

Mentor carers to help them understand the process

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Mentor UK and the EU Kinship Care Programme conducted a survey with Kinship Carers to identify areas in which improvements had to be made. It was brought to attention generally Carers felt isolated, confused and that overall there was a lack of support. They were unsure what was their role, unsure of their legal responsibilities and not clear on whether or not they would be offered additional support in terms of a social worker.

Mentor UK produced a guide produced a resource guide for kinship carers to help them understand the process the role they play when looking after a child. They contacted nearly all local authorities in Scotland and have offered couples of resource for social workers to give to potential kinship carers (Kinship Care, 2016) Advantages of Kinship care The main advantage of Kinship care opposed to traditional common methods like fostering is it enabled the child in concern to remain with someone who is familiar with them. A study carried out by the charity Grandparents Plus, showed that in remaining within the family, the child was likely to perform better in a number of objective measures including exam results – proved to be significantly better than those of a child in foster care (Grandparents plus, 2017) Furthermore, in terms of the economy, Kinship care is a far less expensive method of rehoming children in comparison to foster care. “ Record number of children in care as social services reach ‘ tipping point... Council leaders subsequently warned that funding cuts had pushed children’s social services to “ breaking point” (Bulman, 2017) Implications for social workers Over the years, there has been a rise in referrals for child protection consequently meaning a greater possibility for kids going into the care system.

Social workers based in the children and families sector, when suspecting a child may come into care may try to prevent this by using family group conferencing to investigate and encourage other members of a family who may be able to accommodate a child who is in need. Kinship care provides an alternative that keeps children out of care system hence why it is so important. Increases in Kinship Care is having such an impact on social work practice. The Scottish Government investing a lot of money into this because not only is it a cheaper alternative to fostering, but it has been shown to have better effects on the child whom alternatively would have been placed in foster. However, despite being beneficial in the sense that it is a cheaper alternative to fostering and proven to be more beneficial to the child, we have to acknowledge the needs and rights of Kinship Carers which have been shown to be very unclear.

We need to tackle the problems within Kinship care and perhaps spend more time focusing on the needs of the carer in order to make Kinship more accessible and appealing to potential families whom could offer this service, enabling Kinship to be an effective resource. It should not be overlooked like we have done in the past.