

## **Kinship Care**

Kinship care is the care of children by their extended family or a close friend of the family.

This includes children who are looked after by the council as well as arrangements that are made privately between family members.

Unless there are clear reasons why family care would not be in the child's best interests, care within the extended family and community will be the first option.

### **The responsibilities of the local authority**

The local authority is responsible for making sure that children are cared for safely. Assessing and reviewing potential carers and their homes is part of that process.

We have special duties where a child in kinship care is 'looked after' by us. These are in the Looked after Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009.

Kinship carers are assessed and once approved they are eligible for the Kinship Care Allowance, which we pay at a flat weekly rate per child.

When Social Workers place children with their family, they are required to undertake certain checks and an assessment of their ability to meet the child's needs. They will also provide on-going support to the carers and the children.

Local authorities have no responsibility for providing financial support to carers who entered into a private care arrangement with a friend or family member without any intervention from the local authority.

### **The responsibilities of kinship carers**

When a child is placed with a kinship carer, that carer has the same main responsibility as any parent: to provide a safe and stable home environment which meets the child's individual needs.

Responsibilities will include things like making sure the child attends school or nursery and receives appropriate medical and dental treatment. Other specific responsibilities will be listed in the child's individual care plan.

Kinship carers are also expected to work with the local authority, usually through the child's social worker, but sometimes by attending meetings to discuss the child. These are designed to share information and let everyone work together on the child's care plan and make sure the child gets the best possible outcome. This means that carers have to let social workers into their home on a regular basis.

## **Support for Kinship Carers**

Kinship carers can also get independent legal and financial advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau. For more information see Citizens Advice Bureau - Kinship Care in Scotland.

If you are a kinship carer you can also call the ParentLine Scotland helpline for advice on 0800 028 2233.

North Ayrshire Council has a specific team who offer emotional and practical support and facilitate support groups and training to kinship carers.

- A Kinship Care Social Worker to visit you, or keep in touch to give you advice, information and support. Assistance is also given with requesting other services for the child, for example, from Education or from Health services.
- Opportunities to attend training events and meetings with others who are caring for children.
- Support Groups where you can meet other Kinship Carers.
- Social events, newsletters and information sessions for Kinship Carers.

If you require any more information please contact the Kinship Care Team:

### **Family Placement Team**

**West Road**

**IRVINE**

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