Royal Greenwich Children's Services

Kinship Care Strategy 2026 - 2029



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ROYAL borough of GREENWICH

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1. Foreword

Kinship carers are at the heart of strong families and communities. Every day, they provide children with the love, stability and support they need to thrive, often stepping in at difficult times and changing the course of a child's life for the better.

In Royal Greenwich, hundreds of children are being raised in kinship arrangements, helping them stay connected to the people, places and relationships that matter most. We are incredibly grateful for the commitment and resilience shown by kinship carers across our borough.

This strategy sets out how we will strengthen support for kinship families through better information, advice and practical help. Through our Kinship Local Offer and closer partnership working, we are committed to ensuring kinship carers receive the recognition they deserve and that every child in kinship care has the opportunity to flourish.



Councillor Sandra Bauer
Cabinet Member for Children,
Young People and
Post-16 Futures
Royal Borough of Greenwich

Begin well, develop well, and move into adulthood well. This is the vision we set out for all young people in Royal Greenwich, and it is true for children in kinship care. Through this strategy, we are committed to providing the best possible start in life for these children – just as any loving family would.

As a local authority, we recognise our duty to support children in kinship care, ensuring they enjoy a safe, happy, and healthy upbringing. These children face unique challenges, and it is our responsibility to level the playing field by offering the support they need to thrive.

Our services are designed to prepare and support young people and their carers for a healthy, safe and enriching life, equipping them with the tools to succeed.

Listening to and learning from the experiences of children in kinship care is paramount. We are dedicated to providing them with a platform to voice their needs and aspirations, ensuring they have the opportunity to grow and flourish. Understanding the challenges of and supporting kinship carers with these is crucial to achieving this aim and this strategy lays out our plan on how we intend to achieve this.



Florence Kroll,
Director of Children's Services
Royal Borough of Greenwich

At the heart of every child's journey is the need for love, stability, and a sense of belonging. As we outline our Kinship Strategy for Children's Services, we reaffirm our unwavering belief that children thrive best when they remain within the warmth and support of their families. Kinship carers—whether grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other extended family members—play a vital role in providing this stability, offering children the invaluable gift of connection to their roots and cultural identity. Their involvement not only supports a child's emotional wellbeing but also has a profound impact on their future prospects, life chances, and overall development.

Our vision is clear: we are committed to keeping children within their family networks whenever possible, supporting families in preventing the need for children to come into state care. By investing in preventative services, we aim to strengthen family units, so children can remain at home or with relatives who will provide them with a sense of security and belonging. This strategy reflects our deep-rooted belief that kinship care is not just an alternative but a positive, nurturing solution for children who need it the most.

On a personal note, my own experience has shaped my strong commitment to kinship care. When I was in my early teens, my parents were unable to be with me, and I was cared for by my paternal aunt for a year, followed by my grandmother for four years. These years were crucial in supporting my education, providing me with the environment and emotional support I needed to thrive. The foundation they offered me has been a cornerstone in my life and career. I owe much of my achievements to the love, stability, and guidance that my family provided during those formative years. It is this deeply personal understanding of kinship care that fuels my dedication to ensuring that every child who needs the support of extended family is given the opportunity to experience the love and stability that comes with it.

Through this strategy, we are not just providing a service; we are making an investment in the future of children, their families, and our communities. Together, we can ensure that every child has the opportunity to grow, thrive, and realize their full potential, within the safe embrace of family whenever possible.



Onder Beter,
Deputy Director
of Children's Services
Royal Borough of Greenwich

Being able to care for my niece since her mum passed away has been an amazing journey and we all are learning every day still.

Kinship is not without challenges and can be an emotionally draining and at times challenging, but with the right support and training it can be a life changing experience for a child who really needs love support and stability.

I look forward to continuing to work with Greenwich on understanding and helping kinship carers in providing the best outcomes for children in need.

Melanie
Kinship Champion

Kinship care may not have provided much funding for extras like holidays, so there were some opportunities I missed out on.

However, the overall experience was incredibly valuable. One of the highlights was connecting with other carers in the hub, who came from diverse backgrounds. We learned practical life skills, such as cooking, which I still use to this day. It was a truly enriching experience that left a lasting impact.

Dorcas,
Kinship experienced young person

2. Introduction

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is committed to enhancing support for kinship carers—relatives or close family friends who step in to care for children when their parents are unable to do so. The new social care reforms, which emphasise early intervention, transparency, and improved outcomes for children and families, provide a robust framework for our Kinship Care Strategy.

Our strategy aims to align with the government's vision of breaking the cycle of crisis and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive in a stable, loving environment. By leveraging the new powers and resources made available through these reforms, we will focus on:

1. **Strengthening Support Networks:** Providing kinship carers with access to comprehensive support services, including financial assistance and training.

2. **Enhancing Early Intervention:** Identifying and addressing potential issues early to prevent family breakdown and ensure children can remain within their extended families whenever possible.

3. **Promoting Stability and Permanence:** Ensuring that kinship care arrangements are stable and permanent, reducing the need for children to enter the formal care system.

4. **Improving Access to Resources:** Facilitating better access to educational, health, and social services for children in kinship care to support their overall well-being and development.

By implementing this strategy, we aim to create a supportive and nurturing environment for children in kinship care, recognising the invaluable role that kinship carers play in our community. Together, we can build a system that prioritises the needs of children and families, fostering resilience and long-term positive outcomes.

2.1 Purpose of the Kinship Care Strategy

The purpose of our Kinship Care Strategy is to provide a comprehensive framework that supports and empowers



kinship carers in their vital role. This strategy aims to ensure that children and young people in kinship care receive the stability, love, and support they need to thrive. By outlining clear objectives, support mechanisms, and collaborative efforts, we strive to create an environment where kinship caring families are valued, respected, and equipped with the necessary resources to foster positive outcomes for the children in their care.

2.2 Scope of the Kinship Care Strategy

The Kinship Care Strategy applies to all children and young people who are being cared for by relatives' close family friends, or other connected people the children have a relationship with as well as the kinship carers who provide this essential support. This strategy encompasses:

Children and Young People: All children and young people who are in kinship care arrangements, regardless of their age, background, or specific needs.

Kinship Carers: Relatives, close connections to the family and other connected people who have taken on the responsibility of caring for children and young people, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and other extended family members.

Support Services: All services and resources provided to support kinship carers and the children in their care, including financial assistance, training programs, counselling, legal advice, and respite care.

Stakeholders: All individuals and organisations involved in the support and care of children in kinship arrangements, including all professionals working with the children and carers, our corporate parenting partners, such as health, housing, education, community organisations, and government agencies. We will work with housing services to minimise housing barriers that prevent family members from caring for children safely and sustainably.

Geographical Coverage: The strategy applies to all Greenwich kinship care arrangements, ensuring that support is accessible to all eligible families regardless of their location.

Policy and Legislation: The strategy aligns with relevant local, regional, and national policies and legislation governing kinship care, ensuring compliance and advocating for the rights and needs of kinship caring families.

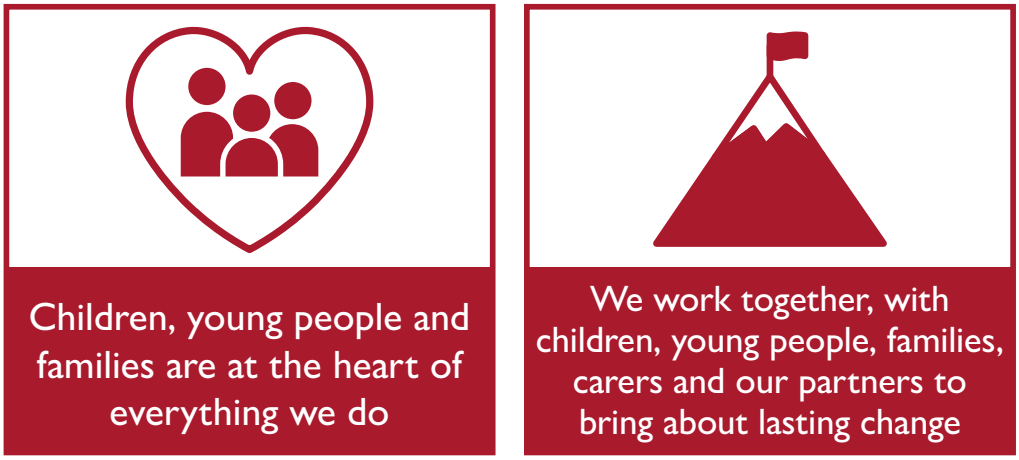


3. Our Principles and Values

3.1 Children's Services Principles

Our structures, system and delivery methods are built around a set of shared values which have been developed with input from staff across the directorate. These values are the norms and standards that guide our individuals as well as our collective behaviours, decisions, and actions.

Acting in a way that is consistent with these values at all times ensures we develop a strong shared identity across our Directorate that embraces diversity and challenges discrimination.



3.2 Our Vision

Our vision is to create a supportive and nurturing environment where children and young people in kinship care can thrive. We aim to empower kinship carers with the resources, training, and support they need to provide stable, loving homes. By fostering a community of collaboration and respect, we strive to ensure that every child in kinship care has the opportunity to reach their full potential and lead a fulfilling life.

3.3 Our Values and Our Pledge

Respect

- **Dignity and Recognition:** we will acknowledge and honour the unique contributions of kinship carers and the importance of their role in the lives of children.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** we will respect the cultural, ethnic, and familial backgrounds of kinship families, ensuring that support is tailored to their specific needs.

Support

- **Holistic Assistance:** we will provide comprehensive support that addresses the emotional, financial, and practical needs of kinship carers and children.
- **Accessibility:** we will ensure that all kinship carers have easy access to the resources and services they need, regardless of their location or circumstances.

Collaboration

- **Partnerships:** we will continue to foster strong partnerships with other agencies, organisations, and community groups to create a network of support for kinship caring families.
- **Shared Responsibility:** we will encourage a collaborative approach where all stakeholders, including kinship carers, children, and professionals, work together to achieve the best outcomes.

Empowerment

- **Capacity Building:** we will provide training and development opportunities to help kinship carers build their skills and confidence.
- **Voice and Choice:** we will empower kinship carers and children to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives, ensuring their voices are heard and respected.

Child-Centred Approach

- **Best Interests of the Child:** we will aways prioritise the well-being and best interests of the child in all decisions and actions.
- **Safety and Stability:** we will ensure that children in kinship care have a safe, stable, and nurturing environment to grow and thrive.

Inclusivity

- **Equity and Fairness:** we will strive to provide equitable support and opportunities for all kinship caring families, recognising and addressing any barriers they may face.
- **Community Engagement:** we will promote a sense of belonging and community among kinship carers and children, encouraging mutual support and shared experiences.

3.4 Our Commitment to Kinship Families

We commit to:

- Providing practical and emotional support.
- Ensuring access to financial assistance.
- Empowering kinship carers through training and resources.
- Listening to your experiences and co-producing our services.

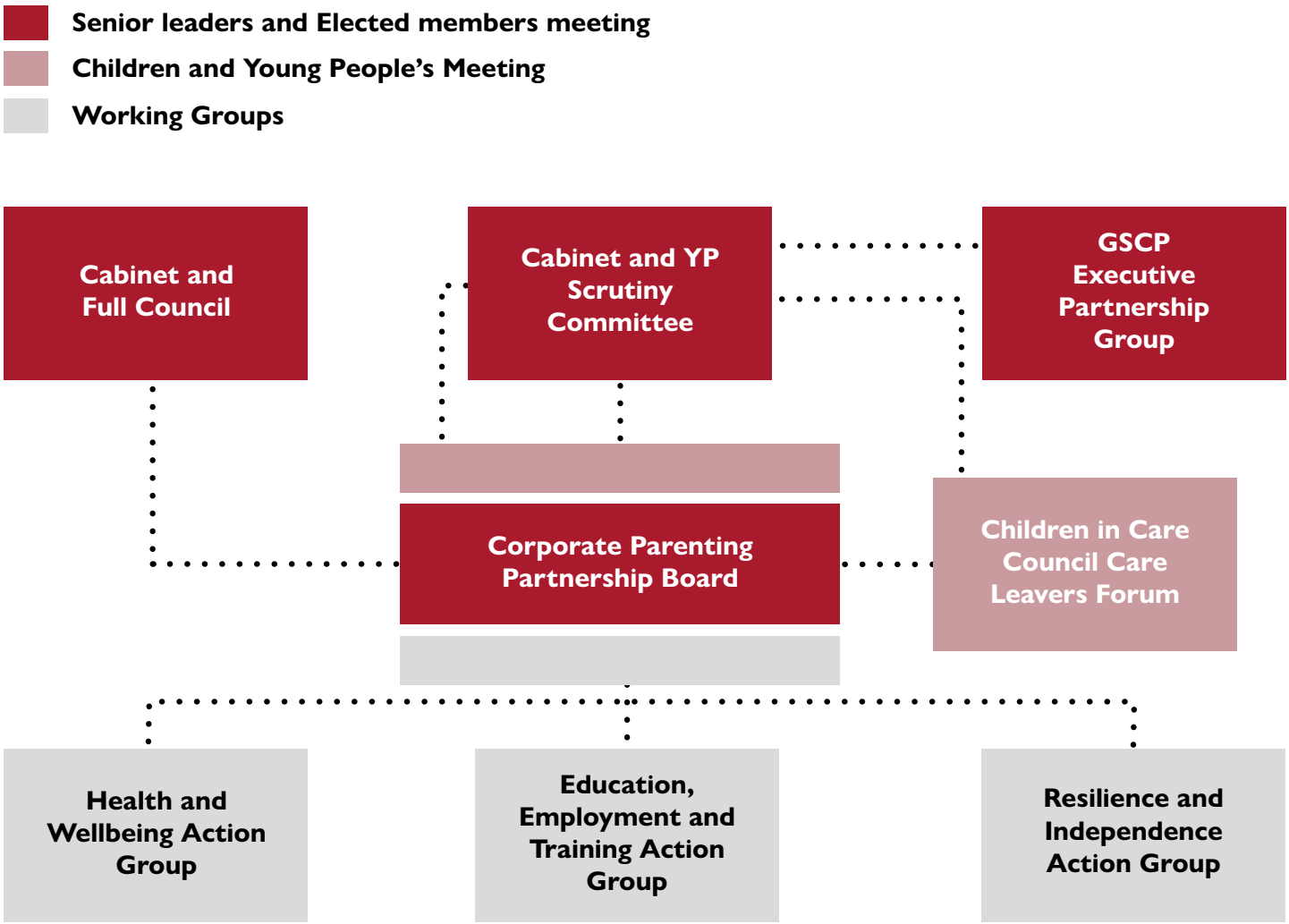
4. Our roles and responsibilities

Governance Board

The Corporate Parenting Partnership Board is responsible for oversight and strategic decision making.

Membership includes:

- Senior representatives from Children's Services
- Health partners (e.g. CAMHS)
- Education leads
- Legal advisors (for Kinship placement regulations)
- Voluntary sector representatives
- Adult services
- Kinship carer representatives/champions (voice of lived experience)



Senior Management

Responsible for overseeing the overall implementation of this strategy, including:

Leadership and Oversight: Provide overall leadership and strategic direction for the Kinship Care Strategy.

Policy Development: Develop and implement policies and procedures to support kinship care.

Resource Allocation: Ensure appropriate resources are allocated to support kinship carers and children.

Operational Service Leads

Responsible for implementing the strategy within their service areas, including:

- **Overseeing Daily Operations:** Ensure that day-to-day activities related to kinship care run smoothly and efficiently.
- **Implementing Policies and Procedures:** Responsible for translating strategic goals into actionable plans. Implement policies and procedures that support kinship caregivers in providing for the physical, emotional, and financial needs of the children in their care.
- **Monitoring Compliance and Quality:** Ensure that all activities comply with legal and regulatory requirements. This includes monitoring the quality of services provided to kinship caregivers and making necessary adjustments to improve outcomes.

Kinship Care Team Leader and Practice Leader

Responsible for the management of the day-to-day operations of the kinship care service, which includes:

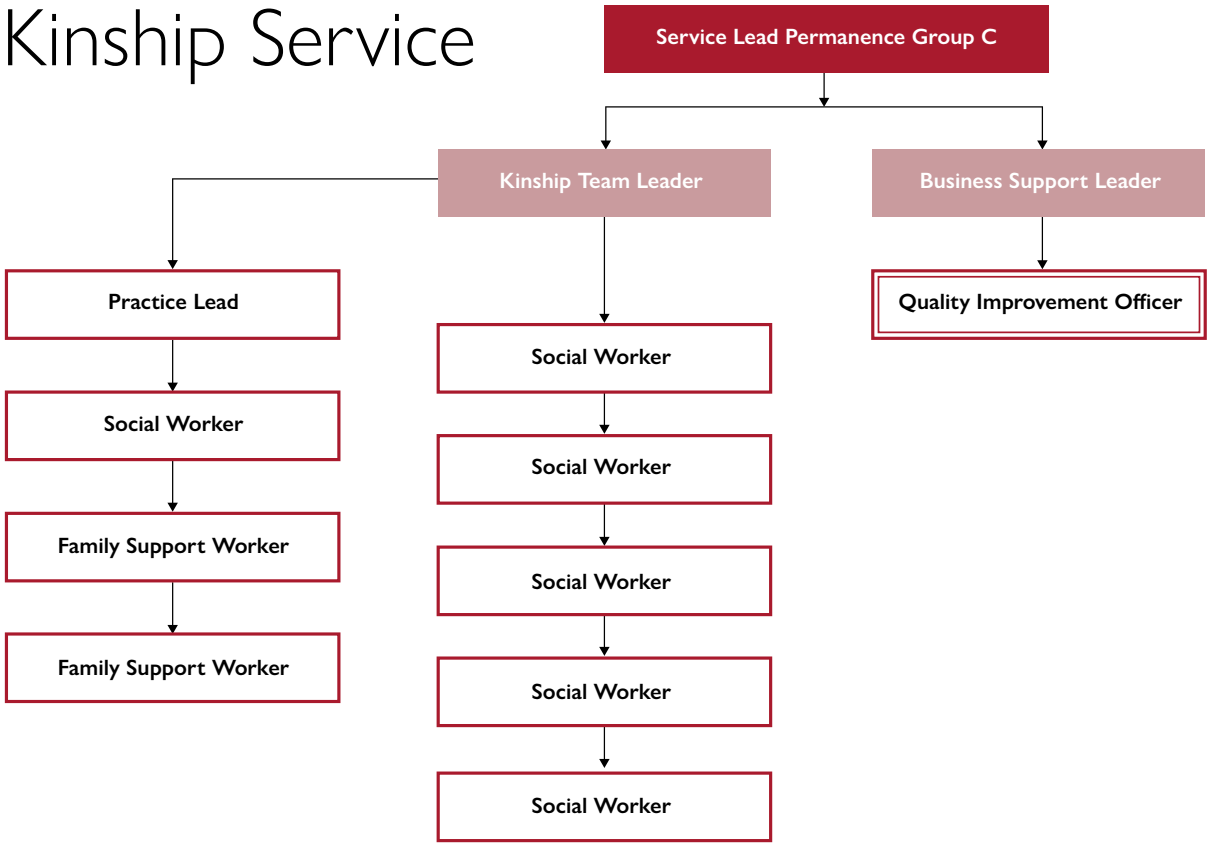
- **Case Management:** Oversee the assessment, planning, and review of kinship care arrangements.
- **Support Services:** Coordinate support services for kinship carers, including training, counselling, and financial assistance.
- **Advocacy:** Advocate for the needs and rights of kinship carers and children within the organisation and the wider community.

Assessing and Supervising Social Workers

Responsible for supporting children who are being cared for by relatives or close family friends, including:

- **Assessment and Planning:** Conduct assessments of kinship care arrangements and develop individualised care plans.
- **Ongoing Support:** Provide ongoing support and supervision to kinship carers and children.

Here is the structure of the Kinship Service:





Kinship Champions

Advocate within Royal Greenwich and the community to ensure kinship care remains a priority and the strategy reflects the needs and experiences of those directly impacted. The Kinship champions play an important advocacy role, focusing on raising awareness, improving support, and influencing positive change for kinship families.

Kinship Carers

Primary Care: Provide day-to-day care and support for the child or young person.

Engagement: Participate in training, support services, and feedback mechanisms to improve the care provided.

Children and Young People

Responsible for implementing the strategy within their service areas, including:

Participation: Engage in the planning and decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Feedback: Provide feedback on their experiences to help improve the support and services they receive.

Engage: It is our responsibility to make sure they have the opportunity to engage.

Training and Development Team

Training Programmes: Develop and deliver training programmes for kinship carers to enhance their skills and knowledge.

Professional Development: Provide opportunities for continuous professional development for staff working with kinship caring families.

Parenting Courses: Sessions on attachments, trauma, and child development.

Financial Support

Financial Assistance: Provide means tested financial support for kinship carers, ensuring timely and accurate payments.

Benefits Advice: Help accessing Universal Credit, Child Benefit, or Tax Credits.

Legal Advice

Legal Support: Provide one off legal advice to kinship carers regarding the legal framework for caring for children or Special Guardianship arrangements for where children live, arrangements for children to see parents and other family members.

Policy Compliance: Ensure that all kinship care arrangements comply with relevant laws and regulations.

Health needs support

Medical Support: Provide medical care and support to children in kinship care.

Health Assessments: Conduct regular health assessments and monitor the well-being of children in kinship care.

Health needs support

Support kinship carers by providing educational guidance, explaining financial pathways including Pupil Premium Plus funding, and providing training for carers. They also coordinate with schools to ensure the child's education includes an offer of emotional and social support to help children in kinship care thrive academically and personally. They will also hold and support schools in promoting positive staff wellbeing to ensure support for children is delivered in timely way at the point of need by well trained and emotionally available staff members.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs): Update, review and share PEP template/structure with schools in and out of borough to promote the educational needs of children and young people. Best practice is for termly PEP meetings.

School Liaison: Act as a liaison between kinship carers and educational provisions to support the child's learning and development.

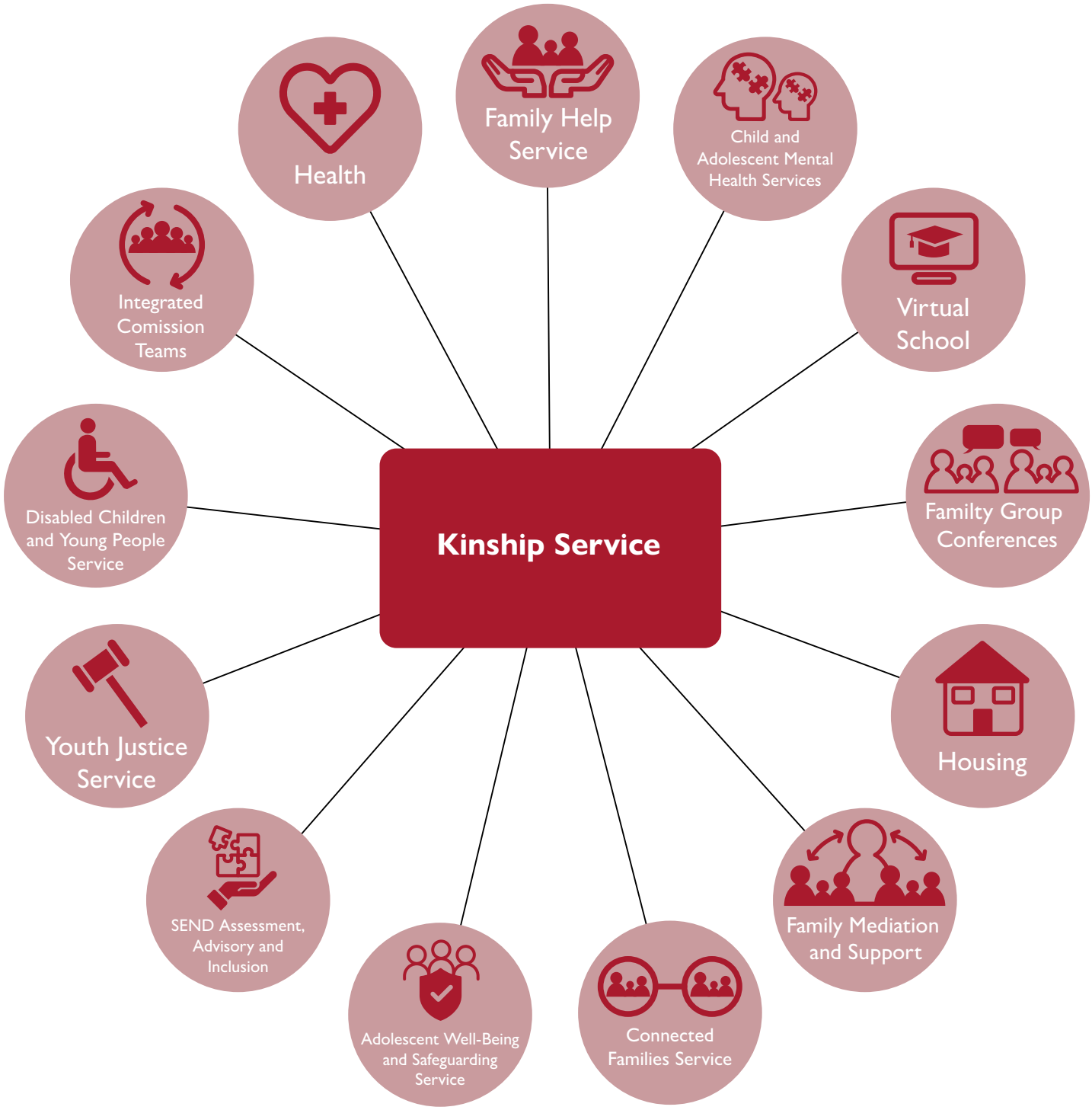
Community Support

Community Support: Provide additional support and resources to kinship caring families through community programmes and services.

Peer Support Groups: Facilitate peer support groups for kinship carers to share experiences and provide mutual support. This will include training and upskilling of kinship carers plus emotional support/resilience for carers.



The following diagram illustrates the network of partners collaborating across the borough to support and enhance the work of the Kinship Service:



5. Local Context

The following presents key demographic data and local context to provide a clear understanding of the kinship care landscape within the borough:

Data as at the end of fiscal year 2025/2026 (March 2026):

	Number of Children	Number of Households
Private Fostering	10	10
Child Arrangements Order	6	5
Special Guardianship Order	353	265
Kinship Foster Carers (this includes Reg 24 and Friends & Family)	69	50
Total	**438**	**330**

(source: local reporting)

We anticipate the demand will increase, due to the national social care reforms focus on children remaining with their extended family networks with support.



6. Local offer

Royal Greenwich has a local offer that sets out the range of support, services, and entitlements available to kinship carers
and the children they care for within the borough.
It is available here *link to local offer when complete*

The Royal Greenwich Local Offer is designed for:

a. Kinship carers in informal arrangements or with legal orders (e.g., SGOs, CAOs, or family and friends fostering arrangements).

b. Children and young people being cared for by relatives or family friends.

c. Professionals supporting kinship families.

d. Partners and stakeholders involved in supporting kinship carers and children and young people

Kinship service provides practical and emotional support to kinship carers who are caring for children who are unable to live with their parents for various reasons.

The local offer includes support and services delivered by both internal and external partners:

- **Financial Support:** Assistance with financial allowances or grants to help cover the costs of caring for a child.
- **Information and Advice:** Access to guidance on legal rights, entitlements, and available services for both carers and children.
- **Training and Development:** Workshops or training sessions to help carers develop the skills needed to care for children with specific needs.
- **Emotional Support:** Counselling or peer support groups to help carers manage the emotional challenges of their role.
- **Practical Assistance:** Help with navigating the education, health, and social care systems to ensure children receive appropriate services and support.





External Partners

The diagram below illustrates the key external partners that the kinship service collaborates with to provide integrated and comprehensive support to kinship families. These partnerships are essential in addressing the wide-ranging needs of both carers and children, ensuring they have access to appropriate services, resources, and guidance.

Kinship is the foremost UK charity dedicated to supporting kinship carers—relatives or close family friends who step in when a child cannot live with their birth parents. As a charity "made by and for our community", it offers a wide range of services including peer support groups, practical advice via a specialist advice line, free workshops and national roadshows, and one-to-one support through partnerships with local authorities.

Coram BAAF is the UK's leading membership organisation for professionals working across adoption, fostering, and kinship care, representing nearly all local authorities, regional agencies, and children's services professionals. In the kinship context, they provide essential support by producing practice notes, briefings, and tools like the new Form K for kinship carer assessments, which ensures a relationship-based, child-centred, and culturally sensitive process.

The Fostering Network, the UK's leading fostering charity, actively supports kinship carers through tailored programmes, resources, and advocacy. They offer assessment guidance and practical tools, as well as specialist resources such as practice information notes and assessment frameworks.

The London Permanency Partners Consortium (LPPC), made up of 11 London local authorities, was established to strengthen the delivery of permanence options for children by improving collaboration, sharing training, resources, and promoting best practices across member boroughs. By working together, the 11 authorities are enhancing support for fostering, special guardianship, kinship care, and private fostering services, ensuring more consistent, high-quality, and sustainable outcomes for children and families across London.

The Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) plays a crucial role in supporting kinship care by providing targeted therapeutic funding to help children in special guardianship or child arrangements orders.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the implementation of a robust kinship strategy is essential for ensuring the well-being and stability of children within our community. Our approach to kinship care is rooted in whole-family practice. We recognise that positive outcomes for children are strengthened when support is available to carers, children, parents, siblings and wider family networks.

By prioritising family connections and providing comprehensive support to kinship carers, we can create a nurturing environment that promotes the emotional, social, and educational development of children. This strategy not only seeks to strengthen family bonds but also reduce the need for formal care placements, ultimately leading to better outcomes for children and families. Moving forward, it is crucial to continuously evaluate and adapt our approach to meet the evolving needs of kinship families, ensuring that they receive the resources and support necessary to thrive.

A Kinship Care Reference Group, including carers and young people with lived experience, will support co-production, service review and the monitoring of this strategy.



7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Related Plans and Strategies

Corporate Parenting Partnership Strategy: Corporate parenting partnership strategy | Royal Borough of Greenwich (royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

Children's and Young People Plan: Children and young people plan | Children's Services plans | Royal Borough of Greenwich (royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

National Kinship Strategy, December 2023: Championing kinship care: national kinship care strategy - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, October 2024: Kinship care: statutory guidance for local authorities

Children's Social Care National Framework, December 2023: Children's social care national framework

Children's Social Care National Framework – Illustrated Guide: An illustrated guide to the Children's Social Care National Framework

Royal Greenwich Kinship Care Local Offer – TBC

Appendix 2 – Glossary of terminology used in Royal Greenwich

Kinship Care - Care provided for a child by relatives, friends, or other people with a close relationship to the child when their parents cannot look after them.

Special Guardianship Order (SGO) - A legal order that places a child with someone other than their parents on a long-term basis, giving the carer parental responsibility.

Children in Our Care (CiOC) - A child who is in the care of the local authority, either through a voluntary agreement or a court order.

Private Fostering (PF) - A private arrangement where
a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) lives with someone who is not their parent or close relative for more than 28 days.

Child Arrangements Order (CAO) - A court order that decides where a child lives and with whom they spend time or have contact.

Family and Friends Care (F&F) - Care provided by relatives or close family friends to a child unable to live with their parents.

Section 17 Child in Need - A legal provision under the Children Act 1989, requiring local authorities to provide services for children in need to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Section 20 Agreement - A voluntary agreement under the Children Act 1989 where parents agree for their child to be cared for by the local authority.

Kinship Foster Care - When kinship carers are approved as foster carers by the local authority to care for a related child who is considered "looked after."

Residence Order (now part of CAO) - An order determining where a child should live. This is now part of the broader Child Arrangement Order (CAO).

Informal Kinship Care - When a child is looked after by
a relative or family friend without formal involvement from social services.

Connected Persons - Individuals who are relatives, friends, or other people with a pre-existing relationship with a child, who may be considered for a foster care arrangement.

Permanence Planning - The process of planning long-term arrangements for children who cannot return to their birth parents.

Viability Assessment - An initial assessment carried out by social workers to determine whether a relative or friend is a suitable carer for a child.

Care Order - A court order placing a child in the care of a local authority.

Family Group Conference (FGC) - A meeting where family members come together to make a plan for the care of a child. Royal Greenwich will promote Family Group Decision Making as a key mechanism for identifying safe family care options at the earliest opportunity and preventing unnecessary escalation into care proceedings.

Adoption Order - A legal order that transfers parental rights permanently from the birth parents to the adoptive parents.

Kinship Care Support Plan - Wherever appropriate, kinship families will have a clear support plan developed in partnership with them, reviewed regularly and adapted to changing needs. This plan provided by the local authority outlines the support a kinship carer will receive, such as financial assistance, training, or respite care.

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

FaASS – Family and Adolescent Support Service

YJS – Youth Justice Service

Regulation 24 (Reg 24) – Regulation 24 allows for the temporary placement of a child with a relative or friend for up to 16 weeks when it is deemed the best option for the child's welfare.

Care Leaver – A young person aged 16-25 who has spent at least 13 weeks in care after their 14th birthday and has since left the care system.

Care Experienced - Anyone who has spent time in the care of the local authority at any point in their life. This includes living with foster carers, in residential care (such as children's homes), under a supervision order at home, or in kinship care with relatives or friends, either formally or informally.





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