



## Family and friends care policy

September 2012

### History of most recent Policy Changes

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change (e.g. TU request, change in legislation etc)
4 Sept 2012	4	Added statement about responsibility for non-financial support to special guardian living outside Bristol transferring after three years	Ombudsman recommendation
21 Sept 2012	6	Changed sentence that Residence order allowances 'can not be backdated' to 'can only be backdated in exceptional circumstances and after agreement by a senior manager'.	Ombudsman recommendation

## **1. Introduction**

This policy sets out how Bristol City Council may support family and friends carers and the children they are caring for. Children who are unable to live with their birth parents may be living with other family members, friends or other people connected to them with whom they have an existing relationship. Some of these children may be in care. There is information here about useful services, the law and about policies for families and professionals working with them.

The policy is available and publicised on the city council web-site and will be regularly updated. This is in accordance with Family and Friends Care: statutory guidance for local authorities, 2010. The policy is available in a leaflet, available on request from [childprotection@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:childprotection@bristol.gov.uk) or 0117 9037788. A summary information sheet is also available.

## **2. The principles of the policy**

2.1 It is the general duty of the council to safeguard and promote the welfare of every child living in our area who is in need and, where possible, to promote the upbringing of the child by their own family, unless this is not consistent with their welfare. This is achieved by working with parents, family members and other adults important to the child to make the child safe and to promote his or her development within the family. This follows the principles of the Children Act 1989 and subsequent legislation and guidance.

2.2 We want to make sure children have permanent homes by helping those who cannot live with their parents to stay with members of their extended family or friends, as a better alternative to growing up in the care of the council. Permanence should provide the emotional, physical and legal conditions that give a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity. For some children in care, permanence is achieved through a successful return to their birth family, where it has been possible to address the factors which led to the child being in care. Where this is not possible, family and friends care will often provide an important alternative route to permanence for the child, particularly where supported by a residence order, special guardianship order or through adoption.

2.3 The principle underlying the policy is that support should be based on the needs of the child and their carers rather than their legal status and that family and friends carers (whether or not they are approved foster carers of children in care) are provided with support to ensure that children do not come into care or remain in care longer than is needed.

2.4 We will take into account children's wishes and feelings in all relevant processes.

## **3. What we know about family and friends carers**

We recognise that children living with family and friends foster carers and unrelated foster carers have similar characteristics and faced similar difficulties before the placements, and face similar emotional and behavioural difficulties, but that family and friends carers often face more disadvantages than unrelated foster carers as they may not have expected to care for children. Research shows that children living with family and friends carers generally do better than those living with unrelated carers, (see Appendix One).

Family and friends carers say that social workers tend to under-estimate their needs and they need help early and for longer, including financial and practical support, information and advice, and support to the child, carers and the child's parents.

In 2001 (latest available census figures), 1 in 59 children or 1.7% of all Bristol children ie about 1200 children, were growing up with relative carers and this figure is likely to be higher now. 38% of carers were siblings and 44% were grandparents. 90% of these are informal arrangements where the carers are not receiving targeted support or financial support from council services and poverty was common. Interviews with carers identified that they want more financial support, have emotional needs arising from the situation that led to the caring situation eg bereavement, may experience discrimination and have to balance the needs of their own children with those they care for. Older carers in particular are not aware of universal support services and benefits available to them. (Research by Nandy, S., Selwyn, J., Farmer, E. and Vaisey, P. (2011), Spotlight on Kinship Care, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol).

Children and young people living in kinship care and in private fostering arrangements and their carers were consulted about the support they would like. They would like information and support on dealing with teenagers, benefits, education, activities in the Bristol area and engaging parents, advice and support from a social worker, an allowance and respite.

## **4. Management**

4.1 An area services manager has responsibility for this policy to ensure that it is publicised, to monitor its implementation and make sure relevant staff are trained appropriately.

4.2 In Bristol, there are carers receiving special guardianship, residence order, private fostering, adoption and children in care support and services. The number of these carers and the children they are caring for is collated regularly and used to inform and plan policies, priorities and the delivery of services to meet their needs.

4.3 A series of workshops, e-learning tools and information is provided to council staff to ensure the policy is applied across the service.

Local partners will be made aware of their responsibilities towards children living in family and friends care and to being proactive in meeting those needs.

A quality assurance group, including an area team manager, will be set up and meet regularly, to monitor the implementation of this policy.

4.4 We will publicise this policy to people considering becoming a family and friends carer so they are aware of its content, and are clear about how to contact the council and other agencies for further information. Information about contacting a social worker is in Appendix Two.

4.5 Social workers who implement the policy will have appropriate training and understand the issues faced by family and friends carers and their obligations, powers and responsibilities, including the content of this policy, and be competent in this area of work.

## 5. Legal framework

This policy and guidance is concerned with various legal options for children living with family members or friends and these are set out in detail in Appendix Four. There are a number of legal options which carers can consider. The advice of a social worker or a solicitor may be helpful when deciding which option may be most appropriate. In summary, these are:

### 5.1 Informal family care

This is when a close relative has chosen to take on the care of the child but does not have parental responsibility. The arrangement was not made by the local authority and the child is not in care.

### 5.2 Private fostering

This is an arrangement where a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who does not have parental responsibility and who is not a close relative, for 28 days or more.

### 5.3 Family, friends and connected people foster care

This is when the child has been placed with a family member, friend or connected person by the council because the person who had been caring for the child was found not to be providing suitable care. The carers are assessed and approved as foster carers to look after that/those particular child/ren. The child is in care and the provisions of Schedule 4 and Regulations 24 and 25 must be followed.

### 5.4 Residence order (RO)

A residence order is a court order settling the arrangements about the person with whom a child will live. The residence order can be made through either public law proceedings as an alternative to a care order, or through private law proceedings, when a parent, relative or carer makes an application in their own right. The residence order is a positive arrangement to ensure permanence for the child where this can be achieved with relatives, friends or former foster carers (who have consistently cared for a child) and as part of a permanency plan. It is likely to continue until the young person is aged eighteen years.

The carer shares parental responsibility with the child's parents, so they share decision making with respect to the child. The child lives with the person holding the RO, who makes the day-to-day decisions about the child. It is expected the child will have continuing contact with their parents.

### 5.5 Special guardianship order (SGO)

The special guardianship order is a court order appointing a person to be a child's special guardian and is intended to provide permanence for a child for whom adoption is not appropriate. It gives a person or persons parental responsibility for the child. In contrast to adoption, the birth parents remain the child's legal parents and retain limited parental responsibility. The special guardian has responsibility for day-to-day decisions about caring for the child and for decisions about their upbringing, for example their education. It offers more security than a residence order.

Bristol City Council can provide financial assistance for legal fees for family and friends carers who are applying for residence or special guardianship orders as an alternative to local authority proceedings. See paragraph 7.5.

If the special guardian lives outside the authority, after three years, responsibility for providing support and services agreed in the initial support plan passes to the authority in which the special guardian is resident. Responsibility for financial services remains with Bristol City Council.

#### 5.6 Adoption order

Adoption provides the only life-long legal arrangement, which will be most suitable for the young child who is unlikely to be able to return to their birth parents within a reasonable time-scale.

## 6. Information about services and support

Social workers will advise families as follows as part of ongoing assessment and support.

6.1 There are many places providing free support and information for people looking after children and young people in Bristol. Bristol City Council and its partners want to support carers so that they have the confidence, skills, knowledge and understanding to build a strong family life which keeps children safe, healthy, happy and successful. 'Parenting support' is a term used to describe any activity aimed at providing information, advice and support to parents and carers to help them in bringing up their children. This includes:

- One-to-one and group parent support
- Parenting programmes and courses
- Information, advice and guidance about parenting issues
- Opportunities for parents to get involved and have a say
- Resources to help parents do a good job.

Further specific information on parenting support is available in Appendix Two, where there is also general information to support families.

6.2 We will ensure that people working in services where they first come into contact with children living with family and friends carers, or with carers, understand the challenges they face and can signpost them to relevant services.

6.3 We will ensure that the information they publish demonstrates their responsiveness to the needs of family and friends carers.

## 7. Financial support and advice

Social workers will advise families as follows as part of ongoing assessment and support.

#### 7.1 Child in need payments

Where a child is cared for informally or in a private fostering arrangement, the council can make 'Child In Need' payments under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, providing appropriate assessments indicate this will meet the child's needs and including an assessment of the financial circumstances of the family. The status of the placement will determine the nature and amount of the financial support and who authorises it. This is a discretionary payment which will only be considered following the assessment by a social worker. A manager can authorise payments up to an agreed financial limit for a specified time and will confirm this in writing. The payments will be reviewed on a twelve weekly basis.

There are three categories of payment:

- One-off expenditure such as school uniform or bedroom furniture, if the carer's financial position requires this, although a full assessment is not carried out. There may be certain conditions eg repayment
- Short term financial support eg if a carer takes unpaid time off work or a career break to support children into their new environment. An employer should provide information about any relevant parental leave entitlements
- Regular payments to enable carers to make adjustments or to continue to care for a child in the longer term. This will be a short term measure for an agreed number of weeks while more permanent arrangements are made

These criteria are applied to all payments made under section 17:

- the payment is made to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child
- a worker is actively involved with the family at least for the duration of the payments
- there are no other legitimate sources of finance
- payments are paid to the carer, not the parents
- the payment would not place any person in a fraudulent position.

#### 7.2 Approved family, friends and connected carers

These carers of children looked after by Bristol City Council will be supported financially through the fostering payment system to the same level as non connected foster carers.

#### 7.3 Residence orders

A residence order allowance can be granted in certain circumstances to provide permanency for children. Residence order allowances are purely discretionary. They can only be backdated in exceptional circumstances and after agreement by a senior manager (second tier officer). They are not means tested.

The following three criteria will need to be met before consideration can be given to an allowance:

- A family member agrees to care for a child who is assessed to have significant needs (physical, emotional, health or educational)
- The area service manager agrees the plan
- The circumstances of the child and family mean that the child in need payments will not be sufficient to achieve permanency for the child.

One of the following circumstances will need to apply before consideration can be given to an allowance:

- The residence order presents an alternative to the child becoming looked after
- The child is subject to the pre-proceedings process
- The child is subject to public law proceedings.

#### 7.4 Adoption support allowance and special guardianship allowance

For an adopted child, or where a child is subject of a special guardianship order, an allowance may be appropriate, following an assessment of need and, for the carers of an adopted child, a financial means test. This can be paid until the child is 18 years of age.

#### 7.5 Legal fees to apply for residence order or special guardianship order

Financial assistance for legal fees for family and friends carers who are applying for residence or special guardianship orders as an alternative to local authority proceedings can be provided following an assessment of need.

When the child is the subject of court proceedings taken under the Children Act 1989 by Bristol City Council, it will fund an initial legal consultation for a maximum of two hours at public funding rates. The council then expects there to be an application to the legal services commission for public funding and it is only if this is refused that the council will consider providing financial support as it is the legal services commission that should fund the application, if possible. Family and friends carers will not get funding from the legal services commission if their financial circumstances take them out of the eligibility criteria.

#### 7.6 Guardian allowance

The Guardian's Allowance is a tax free benefit paid to someone who is looking after a child whose parents have died. In some circumstances it can be paid when only one parent has died. It does not matter how much money you have or how much you earn. See Appendix Four.

#### 7.7 State benefits and allowances

Carers are entitled to child benefit and in some circumstances to other state benefits and allowances such as child tax credit, and sometimes other forms of financial help. Information about sources of support and advice is in Appendix Three.

## **8. Accommodation**

Bristol City Council Housing and registered social landlords recognise the importance of the role played by family and friends carers. Wherever possible, they give them appropriate priority to move to more suitable accommodation if this will prevent the need for a child to become looked after.

Children's social care and Housing work together in partnership to support the housing needs which may face family and friends carers in a range of legal circumstances.

## **9. Supporting contact**

We promote contact for all children in need and looked after children who are living away from home unless it is not practicable or consistent with the child's welfare to do so. We expect that most families should be able to make their own contact arrangements between children and parents. If not, we advise that carers contact support services directly. There are independent organisations that can help facilitate contact between children and their families, including supervision of contact arrangements. See Appendix Two.

In exceptional circumstances, we may make an arrangement to provide advice, support and, if necessary, facilitate contact for a time limited period. We may be involved in supporting contact when it has been assessed and agreed as part of a specific plan to meet the needs of the child as part of a care plan for a child in care, or as part of a post adoption support plan, or special guardianship support plan. See Appendix Two.

## **10. Family Group Conferences**

Where families are receiving a service from children's social workers, and where a need for court proceedings may occur, a family group conference may be considered. This will aim to involve the wider family at an early stage to support it to find solutions to difficulties the family faces in caring for its own children. These are run by Barnardo's in Bristol and can be held in all new and proposed kinship arrangements. See Appendix Two.

## **11. Support groups**

There are parent/carer self help and support groups, some with child care paid by parents/carers, available to anyone in Bristol and listed on One Big Database. If there appears to be a need, we will work with our partner agencies to encourage them to set up further support groups through universal services. There are also specific support groups for foster carers, private foster carers and family, friends and carers connected to a child run or supported by Bristol City Council. Family and friends carers and carers connected to a child can attend any of the foster carers support groups they wish. These are all available through your social worker. See Appendix Two.

There are support groups and training for adopters, events for adopted children and families and a teenagers' activity group. A voluntary organisation is commissioned to provide services for birth parents, including counselling and other support services. These are available through your social worker.

## **12. Private fostering arrangements**

Children who are not living with close family members for more than 28 days may be in a private fostering arrangement. This will cease when the child reaches 16, unless they are disabled, in which case it ceases when they are 18. If the child is 16 and the living arrangements continue, this guidance continues to apply as the arrangement will revert to that of informal family and friends care. Bristol City Council has a statement, policy and procedures about private fostering and provides assessment of private fostering arrangements and support to children, parents and private foster carers involved in these arrangements. Further information is available on the Bristol City Council web-site here: [www.bristol.gov.uk/privatefostering](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/privatefostering)

## **13. Family, friends and connected people foster carers**

Family, friends or other people connected to a child in care who they are looking after need to be assessed as a foster carer for that specific child by the council. Such placements can be made in an emergency and an assessment must then be completed within 16 weeks. The kinship care team carry out this assessment and provide ongoing supervision of the placement. They also offer support and advice to the carer, including specific support groups, a newsletter and events as well as access to general foster care support groups, a newsletter and a web site available to all foster carers.

A clear distinction must be made between an informal placement with family and friends - the use of Section 17 to support or facilitate a family where the child does not need the additional legal protection of coming into the care of the council - and a placement with

family and friends foster carers or connected people for a child in care. If a child is the subject of an interim care order, care order, emergency protection order or taken into police protection then they cannot be placed in an informal arrangement.

## **14. Special guardianship, residence orders and adoption**

Relatives can apply for a residence order or special guardianship order in respect of the child without the leave of the court after caring for the child for one year, instead of three years as was previously the case. The family or friends carer may also apply to adopt the child. There is more detailed information in Appendix Four.

## **15. Complaints, comments and compliments**

We welcome suggestions, compliments, enquiries and complaints about our services from children, young people, families and friends carers and other relevant people. Information about the procedure is available in the leaflet 'Fair Comment: we want to know what you think, so we can improve the services we provide', on the Council's website [www.bristol.gov.uk/page/contact-childrens-services](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/contact-childrens-services) or by contacting the complaints section on 0117 922 3707 or email to [CYPS Complaints](#)

There is a separate process for people who wish to appeal against an agency decision not to approve them as a foster carer. The applicant will be informed in writing of the reasons. They may submit written representation to the panel requesting it reconsider the decision, outlining the reasons why. This representation must be made within 28 days following notification of the panel decision. On receipt of this written representation, the panel will reconsider their decision and any additional relevant information that is provided. The panel will make a new recommendation followed by a decision from the Agency Decision Maker and this will be confirmed to applicants in writing.

Approved by Safeguarding Area Leadership Team, Children and Young People's Services, Bristol City Council on 29 November 2011.  
Date of review: November 2013 or earlier if required.

**If you would like this information in another language, Braille, audio tape, large print, easy English, BSL video or CD rom or plain text please contact (0117) 903 7788.**

## **Appendix One: Evidence**

Studies show that family and friend's foster carers are significantly more disadvantaged than unrelated foster carers eg more are lone carers, has a disability or chronic illness, live in overcrowded conditions or experience financial hardship.

Children with family and friends carers feel more securely attached and have greater continuity of care than with stranger carers, which helps with their long-term well-being. Placements last longer and children have fewer moves with family and friends, although some of this is because a higher proportion of stranger placements were intended as short term placements only and some ended when children returned home or in a planned move. Breakdown rates are almost identical.

Family and friends care contributes to a child's sense of security and personal identity through minimising other disruptions eg a child may remain in the same neighbourhood and school, and contact with parents is more likely, although complex.

Standards of care and child safety may be variable and lower than the average for unrelated foster carers, carers may be more inclined to use physical punishment and they are more likely to be struggling to cope.

Children's well-being tends to be about equal as measured by health, education, emotional and behavioural development and they experience better outcomes with regard to behavioural problems, adaptive behaviours, and well-being.

Family and friends carers say they are often uncertain about what help is available and how to access it and find the response variable, with their needs being under-estimated or help given too late or finishing too soon.

Children and young people advise that families and friends should be assessed first, using the same judgement as for stranger foster carers.

Research sources are identified in 'Family and Friends care: statutory guidance for local authorities', Department for Education, 2011.

## Appendix Two: Bristol organisations and information

### To contact a social worker

Telephone:

North Bristol, 0117 903 8700 East/ Central Bristol, 0117 903 6500

South Bristol - Hartcliffe, 0117 353 2299 South Bristol - Knowle, 0117 903 1414

Outside office hours, Emergency Duty Team: 01454 615 165

Email: [childprotection@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:childprotection@bristol.gov.uk)

Website: [www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/content/Health-Social-Care/Children-and-family-care/child-protection--and-abuse.en](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/content/Health-Social-Care/Children-and-family-care/child-protection--and-abuse.en)

### Family support

One big database

General information in a directory including national and local organisations offering support, advice and guidance for children, young people, parents, carers and professionals on addictions, child protection, benefits, domestic abuse, mediation, grants, funding, legal issues, arts, leisure, youth clubs, children's centres, after school clubs.

Website: [www.1bigdatabase.org.uk](http://www.1bigdatabase.org.uk)

Tel: 01454 868008

Email: [cis@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:cis@southglos.gov.uk)

Parenting hub

This 'sign posting' web-site has useful information and on-line support for parents and carers in Bristol with links to the home pages of relevant web-sites.

Website: [www.bristolparentinghub.co.uk](http://www.bristolparentinghub.co.uk)

Tel: 0845 129 7217 (Family Information Service)

Email: [askcyps@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:askcyps@bristol.gov.uk)

Parenting support

Information about parenting support.

Website: [www.bristol.gov.uk/page/support-parents-and-carers](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/support-parents-and-carers)

Tel: 0117 914 3024

Single Parent Action Network

Parenting programmes, web-site with online support groups, information, interactive learning games, links to other organisations, news, research and money advice.

Web-site: [www.spanuk.org.uk](http://www.spanuk.org.uk)

Tel: 0117 9514231 **Study Centre:** 0117 952 2712

**Address: SPAN, Millpond, Baptist Street, Easton, Bristol BS5 0YW**

**Email:** [info@spanuk.org.uk](mailto:info@spanuk.org.uk)

### Contact between children and their families

Action for Children runs a contact centre in Bristol.

Website: [www.actionforchildren.org.uk/our-services/family-support](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/our-services/family-support)

Tel: 0117 0354440

## **Early years child care (three year olds and under)**

Some two year olds are entitled to free early learning and childcare available through a health visitor or children's centre. All children aged three years and over can have free nursery education for 15 hours a week.

Website: [www.bristol.gov.uk/page/early-education-and-childcare](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/early-education-and-childcare)

Tel: 0845 129 7217 (Family Information Service)

## **Family mediation services**

These are listed on One Big Database.

Website: [www.1bigdatabase.org.uk](http://www.1bigdatabase.org.uk)

Tel: 01454 868008

Email: [cis@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:cis@southglos.gov.uk).

## **Financial support**

Information about welfare rights and money advice from Bristol City Council.

Address: Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service, PO Box 595, Bristol BS99 2AW

Website: [www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/advice-and-benefits/welfare-rights-and-money-advice-service](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/advice-and-benefits/welfare-rights-and-money-advice-service)

Helpline: 0117 3772877

Minicom: 0117 3772878

Email: [welfarerights@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:welfarerights@bristol.gov.uk)

### **Advice West**

Information and list of local advice centres run by voluntary organisations within the former county of Avon and surrounding areas

Website: [advicewest.org.uk](http://advicewest.org.uk)

Email: [admin@advicewest](mailto:admin@advicewest)

### **Bristol Debt Advice Centre**

Website: [www.bdac.org.uk](http://www.bdac.org.uk)

Tel: 0117 954 3990

Information, advice and guidance about back to work financial calculations, tax credits etc are available from Family Information Service on 0845 129 7217. Job Centres Plus have specialist parent advisors.

## **Health**

Contact a GP about any health issues and they will give you information or put you in touch with specialist health services or organisations. To find a GP, hospital, pharmacy, dentist or walk-in centre, look at the Bristol Primary Care Trust web site:

Website: [www.bristol.nhs.uk/your-services--nhs-bristol/service-finder.aspx](http://www.bristol.nhs.uk/your-services--nhs-bristol/service-finder.aspx)

There are targeted and specialist services such as Child and Family Consultation Services (CAMHS) at:

[www.nbt.nhs.uk/our\\_services/a-z\\_of\\_services/c/child\\_family\\_consultation.aspx](http://www.nbt.nhs.uk/our_services/a-z_of_services/c/child_family_consultation.aspx)

Ask a health visitor for advice about pre-school children: contact one through your GP. Discuss issues with the school nurse for older children.

## **Housing**

Information about housing from Bristol City Council.

Website: [www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/housing/housing-advice](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/housing/housing-advice)

Tel: 0117 922 2400

## **Schools**

Information about schools in Bristol, including joining a school.

Website: [www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges)

Address: School Admissions, Bristol City Council, PO Box 57, Bristol, BS99 7EB

Tel: 0117 903 7694

Fax: 0117 903 7710

Email: [school.admissions@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:school.admissions@bristol.gov.uk)

## **Appendix Three: National organisations and information**

### **Action for Prisoners' Families**

Works to reduce the negative impact of imprisonment on prisoners' families. Produces publications and resources, and provides advice, information, training and networking.

Website: [www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk](http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk)

Address: Unit 21, Carlson Court, 116 Putney Bridge Road, London SW15 2NQ

Tel: 020 8812 3600 Advice line: 0808 808 2003

E-mail: [info@actionpf.org.uk](mailto:info@actionpf.org.uk), [info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.org.uk](mailto:info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.org.uk)

### **Addaction**

Offers a range of support for families and carers affected by substance misuse.

Website: [www.addaction.org.uk](http://www.addaction.org.uk)

Address: 67-69 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6PU

Tel: 020 7251 5860

Email: [info@addaction.org.uk](mailto:info@addaction.org.uk)

### **Adfam**

Works with families affected by drugs and alcohol, and supports carers of children whose parents have drug and alcohol problems.

Website: [www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)

Address: 25 Corsham Street, London N1 6DR

Tel: 020 7553 7640

Email: [admin@adfam.org.uk](mailto:admin@adfam.org.uk)

### **Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)**

Independent advice and information for parents/carers on state education and schooling including admissions, exclusion, attendance, special educational needs and bullying.

Web-site: [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)

Address: 1c Aberdeen Studios, 22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2DQ

Tel: 0808 800 5793 (General advice line)

0808 800 0327 (Exclusion advice line)

020 7704 9822 (Exclusion information line, 24hr answer phone)

## **BeGrand.net**

Website offering information and advice to grandparents and online and telephone advice.

Website: [www.begrand.net](http://www.begrand.net)

Helpline: 0845 434 6835

## **British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF)**

Provides information and advice about adoption and fostering and publishes resources.

Website: [www.baaf.org.uk](http://www.baaf.org.uk)

Address: Saffron House, 6-10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS

Tel: 020 7421 2600

Email: [mail@baaf.org.uk](mailto:mail@baaf.org.uk)

## **Children's Legal Centre**

Free independent legal advice and factsheets for children, parents, carers, professionals.

Website: [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

Address: University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex CO4 3SQ

Tel: 01206 877 910 0808 802 0008 (Child Law Advice Line)

0845 345 4345 (Community Legal Advice - Education)

E-mail: [clc@essex.ac.uk](mailto:clc@essex.ac.uk)

## **Citizens Advice Bureaux**

Helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice through local bureaux and website.

Website: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

## **Department for Education**

Details of telephone help lines and online services for information, advice and support on issues that parents and families may face in bringing up children and young people.

Website: [www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families](http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families)

## **Direct Government - information about public services in one place**

Information about money, tax and benefits

Website: [www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/index.htm)

## **Family Fund Trust**

Helps families with severely disabled or seriously ill children to have choices and enjoy ordinary life. Gives grants to make life easier and more enjoyable.

Website: [www.familyfund.org.uk](http://www.familyfund.org.uk)

Address: 4 Alpha Court, Monks Cross Drive, York YO32 9WN

Tel: 0845 130 4542

Email: [info@familyfund.org.uk](mailto:info@familyfund.org.uk)

## **Family Rights Group (FRG)**

Advice to parents and family whose children require children's social care services because of welfare needs or concerns. Publishes resources, helps to develop support groups for family and friends carers and runs a discussion board.

Web-site: [www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk)

Address: Second Floor, The Print House, 18 Ashwin Street, London E8 3DL

Tel: 020 7923 2628 0800 801 0366 (Advice line)

Email: [advice@frg.org.uk](mailto:advice@frg.org.uk)

## **The Fostering Network**

Supports foster carers and anyone interested in fostering to improve the lives of children in care. Publishes resources and runs Fosterline, a confidential advice line for foster carers including concerns about a child's future, allegations, complaints, legislation, finances.

Website: [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

Address: 87 Blackfriars Road, London SE18HA

Tel: 020 7620 6400 0800 040 7675 (Fosterline)

Email: [info@fostering.net](mailto:info@fostering.net) [fosterline@fostering.net](mailto:fosterline@fostering.net)

## **The Grandparents' Association**

Supports grandparents and families, especially those who have lost /are losing contact because of problems, caring for grandchildren full-time, and with childcare responsibilities.

Website: [www.grandparents-association.org.uk](http://www.grandparents-association.org.uk)

Address: Moot House, The Stow, Harlow, Essex CM20 3AG

Tel: 01279 428040 0845 434 9585 Helpline

0844 357 1033 (Welfare benefits advice and information)

Email: [info@grandparents-association.org.uk](mailto:info@grandparents-association.org.uk)

## **Grandparents Plus**

Champions the role of grandparents and the wider family in children's lives, especially when they take on the caring role in difficult family circumstances.

Address: Grandparents Plus, 18 Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green, London E2 9PF

Tel: 020 8981 8001

Email: [info@grandparentsplus.org.uk](mailto:info@grandparentsplus.org.uk)

## **HM Revenue and Customs**

Information about child benefit and guardian's allowance.

Website: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefit/index.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefit/index.htm)

Address: Child benefit office, PO Box 1, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE88 1AA

Tel: 0845 302 1444 (Helpline)

0845 302 1474 (Textphone)

## **Mentor UK**

Promotes health and wellbeing of young people to reduce the damage that drugs can do.

Website: [www.mentoruk.org.uk](http://www.mentoruk.org.uk)

Address: Fourth Floor, 74 Great Eastern Street, London EC2A 3JG

Tel: 020 7739 8494

Email: [admin@mentoruk.org](mailto:admin@mentoruk.org)

## **Family Mediation Helpline**

information and advice about family mediation services and eligibility for public funding.

Website: [www.familymediationhelpline.co.uk](http://www.familymediationhelpline.co.uk)

Tel: 08456 026627

## **National Family Mediation (NFM)**

Provides mediation services to support couples who are separated, and their children and others affected by this.

Website: [www.nfm.org.uk](http://www.nfm.org.uk)

Address: 4 Barnfield Hill, Exeter EX1 1SR

Tel: 0300 4000 636

Email: [general@nfm.org.uk](mailto:general@nfm.org.uk)

## **Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group**

Operates helpline and services to support to anyone with a link to someone in prison, prisoners and other agencies.

Website: [www.partnersofprisoners.co.uk](http://www.partnersofprisoners.co.uk)

Address: Valentine House, 1079 Rochdale Road, Blackley, Manchester M9 8AJ

Tel: 0161 702 1000

0808 808 2003 (Offenders' families helpline)

Email: [info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.co.uk](mailto:info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.co.uk)

## **Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)**

Practical and emotional support to prisoners and their families. The Kinship Care Support Service provides support and advice to carers of children with parents in HMP Holloway.

Website: [www.prisonadvice.org.uk](http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk)

Address: Park Place, 12 Lawn Lane, Vauxhall, London SW8 1UD

Tel: 0207 7359535

## **Parents Against Drug Abuse (PADA)**

Delivers support and services to the families of substance users and a national helpline.

Website: [www.pada.org.uk](http://www.pada.org.uk)

Address: The Foundry, Marcus Street, Birkenhead CH41 1EU

Tel: 0151 649 1580

08457 023867 (National Families Helpline)

## **Parentline Plus**

Help and support for family life, information, an online chat facility and a 24 hour helpline.

Website: [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

Address: CAN Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, London N1 6AH

Tel: 020 7553 3080

0808 800 2222 (24hr Advice line)

Email: [parentsupport@familylives.org.uk](mailto:parentsupport@familylives.org.uk)

## **TalktoFrank**

The government's national drugs helpline which offers free confidential drugs information and advice 24 hours a day. Information and advice is also available via the website.

Website: [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

Tel 0800 77 66 00 (24 hour advice line)

82111 (Text)

Email: [frank@talktofrank.com](mailto:frank@talktofrank.com)

## **Voice**

Advocacy organisation for children living away from home or in need.

Website: [www.voiceyp.org](http://www.voiceyp.org)

Address: 320 City Road, London EC1V 2NZ

Tel: 020 7833 5792

0808 800 5792 (Young person's advice line)

Email: [info@voiceyp.org](mailto:info@voiceyp.org)

## **Winston's Wish**

Childhood bereavement charity. Practical support and guidance to bereaved children, young people, families, professionals and anyone concerned about a grieving child.

Website: [www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

Address: 4th Floor, St James's House, St James Square, Cheltenham, Glos GL50 3PR

Tel: 01242 515157 (General Enquiries)

**08452 030405 (Helpline)**

Email: [info@winstonswish.org.uk](mailto:info@winstonswish.org.uk)

## **Young Minds**

Works to improve the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people and empowering their parents and carers.

Website: [www.youngminds.org.uk/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/)

Address: 48-50 St John Street, London EC1M 4DG

Tel: 020 7336 8445

0808 802 5544 (Parents helpline)

## Appendix Four: Caring for somebody else's child: options

	Private fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
Route into the caring arrangement	<p>This is a private arrangement whereby the child is being cared for for 28 days or more (or the intention is that the arrangement will last for 28 days or more) by anyone who does not have parental responsibility, and who is not a close relative.</p> <p>Relative means grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (by full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or a step parent.</p> <p>The child is not a looked after child.</p>	<p>The relative has chosen to take on the care of the child but does not have parental responsibility, and the arrangement was not made by the local authority. The child is not a looked after child.</p> <p>Relative may perceive the parents to be unable to care for the child;</p> <p>or the parents may be dead or otherwise not available (e.g. in prison);</p> <p>or there may be an agreement between relatives due to difficult family circumstances.</p>	<p>The child has been placed with the relative or friend by the local authority, because the person who had been caring for the child was deemed not to be providing suitable care.</p> <p>The child is a looked after child and so the local authority must approve the relative or friend as a local authority foster carer.</p> <p>The child may be accommodated voluntarily with the agreement of the parents or may be subject to a care order.</p>	<p>The child is a looked after child being accommodated by the local authority under section 20 Children Act 1989 or because the child is subject to a care order; but has been placed with a foster carer by the local authority.</p> <p>(Alternatively, the local authority may choose to place a child into residential care where this is considered to best meet the child's needs).</p>	<p>The child may be at risk of becoming 'looked after' and a friend or relative applies for an order, or</p> <p>The child may have been 'looked after' and their foster carer or other relative/friend applies for an order.</p> <p>In either circumstance, application can be made without the support of the parents or the local authority. Relatives may apply for an order after the child has lived with them for one year.</p> <p>Or, there can be benign reasons, e.g. after parents' death and in line with a prior agreement between the birth parents and the carer.</p>		<p>Looked after children: the LA may decide that the child should be placed for adoption. They can only do so with the consent of the birth parent or under a placement order made by a court.</p> <p>An approved foster carer can apply for an adoption order after a year of caring for the child.</p> <p>Other informal carers could apply for an adoption order if the child has lived with them for a period of 3 years.</p>
Parental responsibility	Remains with birth parents	Remains with birth parents but the person who cares for the child may do what is reasonable to safeguard or promote the child's welfare	Remains with birth parents if child accommodated under section 20 CA, or if the child is subject to a care order or emergency protection order the local authority will have parental responsibility and determines the extent to which it may be exercised by others.		Shared by parents and holder of residence order.	PR shared with parents and any one else with PR for the child. The special guardian may exercise PR to the exclusion of all others with PR, apart from another special guardian.	Transfers to adopters and relationship with birth parents is severed.

Approval basis	The arrangement is assessed by LA, but the carer is not 'approved' as a local authority foster carer is. The arrangement may be prohibited if assessed by the local authority as unsuitable.	None	Approved as local authority foster carers in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations. (If child is looked after, carers must be approved as foster carers even if close relative.)	Appointed by court following application	Appointed by court, following application from the applicant. LA must investigate the matter and prepare a report for the	Adoption agency assesses and approves prospective adopters, court makes order regarding specific child. If the child is not looked after then notice of intention to adopt must be given to LA who carry out assessment / report for court.
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	Private fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
<b>Duration</b>	Subject to discretion of person with PR and readiness of private foster carer.	Subject to discretion of person with PR	So long as placement remains in line with child's care plan, as determined by LA		Age 18.	Age 18 unless varied or discharged by the court before the child reaches 18 years.	Permanent lifelong relationship
<b>Placement supervision</b>	It is not a placement, but there are statutory visits to child by social worker (minimum 6 weekly in first year, then 12 weekly)	None	Statutory: visits to child by social worker and supervision of foster carers by supervising social worker			None	When child is placed for adoption by the LA, the placement is supervised and there are statutory reviews. Once the adoption order is made, none.
<b>Review of placement</b>	It is not a placement, but the LA may do formal reviews in addition to ongoing assessment during visits.	None	Statutory reviews of child's care plan (minimum 6 monthly) and annual reviews of local authority foster carers' approval		None	None	See above

<b>Support services</b>	Provision of advice and support as determined necessary by the LA, which may assess the child as a child in need, with a child in need plan, and provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the Children Act 1989	No entitlement but the LA may assess the child as a child in need, with a child in need plan, and provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the Children Act 1989	Support to meet child's needs including health plan and personal education plan. Training and practical support to foster carers in accordance with the Fostering services Regulations, NMS and CWDC standards. Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services	No entitlement (But LA has discretion to provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the CA)	If child was looked after prior to making the SGO, LA must assess for need for special guardianship support services. LA has discretion whether to provide support. Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services if was a looked after child prior to making of the SGO.	Entitlement to assessment for adoption support services, which may be provided at discretion of LA in accordance with Regulations and NMS.
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	<b>Private fostering</b>	<b>Family care (informal)</b>	<b>Family and friends foster care</b>	<b>Unrelated foster care</b>	<b>Residence order</b>	<b>Special guardianship order (SGO)</b>	<b>Adoption</b>
<b>Financial support – entitlement</b>	Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent. Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holders of PR	Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent. Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holders of PR. Guardians Allowance payable if both parents have died, or the only surviving parent cannot be found or serving 2 years or more prison sentence.	Child benefit and child tax credit not payable. Weekly allowance to meet the costs of caring for the child. This should meet at least the national minimum rate set by DCSF. The Manchester City Council judgment ruled that allowances must be the same for all foster carers, whether or not family & friends.		Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.	Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.	Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent. Entitlement to assessment for financial support (part of adoption support) if child looked after prior to order.

<p><b>Financial support – discretionary</b></p>	<p>LA has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section 17 Children Act</p>	<p>LA has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section 17 Children Act</p>	<p>Some fostering providers pay their foster carers a fee to recognise the carers' skill, experience and commitment.</p> <p>The Manchester City Council judgement (which requires allowances to be paid on the same basis regardless of the relationship of the carer to the child) did not consider fees. However, Statutory Guidance for Fostering Services requires that any policy in relation to the payment of fees must be applied to all foster carers who meet the criteria in the same way and must not discriminate on the grounds of a pre-existing relationship with the child.</p>	<p>LA has discretion to pay residence order allowance – usually if child was previously fostered by the carers, or exceptionally if making residence order prevents child becoming looked after. Any allowance reviewed annually.</p>	<p>Entitled to an assessment for financial support under the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 if child looked after prior to order and meets the criteria in the regulations.</p> <p>Subject to assessment as above and for former foster carers can include an element of remuneration.</p> <p>Regular or one off payments.</p> <p>Any allowances reviewed annually.</p>	<p>Subject to assessment, one off payments or regular adoption allowance may be paid.</p>
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