



Working Together for Kinship Care: Treoir's Kinship Care Ireland Programme Calls to Government

Programme for Government 2025

Securing Ireland's Future

Kinship Care

Foster carers play an essential role in our care system, and we are committed to developing and implementing a comprehensive action plan that takes a cross-government approach to foster care.

This Government will:

- Increase the Foster Care Allowance and ensure increases in the new Initial Placement Payment.
- Examine pension provision for foster carers to acknowledge their long-term commitment and ensure valued support after their fostering years.
- Examine the Back-to-School Clothing and Footwear Allowance eligibility criteria to allow flexibility for foster carers.
- Improve support for kinship care to enhance outcomes for kinship families

Summary of Recommendation

The Government should recognise, value and adequately resource the role of family members and extended support network in supporting people affected by drugs use, and their children. Kinship carers and children should have the same rights as foster carers and foster children, and this should include legal rights and monetary rights on a non means-tested basis.

Develop a scoping paper to guide the development of a policy on the rights of children in informal kinship care.

2024

United Nations



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

(c) **Develop a policy on the rights of children in informal kinship care;**

Kinship Care: What can my Department do to support?



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection

- Work with DCDE to ensure every child in kinship care receives timely financial support, preventing entry into State care.
- Reform Guardian's Payment: introduce a Kinship Care Allowance aligned with Foster Care Allowance and MESL, with a higher rate for children aged 12+.
- Recognise apprentices aged 18–22 as in full-time education for Guardian's Payment.
- Ensure Disability Allowance from age 16 does not reduce kinship carer payments, as in foster care.
- Fast-track SWA, Child Benefit, BTSCFA and Fuel Allowance, with compassionate means-testing for new carers.
- Ensure Living Alone Allowance and solo-parent supports are not lost when caring for a child.
- Protect kinship carers' employment, leave and pension rights when stepping in to care.
- Train DSP staff to recognise kinship care, improve signposting and provide trauma-informed support.
- Raise awareness of all financial supports available to kinship families to increase uptake and reduce child poverty.
- Work with DCDE on a cross-departmental Kinship Care Policy, with regular review.



An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais
agus Comhionannais
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality

- Deliver a cross-government Kinship Care Support Package, informed by policy, evidence and lived experience.
- Recognise all kinship families in policy and legislation, regardless of legal status or pathway into care.
- Embed children's voices, rights and best interests in all kinship care decisions.
- Establish early identification, referral and support pathways when kinship care begins.
- Guarantee trauma-informed assessments, therapeutic supports, carer training, respite and family support.
- Ring-fence sustainable funding for kinship peer support through KCI, Family Resource Centres and community services.
- Fund local Kinship Hubs for information, advocacy, referrals and community awareness.
- Improve Tusla engagement, data collection and the national visibility of kinship care.
- Train Tusla and public sector staff in kinship-informed practice, with dedicated local kinship care contacts.
- Provide sustainable multi-annual funding for Treoir's Kinship Care Ireland programme to meet growing demand.
- Strengthen safe reunification and protection pathways for children and domestic abuse survivors, preventing unnecessary kinship care.
- Embed kinship care across family and care policy, with clear representation, accountability and regular review.



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

- Reform succession rules across all local authorities so children can remain in their family home with kinship carers after a parent's death, preventing homelessness and unnecessary entry into State care.
- Provide accessible home improvement grants to reduce overcrowding and create safe, suitable homes.
- Train housing staff to recognise kinship care and deliver trauma-informed support to families navigating grief and trauma.
- Record kinship care on Housing Registration Forms and CRM systems to improve national data.
- Recognise kinship care as care experience when assessing housing priority.
- Work with DCDE to deliver a cross-departmental Kinship Care Policy.



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice

- Introduce Special Guardianship or Kinship Care Orders, enabling timely guardianship and access to medical and therapeutic care.
- Simplify legal pathways and processes for kinship families.
- Reduce court costs and delays through free or affordable legal aid.
- Ensure children's voices are heard in guardianship proceedings.
- Strengthen safe reunification and protection pathways for children and domestic violence survivors.
- Deliver a health-led drug response with the Department of Health, implementing the 161 Joint Oireachtas Committee, Citizens' Assembly and eight kinship care recommendations.
- Work with DCDE to deliver and regularly review a cross-departmental Kinship Care Policy.



Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais
uálaíochta agus Eolaíochta
Department of Further and Higher Education,
Innovation and Science

- Recognise kinship care as care experience, ensuring equal access to SUSI, bursaries, access programmes, mentoring and supports available to care-experienced young people.
- Remove guardianship barriers, means-testing and complex estrangement evidence requirements for kinship-care students accessing education supports.
- Train Access Teams and student services to support young people in kinship care, young kinship carers and carers returning to education.
- Work with DCDE on national kinship care policy.



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

- Guarantee non-means-tested Medical Cards for all children in kinship care.
- Prioritise health assessments, developmental screening, mental health and therapeutic supports, equivalent to formal care.
- Provide trauma-informed supports, respite, carer health services and supports for older carers.
- Develop a health-led response for kinship families affected by parental substance misuse, with the Department of Justice.
- Ensure health services recognise kinship care, improve signposting and capture national data.
- Work with DCDE to deliver and regularly review a cross-departmental Kinship Care Policy.