

**Family Rights Group****CONSIDERATION OF KINSHIP CARER/S FOR A LONGER TERM  
PLACEMENT OF A CHILD OR CHILDREN****KINSHIP CARE PART 5: LONGER TERM KINSHIP CARE**

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**INTRODUCTION TO PART 5:**

As a relative or friend of a child or siblings known to you, who cannot live with their family, you are an important resource for the child/ren. It may be that living with you is the best option for meeting the child's needs. This assessment is designed to help you and the Local Authority consider what is involved, and for you to prepare yourself for the placement in the long term. In some cases the child/ren will be already living with you, so this assessment will help you to think about issues that may arise in the future, and enable the Local Authority to make appropriate plans to support you.

**Legal Context**

This assessment is your opportunity to discuss the realities of caring for the child/ren in the longer term and to discuss what support you may need. You need an explanation of the legal context for these arrangements. The social worker will try to ensure that you have space to discuss your questions and difficulties and to learn what is on offer to help you.

Part 5 is designed for you to complete on your own, or you may prefer to complete it with the social worker. Anything you are not sure about, or that is not relevant to you, can be left blank and be discussed with the social worker. Completing Part 5 will take time and may require 3-4 meetings to complete over 6 to 8 weeks.

Some families think initially that too much information needs to be included. Experience has shown that full information helps to anticipate problems and ensure that you know what help is available when you need it. If you do not have the information needed, leave the question blank or other family members may be able to help you. If there are still gaps, the social worker may be able to help to get the information from another source. There may already be reports available which can be attached, to avoid unnecessary duplication.

This assessment has the best chance of succeeding if:-

- The needs of the child/ren are carefully identified and understood by you
- The skills of your family are identified and used to enhance your relationship with the child/ren and the child/ren's parents
- There is a good match between the child/ren's needs and what you have to offer
- The views of parents and other relatives and significant people about the proposed placement with you are understood, as is the nature of the changed relationships
- The need for the Local Authority, other agencies and voluntary groups to support the placement in emotional, practical and financial terms is identified, and the necessary support is forthcoming.

While it is hoped that everyone will work in partnership, it will be important to anticipate future difficulties. Only then can constructive and effective post-placement support be identified. It is probable that a family meeting with everyone from your immediate and extended family and other relatives of the child/ren will be helpful. The social worker will discuss this with you.

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It is likely that a formal written agreement about support and other arrangements will be made with you. The social worker will also discuss this and answer any questions you may have. The Local Authority will need to know when any placement with you starts and about any change of circumstances in your home.

It is important for you to remember that much of the information in Part 5 is confidential and should not be disclosed by you or others in your immediate family. You may also want to discuss with your social worker who else might see this information within the Authority or, for instance, parties within court proceedings.

This document has been designed as a working tool. If more than one child is involved, you can provide answers pertaining to each one where that is necessary. If you would prefer to use it as a form, then you or your social worker can expand it on a computer.

## KINSHIP CARE PART 5: LONGER TERM KINSHIP CARE

### 5.1 HISTORY OF THE CHILD/REN

If a 'Core Assessment' has been completed please attach. If you have completed Part 1, remember there is no need to repeat its content.

- a. Who is part of the child/ren's family network? (Draw a family tree if you wish, including the maternal and paternal family). Indicate who needs to maintain links to the child/ren?
- b. Who are the other **important people** in the child/ren's life who could offer support or whose links you will want to maintain, e.g. school friends?
- c. Give a brief description of how important events have affected the child/ren, e.g. major loss, significant events, multiple moves, experience of abuse, neglect, domestic violence, etc.
- d. Update the child/ren's wishes and views about this placement.

### 5.2 NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN

The success of kinship care depends on a detailed knowledge of the child/ren. If you already have reports on the child/ren, you may not have to answer health and education questions below.

#### a. WRITTEN INFORMATION

- What written information about the child/ren has been given to you?
- What further information would be helpful?

#### b. HEALTH

Please tell us what you know about the child/ren's health and what medical reports, if any, you have including:-

- Child/ren's medical history, immunisations, development
- Any other health needs including nutrition/dietary requirements, need for exercise, dental care, optical care, and sex education
- Do you want specialist advice or help with matters such as substance or alcohol misuse or the child/ren's mental health?

**What else might help you to meet the children's health needs?**

#### c. EDUCATION, LEARNING AND LEISURE

\_\_\_\_\_ Not applicable

Please tell us what reports you have, or what you know about the child/ren's education, including:-

- Current progress at nursery/school.
- Relationships with teachers and other children/young people.
- Future educational needs e.g. opportunities for playing or experiencing success and achievement or plans needed for further education
- Need for special education support or review of existing support (including an educational statement)
- If the child/ren will have only limited hours of formal education, how will the remaining term time hours be spent?
- **Leisure:** does the child/ren have areas of enthusiasm that can be built upon, e.g. sport, music, video games, dance, art, etc.?

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**What will you need to help you to meet the child/ren's education, learning and leisure needs, including ensuring school attendance?**

### **d. EMOTIONAL, BEHAVIOURAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

To get the best picture of each child, can you describe the child's temperament, how the child deals with stress, how impulsive the child is, how adaptable, how the child relates to other children and adults, personal hygiene, whether the child is at risk of offending or involved in criminal networks, etc.

**What will you need to help you to meet the child/ren's emotional, behavioural and social needs?**

### **e. COURT ORDERS AND HEARINGS**

\_\_\_\_\_ Not Applicable

- What, if any court orders have been made? (include dates)
- Are there other court hearings scheduled? (Include dates)

## **5.3 THE PARENT(S)**

Even if the child/ren's parent(s) agree to the child/ren living with you they are likely to feel a sense of loss and they will have to adjust to their changed role in relation to their child/ren, to you and to other relatives and friends. This adjustment can be difficult for all of you and can take time to develop.

- a. **Describe** each parent, as you know them. You may want to include a brief history and details of any significant health or mental health issues, learning disability, experience of substance abuse, alcohol misuse, or violence, aggression, etc.
- b. What are their **wishes for the child/ren**? Please deal with each parent in turn and include:-
  - The extent to which they agree with this placement for their child/ren?
  - How long they think this placement is for?
  - What practical and/or financial help they are offering you.
- c. **Describe your relationship with each parent.**  
Include:-
  - What life events have been significant in shaping your relationships?
  - How have these affected current relationships?
  - What are the good things about your relationship?
  - What are the difficulties?
  - What changes do you anticipate and how will these be managed?
  - If you have discussed how things will work between you, what have you agreed?
- d. Describe your understanding of the relationship between the parents(s)
- e. Are there any **other issues** you want to mention concerning the parent(s)?

**What will you need to help you promote good relationships with each parent?**  
(Section 5.8 below will consider contact issues)

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### 5.4 ALL ABOUT YOU: THE KINSHIP CARER/S

Caring for child/ren who are relatives or close friends is a complex task. Family roles change. The changes will not all occur at once, so everyone will need to be tolerant and flexible. It is likely that help and advice from outside of the family will be useful at some stages. Remember you don't have to repeat information from Parts 1 and 2.

(Please include: Information in respect of each of the adults sharing the care of the child/ren.)

#### a. INDIVIDUAL PROFILE (S)

- Briefly describe your own life experiences, your childhood, schooling, early work experience.
- What are your strengths as a carer/s for this child/ren?
- Are there any areas in which you anticipate some difficulties in parenting this child/ren?
- What can you offer the child/ren in terms of your culture, ethnicity, religion and language to meet the child/ren's needs?

#### b. HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

It is important to consider how any financial pressures created by the child/ren living with you will be remedied. You may need to complete a financial assessment form, which will be considered by the Local Authority. You also will be advised by the social worker about the benefits to which you are entitled and written confirmation of this entitlement should be given to you.

- Describe who works out of the home, when, and whether these patterns will need to change in the light of the child/ren's needs.
- What impact will the child/ren's living with you have on your finances?
- What impact are any changes to employment likely to have on other child/ren living in your home?
- What financial help will you need, e.g. help with childcare costs?

#### c. RELATIONSHIPS / PARTNERSHIPS

\_\_\_\_\_ Not Applicable

This is an important area. There is good evidence that the inclusion of a new member into the family is stressful, particularly when one partner is a relative.

- Describe any significant relationships you have that may impact on the child/ren's life with you. Include previous significant relationships that may have an impact.
- What is the length of your current partnership?
- How do you support each other?
- How do you each cope with problems/stress/anger?
- How will the placement affect your relationship?
- Is there a difference between you in how you view the placement plans?
- How are decisions made and how do you usually cope with any disagreements?

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### d. CHILDREN IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD

\_\_\_\_\_ Not Applicable

- How do any child(ren) living at home feel about the kinship child/ren being in their home?
- What do you think will be the likely immediate and long-term effect of this new arrangement on your children?
- Describe how they have been involved in the preparation for the kinship placement.

### e. OTHER ADULT MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY / HOUSEHOLD

\_\_\_\_\_ Not Applicable

(Include grown-up children not living at home, and any other significant person who lives at home or who visits regularly.)

For each adult describe: -

- How much time they spend within your home.
- What is their attitude to the proposed arrangements?

### f. HOUSING

A perceived lack of space or bedrooms often prevents kinship carer/s from offering to care for child/ren. You may wish to discuss specific housing issues with the social worker and be entitled to some help with housing and equipment for the child/ren

- Does your house have space, accessible amenities and facilities appropriate to the age and development of the child/ren you hope to care for?
- If any adaptations are necessary, when would these be needed? What would be the estimated cost and time scale within which these could be completed?
- Are there alternatives?

**What will you need to help you to meet the child/ren's need for reasonable living space, privacy and local facilities? Include details about furniture, bedding, toys, etc.**

### g. PARENTING CAPACITY / FAMILY LIFESTYLE

It may be necessary to make changes to your parenting and lifestyle to fit with the needs of the child/ren. This section will help you to consider how you will care for this child/ren.

- How will you use your experiences and background to benefit the child/ren and help them make sense of earlier life experiences?
- What different skills or approach to parenting will be needed for this child/ren?
- How will you praise and encourage the child/ren (including physical contact, comfort and cuddling)? How will you approach discipline?
- How will you show that you value his/her identity? For example, birth heritage, cultural background, sexuality, and religion.

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**What will you need to help you to overcome any difficulties immediately or in the future?**

Children may also be expected to make changes after coming to live with you. This section will help you to consider how these changes will be managed.

- Comment on what you do as a family (for example, spending time together, sharing TV, other routines, etc) which the child/ren can expect to join.
- Is the `activity level` within your family similar to what the child/ren has experienced before, for example, after school and weekend activities?
- What family rules, behaviours, and expectations will the child/ren need to follow, e.g. regarding problem solving and temper control?
- Comment on behaviours you would find difficult to manage and would expect to change quickly, e.g. rules you have about smoking, alcohol or drug consumption.

**What will you need to help you to overcome any difficulties immediately or in the future?**

### **h. SPECIAL ISSUES FOR THE CHILD/REN**

- How will this child/ren be protected from future physical, sexual and emotional abuse? (Include how you will guard against false allegations being made about you or others in your household).
- Does the previous experiences of this child/ren require you to adapt your lifestyle? (e.g. give up work to ensure consistent care?)
- Do you have special knowledge, experience or other resources yourself to help the child/ren with these special issues?
- If more information about past harm or trauma is revealed over time, how will you respond to this?

**What will you need to help you to overcome any difficulties immediately or in the future?**

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### 5.5 INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER RELATIVES, FRIENDS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Support networks are a crucial part of the complex task of kinship care. The aim is for you to avoid feeling the sense of isolation that can result from the changing roles which many kinship carers report. It is also important for you to consider the potentially supportive and less supportive family relationships around you that can help or undermine you or the child/ren living with you.

- What support systems do you have (e.g. extended family, friends, neighbours, religious activities, community groups, etc.)?
- How do other maternal and paternal relatives view the proposed plan, particularly grandparents (if they are not the intended carers)?
- What ideas do they have about the change of roles for everyone (e.g. who may have the greatest difficulty in adapting)?
- What is likely to be difficult?
- What would help you to manage this?
- Who else do you think the social worker should consult?

**Who could help you to overcome any difficulties? (e.g. would another family meeting help?)**

### 5.6 LEGAL CONTEXT

There are a range of legal options for kinship carers. Each has a different entitlement to financial and other support.

- What legal arrangement would suit your family and the child/ren best?
- Do you need more information?
- Do you need legal advice?

### 5.7 CONTINGENCY PLANNING

It is important to have some plan in place, in the event that unforeseen changes occur.

**a. If there is no expectation that the child/ren living with you will return home: -**

- Who could care for the child/ren in the event of you being unable to continue to do so? Has this plan been agreed?
- How would the parent/s feel about this plan?
- How will the child/ren's views be considered?

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**b. If there is an expectation that the child/ren living with you will return home: -**

- What would need to change before this could happen?
- What are the parent/s' views?
- How will the child/ren's views be considered?

## **5.8 CONTACT**

Although contact is assumed to be more straightforward for family and friends placements, it is often more complex. Careful planning and anticipation of difficulties can assist. Even when things get difficult, it may be better to continue with contact than to stop all together, but you and the child/ren may need help.

- What are the agreed contact arrangements (e.g. frequency, length, venue, who can attend, who does the transport, who finances, who supervises, etc.)?
- What are your thoughts and feelings about these plans and are there differences in how you view them?
- In the light of the child/ren's views (see Part 2 section 2.5 and Part 5, section 5.1), what can you do to help the child/ren manage the contact arrangements?
- What else can you do to help make contact work well (e.g. go along, help with the transport, etc.)?
- If changes are necessary, how and when will these be re-negotiated. The parent(s), child/ren and Social Services will all need to be involved?

**What help is necessary to make the contact a success (e.g. transport, escorts, venue, social work involvement, money, etc.)?**

## **5.9 WORKING WITH PROFESSIONALS**

Kinship carer/s often find that their task is more challenging and complex than other foster care arrangements and they may need more, not less, professional support.

- What sort of help do you want from professionals?
- How regularly would it help you to have the social worker visit to discuss how things are working out for you and your family, as well as the child?
- How regularly would it help you to have a review?
- Do you expect these relationships to end? If so, at what point?

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### 5.10 OTHER ISSUES

- a. Are there any other issues that you want to be considered?
- b. What assistance (not included already) do you need to make the placement a success?

Immediately-

In the Medium Term-

In the Long Term-

## KINSHIP CARE PART 6: ANALYSIS OF LONGER TERM KINSHIP CARE (Social worker to complete)

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### INTRODUCTION TO PART 6

The social worker will complete this part once he/she has considered Part 1 to Part 4 and discussed what the kinship carer/s have written in Part 5. The child/ren and the parent(s) will also be interviewed. It may be necessary to interview other relatives and significant people, particularly if a family meeting has not taken place. The aim is to provide a risk assessment and, thereafter, targeted support for the placement. A support package will often determine the success of the placement, so the aim is to agree the support needed in advance.

### 6.1 ANALYSIS OF THE BENEFITS AND RISKS FOR THE CHILD/REN IN THIS KINSHIP PLACEMENT

Include: -

- What would it be like to be a child/ren in this family?
- How do you understand the views which the child/ren has expressed to you about the plan, including the contact arrangements in the light of your knowledge of all of the circumstances? [For older children and young people, attach what they have written themselves]
- How do you anticipate any difficulties for the child/ren will be overcome (e.g. conflicts of loyalty)?
- In what ways would this placement provide the best option for the child/ren?

### 6.2 ANALYSIS OF ISSUES FOR THE KINSHIP CARER/S

This is an analysis of how the most pressing issues and difficulties for the carer/s, for the existing children in the household and for those in their extended family and/or support network and for the parent(s) will be managed.

a. Analyse: -

- The strengths and difficulties for the kinship carer/s given:
  - their capabilities
  - their own children and the needs of these child/ren
  - the needs and views of other family members
  - the needs and views of the parent(s)
- How existing wider family relationships will contribute to the stability (or otherwise) of the placement? Suggest how any difficulties may be overcome. Include support to those involved (e.g. how will the change of roles or closer relationships with the parent(s) be addressed?).
- What from the carer/s' past and present experiences will help them to manage or what will add to their pressures? What do you suggest could help?
- What lifestyle changes will be necessary to accommodate these new demands?
- What difficulties are likely to arise between the kinship carer/s and the parent(s)? What do you suggest could help?
- What issues, if any, arise from the Medical Advisor's report?
- What issues arise from the personal referees seen? Comment on each referee separately.

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- b. How do you assess what the carer/s have identified as areas of need and support?
- c. Do the carer/s agree with your analysis? If not, specify the disagreements.

### 6.3 PLANS FOR PREPARATION AND SUPPORT

A plan for preparation, training, ongoing support and review should be described and any written agreement attached.

- a. What preparation has been offered and what is still needed? What can be offered as an on-going programme of updating training or other help?
- b. Who is the key worker/team manager now, and in the foreseeable future?
- c. Summarise the support needs identified in this assessment and any discrepancies from the kinship carer(s)' identified needs. Identify the timescales as necessary, including, where appropriate: -
  - Financial package
  - Respite – for carer/s and child/ren
  - Practical assistance
  - Social work involvement
- d. Given the assessment above, what other necessary support has been identified (e.g. child mental health support, discussion groups, support worker, voluntary sector support, etc)?

### 6.4 REVIEW PROCESS

- a. How will changes be negotiated?
- b. What will happen if there is a disagreement?
- c. How will the child/ren's views be included? (directly or indirectly)
- d. How will the parent(s)' views be included in the review process? (directly or indirectly)
- e. How will the child/ren's long term needs be planned and funded?
- f. What is the plan for how the placement (and any support services) will be monitored and reviewed?
- g. How will access to legal advice be secured?
- h. How will access to changed payments be secured?

## KINSHIP CARE PART 6: ANALYSIS OF LONGER TERM KINSHIP CARE

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### PART 5 AND PART 6

#### 6.5 SIGNATURES

Name of Social Worker.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Name of Social Work Manager.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Name of Carer/s .....

Signature.....

Date.....

Name of Birth Parent/s.....

Signature.....

Date.....

#### 6.6 WRITTEN AGREEMENT

In most cases a written agreement will help to clarify the mutual arrangements which have been agreed. If there is a written agreement, please attach a copy.