



Kinship Connected – Kinship Carer Support Programme

One Adoption – West Yorkshire, May 2018

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About Grandparents Plus

Grandparents Plus is a national charity (England and Wales) which champions the role of grandparents and the wider family in children's lives.

We provide **advice, information and peer support for kinship carers** - grandparents and other family members who step in to care for children who cannot live with their birth parents due to difficult family circumstances (most commonly due to drug or alcohol misuse, domestic violence, death or imprisonment).

Each year we support **2,000 vulnerable families**, providing **life-changing financial, practical and emotional support.**



Over **15 years experience** of supporting kinship carers.

Grandparents Plus has a credible reputation for supporting the **national development of good kinship care practice**, including our:

- sector-leading research
- Kinship Care Professionals Group
- kinship care support programmes
- national Support Network of approximately 4,000 kinship care members
- free national advice service, which supports around 1,700 kinship families a year.

We support **all kinship carers** regardless of legal order, including Special Guardians.



State of kinship care

How many children are being raised in kinship care in England?

- *Approximately 150,000 (3 times the number of children in foster care)*

What percentage of children growing up in kinship care have special needs?

- *Almost half (49%) of children in kinship care have some kind of special needs, most commonly emotional and behavioural difficulties, according to our research.*



Kinship care in West Yorkshire

of children growing up in kinship care in West Yorkshire by local authority

Local authority	# of children in kinship care	% of population
Bradford	3,030	2.3
Calderdale	580	1.3
Kirklees	1,230	1.3
Leeds	2,360	1.6
Wakefield	1,400	2.1

Source: 2011 Census (N.B. national average is 1.4%)





only 1 in 10

carers are getting the support they need to bring up the children they've stepped in to raise.

Grandparents Plus 2017



Kinship Connected Kinship Care Support Programme

- Delivered by Grandparents Plus
- Includes:
 - **1-1 support from project workers**
 - **Support group development**
 - **Preparatory workshops**
 - **Consultancy**
 - **Specialist advice service**
 - **'Someone like me' telephone support service**
- Directly supported 800 kinship families to date.
- Worked with kinship carers to develop 25 sustainable and kinship carer-led support groups.



Impact for kinship carers

Independent evaluation in 2017 by York Consulting

- Reduced isolation
- Reduced financial concerns
- Reduced level of concerns about children's behaviour, health and wellbeing
- Improved relationships with family members
- Improved confidence, feeling more able to cope with caring role

'I was surviving, now I'm living.' (kinship carer, Hartlepool)



Impact for local authorities

- **Improved kinship carer confidence, engagement and trust** in local authority
- **Reduced number of children on Child Protection Plans and Children in Need** - of the 550 families we supported in 2014-17, the number of children on Child Protection Plans reduced by 86%. The number of Children in Need reduced by 88%.
- **Cost savings** – estimated cost saving of £1/4m in local authority budgets across NE 2014-17

‘There’s a big gap within the local authority in terms of support for kinship carers. This project is a lifeline.’ (local authority commissioning service)



Safeguarding

- Clear safeguarding policies and procedures
- Programmes Manager – Kinship Care is registered social worker and safeguarding lead
- All staff and volunteers DBS checked
- Work in close collaboration with local authority



Why it works

- **Independent and trusted** so able to reach and engage kinship carers who may be reluctant to ask for help from the local authority
- **Collaborative** – adding value to existing support offer by bringing together combined assets and strengths of kinship carers, charities and the local authority
- **Sustainable** – supporting and empowering kinship carers to lead support groups
- **Peer-to-peer focus** empowers kinship carers to support each other, building community capacity and community resilience.



Evaluation

West Yorkshire would also benefit from an in-depth evaluation and impact measurement process that will be developed as part of this funding.

It would provide some useful data and insights into kinship carers in the region, as well as a cost benefit analysis of the service. Commissioning the service for the 18 months period would enable much more detailed evaluation.



Free services we offer

- National specialist **kinship care advice service** available online and through our helpline on 0300 123 7015
- Wealth of the **latest information on kinship care** on the Grandparents Plus website accessible to all www.grandparentsplus.org.uk
- Kinship carers can join our national **Kinship Carer Support Network** of 4,000 kinship carers. It's free to join and they'll receive a monthly e-newsletter with opportunities to meet other carers at training events and family activity days and also to influence the development of our services and campaigns to make kinship care better. They can join here - <https://www.grandparentsplus.org.uk/forms/join>
- Practitioners and researchers can join our thriving **Kinship Care Professionals Group** that provides a unique opportunity to share and develop good practice in support for kinship carers. The group meets quarterly in London and the north of England and is free to join. You can join here - <https://www.grandparentsplus.org.uk/professional-support-network>

