



Slough Children First – Kinship Local Offer

A guide for kinship carers and their families

Welcome message

We understand that being a kinship carer can be hugely rewarding and gives a great sense of pride in being able to offer a home to a loved one.

We also recognise that making the decision to be a kinship carer is often at a time of urgency and sometimes without a long time to plan for it. You are often responding to a situation and then continuing to find solutions to the pace of challenges that come next.

At Slough Children First, we appreciate the vital role you play in keeping children connected to their family, their community and their unique identity. Whilst there are a huge number of benefits to being a kinship carer, we know that it can also be challenging. Whether that is supporting children with the daily challenges of school, homework and hobbies, or you are trying to navigate key decisions and actions from professionals, we want our offer to provide you with the help and tools needed to **not just survive, but to thrive**.

We are here to support you, however your kinship care journey starts and regardless of where you currently are. Whether you are a temporary carer, a Special Guardian, or caring through a private arrangement, this offer is for you.

This Kinship Local Offer outlines the support, services, and resources available to help.

Our vision and legal duty

In order for children to be **Happy, Safe & Loved, Thriving**; we want to make sure that all of our kinship carers feel supported.

We recognise the unique benefits of being a carer but also understand that it can be challenging and sometimes frustrating. We want our guide to help.

The **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2025**, which places a legal duty on every local authority to publish a Kinship Local Offer.

These reforms champion a “**Family First**” approach, putting families and kinship carers at the heart of decisions about children's care. We wholeheartedly support that ethos.



Every child deserves to be Happy, Safe & Loved, Thriving in a family that knows and cherishes them.

We have developed this offer with input from:

- Kinship carers with lived experience
- Our social care teams
- Local voluntary and community organisations

Children and young people

What is kinship care?

Kinship care is when a child lives with a relative or close family friend who is not their parent. This may happen informally, or through legal arrangements supported by the local authority or the courts.



Types of kinship care

- **Informal kinship care:**



Informal Kinship carer is when an immediate family member is looking after a child they know, following an agreement with their parents, without the involvement of the local authority.

The parents, not the kinship carers, hold legal responsibility for the child unless the carer has applied for an order such as a Child Arrangement order or a Special Guardianship order privately.

Support available:

Whilst there is no support specifically available, Slough Children First has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area who are in need. We can do this by providing a range of services under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

If you are a kinship carer living in the borough of Slough and are caring for a child under an informal arrangement and need help, you can contact our Mash Team and request an assessment of need.

contact the Mash team on telephone: 01753 875362 or email:

sloughchildrenfirst.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

- **Private fostering:**

A private fostering arrangement is when a child lives with someone who is not a close relative for 28 days or more. Parents and carers must notify the local authority about a private fostering arrangement before it begins or immediately if it has already begun.

Support for children in private fostering

A social worker will visit each privately fostered child at least every six weeks in the first year of the arrangement; and at least every twelve weeks in the second and subsequent years. In some areas schools are visited as part of this process to discuss the child with teachers. The private foster carer has a duty to inform the local authority of any substantive changes to the arrangement or within the household.

Support for carers of private fostering

You will be allocated a social worker from the Kinship team who will provide supervision and support to you as the carer. You will be able to access training that is available to all kinship carers.

Financial support:

There is no specific financial support for private foster carers. In most cases, the child's parents must provide financial support and you should check if you can apply for benefits in relation to their care.

Government benefits:

Kinship carers may be eligible for various government benefits such as Universal Credit and child benefit. The Kinship team can support with Debt



and Welfare referrals for support in ensuring carers are accessing all they are able to in terms of benefits. We also work closely with the following agencies who can support in this area:

- Lightning Reach
- Household support fund
- Green Doctor

Should you have any questions or queries about private fostering, please contact the Mash team via telephone on: 01753 875362 or email:

sloughchildrenfirst.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

Please see the link below to a leaflet for parents on private fostering.

[SCF Private fostering leaflet for parents \(2024\).](#)

- **Formal kinship foster care:**

Formal kinship care is when children are “looked after” and were placed by the local authority with a relative or family friend who they have an established relationship with. The carer had undergone an assessment and is given temporary approval under Regulation 24 of the care planning, placements and care review regulations 2010 or fully approved as a foster carer under the Fostering Regulations.

- **Special Guardianship Order (SGO):** Provides carers with long-term parental responsibility. Often used as a permanent alternative to foster care or adoption.

[Become a special guardian: What is a special guardian - GOV.UK](#)

- **Child Arrangements Order (CAO):** Court order allowing a child to live with you and giving you parental responsibility. Parents, guardians, and other parties with a significant interest in the child’s welfare, such as grandparents or other relatives, can apply for a CAO to seek contact or residence arrangements.

- **Adoption:**

Full parental rights and responsibilities are transferred to you permanently by the court. It is a permanent and life-long commitment resulting in the adopted parents become the Childs legal parent.



Who Can Be a kinship carer?

You may be a grandparent, aunt, uncle, older sibling, family friend, or someone with a meaningful relationship with the child (e.g. teacher, youth worker). If you're caring for a child in this way, you are a kinship carer and this offer is for you.



Support you can expect

1. Financial support

- **Kinship foster carers:** Receive the fostering allowance based on the child's age and needs.

Our allowances from 1st April 2025 for approved Kinship foster carers are:

0 to 2 years: £189 per week per child

3 to 4 years £196 per week per child

5 to 10 years £216 per week per child

11 to 15 years £247 per week per child

16 to 17 years £ 288 per week per child

Carers fee £200 weekly payment

- **Special Guardians (SGOs):** No longer required to undergo annual financial reassessments (as of Jan 2025). Assessments apply to new SGOs or where circumstances change.

SGO who qualify will be paid the following allowances minus child benefit from this amount when actually paid.

0-2	3-4	5-10	11-15	16-17
£189.00	£196.00	£216.00	£247.00	£288.00

- **Discretionary help:** Available in exceptional circumstances—please speak to your Kinship Social Worker. We also offer advice and referrals to support services such as:
 - **Universal Credit**
 - **Child Benefit**
 - **Household Support Fund**
 - **Lightning Reach**
 - **Green Doctor (energy advice)**

For full details on benefits: [gov.uk – looking after someone else's child](https://www.gov.uk/looking-after-someone-elses-child)



2. Practical and emotional support

- **Respite support:**

We understand that being a kinship carer is rewarding but can sometime be physically challenging and that they will be occasions that a much-needed break would be beneficial and support placement stability. As part of the local offer kinship carers can now request respite by contacting the Kinship team who will complete an assessment of need with you to determine the level of respite.

- **Kinship duty line:** Speak to a social worker Monday-Friday, 9am–5pm on 01753 690960. After-hours emergency support: 01344 351999. **Email:** kinshipduty@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

- **Advice drop-ins:** Every 6 weeks, get help with forms, benefits, contact arrangements, and more. The dates of the next 3 surgeries are:

- 11th July 2025
- 12th September 2025
- 21st November 2025

- **Dedicated Social Worker:** Temporary approved carers receive visits every 4–6 weeks.
 - Harkiran Randhawa who can be contacted on :07523806013
 - Email: Harkiran.randhawa@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk
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3. Training and learning

- Access to all **SCF training courses** and webinars –
- [Foster with Slough - Training & Support](#)
- **Carers Conference** – every July
- Specialist training via **Kinship Compass**
- Free webinars and national events
- [Kinship: Home | The Kinship care charity | England and Wales](#)

4. Peer support

- **Kinship Support Groups:** Meet other Kinship carers with shared experiences. The group runs every 6 weeks (in person and online) information on dates, time and venue are sent out via email to all Kinship carers and published in our newsletters. The dates of the next 3 forums are:
- 11th July 2025
- 12th September
- 21st November
- **Coffee mornings** hosted by Kinship charity – More information can be found on their website .[Peer support groups - Kinship](#)



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- **Kinship co production:** The Kinship team are working with a small group of carers who are helping shape services and our local offer.
 - **SGO Newsletter** (April and October)

For further information on how to access peer support, please contact the Kinship team. Email: kinshipduty@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

5. Support for children and young people

- **Play therapy:** Ages 4–18
 - **Fun days and events:** Held in May, October, and December
 - **Annual celebration event**
 - **Youth Engagement Slough:** Free activities and clubs
 - [Home - YES Slough](#)
 - **HAF programme:** Holiday clubs and meals
 - [Holiday activities and food programme 2025 - GOV.UK](#)
 - **Leisure passes:** The Kinship team are working with Public Health Program into obtaining leisure passes for young people in kinship care
 - **Therapeutic support:** Access to the **Adoption & Special Guardian Support Fund (ASGSF)** if eligible
 - [Adoption and special guardianship support fund \(ASGSF\) - GOV.UK](#)
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6. Education support

- Pupil Premium funding for children in kinship care
- Access to in-year school places through the **Fair Access Protocol**
- From **Sept 2024**, Virtual School will extend support to children in kinship care
- Advice on educational entitlements:
- We will offer support to families seeking advice and advocacy by phone or email during office hours throughout the year, not exclusive to academic terms. Where appropriate, we will also support families in person with young people in crisis, ensuring their rights are affirmed and they do not receive undue bias.
- VSH non-statutory role guidance is available online: [Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Contact : ewen.godfrey@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk mobile: 07871982788

[Virtual School - Slough Children First](#)



7. Family contact

- Support with planning and supervising contact with family members
- Advice for post-order contact

For further information regarding this service please contact: The Contact Centre Manager. Email clare.dormer@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

8. Legal advice

- One-off legal advice provided after a positive kinship assessment
- SGO carers entitled to legal support if a parent applies to discharge the order
- Solicitor list provided by the Children's Social Team

Please contact the Kinship team to request this support.

kinshipduty@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

9. Family Group Conferences (FGCs) and mediation service

All families on the edge of care or in pre-proceedings will be offered a **Family Group Conference**, enabling family-led decisions, practical support and keeping children and young people within family and friends' networks where it is safe to do so. The Kinship team will attend the FGC to provide information on the assessment process and next steps.

Access to **mediatory/restorative processes** is available to help kinship carers and parents communicate better, hear children and young people's voices, and work collaboratively to make key safe decisions about their future journey and care, especially where there are misunderstandings and difficulties which could put placements at risk.

For further information on this service, please email Karen Brown, Family Group Conference Service Manager: karen.brown@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk or Syeda Hussain, Senior Practitioner: syeda.hussain@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

10. Housing

Kinship carers may need support with accommodation as their current home may not have sufficient capacity to suddenly take on the care of a child or possibly a sibling group.



We believe that suitable accommodation for kinship carers should be prioritised and that kinship children should have access to a safe and secure home that improves their well-being and provides them with space and privacy.

The Kinship team are working closely with Slough Housing Services with a view to Kinship carers being recognised and included within the new Housing Allocations policy. Where it has been identified that urgent accommodation is required for a kinship carer, they will be presented to the housing panel for allocation, and if approved at that panel, the carer will be placed in category A banding requiring urgent accommodation.

Discretionary payments:

For Kinship carers who require support with a deposit for accommodation, they can apply for a one-off discretionary housing payment to enable them to secure suitable accommodation and take on the care of a kinship child.

Rent Bond Deposit Scheme:

For kinship carers needing support in accessing suitable private rented accommodation to enable them to take on the care of a child that would otherwise be placed in care. SCF will support you with applying for this scheme.

To be eligible for this scheme, you need to be on benefits or a low income and will need to evidence that you would have no other way of securing a rent deposit.

For more information on applying for this scheme, please contact Rose Ngonyama on rose.ngonyama@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

11. Early Help & Family Support

Access support through Slough's Family Support Service:

- **Self-referral:** 01753 875362
- Work with Family Support Workers and Youth Workers
- Linked to **Children's Centres** and **Family Hubs** offering local groups, parenting advice, and support services

How to stay involved

We want to work in partnership with our kinship carers.

You can:

- Co-produce of this Kinship Local Offer with kinship carers. We hold fortnightly planning meetings to develop aspects of the local offer and refine the support needed.



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- Record a **podcast** sharing your lived experience
 - Help us design services that work better for families like yours
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Key contacts

- Saima Arif – Head of Service for Regulated Service
Email: Saima.arif@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk
- Alitha Lee-Townsend – Manger for the Kinship team
Email: alitha.lee-townsend@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk
- Nikki Donegan – Head of Service for Children in our careServices
Email: nikki.donegan@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk
- Shepherd Kombo – Head of Service for Safeguarding and Family Support
Email: shepherd.kombo@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk
- Cherie Sear – Head of Virtual School
Email: cherie.sears@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk
- Victor Mangwende – Head of Service for Quality Assurance and Performance
Email victor.mangwende@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

Complaints and feedback

Email: complaints@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

Tel: 01753 875825

Mail: Observatory House, 25 Windsor Road, Slough SL1 2EL

External support

- [Kinship charity](#)
 - [Family Rights Group](#)
 - [CoramBAAF](#)
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A final word

You are not alone. Whether you are just beginning your journey or have been caring for years, you deserve the support, recognition, and information to thrive. We are committed to being with you every step of the way.

For full details, visit our [Kinship section on the Slough Children First website](#).