



# **Family and Friends Care**

## **Policy, Procedures and Guidance**

**June 2016**

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Key Documents and Forms for Downloading (including a number of the Appendices above) are in the West Sussex Guidance area of the Procedures found here	

## Introduction

These procedures replace and update on the previous WSCC Family and Friends Policy 2012. These procedures cover the range of Family and Friends Care options but have a specific focus on Viability Assessments and Special Guardianship Orders as permanency planning options for children on the edge of care and children looked after.

### 1. Values and Principles

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- 1.1 A Family First approach must be considered when making any decisions about placement options for a child who is unable to live at home with his/her parents.
- 1.2 Where possible and safe, families should be assisted and supported to find their own solutions outside the formal care system e.g. informal family care or private fostering.
- 1.3 The local authority offers support to the carers of children living outside of their birth families, not just to children themselves.
- 1.4 Where a child cannot live within his or her immediate family and the local authority is considering the need to look after the child, we will make strenuous efforts to identify potential carers within the child's network of family or friends who are able and willing to care for the child.
- 1.5 All family and friends care options must ensure permanency planning for the child.

See [Permanency Planning Guidance](#) for more details.

### 2. Legal Framework

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- 2.1 The local authority does not have a general duty to assess all arrangements where children are living with their wider family or friends but it does have a duty where services may be necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a Child in Need.
- 2.2 A Child in Need is defined in Section 17(10) of the Children Act 1989 as a child who is disabled or who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by the local authority.
- 2.3 Children in Need may live with members of their family or friends in a variety of different legal arrangements, some formal and some informal. Different court orders are available to formalise these arrangements (as below).
- 2.4 Children looked after will always come within the definition of Children in Need, whether they are accommodated under Section 20 with parental consent or in care subject to a Court Order. The local authority has a responsibility wherever possible to make arrangements for a looked after child to live with a member of the family (Section 22 of the Children Act 1989).
- 2.5 Section 20 accommodation:
  - a) Informed consent from the parent(s) must be obtained at the outset of any s20 arrangement.
  - b) Every social worker obtaining this consent is under a personal duty to be satisfied that the person giving the consent has the capacity to do so and

understands what the arrangement means. In taking any such consent the social worker must actively address the issue of capacity and take into account all the relevant factors. If there are concerns about the capacity to give consent legal advice should be sought

- c) The consent of the parent(s) must be properly recorded in writing and evidenced by the parent's signature. The document should reflect that they are aware they can withdraw consent at any time and a parent should never be asked to give a 'notice period' before a child can be returned. *See Key Documents for more details.*
- d) Upon a withdrawal of parental consent arrangements need to be made for the child/children to be returned to the parents care. If there are concerns about this urgent legal advice should be sought if it is not possible to reach agreement with the parents.

2.6 The Special Guardianship Regulations 2016 placed additional requirements on the assessment of carers and these have been updated in this guidance.

### 3. Different types of Family and Friends Care

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#### 3.1 Informal Family and Friends Care Arrangements

- a) Where a child cannot be cared for within his or her immediate family, the family may make their own arrangements to care for the child within the family and friends network.
- b) The local authority does not have a duty to assess any such informal family and friends care arrangements, unless it appears to the local authority that a Child in Need Plan may be necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of the child.
- c) In such cases, the local authority has a responsibility under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to assess the child's needs and provide services to meet any assessed needs of the child. Following assessment, a Child in Need Plan (referred to as a **Child and Family Plan** from this point) will be drawn up and a package of support will be identified. This can comprise a variety of different types of services and support, including limited financial support in specific circumstances.
- d) Informal Family Care - Arrangements for children: The WSCC Adolescent and Family Resource Team offer a range of Informal Family Care supports. *See Key Documents.*

#### 3.2 Private Fostering Arrangements

- a) A privately fostered child is a child under 16 (or 18 if disabled) who is cared for by an adult who is not a parent or close relative, where the child is to be cared for in that home for 28 days or more. Close relative is defined as 'a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or step-parent.' It does not include a child who is Looked After by a local authority. In a private fostering arrangement, the parent still holds parental responsibility and agrees the arrangement with the private foster carer.

- b) The local authority will become involved with all children in private fostering arrangements under the private fostering regulations. Additionally, where the child comes within the definition of a Child in Need. In such cases, the local authority has a responsibility to provide services to meet the assessed needs of the child under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Following assessment, a Plan will be drawn up and a package of support will be identified.
- c) Private Fostering must be an arrangement made directly between the child's family and the carer.

See [Private Fostering](#) for more details.

### 3.3 Family and Friends as Foster Carers

- a) The purpose of family and friends care is that the child can live permanently and safely with family and friends rather than as a looked after child with the continued need for social work intervention and corporate parenting. Placing a child in foster care with family and friends would therefore only happen in exceptional circumstances based on the child's best interests.
- b) The assessment and approval process for family and friends who apply to be foster carers for a specific Looked After child will be the same as for any other foster carer, although specific consideration is given to the importance of attachments and connections for the child.
- c) Once approved as foster carers, they will be allocated a supervising social worker from the fostering service to provide them with support and supervision; and they will receive fostering allowances for as long as they care for the child as a foster carer.
- d) While the child remains a looked after child, as a foster carer, they will be expected to cooperate with all the processes that are in place to ensure that the child receives appropriate care and support, for example, contributing to reviews of the child's Care Plan, cooperating with the child's social worker and promoting the child's education and health needs.

See [Fostering Procedures](#) for more details.

### 3.4 Child Arrangements Order

- a) A Child Arrangement Order is a Court Order which sets out the arrangements as to when and with whom a child is to live, spend time or otherwise have contact. These orders replace the previous Contact Orders and Residence Orders.
- b) A Child Arrangements Orders is similar to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) in that it is the carer who applies for the Order and it gives the carer parental responsibility. However, it is more of a shared parental responsibility than conferred by a SGO and the parent retains the right to apply for the Order to be revoked.

- c) Child Arrangements Orders may be made in private family proceedings in which the local authority is not a party nor involved in the arrangements unless we are already working with the child as a Child in Need or child looked after.
- d) West Sussex County Council holds the view that for most children and carers a SGO (see below) is a more secure option than a Child Arrangements Orders, and therefore, Child Arrangements Orders are only promoted in appropriate circumstances.

See [Child Arrangement Orders](#) for more details.

### 3.5 Special Guardianship

- a) West Sussex County Council promotes the use of Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) to secure permanence for children with their wider family or friends.
- b) A SGO gives the carers parental responsibility.
- c) This means that the Special Guardians can make most of the day to day decisions as a child grows up, such as where to go on holiday, which school is the best for the child and permission for medical treatment. The exceptions are that Special Guardians cannot take a child out of the UK for more than 3 months, or change his name, without permission from the birth parents.
- d) The remainder of this guidance document focuses on the SGO process.
- e) See *Key Documents* for the Special Guardianship Information leaflet.

## 4. Placements with Family and Friends: Viability Assessments and Special Guardianship Assessments

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### 4.1 Overview

- a) It is very important to establish at an early stage which relatives or friends might be available to care for the child or able to support those caring for the child. A Family Network Meeting must be held.
- b) If it is assessed that the child cannot safely remain at home, every effort must be made to secure a permanent placement with relatives or friends under a Special Guardianship Order where it is safe and in the child's best interests to do so.
- c) A Permanency Planning Meeting must be held and attended by the Group Manager. The placement with family and friends must secure permanency for the child. See [Permanency Planning Guidance](#) for more details.
- d) Before a looked after child or child is placed with family or friends:
  - The plan to place must be agreed by a Group Manager.
  - A Special Guardianship assessment needs to be completed and recommend the carers.
  - The assessment must go to the foster panel and the recommendation of the panel be agreed by the Fostering Agency Decision Maker (ADM). However, for children currently in open hearings before the Family Court, decisions may depend on and be directed by Court timeframes.

## 4.2 Temporary Approval

- a) An emergency placement with family or friends for a looked after child, without any checks or assessments is unlawful.
- b) The expectation is that temporary approval will be used exceptionally, in circumstances which could not have been foreseen and giving insufficient time to undertake a full SGO assessment prior to placement.
- c) There may be occasions where it is in the child's best interests to be placed with family and friends who want to offer the child a permanent home under Special Guardianship in preference to short term foster care with strangers.
- d) The LA must be satisfied that the placement is the most suitable means to safeguard the child, and that placement cannot wait until the full approval process is completed.
- e) Essential checks must be completed on the carers prior to any placement with them:
  - Framework checks
  - Safeguarding Unit checks
  - Police record checks- PNC is minimum requirement, PND is preferable
  - Verbal GP checks

Before the child is placed with family or friends, a Viability Assessment must be completed and temporary approval agreed by the Viability Assessment Agency Decision Maker (ADM). In exceptional emergency circumstances, it may not be possible to complete a viability assessment before a child is placed. Essential checks - detailed in 4.2 e) - are the minimum requirement along with GM approval. Viability Assessment should be undertaken immediately. It should not be assumed that a viability assessment will be positive, an alternative viable placement may need to be considered. A viability assessment should conclude within 10 working days of an emergency placement and be sent to ADM for approval if positive.

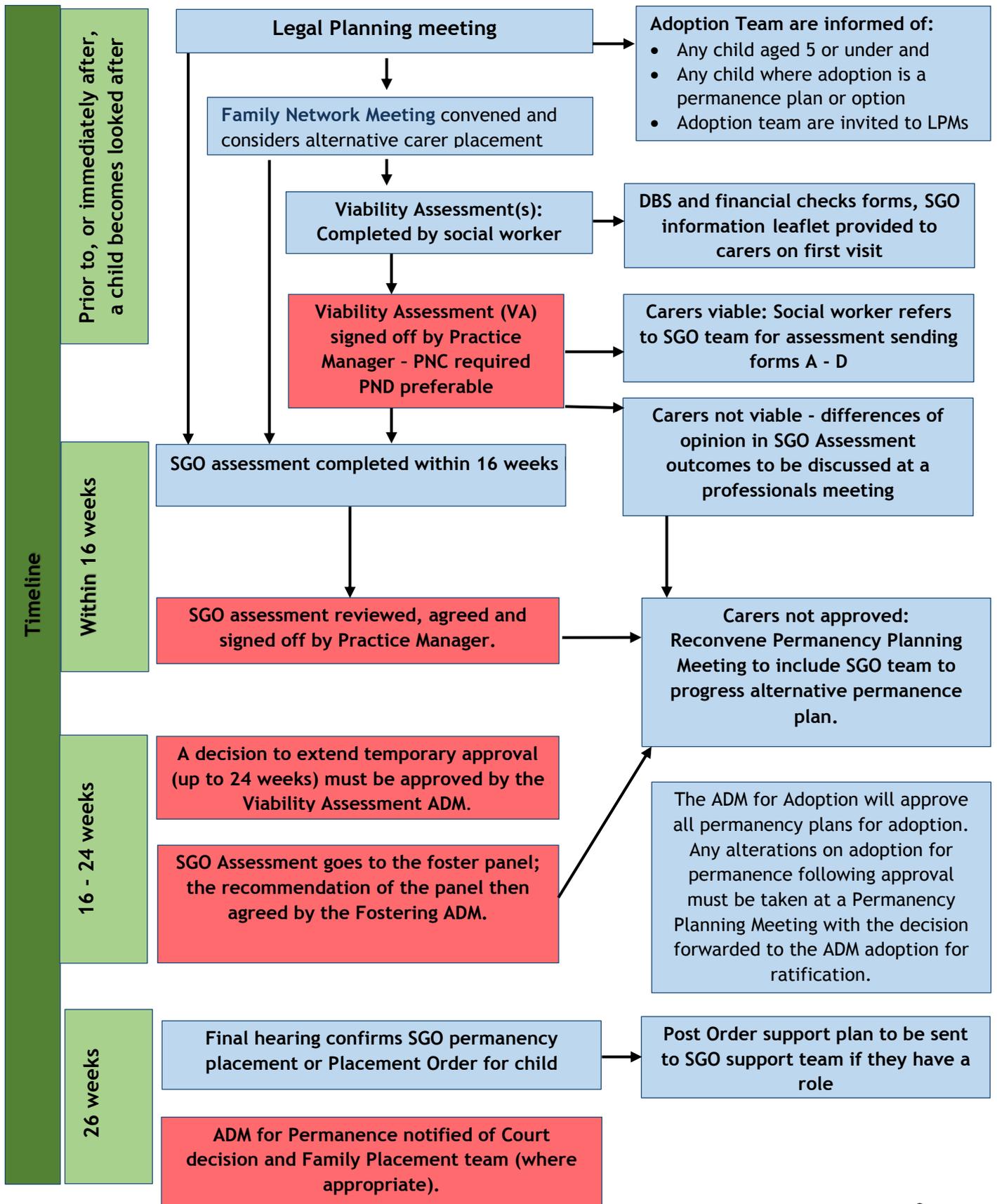
- f) As The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010:
  - Regulation 24 provides for there to be temporary approval of a family, friend or other connected person as a Foster Carer for up to 16 weeks.
  - Regulation 25 also sets out three points that the LA must consider or undertake before a decision to extend the temporary approval is made:
    - i. Consider whether the placement in question is still the most appropriate placement
    - ii. Seek the views of the fostering panel, and
    - iii. Inform the IRO.
- g) A letter needs to be sent to the family advising them of the Regulation 24 status and obligations. *See Key Documents.*
- h) A Supervising Social worker will be allocated and a Placement planning meeting will take place within 72 hours.
- i) A decision to extend the temporary approval must be approved by the Viability Assessment ADM. Extending the temporary approval is to be used in exceptional circumstances only.

- j) If the period of temporary approval and of any extension to that period expires and it is not possible to approve the placement within 24 weeks then the placement becomes unregulated. There cannot be a further extension.
- k) Unregulated placement arrangements need to be underwritten by the Head of Children's Social Care.
- l) During the period of temporary approval the social worker must visit the child in placement at least every 10 days rising to 15 days as the child settles in placement.

#### 4.3 Alternatives to Temporary Approval

1. A child can be placed with family or friends under S17 CA 1989. The assessment must be that the child does not need the protection of being looked after, using the criteria in S20 CA 1989.
2. If a child is placed under S17 in these circumstances, family and friends are then able to apply for an Interim Child Arrangements Orders (an Interim Special Guardianship Order does not exist) followed by a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) if it is in the best interests of the child.

## 4.4 Placement with Family and Friends Flowchart



## 4.5 The Viability Assessment: Guidance

- a) Viability assessments must be completed using the Form C in Appendix C.
- b) Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks should be completed by requesting the applicants to complete DBS Enhanced Disclosure forms and taking the forms to be witnessed by the social work administrator or by careful checking against guidance by the social worker. The DBS forms will be sent to the fostering service for processing.
- c) Essential checks on family or friends must be completed prior to any placement:
  - Framework records
  - Safeguarding unit
  - Police record checks
  - Verbal GP checks
- d) There will be occasions where forward planning and completing the viability assessment prior to placement with family or friends has not been possible (e.g. police protection or emergency protection orders) but immediate placement with family or friends is in the child's best interests. In these cases, essential checks should be completed prior to placement.
- e) Contact arrangements should be planned for the period of the viability and SGO assessments.

### The qualities and abilities that make a good carer

1. Long term commitment to the child and ability to put their welfare first, even when it conflicts with loyalty/ concern for the birth parents;
2. Understanding and acceptance of the real reasons which led to the child's removal from the parents' care;
3. Ability to protect the child from further harm;
4. Ability to deal with the strain of changing family roles;
5. Sufficient support network;
6. Sufficient time and space to devote to everyone in the family;
7. Capacity to offer warm, stimulating care;
8. Capacity to understand, adapt to and meet the child's changing needs;
9. Ability to promote the child's educational and health needs;
10. Commitment to helping the child develop an understanding of their history and promote a positive identity, including their ethnic and cultural identity;
11. Capacity to be realistic about the possible problems and special needs which the child may present;
12. The ability to promote and facilitate contact arrangements.
13. Commitment to using training and professional support;
14. Ability to work with professionals and to seek out and accept help.

## Things to consider that may make family and friends carers potentially unsuitable

1. Health - where medical and/or psychiatric history and current state of health give serious cause for concern about the prospective carer's future health prospects;
2. Age - where the medical opinion is that the carer may not survive all the years of the child's dependence or retain sufficient energy and vigour to meet the child's needs until independence;
3. Drug/alcohol problems - if the carer has a drug or alcohol dependence that is likely to affect your ability to offer safe care;
4. Criminal record of prospective carer and adults in the household - Certain types of offences will automatically bar the offender from caring for a child. I.e. any conviction for an offence against a child under Schedule 1 of the Criminal Justice Act. Other offences will need to be discussed in detail to establish if they may impact on the care of the child. Any conviction for an offence involving violence will be of particular concern;
5. Housing - where the current accommodation is temporary, overcrowded and/or poorly maintained and there are no realistic prospects for re-housing within near future;
6. Finance - Where the family is in debt to the point that it cannot manage its finances, is in danger of losing the home due to arrears or would be wholly dependent on the fostering allowance to support the family;
7. Work/lifestyle - where the prospective carer's work responsibilities and/or leisure pursuits severely limit the time available for child care;
8. Family composition - where the needs of other children and or dependent adults in the household/network are likely to conflict with the needs of the child to be placed;
9. Parenting concerns - where there have been serious difficulties in how the prospective carers parented their own children, particularly a history of abuse or neglect.
10. Understanding children's needs - Inability to demonstrate an understanding of children's development and needs;
11. Meeting needs of a specific child - Unwillingness or inability to understand or meet the identified educational, medical or emotional needs of the child, including for those who may require a high level of specialist care;
12. Protecting the child - Unwillingness or inability to protect the child from abusive parents and enforce restrictions on contact with birth parents;
13. Working together - Lack of co-operation with social services and other professional services.

### 4.6 Special Guardianship Order (SGO)

- a) The carer must apply for the SGO; the local authority cannot apply for an SGO on a carer's behalf. Some carers apply for an SGO without any previous involvement by the local authority and some apply for an SGO because a child or children in the family is looked after. All applicants for a SGO will be assessed by the local authority at the request of the court, and the assessment will include consideration of support needed.
- b) This assessment is free of charge to the applicant.
- c) Where carers apply for an SGO without any previous involvement by the local authority, legal costs are not payable by the local authority.
- d) Where WSCC are supporting the making of a SGO, consideration will be given within care proceedings or the PLO as to whether to meet the legal fees for a one off legal consultation to enable the family member/friend to apply for a SGO.
- e) WSCC would not usually fund ongoing legal fees but would advise applicants to seek public funding from the Legal Aid Agency.

- f) Carers who apply for an SGO and are already fostering a child will receive continuity of the financial package for the first two years and sometimes longer. Unlike foster carers, Special Guardians can apply for child benefit and child tax credit, and are expected to do so.
- g) All foster carers (whether related to the child or not) can legally apply for a SGO on a child they have been looking after for more than a year.
- h) The birth parent of a child who is subject to a SGO does not have a right to apply for the Order to be revoked and can only do so with the leave of the Court. The Court requires substantial new information before leave will be granted. Holders of a SGO can appoint legal guardians in the event of their death and the birth parents would have to obtain the leave of the Court to oppose their choice.
- i) As a Special Guardian, support will be identified and reviewed within a Special Guardianship Support Plan. The plan could include:
  - Direct work with children
  - Emotional and practical support
  - Counselling and therapeutic services
  - Life story work with children
  - Assistance with managing contact arrangements

#### 4.7 Special Guardianship financial support policy

- a) Financial support may be paid to an individual caring for a child who is the subject of a special guardianship order to them. The payment of financial support is at the discretion of the Council and is subject to assessment of need. It is not intended to remove responsibility from the birth parents to make adequate financial provision for the care and upbringing of their children. State benefits and tax credits are available to special guardians in the same way as they are for any parent.
- b) Any financial support paid by the Council is not designed to replace benefits and tax credits and any such payments will be taken into account in consideration of financial support payments.
- c) The payment of financial support is governed by the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005. The Council shall normally make payments only:
  - To enable a child who is being looked after by the Council to be securely placed so as to enable the child to leave the care of the Council and where financial support is necessary to achieve this; or
  - When the payment of financial support is necessary to avoid the need for a child to become looked after by the Council; or
  - An assessment for support services under section 14 of the Children Act 1989 will identify whether:
    - I. There is a necessity for financial support to ensure the child can continue to be cared for by the Special Guardian OR
    - II. To meet unusual and continuing expenses due to the child's illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties or the consequences of past harm.

## Exceptional payments

- a) In exceptional circumstances the Group Manager will consider applications for financial assistance for one off or special expenditure for equipment, furniture, transport, clothing or other items deemed necessary when it is in the best interests of the child by reference to the child's special needs or circumstances related to the child's health, disability, any history of significant harm or behavioural difficulties. Applications will be made by a social worker following an assessment of the child's circumstances.
- b) Consideration may also be given for financial support to meet some or all of the legal costs of an application for a special guardianship order, a private law order for a child who is the subject of special guardianship or an order to secure financial support for the benefit of the child. Such payment may be considered only when an application is:
  - Deemed necessary to secure the best placement for the child;
  - Likely to succeed;
  - Where legal representation is deemed necessary and where the funding is not otherwise available.
- c) The financial support payable by the Council may not include any element of remuneration for the care of the child by the special guardian unless:
  - The special guardian is or has been a local authority foster parent in respect of the child and
  - An element of remuneration was included in the payments made by the Council to that person in relation to fostering the child.
- d) Special Guardianship Orders expire at the child's eighteenth birthday. A payment beyond that date requires the express agreement of the Council and is normally only made when the child is to continue in full time education and where the eligibility criteria apply.

## Appendix 1: Permanency Planning Pathways

	Family and Friends Care	Foster Care	Special Guardianship Order (SGO)	Adoption
Route into the caring arrangement	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. The child is a looked after child and so the local authority must approve the relative or friend as a local authority foster carer. The child may be accommodated voluntarily with the agreement of the parents or may be subject to a care order.	The child is a looked after child being accommodated by the local authority under section 20 Children Act 1989 or because the child is subject to a care order; but has been placed with a foster carer by the local authority. (Alternatively, the local authority may choose to place a child into residential care where this is considered to best meet the child's needs).	The child may be at risk of becoming 'looked after' or The child may have been 'looked after' and their foster carer or other relative/friend applies for an order. 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 or for benign reasons, e.g. after parents' death and in line with a prior agreement between the birth parents and the carer.	Looked after children: the LA 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. An approved foster carer can apply for an adoption order after a year of caring for the child. Other informal carers could apply for an adoption order if the child has lived with them for a period of 3 years.
Parental Responsibility (PR)	Remains with birth parents if child accommodated under section 20 CA, or if the child is subject to a care order or emergency protection order the local authority will have parental responsibility and determines the extent to which it may be exercised by others.		PR shared with parents and anyone 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 relationship with birth parents are severed.

Approval basis	Approved as local authority foster carers in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations. (If child is looked after, carers must be approved as foster carers even if close relative.)	Appointed by court, following application from the applicant. LA must investigate the matter and prepare a report for the court dealing with the suitability of the applicant to be a special guardian.	Adoption agency assesses and approves prospective adopters, court makes order regarding specific child. If the child is not looked after then notice of intention to adopt must be given to the LA who then carry out an assessment / report for the court.
Duration	So long as placement remains in line with child's care plan, as determined by LA	Age 18 unless varied or discharged by the court before the child reaches 18 years.	Permanent lifelong relationship
Placement supervision	Statutory: visits to child by social worker and supervision of foster carers by supervising social worker		When child is placed for adoption by the LA, the placement is supervised and there are statutory reviews. Once the adoption order is made, post adoption supports.
Review of placement	Statutory reviews of child's care plan (minimum 6 monthly) and annual reviews of local authority foster carers' approval	None	See above
Support services	Support to meet child's needs including health plan and personal education plan. Training and practical support to foster carers in accordance with the Fostering services Regulations, NMS and CWDC standards. Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services	If child was looked after prior to making the SGO, LA must assess for need for special guardianship support services. LA has discretion whether to provide support. Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services if was a looked after child prior to making of the SGO.	Entitlement to assessment for adoption support services, which may be provided at discretion of LA in accordance with Regulations and NMS.

Financial support - entitlement	Child benefit and child tax credit not payable. Weekly allowance to meet the costs of caring for the child. This should meet at least the national minimum rate set by DCSF. The Manchester City Council judgment 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 looked after prior to order.
Financial support - discretionary	Some fostering providers pay their foster carers a fee to recognise the carers' skill, experience and commitment. The Manchester City Council judgement (which requires allowances to be paid on the same basis regardless of the relationship of the carer to the child) did not consider fees. However, Statutory Guidance for Fostering Services requires that any policy in relation to the payment of fees must be applied 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.	Entitled to an assessment for financial support under the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 if child looked after prior to order and meets the criteria in the regulations. Subject to assessment as above and for former foster carers can include an element of remuneration. Regular or one off payments. Any allowances reviewed annually.	Subject to assessment, one off payments or regular adoption allowance may be paid.

## Appendix 2: Permanence Options - Checklist of Considerations

Special Guardianship Orders	Adoption	Long Term Fostering
Child needs the security of a legally defined placement with alternative carers, but does not require a lifelong commitment involving a change of identity	Child's primary need is to belong to a family who will make a lifelong commitment	Primary need is for a stable, loving family environment whilst there is still a significant level of continued involvement with the birth family
Child's relation, foster or other carer needs to exercise day to day parental responsibility and is prepared to do so as a lifelong commitment	Child's birth parents are not able or not willing to share parental responsibility in order to meet their child's needs, even though there may be contact	Child has a clear sense of identity with the birth family, whilst needing to be looked after away from home
There is no need for continuing monitoring and review by the Local Authority, although support services may still need to be arranged	Child needs an opportunity to develop a new sense of identity whilst being supported to maintain or develop a healthy understanding of their past	There is need for continuing oversight and monitoring of the child's developmental progress
Child has a strong attachment to the alternative carers and legally defined permanence is assessed as a positive contribution to their sense of belonging and security	Child expresses a wish to be adopted	Birth parents are able and willing to exercise a degree of parental responsibility

## Appendix 3: Risk and Protective factors for Viability and SGO Assessments

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
<b>Family Composition</b>	<p>Presence in the household of children of similar age, and/or children, who have major needs/difficulties of their own.</p> <p>Assessors would need to explore thoroughly the implications of placing another child for the carer's own children. Do the carer's own children have an existing positive relationship with the child/ren needing placement? What are the children's views, wishes and feelings? How does the carer envisage juggling everybody's needs?</p> <p>Presence of household members, who have a negative, potentially or actually abusive relationship with the child/children.</p>	<p>Prospective carers and their children, if any, have positive, well-established relationship with the child/ren to be placed.</p> <p>Warm supportive relationships within the family, sharing responsibilities.</p> <p>Evidence of good parenting of own children</p>
<b>Family Network</b>	<p>Poor relationship with one or both of the child/ren's parents. How is this shown? How is it likely to impact on proposed contact arrangements?</p> <p>Persistent discord and divided loyalties in the network.</p> <p>Evidence of collusive, enmeshed relationship with the child/ren's parents.</p>	<p>Positive, well-established relationship with the child/ren to be placed</p> <p>Acknowledgement of the parents' difficulties which led to Social Services intervention</p> <p>Awareness of, the child's need to maintain links with significant people and ability to manage contact arrangements.</p> <p>Members of the network supportive of the prospective carers and willing to help with child care</p> <p>Strong sense of kinship and belonging with positive family traditions.</p> <p>Shared moral or religious code.</p>
<b>Background Factors- Family History and Current Functioning</b>	<p>Current severe difficulties in parenting own children e.g. children who are not attending school or receiving appropriate education</p> <p>Lack of insight into own difficulties in the past, especially where this affected parenting of their own children. Does the prospective carer become less defensive once trust has been established? Do they understand why</p>	<p>Ability to understand and meet the children's needs in relation to their birth family and past history</p> <p>Ability to appreciate how personal experiences have affected themselves and their families</p> <p>Resolution of past problems - alcohol, drugs, mental illness, domestic violence. Evidence of this.</p>

	<p>this is a vital part of the assessment?</p> <p>Concerning use of alcohol or illegal drugs, other addictions e.g. gambling</p> <p>Children are most vulnerable when carers' mental illness or problem alcohol and drug use coexist with domestic violence.</p>	
<b>Health and Police checks</b>	<p>Major current or chronic physical and/or mental health problems</p> <p>These will need to be fully investigated and might rule the applicant/-s out, if severe.</p> <p>Record of offences against children would generally rule the applicants out, although there is some discretion</p> <p>Current or very recent criminal activity</p>	<p>Absence of severe health problems and/or positive attitude to maintaining good health</p> <p>Willingness to seek and follow medical advice as necessary</p> <p>Ability to maintain effective functioning through periods of stress.</p> <p>Evidence of having moved on from early offending behaviour.</p> <p>Ability to teach and model right and wrong</p>
<b>Housing</b>	<p>Insufficient space to accommodate additional child/children on long term/permanent basis?</p> <p>Poor likelihood of obtaining adequate accommodation within a realistic time frame</p> <p>Environmental health and safety concerns -see Health and safety checklist</p>	<p>Adequate space for the family's needs, including the child/ren to be placed</p> <p>Good physical standards in the home</p> <p>Good range of local amenities</p>
<b>Employment &amp; Income</b>	<p>Poor employment record.</p> <p>Evidence of persistent financial problems-heavy debts.</p> <p>Unrealistic notions of the level of financial support available to support the proposed placement.</p> <p>Unrealistic notions of the cost of caring for a child</p>	<p>Steady employment record</p> <p>Adequate financial resources</p> <p>Good money management</p>
<b>Family's Social Integration</b>	<p>Social isolation</p> <p>Ability to provide the required personal references will give some indication of their peer group and social networks.</p> <p>Poor relationships with Social Services and/or other helping agencies should give cause for concern. Assessing social worker will need to assess whether this is typical of the applicant/-s'</p>	<p>Ability to develop a support system within the community and personal networks</p> <p>Ability to work with professionals and agencies and act as an advocate for the child</p> <p>Ability to communicate effectively</p> <p>Ability to understand the implications of</p>

	<p>relationships with agencies generally or specific to one relationship or situation and what is the capacity for effective co-operation with relevant sources of support.</p> <p>Racial conflict and stereotyping in the family network-particularly significant for children of dual heritage.</p> <p>Family exposed to threats and racism or other harassment.</p>	<p>the effects of discrimination and racism</p> <p>Ability to promote an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory approach to parenting</p> <p>Ability to support the child's integration into the community-arranging school or nursery places, links with Health Clinic, GP, awareness of local resources for children.</p>
<b>Parenting Capacity</b>		
<b>Basic care-Capacity to meet the children's physical needs</b>	<p>Carelessness about the whereabouts and safety of children.</p> <p>Poor standards of physical care</p> <p>Difficulty feeding child, managing routines.</p>	<p>Ability to provide a good standard of physical care and promote healthy development throughout childhood</p>
<b>Ensuring safety-Capacity to protect</b>	<p>Denial of the child protection concerns and risks identified by Social Services would cast doubt on the applicant's viability.</p> <p>Research indicates, however, that, especially in the case of grandparents, this may be due to the initial shock. The prospective carer may be more able to accept the concerns and protect the child/ren as time goes on. The assessing social worker will need to be satisfied that the carer will not collude with the abuser and put the children at risk.</p>	<p>Acknowledgement of problems, which have caused Social Services' intervention</p> <p>Ability to help children keep themselves safe from harm or abuse and to know how to seek help if their safety is threatened</p> <p>Ability to protect children from damaging contact with people, who have abused them.</p> <p>Ability to recognise the particular vulnerability of individual children to abuse and discrimination</p> <p>Understanding the need for safe caring principles</p>
<b>Emotional warmth-Capacity to meet the children's emotional needs</b>	<p>Lack of empathy for the child and persistent complaints about his/her behaviour.</p> <p>Failure to recognise and respect the child's individuality</p> <p>Inappropriate developmental expectations</p> <p>Lack of understanding of how abuse, separation and loss affect children.</p>	<p>Enjoyment of the child's company, liking the child</p> <p>Ability to promote the child's self-esteem</p> <p>Ability to accept the individual child as he/she is and to provide appropriate care</p> <p>Ability to listen and communicate with children</p> <p>Knowledge of child development</p> <p>Understanding of impact of poor parenting</p>

<b>Stimulation</b>	<p>Lack of understanding of the needs of children to play and learn.</p> <p>Inappropriate expectations (too high or too low) of child's capacity.</p>	<p>Creating appropriate opportunities for children to learn and play.</p> <p>Recognising the importance of regular school attendance</p> <p>Interest in homework</p> <p>Good relationships with the children's schools</p> <p>Supporting positive out-of-school activities and interests</p>
<b>Guidance and boundaries</b>	<p>Rigid, coercive discipline without time, patience and coaxing to obtain the child's compliance.</p> <p>Regular use of physical punishments., threats or bribes</p> <p>Chronic Inconsistency or inability to set ordinary boundaries</p>	<p>Ability to set appropriate boundaries and manage children's behaviour</p>
<b>Stability</b>	<p>High number of moves in the last 10 years within and between countries</p> <p>High number of people who would be involved with the child.</p>	<p>Well settled in their present home</p> <p>High commitment and dependability</p>

## Appendix 4: The Special Guardianship Assessment Referral Form

### PAN SUSSEX FORMATS: INCLUSION & ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY & FRIENDS

#### **Part A. REFERRAL FOR SGO ASSESSMENT** (also requires Parts B, C & highlighted sections in D)

<b>Name, telephone number and team of child's social worker</b>	
<b>Date form initially completed:</b>	
<b>Date of any update to the form</b>	
<b>Worker(s) completing any update</b>	

#### **1. THE CHILD(REN)**

<b>a) Name(s) of Child(ren) included in this referral*</b>	<b>DOB:*</b>	<b>Ethnic, cultural &amp; linguistic heritage*</b>	<b>Child's Reference Number:</b>

<b>b) Details &amp; dates of any current or planned pre or within proceedings activities including any orders the child(ren) has been or is subject of including date of order and name of court*:</b>

#### **2. OTHER SIBLINGS:**

<b>Names of any siblings not included above*</b>	<b>DOB:*</b>	<b>Ethnic, cultural &amp; linguistic heritage</b>	<b>Legal status*</b>

#### **3. WHERE ARE THE CHILD(REN) & SIBLINGS CURRENTLY LIVING IF NOT WITH PARENT(S)?**

<b>Name of child:</b>	<b>Details of their whereabouts including date arrangement started, legal status, name, role &amp; contact details of current carer(s) unless confidential:*</b>


**4. SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS:**

**Significant information regarding sibling relationships & plans for each if different:**

**\* include details of any separate/previous legal proceedings in respect of siblings\***

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**5. THE CHILD(REN'S) PARENTS\*:**

<b>a) Mother's name:</b>	<b>DOB:</b>	<b>Place of Birth:</b>
<b>Other names known as / aliases</b>		
<b>Address &amp; contact details (send separately if confidential):</b>		
<b>Local Authority Area:*</b>		
<b>Date address confirmed:*</b>		
<b>Ethnic heritage:</b>	<b>Linguistic heritage &amp; language spoken at home:</b>	
<b>Religion:</b>	<b>Nationality (&amp; immigration status if appropriate):</b>	

<b>b) Father's Name (if more than 1 father involved state which child?):</b>	<b>DOB:</b>	<b>Place of Birth:</b>
<b>Address &amp; contact details (send separately if confidential):</b>		
<b>Local Authority Area:*</b>		
<b>Date address confirmed:*</b>		

<b>Ethnic heritage:</b>	<b>Linguistic heritage &amp; language spoken at home:</b>
<b>Religion:</b>	<b>Nationality (&amp; immigration status if appropriate):</b>

<b>c) Father's Name (if more than 1 father involved state which child?):</b>	<b>DOB:</b>	<b>Place of Birth:</b>
<b>Other names known as / aliases</b>		
<b>Address &amp; contact details (send separately if confidential):</b>		
<b>Local Authority Area:*</b>		
<b>Date address confirmed:*</b>		
<b>Ethnic heritage:</b>	<b>Linguistic heritage &amp; language spoken at home:</b>	
<b>Religion:</b>	<b>Nationality (&amp; immigration status if appropriate):</b>	

**6. DETAILS OF ANY STEP PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIANS NOT INCLUDED ABOVE:**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Relationship</b>
<b>Other names known as / aliases</b>	
<b>Address (unless confidential):</b>	
<b>Place of birth:</b>	
<b>Ethnic heritage:</b>	<b>Linguistic heritage &amp; language spoken at home:</b>
<b>Religion:</b>	<b>Nationality (&amp; immigration status if appropriate):</b>

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**7. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

<b>a) Status of parental relationship including any date of marriage or civil partnership*:</b>
<b>b) Who has parental responsibility and, in respect of father/any other adult, how was it acquired?*</b>
<b>c) Detail of any issues regarding paternity e.g. DNA testing and attempts to contact absent parents:*</b>
<b>d) Any other relevant information regarding the parents relationship and previous/current parenting of the child*:</b>

**8. DETAILS OF POTENTIAL CARERS REQUIRING ASSESSMENT**

Name:	Other names known as / aliases:	Relationship to child:	Contact details (send separately if confidential)

**9. RELEVANT INFORMATION IN RESPECT OF ANYONE NAMED ABOVE Please include:**

<b>a) any additional needs relating to DISABILITY or COMMUNICATION</b>
<b>d) any other significant information</b>

**10. CONTACT:**

<b>a) Details of contact the child currently has with parents &amp; others within their family network*</b>
<b>b) Details of anyone the child should not have contact with:</b>

**11. OTHER SERVICE PROVISION:**

<b>a) Name of Child(ren)'s nursery or school:</b>
<b>b) Details of other services involved with the family:</b>

**12. FOR ASSESSMENT:**

<b>a) Summary of concerns and needs</b>
<b>b) Summary of plan for the child/ren</b> (include reasons why an SGO/kinship assessment is required, permanence plans and contingency plans)
<b>c) Date of family group network meeting</b>
<b>d) When will parents be given a copy of this referral?</b>
<b>e) Date Assessment required by</b> (12 weeks are required for an SGO/kinship assessment)

<b>Name of Social Worker:</b>	
<b>Team:</b>	
<b>Name of Practice Manager</b>	
<b>Name of Legal Advisor:</b>	

## Appendix 5: The Child's Needs

### PAN SUSSEX FORMATS: INCLUSION & ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY & FRIENDS

#### **Part B. THE CHILD'S NEEDS:**

- Parts A, C & highlighted sections in D are also required for full assessment
- Complete separately for each child

CHILD'S NAME:	D.O.B	CHILD'S IDENTIFIER

Please give full details in sections below

<b>1. Picture of the child including physical description*, personality*, likes/dislikes*, skills/aptitudes, daily routines &amp; participation in any out of school activities:</b>
<b>2. Religious persuasion including details of any ceremonies &amp; current practice*:</b>
<b>3. Place of birth*, nationality* (&amp; immigration status where appropriate):*</b>
<b>4. Details of any disability or special needs including whether the child is subject to a statement of special educational needs under the Education Act 1996(1)*:</b>
<b>5. Current educational provision &amp; hopes for the future:</b>
<b>6. Details of any significant health issues not referred to above:</b>
<b>7. Details of the permanency plan for the child:</b>
<b>8. Summary of the Child's Future Needs in Relation to their Social, Emotional &amp; Behavioural Development*:</b> Consider what needs the carer(s) will have to meet including in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impact of any harm which the child has suffered*,</li><li>• Identity needs, family &amp; social relationships, recent/past events and include any attachment issues</li><li>• Any existing or planned therapeutic, psychological or psychiatric input</li><li>• Any existing physical health or developmental needs</li></ul>

- Any needs relating to disability and/or communication
- Any particular risks to child or others due to their behaviour

**Please append any relevant reports and use this space to add further or updated information.**

**9. Any risk of future harm to the child posed by the child's parents, relatives or any other person the local authority considers relevant, particularly in relation to contact between any such person and the child \***

**10. The Child's Wishes and Feelings:**

Include:

- Who they would prefer to live with (carer and siblings)
- Their views about moving away from the local area if this is being considered
- What contact they would like to have with parents, siblings & other family members\*

**Social worker completing this form:**

**Date of completion:**

**PLEASE APPEND CHRONOLOGY that includes key life events for the child and moves of home.**

## Appendix 6: The Viability Assessment

### PAN SUSSEX FORMATS: INCLUSION & ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY & FRIENDS

#### Part C. VIABILITY ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY & FRIENDS CARER(S)

- Please use guidance notes to inform viability & decision making
- Parts A, B & highlighted sections in D also required for further F&F assessment

#### 1. DETAILS OF THE POTENTIAL CARERS:

<b>a) Name(s) of carers*:</b>		<b>Other names known as / aliases</b>	<b>b) DOB*:</b>
<b>c) Address &amp; contact details:* (unless confidential)</b>			
<b>d) Local Authority Area:* (unless confidential)</b>			
<b>e) Ethnic heritage*:</b>		<b>f) Linguistic heritage &amp; language spoken at home*:</b>	
<b>g) Religion:</b>		<b>h) Nationality (&amp; immigration status if appropriate)*:</b>	
<b>i) Details of any disability:</b>			
<b>j) Children to be cared for</b>			
<b>a) Name(s) of Child(ren)</b>	<b>DOB:*</b>	<b>Ethnic, cultural &amp; linguistic heritage*</b>	<b>Child's Reference Number:</b>

#### 2. DETAILS OF OTHERS IN THE HOUSEHOLD\*:

<b>a) Name, DOB/age &amp; relationship to the potential carer(s) of all others living in the household:</b>
<b>b) Views of adults and children in the household regarding this assessment/plan?</b>

### 3. WORK UNDERTAKEN TO COMPLETE THE VIABILITY:

<b>a) Detail type and amount of contact you have had with these potential carers/others in household &amp; wider family network to complete this assessment (dates of visits, who was seen, reports and assessments read):</b>
<b>b) What information has been given to the potential carers so far?</b>
<b>c) Have the carers been made aware of the extensive assessment that will be required in order for them to care for the child/children. Carers will be expected to share all details of their life from birth, provide the names of six referees, and consent to a CRB police check, CPT check, CIS check and a medical examination?</b>
<b>d) Are the applicants aware of the ID documents that they will be asked to provide at the initial visit to complete the DBS check? If not, have you provided them with the DBS ID document list?</b>
<b>e) Are the applicants aware of the documents that they will be asked to provide at the initial visit to complete the financial assessment? If not, have you provided them with the financial assessment document list?</b>

### 4. SPECIFIC RISKS/VULNERABILITIES DISCLOSED BY THE POTENTIAL CARERS OR IDENTIFIED BY SOCIAL WORKER:

<b>a) Details of the carer(s) and any other adults in the household physical and mental health including any specific concerns disclosed by them or checks with health professionals:</b>
<b>b) Details of any offending disclosed by the carer(s) or through PNC/DBS checks:</b>
<b>c) Details of any difficulties within own experiences as a child, any historical drug or alcohol use, or experience of domestic violence and the potential impact of these on caring for the child(ren):</b>
<b>d) Details of any historical legal (family) proceedings* or social work involvement relating to the carer(s), their children and children they have cared for: A check with the prospective carer(s) home local authority <b>must</b> be undertaken</b>

<b>5. WHAT CAN THE POTENTIAL CARERS OFFER THE CHILD(REN):</b>
<b>a) Detail the type ( e.g. relative/friend etc.), nature and quality of the current and past relationship between the child(ren) and these carers &amp; with others in the household:*</b>
<b>b) Their motivation, ability and suitability to bring up the child(ren) until the child(ren) reaches(s) the age of 18 and to ensure permanency for the child until adulthood.</b>
<b>c) Their understanding of and ability to meet the child(ren)'s current and likely future needs, particularly any needs the child(ren) may have arising from harm that the child has suffered*</b>
<b>d) What is their understanding of why the child cannot be with their parents? Include evidence of any protective action by them?</b>
<b>e) How will they protect the child(ren) from further harm from parents &amp; any others in the network who present a risk?</b> Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How they might manage relationships with parents and significant others</li> <li>• How they might manage &amp; help the child with contact</li> <li>• Their understanding of and ability to protect the child from any current or future risk of harm posed by the child's parents, relatives or any other person the local authority considers relevant, particularly in relation to contact between any such person and the child *</li> </ul>
<b>f) What experience of caring for their own or other children can they bring to caring for the child(ren)*?</b> Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical or recent issues relating to their care of children</li> <li>• Their capacity to offer warm, stimulating care with good boundaries</li> <li>• Are their children well behaved and securely attached?</li> <li>• Capacity to promote educational and health needs</li> <li>• Their capacity to understand, adapt to &amp; meet the child(ren)'s changing needs</li> <li>• Capacity to meet any specific additional needs the child has</li> <li>• Are they realistic about potential difficulties?</li> </ul>
<b>g) What is their capacity to help the child(ren) understand why they are not with their parent(s)?</b>
<b>h) What is their capacity to promote a positive identity including in relation to ethnic, cultural &amp; linguistic heritage and any religion?</b>

<b>i) How might they manage the changes in family roles &amp; impact on other family members including their own birth children? (Include their relationship with the birth parents)</b>
<b>j) Details of the carer's relationship with each other and evidence regarding stability:</b>
<b>k) Details of their wider support network</b> (consider who would support on a regular basis emotionally and practically or if the carer became ill)
<b>l) How will the carer(s) balance caring for the child(ren) with work and lifestyle commitments?</b>
<b>m) Is their accommodation suitable for the child(ren)?</b> Consider space, security of tenure & capacity to move if appropriate. Consider risks from any pets
<b>n) Date of home visit:</b>
<b>o) Detail degree of financial security including any significant debts:</b>
<b>p) Relevant information regarding location, neighbourhood &amp; community of the carer(s):</b>
<b>q) What is their capacity to work in partnership with professionals now &amp; in the future?</b> (consider their understanding of partnership working, how involved they have been in the current work and any past evidence of working in partnership)
<b>r) How open are they to further learning and support?</b>

**6. WHAT IS THE CHILD(REN)'S VIEW OF THE POTENTIAL PLACEMENT?:**

(include their views on contact and cultural and religious upbringing)

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**7. WHAT IS THE BIRTH PARENTS' VIEW OF THE POTENTIAL PLACEMENT?:**

(include their views on contact and cultural and religious upbringing)

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**8. DO YOU CONSIDER THIS A VIABLE PLACEMENT FOR THE CHILD/ CHILDREN AND IF SO WHY?**

**The criteria includes:- (scaling in brackets in bold; 0 meaning very poor prognosis to 10 being excellent prognosis) Consider each score with regard to caring for the child/ren until maturity.**

- Long term commitment to the child and ability to put their welfare first, even when it conflicts with the loyalty/concern for the birth parents; **(section 5a) (0-10)**
- Capacity to understand, adapt to and meet the child’s changing needs; **(section 5c) (0-10)**
- Understanding and acceptance of the real reasons which lead to the child’s removal from the parent’s care; **(section 5d) (0-10)**
- Ability to protect the child from further harm; **(section 5e) (0-10)**
- Capacity to be realistic about the possible problems and special needs which the child may present; **(section 5f) (0-10)**
- Capacity to offer warm, stimulating care; **(section 5f) (0-10)**
- Ability to promote the child’s educational and health needs; **(section 5f) (0-10)**
- Commitment to helping the child develop an understanding of their history and promote a positive identity including their ethnic and cultural identity; **(section 5h) (0-10)**
- Ability to deal with the strain of changing family roles; **(section 5i) (0-10)**
- Sufficient support network; **(section 5k) (0-10)**
- Sufficient time and space to devote to everyone in the family; **(section 5l) (0-10)**
- Ability to work with professionals and to seek out and accept help. **(section 5q) (0-10)**

**ANALYSIS**

**Specific strengths relating to the carer(s) ability to meet the child(ren)’s needs:**

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

**Specific risks and vulnerabilities relating to the carer(s) capacity to meet the child(ren)’s needs:**

- 
- 
- 
- 
-

## RECOMMENDATION

<b>Recommendation as to whether the carer(s) are viable for immediate placement of the child, potentially viable for future placement or unsuitable for this child/ren and the reasons why:</b>	
<b>When was/will this assessment &amp; recommendation be shared with the carers?</b>	
<b>Social Worker Name :</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Practice Manager Name :</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Group Manager Name:</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

**Please send a copy of the completed Viability Assessment (form C) and Referral (Form A) along with the child's information (Form B) to:**

[SGOKinshipAssessmentTeam@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:SGOKinshipAssessmentTeam@westsussex.gov.uk)

**If a temporary kinship placement is required under regulation 24, please also send a copy of the Viability Assessment (Form C) and the checks form (Form D) to the ADM for fostering.**

## Appendix 7: Checks and References

### PAN SUSSEX FORMATS: INCLUSION & ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY & FRIENDS

#### **Part D. CHECKS & REFERENCES** (for internal use only)

- Child's Social Worker must complete **checks in red italic** before making Regulation 24 placement/facilitating alternative family care arrangement or as part of the viability assessment
- To be completed alongside Parts A, B & C

<b>CARERS NAME (1):</b>		<b>OTHER NAMES KNOWN AS / ALIASES:</b>	
<b>HEALTH:</b>	<b>Date &amp; name of worker:</b>	<b>Outcome:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Verbal report from GP</b></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GP report</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any other reports obtained from health professionals</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Advisor comments (Prospective Foster Carer)</li> </ul>			
<b>SAFEGUARDING:</b>	<b>Date &amp; name of worker:</b>	<b>Outcome:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PNC (Reg 24 or alternative family care arrangement)</b></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DBS</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Check with prospective carers home Local Authority</b></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checks with Local Authorities where carer has lived in the previous 10 years (Prospective Foster Carer)</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Own Records</b></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Assessment (if required)</li> </ul>			

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<b>CARERS NAME (2):</b>		<b>OTHER NAMES KNOWN AS / ALIASES:</b>	
<b>HEALTH:</b>	<b>Dates &amp; name of worker:</b>	<b>Outcome:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Verbal report from GP</i></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GP report</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any other reports obtained from health professionals</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medical Advisor comments (Prospective Foster Carer)</li> </ul>			
<b>SAFEGUARDING:</b>	<b>Dates &amp; initials of worker:</b>	<b>Outcome:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>PNC (Reg 24 or alternative family care arrangement)</i></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DBS</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Check with prospective carers home Local Authority</i></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Checks with Local Authorities where carer has lived in the previous 10 years (Prospective Foster Carer)</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Own Records</i></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk Assessment (if required)</li> </ul>			

**ACCOMMODATION:**

Type of check	Date completed	Outcome:
<b>Home Visit/Suitability of accommodation</b>		
Health & Safety Checklist		

Animal Questionnaire		
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***CHECKS ON OTHERS IN HOUSEHOLD:***

Name & relationship	Type of Check & Date	Outcome

***TWO VERBAL REFERENCES – Regulation 24***

Name:	Relationship to carer:	Date reference provided:
Summary of reference:		
Name:	Relationship to carer:	Date reference provided:
Summary of reference:		

Reference/Report from:	Which carer or child?	Details & Date of actions	Date visited/spoken to
EMPLOYER			N/A
EMPLOYER			N/A
NURSERY			N/A
SCHOOL			
COLLEGE			
EX PARTNER			
EX PARTNER			

**Name of Social worker completing this form:**

**Date of completion:**

## Appendix 8: The SGO Assessment

### PAN SUSSEX FORMATS: INCLUSION & ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY & FRIENDS

#### Part E. FAMILY & FRIENDS FULL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Completed by:

Date:

<b>1. Recommendation &amp; Summary of Reasons:</b>
<b>2. Individual Profiles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Details of the parents and any siblings of the (prospective) carers with their ages or age at death*</li><li>• Place of birth*</li><li>• Physical description*</li><li>• Personality</li><li>• Background &amp; family history with relevant details (A chronology completed by or with the applicants can be a useful way of providing an overview of significant events and activities)</li><li>• Experience of caring for children* with details of 'own' children*</li><li>• Further information regarding any historical Family Court Proceedings*</li><li>• Details of any previous assessments as foster carers/adopters/ special guardians*</li><li>• Further information regarding any previous convictions or concerns relating to own parenting including any historical drug or alcohol use</li></ul>
Social Work Analysis & Implications for placement:
<b>3. Education &amp; Employment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School history &amp; experience*</li><li>• Further education and training</li><li>• Attitudes to education &amp; aspirations for this child(ren)</li><li>• Work experience including voluntary work*</li><li>• Security of current employment (reference may be required)</li><li>• Attitude to work / employment or unemployment</li><li>• Ability to take time off work, reduce hours or give up work to care for the child(ren)</li></ul>
Social Work Analysis & Implications for placement:
<b>4. Health Assessment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Historical &amp; current physical, emotional and psychological/mental health of the (prospective) carers*</li><li>• Refer to information from health professionals</li></ul>

Social Work Analysis & Implications for Placement:
<b>5. Adult Relationships</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date &amp; place of any marriage or civil partnership*</li> <li>• Strengths, vulnerabilities &amp; stability of current relationship</li> <li>• Details of previous significant relationships* including information about any children of these relationships</li> <li>• Information from ex-partner(s) who have shared childcare responsibility or reason for not seeking reference</li> <li>• Where the carer has a partner but is applying alone for any order, the reasons for this*</li> </ul>
Social Work Analysis & Implications for Placement:
<b>6. Others in household:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views of others in household</li> <li>• Capacity to manage impact on own children still at home</li> <li>• Any other caring commitments</li> </ul>
Social Work Analysis & Implications for Placement:
<b>7. Ability to meet the child(ren's) needs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons for wanting to care for the child(ren)</li> <li>• Historical and current level of contact with the child</li> <li>• Quality of relationship with the child*</li> <li>• Capacity to protect the child(ren)</li> <li>• How might the applicants deal with any subsequent disclosures?</li> <li>• Ability to meet specific needs relating to health, education &amp; psychological wellbeing e.g. attachment issues</li> <li>• Ability to help the child understand their life story</li> <li>• Ability to meet specific needs relating to identity, culture, religion, disability, health or education</li> <li>• Willingness to follow any wishes of the child or their parents in respect of religious or cultural upbringing</li> <li>• Information from observation of child &amp; (prospective) carer</li> <li>• Sibling relationship needs</li> <li>• Capacity to adjust to child(ren) joining household</li> <li>• Capacity to manage stress</li> <li>• Their ability and suitability to bring up the child(ren) until the child(ren) reach the age of 18*</li> <li>• The prospective carers' ability to add to their skills repertoire to meet the child's needs, where they currently have deficits.</li> </ul>

Social Work Analysis & Implications for placement:

**8. Accommodation, Social Integration, Support Network & Lifestyle**

- Security & capacity of accommodation\*
- Neighbourhood\*
- Social integration/support networks\*
- Professional support networks e.g. local schools, GP\*
- Interests & leisure pursuits\*
- Religious practice and/or beliefs\*
- Cultural heritage

Social Work Analysis & Implications for Placement:

**9. Financial Assessment:**

- Relevant details of income and expenditure\*
- Is there evidence of financial security/ability to manage income appropriately?

Social Work Analysis & Implications for Placement:

**10. Family Relationships including Adult Children/Other Significant Relatives & Contact:**

- Current contact plans & how these are managed
- Significant family relationships & how these might be safely maintained for the child\*

Social Work Analysis & Implications for Placement:

**11. Capacity to work in partnership with professionals**

- Any points of disagreement by the (prospective) carer(s) regarding the concerns/Local Authority actions
- Evidence of working with professionals to date\*
- Willingness to continue to learn & develop knowledge & skills
- Commitment & capacity to access support

Social Work Analysis & Implications for placement:

<b>12. Summary of strengths &amp; vulnerabilities with special regard to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed carers understanding of and ability to protect the child from any current or future risk of harm posed by the child's parents, relatives or any other person the local authority considers relevant, particularly in relation to any such contact between any such person and the child *</li> <li>Their understanding of and ability to meet the child's current and likely future needs, particularly any needs the child may have arising from harm that the child has suffered*</li> <li>Their ability and suitability to bring up the child(ren) until the child(ren) reach the age of 18*</li> </ul>	
<b>Social Worker:</b>	<b>Practice Manager:</b>
<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Signed:</b>
<b>Date completed :</b>	<b>Date authorised:</b>

## **Part F. REFERENCES**

<b>(1) Referee's Name:</b> (2)
<b>Relationship to Carer:</b>
<b>Date written reference received:</b>
<b>Date of interview:</b>
<b>Summary of reference provided:</b>
<b>Weight given to reference:</b>

<b>(2) Referee's Name:</b>
<b>Relationship to Carer:</b>
<b>Date written reference received:</b>
<b>Date of interview:</b>
<b>Summary of reference provided:</b>
<b>Weight given to reference:</b>

<b>(3) Referee's Name:</b>
<b>Relationship to Carer:</b>
<b>Date written reference received:</b>
<b>Date of interview:</b>
<b>Summary of reference provided:</b>
<b>Weight given to reference:</b>

## Appendix 9: Special Guardianship Support Plan

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### PAN SUSSEX FORMATS: INCLUSION & ASSESSMENT OF FAMILY & FRIENDS

## **Part G - Special Guardianship Support Plan**

### **Section A**

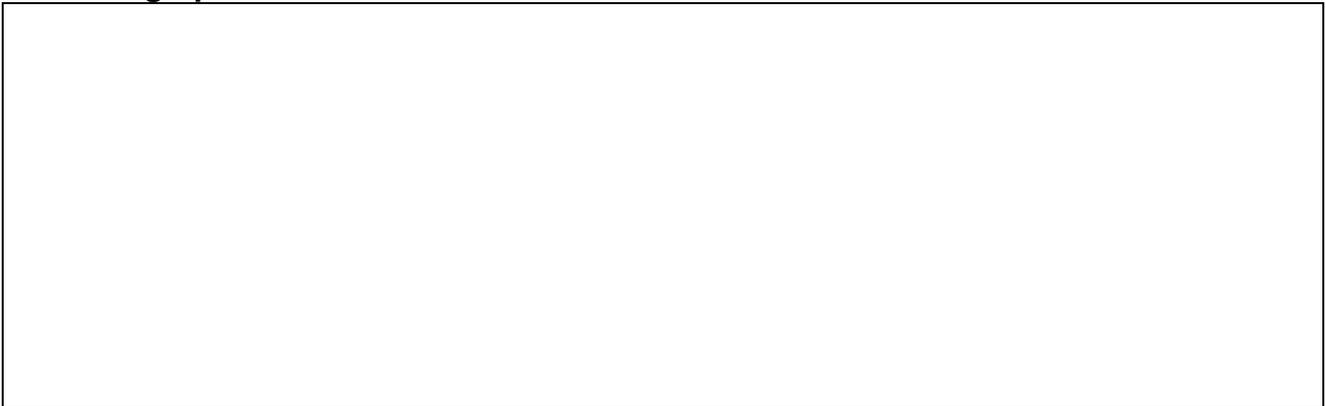
#### **1. Purpose:**

The Court is being asked to grant a Special Guardianship Order to (carer's name/s) in respect of (child/ren's name/s). (carers name/s) is/are (relationship to the child/ren\*). This Support Plan identifies their individual needs and how these can best be met both now and in the longer term.

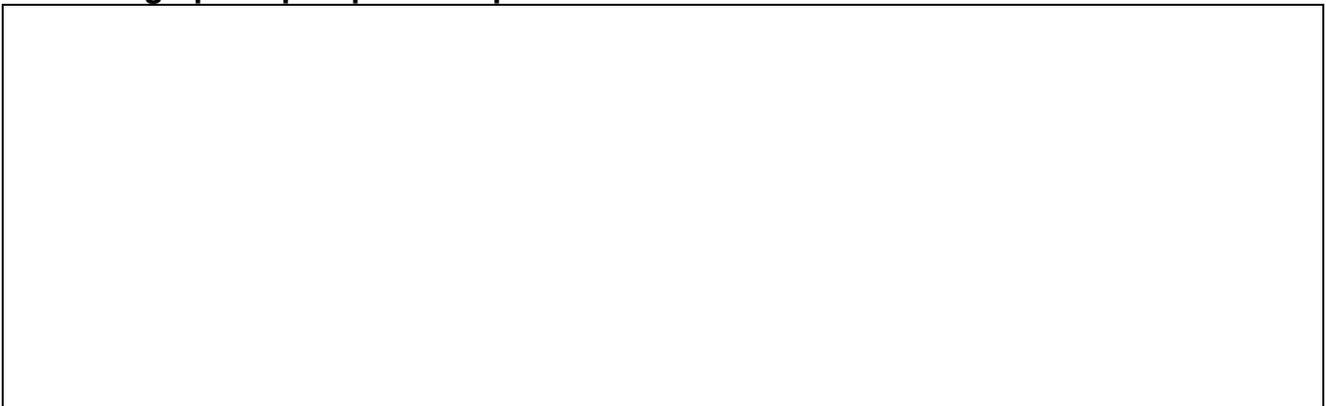
This Support Plan should be read in conjunction with the full Family & Friends Report (Parts A, B, C, E and F). Information required by Special Guardianship Regulations is provided within the full set of documents. (See Appendix 1 for further details)

#### **2. Summary of any relevant information not already reported within the legal proceedings:**

#### **3. Photograph of child:\***



#### **4. Photograph of prospective Special Guardians\*:**



**5. Photographs of birth parents and/or physical description:**

**6. People involved in developing the support plan:**

	<b>NAME:</b>	<b>Dates wishes and feelings obtained*:</b>
<b>Child/young person:</b>		
<b>Mother:</b>		
<b>Father:</b>		
<b>Special Guardians:</b>		
<b>Any other relative or other person the local authority considers relevant:</b>		
<b>Social worker</b>		
<b>Social worker</b>		

**Section B: DETAILS OF SUPPORT PLAN:**

**1. Child's Identity & related needs:**

- Ethnic, cultural & linguistic heritage
- Religious heritage
- Disability
- Gender/Emerging sexuality
- Sense of belonging
- Understanding life story
- Family 'script'
- Does the carer have the child's birth certificate?
- Does the carer have the child's passport?

a) Child's wishes & feelings (considered according to age & understanding) in relation to identity including religious & cultural upbringing\*:

b) Parental views & wishes in relation to identity including religious & cultural upbringing*:		
c) Prospective special guardians views & wishes in relation to identity including religious & cultural upbringing*:		
d) Details of any previous and current local authority or voluntary organisation placements including dates*:		
e) Pen picture of the child's parents including personality, interests and employment history:*		
f) Has a 'life story' narrative and other information been provided? If yes, do the prospective special guardians understand this and know how they can help the child understand why they cannot live with their parent(s):		
g) Social work assessment & analysis of child's identity & related needs:		
h) Identified support needs of child & prospective Special Guardians in relation to the child's identity:		
Actions identified	Who is responsible?	Timescale?

<b>2. Child's Health &amp; related needs:</b>
a) Relevant health history including any significant physical or mental illness, disability or

hereditary health issue affecting parents*:		
b) Child's current health & any treatment*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the carer have the child's health record?</li> </ul>		
c) Child's future health needs & how these will be met:		
d) Identified support needs of child & prospective Special Guardians in relation to the child's health:		
Actions identified	Who is responsible?	Timescale?

<b>3. Child's Education &amp; related needs:</b>
a) Information regarding the parents educational history* & any hopes they have for the child's education or out of school activities:
b) Details of the child's educational history and attainments including names, addresses and types of provision with dates attended*:
c) Current educational provision including details of any additional needs and how these are being met:
d) Detail any interests* and after school activities the child has engaged in or would like to do:
e) Child's future educational needs including any aspirations and how these might be met:
f) Identified support needs of child & prospective Special Guardians in relation to the child's education:

Actions identified	Who is responsible?	Timescale?

**4. Child's development including behaviour and emotional wellbeing & related needs:**

a) Comment on child's development and any specific issues relating to behaviour, emotional needs or self-care skills:

--

b) Identified support needs of the child and special guardians in relation to the child's development:

--

Actions identified	Who is responsible?	Timescale?

**5. Contact\* – maintaining connections across the family & friends network: It is recognised that children's needs for contact change over time.**

a) Description and assessment of current contact arrangements:

--

b) The child's views and wishes regarding contact with parents, other relatives and any other person the local authority considers relevant\*:

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c) Each parent's views and wishes regarding contact\*:

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d) Views and wishes of other relatives or any other person the local authority considers relevant regarding contact:

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e) The prospective special guardian's wishes and feelings in relation to contact between the child and his relatives or any other person the local authority considers relevant:		
f) Analysis including the purpose of each contact and the impact of multiple contacts on day to day life for the child:		
g) Recommendations regarding contact including how often, with whom, when, where & any conditions and any proposals for managing future changes in contact:		
h) Identified support needs of child, special guardians and parents in relation to contact including any financial support for travel, contact service involvement:		
Actions identified:	Who is responsible?	Timescale?

<b>6. Financial Support:</b>
a) Summary of financial support:

<b>7. Special Guardianship:</b>
a) Child's wishes & feelings regarding special guardianship & how these should be considered in light of age and understanding*:
b) Each parents' wishes and feelings regarding special guardianship*

c) Wishes and feelings of the prospective special guardians regarding special guardianship including any hopes and expectations the prospective special guardian has for the child's future*:
d) Wishes and feelings of any of the child's relatives, or any other person the local authority consider relevant regarding the child*:
e) Reasons for applying for a special guardianship order and extent of understanding of the nature and effect of special guardianship and whether the prospective special guardian has discussed special guardianship with the child*:
f) The implications of making a special guardianship order for*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the child</li> <li>• the child's parents</li> <li>• the prospective special guardian and family</li> <li>• any other person the local authority considers relevant</li> </ul>
g) The relative merits of special guardianship and any other order which may be made under the Act or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 with an assessment of whether the child's long term interests would be best met by a special guardianship order*
h) Plans for Reviewing the Support Plan:
The Special Guardianship Support Plan will be reviewed by 6 months and 12 months post order.
The worker(s) identified as responsible for review of the SGO support plan is/are

**Agreement to this plan by:**

<b>Child/young person</b>	
Name:	Signature:
Date:	

**Special Guardian(s):**

Name:	Signature:
Name:	Signature:
Date:	

**Social Worker(s):**

Name:	Signature:
Name:	Signature:
Date:	

**Managers :**

<b>SGO team practice manager</b>	
Name:	Signature:
<b>Child's team practice manager</b>	
Name:	Signature:
<b>SGO group manager</b>	
Name:	Signature:

## Appendix 10: Information required for the first visit from the SGO Assessor

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### Information required for the first visit from the SGO Assessor

#### ID Documents for the DBS Check

The applicant must be able to show:

- one document from Group 1, below
- 2 further documents from either Group 1, or Group 2a or 2b, below

At least one of the documents must show the applicant's current address.

If the applicant doesn't have any of the documents in Group 1, then they must be able to show:

- one document from Group 2a
- 2 further documents from either Group 2a or 2b

At least one of the documents must show the applicant's current address.

#### **Group 1: Primary identity documents**

Document	Notes
Passport	Any current and valid passport
Biometric residence permit	UK
Current driving licence photo card - (full or provisional)	UK, Isle of Man, Channel Islands and EU
Birth certificate - issued within 12 months of birth	UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands - including those issued by UK authorities overseas, e.g. embassies, High Commissions and HM Forces
Adoption certificate	UK and Channel Islands

#### **Group 2a: Trusted government documents**

Document	Notes
Current driving licence photo card - (full or provisional)	All countries outside the EU (excluding Isle of Man and Channel Islands)
Current driving licence (full or provisional) - paper version (if issued before 1998)	UK, Isle of Man, Channel Islands and EU
Birth certificate - issued after time of birth	UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands
Marriage/civil partnership certificate	UK and Channel Islands
HM Forces ID card	UK
Firearms licence	UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man

All driving licenses must be [valid](#).

**Group 2b: Financial and social history documents**

Document	Notes	Issue date and validity
Mortgage statement	UK or EEA	Issued in last 12 months
Bank or building society statement	UK and Channel Islands or EEA	Issued in last 3 months
Bank or building society account opening confirmation letter	UK	Issued in last 3 months
Credit card statement	UK or EEA	Issued in last 3 months
Financial statement, e.g. pension or endowment	UK	Issued in last 12 months
P45 or P60 statement	UK and Channel Islands	Issued in last 12 months
Council Tax statement	UK and Channel Islands	Issued in last 12 months
Work permit or visa	UK	Valid up to expiry date
Letter of sponsorship from future employment provider	Non-UK or non-EEA only - valid only for applicants residing outside of the UK at time of application	Must still be valid
Utility bill	UK - not mobile telephone bill	Issued in last 3 months
Benefit statement, e.g. Child Benefit, Pension	UK	Issued in last 3 months
Central or local government, government agency, or local council document giving entitlement, e.g. from the Department for Work and Pensions, the Employment Service, HMRC	UK and Channel Islands	Issued in last 3 months

Document	Notes	Issue date and validity
EU National ID card	-	Must still be valid
Cards carrying the PASS accreditation logo	UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands	Must still be valid
Letter from head teacher or college principal	UK - for 16 to 19 year olds in full time education - only used in exceptional circumstances if other documents cannot be provided	Must still be valid

## Glossary

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### AGENCY DECISION MAKER

The Agency "Decision Maker" (also known as the ADM) is a named senior manager who has the responsibility for the oversight and decision making for the fostering and adoption of children.

### ACCOMMODATION (Section 20 Children Act 1989)

Accommodation is when a child or young person is cared for by Children's Services because:

- there is no-one with parental responsibility for them or
  - they have been lost or abandoned or
  - The person normally caring for them is unable to provide them with suitable accommodation or care (whether this is temporary or permanent), for whatever reason. However:
- Children's Services may not provide accommodation for a child if someone with parental responsibility objects and can provide accommodation themselves or arrange for someone else to provide accommodation;
  - A person with parental responsibility can remove a child from accommodation at any time (although there are some exceptions to this). It is essential to take legal advice first before doing this.

### ARTICLE 12

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

*"States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child."*

### CHILD ARRANGEMENTS ORDER

This is an order made under Section 8 Children Act 1989. There are two types of child arrangements orders (CAOs) that can be made:

1. An order which says where and with whom a child will live. It used to be called a s.8 'Residence Order'; and
2. An order which says who the child can spend time with and for how long. This used to be called a Section 8 'Contact Order'.

### CHILD IN NEED (Section 17 Children Act 1989)

The Children Act threshold for Children in Need is the threshold for a service provision by Social Services (level 4) under S17 Children Act 1989.

A child shall be taken to be in need if:

- a) S/he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services by a local authority under this Part;
- b) His/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without impaired, without the provision for him of such services; or
- c) S/he is disabled

## CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014

This Act also made changes to the Children Act 1989 and has introduced a number of significant changes to the law in relation to care proceedings, contact with children in care, adoption and brought in fostering for adoption provisions.

### PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY (PR)

Parental responsibility is defined in law as “all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority, which by law a parent has in relation to the child and the administration of his/her property.”

The following people have parental responsibility for a child:

- All birth mothers
- Married fathers
- Unmarried fathers with a parental responsibility agreement (forms are available from local courts) or a parental responsibility order from the court
- Unmarried fathers named on the child's birth certificate
- Female partners of mother's who have a child by assisted reproduction, (so long as they both formally consented to her being a parent with the licensed treatment provider), and they either:
  - Are in a civil partnership or marriage; or
  - Don't enter a civil partnership or marriage, but the partner is named on the birth certificate, or
  - Obtains it by parental responsibility agreement with the mother or by a court order.
- Step-parents (including civil partners) if they have made an authorised agreement with both parents with parental responsibility or
- Anyone who has a Residence Order or a Child Arrangements Order (saying the child should live with them).
- Anyone who has been appointed as guardian of the child by a parent with parental responsibility who has died (and there is no surviving parent with parental responsibility)
- Anyone who has a Special Guardianship order for the child
- The local authority if they have a Care Order or Emergency Protection Order for the child
- Adoptive parents

### PERMANENCE PLAN

This describes a plan for a child which is intended to last until the child becomes an adult at 18. It can be achieved through:

- A plan to return to the parents; or
- A placement with relatives or friends, whether they are long term foster carers for the child, or they have a Child Arrangements Order or a Special Guardianship Order; or
- A placement with unrelated foster carers in foster care; or
- Adoption when a child is legally adopted into another family. This can only happen if clear procedures are followed and the court makes an adoption order.

A permanence plan should be developed at the second looked after child review.

## **PLACEMENT PLANNING MEETING**

Every child looked after must have a placement plan. This should be completed for and finalised in the first or introduction Placement Planning Meeting and uploaded onto the child's initial CLA Care, Placement and Pathway Plan record.

Except in emergency placements, the Introduction Placement Planning Meeting should be held before the placement. Where this is not possible, it should be held at the latest within 5 working days of the placement.

## **PNC/ PND-POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER/ POLICE NATIONAL DATA CHECKS**

PNC checks shown when a person has been arrested, convicted cautioned, remanded or warned by the police.

PND checks will show the above and 'soft intelligence' where there have been allegations/ concerns shared with the police.

## **REGULATION 24 PLACEMENTS**

### **Care Planning, Placement and Review (England) Regulations 2010**

This is a law which allows Children's Services to place a child with a family member or friend in an emergency situation for up to 16 weeks (without doing a full fostering assessment) provided they have carried out certain basic checks about that person's home circumstances and their ability to care for and protect the child. This should allow Children's Services to be satisfied that the placement will keep the child safe and well.

## **REGULATION 25 PLACEMENTS**

### **Care Planning, Placement and Review (England) Regulations 2010**

Regulation 25A provides for a person who has been approved as a prospective adopter (by a local authority or a voluntary adoption agency) to be temporarily approved by a looked after child's local authority as the foster carer for that child. They need not go through the full foster parent assessment and approval process.

## **RELATIVE**

This has a specific meaning in family law. It means a relative, who is a step parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or sibling (whether full or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership).