



FAQ July 2020

From September 1st, Kinship Care Advice Service for Scotland will be led by Adoption UK Scotland and AFA Scotland. The FAQ below sets out the details. For more information, please contact Fiona at Adoption UK Scotland: scotland@adoptionuk.org.uk

What is kinship care?

Kinship care means that children whose birth parents are unable to look after them are cared for by other relatives, like grandparents, uncles or siblings, or by other adults who have a connection to the child, such as neighbours or a close friend of the family.

The majority of kinship placements are temporary and may be informal but some can also be permanent arrangements, possibly formalised through a legal order. There are different sorts of formal kinship care arrangements granted by the court. Depending on the specific circumstances, kinship carers will have different rights, responsibilities and support available to them

What is the Kinship Care Advice Service Scotland? (KCASS)

The KCASS is a service funded by the Scottish Government, with the purpose of delivering the best possible support to kinship carers across Scotland, who play such a critical role in providing secure, stable and nurturing homes for children who cannot be cared for by their birth parents.

What changes are happening to it?

From 1 September, the service will be run by The Adoption and Fostering Alliance (AFA) Scotland and Adoption UK Scotland.

<https://afascotland.com/>

<https://www.adoptionuk.org/>

This follows a tender process, when the contract with the current provider was approaching its end. The current provider, Citizens Advice Scotland, is working closely with AUK and AFA to ensure that the transition happens smoothly. We hope that some of the current staff will transfer over to the new service. The new providers will work closely with the well-established kinship groups across the country to continue to build an excellent service for all kinship carers in Scotland.

Who are we?

The Adoption and Fostering Alliance (AFA) Scotland is a charity that provides support and advice to the professionals working with children who cannot live with their birth parents. The services and training provided by AFA Scotland reflect the central importance of kinship care for children unable to live with their own parents and the growing recognition of the need to improve support to the people who care for them.

Adoption UK Scotland is a charity that works with and for families who are caring for children who can't live with their birth parents. AUK's members include kinship carers. We provide advice,

information, training and therapeutic support, and we work with families to bring about changes to the policies and practices that affect their lives.

Who will do what?

The front-line advice and support elements of the service will be delivered by Adoption UK Scotland. Building on their extensive experience of running support services developed with carers themselves, AUK will put experienced kinship carers at the heart of delivering these services. AFA Scotland will provide support and training to practitioners and agencies.

In addition, the charity Child Poverty Action Group will provide some training and support to help ensure that Kinship Carers receive their correct entitlement in terms of benefits and allowances.

The agencies will work with kinship carers to improve policy and practice at local and national level. The service will be governed by a steering group that includes kinship carers.

What will the new service consist of?

Where these services already exist, they will be reviewed with kinship carers in order to provide the best possible support into the future.

- A dedicated helpline for Kinship Carers to provide support on such issues as finances, benefits and the law.
- Support groups and activities for children and young people living in kinship arrangements
- A website (www.Kinship.Scot) providing the latest information and advice, and signposting to services
- A Kinship Care Advisory Group that gives kinship carers a voice in shaping services and policies
- A peer support service involving local community groups and events
- Training for kinship carers
- Training and advice for professionals who work with kinship care families
- An annual 'kinship care week' to raise awareness of kinship care, celebrate the difference it is making and call for changes in policy and practice.

I'm getting direct support and advice at the moment. What will happen to my support/advice?

If you are currently receiving direct support/advice from the KCASS, that will continue.

Isn't a conflict of interest for adoption/fostering support organisations to take over support for kinship carers?

Although the host organisations for the service will be different from 1 September, this will continue to be the National Kinship Care Advice Service, with a clear focus on the particular and distinct needs of kinship carers and the children they look after.

Neither AFA nor AUK directly place children for adoption or fostering.

Although the names of the organisations reflect their historical focus on adoption and fostering, they are increasingly working with a wider group of families who are caring for children who cannot live with their birth parents.

How do I get in touch to find out more?

This is a living document and we would welcome any questions you may have to add to this list

If you'd like to find out more, and/or get involved in helping us shape these services, please contact
Fiona at Adoption UK Scotland: scotland@adoptionuk.org.uk