



**KINSHIP
CARING**

**WE CARE
YOU CARE.**

AN EXTRAORDINARY ROLE TAKEN ON BY EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE

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Kinship Carers are relatives (grandparents, siblings, Aunts, Uncles or other relatives) or even sometimes just friends of the family, who provide full time (either temporary or permanent) caring support for a child or children of parents who are unable to provide care and support. These children and young people are known as Kinship Kids. Almost half of Kinship Kids have a disability or emotional difficulties.

There are a number of ways in which children can live with people other than their parents. There are also many different reasons why a child may be raised or living with a kinship carer. This could be because of parental death, imprisonment, mental illness, substance misuse and separation of parents.

Kinship care often happens following a crisis situation. It can be extremely stressful for both the Kinship Carer(s) and the Kinship Kid(s).

Kinship Care is an arrangement for a relative or close friend to provide care for a child. This may be an informal arrangement (for example, placed there by the child's parents without the involvement of the Local Authority) or a formal arrangement (for example, placed there by the Local Authority and where a Legal Order has been obtained). When arrangements have been formalised by the Court, the Kinship carer then has parental responsibility.

The majority of kinship carers are relatives of the child or who have parental responsibility for the child through a court order. Many of these arrangements have been undertaken without involvement of the Local Authority.

Families might need advice and assistance during the early stages of considering whether to care for a relative or a friend's child. Advice is available from a variety of sources, including Relative Experience, Grandparents Plus and the Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST). MAST is the first point of contact for Early Help and Kinship Carers will be offered support, advice, signposting and information.

Kinship Carers experience some of the most difficult challenges. They can often be in poor health due to the stress, anxiety and issues that have led to them becoming a Kinship Carer.

Many Kinship Carers are aged over 50 and may already be in a caring role, such as looking after an elderly relative. They then take on the responsibility of looking after Kinship Kids and juggle a dual caring role.

Benefits for Kinship Carers are totally different from Foster Carers. Kinship Carers are able to claim for Child Benefit and Child Tax Credits but may not receive any other financial support. Not all Kinship Carers are able to access additional Welfare Benefits. For most Kinship Carers this can lead to extreme financial hardship and poverty. They may face housing issues such as too small a dwelling due to Kinship Kids living with them. They often have very limited access to information, advice or Advocacy. Above all, they need to know where and who to go to for help including finding out what they may be entitled to claim (for themselves and their Kinship Kids).

Children and young people change over the years. The Early Help and Partnership Team can provide the right support at the right time to help Kinship Kids and Kinship Carers get the most out of family life.

Kinship Carers often say the rewards are enormous and would not have made a different choice if asked again to take on this difficult and challenging role.



**WE CARE
YOU CARE.**

Both my kids had just left home and I finally had a job I really loved. All that changes one Thursday afternoon. I came home from work and the phone was ringing. A voice at the other end said "We are removing your Grandson for his own safety... can you take him?"

Within ten minutes there he was, scrappy, dirty and looking bewildered. My husband came home 45 minutes later to discover two policemen, a social worker and a health visitor drinking tea in the living room. In a split second our whole life changed. All our plans were put on hold.

15 months later, we were asked to care for our granddaughter too, just two weeks before her birth. It wasn't a decision we took lightly, but we agreed. Little did we know that we would be put through the wringer. Visits, contact visits, me giving up work, reports, more reports... all of which put a strain on our marriage. But we came through it.

We are now the very proud carers of two beautiful children. If there is one thing I do miss, it is not the money, my job or my freedom. It is the fact I'm not able to be a Nana... but the alternative, doesn't bear thinking about.

**WE ARE REMOVING YOUR GRANDSON
FOR HIS OWN SAFETY... CAN YOU TAKE HIM?**

I have always lived with my Nana and Grandad. Really, they are my Mum and Dad as they look after me so much. They do annoy me at times but it's ok, as they give me lots of lovely things and tell me they love me everyday.

I haven't met my Dad, but I have met my Mum once. She came up to my room to say hello, she talked to me for ages but I didn't really say anything to her. She smelled funny and when she left I heard her shouting at Nana and Grandad downstairs. I went into the bathroom and stayed there for ages in case she came back.

I have lots of friends and I like school. Sometimes I feel sad when other kids talk about doing stuff with their Mum and Dad. I do lots of stuff with Nana and Grandad but they are getting old now. Grandad has a limp too so he can't play and run around with me like he used to but that's ok.



I HAVE ALWAYS LIVED WITH MY NANA AND GRANDAD. REALLY, THEY ARE MY MUM AND DAD AS THEY LOOK AFTER ME SO MUCH.

Team	Telephone Number
Adult Social Care Single Point of Access (SPA)	01642 726004
Carers Together (Adult Carers)	01642 488977
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	0344 4994110
Department of Works & Pensions (DWP)	0843 5158313
Emergency Duty Team (EDT)	08702 402994
Family Information Directory Service	01642 354200 www.fis.middlesbrough.gov.uk
Grandparents Plus	0300 1237015

USEFUL CONTACTS

Team	Telephone Number
Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST)	01642 726004
Parents4change	01642 200526 / 0758 4055639
Relative Experience	0793 1158313
SEND & Vulnerable Learners	01642 201831
South Tees Youth Offending Team	01642 201888
Staying Put Agency	0800 5875184
Tees Valley Housing	0800 0461600
The Junction (Young Carers)	01642 756000
Welfare Rights	01642 729242

Adoption	Adoption is the process where all parental rights and responsibilities for a child are permanently transferred to an adoptive parent by a Court and the child legally becomes part of the adoptive family.
Care Order	A care order is given by a Court and puts a child under the care of the Local Authority. The Local Authority then shares parental responsibility for the child with the parents/Carers. Jointly they will make most of the important decisions about the child's upbringing, such as where they live and what school they go to.
Care Order (Interim)	This is an order made by a Court before the final hearing and a final decision is made about the child's future. The initial interim care order is for 8 weeks and then 4 weeks on renewal.
Care Plan	The Local Authority must put a Care Plan in place for every child in its care. A Care Plan must also be produced for Court in relation to care or supervision orders. The Care Plan will have details of a child's current and future needs, placement details, family views and details of the support offered.
Care Proceedings	A court process when the Local Authority is concerned about a child's safety. In these cases the court may make an Emergency Protection Order, an Interim Care Order or a Care Order. In such cases the Local Authority share Parental Responsibility with the child's parents.
Case Management Hearing (CMH)	This is a court hearing that takes place during the care proceedings. The purpose is to look at the care plan and make sure all the key decisions have been followed. It looks at what other things should be put in place before the final hearing.

Child Arrangement Order	Child Arrangements Orders were introduced in April 2014 by the Children and Families Act (2014). They replaced Contact Orders and Residence Orders. This is a Court Order relating to where a child can live, who they can spend time or have contact with. Sometimes the order can last until the child is 18 years of age. Parental Responsibility is given to the person the child goes to live with.
Child Arrangement Order - Interim	This order is similar to the above but does not take away the birth parents Parental Responsibility.
Child in Need	A Child in Need must be under the age of 18 and need the help of the Local Authority in order to be safe from harm, prevent a risk to their health and or development. The term Child in Need can also apply to disabled children.
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)	An independent Court that advises family courts on what it thinks are the best interests of the child during law cases.
Children's Guardian	This is an independent experienced social worker who may be asked by a Judge to look at the child's situation and make recommendations. A court will automatically appoint a Guardian if there is an Emergency Protection Order or Care Order for a child or when the case is seen to be complex.
Contact Order	This is a court order that says who the child can have contact with (direct or indirect contact).

Early Help and Partnership Team

A Multi-Agency Team that offers help and support to children, young people and families. The team support and proactively work with families so they get the best outcomes possible.

Education, Health & Care Plan (EHC)

A single legal document detailing a child's education, health and care needs. Services identified in the plan must be carried out by named organisations/workers.

Family Group Conference

A holistic approach where families can come together and identify where they can access help and support.

Family Information Directory Service

An online information site which tells children and families what services are available in Middlesbrough.

Fostering

Fostering is when you look after and care for children and young people who cannot live at home with their own families. They may stay with you for a few days, weeks, months or even years. Foster Carers receive training, an allowance and fees. You need to be aged 21 years + and there may be some restrictions on who can be a Foster Carer (ie someone who smokes).

Looked After Children (LAC)

A looked after child is 'in the care' or 'accommodated' by the Local Authority under section 20 of the Children Act 1989. A Court gives the Local Authority the power to remove a child from the care of its parents. This can be done under an interim care order, a full care order or an emergency protection order.

My Family Plan	A process for creating a plan to help the the child and the family through conversations. This is a solution focused approach to improve outcomes for the whole family.
Regulation 24 Placement	A law that allows Children's Services to place a child with a family member or friend in an emergency situation.
Special Guardianship	Taking on the legal powers and responsibility of parenting a child until their 18th birthday. Birth parents do not lose their parental responsibility. Special Guardians make most decisions to do with the child's upbringing, including where the child lives, goes to school and medical treatment they receive.
Supervised Contact	This is when someone else is present while the child has contact with another person. This could be an employed service, family member or friend.
Placement	Relating to accommodation for a looked after child or young person. The placement can relate to fostering or residential as long as it meets the child or young person's needs.
Transition	Moving from Children's Services to Adult Services.

FREQUENT QUESTIONS RAISED BY KINSHIP CARERS...



He keeps skipping school and I don't know what to do! I am already struggling with money and I don't want to end up with a fine.



The Early Help and Partnership Team can meet with the Kinship Kid to understand what is going on. Together they will create a plan using a solution focused approach to address the issues.



We thought everything was sorted. That all the behaviour and mood swings were in the past. Now it feels like we are back at square one!



The Family Partnership Team is a family support service who have strong working relationships with a variety of services. Therapeutic support can be beneficial not only for Kinship Kids but for the whole family and prevent things from getting worse.

GRANDPARENTS PLUS

Support kinship carers by providing support, giving independent guidance and connecting them with each other.



0208 981 8001



www.grandparentsplus.org.uk





I'm struggling to cope, it's been a long time since I was a parent but if I ask for help will the Council think I can't cope?!



The aim of Early help is to work with families so they get the most out of life. Early Help will make sure families get the right support at the right time.



I'm getting on in years and worry what will happen to the kids if I end up too poorly to look after them.



My Family Plan can provide a platform to have conversations including things like this. It will also help Kinship Carers in developing solutions to specific situations.

I WOULD LIKE TO ASK...

Darren McGlen is the contact for Middlesbrough families, phone **07496 389415** or email **darren.mcglen@ggrandparentsplus.org.uk** for information, or to be connected with a local group that can support you in your role as a kinship carer.

Groups often meet informally in community venues and consist of Grandparents or other relatives and family friends who provide caring support to Kinship Kids.

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We hope by producing this guide we have provided a useful tool to help you navigate all the local services and support available to you as a Kinship Carer living in Middlesbrough.

A digital copy is available to download at www.mvda.info
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