



JOB DESCRIPTION

Project Worker

Location:	Walsall with occasional travel across the UK. Based within the local authority
Salary:	£23,500 per annum (pro-rata)
Hours:	3 days per week (21 hours)
Contract:	Fixed term until 31 st March 2021
Benefits:	30 days annual leave plus bank holidays (pro-rata for part-time) and pension
Line management responsibility:	No
Budget management responsibility:	No
Responsible to:	Programmes Manager

About Grandparents Plus – the kinship care charity

Kinship care begins in crisis. A child whose parents are unable to care for them. It's frightening, painful, confusing. For the child, it can feel like their world is ending.

Instinctively, a loved one steps in – a grandparent, brother, sister, aunt, uncle or family friend. They are now a kinship carer, bringing up the children they love. There's no chance to prepare. Plans are pushed aside. Relationships, jobs and savings are sacrificed.

It's life changing and challenging raising children who've been hurt or neglected, but kinship carers do it without a thought for themselves because they put the children first.

And it's a fight to get support. Kinship families raising over 200,000 children are on the brink of going under because there's no recognition or support. They feel invisible. They are desperate.

At Grandparents Plus, we know how hard life can be for kinship carers. But we've seen the amazing things they're capable of with someone by their side. With the right support, children raised in kinship families flourish.

That's why we support, connect and campaign. To keep kinship families stronger by keeping them together.

We use our experience, expertise and strength to change lives. We are supporting kinship carers in their homes and communities, giving advice and helping them work through problems to find the best way forward.

We connect carers together in our national community and network of local support groups, to share experiences so they don't have to face the fight alone.

We help professionals understand kinship families and improve support for them. And our research and campaigns make sure kinship care is understood and government knows what changes are needed.

We'll not rest until the recognition and support is there for every kinship family. Together, we are stronger.

Grandparents Plus has a credible reputation for supporting the national development of good kinship care practice, including through our kinship care programmes and sector-leading research. We have unrivalled reach with the kinship care community through our national network of over 6,500 kinship carers, our Kinship Care Professionals group and our national kinship care advice service, which supports over 2,000 kinship families a year.

The project worker role is key to enabling us to meet our overarching objectives as a charity:

- **AWARENESS:** Raising awareness, understanding and recognition of kinship care and the challenges faced by carers and children.
- **SUPPORT:** Ensuring kinship care families are supported, can access information, advice and support when they need it.
- **CAMPAIGN:** Campaigning for change so that kinship care is supported by legislation, policy and practice.
- **SUSTAIN:** Building a sustainable future for the charity, diversifying income and building a strong team of staff and volunteers.

About the role

We are seeking an experienced project worker who is passionate about working with kinship carers and issues affecting children on the edge of, and within, the care system in order to transform the support they receive. We are looking for someone who has the interpersonal and partnership skills to perform their role sensitively and creatively and who is able to work collaboratively with Walsall Council, who have commissioned our service to support Special Guardians in their local authorities.

Key responsibilities

The project worker will deliver our Kinship Connected support service in partnership with Walsall Council and in close collaboration with local authority staff. The project worker will provide one-to-one support for special guardians, as well as kinship carers with a Child Arrangements Order or Residency Order. In addition, the project worker will develop peer support groups, which will be for all kinship carers.

1. Recruit

- a. Recruit special guardians who could benefit from advice, information, training and peer-to-peer support from the service within Walsall through engagement events and existing local networks.
- b. Recruit special guardians as volunteers to lead and support the development of peer support groups within Walsall.

2. Support

- a. Provide one-to-one impartial emotional and practical support to special guardians, often in their homes, and signpost to relevant national and local services, including for parenting support.

- b. Set up new, and develop existing, support groups, working collaboratively with special guardians and kinship carers more broadly, the local authorities and other local organisations.
- c. Support the delivery of workshops/ training for special guardians or kinship carers more broadly that may be focused on areas such as parenting, attachment or life story work within support groups.

3. Facilitate

- a. Deliver a series of one day preparatory workshops for current and prospective special guardians to help inform them about what taking on a Special Guardianship Order entails and where they can get support.

4. Collaborate

- a. Work collaboratively with colleagues involved in delivery of the service, staff from the local authority, as well as other statutory, voluntary and community groups to deliver the service effectively.

5. Promote

- a. Work in partnership with local organisations, including local authorities, to raise awareness of kinship care and to reach and support kinship carers through the service.
- b. Represent Grandparents Plus at external events and meetings to raise awareness of the service and to influence other organisations.
- c. Be willing to travel across Walsall and occasionally across England and Wales as necessary to attend events and raise the profile of the service and kinship care.

6. Engage

- a. Work proactively to enable special guardians to influence the design and delivery of the service.
- b. Support Grandparents' Plus communications and engagement strategy, such as writing copy and sourcing images for newsletters and local media to promote the service and recruit participants.

7. Evaluate

- a. Ensure all relevant data on the service is recorded and stored accurately on our central database (Salesforce) within project deadlines and in line with Grandparents Plus' policy and best practice.

Standard Clauses

- The post holder must at all times carry out their responsibilities with due regard to Grandparents Plus' Equal Opportunities Policy and Safeguarding Policy
- The post holder must accept responsibility for ensuring that the policies and procedures relating to Health and Safety in the workplace are adhered to at all times

- This role will require satisfactory enhanced level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance
- The post holder must respect the confidentiality of data stored electronically and by other means in line with General Data Protection Regulations.
- The post holder must carry out their responsibilities with due regard to the non-smoking environment of all Grandparents Plus offices.

Note - this job description is not exhaustive. Grandparents Plus reserves the right to add to or revise it at any time in agreement with the post holder. Appointment is subject to the successful completion of an enhanced DBS check.

Person Specification

Essential criteria

Experience of:

1. Working with a vulnerable client group and undertaking assessments
2. Multi-agency team working
3. Working with groups/ setting up support groups
4. Working with local voluntary sector and community networks
5. Representing an organisation to external stakeholders

Knowledge, skills and understanding

1. Knowledge and understanding of kinship care and/or children and families who need support
2. Understanding of general family/parenting support work
3. Ability to learn quickly about the regulations and guidance relating to special guardians
4. Network of local contacts within voluntary sector and community organisations
5. Training or facilitation skills
6. Excellent communication skills both written and oral
7. Excellent administrative skills
8. Proven track record of working with a case management system to record interventions delivered
9. Ability to work collaboratively in partnership with external organisations, parents and volunteers
10. Ability to work on your own initiative and manage a complex and varied workload to successfully meet project deadlines and targets
11. Excellent IT skills (Word, email, data recording, Excel)
12. Excellent written and spoken English
13. Right to work in the UK

General attributes

14. Positive and can-do attitude and ability to work in a complex working environment
15. Resilience when dealing with challenging and sensitive issues
16. Commitment to the values, aims and objectives of Grandparents Plus
17. Commitment to equal opportunities and diversity and respectful approach to working with people from a range of backgrounds

18. Flexibility to travel across Walsall and to occasional meetings in other parts of England or Wales

Desirable criteria

Experience

19. Personal experience of kinship care
20. Working within a children's services context
21. Experience of working directly with local authorities
22. Experience of using Salesforce database

Knowledge, skills and understanding

23. Knowledge and understanding of older people's issues
24. Knowledge and understanding of regulations and guidance affecting special guardians