

Special Guardianship Training

A guide for Special Guardians and their families

Fostering Team – Post-SGO Support Service



Introduction

The world of Special Guardianship is constantly growing and changing, and it's important to keep up-to-date!

Training is a valuable resource - it can help you to better understand the children that you look after and how you can support them. As a Special Guardian, it's also important to learn and practice self-care to support your own wellbeing and promote your personal development.

Sometimes, training can seem like a daunting task and it can be difficult to allocate time to focus on learning – but it doesn't have to be! At Milton Keynes City Council, our Special Guardians are able to access a variety of fantastic training that works around their routine, meets their learning style, and satisfies their interests.

This brochure will talk you through the different types of training, which you can match to your lifestyle and learning style, including online learning, in-person courses, webinars, podcasts, and other useful resources.

It's important to learn something new, develop your existing knowledge or challenge yourself!

How to Access Training

- 1) Contact the Post-SGO Support Service via email or phone.
- 2) We can recommend courses to suit your family's needs, your learning style and your lifestyle, or you can request a specific training course that you are interested in.
- 3) We will give you instructions on how to access the training.
- 4) Please send in your feedback after completing training, as this helps us to develop the service and support other Special Guardians.

Contact Us:



Post-SGO Support Helpline: 01908 253652



Email: PostSGOSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Our helpline is open from 09:00am to 5:00pm Monday-Thursday and 09:00am to 4:30pm on Friday (excluding bank holidays).

If you call outside of these times, please leave a voicemail message and we will get back to you on the next working day.

Types of Training

It's important to match the type of training to your own learning style and lifestyle, to maximise your learning.



What is a Webinar?

A webinar is a form of online training, the sessions cover a wide range of topics and are hosted by subject experts. The hosts usually appear on webcam and talk through some course material. You can watch the webinar live and there's no commitment for you to appear on webcam or contribute during the session. You can also choose to watch the recorded video back at a time that suits you so you can pause and play at any time.



What is a Podcast?

A podcast is an audio programme, similar to the radio, but you can listen to the episodes whenever you like - some people listen whilst driving, cleaning, and walking. Podcasts are usually focused on a particular topic or theme.



What is Face-to-Face Training?

This involves going to a location in person to be taught by a trainer on a particular topic. There will usually be a group of people who are also attending the course and sometimes you will complete group activities and have discussions.



What is Online Training?

This is also known as computer-based training, distance learning or e-learning. It involves completing a course over the internet. You will be sent a link to the course and can complete this in your own time and at your own pace.



Other Useful Resources

We have compiled a list of interesting resources such as books, videos, articles, and research documents, which can expand your knowledge in a variety of subjects.

What Training Can I Access?

Children and Trauma Community Hub (CATCH)

This can only be accessed online.



CATCH was formerly known as the Adopter Hub however they have rebranded to cover all types of carers – including Special Guardians.

CATCH offer a variety of resources to support the knowledge and skills of Special Guardians – you can access eLearning courses, webinars, online videos, and podcasts. All resources have been created, sourced, or presented by experts such as Clinical Psychologists, Therapists and ‘experts by experience’ such as Special Guardians and Adopters themselves. The resources are designed to support carers with practical advice and guidance on key topics, and more are being added every day!

- **Attachment and Trauma** – Managing symptoms of attachment and trauma at home and in school, building on your attachments with your children, the impact of early childhood experiences on the brain and body, and more.
- **Education** – Empowering children at school, school transitions, pupil premium, and more.
- **Behaviour and Parenting** – Behaviour issues such as sleeping, eating, lying, toileting, and violence, managing challenging behaviour, and more.
- **Health and Wellbeing** – How to support children with mental health, suicidal thoughts, self-care.
- **Additional Needs** – How to support children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, sensory processing difficulties, and more.
- **Managing Contact with Birth Families**
- **Your Role as a Special Guardian** – Becoming a Special Guardian, what to expect from the process, and what support you are entitled to after the order is granted.

You can also access private forums and peer-to-peer webchats through CATCH, to connect with other Special Guardians.

How do I access CATCH?

To create an account, you will need to input a code specific for Milton Keynes City Council. Please contact the Post-SGO Support Service to request the code, you will then be able to register for an account and access the website which you can explore in your own time.



The Foster Care Training Hub offers fantastic eLearning courses designed specifically for those caring for children – Foster Carers, Kinship Carers and Special Guardians. The courses were created by expert professionals, and they have been scientifically designed to encourage reflection which supports you to retain the knowledge. Although the training is online, the content is interactive and involves reading, images, videos, games and quizzes to keep you engaged.

There are hundreds of courses available to explore to support, as a starting point we recommend:

- **Attachment and Child Development**
- **Therapeutic Parenting**
- **Caring for Traumatized Children**
- **Emotion Coaching**
- **Building Resilience**

There are also courses available that cover specific issues which may be relevant to your family, such as:

- **Managing Challenging Behaviour** – Impulsive behaviours, sexualised behaviours, manipulative behaviours, living with teenagers, making sense of adolescence, and more.
- **Contextual Safeguarding** – Awareness of child exploitation, catfishing, county lines, gangs, knife crime and more.
- **Online Safety** – Managing the internet, social media, gaming, and more.
- **Education** – Learn about the EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plans) process, how to engage a child in education, and working with your child's school.
- **Managing Contact with Birth Families**
- **Mental Health** – Managing and supporting depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, eating disorders, and other diagnosed mental health issues.
- **Additional Needs** – Conduct Disorders, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Physical Disabilities, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, and other learning disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
- **Identity** – Learn about LGBTQIA+, improving self-esteem, and more.
- **Cultural Needs** – Awareness of different religions and cultures, diversity and inclusion, racism and discrimination, and more.

How do I access the Training Hub?

Please contact the Post-SGO Support Service to request an account to the Training Hub. Your account will be created and you will be sent a log-in to your email, which you can use to access the website. You can be allocated a maximum of two courses at one time.

Milton Keynes Professional Development Centre (MKPDC)



Most courses are in-person.

MKPDC offer amazing face-to-face courses, delivered by experts, on a range of topic to suit your needs, including:

- **Keeping Memories Alive (Life Story Work)**
- **Autism Reality Experience**
- **Signs of Safety**
- **Understanding, Responding to, and Managing Behaviour**
- **An Introduction to Theraplay**
- **Basic Counselling Skills**
- **Cultural Diversity**

Clinical Supervision is also offered through the MKPDC, sessions can be face-to-face or online.

Milton Keynes City Council commissions Clinical Psychologists to support those who care for children under Special Guardianship Orders or through fostering.

We know that caring for children who have been hurt can be a tiring, troubling and even confusing experience. Everyone deserves extra support from time to time, or perhaps on a regular basis.

Clinical Supervision is a confidential, supportive, and non-judgmental service, designed to give you the opportunity to talk to and exchange ideas with an attachment expert.

The agenda is set by you – you can talk about specific issues that are affecting you and your family, work through new ideas and approaches to take with managing behaviours or talk about your own general wellbeing and coping strategies.

How do I access MKPDC Training and/or Clinical Supervision?

Please contact the Post-SGO Support Service, we can book you onto a training course or set up a Clinical Supervision appointment (these are allocated on a first come, first serve, basis). You will be sent an email and calendar invitation to confirm the booking.

Kinship.org

This can only be accessed online.



The Kinship Care charity offer short, free, online webinars for Kinship Carers and Special Guardians, to help you get the information that you need to support you on your Kinship journey. There are a variety of topics to explore, including:

- **Adoption Support Fund**
- **Better communication and the teenage years**
- **Building resilience and wellbeing in your kinship family**
- **How to improve challenging behaviour**
- **Introduction to Kinship Care**
- **Managing Contact**
- **Managing the cost of raising a child**
- **Overview of the EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) process**
- **Preparing for sensitive conversations with kinship children**
- **Understand trauma and attachment in children**
- **Information about financial support**

How do I access Kinship's Workshops?

Visit this website: <https://compass.kinship.org.uk/workshops/>

Click the course that you are interested in and sign up for a workshop on a date and time that suits you. The workshops are around 1.5 hours long, some workshops are held during school hours and others are held in the evening - to capture as many carers as possible.

All of Kinship's workshops are delivered virtually using Zoom, you will need to create a free Zoom account to join. Kinship have provided a guide on how to use Zoom:

<https://compass.kinship.org.uk/workshops/how-to-use-zoom/>

Therapeutic Parenting

Children and young people who have experienced trauma often need parenting in a manner to enable them to heal, which can be demanding and exhausting for Special Guardians. A therapeutic approach to parenting can help children to learn how to make safe attachments and overcome developmental gaps. It involves implementing firm boundaries and routines to keep children safe and to support them to manage changes and transitions.

The Post-SGO Support Service are in contact with therapeutic providers who can deliver Therapeutic Reparenting Training to Special Guardians.

You will have one-to-one sessions with a practitioner over the course of several weeks, to support you to consider the early life experiences of your children and how the trauma has impacted on their development. You will explore your child's behaviour and needs and learn practical skills and parenting strategies to better support and manage them. The course aims to increase your understanding empathy towards your children, as well as to strengthen your parent/child relationships.

The course covers the following topics:

- Attachment
- Developmental trauma and the impact on the brain
- Self-care, support systems and secondary trauma (including blocked care)
- DDP (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy) and the PACE approach (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy)
- Play and parenting strategies (including sensory activities to stimulate underdeveloped sensory systems)

How do I access a Therapeutic Reparenting Course?

Please contact the Post-SGO Support Service, we can complete an assessment of needs to explore whether a therapeutic reparenting course is appropriate for your family at this time or recommend alternative support. An application will need to be made to the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) to request funding for the course – please refer to the SG Information Pack for further details about the ASF process.

Other Resources

SG Newsletter

A horizontal banner with a rainbow gradient background. The word "RESOURCES" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters across the center.

In every quarterly edition of the SG Newsletter, there is a section at the end which we use to share useful resources for you to explore - this can include books, research articles, podcasts and upcoming training courses. We also list child-friendly resources that you can explore with your child, for example children's books and activities.

If you have something particularly interesting or helpful, please let us know as we may include it in the next edition and share it with other Special Guardians.

If you have missed an edition of the SG Newsletter, please contact the Post-SGO Support Service to request another copy.



Beacon House is a fantastic service that specialises in supporting young people and their families through trauma and adversity. There are lots of valuable resources on their website to support you to understand the impact of trauma and how to support your loved ones.

Visit their website here: <https://beaconhouse.org.uk/resources/>

Help Guide 

Help Guide has lots of resources for mental health, physical health, and wellbeing. There are guides to helping children cope with trauma, as well as sections for different conditions such as:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Trauma and Attachment
- Stress, Anxiety and Depression
- Other learning disabilities and health conditions.

Visit their website here: <https://www.helpguide.org/>

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