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**Kinship care Factsheet**

**Introduction: What is Kinship Care?**

Kinship care is providing the care, protection and nurturing for children who are separated from their parents, or whose parents are unable to provide care and support for them. A kinship carer is an adult who is looking after the child or children of a relative or friend on a full time basis.

This arrangement may be a temporary or permanent arrangement.

All across Wales, thousands of people, such as grandparents, older brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, more distant relatives and close family friends are caring for children.

There are between 200,000 and 300,000 children living with kinship carers in the UK and there are many circumstances which can lead to kinship care situations. The arrangements may be made informally or formally with a legal order from the Court.

The rights and responsibilities of kinship carers and the support and services available to them can be complicated, and vary depending on:

1. How the child came to live with you
2. Where you live.



**Section One: Informal Kinship Carer**

You have come to this section because you are an informal kinship carer. This means:

• You are looking after a child/children who is a close relative of yours, for example, grandchild, niece, nephew, sibling.

• It is an arrangement you have made with the child’s parents or you have stepped in out of necessity. This could include circumstances such as, you did not want to see the child go into LA care, or the parents are deceased.

As an informal kinship carer you have a responsibility to keep the child safe, and look after the child’s welfare whilst they are living with you, but the child’s parents can continue to be involved and can have the child back whenever they want. You do not have any parental rights or responsibilities for the child and cannot go against the wishes of the child’s parents. If you want to or need to make major decisions, you will need the consent of the child’s parents.

Stephanie has been caring for her grandson for over two years

“*My daughter had a baby when she was very young. She and the baby lived with me, then one day I came home and she was standing on the doorstep with her bag packed and said, ‘Bye, I’m off, you can look after him.’ It’s been really hard, I’ve lost my job, and I’ve lost all my jewellery as I had to pawn it. My grandson needed his immunisations but I couldn’t take him as I don’t have parental responsibility. I had to fight to get my daughter to take him to the doctors so he could be immunised. It’s tough but you have to just keep on doing it. My grandson would have been fostered out to strangers if I hadn’t stepped in*.”

Sometimes, parents may make similar informal arrangements with a more distant relative such as a cousin, or with a family friend or neighbour. In these circumstances, if the arrangement is for a period of 28 days or more and the child is under 16, or under 18 if disabled, it is called private fostering.



**Informal kinship care: your legal responsibilities and rights**

The parents:

The law in Wales states that when a child is born the mother has full parental rights and responsibilities. The father also has rights and responsibilities if:

• He is married to the mother.

• He is named on the child’s birth certificate (if the child was born after

December 2003).

• The mother grants rights to him through a parental responsibility agreement.

• He applies to the courts.

Both parents have a legal responsibility to keep the child safe and promote their health, development and welfare.

Your rights as an informal kinship carer:

• The parents retain full legal rights and responsibilities for the child.

• You as a carer have a duty to safeguard and promote the health and developments of the child’s welfare.

• You are entitled to support and guidance from your LA.

What does this mean for you?

• A parent must consent to any decisions you wish to make and so can intervene at any time.

• You cannot make major decisions about the child’s health (unless in an emergency), schooling or foreign travel.

• The parent can demand the child back at any time.

• As an informal kinship carer, you do not have the automatic right to attend meetings about the child’s welfare.

**What to do if you think you need support**

Go to the Children’s Services department of your LA and they must provide you with advice and guidance. The support provided by LAs varies greatly across Wales and you will need to speak with the relevant LA to find out what support they can offer you. They may suggest you contact Children’s Services at the LA the child has come from if it is a different authority to where you live.

Please note, any support your LA provides to children in their area is also available to you as an informal kinship carer.

**Private foster carer:**

Sometimes, parents may set up an informal arrangement for their child/children to be cared for by a more distant relative or friend. This page will give you further information about this type of arrangement.

You are a private foster carer if:

• You are looking after a child/children who is not a close relative of yours i.e. you are not the grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother, sister or step-parent of the child.

• It is an informal arrangement made privately between you and the child’s parents which is intended to last more than 28 days.

• You knew the child/children or were connected to the child/children before you started caring from them, for example, you may be a distant relative or a friend of the family.

• The child is aged 16 or under or under 18 if disabled.

• The LA has had no involvement in setting up the arrangement.

Please note that if you are helping out by looking after a child for a short time, for example, whilst a parent is in hospital for a few days, then you are not a private foster carer. This is only the case if the arrangement is set to last for 28 days or longer.

The LA does not formally approve or register private foster carers, but they have a duty to make sure that children are kept safe and well.

Rights and responsibilities of the parents

• Parents must tell the LA that they are making arrangements for their child to live with a private foster carer.

• Parents retain parental responsibility, including financial responsibility for the child.

**Your legal responsibilities and rights as a private foster carer**

• If you are going to become a private foster carer then you must tell your

Local Authority at least six weeks in advance or immediately if the fostering arrangement is due to start sooner. If you do not tell your LA then you are breaking the law.

• As the child’s private foster carer you have a responsibility to keep the child safe and look after the child’s welfare.

• You do not have parental rights or responsibilities for the child/children. If you need to make major decisions, you will need to consult the child’ parents.

• You are entitled to support and guidance from the LA.

**Support from the Local Authority**

• Once they have been notified that you have become a private foster carer they will arrange for a social worker to visit you and the child. The social worker will check that the arrangements are satisfactory and will visit you and the child regularly to make sure that all is going well.

• As with informal kinship carers the LA does not make financial payments to private foster carers.

• The social worker can give you advice and support on how to care for the child.

As this is an informal arrangement, the rest of the information contained in this section of the Guide will also be relevant to you as a private foster carer.

**Section 2: Looked After Children**

**Kinship foster carer**. **What does this mean?**

This means:

• You are looking after a child/ren who is a close relative or friend of yours, for example, grand-child, niece, nephew, sibling, family friend.

• It is an arrangement that has been made between you and the LA/social worker.

• The LA may have made the arrangement by agreement with the child’s parents or as a result of a care order.\*

\*Care Order: When a LA has a care order for a child they are responsible for deciding where the child should live. The parent, and other people connected to the child, must be consulted but the LA makes the final decision. The child’s wishes should also be taken into account. A care order can last until a child reaches 18 years of age.

A looked after child (LAC) means a child or young person under 18 years of age who is being cared for by the LA. They arrange for the child to live somewhere other than home. This can include relatives, foster carers and residential children’s homes. Most children living with kinship carers are not ‘looked after’ but some of them are, so it is important to know what it means.

Kinship fostering is an arrangement whereby the LA has legal responsibility for a child and place them with a family member or friend who is then a kinship foster carer for that child.

When a child is looked after by the LA, the child should normally be able to stay in touch with their parents, their brothers and sisters, and other people who are important to them, unless this would be harmful to them. The word used for ‘staying in touch’ is contact.’

If the child is looked after either under a court order or by agreement with the parents or others with parental responsibility, it will be the social worker’s job to make arrangements for this contact, based on what is best for the child.



**Caring for a looked after child**

If you are going to care for a child who is ‘looked after’ you must be assessed and approved by the LA as a kinship foster carer. You should be provided with information about the assessment process and the assessment criteria so you know what is expected of you.

Every foster carer is allocated a social worker who will make regular visits and provide support. You should also ensure that you are given details of the legal status of the placement and the level of support, including financial support you will receive.

If a child is placed with you in a crisis situation the LA can give you temporary approval as a foster carer for up to six weeks to allow time for a full assessment to be carried out. However, the LA may decide that it is better to place the child with already approved foster carers whilst they assess your suitability.

Tom and Becky wanted to take on the care of their nephew (3 years old) and niece (9 months old) when their mother (Becky’s sister) wasn’t able to look after them. Becky’s sister had a violent partner and had to flee to a refuge, she just couldn’t cope and asked her sister for help. Tom and Becky were both working full-time and wanted to help, they loved the children and spoke with social services about a shared-care arrangement, where they would have the children from the Friday – Monday and they would stay with a foster family during the week. This would enable them to carry on working and give the children the love and support they needed. Although this was agreed to in principle, things didn’t work out.

Becky said:

“*It’s been awful, a new social worker took over responsibility for the case and informed me that overnight contact could not be agreed to prior to an assessment being carried out. If I had known this before, had been given more information then I never would have gone down that route. If I had known what was to happen, that the children would end up in full-time foster care, I would never have agreed to the shared-care arrangement.”*

**Rights and responsibilities for a ‘looked after child’**

If the Local Authority has been to court for a care order or an emergency protection order for the child, then Children’s Services and the child’s parents share parental responsibility for the child.

However, Children’s Services can make important decisions about the child’s care even if the parents disagree. Children’s Services can also make decisions that you as the child’s kinship foster carer disagree with.

If there is no court order and the child is ‘looked after,’ with the agreement of the child’s parents then parental responsibility remains with the child’s parents. You as a kinship foster carer do not have parental responsibility and cannot take important decisions about the child.

Every ‘looked after child’ will have a care and support plan designed to ensure that all their health, education and welfare needs are met.

Your legal responsibilities and rights as a kinship foster carer

• Kinship foster carers do not have parental responsibility.

• You as a carer have a duty to safeguard and promote the health and developments of the child’s welfare.

• You must follow the child’s plan and ensure all their needs are met.

• You are entitled to support and guidance from your LA.

**What does this mean for you?**

As a kinship foster carer of a child that is ‘looked after’ you will need to talk to your social worker about decisions for the child.

If you are approved as a kinship foster carer then the law states that this should be reviewed every 12 months. You will be fully involved in the review, and feedback will be obtained from the child/ren you are caring for and from social workers you have worked with.

Children in Wales has produced a series of guides for, and with Looked after Children and care leavers which you may find useful and can be found here:

<https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/resources/looked-after-children/>

**Placement plan**

When a child comes to live with you as a looked after child, a placement plan must be drawn up. As a kinship foster carer you must agree to and sign the plan, therefore you should be involved in its development as it will:

• Set out how you are expected to care for the child/ren.

• What support you will get from other people, e.g. social workers, health workers.

• Outline arrangements for the child’s contact with their birth parents.

• Set out how long the placement is expected to last (however, if the child is accommodated with you under Section 20, the parent could ask for the child/children back at any time).

• The plan will also set out what decisions you are allowed to make and what decisions you should refer to the social worker or parent.

Every child’s placement plan will be different and specific to the needs of that particular child. If you are caring for more than one child you will have more than one plan.

**Support and reviews what you should expect**

If you are assessed as a kinship foster carer you should be allocated a social worker who should visit you on a regular basis, provide you with information and offer on-going support and supervision.

Every ‘looked after child’ will have a care and support plan and the social worker will work with you to ensure the child’s plan is being carried out as it should, and will also help co-ordinate any additional services the child may need, for example counselling.

Fostering Services offer a wide range of training courses to foster carers, for example, dealing with challenging behaviour, and you should also have access to these courses.

In some areas, there are Kinship Care Support Groups which will give you an opportunity to meet other kinship carers. These groups provide you with both emotional and practical support.

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**Seeking parental responsibility and rights**

If a kinship foster placement is long term and it is unlikely the child/children will return home to live with their birth parents, you may want to have some parental responsibility over the child/children so you can make important decisions about them, e.g., schooling, holidays abroad, health care etc.

You can get parental responsibility by applying to the court for a special guardianship order. If you are granted a special guardianship order any care order will automatically come to an end, and the child is no longer looked after. This could affect your entitlements to financial and other support.

If you are thinking of applying for a child arrangements or special guardianship order you should seek legal advice and/or obtain a written statement from your LA outlining what support you will be entitled to if you should decide to do this.

For more information on this see Section 3 of this Guide: Kinship Carers with parental responsibility

**Section 3 Kinship Carers with Parental responsibility (Child Arrangement Orders or Special Guardianship**

**Orders)**

Kinship carers with parental responsibility: what does this mean?

You have come to this section because you are a kinship carer with some parental responsibility for the child/children in your care.

This means:

• You are looking after a child who is a close relative or friend of yours, for example, grandchild, niece, nephew, sibling, friend of the family.

• You have probably been a kinship carer for a long time.

• You have been to court and received some parental responsibilities and rights through a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

• The child could have come into your care either as an informal arrangement or as a formal arrangement with the LA.

If you are caring for a child through an informal arrangement with the child’s parents and you are a relative of that child, you are an informal kinship carer and the child is not classed as ‘looked after’ by the LA. You have no parental rights or responsibilities, however, you can go to court to obtain some parental rights or responsibilities through a child arrangements order or special guardianship order. The child would still not be classed as ‘looked after.’

If you are caring for the child through an arrangement with the LA, the child is ‘looked after.’ However, if you and the child decide you would like some parental rights and responsibilities over the child and you go to court to obtain this through a child arrangements order or special guardianship order, then the child will no longer be classed as ‘looked after’ by the LA. This can have implications for the support you receive from your LA. You should get clarification in writing from your social worker about any impact this may have on your support entitlements before you go to court.

**What is a child arrangements order?**

A child arrangements order is an order made by the court. It states who a child should live with and gives parental responsibility to the person or persons named on the child arrangements order. The parents of the child/children still have parental responsibility, but they share this with the holder of the child arrangements order.

If you have parental responsibility you have the right to take part in major decisions in the child’s life, such as schooling, and you can take the child on holiday abroad (for up to one month).

**Rights and responsibilities of kinship carers with a child arrangements order**

The parents of the child/children still have parental responsibility, but they share this with the holder of the child arrangements order. Parents also remain responsible for supporting the child/children financially even though they are not living with them. However, more often than not, this does not happen.

If you have parental responsibility you can make most of the decisions that a parent can about a child’s care and upbringing. However, you cannot take the child abroad for more than a month or change the child’s surname unless everyone with parental responsibility agrees in writing or the court gives permission.

The child arrangements order will not affect the child’s legal relationship with his or her parents nor will it take away their parental responsibility. This means that you will share parental responsibility with the child’s mother, and also with his or her father if he has ever been married to the mother, or he has acquired parental responsibility if they were never married.

Even though you have parental responsibility, some decisions can still only be taken by parents with parental responsibility. For example, the right to agree or disagree to an adoption order being made or the right to appoint a guardian for the child.

**How to apply for a child arrangements order**

In order to apply for a child arrangements order you have to be over 18 years old and you can apply on your own or jointly with another person.

When deciding whether or not to issue a child arrangements order, the court will look at many factors. These are often called the ‘welfare checklist’ and include factors such as:

• The wishes of the child.

• The best person to meet the child’s daily needs.

• The child’s physical, emotional and educational needs.

• Any harm the child has suffered or is likely to suffer.

To help the court make a decision on a child arrangements order, Family Court Advisers (FCAs) from the Children and Family Court Advisory Service (CAFCASS) may be asked to prepare a welfare report on the child/children.

This will provide a comprehensive assessment and clear recommendations to the court on what would be in the best interests of the child. Alternatively, the report may be done by Children’s Services if the LA has been involved with the child.

**How long does a child arrangements order last?**

A child arrangements order can last until the child is 18.

However,

• The court can specify a set period for the order.

• The court can discharge an order before it is due to end.

• If a care order is made in respect of the child, the child arrangements order will automatically come to an end.

• A parent can make an application to the court to end a child arrangements order.

Applying for a child arrangements order can be a complicated process, so you should get as much advice and support as possible to help you through the process.

For more information on this contact Children’s Services in your LA and Citizens Advice Cymru. You may also wish to look at advice sheets written by the Family Rights Group that explain the process of applying for a child arrangements order and a special guardianship order without a lawyer. Please note that the Family Rights Group advice sheets are based on English law and some of the information they contain may be different in Wales.

<https://www.frg.org.uk/images/Advice_Sheets/18-diy-residence-orders-info-family-friends-carers.pdf>

**Support you should expect from the Local Authority**

The child’s parents remain financially responsible for their child when a child arrangements order is in place so, if possible, you should discuss this with them. In reality though, it is very rare that the child’s parents make a financial contribution to the kinship carers bringing up the child.

A child arrangements order does not give any automatic entitlement to additional support from the LA. However, each LA is different and you should speak to Children’s Services in your area for advice as some LAs may pay a child arrangements order allowance. It may be worth asking your social worker to carry out an assessment before you go to court for the child arrangements order, to find out if you would be entitled to an allowance and to ask them to confirm in writing how much they will pay you and for how long.

**Short breaks**

Short breaks give carers of disabled children an opportunity to take a break from their caring responsibilities and give disabled children opportunities to visit different places, try new things and meet new people. Every LA in Wales has a short breaks services statement, so contact your LA to find out what services may be available to you.

**Financial responsibility for the child/children**

Legally, the parent is financially responsible for the child/children. However, more often than not this does not happen and kinship carers find they have to provide for the child/children in their care with no financial support from the child’s parents.

The LA does not have a legal obligation to give kinship carers financial help. However, some LAs do give one. If you are offered a child arrangements order, you should ask how much this will be, how often the allowance will be reviewed and what criteria will be used to review it. Again, you should obtain this in writing.

**What is a special guardianship order?**

A special guardianship order (SGO) is a court order which says where a child should live on a long term basis and gives parental responsibility to that person. A SGO can give the child and the kinship carer a form of stability without fully separating the child from its parents; it is often seen as one step below adoption. Therefore, the child’s parents still retain some parental responsibility but it is very limited.

A SGO gives you parental responsibility so that you can make decisions about the child’s upbringing, without having to consult with the child’s parents or anyone else with parental responsibility for the child. However, there are a few exceptions:

• You cannot change the child’s surname or take him/her outside the UK for more than three months without the consent of everyone with parental responsibility or permission from the courts.

If the child was previously ‘looked after’ and you were in receipt of kinship care foster payments these will stop as the child will no longer be deemed to be ‘looked after’ by the LA.

If you are considering applying for a SGO you should seek independent legal advice and be clear about any impact it could have in relation to support, including financial support, available to you.

**Who can apply for a SGO?**

You can apply for a SGO if:

• You already have a child arrangements order for the child.

• You are the child’s grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother, sister or step-parent of the child and the child has lived with you for at least one year.

• You are a LA foster carer who has had a child placed with you for at least a year.

• The child has lived with you for at least three out of the last five years.

You can also apply for a SGO if you have the consent of:

• Anyone who already holds a child arrangements order for the child.

• The LA, if the child is in their care, or

• Everyone else who holds a parental responsibility for the child.

**Rights and responsibilities of kinship carers with a SGO**

If you have been to court to obtain a SGO for the child in your care you will be given parental responsibility for that child. This means you will no longer have to consult the child’s parents or anyone else with parental responsibility about most decisions for the child. There are, however, a few things you still cannot do without the permission of the parents and others with parental responsibility, for example:

• You cannot change a child’s surname.

• You cannot take the child abroad for more than three months.

• You cannot agree to the child being placed for adoption.

**Special Guardianship Code of Practice (on the exercise of social services functions in relation to special guardianship orders)**

The Special Guardianship Code of Practice covers how local authorities should work in respect to special guardianship orders.

The code of practice places a requirement upon local authorities to make certain categories of people aware of their entitlement to request an assessment of their need for special guardianship support services. These include special guardians, prospective special guardians, children subject to special guardianship arrangements, and children of special guardians.

Local authorities are required to make arrangements for the provision of special guardianship support services. These include counselling, advice, information and such other services, including financial support.

You can access the Welsh Government Special Guardianship Code of Practice and to see what support you might be entitled to here - <https://gov.wales/special-guardianship-orders-code-practice>

**Section 4: Useful Contacts**

The following is a selection of organisations who can be contacted for advice, information or support.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Action for Children Wales | St Davids Court68 Cowbridge Road West, Cardiff CF11 9DN[www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)T: 02920 222127 | Action for Children Wales works directly with children, young people, parents and carers. This includes children in care, young carers and disabled children. They provide a range of services across Wales |
| Barnardo’s Cymru  | Trident Court, E Moors Road, Cardiff CF24 5TD[www.barnardos.org.uk/wales](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/wales)T: 029 2049 3387 | Barnardo’s Cymru works with children, young people and families living on the margins of society who are struggling to overcome the disadvantages caused by poverty, abuse and discrimination. They provide a range of services across Wales |
| Buttle UK | PO Box 2538Rumney, Cardiff CF23 0GX[www.buttleuk.org](http://www.buttleuk.org)T: 029 2054 1996 | Buttle UK provides support to families living in crisis, when there is no one else that can help. They can do this by paying for basic items such as a cooker, fridge or bed to help out when parents or carers find themselves in a critical situation. |
| CAFCASS Cymru  | CAFCASS CymruWelsh Government Cathays ParkCardiff CF10 3NQ<https://gov.wales/cafcass-cymru>T: 03000 628 877 | Cafcass Cymru is an organisation within Welsh Government that provides a voice for any child in Wales that is involved with the Family Justice System. When appointed by the family courts, they work with families and other organisations to find long-term solutions for the child. |
| Carers Trust Wales | 3rd Floor 33-35 Cathedral Road Cardiff CF11 9HB T: 029 2009 0087 <https://carers.org/around-the-uk-our-work-in-wales/our-work-in-wales>  | The Carers Trust Wales offers information, advice, discussion and support for carers. They are part of Carers Trust, a national charity committed to improving support and services for unpaid carers. |
| Carers Wales | Ynys Bridge Court Ground Floor, Unit 5Cardiff CF15 9SST: 02920 811370<https://www.carersuk.org/WALES>  | Carers Wales is the voice of carers. They provde advice and support for unpaid carers in Wales |
| Childline Cymru  | [www.childline.org.uk/](http://www.childline.org.uk/)Helpline: 0800 1111 | Childline provides advice and support to children and young people about a wide range of issues. You can talk to a counsellor online, send an email or post on the message boards, as well as calling the helpline. |
| Children’s Commissioner for Wales | Oystermouth HousePhoenix Way Llansamlet Swansea SA7 9FS[www.childcomwales.org.uk/](http://www.childcomwales.org.uk/)T: 01792 765600 | The Children’s Commissioner for Wales works to make sure that children in Wales understand what their rights are, and that these rights are respected. They operate an advice and information services. |
| Children’s Commissioner Advice & Support Line for Young People | T: 0808 801 1000E: post@childcomwales.org.ukSMS: 80800 | Lines open 9am-5pm (Monday to Friday). |
| Child Poverty Action Group | Child Poverty Action Group30 Micawber StreetLondonN1 7TB[www.cpag.org.uk/](http://www.cpag.org.uk/) T: 020 7837 7979  | The Child Poverty Action Group is committed to ending child and family poverty throughout the UK through research, campaigning and publications. |
| Citizens Advice Cymru Advicelink Cymru | [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) T: 03444 77 20 20Textphone: 18001 03444 111 445T: 03444 77 20 20.<https://edit.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/about-us/how-we-provide-advice/advice-partnerships/advicelink-cymru/>  | Citizens Advice, through local Bureauxs (CAB) deliver free, independent, confident and impartial advice from community locations all over the country. You can search for your local CAB on the website or by phoning the number. CAB also has a self-help website, full of practical, reliable information on a range of subjects including benefits, housing, employment and debt.Advicelink Cymru is designed to help people in Wales who are most in need of advice services, particularly those who would not usually seek advice, and is funded by the Welsh Government |
| Contact a Family | [www.contact.org.uk/wales](http://www.contact.org.uk/wales) T: 0808 808 3555 | Support, advice and information for families with disabled children, no matter what their condition of disability, including local projects. Contact a Family also has a dedicated special educational needs advice service. |
| Coram Children’s Legal Centre | Advice Line: 0300 330 5480 0300 330 5485 [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)  | Free information and advice on legal issues relating to children and young people. Relates to non-devolved areas only as Coram gives advice on English and UK law only |
| CRUSE Bereavement Care | Cruse Bereavement CareTy EnerglynCwrt LlanfabonCaerphillyCF83 2TT[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)T: 02920 886913 | Offers support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies. CRUSE offers face-to-face, telephone, email and website support. |
| Family Fund | [www.familyfund.org.uk](http://www.familyfund.org.uk) T: 01904 550055 | Family Fund can give grants to families and carers raising disabled children and young people. They can help with essential items such as washing machines, fridges and clothing but can also consider grants for sensory toys, computers and sometimes family breaks. |
| Family Information Service | To get in touch with your Family Information Service please phone or email your own Local Authority. Find your local service here - <https://gov.wales/find-your-local-family-information-service>  | Every Local Authority in Wales has a Family Information Service (FIS) and they provide free information and advice on a wide range of issues for children and young people, their families and their carers. This includes information on nurseries, childminders, out of school clubs, playgroups, youth information services and much more. |
| Family Lives | [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk) T: 0808 800 2222E: askus@familylives.org.uk | Family Lives offers information on all aspects of family life. As well as the helpline, it runs groups and courses on parenting issues. It runs a UK helpline, with offices based in England. |
| Families Need Fathers | [www.fnf.org.uk](http://www.fnf.org.uk) T: 0300 0300 363 | They provide information, support and advice to parents and grandparents facing child contact problems. They have a specific section on their website for grandparents and can offer specific advice and support to grandparents. |
| Family Rights Group  | 18 Ashwin StreetDalstonLondon E8 3DL[www.frg.org.uk/](http://www.frg.org.uk/)T: 0808 801 0366Helpline – 0808 801 0366 | A charity supporting parents in England and Wales whose children are in need or at risk of entering the care system, or for wider family members who are raising children unable to live at home. |
| Fostering Network Wales/Cymru | 33 Cathedral Road PontcannaCardiff CF11 9HA[www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk](http://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk) T: 029 2044 0940 | General information for foster carers and professionals about fostering and publications for foster carers and professionals.  |
| Gingerbread | Gingerbread 54-74 Holmes RoadLondon, NW5 3AQ[www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk) T: 0207 428 5400Helpline: 0808 802 0925 | Provides advice and practical support for single parents. |
| Grandparents Plus | [www.grandparentsplus.org.uk](http://www.grandparentsplus.org.uk) Advice Line: 0300 123 7015 | Grandparents Plus advice and information service provides comprehensive information and advice on all issues affecting kinship carers including: welfare benefits and other financial support, employment rights, housing, education, and caring for a child with special needs. Grandparents Plus also run a free peer support network for kinship carers. |
| Grandparents Legal Centre | [www.grandparentslegalcentre.co.uk](http://www.grandparentslegalcentre.co.uk) T: 0843 289 7130 | Specialist legal advice charity for grandparents, including local authority responsibilities and other issues affecting kinship carers. Cover England and Wales. |
| Grandparents Raising Grandchildren | [www.grgcardiff.co.uk](http://www.grgcardiff.co.uk)T: 07340960969E: grgcardiff@hotmail.com | Support Group run by grandparents for grandparents and other family members raising children. Meetings once a month in central Cardiff. |
| Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations | Ty DerwenChurch RoadNewportGwentNP19 7EJ [www.gavo.org.uk/](http://www.gavo.org.uk/)T: 01633 241550E: info@gavo.org.uk | You can contact GAVO for information about a Kinship Care Support Group in the Newport area of South East Wales. |
| MEIC Cymru  | [www.meiccymru.org](http://www.meiccymru.org)T: 08088023456Text: 84001 | Advocacy, information and advice helpline for children and young people in Wales. |
| Money Advice Service | <https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en>T:0800 138 7777 | Offers free and impartial money advice on a broad range of financial issues |
| Older People’s Commissioner for Wales | Cambrian Buildings Mt Stuart Square Cardiff CF10 5FL[www.olderpeoplewales.com](http://www.olderpeoplewales.com)T: 0344 264 0670 | The Older People’s Commissioner for Wales is an independent voice and champion for older people across Wales, standing up and speaking out on their behalf. |
| PACT Cymru  | [www.prisonadvice.org.uk](http://www.prisonadvice.org.uk)T: 0808 808 2003 | Provides practical and emotional support to prisoners’ children and families, and to prisoners themselves. |
| Samaritans | 33-35 Cathedral RoadPontcanna Cardiff CF11 9HB[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org) Helpline: 116 123T: 0330 094 5717Welsh Language T: 0808 164 0123 | Samaritans offer confidential, emotional support 24/7 to those experiencing despair, distress or suicidal feelings. Please visit the website to find details for local branches. |
| Shelter Cymru  | Shelter Cymru Head Office25 Walter RoadSwanseaSA1 5NN[www.sheltercymru.org.uk](http://www.sheltercymru.org.uk) T: 02920 556120 | Shelter is a charity that works to alleviate the distress caused by homelessness and bad housing. They offer advice and support to those in housing difficulties. |
| Working Families | 130 Wood StreetLondonEC2V 6DL[www.workingfamilies.org.uk](http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk)T: (0) 20 7253 7243 | Advice for parents and carers on their rights at work. |
| Young Minds | [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) T: 0808 802 5544Text ‘YM’ to: 85258 | A helpline for any adult worried about the emotional problems, behaviour or mental health of a child or young person. |

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