

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL OFFER FOR KINSHIP

CARERS

October 2025

1. Local Offer for Kinship Carers

Kinship care is where children are looked after by people they already know. It is also called connected persons care or family and friends care. There are different types of kinship care, both formal and informal. All types provide an opportunity for children to feel loved and cared for by people they already have a connection with.

We understand the unique challenges and rewards that come with being a kinship carer. Whether you are a grandparent, aunt, uncle, sibling, or close family friend who has stepped in to care for a child, we are here to support you every step of the way.

Our Local Offer is designed to provide you with information and resources to help you navigate your journey as a kinship carer. You will find details about the various types of support available. It includes financial assistance, training opportunities, and community resources. We also offer guidance on legal matters, health and wellbeing, and educational support for the children in your care.

We are committed to ensuring that you have access to the right support at the right time. Our goal is to:

- make it easier for you to find the information you need
- connect with other kinship carers
- access the services that can help you provide the best possible care for the children in your life

Children and families in kinship care may also be able to access:

- [Bedford Local Offer](#) for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- [Special educational needs and disability \(SEND\) | Bedford Borough Council](#)
- [Care experienced young people - our local offer | Bedford Borough Council](#)

2. Five Types of Kinship Care

Sometimes, children move to live with other family members, or close family friends, due to a private family arrangement. At other times, the court might decide that the child should live elsewhere, so they will be kept safe and have the best chance of reaching their potential.

Where there is an assessed level of need, a local authority provides services to support parents in caring for their children. It ensures the welfare of the children within the area for which the authority is responsible. If a child can't live with their parent because of the local authority concern for the child's welfare, the local authority has a responsibility to support the child. They should help the child to remain living within their wider family, when safe and appropriate to do so. Research suggests that kinship care is beneficial for children in the following ways:

- Kinship care can provide greater stability for children than long-term foster care
- Children tend to perceive their placement more positively
- Kinship care respects cultural tradition
- Kinship care provides legal security and permanence without removing the legal rights of the parents

There are five different types of kinship care with different levels of parental responsibility.

2.1 Child Arrangement Orders

Who has parental responsibility?

Carers and parents share an equal level of parental responsibility with the order defining how the care arrangements are undertaken.

Nature of care arrangement

A Child Arrangement Order is a court order. It gives parental responsibility to the person or people named in it. It usually lasts until the child is 16 years old. The order establishes the residence of a child and can include matters such as contact with a child. Parental responsibility is shared between the holder of the Child Arrangement Order and the parents.

2.2 Connected Person Carer

Who has parental responsibility?

The local authority shares parental responsibility for the child if the child is subject to a Interim care order or (full) care order. If the child is subject to Section 20 of the Children Act (1989) then the parents retain their parental responsibility.

A Section 20 Agreement of the Children Act (1989) is a voluntary agreement. This is when a parent, or person with parental responsibility, agrees to a child being taken out of their care and into another form of care like foster care.

Nature of care arrangement

Where a child is in the care of the local authority, where possible we are responsible for arranging for them to live with a family member or friends. When a child needs an immediate care and protection, this family member or friend is temporary approved as a Connected Person Carer (Regulation 24 of [Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(England\) Regulations 2010](#)). They are temporarily approved for 16 week, and it can be extended for eight weeks while an assessment for full approval as a foster carer or special guardianship order is completed.

The process of approving foster carers is set out in the placement with connected persons procedure - [Placements with Connected Persons](#).

2.3 Informal care

Who has parental responsibility?

The carer does not hold parental responsibility for the child in an informal care arrangement. The power to make decisions on behalf of the child rests with those who have legal parental authority.

Nature of care arrangement

Where a child cannot be cared for within their immediate family, those with parental responsibility may allow a close relative to care for the child. A close relative is defined within the Children Act (1989) as a grandparent, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, or stepparent by marriage.

The local authority does not have a duty to assess informal family care arrangements. However, they must do so if it appears that it may be necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child in need. In such cases, the local authority has a responsibility, under Section 17 of the Children Act (1989), to assess and meet the child's needs. Following an assessment, a 'child in need plan' will be drawn up and a support package identified. This may include a variety of services and support, including financial support - [Child in Need Meetings and the Child in Need Plan](#).

2.4 Private Fostering

Who has parental responsibility?

The carer does not hold parental responsibility for the child. The power to make decisions on behalf of the child rests with those who have legal parental authority.

Nature of care arrangement

Private fostering arrangements are where a child under the age of 16 (or under 18, if a child is disabled), is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative'. This is a private arrangement, made between a parent and a carer, for 28 days or more.

For further information about private fostering, please contact Integrated Front Door Team (IFD)

Telephone- 01234 718700

When - Monday to Thursday 8:45 am to 5:20 pm and Friday 8:45 to 4:20 pm, during office hours.

Out of Hours – contact 0300 300 8123

2.5 Special Guardianship

Special guardianship is a court-ordered childcare arrangement that provides a permanent and secure home for a child who cannot live with their birth parents.

A Special Guardian has enhanced parental responsibility, sharing it with the child's birth parents but having the final say on most decisions regarding the child's long-term care, such as education and healthcare. It lasts until a child turns 18.

However, certain fundamental decisions, such as changing the child's surname or taking the child abroad for over three months, still require the consent of anyone with parental responsibility. A Special Guardianship Order does not remove parental responsibility from the birth parents entirely, but it does grant the special guardian exclusive authority in most care matters.

What is the difference between a connected persons foster carer and a special guardian?

The main distinction lies in the legal status and permanence of the arrangement. A connected person carer acts as a foster carer within the existing family and friends network, often under local authority supervision. A special guardian, however, has a court-ordered legal status that grants them significant, long-term parental responsibility, providing greater stability and legal certainty for the child.

Connected persons carers must comply with the fostering regulations. These are set national standards to ensure every child in care is safeguarded and well cared for.

A Connected persons carer does not have parental responsibility. Many decisions concerning the child will need to be agreed with Children's Social Care and parents. This includes

- arranging for the child to stay with family or friends if not covered in the placement agreement.
- matters such as haircuts or school trip activities

The child cannot have a babysitter or childminder unless the person has been Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked and approved by Children's Social Care.

None of these restrictions apply to special guardians or those with a Child Arrangement Order.

3.Supporting our Kinship carers

3.1Support for children

If you're a child in kinship care, there's helpful information and guidance available to support you, answer your questions, and make things a little easier to understand.

- [Childline](#) - Children and young people can call the helpline on 0800 1111 about any problem, at any time - day or night.
- Ring **the Duty Social Worker** on 01234 718700, Monday to Thursday 8:50am to 5:20pm and Friday 8:50am to 4:20pm.

- You can also call the emergency duty team on 0300 300 8123 at night and weekends and tell them what is happening.
- In an emergency – ring the police on 999.

If you don't want to talk to someone you don't know, you can ask an adult that you trust, like a teacher or youth worker or even a friend, to make the phone call for you.

There are other Organisations that can help. Their contact details are located further down this report.

3.2 Virtual school

The Virtual School exists to support and challenge all those involved in the education of children in care. They work in close collaboration with colleagues across the authority and track educational progress, while supporting and monitoring work with children and young people in care.

All children in our care, from the age of 2 to 16 and who are in education post-16 (up to the age of 18), are monitored by Bedford Borough's Virtual School.

3.3 Support for families

Kinship carers can access a range of support and guidance to help them manage daily challenges and provide the best possible care for the children they look after.

3.3.1 Family Hubs and Children Centres

Family Hubs are welcoming places where families can get a wide range of advice and support, all in one place. They support families with children from birth up to age 19, and up to age 25 for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Family Hubs offer support with everyday things like health, education, parenting, and emotional well-being. They focus especially on helping

young children develop and thrive. Families can take part in activities that help children learn, stay healthy, and grow with confidence

Families can also find support through the [Bedford Borough Local Offer](#) website, which lists various services, or by visiting their local Children's Centre.

How can I get in touch?

Email

For more information email familyhubs@bedford.gov.uk or send a message via our Family Hubs [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) pages and the service will get back to you as soon as we can.

Telephone

Call us on 0300 323 0245 (8.30am-4.30pm Monday-Friday) or contact the [Family Information service](#) on 0800 023 2057 (open Monday-Friday 9-4pm with a 24 hour answerphone service).

Where are the Family Hubs and Children's Centres?

- Queens Park Family Hub, Marlborough Road, MK40 4LE
- Pine Cones Family Hub, Slade Walk, MK41
- Daisy Hill Children's Centre, Hillgrounds Road, MK42 8QH
- Cherry Trees Children's Centre, Hawkins Road MK42 9LS
- Central Family Hub, 30 Allhallows, MK40 1LN
- Bluebells Family Hub, Village Road, Bromham, MK43 8JP
- Eastcotts Family Hub, 65 Beauvais Square, Shortstown MK42 0GG

There are four pop-up Family Hubs in community locations:

- Wixams Pop Up - Lakeview Village Hall, Brooklands Ave, Wixams MK42 6AB
- Thurleigh Pop Up - Thurleigh Village Hall, High Street, Thurleigh MK44 2DB
- Goldington Pop Up - St Mary's Church Hall, Church Lane, Goldington MK41 0AN
- Wootton Pop Up - Wootton Community Centre, Harris Way MK43 9FZ

3.3.2 Bedford Borough Early Help for families

[Early Help](#) is about taking action early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families.

Early Help means providing support as soon as possible to help families cope with difficulties and working together with other services to prevent bigger problems emerging.

Support can come from a range of services and organisations, for parents, children and young people of any age. Our aim is to provide the right action at the right time with the right support.

Contact details: Early Help Hub on 0800 023 2057.

Telephone: 0800 023 2057

E-mail - earlyhelphub@bedford.gov.uk

Website - [Bedford Borough Early Help for families | Bedford Local Offer](#)

3.3.3 Team Around the Family (TAF)

A Team Around the Family (TAF) is implemented where additional needs have been identified through and Early Help Assessment (EHA), and support is required from more than one agency, team or service. The TAF brings together young people, parents, extended family and a range of professionals/ practitioners, into a small, individualised team to co-ordinate support and interventions. All of the family members have a role in the TAF and their views and needs play a central role. A TAF should ensure that young people, parents/carers and extended family all have a role in agreeing goals and agreeing actions to meet those goals.

Outcomes from a TAF meeting should include: The identification of a 'Lead Professional', the creation of a support package which identifies roles and responsibilities, and the setting of a review date for a subsequent meeting to assess whether needs are being adequately met by the support package.

Contact details: Early Help Hub on 0800 023 2057.

Telephone: 0800 023 2057

E-mail - earlyhelphub@bedford.gov.uk

[Bedford Borough Early Help for families | Bedford Local Offer](#)

3.3.4 Integrated Front Door (IFD) Team

Concerned about a Child?

If you think the child is in immediate danger

Call the police on 999.

Or Bedfordshire Police: 01234 841212

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000

If the child is not in immediate danger

If the child is not in immediate danger, but you're still concerned about them, please complete our **'Report a concern about a child' form** which is located on this website [Concerned about a child? | Bedford Borough Council](#) and email it to IFDinformation@bedford.gov.uk.

If you are a member of the public and are unable to use the online form, you can contact the Integrated Front Door (previously known as MASH) by phone:

Tel: 01234 718700 (office hours) Monday- Thursday 9.00am to 5.20pm and Fridays from 9.00am to 4.20pm.

Tel: 0300 300 8123 (out of hours)

3.3.5 Post Adoption and Special Guardianship Support

There are various post adoption and special guardianship services that Bedford Borough Council can offer kinship carers:

- Advice on managing contact
- Supporting families with accessing counselling

- Signposting to relevant and helpful groups and organisations
- Support groups for our families
- Information about the adoption support fund

4. Training

4.1 Triple P - Positive Parenting Program

What is Triple P?

Triple P is the flexible, practical way to develop skills, strategies and confidence to handle any parenting situation. When it comes to raising children and teenagers, there is no guidebook, 'Triple P' gives parents simple tips to help manage the big and small problems of family life. Problems like toddler tantrums or teenage rebellion, self-esteem issues, bedtime battles, managing behaviour, anxiety and aggression. Triple P can help you deal with them all – and more.

Triple P courses help you to:

- encourage your child's development
- manage your children's behaviour in a useful and caring way
- recognise causes of common behaviour problems
- encourage desirable behaviour in your children
- increase your self-confidence.

The following Triple P courses are offered:

- **Stepping Stones Triple P** – 6 weeks course for parents and carers with children with a special need or disability
- **Fear-Less Triple P** – geared to support people to learn to manage anxiety effectively to ensure it does not interfere with their lives
- **Strengthening Families** – is 6 weeks course for parents and children agreed 10-14 years to support parents with strategies to manage their behaviours.
- **Who is in Charge?** – 6-week course to support parents with children who are presenting behaviours that challenge (such as aggression and violence)

Contact Details

For families with children under 5 years old call 0300 323 0245 or email admin@ecpbedford.org.

For Families with children and young people aged 5-18 email triplep@bedford.gov.uk.

4.2 Discussion Group

We have a variety of information Sessions called 'Discussion Groups' available throughout the year.

- Preparing for Baby (Triple P Baby)
- Managing Fighting and Aggression (for parents/carers of children aged 0-12)
- Dealing with Disobedience (for parents/carers of children aged 0-12)
- Developing Good Bedtime Routines (for parents/carers of children aged 0-12)
- Hassle Free Mealtimes (for parents/carers of children aged 0-12)
- Hassle Free Shopping with Children (for parents/carers of children aged 0-12)
- Teen Brain (for parents/carers of children over 12)
- Getting Teenagers to Cooperate (for parents/carers of children over 12)
- Coping with Teenage Emotions (for parents/carers of children over 12)
- Building Teenage Survival Skills (for parents/carers of children over 12)
- Reducing Family Conflict (for parents/carers of children over 12)

These are bookable through our Eventbrite page link. This page is updated regularly with new dates/times/venues.

[Courses for parents and carers by Bedford Borough Family Hubs | Eventbrite](#)

4.3. Additional Advice, Support and Training

We are committed to supporting all kinship carers and children in kinship care. This is whether you are a household who has a Special Guardianship Order, a private foster carer, in receipt of a Child Arrangement Order, an informal kinship carer.

If you would like some advice and support, you can access this by calling contact centre by phone: 01234 267422

- 01234 267422 (Monday to Friday 8:45 to 5:20, Friday 8:45 to 4:20pm)
- 0300 300 8123 (out of hours)

Information about local activities and events for family can be found on -

[What's On - Love Bedford](#)

[Log in to Facebook](#)

[Love Bedford \(@LoveBedford\) / X](#)

We offer additional free training on the following topics

- Bumps, birth and baby stuff
- Introducing Solid Food workshop
- Potty training workshop
- Makaton Signing
- Dealing with Disobedience under 5 years
- Managing fighting and Aggression under 5
- Managing bedtime under 5

The courses can be accessed via this link - [Bedford Borough Council Early Help Events - 16 Upcoming Activities and Tickets | Eventbrite](#)

To find more information and local support for parents visit **the** [Family Hubs and Children's Centre website](#)

5. Additional Support for children

- [Action for Children supports and speaks out for the most vulnerable children and young people in the UK.](#) It offers help and support for disabled children, young people, children in care and family support.
- [Bedfordshire Against Violence and Exploitation](#) - information on what child sexual exploitation is, how to spot the signs, and what to do if you're concerned about it.
- [Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership](#) - information on where to go for help and local support services. 24 hour helpline 0808 2000 247/
- [Bedfordshire Young People Substance Misuse Service \(Aquarius\)](#) - supports 5 to 19 year olds impacted by substance misuse (own use or parents)/
- [Brook](#) - Sexual health and wellbeing service for under 25 year olds.
- [CAMHS](#) - Children and adolescent mental health service for East London, Luton and Bedfordshire.
- [CEOP](#) (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) - What to do if you worried about online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating with you online.
- [Childhood Bereavement Network is a national, multi-professional federation of organisations and individuals working with bereaved children and young people.](#)
- [Childline](#) - Children and young people can call the helpline on 0800 1111 about any problem, at any time - day or night.
- [Childnet](#) - advice to stay safe while using the internet.
- [Chums](#) (Child Bereavement, Trauma and Wellbeing Service) Tel: 01525 863924 Email: info@chums.uk.com.
- [Cruse Bereavement Care](#) - Offers support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies. Free helpline: 0808 808 1677.
- [Frank](#) - Confidential service offering advice, support with drugs and alcohol issues for all ages. Phone: 0800 776 600.
- [Galop](#) - LGBT+ anti-violence charity.
- [The Hideout](#) - advice for children and young people about domestic violence.
- [Hope Programme](#) - telephone helpline, emotional support and counselling for children over 10, and adults, who have suffered rape and sexual violence.
- [Kidscape](#) - advice on how to deal with bullying.
- [Lawstuff](#) - legal advice and information.

- [Let's Talk About It](#) - practical help and guidance to the public to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- [Mind BLMK \(Bedford\)](#) - mental health support and advice.
- [National Youth Advocacy Service \(NYAS\) is a UK charity providing children's rights and socio-legal services.](#) It offers information, advice, advocacy and legal representation to children and young people up to the age of 25.
- [NSPCC \(National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children\)](#) is the UK's leading charity specialising in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children.
- [Runaway Helpline](#) - if you are thinking about running away, if you have already run away, or if you have been away and come back.
- [Samaritans](#) Tel: 0845 7909090 Provides emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide.
- [Victim Support](#) offers information and support to children and young people affected by crime.
- [YoungMinds](#) - mental health advice and support.