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- 1.1 This is a response to the Department for Education's consultation on Financial Support for 16 to 19 year olds in Education or Training. The response has been drafted by Family Rights Group on behalf of the Kinship Care Alliance.
- 1.2 The Kinship Care Alliance is a group of organisations who subscribe to a set of shared aims and assumptions on the issue of family and friends care, that is to say arrangements where children who are unable to stay with their parents are being raised instead by other family members or friends. This can take place under a variety of legal arrangements, including a small minority of children who are looked after and being fostered by relatives or friends. The aims of the Kinship Care Alliance are to:
 - Prevent children from being unnecessarily raised outside their family.
 - Enhance outcomes for children who cannot live with their parents and who are living with relatives.
 - Secure improved recognition and support for family and friends carers.
- 1.3 There is significant research evidence which shows that 75% of family and friends carers are living in poverty, while the children living with family and friends carers have previously been subjected to almost identical adversities to the children who are in local authority foster care. Despite the difficulties facing these placements, and the lower levels of support which is provided to them by local authorities, the children who are placed with family and friends carers are doing just as well, across a range of measures, as children placed with unrelated foster carers.¹
- 1.4 In the context of: these children living in circumstances which are already economically disadvantaged; many of these children living with family and friends carers as an alternative to entering the care system; and the proven benefits to children of being placed with family and friends carer, we strongly recommend that children who are placed with family and friends carers should be protected against the very real possibility of increased financial hardship due to the closure of the Educational Maintenance Allowance scheme.

¹ Farmer E and Moyers S (2008) *Kinship Care: Fostering Effective Family and Friends Placements* (Jessica Kingsley); Hunt et al, (2008) *Keeping them in the family: Outcomes for children placed in kinship care through care proceedings* (BAAF)

- 1.5 We would wish this to be taken as a response to Question 1 in the response form, which asks whether the right groups have been identified to be eligible for the bursary payments. We strongly recommend that young people living with family and friends carers should be added to the list of groups eligible for bursary payments.
- 1.6 We also recommend, in response to Question 4, that young people placed with family and friends carers should be eligible for additional support in the transitional arrangements.
- 1.7 If the Department accepts that young people living with family and friends carers should be eligible for bursary payments and transitional support, but wishes to prioritise young people who are in such arrangements because their parents were no longer able to care for them, then we would suggest those young people could be identified as follows:
- (a) where the child comes to live with the carer as a result of plans made within a section 47 Children Act 1989 child protection enquiry;*
- (b) where a child comes to live with the carer following a section 37 Children Act 1989 investigation;*
- (c) where a carer has secured a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order to avoid a child being looked after, and there is professional evidence of the impairment of the parents' ability to care for the child;*
- (d) where the carer has a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order arising out of care proceedings;*
- (e) where the carer has a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order following the accommodation of a child;*
- (f) where the carer has a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order following the death or serious illness of a parent.*