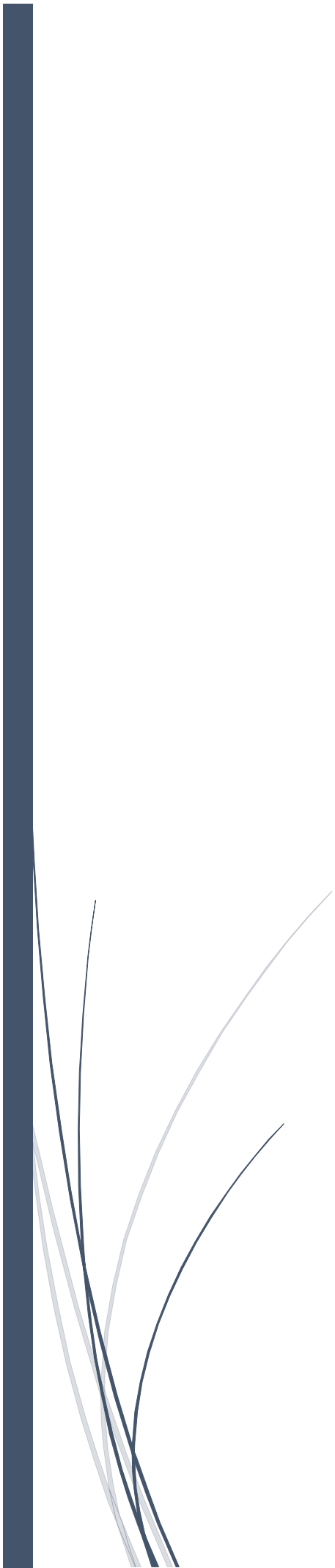




Camden's Kinship Local Offer November 2025



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Introduction

Every child and young person deserve to grow up in a safe, loving home. In many families, relatives or close friends step in to care for a child or young person full-time when their parents cannot do so. This is known as kinship care, and it plays a vital role in helping children stay connected to the people, places and cultures that matter to them. In Camden, many children are being cared for by grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles or family friends. These arrangements, whether informal or arranged with the help of Social Care services, are often rooted in love, loyalty and a strong sense of responsibility. At Camden, we value the incredible and important role kinship carers play in providing security, stability and belonging for children and young people within the borough.

Through our kinship strategy, we are committed to supporting children and young people to remain within their family networks whenever safe to do so. For those who take on the vital role of kinship carer, we are committed to providing clear information and practical support, including training, financial assistance, legal guidance, emotional wellbeing support and access to peer support networks, so that no carer faces this responsibility alone.

Camden's Kinship Local Offer has been developed in collaboration with kinship carers, young people, and local partners. Through engagement with carers, they highlighted the need for a single point of contact and clear, accessible information. In response, Camden introduced a dedicated kinship phone line and a webpage consolidating kinship support information.

What is Kinship Care?

Kinship care describes situations where a child is cared for by someone they already know and trust, such as a family member or close friend. There are different types of kinship arrangements:

- **Informal Kinship Care:** Private, family led arrangements with no legal order or formal involvement from the local authority.
- **Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs):** Where a trusted adult, often a relative or close family friend, is appointed by the court to care for a child and take on parental responsibility.
- **Child Arrangements Orders (CAOs):** Where the court agrees a child should live with a family member or friend who is not their parent.
- **Kinship Foster Care:** Also known as Family & Friends foster care or connected persons. It is when a family member or friend is assessed and becomes a child or young person's approved foster carer.
- **Private Foster Care:** When a child is cared for by someone who is not their parent or close relative for 28 days or more. Camden must be notified so the child's welfare can be checked.
- **Adoption:** This is not appropriate or recommended for most kinship carers. When you adopt a child, the link between the child and parent is legally separated and you have full parental responsibility.

Support available through this Local Offer depends on the child's legal status and assessed needs.

What is Camden's Kinship Local Offer?

Camden's kinship Local Offer is based on clear values about how we work with kinship families. We believe kinship care is a vital part of keeping children safe within their families, and we are committed to being fair, open, inclusive, and offering help as early as possible. We know that kinship carers can face challenges, such as finding the right information, managing money pressures, dealing with housing issues, or trying to navigate complex services. This Local Offer is designed to make things easier by clearly explaining what support is available, how to access it, and who you can contact for help.

This Local Offer is mainly for kinship carers and the children and young people they care for. It is also for professionals working in early years settings, Family Hubs, schools, colleges, health services, and advice agencies, so they can better understand kinship care and help families access the right support. The Kinship Local Offer brings together information about the support available to kinship families in Camden. It explains what help you can expect, how to get it, and where to go for advice when you need it.

The Local Offer is shaped around five key priorities, based on what kinship carers and families have told us matters most.

Camden Priorities	What that means for you
Security Helping children stay safe with people they know and trust	We want children and young people to grow up with people they already know and love. This is why we work with families early, carry out timely and thorough assessments, and create strong support plans that meet everyone's needs. We regularly review these plans to make sure the arrangement stays safe, stable and supportive for kinship carers and the child or young person.
Inclusion Making kinship support part of everyday help	We recognise and value the important role kinship carers play in our community. We offer regular peer support groups, provide tailored training, run a weekly advice telephone line, and link you with local charities and services. We want kinship families to feel included and supported.
Stability Support to keep kinship families together when things get tough	We know kinship care can be challenging, so we are here to help. We create joined-up support plans with professionals across services, offer intensive help when needed, deliver training and practical workshops and run support groups. We also do regular check-ins to make sure kinship families are getting the right support at the right time.
Raising Awareness Helping other services understand kinship care	We are actively working to make sure kinship families are recognised and supported across all services, not just social care. We do this by raising awareness, organising events and training, and sharing updates that reflect the experiences of kinship families.
Achieve Helping children and families thrive	We help kinship families by removing barriers and connecting them to the right support. Working with schools, health services and community organisations, we support children and young people's education, health and emotional wellbeing so they can thrive and reach their full potential.

We know kinship carers can face additional barriers when accessing support, such as lack of information, financial pressure, language needs, digital access, or uncertainty about legal status. We aim to reduce these barriers by offering clear information, a single point of contact, face-to-face support where needed, and help from workers who understand kinship care.

You don't need to read this document from start to finish. You can dip into the sections that matter to you most, such as money, housing, school, or wellbeing. If you're unsure where to start, call our Kinship Team and we'll help you find the right support.

This Local Offer applies to kinship families caring for children under a range of arrangements and explains how support differs depending on legal status. It is also shared with frontline professionals so they can confidently signpost kinship carers and understand referral routes. This Local Offer applies to kinship families caring for children under:

- Informal arrangements
- Private fostering
- Kinship foster care
- Special Guardianship Orders
- Child Arrangements Orders

Support is tailored according to legal status, assessed needs, and statutory guidance.

Support for Carers

How to Access Support

If you are caring for a child or young person in a kinship arrangement, you can access support in several ways. You do not need to know the child's legal status to make contact. You can:

- Contact Camden's Kinship Team directly for advice, guidance and signposting.
- Speak to your allocated Social Worker or Kinship Support Worker (if you have one).
- Access universal services such as Family Hubs, Children's Centres, schools or health services without social care involvement.
- Ask for an assessment if your circumstances change or if the arrangement becomes difficult to sustain.

The Kinship Team will listen to your situation, explain what support may be available, and help you understand next steps

Financial Support

We know caring for a child can be costly, often with little time to prepare. This section explains the type of financial help available to you as a kinship carer, including allowances, benefits, and one-off payments, and how to apply.

Regular Allowances

If you have a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or Child Arrangements Order (CAO), you may receive regular payments to help with the costs of caring for the child. If you are a kinship foster carer (also known as a family and friends foster carer) for a child who is looked after by the Council, you will receive a fostering allowance.

Review of financial support

Any regular financial support provided under a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements Order will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if your circumstances change. Reviews consider the child's needs and the carer's financial situation.

Benefits & Income Support

Most kinship carers can claim Child Benefit, and depending on your income, you may also qualify for Universal Credit to help with living costs, housing, or childcare.

If the child has a disability or additional needs, you may be able to claim Disability Living

Allowance (DLA). For advice, contact our Welfare Rights Team at IEYSWelfareRights@Camden.gov.uk, or visit GOV.UK for details on each benefit.

One-off or Discretionary Payments

If you're facing unexpected costs, such as buying furniture, school uniforms, or essentials for the child, you can ask about one-off discretionary payments.

Contact your social worker or the Family and Friends Fostering Duty Team to discuss what help might be available.

Free School Meals and Uniform Support

Children from low-income families may be eligible for free school meals or help with school uniform costs. You can apply through your child's school or by calling the Council on 0207 974 4444.

Supporting Carers to Stay in Work

We understand that many kinship carers balance caring for a child with work or training. Camden is committed to helping carers manage this, by providing information, guidance, and support to make it easier to stay in employment. This may include advice about flexible working, childcare options, and services that can help you balance work and caring responsibilities. Your Social Worker or Kinship Support Worker can discuss your situation and help you find the support that works best for you.

Emotional & Wellbeing Support

Caring for a child can be deeply rewarding, but it can also be demanding, especially when you are balancing family life, work, and your own wellbeing. You don't have to do it alone. We are here to make sure you and your family feel supported every step of the way.

Family Time and Contact Support

We support safe and meaningful contact between children and their birth family where this is in the child's best interests. Support can include advice on contact arrangements, help to review them if circumstances change, and referrals to supported contact services. Mediation may also be offered to help resolve disagreements.

Peer Support Groups

We run regular peer support groups where you can meet other kinship carers in a friendly, understanding environment. These sessions are a chance to share experiences, exchange advice, and build connections with people who truly understand your journey. Sessions are usually held at local council buildings and community venues. You can attend as often as you like, just come as you are.

You can also join groups run by [Kinship.org.uk](https://www.kinship.org.uk), which host workshops, activities, and events for kinship families to learn, connect, and have fun together.

Specialist & Therapeutic Support

We know some children and carers need more specialist help, especially if a child has experienced loss, change, or trauma. In partnership with Family Action, PAC-UK and the North London Consortium, we offer:

- **Advice and guidance** through a dedicated helpline and website
- **Counselling and emotional support** for both carers and birth parents

- **Community and peer groups** such as coffee mornings and seasonal events.

You can contact PAC-UK directly (no referral needed) or ask your social worker or kinship support worker to help you access the service.

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Support

If a child needs more structured mental health help, we can refer you to local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). These teams specialise in supporting children and young people with emotional or behavioural needs. Referrals are usually made by a GP, school, or social worker, and your Kinship Support Worker can help you understand the process and get the right support in place.

Therapeutic support for children

If you have a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), you may be able to access the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF). This fund can help pay for therapeutic support such as:

- Play therapy
- Counselling
- Trauma-informed or attachment-based support.

Ask your social worker or contact the Family and Friends Fostering Duty Team to find out how to apply.

Advocacy and Independent Support

Children and young people in kinship care have the right to be heard and can access independent advocacy to help them express their views, especially when decisions are being made about their care. Kinship carers can also be supported to raise concerns, ask questions, or challenge decisions.

We will:

- Explain advocacy options clearly
- Support access to independent advocacy services
- Make sure children and carers know how to get help if they are unhappy with decisions.

Universal Services

Universal services are services that all families can access without a social care assessment. Kinship families are encouraged to use these services alongside any targeted support. Universal services in Camden include:

- Health visiting and school nursing services
- Early years and childcare support
- Youth services and activities for young people
- SEND information, advice and support services
- Family Hubs and Childrens Centres

Our Kinship Team and Family Hubs can help you understand what is available locally, alternatively you can access the information via [Families - Camden Council](#).

Family Hubs and Childrens Centres

Children's Centres and Family Hubs offer free support for families from pregnancy to age 19, or up to 25 for young people with SEND. Based in local communities across Camden, they provide easy access to advice, wellbeing, education, childcare, money and youth support. Kinship carers can use Family Hubs without needing social care involvement, and the Kinship Team can help families access the right support.

Find your nearest Family Hub:

[About our Children's Centres and Family Hubs - Camden Council](#)

Housing and Accommodation Support

We understand that taking on the care of a child can place pressure on your accommodation, particularly where a child comes to live with you suddenly or where your current home becomes overcrowded or unsuitable.

We are committed to working with kinship carers to help ensure children live in safe, suitable, and stable accommodation. Where housing issues place a kinship arrangement at risk, we will work with you and relevant housing services to explore available options.

Housing needs may be considered as part of a wider kinship, child's needs, or support assessment. Support is assessed on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the child's legal status, your circumstances, and available local resources.

Support may include:

- Advice and guidance on housing options available to kinship carers.
- Support to apply for social housing or to request a review of housing priority or banding where caring responsibilities have changed.
- Liaison with housing services where accommodation issues affect the stability of a kinship arrangement.
- Advice about discretionary housing-related financial support, where available.
- Support to help prevent homelessness or placement breakdown linked to accommodation difficulties.

Kinship carers are encouraged to raise housing concerns as early as possible, including before a placement is at risk of breaking down.

To discuss housing support, contact your Kinship Support Worker, Social Worker, or the Council's Housing Service, who can help you understand your options and access the right support.

Training and Preparation for Kinship Carers

We offer training and learning opportunities to help kinship carers feel confident and supported in their role. Training is tailored to the type of kinship arrangement and the needs of the child and carer. Training may include:

- Preparation and training for family and friends foster carers
- Training for special guardians and carers with Child Arrangements Orders
- Workshops on trauma, attachment, behaviour, and emotional wellbeing.

Your Social Worker or Kinship Support Worker can tell you what training is available and how to access it.

Family-Led Decision Making

At Camden, we put families at the heart of decisions about children. Family-Led Decision Making brings together relatives, friends, and other important people to plan what's best for a child. This helps children stay connected to the people they love and gives them stable, caring homes. From the very start, we can support families to hold a Family Meeting in a safe place, like home, school, or a community setting, to share ideas and plan support. Family Meetings are informal, while a Family Group Conference (FGC) is run by an independent coordinator and is offered at important points, for example if a child might need to live away from home or if there are child protection concerns. If you care for a child, you can get help through Family-Led Decision Making. Your Social Worker or Kinship Support Worker will bring together family and important people so everyone can share their views and decide together what is best for the child.

Assessment & Support Planning

Becoming a kinship carer can feel overwhelming, especially when there is lots of new information to take in. We are here to make sure you feel informed, supported, and involved every step of the way.

Assessments help us to:

- Understand the child's needs
- Make sure the child is safe and settled
- Identify what support you and your family may need now and in the future.

This includes considering any financial, practical, emotional, or housing-related support.

What is an Assessment?

An assessment is simply a way for us to learn more about:

- the child's needs: their health, education, and emotional wellbeing
- your situation: what is going well, and where you might need support
- what help we can offer to make caring for the child easier and more sustainable.

Not every family needs a full assessment. The type of assessment depends on the child's circumstances and whether the local authority is formally involved.

Types of Assessments

Viability Assessment

This is an initial assessment to look at whether you may be able to care for the child long-term. It usually takes place when a child is, or may become, looked after by the local authority. It helps us understand whether a family placement could be suitable and what support might be needed.

Special Guardianship or Connected Persons Assessment

This is a more detailed assessment, usually carried out if you are applying for a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or approval as a family and friends foster carer. It looks at your ability to meet the child's needs and what support should be put in place.

Child's Needs Assessment

This focuses on understanding the child's needs, for example in relation to education, health, or emotional wellbeing, and what support may help them thrive. We assess a carer's suitability through a viability or full assessment when a child is looked after by the local authority. If a child is living with you under a private family arrangement, we will not carry out a carer assessment, but we can still offer advice, signposting, and assess the child's needs.

The Approval Process

If you are caring for a child under an arrangement approved and supported by the Council, there is a more detailed approval process. This includes training, safety checks, and a full assessment to ensure you and your home are ready and any support you need is identified early.

Planning Support

Following an assessment, we will work with you to create a clear and practical support plan. This may include:

- Financial support
- Housing advice or support
- Emotional wellbeing or therapeutic services
- Parenting advice or training.

Support plans are reviewed regularly and updated as your circumstances or the child's needs change.

Pathway Planning & Transitions

As young people in kinship care grow older, it is important they feel supported to prepare for adult life. We want every young person to have the confidence, skills, and opportunities they need to move successfully into adulthood.

What is a Pathway Plan?

A Pathway Plan is a personalised plan for young people who were looked after by the local authority after the age of 16.

The plan sets out the support a young person will receive as they move towards independence and adulthood. It is reviewed regularly and can include support with:

- Education, training, and employment
- Housing and independent living skills
- Health and emotional wellbeing
- Managing money and accessing financial support.

If the young person you care for is eligible, a Personal Advisor from the Care Experienced Team will work with them, and with you, to create and review their Pathway Plan.

If Pathway Planning Doesn't Apply

If the young person you care for was not looked after by the local authority after age 16, they will not have a formal Pathway Plan. However, support is still available.

This may include:

- Education, training, and careers advice through schools, colleges, or the Virtual School
- Housing and benefits advice through Welfare Rights and Housing Services

- Emotional wellbeing and health support through community or youth services.

We will make sure you understand what support is available and how to access it.

Care Experienced Support (If eligible)

Young people who were previously looked after by the local authority may be entitled to support from the Care Experienced Team up to the age of 25, depending on an assessment of their needs.

Education, Training & Future Planning

Growing up brings big changes, particularly for young people in kinship care. We are here to support you and the young person you care for through key educational transitions, so they feel confident about their future.

Post 16 Education & Training

Young people must stay in education, employment, or training until the age of 18. We can help you explore the options that best suit the young person's interests and needs.

Support may include:

- Advice about sixth form, college, or university options
- Help with applications and next-step planning
- Information about vocational courses, apprenticeships, and training programmes
- Advice about funding, bursaries, and travel costs.

If the young person has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), their school or college will work with you and the local authority to plan their next steps.

Employment & Apprenticeships

For young people moving into work, we can offer practical support, including:

- Help with CV writing and job searching
- Interview preparation
- Advice about apprenticeships and training routes.

Education Support & The Virtual School

Camden's Virtual School supports:

- Children who are looked after
- Children who were previously looked after
- Children in kinship care, with or without a Special Guardianship Order.

Support includes:

- Monitoring progress and attendance
- Setting and reviewing educational targets
- Managing Pupil Premium funding (where applicable)
- Advice and guidance for carers and schools
- Training and consultation for professionals.

The Virtual School works closely with kinship services to help every child achieve their potential.

Legal Advice

If you're caring for, or thinking about caring for, a child in your family or network, it's completely normal to have questions about your legal rights and responsibilities. We want to make sure you feel informed and confident about your options. Different legal routes can give you different levels of parental responsibility, for example, Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs), Child Arrangements Orders (CAOs), or becoming an approved family and friends foster carer. If you're unsure which option might be right for you, we can help you understand the differences and what each one means for you and the child.

Getting Legal Advice

You can:

- Ask your social worker for guidance or a list of local specialist lawyers
- Request help to access independent legal advice
- Find your own solicitor who specialises in family or children's law at any time.

If you already have a legal order (like an SGO or CAO), you can still seek advice if your circumstances change or you have questions about support or contact arrangements

Reviewing the Local Offer

The Local Offer is reviewed annually by the Head of Service, and Kinship carers, children and young people, and partner organisations will be invited to share feedback to help shape future updates. Any significant changes will be published so families and professionals always have access to up-to-date information.




Complaints/Challenges

If you are unhappy with a decision and do not agree with a decision about support, you can ask for it to be reviewed. You can also use Camden's complaints procedure.


[Complaints - Camden Council](#)

Useful Organisations and further support




Local support

- **Camden Kinship Team**
Advice, guidance and access to kinship support services
 0208 974 1965
 [What kinship care is - Camden Council](#)
- **Family Hubs and Children's Centres**
Universal support for families, including early years, SEND, youth services and parenting support
 [About our Children's Centres and Family Hubs - Camden Council](#)
- **Camden Virtual School**
Supports children who are looked after, previously looked after, and children in kinship care


Advice, legal and family support

- **Family Rights Group**
Independent advice for families involved with children's social care
 <https://frg.org.uk>
 - **Coram Children's Legal Centre**
Free legal advice and information on family and children's law
 www.childrenslegalcentre.com
 - **Citizens Advice**
Free advice on benefits, housing, money and legal issues
 www.citizensadvice.org.uk
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Contact, mediation and wellbeing

- **National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC)**
Provides safe, supported contact centres for children and families
 www.naccc.org.uk
 - **Family Mediation Helpline**
Mediation support to help families resolve disagreements
 www.nfm.org.uk
 - **PAC-UK**
Advice, counselling and therapeutic support for special guardians and kinship families
 www.pac-uk.org
-

National kinship support

- **Kinship**
The leading kinship care charity in England and Wales, offering advice, peer support and training
 www.kinship.org.uk