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Family and Friends Carers Policy

August 2013



“Enabling all Haringey children to thrive”

(Haringey Council Corporate Plan 2013/15)

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1. Summary of Haringey's Family and Friends Policy

Haringey Council (Haringey) is committed to enabling all children and young people to thrive.

Families can experience all kinds of difficulties and challenges. These can sometimes lead to children being cared for by relatives or family friends for varying periods of time.

The Permanency Policy developed by Haringey Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) recognises that children are generally best cared for by their parents or, when this is not possible, within their extended family.

Research shows that children who are cared for by family or friends generally enjoy greater stability, better emotional health and better long term outcomes than do children who spend protracted periods of time in the public care system.

Haringey is therefore strongly committed to supporting relatives and family friends who step in to care for children when the child's parents are facing serious difficulties or challenges.

In this policy we describe the different situations within which family members and friends may be caring for children and we outline the support available from CYPS.

Family and Friends carers are now often referred to as "connected person" carers, meaning that they are people who already have a relationship or connection with the child prior to becoming the child's carer. They are not strangers to the child. They are people the child already knows, who he child feels safe and with whom the child enjoys a positive, affectionate relationship.

In this policy we mainly use the term "Family and Friends" because carers have told us this is how they would prefer to be described.

Many children are cared for by family and friends for varying periods of time in informal arrangements set up by their parents.

Haringey does not wish to intrude unnecessarily in these situations but would want to offer information, advice, practical help and emotional support to the carers of any child who is defined as a “child in need” (a term with a specific meaning defined in the Children Act 1989).

Some children who are looked after by Haringey are placed with Family and Friends carers. “Looked after” means children who are in care under an Interim or full Care Order made in the family courts, as well as those children who are looked after on a voluntary basis under s20 Children Act 1989.

Any person (other than the child’s parents) who cares for a looked after child must be approved as a foster carer. Haringey fully recognises the important part that Family and Friends foster carers play in caring for looked after children, sometimes for short periods of time and sometimes for much longer. People who put themselves forward to become Family and Friends foster carers often make great sacrifices and can incur substantial expense to care for children who would otherwise be placed outside their family network with unconnected foster carers, or be placed in residential care.

Haringey is committed to providing high quality support to Family and Friends foster carers in exactly the same way as we would with other foster carers. This means providing a supervising social worker, relevant training, peer support groups, short breaks, practical help and financial support.

Haringey will pay a fostering allowance to all Family and Friends foster carers from the day on which the child is placed with the foster carer. This will initially be at the level recommended by the Fostering Network. Upon satisfactory completion of Skills to Foster Training, and a commitment from the carer to carry out subsequent mandatory training, Haringey will pay a higher rate of allowance to the carer, equivalent to that paid to a Haringey task centred or long term foster carer. This allowance consists of an amount recommended by the Fostering Network, plus a “reward element” that recognises that the carer has undertaken training and has evidenced key knowledge and skills.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Children may be cared for by members of their extended families, friends or other people who are connected with them for many reasons and in a variety of different arrangements. The precise numbers of family and friends who care for children in Haringey are not known as many are informal arrangements and do not come to the attention of Children and Young Peoples Services, but as at April 2013, this authority had 41 approved family and friends foster carers, and was supporting 133 children subject to Special Guardianship Orders and 32 children subject to Residence Orders.
- 2.2 This policy sets out Haringey's approach to promoting and supporting the needs of such children and describes the assessments which will be carried out to determine the services required and how such services will then be provided.
- 2.3 This policy has been informed by research. In addition consultation has taken place with children and young people, family and friends carers and parents. Haringey has a well established Child in Care Council, known as Aspire, through which children in care are consulted on a range of issues, including their views on the quality of their care. Young People from Aspire regularly meet with the Lead Member who chairs the Corporate Parenting Committee. There is a Participation Strategy and Action Plan, both of which are updated yearly. The views of children and young people in care, carers and parents are obtained through statutory reviews. Additionally, the views of special guardians and carers with Residence Orders are obtained during the annual review process. This authority has therefore sought to obtain and consider the views of those concerned when formulating this policy.
- 2.4 The manager with overall responsibility for this policy is the Head of Service (Placements and Commissioning)

3. Values, principles & objectives

3.1 The main principle this policy seeks to promote is that children should be enabled to live with their families unless that is not consistent with their safety and wellbeing. Children who cannot live with their parents should, where appropriate, remain with members of their extended family or with family friends. Research indicates that children are likely to enjoy better long term outcomes if they remain within their extended family or kinship network rather than being cared for within the public care system.

3.2 This policy is based on Haringey's Permanency Policy (http://haringeychildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_H_G_placement_for_adoption.html). Permanency, in respect of planning for looked after children and young people, is defined as:

“a framework of emotional, physical and legal conditions that give a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity.”

Haringey's Permanency Policy stresses the need for children to have stability and to receive consistent loving care throughout their childhood.

For those children who become looked after children by Haringey, permanency is most usually achieved through a successful return to their birth family, where it has been possible to successfully address the adverse factors which led to the child becoming looked after.

Where this is not possible, family and friends care will often provide an important alternative route to permanency for the child, particularly where this can be supported by a Residence Order or a Special Guardianship Order or through adoption.

3.3 The support provided by the local authority and by other agencies to family and friends carers will be based on an assessment of the needs of the child rather than merely the child's legal status. Support may involve practical help, provision of information / advice, social work support and financial support. The local authority will provide support to

ensure the child's needs are met and also, wherever possible, to enable the child to cease to be looked after.

- 3.4 Children should be active participants and their wishes and feelings should be taken into account in all relevant processes when decisions are being made to resolve problems concerning their care.

4. Legal Framework

- 4.1 There are different legal arrangements which can apply when family and friends carers look after children in need and looked after children. It is necessary for carers to be clear about what the options are before they commit to it, and they may wish to obtain their own legal advice. The following gives a brief summary of the options and Haringey's policy concerning each one. See also Annex A for a detailed table of the options.

Private fostering

- 4.2 This is a private arrangement made by the parents whereby the child is looked after for a period of 28 days or more by anyone who does not have parental responsibility, and who is not a close relative. "Close relative" is defined in the legislation as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (by full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership), or a step-parent. The child is not in the care of the local authority, and the parents retain parental responsibility.
- 4.3 The local authority must assess and monitor the arrangement, but the carer is not a local authority foster carer. The arrangement may be prohibited if assessed as unsuitable. A social worker will visit the child a minimum of 6 weekly in the first year, and then 12 weekly. There may be formal reviews in addition to the ongoing assessment visits. If the child is assessed as being in need of advice and support, such discretionary support and services may be provided to the child or family by the local authority under section 17 Children Act 1989.

- 4.4 The carer can claim child benefit and child tax credit if these are not paid to the parents. Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with those who have parental responsibility.

Informal Family arrangements

- 4.5 This is where a close relative (see definition above under Private Fostering) has taken on the care of the child but does not have parental responsibility, and the family has made their own arrangements regarding the care for the child, without any involvement from the local authority. The arrangement was not made by the local authority and the child is therefore not looked after by the local authority. The parents retain parental responsibility, whilst allowing the relative to do what is reasonable to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. The relative may perceive the parents to be unable to care for the child; the parents may be deceased or otherwise not available (e.g. in prison or abroad); or there may be an agreement between relatives due to strained family circumstances such as poor health. No approval, monitoring or review by the local authority is necessary in these circumstances, although the local authority will provide appropriate advice and support upon request if the child is deemed to be a "child in need" as defined in the Children Act 1989.
- 4.6 There is no entitlement to support or services from the local authority. However, if the child is assessed as being a child in need, the local authority has discretion to assist under section 17 Children Act 1989.
- 4.7 The carer can claim child benefit and child tax credit if these are not paid to the parents. Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with those who have parental responsibility.

Family and friends foster care – also known as "connected person" foster care

- 4.8 This section of the policy deals with those situations where a child is looked after by the local authority (under either a Care Order or under s20 Children Act 1989) and has been placed with the relative or friend by the local authority following an assessment of the family member's or friend's capacity to care for the child. The child is looked by the local authority, so the local authority must approve the relative or friend as a local authority foster carer, even if the arrangement is intended to be temporary. The placement may be intended to be very short term, medium term or until the child reaches adulthood.
- 4.9 Temporary approval of the family and friends carer as a foster carer can be made for up to 16 weeks, with one extension of 8 weeks in exceptional circumstances (Children's Planning, Review and Placement Regulations 2010). Temporary approval, following an initial viability assessment by a social worker, will be considered in those situations where the authority believes it would be in the best interests of the child to be cared for by the prospective carer, but there is not sufficient time to enable the carer to be fully assessed following consideration by the Fostering Panel.
- 4.10 The temporary approval of a family and friends foster carer, pending a full assessment being presented to Haringey's Fostering Panel, has to be agreed by the Agency Decision Maker (Fostering) or the Assistant Director. Under the relevant regulations, if the child remains with the Family and Friends foster carer for more than 16 weeks (or 24 weeks in exceptional circumstances) without the carer being formally approved by the Agency Decision Maker following recommendations from the Fostering Panel, the authority must remove the child from the carer and seek an alternative placement (unless a review of the decision is pending).
- 4.11 The child may be accommodated voluntarily under section 20 Children Act 1989, with the agreement of the parents, in which case the parents retain full parental responsibility. If, however, the local authority holds a Care Order then it shares parental responsibility with the parents and can determine the extent to which it can be exercised by others. If a child is already looked after under section 20, the child

will remain looked after following the placement with a family and friends foster carer, and will remain so until the local authority and anyone holding parental responsibility decide that the child no longer needs to be looked after under s20. Any change in the child's status will always be confirmed in writing to the carer, the child where appropriate (subject to child's level of understanding), and the parents.

- 4.12 Critical decisions concerning the child's placement, such as a decision to separate siblings, the placement of the child out of the authority's area, or a placement which will disrupt the child's Key Stage 4 education will be approved by the Head of Service for Children in Care.
- 4.13 The child will have a care plan (with integral health plan and personal education plan) and a placement plan, which will be reviewed regularly by the child's social worker and an Independent Reviewing Officer.
- 4.14 A social worker will make regular (minimum 4 weekly) statutory supervising visits to both the child and the carer; there will be statutory reviews of the child's care plan (minimum 6 monthly) and annual reviews of the carer's approval.
- 4.15 The Family and Friends foster carer will have a supervising social worker from the Fostering Service who will visit at least once every six weeks and maintain regular telephone contact between visits. The supervising social worker will also make at least one unannounced visit each year.
- 4.16 Support may be provided to meet the child's needs, including health and education. Training and practical support may be provided to the foster care. The young person may be entitled to leaving care support services when they become 16 or older.
- 4.17 Child benefit and child tax credit are not payable to the carer of a child who is looked after by a local authority. Haringey will pay a weekly allowance to meet the costs of caring for the child (see later under Financial Support).

- 4.18 Details of the assessment and approval process for foster carers can be found in the Fostering Service's Statement of Purpose. An information pack will be given to prospective Family and Friends foster carers about the process, and they will be given the name and contact details of the social worker who will be allocated to carry out the assessment.
- 4.19 Family and friends foster carers seeking long term approval to care for a particular child will be assessed in the same way as 'stranger' foster carers, and approval will be given by the Agency Decision Maker following recommendations from the Fostering Panel.
- 4.20 If an approved Family and Friends foster carer should decide that they would like to foster children to whom they are not connected, they should discuss this in the first instance with their supervising social worker who will provide advice and information. A further assessment would be required, which would be presented to the Fostering Panel for recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker (Fostering).
- 4.21 Haringey recognises the valuable service provided by Family and Friends foster carers and understands that these carers often have a great deal to offer to children in terms of their skills, knowledge and life experience. Haringey therefore welcomes inquiries from Family and Friends foster carers who feel they might be able to provide foster care to other children.

Residence Orders and Special Guardianship Orders

- 4.22 There are situations where a child may be at risk of becoming looked after by the local authority, or may already be looked after, and their foster carer or other relative or friend applies to care permanently for the child under a Special Guardianship Order or Residence Order. Application to court can be made without the support of parents or the local authority. Relatives may apply for an order without first seeking the court's permission if the child has lived with them

for one year; if less than a year, or the child is not living with them yet, the court's permission is required before the application can be lodged.

- 4.23 Parental responsibility is shared with the parents, but a special guardian may exercise it to the exclusion of all others with parental responsibility.
- 4.24 The court will always require an assessment report from the local authority before making a Special Guardianship Order, and sometimes requires a report from the local authority before making a Residence Order.
- 4.25 Child benefit and child tax credit are payable to people who hold a Special Guardianship or Residence Order, if not being paid to the parent. Financial support from the local authority is discretionary (see Financial Support). Special Guardians are entitled to receive an assessment from the local authority for support services and financial support if the child was looked after by the authority prior to the order being made.
- 4.26 Where a child is not looked after by the local authority immediately before the order being made, an assessment for support services will be made on request. There is no automatic right to this if the child was not looked after, but if the assessment is refused, written reasons will be given and representations can be made as to why it should be made. Support services which may be offered, and which will depend on assessed need, include counselling and advice; assistance regarding contact; therapeutic input for the child; and training for the carer. This list is not exhaustive, and services may be time-limited, for instance, to help the child settle in with a new carer.

Adoption

- 4.27 If the local authority decides that a child they are looking after should be placed for adoption they can do so either with the parents' consent or under a Placement Order. Foster carers can apply for an adoption order after the child has lived with them for one year. Other people who have cared for the child can apply for an Adoption Order if the child has lived with them for three years.

- 4.28 Parental responsibility transfers to the adopters and is no longer held by the birth parents. The child remains legally a part of the adoptive family for the rest of his/her life.
- 4.29 If the child is looked after by a local authority, the adoption agency, which may be the local authority, assesses and approves the prospective adopters. The court will make the adoption order. If the child is not looked after by the local authority, notice of intention to adopt must be given to the authority who then carry out an assessment and report to the court.
- 4.30 Child benefit and child tax credit are payable in respect of children who are subject to Adoption Orders. There is an entitlement to assessment for financial support if the child was looked after by the local authority prior to the order. Support services may also be offered if a need is assessed and it is felt necessary, such as assistance with contact, and counselling. Further details are available from the Adoption Service.

5. Information about Services and Support

- 5.1 Guidance and information about local services and support is available from CYPS on request. This will include information concerning day care providers, children's centres, schools, health services, leisure facilities, youth support services, and counselling services, to name but a few.
- 5.2 Haringey seeks to provide comprehensive information for parents and carers about the full range of services for children, young people and families in the area, and to highlight the availability of advice from independent organisations. Annex B provides a list of useful national organisations, and information regarding a wide range of local resources is available on the Southwark Council website's Family Information Service.

6. Financial Support

Family arrangements

- 6.1 The local authority has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section 17 Children Act 1989 to safeguard or promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need, and to promote the upbringing of such children by their families.
- 6.2 This authority's eligibility criteria for such financial support are as follows:
- i) Where the child comes to live with the carer as a result of a child protection investigation (known as a 'section 47 investigation');
 - ii) Where the child comes to live with the carer as part of his/her Child Protection Plan; or
 - iii) Where the child comes to live with the carer to avoid the child being looked after by the local authority, and there is professional evidence (e.g. social work, health or educational) of the impairment of the parents' ability to care for the child.
- 6.3 A request for an assessment should be made to the First Response Service or to the relevant social work team if the child already has a social worker. Details of the child and carer's finances will need to be provided, as consideration will be given to the carer's ability to financially support the child's needs, which should be without local authority support where possible. Carers will be expected to apply for child benefit for the child or to obtain this from the parent, who remains financially responsible for their child. Carers must also ensure that they are claiming all other welfare benefits to which they and/or the child are entitled. This authority can refer the carer to the appropriate organisation to assist with this.
- 6.4 There are 3 categories of payment by this authority which may be considered, and one or more may be applicable in any case:

- i) Subsistence crisis (one-off) payments
These are to be used to overcome a crisis, following assessment by the authority.
- ii) Setting-up
These are to cover the initial costs of having a child come to live with the family and friends carer, such as for clothing, furniture or bedding. Payment may be subject to conditions, such as repayment in certain circumstances.
- iii) Weekly living contribution
Where financial support is to be provided regularly, a written agreement will be drawn up detailing the level and duration of the support, how payments will be made, and the mechanism for review.

6.5 The decision to offer financial support will be made by the relevant Head of Service.

Fostering allowances (Family and Friends foster Carers)

6.6 With effect from 1st September 2013, Family and Friends foster carers who have been temporarily approved following an initial viability assessment, and who have also successfully completed the Skills to Foster Training, are paid the same fostering allowance as Haringey's task centred and long term foster carers. This aspect of the policy takes account of the case of X v London Borough of tower Hamlets (2013) EWCA Civ 904 – Court of Appeal Decision. The judgement in the Court of Appeal was that it is unlawful and discriminatory for a local authority to provide approved family and friends foster carers with a lower level of financial support and recognition than the local authority ordinarily pays to other approved foster carers.

6.7 Fostering allowances are related to the age of the child and are calculated to take account of the actual cost of caring for a child of that age as well as the tasks and responsibilities that a foster carer takes on in caring for a looked after child. These responsibilities and tasks may include taking a child to and from school, attending meetings with professionals, attending Child Care Review meetings, taking the child to health appointments, supervising the child's contact with parents, promoting contact with siblings etc. The local

authority may pay an enhanced fostering allowance in the case of a child with a significant level of special or additional needs.

- 6.8 Family and Friends foster carers who have had a positive viability assessment, but who have not completed the Skills to Foster training, are paid a level of fostering allowance at a rate recommended by the Fostering Network. On successful completion of Skills to Foster Training the foster carer's fostering allowance will be lifted to the higher Haringey fostering allowance level. Family and Friends foster carers are required to continue to engage in learning and training and to participate in a regular peer support group. Compliance with this requirement is a condition of continued approval as a foster carer. Being a foster carer involves taking on responsibility for someone else's child, often in difficult circumstances. It can be a challenging and stressful role. Therefore, Haringey takes the view that appropriate training and support is essential for all foster carers.

Residence order or Special Guardianship allowances

- 6.9 The local authority has discretion to pay financial support to a family and friends carer who has been granted a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order, unless they are a spouse or civil partner of the child's parent. Haringey will respond promptly to any such requests. The decision as to whether to pay an allowance will depend on a social work assessment of the child's needs.
- 6.10 Where a child was looked after immediately prior to the Special Guardianship order being made, on request the local authority must assess the financial support needs of the child and special guardians, and make payments where it is considered necessary to ensure that the carer is able to care for the child. These payments may be one-off to assist with the purchase of essential items such as furniture and bedding, or may be weekly on-going support.
- 6.11 The eligibility criteria for such financial support are as follows:

- i) Where the residence or special guardianship order arises out of care proceedings; or
- ii) Where the residence or special guardianship order follows the child being accommodated under section 20; or
- iii) Where the child has come to live with the carer as a result of a child protection investigation (known as a 'section 47 investigation'); or
- iv) Where the child has come to live with the carer as part of his/her Child Protection Plan; or
- v) Where the child has come to live with the carer to avoid the child being looked after by the local authority, and there is professional evidence (e.g. social work, health or educational) of the impairment of the parents' ability to care for the child.

6.12 The rates for allowances for residence orders or special guardianship orders are the same. Both are means-tested and the carer can apply for child benefit and child tax credit. Haringey uses the government recommended Standard Means Test Model for calculating the allowance to be paid. The 'maximum rate' used in the Means Test Model is the current National Fostering Network rate, less child benefit and child tax credit.

6.13 The expectation is that the financial support will cover all the child's requirements, including an amount for birthdays and holidays, and it will be for the carer to manage that appropriately.

6.14 As stated above, the payment of support is discretionary. Following consideration of the eligibility criteria, and then where appropriate the means-testing calculation, the decision as to whether financial support will be offered is made by the relevant Head of Service. Where it is to be paid, a written agreement must be entered into, and this will be reviewed annually. Financial support may be paid in advance of the order being made where the authority considers it is necessary to facilitate the arrangements for the carer to become the legal carer of the child.

- 6.15 The authority may agree to assist with the legal costs of the family and friend's carer obtaining advice and possibly representation to enable them to apply for a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order, where it considers it appropriate to do so. This will generally only be where the carer cannot obtain public funding. The decision to pay will be made by the Head of Service responsible for the child's case, but will never exceed the current rates for public funding, and will only be payable if prior written agreement has been given.

Adoption financial support

- 6.16 The local authority has discretion to pay financial support to a family and friends carer who adopts the child they are caring for. Such support is only payable where it is necessary to ensure that the adoptive parent can look after the child. Where the child was placed with the carer for adoption by this authority, there is an entitlement to be assessed.
- 6.17 It is a requirement that there must be some particular condition relating to the child's health or development, or circumstances making it hard to place the child for adoption. Where the child needs special care, the condition must be serious and long-term. Further details are available from the Adoption Service. Payments may be one-off to assist with particular items, or may be weekly on-going support.
- 6.18 An assessment for financial support will include a means test of the financial circumstances of the adoptive parent, although there are some circumstances where means are disregarded. The adoptive parent can claim child benefit and child tax credit. The 'maximum payment' to be applied in the means test is the National Fostering Rate prevailing rate applicable to the age of the child, less child benefit and child tax credit, plus any enhancement assessed for the child. This is then applied to the means test to determine the level of allowance that should be paid.

- 6.19 The expectation is that the financial support will cover all the child's requirements, including for birthdays and holidays, and it will be for the carer to manage that appropriately.
- 6.20 As stated above, the payment of support is discretionary. Following consideration of the child's needs, and then where appropriate the means-testing calculation, the decision as to whether financial support will be offered is made by the Head of Service for the Adoption Service. Where it is to be paid, a written agreement must be entered into, and this will be reviewed annually. Financial support may be paid in advance of the order being made where the authority considers it is necessary to facilitate the arrangements for the carer to become the child's adopter.
- 6.21 The authority may agree to assist with the legal costs of the family and friends carer obtaining advice and possibly representation to enable them to apply for an adoption order, where it considers it appropriate to do so. This will generally only be where the child has been placed with the carer for adoption by the authority, where the carer cannot obtain public funding, and where the proceedings are contested. The decision to pay will be made by the Head of Service for the Adoption Service, but will never exceed the current rates for public funding, and will only be payable if prior written agreement has been given.

7. Accommodation

- 7.1 This authority will work with landlords to ensure that whenever possible family and friends carers living in social housing are given appropriate priority to move to more suitable accommodation if this will prevent the need for a child to become looked after.

8. Supporting Contact for children with their birth families

- 8.1 Haringey recognises it has a duty to promote positive contact for all children in need, although there are differences in the

way that duty is expressed depending on whether or not the child is looked after.

- 8.2 Where a child is not looked after by this authority, we will promote contact between the child and his/her family where it is necessary to do so in order to safeguard and promote his/her welfare. Specific assistance may be identified by this authority as required to ensure that any such contact can be managed safely. Information is also available to family and friends carers about local contact centres and family mediation services, and how to make use of their services. Details are available on the Haringey Council website.
- 8.3 Where a child is looked after, Haringey will endeavour to promote contact between the child and his/her family unless it is not practicable or consistent with the child's welfare. The overall objective of the contact arrangements will be included in the child's care plan and the specific arrangements will be set out in the child's placement plan.

9. Family Group Conferences

- 9.1 Family Group Conferences (FGCs) are decision making and planning meetings in which the wider family group makes plans and decisions for children in need to safeguard and promote their welfare. The child should be involved in the process, although may not be present at the meeting, and the family plan should take account of any stipulations raised by this authority.
- 9.2 This authority will offer and facilitate FGCs or other forms of family meeting at an early stage when there are concerns about a child who may not be able to live with his/her parents. These meetings are to promote the involvement of the wider family to achieve a resolution of difficulties, and offer a means of ensuring that all resources within the family's wider social networks have been engaged for the benefit of the child. The child's social worker will provide information as to the process for arranging an FGC.

10. Support Groups

- 10.1 Haringey recognises that family and friends carers may sometimes find that getting together with others in a similar position can be a valuable source of support. Groups can help to combat the isolation which many carers feel when they take on the role, particularly when they are dealing with the complex needs of vulnerable children for which they had not planned. Support groups can be particularly important for carers and others who are not in receipt of services from the local authority.
- 10.2 Haringey works with other statutory agencies and voluntary organisations to find ways to encourage peer support and access to support groups. There are various national and local support groups: they may be specifically for grandparents, or just informal family and friends carers, or mixed groups. Haringey provides support groups for certain groups. Information about existing groups is available on request from either the supervising social worker or the family and friends social worker. Advice about how to set up a new group is available from organisations such as Family Rights Group and The Grandparents Association. See Annex B for contact details.

11. Complaints

- 11.1 If a family and friends carer, foster carer or child feels dissatisfied with the service they have received from this authority, they may make a complaint via the authority's CYPS complaints process. Haringey aims to resolve complaints as quickly as possible without the need for a formal investigation, but where this is not possible, a formal investigation will be arranged. Details of the complaints procedure are available on request.

HARINGEY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES

AUGUST 2013

Annex A – Caring for Somebody Else’s Child - Options

ANNEX A: CARING FOR SOMEBODY ELSE'S CHILD – OPTIONS

Approval basis	Parental Responsibility (PR)	Route into the caring arrangement	Private fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
The arrangement is assessed by LA, but the carer is not approved as a local authority foster carer is. The arrangement may be prohibited if assessed by the local authority as unsuitable.	Remains with birth parents	Relative means grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (by full blood, half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or a step parent. The child is not a looked after child.	This is a private arrangement whereby the child is being cared for for 28 days or more (or the intention is that the arrangement will last for 28 days or more) by anyone who does not have parental responsibility, and who is not a close relative.	The relative has chosen to take on the care of the child but does not have parental responsibility, and the arrangement was not made by the local authority. The child is not a looked after child.	The child has been placed with the relative or friend by the local authority, because the person who had been caring for the child was deemed not to be providing suitable care. The child is a looked after child and so the local authority must approve the relative or friend as a local authority foster carer.	The child is a looked after child being accommodated by the local authority under section 20 Children Act 1989 or because the child is subject to a care order, but has been placed with a foster carer by the local authority. (Alternatively, the local authority may choose to place a child into residential care where this is considered to best meet the child's needs).	The child may be at risk of becoming 'looked after' and a friend or relative applies for an order, or The child may have been 'looked after' and their foster carer or other relative/friend applies for an order. In either circumstance, application can be made without the support of the parents or the local authority. Relatives may apply for an order after the child has lived with them for one year. Or, there can be benign reasons, e.g. after parents' death and in line with a prior agreement between the birth parents and the carer.	PR shared with parents and any one else with parental responsibility for the child. The special guardian may exercise parental responsibility to the exclusion of all others with PR, apart from another special guardian.	Looked after children: the LA may decide that the child should be placed for adoption. They can only do so with the consent of the birth parent or under a placement order made by a court. An approved foster carer can apply for an adoption order after a year of caring for the child. Other informal carers could apply for an adoption order if the child has lived with them for a period of 3 years.
None	Remains with birth parents but the person who cares for the child may do what is reasonable to safeguard or promote the child's welfare	Relative may perceive the parents to be unable to care for the child. or the parents may be dead or otherwise not available (e.g. in prison); or there may be an agreement between relatives due to difficult family circumstances.					Shared by parents and holder of residence order.	PR shared with parents and any one else with parental responsibility for the child. The special guardian may exercise parental responsibility to the exclusion of all others with PR, apart from another special guardian.	Transfers to adopters and relationship with birth parents is severed.
Approved as local authority foster carers in accordance with Fostering Services Regulations. (If child is looked after, carers must be approved as foster carers even if close relative.)	Remains with birth parents if child accommodated under section 20 CA, or if the child is subject to a care order or emergency protection order the local authority will have parental responsibility and determines the extent to which it may be exercised by others.						Appointed by court following application.	Appointed by court, following application from the applicant. LA must investigate the matter and prepare a report for the court dealing with the suitability of the applicant to be a special guardian.	Adoption agency assesses and approves prospective adopters, court makes order regarding specific child. If the child is not looked after then notice of intention to adopt must be given to the LA who then carry out an assessment / report for the court.

	Private fostering	Family care (informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
Duration:	Subject to discretion of person with PR and readiness of private foster carer.	Subject to discretion of person with PR	So long as placement remains in line with child's care plan, as determined by LA	Statutory: visits to child by social worker and supervision of foster carers by supervising social worker	Age 18.	Age 18 unless varied or discharged by the court before the child reaches 18 years.	Permanent lifelong relationship
Placement supervision	It is not a placement, but there are statutory visits to child by social worker (minimum 6 weekly in first year, then 12 weekly)	None	Statutory: reviews of child's care plan (minimum 6 monthly) and annual reviews of local authority foster carers approval	None	None	None	When child is placed for adoption by the LA, the placement is supervised and there are statutory reviews. Once the adoption order is made, none.
Review of placement	It is not a placement, but the LA may do formal reviews in addition to ongoing assessment during visits.	None	Statutory reviews of child's care plan (minimum 6 monthly) and annual reviews of local authority foster carers approval	None	None	None	See above
Support services	Provision of advice and support as determined necessary by the LA, which may assess the child as a child in need, with a child in need plan, and provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the Children Act 1989	No entitlement, but the LA may assess the child as a child in need, with a child in need plan and provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the Children Act 1989	Support to meet child's needs including health plan and personal education plan. Training and practical support to foster carers in accordance with the Fostering Services Regulations, MMS and CWDC standards. Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services	No entitlement (But LA has discretion to provide services / support for child/family under section 17 of the CA)	If child was looked after prior to making the SGO, LA must assess for need for special guardianship support services. LA has discretion whether to provide support.	Young person may be entitled to leaving care support services if was a looked after child prior to making of the SGO.	Entitlement to assessment for adoption support services, which may be provided at discretion of LA in accordance with Regulations and MMS.

	Private fostering	Family care (Informal)	Family and friends foster care	Unrelated foster care	Residence order	Special guardianship order (SGO)	Adoption
Financial support – entitlement	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p> <p>Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holders of PR</p>	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p> <p>Financial responsibility to maintain the child remains with holders of PR.</p> <p>Guardians Allowance payable if both parents have died or the only surviving parent cannot be found or serving 2 years or more prison sentence.</p>	<p>Child benefit and child tax credit not payable.</p> <p>Weekly allowance to meet the costs of caring for the child. This should meet at least the national minimum rate set by DCSF.</p> <p>The Manchester City Council judgment ruled that allowances must be the same for all foster carers, whether or not family & friends.</p>		<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p>	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p>	<p>Can claim child benefit and child tax credit if not being paid to parent.</p> <p>Entitlement to assessment for financial support (part of adoption support) if child looked after prior to order.</p>
Financial support – discretionary	<p>LA has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section17 Children Act</p>	<p>LA has discretion to make one-off or regular payments under section17 Children Act</p>	<p>Some fostering providers pay their foster carers a fee to recognise the carer's skill, experience and commitment.</p> <p>The Manchester City Council judgement (which requires allowances to be paid on the same basis regardless of the relationship of the carer to the child) did not consider fees. However, Statutory Guidance for Fostering Services requires that any policy in relation to the payment of fees must be applied to all foster carers who meet the criteria in the same way and must not discriminate on the grounds of a pre-existing relationship with the child.</p>		<p>LA has discretion to pay residence order allowance – usually if child was previously fostered by the carers, or exceptionally if making residence order prevents child becoming looked after. Any allowance reviewed annually.</p>	<p>Entitled to an assessment for financial support under the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 if child looked after prior to order and meets the criteria in the regulations.</p> <p>Subject to assessment as above and for former foster carers can include an element of remuneration.</p> <p>Regular or one off payments.</p> <p>Any allowances reviewed annually.</p>	<p>Subject to assessment, one off payments or regular adoption allowance may be paid.</p>

Annex B: Useful Organisations and Information for Family and Friends Carers

Action for Prisoners' Families

Works to reduce the negative impact of imprisonment on prisoners' families. Produces publications and resources, and provides advice, information and training as well as networking opportunities.

www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk

Address: Unit 21, Carlston Court
116 Putney Bridge Road
London SW15 2NQ

Tel: 0208 812 3600

Email: info@actionpf.org.uk

Advice Line: 0808 808 2003

Info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.org.uk

Addaction

Offers a range of support developed for families and carers affected by substance misuse.

www.addaction.org.uk

Address: 67-69 Cowcross Street
London EC1M 6PU

Tel: 0207 251 5860

Email: info@addaction.org.uk

Adfam

Works with families affected by drugs and alcohol, and supports carers of children whose parents have drug and alcohol problems.

www.adfam.org.uk

Address: 25 Corsham Street

London N1 6DR
Tel: 0207 553 7640
Email: admin@adfam.org.uk

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

Offers free independent advice and information for parents and carers on a range of state education and schooling issues, including admissions, exclusion, attendance, special educational needs and bullying.

www.ace-ed.org.uk

Address: 1c Aberdeen Studios
22 Highbury Grove
London N5 2DQ

General advice line: 0808 800 5793
Exclusion advice line: 0808 800 0327
Exclusion information line: 0207 704 9822 (24hr answer phone)

BeGrand.net

Website offering information and advice to grandparents, plus online and telephone advice.

www.begrand.net

Helpline: 0845 434 6835

British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF)

Provides information and advice about adoption and fostering and publishes resources.

www.baaf.org.uk

Address: Saffron House
6-10 Kirby Street
London EC1N 8TS

Tel: 0207 421 2600
Email: mail@baaf.org.uk
Children's Legal Centre

Provides free independent legal advice and factsheets to children, parents, carers and professionals.

www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Address: University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park
Colchester
Essex CO4 3SQ

Tel: 01206 877 910

Email: clc@essex.ac.uk

Child Law Advice Line: 0808 802 0008

Community Legal Advice – Education: 0845 345 4345

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free independent and confidential advice through local bureaux and website.

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Department for Education

Lists details of telephone help lines and online services to provide information, advice and support on a range of issues that parents and families may face in bringing up children and young people.

www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families

Family Fund Trust

Helps families with severely disabled or seriously ill children to have choices and the opportunity to enjoy ordinary life. Gives grants for things that make life easier and more enjoyable for the disabled child and their family.

Address 4 Alpha Court
Monks Cross Drive
York YO32 9WN

www.familyfund.org.uk

Tel:0845 130 4542

Email: info@familyfund.org.uk

Family Rights Group (FGR)

Provides advice to parents and other family members whose children are involved with or require children's social care services because of welfare needs or concerns. Publishes resources, help to develop support groups for family and friends carers, and runs a discussion board.

www.frg.org.uk

Address: Second Floor
The Print House
18 Ashwin Street
London E8 3DL

Tel: 0207 923 2628
Advice Line: 0800 801 0366
Email: advice@frg.org.uk

The Fostering Network

Supports foster carers and anyone with an interest in fostering to improve their lives of children in care. Publishes resources and runs Fosterline, a confidential advice line for foster carers including concerns about a child's future, allegations and complaints, legislation and financial matters.

www.fostering.net

Address: 87 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8HA

Email: info@fostering.net
Tel: 020 7 620 6400
Fosterline: 0800 040 7675
Email: fosterline@fostering.net

The Grandparents' Association

Supports grandparents and their families, especially those who have lost or are losing contact with their grandchildren because of

divorce, separation or other family problems, those caring for their grandchildren on a full time basis and those with childcare responsibilities for their grandchildren.

www.grandparents-association.org.uk

Address: Moot House
The Stow
Harlow
Essex CM20 3AG

Tel: - 01279 428040
Helpline: 0845 434 9585
Welfare benefits advice and information: 0844 357 1033
Email: info@grandparents-association.org.uk

Mentor UK

Promotes the health and wellbeing of children and young people to reduce the damage that drugs can do to lives.

www.mentor.org.uk

Address: Fourth Road
74 Great Eastern Street
London EC2A 3JG

Tel: 0207 739 8494
Email: admin@mentoruk.org

Family Mediation Helpline

Provides information and advice about family mediation services and eligibility for public funding.

08456 026627
www.familymediationhelpline.co.uk

National Family Mediation (NFM)

Provides mediation services to support couples who are separated, and their children and others affected by this.

www.nfm.org.uk

4 Barnfield Hill
Exeter
EX1 1SR
general@nfm.org.uk

Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group

Operates helpline and provides a variety of services to support anyone who has a link with someone in prison, prisoners and other agencies.

www.partnersofprisoners.co.uk

Address: Valentine House
1079 Richdale Road
Blakeley
Manchester M9 8AJ

Tel: 01061 702 1000
Offenders' Families Helpline Tel: 0808 808 2003
Email: info@prisonersfamilieshelpline.co.uk

Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)

Provides practical and emotional support to prisoners and to their children and families. The kinship care Support Service provides support and advice to family members and friends who care for children whose parents are in HMP Holloway.

www.prisonadvice.org.uk

Address; Park Place
12 Lawn Lane
Vauxhall
SW8 1UD
Tel: 0207 735 953

Parents Against Drug Abuse (PADA)

Delivers support and services to families of substance users, including a national helpline.

www.pada.org.uk

Address: The Foundry
Marcus Street
Birkenhead CH41 1EU

Phone: 0151 649 1580
National Families Helpline: 08457 023867

Parentline Plus

Provides help and support in all aspects of family life, including information, an online chat facility and a 24 hour helpline.

www.familylives.org.uk

Address: CAN Mezzanine
49-51 East Road
London N1 6AH

Tel: 0207 553 3080
24hr Advice line: 0808 800 2222
Email: parentsupport@familylives.org.uk

TalktoFrank

The government's national drugs helpline which offers free confidential drugs information and advice 24 hours a day. Information and advice is also available via the website.

www.talktofrank.com

24 hour advice line: 0800 77 66 00
Text 82111
Email: frank@talktofrank.com

Voice

Advocacy organisation for children living away from home or in need.

www.voiceyp.org

Address: 320 City Road
London EC1V 2NZ
Tel: 0207 833 5792
Young person's advice line: 0808 800 5792
Email: info@voiceyp.org

Young Minds

Works to improve the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people and empowering their parents and carers.

www.youngminds.org.uk

Address: 48-50 St John Street
London EC1M 4DG

Tel: 0207 336 8445
Parents helpline: 0808 802 5544