

## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR KINSHIP CARERS



### **What is contact?**

Contact is the term used to best describe the meetings / visits that take place between children and their family members when the child/ren do not live with them.

The needs of a child and ensuring their safety and wellbeing are always central when making contact arrangements. Many Looked After children have a contact plan which stipulates who may have contact with the children and when.

It is recognised that Kinship Carers are required to manage many family relationships and contact can be anxiety provoking. It is important that the Kinship Carer understands the purpose of contact and any restrictions in place and is willing to work with this.

### **Different types of contact**

- Contact supervised or supported by social work staff
- Contact supervised or support by Kinship Carers or an appropriate adult
- Unsupervised contact
- Sibling contact

### **Different ways for children to maintain family contact**

- Face to face contact- visits
- Letters
- E-mail
- Telephone
- Presents and cards
- Text messages

Published by the Kinship Team  
And Contact Centre .



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## **What is the Contact Service?**

Supporting contact for children who are accommodated by the local authority is an integral part of the social work service. The Contact Service was established to offer a comprehensive, consistent approach to contact that will contribute to the assessment and planning for looked after children.

The Contact Service staff arrange contact between children and their birth families, compiling a contact agreement that sets out clear expectations of both parents and workers during contact. Staff observe and assess contact while offering support to both parents and children.

The Service is a social work service with referrals only from the social work department.

The Contact Centre is based within Northfield. There are five designated rooms for contact that have been furnished to reflect an open plan living area with a kitchen, dining and seating area. There are a range of resources for all age groups that are all specifically to be used by families. Four rooms also have access to the garden. Families using the centre are encouraged to plan for sessions in advance making use of the range of activities available, any outings would need to be planned and agreed by staff.

## **What might the child I am looking after do during contact?**

There are many resources available for families to access such as toys, games, cooking facilities, arts and crafts materials, books and puzzles etc. There is a sensory room and access to facilities for bathing and changing. It is hoped that the setting allows opportunities to mirror family life and will be an enjoyable and safe experience.

Contact can happen in a variety of settings, ranging from centres, venues in the community and even in family homes where appropriate. Contact arrangements are reviewed on a regular basis and contact staff always strive to find an arrangement which best meets a child's needs. That is where, as a kinship carer, we encourage your involvement.

## **How kinship carers can be involved**

There are many roles a kinship carer can take in supporting the child's contact arrangements.

For example, kinship carers are actively encouraged to be involved in transporting children to and from contact with their parents/ siblings. This helps the child feel more secure travelling to contact and allows them to see a positive relationship between their parents and carer during the handover.

Kinship carers can share important information about the child's welling, likes and interests in supporting the planning of contact. It will also be important for kinship carers to support the child to share their views about how contact is progressing of their own observations of the child if these are uncharacteristic.

Just as the Contact Service offers support to parents and children attending contact, we can offer support to carers too- helping everyone work towards an arrangement that is best for the child.

When it is appropriate, we would also encourage that carers manage a child's contact with their parents. This provides a much more natural experience for the child and everyone involved. The contact worker, social worker or kinship worker will be able to discuss this with you and the kind of safeguards and activities that you might take part in if you are unsure.

Each family will have an allocated worker from the team at the Contact Service and they are available for you to contact at any time. The team leaders and team manager are also available to offer you support and discuss any worries you may have about the contact arrangement for the child you are caring for.

**Address:**

Contact Service, Quarry Centre, Cummings Park Crescent, Aberdeen,  
AB16 7AS

**Telephone:**

01224 691800

Should you wish to phone the contact centre but do not have the funds on occasion you may reverse the charges.

In this instance you can

- DIAL **0800 7383773** Enter **01224 691800**
- Record your name so the person you are calling knows it's you- Wait on the line while your call is attempted

Should you require advice and information in relation to contact matters in your role as Kinship Carer please contact the Kinship Team.

### **Kinship Team,**

**Address:** Alternative Family Care, Integrated Children and Family Service, Quarry Centre, Cummings Park Crescent, Aberdeen, AB16 7AS

**Telephone:** 01224 694554

**Email:** [kinship@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:kinship@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

### **Are there any other services that can help?**

The Local Authority is committed to ensuring that Kinship Carers have access to independent information in respect of the important role they undertake.

### **Below are some useful contacts:**

#### **Avenue a New Direction**

AVENUE is a private provider of Mediation, Counselling and Child Contact Centres in Northeast Scotland. Their service is likely to have a fee attached.

Telephone: 01224 587571

**Email:** [aberdeen@avenue-info.com](mailto:aberdeen@avenue-info.com)

**The National Kinship Care:** A comprehensive Kinship Care Guide is now also a web-based resource which you can access at [www.kinship.scot](http://www.kinship.scot)

**National Kinship Helpline:** **0808 800 0006**, open weekdays 10am - 2.30pm or email [kinship@adoptionuk.org.uk](mailto:kinship@adoptionuk.org.uk)

#### **Citizens Advice Bureau:**

Advisors in every Citizens Advice Bureau in Scotland can provide advice and information about kinship care and they can also access additional, specialist advice where necessary.

Scotland: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/> Advice Line: **0131 550 1000**

England: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/> Advice Line: **0800 144 8848**

#### **Children's 1st: National Kinship Care Helpline:**

The parent line is extended to kinship care helpline is there to listen, and to offer advice, support and information.

Telephone: 08000 28 22 33

Webpage: [www.children1st.org.uk](http://www.children1st.org.uk)

Email: [parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk](mailto:parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk)

Please note that there are other information leaflets available from the kinship team including:

- What is Kinship Care?
- Kinship Allowance
- A Legal Option in Kinship Care