

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Improving Lives Select Commission – 05 March 2025

**Report Title**

Kinship Care Update, including Local Offer

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Nicola Curley, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

**Report Author(s)**

Jane Wood, Head of Service Children in Care  
Jane-e.wood@rotherham.gov.uk

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The report accompanies a presentation to update the committee regarding recent national developments in Kinship Care and how we have applied these locally.

**Recommendations**

That the Improving Lives Select Commission:

- 1) Consider the content of the report and associated presentation and acknowledge the updates in Kinship practice.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Kinship PowerPoint Presentation.

**Background Papers**

No

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

No

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Kinship Care Update**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Currently, there is national focus on supporting all children where possible to remain with family and networks, when they are unable to live with their families. There is new statutory and non-statutory guidance to support overall practice working with children and kinship carers.
- 1.2 Kinship Care is a term used to describe placements of children living with family, friends or connected persons. Children may live with Kinship Carers in any of the following circumstances:
  - In informal arrangements with a relative or connected person.
  - As a Private Fostering or Supported Lodgings arrangement.
  - Under a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order.
  - As a looked after child with Kinship Foster Carers.
- 1.3 In February 2023 the Government set out 6 ambitions of reform through the Stable homes, Built on Love legislation. Within the new Social Care National Framework 2023, one of the six requirements is that all Local Authorities update and review their Kinship Care policy in line with the updated Kinship care statutory guidance.
- 1.4 The DFE have recently published their updated Kinship Care: statutory guidance for local authorities (DFE, October 2024). This sets out a framework for the provision of support to kinship families, and how family networks can be engaged to support the needs of children throughout children's social care, including those who are unable to live with their parents.
- 1.5 It sets out proposals and principles for local authorities (no change to statutory duties);
  - To identify a 'Kinship Lead' who is a senior officer in Children's Social Care.
  - For all local authorities to publish a Kinship Local Offer. This will include the provision of information about all support and services in the local area, which is to be readily available to those who need it.
  - Support available should be based on the needs of the child rather than the legal status of the child.
  - For local authorities to focus on family networks and identifying these at an early stage.
- 1.6 Rotherham Council have been working on several initiatives to develop this area of practice. This includes:
  - Identifying a Kinship Lead – Chris Macdonald Service Manager.

- Creating a Kinship Local Offer – by September 2025.
- Updated Kinship Care Practice Guidance November 2024.
- Adopting the DFE standardised means testing model for Kinship Carers – November 2024, to commence January 2025.

## **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 When children cannot live with their birth parents, RMBC are committed to ensuring that children can remain with wider family members, or connected networks, wherever this is a possibility. This offers children and young people the best chance of permanence and stability and enables them to maintain strong links with their birth parents. It is important that family and connected networks continue to be explored for Children in Care throughout their childhood.
- 2.2 RMBC recognise that to support Kinship Carers to offer appropriate care to children, who cannot live with their parents, they need access to a range of high-quality support services, at universal, targeted and specialist levels. These should be aimed at improving outcomes for children who cannot live with their birth parents.
- 2.3 It is an underlying principle of the Children Act (1989) that children should be enabled to live within their family unless this is not consistent with their welfare. The following RMBC principles apply to any work with children and families:
- The child's welfare is paramount.
  - The child's wishes and feelings are sought, heard, and responded to.
  - RMBC works in partnership with whole families.
  - children are raised by their families, within their family networks, or in family environments wherever possible.
  - RMBC will work with other agencies to effectively identify and meet the needs of children, young people, and families.
  - RMBC will consider the economic and social circumstances which may impact children, young people and families.

## **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 Not applicable. Update only.

#### **4. Consultation on proposal**

4.1 The presentation provides an overview and update.

#### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 Not applicable.

#### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

6.1 Not applicable.

#### **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

7.1 Not applicable.

#### **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 Not applicable.

#### **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 These are referenced within the report and presentation.

#### **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implication**

10.1 There are no direct implications linked to this report.

#### **11. Implications for CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions and Climate Change**

11.1 There are no direct implications linked to this report.

#### **12. Implications for Partners**

12.1 Partners are included in and consulted with about changes to practice guidance for children and young people. Partners will be included within the Kinship local offer in particular.

#### **13. Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 Not applicable.

#### **Accountable Officer(s)**

Nicola Curley - Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of:

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
The Strategic Director with responsibility for this report	Nicola Curley – Strategic Director, Children & Young Peoples Service	05/02/25
Consultation undertaken with the relevant Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People - Councillor Cusworth	14/02/25

*Report Author: Jane Wood, Head of Service Children in Care.  
Jane-e.wood@rotherham.gov.uk*

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