**Writing an SGO Support Plan – for social workers and family support workers**

Whilst each individual family’s needs and situation may differ below are some of the services that are available to Special Guardians and children in Herefordshire – this list is not exhaustive and not intended to be copied and pasted.

Attached are: - 1. The training courses available to Special Guardians. All foster carer training is open to all Special Guardians. 2. The online virtual training list for foster carers 3. The Family Action leaflet providing information on what is available to children and their Special Guardians. 4. SGO Financial Allowance policy

Childs Developmental Needs and Strengths

* Family Action for independent advice – see leaflet attached – includes a crisis text service
* Access to all foster carer training for SGs – see attached programme (1) this includes the Solihull Approach
* School/School Nurse/HV/GP/OT
* Access to HIPSS consultations
* SGO support group – research on value of support groups – sg perspective
* Fostering Service – advice, signposting and 3 monthly reviews during the first year followed by annual review thereafter.
* Post 16 support – Where the young person is a qualifying care leaver they will be offered befriending, advice and assessment at the relevant time from our 16+ team
* WISH Herefordshire – Children and Families holds a wealth of information – activities locally, to speech and language toolkit for parent/carers.
* Children can access Participation activities.
* <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds> - 2 year olds can get free child care if they have left care under a Special Guardianship order.
* Kooth – Service for 11 – 18 years free counselling support services www.kooth.com 365 days a year – And live forums such as Staying safe online, Youth homelessness, stress relief, getting back into education.

Child’s Health

* Universal Health Services eg. GP, School nurse, HV and Specialist Health provision eg. paediatrician, Speech and Language etc. for advice and training
* School – EHCP – discuss use of Pupil premium to aid child in school
* Family Action for advice – including benefit advice such as DLA, Carers Allowance
* Fostering Service – advice, signposting and 3 monthly reviews during the first year followed by annual review thereafter.
* SGO Support group – valuable support for special guardians and include Wellbeing sessions.
* WISH Herefordshire – holds a wealth of information eg. keeping well, staying safe, eating disorders and lots more
* Kooth – Service for 11 – 18 years free counselling support services [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) 365 days a year – And live forums such as Staying safe online, Youth homelessness, stress relief, getting back into education.
* **Barnardo’s Beacon Project is here to offer support for young people who have been sexually abused. We understand that every young person is unique and that as a parent or carer it can be challenging to know how best to support them to cope and recover after what has happened to them.** This website offers parents and carers a space to find out more about child sexual abuse and to seek advice and find support in your local area for your children and for yourselves.

Child’s Education

* Pupil Premium+ currently £2345.00 payable each year to schools - SGs to discuss and agree with schools how this is used. This can be used for counselling services eg. Butterflies.
* Family Action advice and help
* School/college - support transitions and access to further education and often offer bursary funding
* University support to former looked after children see below from *the complete university guide:-*

“*Many universities offer scholarships and bursaries for care leavers, although these may only be available to those under the age of 26. When applying for university via UCAS, tick the box on the form that asks if you've been in care. You may worry about identifying yourself as a care leaver, but the information will be confidential and can open support from your university, possibly including financial or practical support. Universities also have emergency funds for any student in financial difficulty.”*

* Advice and support from Herefordshire’s Virtual School – Nicola Butler offers advice on educational matters to Special Guardians.
* Looking into the future WISH Herefordshire gives advice on housing and finding a home.

Childs Identity

* It is important to identify if any life story work is underway or required. Who will complete this work and a timescale for completion is required.
* Through placement with family/friends and contact with parents children will gain an understanding of what has happened to them and gain a sense of belonging; but it is acknowledged that carers at times will need support and advice on how to approach a subject or life event with a child:-
* Access to foster carers training eg. memory box, Foundations for Attachment, for example. Help to continue a child life story book is available through this training.
* Family Action advice and support
* ASF – list of interventions supported by funds is attached.
* Kooth – Service for 11 – 18 years free counselling support services [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) 365 days a year – And live forums such as Staying safe online, Youth homelessness, stress relief, getting back into education.

Contact

* Contact training via Herefordshire Foster carer training suite
* Family Action can offer help and advice on how to manage contact and support children
* Where necessary Contact supervision can be offered. Eg. support over first year to help carers manage contact sessions can be offered by the contact team. In most cases contact will be supported by the SGs. Community contact centres may be helpful and provide a less formal environment – Hinton Community Centre and Hope Centre (post Covid).
* The SGO support group is a really helpful resource – SGs share their experiences and how they have managed difficulties. Important for SGs to be part of a group that really understands the challenges.
* Herefordshire Fostering Service – advice and signposting

Financial Support

SGO Allowance – see SGO allowance policy attached

* For former Herefordshire foster carers the same fee and age allowance will be paid. Any request outside of this eg. IFA carers then approval is required from our Head of Service for looked after children.
* SGs should claim Child tax credit and Child Benefit within the first three months and inform Children’s Finance who monitor payments and review them annually. (For new claims then the Child element of Universal Credit would be deducted – this replaces child tax credit now.)
* The allowance is until 18 and can be extended following assessment of need until the end of the academic year following a young person’s 18th birthday.
* When it comes to employment, training and education we can offer a contribution to expenses incurred for accommodation, or a grant to enable a qualifying care leaver to meet expenses connected to education/training (S24B Children Act). This would need to be considered at the relevant time.
* Any savings and continued savings would support a young person in the future.
* WISH Herefordshire – benefits, council tax and other money matters, eg. nursery funding

Legal financial support

* £200+VAT – legal advice on the Support Plan is funded by the local authority. Local solicitors will charge directly via our Legal Team.
* Where a child was looked after then legal support can be offered if in the future:-
  + Contact is challenged in court
  + If there is an application to discharge the SGO.
* Private applications are funded by the applicant.
* Signpost to Family Rights Group – legal helpline, Grandparents Plus and for foster carers they can access free legal advice through the fostering network.

Contact details:-

Family Action 0800 802 1111 – see attached leaflet

Family Rights Group – 0808 801 0366 www.frg.org.uk

Grandparents Plus - **Advice line:** 0300 123 7015 [advice@grandparentsplus.org.uk](mailto:advice@grandparentsplus.org.uk)

Herefordshire Fostering Service - 01432 383680

Herefordshire Virtual School - VirtualSchool@herefordshire.gov.uk

Childrens Finance - childrensfinance@herefordshire.gov.uk

Herefordshire 16+ Team – 01432 261626

WISH Herefordshire – a source of information, signposting and help on a wide range of subjects.

Website or via 01432 260888

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> calculates entitlement to child care costs toddlers to teens

[Barnardo's Beacon](https://www.barnardosbeacon.org.uk/) -Phone us on [01384 411722](tel:01384411722) Email us at [barnardosbeacon@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:barnardosbeacon@barnardos.org.uk)

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