

2019

Bristol City Council

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Family and Friends (Kinship) Care Policy

Bristol City Council Children & Families Services

This policy sets out Bristol City Council's approach to promoting and supporting family and friends care arrangements for children and to help both potential and existing family and friends carers and the professionals working with them, understand the support available and the implications of the different options available to them.

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In drawing up this policy we have taken into consideration the points made by the Family Rights Group when they researched Local Authority policies on kinship care: Ashley C Ed. Authors Roth D, Aziz R and Lindley B (2012) Understanding family and friends care: local authority policies (FRG) Bursary Arrangements where Children and Young People live with family and friends (Kinship) Carers. In accordance with Family and Friends Care: statutory guidance for local authorities, 2010, this policy will be regularly reviewed and updated, be publicised on the city council web-site and made freely and widely available.

Purpose of policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out Bristol City Council's approach to promoting and supporting family and friends care arrangements for children and to help both potential and existing family and friends carers¹ and the professionals working with them, understand the implications of the different options available to them.

The Director of Children's Services has nominated the Head of Service for Permanency and Specialist Services as the lead person responsible for ensuring Bristol children are well cared for in family and friends (kinship) care arrangements.

Bristol City Council has two teams that specialise in working with family and friends carers. A Fostering Team that takes the lead on assessing and supervising family and friends foster carers and a Special Guardianship Team that assesses and supports special guardians. These teams can provide information and advice on all aspects of kinship care to social workers, other agencies and members of the public.

Social workers who implement this policy will have appropriate training so that they understand the issues faced by family and friends carers and their obligations, powers and responsibilities.

What is family and friends (kinship) care?

Family and Friends Carers, also known as Kinship or Connected Carers, look after children whose parents are not able to care for them. Care is provided by members of their extended family, friendship network or other people who are known to them.

Kinship care can be arranged in a number of ways, some of which are informal and others that involve legal orders granted by the courts, therefore the circumstance of kinship carers can vary.

Kinship carers make an invaluable contribution to the options available for children who cannot be cared for by their parents. We will always seek to identify carers within family and friend networks who know or are connected to the child when it is not possible for a child to be cared for by their parents.

We will take into account children's wishes and feelings and seek the views of family and friends carers when planning and delivering services.

The principles of the policy

The key principle of the Children Act 1989 is that children should be enabled to live within their families unless this is not consistent with their welfare.

It is the duty of Bristol City Council to safeguard and promote the welfare of every child living in our area. This is achieved by working with parents, family members, and other adults who are important to the child to make sure the child is safe and that their development and emotional well-being is promoted by the family.

Family and friends (Kinship Care arrangements) provide a very important alternative permanence option

¹ Family and friend carers are sometimes referred to as "kinship carers" or "connected carers".

for children and young people who cannot live with their birth parents.

Therefore when it is not safe for a child to live with their birth parents we carefully consider who in the family or family network can look after the child. Our aim is to make sure that children have permanent and secure family arrangements throughout their childhood.

The support that is provided will be based on the needs of the child and their carers rather than their legal status to ensure that children do not come into the care of the local authority or remain in the care of the local authority for any longer than needed.

What we know about family and friends carers

Bristol City Council is aware of the personal cost and sacrifice that many kinship carers make in order to care for the child, often having to change their life style and plans for the future.

Studies show that family and friend's foster carers are significantly more disadvantaged than unrelated foster carers e.g. more are lone carers; have a disability or chronic illness, live in overcrowded conditions or experience financial hardship.

We recognise that children living with kinship carers and those that are cared for by foster carers have similar characteristics and faced similar difficulties before they went to live with their carers. They also may experience the same emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Although the exact number of children in Bristol that are currently living with extended family members and friends is not known the 2001 (latest available) census figures indicated that 1 in 59 children or 1.7% of all Bristol children, i.e. about 1200 children, were growing up with relative carers. We are aware that this figure is likely to be higher now.

Children living with family and friends carers feel more securely attached and have greater continuity of care than with stranger carers (local authority foster carers), which helps with their long-term well-being.

Family and friends care contributes to a child's sense of security and personal identity through minimising other disruptions e.g. a child may remain in the same neighbourhood and school, and contact with parents is more likely, although complex.

Family and friends carers say they are often uncertain about what help is available and how to access it and find the response variable, with their needs being under-estimated or help given too late or finishing too soon.

Interviews with carers identified that they want more financial support, have emotional needs arising from the situation that led to the caring situation (e.g. bereavement), may experience discrimination and have to balance the needs of their own children with those they care for. Older carers in particular are not aware of universal support services and benefits available to them. This information was identified by research completed by research undertaken by Nandy, S., Selwyn, J., Farmer, E. and Vaisey, P. (2011), *Spotlight on Kinship Care*, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol).

Research also shows that outcomes are positive for most children living in family and friends care, and considerably better than for children living with unrelated foster carers and this is despite the often

difficult circumstances of the carers. A major study published, by Buttle UK and the University of Bristol in 2013 (The Poor Relations: Children and Informal Kinship Carers Speak Out), found evidence that kinship care arrangements provide the children with stability, that they have strong attachments to their carers and good levels of academic attainment, particularly when these are compared to children in the local authority care system.

We take into account this research and the experiences of children and carers when planning the services and support that we offer in Bristol.

Relevant legislation, national policy, guidance or regulations

There are a number of legal options which carers can consider. The advice of a social worker and/or a solicitor will be helpful when deciding which option may be most appropriate. These are:

Informal family care

This is when a close relative (such as a grandparent or an aunt or uncle) is caring for a child but does not have parental responsibility. The arrangement is not made by the local authority and the child is not in local authority care. All decision making for the child lies with the carers in partnership with the child's parents and anyone else who holds parental responsibility for them.

The local authority does not have a duty to assess any such informal arrangement or to provide ongoing support unless it appears necessary in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child as a 'Child in Need' (section 17 of the Children Act 1989)

Private fostering

This is when there is an arrangement for a child under the age of sixteen (or under 18 if disabled) to be cared for by someone who does not have parental responsibility and who is not a close relative (for example a more distant relative or a family friend), for 28 days or more. Children living with a private foster carer are not in local authority care. Decision making for the child rests with the private foster carers in partnership with the child's parents and anyone else who holds parental responsibility for them. Where a private fostering arrangement exists Bristol City Council has a duty, under the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations (2005) to assess the welfare of all privately fostered children living in Bristol. This includes regular visits, a minimum of every six weeks in the first year and then every 12 weeks after that, to see the child while they are living with the private foster carer.

Private foster carers are entitled to the same range of support services as any other informal family and friends' carer. This means that the Local Authority does not have a duty to provide ongoing support unless it appears necessary in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child as a child in need (section 17 of the children act 1989). Parents make their own arrangements to financially support the placement of their child with the private foster carer.

Family, friends and connected people as local authority foster carers

If a child is no longer able to live with their parents or others with parental responsibility the Local Authority has a duty to look after them either voluntarily with the agreement of their parents or because they are subject to a court order. In deciding where the child will live, the Local Authority will give preference to placing the child with a relative or family friend or other person with a prior relationship with

the child as long as this is appropriate to promote the safety and welfare of the child. The Local Authority is placing the child with the relative or family friend or other person.

The child is “looked after” by and in the care of the Local Authority. The Local Authority must approve the family/friends carer as a Local Authority foster carer. The standards for foster care are set out in the Fostering Regulations (2011). The assessment and approval process for family and friends who apply to be foster carers is the same as for any foster carer. Wherever possible, full approval as a family and friend foster carer should be made before the child is placed with the carer. However, in exceptional circumstances the Local Authority has the power to give temporary approval for a family and friend carer to be the child’s foster carer under Regulation 24 (Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (England) 2010). This temporary approval lasts 16 weeks and can, in highly exceptional cases be extended by a further 8 weeks. During this time, all the work necessary to determine suitability to be the child’s foster carer and establish full approval must take place. Approved foster carers receive a fostering allowance for the child they are caring for on behalf of the Local Authority and also have an allocated social worker from the fostering service to supervise and support them.

The local authority responsible for caring for the child/young person is required to provide the child/young person with their own social worker (who is a different person from the family/friend foster carer social worker). The child/young person’s social worker's job is to promote the child/young person’s safety and welfare, in partnership with their parents and carers as well as other staff and professionals in the child's life. This includes visiting the child/young person and their carers on a regular basis. The local authority also appoint an Independent Reviewing Officer whose job is to oversee the child/young person's case and ensure that the child has a good care plan that sets out what work needs to be done to promote the best possible outcome for the child. Family and friends foster carers are expected to co-operate with the Local Authority in its duties to promote the safety and welfare of the child placed with them. This involves working with the child’s social worker in their work with the child and their family, including statutory visits to the child, promoting the child's health and education and contributing to their reviews.

Child Arrangements Order

Child Arrangement Orders were introduced in April 2014 by the Children and Families Act 2014 (which amended section 8 of the children act 1989). They replace Contact Orders and Residence Orders

A Child Arrangements Order sets out the arrangements for a child such as who they should live with and who they should see. A Child Arrangements Order is usually made by a court either in care proceeding as an alternative to a Care Order or through private law proceedings when a parent, relative or carer makes an application in their own right. A carer who has a Child Arrangements Order saying that a child should live with them shares parental responsibility with the child's parents, so they share all decision making about the child. If the child lives with the person holding the order they will make the day-to-day decisions about the child. . A Child Arrangement Order saying who the child is to live can last until the child reaches 18 years (unless discharged earlier by the court).

A person named in the order as the person with whom the child is to live will automatically have parental responsibility for the child while the order remains in force. Where a person is named in the order as a person with whom the child is to spend time or otherwise have contact the court may also provide for that person to have parental responsibility for the child while the order remains in force.

Guardianship

The Children Act 1989 (section 5 and 6) allows the birth parents of the child to formally name someone in their family/friend network as the child's guardian in the event of both of their deaths. Guardianship arrangements do not have to be made in court but are usually overseen by a solicitor (often in a Will) and usually becomes active in the event of both parents death or, for example, where the parents are unable to look after the child for some other reason. The Local Authority would not be involved in the making of a guardianship arrangement and this would usually fall under an informal family and friends care arrangement. A tax-free benefit called guardianship allowance is available from HMRC for those caring for a child whose parents have died or where one parent has died and the other is serving a prison sentence (this allowance is in addition to child benefit). Any local authority support that is provided under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 must be identified through a formal assessment of the child and the family's needs. A guardianship arrangement like this is different to being appointed as a child's guardian through the courts under a Special Guardianship Order.

Special Guardianship Order

A Special Guardianship Order is completely different from a guardianship arrangement described above and provides another way in which a child's permanent living arrangements (with someone in their family/friend network outside of their birth family) can be secured legally.

A Special Guardianship Order is made by the courts in favour of a person or persons who the court decide should care for a child. A Special Guardianship Order does not completely break the legal link between a child and their parents (in the way that an Adoption Order would). Special Guardians hold parental responsibility for the children in their care. They are able to make all the day to day decisions concerning a child and they can exercise their parental responsibility in priority to a parent. Therefore, the opinion of the Special Guardian will take precedence if a conflict was to arise between the parents and the Special Guardian.

Relatives and local authority foster carers who have cared for the child for a least a year can apply to the courts for a Special Guardianship Order. Other members of the child's family/friend network may also be eligible (for example if they already have a Child Arrangements Order in force with respect to the child). Other people can make applications to the courts for Special Guardianship Orders but they are likely to need permission from the court to make an application.

Special Guardianship Orders may be made by a court in care proceedings or in private family proceedings in which the local authority is not involved in making arrangements for the child. When a Special Guardianship Order is made with respect to a 'looked after' child/young person this would mean that the child/young person would no longer be 'looked after' by the local authority.

Children/young people subject to a Special Guardianship Order are not entitled to any post 16 years leaving care services from the local authority unless they were either previously 'looked after' following their 16th birthday or 'looked after' immediately before the Special Guardianship Order was made.

When a Special Guardianship Order is made with respect to a child who immediately prior to the Special Guardianship Order was 'looked after', the local authority has a responsibility to assess the support needs of the child, parents and special guardians, including their need for financial support.

See Arrangements where Children and Young People live with family and friends (Kinship) Carers (Appendix 1) for a summary of the legal orders outlined above.

Bristol's policy to support to family and friends care arrangements

The majority of family and friends/kinship care arrangements work well and meet the needs of the child with the support of universal agencies such as: health, education and housing services. Families may need advice and assistance during the early stages of considering whether to care for a relative or friends child in order to weigh up the options and consider what support services they might require and what are available to them. This advice can be obtained from a variety of sources including charities such as the Family Rights Group and Grandparents Plus, (contact details are provided at the end of this policy- can't find!).

Partner agencies such as health, education and housing have a key role to play in identifying and supporting children who are living with family and friends carers and their services need to be aware of and sensitive to their needs and give priority to helping them.

We know that support may be required at different stages of the child's life, for example during their transition to school or when becoming a teenager. Carers have told us they would like information and support on a number of issues including: benefits, education, children's behaviour and managing contact with birth relatives.

Bristol families can contact the First Response team on 0117 903_6444 -who will provide:

- Information, advice and guidance about services to help families,
- Make a referral to the Families in Focus Team who can provide support to children, young people and families,
- Make a referral to a social work team.

Where a child is assessed as being in need, support may be provided under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. This may include practical, emotional and financial support.

A child should be taken to be in need if:

(a) He or she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him/her of services by the local authority

b) His or her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired or further impaired without the provision for him/her of such services: or

(c) He or she is disabled

Bristol kinship foster carers have access to support and guidance through their social worker and the child's social worker. This may include: support groups, referral to CAHMS, training, social events with other carers and children such as a summer fun day.

Special Guardians who are caring for a child, who was previously 'looked after', can also be supported to make an application to the Adoption Support Fund for therapeutic support for the child they are caring for.

Bristol City Council's Special Guardianship Team can be contacted on 0117 353 4196

Financial Support

If you are looking after someone else's child a Social Worker will be able to advise you about financial support.

One off payments

This could be used to overcome a specific crisis facing the child and carer's that might otherwise prevent the child from being able to live with their family and friend carers.

Setting-up grants

This kind of financial support would be used to help family/friend carers obtain essential items to care for the child such as a bed. In order to ensure that the payment is justified a social worker will make an assessment of the carers financial circumstances. Any assistance that is provided may be subject to certain conditions, including, in exceptional circumstances, repayment.

Child in Need payments

If a child is cared for informally or in a private fostering arrangement the local authority is not required to provide a regular allowance.

However, it is an expectation that any family and friends or kinship carer will seek financial contributions for the child from the child's birth parents and access universally available financial and practical support before approaching the local authority for financial assistance as the Local Authority cannot duplicate state benefits:

- Child Benefit
- Child Tax credits (or Universal Credit/Benefit when this applies)
- Welfare benefits (or Universal Credit/Benefit when this applies)

Before considering taking on a commitment to a child, carers can access information from the Local Authority about the level of support, including any financial assistance, that they may be offered. This will include how finances have been or will be calculated and how long this support will last on a case by case basis from the team involved.

Advice, information and assistance on entitlement and how to claim Welfare Benefits can be sought from Bristol's **Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service**:

Open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings, 8.30am to 1pm.

Helpline 0117 35 21888.

Fax 0117 35 21556

Minicom 0117 35 21557

Email welfarerights@bristol.gov.uk

In exceptional circumstances Bristol City Council can use their discretion under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to make a Child in Need payment. Any support provided must be identified through a formal assessment of the child and family's needs and must demonstrate that it is necessary in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child as a 'Child in Need'

They will be agreed for a specific period of time and this will be confirmed in writing and reviewed regularly.

Child Arrangement Orders

If a carer has a Child Arrangement Order there is no entitlement to financial support from the Local Authority. The Local authority has the discretion to provide services/support for the child under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, if the child meets the criteria as a Child in Need. This would need to be discussed and agreed prior to the order being made.

These services/support might include financial support or an allowance subject to a financial assessment. Specific advice regarding the impact on any state benefits received should be sought.

Kinship Foster Carers

Kinship Foster Carers are approved by Bristol City Council's Fostering Panel. They are supported financially through the fostering payment system at the same level as non-connected foster carers.

Special Guardianship Orders

Special Guardians have parental responsibility for the child they are caring for and can claim Child Benefit and any other means tested benefits that they may be eligible for. If the child was previously a 'looked after' Child (in the care of the Local Authority) then a Special Guardianship Allowance may be payable. The allowance will be subject to a financial assessment given in the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005. These Regulations direct local authorities to have regard to how much fostering allowance would have been paid had the child been fostered rather than cared for under a Special Guardianship Order.

Adoption Orders

There is no automatic entitlement to financial support however if adopters request financial support this will include an assessment of need in relation to the child and a financial assessment of the adopter. Adopters can also be supported to make an application to the Adoption Support Fund for therapeutic support for the child they are caring for.

Legal Fees

We strongly recommend that you seek legal advice before agreeing arrangements to care for a child. If the child is subject of care proceedings or is already a 'looked after' child we will usually pay for legal advice up to an agreed limit for an initial consultation we will sometimes agree to pay for legal representation and court fees to make an application to the court.

Accommodation

Bristol City Council is committed to ensuring that no child should enter or stay in our care as a result of

inadequate housing. Housing services provided by the Council can make an important contribution to promoting family and friends/kinship care arrangements by assisting carers to secure suitable housing. Statutory housing services are responsible for the assessment of housing need and making accompanying priority awards for council re-housing.

We are advised by our colleagues in housing services that the waiting list is very long for council accommodation and that even people with the greatest need often wait several years before they get a council property. Therefore you need to be aware of this when deciding to take on the care of children and how realistic it is that a potential kinship carer will be able to secure suitable accommodation will form part of any assessment.

Family time (Contact)

Children usually benefit from seeing parents and other family members unless there are specific reasons why this would not be safe or in the child's interest. In some cases, older children will want to make their own decisions about keeping in contact with their parents.

Local mediation services can help parties to communicate better and resolve disputes taking account of the child's wishes in a supported environment and organisations like The Grandparents' Association may be able to help with such issues. Similarly if the courts are involved with the children then the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) officers may be able to help you in drawing up safe contact arrangements for you and your family. Child Arrangements Orders can be made in the courts which spell out the arrangements for contact, although there is an expectation that families have tried mediation first. Legal aid may be available for mediation in such circumstances if carers and parents meet the criteria.

Education

Bristol City Council recognises the importance of continuity of education for children and young people. Advice and guidance on educational matters for children cared for by family and friends/kinship will be provided, by directing carers to the most appropriate helplines or services.

Young people aged 16 -19 in family and friends/kinship care may be entitled to the Government funded bursary scheme. For more information contact: <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>

Priority schools admissions are available for those children who were in Local Authority care prior to a Child Arrangements Order, Residence Order, Special Guardianship Order or Adoption Order being granted. This is under Schools Admission Code 2014.

Bristol Virtual School has a dedicated email and web pages for information and advice for guardians and carers of children that were previously looked after/in the care of the Local Authority:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years-resources-professionals/previoully-looked-after-children-information-and-advice-for-schools-and-education-settings>

Is family and friend/kinship care right for you and your family?

It is not an easy to step in and care for someone else's child and you need to be ready to face any difficulties, which may arise. Some of the challenges you will need to consider are described below. Not all of them will apply to you, but these are the things that some experienced family and friend's carers have said they have found difficult. Also a lot of kinship carers take on the care of children in an emergency and do not have much time to think about the impact it will have on them and their family.

It useful to take the opportunity to speak to someone who is objective and can give you independent advice. See [Information and Advice Appendix 2](#) for a list of organisations and charities who provide this type of support.

How well do you know the child and their needs?

You may have an established relationship with the child or you may not know the child as well as you think you do. There might be things which have been kept from you, such as domestic violence, exposure to drug use, neglect, or child abuse, which have affected the child's behaviour and emotional wellbeing.

Who will support you?

It will be helpful to try to think from the start about what support you will need to meet the child's needs and where you might get this. What support would you need from your own family network or from the Local Authority?

What about emotional support?

You need to consider your own needs too if you are going to do the best you can by the children. It's important that you care for yourself and keep yourself fit and healthy emotionally as well as physically.

How could this affect family relationships?

There are lots of benefits for a child remaining within their family network, but family and friends/kinship care arrangements can also be a source of difficult family relationships. Where social workers have been involved, parents may feel resentful of the family and friends/kinship carers and either do not understand or accept why they cannot care for their own children. The children may not understand why they are unable to live with their parents, and can even get caught up in the middle of difficult relationships between the adults. For example sometimes grandparents have to accept that in order to step in and do their best for their grandchildren their relationship with their own adult children is irrevocably damaged.

Family and friends/kinship carers need to be aware of the complexities of caring for another family member's child and the impact that this may have on family relationships. Looking after a child from within the family will affect your relationship with their parents and the fact that you have taken on the care of their children will evoke strong emotions for all of you.

It is sometimes necessary for the child to have the security and care of family and friends carers until they are grown up. Therefore you need to consider how long you may be required to look after the child concerned before putting yourself forward as a possible carer.

Therefore you should think about how your new role will affect both your own and the child's relationship with their parents, as well as with other family members. How will your own children feel about someone else joining the household? How will the child react to their grandparents taking on a parental role?

Age and health

It is sensible to think about your age in relation to that of the child, and the long term plans. Think also about how you would manage if your health deteriorates. Will you be able to go on providing care for as long as it is needed, and are there others who will be able to help you or take over if necessary?

Financial Considerations

How will you manage financially and will you be able to provide for the child you propose caring for? Work out how you will be affected by any loss of income from employment and whether you will be eligible for any benefits or other financial support which might help to cover any loss. Parents remain responsible for maintaining their children unless they are in the care of the Local Authority, but very often kinship carers do not receive any financial support from parents.

Work/Employment

When you take on the care of a child, it can be difficult to balance all the different demands on you. Before you make any decisions about work it is important that you are aware of the options that might be available to you. All employees have a right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to deal with emergencies involving someone who depends on them. This applies regardless of how long you have been working for your employer. Your employer doesn't have to pay you for taking time off for dependents but they may choose to do so. Some employers do allow a number of days carers leave per year, but they do not have to pay you for this time unless it is in your contract.

Unpaid parental leave

To be eligible for parental leave you must be an employee who has worked for your employer for at least a year. You must also have legal parental responsibility for a child under 18. This means that people with Child Arrangement Orders, Residence Orders and Special Guardianship Orders can all qualify for parental leave (Foster Carers do not have these rights). If you qualify, you are allowed up to 18 weeks parental leave which is normally unpaid but if your income is low you may be entitled to Income Support or Universal Credit/Benefit during parental leave.

Flexible working

Since 30 June 2014 all employees have had the right to request flexible working provided they have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks. This might include working part-time or as a job share, or working longer hours over fewer days or working from home. Employers must deal with requests in a 'reasonable manner'. They should usually make a decision within three months and can only refuse for good business reasons. Consider the implications carefully as any reduction in hours may have an impact on any welfare benefits you receive so you may need to get advice about this before making any decisions.

See: www.gov.uk and the ACAS website, www.acas.org.uk

If you have been with your employer for more than a year and are caring for a child who is under five, or was placed with you for adoption less than five years ago, or who qualifies for disability living allowance you may be entitled to up to 18 weeks unpaid parental leave. This only applies if you have parental responsibility, or are applying for a court order that will grant you parental responsibility (so does not apply if you are a foster carer).

Accommodation

Do you have sufficient/appropriate space in your home for this particular child and their belongings? Bear in mind that you may need more space as child gets older, such as when they can no longer share a bedroom or need room to do homework. How might you get help with bigger accommodation if this is needed?

Lifestyle Changes

How will being a family and friends/kinship carer affect your life? Think about the ways in which caring for a child will affect the way you lead your life, and any changes you will need to make. Do you have other caring responsibilities to fit in? Are you prepared to make any necessary sacrifices to your social life and outside interests? Consider who might be able to help you with any childcare you need, and if necessary how you will find out about other issues that are important when you are bringing up a child, such as the education system and social networking.

Motivation

What is your motivation? You might have thought very carefully about becoming a family and friends/kinship carer, or everything may have happened in an emergency. You may have lots of complicated emotions, such as feeling responsible, angry, or that you have no real choice but to help. None of these feelings are wrong, but if you are clear about why you are offering to help it will enable you to make better informed decisions. You can still say no if you have weighed it all up and feel this isn't the right choice for you and your family and only you know the right decision for you.

Contact

How will you manage contact arrangements? Can contact be informal, or will it need to be organised and supervised by someone? Where will it take place? Who will pay for travel and other expenses? How will the inevitable conflicts be managed and supported?

Please refer to the **Family and Friends Carers Information Pack** (Appendix 3) or more information about becoming a friends and family/kinship carer.

Complaints, comments and compliments

We hope you have found this policy useful.

We welcome suggestions, compliments, enquiries and complaints about our services from children, young people, families and friend's carers and other relevant people. We want to know what you think, so we can improve the services we provide, comments can be made on the Bristol City Council's website <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/complaints-and-feedback> or by 0117 922_2000 and asking for the Complaints Team.

Date Written	Date Approved by Legal	Date for Review
<u>02/12/2019</u>	<u>02/12/2019</u>	<u>02/12/2020</u>

