

Special Guardianship Support Policy



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1. Introduction

1.1. This policy and procedure document is designed to achieve the following:

- to outline the use of Special Guardianship Orders as an appropriate legal framework,
- to support greater stability and legal security to a placement and to achieve permanence where adoption is not an option.
- to set out the duties on Calderdale Council in relation to Special Guardianship Orders
- to outline the Special Guardianship Order Support Offer for Special Guardians, which includes financial support and a no detriment offer where applicable.

2. Special Guardianship as a Permanency Option

2.1. Special Guardianship offers an option for children needing permanent care where they are unable to remain with their birth parents. It can offer greater security without absolute severance from the birth family as in adoption.

2.2. It can meet the needs of a significant group of children, mainly older, who need a sense of stability and security but who do not wish to make the absolute legal break with their birth parents that is associated with adoption.

2.3. It also provides an alternative for achieving permanence in families where adoption, for cultural or religious reasons, is not an option.

- 2.4. A Special Guardianship Order offers greater stability and legal security to a placement than a Child Arrangements Order.
- 2.5. Special Guardianship does not mean that the Local Authority is no longer responsible for the child. If the child was subject to a Care Order which is then discharged by the making of a Special Guardianship Order, the Local Authority is required to undertake an assessment of need and to provide support services. These services may include financial support.
- 2.6. A Special Guardianship Order can also be made for children who have never been Looked After.
- 2.7. The Local Authority may be responding to an application made by the prospective Special Guardians or to a requirement from the Court to assess. A robust analytical assessment is crucial to ensure that the child's welfare and needs for permanence would be met by the applicants and that such an order is the most appropriate way of securing the child's future.
- 2.8. A Special Guardianship Order made with respect to a child who is the subject of a Care Order or for an order for contact to a child in care, discharges those orders.
- 2.9. A Care Order, however, does not automatically revoke a Special Guardianship Order although the Special Guardian's exercise of Parental Responsibility is restricted as the Local Authority has primary responsibility for decision-making under the Care Order.

3. Legislative context

- 3.1. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 provides the legal framework for Special Guardianship under the Children Act 1989. Section 115(1) of the 2002 Act inserted new sections 14A-F into the Children Act 1989. The new sections provided for:
 - who may apply for a Special Guardianship Order
 - the circumstances in which a Special Guardianship Order may be made.
 - the nature and effect of Special Guardianship Orders
 - support services for those affected by Special Guardians.
- 3.2. Other relevant legislation includes:
 - The Leaving Care Act 2000
 - The Special Guardianship Regulations England 2005 (as amended by the Special Guardianship (Amendment) Regulations 2016).

4. Who can apply?

- 4.1. Applications for Special Guardianship may be individual or joint. Joint applicants do not need to be married. Special Guardians must be 18 or over and must not be a parent of the child in question.
- 4.2. Subject to giving notice to the relevant Local Authority, the following people are entitled to apply for a Special Guardianship Order without needing to first seek the leave of the court:
- Any guardian of the child.
 - Any person who is named in child arrangements order as a person with whom the child is to live;
 - Any person who has the consent of each person named in child arrangements order as a person with whom the child is to live;
 - Anyone with whom the child has lived for a period of at least 3 years (which need not be continuous, but must not have begun more than 5 years before, or ended more than 3 months before, the making of the application);
 - A relative with whom the child has lived for a period of at least 1 year immediately preceding the application.
 - Where the child is in the care of a Local Authority, any person who has the consent of the Local Authority.
 - Any person who has the consent of all those with parental responsibility for the child.
 - Any other person aged 18 or over (other than a parent) may apply for a Special Guardianship Order if they have the leave of the court to make the application.

5. Parental Responsibility

- 5.1. The Special Guardian will have Parental Responsibility for the child and, subject to any other order in force, will have clear responsibility for the day-to-day decisions about caring for the child to the exclusion of anyone else who might have Parental Responsibility (apart from another Special Guardian).
- 5.2. The child's parents will continue to hold Parental Responsibility but their exercise of it will be limited. The parents will, however, retain the right to consent or not to the child's adoption or placement for adoption. The Special Guardian must also take reasonable steps to inform the parents if the child dies.
- 5.3. In addition, there are certain steps in a child's life which require the consent of everyone with Parental Responsibility or the leave of the court, for example:
- Causing the child to be known by a different surname; or
 - Removing the child from the United Kingdom for longer than 3 months.
- 5.4. The court may, at the time of making the Special Guardianship Order, give leave for the child to be known by a new surname and/or to be removed from the United Kingdom for longer than 3 months, either generally or for specified purposes.

- 5.5. For the avoidance of doubt, a child is any child or young person under the age of 18 years.
- 5.6. A Care Order, however, does not automatically revoke a Special Guardianship Order although the Special Guardian's exercise of Parental Responsibility is restricted as the Local Authority has primary responsibility for decision-making under the Care Order.
- 5.7. Should a child be accommodated under Section 20 (Children Act 1989), the Parental Responsibility remains with the Special Guardian for the duration of the Section 20.

6. The circumstances in which a Special Guardianship Order can be made

- 6.1. The welfare of the child is the court's paramount consideration in all cases. The Court may make a Special Guardianship Order in any family proceedings concerning the welfare of the child. This applies even where no application has been made and includes adoption proceedings.
- 6.2. Any person applying for a Special Guardianship Order must give three months written notice of their intention to apply. If a Child is already open to Children's Social Care, then the Team Manager of the Fostering Service should be notified of the intention by emailing Fostering.BusinessSupport@calderdale.gov.uk. For any other application, applicants living within Calderdale should email their intent to the Multi-Agency Screening Team at MASTAdmin@calderdale.gov.uk
- 6.3. Head the email 'SGO Notice of Intention' and include the name and address of the child; the name of the applicants wishing to apply for a Special Guardianship order; the applicant/s relationship to the child; the date the child came to live with them. You should receive a confirmation email within 14 days.
- 6.4. The exception to the requirements for three months' notice is where the court has granted leave to make an application or where there is an application made for a Child who is Looked after by Calderdale Council.
- 6.5. Calderdale Council may choose to apply to the court within Public Law Proceedings (as part of its final care plan) or after a Care Order has been granted, where Calderdale Council determines that Special Guardianship is the most suitable permanence plan for a child.
- 6.6. Calderdale Council may support an application from an eligible applicant for a child known to the Local Authority but for whom they do not share parental responsibility, where Calderdale Council determines that the Special Guardianship Order would be the most suitable plan for the child as an alternative to care proceedings.
- 6.7. Responsibility for making freestanding applications e.g. for children not previously known to the Calderdale Council, children not currently looked after by Calderdale Council, or for applications not supported by the Local Authority, should be made by the applicant's legal representation. The prospective Special Guardians will need to

instruct their own solicitor to draft the application and represent them in the court proceedings.

- 6.8. Applications for children subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order should be made by the Children's Services legal department. The legal department will draft and submit the application upon receipt of the reports, statements and plans completed by the social worker.

7. Provision of Support for Special Guardianship

- 7.1. As set out within statutory guidance, the Local Authority must make arrangements for the provision for a range of support services in their area to meet the needs of people affected by Special Guardianship.

7.2. Special Guardianship support services in Calderdale are defined as:

- Financial support (see Section 8, Financial Support);
- Services to enable groups of children for whom a Special Guardianship Order is in force (or in respect of whom such an Order is being formally considered), Special Guardians, prospective Special Guardians, and parents of the child to discuss matters relating to Special Guardianship;
- Assistance, including mediation services, in relation to contact between the child and their parents or relatives or any other person with whom the child has a relationship that the Local Authority considers to be beneficial to the welfare of the child;
- Therapeutic services for the child;
- Assistance for the purpose of ensuring the continuance of the relationship between the child and their Special Guardian or prospective Special Guardian, including training for the Special Guardian or prospective Special Guardian to meet any special needs of the child; respite care; and mediation in relation to matters relating to Special Guardianship Orders and;
- Counselling, advice and information.

7.3. Calderdale Council have a "Special Guardianship Offer" which is updated annually and can be utilised by Special Guardians, and those working with Special Guardianship Families, to determine the most appropriate source of support dependant on the families needs and/or requests.

7.4. Special Guardianship Support will be subject to the approval of the Designated Service Delivery Manager for Special Guardianship Support and in agreement with the Practice Manager/Team Manager for Special Guardianship Support.

7.5. Support services should not be seen in isolation from mainstream/universal services and it is important to ensure that families are assisted in accessing mainstream services and are aware of their entitlements to tax credits and social security benefits. This will be discussed with Special Guardians as part of their assessment of support needs.

7.6. Where the child was previously Looked After immediately before the making of the Special Guardianship Order, responsibility for the assessment and provision of

services for the child, the Special Guardian and any children of the Special Guardian all remain the responsibility of the Local Authority where the child was last looked after for 3 years after the making of a Special Guardianship Order. Thereafter the Local Authority where the Special Guardian lives will be responsible for assessing and providing support services.

- 7.7. If a child is not Looked After, the Local Authority where the Special Guardian lives has the responsibility for assessing and providing support services. This includes assessment and any support that is needed by the child's relatives who may live elsewhere. If the Special Guardian and their family move, then the responsibility passes to the new Local Authority. The Local Authority where the Special Guardian previously lived should cooperate as needed to ensure a smooth transition for the child.
- 7.8. Ongoing financial support (i.e. that paid on a regular basis), which was agreed before the Special Guardianship Order was made, remains the responsibility of the Local Authority that agreed it so long as the family qualify for payments. (See Section 8, Financial Support for further information).
- 7.9. Local authorities may also provide services to people outside their area in other circumstances where the authority considers it appropriate. For example, transitional arrangements by the originating authority where a family move to allow time for the new authority to review the family's existing plan without a break in service provision.
- 7.10. In addition to the support provided by Calderdale Council for Special Guardianship families, the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) in England also covers therapeutic support for children, living in England, who were previously in care immediately before the making of a Special Guardianship Order.
- 7.11. Based on the assessment of needs, local authorities can apply for funding from the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (see Section 9, ASGSF).
- 7.12. Where the child is Looked After or was Looked After immediately prior to the making of the Special Guardianship Order, the following people **MUST** receive an assessment at their request:
- The child.
 - The Special Guardian or prospective Special Guardian.
 - A parent.
- 7.13. Where the child is not Looked After or was not Looked After immediately prior to the making of the Special Guardianship Order, the following people **MAY** be offered an assessment of their need for Special Guardianship support services:
- The child;
 - The Special Guardian or prospective Special Guardian;
 - A parent.
- 7.14. In all cases, whether the Special Guardianship child is looked after or not, the following people also **MAY** be offered an assessment of their need for Special Guardianship support services:
- A child of the Special Guardian;

- Any person with a significant ongoing relationship with the child.
- 7.15. If the Local Authority decides not to assess in cases where they have discretion as above, they must notify the decision in writing, including reasons for the decision, to the person making the request. The person who requested the assessment must be allowed at least 28 days to make representations in relation to the decision.
- 7.16. It will not always be necessary to undertake an assessment before providing information, advice, or counselling services. Where a request relates to a particular service or where a particular service is what is required, then the assessment process can be limited to looking at the need for that service.
- 7.17. Where a person has an urgent need of a service, the assessment process should not delay provision and arrangements can be made for support to be provided as a matter of urgency in appropriate cases. The approval of the Designated Manager (Special Guardianship Support) will still be required. The Local Authority will need to review the provision as soon as possible after the support has been provided in accordance with the procedures set out above.
- 7.18. There is a Single Point of Access for Special Guardianship Support in Calderdale, which Special Guardians and/or Professionals working with families to request support. Support requests can be sent to SGO.support@calderdale.gov.uk or by contacting 01422 266020 and asking to speak to someone from the SGO Single Point of Access.

8. Financial Support

- 8.1. Government guidance says that Special Guardianship arrangements should not fail just because of financial problems. Financial support should be paid to help secure a suitable arrangement where this is not possible because of a financial obstacle.
- 8.2. Where the prospective Special Guardian had fostered the child prior to the application for Special Guardianship and Calderdale Council supports the application, we will continue to provide SGO allowance equivalent to the allowance and skills payment that the prospective guardian received whilst fostering. This financial offer is extended to include any Independent Fostering Agency Carers, where Calderdale Council supports the application in the best interests of the child, providing that the Foster Carer engages in a financial assessment as part of the SGO assessment, sharing evidence of finances within this process.
- 8.3. In all other cases, not covered above, Calderdale Council will undertake a means assessment to calculate the SGO allowance that the Special Guardians may be entitled to. See Appendix A, for table of financial support eligibility and entitlement.
- 8.4. In exceptional circumstances, requests for additional financial support outside of the Calderdale SGO offer, must include information as outlined in point 8.20 – 8.22 of this policy and must be presented to the Designated Service Delivery Manager (Special Guardianship Support) for a decision. This decision making may be escalated to the Director of Children’s Social Care if the financial request is outside of Service Manager delegation.

- 8.5. Calderdale Council will take account of any other grant, benefit, allowance, or resource available to the person in respect of his needs as a result of becoming a Special Guardian of a child. Financial support cannot duplicate any other payment available to the Special Guardian.
- 8.6. Special Guardians must be helped to access any benefits to which they are entitled; this will usually include child benefit and tax credits.
- 8.7. The allocated Social Worker will seek authorisation from the Designated Service Delivery Manager for Special Guardianship Support in relation to financial support, in every circumstance in which financial support is proposed to be delivered..
- 8.8. The social worker should then write to the Special Guardian setting out the amount of financial support agreed by the Designated Manager (Special Guardianship Support). This information will be explicit within the Special Guardianship Support Plan, and the Special Guardian will be encouraged to seek legal advice around the application, the costs of which will be met by Calderdale Council, of which a maximum amount is claimable (see Appendix A – Summary of Financial Support).
- 8.9. Calderdale Council are not expected to meet the legal costs of a Special Guardianship Order where they oppose an application in respect of a child they previously looked after or in a non-looked after case. Calderdale Council will advise prospective Special Guardians in these circumstances that they may be able to obtain help with legal costs from the Legal Aid Agency.
- 8.10. Where financial support is paid periodically, Calderdale Council will review this:
- On receipt of the annual statement received from the Special Guardian.
 - If there is any relevant change of circumstances that the Special Guardian agreed to notify, or any breach of a condition comes to the Local Authority's notice.
 - At any (other) stage in the implementation of the plan that the Local Authority considers appropriate.
- 8.11. The procedure for assessment set out for first assessment for financial support (see above) applies equally to a review of financial support. If Calderdale Council proposes, because of the review, to reduce or terminate financial support or revise the plan, before making that decision the Local Authority will give the person an opportunity to make representations. Calderdale Council may suspend financial support pending that decision if deemed to be appropriate.
- 8.12. The notice must contain the same information as the notification of the outcome of the first assessment.
- 8.13. The Local Authority must, having regard to the review, and after considering any representations received within the period specified in the notice, then decide whether to vary or terminate payment of the financial support or whether to seek to recover all or part of any financial support that has been paid; and where appropriate, revise the plan.
- 8.14. The Local Authority must give the person notice of their decision including the reasons for it and, if applicable, the revised plan.

- 8.15. Where Special Guardians are in receipt of financial support, the Service responsible for monitoring the Special Guardianship Support Plan (named within the SGO Support Plan) will write annually to them with a request for information about any change in circumstances for the Special Guardian or the child.
- 8.16. The Charging Assessment Team will request an annual assessment review form is completed by the Special Guardian and will forward this on to the Payments Team to ensure continuity of payments where appropriate. If any change in financial support is considered appropriate, the recommended change should be forwarded to the Designated Service Delivery Manager (Special Guardianship Support) for a decision.
- 8.17. Where Special Guardians do not return the Assessment Review Forms within the required time scale, the Service monitoring the support plan should send a reminder letter, giving 28 days' notice of the suspension of payments if the information requested is not received.
- 8.18. Calderdale Council will undertake a review if it becomes aware that there has been a relevant change in the circumstances of the person receiving support.
- 8.19. Any retrospective claim for financial support may only be backdated to the date of the initial request for assessment or a subsequent review date up to a maximum period of 12 weeks.
- 8.20. Approval for financial payments is made by the Designated Service Delivery Manager for Special Guardianship Support, following a recommendation from the Team Manager/Practice Manager responsible for Special Guardianship Support. The Designated Manager will consider evidence of the child's history and family circumstances, the child's needs, and the financial circumstances of the applicant.
- 8.21. Approval for financial payments requires a summary from the social worker covering the child's history and family circumstances, the child's needs and the financial circumstances of the applicant and/or whether this is an exceptional payment request.
- 8.22. There may be circumstances that warrant a single payment to support a placement, and agreement to such a payment needs to be made at Legal Planning Meeting by both the Service Delivery Manager for Special Guardianship Support, and the Service Delivery Manager for Children and Families Localities.
- 8.23. The provision of ongoing financial support will remain with Calderdale Council if it was completed within the three years the Local Authority was responsible. If it was not completed in this time, it is the responsibility of the Local Authority or Trust in which the Special Guardians live.
- 8.24. If a child was not a Looked After child, the Local Authority where the Special Guardian lives has the responsibility for completing any assessment for Special Guardianship support and determining what, if any, provision will be made.

9. Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF)

9.1. Local authorities and regional adoption agencies can apply for therapeutic funding for eligible adoptive, Special Guardianship Order and child arrangement order families. Local authorities and RAAs must apply to the ASGSF within 3 months of assessing a family's support needs, where the outcome supports therapeutic provision is to be provided. The Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) is available to children being raised under a Special Guardianship and Child Arrangement Order, where specific eligibility criteria applies. This also includes children up to and including the age of 21, or 25 with an education, health and care (EHC) plan who:

- Are living (placed) with a family in England while waiting for adoption.
- Were adopted from local authority care in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland and live in England.
- Were adopted from abroad and live in England with a recognised adoption status.
- Were in care before an SGO was made.
- Left care under a Special Guardianship order that was subsequently changed to an adoption order, or vice versa.
- Are under a residency order or child arrangement order (CAO) and were previously looked after.
- Were previously looked after but where the adoption, Special Guardianship, residency, or CAO placement has broken down, irrespective of any reconciliation plans.

9.2. If eligible, in order to access the ASGSF, an assessment of need will need to be completed by an allocated Special Guardianship Practitioner which will identify the most appropriate therapeutic support for the family – a request for assessment can be made by contacting the Calderdale Special Guardianship Single Point of Access.

9.3. When an assessment of need is carried out, the allocated Special Guardianship Practitioner will notify the Special Guardian in writing of the outcome. The Special Guardian will have 28 days to appeal the decision by providing written representation to the Team/Practice Manager for Special Guardianship Support. Calderdale Council cannot make their final decision until the period for making an appeal has expired or the Special Guardian informs them that they are satisfied with the proposed decision.

9.4. Where the assessment identifies that therapeutic services would be beneficial to the family, the local authority will apply to the ASGSF to request funding for provision of this service and the SGO Support Service will maintain oversight of this provision for the duration that this service is provided to the family.

10. Special Guardianship Orders in International Cases

10.1. Identifying potential long-term carers for the child within the family may include those who are either resident in, or nationals in, overseas countries. Special Guardianship can be considered in placing a child outside of the jurisdiction. Consideration must be given to how assessments are carried out in a legally compliant and culturally relevant manner. Thought should be given to:

- The status of Special Guardianship in that country and other legal matters.

- The relevant matters associated with the care of children in that country: permanent, stable and secure family life; safeguarding; education and health; and specifically, how all of these relate to the personal living circumstances of the host family and their need for support services, including financial and therapeutic support and contact between family members including those resident in the UK;
- Contacting local agencies in that country for guidance on the support that maybe offered.

10.2. In advance of the child being placed, a plan will need to be agreed about how the placement will be supported and what the contingency arrangements are for the child.

10.3. [Best Practice Guidance: Special Guardianship Orders \(Public Law Working Group, 2021\)](#) provides that if the proposed carers appear to be viable, the assessment of carers living in another country will also justify an extension of 26 weeks. In these circumstances time may be needed for Children and Families Across Borders (CFAB) to carry out an assessment and there may unavoidable delays which will, quite properly, take the case beyond 26 weeks. Where more time is needed to assess the quality of the relationship between the child and proposed carers, this is likely to arise after the court has undertaken the welfare evaluation in terms of the possible arrangements for the child/ren but further time is required to ensure the stability of the placement. Whilst circumstances vary widely, it is likely that this will lead to an extension of the timetable, particularly if the court has indicated that this is the preferred placement.

10.4. **Note:**

- Contracting states to the 1996 Hague Convention will be better placed to offer co-operation and support than some other countries (see [HCCH](#));
- Social workers should carefully explore the local authority's ability to provide financial support particularly after an initial 3 years. when 'out-of-area placements' are abroad.

10.5. See also: [Children and Families Across Borders \(CFAB\)](#).

11. Special Guardianship and Staying Put

11.1. In 2021, a decision was made to extend Staying Put to children in Special Guardianship arrangements, whereby they were looked after children just prior to the Order being made. This applies in circumstances where the child was previously looked after by Calderdale MBC, immediately prior to the making of the Special Guardianship Order and Calderdale MBC have been responsible for the Special Guardianship payments. This does not apply to young people with whom Calderdale have provided 'post SGO' support after living in the Calderdale region two years after the Order was granted, but where Calderdale was not responsible for payments.

11.2. This amendment applies to Special Guardianship Orders that were made after April 2021. This agreement does not apply to those arrangements agreed prior to April 2021, however, these Staying Put equivalent payments can be agreed via the Care Leaver Finance Panel, if an assessment of need has been undertaken and hardship is evidenced, meaning that without the payments continuing the young person would

have to find alternative accommodation. If this is agreed, then the same guidelines described below apply.

11.3. Currently, there is no legislative framework to support formerly looked after children in Special Guardianship placements to remain there on a Staying Put or similar alternative arrangements. It is therefore a local (Calderdale) policy, designed to;

- support Special Guardians of children who were looked after immediately before the making of the Special Guardianship Order (SGO).
- support formerly looked after children, ensuring that young people do not experience a sudden disruption to their living arrangements, that educational and training achievement and continuity is promoted, and that these young people can make a gradual transition to living independently.

11.4. The Staying Put policy, in its design, should mirror that of young people leaving care. However, practically, it is not always possible to provide the same level of oversight and scrutiny as most young people subject to SGO do not have an allocated social worker or personal advisor.

11.5. At the time of the making of the Special Guardianship Order, it is good practice to state the following in the SGO Support Plan:

On reaching the age of 16 years (and up to the age of 21 years) children subject to Special Guardianship Orders are entitled to Leaving Care provisions under Section 24(2) of the Children Act 1989; where the following criteria are met:

They were looked after by the Local Authority immediately before the making of a Special Guardianship Order, and; The Special Guardianship Order remains in force when they reach the age of 16 years. These children are qualifying under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and there is a duty upon the Local Authority who last looked after them to provide advice and assistance in relation to employment, education and training. Sometimes this might be through signposting to a more relevant service, but if required there is a duty upon the leaving care service to offer an 'assessment of need' to determine what support can be offered.

11.6. This sets out in the support plan the expectations on the leaving care service for the young person and the Special Guardian. Within the financial section of the support plan, it should then state:

CARER *will be entitled to payments equivalent to Staying Put payments, if the young person remains in their care post 18 (and up to age 21). The Special Guardian will need to contact the Local Authority six months before the young person turns 18 to request staying put support.*

11.7. If the carer does not contact the Local Authority, the payments will cease following the young person's 18th birthday.

- 11.8. When a Special Guardianship carer contacts the Local Authority to request post-18 payments, the Local Authority need to satisfy themselves that the young person remains in placement. Once this is confirmed, a letter should be sent to the carer and child (APPENDIX 4 of Staying Put Policy) detailing the terms of the payments. It is expected that the carer and young person both sign the agreement and send it back, before payments are made.
- 11.9. Each year, the Special Guardian will be contacted to see if there are any changes within their household or the circumstances remain the same. The agreement does not need to be re-signed each year, unless there are specific changes that would need amending in the letter and re-signing.
- 11.10. The payments will cease when the young person reaches 21 years of age, or moves out of the property, whichever occurs first.
- 11.11. If the young person or the Special Guardian requests additional support, then a referral should be made to the leaving care service for an assessment of need.
- 11.12. The Special Guardian should consider aspects raised in the “Staying Put” Policy document in relation to the legal and financial implications of being a Staying Put carer. There is also an assumption that the Special Guardian will provide support to the young person, as detailed in section 13 of the Staying Put Policy.
- 11.13. If a Special Guardianship carer accepts payments when the young person is not living in the home, then Calderdale MBC will seek to recoup the monies through debt recovery.

12. Complaints and Representations

- 12.1. Should the Special Guardian not agree with a decision regarding services, and a resolution could not be brokered through the relevant service area then the option to progress this through the formal complaint route is available.
- 12.2. Further information on making a formal complaint can be found at: <https://new.calderdale.gov.uk/contact/complaints>
- 12.3. **You must make a complaint within 12 months** of the event or of finding out you have a reason to complain. We can only consider complaints after this time in exceptional circumstances.

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