

**Post Special Guardian Support  
Policy**

**November 2022**



## **Bolton Council Post Special Guardianship Support Service Policy.**

### **1. Background.**

This policy covers all aspects of Post Special Guardianship Support services. It relates to support services provided by the Local Authority after a Special Guardianship Order has been made, and should be read in conjunction with Bolton Council Special Guardianship Orders Policy (6.2.17).

### **2. The Legal Framework.**

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 provides the legal framework for Special Guardianship under the Children Act 1989.

The Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 were implemented in December 2005 and amended with The Special Guardianship (Amendment) Regulations 2016 - thereby ensuring parity of assessment requirements with other Orders.

This legislation is supported by the [DfE Special Guardianship Guidance \(2017\)](#) produced by the Department for Education.

The 2017 Special Guardianship Guidance to LAs states that parents/children and Special Guardians must receive an assessment for Special Guardianship support services if the child has been previously 'looked after'.

Those young people made subject to Special Guardianship Orders who were not previously Looked After Children should not be disadvantaged. Those families should also be offered an assessment of support needs. If no assessment is being offered, the Local Authority needs to write to the family to explain why. An assessment does not automatically mean support will be provided to the Special Guardians,

Children subject to a Special Guardianship Order are eligible as previously Looked After Children for additional support with their education (Sections 20(4) and 20A(4) of the Special Guardianship Regulations although this only applies to those children who previously looked after subject to Special Guardianship Orders and not the children who are subject to Special Guardianship Orders but have not been previously looked after

Children and Young Persons Act 2008). For further information, please see the [Education of Children with a Social Worker, Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Procedure](#).

### **3. Preparation and Assessment of Support Needs Prior to a Special Guardianship Order being Made.**

Bolton Council Special Guardianship Orders Policy (6.2.17) specifies the process by which the Local Authority will assess the need for support, including financial support, before a Special Guardianship Order is made. The Policy outlines how and when existing support plans may be reviewed, including review of financial support.

### **4. Review of the Original Special Guardianship Support Plan.**

A Special Guardian has the right to contact Bolton Social Care and Early Help at any stage during the first three years of the Order to request that the Special Guardianship Support Plan is reviewed to ensure that it continues to best meet the needs of the carer and child. Circumstances need not to have necessarily changed to warrant a review, but it may be that the Support Plan is no longer having the desired positive impact.

When the three-year period from the making of the Special Guardianship Order has expired, the Local Authority where the Special Guardian lives is responsible for assessing and providing support services (excluding financial support).

The Local Authority may contact a Special Guardian on an annual basis to establish whether the child(ren) continue to reside within the family and to review the Special Guardianship Arrangement, this includes the review of financial support.

### **5. Request for Post Special guardianship Support.**

Self-referrals for support may be made by Special Guardians, and birth parents of children cared for in Special Guardianship arrangements, by contacting the Post Special guardianship Support Team on 01204 337480, or by email at [postsgosupport@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:postsgosupport@bolton.gov.uk).

Professionals wishing to request support for Special Guardians may do so by completing the referral form and sending to [postsgosupport@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:postsgosupport@bolton.gov.uk). Professionals may also wish to contact the service to request advice, or to discuss a referral, by contacting the Post Special guardianship Support Team on 01204 337480, or by email at [postsgosupport@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:postsgosupport@bolton.gov.uk). The referrer must first seek the agreement and consent of the Special Guardian / family before making a referral.

### **6. Assessment of Post Special Guardianship Support.**

In response to referrals, the Post Special Guardianship Support Team will consider the need for an assessment. An assessment will not be needed in all cases, including cases where the support needed is in the form of advice, where the support needed is clear without an assessment, and where the support need is outside the remit of the team.

Where an assessment is completed, the Special Guardian, and where appropriate the child, will be consulted. Any proposed plan of support should be drawn up in agreement with the Special Guardian. Where a decision is made not to provide support, the reason for this will

be provided. The Special Guardian has the right to make representations if they disagree with this, which will be considered by the Head of Service for Family Placement.

## **7. Support Provided by the Post Special Guardianship Support Team.**

The assessment of support needs will identify and build packages of support to increase the resilience of placements and support carers to ensure the best quality of care for children. The assessment will build a profile of the family's skills and abilities so that placements can be maintained and supported.

Support can include individual work, group work, and / or access to training. Support may also include signposting to other agencies, including Housing, benefits advice, Adults' Services, Education, and health care services.

Support may be provided for issues specific to Special Guardianship, including supporting carers with life story work, mediation between carers and birth parents, and issues with children's family time.

The team may also support carers through advocacy, and support with regard to their own emotional wellbeing.

The team may also support carers to work in collaboration and develop good working relationships across Children's Services, including working with the Child in Need, Looked After Children, and Leaving Care Teams, as well as with colleagues in schools, health, and CAMHs.

Where appropriate, support may include making applications to the Adoption Support Fund for assessment / therapy and liaising and working alongside therapists / psychologists to determine the most suitable therapeutic intervention.

## **8. Child in Need and Safeguarding Concerns.**

Where it is identified that a child's needs are such that a child is at risk of not meeting their potential (Child in Need as defined under Section 17, Children and Family Act 1989), the family will be supported in line with the Local Authority Child in Need or Early Help Process by the relevant Early Help, Integrated Front Door, or Safeguarding Team.

Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their welfare will be overseen in line with the Local Authority Safeguarding process and by the relevant Integrated Front Door, Safeguarding, or Looked After Child Team.

Where it is believed that there may be safeguarding concerns at the point of referral to the Post Special guardianship Team, professional referrers will be advised to refer to the Integrated Front Door Team.

Where a Special Guardian or parent / family member of a child in a Special Guardianship arrangement makes a referral to the Post Special Guardianship Support Team, the team will refer any safeguarding concerns to the Integrated Front Door Team.

Should safeguarding concerns arise during the provision of post Special Guardianship support, the team will refer these concerns to the Integrated Front Door Team. Should this happen, the Special Guardian will be made aware that this information is being shared and the reason why, with the exception of circumstances where sharing this would place the child at risk of harm.

The Post Special Guardianship Team does not provide the role of allocated Social Worker for a child where there are safeguarding concerns but will contribute to safeguarding plans via the provision of support in relation to issues connected to Special Guardianship.

### **9. Review of support provided.**

Regulation 17 of the Special Guardianship Regulations requires that where the local authority provides special guardianship support services for a person, other than financial support payable periodically, it must review the provision of such services. The Special Guardianship support plan will be reviewed in timescales that are agreed, considered and appropriate, in any event, at least annually.

**Updated by Shirley Jennings November 2022**