

Understanding Kinship Care Arrangements.

Here is a short poem explaining the importance of kinship carers, made by Kinship Compass [#ValueOurLove Poem \(youtube.com\)](#)

There are many reasons why a child may be living under Kinship Child Arrangements. Below is a guide for education settings to understand the process and different types of kinship care that exist.



Court- This is where a Judge listens to all the information about your family and will make a decision on where they think a child/children should live.

PLO (Public Law Outline)- This is 16 weeks where you have a solicitor, and the Local Authority make plans to decide if children can live with you.

Legal Planning- This is where there are too many safety worries for child/children where they are living. The social worker and manager talk to the legal team for advice on going to court.

Child Protection – When you have a social worker, and they have lots of worries about a child (children) and how they are being cared for.

Child in Need – This when you have a social worker and they have some worries about a child (children) and how they are being cared for.

Early Help – This gives a family help and support when there are a few worries.

From any stage from legal planning onwards, the children's Social Worker will look to the extended family network to provide care, this is called kinship care (sometimes referred to as friends and family care).

Different Types of Family and Friends' Arrangements

Parental Responsibility (PR): Those who have PR are birth mother, adoptive parents, birth father if (named on the birth certificate), anyone with a court order that gives them PR, including the Local Authority if a Care Order is in place for a child - **Only** adults with parental responsibility can make decisions for the children, for example where they live, what school they attend, and taking them out of the country on holiday.

Private/informal arrangement

This is when a family choose to make their own arrangements for a close friend or relative to look after the child e.g., after a parent has died, is in prison, or through other family difficulties. The local authority may want to know details about the arrangement to make sure any support the child may need is identified. The local authority does not have a duty to assess such arrangements or to provide any financial support

Who arranges this?	The person with Parental Responsibility (PR)
Parental Responsibility	Remains with birth parents
Term for person caring	Friend or relative
Legal status	Private citizen
Examples	A child moves in with a grandparent because their mother is terminally ill.

Private Fostering

This is when someone who is not a close relative (e.g. great aunt, cousin, parent's friend or a neighbour) cares for a child (up to age 16 or 18 for a disabled child) for 28 days or more. When the local authority receives notification of a private fostering arrangement, they must arrange for a social worker to undertake an assessment to make sure the arrangement is suitable. In these scenarios there is not a financial obligation for the local authority. The parent must make sure arrangements are in place for financial support (if required) for their child directly with the private foster carer.

Who arranges this?	The person with Parental Responsibility.
Parental Responsibility	Remains with birth parents
Term for person caring	Private Foster Carer
Legal status	Private citizen – considered a 'Private Foster Child' (subject to Private Fostering Regulations)
Placement supervision	There are statutory social work visits to make sure the arrangement is safe and additional support (not financial) for the child and private foster carer, depending on the assessment.
Examples	A friend of the family who has offered to help care for a 15-year-old child as the child is estranged from their father.

Formal arrangement/ Kinship Care (Local Authority Arrangement)

This is when it is not safe for the child to continue to live at home and through agreement, either via the Family Court or arrangements directly with the family, alternative family or friend arrangement to care for the child is sought by the local authority in collaboration with the parent.

- The member of the family or friend (known as kinship carer) will need to have an assessment completed by the local authority.
- In some situations where the child needs to move in with them quickly or in an emergency, temporary approval as a foster carer can be given. This will involve a home visit and completing some checks with other agencies (for example the police) to make sure the kinship carer is able to support the child and if there is any additional support they may need. The local authority must then complete a full assessment over 16 weeks.

Who arranges this?	The local authority, either on the authority of the court or in collaboration with the person who has Parental Responsibility (normally the parent(s)). This could be in an emergency or planned way.
Parental Responsibility	Remains with birth parents. If there have been court proceedings and the child is subject to a Care Order or Emergency Protection Order the local authority will share parental responsibility
Term for person caring	Kinship carer/connected person which can be a friend or relative
Legal status	The child will become a Child in Care. Under certain arrangements (for example if there is not a court order in place), parents can request their child returns to their care.
Examples	The Court has deemed the child is not safe in the care of their parents. At Court, the parent suggests a family member to care for the child instead of local authority foster care.

Legal Orders available to kinship carers

Child Arrangement Order

Where the Family Court gives a carer an equal (equal to parents) share of parental responsibility for the child so that they can make decisions on the child's behalf.

Special Guardianship Order

This is a court order which states where a child live until they are 18. The special guardian is given 'enhanced' parental responsibility for the child, meaning they have the authority to make all major decisions about the child's care. The order restricts the birth parents' rights but does not permanently end them.

Adoption

Adoption in kinship care changes the child's legal relationship with their parents. Birth parents no longer hold any parental responsibility. The local authority gains a Placement Order from the court to place children with their adopters. Inter family adoption is possible but not frequent as it can skew family relationships e.g. aunt becomes legal guardian.

Useful Websites

[Leaflet for Parents in Care Proceedings | Child Protection Resource](#)

[Prepare for being a kinship carer - Kinship Compass](#) - provides clear advice and information for those considering kinship care, and access to support groups

[Public Law Care Proceedings - childlawadvice.org.uk](#) – provides clear outline of legal proceedings

[Parents' leaflets | NSPCC Learning](#) – useful resources and advice on parenting children

[Kinship care - Family Rights Group \(frg.org.uk\)](#)– offering leaflets and advice to families whose children are involved in social care procedures