

Camden Kinship Local Offer

Consultation Report

This report sets out how Camden engaged kinship carers and young people during the development of the Kinship Local Offer, and how feedback shaped the final published offer.

1. Introduction

Camden Council is committed to ensuring that the voices of kinship carers, children and young people are central to the development of services and support available to kinship families.

To inform the development of Camden's Kinship Local Offer, Camden undertook a programme of consultation and engagement with kinship carers and young people between February and April 2025. The purpose was to better understand lived experiences, identify strengths within existing support, highlight gaps in provision, and ensure that the Local Offer reflects the needs and priorities of kinship families in Camden.

The consultation findings were considered when drafting the Local Offer. The Local Offer includes information and support areas that directly reflect themes raised by carers and young people, including access to clear information, a single point of contact, financial support, housing, family time, education, training, therapeutic support and peer support.

2. Consultation Methodology

Camden used a mixed-method approach so that carers and young people could contribute in different ways. This included focus groups, telephone conversations and surveys. Using multiple engagement methods helped ensure that carers and young people could participate in ways that suited them and enabled Camden to gather a broad range of experiences and views.

Engagement activity	Participation and responses
Kinship Carer Focus Group	5 carers took part in a dedicated discussion about existing support, challenges and priorities for improvement.
Young People's Focus Group	5 young people took part in a dedicated discussion about their experiences of kinship care, support, relationships and opportunities.
Kinship Carer Survey	48 responses were received from kinship carers in total. Approximately 25 responses were collected via telephone, and 23 were collected online.
Young People's Survey	7 responses were received from young people in kinship care.

The consultation explored:

- What support is currently working well for kinship families.
- Challenges experienced by kinship carers, children and young people.
- Gaps in services, information, support and communication.
- Additional support that carers and young people would value.
- Priorities for inclusion in Camden's Kinship Local Offer.

3. What Kinship Carers Told Us

3.1 What is working well

Carers highlighted positive aspects of existing support, including:

- Support from social workers, family support workers and named professionals.
- Access to financial assistance where available.
- Opportunities to attend peer support groups and meet other carers.
- Having someone available to contact for advice and guidance.
- Support from specialist organisations and community-based services.

Kinship carer survey findings showed that:

- 46% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the local authority's support meets their family's needs.
- 63% agreed or strongly agreed that they can access information, guidance and resources when needed.
- 62% agreed or strongly agreed that emotional support and regular communication from the local authority are important in their role.
- The most desired forms of support were financial assistance, emotional support, respite care and training.

3.2 Challenges and gaps identified

The consultation identified recurring challenges for kinship carers and families, including:

- Financial pressures and concerns about the fairness of support.
- Housing pressures, including overcrowding or unsuitable accommodation.
- Limited respite opportunities and the impact on carer wellbeing.
- Need for clearer information about entitlements, support and available services.
- Access to specialist support for children, including therapeutic, trauma-informed and SEND-related support.
- Education-related challenges, including schools not always understanding the needs of children in kinship care.
- Support with family time, birth family relationships and mediation.

Feedback from carers identified the following priority areas for further support.

Theme	Survey finding
Insufficient practical and emotional support	25% of responses identified this as a key challenge.
Housing instability and overcrowding	16.7% of responses identified this as a key challenge.
Financial strain and inequity	12.5% of responses identified this as a key challenge.
Information and entitlement gaps	8.3% of responses identified this as a key challenge.
Lack of respite and well-being support	6.3% of responses identified this as a key challenge.

4. What Children and Young People Told Us

Young people described strengths in their kinship arrangements, including feeling supported and loved by their carers, valuing family relationships, and benefiting from school or sporting activities.

In addition to the young people's focus group, 7 young people completed the young people's survey. The survey provided further insight into support, belonging, family contact and activities.

Young people's survey findings included:

- 86% reported that they are not treated differently because they live in a kinship household.
- 71% said they feel included and supported by friends and peers.
- Family was the most common source of help and support, followed by friends.
- Young people highlighted the importance of contact with birth families, including parents, aunts, uncles and siblings.

Young people identified areas where further support would help, including:

- Greater awareness and understanding of kinship care in schools and community settings.
- Better access to information about kinship care and support available.
- More opportunities to spend time with siblings, parents and wider family where this is safe and appropriate.
- Increased opportunities to meet other young people in similar situations.
- Access to a trusted adult, named support worker or someone to contact during difficult times.
- Greater access to therapeutic, recreational and activity-based support, including play therapy, structured activities and help with travel.

5. How Consultation Was Reflected in the Local Offer

The consultation findings were used to shape the content and structure of Camden's Kinship Local Offer. The table below shows how the main themes raised by kinship carers and young people were considered and reflected in the published Local Offer.

5.1 How We Reflected The Feedback In Our Local Offer.

Consultation theme	How this was reflected in the Local Offer
Clearer information and easier access to support	The Local Offer brings together information about support, eligibility, advice and contact routes in one document and links to Camden's kinship webpage.
Single point of contact	The Local Offer references Camden's dedicated kinship phone line and explains how families can contact the Kinship Team for advice, guidance and signposting.
Financial support and entitlements	The Local Offer includes a financial support section covering regular allowances, annual reviews, benefits, one-off discretionary payments, free school meals and uniform support.
Housing and overcrowding	The Local Offer includes a dedicated housing and accommodation section covering housing advice, liaison with housing services and support where accommodation issues affect stability.

Emotional support and regular communication	The Local Offer includes information on emotional and well-being support, support planning, peer groups and how families can ask for support when circumstances change.
Respite, activities and peer connection	The Local Offer includes peer support groups, community support and links to organisations that provide workshops, activities and events for kinship families.
Training and specialist support	The Local Offer includes training and preparation for kinship carers, therapeutic support, CAMHS, PAC-UK and Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund information.
Education and school support	The Local Offer includes education, post-16 planning and Virtual School support for children in kinship care.
Family time and contact	The Local Offer includes information on family time, contact support, mediation and support to maintain safe and meaningful relationships where this is in the child's best interests.

5.2 You Said, We Did

Not all feedback could be addressed through the Local Offer itself; however, the themes raised informed both the content of the offer and wider service development priorities.

You said	We did
Information about support can be difficult to find.	Developed a Kinship Local Offer bringing information together in one place, supported by Camden's kinship webpage.
Families wanted a single point of contact.	Introduced a dedicated kinship telephone line and email address, which are published on Camden's kinship webpage.
More information about financial support was needed.	Included information on financial support, allowances, benefits and discretionary support.
Housing was identified as a challenge.	Included a dedicated section on housing and accommodation support.
Families wanted more support and regular communication.	Included information about access routes, support planning, peer support and services available to kinship families.
Carers requested training and specialist support.	Included information on training, therapeutic support, CAMHS, ASGSF and specialist organisations.
Young people wanted better support in education settings.	Included information on education support, post-16 planning and Camden Virtual School.
Young people highlighted the importance of family connection and contact.	Included information on family time, contact support and mediation where this is in the child's best interests.

Families wanted opportunities to connect with others.	Included information about peer support groups, community support and national kinship support organisations.
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7. Ongoing Engagement and Review

Camden recognises that consultation and co-production should be an ongoing process rather than a one-off activity. The Kinship Local Offer will be reviewed annually, and kinship carers, children, young people and partner organisations will be invited to share feedback to inform future updates.

Any significant changes to the Local Offer will be made so families and professionals continue to have access to up-to-date information about support available in Camden.

8. Conclusion

The consultation findings demonstrate the importance of accessible information, strong relationships, practical support and ongoing engagement with kinship families. Camden is grateful to all kinship carers, children and young people who contributed to the development of the Local Offer. Their feedback has helped shape a Local Offer that reflects local need and supports Camden's commitment to keeping children safe and connected within their family networks.

Particular thanks are extended to the young people and kinship carers who shared their experiences and helped shape the final offer.