We champion the wider family who care for children

Sam Smethers, Chief Executive
Kinship Care – the Fostering Alternative
Recruiting Foster Carers – Tackling Delay
11th December 2012

about us

We champion the role of grandparents and the wider family in children's lives.

- campaign for change
- Advise and support grandparents and family carers
- Work with professionals to improve practice

our work

- Redefine the family
- Recognise and value grandparental & wider family role
- build evidence base + campaign, active in KCA
- From peer support/advice to kin carer-led campaigning – media and lobbying
- Practice-focussed work with social workers

What is kinship care?

Grandparents plus

The care, nurturing and protection of children who are separated from their parents or whose parents are unable to provide that care and support. Instead this care is provided by grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles or other relatives, godparents, step-grandparents, or other adults who have a relationship with or connection to the child. This may be a permanent arrangement or temporary, formal or informal.

Why kinship care?

Grandparents plus

- Statutory requirement - **consider wider family first** (Adoption & Children Act 2002, CYP Act 2008)
- Statutory guidance on family and friends care (2011)
- Because it's in a child's best interests
- Part of the solution not the problem
- Increasing – drug alcohol misuse/imprisonment

Why kinship care?

Grandparents plus

Statutory guidance requires *consultation* with kinship carers then:

1. A policy in place (by 30 Sept 2011) - 47%
2. A named person responsible
3. Support determined by needs of child
4. Info about sources of financial help
5. Contact arrangements

Why kinship care?

Grandparents plus

Statutory guidance cont.

6. Family group conferencing
7. Local support groups
8. Fostering services for F&F foster carers
9. Advice and info on different orders (SGO, RO, Adoption)
10. Complaints Procedure

What's the problem?

- demand for safeguarding services continuing to rise with a 51% increase since 2007/8 and a 7% increase in the past year (ADCS)

Debbie Jones:

"…adoption is not the only option when seeking a permanent home for children in care, and that Special Guardianship Orders and Residence Orders can offer a quicker solution in some cases, and particularly with groups for whom it is harder to find suitable adopters, such as sibling groups or older children."

What's changing?

- Focus on adoption – we argue for *permanence*
- 6 month time limit – pre-proceedings is key, FGCs
- Reduced access to legal aid - 44% received legal aid, 33% spent up to £5K (GPlus, 2010)
- Move away from independent SWs
- Welfare reform – HB, cap, no of children

kinship carers

- **Have an uncertain status in a system not designed for them**
- 200,000 family and friends carers raising 300,000 children (173,000 children in 2001 census)
- Majority are not ‘looked after’ (only 5-7% looked after)
- Grandparents - largest group, then siblings
- More children in kinship care than in foster care
- 67,050 looked after children in England (Mar 2012)

kinship carers

- 3 out of 4 experience financial hardship
- 86% under 65, 41% under 55.
- Half (47%) give up work, 31% reduce hours
- 35% single parent grandparents
- Only 1 in 3 receive any LA financial/practical support
- 7 out of 10 are stressed, depressed or isolated

(Grandparents Plus, 2010, 2012)

Children in kin care

- V similar to LAC in terms of multiple-adversities
- Support discretionary - doesn't follow needs of child (Hunt, 2012)
- 59% challenging at placement, most in need least supported (Hunt 2012)
- 48% of kin carers are raising a child with a disability/special needs (Gplus 2010)
- More likely than gen population to be poor 24% living in poorest 20% of areas, figure rises to 40% of kinship children (Selwyn & Nandy 2011)
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Children in kin care

- Report feeling loved. Outcomes at least as good as foster care (Hunt, 2008)
- Tend to be older
- more likely to be with brothers or sisters
- More likely to stay in same school/community
- About identity as well as relationships

What we do

Grandparents plus

- We reach 5000,over 40 groups
- Reduce isolation 6 out of 10 are less isolated
- Empower - give them a platform to campaign
- Newsletters, events, peer support, groups
- Parenting/child behaviour resources

Grandparents plus

We champion the wider family who care for children

Advice & Information

Call 0300 123 7015
advice@grandparentsplus.org.uk
10am-3pm Monday-Friday

Advice & Info Service

- CAB-trained advisers
- benefits, debt, employment, education, housing, social care, pensions
- Holidays and grants for essential items
- Legal orders and legal support from 4 Brick Court
- 78% say they acted on our advice, 92% would rec us to a friend
- Benefits inquiries £3,000 per year better off on average

www.grandparentsplus.org.uk/advice

Fair deal for kinship carers

What we do

Grandparents plus

- Peer support group for professionals
- Over 140 members from 40 LAs
- Recognise the challenges professionals face
- Supporting kinship practice
- Want to develop our offer

References

Hunt, Waterhouse & Lutman, *Keeping them in the Family* BAAF, 2008

Hunt, Waterhouse, *Understanding family and friends care: the relationship between need, support and legal status,* FRG, 2012

Selwyn & Nandy *Spotlight on Kinship Care* University of Bristol, Buttle Trust 2011

Wellard & Wheatley *What if we said no?* Grandparents Plus, 2010

Wellard and Gautier, *Giving up the day job?* Grandparents Plus, 201

Useful websites:

www.grandparentsplus.org.uk

http://www.frg.org.uk/involving-families/kinship-care-alliance

www.grandparents-association.org.uk/

Statutory Guidance on Family and Friends Care DfE, 2011

https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Family%20and%20Friends%20Care.pdf

Grandparents plus

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