



Kinship Care

(Friends and
Family Care)

With you every step of the way

Fosterline
0800 040 7675
your fostering advice service

www.fosterline.info



Kinship care is the care given to a child whose parents are unable to provide the care and support for a child and this responsibility is taken on by a family member such as a grandparent, aunt, uncle, sibling or other connected adults to the child such as godparents or close friends of the family. For these associations Kinship Care can also be termed as 'Family and Friends' care or 'Connected Persons' care.

A Kinship carer is a person who is looking after a child of a relative or friend on a full time basis; this can also be a temporary or permanent arrangement and can also be on a formal or informal basis. The placement of a child with an unrelated person by their parent(s) is known as Private Foster Carer. A chart showing the differences between these types of care can be found below.

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Informal Kinship Care

It is important to understand the difference between an informal kinship care arrangement and that of an approved kinship foster placement. In general terms an informal kinship carer will care for a child following an agreement between themselves and the parents when they are no longer able to care for the child themselves and wish to avoid the child going into care. For example, grandparents might step in to look after a child if the parents are unable to cope, perhaps due to bereavement, drug or alcohol problems, or mental health issues. This type of arrangement does not involve the local authority and the carers do not generally receive a fostering allowance. If the carer feels they may not be able to meet the needs of the child due to finances, they may consider requesting a 'Child in Need' assessment from the local authority (see below).

Kinship Foster Care

In Kinship Foster Care, the local authority will approach a relative or friend (a connected person) and ask them to care for the child. Sometimes the child will already be in foster care with an unrelated foster carer or sometimes the local authority will seek a kinship foster placement to avoid taking a child into foster care. The key difference is that the local authority places the child with the Kinship Foster Carer and therefore has financial responsibility for them. Where the local authority places the child with a relative or connected person, they are referred to as a looked after child and the local authority will exercise parental responsibility for the child. Kinship foster carers undergo a fostering assessment and once approved will receive a fostering allowance to help support the child. The financial support should be equal to the allowances/fees provided to other foster carers within that local authority (National Minimum Standard 28.7).



Private Foster Care

When informal arrangements of care for a child or young person are made with people who are not connected or family members then this is classed as a private fostering arrangement. If it is to continue beyond a period of 28 days, the local authority should be informed and an assessment of the placement should take place. There is no entitlement to financial support from the local authority and Private Foster Carers are not assessed as foster carers.

Child in Need

Anyone can contact social services if they have concerns about a family, or believe that a child may be in need. An assessment is made where more than advice or information is required and it appears you might need services to assist you and the children in your family.

You are entitled to an assessment if a child or children in your family appear to be in need or at risk of harm if an assessment is not carried out. An assessment is usually carried out by a social worker and the child will be identified as a child in need if without the provision of additional services they are unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of expected health and or development.

An assessment of a child in need is carried out under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 17 the child is not looked after by the local authority and will not have a care plan but there may be the requirement to implement a child in need plan or a child protection plan. When a plan is put in place social workers or other professionals may be required to visit the child periodically.

Advice about Friends and Family or Kinship Foster Care

If you have been asked to care for someone else's child or have questions about a current informal fostering arrangement, Fosterline can help you find out more information and direct you to additional sources of advice and support.



	Informal Kinship Care	Kinship Foster Care	Private Foster Care
How arrangements are made	<p>Arrangements are made between the parents of the child (or the person with parental responsibility) and a relative(s)</p> <p>The child is not placed into the arrangement by the local authority</p> <p>Arrangements made for children of 16 and 17 without disability enter an informal arrangement rather than private foster care</p>	<p>The child is termed as a 'looked after child' by the local authority</p> <p>Local authority will place the child with a family relative or connected person</p> <p>The carers will need to be assessed and approved as foster carers</p> <p>Local authority can place a child with unapproved carers in emergency with a view to the assessment and approval being completed</p> <p>Local authority also have the ability to place children in short term foster care while the assessments are completed</p>	<p>Arrangements are made between the parents of the child (or the person with parental responsibility) and a person(s) not related to the child</p> <p>The child is not placed into the arrangement by the local authority</p> <p>Made for children under 16 (unless the child has a disability)</p>
Role of the Birth Parents	<p>Birth parents retain the parental responsibility</p> <p>Birth parents are able to delegate the day to day decisions concerning their child but major decisions need birth parents' consent such as medical treatment, foreign travel and schooling</p>	<p>If the child is accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act birth parents retain parental responsibility</p> <p>Local authority will work with the birth parents and negotiate the day to day decision making</p> <p>If the child is placed under a care order the local authority will share the parental responsibility and has the power to make decisions even if the birth parents are not in agreement</p>	<p>Birth parents retain the parental responsibility</p> <p>Birth parents are able to delegate the day to day decisions concerning their child but major decisions need birth parents' consent such as medical treatment, foreign travel and schooling</p> <p>Birth parents have a duty to inform the local authority of the arrangement</p>

<p>Role of the Carer</p>	<p>To safeguard and promote the welfare of the child within their care</p> <p>To respect the wishes and decisions made by the birth parents</p> <p>Parental responsibility can be sought by applying for a legal order in extreme circumstances</p>	<p>To safeguard and promote the welfare of the child within their care</p> <p>To respect the wishes and decisions made by the birth parents</p> <p>Local authority will negotiate and delegate some of the day to day decisions to the carer</p> <p>All foster carers are required to sign a foster care agreement clarifying their responsibilities and role</p> <p>Foster carers are expected to work with other professionals to promote the welfare of the child</p>	<p>To inform Children’s services Department for the local authority at least 6 weeks prior to the commencement of the arrangement</p> <p>If the arrangement is to commence within 6 weeks then the local authority requires notification immediately</p> <p>Local authority needs to be informed of any change of circumstances or when the arrangement is terminated</p> <p>To safeguard and promote the welfare of the child within their care</p> <p>To respect the wishes and decisions made by the birth parents</p>
<p>Approval</p>	<p>No approval is required</p> <p>Birth parents are able to judge on the suitability of the person being asked to care for their child</p> <p>If the local authority has reason to believe that services need to be engaged to promote or safeguard the welfare of the child they may assess the child as a child in need under section 17 of the Children Act (See below ‘Child in Need’)</p>	<p>The child will be a looked after child by the local authority meaning the carers will need to be assessed and approved as foster carers regardless of the carers relation to the child</p> <p>Temporary approval can be granted in the case of an emergency but will require an approval process to be completed for the arrangement to continue</p> <p>Foster carers need to be approved by an independent fostering panel</p>	<p>Arrangement should be assessed by the local authority for suitability</p> <p>Local authority will visit the birth parents as part of their assessment of the arrangement</p>

<p>Time frame for arrangement</p>	<p>Birth parents can terminate the arrangement without notice</p> <p>The carer may also terminate the arrangement at any given time</p>	<p>Care planning for the child will set out appropriate time frames for the placement dependent on a number of circumstances.</p>	<p>The arrangement is intended to last for a continuous period of more than 28 consecutive days</p> <p>Birth parents can terminate the arrangement without notice</p> <p>The carer may also terminate the arrangement at any given time</p>
<p>Supervision of the arrangement</p>	<p>Local authority are not responsible for supervising or reviewing the arrangements</p> <p>Arrangement is an agreement between birth parents and the carers</p>	<p>A supervising social worker will be allocated to the carers to provide support and regular supervision of the placement</p> <p>Looked after children will have a care plan that requires the input from a number of professionals including a social worker assigned to the child</p>	<p>Local authority are required to visit the arrangement every 6 weeks in the first year then every 12 weeks after that</p> <p>If conditions are not satisfactory local authority can take legal action to prevent the arrangement continuing</p>
<p>Support available</p>	<p>Birth parents are responsible for the financial support of the child</p> <p>The child is entitled to the universal support available to all children with or without specific additional needs and are able to access these in the same manner as their peers</p> <p>Carers that believe they require extra discretionary support from the local authority can consider asking children's services to assess the child which may result in the child being assessed under section 17 and recognised as a `Child in Need` (see above)</p>	<p>The supervising social worker will be your immediate source of support</p> <p>Foster carers will be provided with training to help with the support of children placed with them</p> <p>Foster carers are paid an allowance/fee to support the child placed with them</p> <p>Payments to foster carers should be clearly documented to foster carers as set out in National Minimum Standards 28</p>	<p>Birth parents are responsible for the financial support of the child</p> <p>The child is entitled to the universal support available to all children with or without specific additional needs and are able to access these in the same manner as their peers</p> <p>Carers that believe they require extra discretionary support from the local authority can consider asking children's services to assess the child which may result in the child being assessed under section 17 and recognised as a `Child in Need` (see above)</p>

<p>Benefits available</p>	<p>In general carers are able to claim the same benefits as the birth parents</p> <p>In the case of child benefit only one person can be awarded child benefit</p> <p>Birth parents can continue to claim the child benefit on the proviso it is paid to the carer for the child's upkeep</p> <p>Were disputes exist the carer has priority over claiming child benefit by informing HMRC</p> <p>Carers may be eligible for child tax credits (dependent on household income)</p> <p>Caring for a child with a disability will enable you to apply for disability Living Allowance (DLA)</p>	<p>Foster carers cannot claim child benefit or child tax credit as they will be paid an allowance for caring for the child</p> <p>Foster care is recognised as 'qualifying remunerative work' and entitles a foster carer to apply for working tax credits but will be dependent on other factors and incomes</p> <p>Caring for a child with a disability will enable you to apply for disability Living Allowance (DLA)</p> <p>Other benefits may be available to the foster carer dependent on personal circumstances and income to the household</p>	<p>In general carers are able to claim the same benefits as the birth parents</p> <p>In the case of child benefit only one person can be awarded child benefit</p> <p>Birth parents can continue to claim the child benefit on the proviso it is paid to the carer for the child's upkeep</p> <p>Were disputes exist the carer has priority over claiming child benefit by informing HMRC</p> <p>Carers may be eligible for child tax credits (dependent on household income)</p> <p>Caring for a child with a disability will enable you to apply for disability Living Allowance (DLA)</p>
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