



Post Special Guardianship Order (SGO) support

A leaflet to explain what support is
available to you.



**Brighter Futures for Children
Friends & Family
Leaflet 6
V2.0**





Questions that might be asked

All children looked after who are made subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) will have a support plan put in place for them before the granting of the legal order. This is a requirement under the SGO assessment process and the support plan will be filed in court during the legal proceedings.

- ★ The support plan will be drawn up by the child's social worker and the carer's supervising social worker. It will cover areas such as finances, contact arrangements and future support for the special guardian(s).
- ★ The section in the plan detailing the proposed contact arrangements will be shared with the child(ren)'s parent(s) so they know what the recommendations are regarding when and where they will see their child(ren).
- ★ The proposed special guardian(s) will be allocated a support social worker who will be named on the support plan.

What support is there?

- ★ During the first three years following the granting of an SGO, Brighter Futures for Children offers the following support services to special guardians:
 - Visits by the allocated support social worker. These visits can be held face-to-face or virtually and will be arranged at a frequency that suits the individual carer(s)
 - Phone, email and/or text support as required
 - Training on various topics such as attachment, trauma, brain development and managing parental contact
 - Signposting to other agencies that may be able to offer specialist support around

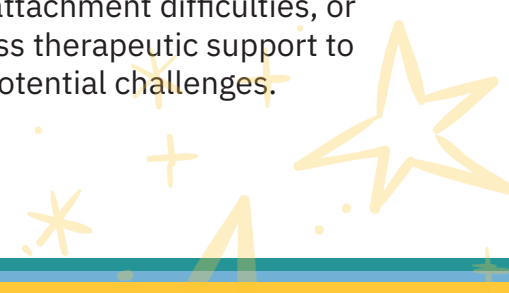
issues such as caring for a child with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) or Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS).

- ★ Mediation between special guardians and the child(ren)'s birth parent(s) if contact arrangements become difficult.
- ★ A fortnightly Family and Friends support group.

The Family and Friends Support Group

- ★ The Reading Family and Friends Support Group meets fortnightly on a Thursday between 9.30-11am. The group provides carers a safe space to talk about anything that is worrying them and to share positive experiences.
- ★ The support group offers a monthly training sessions/workshops on a pre-agreed topic. Training topics are chosen by the group members, so are all relevant to special guardians.
- ★ While we recognise that some people do not enjoy attending support groups, Brighter Futures for Children encourages all approved family and friends foster carers and special guardians to attend. It provides a good source of mutual support between carers who have been through similar experiences and understand the issues connected with providing long term care to a relative or friends' child(ren).

Therapeutic support

- ★ Many of the children placed with family and friends carers will have experienced difficult earlier life experiences which may result in them having attachment difficulties, or needing to access therapeutic support to help deal with potential challenges.
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- ★ If the child was in local authority care before the SGO was granted, our Special Guardianship Support Service can make an application to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund to allow the child's carer(s) to access funding for therapeutic support for the child.

Financial support

- ★ All potential special guardians will have a financial assessment completed with them as part of their special guardianship assessment. This will determine whether they will be entitled to receive payment of an ongoing allowance to support them with the care of the child(ren) concerned.
- ★ If a special guardian(s) is entitled to receive an allowance it will be paid fortnightly and subject to an annual review process.
- ★ While the child remains living with the carer and, on the basis of an annual means test, the carer(s) remains eligible to receive it, an allowance will be paid for each child until they become 18 years old. If the child remains in education after their 18th birthday, Brighter Futures for Children will continue to pay the allowance until the last Friday in the August following their birthday.

What if a carer does not live in Reading?

- ★ When special guardians who are caring for a Reading child but do not live in the Reading area, Brighter Futures for Children's Special Guardianship Support Service will still offer support for up to three years after an SGO is granted. How support is offered may depend on geographical considerations.
- ★ When carers live at a distance from Reading, our Special Guardianship Support Service may try to access support services in the carer's local authority area.

- ★ If special guardians are eligible to receive payment of an ongoing allowance, this will be payable regardless of where the special guardian(s) is living, provided the criteria for the payment continues to be met.

What happens if a carer needs support after the initial three years?

- ★ Three years after the SGO was made, responsibility for providing special guardianship support services transfers from the placing local authority to the local authority where the special guardian(s) live. If special guardians live within Reading borough this will not affect them. However, if they live outside the Reading area, this will mean a transfer of responsibilities.
- ★ Any ongoing financial support (i.e. that paid on a regular basis) which was agreed before the SGO was made, remains the responsibility of the local authority that agreed it, so long as the family continues to qualify for payments.
- ★ The support we offer aims to be flexible to meet your needs, so you can care for your relative or friend's child. We are happy to discuss other forms of support that would be helpful to you.

Any questions?

If you have questions about any of the information contained in this leaflet, or you require further information, please contact your assessing social worker or the Team Manager of the Brighter Futures for Children Adoption & Permanence Service:

Name:

Email address:

Phone:

Alternatively, visit us online at www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org

