# NOVEMBER 2023 Notes and action log Text  Description automatically generated with low confidence South East regional Kinship network

**Chair Dr Mac Heath,** DCS Milton Keynes

**Meeting details:** November 16 2023 2.30-4pm via MS teams

**Item 1: Introductions:** MH welcomed the group to the second meeting of the Kinship SESLIP network. He confirmed the increasing importance of kinship to the region and the establishment of this group, as separate from the ASGLB as a clear signal of intent and commitment to growing our practice and creating space for senior leaders in Kinship across the South East.

**Item 2: Update from Kinship:** Lucy Peake, Chief Executive from Kinship presented on trends and issues they are seeing nationally, and direction of travel/key dates in relation to national policy on Kinship (as consequence of Stable Homes built on Love outlining that a new strategy was promised but not yet published. She summarised the national policy context:

**May 2022** The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care makes proposals to “unlock the potential of family networks” including financial allowances, kinship care leave, training and support for kinship carers, expansion of peer support.

**Feb 2023**: In response, the Government’s *Stable Homes, Built on Love* strategy commits to delivering a dedicated kinship care strategy, investing £9 million in a national training and support offer, and exploring the introduction of financial allowances and additional workplace entitlements.

**July 2023**

The Department for Education launches its families first for children (FFC) pathfinder and family networks pilot (FNP) to test how to intensively support kinship carers earlier to avoid children entering local authority care.

**Sep 2023**

The Government responds to its *Stable Homes* consultation noting that over 400 responses (45%) were from kinship carers and committing to setting out its next steps in the kinship care strategy.

**December 2023**

We anticipate the publication of the Government’s national kinship care strategy. We want to see an ambitious, long-term and properly funded plan for well-supported kinship care.

Our #ValueOurLove campaign is calling on Government to:

* introduce a mandatory **financial allowance** for kinship careAll rs which matches that given to foster carers.
* provide kinship carers with a statutory right to **paid employment leave,** like that for adoptive parents.
* improve educational and therapeutic **support for children** in kinship care.

LP outlined that they had been awarded £3m by DfE for 18 months to deliver training for kinship carers online and in person.

**Action:**  All to get in touch with Fiona Summers or LP or kinship directly via their website to explore how South East Kinship carers can benefit from the training programme.

**Item 3:**  **Sharing practice:**

* **Mixed team:** Some LAs are pursuing a mixed approach to growing Kinship practice and skill (Las + voluntary sector + peer support), Kinship (Lisa Morris) share on how they work with Surrey (Clark McAuley)  on this model
* **Kinship: dedicated team:**Kent (Caroline Smith), Hampshire (Rosanna Smith) Bucks (Maryke McCarthy) are all developing or have put in a dedicated and separate kinship team.
* **Kinship: dedicated worker:**  East Sussex (Cassie Atherton)  all have dedicated SG/Kinship support workers

LAs shared practice and made presentations on their approaches to building kinship expertise and capacity in their LAs. The presentations are attached. Kent is unable to share their presentation as the structure presented was still under consultation and so confidential to the meeting.

**Item 4: Standing items:**  No issues for escalation.

Future meeting 2024 dates:

* 16 Nov 2.30-4pm (focused discussion resourcing kinship teams)
* 26 February 2-3.30pm (focused discussion on national kinship strategy)
* 16 May 2-3.30pm (focused discussion ASF)
* 16 July 2-3.30pm

**Action log:** This action log was updated on 12 Nov 2023. Shaded actions are closed or complete

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|  | **Action** | **Responsible** | **Date issued** | **Status** |
| **8** | RE to circulate presentations from Nov 2023 meeting | RE | Nov 2023 | Complete |
| **7** | All to get in touch with Fiona Summers or LP or kinship directly via their website to explore how South East Kinship carers can benefit from the training programme. | All | Nov 2023 | Complete |
| **6** | terms of reference agreed and to be published on SESLIP website | RE | June 2023 | Complete |
| **5** | detailed discussion at next meeting on learning from different approaches to resourcing kinship. | RE | June 2023 | Complete |
| **4** | West Sussex (Bridget McDermott) to send kinship charter to RE to circulate to rest of group | RE | June 2023 | Complete |
| **3** | RE to incorporate further data from LAs and to recirculate benchmarking ahead of next meeting | RE | June 2023 | Complete |
| **2** | Focused future discussion on ASF. Is there appetite to fund a regional ASF SG champion/support worker to have a practical role at increasing ASF coming into the region for SGOs? | RE | June 2023 | Complete |
| **1** | All to confirm to RE the lead representative/s for your LA going forward. | RE | June 2023 | complete  |

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