



CITY OF
YORK
COUNCIL

Our Local Offer

Kinship Care

2026/2027

“As a Grandparent carer, I never think of my children as being in care. To me, they are in their rightful place within their family and their community” (Anonymous)

This guide has been developed to provide clear and accessible information about the support available to those who are caring for children within their extended family or close network.

When children can't live with their parents, for whatever reason, we will do everything we can to help those children to live with people they know either within their wider family or network of people they know and trust. We call these arrangements 'kinship care'.

Whether you're a grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle or a family friend, this offer outlines the help you can access – legal, financial, emotional, and practical – based on your own unique circumstances.



Our commitments:

- Ensuring children and carers receive the right support at the right time.
- Promoting family group decision-making.
- Engaging carers in shaping and reviewing support services.
- Providing consistent, fair support across all professional services.

We will review our Kinship Local Offer on an annual basis to ensure it remains up to date with relevant information for all kinship carers.

Contents

1. Introduction
 - What is kinship care?
 - Legal framework
 - Values, principles and objectives
2. Types of kinship care arrangements
3. Professional practice
4. Support
 - Supporting young people aged 18+ – Staying Put
 - Support from other organisations
 - Support groups
 - Training
 - Financial support
 - Supporting kinship carers to stay in work
 - Housing support and advice
 - Education support and advice
 - Supporting children with complex health and disabilities
 - Family time
 - Family network meetings
 - Early help support
 - Legal support
 - Emotional, mental health and therapeutic support
 - Out-of-hours support / emergency support
5. Diversity and inclusion
6. Complaints procedure
7. Useful information and organisations



1. Introduction

What is kinship care?

When children are cared for by members of their extended family, friends or other people who are connected to them we call this **kinship care**.

Kinship care arrangements are when children are separated from their parents, or parents are unable to provide the care and support a child needs. Kinship care arrangements may happen for lots of different reasons and may be permanent or temporary. Sometimes these arrangements are made by City of York Council or arranged privately within the family, or the court has decided that the children need to live apart from their parents.

Many people become kinship carers, and they include, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, stepparents (who have separated from the birth parent) step grandparents, great grandparents, friends of the family or other people **connected to the child**.

Consideration of a child's welfare and what is in their **best interests** will always be at the heart of what we do. It is our strong belief that children should be enabled to live within their families, unless this is not in their best interests. We will therefore work really hard to support these arrangements to keep children within their own families and/or connected networks wherever this is possible and consistent with the child's safety and well-being.

This principle applies to all children in need, including those children in the care City of York Children's Social Care. Where a child cannot live within their immediate family, we will make strenuous efforts to identify potential carers within the child's network of family and friends who are able and willing to offer care.

We will provide support for these arrangements based on assessed needs, to enable children to experience stability and belonging within their network. Our aim is to reduce the need for children to become looked after by City of York Council, and to reduce the need for children to be cared for by people who they do not already know.

"Every child deserves a champion – an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection." (Rita F. Pierson)

Legal framework

City of York Council has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need living within its area and to promote the upbringing of such children by their families. The way in which we fulfil this is by providing a range of services appropriate to those children's assessed needs. This can include for example, financial, practical or emotional support.

It is important to note that City of York Council does not have a general duty to assess all arrangements where children are living within their wider family or friends' network rather than

their parents, but it does have a duty where it appears that services may be necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child in need.

Values, principles and objectives

Consideration of children's welfare and best interests will always be at the very centre of the work we do.

It is an underlying principle that children should live within their families unless this is not consistent with their welfare. We will therefore work to maintain children within their own families, and facilitate services to support any such arrangements, wherever this is consistent with the child's safety and well-being. This principle applies to all children in need, including those who are looked after by City of York Council.

Where a child cannot live within their immediate family and City of York Council is considering the need to look after the child, we will make strenuous efforts to identify potential carers within the child's network of family or friends who are able and willing to care for the child.

This support and training will be provided in ways that are appropriate and encouraging for kinship carers and also recognise that kinship carers may need access to a range of high-quality support services at universal, targeted and specialist levels may be needed.

2. Types of kinship care arrangements

Private / Informal Family Arrangements

The parent(s) make the arrangement or a close family member, steps in to help support the care of a child. The length of the arrangement is decided by the person with parental responsibility (PR) or someone who has taken out a legal order for the child.

City of York may become involved if a child is not living with those with parental responsibility and within close family network. This could be as a 'child in need' or through early help provision, where assessments are completed and support plans put in place to support the child and their family.

Parental responsibility remains with the birth parents, but the carer may do what is reasonable to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

Private Fostering Arrangement

A privately fostered child is under 16 (or 18 if they are disabled) who is cared for by someone who is not a parent or close relative.

A close relative is defined as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (where of full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership). If the arrangement is intended to last for 28 days or more, it needs to be approved by City of York Council. The birth parent(s) will still hold parental responsibility for the child and agree the decision-making arrangements with the private foster carer.

City of York Council has a duty to assess and monitor the welfare of all privately fostered children and the way in which they carry out these duties is set out in schedule 8 of the Children Act 1989, with a new paragraph inserted by section 44 of the Children Act 2004 and Private Arrangements for Fostering Regulations 2005.

The parent and or the person caring for the child can ring City of York Council Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on **01904 551900** for help and advice on private fostering arrangements. If a professional or member of the community becomes aware of information which suggests a child may be living in a private fostering arrangement, then they must also report this to City of York Council.

Private fostering is not the same as fostering for a private or independent fostering agency, which involves being paid to look after a child or young person who is not related or connected to you.

Any payments or financial support may be part of a Child in Need Plan. However, **the parent is financially responsible for the care given to their child by the private fostering carer.**

Kinship Foster Care (also known as connected care)

A kinship foster carer is someone who is either being assessed via Regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010, or has been assessed by City of York Council's Fostering Service, to be a registered foster carer for the child. (The Children Act 1989, Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services). The child in this case would be a child in the care of City of York Council.

The assessment and approval process for kinship carers who apply to be foster carers for a specific child in the care of City of York Council will be fully explained during the initial assessment. A guide to kinship care is also available containing information about the expectations of being kinship carers. This guide should be given to the prospective kinship carer in the placement planning meeting.

Once approved as foster carers, the carers will be allocated a supervising social worker from the fostering service; to provide them with support and supervision, the child/children will also continue to have their own social worker. The carer should be provided with the contact details for their supervising social worker and the children's social worker along with the service duty contact details.

While the child remains a child in the care of City of York Council, the approved kinship carer will be expected to co-operate with all the processes that are in place to ensure that the child receives appropriate care and support, for example: completing training, working with the child's social worker and contributing to the child's care plan.

Authority for day-to-day decision making about the child should be delegated to the carer, unless there is a valid reason not to do so. During the placement planning meeting delegated responsibilities and what is delegated to who, will be discussed and agreed in more detail.

Kinship foster carers will receive the equivalent fostering fees and allowances as all registered City of York Council foster carers for as long as they are caring for a child in our care.

Child Arrangement Orders

A Child Arrangement Order (CAO) is a Court Order which sets out the arrangements as to when and with whom a child is to live and spend time with. A Child Arrangement Order may give parental responsibility to the person caring for the child and parental responsibility is shared with the parents. However, authority for the day-to-day decision making about the child should be delegated to the carers, unless there is a valid reason not to do so.

Child Arrangement Orders may be made in private family court proceedings in which City of York Council is not a party nor involved in any way in these arrangements. However, a Child Arrangement Order in favour of a relative or previous kinship foster carer with whom the child was living with, may be an appropriate outcome as part of a plan of permanence for a child in the care of City of York Council.

Should a carer with a Child Arrangement Order, feel they require further support and advice, then they should contact: **Children's Social Care on 01904 551900** to request an assessment of support needs.

If the child has been a child in the care of City of York Council immediately before the making of the Child Arrangement Order, then the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) may be accessed for therapeutic support for the child.

Special Guardianship Order

Special Guardianship offers a further option for children needing permanent care outside their immediate birth family. It can offer greater security without absolute severance from the birth family as in adoption.

Relatives may apply for a Special Guardianship Order after caring for a child for one year, however, if a Special Guardianship Order is part of City of York Council's plan of permanence for a child, then the length of time caring for a child can be shorter, depending on the circumstances.

Special Guardians will have over-riding parental responsibility for the child which, while it is still shared with parents, can be exercised with a greater autonomy on day-to-day matters than where there is a Child Arrangements Order.

Where the child was in the care of the City of York Council immediately prior to the granting of the Special Guardianship Order, City of York Council has a responsibility to assess the support needs of the child, parents and special guardians, including the need for financial support.

Once the assessment is completed recommending a Special Guardianship Order for the child, a support plan will be devised by the child's social worker, outlining what support is available once the SGO is granted.

Prior to the completion of an assessment for a Special Guardianship Assessment, City of York Council will provide carers with a letter outlining how they can access one-off legal advice with a solicitor of their own choosing and pay up to the value of £300. A list of childcare law solicitors can be provided but City of York Council cannot indicate a preference.

Support after the Order will be outlined in the support plan. If the Special Guardian feels they need more support, either as guardians of the child or if they feel the child needs specific support, they can contact the **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on Tel: 01904 551900**. Additional support may include:

The **Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF)** may be accessed for therapeutic support for the child. This will be something which is discussed via the assessment of support needs that will be completed with the carer by a social worker and/or worker from the adoption support team.

If a **Special Guardianship Order** was granted outside of York and **less than 2 years ago**, then it is the local authority who supported the application that maintains responsibility. However, if the **Special Guardianship Order** was granted outside of York **over 2 years ago**, but live in York and require additional support, carers can make contact with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on Tel: **01904 551900**.

Special Guardians in York can access the **full training package** on offer to York Fostering Service foster carers. Please refer to the full training programme that provides course contents and learning outcomes: <https://york.learningpool.com/login/index.php>

For **children with a disability**, you may be entitled to support through a short break or additional financial support following an assessment. We will provide support to navigate the benefits and allowances available and offer practical support to complete any applications for financial assistance, i.e. such as DLA.

3. Professional practice

Agencies working with kinship carers should acknowledge not only the joy and fulfilment experiences but also consider the personal cost and sacrifice that many kinship families make in order to care for children.

Practitioners should encourage Kinship carers to access all the universal services available to them, both locally and nationally, including any universally available benefits and allowances, and to seek advice when the child's needs exceed these.

This also extends to Kinship fostering families, where they are supported and encouraged to access the wide range of learning and training opportunities in maintaining their approval status as kinship foster carers and meeting the fostering standards.

4. Support

Most kinship care arrangements work well and meet the needs of the child with the support of universal agencies such as health, education and housing services. Where kinship carers require some additional support or advice then they can speak with their supervising social worker within the fostering service, or kinship support worker, who will be able to support, advise and signpost to the right services.

The following outlines the types of support available to all kinship carers in York.

Staying Put - Supporting young people over the age of 18

A Staying Put arrangement is when a young person who has been living in foster care/ kinship foster care remains in the former foster home after the age of 18.

It is the duty of City of York Council:

- to monitor the Staying Put arrangement; and
- to provide advice, assistance and support to the child / young person and the foster carer with a view to maintaining the Staying Put arrangement (this must include financial support), until the child reaches the age of 21 (unless the local authority consider that the Staying Put arrangement is not consistent with the child's welfare).

Support from other organisations

Carers can also access support from:

Kinship, the charity for kinship carers; www.kinship.org.uk

Kinship is the leading kinship care charity in England and Wales. They work with all kinship carers who are caring for children when their parents can't. Kinship aims to provide support, advise and training to all kinship carers irrespective of under which Kinship Care arrangement they are in.

Family Rights Group; www.frg.org.uk/get-help-and-advice/who/kinship-carers

Family Rights Group is a charity that advises parents, grandparents, relatives and friends about their rights and options when social workers or courts make decisions about their child's welfare.

Carers can also seek their own independent legal advice from a solicitor. Some solicitors offer one-off free advice, and should a positive Special Guardianship assessment be completed, then City of York Council will fund a one-off payment for legal advice to carers to support them in

considering what is the right legal order for them and their family. An assessing social worker will guide carers through this process at the appropriate time.

Support groups for York Carers

Support groups can be a good way of making connections with other carers with similar experiences for support and advice. We know that kinship carers can often become isolated from their existing support networks due to the additional pressures of caring for children.

The Kinship Charity run several support groups for kinship carers around the York area. These are run by staff from Kinship but some are peer-led by other kinship carers who have lived experience of being kinship carers and are understanding of the challenges that carers can experience.

Any kinship carer can attend the support groups regardless of legal order. Children are welcome at some of these support groups. For further details, visit the Kinship website's directory of support groups in and around York. If you consent, Kinship will send you an email newsletter every quarter. This email includes up-to-date information, resources and links to services which are relevant to kinship carers.

Kinship carers can also access the York Fostering Service's carer support groups which are held across York at various times. These can include guest speakers and an opportunity to network with other carers and get advice and support.

York Fostering Service also holds regular drop-in sessions, which kinship carers can attend to find out about changes being made to the service and to have an opportunity to contribute to feedback. There will also be opportunities for learning at these and further opportunity for networking with other carers.

Our Consultant Clinical Psychologist also provides monthly 'slots' for those carers who may need additional support, advice or guidance in caring for a child and also provides opportunities for groups of carers to come together as a means of mutual support.

Training

All approved kinship foster carers are required to undertake mandatory training and completion of the [Training, Support & Development Standards workbook](#) also known as TSDS.

Training can boost the confidence of kinship carers and equip them with the skills and knowledge to look after children. York Fostering Service's team will deliver training to foster carers and kinship carers.

All kinship carers in York have access to MYLO, the online platform, which provides a range of online training on a wide variety of relevant topics; <https://york.learningpool.com/login/index.php>

The Kinship charity www.kinship.org.uk also offers a range of webinar and training opportunities.



Working Together to Safeguard Children – the York partnership provides a range of multi-agency training courses both face to face and via e-learning to meet the needs of professionals, foster carers, kinship carers and volunteers working with children and young people in York.

Kinship carers can view and book training on the website; www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/

Financial support

Kinship carers **approved at fostering panel** who look after a child in the care of City of York Council will receive financial support to make sure they have all the necessary furniture/equipment for them to care for the children.

These carers will also receive a weekly fostering fee and allowance in line with their skill level and age of child. Any queries relating to the fostering allowances should be directed to their allocated supervising social worker.

Special Guardians, who were previously kinship foster carers and caring for a child in the care of City of York Council prior to the making of the SGO Order, will receive the equivalent payment of their fostering fee and allowances for the child, at the time the order was granted, for a period of 2 years. After this period a financial means test assessment will be undertaken to identify any future financial support offered.

In all other kinship arrangements, financial assistance may be available from City of York Council upon request under section 17 of the 1989 Act, where a child is deemed to be a child in need in line with the legal framework. In this instance, a financial assessment will be undertaken, and this would need agreement from the relevant Head of Service.

We offer Max Cards to all our carers. The Max Card is the UK's leading discount card for cared for and looked after children. Families can use their Max Card at venues across the UK to get free or discounted admission. Carers are encouraged to speak to their supervising social worker or Kinship Support Worker to request one; <https://mymaxcard.co.uk/>

Other Financial Support

Universal Credit is a means-tested benefit for people of working age who are on a low income. You can be working, looking for work, sick or disabled, or caring for a child or disabled person. **As an approved foster carer, you can claim Universal Credit if you are eligible.** Find more information: <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

As a kinship carer, you can likely claim **Child Benefit** and **Child Tax Credits** for each child in your care (under 16 years of age or a young person under 20 years of age who is in approved education or training) for whom you are responsible. Only 1 person can get child benefit and there is no limit to how many children you can claim for. Child benefit cannot be claimed by Kinship foster carers where the child is the subject of a care order. Find more information: <https://www.gov.uk/child-benefit>

If you are over State Pension age, you may be able to get **Pension Credit**. This is a payment that is separate to your State Pension. It gives you extra money to help pay for day-to-day living

costs, including looking after a child if you are a **kinship carer**. You may also be entitled to additional financial support if caring for a child/children with a disability. Find out more: <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit/eligibility>

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children may help with the extra costs of looking after a child who:

- is under 16
- has difficulties walking or needs much more looking after than a child of the same age who does not have a disability

They will need to meet all the Government's eligibility requirements.

Kinship carers may also be able to claim additional financial support from via the **Carer's Allowance** if caring for children with disabilities. For more information about the Carer's Allowance, visit Gov.uk.

There may be other financial support options available to you that are not listed here. Please visit the Gov.uk page Looking after someone else's child or the Kinship website for the most up-to-date information about financial support available to kinship carers.

Help with Energy Bills

There are several national schemes that provide financial support or discounts for paying for energy, for example: the Winter Fuel Payment, Warm Home Discount Scheme, fuel vouchers if you use a prepayment meter.

Further advice and support can be found via the links below:

For more information about Government benefits and support that you may be eligible for, visit Kinship's website; www.kinship.org.uk

For more information about grants and benefits to help you pay your energy bills, visit Citizens Advice website; www.citizensadviceyork.org.uk

Supporting kinship carers to stay in work

Whilst in some circumstances carers may be able to take time off work due to caring responsibilities, family members sometimes take on the care of children in an emergency and may have to take unpaid time off work or a career break in order to settle the children into their new environment and to adjust their own lifestyles.

It will not always be possible or can be in the child's or carer's best long-term interests for the carer to reduce their hours and therefore income, or give up work altogether, particularly if this would lead to future financial hardship which would impact on the care provided for the child.

Where carers are employed, their employer will be able to provide information about any relevant parental leave entitlements.

For more information about your rights to time off for family and dependents, visit the Gov.uk website; www.gov.uk/time-off-for-dependants

Housing support and advice

Kinship carers may need support with accommodation, as their homes may not be sufficient to care for an additional child or possibly a sibling group of children. Living in cramped conditions may add to the pressures of caring.

During the planning stages of kinship and SGO arrangements, housing needs should be assessed and discussed to reduce any current and future impact on carers and the children they are caring for, along with any birth children still living at home.

We work closely with our colleagues in Housing and can support kinship carers in approaching them and registered social landlords to explore alternatives. Our colleagues in housing recognise the importance of the role kinship carers in keeping families together, and whenever possible will work with us to identify solutions

Social housing residents that become kinship carers should notify their housing provider of their changed circumstances and request to be transferred to more suitable housing, although these lists can be long, even for those in high priority groups.

Education support and advice

Children living in kinship arrangements are more likely to face difficulties in education and challenges that may require targeted support. In many cases, the impact of trauma and neglect can impact on children's education attainment, with many children having special educational needs (SEN) such as autism, ADHD, physical disabilities and social, emotional and mental health.

No child should be disadvantaged by their lived experiences and all children should have the opportunity to achieve in their education and to have better outcomes as adults.

All schools and academies must appoint a designated teacher and SENCO who is in a leadership role, to promote the educational achievement of every current and previously looked-after child on the school's roll and for children who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or is on the Special Educational Needs register.

This includes making sure that all staff have high expectations of the children's learning and understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education.

Virtual School - York

A virtual school is a statutory service, not a physical building, that supports, monitors, and improves the educational outcomes of children in care, previously in care, and those with a social worker. It is a group of professionals, led by a Virtual School Head and explore creative ways in which children can learn and achieve qualifications.

The Virtual School Head has a duty to promote the educational attainment of pupils who are no longer looked after because they are the subject of adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangements order by providing information and advice to their parents, educators, and others they consider necessary.

The Virtual School Head role has been extended on a non-statutory basis to specifically include championing the attendance, attainment, and progress of all children in kinship care. This means that all children in kinship arrangements, regardless of legal status, will benefit from the adaptation of this important role.

Kinship families with a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order, regardless of whether the children were previously in local authority care, will also benefit from advice and information, upon request, from the Virtual School to help them navigate the education system.

Previously looked-after children are further supported by Pupil Premium Plus funding, which is provided to help improve their education outcomes and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. It is paid to and managed by the school.

Previously looked-after children and those in formal kinship care arrangements are also eligible to be secured a school place through Fair Access Protocols. This is the mechanism which ensures that unplaced and vulnerable children who are having difficulty securing school places in-year are allocated one promptly.

Previously looked-after children must be given highest priority in over-subscription criteria by school admissions during normal admission rounds.

Support for kinships carers around education support can be accessed from the City of York Council's Virtual School:

Virtual School Head: Karron Young

Email: education@york.gov.york

Web: www.raiseyork.co.uk/education/virtual-school

Other Educational Support

The Families SEND Support Team offers Portage, and a range of bespoke programmes and workshops designed to guide, support, and empower families who have children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The team aims to listen, understand, and help you develop your skills and knowledge to feel more confident in raising a child or young person with special need and/or disability.

The focus will be on children's/young people's strengths, looking at what they can do and enjoy and looking at ways to help you support your child/young person in achieving next steps in their development.

Families with children/young people aged 0 – 25 with Special Educational needs and Disabilities living in the City of York can access this service.

Children/young people do not require a diagnosis to access most of the programmes. Autism-specific training is also offered.

Portage is an education service for pre-school children with additional support needs and their families. To be eligible, children must have:

A severe developmental delay in two areas of learning from the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Areas of learning: communication; personal; social and emotional development; cognition (thinking); physical development.

Portage sessions can take place at home or in a group. The service works with other agencies involved and support transition to nursery or school.

For more information about the Portage offer and to request support from the Families SEND support team, visit their page: www.yorksend.org/parents/send-central

Supporting children with complex health and disabilities

The Disabled Children's Team (DCT) provides specialist social care support to disabled children and young people (0-18) whose disability or health condition significantly impairs their daily functioning, and whose needs cannot be met by universal or targeted services alone and where their physical or mental impairment that has a **substantial and long-term** adverse effect on the child's ability to carry out normal daily activities. The team support children and young people to be safe, develop skills for life and be part of their local communities

For up-to-date information about (DCT), the specialist support on offer and eligibility criteria is found on the Local Offer website: www.yorksend.org

Family time

Family time, when it works well, can reassure children that their family members still care about them. It can help them process why they no longer live with them and come to terms with their past. It can help them to continue to develop relationships with siblings and their wider family network which may be very important to them as they get older.

Family dynamics can be complex and emotionally demanding for kinship carers to manage. However, it is important that children maintain links with their family where this is safe and appropriate.

Family time is the term used for opportunities for children to stay in touch with their family, friends and other people who are important to them, including brothers and sisters.

Family time is meant to create positive experiences for children, nurturing their connections with those who are important to the child. This is essential for the child's sense of **identity and sense of belonging**.

Family time can be direct or indirect. It is important that kinship carers are aware of what has been agreed.

Direct family time is when the child spends time face to face with the important people in their lives. Indirect family time includes phone calls, FaceTime, WhatsApp video calls, letters, emails, birthday cards as well as the exchange of information at key events for the child such as Christmas, Eid or Easter.

If a child has a plan of permanence via either a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order, the level of family time for the child and parents will be specified by the court. Following the granting of a Special Guardianship Order, it is up to the carer to follow the plans set by the court. However, family time must always be reflective of what is in the best interests of the child and can be challenged and changed.

If a child remains on a Care Order, support is available from the child's social worker and the supervising social worker and there is a duty on the local authority to promote family time.

Family time can be unsupervised, facilitated or supervised:

Unsupervised

Unsupervised family time means that the family time takes place with no-one else there to facilitate, support or supervise the session.

Supervised

Supervised family time involves someone who is allocated to be present throughout the whole session and a written record should be kept. This sometimes happens because information about the parent(s) in contact sessions is needed to inform court proceedings. Another reason for supervising family time is for the child's safety and welfare.

Family time should always take place unless it is not reasonably practicable or consistent with the child's welfare. Family time must always be for the benefit of the child and not the parent, relative or friend.

Family time arrangements should be reviewed as part of the child in care review for those children who remain look after by City of York Council and this should be monitored and supported by the child's social worker and supervising social worker for the kinship foster carer.

In other kinship arrangements, the court may have decided what family time should take place between the child and their parents and kinship carers should be aware of this at the time of the order being made.

Sometimes family time arrangements can break down because the child no longer wishes to attend, or a break down in the relationship between the kinship carer and parent/parents. Support is available from the York Fostering Service for kinship carers who are managing these complex family situations.

Family network meetings

A family network is a group of people close to a child made up of relatives, including parents, siblings and grandparents and non-related connected people, such as stepparents or close family friends.

Family networks can be an essential support network to help families stay together and thrive. When this is not possible, kinship carers from within the network can offer a safe, loving and stable home to keep children out of local authority care.

Kinship carers may find themselves requiring support whilst caring for children or there may be difficulties in the relationships between the carer and parents for several reasons that are impacting on both the child and carer.

In these instances, kinship carers and SGO carers may require support in working through these difficulties with the support from the child's social worker and the fostering worker through the use of family network meeting to resolve any ongoing difficulties between family members and support them in coming together to work out solutions.

Emotional, mental health and therapeutic support

Emotional well-being for carers

Kinship carers can often face unique challenges in caring for children who have been through difficult experiences and this can be emotionally demanding. It is important for kinship carers to take time for self-care. This includes seeking help and support when needed and making time for themselves. This is not just in relation to self-care, but also ensuring carers are able to provide the best care for the child.

Being able to speak with people who have had the same experiences and understand the demands and impact on the whole family can be a good source of support. Support groups are available for all kinship carers to attend, please speak with your social worker for details.

Kinship runs monthly support groups in York for kinship carers. For further information, visit the Kinship website: www.kinship.org.uk

Mental Health Crisis Support

www.valeofyorkccg.nhs.uk/your-health-and-local-services/mental-health/crisis-support/



If you are, or someone else is, at immediate risk, always call 999.

You can text SHOUT to **85258** for a free 24/7 text service for anyone in crisis.

You can also visit York Mind: www.yorkmind.org.uk/our-services/

Therapeutic Support

The Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) is available to children and families where the children are subject to Special Guardianship Orders, or Child Arrangement Orders and were previously in care.

The Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund therapeutic support for these children and young people up to and including the age of 21, or up to the age of 25 if the child has an education, health and care plan:

- are living (placed) with a family in England while waiting for adoption were adopted from local authority care in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland and live in England
- were adopted from abroad and live in England with a recognised adoption status were in care before an SGO was made
- left care under a special guardianship order that was subsequently changed to an adoption order, or vice versa
- are under a residency order or child arrangement order (CAO) and were previously in local authority care
- were previously looked after but where the adoption, special guardianship, residency or CAO placement has broken down, irrespective of any reconciliation plans.

The Adoption Support team will complete the assessment of need and application to the ASGSF. They will identify what therapeutic support is required and identify a therapist who specialises in that area. understand and make sense of the meaning behind children's behaviours

- understand how developmental trauma impact on a child's developing brain
- look beyond the behaviour, to understand what is causing it – this is the key to healing a hurt child
- recognise the important role in which foster carers have in the healing process of the child that requires time and perseverance.

Please speak to your supervising social worker if you feel you would benefit from this support.

Young Carers



A young carer is someone under the age of 18 who helps to care for a family member, relative or friend. A young person aged 16-25 with caring responsibilities can be known as a young adult carer.

Children and young people living in kinship care arrangements can sometimes find themselves caring for their aging relatives or relatives with disabilities. It is important that these children and young people also receive support in these circumstances.

For further information about young carers and support, visit:

www.yorkcarerscentre.co.uk/young-carers

Out-of-hours / emergency support

City of York Council have an emergency out-of-hours duty team. For urgent concerns about a child or young person outside of office hours,

Call **0300 131 2131** or emailing edt@northyorks.gov.uk They operate from 5:00 pm to 8:30 am on weekdays and from 4:30 pm on Friday to 8:30 am on Monday, including all public holidays.

5. Diversity and Inclusion

A child's identity is based on a range of factors including their ethnicity, religion, disability, language, sexuality, gender orientation, family relationships and the community they live in.

Practical things, such as food and diet, hair and skin care, faith, social activities, and education, and other cultural practices are also very important in forming a child's identity.

Some carers may struggle with understanding how to meet children's cultural, and identity needs if different to their own. Support and advice can be accessed from;

Fosterline: www.fosterline.info/about-us/contact-us or 0800 0407675

Kinship: www.kinship.org.uk

6. Complaints procedure

If a kinship carer is not satisfied with the level of support provided to enable them to care for the child, then they can use City of York Council's complaints procedure.

City of York Council aim is to resolve any such dissatisfaction without the need for a formal investigation but if an informal resolution is not possible, then a formal investigation will be arranged.

www.york.gov.uk/contact-us/raise-comment-compliment-complaint-concern

7. Useful information and organisations



Useful Reading

Forgotten: Support for kinship children's education and mental health – a report from Kinship

Forgotten shares insights from Kinship's 2023 annual survey of kinship carers to reveal how a complex, inadequate and often inaccessible landscape of support for kinship children's education and mental health is resulting in significant challenges for kinship families across England and Wales. Given the legacy of childhood trauma for children who enter kinship care and the impact this can have on their learning and wellbeing, the UK and Welsh Governments and local authorities should prioritise delivering urgent support tailored to the unique needs and strengths of all kinship families. See link below;

<https://kinship.org.uk/our-work-and-impact/policy-and-influencing/reports-and-publications/forgotten-report/>

The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children

Dept for Education statutory guidance for the governing bodies of maintained schools, academy proprietors and the designated staff member at maintained schools and academies when promoting the educational attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children. See link below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a901d6ce5274a5e67567fc1/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

How can education professionals support children in kinship care?

Guidance from Kinship for education professionals who play an important role in the lives of children in kinship care, to help them support children in kinship care in school to thrive academically. See link below:

<https://kinship.org.uk/for-professionals/working-with-kinship-carers/how-can-education-professionals-support-children-in-kinship-care/>

Useful organisations' contact details

Coram BAAF

Membership organisation supporting people with an interest in fostering, adoption and kinship care. Also has a wide range of publications for carers, children and professionals.

Coram BAAF website: www.corambaaf.org.uk/

You can contact them by emailing: advice@corambaaf.org.uk

Families in Harmony



Charity leading the campaign for racial justice in the children's social care sector, within kinship care.

Families in Harmony website: www.familiesinharmony.org.uk/

Email: info@familiesinharmony.co.uk

Family Rights Group

Free, confidential advice to families dealing with children's services. They offer online advice, forums, a free telephone advice line and web chat service.

Family Rights Group website: www.frg.org.uk/

Telephone: **0808 801 0366**

Kinship Carers UK

Kinship Carers UK is a national charity that supports and advises family and friends' carers often called Kinship Carers or Connected Carers that are thinking or taking on the role of parenting someone else's child.

Website: www.kinshipcarersuk.com/

We're here to support you, Monday to Friday from 10 am to 3pm. If you need an urgent response you can contact us at **07714531802**.



Kinship Care

‘Keeping families together’