



Support available

You're not alone as support is available. There are lots of ways to find support, and the **kinship.telford.gov.uk** webpage can guide you to local opportunities such as:

- support groups – connect with others who understand;
- coffee mornings – a relaxed space to chat and share;
- walk and talks – fresh air and friendly conversation; and
- Family Hubs – advice and workshops for families.

You can also find national support:

- **Kinship UK** offers financial guidance and resources: www.kinship.org.uk
- **Family Rights Group** provides help and advice: www.frg.org.uk
- **The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)** shares information and advice on private law proceedings: www.cafcass.gov.uk

Useful contacts and links:

Telford & Wrekin Council, Kinship Team

Email: kinshipenquiries@telford.gov.uk

Tel: 01952 380353

<https://kinship.telford.gov.uk>

Family Connect

Tel: 01952 385385

Text back service: 07908680320

Email: familyconnect@telford.gov.uk

Kinship UK

Tel: 0300 123 7015

www.kinship.org.uk

Family Rights Group

Tel: 0808 801 0366 (free advice line)

www.frg.org.uk

Family Hubs

Tel: 01952 385385

Email: telfordfamilyhubs@telford.gov.uk



kinship telford

Child Arrangements Orders



What is a child arrangements order (CAO)?

A Child Arrangements Order is a legal order made by the Family Court that sets out:

- where a child lives;
- who they spend time with; and
- when and how contact takes place (e.g. visits, phone calls).

This order usually lasts until the child turns 18 unless the court decides otherwise.

Having a Child Arrangements Order can:

- give you shared parental responsibility with the child's birth parents;
- allow you to make everyday decisions about the child's care; and
- provide legal recognition of your role in the child's life.

However, major decisions (e.g. changing the child's surname or moving abroad for more than 28 days) still require the consent of others with parental responsibility or a further court decision.

Who can apply

You may be able to apply if you are:

- a grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother or sister (including by marriage or civil partnership), half-sibling, or step-parent and the child has lived with you for more than a year; or
- the child's appointed guardian after a parent or special guardian has passed away; or
- a kinship foster carer where the child has lived with you for over a year, or you have consent from everyone with parental responsibility; or
- a private foster carer and the child has lived with you for at least three years.

You can also apply if you have consent from:

- everyone who has parental responsibility;
- Children's Services, if the child is in their care; and
- anyone who already has a residence order or child arrangements order for the child.

You must be 18 or over to apply.

It's strongly recommended to seek legal advice and support early, so you understand your options.

Applying for a Child Arrangements Order is an important decision. You should never feel pressured to apply and should only do so if it is right for you and in the best interest of the child.

The assessment

Sometimes, the court may ask the Local Authority to prepare a report before deciding whether to grant a Child Arrangements Order (CAO). This report is designed to make sure the arrangements are in the child's best interests.

Who completes the report?

Depending on the situation, the assessment might be carried out by the Kinship Team or the Safeguarding Team. If the Local Authority are not involved it may be that CAFCASS step in to independently advise the family courts.

What does the report look at?

The focus is always on the child's needs, including:

- safety and protection;
- emotional wellbeing; and
- relationships with family members and others involved.

Why is it important?

The report helps the court understand whether the proposed arrangements will provide a safe, stable, and supportive environment for the child.

What might the process involve?

You may be asked to take part in interviews, home visits, and provide information about your ability to care for the child. This is all to ensure the child's welfare is the top priority.