

Public Document Pack

Supplementary information for Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) on Thursday, 19th March, 2015

Item 7 – Inquiry into Kinship Care

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Kinship Care – Case Study

(*The names of the people in this case study have been changed to fictitious names.)

Jack is 10 years old, and has been living with his Uncle David and Aunt Mary for the last 15 months.

Jack originally came into care three years ago, because of significant concerns about his parents' problematic drug use, domestic violence, and their inability to prioritise and meet Jack's needs.

Jack was initially placed in a short-term fostering placement whilst care proceedings were underway. A kinship assessment was undertaken of Jack's maternal grandparents, but they were assessed as unsuitable to be permanent kinship carers for him.

Jack's paternal Uncle, David, and his wife, Mary, also considered at that point being assessed for full-time care of Jack, but in discussion with social workers, did not feel that was the right time either for them (their relationship was relatively new), or for Jack (it would have meant him moving to a city in the south of England). David and Mary were, however, assessed and approved as respite / holiday carers for Jack as they had a pre-existing and positive relationship with him.

At that time, the care plan for Jack was to move to long-term foster carers. Just under two years ago, suitable foster carers were identified, and Jack moved to live with this new family. Unfortunately, within a couple of months, the carers changed their minds, and felt that they could not, after all, offer Jack a long-term home with them.

Jack's Uncle David and Aunt Mary considered their position, and requested that they be assessed to provide a permanent home for Jack. They had seen Jack regularly since he had been in care, and their relationship with him had developed and cemented. A Kinship Care Assessment was undertaken; David and Mary were approved as Kinship Foster Carers in December 2013, and Jack moved to live with them in January 2014.

Jack's move represented a huge change for him, as it meant him leaving Leeds and moving to the south of England, along with the change of friends and school that this entailed. However, he has gained the security provided by the love and commitment to him by his Uncle and Aunt, he knows that he is 'wanted', and he has been able to live within his family network.

There have been challenges in the placement. Jack displays a degree of hyperactive behaviour both at school and at home; he struggles with concentration, can be disruptive, and is demanding of attention. This is very much thought to be linked to his previous life

experiences, and a response to the trauma and stress he suffered as a young child, along with the rejection from his last carers, and the uncertainty he had faced about his future.

There is also the professional challenge, of supporting the placement at such a distance from Leeds, and in trying to ensure that our “Child-friendly Leeds” aspiration is as much a reality for Jack as it is for children living in Leeds. Jack has had the support of a good primary school, which has been really pro-active at providing him with the additional support and help in school that he needs, and academically, he is starting to catch up with where he should be. Equally importantly, Jack has had the love and patient care from his Uncle and Aunt, and with the birth of their own baby, has a real sense of being part of a loving family.

An email I received recently from David conveys in a small way, the benefits of this placement for Jack, and the support provided from the Kinship Care Team:

“When I picked Jack up from after school club on Friday one of his particularly nice teachers took me aside and said “what a change in that little boy, such a pleasant lad and what strides he has made, sometimes it brings a tear to my eye; he's so happy and confident now”

It is one year tomorrow since the day I drove to Leeds and collected him and his belongings and he moved to live with us.

Thank you very much for all your help and support thus far, and for your strong recommendations when we went to Panel 14 months (and a lifetime) ago!!”

KINSHIP FOSTERING/SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP (SGO)
CASE STUDY ON CHILD S AGE 29 MONTHS OLD

Child

S presents as a happy and sociable child. S has no identified health or developmental needs. However, due to her early life experiences her attachment development was impacted. She has recently begun to attend nursery for up to 15 hours per week (funded under the vulnerable 2 yr. olds scheme).

Child background

S has been subject to a Child Protection Plan under categories of Neglect and Emotional harm since 2013. This is due to concerns around domestic violence in her parents relationship, her father's heroin use, concerns around inappropriate parenting and her mother's mental health.

In July 2013 S sustained a burn to her arm. Her mother did not seek appropriate medical care and waited four days before she informed the social worker she was working with about the burn. Mother was advised to take S to the G.P.

The paediatrician raised serious concern in relation to the burn on S's arm and a bruise she had observed on S's cheek. Both these injuries she felt were non-accidental injuries. S was initially placed with maternal grandmother over the weekend. Due to the level of concerns the Local Authority attended Court and obtained an Interim Care Order. S was subsequently placed into Local Authority Foster Care whilst assessments were going.

Assessments of parents were not positive and therefore alternative suitable care was needed. If it was deemed there were no suitable carers in the family network for S the plan would have been adoption. Then J came forward and was assessed. Initially S's birth mother was not agreeing for her daughter to be placed in J's care and opposed this plan. J was subsequently approved as a foster carer and S moved to her care in January 2014.

Carer Background

J is a 44 year old female and is a mother to seven children. J is a warm natured and caring person, and takes great pride and enjoyment from helping others. Children are a focus of her priorities and she wants best for her children. She appears to have a good level of resilience. J works in a primary school as a playground supervisor five days per week for 2 hours per day. In addition, J is a volunteer at her church which includes volunteering at the kids club.

Kinship connection

J is not blood related to S, however, she was deemed as a suitable kinship connected person to the family as J has known the birth family for over twenty years and her eldest two daughters maintain regular links with S's birth family, as they are linked by being second

cousins. J's relationship is primarily with S's maternal grandmother. Knowing the family for over twenty years, J knew S's mother when she was a child herself. J felt that she was in a position to help and that she can provide a suitable home for S. J believes that it is important for children to know who their birth parents are and that maintain a link with them, if possible.

Reason for case to move from fostering to SGO

J is providing S with a warm and safe home environment, which also provides her with boundaries and routines. S has formed an attachment to J and appears to be very content with J. S is very settled in the home and has been accepted as part of the family by all of J's children. S's behaviour has improved during her time living with J, such as her hair pulling and head banging.

S's mother is no longer posing difficulties for J and the family and is more accepting that she cannot parent S herself.

J feels she could offer love, care and protection for S, whilst being in a position to also maintain birth family links.

J is providing S with a high standard of individual care. She clearly understands S's past history and what the risks the parents pose. J is very child focused in her parenting style and has a good understanding of a child's developing and growing needs.

Move to Special Guardianship (SGO)

S was placed in J's care early in 2014. After an initial short period of instability, S has settled well into the home. S has established herself well to her new home life and she is thriving in all aspects of her development.

J views that she has *"a great bond and she is one of our family and has fitted in like the missing jigsaw piece. We want to see her grow up and lead her in the right way of life and give her the love she deserves just like any one of my children and give her encouragement she needs in school life to working adult life"*.

Promoting contact

J is committed to promoting the contact between S and her parents. Her primary reasons to care for S were for her to maintain and know her family. The current care plan was for S's parents to have separate direct contact 4 times a year. Despite assurances by S's father he has resumed his drug use. It therefore has been stipulated that father needs to meet with the local authority prior to contact resuming again. Father has always supported his daughter living with J. S's mother was never in support for S to live with J, this view has since changed after mediation has taken place between both parties and J now supervises this contact.

SGO support

J is a self-sufficient carer who has required little support from the Department during her time as a kinship foster carer. She will continue to receive financial support, equivalent to fostering allowances for 2 years after the court order has been made. She will have access to the SGO support group, advice line and also consultation service provided by the therapeutic Social Work Service should this be needed in the future.

March 2015

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Dates to remember

November 2014

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
					1	2
3	4 TSDS workshop	5 Bonfire Night	6	7	8	9
10	11 Armistice Day / TSDS workshop	12 SGO Support Group	13	14 Christkindel Market opens	15	16
17	18 TSDS workshop	19	20	21 Kinship Team move to Kernel House	22	23
24	25 TSDS workshop	26	27 Kinship Support group	28	29	30

December 2014

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2 TSDS workshop	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 TSDS workshop	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 SGO Support Group	18 Kinship Support Group	19 Half Term	20 Christkindel Market closes	21 Shortest day of the year
22 Kinship Christmas Party	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day	27	28
29	30	31				

Kinship Care
& Special Guardianship
Autumn-Winter 2014

Keeping you up to date...

... help us help you! Send us your email to kinshipcareadmin@leeds.gov.uk so we can keep you up to date with all the latest news, offers and events!



The time has finally come to bid farewell to Roundhay Road area office.

As of mid November our new address will be Kernel House, Killingbeck Drive, LS14 6UF (near ASDA)



We're proud to announce that the Kinship Care Team have been nominated for an 'Awards for Excellence' in category 'Team Achievement of the year' furthermore our very own Bev Hudson was nominated for 'Colleague of the year'. Such fantastic news after the radical changes we have experienced this year!

Have you heard about Junior ISAs?

The Government announced this support for Looked After Children and young people who have been in care for at least one year and do not have a Child Trust Fund. A Junior ISA has a starter fund of £200 and anyone can contribute to it. It can be accessed by the child when they reach 18. For more information visit www.sharefound.org or contact the Share Foundation helpline on 0300 6660127

Department for Education Training, Support & Development Standards

In our last news letter we told you about the Training, Support & Development Standards, we have revisited the training material to bring it up to date with current policies and legislation.

The training is compulsory for newly approved Kinship Carers which may sound daunting but from previous groups have blossomed friendships and support networks. It's a fantastic opportunity for Kinship Carers alike to come together and know they are not alone, many issues are discussed in the groups which in turn helps us to learn from each other.

Bev Hudson and Rita Okpala will be introducing the new material on the next round of training in November. The 6 week programme will commence on 4th November, the sessions will initially take place at Roundhay Road area office with a view to move to Kernel House. Please see the calendar at the back for all the dates.

If you would like more information please contact Bev Hudson or Rita Okpala on 0113-2474654

Christmas is coming!

Why not try something different this year? Keep the kids entertained by crafting some lovely decorations from things lying around the house or in the garden, plus it's a great way to save money! Here are a few ideas to get you going.



Ask the kids to cut some shapes from some old Christmas cards or cereal boxes, simply thread them on to some festive ribbon or string and voilà, a homemade garland!



Why not make a day of this craft, Autumn is here and places like Temple Newsham and Roundhay Park are full of exciting things just waiting to be picked up and turned into a funky decoration! What's more its absolutely FREE!

Don't stop there, why not try making your own Christmas cards? Cheaper than in the shops, unique and they'll keep the kids busy. Everyone's a winner!

What you'll need

- Card
- Ribbon
- Scissors
- Leafs
- Glitter
- PVA glue
- Acorns
- White/Brown paint
- Blank cards
- Scrap newspapers



Fingerprints!



Snowman Biscuit Christmas treats for all the family!

Recipe

- 200g fondant icing sugar
- 6 white marshmallows
- 6 large cookies
- 24 mini chocolate beans
- 6 pretzel sticks
- tube black writing icing



Method

1. Put the icing sugar into a bowl and add cold water a teaspoon at a time until the mixture is runny but thick enough to coat a spoon.
2. Ask an adult to snip the marshmallows in half using wetted scissors.
3. Spoon a little icing onto each cookie and attach half a marshmallow. Using a little icing, stick the other half on top at an angle. Drizzle a little more icing onto the cookie to make melting snow.
4. Break the pretzel sticks in half and place on the cookie for arms. Stick orange chocolate beans on for the noses. Stick three chocolate beans on each cookie to represent buttons.
5. Using the writing icing, pipe small blobs for the eyes and mouth. Leave to set.

Life Story Work

Being a Kinship Carer can throw up some challenging questions from the children and young people in your care, like "Why do I live with you and not my Mum and Dad?", it can sometimes be tricky to find the right answer to suit the age of the children you care for.

www.lifestoryworks.org

Is a website which gives really good information on this difficult process. It is worth having a look as there are suggestions of how you can have discussions with children and explain difficult things to them in a safe and sensitive manner.

Some of the things they cover are:

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------|-------------------|---------|
| Death | Sexual Abuse | Rape | Alcoholism | Neglect |
| Non-Accidental injury | Unknown Fathers | Drugs | Mental Ill health | |

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Waitrose

Some of our Kinship Carers have been lucky enough to have their homes transformed with the help of Waitrose. We would like to share a few words from the Duty Manager at the Leeds Meanwood store, Connor Shaw.



"As part of our community matters program and use of voluntary hours, we have a DIY SOS style project where we help out decorate/garden/tidy up fostering or adoption families homes. This was the first in a series of projects we have on our schedule working with Leeds City Council and in particular making Leeds a 'child friendly city'. The sites we help out are at addresses within a short distance from the branch therefor helping the local community."

Leeds City Council and especially the Kinship Care Team would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude on behalf of our carers. We look forward to what the future holds!



Great news for Special Guardians!

maxcard

So what is the Max Card?

The Max Card is now available to all families with a Special Guardianship Order. To order your card please contact the Kinship Care Team on 0113-2474654

The Max Card is a discount card for foster families, Special Guardians and families of children with additional needs. Families simply show their Max Card upon entry to a venue in order to obtain free or discounted admission. The scheme is designed to help those families save money on great days out at castles, zoos, bowling alleys and more.

We aim to provide a sense of community through stimulating learning experiences and enjoyable days out for everyone. We work with local authorities and selected charities, who administer the cards to eligible families in their areas.

Here are just some of the local attractions available to you at a discounted rate:

- Diggerland
- Eureka
- Harewood House
- Hollywood Bowl
- Lotherton Hall
- Temple Newsham
- Tropical World
- Thwaite Mills
- Jorvik
- York Minster
- York Theatre Royal

For more information on discounts around the UK check out the website www.mymaxcard.co.uk



IMPORTANT: FINANCIAL INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW AS A KINSHIP FOSTER CARER

Please be advised that carers are not eligible to Claim Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit or any other related benefits for a child placed in their care if approved as a Kinship Foster Carer or Caring for a child on a Temporary Fostering Basis. As a kinship foster carer whether fully approved or on a temporary basis, the department provides a weekly maintenance allowance that is child 'age related' for the duration of the placement – this is specifically for the upkeep of the child placed. For up to date information on weekly amounts and allowance levels, please refer to the FN16 (Financial Policy) document which is reviewed annually and sent out to carers or speak to your Supervising Social Worker.

We strongly advise any kinship foster carer who is in receipt of Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit or Related Benefits for any child placed in their care to stop claiming these benefits. It is regarded as fraud by the government to knowingly claim child benefit, child tax credits or related benefits in addition to fostering allowance. If you have any concerns/queries about this, please contact your Supervising Social Worker or the Kinship Care Team Manager on 0113 247 4654.

NB: This does not apply to Special Guardians, Special Guardians can claim Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit if applicable.

"It was actively promoted by the fostering service. It was somewhere different to take the children."



"It's a good chance to get out and spend time together as a family."

Two groups of Kinship and Special Guardianship carers and their children have been fortunate enough to be involved in programmes of activities at Eureka. Each group attended the children's museum in Halifax for three sessions on Sundays in September and October. Each session comprised of activities for the carers and children to be together followed by a picnic lunch provided by the museum. Following this families were free to use the museum for the rest of the day. The ultimate bonus for families involved was a free annual family pass for 12 months!

With regard to the activities provided by Eureka, it was good to see adults and children all engaging in the different themes, with the prize for most outrageous dressing up outfits going to carer Vanessa Speight who wholeheartedly threw herself into the Pirate and Carnival themes.



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Many thanks must be extended to Eureka staff for their excellent organisation and hospitality.

"It has given me a bit more of an incentive to attend support group meetings. Thank you for organising it."

"It got the kids interacting and doing things. It was nice to meet and speak to people in a similar situation. We have made new friendships."

Children's Views

Within the Kinship Team and as part of the whole Children's Social Work Service we endeavour to obtain children's views to ensure they know that they are respected and heard throughout what can be a difficult time in their lives. Below are a few examples of children's views with regards to their placements in Kinship foster Care.

"I lived with foster carers for 16 months and was happy living with my foster carers. I was even happier when I knew I could go and live with my family.

I have lived with my grandparents for nearly four years and I am happy living with them and I am spoilt to death.

They are fun to be with and I enjoy baking with my grandma. I get pocket money every week, go to the caravan once a month and they buy me treats.

I have a pet lizard and my grandma helps me to clean out its cage and look after it. What more can I say!"

Joshua, aged 13.

"I like my own room with all my things in it. I like my X Box and that my friends can come to play. All my family are here. They all love me and care about me."

Anonymous

"I enjoy every part of being in my foster placement, my carer is absolutely awesome! She is there for me when I need her, she takes us out to theme parks. She looks after us well and makes me happy when I think of mum. There is nothing that I don't enjoy about being in my placement."

Anonymous

The Grandparents' Association

The Kinship Care Team work closely with the Grandparents' Association who are now offering their own support group for Kinship Carers. The group will be held at the Henry Barran Centre, Amberton Grove, Leeds, LS8 3JR.

The next group is on the 4th November, following that it will be held on the first Tuesday of every month. It's a fantastic opportunity to meet new people in the same situation as you and to build your own support network.

It's an informal group and sometimes just a chance to get together with people going through similar experiences as yourself.



The Grandparents' Association
Reg. Charity No. 1105977

LEEDS OFFICE

The Grandparents' Association
Third Floor
6-8 The Headrow
Leeds
LS1 6PT

Helpline: 0845 4349585

advice@grandparents-association.org.uk

For more information contact Laura Teahan on 0113 2446111 or 07914787746

The Leeds Warrior

By Rachel Reddington



I had the pleasure of spending the afternoon with Sean O'Hagan, a fellow Kinship Carer and the man behind Josh Warrington's success, his dad, his coach and his friend.

It was a fantastic opportunity to hear Sean's side of the story behind Josh's sudden rise to fame. Speaking with such warmth and pride Sean told me that he has been in the boxing game for over 20 years and is renowned for his professional achievements over the years.

At the age of 7 he introduced his son Josh to The VIP and Warrior Boxing club and has never looked back since. Sean has dedicated hours, weeks and years putting Josh through grueling training and with fantastic results! At the age of 18 Josh turned pro and has since been undefeated in 19 fights. Josh now holds the European Featherweight, Commonwealth and British Title, none of which could have been won without his team behind him. Sean spoke of the amount of work that goes into one fight and how he has had to learn to switch off his fatherly instincts in order to be successful. Not only does he prepare Josh physically by 7 days a week training prior to a fight, he studies the opponent in order to prepare him mentally, Josh then has the upper hand when entering the ring with awareness of his opponents moves.

As well as being a professional boxer Josh graduated from Leeds University with a degree and works part time as a Dental Technician which has gained him the nickname of 'the boxing tooth fairy'.

Josh has a huge following of supporters including Leeds Rhinos and Leeds United players which have grown with each fight, his next fight will take place in the new year where he hopes to go on to world titles.



Being a Kinship Carer Sean is well aware of the challenges he can face and how it can be a struggle managing family life and work with an additional member in the family, Sean however wouldn't change this for the world and despite knowing what he knows now, would still choose to be a Kinship Carer. Sean has kindly offered a number of tickets for the next fight to Kinship Carers and their older children who are interesting in boxing to which we offer sincere gratitude.



A Snapshot of the Nurtured Heart Approach

The Nurtured Heart Approach (NHA) is a **philosophy for creating healthy relationships with the people in your life**. NHA is being successfully implemented through families, classrooms, foster carers, health care professionals, social workers and criminal justice organizations that are seeking successful, early intervention techniques.

The Nurtured Heart Approach consists of a set of strategies that assists children in further developing their self-control, especially in relation to emotions, and has been found effective with children of all ages. It focuses on transforming the way children perceive themselves, their caregivers and the world around them. Children learn to understand that they will receive endless amounts of praise, energy, recognition and reward through the positive behaviour they display and this supports children to build a positive image of themselves, which we call "**Inner Wealth**."

ABSOLUTELY NO!

I will not accidentally foster failure nor will I reward problems by responding to them in animated ways. I will save my time and energy for searching for success.

ABSOLUTELY YES!

I will constantly recognize the success and achievement that children are displaying no matter how small.

ABSOLUTE CLARITY!

I will have clear and consistent consequences for children when a rule has been broken. "Here are the rules, and here's what happens when you break a rule."

For information on books, audio material, online courses and live trainings, please visit:

www.ChildrensSuccessFoundation.com

For more information please call Gill Morgan on 0113-3952630 or your Supervising Social Worker.

A course for Kinship Carers ran in September and went really well. The course included two full days training on the Nurtured Heart Approach delivered by Gill Morgan Supervising Social Worker and Marie Procter Foster Carer followed by monthly support groups for a year.



We've had positive feedback from the Kinship Carers who took part which is fantastic and exactly the result we were aiming for!

The next course will run in the new year and we are taking names now, we look forward to hearing from anyone who is interested in taking part.

To take part in the next course please speak with your Supervising Social Worker



Private Fostering Your story...

Mykey is fifteen years old. He is a privately fostered young person who lives with his Private Foster Carer Carol. When he was 9 years old, Mykey became unable to continue living with his birth family and he was too young to care for himself. As Mykey's neighbour Carol became concerned.

Carol understood that Mykey deserved to feel safe and well cared for. She and her daughter Charlotte wanted to offer love and care to Mykey so Carol made an agreement with Mykey's family that she should care for him under a *Private Fostering Arrangement*. Carol notified Leeds Children's Social Work Service about the arrangement (a legal requirement of all parties involved in making Private Fostering Arrangements).

Within six months of living with Carol, Mykey's appearance improved. He enjoyed good home cooking and gained weight and developed into a very healthy boy.

Mykey is an important member of Carol's family and his relationship with Carol and Charlotte is that of a loving son and brother. Carol states "They are my kids – both".

There were challenges Carol encountered as a Private Foster Carer, including financial difficulty in affording to care for Mykey and the need to move to a bigger house. As a Privately Fostered young person Mykey receives regular support visits from Social Work Assistant Ruth. Carol and Mykey describe Ruth as "very good and supportive". Ruth is very proud of Mykey's achievements and describes him as a successful young man who she is confident will achieve well throughout his life.

Indeed Mykey is now a very confident and outgoing young man. He recently sat 15 GCSE's and is currently awaiting his exam results. He has plans to attend College to study a two year extended diploma in Performing Arts and has further career aspirations to attend university to study teaching at degree level.

Carol proudly states "Mykey is self-sufficient – he's brilliant. I've never had a bad report about him from anyone". She has brought Mykey up to be loving and considerate of other people and strongly believes that all young people should contribute to a family home. Mykey is glad to give Carol a hand whenever one is needed and indeed, last year when Carol encountered a serious illness, Mykey and Charlotte were the ones who supported Carol.

Carol also believes in the importance of all young people learning to contribute to the wider society and she has taught Mykey a range of independence and life skills which will stand him in good stead at university and throughout his adult life.

Mykey's advice to any young person who may encounter similar difficulties to those he encountered as a young child? "Talk about your problems to someone who will listen to you. Otherwise you might continue feeling secluded and lonely. When you finally settle with a family you get out of that unhappy situation. You feel a difference, a relief at the loss of the difficulties." Mykey considers that thanks to Carol, he has developed the right morals to become a good parent and to contribute to the wider society. He is so happy he trusted Carol to care for him. What a successful Private Fostering Arrangement –couldn't be better.

Kinship picnic in the park

A successful picnic was held for children and carers at the end of the summer holidays in Roundhay Park. Attendance was good (though always room for more) and there was a plentiful supply of party food. Everyone, adults and children alike engaged in a range of games including a lengthy and enthusiastic game of rounders, swing ball, Frisbees and football.

This was a good event and the hope is that word will spread and more children and carers will join us at the Halloween and Christmas Parties. Everyone Welcome!



Our annual Kinship Christmas party will be held on 22nd December, venue is to be confirmed. We hope you can join us for the festivities!

Kinship Support Group 2015

Some dates for your diary for 2015 Kinship support Group:

- | | | |
|---------------|--|----------------|
| 22nd January | 21st May | 17th September |
| 26th February | 18th June | 15th October |
| 19th March | 16th July | 19th November |
| 23rd April | August Kinship Picnic (date to be confirmed) | |

For more information please contact the Kinship Care Team on 0113-2474654

17th December (Christmas Party)