

Staffordshire County Council (People)

Families First Specialist Services - Policy & Procedures

Part Three, Section 6 – Family & Friends (Kinship) Care Policy

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Family and friends (Kinship) care is when children and young people are unable to live with their immediate family and are brought up by wider family members, friends or other people who are connected to them, and with whom they have an existing relationship.
- 1.2 Family and friends care enables children and young people to remain with people they know and trust, instead of being placed with foster carers or within children's residential homes.
- 1.3 Staffordshire County Council's 'Family and Friends' (Kinship Care) Policy has been written for staff working within Families First to help clarify the statutory requirements in relation to family and friends care. It is also aimed at family and friends carers and anyone in contact with them to help them understand their roles and responsibilities, the services and support available to them, and where to go for further information.
- 1.5 Many children who live with family and friends do not need any help from the Local Authority; however, there are some occasions where assistance may be required to support a family & friends arrangement. This policy clarifies how that support, if assessed as needed, will be arranged.
- 1.8 The **County Manager, 'Regulated Services and Corporate Parenting'**, has the overall responsibility for ensuring this policy is implemented and will work with colleagues within Families First, as well as other partner agencies, to look at their responsibilities towards children and young people living with family and friends carers.

2. What is Family & Friends Care?

- 2.1 Children and young people are described as living in family and friends care when they are:
 1. In informal arrangements with a close relative.

2. In informal arrangements with other family members or friends which last for a period of **less** than 28 days.
3. As a Private Fostering arrangement.
4. As a Looked After Child placed with relatives or friends who are approved as Foster Carers.
5. Under a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order.
6. In arrangements which **may** lead to an Adoption (in exceptional circumstances).

[NB: More information about these different arrangements, including the specific legal implications, financial entitlements and other support that is available, is provided on pages 4 -10].

- 2.2 A family and friends carer is a relative, friend or other 'connected person' who is caring for a child full-time. A child who is cared for by a family and friends carer may, or may not be 'looked after' by the Local Authority.
- 2.3 There are a number of reasons why children and young people may be in family and friends care arrangements. These include:
 - Children and young people who have been assessed as been unable to live with parents to safeguard their welfare.
 - Children and young people whose family is going through a crisis.
 - Children and young people whose parents are unable to care for them because of ill-health, alcohol, drug or mental health issues.
 - Children and young people who are living with friends while their parents move away for employment or education.
 - Children and young people living with host families while attending a language school or undergoing medical treatment.
- 2.4 When there is a crisis in the family, wider family and friends often help to make sure the child(ren) are well looked after and make arrangements between themselves to take care of the child(ren) until the crisis or difficulty has passed. In these situations, the child's parents, or those with parental responsibility, have the authority to make these informal arrangements.
- 2.5 The Local Authority will only become involved if there are welfare or protection issues for which the family needs support; if the arrangement falls within the definition of 'Private Fostering', or if the child is, or becomes 'Looked After'.

3. Guiding Principles and Values:

3.1 The following principles and values seek to guide this policy:

- The welfare of the child is of paramount importance, and wherever possible children and young people should be brought up by their wider families and friends, if they cannot remain with their parents.
- In order to promote a child's welfare, support will be based on the needs of child, rather than their legal status.
- Family and friends carers (even if they are not approved foster carers) will be provided with support to ensure that children do not become, or remain in care longer than is needed.
- Where children live in family and friends care, Staffordshire's **'Family and Friends' team** will provide support, information, advice and guidance to carers and children to ensure that they are able to make informed decisions about the options available to them.
- Parents will be supported to retain their responsibilities and to remain closely involved with their child(ren), even if their child(ren) cannot live at home with them.
- Staffordshire 'Family and Friends' teams will consult with children about their care, involve them in all decisions made about them, and take their wishes and feelings into account in a way which is appropriate to their age and understanding.
- Staffordshire Families First Specialist Services will ensure it meets its legal duties in relation to family and friends placements.

4. Legislation and Statutory Guidance:

4.1 'Family and Friends Care' (DfE) is the statutory guidance published in 2011, and requires local authorities with responsibilities for children's services to publish a policy setting out its approach towards promoting and supporting the needs of children living with family and friends carers, whether or not they are looked after children.

4.2 In addition, the following legislation and statutory guidance is applicable:

- Children Act (1989/2004)
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regs (2010)
- Fostering Service: Regulations (2011); and the Fostering Service: National Minimum Standards (2011)
- Private Arrangements for Fostering Regulations (2005); and the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering (2005)
- Adoption & Children Act (2002)
- Adoption Support Services Regulations (2005)
- Special Guardianship Guidance (2005).

5. Informal (Private) Arrangements:

5.1 Definition: an arrangement where a child is living with a family carer who does not have parental responsibility for the child. The arrangement is **not** made by the Local Authority and there is no statutory requirement for the Local Authority to assess and approve the family carer, as long as they are a close relative.

There is no statutory duty on the Local Authority to provide supervision for the carer and no requirement to review the arrangement, unless the child becomes known to the Local Authority as a 'Child in Need'.

The majority of informal (private) arrangements will work well and will meet the needs of the child. However, if problems arise, it is important to respond early and local authority services, as well as partner agencies, should be involved in order to identify and support children who are living with a family carer.

5.2 Financial Implications: the financial responsibility for these informal arrangements rests entirely with the child's parent(s). However, if the child's needs cannot be met by the family carer, they may be eligible for state benefits for the child's maintenance (e.g. child benefit, child tax credits), as long as these are not already being claimed by the child's parents. Further information and advice on finance and benefits can be provided by the [Directgov - Benefits Advisor](#) or by the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB).

In exceptional circumstances, the Local Authority may provide discretionary financial assistance to family carers - where the arrangement is informal - through the use of Section 17 funding. This may be to support a carer with a specific item or expenditure, or through regular payments.

5.3 Other Support: like all other children, those being cared for informally by family carers can access universal services, including day care

facilities, children's centres and after-school/holiday activities etc. Information about these can be found here: [Staffordshire County Council's Education webpage](#).

Targeted and Specialist Services may be available to family carers; however, early intervention, underpinned by the 'Common Assessment Framework' and 'Team around the Family' will help prevent problems escalating to a point where specialist services are required.

General advice and information can also be accessed from one of the Families First Local Support Teams: [LSTs](#).

6. Informal (Private) Arrangements for less than 28 days:

6.1 Definition: an arrangement where a child is living with other family members or friends for a period of **less** than 28 days. The definition is the same as that for an informal (private) arrangement with a close relative (see point 5.1 above).

6.2 Financial Implications: as above (see point 5.2).

6.3 Other Support: as above (see point 5.3).

7. Private Fostering Arrangements:

7.1 Definition: an arrangement where a child who is under 16 (or 18 if disabled) and who has not been provided with accommodation by the Local Authority, is cared for by and accommodated by someone who does not have parental responsibility for them and is not a relative, and the arrangement is intended to last for 28 days or more.

Private foster carers may be from the extended family such as a great-aunt or a cousin; they may be a friend of the family; the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family but connected with the child such as a childminder, teacher or youth worker. A person who is a close relative such as a grandparent, aunt/uncle, brother/sister or step-parent **will not** be a private foster carer.

The private foster carer becomes responsible for providing the day to day care of the child; however, parental responsibility remains with the child's parents, and therefore parents still have the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of their child.

If the Local Authority is involved in making the placement, then the arrangement is **not** private fostering.

NB: Currently, Staffordshire's Policy is to assess children living in Private Fostering arrangements as a 'child in need'.

In addition, a 'Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Record' (PFAAR), should be completed covering the issues detailed in the 'Private Fostering Schedule 2/Schedule 3 Reports'. These reports should be completed **within 28 working days** and forwarded to the Family & Friends Team Manager.

For more information and guidance, including the Local Authority's statutory duties to undertake a Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment, see Staffordshire's 'Private Fostering' Policy & Procedures.

- 7.2 Financial Implications:** the child's parents remain financially responsible for the child. Private foster carers may be eligible for state benefits e.g. child benefits, child tax credits etc but only if these are not already being claimed by the parents.

In exceptional circumstances, the Local Authority may provide discretionary financial assistance to private foster carers.

- 7.3 Other Support:** like all others, children in private fostering arrangements can access universal services including day care facilities, children's centres and after-school/holiday activities etc. Information about these can be found here: [Staffordshire County Council's Education webpage](#).
- 7.4.** Family support services for informal family and friends arrangements may be provided under Section 17 where an assessment has identified a need.

8. Family & Friends Foster Care:

- 8.1 Definition:** for a child under 18 who is subject to a care order (or interim care order), or who is accommodated under Section 20. These are placements which are made following an assessment by the Local Authority who having made the decision that the child should be 'looked after' and placed in their care, have a legal responsibility to provide accommodation in an approved placement, which may be a placement with a **Family & Friends Foster Carer**.

If a relative, friend or other connected person is able to care for the child, they will be assessed and approved as foster carers.

Approval of a foster carer is made under Fostering Services Regulations (2011), or temporarily approved as a foster carer under the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regs (2010) – See **Part Three, Section 4(a) Making Placements under Reg 24**

The completed assessment and all relevant checks, including CRB checks, is presented to the Fostering Panel who make the recommendation on whether to approve the carers as foster carers.

- 8.2 Financial Implications:** accountability for the placement of looked after children resides with the Local Authority in its role as the 'placing authority'. Under current policy, all foster carers (including Family & Friends foster carers) are paid a level of allowance in line with Families First Fostering Service's Finance Policy - **Part Seven, Section 11**

In exceptional circumstances, interest-free loans may be available to provide either a larger vehicle or small extension to the home in order to facilitate the fostering role. (See **Part Seven, Section 16 - Loans to Foster Carers**)

- 8.3 Other Support:** All Family & Friends foster carers will be provided with the same level of support as other foster carers approved by Staffordshire Families First, Looked After Children - Fostering Services, which includes access to the full range of training opportunities afforded to other approved foster carers.

Family & Friends foster carers (like other approved foster carers) are also required to complete the **CWDC** 'Training, Support and Development' - Standards for Foster Care within 18 months of the approval by the Fostering Decision maker.

Family & Friends foster carers will have an allocated social worker from the Fostering Service who will visit on a regular basis, making scheduled and unannounced visits. They will also review the approval of the foster carers, at least on an annual basis.

9. Special Guardianship Orders:

- 9.1 Definition:** A 'Special Guardianship Order', is awarded by the court. It offers more security than a residence order because a parent cannot request for it to be removed unless the court has given permission to do so. Parental responsibility is shared between birth parents and the family and friends carer. However, a special guardian can exercise parental responsibility to the exclusion of others who share it, which means they can make all the major decisions about a child's upbringing, without consulting the birth parents. In practice, this means that the child is no longer the responsibility of the Local Authority, and the special guardian will have clear responsibility for all day-to-day

decisions about caring for the child and for taking important decisions about their upbringing, e.g. their education. Importantly, although birth parents retain their legal parental responsibility, the special guardian only has to consult with them about these decisions in exceptional circumstances.

Family and friends carers can apply for a special guardianship order if the child or young person has lived with them for three out of the last five years, or for one year immediately preceding the application (in the case of a close relative, or an approved Local Authority foster carer).

Any decision to apply for a special guardianship order should always be based on meeting the needs of the child. In situations where members of the child's extended family may not want to adopt the child, but need more security and clarity about day-to-day decision making, special guardianship may be the preferred option.

9.2 Financial Implications: The Local Authority can pay a 'special guardianship allowance' to family and friends carers, but this will be at the Local Authority's discretion and will generally be paid only where the Fostering Service has had previous and significant involvement.

- (a) To facilitate arrangements for a person to become the special guardian of a child where the Local Authority consider such arrangements to be beneficial to the child's welfare; or
- (b) To support the continuation of such arrangements after a special guardianship order is made.

The process by which financial support for special guardianship is agreed is via the 'Allowance Review Panel' (see Families First Policies & Procedures **Part 6 - Allowance Review Panel**)

All requests for financial support will need to go the '**Allowance Review Panel**'. A completed and agreed 'Special Guardianship Support Plan' also needs to be sent alongside this booking request.

Previous foster carers wishing to be Special Guardians are entitled to **two year's pay protection** at the level of payment they received as foster carers. After that, the Local Authority can exercise discretion as to whether they continue to pay at the same level, or at an adjusted level. This decision would be subject to an annual financial review. These reviews are done via the finance department in consultation with the Allowance Review Panel.

If the Special Guardians circumstances do not change, there is scope for the level of payment to continue at the same rate (subject to the financial assessment).

In addition to these allowances, financial support to Special Guardians e.g. help with nursery fees, expenses to manage/supervise contact, and in some cases financial help to cover legal fees should birth parents attempt to revoke the Special Guardianship Order may be available.

Special Guardians may also be eligible for an interest free loan to cover the costs of a larger vehicle or an extension to their property –this would be subject to meeting the criteria of the Local Authority’s **Loans to Foster Carers Policy**.

Where children were not previously looked after, but may have been placed directly with a relative e.g. with grandparents who go onto make an application for Special Guardianship, some discretion may be made and financial assistance may be provided, which may include a request for an allowance or for single, lump-sum payments. However, this is entirely at the discretion of the Local Authority and will be subject of a financial assessment.

No payments will be made unless a financial assessment has been completed, and any decision making will take place at the Allowance Review Panel. ([Part Six - Allowance Review Panel](#))

Also see the [Special Guardianship Financial Support Policy](#)

10. Residence Orders:

10.1 Definition: Residence Orders provide an option for legal permanence for children who cannot grow up with their birth families. A residence order is a court order made under Section 8 of the Children Act (1989), which settles arrangements as to where and with whom the child will live. The order may include directions and conditions such as the time the child will spend with one carer or another. In order to apply for a residence order, the Family & Friends carer must be one of the following:

- A guardian of the child.
- A person with whom the child has lived for a period of at least three years.
- A close relative with whom the child has lived with for one year immediately preceding the application to court.
- A foster carer if the child has lived with them for at least one year immediately preceding the application to court.

The Local Authority cannot apply for a residence orders as these are made through the court. Residence orders will cease to have effect once the child reaches 16; however, the court can direct that the order be continued until the child reaches 18.

If a residence order is made, limited parental responsibility is acquired by the family and friends carer and then shared with the child's birth parents. This means that most decisions, that a parent can make, can be made by the carers, apart from taking the child abroad for more than a month, or changing a child's surname.

Birth parents can apply to have the residence order revoked, although the court will only discharge the order if they consider this to be in the best interests of the child. If the child is subject of a care order, then the residence order ends the care order.

Financial Implications:

If former foster carers, carers with Residence Orders should be entitled to financial assistance (similar to Special Guardians), which would be paid up until the young person's 16th birthday, after which the young person will be entitled to claim state benefits. If the young person remains in further education following their 16th birthday, then the Local Authority may agree to continue to pay the allowance.

As with Special Guardians, if the young person was not previously looked after, and the Residence Order application is made by a relative and they ask for financial support, then the Local Authority will undertake a financial assessment and a decision will be made by the Allowance Review Panel. The application itself does not guarantee payment.

Carers with Residence Orders may be eligible for state benefits available for the child's maintenance (such as child benefit, child tax credits etc), but only if these are not being paid to the birth parent(s). Information and advice on claiming benefits can be provided by the [Directgov - Benefits Advisor](#) or by the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB).

Other Support: like all others, children in private fostering arrangements can access universal services including day care facilities, children's centres and after-school/holiday activities etc. Information about these can be found here: [Staffordshire County Council's Education webpage](#).

11. Adoption:

11.1 Definition: Adoption is a court order which creates a new legal relationship between a child and his/her carer. Adoption permanently ends the legal relationship between the child and their birth family, and once an adoption order is made it cannot be revoked. An approved foster carer can apply for an adoption order after caring for a child for one year. Other informal carers can apply for an Adoption Order if the

child has lived with them for a period of three years. However, if this is not the case it is possible to apply for an Adoption Order if the court gives permission to do so.

11.2 Financial Implications: A range of adoption support services are made available, including financial support. Where the Local Authority has agreed ongoing financial support, prior to the making of an Adoption Order, it will continue to pay this for as long as the adoptive family continues to meet the criteria for support and this is qualified by a review. The Local Authority will consider the payment of financial support where it is necessary to ensure that the adopter can look after the child; where the child has special care needs; or where special arrangements are necessary to effect an adoption. See [Part Six, Section Seven - Adoption Support](#) for more information.

11.3 Other Support: Once the Adoption Order is granted, this is a permanent arrangement, where the adopter accepts full parental responsibility. Therefore, there is no need for supervision of the placement, nor for the placement to be reviewed.

Staffordshire currently provide a range of adoption support services including group discussion opportunities, mediation services, therapeutic services for adopted children, support in the continuance of the relationship between the adopted child, and the adoptive parents and counselling, advice and information support. See [Part Six, Section Seven - Adoption Support](#) for more information.

For more information about the options for Family & Friends Care see Appendix 2 – ‘Caring for someone else’s child – the options’.

12. Contact:

- 12.1 Contact with their immediate families is generally a positive experience for children who are not living with their parents, as it can help them to maintain a sense of belonging and identity, however contact arrangements should always be determined by the extent to which it meets the child’s needs.
- 12.2 The Local Authority has a duty to promote contact for all children in need, and if the child is **not** looked after, there is a duty to promote contact in order to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare.
- 12.3 If the child is looked after, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to promote contact unless it is not practicable or consistent with the child’s welfare.

- 12.4 The Local Authority will provide information to Family and Friends carers about contact arrangements, and will provide additional support and advice including information about family mediation and how to make the best use of their services.
- 12.5 In certain circumstances, the Local Authority may need to be more actively involved if there are any safeguarding concerns surrounding contact, with support provided for safe contact arrangements.

13. Family Group Conferencing:

- 13.1 Where support is required, a **Family Group Conference** can be arranged as a way of enabling families to work together to make the best plan for their children, and to ensure that they can remain in the care of their families.
- 13.2 A Family Group Conference is a decision making and planning forum in which the wider family makes plans and decisions for children and young people who have been identified, as being in need of a plan that will safeguard and promote their welfare.
- 13.3 The main decision makers at a Family Group Conference are the family members themselves, rather than the professionals. The children are also directly involved in the process and in all decisions made about their lives. The 'family plan' takes account of any stipulations arranged by the Local Authority in order for it to be agreed.
- 13.4 The 'family plan' aims to:
- Ensure the child lives in a safe environment
 - Provides an opportunity for the family to find solutions to problems, using their understanding of the child
 - Encourages the child to take part in the decision-making that affects them.
- 13.5 Family Group Conferences are most effective when undertaken early and Staffordshire's Family Group Conference Service can support families to arrange FGCs. (See Staffordshire's Family Group Conference Policy) for more information.

14. Contact Details:

- 14.1 For further information about this policy, please contact the Family & Friend's Team Manager warren.smith@staffordshire.gov.uk
- 14.2 Additional information can be found by contacting:

The Family Rights Group (FRG)
www.frg.org.uk

The Fostering Network
www.fostering.net

National Association of Kinship Carers

The Grandparent's Association
www.grandparents-association.org.uk

Appendix 1 – Glossary

Connected Person

A connected person is a relative, friend, or other young person connected with a looked after child. This may be someone who knows the child in a more professional capacity such as child-minder, a teacher, or a youth worker.

Family & Friends Carer

A relative, friend, or other person (with a prior connection), who is caring for someone else's child full-time.

Foster Carer

A person who is approved as a local authority foster carer (by a local authority or an independent fostering provider), in accordance with regulation 27 (Regulations 2011), or temporarily approved under Regulation 24 of the Regulations (2010).

Informal Arrangement

An arrangement where a child is living with a family and friend's carer who does not have parental responsibility for the child

Parental Responsibility

A person with PR is one who becomes responsible for providing the day to day care of the child. In informal (private) arrangements, parental responsibility remains with the birth parent(s). This means that the birth parents remain legally responsible for safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare and they should be involved in all major decisions concerning the child. Parental responsibility remains with the birth parent(s) but the family carer may do what is reasonable to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

Private Fostering Arrangement

An arrangement where a child who is under 16 (or 18 if disabled), and who has not been provided with accommodation by the local authority, is cared for and accommodated by someone who does not have parental responsibility for him/her and is not a relative, and the arrangement continues for a period of 28 days or more or is intended to do so.



Appendix 2: Caring for somebody else’s child – The options.....

	Private Fostering	Family Care (informal)	Family & Friends Foster Care	Unrelated Foster Care	Residence Order	Special Guardianship	Adoption
Route into the caring arrangement	<p>This is a private arrangement whereby the child is being cared for 28 days or more (or the intention is that the arrangement will last for 28 days or more) by anyone who does not have parental responsibility, and who is not a close relative.</p> <p>Relative means grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (by full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or a step parent.</p> <p>The child is not a looked after child.</p>	<p>The relative has chosen to take on the care of the child but does not have parental responsibility, and the arrangement was not made by the Local Authority.</p> <p>The child is not a looked after child.</p> <p>Relative may perceive the parents to be unable to care for the child; or the parents may have died, or otherwise not available (e.g. in prison); or there may be an agreement between relatives due to difficult family circumstances.</p>	<p>The child has been placed with the relative or friend by the Local Authority, because the person who had been caring for the child was deemed not to be providing suitable care.</p> <p>The child is a looked after child and the Local Authority must approve the relative or friend as a Local Authority foster carer.</p> <p>The child may be accommodated voluntarily with the agreement of the parents or may be subject to a care order.</p>	<p>The child is a looked after child being accommodated by the Local Authority under s20 or because the child is subject to a care order; but has been placed with a foster carer by the Local Authority.</p> <p>(Alternatively, the Local Authority may choose to place a child into residential care where this is considered to best meet the child’s needs).</p>	<p>The child may be at risk of becoming ‘Looked After’ and a friend or relative applies for an order, or</p> <p>The child may have been ‘Looked After’ and their foster carer or other relative/friend applies for an order.</p> <p>In either circumstance, application can be made without the support of the parents or the Local Authority. Relatives may apply for an order after the child has lived with them for one year.</p> <p>Or, there can be benign reasons, e.g. after parents’ death and in line with a prior agreement between the birth parents and the carer.</p>	<p>Looked After Children: the Local Authority may decide that the child should be placed for adoption. They can only do so with the consent of the birth parent or under a placement order made by a court.</p> <p>An approved foster carer can apply for an Adoption Order after a year of caring for the child.</p> <p>Other informal carers could apply for an Adoption Order if the child has lived with them for a period of 3 years.</p>	

Parental Responsibility (PR)	Remains with birth parents.	Remains with birth parents but the person who cares for the child may do what is reasonable to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.	Remains with birth parents if the child is accommodated under s20. If the child is subject to a Care Order or Emergency Protection Order the Local Authority will have PR and will determine the extent to which it may be exercised by others.	Shared by parents and the holder of Residence Order.	PR shared with parents and any one else with parental responsibility for the child. The Special Guardian may exercise parental responsibility to the exclusion of all others with PR, apart from another Special Guardian.	Transfers to adopters and the relationship with the birth parents is severed.
Approval basis	The arrangement is assessed by the Local Authority but the carer is not 'approved' as a Local Authority foster carer is. The arrangement may be prohibited if assessed by the Local Authority as unsuitable.	None	Approved as Local Authority foster carers in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations. (If the child is Looked After, carers must be approved as foster carers even if they are a close relative).	Appointed by Court following application.	Appointed by court following application from the applicant. The Local Authority must investigate the matter and prepare a report for the Court, dealing with the suitability of the applicant to be a Special Guardian.	Local Authority assesses and approves the prospective adopters. The Court makes the order regarding the specific child. If the child is not looked after then 'notice of intention to adopt' must be given to the Local Authority who then carry out an assessment / report for the Court.
Duration	Subject to discretion of person with PR and readiness of private foster carer.	Subject to discretion of person with PR	So long as placement remains in line with the child's Care Plan, as determined by the Local Authority.	Age 18	Age 18 unless varied or discharged by the court before the child reaches 18	Permanent lifelong relationship

Placement Supervision	It is not a placement, but there are statutory visits to the child by the Social Worker (min 6 weekly in first year, then 12 weekly) See Staffordshire's Private Fostering Policy .	None	Statutory: visits to the child by the Social Worker and supervision of foster carers by the Supervising Social Worker. See Staffordshire's Visits to LAC and Supervision & Support of Foster Carers	None		When child is placed for adoption by the Local Authority, the placement is supervised and there are statutory reviews. Preparing, Assessing & Reviewing Adopters . Once the Adoption Order is made, none.
Review	It is not a placement, but the Local Authority may do formal reviews in addition to ongoing assessment.	None	Statutory reviews of child's Care Plan (min 6 monthly); and annual reviews of LA Foster Carers approval. See Staffordshire's Standards for Stat Care Plan Reviews	None		See above
Support Services	Provision of advice and support as determined necessary by the Local Authority.	No entitlement but the Local Authority may assess the child as a 'child in need', with a Child in Need Plan, and provide services and support for the child/family under s17.	Support to meet the child's needs inc health plan and PEP. Training and support to foster carers (in accordance with Fostering Regulations, NMS and CWDC standards	No entitlement although Local Authority has discretion to provide services/support for child/family under s17	If child was looked after prior to making the Special Guardianship Order the Local Authority must assess for need for Special Guardianship Support Services. Local Authority has discretion whether to provide support. Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services if they were a Looked After Child prior to the making of the order	

Financial support (entitlement)	Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent. Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holders of PR	Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent. Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holder of PR. Guardian's Allowance payable if both parents have died; or the only surviving parent cannot be found or serving 2 years or more prison sentence.	Child benefit and child tax credit not payable. Weekly allowance to meet the costs of caring for the child. See Staffordshire's Foster Carer's Finance policy. This should meet at least the national minimum rate set by DCSF. (Manchester City Council judgement ruled that allowances must be the same for all foster carers, whether or not family & friends).	Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent	Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent. Entitlement to assessment for financial support (part of adoption support) if child was looked after prior to order.
Financial support (discretionary)	LA has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under s17	Some fostering providers pay their foster carers a fee to recognise the carers' skill, experience and judgement (See Staffordshire's Foster Carers Finance Policy) Statutory guidance for Fostering Services requires that any policy in relation to payment of fees must apply to all foster carers who meet the criteria in the same way and must not discriminate on the grounds of a pre-existing relationship with the child.	Local Authority has discretion to pay residence order allowance - usually if the child was previously fostered, by the carers, or exceptionally if making Residence Order prevents the child becoming Looked After. Any allowance must be reviewed annually.	Entitled to an assessment for financial support under the Special Guardianship Regs (2005) if child was Looked After prior to the order and meets the criteria in the regs. Subject to an assessment as above and for former foster carers can include an element of remuneration. Regular one-off payments. Any allowance to be reviewed annually	Subject to assessment, one –off payments or regular Adoption Allowance may be paid

