also about understanding the everyday details that shape who they are. Knowing their routines, favourite foods, hobbies, and comfort items can make a big difference. The more carers understand these small but important details, the more confident and prepared they can feel in helping the child settle during the first days and weeks together.

"I mean she's family, we know that she's been abused, but we didn't know that she tries to do it on others, if you know what I mean. Because if we knew that we would be a bit like 'watch her around this', and 'watch her around that'. Now we do, because obviously we know how she works. But to start with we didn't have a clue."

Jess, informal carer for her niece

"Until that child is placed with you, you don't know how they act or how they're going to behave, or what will come out, or what they disclose, or what their behaviours are. And you don't get given much information as well."

Sally, kinship carer for her nieces



Things to Think About When Creating a Support Plan

- **Clarity about the child's history**
 Have open conversations about what carers have been told about the child's past and what information is still missing. If there are gaps, noting them in the plan ensures they are acknowledged and sets out how and when carers can expect to be updated. The plan can also record who will follow up, how updates will be shared, and what support will be available while information remains incomplete.
- **Everyday details**
 Support plans shouldn't just focus on difficult histories. Everyday information like routines, favourite foods, hobbies, comfort items, or things that may cause fear or distress can make a big difference in helping a child feel safe and helping carers feel more confident. Where this information isn't immediately available, the plan can note how it will be gathered e.g. through life-story work, conversations with previous carers or discussions with the school.
- **Understanding and preparing for possible behaviours**
 Children's past experiences can often show up in their behaviour. Carers may see signs such as withdrawal, mistrust, anger, defiance, or difficulties at school and in friendships. Naming and planning for these possibilities helps carers to understand these behaviours and feel confident and prepared to respond.
- **Access to specialist services**
 Support plans can identify routes to therapeutic or specialist help that supports both children and carers, such as child or family therapy, play therapy, or trauma support. They can also note what services are available locally, who will make referrals, expected timescales, and who will follow up.
- **Training and peer support**
 Many carers say they feel unprepared to understand or respond to the effects of trauma or loss. Support plans can include access to trauma-informed training, behaviour support courses, or local kinship peer groups where carers can share ideas and feel less isolated. If formal training isn't available, the plan might highlight community or online resources that can help bridge the gap.
- **Protective measures**
 When a child has been abused, has complex needs, or shows behaviours that may be unsafe, the support plan can outline how to manage this sensitively while keeping everyone in the household safe. This might include practical adjustments such as locking away medicines or sharp objects as well as guidance on talking about safety in ways that avoid stigma or blame.
- **Ongoing review and consistency**
 A child's needs and strengths will change over time. Including a commitment to revisit the support plan regularly helps ensure it stays relevant and responsive.

3.1.3: Setting new routines and boundaries

In the early days, all families need to settle into new routines. Daily life like school runs, mealtimes and bedtime routines can all feel unsettled.

For children, this adjustment can be layered with other challenges: missing their parents, coping with separation from siblings, starting a new school, or grieving the loss of familiar friends and neighbourhoods.

Support planning can recognise this sensitive period and prepare carers for the possibility of resistance and conflict as routines are established.

“The problem at home is that Nia absolutely hates boundaries, she didn't have them as a kid, she came to us at five, quite a difficult age. When we try to implement boundaries she'll just do absolutely anything to not have to follow them.”

Luna, connected foster carer looking after her niece



Things to Think About When Creating a Support Plan

- **Coping with resistance**

It can be helpful to acknowledge that some children may find new boundaries, rules, or routines difficult. Plans can include strategies, advice, or training for carers on how to manage this.

- **Emotional impact of change**

Change can be emotionally challenging, making routines harder to follow. Support plans should outline what emotional support is available locally and how carers can access it. Where therapy is not immediately available, interim support such as school pastoral care, youth groups, or community activities should be considered.

- **Practical help during transitions**

Arrangements such as help with school transport, childcare, or flexible working are all ways to ease the pressure on kinship carers while new routines are given time to bed in. Support plans can note what practical help may be available.

- **Involving schools**

Schools play a key role in helping children adjust. When schools understand a child's circumstances and provide the right support, it can make a real difference. This may include carers and professionals working with schools through meetings or regular check-ins. The Virtual School can also help arrange extra support when needed.

3.2: What children and young people might need

Children and young people's needs change over time. Some kinship carers find that a child's needs are not immediately obvious but gradually emerge as the child grows up. Support planning needs to work with the child, carer, and the whole family to think carefully about meeting the child's needs.

This matters because when kinship carers are supported to meet their child's needs, they describe feeling more confident, capable, and settled in their role. But when those needs are not met the impact can be serious. Children's mental health, learning, and overall wellbeing can suffer, while carers are left managing difficult behaviours without the understanding, or support they need.

This section highlights key areas to consider when thinking about a child's circumstances and what support they might need.

3.2.1: Child's age

Support planning should reflect a child's developmental stage, as their age when joining a kinship family will shape the support they need both now and as they grow.

"The baby side of things like looking after him, I had to pick it up on the fly. Fortunately, I'd been around my friend's kids maybe when they were very little, a handful of times, so I knew a few things. But he was quite a difficult baby in that he was born addicted to the medication she was on."

Tanya a young carer for her Nephew

"I mean, I've had Ted [Grandson], and all I've done is fight for him. I had to fight for him to get him his ADHD diagnosis"

Rose Special Guardian for her grandson who has ADHD

Babies and young children

Even at a very young age, children can show signs of the impact that trauma, separation, or neglect has had on their life.

It is important carers and the professionals around them have open and honest conversations about these prospects.

For carers, past experience with babies or young children can make a difference. Those who have raised children before often feel more confident, while carers new to looking after a very young child can find the demands of constant care, sleepless nights, and a new responsibility overwhelming at first.

Support planning for babies and young children should recognise the demands on carers and focus on helping them build a secure, nurturing bond in these vital early years.

Tanya's story highlights the need to prepare carers who may have little or no parenting experience.



Tanya's Story: Learning to Raise a Baby

When Tanya's nephew, Tony, needed a carer as an infant, she stepped in despite having little experience of looking after babies. She gave up work to care for him and turned to the internet to learn the basics of feeding and routines. Those early days were especially demanding because of Tony's additional needs, including drug withdrawal symptoms.

Tanya often felt overwhelmed. She had limited support from relatives, few local friends to call on, and little access to support groups or services. Eventually she was connected with the local authority's SGO team and helped to join an SGO support group - which for the first time meant she had people she could call on for help and advice. This helped her grow into her new life with baby Tony.

Tanya's experience highlights the courage and resilience of carers who step in without prior parenting experience. It shows why support planning must take account of a carer's experience with young children, and help them access training, peer networks, and structured support. Without this, carers like Tanya can feel thrown in at the deep end - placing unnecessary strain on both them and the child.



Consider including in a support plan:

- Parenting training and skills support**
Access to courses, workshops, or one-to-one guidance on baby care, child development, and attachment can help carers feel more confident, especially if they're caring for a baby for the first time.
- Parent-baby and toddler groups**
Joining local parent-baby or toddler groups can help carers and children socialise, reduce isolation, and support early development. Plans can note what's available nearby and any barriers such as transport, cost, or confidence - and how these might be eased.
- Peer support, mentoring or buddy systems**
Connecting with other kinship carers, particularly those experienced in caring for babies and toddlers, can offer reassurance and practical tips and advice. Where no formal peer scheme exists, it may help to think about relatives, neighbours, or community contacts who can provide advice and a listening ear in the early months.
- Access to early years services**
Support plans can consider how carers and children are linked in with early years services such as health visitors, children's centres, speech and language therapy, or nursery places. Support plans can note what's available locally, who can help with referrals, and what can be accessed while waiting, such as drop-in sessions, voluntary organisations, or advice lines.

Teenagers

This stage of life can be particularly complex for young people settling into their kinship family for the first time. Research shows that teenagers in kinship care are at particular risk of low self-esteem, anxiety, and other mental health and wellbeing difficulties. It is also a time when some young people are more likely to try to reconnect with their parents, which may bring about complex emotional challenges for them and the carer.

For carers, looking after a teenager for the first time (or after many years) can feel daunting. Young people today face different challenges around mental health, identity, and online life that can be unfamiliar and difficult to navigate. Carers can feel apprehensive about preparing their child for the future, making sure they have the skills and resilience to enter adulthood and live independently.

It is therefore critical that support planning recognises the unique support needs of teenagers and their carers.

“The kids are embarrassed to say ‘we are looked after children’, and ‘I live with my Auntie’. And I don’t know why they should feel like that, but they do. So if their friends ask ‘oh, why do you live with your Auntie?’, they say ‘because I want to’. They don’t admit that they’re kinship kids.”

India connected foster carer for her Nephews

“We do have a lot of issues with adolescent teenage years because they are now in the stage where they are exploring more and can vote with their feet [to reconnect with parents].”

Social Worker in an SGO Support Team



Things to Reflect on in a Support Plan for Carers of Teenagers

- **Teenager's voice in planning**
 Young people should be actively involved in shaping a support plan - identifying what matters to them, their goals, and the kind of help that feels right. Listening to a young person helps build trust, guide priorities, and ensures they feel heard and valued.
- **Mental health and wellbeing support**
 Adolescence can be an emotionally complex time, and access to counselling or therapeutic support might be important. Where formal services have long waiting lists, plans can reflect how referrals will be followed up and what can help in the meantime (e.g. school-based support, mentoring, trusted adults, or peer networks)
- **Interests, hobbies and strengths**
 Taking time to discuss what a teenager enjoys (e.g. football, dance, gaming, art, or playing an instrument) can open valuable opportunities to boost their confidence and wellbeing. Support plans can recognise and nurture passions by helping young people access local clubs, groups, or coaching and by considering any practical barriers such as equipment, transport, or fees. Kinship carers told us that when they had help to connect teenagers with activities they love, it made a real difference.
- **School and education support**
 Schools that understand a young person's background are better placed to offer meaningful support - whether with attendance, bullying, exams, or transitions into further education or training. Support plans can note how carers and professionals will work with schools, maintain communication, and advocate for the right help when needed.
- **Peer connections**
 Relationships with peers are key to wellbeing in the teenage years. Support plans can explore opportunities for young people to connect with others through specialist groups, youth clubs, sports, or creative activities. Practicalities such as transport, access, and small grants or funding to cover costs can also be considered.
- **Preparation for adulthood**
 Support planning can begin to look ahead, thinking about housing, education, training, employment, and independent living skills. Even where formal leaving-care services don't apply, gentle conversations and gradual skill-building can help young people prepare for adult life.

3.2.2: Identity and cultural needs

Children and young people also have needs linked to identity and culture. Support planning should recognise this early, including safe, appropriate ways to stay connected with family, heritage, faith, and community.

Kinship care can strongly support these connections, but it doesn't happen automatically. Carers may need guidance when they are less familiar with a child's background. Support planning can help by creating space to talk about identity, linking families with cultural or community resources, and helping children feel they belong in their current home.

Children and young people should be involved in these decisions, so their identity is shaped with them, not for them.

Clara's story illustrates this powerfully. She described the strategies she put in place to ensure her great-niece remained connected to her roots.

"Jamila has her family around her, so she doesn't just see whiteness, so from when she came, about her hair, about her skin all these kind of things that were really important for identity and self and everything, she didn't get that from her foster carer."

Clara kinship carer for her great-niece

Clara's Story: Supporting Culture and Identity

When Clara became the connected foster carer for her seven-year-old great-niece, Jamilla, she was determined to support her identity and cultural heritage.

Jamilla has Black British, Arab, and White British roots. Yet during assessments, Clara felt professionals treated Jamilla's cultural needs as secondary, rather than central to her sense of belonging and wellbeing.

Clara made identity part of everyday life. She helped Jamilla stay connected with her Jamaican family, learn to cane row her hair and cook traditional dishes with support from relatives. Because her school lacked diversity, Clara found a local supplementary school teaching Black British history through arts and culture.

Clara's own household was already shaped by Jordanian heritage, Arabic language, and Islamic traditions, which helped support Jamilla's connection to her Arab background.

Clara feels these intentional steps to create a welcoming, inclusive environment, has helped her niece grow into a confident young woman who understands and values her identity.

Clara's story shows how carers can play a powerful role in strengthening belonging, and helping children feel secure in who they are.





Things to Think About When Creating a Support Plan

- **Child's voice on identity**
It can help to record how the child or young person will be involved in discussions about their heritage and culture - capturing what matters most to them and how they would like this reflected in daily life.
- **Maintaining family and community links**
Support planning can explore how children might stay connected with family and community, where this is safe and appropriate.
- **Culturally responsive home environment**
Support plans can help ensure a child's daily life reflects their culture, faith and identity: including food, routines or celebrations. Carers may need support to do this such as links to community or guidance from people who share the child's background. Revisiting cultural needs over time is also important, as children's understanding of their identity may change as they grow.
- **Opportunities for cultural learning and belonging**
Support planning can include ways for children to explore their culture through community events, places of worship, or supplementary schools. If specialist provision is limited locally, think about everyday things that could help build learning for example cultural celebrations, decorations, or shared meals.
- **Supporting belonging in new communities**
For children in families who have recently migrated or relocated, identity needs may be about building new connections. Plans can consider how carers are supported to help children feel confident at school, develop friendships, access language support, and take part in local clubs or community activities.

3.2.3: Children with additional or complex needs

Many children in kinship care have additional needs linked to their mental health, development, learning, or behaviour. Every child's experiences and needs are unique, but all benefit from early recognition and the right support.

Challenging behaviour can limit family life, leading to stress and isolation for carers and placing strain on relationships within the home. Without the right help, the stability of the care arrangement can be put at risk.

Carers often feel frustrated when they lack information about a child's history, making it harder to understand what is driving their behaviour. Support planning should acknowledge this from the outset and focus on what the child's emotions and actions are telling us about the help they need now and in the future.

As **Esme and Luna's story** shows, trust can falter when carers are not given the information or support they need.

"It was challenging; I had my niece come to live with me, who was living through trauma, while having my own kids, who, because I was so full on with my niece and prioritising her needs - I took my eye off the ball with my oldest daughter."

Clara, connected foster carer for her niece

Esme and Luna's Story: When Carers Don't Feel Fully Informed



Esme and her wife Luna, a young couple with no previous parenting experience, unexpectedly became kinship carers for their nephew, Alex, after he was suddenly removed from his parents to protect him.

At the time, Esme and Luna felt social workers and the courts gave them very little information about Alex's background and needs. When Alex came to live with them, the extent of the trauma he had experienced became clear and his behaviour was far more complex and challenging than they felt prepared for.

As Alex tried to settle in and process what he had been through, he frequently showed anger and emotional outbursts. Esme and Luna became overwhelmed, unsure how to manage these behaviours. They also struggled to know what specialist services or therapeutic support might help Alex, or how to access them.

The lack of clear information and meaningful support at the outset left them feeling alone. Over time, their trust in the local authority broke down, and they turned instead to charities and peer groups, where they felt listened to and supported.

Esme and Luna's experience shows that carers need clear, honest information about a child's background, needs, and possible behaviours before they come to live with them. They also need early, guided access to specialist services, so they are not left to navigate a complex system alone.

3.3: Key transition points

3.3.1: Starting or changing school

The start of nursery, school, college or university is a major transition for both children and carers, and something that benefits from careful planning. It can bring up questions about identity, family background, or differences between home and school life. Carers may need extra reassurance or practical help to manage these changes, while schools can play an important role in supporting a child's sense of belonging and helping them settle confidently.



Planning for School and Educational Changes

- **Sharing the child's story with the school**
Plans can set out how the kinship arrangement and any relevant background information will be shared with the school. This can include agreeing what details are appropriate to share, who will communicate them, and how the child's story can be explained sensitively if questions arise. This can help staff understand the family situation and provide the right support.
- **Supporting the child emotionally at school**
Support planning can explore how the child will be helped if questions arise about their family situation or if they feel different from their peers. This could include preparing staff to respond sensitively, identifying pastoral support the child can talk to, and providing guidance for teachers on any triggers or difficult topics.
- **Monitoring progress and communication**
It can help to agree how communication between carers, schools and services will be maintained. This ensures the child's educational and emotional needs are regularly reviewed and any emerging issues addressed.

3.3.2: Entering teenage years

Adolescence can bring new emotional, behavioural and practical challenges for kinship families. Teenagers may begin to question their history, test boundaries, or want more contact with parents. Carers can find this period particularly demanding, especially if it brings back to the surface earlier family tensions or unresolved grief.



Preparing for the Teenage Years in a Support Plan

- **Keeping the young person's voice central**
Support planning should ensure that the young person's wishes, feelings and views are heard and respected. Plans can show how they will be involved in discussions about identity, family relationships and future plans. This can help them feel understood and supported through a period of change.
- **Managing and reviewing contact**
Adolescence can bring changes in how young people view their parents or relatives. Support planning can reflect how contact arrangements will be managed and reviewed during this stage - recognising that a teenager's curiosity, boundaries and emotional needs may shift over time.
- **Responding to conflict and challenging behaviour**
Plans can note what support is available if conflict arises or the young person's behaviour becomes difficult to manage. This might include family support work, mediation, or behavioural advice. It can also help to record who the carer can contact for immediate support or guidance during crises.

3.3.3: Transition into independence and adulthood

As young people approach adulthood, new questions may arise about independence, education, housing, and ongoing relationships. This can be a proud but anxious time for carers, especially when they have been the child's constant anchor through instability or trauma. Young people need ongoing emotional or practical help beyond 18, and carers often need support to understand what options exist.



Planning for Adulthood and Independence

- **Planning early for transition**
Support planning can start early to prepare for the young person's move into adulthood. This may include thinking about education, training, employment or housing options, and helping the young person explore what they want for their future. Early planning allows time to understand what choices are available and to put the right support in place before big changes happen.
- **Identifying support and entitlements**
As young people reach adulthood, their eligibility for services and financial support may change. Plans can identify what advice or assessments are needed to clarify entitlements, such as leaving care support, benefits, or housing options, and who will help the young person access them.
- **Supporting carers through change**
Caring for a young person moving toward independence can bring pride but also loss and uncertainty. Support planning can include what carers might need to manage this transition e.g. practical advice or connection with peer groups who understand this stage of caring.

3.4: Family life and relationships

Family can be a source of help and encouragement for kinship carers, but it can also bring stress and conflict. Much depends on the circumstances that led to a child coming to live with their kinship family. Often this is following a crisis, and the impact of that situation can strain relationships across the wider family.

Effective support planning recognises the complexity of wider family relationships and helps carers manage these in a safe and confident way.

Elsa's story shows how family can both be a crucial source of support and added pressure in a carer's life



Elsa's Story – Family as Both Support and Strain

When Elsa's nephew-in-law, Jamie, came to live with her and her husband when he was one year old, it was meant to be a temporary arrangement while his mother accessed substance misuse support. It gradually became permanent under an SGO, and Jamie is now three.

Elsa is a younger carer and had never raised a child before. At the start, Elsa and her husband often felt daunted. She leaned heavily on her parents who live nearby to offer her advice and reassurance they were doing things well. Her close network of siblings and friends have also been a lifeline of practical and emotional support.

Elsa felt the SGO court process was confrontational, pushing her and Jamie's mother apart rather than helping them work together. Some relatives on Jamie's mother's side also questioned Elsa and her husband's motives, which has been deeply upsetting, as they have only ever wanted the best for Jamie.

Managing contact with Jamie's mother has been the hardest part of Elsa's role. They weren't close before, and Elsa has struggled to balance empathy for the mother's loss with the need to set clear boundaries.

Elsa feels carers need better access to mediation and support to help families adjust to new circumstances and roles and to navigate contact arrangements.

3.4.1: Parent contact and family time

Managing contact with parents is often one of the most challenging parts of kinship care. Many carers are left to organise contact on their own, without professional support or mediation; deciding how often it happens, where it takes place, and how to make it work day to day.

This is where kinship carers can face particularly complex and conflicting emotions. They're often making decisions about contact with their own relatives including their children, siblings or other family members. Setting limits with relatives who live nearby and may not respect boundaries can put carers in the middle of extremely difficult situations, torn between protecting the child and maintaining family relationships.

Knowing what's best for the child can also be hard. Some parents may be unreliable in keeping in touch, frequently letting children down, or have lifestyles that expose them to inappropriate or risky situations. Sometimes children won't want to go to contact at all, or their behaviour might become increasingly challenging before or after contact.

Careful planning at the support planning stage can help ensure contact arrangements are realistic, safe and clearly understood by everyone involved. A robust plan can give carers confidence that the arrangements work for them and the child, and that they know what to do if things aren't going well. It also helps ensure the carer feels safe, and that the child's wishes and feelings are respected throughout.

"The hardest and most stressful part is managing the relationships with the wider family. Just having difficult conversations puts a strain on everyone."

Hilary, a special guardian for her nephew

"It would be easier if you didn't know the parent or the children, because you can act like a robot, but not with your own family you can't."

Isobel, connected foster carer for her grandchildren



Planning Support for Contact and Family Time

- **Agreeing contact**
 Agreeing and recording how contact will work gives everyone a shared understanding and clear boundaries. This might be a simple written agreement or a more formal plan, depending on the legal situation. What matters most is that it sets out how often contact happens, how long it lasts, where it takes place, and whether it's in person, by phone, or online.
- **Reviewing and changing contact**
 Contact arrangements may need to be reviewed and updated over time as children's wishes and feelings change, or carer and family circumstances change. Support planning (whether for a new plan or a review) can be a helpful point to reflect on what contact arrangements are in place, who is involved, and what's working well or causing concern.
- **When contact arrangements are challenged**
 Parents can sometimes contest existing contact arrangements, which may mean previously agreed plans no longer stand. This can lead to uncertainty and stress for kinship carers. Support planning can help by making sure carers know their rights and where they can seek advice if arrangements are disputed.
- **Mediation and professional support**
 Support plans can include formal help for carers to set or adjust contact arrangements. Mediation can help a family reach agreement about contact in a neutral, supported space, though access and cost can vary. Where formal mediation or support isn't available, support planning can consider how a kinship support worker, social worker, or a trusted family member or friend can help facilitate constructive conversations. Professionals can also share difficult or sensitive information with parents on the carer's behalf, helping to reduce emotional strain.
- **Practical and emotional support**
 Plans can identify what other help could make contact less stressful e.g. help finding neutral venues to host contact like children's centres or contact centres, arranging supervision or transport, or coordinating times that fit around school and work routines. They can also note where carers or children would benefit from emotional support such as counselling, support groups, or informal mentoring to manage the emotional aspects of contact.

3.4.2: Wider family tensions and conflict

Kinship care arrangements are often made at a point of crisis, when emotions across the wider family are already running high.

Where children have been removed from their parents against their wishes for instance, because of neglect, abuse or imprisonment - feelings of loss and resentment can surface. These can spread through the wider family, leading to tensions, blame or even hostility towards the carer from relatives who may disagree with the arrangement.

Because kinship carers remain part of the same family network, they must continue to manage these relationships.

During support planning, it's important to discuss any family tensions and what support could help reduce conflict and keep everyone safe.



Managing Family Tensions through a Support Plan

- **Understanding family relationships**
Support planning can provide space to think about family relationships and where tensions, divided loyalties or misunderstandings may exist. Noting these openly can help everyone recognise what's sensitive and what support or communication might help keep relationships respectful and safe. In some areas, Family Group Conferencing exists and may be a helpful way to bring people together.
- **Mediation and family discussions**
Plans can consider whether formal mediation, family meetings or facilitated conversations might help relatives talk through conflict, clarify expectations and reach a shared understanding about the care arrangement.
- **Managing unavoidable contact**
Support planning can explore how carers are prepared and supported for contact they can't easily avoid - such as seeing parents or relatives at family events or in the community. This might include agreeing boundaries, discussing what helps manage emotions, and identifying someone they can turn to if situations become uncomfortable.
- **Safety planning and ongoing conversations**
Plans can set out how carers and professionals will keep safety under review, and what would trigger a review of arrangements. Keeping safety as an active, ongoing conversation helps carers feel confident that support is there if things change or become more difficult.
- **Relocation and protecting identity**
If carers need to move to stay safe, support planning can note what practical and emotional help might be needed - for example, with housing, schools, benefits, or rebuilding networks. Plans can also reflect any steps taken to protect the family's privacy, such as managing contact information or social media use, and how children will be supported to settle safely in a new community.

3.5: Carer welfare and wellbeing

Support plans are just as important for the carer as they are for the child. While the child's wellbeing is rightly at the heart of planning, many kinship carers told us it can sometimes feel like their own needs are overlooked. Yet carers' health, wellbeing, finances and relationships are vital to sustaining a stable, loving home for a child.

“School runs at the age of 51. But I wouldn't change it. It is hard work. Financially, it's not good either. But I couldn't be without her now. I couldn't.”

Ella, an informal carer for her granddaughter

Taking on the care of a child often brings shifts in life plans, added financial pressures and busier routines. Many carers also described their support networks shrinking after taking on the role, with less time or energy to see friends or take part in activities they once enjoyed. Some also need to leave work or reduce their hours, bringing not only financial pressures but loss of daily contact with colleagues and friends.

These experiences vary across ages and family circumstances. Younger carers often take on responsibilities at a stage when their peers are pursuing education, careers or new relationships. Older carers sometimes describe feeling out of place among younger parents and unsure where to find age-appropriate support.

Across all ages, many carers spoke of how stigma or concerns about confidentiality made it harder to talk openly about what they were going through.

The emotional impact can also extend into romantic relationships. Some carers link strains or breakdowns in partnerships to the demands of caring, while younger carers often find it difficult to start or maintain relationships when childcare responsibilities need to take priority.

Support planning is a key opportunity to consider the carer's wellbeing and the practical and emotional help they need to sustain their role.

3.5.1: Finances

Taking on the care of a child can bring sudden and significant added financial pressure. Support planning can be a useful space to talk openly about money and what financial help may be available. It is important to know financial support is not automatic - it will depend on the type of legal arrangement, individual circumstances, and local authority policy.

Depending on their situation, carers may be eligible for national benefits such as Universal Credit, Child Benefit, Pension Credit, or a Guardian's Allowance. There are also national schemes to help with energy or household bills, such as the Winter Fuel Payment, Warm Home Discount, or fuel vouchers.

Some local authorities may offer additional discretionary support - for example, help with moving costs, essential household items, or one-off grants to assist when a child first moves in. Support planning can help identify what may apply and where carers can access specialist benefits or debt advice.



Thinking about finances in the Support Plan

- **Understanding financial pressures**
Plans can capture what new costs have arisen and how becoming a kinship carer has affected income, work, and savings. This helps professionals and carers identify where advice or financial help may be needed.
- **Access to advice and support**
Support planning can record how carers will be supported to understand what financial help might apply to their circumstances, and who can provide accurate, up-to-date information. This may include referrals to welfare rights or benefits advisers, or local kinship support teams.
- **Practical assistance**
Plans can set out what help will be given to access support - for example, help completing forms, gathering documents, or following up applications. Identifying a professional who can take the lead in coordinating or making referrals can make the process clearer and less stressful for carers.
- **Clear and open conversations**
Support planning should allow space for open and transparent conversations about eligibility for financial support. Professionals can help carers understand what is discretionary or subject to local policy, and advocate on their behalf where appropriate.
- **Planning ahead**
Plans can include how carers will be supported to manage longer-term financial stability - for example, budgeting, returning to work, or exploring childcare support once circumstances allow.

3.5.2: Housing

Housing pressures are common for kinship carers. Some families need to move to keep a child safe or to create more space, while others find themselves living in overcrowded conditions that add stress.

Support planning can help identify whether the carer's accommodation is suitable and what housing support might be needed. **Housing support is not automatically available to all kinship carers**, but local housing authorities and social landlords are encouraged to recognise the important role kinship carers play and, where possible, prioritise them for rehousing when space or safety is an issue.

Local authorities can also provide financial assistance towards accommodation costs where this is the most appropriate way to safeguard and promote a child's welfare. However, this is **discretionary** and **assessed on a case-by-case basis**.

Support planning should set out any housing challenges and the steps being taken to improve the situation. It's important that social workers and other professionals involved in planning understand local housing policies and routes to support, so they can guide carers effectively and help secure a stable home environment that meets the child's needs.



Thinking About Housing Needs in the Plan

- **Discussing housing needs**
Support planning can help identify whether the carer's current home meets the child's needs for space, safety and stability. This might include discussing issues such as overcrowding, relocation or home adaptations.
- **Access to housing advice**
Plans can note where carers can get specialist housing advice, and who will make any necessary referrals e.g. to housing officers, social landlords, or local kinship or family support teams.
- **Joined-up professional support**
It can be helpful for support plans to record how professionals from housing, children's services and other relevant teams will work together to address the carer's housing needs. Professionals may also support carers to advocate for themselves or request priority housing where appropriate.

3.5.3: Connections, peer support, and wellbeing

Many kinship carers find their circle of support becomes smaller once they take on caring, leaving them with fewer people to rely for help and support. This is often because the demands of caring can leave little time, energy or money for socialising, or for the hobbies or activities that once helped them feel balanced. Friendships may fade, close relationships can come under strain, and carers can quickly begin to feel isolated.

Having people to talk to, spend time with, and share experiences with helps carers find emotional support and encouragement.

But it's not only about how many people are in a carer's network. The quality of support matters too: who can step in at short notice, who brings practical help or respite, and who offers emotional understanding. Support planning can explore how carers' existing networks can be maintained, and how new ones might be built.

Thinking About Connections, Peer Support and Wellbeing in a Support Plan



- **Mapping existing networks**

Support planning can include time to explore a carer's current support network. Social workers often use tools such as eco-maps and conversation prompts. These can help carers reflect on who is in their life, who supports them and what brings them joy and balance. When support plans are reviewed, it can be helpful to revisit these networks to see how things have changed.

- **Maintaining and rebuilding connections**

Plans can note what helps carers stay connected with friends, community, faith groups, and hobbies/interests. They can also identify practical ways to rebuild links where they've weakened. Support might include help with transport or childcare to socialise or attend activities.

- **Building new networks**

Support planning can explore opportunities to connect with other people who 'get' kinship care e.g. through local groups, community activities or online kinship networks.

- **Access to respite**

Plans can consider what breaks or respite opportunities are available, and what would help carers maintain balance in their lives. Even short breaks can help carers return to their role with renewed energy and perspective. Support planning can include practical help, such as finding trusted respite providers, planning shared caring responsibilities within the family, or exploring short-break schemes. Linking carers with local networks of kinship carers can also offer opportunities to support one another with respite and breaks.

- **Confidence and ongoing support**

Support planning can recognise that isolation is not only practical but emotional. Plans might include ways to build confidence in reaching out e.g. through counselling, mentoring, or support from a kinship worker who checks in regularly. Professionals can also help identify safe spaces where carers can talk openly, feel understood, and develop friendships.

4 Revisiting a support plan

Support plans should be seen as a living, evolving document that changes in line with family needs. Having a clear written plan gives carers something they can keep, refer to, and update over time.



Regular reviews of the support plan are also important because help promised from friends, family and services may not always materialise or can fade away as time passes. Coming back to the plan allows everyone to see what support is still working, what has changed, and where further help might be needed.

Ongoing review helps build long-term trust and rapport. Many kinship carers feel unsupported once plans are agreed and professionals step back. Regular check-ins, following up on actions, and making sure support is in place can make a real difference by showing carers they are valued and not forgotten.

Neil's story shows just how quickly circumstances can change, and why support plans need to grow alongside families.

Neil's Story: Why Support Plans Need to Change Over Time



Neil and his wife stepped in to care for their nieces while also raising their own young toddlers. Everything happened very suddenly, with little time to prepare.

Neil remembers that the support plan felt rushed and poorly explained. There was little consideration of the support he and his wife would need to cope with the financial strain and challenge of balancing work and caring for everyone in the household. He also noticed that his own children received little recognition or support as they adjusted to such big changes.

Once the Special Guardianship Order was granted, there were no regular check-ins and their support plan was not revisited, leaving the family to cope alone.

At first, Neil's Dad was a big source of support. But after his father sadly passed away, that help was gone. Other relatives who had promised to be there slowly stepped back, leaving Neil and his wife carrying the responsibility alone.

As the girls grew, new challenges emerged - including special educational needs and the ups and downs of adolescence.

Neil's story highlights why support plans must be reviewed and adapted over time, so families aren't left to cope alone when circumstances change.



Building a Living Support Plan

Key points for carers and social workers to discuss:

- **Agree review times** – set clear dates for when the plan will be revisited (e.g. every 12/24 months).
- **Clarify who leads reviews** – record which professional or team is responsible for initiating and coordinating reviews. Note how contact will be maintained (for example, home visits, phone calls, or check-in emails)
- **Discuss what has materialised between reviews** – keep track of whether promised actions or supports have been put in place and note anything still outstanding or delayed.
- **Revisit family circumstances** – discuss whether anything significant has changed in the carer's or child's situation and update the plan accordingly.
- **Set clear follow-up actions** – outline what will happen next, who will do it, and by when.
- **Know what to do if support isn't delivered** - the support plan should record who to contact if actions are delayed or not followed through, including the local authority's complaints process. Carers can use the plan as evidence of what was agreed and by whom, helping them raise any concerns.

5 Essentials every support plan should include



You can use this checklist to make sure your support plan covers the key areas and includes the information that matters to your family:

1. Understanding of your Kinship Child

- a) Their health, emotional and developmental needs
- b) Their school, friendships and any learning support needs
- c) Identity and cultural needs, including whether any discrimination or stigma may impact their experiences or behaviour
- d) What will help them settle and feel secure
- e) Support if they've experienced trauma, loss or change, including culturally appropriate support if needed

2. Support for you as the Carer

- a) Supporting your emotional wellbeing, physical health and your identity
- b) Help to stay connected with other people
- c) Training
- d) Peer support and/or respite options
- e) Information, advice, and guidance tailored to your situation

3. Financial, Housing and Practical Support

- a) Any financial support you will receive — what, how much, and for how long
- b) Who to speak to about benefits or financial advice
- c) What housing support is available if space or safety is an issue
- d) Help with transport, childcare, or household adjustments where needed
- e) Consideration of future or changing costs as your kinship child grows

4. Family Relationships and Contact

- a) How and when contact with parents/family will happen
- b) Where support or mediation will come from if required
- c) How children's wishes and feelings will be considered

5. Your Support Network

- a) Who you can rely on day-to-day
- b) Who can provide breaks or emotional support
- c) Links to peer groups, community networks or specialist charities
- d) What help you need if your support network changes or shrinks

6. Reviews and Accountability

- a) When your support plan will next be reviewed (e.g. 12/24 months)
- b) Who is responsible for coordinating the review
- c) What happens if circumstances change
- d) Who to contact if support isn't delivered



Your support plan belongs to you. You should always:

- Be given a copy in a format that you can use
- Be able to discuss it and request reviews and updates
- Use it to guide conversations

Expect it to evolve with the needs of your family.

About the Department of Health and Community Sciences, University of Exeter

The Department of Health & Community Sciences at the University of Exeter undertakes applied health and social care research that reflects the needs and priorities of service users and providers. We have a strong commitment to addressing health and social care inequalities and reducing disparities in health and social care outcomes at local, national and international levels. We involve people, communities and organisations in all of our work.

Find out more: <https://medicine.exeter.ac.uk/health-community/>

About Kinship

We are Kinship. The leading kinship care charity in England and Wales. We're here for kinship carers – friends or family who step up to raise a child when their parents aren't able to. We are made by and for our community of kinship carers. For too long they have been isolated without the help they need. Our purpose is to change lives and change the system. We support, advise and inform kinship carers. Connecting them so they feel empowered. Because a child needs the love and warmth of a thriving family. We develop research, campaigns and policy solutions. Creating positive change across society. Because for kinship families, love alone is not enough. And as we see momentum building for change, we keep working with our community and making impact. Join us. Together, let's commit to change for kinship families.

Find out more: www.kinship.org.uk

About Families in Harmony

Families in Harmony was born out of the kinship care lived experience of Johanna Bernard and Sharon McPherson. We know first-hand that the system is not always culturally competent, often leaving families like ours unseen and unsupported. In just a short time, we are proud to have established ourselves as a trusted, credible voice for African and Caribbean heritage kinship families. Our mission is to ensure that every kinship family with African and Caribbean heritage children are seen, heard and respected - receiving the right support at the right time.

If you are interested in learning more about Families In Harmony's work email: research@familiesinharmony.org.uk or peersupport@familiesinharmony.org.uk

About CoramBAAF

CoramBAAF is the UK's leading membership organisation for professionals working across adoption, fostering and kinship care. We provide information, best practice guidance, advice, training and resources to support our members and influence policy to improve outcomes for children and young people. CoramBAAF's practice forums provide our members with a unique opportunity to discuss professional practice and share knowledge and expertise with colleagues.

Find out more: [Kinship Care Practice Forum](#) and [Private Fostering Practice Forum](#).