

Hello and Welcome!

Welcome to the third edition of SG News – our newsletter for Special Guardians in Milton Keynes. We hope you have all had a wonderful start to the new year.

We hope that the winter period will be soon behind us - ready to look forward to Spring and some lovely sunshine!



As part of our offer as the Post-SGO Support Team, we will endeavour to send a newsletter out every quarter to bring you any upcoming dates on events that you may wish to attend locally, and any other resources we have come across that you might find useful. If you have any ideas on what we could do to add or improve the newsletter, please feel free to get in touch at: PostSGOSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Please send us any pictures of any celebrations or events that you attend for us to share in the next newsletter!

Post-SGO Support Survey



We recently sent out an online survey to Special Guardians asking for feedback on our Post-SGO Support Service, thank you to everyone who completed this.

We are very pleased with the feedback and we are working hard behind the scenes to ensure that we continue to develop and improve our service over time for our Special Guardians.

Our survey has now closed but if you would like the chance to share your feedback and ideas with us, please contact us at PostSGOSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk

SG 'Working Group'

Our support service is *for* you, that's why we need *your* help to shape it!

The next Special Guardianship Working Group meeting will be held in April 2023. Please speak to your representatives for further details.

Sharon Godfrey, Head of Corporate Parenting, and Jade Teale, Fostering Deputy Manager, will be working alongside Special Guardians – selected by you – to ensure that your voices are heard when decisions are made about our Support Service.





Post SGO Support

We are
here to
help.

How to reach us:



Post-SGO Support Helpline: 01908 253652



Email: PostSGOSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Our helpline is open from 09:00am to 5:00pm Mondays to Thursdays and 09:00am to 4:30pm on Fridays (excluding bank holidays).

If we do not answer your call immediately, please leave a voicemail message and we will get back to you on the next working day.

If your query is urgent, please contact our Fostering Duty Team on 01908 253206 or if it is out-of-hours then please contact the Emergency Social Work Team on 01908 265545.

Recent Successful Events:

Kinship Crafts

The local Kinship MK Support Group of incredible volunteers organised a Craft Event during the February 2023 half-term 2023 for ALL kinship carers and children to get together – which included those under SGO, Kinship and Child Arrangement Orders. Grace Woodall, Social Work Assistant, attended the event and said it was a lot of fun!

SG Drop-In Sessions

On the first Monday of the month (excluding bank holidays) from 10.00am to 11.30am, Khush and Grace will attend Pebbles Children's Centre for our SG Drop-In Sessions. This is a great opportunity for our Special Guardians to attend to discuss anything that you feel is important within your role or that you may need advice on. We may also hold 'theme' sessions to spotlight important issues and do short training events.

Location: Newlyn Place, Fishermead, Milton Keynes, MK6 2LP

Tell us about you!

We would love to know what is happening in your lives – your successes, the big or small breakthroughs that you have made with your children, something that made you smile or laugh, or maybe something that you found interesting.

Write to us with something you want to share with other Special Guardians in your community – we just might feature it in the next Newsletter!

An analysis of the views and experiences of over 1200 children and young people in Kinship Foster Care in 38 local authorities demonstrated that more children placed with family/friends rate their wellbeing as high compared with children in unrelated Foster Care. This research shows the positive experiences of children being with family members under what may be difficult circumstances. If you would like to read more, please visit this link: <https://www.coram.org.uk/news/coram-voice-analysis-finds-more-children-kinship-foster-care-rate-their-wellbeing-high-compared>

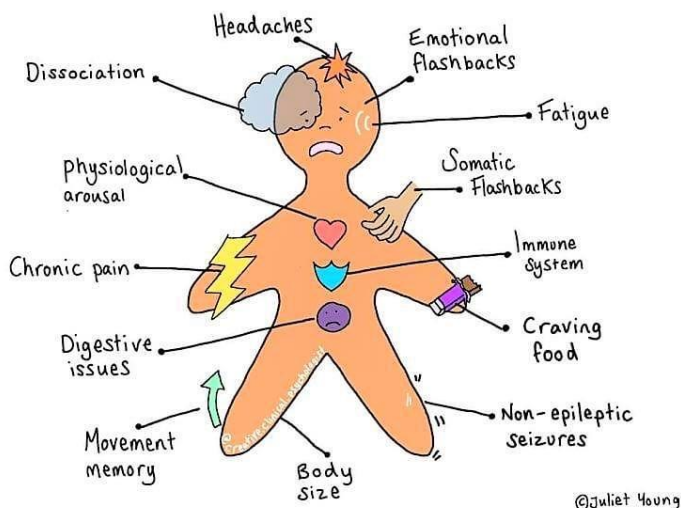
The Family Rights Group organisation is holding an online workshop for kinship carers in partnership with the Kinship Care Team at the Department of Education. The workshop will be held on Zoom on Tuesday 18th April from 12.45pm-2.30pm. It will be an opportunity for relatives and friends raising children who cannot remain at home to share what you think about the national policy and strategies. This is to help raise awareness as part of the introduction to have the Kinship Care Bill passed. Please visit: <https://frg.org.uk/news-blogs-and-vlogs/news/national-kinship-care-workshop-have-your-say/>

The Body Keeps The Score

This is the term made infamous by the author of the book 'The Body Keeps The Score' by Bessel van der Kolk.

How Does the Body Keep the Score?

Sometimes when overwhelming traumatic events happen, the physiological energy can be pushed down into the body. This 'trapped trauma' energy can show in different ways...



This book is a pioneer of work that uses recent scientific research and evidence to demonstrate how trauma can affect the mind, body, and the innovative treatments for recovery.

This picture here has been created by a clinical psychologist on Instagram known as @creative.clinical.psychologist and the picture here shows incredibly how the body / mind may cope with adverse events / trauma experienced by the children in our care.

This book comes highly recommended by our Social Worker Khush Shah for a very interesting read!



We would like to wish those celebrating a very happy Easter! Please see below of some events happening locally over the Easter period:

- Easter Adventures Trail at Waddesdon Manor, 29th March to 10th April
- Easter Egg Hunt at Milton Keynes Museum, 7th to 10th April
- Easter Trail at Thrift Farm – Dates TBC
- Easter Egg Hunt with code cracking at Bletchley Park
- Ministry of Science Live at Milton Keynes Theatre, 14th April
- Easter Wonderland – Mead Open Farm (Leighton Buzzard) from 1st to 14th April
- Day out with Thomas at Bucks Railway Centre (Quainton) 7th to 9th April
- Breakfast with Easter Bunny, 3rd April (09.30am-10.30am) at IKEA Bletchley
- Easter Egg Hunt at Caldecotte Brook, 1st April to 16th April
- Mini Moo, Willen Hospice at Willen Lake North, 10:00am

Please send us any pictures of what you and your family get up to this year, and we may include them in the next newsletter!



The month of April is holy for many faiths including the Islamic faith. This celebration will start on the evening of Friday April 21st and last until Saturday 22nd April but may be celebrated that whole weekend to spend time with loved ones and make special memories. We hope our Special Guardianship families who celebrate Eid have a wonderful time!

International Family Day – 15th May 2023
15th May is marked as the international day of the family. This day is promoted to enhance awareness of specific issues that affect families across the world.

Father's Day – Sunday 18th June 2023
Father's Day is a day celebrated every year in the UK to celebrate those paternal figures that have had a positive influence on the children that they have cared for or continue to care for. This can be a difficult time for some children and certain coping strategies may work better, such as talking about it ahead of the day to make them feel comfortable, and planning other activities to help take their mind off it if they do not feel like celebrating.

Easter Holiday Activities

The Holiday Activities and Food Programme have a host of Spring activities and food programme on during the Easter Holiday. Activities include football camps, film making, multi-sports camps, music and crafts. All activities will run from 03 – 06 April 2023. Please click on this link to see more and register: <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2023>

Your exclusive code is: **SR15%23** - Please use this code at the point of booking.

Please come and visit your local children's centre if you are caring for any child under the age of 5 (they also work with families with older children depending on the child's needs and situation). These centres are a wealth of resources and there is a lot of support available from baby sessions to employment support. The staff also work alongside many other agencies including: Education, Health, Housing Associations, Food Bank, MK Storehouse and much more!

This is a picture of the Pebbles Children's centre based in Fishermead.



Kinship Support Group

Kinship MK are a Support Group for all Family and Friends Carers (anyone who is looking after a family or friends' child that can't live with their birth parents). There's no need to book, just pop in and chat.

The group meet every Thursday during term-time from 09:30am to 11:30am at Morrisons Westcroft District Centre in the Community Room at the rear of the restaurant. There are also virtual meetings on the 3rd Thursday of every month in the evening.

Please email kinshipmk@outlook.com for further details.

"The people I met were so lovely & made me feel very welcome." "It's great to meet other people in the same situation." "I think the group is great." "Finding the group made me feel stronger in being able to cope." "I don't feel so isolated." "Makes me feel as if I have some support."

You said – we did!

Lots of Special Guardians have been asking about what training they can access, therefore we have put together a training brochure full of lots of fantastic resources. We can recommend resources that will best meet your interests, needs and learning style.

Please speak to a member of the Post-SGO Support Service for further details.



Training Resources

CATCH – A online resource platform to empower families and professionals to learn how to support children with adverse childhood experiences, trauma, learning needs and much more.

Foster Carer Training Hub – A online platform with a wealth of training courses from attachment to active listening to support you in your role as a Special Guardian.

MKPDC – Offers lots of training courses ranging from attachment, basic counselling, life story work and so much more.

Clinical Supervision – We have access to wonderful qualified psychologists where you can have a 1-2-1 session which is called a supervision to discuss any concerns or issues that may be on your mind.

There are a number of benefits to learning and accessing training courses online:

- It doesn't cost the Special Guardian money (unless the course has not been finished for some time or there is a late cancellation without reason)
- You can complete the course at your own pace
- It supports and informs your learning and your caregiving role.

For access to any of these services please get in touch with the Post-SGO Support Service and we will make contact to discuss this further.

A previously looked after child (PLAC) is a child who was in care at the point at which they were made subject to a Special Guardianship Order.

Pupil Premium Plus Funding

Pupil Premium Plus is funding to improve education outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in schools in England for children who were previously looked after.

The Department for Education defines Previously Looked After as:

‘Children who are no longer looked after by the local authority in England and Wales because they are the subject of an Adoption, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Order. (This currently does not include children who have been returned home to parents after being in care by the Local Authority). The child/young person must have been in care in England and Wales to qualify for Pupil Premium Plus funding.’

Any child attending school from the start of reception to the end of Year 11 (summer term) is eligible to receive PP+. Children who are electively home educated or are post-16 students are currently not eligible for post-LAC PP+.

Evidence shows that disadvantaged children face more difficulties in reaching their full potential educationally. The funding is paid directly to schools and is up to the school leaders to decide which activity they spend their pupil premium on within the framework set out by the ‘menu of approaches’. This can be found on page 7 of ‘Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders’.

Virtual School

Milton Keynes Virtual School can offer information, advice, and guidance to the guardians of previously looked after children who attend education settings in Milton Keynes.

If you would like to access this support please request a consent form and email it to mkvirtualschool@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Here are some of our best resources, compiled by our team for you to use with the children in your care.
If you find something particularly helpful, please let us know!



Family Rights Group (FRG) are a charity that provides advice to parents, grandparents, relatives, and friends about their rights and options when social workers or courts make a decisions about a child or children's welfare. FRG work with parents whose children are in need, at risk or are in the care system, and with wider family members and friends who are raising children (such as kinship carers).

You can get help and advice by ringing 0808 801 0366 (freephone) and Textphone 18001 + the advice phone number. There is also a wealth of information on their website which is very useful.

Young Minds are a mental health charity for children and young people and their parents / carers, ensuring that all young people can get the mental health support they need. The website is easily accessible for both parents / caregivers and young children.

The website provides useful and practical advice and has dedicated helpline and webchat. The number to call is 0808 802 5544 Monday-Friday 09.30-4.00pm. If you need further help the charity will organise for an independent experienced professional to call you for a 50-minute telephone consultation with seven days.

Kinship Carers UK is a national charity that supports and advises family and friends' carers often called Kinship Carers or Connected Carers. The organisation is run by experienced Kinship Carers who are there to offer support and guidance as they have walked the path of kinship care before. Their aim is to build a strong community of kinship carers that can support you from the start of your journey. Their website has access to various articles and resources on www.kinshipcarersuk.com



If you have something useful or interesting to share, please let us know!
It's helpful to learn something new.



Mindfulness is the practice of purposefully bringing one's attention to the present-moment experience without evaluation, a skill one develops through meditation or other training. Here is a mindfulness activity below to help focusing on the present. This is a picture of a flower and lion with intricate patterns and details, take some time to colour these in.



Here are 4 tips from the NHS on how to improve our overall well-being:

1. Do things you enjoy (take a bath, read a book, or meet a friend for a coffee).
2. Boost your self-esteem (talk kindly to yourself).
3. Build healthy habits (exercise, movement such as walking, share your problems, eat healthy and get 7+ hours sleep).
4. Building resilience – Find a way to express yourself in the experiences you might have had – through writing, painting, or singing.

GROUNDING TECHNIQUES FOR THE SENSES

- 5 THINGS YOU CAN SEE 
- 4 THINGS YOU CAN TOUCH 
- 3 THINGS YOU CAN HEAR 
- 2 THINGS YOU CAN SMELL 
- 1 THINGS YOU CAN TASTE 