

Kinship Charter Liverpool

What is a Kinship Charter?

A charter provides a framework to guide the way the Local Authority works with Kinship Families.

Creating a model of work:

A model of work was established in 2018 when Kinship Carers Liverpool was awarded funding from the Baring Foundation to look at Kinship Care from a Human Rights based approach. Working collaboratively with Liverpool City Council Children's Services Lead Officers and Family Law Solicitors a Model of Work was created to improve the level of understanding, provide practical solutions and support the needs of Kinship Families.

This work was further validated by the recommendations of the Cross Party Parliamentary Task Force Report (PTF): <https://frg.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/the-cross-party-parliamentary-taskforce-on-kinship-care/>

Kinship Carers and Kinship Children have been involved in putting this charter together from lived experience.

From the Human Rights based approach it was identified that Kinship Families need:

Greater information (article 6 ECHR)

- ✓ You will be given clear, concise information at the earliest opportunity, which gives details of the forthcoming Kinship journey
- ✓ You will be provided with the chronology of the child to enable a potential carer to make an informed decision about whether to accept the placement and to effectively take on the responsibility of caring for the child
- ✓ We will keep precise records throughout the process in order to demonstrate transparency, effective communication and to help develop an understanding of the implications of agreeing to care arrangements
- ✓ We will have a clear process of procedures for complaints
- ✓ We will regularly review Kinship Safeguarding policies for children, young people and vulnerable adults

Legal advice, representation and the law (article 6 ECHR)

- ✓ Kinship families will fully understand what their options are in order to make informed choices around different orders available, i.e. Special Guardianship Order (SGO), Family and Friends Fostering, Child Arrangement Order (CAO) and informal / private arrangements
- ✓ We will offer appropriate support and information to those families who decide not to undertake the care of their Kin.
- ✓ We will provide an up to date Family and Friends Care Policy and consult with families when up for review
- ✓ We will ensure that families have access to independent legal advice at the earliest opportunity, this is crucial to the decision making process

Your Voice (article 8 ECHR)

- ✓ We will take the time to listen to families and strive to understand your point of view
- ✓ The child's view and interests will be placed at the heart of any decisions made. If required we will support the child and young person to engage with an advocacy service.
- ✓ We will make sure the child is empowered to voice their wishes and feelings with the understanding that adults make the ultimate decision.
- ✓ We will ensure that you are included in the decision making process concerning a child in your care

Support (article 8 ECHR)

- ✓ We will provide information about key organisations both within the Local Authority and external that can support your Kinship journey
- ✓ This will include information on issues such as: Financial advice and other financial support funds
- ✓ We will ensure you have a named contact for support within the Local Authority
- ✓ We will ensure you have a clear plan of support that is understandable and will be reviewed to continually meet the changing needs of your family
- ✓ We will provide the emotional and practical support that you are entitled to dependant on your needs
- ✓ We will ensure that you do not feel isolated and achieve the best outcomes for your family
- ✓ We will work to ensure that Kinship Carers do not experience undue discrimination compared with other families
- ✓ We will make appropriate and timely checks to identify any risks and strive to prevent a breakdown in your circumstances that could jeopardise your child's welfare

Resources (article 1 of protocol 1 ECHR)

- ✓ We will ensure Previously Looked After Pupil Premium Plus funding is paid to eligible children and young people.
- ✓ We will ensure you have the same access to Priority One gym passes
- ✓ We will provide Kinship Carers with any necessary training to enable them to manage the complex task of caring for their Kin.

Professional responsibilities

- ✓ We will ensure that all professionals involved with your family are kept up to date with any key recommendations that support Kin families and that they have access to any learning from Ombudsman findings
- ✓ We recognise the need for Continuous Professional Development for all staff to raise awareness of the unique needs of Kin families
- ✓ We recognise that family and friends are often deeply affected personally, often traumatised, by the events which have led to the need for a child to live away from their parents. We will ensure that local authorities understand these pressures and take this into consideration at all times

Adopted date: 17th March 2023

Signed:



Position: Deputy Mayor of Liverpool and Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health