

Scotland's Vision for Kinship Care

Our Offer of Support for Families



What is Kinship Care?

Kinship care is when family or friends step up to care for a child or young person when their parents may be navigating difficult challenges in their lives.

What is the Kinship Care Vision?

The Scottish Government has set out a clear plan for the future of kinship care in Scotland.

This vision explains how kinship families will be recognised, valued and supported across the country.

This vision sets out where we are heading. Not everything will change straight away, but improvements will happen step by step over time.





Who is it for?

For you and your family – it sets out the help you and your family should be able to expect.

For the people who support you – it sets out what councils, social workers, teachers, health visitors, support workers and others can do to support you.

Why has it been created?

Kinship carers have told us that:

-  Support can be different depending on where you live.
-  Some carers told us that support isn't always there when they need it.
-  Getting the right help for trauma, mental health, or school issues can be difficult.
-  Housing and other practical challenges can add extra pressure.

What the Kinship Care Vision says you should expect:

- Clear and easy to understand information
- Advice and support when you need it.
- Money advice, practical support, and emotional support.
- Help to support your children's wellbeing and identity.
- Fair and consistent services wherever you live in Scotland.

Our Offer to Kinship Families

This means:



Voice

Children, young people and kinship carers should be heard and taken seriously.

- Children and young people in kinship care will be able to get help from a trusted person who is independent of decision-making about their care. This person can help them speak up, be heard, and understand their rights
- Kinship care will count as “care experience”. This means families will be recognised, treated fairly, and able to get the support they need
- People who work with kinship families will have a good understanding of kinship care and will make sure families feel respected and not judged
- Children and young people will get support to understand their own life story. This will help them feel confident in who they are and know where they belong



Family

Families should get help early, before problems grow.

- Kinship families will have the right to ask for, or be offered, an assessment of their needs to understand what support will help them thrive
- When help is needed, it will be written down clearly so everyone knows what will be provided and how it will help
- Families will be able to ask for a review of their support needs if their circumstances change
- Kinship Care Assistance will clearly include help such as: money advice and help with benefits, clear information and guidance, emotional and mental health support (like counselling), peer support groups, training and learning to help carers feel supported, practical help (such as transport, household items, or short breaks)
- Kinship families will be supported to manage complex family relationships, with help for contact arrangements and guidance when challenges arise



Care

Support should not depend on where you live or what legal order you have.

- Councils will have to publish how much money they pay kinship and foster carers, to help move towards fairer, more equal payments across Scotland
- Young people who were looked after but left care before age 16 and who need and want support will have the right to access aftercare from age 16
- Kinship families will be able to see what support is available in their area, through a clear local kinship care offer
- Support should not suddenly stop when a child’s legal status changes

This means:



People

Kinship carers need advice, training and people they can trust.

- Every new kinship carer will receive a clear and easy-to-use Starter Pack with information on kinship care, legal options, finances, practical checklists, advice and support, guidance on family time, and emotional support
- Kinship families will be able to talk to staff who specialise in kinship care, so they speak to someone who understands their situation
- Kinship carers have details of a person they can contact if they need help
- New Kinship Coordinators will be tested in some areas. They will be able to help carers deal with schools, health services, housing and other systems
- We will look at ways for kinship carers to easily evidence their caring role across services, so they don't have to keep repeating their situation
- Carers will be able to access trauma training if they need it, to help them support their children and young people who have been through difficult experiences
- Experienced carers may help support and mentor newer kinship carers
- Practitioners and others who work with kinship families will have access to training so support is more joined up and consistent



Scaffolding

Better joined-up services

- Local services (health, education, housing, social work, charities) will work together more closely
- A national plan will be created to organise how all the changes will happen
- This plan will be made together with local partners and people who have lived experience of kinship care
- Good ideas and best practice will be shared across Scotland
- Progress will be tracked so families can see what is improving
- The Kinship Care Collaborative will play a stronger role in supporting delivery of this work
- We will work with employers to encourage Kinship-Friendly policies, such as offering extra paid family leave to support kinship carers



Kinship Care Advice Service (KCASS)

One clear place to get advice

- Kinship carers can contact KCASS for clear, free advice about rights, money, housing, schools and local services
- KCASS will help families get referred to local support
- Professionals will also be encouraged to use KCASS
- Support will be available by phone, online and through community outreach
- KCASS will help improve services by sharing anonymous information about areas where things could be better

What happens now?

The kinship care vision sets out where we are heading.

It will be developed step by step, with more support becoming available over time.

We will continue listening to kinship carers as this work continues, so your experiences help shape what happens next.



Scan for more information on the Kinship Care Vision

Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, loving, and stable home. Kinship carers are a crucial part of making this possible and form a valued and essential part of how we in Scotland care for our children.

