

# South East regional Kinship Care conference July 8 2024



# Agenda

Item	Presenters
Agenda and housekeeping	Rebecca Eligon (SESLIP)
Welcome	Dr Mac Heath (DCS Milton Keynes and Chair)
Reflections of kinship care	Sarah Crowley (Kinship carer)
National kinship strategy	Lucy Peake (CEO Kinship and deputy chair)
Adoption and special guardianship support fund	Duncan Clark (Mott McDonald)
New responsibilities for virtual school heads re: Kinship	Michelle Nye (Virtual School Head, Hampshire)
BREAK	
Mapping practice	Rebecca Eligon (SESLIP)
Resetting regional priorities	Rebecca Eligon (SESLIP)

43 participants from across the South East attended

96% of attendees said they thought the conference was a good use of their time



# Dr Mac Heath, DCS Milton Keynes and chair of regional kinship group and adoption board



# South East Regional Kinship Arrangements



All 19 SE L.A.'s agree to work together in developing support to Kinship arrangements that have coherence, consistency and commitment to mitigate a 'postcode lottery' in approach



We have the mandate to understand where the strengths lie, identify the gaps and propose opportunities



8<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2024

# Developing kinship care: a case for evidence based social work practice

'the very idea of "kinship care" remains contested in theory, law and operational practice in local authorities'

'this research does not seek to evidence best practice in its own right but to recognise the variance of kinship in practice and approach and, from knowledge gained, set out a proposed model of good practice, one that is responsive to the findings and could be adopted within local authorities in England'

'whatever changes are made at a government level, and whatever local guidance is issued around kinship care, the importance of how this is then enshrined into local authority policies and then manifested in social work practice, is likely to be an area of challenge for a significant time to come'



# Lucy Peake, Chief Executive Kinship, and vice chair of South East regional kinship group



# Kinship Care Strategy – what's next?

Lucy Peake  
Chief Executive, Kinship

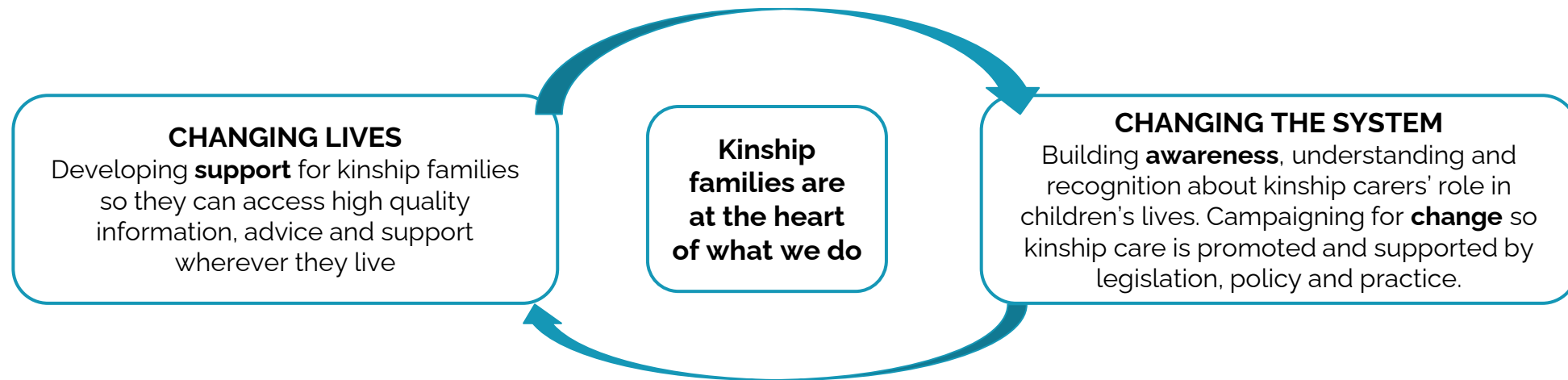
South East Kinship Conference

8 July 2024



# About Kinship

**Kinship is the leading kinship care charity in England and Wales.** We're here for all kinship carers. We want every kinship family to have the recognition, value and support they need and deserve.



National information, advice, training & support service

National peer support service

Support programmes with local authorities

Raising awareness & influencing policy & practice







# Labour commits to supporting kinship families



This week I spoke at @kinshipcharity's event in Parliament.

Labour will not forget kinship carers.

We will not forget the children you care for.

We will not forget the difference you make.

We will always remember the love you give.



Labour Party's manifesto:

"Every child should have a loving, secure home" and committed to supporting children "including through kinship, foster care and adoption."

Election campaign activity:

- 6,800 #ValueOurLove emails sent by 1,500 supporters to 2,500 MP candidates in 90% constituencies
- 190 candidates signed up to the campaign
- Cross-party support





# Secretary of State Bridget Phillipson commits to children's social care reform

“...the greatest mission of this Labour government...will be to break down the barriers of opportunity which hold back too many of our children, which scar the life chances of too many of our young people....the values that underpin that mission...will be at the heart of our approach as we tackle the issues that you all know well, but that have had rather less attention in recent weeks during the election campaign: the support and outcomes for children with SEND and their families, the need to bring reform to children's social care and to build opportunities for our most vulnerable children...”



Susan Acland-Hood @SusanAclandHood · Jul 5

A privilege to welcome @bphilipsonMP as the new Secretary of State for Education today, and to hear her talk so passionately about opportunity and public service.



11

70

809

91K

Share icon



# Kinship Care Strategy - Vision



Children will be supported to stay within their families, where possible. Families will receive the right help at the right time to ensure this.



When it is considered that a child is unable to remain living with their parents, family networks will be consulted and have their options explained to them clearly



When a kinship carer is formally assessed, the assessment process will be reasonable, proportionate and treat family members with trust, whilst prioritising the safety of the child



Children in kinship care will be supported to thrive. Kinship families will be actively offered support that is tailored to their needs



# Kinship Care Strategy - £20million investment

An SGO allowance  
'Pathfinder'  
programme

Guidance for  
employers on  
supporting  
kinship carers

An expansion of  
the Virtual  
School Head's  
role

Appointing a  
new "Kinship  
Care  
Ambassador"

Establishing a  
kinship training,  
information and  
advice offer

Continuing  
kinship peer  
support groups

Improving awareness  
of the Adoption and  
Special Guardianship  
Support Fund

Working towards  
national roll out of  
Family Group  
Conferencing

Introducing a  
new definition  
of kinship care

Publishing an updated  
version of the 2011  
Family and Friends Care  
statutory guidance

Confirming the Law  
Commission will review  
legal orders and statuses  
for kinship carers



# Training, information, advice and support

**Roadshows** – in-person regional events (workshops, peer support, market place)

Portsmouth – Wednesday 18 September

London – Wednesday 15 January

**Introduction to kinship care workshops** – online

**Advanced workshops** – online

**Peer support** – in-person and online (local and specialist)

**Advice and information** – online, by phone and by email



# Strategy summary

*"I've got 3 mins!"*

## National Kinship Care Strategy summary

The [first ever National Kinship Care Strategy for England](#) has been published, setting out the Government's plans for kinship care, including new commitments and £20 million investment over 2024-5.

The Government committed to delivering a dedicated kinship care strategy in February 2023 when it published its *Stable Homes. Built on Love* plan for children's social care. Our [#ValueOurLove campaign](#) has mobilised thousands of kinship carers over the last year to write to Ministers, meet with their MPs, and share their views and experiences through consultations to push the Government on their commitments to kinship families.

**Below, we've outlined each of the new commitments made in the Strategy.** Each is a testament to all the kinship carers who have demonstrated, for decades, the value of raising children within their family network, but overall the Strategy doesn't go far enough to deliver the urgent support kinship families need now and build a new kinship care system for the future.

For more information, answers to common questions, and a detailed exploration of current kinship care policy, please [visit our National Kinship Care Strategy hub](#).

**Financial allowances pathfinder**

**Extended educational support for kinship children**

£3.8 million will be invested to expand the role of Virtual School Heads, with delivery commencing between September 2024 and March 2025. This will

[kinship.org.uk/national-kinship-care-strategy/strategy-summary/](https://kinship.org.uk/national-kinship-care-strategy/strategy-summary/)

# Kinship care policy tracker

*"Give me the detail!"*

## Kinship care policy tracker

Our kinship care policy tracker is the place to understand more about the current state of play for kinship care policy in England, and particularly following the commitments made by the Government in its [children's social care implementation strategy](#) published in February 2023. For a shorter outline of what the strategy says about kinship care, you can instead [view our strategy summary](#).

Below you'll find an overview of what's currently happening and what we think should happen next across a range of kinship care policy areas. Please note that the policy tracker does not represent a formal nor complete response in all areas; we will regularly update the content below as progress is made, as new evidence emerges, and as our thinking as an organisation develops.

For further information or for a conversation about Kinship's policy and public affairs activity, please [get in touch](#).

### Update history



*Good progress is being made.*



*In the right direction, but further and faster effort required.*



*Action significantly lagging behind what's needed.*

### Jump to:

- [Recognising kinship care](#)
- [A national kinship care strategy](#)
- [Prioritising and supporting early kinship arrangements](#)

[kinship.org.uk/kinship-care-policy-tracker](https://kinship.org.uk/kinship-care-policy-tracker)



# Ask the new Government to support kinship families

1. Equalise **financial allowances** between foster and kinship families.
2. Equalise **access to training and support** between kinship carers and foster carers.
3. Equalise **leave** between adoptive and kinship families.
4. Equalise support between **children in kinship care** and those in care.

Sign our petition, write to your MP, and learn more about kinship families in your local area at [valueourlove.kinship.org.uk](http://valueourlove.kinship.org.uk).





**Visit our stand and stay in touch**



**Tom Bucher, Head of Network Development (lead contact for local authorities and virtual schools in the South East)**  
**[tom.bucher@kinship.org.uk](mailto:tom.bucher@kinship.org.uk)**

**Fiona Summers, Head of Programmes (lead contact for commissioned programmes)**  
**[Fiona.summers@kinship.org.uk](mailto:Fiona.summers@kinship.org.uk)**

**Lucy Peake, CEO [lucy.peake@kinship.org.uk](mailto:lucy.peake@kinship.org.uk)**



# Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund

Duncan Clark

July 2024

# Agenda

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Background to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF)

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The ASGSF Journey

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The ASGSF so far

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ASGSF Criteria and Eligibility

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What can & can't funding be used for?

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Resources & useful information

# Background to the ASGSF

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The Fund has provided much-needed, life-changing therapeutic support since its inception in 2015.

The need for the fund emerged out of recognition of the challenges faced by adoptive families and the resulting trauma requiring comprehensive support.

The fund provides one element of this support and has had a transformative impact for many families; preventing the risk of disruption and providing a consistent support offer for families across England.

The fund is aimed at improving the lives of children and young people both now and into the future.



# The ASGSF Journey

## 2013 – Further Action on Adoption

DfE report published setting out proposal to attract adopters and improve support available to adoptive families.

## 2014 – ASGSF Pilot

The then 'Adoption Support Fund' (ASF) was operationalised initially with 10 pilot local authorities.

## 2015 – National ASGSF

1<sup>st</sup> May 2015 the ASGSF was opened to all 152 LAs in England.

## 2016 – Programme Extension

1<sup>st</sup> April - ASGSF extended to cover children that left care through SGO or ICA.

## 2016 – Fair Access Limit

6 October saw the introduction of the £5k FAL to manage demand and sustainability of the Fund.

## 2017 – Fair Access Limit

Existing FAL of £5k continued with a separate £2.5k specialist assessment FAL was launched.

Focus on RAA development

## 2020 – Emergency Covid-19 funding scheme

£8m was committed to fund immediate therapeutic support arising from the impact of the Covid-pandemic.

## 2023 – Kinship Care Strategy

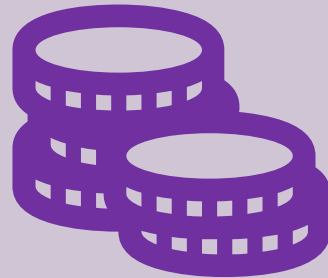
To minimise the barriers kinship carers face and ensure more carers are aware of the fund it was renamed to Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF).

# The ASGSF so far

Families have accessed the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) to benefit from a range of therapeutic services.



**107,829**  
**Approved**  
**Applications**



**£356 million**  
**Funding Approved**



**Supporting more than**  
**129,000 service recipients**

# How does the ASGSF work?



## Pre-Application Process

- Local authority to complete a review of support needs.
- They will talk to you about the services you/your child can access.
- They will talk to you about the providers available.
- Once agreed they can apply for funding.

## ASF Application

- They complete the ASF application on your behalf.
- The application will be reviewed against the scope and eligibility criteria.
- A decision will be provided to the LA within 25 working days of the application submission.

## Post-Application Process

- If the application is approved they commission the services identified.
- Services can be delivered to you/your child.

# ASGSF Criteria and Eligibility

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## Do you have an SGO or Child Arrangement Order?

Children previously looked after by the local authority can access funding for therapeutic services. Your local authority or regional adoption agency can provide further advice around eligibility and if you meet the criteria, they can complete an application on your behalf.

### Is my child eligible?

The ASF is available to children up to and including the age of 21, or 25 with an education, health, and care (EHC) plan who were either:

- looked after by the local authority before a SGO was made;
- looked after by the local authority before the SGO was made but subsequently changed to an adoption order, or vice versa;
- looked after by the local authority prior to living under a child arrangement order (CAO) to enable the assessment of a potential special guardian. They remain eligible if an SGO is subsequently made.

If **yes**, you can find more information on the [ASF website](#).

If **no**, you can find information of the support available on the [Kinship](#) and the [Family Rights Group](#) websites.



# What can the funding be used for?

## **Creative therapies (e.g. art, music, drama, play therapy)**

Creative ways for your child to process their thoughts, feelings and history through therapy.

## **Extensive therapeutic life story work**

Helping your child understand and cope with their past trauma and difficulties through therapy.

## **Family therapy**

Therapy to help build attachment and improve the relationship between you and your child

## **Therapeutic Parenting**

Group training/individual sessions to support you with skills and techniques to therapeutically parent your child.

## **Psychotherapy**

A talking therapy for your child to help them understand and cope with their past trauma and difficulties through therapy.

## **Specialist Assessments**

In-depth assessment of your child and family's needs focused on trauma and attachment completed by a qualified clinician resulting in a therapeutic support plan.

# What can the funding not be used for?

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## **Standalone assessments for single conditions**

Unless part of a wider Specialist Assessment.

## **General social work assessment of SGO support needs**

This remains the responsibility of the local authority.

## **Support offers from your LA**

This include the universal health services and short breaks with no therapeutic focus.

## **Memberships**

Of clubs and organisations.

## **Education support**

This can be funded through alternate funding streams such as Pupil Premium Plus

## **Therapies with no trauma and attachment focus**

Reviewed by the expert panel as out of scope.

# Resources



FIRST 4 ADOPTION



## Do you have an SGO or Child Arrangement Order?

Did you know that you may be eligible to access ASF funding?

Children **previously looked after** by the local authority can access funding for therapeutic services. Your local authority or regional adoption agency can provide further advice around eligibility and if you meet the criteria, they can complete an application on your behalf.

### Is my child eligible?

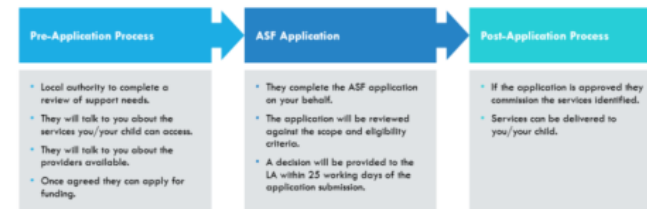
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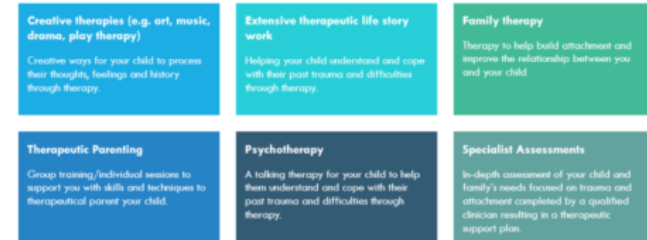
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### How does the ASF work?



### What can the funding be used for?



### What next?

For Further Information, please contact your Local Authority/Regional Adoption Agency:

Team Name: .....

Contact Details: .....

# Useful information

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## ASGSF contact

### Email

[asf@mottmac.com](mailto:asf@mottmac.com)

### Helpline

01223 463 517

[Family Rights Group](#) > Get help and advice

[Kinship](#) > Home > Advice & Information > Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund

[Gov.uk](#) > Parenting, childcare and children's services > Adoption, fostering and surrogacy > Adoption

# Kinship Care

Michelle Nye, Hampshire Virtual School Head



## Championing Kinship Care: The National Kinship Care Strategy

In February 2023, DfE published *Stable Homes, Built on Love* to respond to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

# Kinship Care

In December 2023, DfE published *Championing Kinship Care*. Government has invested £20m of funding in 2024-25 to ensure there is well-designed improvement across the kinship care sector so that kinship carers and children in kinship care arrangements feel supported, empowered, and heard.

As part of this, £3.8 million in 2024-25 to expand the role of Virtual School Heads to ensure that more children in kinship care receive the help they need to thrive at school

## Guidance

# Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension

Updated 5 March 2024

# Kinship Care

Kinship care includes children who may be living in an informal arrangement made by their parents, on a Child Arrangements Order or Special Guardianship Order, 'looked after' by the local authority and placed with kinship foster carers.

The remit of virtual school heads already includes kinship children:

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

Virtual school heads should bring greater focus and visibility to the distinct needs of children in kinship care within their existing non-statutory responsibilities of CWSW.

The **VSH non-statutory duty** will be extended to specifically include championing the attendance, attainment and progress of children in kinship care from September 2024 to bring parity of support to kinship families who are currently not captured.

[Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/promoting-the-education-of-children-with-a-social-worker-and-children-in-kinship-care-arrangements-virtual-school-head-role-extension)

Guidance

**Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension**

Updated 5 March 2024

# Strategic activities



Enhancing partnerships between education settings and the local authority so agencies can work together in a child focused manner



Identifying the needs of the cohort and addressing barriers to poor educational outcomes to ensure pupils make educational progress



Offering advice and support to key professionals such as social workers, designated teachers, designated safeguarding leads (DSL) and school leaders to help children make progress, including through increasing their confidence in using evidence-based interventions.

## Additional activities for the extension to kinship care



Raising awareness of the needs and disadvantage of children in different types of kinship care arrangements



Promoting practice that supports attendance and engagement of kinship children in education



Promoting practice that improves the educational attainment of children in kinship care



Expand the provision of advice and information, on request, to all kinship carers with special guardianship orders and child arrangement orders, regardless of whether their child was previously looked after by the local authority.



# Current thinking ...

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- ✓ Raise awareness of need
- ✓ Emotional understanding of child's journey
- ✓ Identify/signpost services to support
- ✓ Breaking into chunks what kinship means...what, who
- ✓ Broaden understanding across CSD – E&I, C&F
- ✓ Raise profile with and provide training to supporting services, e.g. SEN, HIEP, SALT
- ✓ Support for grandparents/carers who may feel shame
- ✓ Guidance for schools
- ✓ Guidance around GDPR
- ✓ Pupil voice
- ✓ Encourage aspirational thinking

# Mapping our practice



# What we identified as strengths today

## July 2024

76 responses from 33 participants



# SESLIP

South East Sector Led  
Improvement Programme





# Resetting priorities



# What you identified as priorities today July 2024

74 responses from 33 participants



## SES LIP

South East Sector Led  
Improvement Programme



# What you identified as priorities last time in 2022



**SES LIP**

South East Sector Led Improvement Programme



# What next



**SES LIP**

South East Sector Led  
Improvement Programme

A huge amount of insight on best practice was gathered at the conference and this is being written up. A number of priorities were also identified for the region's Kinship leadership group. The group will consider these priorities and how they are taken forward at their next meeting on 18 November 2024 2-3.30pm.

If you would like to attend this meeting and do not have an invite please contact [rebeccaeligon@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccaeligon@gmail.com)