3  Kinship foster care: an increasingly reliable passport to support

In my experience it’s the kinship foster carers who definitely get a service. And, I would say, a very good service. (Social worker, family placement)

Following approval Family and Friends foster carers will be supervised and supported according to the Fostering Services Regulations and Minimum Standards to enable them to meet the needs of the child/ren for which they are caring. They will be entitled to the same support and allowances as non related foster carers. (Local authority policy)

As noted in chapter 2, although our interviews with carers demonstrated that being accepted as a kinship foster carer did confer an advantage in terms of access to both financial and material support, the differences were somewhat muted by the fact that most of the carers, whatever the legal status of the arrangement, were dissatisfied with the level of support they had received from Children’s Services.

The data from professionals highlights even more the difference foster care status makes. Moreover, it also suggests that support for kinship foster care arrangements has improved and is now more likely to be equivalent to that available to mainstream foster carers. Some informants attributed this to the local authority producing its policy on family and friends care or to the government guidance.

(The policy) means we now offer them what we offer mainstream carers. (Social worker, family placement)

There is greater clarity about the allocation of fostering support to family and friends carers. (Manager, family placement)

I've seen a difference (since the guidance) it seems much, much clearer. I think it was a bit woolly before. I've seen a huge shift, I think with all the changing regulations and the guidance around that....Just looking at the whole package, the sort of service. They're given what other foster carers are, there's not a great distinction there. We put them on the same footing as regulated foster carers would be. (Designated manager)

Here we do treat family and friends foster carers the same as mainstream foster carers. We provide training, for example, and pay the same allowances. It has taken time for this to be developed. (Social worker, family placement)

Others stressed that this had been their approach for some time:

I don't think we've just done it because of the new guidance that came in last year, I think that we've tried very hard to treat kinship carers as link partners and put them on the same footing as regulated foster carers would be. (Designated manager)

We didn't have a specific policy on kinship but for as long as I can remember we've always treated family and friends foster carers the same as other foster carers. It was our policy to pay them the same, train them the same, supervise them the same. So we had that as a pre-existing policy. (Designated manager)

Whether a long-standing practice or a recent change, many professional informants thought that kinship foster carers now generally received the same level of service as mainstream foster carers. Typical comments included:
Once the child is a looked after child and with a family member we would pay the foster rate and treat that carer the same as if they had walked off the street to be a foster carer. (Manager, kinship team)

We treat our kinship carers the same as we would treat foster carers, they are foster carers, they are professionals in that sense, they’ve been through the same process of assessment. (Designated manager)

Family and friends foster carers are offered and can access the same support as mainstream foster carers. They are entitled to and receive the same financial and material support. They are given information outlining the support that is available and an induction training course which covers the support available. (Social worker, family placement).

The numerical data also supports these views. The on-line survey posed two specific questions about this, viz:

In your local authority, when family and friends carers are fully approved, by panel, as foster carers for the particular child, are they entitled to the same financial and material assistance as unrelated foster carers (i.e. basic allowance, holiday and birthday money, any additional element, for example child’s special needs or skills/training)?

In your local authority, when family and friends carers are fully approved, by panel, as foster carers for the particular child, do they have the same entitlement to other forms of support as unrelated foster carers (e.g. supervising social worker, training, support groups, respite care, access to therapeutic help)?

Table 3.1: Equal financial and material support for kinship and mainstream foster carers?

|                | Yes | No | %    | | No | % | (N=) |
|----------------|-----|----|------| |----|---|------|
| Children’s Services staff | 51  | 14 | 78.00 | | 22  | 22.00 | (65) |
| Other professionals | 6   | 5  | 55.00 | | 45  | 45.00 | (11) |
| All            | 57  | 19 | 75.00 | | 25  | 25.00 | (76) |

Table 3.2: Equal other forms of support for kinship and mainstream foster carers?

|                | Yes | No | %    | | No | % | (N=) |
|----------------|-----|----|------| |----|---|------|
| Children’s Services staff | 67  | 14 | 83.00 | | 17  | 17.00 | (81) |
| Other professionals | 7   | 9  | 44.00 | | 56  | 56.00 | (16) |
| All            | 74  | 23 | 76.00 | | 24  | 24.00 | (97) |

As can be seen from tables 3.1 and 3.2, over three-quarters of Children’s Services staff said that in their authority kinship foster carers were entitled to the same support as other foster carers. It was also considered by most of those responding to the on-line survey that carers who were temporarily approved but still going through the assessment process, would receive the same level of financial and material support as they would when they were fully approved by panel, although a sizeable number, just under a third (23 of 76; 30%) said they would not. This is in breach of government guidance and the Manchester judgement which

14 Reg 24 and Schedule 4 Care Planning, Placement and Review Regulations 2010
15 The Queen on the Application of L and others v- Manchester City Council; The Queen on the Application of R and another v- Manchester City Council [2002] 1 FLR 43 (See Appendix B)
has been reiterated in the recent Court of Appeal judgement against Tower Hamlets\textsuperscript{16}.

The on-line questionnaire also put the following question:

In our research with kinship carers we found that even those who had been approved as foster carers were not very satisfied with the support they had had and often compared this unfavourably with the support provided to unrelated foster carers. If we asked kinship foster carers in your authority, do you think they would say the same?

Not surprisingly, in view of the data already presented, most Children’s Services staff who felt able to answer this question (37 of 61; 61\%) said no.

I think they’re quite pleased that we’re giving them the same opportunities as we give our general foster carers, because at the beginning when we start the assessment they don’t think that they’re on the same line, they think that they’re not going to be given as much support as the general foster carers and they’re quite pleasantly surprised when we tell them yes you will. (Social worker, family placement)

Kinship foster care, of course, is not a cast-iron guarantee of support. It was notable that informants responding to the on-line survey who did not work for Children’s Services tended to be less sanguine about the support kinship foster carers could access. Thus only six of 11 (55\%) thought that financial and material support was equivalent to that available to other foster carers, and only seven of 16 (44\%) that other forms of support were equally available (tables 3.1 and 3.2). Several commented on differences between local authorities in this respect:

The theory of treating kinship foster carers the same as unrelated carers above does not always meet the aspiration when resources are tight (Independent reviewing officer)

Some local authorities provide more support than others. (Independent social worker)

This varies from area to area. Some local authorities do pay friends and family foster carers the same or similar to unrelated foster carers, others do not. The attitude seems to be ‘you’re family, get on with it’. This is particularly relevant when it comes to children needing therapy. (Independent social worker)

Some Children’s Services informants were also aware of ways in which the service for kinship foster carers fell short. Thus 22\% did not think that kinship foster carers received the same financial and material support as other foster carers (table 3.1) and 17\% said the same in relation to other forms of support (table 3.2). Thirty per cent thought carers received poorer support before they were fully approved, or said that this had only recently changed.

For the first 16 weeks a lower rate of financial support applies. (Social worker)

They are provided with material and emotional and practical support, they are reimbursed for expenses and ‘paid’ approx £40 per week. The local authority will not fund them to the same level as if they were approved. This is also not backdated to when the child is placed with them but only from the date the viability assessment is ‘signed off’ by a service manager. It is down to the field work social worker for the child to then put a reasoned argument together to a separate service manager to enable the funds to be back dated and paid from the section 17

\textsuperscript{16} R (on the application of X) v London Borough of Tower Hamlets [2013] EWHC 480 (Admin)

(See Appendix B)
budget from time of placement to time of the assessment being 'signed off'. (Manager, child care team)

Even where equivalent services are offered – such as support groups - they are not necessarily suitable for kinship foster carers, and therefore may not be accessed:

They need to provide the support that the carers identify that they need. The regular support services to other foster carers is made available to them but they do not meet the sort of support services that are specific to kinship carers. Kinship carers know this and are reluctant to access existing support services. (Chair of fostering panel/independent social worker/independent reviewing officer)

It is hard to include family and friends carers with general foster carers. We want to encourage them to be open to learning and not put them down. Resources are so tight in every area of social work that although many people believe there should be family and friends training separate and groups for young people there are not enough staff/hours/finance/venues etc to do this regularly (where it is done something else isn't done). (Social worker, family placement)

We have support groups they can access. I think they tend to access them less because usually they are a foster carer for a specific child. So I think their intentions are often different to the intentions of professional foster carers. (Designated manager).

Children’s Services informants also commented on variation in practice between local authorities, often in the context of creating problems when foster carers lived in a different area:

In my experience in several authorities support is routinely less substantial for family and friends than for unrelated foster carers. (Social worker)

I think overall we are doing quite a good job especially when I hear of disparities in other local authorities. Our challenge is that some of our kinship carers aren’t in the locality so we have to support them from a distance; other local authorities don’t always want to set up a reciprocal arrangement and a lot of local authorities aren’t offering the same level of payment or training we are providing to our kinship foster carers. I think overall we are providing quite a good level of service. (Manager, kinship team)

**Financial support**

Variation in practice between local authorities was most evident in terms of financial support. As kinship foster carers, whether temporarily or fully approved, carers are entitled to receive regular, non-means-tested maintenance payments for the child. This confers an advantage over all other legal statuses, where financial support is discretionary and means-tested.

Case law and government guidance have also made it clear that these allowances must be the same for all foster carers and that it is unlawful to discriminate against kinship foster carers on the grounds that they are related to the child. A few respondents reported that this was still happening.

They are paid less than foster carers taking on any child from the local authority (Independent social worker)

They should be but they aren’t. Unfortunately the local authority sees family and friends carers as a ‘cheap’ option. (Senior social worker)
(Local authority X) always ignored the Manchester case. They did it deliberately because not everyone goes to a lawyer. They just try it on. (Solicitor)

On the whole, however, the data presented earlier suggests that local authorities are increasingly complying with the law on this.

I think we had a case where the local authority was taken to court, where previously kinship carers were being paid a lesser allowance. That isn't the case here now, they are getting the same as our standard carers. (Social worker, family placement)

This does not mean, however, that kinship foster carers across the country will receive the same amounts: some local authorities, for instance, pay The Fostering Network recommended rates, others only the minimum required by the Department of Education, which are less generous.

Nor does it mean that kinship foster carers necessarily receive the same total remuneration as mainstream foster carers, who will typically receive additional monies, in the form of a fee, for skills, experience and undertaking training.

I am still experiencing approved kinship foster carers being paid at lower rates than approved foster carers...I'm not finding local authorities so much relying on kinship policies per se but they are separating out their allowance into a core allowance and then a training part...and then an additional part of the allowance relating to experience...so kinship carers only ever get offered the core basic allowance...they are not in my experience ever offered training...even though they...absolutely should be offered training but it's very difficult to get the reward, the professional element for them because obviously they're not professional foster carers. (Solicitor)

Local authorities appear to take different approaches to such payments where kinship foster carers are concerned, as is evident from comparing these two local authority policies:

Following approval family and friends carers will continue to be paid an allowance in line with the Fostering Network recommendations. The allowance covers the cost of caring for the child or children in their care. Family and friend carers do not receive a fee, which is a reward element paid to career foster carers in recognition of specific skills, qualifications or experience. (Local authority policy)

Financial support arrangements for approved connected carers are no different to other (local authority) approved foster carers. (The) Fostering Service pays all carers an allowance based on the age of the child or young person. This allowance is equivalent to the minimum set annually by the Department of Education. In addition all foster carers are paid a fee which recognises that caring for somebody else’s child requires skill and understanding, as well as working with the social workers and other professionals who may be involved. (Local authority policy)

Some informants told us that there was a blanket exclusion in their local authority - kinship foster carers were not eligible for the fee element or could only progress so far:

They get the same allowance as general carers minus the level 1 money. Our general carers come in as level 1 and I think it's about £53 on level 1. Level 2 gets £200, level 3 they get something like £275 per week. But family and friends don't get the level 1 money, they just get the allowance that all the other carers would get for a child....The reason they don't, is
because they don't do the other bit that the foster carers are doing. Our foster carers will come
in and do training. (Social worker, family placement)

They get the same, as they have to in law, the same maintenance rate as a stranger foster
carer. The challenge we get here sometimes from carers is why aren't we paying them the full
amount, the amount that a stranger foster carer gets.

Researcher: What do you say to them?

Ah we say that (stranger foster carers) are being paid to care for any child, that they have to
attend training and so on, that that's the professional fees, what they're being paid is what it
costs to care for a child, not those additional bits. Some of them, you know, feel annoyed
about that and others accept it. We haven't had any judicial reviews though. (Designated
manager)

They are unable to progress past the level 2 payment band. Unrelated foster carers can
achieve level 5. (Kinship social worker)

Others said that although kinship foster carers would be eligible for a fee, and were offered
training, few were willing to undertake it.

What they don't get is obviously all the skill levels etc. because there's expectations to go
through Skills to Foster training and also the CWDC17 etc. which is there now with it.
(Designated manager)

Yet others explained the policy not just in terms of training but other differences in the
expectations of kinship foster carers and mainstream foster carers:

They receive the child care element of the allowance but not the reward element. They don't
have to attend training and they are not approached to go on the EDT18 rota for emergency
placements nor are they approached to take any unrelated children as a placement. (Social
worker)

In terms of the payment structure for our family and friends foster carers, because they
haven't done the full preparation and they don't offer care to a range of different children
coming in and out of their homes and all of that sort of stuff, we offer The Fostering Network
care element as our basic. (Kinship social worker)

Carers do not receive fostering fee payments as they only care for specific child/children
known to them. (Social worker)

They receive the same basic allowance and the same holiday and birthday money etc and they
receive a payment for skills sum in recognition of training but to expand their allowance to
the higher levels they need to take into their home unrelated children. We have family and
friends carers who have done this successfully. (Manager, family placement)

In view of the recent judgement against the London Borough of Tower Hamlets19, local
authorities are likely to have to review their policies on the payment of fees.

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17 This refers to the Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC). Training, Support and Development
Standards
18 Emergency Duty Team
19 The Queen on the application of X and London Borough of Tower Hamlets [2013] EWHC 480 (Admin) (See
Appendix B)
Exceptionally, a few local authorities were reported to pay fees.

We pay them the same as our mainstream foster carers when they are temporarily approved as foster carers. When they have been fully approved by panel they also receive the Carers Progression reward element. (Manager, family placement)

Family and friends carers are approved as level 1 carers on a basic rate, (plus additional payments, equipment, holiday allowance etc, same as general carers), but can quickly access skills to foster training, which then means they are on the same rate as general carers (Social worker, family placement)

We pay Fostering Network rates. And all our foster carers, including those with temporary approval, receive a fee. Now what we call our standard fee is very low and it’s almost a token, it’s £28 a week, but we do have some kinship carers who meet the criteria for higher fees, you know, and the next one up is £125 a week. It’s a payment for skills. It’s to do with training and what they can offer, which would be to do with the needs of the child and in particular if they were meeting the needs of a number of children who had different complex needs. There’s a handful of kinship carers who are getting the bigger fee. (Manager, family placement)

We have a scaled system where carers, dependent on the amount of training etc. could achieve a higher level than the standard carer. So I think in all fairness the department has been quite proactive in ensuring our family and friends carers are treated equally, they have equal opportunity to attend any training, so yes I think (this local authority) has been really good in terms of trying to be equal. (Social worker, family placement)

One authority, which had recently changed its policy, had also adopted a very proactive approach, which had enabled a considerable number of kinship foster carers to qualify for a fee, by actively supporting them to complete the required training.

We changed last year…opened up our skills payments to family and friends foster carers. That wasn’t the case before. We made transitional arrangements for existing family and friends foster carers to complete the training standards. When writing it I had no idea how many would do it, but we had a tremendous take up and they got the fee of £73 a week per child. Other local authority colleagues have reported poor take up even when they’ve offered that. The difference was we put in quite a lot of support…we put in a lot of one to one and mentoring to help our carers do this. And it was backdated and people ended up with quite a big lump sum…that was a big incentive. It was recognising change and also how much family and friends carers did – similar to foster carers but even more as they supervise contact. If you had told me 12 months ago that this local authority would accept paying fees to our family and friends foster carers I’d have laughed about it. We talked about it but I didn’t think that would happen. (Manager, kinship team)

The advantages of foster care status
Notwithstanding these inequalities and deficiencies in the support available, our informants were very clear that being a kinship foster carer does confer considerable advantages over all other legal statuses, entitling children and carers, in theory at least, to a package of services.

Obviously foster carers get loads more support. (Solicitor)

If a child is placed with kinship carers as a looked after child in foster care they’re automatically pass-ported into non means tested allowances, the allocation of the supervising social worker; the child gets more closely scrutinised by health, it gets extra support in education. So by having looked after status a child instantly gets a whole package of things
automatically. If in any other status, support is discretionary and usually means tested. (Local authority solicitor)

How impressive that package is can be seen from the list set out below, which is taken from the policy of one particular local authority:

(Where) the child is looked after by the local authority
- the child will have a care plan (including health plan and personal education plan) which will be reviewed by an independent reviewing officer
- a social worker will visit the child and carers and oversee the child’s welfare
- the child will be offered access to an advocacy service where they make or intend to make representations under section 26 of the 1989 Act
- a supervising social worker will be appointed for the foster carers
- training and support must be offered to the foster carers
- on leaving care the young person may be eligible for ongoing support under the 1989 Act (as amended by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000)

Family and Friends Foster Carers are eligible for the range of non-financial support available to non-related foster carers. This includes the following:
- Children’s Workforce Development Training Standards Induction: The National Minimum Standards require that all foster carers complete mandatory training on approval with the support and guidance of their fostering social worker. There is a specially adapted set of induction standards for family and friends carers. (This LA) will support family and friends carers to achieve these standards.
- Training: Further training provision is planned for family and friends carers according to their needs and the profile of the children they care for.
- Personal Development Plan: As part of the National Minimum Standards each family and friends carer has a personal development plan to guide their training and development.
- Allocated Fostering Social Worker: to provide support and supervision (via regular visits and telephone contact) for carers of children who are ‘looked after’.
- Support worker: These support the Allocated Social Worker, undertaking specific tasks to support family and friends foster carers. Examples of such tasks include transporting children and assisting with the development plan.
- Foster Carer handbook: This handbook outlines all key guidance and information required by foster carers, including family and friends foster carers, to function effectively.
- Fostering Network membership: (the LA) funds every foster carer to be a member of Fostering Network, the national advisory body for foster carers. This allows them to be registered as a foster carer and receive information and support as part of the children’s workforce. Family and friends carers are eligible to join Fostering Network and (the LA) will fund them to do so.
- Out of hours support: This service allows family and friends carers to access support via telephone or, if necessary, through an in-person out of hours visit.
- Invitation to support groups and social events: Foster carers benefit from sharing social events with others undertaking the same role, and family and friends carers are welcome to participate in these events.
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service consultation: This is available when it has been agreed that the child or young person’s psychological needs or behaviour indicate specialist input is required.
- Newsletter: This helps family and friends’ foster carers feel part of a group of committed volunteers and connect them to (the LA).
- Access to foster carer library: Family and friends foster carers are able to access books and publications to help them learn and explore topics that support them in developing positive parenting and addressing any areas of difficulty.
Consultation events: Family and friends foster carers are invited to relevant key consultation events about how to develop the fostering service as appropriate.

Annual conferences: (the LA) holds annual foster carer conferences to which family and friends carers are invited. These events provide an opportunity for foster carers to get together and benefit from keynote speakers, presentations and workshops.

Reviews of children’s placement: These meetings review how well the child’s placement is developing and makes further plans for the care of the child.

Visits from Child’s social worker: Children who are cared for formally by friends and family foster carers will receive visits from the child’s social worker. This will provide an opportunity for the foster carer to report any concerns, take advice and plan around the needs of the child. It also ensures the child’s views are shared with someone outside the foster placement.

Input from Education Looked After Children (ELAC) team Personal Educational Plan (PEP) and health plan: The ELAC team holds an overview of the child’s PEP. The child’s health plan lays out clearly any actions required to ensure their health needs are met involving key people from the health service.

Respite care (if required): If required to meet the needs of the child periods of respite foster care may be arranged. This assistance can be very supportive in assisting the foster carer to maintain a particularly demanding placement.

Access to children who foster group: Foster caring families sometimes find their birth children benefit from meeting other children who help their families foster. Groups are run within (the LA) Fostering Service to bring these children together for mutual support.

One would not expect interviewees, of course, to be able to produce such a comprehensive list. Rather they highlighted particular elements. The overall message, however, was clear - being a kinship foster carer for a looked after child confers many privileges in terms of support.

The level of support carries much more weight behind kinship foster carers. I think now in light of the difficult financial climate it would be harder to get a resource for any family unless they're approved as a kinship foster carer. (Social worker, family placement)

Foster carers get more money and access to CAMHS, respite, activities for children - panto tickets etc (Kinship social worker)

If you are a foster carer you have your own support worker and you have a supervising social worker who would visit you every six weeks and you'd have other visits in-between. You have an out of hours support service which is manned by the support workers in the fostering team and you have a childcare worker working with the child. Then you have a personal education plan at school and you have a care plan and our kinship foster carers have access to all the training etc. It's quite comprehensive. (Designated manager)

There are real benefits in looked after child status. e.g. better allowances, reports by school governors regarding LAC, preferential CAMHS access, access to the best schools. (Solicitor)

If the child is looked after then there's promise of a support plan, which would include finances, it would include a supervising social worker, it would be resources from our Placement Support Team. It definitely facilitates a lot more support and sort of focus, the assessments should look at what they need to support the child. (Social worker, family placement)

When you've got situations set up as fostering situations there's a whole package of services around. There's an out of hours support line for foster carers, they've got their own separate social worker who visits them. If it wasn't on a fostering basis but on a different sort of
arrangement you don't have the same, yes you can always ring the out of hours social work line, anybody can do that, but you don't have a dedicated out of hours support line, as you would do for foster carers. So there are services there but there are some things which are again under the foster care standards and stuff we've set up for foster carers, so when these relatives move out of being foster carers, you know, they can access services but they'll be more of the mainstream services rather than being specific. (Designated manager)

Once children are looked after then they're into a whole other system in terms of, for example, being tracked by education and the involvement of our team that works on achievements of children in care and so on. (Designated manager)

As noted earlier, when respondents to the on-line survey were asked whether they thought kinship foster carers in their authority would feel dissatisfied with the support they were receiving, the majority of Children’s Services informants (61%) said no. In contrast, when we put a similar question about those caring under other legal statuses - ‘Most of the kinship carers in our study who had not been foster carers felt very poorly supported or felt they had had to fight for the support they got. If we interviewed such carers in your authority, do you think they would say the same? - half of those responding, (26 of 50) said they thought carers would give the same response.

The on-line survey put three further questions specifically on this:

1. In your authority, would you say that more financial and material help is usually available when the carers are approved as family and friends foster carers than when they are caring under other legal statuses (e.g.: informal placement, private fostering, residence or special guardianship order; adoption)?

2. In terms of other forms of support, would you say that family and friends foster carers have been able to access greater help for the children than those caring under other legal statuses (eg informal placement, private fostering, residence or special guardianship order, adoption)?

3. In terms of other forms of support, would you say that family and friends foster carers have been able to access greater help for themselves than carers with other legal statuses

As can be seen from table 3.3, the greatest differential was perceived in terms of financial and material support, with 65% of Children’s Services staff saying that more financial and material help was usually available to kinship foster carers than to those caring under different legal statuses. A further 27% said this was sometimes the case.

Table 3.3: Is more financial and material help usually available to kinship foster carers than carers with other legal statuses?

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<td></td>
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<td>Children's Services staff</td>
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Rather fewer thought that kinship foster carers would usually be able to access more help for the child (43%) with a further 25% saying this was the case, while only 37% thought that kinship foster carers would be able to access more help for themselves. (Tables 3.4 and 3.5). While this might suggest there is not an enormous gap between foster carers and those with other legal statuses, what this probably means is that support is equally deficient rather than that both are well served.
Table 3.4: Are kinship foster carers able to access greater help for the child than carers with other legal statuses?

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<td>Children’s Services staff</td>
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Table 3.5: Are kinship foster carers able to access great help for themselves than carers with other legal statuses?

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<td>All</td>
<td>24</td>
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In the next chapter we explore how kinship foster care status not only confers advantages in terms of support while the child is looked after but also privileges children and carers subsequently, if they move into other, permanent legal statuses.

Summary

- The professional data reveals, much more strongly than our carer interviews had done, the advantages of foster care status for kinship carers.

- It also indicates that support for kinship foster care arrangements have improved and are now more likely to be equivalent to that for mainstream foster carers. Over three-quarters of Children’s Services staff responding to the on-line survey said that in their authority kinship foster carer status meant entitlement to the same support as mainstream foster carers. Many thought this greater entitlement was a recent result of the impact of policy and guidance.

- Some gaps still remained, particularly in terms of financial support. Some authorities still appear to be flouting case law with respect to the payment of basic allowances and many more discriminate against kinship foster carers by not making them eligible for incremental professional ‘fees’. Very recent case law, however, means that local authorities are likely to have to review their policies on this.

- Although there remain some inequalities and deficiencies in the support available to kinship foster care arrangements, our professional informants were clear that such status was a passport to a comprehensive package of services throughout a child’s minority which is not available to those with other legal statuses.