



# **Investing in Kinship Families**

An analysis of investment in Ireland, New Zealand, and  
Northern Ireland.

September 2023  
Gillian McGinley



## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WHAT IS KINSHIP CARE? .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO INVEST IN KINSHIP CARE: .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CHILD AND FAMILY LEGISLATION AND POLICY:.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PREVALENCE OF KINSHIP CARE PLACEMENTS: A BRIEF STATISTICAL OVERVIEW. ....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>STATUTORY RECOGNITION: KINSHIP CARE FAMILIES. ....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR KINSHIP CARE FAMILIES: .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PRACTICAL CHILD AND FAMILY SUPPORTS: .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>ANALYSIS &amp; DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>OVERVIEW OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS: .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY:.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>APPENDIX ONE: .....</b>	<b>38</b>

---

## **Introduction**

Kinship Care Ireland say that “when kinship care is recognised, policy and provision can be tailored, given legal clarity and protection, provide the necessary support and services along with ending the lack of awareness of kinship care and the stigma that follows” (2020: 8). Other research argues that “Well supported kinship care is associated with better adult outcomes in health, earnings and family life than other types of non-parental care and that lower rates of long-term illness and higher rates of employment for adults with a history of kinship care compared to those that grew up in foster or residential care” (MacAllister, 2022: 7).

The aim of this research is to analyse and compare developments in relation to investment in kinship care in Ireland, New Zealand, and Northern Ireland. The areas of focus in this report will be statutory recognition of kinship care families as a distinct family type and the provision of financial and family supports to kinship care families. The purpose of this research is to identify positive legislative and policy developments that could be considered in an Irish context. The report will begin with a brief introduction to the meaning and prevalence of kinship care. In addition, the statutory recognition of kinship care as a distinct family type in each country will be reflected upon. Furthermore, the financial supports available to kinship families in each country will be outlined. The provision of child and family supports for kinship carers and children in each country will also be discussed. Before drawing a conclusion and offering some recommendations, a discussion and analysis relating to each area of focus will be offered.

## **What is Kinship Care?**

Kinship care is a term used to describe a situation whereby a child or children are being cared for by another member of their family in a situations where the birth parent/ parents are unable to do so. There are a number of reasons why children may need to be cared for by kin on a formal or informal basis. The reasons a child may need to be cared for by kin include poor physical or mental health, homelessness, and other issues that can lead to parental incapacity. The child may be at risk of or may have experienced abuse or neglect (Delapp and Mann, 2019). A child may also be cared for by kin where a parent/s has died.

Formal kinship arrangements refer to when a family member takes on the care of a child by means of a formal arrangement. A formal arrangement may occur where there is a child protection concern, and a formal care arrangement is made with a child protection agency to allow a relative to become a foster carer for the child (O’Brien, 2015). Apart from some cases

of emergency, relatives would have to be assessed and become a registered foster carer before they could take over care of the child.

Informal kinship care refers to an arrangement whereby the parent/s of a child/children have a private agreement with a family member or close friend to take over parental responsibility for a child should the parent/s die or become unable to care for their child long term, this is seen as a private family arrangement (PFA). The strengths and weaknesses of PFA's as an alternative care arrangement is reflected upon in research conducted in an Irish context by Burn's, O'Mahony, and Brennan (2021) (see table 1).

Table 1: (Burn's, O'Mahony and Brennan, 2021)

Private Family Arrangements	Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A private family arrangement for the alternative care of a child/children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Operationalises the principle of subsidiarity, care is provided at a local level with minimal or no state intervention.</li> <li>- Consistent with family first policies that promote keeping children within their communities and in contact with their social networks, including parents and other kin.</li> <li>- Can reduce stigma for children as they are not in state care.</li> <li>- Cost effective to the state.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safeguarding the rights of the child is placed at risk, no legal obligation on the state or carers to promote the welfare of the child.</li> <li>- Absence of a solid legal foundation makes PFA's potentially precarious.</li> <li>- Cost related burden shifts from state to family.</li> <li>- No formal oversight which can be a potential sources of harm if the placement is unsuitable.</li> <li>- Access to supports and services on a statutory level is reduced.</li> <li>- The minimal level of resourcing and oversight associated with such placements when compared with formal foster-care placements means that children are at risk of discrimination by virtue of their placement type (2021:15).</li> </ul>

## **What Does it Mean to Invest in Kinship Care:**

Investing in kinship care means:

- Ensuring that there are legislative and policy frameworks in place that recognise and protect the rights and promote the wellbeing of **all** kinship care children and caregivers (Kinship Care Ireland, 2021).
- Ensuring that **all** kinship children and caregivers have access to adequate financial support. Access to financial support should be based on need and not on the legal status of the child (Kinship, 2022).
- **All** kinship families should have access to social and family supports. Access to supports should be available based on need and not on the legal status of the child being cared for (Family Rights Group, 2022).

## **Child and Family Legislation and Policy:**

Alongside the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) and the United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care for Children (2010), the following policies and pieces of legislation were reflected upon as part of the research conducted here. The following are highlighted in the literature and on government websites as being relevant to kinship care in each country.

### Ireland:

- Child Care Act (1991).
- Child Care (Placement of Children with Relatives) Regulations (1995).
- The Child Care (Placement of Children in Foster Care) Regulations (1995).
- The Children's Act (2001).
- National Standards in Foster Care (2003)
- The Child Care Amendment Act (2007).
- Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (2014).
- Childrens First Act (2015).
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017).

### New Zealand:

- The Family Proceedings Act 1980.
- The Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.
- The Human Rights Act 1993.
- The Care of Children Act 2004
- The Children's Act 2014.

- The Oranga Tamariki (National Care Standards and Related Matters) Regulations 2018.
- The Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi.

#### Northern Ireland:

- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.
- The Arrangements for Placement of Children (General) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.
- The Foster Placement (Children) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.
- The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.
- The Placement of Children with Parents etc. Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.
- The Representations Procedure (Children) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act (Northern Ireland) 2002.
- The Children (Leaving Care) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.
- The Foster Placement (Children) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012.
- The Looked After Children Minimum Kinship Care Standards for Northern Ireland 2019.

### **Prevalence of Kinship Care Placements: A Brief Statistical Overview.**

In Ireland, at the end of December 2017, the total number of children in relative foster care was 1667. The total number of children in relative foster care placement in 2022 was 1453, a decrease on the number in 2017 (Tusla, 2017, 2022). The number of children in informal kinship placements is not formally recorded in Ireland, however, it is suggested that around 10,000 children are in kinship care placements in Ireland (Kinship Care Ireland, 2023).

Approximately 3255 children in care in New Zealand are in formal kinship care placements (Family for every Child, 2022). The actual number of children living in informal kinship arrangements is not fully known. However, research would suggest that approximately 9543 grandparents are in a parental role in New Zealand (Worrall and Bundle, 2021).

In 2016, the number of children in Northern Ireland who were in formal kinship care placements was 933 (Chapman and Tarrant, 2017). Formal kinship foster care placements have risen from 25 percent in 2010 to over 41 percent in 2022 (Rodgers and McCluney, 2022). There are more children in care placed in kinship foster care than any other placement type in Northern Ireland (Department of Health, 2022a).

## **Statutory Recognition: Kinship Care Families.**

Recognition of kinship care families as a distinct family type, along with legislative and policy frameworks that seek to protect the rights and promote the wellbeing of all kinship children and their caregivers is an important aspect of supporting kinship care families.

The legal status of the care arrangement between a caregiver and child can make a difference in the lives of kinship care families. For some kinship families, the legal status of the care arrangement can affect the capability of caregivers to make important decisions relating to the child's day to day life. It can also determine whether or not a caregiver can be involved in statutory proceedings relating to the child, especially where child protection/social services are involved (Family Rights Group, 2022).

The legal status of the care arrangement can impact the access that some families have to financial and other supports and services. For example, where carers take responsibility for a child on a temporary basis, or where there is no statutory care arrangement in place, access to financial and other practical supports are often denied based on a child's legal status rather than their level of need (Kinship, 2022; O'Brien, 2015).

### Ireland:

In Ireland, there is no explicit legislative or policy framework specifically for kinship care families as a distinct family type. Formal kinship care falls into the category of alternative care and is provided for also under the Child Care Act (1991) and in child protection related policies (O'Leary and Butler, 2015). Formal kinship carers are seen as relative foster carers, a definition of which is provided in the Child Care (Placement of Children with Relatives) Regulations (1995).

In Ireland, a kinship carer can apply to the court to become a legal guardian to the child in their care. To be eligible, there must be no parent or guardian willing or able to care for the child, and the applicant must have provided day-to day care for a child for at least 12 months (Citizens Information, 2023). Under the Children and Families Relationships Act (2015) kinship caregivers can also apply to the court for custody of a child. There are certain thresholds a caregiver must meet in order to apply for custody of a child. For example, the child's parent/guardian must consent; however, there are times the court can dispense this requirement and the decision will be based on the best interests of the child (Citizens Information, 2023).

Kinship Care Ireland say that despite much progress over the last number of decades, legislation and policy that offers greater protection for families and recognition of the needs of children and families in Ireland has not been extended fully to all families. It is argued that “kinship families, particularly informal kinship families have yet to be formally recognised in law” (Kinship Care Ireland, 2021: 2-3).<sup>1</sup>

#### New Zealand:

New Zealand is like Ireland in that recognition of kinship care families as a distinct family type is not explicitly provided for in legislation, provision for formal kinship care families fall under child protection and other child and family legislation and policy. However, it is argued that the philosophy of kinship care has been evident in legislation and policy for many years. For example, Worrall suggests that the Children, Young Person’s and their Families Act (1989) “was a forerunner in international child welfare legislation in enabling families to make decisions about the care of their kin children” (2008: p, 4).

To have the legal status of a care arrangement recognised in New Zealand, caregivers can apply to become a legal guardian of a child who is a relative. Under the Care of Children Act (2004) the court can appoint a relative such as a grandparent, sibling, aunt, or uncle to be a guardian of the said child. For children who are under the care or attention of the state, it is Oranga Tamariki policy that a social worker should support a caregiver in the legal process of becoming a legal guardian if the person is to be a permanent caregiver for a child (Oranga Tamariki, 2021).

#### Northern Ireland:

On a legislative basis, Northern Ireland is similar to Ireland in that kinship care falls into the category of alternative care (Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, 2021). However, policy developments in Northern Ireland mean that provisions for formal kinship families is now guided by statutory regulations such as the Looked After Children: Minimum Kinship Care Standards for Northern Ireland (Department of Health, 2019). These standards “recognise

---

<sup>1</sup> The Special Rapporteur on child protection, Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC, recently made a submission on the Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2023 and within it noted that the development of the Bill “is undoubtedly a significant and important step in reforming and revising the legal and policy framework concerning child welfare and child protection in Ireland” (Gallagher, 2023: 2). However, in concern, Gallagher drew attention to head 7 of the Bill which relates to voluntary care. It is suggested that further attention was required in terms of addressing “whether kinship care matters, whether there should be a maximum term applied to voluntary arrangements, and the oversight processes for a child in voluntary care” (Gallagher, 2023: 7).



the unique role played by family and friend carers in the lives of children separated from their parents” (ibid: para 1) and clearly define what kinship care is. The role and responsibility of health and social care services in supporting formal kinship carers and children in formal kinship care placements is outlined, as is the role of formal kinship carers. The rights of children in formal kinship care placements are also outlined. The development of this guidance is progressive in terms of investing in kinship care families as a distinct family type.

In Northern Ireland, a caregiver of a child who is not in the care of the state and is caring for the child as part of a private family arrangement, may apply for a Residence Order which will give him/her parental responsibility for the child as long as the order continues (Family Lives, 2023). This means that the caregiver will have some legal capacity to make important decisions relating to the day-to-day care of the child he/she is looking after. Grandparents in Northern Ireland can apply to become their grandchild’s legal guardian if he/she shares parental responsibility for a child over a continuous period of three years or if he/she has provided for the day-to-day care for the child for more than twelve months. The Children (Northern Ireland) Order (1995) defines parental responsibility as “All the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property”. Under this piece of legislation, any additional people with parental responsibility for the child would need to agree to the order being made, but ultimately, the court’s decision is based on the best interests of the child (Lynch, 2018).

### **Financial Support for Kinship Care Families:**

Investing in kinship care means ensuring that all kinship families have access to the financial support required to meet the needs of the child and to ensure the caregiver can provide an adequate standard of living for the child as a matter of human right.

In the world we live in today, caring for and meeting the needs of a child/ children is expensive. Kinship caregivers may step into the role of carer in a crisis situation or from circumstances under which they have not prepared to financially care for an additional child/children (Hunt, 2020). Some carers may have to or choose to give up work in order to care for a child in their family (Delap and Mann, 2019). This can increase the risk of experiencing financial hardship. Research shows that grandparents are more likely than those in the younger age groups to become kinship carers and are more likely than younger carers to experience financial hardship (Delap and Mann, 2019; McGrath and Wrafter, 2021). Older people are a vulnerable group in many societies in terms of increased risk of poverty with age (OECD, 2015). To ensure that

grandparents who take on the role of kinship carer are not pushed further into poverty, it is important to ensure they have access to adequate financial support.

Policy approaches to kinship care varies across the UK, and whilst the research discussed below is largely representative of kinship carers in England and Wales, it draws our attention to the financial hardship that kinship carers can experience. Drawing on the experience of 1435 kinship carers in England and Wales; McGrath and Ashley (2022) findings from a survey that in part was designed to develop an understanding of the financial impact on kinship carers who take on the care of vulnerable children. Some of the key findings from this study are as follows:

- 26% of carers could not afford food for their families.
- 35% of carers could not afford to buy clothes for their families.
- 45% could not afford to pay for activities for their children.
- 18% could not keep up with rent or mortgage payments.
- 31% could not buy educational equipment for their children.
- 72% of carers believed that their financial situations were having a negative effect on their physical and mental health.
- 36% of carers did not receive any financial support to help them raise their children.
- 33% of carers were concerned that their financial situation might eventually prevent them from being able to continue to care for their children.
- 86% of informal kinship carers received no financial support (2022: 4).

Kinship care has the aim of preserving family connections and providing a secure home where children feel safe and connected to his/her community and family (Black, 2012). The permanency, stability, and security offered to many children within kinship care arrangements (McSherry et al. 2013, 2016) aligns with and promotes the objectives of human rights treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (2010). However, it could be argued that the financial insecurity and or financial hardship that kinship families can face may jeopardise the positive impact kinship care placements can have, that is improved placement security and a sense of belonging / connectedness for a child/ children (McSherry et al. 2013, 2016). If caregivers are not financially supported, they may have no other choice than to relinquish care of the child to the state (Daly, 2021b).

#### Ireland:

In Ireland, kinship carers who are looking after children who are in state care (formal kinship carers/ relative foster carers) may be eligible for the Foster Care Allowance (FCA). To be eligible for the FCA, caregivers must undergo an assessment and be approved by Tusla to

become a relative foster carer. In some cases, children can be placed in the care of relatives in an emergency situation, but the assessment would be required to take place within a specific timeframe. The rate of payment for relative/ non-relative foster carers is the same and ranges from €325.00 to €352.00 depending on a child's age (Tusla, 2023). In the recent annual State Budget, it was announced that from January 2024, the rate of payment will increase by €25 per week. It is proposed that by November 2024, the rate of payment will increase to €400 for children under twelve and €425 for children over the age of twelve (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2023a). Whilst the increases in the rate of the FCA are welcomed, the lack of consideration in Budget 2024 in relation to financial support for informal kinship carers has been voiced Senator Eileen Flynn in Seanad Eireann on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2023b)

Informal kinship carers can apply for the Guardians Payment, previously known as the Orphans Payments. This is a weekly payment for children whose parents have both died, or “one parent is either dead or unknown or has abandoned and failed to provide for the child, and the other parent is unknown or has abandoned and failed to provide for the child” (Citizens Information, 2023: para 4). €203.00 per week is paid to successful applicants of the Guardian Payment (Contributory). The Non-Contributory Guardian's payment may be paid at the same rate or a reduced rate depending on the assessed means of the child. Notably, the Guardian Payment is much less than the FCA which may be available to formal kinship carers who become relative foster carers. Caregivers may also claim Child Benefit for the child/children in their care. Child Benefit is paid monthly at a rate of €140 per child.

1192 households were in receipt of the Guardian Payment (Contributory) in 2022, a slight increase that the number in 2020 which was 1179 (Department of Social Protection, 2020; 2022). There were 594 households in receipt of the Guardian Payment (Non-Contributory) in 2022, a slight increase in the number of recipients in 2020 where 553 household were in receipt of the payment (Department of Social Protection, 2020; 2022).

Twenty-four recipients of the Guardian payment (Contributory) and twenty-one recipients of the Guardian Payment (Non-Contributory) received an additional allowance for fuel in 2022 (Department of Social Protection, 2022). This is an increase on the number of recipients who received the payment in 2020 (GP C-5) (GP NC-8) (Department of Social Protection, 2020).

The number of household who are in receipt of the Guardian Payment and received the Back-to-School Clothing and Footwear Allowance has been increasing over the last number of years.

- 2020: GP-C: 208 GP-NC: 100

- 2021: GP-C: 200 GP-NC: 121
- 2022: GP-C: 285 GP-NC: 166

More women than men are in receipt of the Guardian Payment, Contributory and Non-Contributory:

- 2020: GP-C (F-990 M-189) and GP- NC (F-473 M- 80)
- 2022: GP-C (F-1109 M- 183) and GP- NC (F- 504 M-90)

Older people are more likely to be in receipt of the Guardian Payment (Contributory and Non-Contributory) than younger people.

- In 2022, 221 women and 48 men aged 65+ compared to 44 women and 16 men in the 20-24- year age category was in receipt of the GP (C).
- In 2022, 65 women and 6 men aged 65+ were in receipt of the GP (NC) compared to 13 women and 8 men in the 20-24- year age category.

#### New Zealand:

Like Ireland, there are financial supports provided for through legislation and policies relating to child protection and social protection (Work and Income, 2023). Legislative and policy developments over the last number of years have had an impact on the type and level of financial support kinship carers can access when caring for someone else’s child. Amendments to the Social Security Act 2018 and the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 mean that all kinship caregivers that are caring daily for a child who is not their own, regardless of placement type, can apply for financial support from the state (Oranga Tamariki, 2019).

Through the Social Security Act 2018 (SSA) where caregivers can apply for the Caregiver Allowance (CA), Unsupported Child Benefit (UCB), and Orphans Benefit (OB). CA is available to approved caregivers caring for a child who has been taken into state care (Oranga Tamariki, 2021). UCB is available to caregivers who are caring for someone else’s child as a result of family breakdown (ibid). OB is available to carers who are looking after a child/children whose parents have died, cannot be found, have long-term health conditions, or who are incapable of looking after their child (ibid).

The rate of payment is the same for all of the payment types outlined here. That is, between \$273.36 and \$317.82 depending on the child’s age. The rate of pay has increased since 2022 when the rates were between \$254.95 - \$296.42. Additionally, families who receive these income supports are automatically entitled to or can apply for additional supplementary payments such as the Holiday and Birthday Allowance, a clothing allowance, the Establishment

Grant and a yearly School and Year Start Payment (New Zealand Government, 2023a, 2023c). There is also an Extraordinary Care Fund which is intended to support carers to support children ‘showing promise’ or experiencing difficulties. Carers can apply for this fund once per year (New Zealand Government, 2023d).

The Ministry of Social Development (2023b) provides statistics relating to the number of caregivers in receipt of USB and OB. This data shows that there had been a consistent increase in the number of caregivers in receipt of either USB or OB between 2018 and 2022, until 2023 when there was a slight dip in the number of caregivers in New Zealand who received one of these supplementary payments.

- 2018: 10,896
- 2019: 11,769
- 2020: 12,642
- 2022: 13,260
- 2023: 12,258

Increases in the rates of these payments, and the extension of additional supplementary allowances to all caregivers in recent years has been partly in response to a 2019 review of the financial assistance for caregivers by the Oranga Tamariki, the Ministry for Children. The review found that the nature of the system was complex and fragmented, it involved different payments, agencies, and funding models, the payments system was not equitable, and that caregivers found it difficult to navigate the payment system (Stephenson and Thompson, 2020).

The changes in the access to and extension of financial assistance to kinship caregivers over the last twenty years in New Zealand is also be attributed to the work of organisations such as the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust (GRG). In 2008, GRG drew on research to urge the government to increase UCB and OB rates to the same base level as that received by non-relative foster carers. They also advocated for an extension of additional supports such as the School and Year Start Payment, the Establishment Grant, and the Extra Ordinary Care fund to children and families eligible for UCB and OB (Worrall and Bundle, 2021). In 2013, GRG worked with a Member of Parliament to develop a Bill to extend eligibility for the clothing allowance to carers who received UCB and OB also. That Private Members Bill came into effect in 2018 (ibid).

Northern Ireland:

In Northern Ireland, formal kinship caregivers who are approved by a Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) may be eligible to receive the same payment as non-relative foster carers. In 2022, there was 2604 foster carers registered with the HSC Trusts, fifty-two percent of which were approved or in the process of being approved kinship carers (Department of Health, 2022a). Like New Zealand, rates of payment for foster carers in Northern Ireland is between £141 (£135.93 in 2021) and £207.00 per week (£200.25 in 2021) depending on the age of the child (Department of Health, 2022b).

Similar to Ireland and New Zealand, formal kinship carers in Northern Ireland who are in receipt of the Foster Care Allowance are automatically entitled to additional financial allowances that can be used to benefit the child in their care (Department of Health, 2022b). There are certain activities and costs that a foster caregiver can apply for additional financial support. For example, he/she can apply for support with clothing, school activities, setting up costs, tuition, and special activity fees, milage, and some health-related costs such as spectacles that are not available under the NHS. Caregivers must demonstrate need in an application for additional financial support under these categories (Department of Health, 2022b).

As is the approach in Ireland, there is no statutory obligation on the state to provide financial or other support for families in informal kinship care arrangements (Rodgers and McCluney, 2022). Outside of the financial support that may be available as part of the social protection system in Northern Ireland, namely Universal Credit and Child Benefit, to access additional financial support for caring for someone else's child, informal kinship carers can apply for financial assistance from a HSCT who have an obligation to support children in need. According to Citizens Advice UK in Northern Ireland, health and social care trusts who have assessed a child as being in need, "have a discretionary power to provide financial assistance or assistance in kind to families in order to meet their duties" (2023: para 5). There is no set amount, the Trust will decide the amount and kind of financial assistance based on the assessed needs of the child and or carer.

The Looked after Children Minimum Kinship Care Standards Northern Ireland states that "It should be noted that no child or young person should have to become looked after, whether by agreement with those with parental responsibility or by way of seeking a court order, for the sole purpose of enabling financial, practical or other support to be provided to the child's carer" (Department of Health, 2019: 4). However, it could be argued that inadequate/limited access to financial support for informal kinship families may mean that some caregivers may have no

other choice than to seek state intervention and enter a formal care agreement in order to be able to financially support the child/children in their care. This was found to be some grandparents experience in New Zealand (Gordon, 2016b) prior to legislative and policy reforms that led to the current system. A table outlining the main financial supports available for kinship carers and the eligibility criteria attached to each payment for Ireland, New Zealand, and Northern Ireland can be found in Appendix One.

### **Practical Child and Family Supports:**

Research suggests that children in kinship care have a high level of need and often have similar complex educational and psychosocial needs to children in the care of the State (Burns, O'Mahony, and Brennan, 2021). However, children in kinship care often have unique experiences that require specific and targeted supports. Wijedasa (2017) highlights how compared to children who live in a household with at least one birth parent, children in kinship care in Northern Ireland were 1.5 times more likely to have longer term health problems or disability that limited their day-to-day activities (2017: 7). In the UK, data drawn from the Kinship Care: State of the Nation Survey 2021 shows that sixty-two per cent of kinship carers believe that the child in their care has long term physical and mental health needs and that thirty-six percent of represented children have special education needs (McGrath and Ashley, 2021).

In another study, Houston, Hayes, and MacDonald (2018) found that the children being looked after by fifty-four kinship foster carers in Northern Ireland required help at school and some presented with challenging emotions and behaviours. The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust say that many children in kinship care have special education needs and require intensive supports to deal with the trauma they have experienced. GRG research found that many children are diagnosed with behaviour disorders (Family for Every Child, 2021).

Research shows that kinship caregivers also require support, support that seeks to cater for the distinct and unique needs and experiences of kinship carers. McGrath and Ashley say that “Kinship carers are older than other groups raising children” and found that “over one-third of kinship carers have support needs of their own” (2021: 3). Houston, Hayes, and MacDonald (2018) describe the characteristics, needs and experiences of fifty-four kinship foster carers in Northern Ireland. The kinship carers involved in this study were predominantly grandparents. The study found that the beginning of the placements was the period where the need for

practical and emotional support was most evident. There was also a need for respite support (ibid).

The literature reviewed here shows that ensuring access to practical child and family support is important in terms of promoting positive outcomes for children and young people (Delap and Mann, 2019). Caregivers also need to be supported in order for them to fulfil their role to the best of their ability. The access that families have, can make a difference in the lives of kinship carers, kinship children, and for the state (Kinship, 2023; MacAllister, 2022).

### Ireland:

In Ireland, the state has a legal obligation to ensure that the needs of a child in care are met and under the Childcare Act (1991), there is an obligation on Tusla to provide family support services (Tusla, 2022: 105). For formal kinship care families, practical supports are provided by Tusla. For example, formal kinship carers have access to a link worker, and a child social worker is also assigned to the family and are often afforded access to additional supports depending on the child's needs. The Irish Foster Care Association also offers supports in the form of training and helpline support for formal kinship carers. In 2022, €206,282 million in funding was given to a wide range of private and voluntary agencies who were commissioned to provide services on behalf of Tusla on a local, regional, and national basis (Tusla, 2022: 105).

In terms of support with meeting the health needs of the children in the care of the State, Tusla say that all children in state care will have their own medical card (Tusla, 2023c). However, it is suggested that this is not automatically the case for children in kinship care. Kinship Care Ireland say that this “is an anomaly, which serves to prevent a specific cohort of children and young people, who often have ongoing or complex health conditions, from access to appropriate healthcare and creates an additional burden for households in which kinship families are often already struggling financially” (2023: 7).

In comparison to the numerous practical supports available to formal kinship care families, there are limited provisions in terms of equally supporting informal kinship families. Some informal kinship caregivers may be able to access funding for the child in their care to access funding for, or a place in a childcare facility for the child in their care under the National Childcare Scheme. This is a positive aspect of statutory provision as it relates to practical support as it may allow some informal kinship caregivers to be in a better position to be in paid employment, it may give some carers respite for a short period of time daily. It is also positive



in terms of supporting the wellbeing of children living in informal kinship care arrangements. For many informal kinship care families, support and advice comes from civil society organisations such as Kinship Care Ireland (KCI). KCI is the only organisation that specialises in providing information and support for kinship care families in Ireland. An example of some of the services and supports offered by KCI include ensuring families have access to the right information pertaining to their care arrangement and hold workshops and events to help families connect with and support each other. Alongside this, the advocacy and campaign work in relation to policy and legislative change seeks to enhance the support for and recognition of kinship families (Kinship Care Ireland, 2023b).

Additionally, some families may be able to access supports and services from a Family Resources Centre (FRC) in their local area. There are 121 FRC's across Ireland that offer information and advice in relation to rights and entitlements and educational and therapeutic programmes and services for children, young people, and adults to name a few (FRCNF, 2022). The 2022 Annual report shows the extent of FRC's reach in terms of supporting children and families. For example, in 2022, 58,325 counselling sessions were provided for children, young people, adults, and families. They provided 40,550 family support sessions and 6,790 parent support sessions. Furthermore, 28,488 adults availed of admin support and 91,734 adults and children benefitted from community-based initiatives. FRC's receive their core funding from Tusla and a budget of €18.1 million was allocated in 2022. However, in the FRCNF (2023) prebudget submission, it is argued that more funding is required from the state in order for this level of support to be sustained and call on the government to address the historical shortfall in funding (FRCNF, 2023).

#### New Zealand:

In New Zealand there are provisions made on a statutory basis through the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 and the Childrens Act 2014 to ensure the assessed needs of child/children in care are met. Supports and initiatives put in place seek to meet the health, educational, cultural, social, and emotional needs of children in care. In 2019, the National Care Standards came into effect, and “set out the standard of care that tamariki and rangatahi need to be well and do well while they're in care, and the support that caregivers can expect to receive” (Oranga Tamariki, 2020: para 2). There are six parts to National Standards. Under each part there are policies, guidelines, and toolkits that seek to ensure the needs of children and caregivers are met. They are:

1. Assessments, plan, and visits which relates to ensuring a needs assessments and care plan is developed for children in care.
2. Support to meet needs is about meeting the needs of children when they are in care.
3. Caregiver recruitment and support relates to the assessment, plans and support for caregivers.
4. Voice of the child which is related to supporting children to express their views and contribute to their care experience.
5. Care transitions is about supporting children during care transitions.
6. Monitoring relates to obligations around monitoring and report on compliance with the National Care Standards (Oranga Tamariki, 2020).

For caregivers, there are support services such as the Caregiver Assistance Programme, access to training programmes and a confidential counselling and advice service (Oranga Tamariki, 2021). Oranga Tamariki carers can access information and support advice from a social worker, or another support team worker (Oranga Tamariki, 2023a). While there is a range of supports and services provided for caregivers in New Zealand, it is argued that while there are many parenting programmes available, there is a difficulty accessing supports and or training programmes that meet the specific needs of kinship care families (Family for Every Child, 2021).

Similar to Ireland, the access that informal kinship carers have to supports and services for themselves and the children they care for is largely provided by community-based organisations in New Zealand. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust (GRG) are a national organisation that provides access to supports and services specifically for kinship families. Similar to KCI, GRG provides information and advice to kinship carers, and they hold events and workshops that encourages the development of support networks between caregivers. The organisation also campaigns on behalf of kinship families in order to generate meaningful legislative and policy change (GRG, 2023).

#### Northern Ireland:

‘A Life Deserved: “Caring” for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland’ is a strategy that aims to improve outcomes for children and young people and help them to achieve their full potential in line with their peers. It is stated that the “strategy describes the pledge to support children and young people in care, i.e., those in foster care, residential care, supported accommodation, supported lodgings and placed with parents” (Department of Health, 2021: 2). This strategy sets out a number of commitments in relation to the promotion of the health

and education needs of children in care. The strategy commits to ensuring access to family supports and services that are required by kinship care children and their caregivers.

In terms of the provision of supports for kinship care children, the Minimum Standard for Kinship Care in Northern Ireland states “All children in kinship care are provided with the necessary support to ensure that their education, training, health and social development needs are being met; that they are living in a safe environment; and that they are being supported to acquire the necessary skills, confidence and competence to carry them through into adult life” (Department of Health, 2019: 27).

For formal kinship carers in Northern Ireland, the Minimum Standards recommends that families will have access to support and advice from one of five HSC Trusts or another agency commissioned by the Trust. Formal kinship carers are provided with training under the Regional Training Pathway for Foster Carers programme (Department of Health, 2019). Additionally, depending on the level of assessed need, a kinship care social worker may be available to support the family also.

While there may be an obligation on the state to provide access to supports and services for children and families involved with child protection services, a recent review of social care services in Northern Ireland revealed that access to some programmes and supports can depend on the severity of need and the postcode in which a family resides (Jones, 2023). The report also highlighted the need for more practical supports and the need to adequately resource and strengthen the voluntary and community sectors (Jones, 2023).

Kinship families can also access support and advice from a Family Support Hub in Northern Ireland. Family Support Hubs adopt a community-based approach and involve statutory, community, and voluntary agencies coming together to work with families in need of support (Family Hubs Network, 2023). Families can self-refer to a Family Support Hub, or a referral can be made on their behalf with their consent (CYPSP, 2023). Some of the services and supports offered in Family Support Hubs include parent and service led support groups, welfare and benefits advice, services for children and young people with special educational needs, health advice, and a range of other child and parenting supports (Family Hubs Network, 2023).

Child and family support for informal kinship families may be available through the Community Family Support Programme (NI Direct Government Services, 2023). Families can refer themselves for support with parenting skills, encouraging better relationships with families, and money management and benefit advice. Some families may be able to access

specialist support that can include family counselling and debt management (NI Direct Government Services, 2023).

Northern Ireland Kinship Care is a community-based organisation that works specifically with all kinship care families regardless of placement type. This organisation provides specialist services such as the Caring for Kin Project and the Kinship Care Support Service. The Caring for Kin Project brings grandparents and other older kinship carers together to help build a network of support. The supports and services offered to kinship carers include training opportunities, counselling services, specialist advocacy services, and a free confidential telephone helpline service (Northern Ireland Kinship Care, 2023a)

## **Analysis & Discussion.**

### Statutory Recognition:

In Ireland, New Zealand and Northern Ireland, there are established legislative and policy frameworks that seek to protect the rights and promote the wellbeing of children and families. In Northern Ireland, the development and introduction of the Minimum Standards for Kinship Care is a positive development that indicates that those with policy making power see the value of formally investing in kinship care.

In reflection of the unique experiences of kinship care families, there is a need for governments in Ireland, Northern Ireland, and New Zealand to continue to work towards developing strong legislative and policy frameworks that recognise the distinct experiences and often complex and dynamic needs of all kinship care families, not just those that develop as a result of statutory intervention. Doing so would be a positive step forward in terms of protecting the rights and promoting the wellbeing of all children and of all families as set out in human rights treaties and objectives such as the UNCRC (1989) and the United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care for Children (2010).

The statistical data from Ireland indicates that more women compared to men take on the role of main kinship carer. It may prove useful for a gender impact assessment to be carried out as part of the development of future legislative or policy frameworks relating to kinship care families. Doing so would allow government to ensure “any discriminatory” effects in relation to the promotion of gender equality “are either removed or mitigated” (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016).

### Financial Support:

Investing in kinship care means ensuring that all kinship families have access to adequate financial support. Research discussed earlier in this report shows the extent of the financial hardship that some kinship caregivers experience as they take on the role of caring for a vulnerable child. From a rights-based perspective, it is argued that “States should ensure that kinship carers receive equitable financial and other support to ensure that they do not face financial difficulties due to taking on the care of the child of another. States should refrain from discriminatory treatment of children in kinship care (as opposed to those in state care) when it comes to state support. Provision for children should be based on need rather than legal status” (Daly, 2021a: 5).

In Ireland, New Zealand, and Northern Ireland, there are a range of financial supports available to kinship carers and children on a statutory basis through the child protection and or social protection systems. The increase in the number of families accessing financial supports such as the Guardian Payment in Ireland is positive and implies progress in terms of increased support for informal kinship care givers. However, given Ireland and New Zealand are quite similar in the context of population size, the difference in the number of kinship carers accessing state financial supports in New Zealand compared to Ireland is stark.

For many kinship care families, access to financial support can depend on the legal status of the care arrangement, and access for those that develop from private family arrangements can be particularly challenging for kinship care families in Ireland and Northern Ireland. In New Zealand, the removal of the 12-month rule whereby the caregiver must be the primary caregiver for at 12 months means that kinship caregivers can seek financial support even if the care arrangement will be temporary. The improved access that all kinship carers have to financial supports in New Zealand could be seen as an example of progressive legislative and policy developments in terms of investment in kinship care families.

As noted, the statistical data shows that over the last number of years, more families are in receipt of the Guardian Payment (Contributory and Non-Contributory). However, it is argued that qualifying for the Guardian Payment can be challenging, particularly where the caregiver has no access to social work support (Kinship Care Ireland, 2023). This issue was raised in a review of the Orphan Contributory Allowance and the Orphan Non-Contributory Pension (Department of Social and Family Affairs, 2003). At that time, it was argued that as there was no definition of the term abandoned in the legislation governing the Orphan Contributory

Allowance and the Orphan Non-Contributory Pension, and it was “very difficult to determine whether or not a child has been abandoned and can qualify for payments” (2003: 66).

It was recommended that a definition of the term ‘abandoned’ be incorporated into legislation that provides for access to the Orphan Contributory Allowance and the Orphan Non-Contributory Pension (DSFA, 2003). It was also recommended that the definition should include that “a child is not regarded as abandoned if the parent knows and approves of the steps that someone else is taking to look after him/her” (Ibid, 2003: 66). It was proposed that this would make the process of applying for the payment more straightforward and that the same standard is applied to all cases. It was also recommended that in describing abandoned in the legislation discussed, the word “failed to provide” should be changed to “unable to provide”.

Fourteen years since the review, the recommended legislative changes have not come to the fore. An example of how the legislation continues to exacerbate the challenges faced by some kinship carers in accessing financial support can be drawn from a report published by the Community Law and Mediation Northside (CLMN) (2017). The report drew attention to the impact of the way that the terms “orphan” and “abandonment” are interpreted by a deciding officer in assessing a grandmother’s eligibility for the Guardians Payment (Contributory). The grandmother, who was the child’s only legal guardian, was refused the Guardians Payment (Contributory) on the basis that the support provided by the birth father of the child was not consistent with the statutory definition of an ‘orphan’. However, CLMN used the Department of Social Protection Guidelines to support the grandmother in appealing the decision. It was claimed that the birth father made irregular financial contributions, and “failed to maintain a reasonable degree of interest, concern or responsibility as to the welfare of the child” (CLMN, 2017: 2). It was argued that this is abandonment and therefore satisfies the legal definition of orphan. They successfully supported the grandmother of the child in appealing the decision.

Reflecting on the report by CLMN (2017) and on the wording of legislation that provides for access to financial supports for kinship carers in Ireland, it could be argued that the wording within legislation continues to contribute to the challenges faced by some kinship carers. The current definition of abandonment is open to interpretation, making it more difficult for kinship carers in Ireland to prove/evidence their need for financial support. In contrast, the wording of legislation in New Zealand appears to be more centred on the needs of the child and it recognises that there are times when a biological parent is not able to care for a child, for

example, due to disablement, family breakdown, illness etc. This makes it much easier for caregivers to prove their need for financial support.

(Table 2: wording of Irish and New Zealand legislation)

Ireland	New Zealand
<b>Social Welfare Act (1995)</b>	<b>Social Security Act (2018)</b>
<p><b>Guardian Payment</b></p> <p>20.— (1) Section 2 (1) of the Principal Act is hereby amended by the substitution for the definition of “orphan” of the following definition:</p> <p>“‘orphan’ means a qualified child—</p> <p>a) both of whose parents are dead,</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>b) one of whose parents is dead, unknown, has abandoned or has refused or failed to provide for the child and whose other parent—</p> <p>(i) is unknown, or</p> <p>(ii) has abandoned or has refused or failed to provide for the child,</p> <p>where that child is not normally residing with a stepparent or with a person who is married to and living with that stepparent;”.</p>	<p><b>Orphan Benefit</b></p> <p>(1) This section applies if, because of the circumstances specified in subsection (2), a child has no parent (as defined in subsection (3)) who is able to care for the child.</p> <p>(2) The circumstances are that each of the child’s parents (as defined in subsection (3))—</p> <p>(a) is dead; or</p> <p>(b) is missing; or</p> <p>(c) has a long-term serious disablement.</p> <p>(3) A parent, in relation to a child, and for the purposes only of this subpart and section 31(b)(i), means a natural parent or an adoptive parent (and so excludes, for those purposes, a stepparent) of the child.</p> <p>(4) A person (<b>P</b>) is entitled to an orphan’s benefit for the child if—</p> <p>(a) P is an eligible caregiver of the child; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the child is both resident and present in New Zealand; or</p> <p>(ii) P has been both resident and present in New Zealand for a continuous period of 12 months at any time</p> <p><b>Unsupported child’s benefit</b></p> <p>A person who is a principal caregiver in respect of a dependent child shall be entitled to receive an unsupported child’s benefit in respect of the child if—</p> <p>(a) that person is not the natural parent, adoptive parent, or stepparent of the child; and</p> <p>(b) because of a breakdown in the child’s family, no natural parent, adoptive parent, or stepparent of the child is able to care for the child or to provide fully for the child’s support; and</p> <p>(c) the applicant is likely to be the principal caregiver in respect of the child for at least 1 year from the date of application for the benefit; and</p> <p>(d) the applicant is aged 18 years or over; and</p> <p>(e) either—</p> <p>(i) the child is both resident and present in New Zealand; or</p> <p>(ii) the applicant has been both resident and present in New Zealand for a continuous period of 12 months at any time.</p>

Practical Child and family Supports:

Investing in kinship care means ensuring all children and families have access to the social and practical supports that they need. The United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care for

Children states: “The Family being the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth, wellbeing and protection of children, efforts should primarily be directed to enabling the child to remain in or return to the care of his/her parents, or when appropriate, other close family members. The State should ensure that families have access to forms of support in the care giving role” (United Nations, 2010: para 3).

In Ireland, New Zealand, and Northern Ireland, access to child and family supports are provided for on a statutory basis. As discussed, there are policies, standards, and guidelines put in place to ensure that the health, educational, cultural, social, and emotional needs of children in care are met. There are also some provisions made for formal caregivers who are looking after a child in care. These provisions are positive in terms of investing in formal kinship care arrangements.

In Ireland, the legislative and policy frameworks in place to ensure the needs and rights of children in care are robust. The provision of funding to community and voluntary organisations working at a local level is a positive aspect of investment in children and families and in promoting timely access to practical support. Whilst not specifically an example of investment in kinship care, it does mean that kinship families who otherwise may not be able to access supports and services due the legal status of the care arrangement have better opportunities in terms of accessing information and advice pertaining to their role as kinship caregiver. The open-door and inclusive approach taken by organisation such as KCI and FRC’s and many other civil society organisation, along with the community-based delivery approach may be particularly beneficial for kinship care families who might be reluctant to seek advice or support from statutory agencies due to negative experiences and or fear that the children will be taken into state care. As noted, more commitment in terms of funding is required to help sustain the work of these organisations and other similar initiatives.

In New Zealand, the introduction of the National Care Standards in 2019, and the requirement of monitoring and reporting on compliance is good practice in terms of promoting better outcomes for children in care and may ensure that children in care, their caregivers and wider families have better access to the supports and services that they need. The increasing focus on prevention and early intervention in policy and practice when it comes to child and family support, may mean that some children and their birth parents receive the required support where needed. This may alleviate the need for some children to be separated from their birth parents



for long periods of time which aligns with the recommendations outlined in the United Nations Guidelines for Alternative Care (United Nations, 2010).

The introduction of the Minimum Standards for Kinship Care in Northern Ireland (DoH, 2019) is a positive policy development and indicates that the state is investing in kinship families. The allocation of a kinship care social worker is also a positive aspect of practice. Having social workers with specific training of kinship care may ensure the experiences and unique needs of kinship families are better understood and taken into consideration. For some kinship children and caregivers, understanding and empathy can make a real difference in their experience and willingness to engage with social workers.

For informal kinship families, in Ireland and Northern Ireland in particular, there is a major shortfall when it comes to the statutory provision of child and family practical supports. It is community and voluntary organisations who provide the most support for these families. The reliance on the community and voluntary sector in the context of providing practical child and family supports and services for all kinship care families, and the level practical support provided by these organisation shows the importance of adequately funding and resourcing them. Without doing so, these organisations may not be able to sustain the level of support they provide to children, caregivers, and families in the future.

## Overview of Strengths and Weaknesses

Statutory Recognition	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of policies and legislation that recognise and seek to protect and promote the rights and wellbeing of all children and families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No formal legislative framework recognising kinship care families as a distinct family type.</li> <li>Terminology used in legislation is open to interpretation, can impact access to supports.</li> </ul>
<b>New Zealand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philosophy of kinship care evident in legislation and policy (Worrall, 2008).</li> <li>Legislative development to ensure caregivers have access to financial support based on need, not the legal status of the child.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No formal legislative framework relating to kinship care families as a distinct family type.</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of policy frameworks recognising formal kinship care families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No formal legislative framework relating to kinship care families as a distinct family type.</li> <li>Informal kinship carers not considered in the Kinship Care Minimum Standards (DoH, 2019).</li> </ul>
Financial Support	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to weekly and monthly financial supports depending on eligibility and proof of need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PFA= no legal obligation on the state to financially support informal kinship care families.</li> <li>Terminology used in legislation is open to interpretation, can impact a deciding</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay-parity between approved relative foster carers and non-relative foster carers.</li> </ul>	officer's approval or refusal of financial support.
<b>New Zealand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to financial support for children in the care of the state or not.</li> <li>Pay-parity between foster carers and all kinship carers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some caregivers not informed about the financial supports available to them (Family for Every Child, 2021).</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to financial support for children in the care of the state.</li> <li>Pay-parity between approved relative and non-relative foster carers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessing information around entitlement to financial support can be challenging.</li> <li>No formal provision for informal kinship care families to access financial support, decided at a local level by HSCT.</li> </ul>
<b>Family Supports</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statutory provision of health, education, and family support for children in the care of the state.</li> <li>State funding for community/voluntary sector to provide services and supports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited/ no statutory provision for informal kinship families.</li> <li>More funding needed to sustain the level of support provided.</li> </ul>
<b>New Zealand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statutory provision of health, education, and family support for children in the care of the state.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited/ no statutory provision for informal kinship care families. Access to supports and services for informal kinship care families can be determined by ability to pay.</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statutory provision of health, education, and family support for children in the care of the state, including those in formal kinship care placements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited/ no statutory provision for children who are not 'looked after', informal kinship care arrangements are exempt from statutory guidance.</li> <li>Support more readily available where there are child protection concerns (Jones, 2023).</li> </ul>

## Conclusion and Recommendations:

Drawing on the literature reviewed as part of this research project, there is a strong rationale for recognising, investing in, and supporting kinship care as an alternative to state and other out of home care alternatives and as a distinct family type. States should endeavour to develop and implement strong legislative and policy frameworks that recognise and provide for kinship care families as a distinct family type. Without adequate access to financial, social, and practical child and family supports for all kinship care families, the security and stability that comes with many kinship care arrangements can be placed at risk. To support all kinship care families, states should endeavour to take a rights-based approach in recognising and investing in both formal and informal kinship care families. Doing so “will lead to better outcomes for children, wider society, and the economy in the future” (Nicol Economics, 2020; Kinship Care Ireland, 2021; MacAllister, 2022).

## Recommendations

1. States should endeavour to develop strong legislative and policy frameworks that recognise the unique experiences and distinct needs of all kinship care families. Policy makers should endeavour to ensure that future legislative and policy developments are informed by those with lived experience of kinship care and that the gendered nature of kinship care is taken into consideration.
2. Ensure all kinship care families have access to adequate financial support. Similar to the developments in New Zealand, access to financial support should be based on need and not on the legal status of the child or on the legal status of the care arrangement. Definitions used in legislation providing for access to financial support should be updated or made clearer so that there is no room for interpretation, making it less challenging for kinship caregivers to access financial supports.
3. All kinship care families should have access to the social and practical child and family supports required. The provision of statutory support should depend on the rights and needs of children and caregivers and not on the type of care arrangement in place. Funding to voluntary and community-based organisations should be increased to help sustain the level of support provided.
4. More research conducted on a national level would help in understanding the lived experiences of all kinship carers, young people, children, and extended family member in accessing financial, practical, and other child and family supports. Findings from such research could be considered and used in future legislative and policy developments.

## Bibliography:

1. Black, L.A. (2012). Kinship Care [online]. Available at: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/Documents/RaISe/Publications/2012/health/4112.pdf> (Accessed 09/08/2023).
2. Burns, K., O’Mahony, C. and Brennan, R. (2021) 'Private Family Arrangements' for Children in Ireland: The Informal Grey Space In-Between State Care and the Family Home', *The British Journal of Social Work*, 51(4), pp. 1203-1220. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcab032.
3. Chapman, A and Tarrant, A. (2017) *Exploring Inequalities in the Context of Kinship Care* [online]. Available at: [https://www.ark.ac.uk/ARK/sites/default/files/2018-01/policybrief11\\_1.pdf](https://www.ark.ac.uk/ARK/sites/default/files/2018-01/policybrief11_1.pdf) (accessed 15/08/2023).
4. Citizens Advice UK. (2023) *Local Authority Services for Children in Need* [online]. Available at: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/cymraeg/family/looking-after-people/local-authority-services-for-children-in-need/#h-what-services-can-the-local-authority-provide> (accessed 29/08/2023).
5. Citizens Information. (2023) *Custody of Children and Cohabiting Couples* [online]. Available at: <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/birth-family-relationships/cohabiting-couples/custody-of-children-cohabiting-couples/> (Accessed 21/08/2023).
6. Community Law and Mediation Northside. (2017) *Case base Number G0087. Title of Payment: Guardian Payment (contributory)* [online]. Available at: <https://communitylawandmediation.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/GuardiansPaymentGOO87.pdf> (accessed 27/08/2023)
7. CoramBAAF. (2023) *Statistics: Northern Ireland Looked after children, adopting, and fostering statistics for Northern Ireland* [online]. Available at: <https://corambaaf.org.uk/resources/statistics/statistics-northern-ireland> (Accessed 15/07/2023).
8. CYPSP. (2023) *Family Support Hubs* [online]. Available at: <https://cypsp.hscni.net/family-support-hubs/> (accessed 03/09/2023).
9. Daly, A. (2021a) *Kinship care and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child for the Day of General*

- Discussion: “Children’s Rights and Alternative Care”* [online]. Available at: <https://www.kinshipcare.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Kinship-Care-and-CRC-Rights-Dr-Aoife-Daly-2021.pdf> (accessed 16/08/2023).
10. Daly, A. (2021b) Good Relations: Kinship Care in Liverpool, UK and the Views of Professionals on Human Rights, *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, Volume 13, Issue 1, February 2021, Pages 67–85, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/huab006>.
  11. Delap, E & Mann, G. (2019) *The Paradox of Kinship Care. The Most Valued but Least Resourced Care Option- a Global Study* [online]. Available at: <https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Kinship-Care-Global-Review-Final.pdf> (Accessed 04/08/2023).
  12. Department of Communities. (2011) *Kinship care: A literature review*, Child Safety Services, Department of Communities, Queensland [online]. Available at: <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/childsafety/foster-care/kinship-care-literature-review.pdf> (accessed 10/08/2023).
  13. Department of Health and Department of Education. (2021) *A Life Deserved: Caring for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland* [online]. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/doh-lac-strategy.pdf> (Accessed 27/08/2023).
  14. Department of Health. (2020) *Childrens Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2019/2020* [online]. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/child-social-care-19-20.pdf> (accessed 14/08/2023).
  15. Department of Health. (2022a) *Childrens Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2020/2021* [online]. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/child-social-care-21-22.pdf> (accessed 14/08/2023).
  16. Department of Health. (2022b) *Foster Care Allowance* [online]. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/foster-care-allowances> (accessed 15/08/2023).
  17. Department of Health. (2023) *Kinship Care* [online]. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/kinship-care> (accessed 15/08/2023).

18. Department of Social and Family. (2003) *Review of the Orphan's Contributory Allowance (OCA) and Orphan's Non-contributory Pension (ONCP)* [online]. Available at: <file:///C:/Users/Gill2/Downloads/Expenditure-Review-of-the-Orphans-Contributory-Allowance.pdf> (accessed 31/08/2023).
19. Department of Social Protection. (2020) *Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services Annual Report 2020* [online]. Available at: <https://assets.gov.ie/152643/d6371436-0518-471e-9674-a2b6a92739a2.pdf> (accessed 29/08/2023).
20. Department of Social Protection. (2022) *Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services Annual Report 2022* [online]. Available at: <https://assets.gov.ie/262944/3bdd325b-db94-4daf-90c3-b6c00682a7d9.pdf> (accessed 29/08/2023).
21. European Institute for Gender Equality. (2016) *Gender Impact Assessment Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit* [online]. Available at: [https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/eige\\_gender\\_impact\\_assessment\\_gender\\_mainstreaming\\_toolkit.pdf](https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/eige_gender_impact_assessment_gender_mainstreaming_toolkit.pdf) (Accessed 29/08/2023).
22. Family for Every Child. (2021) *Kinship Care in New Zealand* [online podcast]. Available at: [Kinship care in New Zealand - Family for Every Child](#) (accessed 20/08/2023).
23. Family for Every Child. (2022) *Kinship Care Position Paper* [online]. Available at: <https://familyforeverychild.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Kinship-care-Position-paper.pdf> (Accessed 16/07/2023).
24. Family for Every Child. (2023) *Who We Are* [online]. Available at: <https://familyforeverychild.org/about-us/who-we-are/> (Accessed 16/07/2023).
25. Family Hubs Network. (2023) *What Family Hubs Offer* [online]. Available at: <https://familyhubsnetwork.com/hubs/what-family-hubs-offer/> (accessed 03/09/2023).
26. Family Lives. (2023) *Residence Orders* [online]. Available at: <https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/your-family/fostering-adoption-kinshipcare/residence-order?referer=/advice/your-family/fostering-adoption-kinshipcare> (accessed 29/08/2023).

27. Family Resource Centre National Forum. (2023) *Pre-budget Submission 2024* [online]. Available at: [https://www.familyresource.ie/uploadedfiles/FRC%20National%20Forum%20Pre%20Budget%202024%20Submission\\_3.pdf](https://www.familyresource.ie/uploadedfiles/FRC%20National%20Forum%20Pre%20Budget%202024%20Submission_3.pdf) (accessed 02/09/2023).
28. Family Resource Centre National Forum. (2022). *Annual Report* [online]. Available at: [https://www.familyresource.ie/uploadedfiles/Final%20FRCNF-Annual-Report-2022\\_4.pdf](https://www.familyresource.ie/uploadedfiles/Final%20FRCNF-Annual-Report-2022_4.pdf) (accessed 02/09/2023).
29. Family Rights Group. (2020) *First Thought Not After Thought: Report of the Parliamentary Taskforce on Kinship Care* [online]. Available at: [https://frg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/KinshipCare\\_parliamentaryreport-sept20.pdf](https://frg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/KinshipCare_parliamentaryreport-sept20.pdf) (accessed 21/08/2023).
30. Family Rights Group. (2022) *Supporting Kinship Care: Getting the Legislative Framework Right* [online conference]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdMaqcz7Rw0> (Accessed 21/08/2023).
31. Gallagher, C. (2023) *Submission to The Joint Committee on Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Concerning the General Scheme of the Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2023* [online]. Available at: [https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/33/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_children\\_equality\\_disability\\_integration\\_and\\_youth/submissions/2023/2023-06-28\\_submission-caoilfhionn-gallagher-kc-special-rapporteur-on-child-protection-special-rapporteur-on-child-protection\\_en.pdf](https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/33/joint_committee_on_children_equality_disability_integration_and_youth/submissions/2023/2023-06-28_submission-caoilfhionn-gallagher-kc-special-rapporteur-on-child-protection-special-rapporteur-on-child-protection_en.pdf) (accessed 30/08/2023).
32. Geen, R. (2004). The Evolution of Kinship Care Policy and Practice. *The Future of Children*, 14 (1), 131–149. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1602758>
33. Gordon, L. (2016a) *The empty nest is refilled: The joys and tribulations of raising grandchildren in Aotearoa Auckland*: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust (NZ) [online]. Available at: <https://www.grg.org.nz/site/grg/The%20empty%20nest%20is%20refilled%20-%20Research%20Report.pdf> (accessed 07/08/2023).
34. Gordon, L. (2016b) *Study of grandparents in family court proceedings over their grandchildren prior to the 2014 changes to the court*. Available at:

- <https://www.grg.org.nz/site/grg/files/Research-Reports/final-report.pdf> (accessed 03/09/2023).
35. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. (2023) *Our Work* [online]. Available at: <https://www.grg.org.nz/Local+Support.html> (accessed 02/09/2023).
36. Hallett, N., Garstang, J., and Taylor, J. (2023) Kinship Care in Child Protection in High-Income Countries: A Scoping Review. *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*, Vol. 24(2), pp. 632–645.
37. Houses of the Oireachtas. (2023a) *Budget 2024 Dáil Eireann Debate, Wednesday- 18 October 2023* [online]. Available at: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-10-18/233/> (accessed 15/11/2023).
38. Houses of the Oireachtas. (2023b) *Budget 2024 (Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform: Statements* [online]. Available at: [https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/seanad/2023-10-10/12/?highlight%5B0%5D=kinship&highlight%5B1%5D=care&highlight%5B2%5D=kinship&highlight%5B3%5D=care&highlight%5B4%5D=kinship#spk\\_99](https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/seanad/2023-10-10/12/?highlight%5B0%5D=kinship&highlight%5B1%5D=care&highlight%5B2%5D=kinship&highlight%5B3%5D=care&highlight%5B4%5D=kinship#spk_99) (accessed 15/11/23).
39. Houston, S., Hayes, D., and MacDonald, M. (2018). Hearing the voices of kinship foster carers in Northern Ireland: An inquiry into characteristics, needs and experiences. *Families, Relationships and Societies*, 7(2), pp. 227-247. <https://doi.org/10.1332/204674316X14676449115315> (accessed 14/08/2023).
40. Hunt J (2003) *Family and Friends Carers*, report prepared for the Department of Health [online]. Available at: <http://www.doh.gov.uk/carers/familyandfriends.htm> (accessed 06/08/2023).
41. Hunt, J. (2020) *Two Decades of UK Research on Kinship Care: An Overview*. Family Rights Group [online]. Available at: <https://frg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Overview-research-kinship-care.pdf> (accessed 14/08/2023).
42. Indirect Government Services. (2023) *Training and Financial Supports for Foster/ Kinship Foster Carers* [online]. Available at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/training-and-financial-support-fosterkinship-foster-carers#:~:text=If%20you%27re%20a%20foster%2Fkinship%20foster%20carer%2C%20>



[you%20can,visit%20to%20support%20you%20and%20the%20foster%20child.](#)

(Accessed 15/08/2023).

43. Ingram C. (1996) "Kinship care: from last resort to first choice" *Child Welfare* 75(5), pp. 550.
44. International Foster Care Organisation. (2023) *Ireland* [online]. Available at: <https://www.ifco.info/ireland/> (Accessed 2/8/2023).
45. Jones, R. (2023) *Northern Ireland Review of Children's Social Care Services*. Report [online]. Available at: <https://www.cscsreviewni.net/files/cscsreviewni/2023-06/The%20NI%20Review%20of%20Children%27s%20Social%20Care%20Services.pdf> (accessed 16/08/2023).
46. Keogh, B. (2023) *The Hidden Care Kids: Need for Benefits to Raise Someone Else's Child Up 50 Per cent* [News Media online]. Available at: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/131620571/the-hidden-care-kids-need-for-benefits-to-raise-someone-elses-child-up-50#:~:text=The%20number%20of%20caregivers%20receiving,2022%2C%20that%20figure%20was%2013%2C209.> (Accessed 27/08/2023).
47. Kinship Care Ireland. (2020). *Review of the Child Care Act 1991 Submission to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs* [online]. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/Gill2/AppData/Local/Temp/Temp1\\_Kinship%20Care%20articles%20and%20research%20\(2\)%20\(1\).zip/Kinship%20Care%20articles%20and%20research/Kinship%20Care%20Ireland%20submission%20on%20the%20review%20of%20the%20Childcare%20Act%201991.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Gill2/AppData/Local/Temp/Temp1_Kinship%20Care%20articles%20and%20research%20(2)%20(1).zip/Kinship%20Care%20articles%20and%20research/Kinship%20Care%20Ireland%20submission%20on%20the%20review%20of%20the%20Childcare%20Act%201991.pdf) (Accessed 12/08/2023).
48. Kinship Care Ireland. (2021) *Strategic Plan 2021-2026* [online]. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/Gill2/AppData/Local/Temp/Temp1\\_Kinship%20Care%20articles%20and%20research%20\(2\)%20\(1\).zip/Kinship%20Care%20articles%20and%20research/KCI%20Strategic%20Plan%202021-2026%20Final.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Gill2/AppData/Local/Temp/Temp1_Kinship%20Care%20articles%20and%20research%20(2)%20(1).zip/Kinship%20Care%20articles%20and%20research/KCI%20Strategic%20Plan%202021-2026%20Final.pdf) (accessed 23/07/2023).
49. Kinship Care Ireland. (2023) *Ensuring Equity and Security for Kinship Families*. Prebudget Submission [online]. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/Gill2/AppData/Local/Temp/Temp1\\_Kinship%20Care%20articles%20and%20research%20\(2\)%20\(1\).zip/Kinship%20Care%20articles%20and%20research/Kinship](file:///C:/Users/Gill2/AppData/Local/Temp/Temp1_Kinship%20Care%20articles%20and%20research%20(2)%20(1).zip/Kinship%20Care%20articles%20and%20research/Kinship)

[p%20Care%20Ireland%20Pre-Budget%20Submission%20%20June%202023.pdf](#)

(Accessed 15/08/23).

50. Kinship Care Ireland. (2023b) *Our Work* [online]. Available at: <https://www.kinshipcare.ie/about-kinship-care-ireland/> (accessed 02/09/2023).
51. Kinship. (2022) *Why Kinship Care Needs to be Recognised in Law* [online]. Available at: <https://kinship.org.uk/news/why-kinship-care-needs-to-be-recognised-in-law/> (accessed 13/08/2023).
52. Kinship. (2023) *Kinship Connected* [online]. Available at: <https://kinship.org.uk/commission-our-services/kinship-connected/> (accessed 13/08/2023).
53. Northern Ireland Kinship Care. (2023a) *Caring for Kin Project* [online]. Available at: <https://kinshipcareni.com/contact/caring-for-kin-antrim/> (accessed 03/09/2023).
54. Lernihan, U., and Kelly, G. (2006). Kinship Care as a Route to Permanent Placement. In D. Iwaniec (Ed.), *The Child's Journey Through Care: Placement Stability, Care Planning, And Achieving Permanency* (pp. 99-112). Wiley-Blackwell.
55. Lynch, J. (2018) *Grandparents and Guardianship- The legal Rights of Grandparents* [online]. Available at: <https://www.lynchsolicitors.ie/grandparents-and-guardianship/> (accessed 29/08/2023).
56. MacAlister, J. (2022) *The Independent Review of Childrens Social Services* [online]. Available at: [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20230308122535mp\\_/https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/The-independent-review-of-childrens-social-care-Final-report.pdf](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20230308122535mp_/https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/The-independent-review-of-childrens-social-care-Final-report.pdf) (accessed 16/08/2023).
57. Mason, W., Morris, K., Featherstone, B., Bunting, L., Davidson, G., McCartan, C., Bywaters, P., and Webb, C. (2021) Understanding out of Home Care Rates in Northern Ireland: A Thematic Analysis of Mixed Methods Case Studies, *The British Journal of Social Work*, Volume 51 (7), Pages 2645–2664, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcaa075>.
58. McGrath, P and Ashley, L. (2021) *Kinship Care: State of the Nation Survey 2021* [online]. Available at: <https://kinship.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Kinship-State-of-the-Nation-2021-FINAL.pdf> (accessed 3/08/2023).

59. McGrath, P and Ashley, L. (2022) *Kinship Care: Financial Allowance Survey 2022* [online]. Available at: <https://kinship.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Kinship-Financial-Allowances-Survey-2022.pdf> (accessed 03/09/2023).
60. McGrath, P and Wrafter, E. (2021) *Kinship Care Financial Allowances Survey* [online]. Available at: <https://kinship.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Kinship-Care-Financial-Allowances-Survey-3.pdf> (accessed 15/08/2023).
61. McSherry, D., and Fargas Malet, M. (2018). The extent of stability and relational permanence achieved for young children in care in Northern Ireland. *Children Australia*, 43(2), 124-134. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cha.2018.18> (accessed 14/08/2023).
62. McSherry, D., Fargas Malet, M. & Weatherall, K. (2013) *Comparing long-term placements for young children in care: The care pathways and outcomes study – Northern Ireland*. London: British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF).
63. McSherry, D., Fargas Malet, M. & Weatherall, K. (2016) Comparing long-term placements for young children in care: Does placement type matter? *Children & Youth Services Review*, (69), pp. 56-66.
64. Ministry for Social Development. (2016) *Expert Panel Final Report: Investing in New Zealand's Children and their Families* [online]. Available at: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/corporate/expert-panel-cyf/investing-in-children-report.pdf> (accessed 31/08/2023).
65. Ministry of Social Development. (2023a) *Unsupported Child's Benefit* [online] Available at: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/unsupported-childs-benefit.html> (accessed 07/08/2023).
66. Ministry of Social Development. (2023b) *Benefit Fact Sheets* [online]. Available at: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/benefit/index.html#pLatestBenefitFactSheetsreleasep1> (accessed 29/08/2023).
67. Nandy, S., & Selwyn, J. (2013). Kinship care and poverty: Using census data to examine the extent and nature of kinship care in the UK. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 43(8), 1649–1666. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcs057>.

68. National Family Support Network. (2017) *Review of the Child Care Act 1991 – Background note and template for written consultation* [online]. Available at: <https://assets.gov.ie/73960/e3e9a56e69ac4e3da1947e4bc8a71664.pdf> (accessed 30/08/2023).
69. New Zealand Government. (2023a) *Benefits and Payments*. Work and Income [online]. Available at: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/index.html> (accessed 14/08/2023).
70. New Zealand Government. (2023b) *Orphans Benefit and Unsupported Childs Benefit (current)*. Work and Income [online]. Available at: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/main-benefits-rates/orphans-benefit-and-unsupported-childs-benefit-cur.html> (accessed 14/08/2023).
71. New Zealand Government. (2023c) *School and Year Start Up Payment*. Work and Income [online]. Available at: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/school-and-year-start-up-payment.html> (accessed 14/08/2023).
72. New Zealand Government. (2023d). *Extraordinary Care Fund*. Work and Income [online]. Available at: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/extraordinary-care-fund.html> (accessed 14/08/2023).
73. Nicols Economics. (2020) *Kinship Care: The opportunity* [online]. Available at: [https://kinship.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Final\\_economic\\_case\\_text.pdf](https://kinship.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Final_economic_case_text.pdf) (Accessed 6/07/2023).
74. Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. (2021) *Alternative Care and Children's Rights in Northern Ireland* [online]. Available at: <https://nihrc.org/publication/detail/alternative-care-and-children> (accessed 27/08/2023).
75. NZ Herald. (2019) *Oranga Tamariki signs agreement with North Island iwi Tūhoe* [online]. Available at: [https://www.nzherald.co.nz/kahu/oranga-tamariki-signs-agreement-with-north-island-iwi-tuhoe/A72EOBFNPILKOSZSBF5K7BMZFY/?c\\_id=1&objectid=12261016](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/kahu/oranga-tamariki-signs-agreement-with-north-island-iwi-tuhoe/A72EOBFNPILKOSZSBF5K7BMZFY/?c_id=1&objectid=12261016) (accessed 08/08/2023).

76. NI Direct Government Services. (2023) *Community Family Support Programme* [online]. Available at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/community-family-support-programme> (accessed 02/09/2023).
77. OECD. (2015) *Pensions at a Glance 2015: OECD and G20 indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris [online]. Available at: [https://doi.org/10.1787/pension\\_glance-2015-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/pension_glance-2015-en) (accessed 03/09/2023).
78. O'Leary, M and Butler, S. (2015) Caring for Grandchildren in Kinship Care: What Difficulties Face Irish Grandparents with Drug-Dependent Children? *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*, 15 (4), 352-372.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1533256X.2015.1090999>.
79. O'Brien, V. (2014) A conceptual model for kinship care assessment. *Child & Family Social Work*, 19: 355-366. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12025>.
80. Oranga Tamariki. (2020) *Care Standards* [online]. Available at: <https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/our-work/care/care-standards/> (accessed 02/09/2023).
81. Oranga Tamariki. (2021) *Prepare to Care: Caregiver Kete A Basket of Information and Guidance for Caregiving Whanau*. Oranga Tamariki [online]. Available at: <https://orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Caregiving/Caregiver-handbook.pdf> (accessed 15/08/2023).
82. Oranga Tamariki. (2023a) *New Ways of Working* [online]. Available at: <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/our-work/new-ways-of-working/> (accessed 07/08/2023).
83. Oranga Tamariki. (2023b) *How We Keep Children Safe* [online]. Available at: <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/our-work/how-we-keep-children-safe/> (accessed 07/08/2023).
84. Oranga Tamariki. (2023c) *Reforming Financial Assistance and Support for Caregivers* [online]. Available at: <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/caregiving/financial-help/review-of-financial-assistance-for-caregivers/> (accessed 07/08/2023).
85. Powell, G. (2023) *Kinship Care: Exploring Relationships in Kinship Care Arrangements*. Social Care Ireland [online]. Available at: <https://socialcareireland.ie/wp->

- [content/uploads/2022/09/Presentation-30th-March-Grainne-Powell.pdf](#) (accessed 21/08/2023).
86. Rodgers, H and McCluney, J. (2022) *Children in Care in Northern Ireland 2020-2021* [online]. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/child-care-ni-20-21.pdf> (accessed 15/08/2023).
87. Sheffield City Council. (2022) *Special Guardianship: Some Questions Answered* [online]. Available at: <https://library.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Special-guardianship-FAQs.pdf#:~:text=Special%20Guardianship%20Orders%20were%20introduced%20on%2030%20December,of%20parenting%20a%20child%20until%20their%2018th%20birthday> (accessed 12/08/2023).
88. Stephenson, B and Thompson, R. (2020) *Review of Financial Assistance for Caregivers: summary of engagement findings*. New Zealand Government, Oranga Tamariki [online]. Available at: <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Report-and-releases/Cabinet-papers/Financial-assistance-caregivers/Review-of-Financial-Assistance-for-Caregivers-Summary-of-Engagement-Findings.pdf> (accessed 14/08/2023).
89. Together Trust. (2021) *Recommendations to the Committee on the Rights of the Child- United Nations Day of General Discussion 2021 on Strengthening Kinship Care in Aotearoa, New Zealand* [online]. Available at: [https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/DGD21\\_submissions-NZ-FFEC.pdf](https://www.togethertrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/DGD21_submissions-NZ-FFEC.pdf) (accessed 08/08/2023).
90. Tusla. (2017) *Annual Review on the Adequacy of Child Care and Family Support Services* [online]. Available at: [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Review\\_of\\_Adequacy\\_Report\\_2017-Final.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Review_of_Adequacy_Report_2017-Final.pdf) (accessed 21/08/2023).
91. Tusla. (2022) *Review of Adequacy Report* [online]. Available at: [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Review\\_of\\_Adequacy\\_Report\\_2022.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Review_of_Adequacy_Report_2022.pdf) (accessed 21/08/2023).
92. Tusla. (2023a) *Statistical Data* [online]. Available at: <https://data.tusla.ie/> (Accessed 15/07/2023).

93. Tusla. (2023b) *Quarterly Service Performance and Activity Report QUARTER 1 2023* [online]. Available at: [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Q1\\_2023\\_Service\\_Performance\\_and\\_Activity\\_Report\\_V1.0.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Q1_2023_Service_Performance_and_Activity_Report_V1.0.pdf) (Accessed 5/08/2023).
94. Tusla. (2023c) *Fostering Supports* [online]. Available at: <https://www.tusla.ie/services/alternative-care/foster-care/fostering-supports/> (accessed 21/08/2023).
95. Wijedasa, D. (2015) *The Prevalence and Characteristics of Children Growing up with relatives in the UK* [online]. Available at: [https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/Kinstat\\_%20Briefing%20Paper%20001\\_V2.pdf](https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/Kinstat_%20Briefing%20Paper%20001_V2.pdf) (Accessed 5/08/2023).
96. Wijedasa, D. (2017). *The prevalence and characteristics of children growing up with relatives in the UK - Briefing paper 4: Characteristics of children living with relatives in Northern Ireland*. University of Bristol [online]. Available at: [https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/215836190/Northern\\_Ireland\\_Kinstat\\_Briefing\\_Paper\\_004.pdf](https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/215836190/Northern_Ireland_Kinstat_Briefing_Paper_004.pdf) (accessed 12/08/23).
97. Winokur, Marc et al. (2014) “Kinship care for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children removed from the home for maltreatment.” *The Cochrane database of systematic reviews* vol. 2014,1 CD006546. 31 Jan. 2014, doi:10.1002/14651858.CD006546.pub3.
98. Worrall, J. (2008) Kin Care: Understanding the Dynamics. *Social Work Now*, 41, pp. 4-11.
99. Worrall, J., and Bundle, K. (2021) *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: A New Zealand Perspective* [online]. Available at: <https://peakcare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/GRG-A-New-Zealand-Perspective-20-10-2021.pdf> (accessed 16/08/2023).

## Appendix One:

Ireland: Payment Type	Rate of Pay	Eligibility
Foster Care Allowance	€325 to €350 per week depending on the child/ young person's age.	<b>Kinship carers must:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undergo a personal and home assessment.</li> <li>- Be approved as a relative foster care (there are exemptions in cases of emergency).</li> </ul>
Guardian Payment (Contributory)	€203 standard rate per week.	<b>Child must be:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the age of 18 (22 if in full time education).</li> <li>• Be without one or both parents due to death and/ or incapacity to fulfil parental duties.</li> <li>• Parent or stepparent paid PRSI for 26 weeks at any time.</li> </ul> <b>Carer must:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be responsible for and living with a child who is an 'orphan' as defined in law.</li> </ul>
Guardian Payment (Non-Contributory)	Up to €203 per week depending on the child/ young person's assessed means	<b>Child must be:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the age of 18 (22 if in full time education).</li> <li>• Be without one or both parents due to death and/ or incapacity to fulfil parental duties.</li> <li>• Undergo a means test to determine rate of payment.</li> </ul> <b>Carer must:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be responsible for and living with a child who is an 'orphan' as defined in law.</li> </ul>
Child Benefit	€140 per child per month	<b>Carer must:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be living with and have day-to-day responsibility for the child they are claiming CB for.</li> </ul>
New Zealand: Payment Type	Rate of Pay	Eligibility
Caregivers Allowance	\$273.36 to \$317.82	<b>Carers must be:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caring for a child that is not their own and is in the care of the state.</li> <li>- Undergo a personal and home assessment and be approved by Oranga Tamariki, the Ministry for Children.</li> </ul>
Unsupported Child Benefit	\$273.36 to \$317.82	<b>The Child or young person being cared for must be:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18 years old or younger</li> <li>- single</li> </ul>



	depending on the child/ young person's age.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- financially dependent on you</li> <li>- not able to be cared for by their parents.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Carers must:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be older than 18 and the main carer of the child/ young person.</li> <li>- Have primary responsibility for the day-to-day care of the child.</li> <li>- Be a NZ citizen or permanent resident.</li> <li>- Not be the child or young person's natural or adoptive parent/ stepparent.</li> <li>- Need to apply for child support from the child's parents.</li> <li>- Need to attend a family meeting (if you haven't already had a family group conference) to confirm that there has been a family breakdown and that you will be the main caregiver for a period of time.</li> </ul>
Orphans Benefit	\$273.36 to \$317.82 depending on the child/ young person's age.	<p><b>The child or young person must be:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18 years old or younger</li> <li>- single</li> <li>- financially dependent on you.</li> </ul> <p><b>The applicant must:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- be 18 or older and the main carer of the child or young person.</li> <li>- have primary responsibility for the day-to-day care of the child.</li> <li>- be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident.</li> <li>- not be the child or young person's natural or adoptive parent, and</li> <li>- be ordinarily resident in New Zealand when you apply.</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Ireland: Payment Type.</b>	<b>Rate of Payment</b>	<b>Eligibility</b>
Foster Care Allowance	£141 to £207 depending on the child's age.	<p><b>Carer must:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be caring for or agree to care for a child who is not your own.</li> <li>• Have a formal assessment by a HSCT.</li> <li>• Undergo preparation training as part of the approval process.</li> </ul>