

News and information for Kinship Families in Essex



Dear Kinship Carer,

We cannot believe it is May already. We hope you all enjoyed the holidays.

As always, we would like to keep you up to date with news and developments within the Kinship Post Order Support Team.

In this month's bumper edition, we are pleased to share details of three save the dates, screen time advice and research and an opportunity to take part and have your say in two different research projects.

Please do contact us at any time, if you need guidance, advice, and support or to just share achievements of the children/young people with us.

Best wishes

Kinship Post Order Support Team

Youth Group



We have a brand-new Youth Group for kinship young people age, 13 – 18.

The aim of the group is:

- To provide a safe and fun environment
- Young people to make new friends
- Learn skills
- Explore interests

We are planning to kick off with an event on Saturday 31st May '25 at Carousel Family Hub, Chapel Hill, Braintree CM7 3QZ

Please see attached flyer for more details.

Save the Dates

It's My Life - We are pleased to announce that this years It's My Life will be held on **Friday 1st August** Time: 10:30 to 14:30.

Venue: Danbury Outdoor Centre, Well Lane, Danbury, CM3 4AB Further details to follow.

Kinship Conference 2025 – Thursday 18th September at The Keene Hall, Watchouse Road, Galleywood, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 8PT. Further details to follow.

Screen Time – Your tips for a healthier screen time

'FIVE A DAY' Your tips for a healthier screen time.

'How much is too much screen time for children?'

Dr Sanjiv Nichani OBE: Senior Consultant Paediatrician at the East Midlands Congenital Heart Centre and Leicester Children's Hospital is raising awareness of the effects of screen time on the health, well-being and safeguarding of children and young people.

'Tips for a Healthier Screen Time' is a useful guide for parents, carers, children and young people.

Screen time is an everyday reality and has social and educational benefits depending upon the child's age. However, several recent studies have demonstrated a causal link between high levels of screen time and the astronomical increase in mental health and well-being difficulties amongst children and young people. In addition, unprotected and prolonged online presence is associated with a much greater risk of bullying, abuse and grooming (when an individual builds an online relationship leading to child abuse)

[Roles of cyberbullying, sleep, and physical activity in mediating the effects of social media use on mental health and wellbeing among young people in England: a secondary analysis of longitudinal data - PubMed](#)

According to the most recent NHS survey in 2023, 20% of 8–25-year-olds have mental health difficulties, a dramatic rise in the last 10 years.

[MHCYP Wave 4 - Briefing Presentation \(Final\).pdf](#)

Locally a Key Finding of the Leicester Children's Health and Wellbeing Survey 2021-2022 from 3,000 Leicester school pupils showed that over a quarter of children spent five or more hours looking at a screen the day before the survey:

[Leicester Children's Health and Wellbeing Survey](#)

The Tips for a Healthier Screen Time support parents and carers to achieve a healthy balance between allowing and removing screen time thereby reducing the possibility of children and young people wanting to keep screen time a secret, making it more difficult for them to seek help with bullying, harmful content, or potential grooming.

Further tips and information to support negotiating parental control over screen time can be found in the link below:

[Your child's screen time | The Key Safeguarding](#)

HELP US UNDERSTAND AND CELEBRATE NEURODIVERSITY

"Neurodiverse" or "neurodivergent" is a way of defining someone whose brain works significantly differently from what we think is the norm; for example, someone who is on the autistic spectrum or has ADHD, as well as people with dyslexia or another learning diversity.

We are preparing some resources around neurodiversity in adults, and we want to put across the experiences and perspectives of parents, carers and special guardians. We want to know about both parenting children and young people who are neurodiverse and also about being a carer who is neurodiverse.

We will likely interview you or ask you to fill a questionnaire. We will produce some videos and some written material with our findings.

If you are interested to take part, please contact us at neurodiverselife@essex.gov.uk by **23rd June**.

Our aims are to:

- improve the training we deliver to staff about assessing and supporting neurodiverse adults
- improve our training and support to carers who are neurodiverse and who look after neurodiverse children and young people.

Above all, we want to celebrate the strengths and recognise the challenges of carers and parents whose brains work differently.

We are truly looking forward to hearing from you!

ECC clinical leads

Research - Exploring Special Guardian's relationships with their birth child

We have an opportunity for special guardians who are also grandmothers to take part in some research. Further details are attached.



If you would like to take part in this, please email Imrana Choudhry on ic356@canterbury.ac.uk

Upcoming Coffee Mornings



However you take it, you are guaranteed a warm welcome and a cup of what you fancy, interesting conversations and a chance to meet new friends.

Please be reminded that it is not appropriate for children to attend our coffee mornings, due to the adult content of some of the discussions.

Area	Venue	Date and Time
Basildon	Mother's Kitchen Café 6 Felmores End, Pitsea, Basildon SS13 1PN	Thursday 22 nd May and 19 th June 2025 9.30am to 11.30am
Clacton	Weeley Village Hall, Clacton Rd, Weeley, Weeley Heath, Clacton-on-Sea, CO16 9DH	Friday 9 th May and 6 th June 2025 10am to noon
Canvey Island	Leigh Beck Infant School, Point Road, Canvey Island, SS8 7TD	Thursday 15 th May and 12 th June 2025 9.30am to 11.30am
Cressing	St. Barnabas Church Hall, Claud Ince Avenue, Cressing, CM77 8HG	Friday 16 th May and 13 th June 2025 10am to noon

Harlow	Woodlands Family Centre, 9 Peterswood, Harlow, CM18 7RJ	Wednesday 7 th May and 4 th June 2025 <i>10am to noon</i>
Virtual	Via Teams – link sent out the day before	Tuesday 6 th May and 3 rd June 2025 10am to noon

Charities, Support Services and Training Opportunities

Virtual School

The Essex Virtual School is dedicated to supporting children in care (CiC), previously looked-after children (PLAC), and those under Special Guardianship Orders, helping them to thrive as learners.

They aim to enhance educational outcomes by providing guidance and support that raises aspirations and expectations for these children and young people.

They work with designated teachers, social workers, carers and other partners at times of difficulty and need.

Their aim is to:

- improve understanding of the unique barriers to learning and education experienced by many of our children and young people
- promote and foster a culture that takes account of children and young people's views according to age and understanding, identifying, and meeting their educational needs
- work in partnership with all of those who support our children and young people to raise aspirations and expectations and build capacity to make a positive difference to their educational experiences and outcomes
- provide support and challenge where needed to ensure that the educational needs of our children are prioritised

For support and advice contact them on virtual.school@essex.gov.uk

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupil-support-and-wellbeing/essex-virtual-school>

For further guidance please contact virtualschool@essex.gov.uk or www.essex.gov.uk/virtualschool



Training Opportunities through Kinship Compass

Compass is an independent online information, advice, and support hub just for kinship carers run by Kinship. They hold a number of free workshops. With the following planned for August. You can sign up for these using this link [workshops and roadshows](#) or by searching <https://kinship.org.uk/support-and-advice/training-and-events/>

- EHCP/SEND Processes
- Preparing for Sensitive Conversations
- Understanding trauma and attachment

From January 2025 Kinship are extending their training with new workshops which are now available to book.

- Foetal Alcohol Syndrome – understanding FAS
- Raising a biracial child – understanding the importance of identity, impact of racism
- Life story work – practical tools and resources to support kinship children to understand their family history.
- Understanding aggressive and challenging behaviours

As always, they also have their peer support and Someone Like Me services running, as well as our online and phone line advice support. <https://compass.kinship.org.uk/> or call them 0300 123 7015

Essex Kinship Post Order Support Team - Contact Details:



We have a dedicated duty number on 033301 39860. The team's aim is to answer your queries or signpost you to a partner agency that can offer you further support and advice.

The phone Helpline is open Monday to Thursday from 9.00am to 5.30pm and Friday 9am to 4.30pm.

You can also e-mail us at any time on kinship.support.gov.uk – this mailbox is monitored daily Monday to Friday.

We also have our website <https://www.essex.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/special-guardianship>

Please be mindful that urgent requests or concerns regarding the welfare of a child should always be called through to:

Children & Families Hub: 0345 603 7627

After hours - Emergency Duty Team: 0345 606 1212

Mon - Thurs 5.00pm - 8.45am and Fri 4.30pm - Mon 8.45am inc. Bank holidays

If you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, please let us know by emailing kinship.support@essex.gov.uk and we will remove you from our mailing list.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for the wonderful caring task you do every day!!

