

Tower Hamlets Kinship Care Local Offer

SUPPORT FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO STEP IN TO CARE



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WELCOME



You're Not Alone

If you're caring for a child who isn't your own, you're a kinship carer — and you're doing something incredible.

You might be a grandparent, aunt, uncle, older sibling, family friend or neighbour. Whatever your connection, what you do matters. We want to support you to provide a safe, stable and loving home for children who can no longer live with their parents.

This guide explains the help and support available for you and the children. It provides all the key information summarised in one place. If you would like more detail on any of the areas mentioned, please request the practitioner guide version from the Kinship Care Team.

2. WHAT IS KINSHIP CARE?

Kinship care is when a child is cared for by someone they already know, rather than living with a foster carer.

There are several different types of kinship care, one of these may apply to you.

- **Informal Kinship Care:** A family arrangement where a child is cared for by a relative or friend without formal involvement from the council and no legal order.
- **Private Fostering:** When you are caring for a child who is not a close relative for 28 days or more.
- **Kinship Foster Care:** The child is legally in the Local Authority's care, and the council moves them in with someone who is an approved foster carer.
- **Child Arrangements Order (CAO):** A court order saying the child can live with you and you share the decision making with the parent meaning you share what is called 'parental responsibility'.
- **Special Guardianship Order (SGO):** Gives the carer legal parental responsibility for the child.
- **Adoption by a Family Member:** When a legal order permanently transfers all legal parental rights and responsibilities to the adoptive parents.

Each type of arrangement comes with different responsibilities, rights and levels of support. The kinship team can explain specifically what these will be.



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PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR SUPPORT

We believe every child deserves to feel safe, loved and supported.

Our support for kinship families is based on these key principles:

Children's best interests come first.

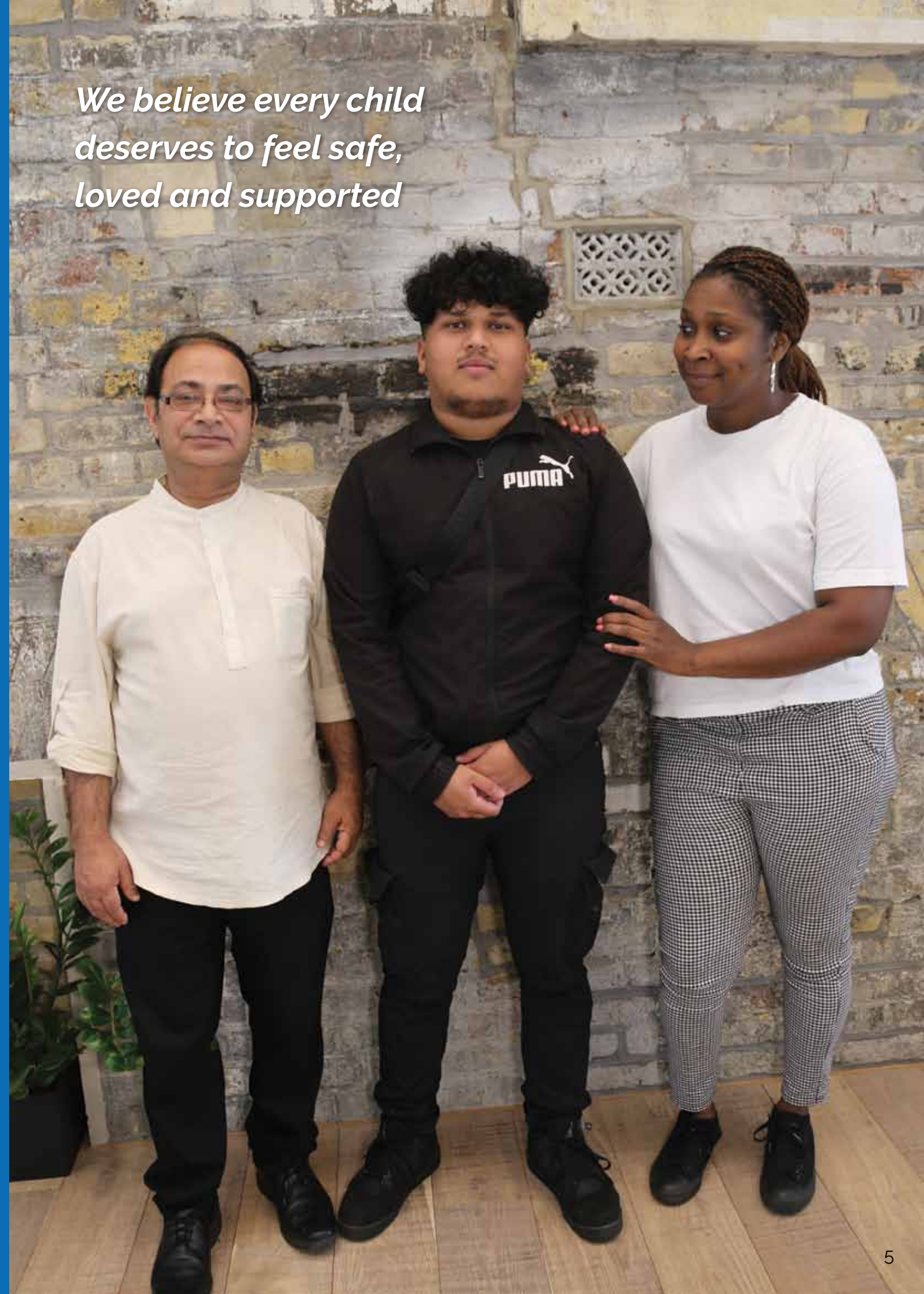
Children should be supported to stay within their family network where safe and possible.

Kinship carers should get clear information, advice and practical support.

All children and families will be treated fairly and with respect for their culture, language, faith, disability, gender and identity.

Children and carers should be listened to and involved in decisions that affect them.

*We believe every child
deserves to feel safe,
loved and supported*



4 SUPPORT FOR ALL CHILDREN AND THEIR CARERS

Whether it's an informal or formal kinship arrangement, support is available to all children and their carers in Tower Hamlets. Here are some of the services.

Advice and support from Early Help & Children and Families Service

Early Help gives support to children, young people and families so they can thrive and reach their potential.

Families get help as soon as challenges start, before problems grow. They can work with carers to build on their strengths and give them the tools to cope.

Tower Hamlets Family Hubs

Family Hubs are based across the borough and bring services together for children, young people and families. They offer support from pregnancy through to age 19, or 25 for those with special needs. Working with partners like schools, health services and charities, Family Hubs make sure families get help when they need it.

Children with additional needs

There is a wide range of services for

children with additional needs and their families, from fun activities to parent support. These are listed in our 'Local Offer' at localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk, along with information and advice services such as Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network.

Leisure and youth services

Our 'Be Well' leisure centres provide sports, play, health and wellness activities across the community, many free for children. **Young Tower Hamlets** also runs youth activities in every ward, led by trained youth workers and support staff.

Ask us about our **Kinship Youth group**.

Go to www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk



5 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

You can get training and join support groups to help you care for your child:

- Peer support groups with other kinship carers
- Emotional support through counselling or therapeutic help. We use a special model to support parenting
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) can support you or a child to improve mental wellbeing
- Specialist therapeutic emotional support may be available through the Adoption Special Guardianship Support Fund. Check your eligibility with our Kinship team
- Training courses are available for all kinship families. Ask the kinship team for the latest training brochure. Topics include managing behaviour, safer caring, therapeutic parenting and understanding trauma

Support is tailored to your needs, for example, we can offer extra help if English isn't your first language.

kinship@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Phone: **020 7364 4282**

MIND IN TOWER HAMLETS

Support for mental health and wellbeing. Services include:

- Advocacy and benefit advice
- Counselling and drop-in sessions
- Welfare rights and housing support
- Employment help, peer support and training

13 Whitethorn Street, London, E3 4DA

info@mindthnr.org.uk

Phone: **020 7510 1081**

www.mindthnr.org.uk

"You do know and feel the support is there if and when you need it."

*“Sharing our experiences
and how we look
after ourselves is very
important for our
wellbeing.”*

6 SUPPORT FOR KINSHIP FOSTER CARERS

Fostering social worker

If you are a Kinship Foster Carer you will be assigned a fostering social worker who provides regular visits, advice and support. The child in your care will also have an allocated social worker and additional multi-agency support. For example, regular health reviews with the **Children Looked After** Health Team.

As a Kinship Foster Carer you will be expected to:

- Keep records about the child.
- Attend meetings, training, and reviews.
- Work closely with social workers and professionals.
- Follow the foster care agreement.

Training and development

The Tower Hamlets Fostering Service offers a broad training programme for all carers, including kinship carers. Ask the Kinship team for the latest training brochure.

Additional support for carers

There is a lot of specialist support available to help you. This is very useful if your child has been through a lot and you need to find the best way to support them while in your care.

These include:

Support groups where you can meet other kinship carers in a similar position to you and may include therapeutic advice from therapeutically trained practitioners.

Fostering Network membership for independent advice

Access to trained psychologists for 'one to one' therapeutic support.



7 FAMILY TIME - CONTACT WITH BIRTH FAMILY

Family time helps children keep contact with their parents and other important people in their lives so relationships can be improved.

We support this by carefully:

- Planning safe and appropriate family time meetings.
- Finding places to hold family time that is safe, welcoming and works for everyone.
- Look to see if family time can be supervised if there are significant risks.

• Finding ways to improve relationships and communication if problems arise. This can involve mediation.

• Offer training to equip you with the skills to promote family time.

Your supervising social worker, the child's social worker or the kinship team will help oversee this.

“Having an understanding about the complex care our children need and hearing that I’m not alone.”

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FINANCIAL HELP

If you’re a kinship carer, there is often financial help available.

We will carry out a needs assessment to find out what support you could get.

- **Informal kinship carers (child in need)** – You might get an allowance as part of the child’s needs assessment.
- **Private fostering (child in need)** – You might also get an allowance through the child’s needs assessment.
- **Kinship foster carers** – You’ll get a weekly payment based on the London rate for the National Minimum Fostering Allowance.
- **Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or Child Arrangement Order (CAO)** – You may get a means-tested allowance (based on your income) which is reviewed every year. You should have received a written agreement explaining this when the order was made. This payment is extra help – it does not replace benefits like Child Tax Credit and it will not affect the benefits you get.
- **Extra help** – Sometimes, you might get a one-off payment to help with essentials when a child moves in.

We can also help you apply for Child Benefit or Universal Credit if you’re eligible.

kinship@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Phone: **020 7364 4282**

“Knowing the support that is available makes you more firm and confident in your decision to step forward.”



Looking for general support, information or a service?

Tower Hamlets Family Information Service (FIS) and Local Offer website lists everything that is available for all families, children and young people from birth to 25.

It covers health, education, social care, leisure, childcare, youth work, advice, events and much more.

Go to www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk or contact the Family Information Service on 020 7364 6495



9 ADDITIONAL HELP AND SUPPORT

We work with local services to offer extra support, including:

- **Housing support to help with overcrowding:**

Housing Options Service, Tower Hamlets Town Hall homeless@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Phone: 020 7364 7474



- **Education:** Support from the 'Virtual School' for Kinship children.

vsinfo@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Phone: 020 7364 6304 / 3692

- **Idea Store:** One stop shop for libraries, adult learning courses (ESOL classes), activities, events and general support

www.ideastore.co.uk

- **Family Group Conference:** A special service offered to bring the wider family together to plan the best way forward. *Watch our short film* for more information about what is involved in a Family Group Conference.

familygroup.conference@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Phone: 020 7364 3443



- **Benefits advice:** From the Citizens Advice Bureau and Tower Hamlets Connect. Citizens Advice Tower Hamlets, Phone: 020 3855 5234

Tower Hamlets Connect, enquiry@towerhamletsconnect.org
Phone: 0300 303 6070



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND REDUCING CONFLICT

FAMILY MEDIATION

A trained, independent mediator helps families talk through disagreements and reach fair solutions for their children



- Private and confidential
- Both parents must agree to take part
- Helps reduce conflict so children can grow up in happier, calmer homes

earlyhelp@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Phone: 020 7364 5006 (option 2)

ONEPLUSONE DIGITAL RESOURCES

Online tools for parents to manage conflict:

- Short videos and animations
- Proven techniques for positive change
- Tips on communicating in kinder, more supportive ways



info@oneplusone.org.uk

TRIPLE P (POSITIVE PARENTING PROGRAMME)

Triple P gives parents tools to manage behaviour and build confidence for carers of children and teens.

- Positive strategies and routines
- Builds self-care for parents
- Helps children feel safe and supported



parenting@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Phone: 020 7364 6398

THE POSITIVE CHANGE SERVICE

Helping families recover from conflict or abuse by increasing safety and wellbeing.

- Support for children who've lived with conflict
- Help for parents who've experienced abuse
- Support for parents who've been abusive

Eva Armsby Family Centre,
6 Glamis Road, E1W 3EG
eafc.referrals@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Phone: 020 7364 3015



YOUNG TOWER HAMLETS

Opportunities for young people aged 11–19 (or up to 25 with SEND) to learn, grow and have their say.

- Free activities in youth centres and outdoors
- Targeted support for vulnerable young people
- Safe spaces with trained youth workers
- Sports, arts, and opportunities to share their voice

www.youngtowerhamlets.org.uk
YTHLondon@towerhamlets.gov.uk

PARENTING AMBASSADORS

A group of parents and carers of children with SEND who tackle stigma and offer peer support.

- Coffee mornings and stay & play sessions
- Parent evenings and advocacy at meetings

sendparentambassadors@gmail.com
Phone: 020 7364 7127

10. Complaints and Feedback

If you're unhappy with the support you receive, you can:

- First, speak to the Kinship Team contact.
Alternatively, you can contact the kinship duty line:
020 7364 4282 or email: **kinship@towerhamlets.gov.uk**
- If you are still unhappy use the online form: Tower Hamlets Children's Services Complaints



USEFUL CONTACTS

Kinship team, Tower Hamlets

(Permanency Assessment and Support Team-PAST)

- Email: **kinship@towerhamlets.gov.uk**
- Phone: **020 7364 4282**
- Emergency Duty Team: **020 7364 4079**

More resources can be found on our website.

Tower Hamlets Local Offer

- Website: **localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk**

Citizens Advice Tower Hamlets

- Website: **eastendcab.org.uk/tower-hamlets**
- Phone: **020 3855 5234**

National Organisations

- Kinship: **www.kinship.org.uk** | **0300 123 7015**
- Family Rights Group: **frg.org.uk/** | **0808 801 0366**
- Citizens Advice: **www.citizensadvice.org.uk/** | **03444 111444**
- Families In Harmony **www.familiesinharmony.org.uk/**
07709 240 585 / 07946 264 313

