



## KINSHIP CARE IN ARGYLL AND BUTE

Kinship Care is a care arrangement provided by a child's extended family or by a close friend who has a pre-existing relationship with the child

Argyll and Bute has a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their community who are in need. This means that kinship carers and the children for whom they are caring can ask for assistance under this provision. Examples of the kind of help offered are advice and guidance regarding difficulties that children may be having, support to apply for benefits and information about other services.

Argyll and Bute Council may provide financial support via a Kinship Carer Allowance to carers who are caring for:

- a child who is subject to a Section 83 Supervision Order from the Children's Hearing and where the placement of the child/ren has been arranged with the involvement of Argyll and Bute Council
- a child who is placed with the carer under Section 25 ( that is a voluntary arrangement where the child's parent is agreeing to the child staying with the kinship carer) and where the placement of the child/ren has been arranged with the involvement of Argyll and Bute Council.
- some situations where the child is subject to a Section 11 Order under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (to be known as a Kinship Care Order from April 2016) **and** where the child is or was previously looked after by Social Work Services or was placed with the kinship carer with the involvement of Argyll and Bute Council or is at risk of being looked after.

In addition:

- The kinship carer must have applied for Child Benefit
- The child must be resident full-time with the kinship carer
- The child's parent(s) must not be resident at the same address

If you are unsure if you are eligible or wish further information please contact social work services using the contact information at the end of this leaflet.

In order to be considered for the allowance, kinship carers who meet the criteria outlined above must undergo a full assessment by a social worker. This assessment will look at the kinship carer's circumstances in detail including any previous involvement with the police or social work services; the carer's health in relation to how it might affect the ability to meet the

child's needs; the carer's own background and experience of being a parent and how the carer would parent the child; the carer's relationship to the birth parent and the implications of this for the child; the carer's ability to keep the child safe and to promote his health and development. This information is then considered by social work services.

Kinship carers who receive an allowance will have a social worker allocated to them who will be available to give advice and support to kinship carers on an individual basis. Kinship carers will be reviewed annually to consider any additional support needs. There are local support groups which meet regularly. These provide kinship carers with the opportunity to share experiences and to discuss issues with others in the same position. Training is also provided through this group.

### **Finances**

To avoid financial hardship it is important that all kinship carers be advised to contact their local Citizens Advice Bureau for a 'better off' assessment at the earliest opportunity.

Kinship carer allowance will be paid under the provisions of s50 of the Children Act 1975. Carers will be eligible to claim Child Benefit, and will therefore be paid an allowance equivalent to fostering allowance, minus the carer's component and child benefit.

Payment therefore will be:

<b>Age Banding</b>	<b>Weekly Rate</b>	<b>Weekly Rate Less Child Benefit 1<sup>st</sup> Child (£20.70)</b>	<b>Weekly Rate Less Child Benefit 2<sup>nd</sup> Child (£13.70)</b>
0-10 years	£196.71	£176.01	£183.01
11-16+ years	£240.40	£219.70	£226.70

It is important that kinship carers are made aware that being awarded a Kinship Carer Allowance from the local authority means they are ineligible to claim tax credits for the child.

Kinship carer allowance will be paid 2 weeks in advance, 52 weeks a year unless the child is not in your care for a period of time.

The Council may meet the legal costs of applying for a Kinship Care Order (Section 11) where the kinship carer is not entitled to Legal Aid. However, agreement to cover legal costs must be approved by the Children's Resource Panel.

Following assessment, the Council may provide further financial assistance to cover essential costs. This may include a Start-Up Grant for items such as clothing, furniture, bedding and any other necessary equipment. All financial assistance will be applied for via the allocated social worker.