

Southwark Virtual School



Kinship Care

Kinship Care: extension of the VSH's Duty

Why has the duty of the Virtual School Head now been extended to children in Kinship care?

Children growing up in kinship care do better than children in unrelated foster care, but worse than children in the general population. This applies to emotional, behavioural and education outcomes.

Kinship care offers children a chance to belong to a loving family. Most kinship carers believe they are permanently caring for their children.

The 2021 census found that:

- Around 141,000 children were living in kinship care in England and Wales
- 67% of children living in kinship care are in deprived households

Kinship Care: State of the nation

Additional findings for children in Kinship Care:

- Over half are looked after by a Grandparent
- A quarter of the households had at least one member with long term mental or physical health problems
- They are more likely to be living in overcrowded households

Survey by Kinship – the pressures on kinship families :

- Large majority of carers believed their children had additional physical or mental health needs but just 33% had received an official diagnosis. This suggests that many carers believed they were caring for children with undiagnosed health needs,
- Kinship carers were often dealing with violence and the consequences of trauma and therefore a need for therapeutic support
- 3 times the national average of children in kinship care had special educational needs.

Virtual School and Kinship

- The Virtual School Head's role has been extended on a non-statutory basis to specifically include championing the attendance, attainment, and progress of all children in kinship care.
- This means that all children in kinship arrangements, regardless of legal status, will benefit from the adaptation of the strategic role.
- Kinship families with a special guardianship or child arrangement order, regardless of whether the children were previously in local authority care, will also benefit from advice and information, upon request, from the Virtual School to help them navigate the education system.

Extension of duty: Kinship Care

The remit of Virtual School Heads already included kinship children:

- who are looked-after
- who meet the definition of previously looked-after
- with a social worker.

Extension of duty: PLAC

- Previously looked-after children's challenges and need for support will often continue after they leave care. **Looked-after children and children adopted from care, on a special guardianship or child arrangements order are eligible for Pupil Premium + funding.**
- For previously looked-after children, PP+ funding is managed by the child's school. **The amount a school receives is based on the number of eligible children recorded in the school's annual January School Census return to the Department for Education.**
- Schools need to help raise previously looked-after children's parents' and guardians' awareness of the PP+ by **encouraging parents of eligible previously looked-after children to tell the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+ funding**

Extension of duty: PLAC

- Statutory guidance states schools will need to ask parents/guardians for evidence of PLAC status
- For previously looked-after children, **designated teachers** should work with senior leaders, mental health services and parents and carers to **put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of this group of children.**
- The **designated teacher should be open and accessible so that those with parental responsibility** feel able to approach the DT to discuss the support needs of their child.

Extension of duty: PLAC

- Carers should be encouraged to participate in discussions about their child's support needs and strategies to meet identified needs, including how PP+ should be used to support their child. The views and wishes of parents and guardians should be respected at all times.
- Where a previously looked-after child is at risk of exclusion, the designated teacher should talk to the child's parents or guardians before seeking the advice of the VSH on avoiding exclusion.

Extension of duty: Role of Designated Teacher

- Providing **effective induction** for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care
- Although they will no longer be required to have a PEP, the designated teacher has a **duty to promote the educational attainment of children who leave care through adoption, Special Guardianship or a Child Arrangements Order.**

PLAC support

Some kinship carers can get financial support from the adoption and special guardianship support fund through Children's Services. This is for:

- essential therapeutic services, such as creative therapies or life story work.
- specialist assessments that lead to a therapeutic support plan for the family.

In Southwark contact is through SGOConnectedPersons@southwark.gov.uk



More information can be found on the Kinship website:

- <https://kinship.org.uk/support-and-advice/advice-and-information/adoption-and-special-guardianship-support-fund/>

Kinship training



kinship.org.uk

[Overview of the EHCP and SEND process](#)

13 December 2024 — 10:00am - 11:30am

[Financial support for kinship families workshop](#)

5 December 2024 — 11:00am - 12:30pm

11 December 2024 — 11:00am - 12:30pm

[Managing contact for kinship families – the emotional journey workshop](#)

9 December 2024 — 10:00am - 11:30am

[Managing contact for kinship families – practical tools and tips workshop](#)

10 December 2024 — 11:00am - 12:30pm

[Supporting your kinship child at school](#)

12 December 2024 — 11:00am - 12:30pm

Kinship carers can also sign up now for the roadshow, running 9.30-14.30 on the day, in:

- [London](#) (9 December 2024)

Extension of duty: Educational Inclusion

- Raise awareness of needs and disadvantage of children in kinship care
- Promote practice that supports attendance and engagement and attainment

Southwark Virtual School supports trauma-informed and relational practice

We have paid for all Southwark schools to join ARC (Attachment Research Community). 50 schools are signed up.

Offers a pathway to reviewing and establishing relational practice

Beormund school reached the short list for the Alex Timpson Award this year as a school steeped in relational practice.



Extension of duty: London Inclusion Charter

If you are not one of the 50 schools that has already signed up to the Attachment Research Community, please fill in this form to receive your login:

<https://forms.office.com/e/2ALZ6Ci8R5>



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