

An ESRC Funded Research Study



THE PREVALENCE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN GROWING UP WITH RELATIVES IN THE UK

BRIEFING PAPER **003**



Characteristics of children living with relatives in Scotland

This briefing paper series provides snapshots from the research titled 'Kinship Care Re-visited: Using Census 2011 Microdata to Examine the Extent and Nature of Kinship Care in the UK' funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) grant ES/K008587/1.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the feedback from her mentor, Professor Julie Selwyn and the support from the team at the Virtual Microdata Laboratory at the Office for National Statistics, Titchfield. The author would also like to thank Lizzie Morton of CELCIS, Scotland for advice on previous drafts. This research project is being conducted under the auspices of an academic and a stakeholder advisory group. The list of members in the advisory groups and further details of the study can be found on the project website:
www.bristolkinshipstudy.co.uk

The responsibility for the analysis, results and the views expressed ultimately rests with the author.

Published by the Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies, University of Bristol

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ISBN- 978-0-9933828-8-8

INTRODUCTION

The background to this study, the aims and the method were described in Briefing Paper 1, published in the autumn of 2015 [1].

This briefing paper, which is the third in a series, provides a brief overview of the characteristics of the children growing up with relatives in Scotland. This series of briefing papers is published as part of a study funded by the ESRC to analyse secure microdata from the 2011 Census to provide nationally representative, reliable statistics and maps on the distribution and characteristics of kinship care households in the four countries of the UK. Individual and household secure microdata hold anonymised records of a third of the respondents in the 2011 Census¹. The secure data can only be accessed at secure settings by researchers with a special licence.

DEFINITIONS

Usually, kinship care is defined as when a child is brought by a relative or a friend. Children growing up in the care of friends could not be ascertained from the secure microdata. Therefore, children in kinship care in this study refers to children who are growing up in the care of relatives, such as grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins².

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines anyone under the age of 18 years as a child unless majority is attained earlier. In the UK, the age of majority is 18 years. Therefore, in this study, a child was defined as anyone who is under the age of 18 (0-17 years).

CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE IN SCOTLAND

As the legal underpinnings, and the policy context differ between the UK countries, it is apt to start this paper by examining the legal and the policy context in Scotland. In Scotland, a child can be in kinship care in three situations. A description of each and the legal underpinning of those placements are given in Table 1.

In 2007, the Scottish Government signed a concordat with the Convention of Scottish local authorities (COSLA) to provide equivalent support to that of stranger foster carers, to kinship carers bringing up children in State care. However, in terms of payments to kinship carers bringing up children in State care, there is still much variation between the 32 local councils, with most local councils frequently falling short in comparison with payments to foster carers looking after non-kin children [2].

¹ All analyses have been weighted to sum up to the population values. Given that the estimates are based on a 1/3 sample of Census data, the estimates in this report might vary from the population statistics reported by the National Records of Scotland and the Office for National Statistics.

² Consequently, given the exclusion of the number of children growing up in the care of friends, the estimates of kinship care are likely to be an underestimation of the total number of children who are growing up in the care of relatives *and* friends.

Table I. Typology of children in kinship care in Scotland

Children in kinship care in Scotland	Legal Underpinning	Support
Children in kinship care looked after by local councils	<p>Legal status of a looked after child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked after under section 25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 or; • Compulsory/interim supervision order under a Children’s Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011 or; • Subjected to a permanence order under Part II of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 <p>Legal provision for support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 50 of the Children Act 1975 allows local councils to make payments towards the upkeep of children (up until the age of 18) who are growing up without parents • Section 22 of the 1995 Act sets out the duties of the local councils to children in need • Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009 issued as a result of the 2007 concordat provides local councils with a framework for assessing and approving potential kin carers for looked after children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Scotland, kinship carers who are caring for looked after children are not required legally to be registered as foster carers. This situation is different to that of England and Wales where kin who are caring for looked after children are assessed and supported within the same provision • Neither the Children Acts (1975, 1995) nor the 2009 regulations place any obligation upon local councils to provide allowances to kinship carers caring for looked after children • Between the 32 local councils, there is much variation between the level of allowances provided and the legal basis used to support kinship carers caring for looked after children
Children in kinship care who are not looked after by local councils but have legal orders pertaining to their residence with kin	<p>Pre-2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private law orders such as the Residence Order under section 11 of the 1995 Act <p>Post-2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinship order under section 72 (1) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 	<p>Pre-2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discretionary support depending on the local council. Some local councils were not aware of the court rulings <p>Post-2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Kinship Care Assistance as per Part 13 of the 2014 Act - this is advice and information and, in certain circumstances, financial allowance
Children in kinship care not looked after by local councils, or on any legal order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal arrangement between family members with no legal underpinning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most local councils may not be aware of this group of children and their needs as there is no legal obligation put upon the kin or parents to notify the local councils of these informal care arrangements

Information adapted from Gillies (2015) [2]

RESULTS

The prevalence of children living in kinship care in Scotland

At the time of the 2011 Census, there were just over one million children (aged 0-17 years) living in Scotland [2].

Of all the children living in Scotland in 2011, an estimated 12,630 (1.2%) children were living in kinship care (Table 1). This is marginally lower than estimates of the prevalence rates of kinship care in England (1.4%) and Wales (1.5%)[1,4].

In other words, in 2011, one in every 83 children in Scotland was growing up in the care of relatives. The prevalence rates of kinship care at local council level are given in Appendix A.

In contrast to England and Wales, where the kinship child population grew by 6% and 4% respectively between 2001 and 2011 [1,3], the kinship child population in Scotland decreased by -18% since 2001. The overall child population in Scotland also decreased during the same time period by -5% [3].

By 2011, the number of children in care in Scotland had seen a 49% rise compared with the number in 2001, with the total number of looked after children living with kin increasing by more than 254% from 1,274 in 2001 to 4,513 in 2011. However, the children looked after and living with kin are included in the total number of children in kinship care in the Census³. It is difficult to ascertain whether the decrease in the total number of children in kinship care may be attributable to the rise in the looked after child population.

Table 2. Estimates of children living in kinship care in 2001 and 2011 in Scotland

	Number of children in kinship care	Prevalence of kinship care (%)
2001	15,433	1.3%
2011	12,630	1.2%

Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata, 2001 estimates from Nandy et al., 2011 [5]

³ The children in kinship care in the Census includes children who are looked after and living with kin, children who were previously looked after and are now living with kin, and children who are not looked after/previously looked after and living with kin.

Gender of children in kinship care in Scotland

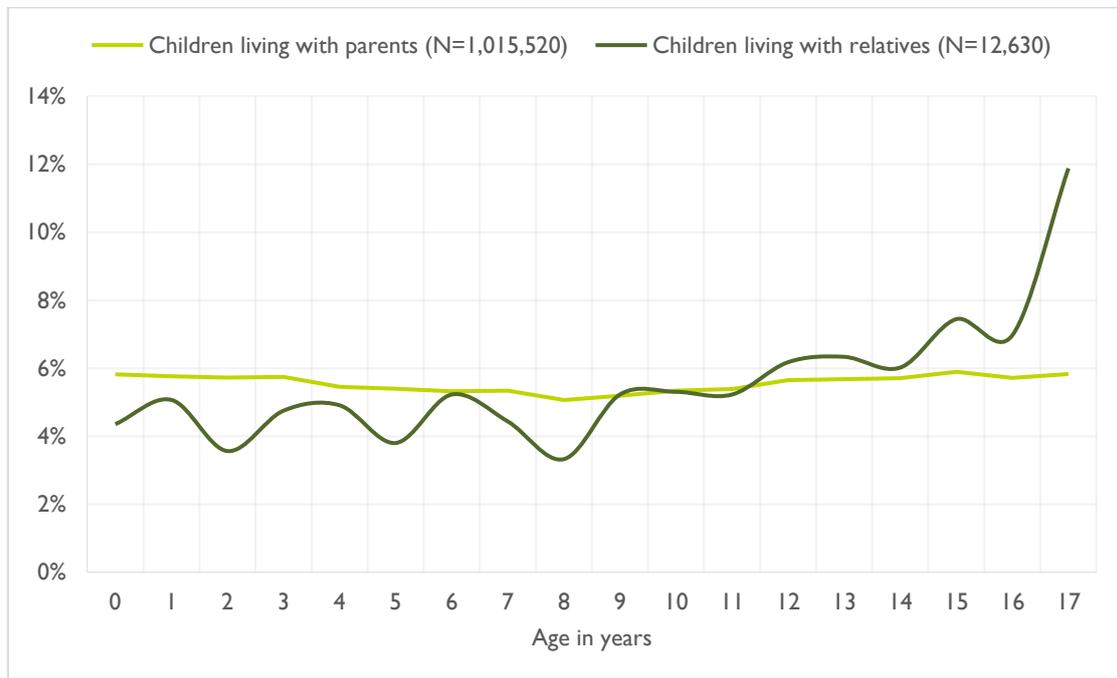
A little more than half (52%) of the children in kinship care were male. The representation of males in the general child population in Scotland was 51% in 2011.

The age distribution of children in kinship care in Scotland

The age distribution of children in kinship care, compared with those living with at least one parent is shown in Figure 1.

Children living in kinship care in Scotland were more likely to be aged 10-17 years. A significant proportion (61%) of children in kinship care in Scotland were 10-17 years old⁴, compared to the proportion of children who were aged 10-17 years and were living with parents (50%).

Figure 1. The estimated age distribution of children living in kinship care compared with children living with at least one parent in Scotland in 2011



Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

⁴ $\chi^2(1) = 518.89, p < .001, OR = 1.51$

The prevalence and population growth of kinship care in Scotland by age

The numbers, prevalence and kinship child population growth rates by age group, between 2001 and 2011, are shown in Table 3.

The highest prevalence of kinship care was seen in children who were 15-17 years old. This is similar to the pattern that was seen in 2001.

The number of children in kinship care who were 0-4 years old grew by 9% over the 10 years between 2001 and 2011, whilst the number of children in the other age groups decreased over the same time period.

Table 3. Estimates of children in kinship care by children's age in Scotland in 2001 and 2011

Age group	Number of children in kinship care (2001)	Number of children in kinship care (2011)	Prevalence rate (2001)	Prevalence rate (2011)	Kinship child population growth rate (2001-2011)
0 - 4 years	2,633	2,860	0.9%	1.0%	9%
5 - 9 years	4,300	2,780	1.3%	1.0%	-35%
10 - 14 years	4,867	3,670	1.4%	1.3%	-25%
15 - 17 years	3,633	3,320	1.7%	1.8%	-9%
Total (Scotland)	15,433	12,630	1.3%	1.2%	-18%

Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata, 2001 estimates from Nandy et al., 2011[5]

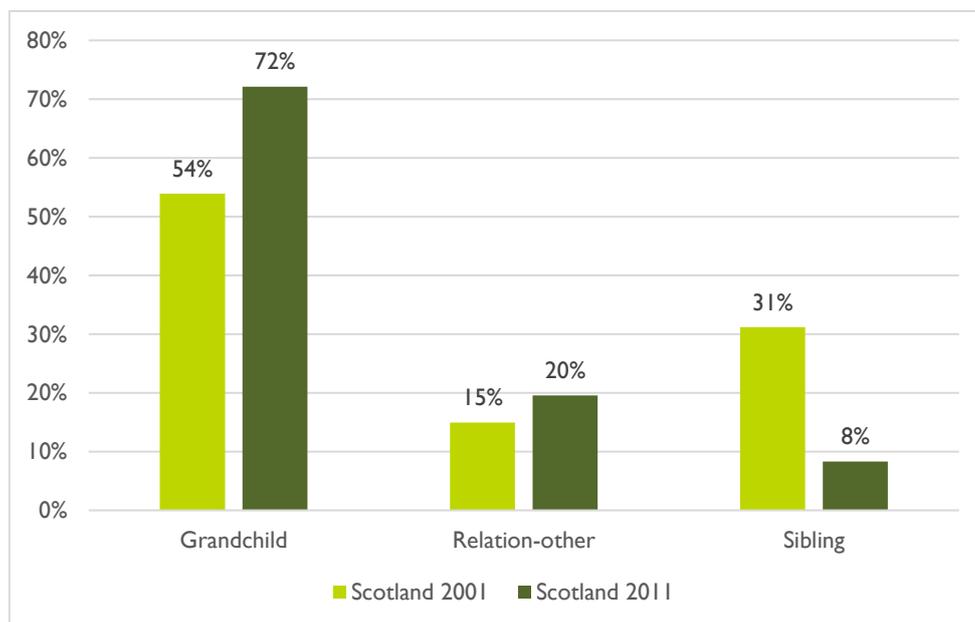
Children's relationship to the head of the household

See Appendix B for a definition of the household reference person (HRP) variable that was used to establish the relationship of the children to the head of the household.

Nearly three quarters (72%) of children living in kinship care in Scotland were growing up in households headed by a grandparent and 8% of children in kinship care were growing up in households headed by a sibling. The rest were growing up in households headed by another relative such as an aunt, an uncle or a cousin (see Figure 2).

When compared with households in 2001, the proportion of grandparent-headed kinship households has increased, whilst the proportion of sibling-headed households has decreased (see Figure 2). The same pattern was seen in England and Wales [1,4].

Figure 2. Estimates of children's relationship to their kin carers in Scotland in 2001 (N=15,433) and 2011 (N=12,630)



Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata, 2001 estimates from Nandy et al., 2011 [5]

Prevalence of kinship care within ethnic groups in Scotland

The prevalence rates of kinship care within different ethnic groups in 2011 are given in Table 4.

The highest prevalence of kinship care was seen within the Asian ethnic group. One in every 48 Asian children was growing up in the care of relatives. The lowest prevalence of kinship care was seen in the Mixed/Other ethnic group.

This pattern is different to the results seen in England and Wales, where the highest prevalence was seen within the Black ethnic group and the lowest prevalence within the White ethnic group [1,4].

Table 4. Estimated prevalence of children in kinship care within ethnic groups in Scotland in 2011

Scotland	Children living with relatives (N=12,630)	Prevalence of kinship care within ethnic group	Prevalence per 1000 children within ethnic group
Asian	680	2.1%	21
Black	180	1.8%	18
White	11,650	1.2%	12
Mixed/Other	120	0.9%	9

Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

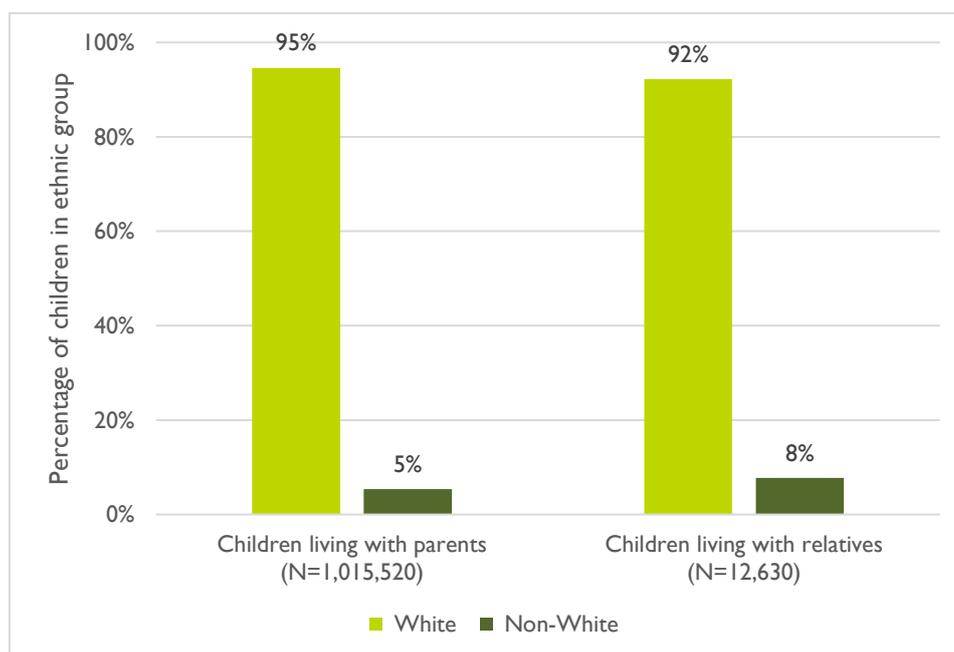
Distribution of kinship care within ethnic groups in Scotland

Considering the ethnic distribution of children in kinship care in Scotland (Figure 3), 8% of children were non-white. This proportional representation of non-white children in kinship care is similar to that of Wales, where an estimated 9% of children growing up in kinship care were non-white [4]. In contrast, in England, nearly a third (32%) of the children in kinship care were non-white [1]. These differences might be attributable to the low proportion of non-white children in Scotland and Wales. In Scotland, only 5% of children were non-white in 2011.

However, kinship children in Scotland were still 1.5 times more likely to be non-white compared with children growing up with at least one parent⁵.

⁵ $\chi^2(1)=136.86, p < .001, OR=1.47$

Figure 3. The estimated ethnic distribution of children living in kinship care compared with children living with at least one parent in Scotland in 2011



Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

Long-term health problems and disability

The Census respondents were required to indicate whether children had been affected by a long-term health condition or disability (which they had been affected by or expected to be affected by for at least 12 months) and to assess how their daily activities were affected by such a condition.

When compared with children who were growing up with at least one parent, children in kinship care in Scotland were nearly twice as likely to have a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities⁶ (Table 5).

⁶ $\chi^2(1)=375.91, p < .001, OR=1.83$

Table 5. Estimated distribution of long-term health problems and disability in kinship children compared with children living with at least one parent in Scotland in 2011

	Children living with parents (N=1,015,520)	Children living with relatives (N=12,630)
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	1.7%	4.1%
Day-to-day activities limited a little	3.2%	4.4%
Day-to-day activities not limited	95.2%	91.4%

Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

Residence of children living in kinship care in Scotland

The data were further explored to establish whether the children in kinship care were recorded in the Census as usual residents in Scotland, or whether they were migrants from within or outside the UK, or lived away from home during term-time^{7,8} (see Table 6).

Compared with children who were living with at least one parent, children in kinship care were twice as likely to be a migrant to Scotland⁹.

Children in kinship care in Scotland were also around twice as likely to be migrants from within¹⁰ or outside the UK¹¹.

There were significantly more kinship children who were living away from home, at boarding school, as well. A child in kinship care was 10 times more likely to be a student living away from home during term-time compared to a child who was growing up with at least one parent¹².

⁷ A census short-term UK resident is anyone born outside of the UK who, on 27 March 2011, had stayed or intended to stay in the UK for a period of three months or more but less than 12 months.

⁸ These are exclusive categories used by the National Records of Scotland (NRS) to differentiate between the groups in the population.

⁹ $\chi^2(1)=718.87, p < .001, OR=1.87$

¹⁰ $\chi^2(1)=556.94, p < .001, OR=1.78$

¹¹ $\chi^2(1)=124.02, p < .001, OR=2.40$

¹² $\chi^2(1)=329.08, p < .001, OR=10.05$

Table 6. Estimated distribution of the residence type of kinship children compared with children living with at least one parent in Scotland in 2011

	Children living with parents (N=956,430)	Children living with relatives (N=12,080)
Usual resident	89.8%	82.3%
Student living away from home during term-time	0.03%	0.33%
Migrant from within the UK	9.7%	16.1%
Migrant from outside the UK	0.6%	1.3%

Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

Poverty and deprivation in the population of children in kinship care in Scotland

The Scottish Census 2011 microdata currently does not include any data on the IMD variables¹³. Therefore poverty and deprivation in the kinship child population in Scotland could not be explored in time for this publication.

To join the mailing list, e-mail kinship-study@bristol.ac.uk or find the latest briefing papers on the project website www.bristolkinshipstudy.co.uk

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¹³ The index of multiple deprivation is a measure of deprivation at small area level (Noble et al., 2000, 2004, 2007, 2010) [6-9].

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**Appendix A. Estimated prevalence of children kinship care by local councils
in Scotland, 2011**

	Local Authority District	Number of children in kinship care	Prevalence of children in kinship care	Number of children in kinship care per 1000 children
S12000033	Aberdeen City	450	1.2%	12
S12000034	Aberdeenshire	380	0.7%	7
S12000041	Angus	280	1.2%	12
S12000035	Argyll & Bute	180	1.1%	11
S12000005	Clackmannanshire	150	1.4%	14
S12000006	Dumfries & Galloway	440	1.5%	15
S12000042	Dundee City	480	1.8%	18
S12000008	East Ayrshire	450	1.8%	18
S12000045	East Dunbartonshire	250	1.2%	12
S12000010	East Lothian	210	1.0%	10
S12000011	East Renfrewshire	140	0.7%	7
S12000036	Edinburgh, City of	980	1.2%	12
S12000013	Eilean Siar	40	0.8%	8
S12000014	Falkirk	290	0.9%	9
S12000015	Fife	870	1.2%	12
S12000046	Glasgow City	2120	2.0%	20
S12000017	Highland	490	1.0%	10
S12000018	Inverclyde	160	1.0%	10
S12000019	Midlothian	180	1.0%	10
S12000020	Moray	230	1.2%	12
S12000021	North Ayrshire	340	1.2%	12
S12000044	North Lanarkshire	990	1.4%	14
S12000023	Orkney Islands	x	x	x
S12000024	Perth & Kinross	180	0.7%	7
S12000038	Renfrewshire	430	1.3%	13
S12000026	Scottish Borders	190	0.9%	9
S12000027	Shetland Islands	40	0.8%	8
S12000028	South Ayrshire	240	1.1%	11
S12000029	South Lanarkshire	540	0.8%	8
S12000030	Stirling	150	0.8%	8
S12000039	West Dunbartonshire	330	1.7%	17
S12000040	West Lothian	430	1.1%	11

Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

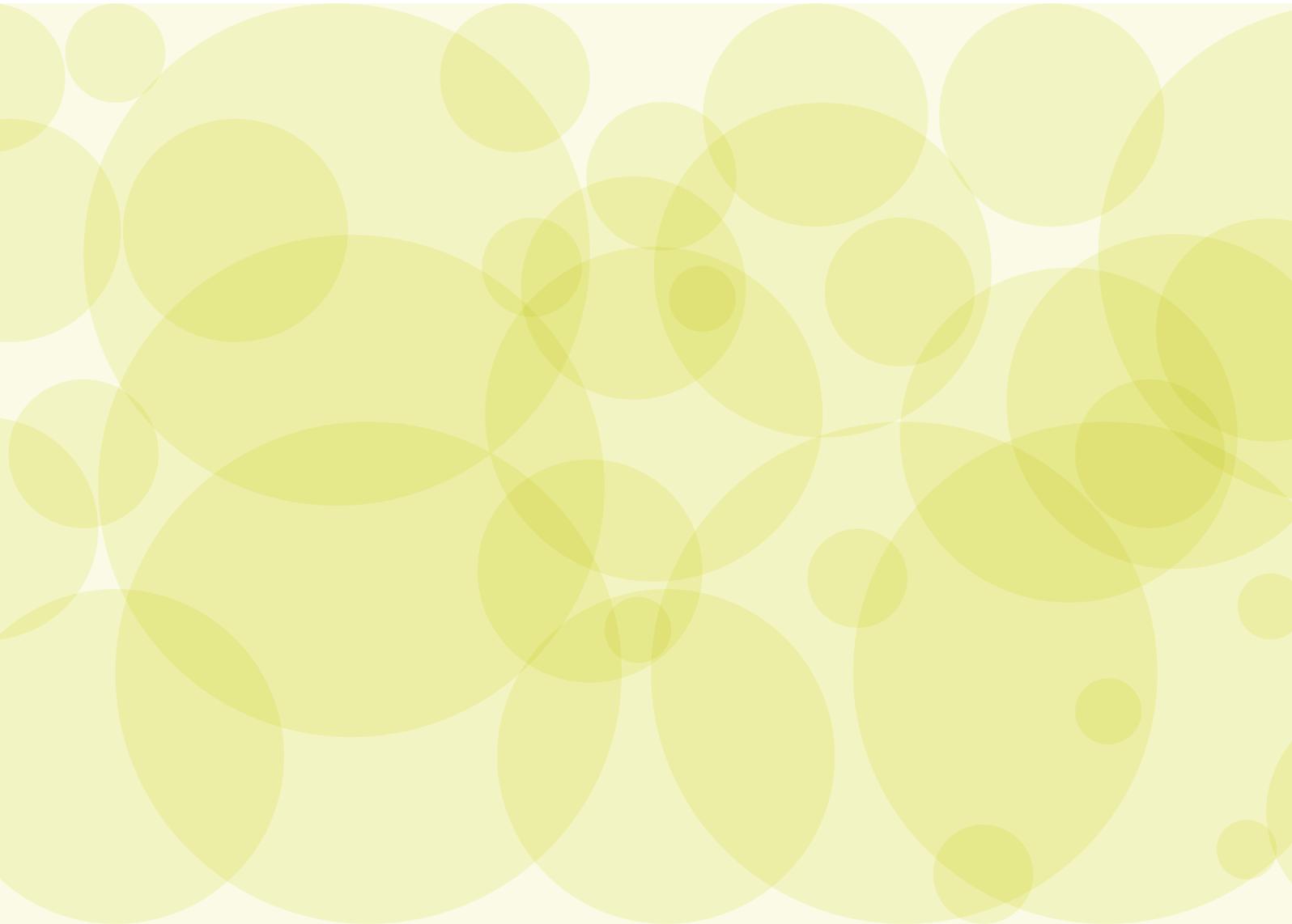
NOTE.

Prevalence rates in red ink indicate that the local authority kinship child population prevalence rate is higher than the Scottish national prevalence rate for kinship care of 1.2%.

Appendix B. Definitions

Note on the kinship children's relationship to the head of the household

It was not possible to ascertain whether the household reference persons were the children's primary carers from the Census data. Therefore, it is possible that in some households, persons other than the household reference person were the child's primary caregiver. There may be grandparent headed households where a sibling is the primary carer and also sibling headed households where a grandparent or another relative is the primary caregiver.



Dinithi Wijedasa

Hadley Centre for Adoption & Foster Care Studies
University of Bristol

+44 (0)117 954 6627

kinship-study@bristol.ac.uk
www.bristolkinshipstudy.co.uk