

# NATIONAL KINSHIP CARE SERVICE – How it can support kinship carers and their children

## Background

CHILDREN 1<sup>ST</sup> was commissioned by the Scottish Government in March 2011 to develop and implement a national service for kinship carers. The national service provides a helpline and email service, outreach, information workshops and advice and support to kinship care families. We also work with kinship carers and local kinship care groups to support them to influence policy and practice at a national and local level.

## What does the National Service do?

### The National Kinship Care Helpline

Support is available to kinship carers 365 days a year through the National Kinship Care Helpline run by ParentLine Scotland, a national confidential helpline and email service for anyone caring for or concerned about a child.

The service, staffed by trained call-takers, provides emotional support as well as practical guidance. This can be in the form of signposting to more specialist services, advocacy or on-going telephone support with a named call-taker.

The Kinship Care Helpline is open Monday – Friday from 9am to 10pm and Saturday and Sunday from 12 noon to 8pm.

### Outreach

We visit kinship care groups around Scotland, learning directly from their experiences and updating them on the services and support available through the National Kinship Care Service, other organisations and CHILDREN 1<sup>ST</sup>'s other national and local services. Our range of local services can offer practical support to kinship care families on parenting skills, child development, recovery from abuse and trauma, befriending, advocacy and mediation.

Our outreach work is also an important tool for keeping kinship carers up to date with policy changes and new resources. We update individual carers and kinship care groups through our quarterly e-newsletter, which is also sent to kinship care social work staff.

From the groups we work with we understand the value of the support they offer each other and we actively work to encourage and facilitate both local authorities and individual kinship carers seeking to establish a local group.

In addition to kinship carers, we also engage with and liaise directly with local authority teams and other organisations working with kinship care families, including Citizens Advice Scotland and Mentor UK. Each year, we also organise and deliver a range of events for kinship carers.

### Information workshops

We can provide a number of workshops to kinship carers and kinship care groups all over Scotland. The current training programme consists of:

- Financial Inclusion
- Impact of Substance Misuse
- Hints and Tips about School and Learning
- Challenging Behaviour
- Safe Internet Use

Workshops are delivered free of charge and travel and childcare expenses are reimbursed.

We also provide annual training workshops for local authorities, run in partnership with Citizens Advice Scotland. They have been targeted largely at social work teams supporting kinship carers, however, we can also run a regional event in your area for a broader group of professionals and practitioners. Contact us to find out more.



## KINSHIP CARE INFORMATION FACTSHEET

### Research, engagement and influencing policy

We have undertaken research with kinship carers, children living in kinship care and local authorities to inform the development of policy and practice for kinship care families. This has included the development of the National Parenting Strategy and the Children and Young People Bill.

A key part of the Policy and Outreach Officer's role is to ensure the needs of kinship carers and the children they look after are kept high on the political agenda.

Recently this has included engaging with kinship carers on a financial review being undertaken by the Scottish Government, as well as working to ensure the needs of kinship care families are considered as part of the welfare reform agenda.

We also work with kinship carers and local kinship care groups to support them to influence policy and practice at national and local level. This work enabled kinship carers to develop and produce their own manifesto for the 2012 local government elections.

### Contact

If you would like any further information about the National Kinship Care Service please contact:

Kinship Care Policy and Outreach Officer  
CHILDREN 1<sup>ST</sup>  
83 Whitehouse Loan  
Edinburgh EH9 1AT

t: **0131 446 3983**

f: **0131 446 2339**

e: **[lisa.marshall@children1st.org.uk](mailto:lisa.marshall@children1st.org.uk)**

Further resources can be found on our website:  
**[www.children1st.org.uk](http://www.children1st.org.uk)**

**ParentLine**  
SCOTLAND 08000 28 22 33

You can also contact the National Kinship Care Helpline at ParentLine Scotland:

t: **08000 28 22 33**

e: **[parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk](mailto:parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk)**

The helpline opening hours are:

**Monday to Friday: 9am-10pm**

**Saturday and Sunday: 12noon-8pm**

## We can help you take action to achieve change where it is needed.

For further information about CHILDREN 1<sup>ST</sup> and to order any of our publications, please contact:

CHILDREN 1<sup>ST</sup>, 83 Whitehouse Loan, Edinburgh EH9 1AT

t: 0131 446 2300

f: 0131 446 2339

e: [info@children1st.org.uk](mailto:info@children1st.org.uk)

For more information on family group conferences or to find out how you can help visit our website:

**[www.children1st.org.uk](http://www.children1st.org.uk)**



**WE LISTEN, WE SUPPORT,  
WE TAKE ACTION**  
for Scotland's vulnerable  
children and families

CHILDREN 1<sup>ST</sup> Registered Office  
83 Whitehouse Loan Edinburgh EH9 1AT

**[www.children1st.org.uk](http://www.children1st.org.uk)**  
Registered Scottish Charity No. SC016092