

Contact us to find out more - we are here to help:

For further information please visit www.kinshipcarersliverpool.co.uk where you will find a range of further guidance, information leaflets and resources related to:

- Local Legal Advice Services including free Law Clinics & specialist legal advisers in Liverpool.
- Our Activities Programme for Kinship Carers, Kids & Families
- Information & Links about Legal Orders related to Kinship Care
- Money & Benefits Advice & Links
- Early Help & Wellbeing Information
- Schools and Learning Resources & Links
- Signposting to national Kinship Websites & Guidance

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**Kinship Carers
Liverpool**

Informal & Private Arrangements - A Guide for Kinship Carers

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Q. What are Informal/Private Kinship Arrangements?

A. Informal arrangements are made between the parents (or someone else who has parental responsibility) and the relative – not by the local authority. The child is not 'looked after' by the local authority. **It is particularly important to get independent, specialist advice as whether or not the child is considered as being, or having been, 'looked after' will affect the financial and practical support you may receive.**

You must be the child's grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt or step-parent. You make the arrangement yourself with the child's parent; it is not made by the local authority. If this is done by agreement with the parents, and not at the direction of a social worker, this is a 'private arrangement' sometimes also known as a 'family arrangement'. In that situation, Children's Services have not taken on any legal or financial responsibility for the arrangement.

However, this is often an area of dispute. Sometimes social workers are very involved in making plans for a child to live with relatives as they think it is not safe for the child to stay with their parents, but they then say it is a private arrangement and that they do not have to give the carer any financial or other help. If this happens to you, you should take advice from a solicitor about what you can do to challenge this.

Questions

Private/Informal Arrangement:

Do arrangements have to be Proven?

No

How long does arrangement last?

As long as you and the parents agree. It may be ended by either party without notice.

Are arrangements supervised/reviewed?

No

What are the responsibilities of kinship carers?

May do what is reasonable to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

What are the rights & responsibilities of Parents?

Parents retain parental responsibility and financial responsibility to maintain the child.

What support is there?

No special entitlement. You may need extra support to help you care for the child under a private arrangement. This could be because the child needs extra help with some things, for example bereavement counselling, help with contact, special educational support etc. If so, you can ask for an assessment to see if the child is in need of support. They should then provide support to help you with the child's needs, but this is discretionary.

Is there any financial support?

Local authority may assess the child as a child in need and has discretion to make one off or regular payments under Section 17. Treated as parents by the benefits system plus Guardians' allowance in some circumstances.