

Support for Families with children under Special Guardianship Order (SGO)

To meet the needs of all Special Guardians living within Kent, Kent County Council has subscribed to the **Family Action** support service which aims to:

- Improve outcomes for children living with special guardians.
- Provide an accessible source of trusted support, information and guidance to special guardians.

This subscription is available to all guardians as well as professionals supporting children with a Special Guardianship Order in Kent.



The offer for families:



A dedicated special guardianship [website](#) containing up-to-date information and guidance on a range of issues.

To access the website please go to www.specialguardiansupport.org.uk to register an account.

- ❖ A **dedicated website** containing up-to-date information and guidance, downloadable resources and signposting to other sources of support
- ❖ Online **web chat** with trained professionals available 5 days a week with a crisis text service available at all other times
- ❖ Telephone **helpline** offering support from trained operators 5 days a week with a crisis text service available at all other times
- ❖ Trained out of hours **operators** who you can talk to via phone, text, email or web chat. **The operators will be available Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm.**
- ❖ A referral into one of our virtual tier 2 services (**Befriending, Coaching or Counselling**) where relevant.

The **website** provides information and guidance on a range of issues including:

- The role of a special guardian
- Family relationships - how to manage birth family contact and sibling interactions
- Helping a child to feel secure - how to manage transitions and the impact of domestic violence
- Working with schools
- Accessing financial support
- Managing birth family contact
- Supporting a child with a special need or health condition
- How special guardians can take care of their health and wellbeing



Building
stronger
families

Further Support



Providing a safe and loving home under an SGO can be challenging. It is recognised that this can be difficult and stressful at times. Kent County Council provides several support services that can be accessed by special guardians and those they care for.

Please see more information about Special Guardianship Orders and what programmes, resources and information available to families living in Kent:

[Special Guardianship Orders - A guide to help available to you \(lea.kent.sch.uk\)](http://lea.kent.sch.uk)



If you would like Social Services support for your child or Young Person, including access to the Early Help Team, please contact: [03000 411111](tel:03000411111) (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or request email social.services@kent.gov.uk

If your child or young person needs more individualised support, then KCC will offer an assessment to determine the right support is put in place. This will be completed in partnership with the you and your child/young person, depending on their age. Should the assessment identify that support or services are needed a proposed plan outlining the provision will then be agreed.

If your child was 'Looked After' by a local authority in England or Wales:

Children who have left the care of a local authority under an SGO are eligible for:

- ❖ Pupil Premium Funding for previously looked after children:

Pupil Premium funding is available to pupils from reception age to Year 11 in state-funded education in England. Schools will receive £2,345 for any child who has ceased to be looked after by a local authority in England or Wales because of adoption, a special guardianship order, a child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order).

[Pupil Premium for Previously Looked After Children: Virtual School Kent \(lea.kent.sch.uk\)](http://lea.kent.sch.uk)

- ❖ Virtual School Kent:

The Advisory Team at VSK can offer email advice, telephone consultations and advice around EPPLAC meetings (Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children) with families and schools to support the educational provision for children. The Virtual School website is full of additional information and guidance to support families, education settings and professionals. www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk

- ❖ Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASF):

When an assessment is completed, Kent County Council may identify that therapeutic services funded by the ASF would be beneficial to support your family. If this is the case, Kent County Council will apply to the Fund directly. If successful, the ASF will release funding to Kent County Council which uses the fund to commission and pay agreed providers of therapeutic services. This will ensure the right support for you and your family.

Further Resources



Government Documentation:

Children's Commissioner (2019) Children on Special Guardianship Orders

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/vulnerability-in-numbers/groups/children-on-special-guardianship-orders/> 2 DfE (2015)

Special Guardianship Review

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/487243/SGR_Final_Combined_Report.pdf

You can find out more about Family Action by visiting

www.family-action.org.uk

How to contact our service

Now that your Local Authority has signed up to the service as a special guardian you will have been sent or can request from your authority the login information for our dedicated website.

You can also contact us in the following ways:

- freephone helpline offering support from trained operators Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm
- Outside of our normal opening hours a crisis text service is available 24/7

Contact

Freephone 0808 802 1111
Text 07537 404281

Email:

sg.support@family-action.org.uk

You can visit the dedicated website at:

www.specialguardiansupport.org.uk

Where webchat is also available.

Virtual School Kent Advisory Team



The Virtual School Kent Advisory Team (VSKAT) advises families, schools and the wider professionals working with either Previously Looked After Children and those children with (or who have had) social worker involvement. The Virtual School Kent Advisory Team acts as a local authority champion to promote the progress and educational attainment of children and young people in the two cohorts so that they achieve educational outcomes comparable to their peers.

Previously Looked After Children are those children who have left the care of a local authority under an Adoption, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order. The VSKAT is a source of advice and information to help parents and guardians of previously looked after children at education settings within Kent advocate for them as effectively as possible.

Who are Children with a social worker (or who have ever had a social worker)?

Any child or young person who has been or is under a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan falls within the 'Children with a Social Worker' cohort. It is the VSKAT's responsibility to strategically champion the educational attendance, attainment and progress of these children and young people. Although we are unable to advise guardians and parents directly, we can offer advice to education settings around their cohort and with permission from guardians/parents, can discuss individual cases with the school.

All our advice to parents, guardians, educational settings, young people and other agencies is based around our 6 principles of nurture. Our nurturing culture enables us to support educational settings, to enhance their teaching and learning and promote healthy outcomes for children and young people. We encourage educational settings, parents and guardians to focus on the children and young people's emotional needs and development as well as their academic learning.

If you need further advice, please contact Virtual School Kent where our team can support you:

❖ [Welcome to the Virtual School Kent Website: Virtual School Kent \(lea.kent.sch.uk\)](https://www.lea.kent.sch.uk)

Email VSKAdvisoryTeam@Kent.gov.uk



Whatever changes you face we are here to guide you
No matter what age, everyone is at a different stage
VSK can help you find your voice

How you behave tells us how you feel
VSK can be your safe space
Nurture helps you feel happy and healthy

