



# Information pack for Members of Parliament

Everything you need to know to  
support **kinship families** in  
Parliament and your constituency

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Dear colleague,

Congratulations on your recent election as a Member of Parliament.

At Kinship, we look forward to working with you to ensure all kinship families get the support they need and deserve. We are here for all kinship carers – the grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings and other relatives and family friends who step up to raise children when their parents aren't able to.

**We're delighted to share with you this digital information pack full of useful information and materials designed to help you in your role as an MP.**

This pack will support your constituency casework staff to learn more about kinship care and where to signpost kinship carers in in your constituency to available online and local help. It will also equip you and your parliamentary and research staff with information about kinship care policy and our #ValueOurLove campaign so that you can become an effective advocate for kinship families in Parliament and beyond.

As the leading kinship care charity in England and Wales, Kinship supports thousands of kinship carers each year through expert advice and information, peer support groups, one-to-one support and free workshops and training. For more than two decades, we've developed a strong evidence base for what works and we're proud to have campaigned alongside kinship carers to secure significant improvements to policy and practice.

In the run up to the General Election, we asked our active community of kinship carers to get in touch with their MP candidates to tell them about the kinship families in their constituencies and the issues they face. 9 in 10 of you heard from your own kinship carer constituents on what matters most to them, and thank you for the kind responses you were able to share. I also hope you've since received a welcome card from some of the kinship carers in your constituency who wanted to congratulate you themselves and invite you to meet with them soon.

I hope you find this information pack useful whether you are a returning MP with years of experience or a new MP joining Parliament for the first time. We're enormously grateful to all of those in the House of Commons who have been able to lend their support to our #ValueOurLove campaign and advocate on behalf of kinship families, and we look forward to working with you in the coming months.

Best wishes,



Dr Lucy Peake  
Chief Executive



# About kinship care

Kinship care is when a child lives full-time or most of the time with a relative or family friend, usually because their parents are not able to care for them.

The best estimate we have suggests there are more than 141,000 children 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, 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.

## [Learn more about the different types of kinship care](#)

Most children are in kinship care because their parents are not able to look after them. Research shows that around half of children are in kinship care because their parents have had problems with drugs or alcohol. Children may also need kinship care if their parents die, go to prison, or they are abusive, neglectful or unwell.

## Why support kinship care?

Many children in kinship care will have experienced trauma. A kinship carer provides a stable home life where they 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 1000 children looked after in well-supported kinship care rather than local authority care, the state saves £40 million and increases the lifetime earnings of those children by £20 million.

## [Read the economic case for kinship care](#)

*"I believe that because she was family, she did everything she could to give me the best opportunities in life. Family sometimes just go above and beyond for other family. The amazing thing that kinship care offers you is that glimmer of hope that you will have a family that can work again."*

**Poppy, aged 23, raised in kinship care**

# Our policy and research work

We work collaboratively with kinship families, researchers, professionals, decision makers and other partners to influence national and local policy making across England and Wales.

Our unique reach allows us to listen to the views and expertise of thousands of kinship carers each year, and we campaign alongside them to deliver the changes they want to see most for their families.

## Kinship care policy tracker

Our kinship care policy tracker is the best place to understand more about the current state of play for kinship care policy in England. Visit the tracker to keep up to date with what's happening now, our verdict, and what we think should happen next.

### [Visit the kinship care policy tracker](#)

The tracker covers all areas of kinship care policy in England, including:

- Financial allowances
- Kinship care leave
- Defining kinship care
- Support for kinship children
- Family justice and legal aid

## Reports and briefings

Our surveys of kinship carers are the largest of their kind, and alongside the insights from our advice and support work, enable us to make a compelling argument for policy and practice change. We regularly deliver written and verbal briefings for MPs ahead of debates, respond to consultations and calls for evidence, and publish other policy outputs setting out our recommendations for change.

Our most recent publications include:

- [Forgotten: Support for kinship children's education and mental health](#)
- [#ValueOurLove campaign: a manifesto for kinship care](#)
- [Breaking Point: kinship carers in crisis](#)
- [Forced Out: delivering equality for kinship carers in the workplace](#)

### [View all reports and briefings](#)

For any additional briefing materials or questions about kinship care, please don't hesitate to [get in touch](#).



*Good progress is being made.*



*In the right direction, but further and faster effort required.*

#### Jump to:

- [Recognising kinship care](#)
- [Building a new kinship care system](#)
- [Defining kinship care](#)
- [Data and research](#)
- [Engaging and supporting family networks](#)
- [Financial allowances](#)
- [Kinship care leave](#)
- [Legal support for kinship](#)

# #ValueOurLove campaign

Kinship's #ValueOurLove campaign launched in October 2022 and calls on the UK and Welsh Governments to equalise support between kinship families and foster and adoptive families.

More than 141,000 children in kinship families across England and Wales know the value of love. But politicians still overlook them and undervalue the role of kinship carers in keeping children out of the care system.

Unlike children in foster and adoptive families, most kinship children and those that care for them receive no financial or practical support. As a result, nearly 1 in 8 kinship carers told us they are concerned about



continuing to care for their children in the next year if their situations don't improve.

This not only risks the futures of thousands of children, but is also economically short-sighted. Love provides the best value to children, society and the economy – the love and sacrifice of kinship carers saves the public purse millions a year by preventing children from going into the care system.





# What we want to see

We need to provide urgent support for kinship families across England and Wales today, and take steps to build a kinship care system fit for the kinship families of tomorrow.

## 1. Equal financial allowances

More than two thirds of kinship households are deprived in at least one dimension, and most kinship carers do not receive any financial support when they unexpectedly take on the care of a relative or friend's child.

**We want to see all kinship carers get the financial support they need, including a financial allowance which at least matches the guaranteed financial allowance provided to all foster carers.**

## 2. Equal paid leave from work

Our Forced Out report revealed that more than 8 in 10 kinship carers had given up work permanently or reduced their hours after taking on their caring role. The lack of paid leave for kinship carers is unnecessarily pushing them out of work and into poverty, and robbing them of protected time where they can focus on settling in a child to their new home.

**We want to see a new right to statutory pay and leave for all kinship carers, at least on a par with that for adoptive parents.**

*"I have thought about whether I can go on like this, or whether I should hand her back to social services. It makes me feel awful to even consider it, because she's my granddaughter, but what if I can't give her what she needs?"*

Grandmother and kinship carer

## 3. Equal therapeutic and educational support for children

Children growing up in kinship care have typically experienced trauma, separation and loss. But unlike their counterparts in the care system, most don't have access to vital help at school or with their mental health.

**We want to see all kinship children get the support they need to heal and thrive, enabling them to understand their journeys into kinship care and get professional help to manage their social, emotional and mental health needs.**

## 4. Equal access to training and support

Unlike foster care or adoption, kinship care often happens in a crisis and so most kinship carers don't get the preparatory training and ongoing advice and support they need. 25% of kinship carers rate the support provided by their local authority as very poor, and 35% rate the information provided as very poor.

**We want to see all kinship carers offered independent expert advice and the ongoing training and support they feel they need to best support the children in their care.**

**[Learn more about the campaign and watch our series of kinship carer story videos.](#)**

# The journey so far

Kinship has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with kinship carers for more than two decades, but we've been on an exciting journey over the last few years in particular as awareness of and support for kinship care has grown. Here are some of the key milestones.

## May 2022

The final report of the [Independent Review of Children's Social Care](#) said that the relatives and family friends caring for children had for too long been a "silent and unheard majority" in children's social care and deserved "far greater recognition and support". It made a number of welcome recommendations to "unlock the potential of family networks", including introducing financial allowances and paid employment leave for kinship carers.

## October 2022

Kinship's [#ValueOurLove](#) campaign launched in Parliament with contributions from leading politicians including Bridget Phillipson MP, then Shadow Secretary of State for Education, who pledged that "Labour will not forget kinship carers. We will not forget the children you care for. We will not forget the difference you make. We will always remember the love you give."



## December 2022

We handed in the [#ValueOurLove](#) campaign petition signed by more than 10,000 kinship carers and supporters who joined us to call for a dedicated kinship care strategy and equalised support between kinship families and foster and adoptive families.



## February 2023

The previous Government published its children's social care implementation strategy, [Stable Homes, Built on Love](#). This finally gave kinship care the recognition it deserved and placed it at the heart of its reform plans for children's social care. However, it only committed to "exploring the case" for introducing financial support and additional workplace entitlements for kinship carers, falling short of the Review's recommendations, but promised to deliver a dedicated kinship care strategy by the end of the year and invest in a national offer of training and support for kinship carers.



## July 2023

Kinship carers such as Ginna, who had been forced out of work when they stepped up to care for a child, took the #ValueOurLove campaign to Westminster to push Ministers to deliver a right to statutory paid employment leave for kinship carers.



## September 2023

We mobilised more than 400 kinship carers to respond to the Government's consultation on its children's social care reforms, representing nearly half of all respondents to the consultation and reinforcing kinship care as a top priority for the Department for Education.

## October 2023

We celebrated one year of Kinship's #ValueOurLove campaign in Parliament and the remarkable efforts of thousands of kinship carers who had taken action in their local areas and nationally.

## December 2023

The first ever National Kinship Care Strategy was published, marking a significant win for the #ValueOurLove campaign. This set out the previous Government's ambitions for encouraging and supporting kinship care, including £20 million investment over 2024-25 to begin a four-year pilot of financial allowances for some kinship carers, extend Virtual School support to some children in

kinship care, and publish new guidance for employers on supporting kinship carers at work. However, it failed to deliver the urgent support which kinship families needed and to lay the groundwork for a new kinship care system.

## June 2024

We published our #ValueOurLove campaign manifesto for kinship care and launched a refreshed kinship care constituency map, supporting more than 1,500 kinship carers and supporters to contact more than 2,500 MP candidates during the General Election campaign, covering 90% of all constituencies in England and Wales.

## July 2024

Following the election of a new Government, new Minister for Children and Families – Janet Daby MP – met with a group of kinship carers at our head office on only her second day in post. Janet heard their emotional stories and their views on how the new Government should maintain the momentum following the National Kinship Care Strategy but go further to ensure kinship families get the financial, practical and emotional support they deserve.



# How you can support

We're grateful for the support of MPs who can help to champion kinship care in Parliament and push the Government to commit to improving support for all kinship families. Here's how you can help.

## 1. Meet with kinship carers

Why not meet with kinship carers in your constituency to learn more about the challenges they face and their views on what should change?

We coordinate more than 150 peer support groups across England and Wales as well as a network of kinship carer campaign champions who would love the opportunity to share their views directly with you. Please [get in touch](#) and we can help to arrange.



## 2. Share the campaign

Show your support for kinship families and boost awareness of kinship care by sharing the #ValueOurLove campaign on social media and via newsletters, websites and other networks.

Follow and tag us at [@kinshipcharity](#) on X/Twitter, [@kinshipcarecharity](#) on Facebook, and [@kinship\\_charity](#) on Instagram. We can share suggested copy for posts.

## 3. Take actions in Parliament

Write to the Secretary of State for Education and/or the Minister for Children and Families, as well as other Ministers with relevant policy responsibilities, and urge them to consider kinship families and our #ValueOurLove campaign calls. Please [get in touch](#) for template letters you can adapt.

You could also table written and oral questions to push for further information and action, and try to secure or speak in debates on kinship care and other relevant topics. We can help by providing suggested wording or briefing materials, and finding other Members to support actions.

You might also wish to join the APPG on Kinship Care. We campaign alongside our friends at the Family Rights Group who act as the Secretariat for the APPG, as well as other organisations who form the sector-wide Kinship Care Alliance. We regularly brief APPG members ahead of meetings or events.



# Save the date!

Join the **#ValueOurLove campaign parliamentary reception** to meet with kinship carers, learn more about the kinship families in your constituency and how Kinship can support them, and lend your support to the #ValueOurLove campaign.

**2pm to 4pm**

**Wednesday 16 October 2024**

**Churchill Room, House of Commons**

RSVP to [natalie.grubb-latouche@kinship.org.uk](mailto:natalie.grubb-latouche@kinship.org.uk)



## Welsh MP?

We're grateful to those MPs representing Welsh constituencies in Westminster who have helped us to push the UK Government for the changes which kinship families need.

This includes potential reforms led by the UK Government which could impact on kinship families in Wales too, such as our call for a new entitlement to paid employment leave for kinship carers.

As children's social care is a devolved issue, our policy and campaigns activity also seeks to influence the Welsh Government and Members of the Senedd in Wales.

**We want the Welsh Government to put kinship care at the heart of its vision to improve children's social care in Wales.**

Welsh MPs can help this too by supporting engagement with colleagues in the Senedd and raising awareness of the [#ValueOurLove / #TrysoriEinCariad](#) campaign in Wales.



# Kinship care in your constituency

## Kinship care constituency map

Learn about kinship families in your constituency and the key challenges facing kinship carers in your region at our kinship care constituency map, recently updated in June 2024.

[Visit the kinship care constituency map](#)

You may want to use the map to support your advocacy for kinship families in Parliament by highlighting the scale of

kinship care and the number of kinship children in your constituency during debates or in letters to Ministers.

The map can also support with local or regional activity, including in discussions with local authorities or as part of constituency casework involving kinship families.

For more information or figures about kinship care in your constituency, please don't hesitate to [get in touch](#).





# How to support kinship families in your constituency

## 1. Meet with kinship carers to help improve local policy and practice

As noted above, we can support you to meet with kinship carers and families in your constituency so you can hear their experiences and their views on what needs to change locally.

We coordinate more than 150 peer support groups across England and Wales and also work closely alongside local authorities who are pioneering new ways of supporting kinship families.



Please [get in touch](#) as we can help to arrange visits and meetings, and look out for invitations from kinship carer constituents to meet with them during [Kinship Care Week 2024](#).

You could also write to council leaders, lead members for children's services and/or

Directors of Children's Services in the local authority(ies) which covers your constituency area to learn more about the support they offer and their plans for working alongside kinship families to improve this. Developing relationships with relevant colleagues in the local authority can also help with constituency casework. We can provide template letters and share contact details to help you.

## 2. Raise awareness of kinship care and Kinship

As visible leaders in their communities, MPs play an important role in helping us to raise awareness of kinship care.

Many relatives and friends may not know they're a kinship carer, especially those who are informal kinship carers, and the wide reach which you have as an MP can help us to boost understanding and ensure more families recognise themselves as kinship carers and subsequently get the support they need.

Please do consider sharing information about kinship care and Kinship through your social media channels, website and any constituency newsletters or groups, as well as other wider networks or organisations based in your constituency which work with children and families, including charities, schools and early years settings, family hubs, primary health services and other community and faith groups.



Kinship coordinates [Kinship Care Week](#) each year which is a perfect time to celebrate and raise awareness of kinship families in your constituency.

Visit our [Kinship Care Week 2024 webpage](#) to learn more about how you can support this year from 7 – 13 October

### 3. Signpost to our support

We know that growing awareness of and support for kinship care has increased the number of kinship carers who feel

empowered to reach out to their MPs and ask for their help in pushing for change, as well as those requesting advocacy and casework support as a constituent.

The information in the following section should support you and any constituency casework staff with signposting your kinship carer constituents to relevant advice, information and support from Kinship. We can also provide digital and some printed copies of relevant flyers and other materials; please [get in touch](#) to request.



**#THISISKINSHIPCARE**

Let's raise awareness about kinship care and what life is like for kinship families.



**Kinship Care Week 2024**  
7-13 October

# Our support for kinship carers

Kinship Compass is our online information, advice and support hub just for kinship carers: the one place they can go for information, expert advice and support for every stage of their kinship care journey, tailored to their situation.

[Visit Kinship Compass](#)

## Information and advice

Becoming a kinship carer can be overwhelming and there's a lot of information to take in. Whether any of your constituents are new to kinship care, already caring for a child or supporting a family member or friend, we're here to help.

Some of our most popular online advice guides include:

- [What is kinship care?](#)
- [Legal help for kinship carers](#)
- [Worried about a child's safety or welfare?](#)
- [How do I obtain parental responsibility for the child I am caring for?](#)
- [Financial support and benefits for kinship carers](#)
- [Family and friends foster care](#)
- [Managing contact time with family](#)

The Kinship advice team are specialists in supporting kinship carers across England and Wales. We can advise those who care for a relative or friend's child full time, as well as those who are thinking about becoming a kinship carer. Our advisers are impartial, non-judgemental and the service is confidential.

Your kinship carer constituents can contact our advice line by phone on 0300 123 7015 between 9.30am and 2pm Monday to Friday. Outside of these hours, kinship carers can reach our advice team using our web inquiry form and one of our advisers will get back to them as soon as possible. We also hold monthly [Facebook advice sessions](#).

[Get help and advice from the Kinship Advice Team](#)

Please note that we can only advise kinship carers in England and Wales. If you are supporting a kinship carer who would like advice, please encourage them to contact us directly.

## Free workshops

Our free workshops and events for kinship carers include online and in-person opportunities to learn more about topics such as understanding trauma and attachment, preparing for sensitive conversations, an introduction to kinship care, managing contact, and navigating the EHCP and SEND processes.

[View our free workshops and events](#)

We're excited to have been awarded an 18-month contract by the Department for Education to develop a [training and support programme for kinship carers](#) in England, offering online and in-person training and resources for all types of kinship carers.

This will provide kinship carers with preparatory support at the beginning of their kinship care journey, as well as options for ongoing support.

Upcoming roadshow events and other training opportunities are in development and will be promoted in the coming months on [Kinship Compass](#).

### [Visit Kinship Compass](#)

## **Connect with other kinship carers**

Wherever you are an MP in England or Wales, kinship carers in your constituency are not alone. If they are looking for a local kinship peer support group or simply just want someone to chat to, there's a community just for them.

We coordinate more than 150 peer support groups across England and Wales, and our handy online search tool allows kinship carers to find groups which meet near to where they live or which meet online, including regional and other special interest groups such as those for kinship carers with teenagers, male kinship carers, LGBTQ+ kinship carers, and many more.

### [Find a kinship peer support group](#)

Our Someone Like Me service helps to match kinship carers with a trained, friendly and supportive kinship carer volunteer who'll listen to how they're feeling and give them emotional support.

### [Talk to another kinship carer](#)

Kinship carers in your constituency can also join our powerful Kinship Community of over 10,000 kinship carers so they can receive updates on events, campaigns and useful information to support them in their caring role.

### [Join the Kinship Community](#)

## **Specialist programmes**

We work with local authorities to support kinship carers to access emotional support and expert advice and information. We provide independently evaluated needs-based services that have been co-produced with kinship carers, including [Kinship Connected](#) which provides tailored family support through specialist project workers and [Kinship Ready](#), which supports new and prospective kinship carers.

Find out if the local authority(ies) covering your constituency commissions our specialist programmes and learn more about our work with local authorities and professionals below.

### [Local authorities supporting kinship carers](#)

# Get in touch

Please get in touch with our friendly policy and public affairs team for further information or help with anything around kinship care. Thank you for your continued support for kinship families.



**Sam Turner**

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# About Kinship

Kinship is the leading kinship care charity in England and Wales, supporting thousands of kinship carers each year through free training sessions, one-to-one support, peer support groups, and expert advice and information.

**We want kinship carers and the children they are raising to be recognised, valued and supported.**

[kinship.org.uk](https://kinship.org.uk)



@kinshipcharity



@kinshipcarecharity



@kinship\_charity



Kinship is the working name for Grandparents Plus, which is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under number 4454103 and registered as a charity under number 1093975. Registered office: The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London SE11 5RR.