

Family and friends care policy and placement of children in care with connected persons

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1. Introduction

Children may be brought up by members of their extended families, friends or other people who are connected with them for a variety of reasons and in a range of different arrangements. The preferred option for every child who cannot live with their parents is to grow up in the care of their family or with an adult with whom they have an existing significant relationship.

This policy sets out how Warrington Borough Council, in collaboration with its local partners will meet the needs of children living with family and friends in any of the following circumstances:

- In informal arrangements with a relative
- As a private fostering arrangement
- As a child in care placed with foster carers
- Under a child arrangement order (formally known as a residence order) or special guardianship order
- In arrangements which may lead to an adoption order

In drawing up this policy we have consulted with family and friends already caring for children and also with local support groups in the community as well as with our partner agencies.

Family and friends carers play a unique role in enabling children and young people to remain with people they know and trust if they cannot, for whatever reason, live with their parents. Family and friends often start to care for other people's children in a crisis or emergency situation. These children may or may not be looked after by the local authority. The majority of the relatives who provide care are grandparents, aunts and uncles and older siblings.

Warrington Borough Council recognise that family and friends who are providing care for children and young people who are unable to live with their birth parents will require access to high quality support services.

The Executive Director of the Families and Wellbeing Directorate is the lead person responsible for ensuring Warrington children are well cared for in family and friends arrangements. This policy will be regularly reviewed, and made freely and widely available. This policy should also be read in conjunction with Warrington Borough Council's Statement of Purpose for Fostering which can be accessed by visiting www.warringtonfostering.co.uk

2. Values and principles

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. The guidance

underpinning the Act defines 'family' widely and includes relatives, friends and other connected and significant people in a child's life. Consideration of children's welfare will always be at the centre of any planning and decision making.

Warrington Borough Council will not interfere with informal care arrangements which meet legal requirements unless there is a request for services or where there are safeguarding concerns. The Children Act 1989, affirms that family life will vary according to culture, class, religion and asserts the importance of ethnicity, culture and language being significant factors in shaping decisions affecting children.

Warrington Borough Council promotes permanence for children by seeking to enable children who cannot live with their parents to remain with members of their extended family or friends, providing where appropriate, a better alternative to growing up in the care of the Local Authority.

Where children need to be looked after by the Local Authority either on a voluntary basis or through the courts, the first placement choice will always be with someone who the child knows, either a family member or friend who will need to be approved as a foster carer under the Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

For most children looked after in care, permanence is achieved through a successful return to their birth family. Where this is not possible, family and friends care will often provide an important alternative route to permanence for the child, particularly where this can be supported by a child arrangement order or a special guardianship order or through adoption.

Families requiring support will be assisted and signposted to appropriate services that will help them care for the child, including access to any state benefits they may be entitled to.

Support and access to services will be based on the needs of the child rather than just their legal status in order to ensure that family and friends carers are provided with the support they need.

Warrington Borough Council believe that children, parents, family members and family friends should be active participants in decision making and planning about child placements as collaboratively as possible.

3. Legal Framework

There are a number of ways in which children can live with people other than their birth parents and the different legal situations are set out in **Appendix 1 Caring for Someone Else's Child – Options**. It summarises the legal framework as well as the support entitlement in each situation.

The majority of family and friends carers act informally by agreement with those holding parental responsibility for the children they care for. Providing they are a relative of the child as defined in the Children Act 1989 or have parental responsibility for the child, there is no requirement to notify the Local Authority of the arrangement. Most of these arrangements remain entirely private without the need for the involvement of the Families and Wellbeing Directorate, although where a child

is assessed as being in need, support may be provided under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

A **Child in Need** is defined in Section 17(10) of the Children Act 1989 as a child who is disabled or who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by the Local Authority. Children in Need may live with members of their family or friends in a variety of different legal arrangements, some formal and some informal.

Legal arrangements include children looked after by the Local Authority under s31 of Children Act 1989 and courts make the decisions about these children. Children can also be looked after or accommodated by the Local Authority under s20 of the Children Act 1989 by voluntary arrangement with parents and/or those who hold parental responsibility. In both cases children may be cared for by family and friends only if the carers have been approved as Local Authority Foster Carers under the Fostering Regulations 2011 and where they meet the requirements of the National Minimum Fostering Standards 2011.

Other legal arrangements for children to live with family and friends include adoption and special guardianship orders under the Adoption and Children Act 2002, Child Arrangement orders under the Children and Families Act 2014 and Private Fostering under the Private Fostering Regulations 2005. This is where a parent arranges for their child to live with someone who is not directly related to them or who is a friend of the family.

In relation to financial support, the Local Authority may provide carers of children in need with such support on a regular or one-off basis, under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. In all cases, carers will be directed to access universal benefits and payments in the first instance, as the Local Authority cannot duplicate any state benefits payable. However, the status of the placement will determine the nature and amount of any discretionary financial support particular to the needs of the individual child. The legal status of the child will have a bearing on the levels of financial support which may be available to carers. There are different legislative provisions which apply to financial support for children living with family or friends in the care of the local authority, special guardianship, adoption or child arrangement orders.

The following sections of this policy set out the support that we may provide to family and friends or connected people who are caring for children in these different situations.

4. Different situations whereby children maybe living with family and friends carers

4.1 Informal family and friends care arrangements

Where a child cannot be cared for within his or her immediate family, the family may make their own arrangements to care for the child within the family and friends network.

The Local Authority will not normally be involved in most informal family and friends arrangements unless it is necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a **child in need** living in the Warrington area.

The definition of a child in need in section 17(10) of Children Act 1989 is broad. A child in need is a child whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or their health or development would be significantly impaired without the provision of services by the local authority, or they are disabled.

Where this is the case then an assessment will be completed by a children's social worker who will consider what support might be required to enable the child's needs to be met and whether the support can be provided by assisting the carer to access universal services. Following assessment, a **Child in Need Plan** will be drawn up and a package of support will be identified. This can comprise a variety of different types of services and support, including practical, emotional and in exceptional situations financial support. Anyone who feels they would benefit from additional support should contact **Warrington Children and Families Wellbeing Directorate: phone 019255443322 or email: contact@warrington.gov.uk**

Financial Support for Family and Friends - Section 17 of the Children's Act 1989

Children may be brought up by members of their extended family, friends or other people who are connected with them for a variety of reasons and in a myriad of different arrangements. While most informal family and friends arrangements for the care of children are established without the involvement of the Families and Wellbeing Directorate, there are occasions when financial support is required to support such placements.

In **exceptional** circumstances the Local Authority can provide minimal, one off or very time limited financial assistance under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. This may be available to support extended family members and connected people to care for children at a time of crisis, or to meet a special need on the part of the child and as such prevent the child or young person from becoming a Child in the Care of the Local Authority.

All financial support is given with the aim of setting up an arrangement that is self sustaining in the longer term. The Local Authority may be approached after all other efforts to obtain financial assistance have failed. Friends and family carers will be encouraged to seek assistance from established mechanisms such as through the benefits agency, charitable trusts or organisations and the wider network of family for assistance.

Almost all financial arrangements made by the Local Authority under section 17 are occasional one off payments, or cease once child benefits are received by the applicant. In exceptional cases where an agreement is made to provide regular financial support to prevent a child becoming a looked after Child in Care, frequent reviews will take place to re-assess the child's needs and eligibility for financial support.

Threshold for support to friends and family carers of children in need to prevent the child becoming looked after; the following conditions must be met:

- The child lives within the area of the Local Authority
- The child is a child in need within the definition of the 1989 Act
- If friends and family carers were not available or had not offered to provide care of their own volition the child would be at risk of becoming looked after by the Local Authority.
- The child's parents or person with parental responsibility are prevented from providing suitable accommodation or care within the meaning of section 20 of the Children Act 1989
- The child is not a privately fostered child. If this is the case then the procedure for private fostering must be followed
- The child is either living with a close family member, wider family member or friend or there is a plan to make such an arrangement
- The relevant social work manager agrees with the findings of the combined assessment that support should be provided

Examples of situations of where recourse to section 17 could be considered by the Local Authority:

- Families who have no recourse to public funds and where a social work assessment has determined the need for immediate financial aid
- Children who have been abandoned by their main carer and a relative or friend needs short term assistance to provide for the child's needs
- Children who are being cared for by family and friends, where it has been assessed that without financial support the family or friends would not be able to care for the children. This arrangement will be time limited and reviewed.
- Examples of time limited financial support might be a contribution to nursery care fees as the carer works and the child is not of school age. Basic equipment is required eg bed, bedding, clothing as the carer does not have essential equipment in the family home and cannot access these from other sources, or it is required immediately for the child to be able to live with carer.

4.2 Private fostering arrangements

A privately fostered child is a child under 16 (or 18 if disabled) who is cared for by an adult who is not a parent or close relative, where the child is to be cared for in that home for 28 days or more. Close relative is defined as 'a grandparent,

brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or step-parent.’ It does not include a child who is Looked After by a local authority.

In a private fostering arrangement, the parent still holds parental responsibility and agrees the arrangement with the private foster carer and is responsible for any financial payments in respect of the child. Child benefit and child tax credits can be claimed by the private foster carer.

The Local Authority has a duty to assess and monitor the welfare of all privately fostered children and the way in which they carry out these duties is set out in the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005. However, the local authority may also become involved with a child in a private fostering arrangement where the child comes within the definition of a Child in Need. In such cases, the local authority has a responsibility to provide services to meet the assessed needs of the child under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Following assessment, a Child in Need Plan will be drawn up and a package of support will be identified. This can comprise a variety of different types of services and support, including financial support.

For more information on private fostering please log onto the website below and follow this link to private fostering:

http://www.warrington.gov.uk/downloads/200286/private_fostering

4.3 Family and friends foster carers – ‘connected persons’

Where a child is looked after by the Local Authority, we have a responsibility wherever possible to make arrangements for the child to live with a member of the family or connected person who is approved as a foster carer (Section 22 of the Children Act 1989).

A Connected Person is defined as ‘a relative, friend or other person connected with the child’. A connected person would have a pre-existing relationship with the child but not necessarily be a relative or friend. It could be someone who knows the child such as a child minder, teacher or neighbour.

Warrington Borough Council Fostering Service recognises that a child’s needs are best met by a nurturing family and is committed to placing children who are not able to remain in their own family in an appropriate alternative family placement wherever possible. First priority will be for children to be placed with family, friends or connected person under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (amended July 2013), where this placement is deemed suitable

The child can be placed with family members or a connected person in an emergency following a viability assessment being completed and approved by the Agency Decision Maker. Under Regulation 24, the relative, friend or connected person becomes a foster carer and a full fostering assessment must

be completed within 16 weeks. This can be extended by a further 8 weeks in exceptional circumstances.

Foster carers who are approved on a temporary basis will receive a weekly fostering maintenance payment to cover the costs of caring for the child. This is in line with all foster carers and is based on the age of the child.

In addition the child will have a placement plan which sets out the specific arrangements surrounding the child and the carers including the expectations of the foster carers and the support they can expect to receive to enable them to fulfil their role and responsibilities for the child.

The assessment and approval process for family and friends, who apply to be foster carers for a specific Child in Care looked after by the Local Authority, is usually completed within 6 months of receipt of the applicant's formal application to become a foster carer except when the child has already been placed under Regulation 24 wherein the timescale is 16 weeks, as detailed above.

Information explaining the assessment process and the requirements of Family and Friends Foster carers and Connected Persons is available to potential foster carers and a Supervising Social Worker from the Fostering Service will be allocated to support the carers through the assessment period.

Expectations of a Family and Friends Carer

Prospective foster carers will be considered in terms of their competence and capacity to look after children in a safe and responsible way that meets children's individual developmental needs.

Some questions to be considered by anyone thinking about becoming a Family and Friends carer:

- Does the child have an established relationship with you?
- Is there sufficient/appropriate space in the house for this particular child and their belongings?
- Smoking is not usually acceptable if the child is under 5 years.
- Your overall competency and wellbeing should be considered carefully in respect of a particular child.
- Do you have sufficient practical support?
- Are there any financial constraints/debts?
- Does the prospective carer have good knowledge of the child?
- How many outside commitments do you have e.g. work, other caring commitments etc?

- If you work full time, it would not usually be appropriate to place a young baby as the baby will need to make good attachments with the carer.

In considering whether a relative, friend or other connected person should be approved as a foster carer, account must be taken of the needs, wishes and feelings of the child whom it is proposed to place with them, and the capacity of the carer to meet the child's particular needs.

The assessment will balance the strengths of the carers arising from their position within the family network against any aspects which may make them less suitable. The carer's past experiences of parenting will be assessed as part of a fuller picture of their capacity to care for the child.

Family and Friend Foster carers, are allocated a supervising social worker from the fostering service to provide them with supervision and support when a child is placed. The foster carer will receive fostering allowances for as long as they care for the child in care.

Family and Friends Carers will be expected to satisfactorily complete relevant mandatory training to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities as an approved Foster Carer and to support them in enhancing their knowledge and skills in order to meet the child's individual needs.

While the child remains a child in care looked after by the Local Authority, as a foster carer, they will be expected to co-operate with all the processes that are in place to ensure that the child receives appropriate care and support, for example, contributing to reviews of the child's Care Plan, working with professionals, cooperating with the child's social worker and promoting the child's education and health needs.

For more information on fostering including allowances please go to the Warrington.gov.uk website and search Fostering or use this link:

www.warringtonfostering.co.uk

4.4 Child Arrangement Order

There are two types of child arrangements orders:

1. An order which says **where and with whom a child will live. A person applying does not** need to be biologically related to the child to apply a child arrangement order. (This order used to be called a 'Residence Order').
2. An order which says **who the child can spend time with and for how long.** This used to be called a s.8 'Contact Order'.

Child arrangement orders give parental responsibility to the person the order says a child should live with for as long as the order is in force. This includes being responsible for the care and well-being of the child and also being able to make important decisions about the child's life such as consent to medical and dental

treatment and school trips. Parents and anyone else who already has 'parental responsibility' will retain this alongside the person with a child arrangement order.

A child's parents remain financially responsible for their child when a child arrangement order is in place. A court can make an order for a parent to pay maintenance for their child alongside the child arrangement order if the parents are working or have savings. A person with a child arrangement order can claim child benefit once a child has lived with them for 3 weeks and may also be entitled to tax credit and other benefits.

If the local authority are involved in placing a child with a person who subsequently obtains a child arrangement order, the local authority will undertake an assessment of support if requested to do so. In some circumstances the local authority will pay a child arrangement order allowance. These payments are means tested and reviewed by the local authority on an annual basis.

Child arrangement orders end when a child reaches the age of 18 years.

4.5 Special Guardianship Order

Special Guardianship offers a further option for children needing permanent care outside their birth family. It can offer greater security without absolute severance from the birth family as in adoption.

Relatives or foster carers may apply for a Special Guardianship Order after caring for the child for one year. As Special Guardians, they will have parental responsibility for the child which, while it is still shared with the parents, can be exercised with greater autonomy on day-to-day matters than where there is a Child Arrangement Order.

Special Guardianship Orders may be made in private family proceedings and the Local Authority may not be a party to any such arrangements. However, a Special Guardianship Order in favour of a relative or foster carer (who was a 'Connected Person') with whom a child is living may be an appropriate outcome as part of a permanence plan for a Child in Need or a Child in Care looked after by the local authority.

Where the child was Looked After immediately prior to the making of the Special Guardianship Order, the Local Authority has a responsibility to assess the support needs of the child, parents and Special Guardians, including the need for financial support.

For more information about Special Guardianship Orders please go to the warrington.gov.uk website.

4.6 Adoption Order

Adoption is the process by which all parental rights and responsibilities for a child are permanently transferred to an adoptive parent by a court. As a result the child legally becomes part of the adoptive family.

An Adoption Order in favour of a relative or foster carer (who was a 'Connected Person') with whom a child is living may be an appropriate outcome as part of a

permanence plan for a Child in Need or a Child in Care. Warrington Borough Council Adoption Service provides a range of adoption support services in conjunction with partner agencies. An assessment for adoption support services can be requested by the adopted child, adoptive parents and their families, as well as birth relatives. The support required is then set out in an Adoption Support Plan and this may include a range of support and advice and also financial support in some cases.

For more information about adoption and adoption support contact WWiSH Adoption Service. This is a shared Adoption Service for Warrington, Wigan, and St Helens:

WWiSH Adoption Service
196a Newton Road,
Lowton,
Warrington,
WA3 2AQ
Phone: 01942487272
Email: wwish@wigan.gov.uk

5. Provision of financial support – general principles

Any payment which may be considered depends on the particular circumstances of the case and whether the child is a child in need or a child in care and cared for by a Family and Friends foster carer. The purpose of any payments or allowances must be to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.

Foster Care Allowance – Where a Connected Person is approved as a carer for the child, they will usually be paid the level 1 Foster Care Allowance. An approved Foster Carer will be paid an appropriate age related fostering allowance.

Setting up payment/one-off payments - These are for such items as clothing, furniture, or bedding. The social worker must be satisfied that the carers' financial position justifies the payment.

Weekly living contribution - In exceptional circumstances it is possible for the Local Authority to make regular payments where family members or friends care for a child, whether or not the child is a child in care looked after by the Local Authority. Where regular payments are to be made, relative carers will always be assisted to maximise their Income/Benefit as regular payments may adversely affect an individual's claim to income support/universal credit.

In all cases where regular financial support is agreed, a written agreement will be drawn up detailing the level and duration of the financial support that is to be provided, and the mechanism for review.

6. Accommodation

Family and friends carers may need support with accommodation, as their homes may not be of sufficient capacity to suddenly take on the care of a child or possibly a sibling group of children.

The authority will liaise with landlords to ensure that, whenever possible, family and friends carers living in social housing are given appropriate priority to move to more suitable accommodation if this will prevent the need for a child to enter the care system. Within the Families and Wellbeing Directorate, Housing and Children's Social Care will work together to help families who may be in need of urgent housing advice and assistance.

7. Supporting contact with parents

Warrington's Families and Wellbeing Directorate will promote contact for all children in need although there are differences depending on whether or not the child is looked after. Most children living with members of their extended families will be in contact with one or both of their parents, and often also with other relatives, and this will often help to promote positive relationships. It is usually helpful, even in informal arrangements to draw up a contact agreement between all parties. If a social worker is involved with the family, they will help draw up an agreement.

Family mediation 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, the CAFCASS officer may assist in drawing up safe contact arrangements for children with family. If necessary Contact orders can be made in the courts which spell out the arrangements by making a legal order.

Where a child is a Child in Care looked after by the Local authority, we are required to endeavour to promote contact between the child and his or her family 'unless it is not practicable or consistent with the child's welfare'.

The overall objective of the contact arrangements will be included in the child's Care Plan and the specific arrangements will be set out in the child's Placement Plan. Children's Social Care can provide advice and assistance in relation to contact arrangements and may undertake formal supervision of contact in certain circumstances.

8. Family Group Meetings

Family Group Meetings are meetings held between professionals and family members which aim to achieve the best outcomes for children. They promote the involvement of the wider family to achieve a resolution of difficulties for Children in Need, and may help to identify short-term and/or permanent solutions for children within the family network. A Family Group Meeting is a decision making meeting in which a child's wider family network come together to agree and make a plan about the future arrangements for the child. The plan will ensure that the child is safe and his/her wellbeing is promoted.

Family Group Meetings are most often used for children where a consideration is being made about a child becoming a child in care.

Family Group Meetings are intended as a respectful and empowering process in which parents, children and members of the wider family are given clear information about the concerns held by Children's Social Care and family are asked to produce a plan that addresses those concerns and answers specific queries, particularly about who a child should live with and how his/her welfare will be safeguarded.

9. Compliments and Complaints procedure

Where a family or friends carer is not satisfied with the level of support provided to enable them to care for the child, then they have access to the Local Authority's complaints process. Our aim would be to resolve any such dissatisfaction without the need for a formal investigation but where an informal resolution is not possible, then a formal investigation will be arranged.

The timescales and process are set out in the Complaints Procedure which can be found on the [Warrington.gov.uk](http://www.warrington.gov.uk) website.

<http://www.warrington.gov.uk/complaints>

Appendices

1. Caring for someone else child – Options
2. Useful organisations providing support, advice and opportunities

1. Caring for Somebody Else's Child – Options

	Private fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Child arrangement order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
Route into the caring arrangement	<p>This is a private arrangement whereby the child is being cared for 28 days or more (or the intention is that the arrangement will last for 28 days or more) by anyone who does not have parental responsibility, and who is not a close relative.</p> <p>Relative means grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (by full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or a step parent. The child is not a looked after child.</p>	<p>The relative has chosen to take on the care of the child but does not have parental responsibility, and the arrangement was not made by the local authority.</p> <p>The child is not a looked after child.</p> <p>Relative may perceive the parents to be unable to care for the child;</p> <p>or the parents may be dead or otherwise not available (e.g. in prison); Or there may be an agreement between relatives due to difficult family circumstances.</p>	<p>The child has been placed with the relative or friend by the local authority, because the person who had been caring for the child was deemed not to be providing suitable care.</p> <p>The child is a looked after child and so the local authority must approve the relative or friend as a local authority foster carer. The child may be accommodated voluntarily with the agreement of the parents or may be subject to a care order.</p>	<p>The child is a looked after child being accommodated by the local authority under section 20 Children Act 1989 or because the child is subject to a care order; but has been placed with a foster carer by the local authority.</p> <p>(Alternatively, the local authority may choose to place a child into residential care where this is considered to best meet the child's needs).</p>	<p>The child may be at risk of becoming 'looked after' and a friend or relative applies for an order, or</p> <p>The child may have been 'looked after' and their foster carer or other relative/friend applies for an order.</p> <p>In either circumstance, application can be made without the support of the parents or the local authority. Relatives may apply for an order after the child has lived with them for one year.</p> <p>Or, there can be benign reasons, e.g. after parents' death and in line with a prior agreement between the birth parents and the carer.</p>	<p>Looked after children: the LA may decide that the child should be placed for adoption. They can only do so with the consent of the birth parent or under a placement order made by a court.</p> <p>An approved foster carer can apply for an adoption order after a year of caring for the child.</p> <p>Other informal carers could apply for an adoption order if the child has lived with them for a period of 3 years.</p>	
Parental Responsibility (PR)	Remains with birth parents	Remains with birth parents but the person who cares for the child may do what is reasonable to safeguard or promote the child's welfare	Remains with birth parents if child accommodated under section 20 CA, or if the child is subject to a care order or emergency protection order the local authority will have parental responsibility and determines the extent to which it may be exercised by others.	Shared by parents and holder of a child arrangement order.	PR shared with parents and any one else with parental responsibility for the child. The special guardian may exercise parental responsibility to the exclusion of all others with PR, apart from another special guardian.		Transfers to adopters and relationship with birth parents is severed.

	Private fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Child arrangement order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
Approval basis	The arrangement is assessed by LA, but the carer is not 'approved' as a local authority foster carer is. The arrangement may be prohibited if assessed by the local authority as unsuitable.	None	Approved as local authority foster carers in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations. (If child is looked after, carers must be approved as foster carers even if close relative.)	Appointed by court following application.	Appointed by court, following application from the applicant. LA must investigate the matter and prepare a report for the court dealing with the suitability of the applicant to be a special guardian.		Adoption agency assesses and approves prospective adopters, court makes order regarding specific child. If the child is not looked after then notice of intention to adopt must be given to the LA who then carry out an assessment / report for the court.
Duration	Subject to discretion of person with PR and readiness of private foster carer.	Subject to discretion of person with PR	So long as placement remains in line with child's care plan, as determined by LA	Age 18.	Age 18 unless varied or discharged by the court before the child reaches 18 years.		Permanent lifelong relationship
Placement supervision	It is not a placement, but there are statutory visits to child by social worker (minimum 6 weekly in first year, then 12 weekly)	None	Statutory: visits to child by social worker and supervision of foster carers by supervising social worker		None		When child is placed for adoption by the LA, the placement is supervised and there are statutory reviews. Once the adoption order is made, none.
Review of placement	It is not a placement, but the LA may do formal reviews in addition to ongoing assessment during visits.	None	Statutory reviews of child's care plan (minimum 6 monthly) and annual reviews of local authority foster carers' approval	None	None		See above

	Private fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Child arrangement order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
Support services	Provision of advice and support as determined necessary by the LA, which may assess the child as a child in need, with a child in need plan, and provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the Children Act 1989	No entitlement but the LA may assess the child as a child in need, with a child in need plan, and provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the Children Act 1989	Support to meet child's needs including health plan and personal education plan. Training and practical support to foster carers in accordance with the Fostering services Regulations, NMS and CWDC standards. Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services	o entitlement (But LA has discretion to provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the CA)	If child was looked after prior to making the SGO, LA must assess for need for special guardianship support services. LA has discretion whether to provide support. Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services if was a looked after child prior to making of the SGO.		Entitlement to assessment for adoption support services, which may be provided at discretion of LA in accordance with Regulations and NMS.
Financial support – entitlement	Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent. Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holders of PR	Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent. Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holders of PR. Guardians Allowance payable if both parents have died or the only surviving parent cannot be found or serving 2 years or more prison sentence.	Child benefit and child tax credit not payable. Weekly allowance to meet the costs of caring for the child. This should meet at least the national minimum rate set by DCSF. The Manchester City Council judgment ruled that allowances must be the same for all foster carers, whether or not family & friends	Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.	Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent		Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent. Entitlement to assessment for financial support (part of adoption support) if child looked after prior to order.

	Private fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Child arrangement order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
Financial support – discretionary	LA has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section17 Children Act	LA has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section17 Children Act	<p>Some fostering providers pay their foster carers a fee to recognise the carers' skill, experience and commitment.</p> <p>The Manchester City Council judgement (which requires allowances to be paid on the same basis regardless of the relationship of the carer to the child) did not consider fees. However, Statutory Guidance for Fostering Services requires that any policy in relation to the payment of fees must be applied to all foster carers who meet the criteria in the same way and must not discriminate on the grounds of a pre-existing relationship with the child.</p>	LA has discretion to pay child arrangement order allowance – usually if child was previously fostered by the carers, or exceptionally if making the child arrangement order prevents child becoming looked after. Any allowance reviewed annually.	<p>Entitled to an assessment for financial support under the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 if child looked after prior to order and meets the criteria in the regulations.</p> <p>Subject to assessment as above and for former foster carers can include an element of remuneration.</p> <p>Regular or one off payments.</p> <p>Any allowances reviewed annually.</p> <p>Entitlement to an assessment of financial support by local authority.</p>	Subject to assessment, one off payments or regular adoption allowance may be paid.	

2. Useful Organisations and Information for Family and Friends Carers

Action for Prisoners' Families

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.

www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk

Address:

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

Tel: 020 8812 3600

E-mail: info@actionpf.org.uk

Advice line: 0808 808 2003

info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.org.uk

Addiction

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

www.addaction.org.uk

Address:

67-69 Cowcross Street
London EC1M 6PU

Tel. 020 7251 5860

Email: info@addaction.org.uk

Adfam

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

www.adfam.org.uk

Address:

25 Corsham Street,
London
N1 6DR

Tel: 020 7553 7640

Email: admin@adfam.org.uk

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

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.

www.ace-ed.org.uk

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

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

www.begrand.net

Helpline: 0845 434 6835

British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF)

Provides information and advice about adoption and fostering and publishes resources.

www.baaf.org.uk

Address:

Saffron House,
6-10 Kirby Street,
London
EC1N 8TS

Tel: 020 7421 2600

Email: mail@baaf.org.uk

Children's Legal Centre

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

www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Address:

University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park
Colchester
Essex
CO4 3SQ

Tel: 01206 877 910

E-mail: clc@essex.ac.uk

Child Law Advice Line: 0808 802 0008

Community Legal Advice - Education: 0845 345 4345

Citizens Advice Bureaux

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

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Department for Education

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.

www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families

Family Fund Trust

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.

www.familyfund.org.uk

Address:

4 Alpha Court

Monks Cross Drive

York

YO32 9WN

Tel: 0845 130 4542

Email: info@familyfund.org.uk

Family Rights Group (FRG)

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.

www.frg.org.uk

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

The Fostering Network

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.

www.fostering.net

Address:

87 Blackfriars Road

London

SE1 8HA

Email: info@fostering.net

Tel: 020 7620 6400

Fosterline: 0800 040 7675

Email: fosterline@fostering.net

The Grandparents' Association

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.

www.grandparents-association.org.uk

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

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

Mentor UK

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

www.mentoruk.org.uk

Address:

Fourth Floor 74 Great Eastern Street

London

EC2A 3JG

Tel: 020 7739 8494

Email: admin@mentoruk.org

Family Mediation Helpline

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

08456 026627

www.familymediationhelpline.co.uk

National Family Mediation (NFM)

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

www.nfm.org.uk

4 Barnfield Hill,

Exeter EX1 1SR.

0300 4000 636

general@nfm.org.uk

Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group

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

www.partnersofprisoners.co.uk

Address:

Valentine House 1079 Rochdale Road

Blackley

Manchester

M9 8AJ

Tel: 0161 702 1000

Offenders' Families Helpline Tel: 0808 808 2003

Email: info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.co.uk

Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)

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.

www.prisonadvice.org.uk

Address:

Park Place 12 Lawn Lane
Vauxhall
London
SW8 1UD
Telephone: 020 77359535 55

Parents Against Drug Abuse (PADA)

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

www.pada.org.uk

Address:

The Foundry
Marcus Street
Birkenhead
CH41 1EU
Phone: 0151 649 1580
National Families Helpline: 08457 023867

Parentline Plus

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

www.familylives.org.uk

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

TalktoFrank

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.

www.talktofrank.com

24 hour advice line: 0800 77 66 00

Text: 82111

Email: frank@talktofrank.com

Voice

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

www.voiceyp.org

Address:

320 City Road

London

EC1V 2NZ

Tel: 020 7833 5792

Young person's advice line: 0808 800 5792

Email: info@voiceyp.org

Young Minds

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

www.youngminds.org.uk

Address:

48-50 St John Street

London

EC1M 4DG

Tel: 020 7336 8445

Parents helpline: 0808 802 5544