

Join our parliamentary reception to learn more
and to meet with kinship carers

 **2 to 4pm | Wednesday 11 November 2026**
 **Terrace Pavillion, House of Commons**



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

#ValueOurLove campaign

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. There are **more than 141,000 children** living in kinship care in England and Wales – that's 3 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. Kinship carers in England contribute more than £4.3 billion to the economy annually by caring for children, many of whom would otherwise be looked after in unrelated foster or residential care.

About Kinship

Kinship is the leading kinship care charity. 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 180 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 MPs

1. Download our **information pack for MPs** which covers everything you need to know to support kinship families in your constituency and in Parliament.
2. Learn more about kinship care in your constituency at our **kinship care constituency map**.
3. Visit our **kinship care policy tracker** to stay up to date on kinship care policy in England.
4. Read our most recent '**state of the nation**' **report** based on the findings of our 2025 annual survey of kinship carers and explore our other **reports and briefings**.
5. Use our **Kinship Compass** to help your constituents navigate to local support.

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.



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. 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 keep children unnecessarily looked after in the care system, preventing families from achieving stability and resulting in greater costs for overstretched local authority budgets.

Current status: 7 local authorities in England are currently piloting financial allowances for some kinship carers over the next 3 years as part of the government's [Kinship Zones programme](#). This is a positive step – but the pilot will only reach about 4% of children in kinship care and risks paralysing progress towards equalising financial support more widely. We want to see the government take additional action in the meantime to encourage – and challenge – other local authorities to [improve their financial support](#).

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

Nearly half of kinship carers in work have no choice but to [give up their jobs](#) after taking on their caring role, and 8 in 10 never return to paid 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 forces them into poverty and the benefits system, and robs children of the protected time they deserve to heal and settle into their new home. We've supported leading employers – such as Tesco, John Lewis and B&Q – to become [Kinship Friendly Employers](#), but we need to see kinship carers included alongside other working parents and supported through the parental leave system.

Current status: We secured the [inclusion of kinship carers](#) within the scope of the government's parental leave review last year, set to conclude in early 2027. This review must lead to a new right to paid kinship care leave. We've [published our proposals](#) for a new statutory entitlement, developed alongside kinship carers and workplace leaders, which sets out how close this unfair gap in the law.

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 therapeutic and special educational needs comparable to children in care. But most [don't have access to vital help](#) at school or with their mental health. This lack of support risks family stability: for the 1 in 8 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: Government proposals set out earlier this year to [reform adoption and kinship support](#) need a rethink. They treat kinship families as an afterthought and risk eroding access to vital support even further after last year's [changes to the adoption and special guardianship support fund](#) (ASGSF). We want to see all kinship families get access to funded therapeutic support designed for their needs, and an end to the patchwork of educational support for different groups of kinship children.

If you'd like to learn more from your kinship carer constituents or join a local peer support group meeting, please [get in touch](#) and we can help to arrange.

Contact: Sam Turner, Associate Director of Policy and Public Affairs: sam.turner@kinship.org.uk