


<b>Title:</b> Kinship Care and Support Policy 2017-2019	 <b>Brent</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	
<b>Author:</b> Kelli Eboji, Service Manager		<b>Issue:</b> 4	<b>Next update due:</b> August 2019
<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of this policy is to set out the London Borough of Brent's approach towards promoting, assessing and supporting the needs of children living with kinship carers.		
<b>Who is the Responsible Senior Manager?</b>	Onder Beter, Head of Service for LAC & Permanency Service		
<b>Legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children Act 1989</li> <li>• Children (Leaving Care) 2000</li> <li>• Adoption and Children Act 2002</li> <li>• Children and Adoption Act 2006</li> <li>• Children and Young Persons Act 2008</li> <li>• Children and Families Act 2014</li> <li>• Fostering Service Regulations and National Minimum Standards 2011</li> <li>• Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2015</li> <li>• Special Guardianship Regulations 2005</li> <li>• Special Guardianship Guidance 2016</li> <li>• Family and Friend Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities</li> </ul>		
<b>Forms / links</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All relevant Brent fostering policies - <a href="http://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/family-and-schools/fostering-and-adoption/fostering">http://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/family-and-schools/fostering-and-adoption/fostering</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/family-and-schools/fostering-and-adoption/?_ga=1.168080993.1958826289.1360746679">http://brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/family-and-schools/fostering-and-adoption/?_ga=1.168080993.1958826289.1360746679</a></li> <li>• Kinship Assessment Procedures</li> <li>• Brent Private Fostering Policy and Procedures</li> </ul>		

## Values and Principles

Brent is committed to:

- Enabling children to remain within the care of their kinship network unless this is not consistent with their welfare.
- Promoting children's permanent care in their kinship network.
- Ensuring that assessment of support for all types of kinship care is based on the needs of the child.

## **Definition of Kinship Care**

Kinship Care is when a child or young person is living with a family member, friend or a person of significance to them for a short, long or permanent period of time.

This document refers to Connected Person fostering arrangements, Special Guardianship and Child Arrangement Order (historically known as Residence Order) arrangements, and informal kinship arrangements. Although Private Fostering is considered to be a kinship arrangement please refer to the specific guidance and regulations governing Private Fostering arrangements.

Kinship Care can be separated into 3 main categories for the purpose of Local Authority involvement.

- 1) Connected Persons Foster Care: for children/young people who are "Looked After Children". Refer to sections 20, 38 or 31 of the Children Act 1989

*The Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services* defines a connected person as "a relative (defined as section 105 of the 1989 Act as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt (whether of the full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or step parent), friend of or other person connected with the looked after child."

- 2) Private Fostering- children/young people who are not "Looked After Children", but living with kinship carers who are not relatives as defined by the CA 1989. This is a private arrangement between the Private Foster carer and parent/person who has parental responsibility.
- 3) Private kinship arrangement- for children/young people who are residing with a relative (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and are not "Looked After Children". This type of arrangement can include; informal kinship arrangements, Testamentary Guardianship, Child Arrangement Orders and Special Guardianship.

## **Legal framework**

Brent is committed to informing kinship carers of the different options available to them should they be, or are considering, caring for a child with whom they have a connection. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that members of the public have the necessary information to make informed choices about the most appropriate route for them to follow. Information should be provided about the meaning and implications of different legal situations, the rights of carers and of the children's parents, and the nature of decisions which kinship carers will be able to make in relation to the child.

Please refer to **Appendix B** which summarises the legal framework in respect of the different avenues which may apply when caring for somebody else's child and the entitlement to support services relating to these.

## **Family Network Meetings**

Brent Local Authority fully supports the use of Family Network Meetings to ensure that family and friends are explored and involved in the care plans for children.

Within Brent, the allocated child social worker will arrange and co-ordinate Family Network Meetings where there is a clear risk of family breakdown and/or children may already be in care.

Social workers from the Kinship Care Team are able to attend Family Network Meetings when requested in order to assist in explaining assessment processes, permanence options, and support available to the child's friend and family network.

There may be occasions when a Family Network Meeting is not appropriate, in these circumstances Brent will work with the family to establish a way in which they are able to contribute to the local authority's decision making.

### **(A) Assessment and Approval Process**

#### **1. Viability assessments**

Prior to a child being placed with a kinship carer a joint viability assessment should be carried out by the child's social worker and a kinship social worker. Brent is currently using a Brent designed viability assessment tool for viability assessments of potential kinship carers. This template is the recommended viability template used in the "Initial Family and Friends Care Assessment: A good practice guide" published by the Family Rights Group in February 2017. This guide can be found at: <https://www.frg.org.uk/involving-families/family-and-friends-carers/assessment-tool>

This assessment is designed to assist social workers to establish the strengths, risks and support needs of prospective kinship placements. See below Assessment and Checks before Immediate Placement for further details of what information covered in the assessment.

If an emergency placement is required see below for Approval of Immediate Placements under Regulation 24 and Assessment and Checks before Immediate Placement.

#### **2. Connected Person Foster Care**

Kinship carers are considered to be "Connected Person foster carers" when they are caring for a child who is "looked after" by the local authority. The below information applies to the assessment and approval of connected persons as foster carers whether on a planned or unplanned basis and is applicable when the following applies:

- A child who cannot remain within his or her birth family is assessed as needing to be Looked after by Brent Council and is placed with relatives or friends.
- A child is already living with a relative or friend and subsequently becomes Looked After by Brent Council.
- A child who is already Looked After is placed with a relative or friend.

### **3. Approval of Immediate Placements under Regulation 24 (Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010)**

Before any placement with a connected person who is not already approved as a foster carer, the approval of the nominated officer is required. Such a placement can only be approved for a period of 16 weeks from the date of placement after which time the case needs to be presented to Brent's Fostering Panel. An extension of up to 8 weeks can be made in exceptional circumstances.

### **4. Assessment and Checks before Immediate Placement**

In the event that a child is moved to a connected person in an emergency under the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010, a (viability) assessment is required to be carried out in order for the connected person to be given temporary approval while the full Connected Person fostering assessment is carried out.

The Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Family and Friends(Kinship) Foster Care states that the local authority must ascertain as much of this information as is possible in the circumstances. Where a child is placed with a connected person who is to be temporarily approved, every effort has to be made to maximise the level and quality of information that will be used to decide whether the connected person should be temporarily approved. In particular, the information should focus on:

- An assessment of the quality of the existing relationship between the child and the connected person;
- The child's wishes and feelings about the placement;
- A visit to the connected person's home by the social worker, which should confirm that the physical environment and space available is suitable for the particular child/ren;
- Whether the connected person would require any additional resources in order to meet the particular needs of the child;
- The quality of the relationships between the members of the household, including children and young people, and their views about the proposed caring arrangement, impact of the proposed caring arrangement on other children and young people in the household, based on information about their history and current lifestyle;
- The connected person must be interviewed to consider their ability to provide safe and appropriate care, to promote contact to birth family, to work with the Care Plan and to ensure they understand that should the placement continue, they will need to be fully assessed as foster carer's;
- The accommodation, including sleeping arrangements, must be inspected;
- Information must be obtained about other persons in the household;

- The proposed carer and all members of the household aged 16 and above must give written consent to Police, DBS and other relevant checks;
- PNC and Child Protection checks must be carried out;
- The child's social worker must arrange for police checks on the carers and all household members over the age of 16 prior to a child coming into placement;
- The wishes of those with parental responsibility for the child must also be ascertained.

## 5. Interim Approval of Placements

Prior to any placement with a non-approved connected person, the child's social worker must have the approval of the nominated officer. This would usually be the Head of Service for the relevant service. Approval can only be provided with the information from the Viability Assessment template (*Appendix B*).

Interim fostering approval can be provided to a connected person for a period of up to 16 weeks, during which time a full short term Connected Person fostering assessment should be completed by the Placement Service and the carer should be formally approved via the fostering panel process within this time.

In the event that the connected person is not approved as a foster carer within the 16 weeks, then in exceptional circumstances an extension for a further 8 weeks can be requested. (Regulation 25) Please see **Appendix C** for a "Request to Extend Kinship Approval" form.

## 6. Connected Person Fostering Assessment

Once a referral is received for a Connected Person fostering assessment, the assessment will be booked into the Fostering Panel in line with the 16 week timeframe. It is the responsibility of the allocated assessing social worker to discuss any need for extending this timeframe with their manager and also the child's social worker.

The following information should be presented to the Fostering Panel:

Assessing Social Worker must complete:

- A report summarising the prospective carers circumstances, highlighting any issues or concerns that have arisen during these enquiries, a full chronology, an analysis of the implications for the placement and should conclude with an analysis of the risks and benefits of the proposed care arrangements, including what actions need to be taken to minimise any identified risks.
- Assessing Social Worker submits the following documents with their assessment report:-
  - o Feedback of any medical reports(applicants only)
  - o Details of enhanced DBS checks for all household members over 16
  - o Details of agency checks
  - o Record of interviews with referees

- o Record of interviews with adult children and ex-partners
- o Health and safety report, including any pet questionnaires
- o Safe caring report

Child's Social Worker must complete:

- Child profile on the child

The child's social worker and assessing social worker must both attend the Panel meeting when the report is considered.

Panel will be requested to consider either short term or long term approval of the carers at this time. The Panel's recommendation will be presented to the Agency Decision Maker for a decision to be made.

The **Agency Decision Maker** will notify the carers in writing of the decision, and the terms of their approval within 7 working days. Verbal feedback will be given to the applicants by their assessing social worker or the Team Manager within 48 hours of a decision being ratified.

### **7. Action required by the Child's Social Worker and Assessing Social Worker immediately following the Child's Placement**

Immediately following the child's placement, the child's social worker must:

- Provide the carers with the following documents relating to the child:
  - o Copy of child and young person's care plan
  - o Copy of Initial Assessment and Core Assessment
  - o Mosaic Placement Information Record
  - o Details of out of hours contacts, e.g. EDT
- Record the details of the child's admission to local authority care on Mosaic
- Arrange a Placement Agreement Meeting
- Visit the placement and see the child weekly for the sixteen week period of immediate placement under Fostering Regulations

The assessing Social Worker will:

- Provide support to the placement
- Complete the assessment, including referee interviews, birth children interviews, ex partner references, health and safety and safe caring policies.
- Initiate all statutory checks, medicals and DBS.

- Arrange for the fostering allowance to be paid to the carers.
- Complete a “Notification of Kinship Placement” step on Mosaic.

## **8. Court directed assessments of family and friends during care proceedings**

It may be that the court requires an assessment of a prospective kinship carer to be undertaken prior to placement in which case they should be assessed and approved whilst the child is with birth parents or with local authority foster carers. Planned placements of children with relative or connected person should enable sufficient time for the full assessment of the proposed carers. The Assessment and Approvals of Foster Carers Procedure should be followed.

Where the relatives of children who are the subjects of court proceedings are to be assessed it is the responsibility of the child's social worker to make the necessary referral for viability assessment. However this assessment is carried out jointly by the child social worker and a kinship social worker.

If the court directs a full assessment of identified family members a referral for a full assessment should be made to the Kinship Care Team.

In all assessments involving a connected person, consideration should be given to specific practice issues, including working with black and minority ethnic families and grandparents. BAAF Practice Guide "Relative Benefits" offers useful guidance and practice principles.

### **(B) Kinship Support**

#### **1. Social Work /Practical Support**

##### **Looked after Children**

Each connected person looking after a child/ren that is “looked after” by the Local Authority will have access to the child’s social worker and also a kinship assessing/supervising social worker. They will receive support via telephone and home visits.

Supervising social workers have a minimum statutory responsibility to visit Connected Person foster carers every 6 weeks once they are approved foster carers. During a Connected Person fostering assessment, visits will be more frequent due to the assessment process and safeguarding responsibilities. Connected Person foster carers can also expect that some of these statutory visits will be unannounced visits in line with regulations.

Children’s social workers also have a minimum statutory responsibility to visit the child in placement every 6 weeks.

As approved foster carers for the Local Authority, Connected Person foster carers can expect to receive financial support via a fostering allowance, support groups and training. They will be expected to complete their Training, Support and Development Standards workbook within the first 18 months following approval.

All supervising social workers are qualified practitioners and registered with the HCPC.

## **Post SGO/CAO support**

Social work support will be dependent upon the needs of the children and the support plan devised before the granting of the court order.

Children will continue to receive social work support from the relevant Care Planning Team for 3 months following the granting of a Special Guardianship Order if they were looked after prior to the order being granted. After 3 months, these families will be transferred to the Adoption and Post Permanency Team.

The transfer process is completed by the child social worker in the Care Planning Team completing a Transfer Summary, and transfers are managed Team Manager to Team Manager.

Cases will not be allocated once transferred to Placements, but will be managed on duty.

**Private Fostering:** A private fostering assessment will be carried out by the local authority once a private fostering referral has been received. Private Fostering arrangements will be monitored by a social worker from the Kinship Care Team with 6 weekly visits and an annual review of the placement.

**Private family arrangements:** Under these arrangements local authority involvement should be based on the needs of the child.

The Kinship Care Team is able to provide information and advice to all private kinship carers either in person or via telephone, or signpost them to a service that can assist.

## **2. Training and Support groups**

Connect Person foster carers will be encouraged to attend training to enhance their skills and assist them to meet the needs of the child/ren they are caring for. This is a specific expectation of those carers who are approved as Brent Connected Person Foster Carers.

Training is offered to Connected Person foster carers, Special Guardians and Child Arrangement Order holders via the Northwest London Fostering Consortium. Connected Person Foster Carers are also able to access the general Brent Fostering Training.

The local authority encourages kinship carers to meet with other kinship carers as an opportunity to network and seek support, and encourages all kinship care applicants to attend the Induction Training day during the process of assessment, or soon after approval.

We run a support group for kinship carers several times a year. Details of this group can be provided by the Adoption and Post Permanency Team.

## **3. Contact**

Contact between young people and their families is supported by the local authority where it is seen to be in the best interests of the child/ren.



Contact is often a difficult area for kinship carers, and the Local Authority recognises that there may be situations when carers are not able to manage the contact between the child/ren in their care and their birth parents.

### **Looked After Children**

In these situations the Brent Contact Service can assist the approved Connected Person foster carer by supervising contact and providing transport in situations where this is necessary. Referrals to the Contact Service should be made by the child's social worker. Contact support provided to Connected Person foster carers will be reviewed on a regular basis.

### **SGO/CAO**

Where possible, any contact needs for children in SGO or CAO placements will be identified as part of the assessment and support plan prior to a court order being made. Financial commitments required of the local authority will require agreement by the LAC & Permanency Head of Service, and may need to be presented at the Children's Placement Panel.

While some families require assistance with contact, other families will be able to manage contact between children and their parents and extended families with minimal intervention from social services and it is felt that children benefit from this type of arrangement where possible. It is an expectation that all carers will work with the local authority where possible towards a situation where they are able to manage contact for the child/ren in a safe and suitable environment.

## **4. Therapeutic / Behavioural Support**

Children in kinship placements have often experienced abuse and neglect and consequently often have emotional and behavioural needs which require therapeutic intervention. The local authority is committed to making sure that each child has the appropriate emotional and psychological support that they need in order to assist them with any emotional or behavioural needs. The specifics of this support will be discussed as part of a social work assessment, LAC Care Plan or in a Special Guardianship Support Plan.

If the assessed support need requires a service which requires funding, agreement needs to be sought prior to the service commencing.

Support can include the following:-

- Mentoring
- Advocacy
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Psychological and Psychiatric intervention
- Training for carers.

Connected persons will be provided with a comprehensive list of supports available and a list of contacts. See **Appendix A** for a list of community organisations.

Local Organisations include:

Brent LAC & Permanency Service/Kinship Care Team: 3rd floor, Brent Civic Centre, Wembley, HA9 0FJ, 0208 937 2749

Brent's Virtual School (educational support for LAC): Brent Civic Centre. 0208 937 4907

Brent CAMHS: Warranty House, Dudden Hill Lane, Neasden, NW10 1DD  
0208 208 7201 / 7200

## **5. Financial Support**

### **Fostering Allowances for Looked After Children:**

Kinship carers who are caring for Looked After Children are considered to be (Connected Person) foster carers for the Local Authority and as such will receive a fostering allowance for each looked after child in their care. These allowances are based on the age of the child.

The Local Authority has clear guidelines for foster carers in the use of these fostering allowances and more information can be found in the annual Placements Rates and Guidance document. All Connected Person foster carers will receive a copy of the Placements Rate and Guidance policy once they are approved or following a placement being made.

### **CAO/SGO allowance:**

Brent approved Connected Person foster carers who go on to apply for Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Orders for the children in their care will continue to receive the fostering allowance until the court orders are granted.

Payment start dates will be taken from the date of referral to the Kinship Care Team or from the date the order was granted if current.

Child Arrangement Order allowances will **not** be paid to birth parents that are caring for or living in the same household as their own biological children under this legal arrangement.

Generally the local authority will only consider financially assessing and paying a SGO/CAO allowance in situations where children were "looked after" by the local authority prior to the making of the court order. However there may be some private application cases where the family's circumstances are considered to be exceptional. These cases will be dealt with on a case by case basis, and if deemed exceptional a financial assessment can be completed as part of the support plan. In these situations the applicants will be provided with the local authority's rationale for why this is an exceptional case in writing.

All SGO/CAO allowances are reviewed annually.

All Special Guardians and Child Arrangement Order carers may also be eligible for Child Benefit and Child/Working Tax Credits. Prospective carers should speak to their assessing social worker for more information about benefits which may be applicable, and speak to their local DWP office.

Local DWP office to Wembley:

6 St Johns Rd  
Wembley  
Middlesex  
United Kingdom  
HA9 7JD  
Telephone: 0845 604 3719  
Textphone: 0845 608 8551

A benefit pack can be requested by contacting the enquiry line on 0845 3021444, or online at [www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk](http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk).

To enquire about Child Tax Credit call 0845 3003900 for information.

If a carer is in receipt of state benefits, in order to avoid any unintended breach of the law related to benefits, please be aware that Special Guardianship Allowances may be classed as income and should be declared to your local benefit office. Please refer to [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk).

**Private fostering:** Financial support may be offered under Section 17 of the Children's Act and is considered on a case by case basis.

**Private Family arrangements:** Financial support may be offered under Section 17 of the Children's Act in exceptional circumstances and this is considered on a case by case basis.

Advice on financial support to kinship carers caring for children under private family arrangements/private fostering arrangements can also be sought from a Local DWP office and the Family Rights Group, please refer to appendix A for details of national organisations.

## **6. Accommodation**

Kinship placements must comfortably accommodate all who live there and are expected to be warm, adequately furnished and decorated, and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene. The home and immediate environment must be free of avoidable hazards that might expose a child to risk of injury or harm and contain safety barriers and equipment appropriate to the child's age, development and level of ability.

The Viability Assessment must clearly state the appropriate sleeping arrangement for each child. Each child must have his or her own bed and accommodation arrangements must reflect the child's assessed need for privacy and space or for any specific need resulting from a disability (please refer to North West London Fostering Consortium Guidance for working with Kinship Foster Carers and Initial Family and Friends Care Assessment: A good practice guide)

If a child is required to share a bedroom with other young people/carers, it is imperative that the child's views are sought prior to the placement being made if they are of an age and ability to consult.

It is acknowledged by the local authority that space is an issue for many connected person carers whether they are foster carers for the LA or they have entered into a private kinship arrangement.

The local authority is unable to support kinship arrangements by providing financial support for loft conversions, extensions or building works. The only possible exception to this may be placements for children who have a complex disability that requires this type of support or modification.

For carers living in social housing, the local authority is able to assist carers with support letters, assistance with meetings with housing officers and possible housing nomination (this is subject to the local authority’s social care quota)

For approved Brent Connected Person foster carers living in privately rented accommodation the local authority may be able to support with rental deposits and time limited rent “top ups” in order to obtain housing which will meet the needs of their own family including the Looked After Child/ren. Carers would be required to manage the rent on their own in these circumstances.

**7. Child Care / Nursery Provision**

Brent believes that looked after children benefit from being able to grow up in families with good role models in relation to work, and benefit from living in families who are able to provide for them financially, and demonstrate a willingness and desire to work. It is acknowledged that prospective kinship carers do not come to the caring task because they have made a conscious decision or career choice to foster, and therefore this local authority understands that there is a need to support kinship carers if and when they are working.

This needs to be balanced with the need for looked after children and children in private kinship placements to have stable and consistent care, with adults that they can develop good, secure attachments.

We would generally not support a young child being cared for within formal childcare provision between the hours of 8am-6pm, 5 days a week.

The local authority can support kinship foster carers with applications for social care nursery places in Brent or reasonable financial requests for childcare provision.

For Special Guardians and Child Arrangement Order carers, funding for nursery provision will be considered within their support plan, or prior to any court orders being granted.

For all nursery funding requests, the Local Authority will use the below scale to make a decision on whether funding will be provided.

Where there is one carer at home full time with the child, there will be no funding agreed for nursery provision.

Carers should be aware that for 2 and 3 year olds, most London Local Authorities provide a certain number of free hours of nursery time and this will be factored in when determining the level of support the Local Authority may provide.

<b>Day/s per week carer is working</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
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<b>Agreed days of nursery funding</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1 and ½</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2 and ½</b>
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### **After School Club**

There may also be a need for carers to use before and after school provisions for child care purposes. Carers will generally be asked to pay for these activities out of the fostering allowance, SGO allowance or CAO allowance paid to them by the local authority.

### **8. Loss of Earnings / Income**

In exceptional circumstances some children will require the prospective carer to consider time off from work in order to settle the child/ren into a new placement and home. If this is the case, the local authority will consider requests to compensate carers for loss of earnings or income. These requests will be considered when the time off is specifically for settling children into a permanent placement and will be for a time limited period, not exceeding a period of 1 month.

### **9. Vehicles and Transport**

The local authority does not provide vehicles for foster carers, Special Guardians or Child Arrangement Order carers.

### **10. Education and Health Support**

#### **Looked After Children**

Children in Connected Person fostering placements are able to access specific support offered to Looked after Children for education and health.

Brent has a Virtual School who is responsible for supporting all LAC with their academic progression and identifying educational provision.

Brent also offers specific health support for children who are looked after, and our LAC nurses are co-located at Brent Civic Centre.

Carers should speak to their assessing or supervising social workers if they would like support with these areas.

#### **Post SGO / CAO**

Children in SGO or CAO arrangements should receive education and health support from their schools and local health provisions. If carers are having difficulty in accessing support in these areas, Brent Social Care is available to advocate and support families to be able to access the universal community supports which should be available to them. Please contact the Adoption and Post Permanency Team for this support/information.

Special Guardians and Child Arrangement Order carers should also be aware that children in their care may very well be entitled to additional funding via a Pupil Premium (for educational purposes). If you think that the child that you are caring requires additional support which could be funded via the Pupil Premium, please speak to the child's school in the first instance.

## **11. Legal Costs**

Before agreement is given to provide financial support for legal purposes, carers are requested to establish whether they are eligible for legal aid through their solicitors. Social workers can provide carers with details of appropriate child care solicitors/firms on request.

### **Looked After Children:**

Brent will assist carers with legal costs associated with proceedings when they are applying for either Child Arrangement Orders or Special Guardianship Orders for the looked after child in their care and the local authority is in support of this application.

Legal costs can be provided up to an amount of £2500.00(exclusive of VAT). For applications being made in relation to children who are currently looked after, agreement for legal funding is given by the Head of Service for LAC & Permanency.

For those (potential) carers who are being assessed within care proceedings, and the recommended outcome is that the child/ren will be placed permanently with these carers, Brent is able to fund a one off legal consultation prior to the conclusion of the proceedings. This funding should not exceed £250.00(exclusive of VAT) for one consultation. It is recommended that these (potential) carers have their one off consultation once a *draft* support plan is made available to them.

For costs above £2500.00, agreement is to be given prior to payment by the LAC & Permanency Head of Service in consultation with Brent Legal Service in specific relation to services rendered.

### **Private kinship arrangements/SGO/CAO:**

For carers who are caring for children in a private kinship arrangement who wish to apply for either Special Guardianship or Residency, support for financial assistance will need to be arranged and agreed by Brent's Locality Teams, via section 17 financial support.

## **12. Overseas Kinship Placements**

It is acknowledged that kinship placements outside the UK may have specific and unique needs which need consideration as part of a fostering support plan or a SGO/CAO support plan for Brent looked after children.

Each of these cases should be considered in light of this policy, but also with consideration to the specific needs of the children in the context of their proposed permanent placement.

Areas of additional support may include:

1. Education - carers may require support with school fees, uniforms, books.
2. Health - there may be situations where carers have to purchase private health insurance/cover due to the health system in their specific country.
3. Contact with birth parents and siblings in the UK- this is often an additional cost associated with placing children outside of the UK. It is important to consider these costs as part of the support plan prior to placement being finalised. Birth parents should also be included in these discussions so that all parties are clear about the

support being offered and the expectations of the Local Authority in relation to this contact.

4. Legal advice and costs for prospective carers in relation to how the legalities of the placement will translate in their country of origin.

Living costs in the particular country of placement should also be taken into account when planning additional support. It is expected that any allowance provided to the carers will be calculated in the context of that specific country's cost of living index and used to contribute to the additional expenses listed above.

There may also be situations when the prospective carers require support from the local authority prior to the children being placed in order to attend court hearings, establish contact with the children in the UK etc. In these situations it is not the responsibility of the local authority to assist the prospective carers with their passport, visa and immigration needs in respect of coming to the UK.

The local authority will assist the prospective carers with flights, accommodation and maintenance/travel allowance while they are in the UK for the purposes of the proposed placement. This will be for a time limited period.

There may also be occasions where it is felt that a social worker should accompany the carer and child on their journey home. This will be considered on a case by case basis and will be specifically related to the social workers assessment and the specific needs of the child/ren.

Contact with the local social services in the carer's country of origin should be made as soon as possible, and should be an essential element of the kinship assessment undertaken. It is imperative to identify the scope of support on offer by the carer's local services, how these services work, and how the carer is to access them if required. This information should be built into the support plan for the identified placement. Where local services are willing to work collaboratively with the assessing social worker, this should be encouraged due to local knowledge and also the opportunity for carers to build a local support system.

### **(C) Situations Where These Procedures do not apply**

This Procedure does not apply when child goes to live with a close relative and this is a **private family arrangement** between the parent with Parental Responsibility and the relative. In these situations it is not necessary for Brent Council to become involved unless there are concerns for the child's welfare or the family request help.

These procedures do not apply where a child goes to live with a less immediate relative or friend and this is a **Private Fostering arrangement** between the parent with Parental responsibility and the carer. If this placement continues for 28 days or more the situation must be assessed under the Private Fostering Regulations. Please refer to the Private Fostering Procedure and Appendix B below for options of caring for someone else's child.

### **(D) Complaints/compliments**

We always try to provide excellent services. But things sometimes go wrong and, when they do, we want to know so that we can put things right, and learn from our mistakes.

Before making your complaint please read the information in Appendix C as it gives you contact details, advice on what you can expect, what we need to know from you and other information that you may find useful.



## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A –List of national organisations.

Appendix B - Annex A chart –Legal framework of orders.

Appendix C –Complaints information

## **Appendix A**

### **NATIONAL USEFUL ORGANISATIONS AND INFORMATION FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS CARERS**

#### **Action for Prisoners' Families-** [www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk](http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk)

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

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

Tel: 020 8812 3600

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

Advice line: 0808 808 2003 [info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.org.uk](mailto:info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.org.uk)

#### **Addaction-** [www.addaction.org.uk](http://www.addaction.org.uk)

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

Address: 67-69 Cowcross Street London EC1M 6PU

Tel. 020 7251 5860

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

#### **Adfam-** [www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)

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

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

Offers free independent advice and information for parents and carers on a range of state education and schooling issues, including admissions, exclusion, attendance, special educational needs and bullying.

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

General advice line: 0808 800 5793

Exclusion advice line: 0808 800 0327

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

#### **BeGrand.net-** [www.begrand.net](http://www.begrand.net)

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

Helpline: 0845 434 6835

#### **Children's Legal Centre-** [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

Provides free independent legal advice and factsheets to children, parents, carers and professionals.

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

Tel: 01206 877 910

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

Child Law Advice Line: 0808 802 0008

Community Legal Advice - Education: 0845 345 4345

#### **Citizens Advice Bureaux-** [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

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

### **CoramBAAF**

CoramBAAF is an independent membership organisation for professionals, foster carers and adopters, and anyone else working with or looking after children in or from care, or adults who have been affected by adoption. It is a successor organisation to the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF).

Address: Coram Campus, 41 Brunswick Square, London, WC1N 1AZ

Tel: 020 7520 0300

E-mail: [advice@corambaaf.org.uk](mailto:advice@corambaaf.org.uk)

### **Department for Education-** [www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families](http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families)

Lists details of telephone help lines and online services to provide information, advice and support on a range of issues that parents and families may face in bringing up children and young people.

### **Family Fund Trust-** [www.familyfund.org.uk](http://www.familyfund.org.uk)

Helps families with severely disabled or seriously ill children to have choices and the opportunity to enjoy ordinary life. Gives grants for things that make life easier and more enjoyable for the disabled child and their family.

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

Provides advice to parents and other family members whose children are involved with or 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.

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

Tel: 020 7923 2628

Advice line: 0800 801 0366

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

### **The Fostering Network-** [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

Supports foster carers and anyone with an interest 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 and complaints, legislation and financial matters.

Address: 87 Blackfriars Road London SE1 8HA

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

Tel: 020 7620 6400

Fosterline: 0800 040 7675

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

### **The Grandparents' Association-** [www.grandparents-association.org.uk](http://www.grandparents-association.org.uk)

Supports grandparents and their families, especially those who have lost or are losing contact with their grandchildren because of divorce, separation or other family problems, those caring for their grandchildren on a full-time basis, and those with childcare responsibilities for their grandchildren.

Address: Moot House The Stow Harlow Essex CM20 3AG

Tel: 01279 428040

Helpline: 0845 434 9585

Welfare benefits advice and information: 0844 357 1033

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)

### **Mentor UK-** [www.mentoruk.org.uk](http://www.mentoruk.org.uk)

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

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

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

Tel: 08456 026627

### **National Family Mediation (NFM)-** [www.nfm.org.uk](http://www.nfm.org.uk)

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

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

Operates helpline and provides a variety of services to support anyone who has a link with someone in prison, prisoners and other agencies.

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

Tel: 0161 702 1000

Offenders' MFamilies Helpline

Tel: 0808 808 2003

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

### **Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)-** [www.prisonadvice.org.uk](http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk)

Provides practical and emotional support to prisoners and to their children and families. The Kinship Care Support Service provides support and advice to family members and friends who care for children whose parents are in HMP Holloway.

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

Telephone: 020 77359535 55

### **Parents Against Drug Abuse (PADA)-** [www.pada.org.uk](http://www.pada.org.uk)

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

Address: The Foundry Marcus Street Birkenhead CH41 1EU

Phone: 0151 649 1580

National Families Helpline: 08457 023867

**Parentline Plus-** [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

Provides help and support in all aspects of family life, including information, an online chat facility and a 24 hour helpline.

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

Tel: 020 7553 3080

24hr Advice line: 0808 800 2222

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

**TalktoFrank-** [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

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.

24 hour advice line: 0800 77 66 00

Text: 82111

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

**Voice-** [www.voiceyp.org](http://www.voiceyp.org)

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

Address: 320 City Road London EC1V 2NZ

Tel: 020 7833 5792

Young person's advice line: 0808 800 5792

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

**Young Minds-** [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

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

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

Tel: 020 7336 8445

## **Appendix B**

Please see the below link to the Department for Education's Friend and Family Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities. Please refer to **Annex A** of this document for information on different options when caring for someone else's child.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/dfe-00025-2011>

## **Appendix C**

Please see the below link to Brent Council's complaints' information.

<http://brent.gov.uk/your-council/complaints/making-a-complaint-about-social-care-and-education/>