

National Advice and helplines

Buttle UK

Buttle offer support to kinship carers through grant programmes for children and young people.

www.buttleuk.org

E-mail: info@buttleuk.org

Telephone: 020 7828 7311

Coram Children's Legal Centre

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

www.childrenslegalcentre.com

E-mail: info@coramclc.org.uk

Child Law Advice Line: 08088 020 008

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.

www.frg.org.uk

Advice line: 0808 801 0366

Email: advice@frg.org.uk

National Advice and helplines

The Grandparents' Association

Supports grandparents and their families, especially those caring for their grandchildren on a full-time basis.

www.grandparents-association.org.uk

Helpline: 0845 4349585

Support Groups: 0844 3572907

Grandparents Plus

Grandparents Plus is the national charity that offers a free peer Support Network and an advice and information service for grandparents and family members who have stepped in to raise a child.

Advice and Information Service

0300 123 7015 10am-3pm Mon – Fri

Email: advice@grandparentsplus.org.uk

www.grandparentsplus.org.uk

Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)

Provides practical and emotional support to prisoners and to their children and families.

www.prisonadvice.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7735 9535

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Department
for Education

Services and support for family and friends carers



This leaflet provides information on the main types of support and services for relatives or friends who are caring for a child who is unable to live with their parents.

Family and friends care

Being a family and friends carer

A family and friends carer is a grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother, sister or family friend who is looking after a child who cannot be cared for by their birth parents.

As a carer, you are providing a vital role to a child who cannot live with their parents, giving them love, support and a sense of belonging.

You may have become a carer in a crisis without any notice and may yourself have been deeply affected by the events which have led to the child coming to live with you .

You could be dealing with the death of a loved one or coping with them suffering from mental health or drug addiction, all whilst trying to take on the care of the child. So it is important that you know what support services you are entitled to.

In this leaflet there is information on key facts, entitlements, services and advice that may be available to you.

As well as the help you can receive from your local authority you may also want to find out about a local support group.

Support groups are a valuable way of helping carers access practical and emotional support when it is needed.

On the back of this advice leaflet you will find advice lines that will be able to help you connect with your local group.

Key facts

- If a child comes to live with you at the request of the local authority then the child is 'looked after'. In this case you must be approved as a foster carer.
- All foster carers are entitled to an allowance to meet the costs of caring for the child as well as a wide range of services and support for the child.
- Children who came to stay with you without the local authority being involved are not looked after. In this case, you do not have to be approved as a foster carer.
- Whether or not you are a foster carer, you can receive support for the child you care for as a 'Child in need' from your Local Authority (under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989) to help a child to be cared for in their wider families. This includes financial support and guidance or counselling for those children with emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- All local authorities must have a published policy on what services and support are available to meet the needs of all children in family and friends care, whether or not they are looked after children.
- You should be able to find this policy on your local authority's website but you can also ask for them to send a copy to you.

Long term arrangements

You may wish to make a longer term commitment to the child in your care. You can apply for a Child Arrangement Orders (formally a residence order) or a special guardianship order, this will give you parental responsibility and the child would no longer be looked after if they were previously.

Relatives caring for a child in these long term arrangements are entitled to child benefit and any other benefits available to parents subject to the usual eligibility criteria.

If you have a special guardianship order you may also apply to be assessed for special guardianship support .

In some cases a local authority may pay a financial allowance to a person with a residence order or special guardianship order.

If you are considering this type of long term arrangements you should check with your local authority what support you will receive and where possible with an independent advice service before you decide whether this type of arrangement is suitable for you.

Further information on legal arrangements and types of supports and services is available on the back of this leaflet and at <https://www.gov.uk>