

Applying for a Special Guardianship

Information for Foster Carers considering making an application for a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)

A Special Guardianship Order (often known as an SGO) is a legal order where the court appoints a carer – usually a relative or friend – as the 'Special Guardian' of a child until they turn 18. The Special Guardian then shares parental responsibility for the child with the parents and can make nearly all the major decisions about the child. The child is no longer a looked after child once the SGO is granted.

This information is for all foster carers who may be considering applying for an SGO. Foster carers include Children's Trust, Independent and Connected Persons who have been approved as foster carers.

If you are currently considering applying for an SGO for a child/ren in your care, please discuss this with your supervising social worker and the social worker for the child. A discussion may also take place at the child in care review meeting to explore this option for the child.

A visit or call with a worker from the SGO support team can also be arranged to explore the range of support available.

Foster Carers will already be receiving fostering payments for the child they are looking after. A principle is established that where a permanency plan has been agreed as being in the child's best interest that foster carers should not be financially disadvantaged as a result of no longer being the child's foster carer.

If you are considering applying for an SGO a letter can be prepared for you before an application is made that will set out what financial support, you will receive.

The pupil premium payable annually to a school will continue to be paid following the making of a SGO.



After the child, who was formerly looked after prior to the SGO, has reached the age of 18, 'Staying Put' payments may also be made by the Trust to the young person's former Special Guardian, if the child was 11 years of age or over at the time the SGO was granted.

While the young person remains resident with the Special Guardian staying put payments may be made until the young person reaches the age of 21.

In addition, a young person subject to a SGO will be eligible for advice and assistance from Leaving Care service if they were looked after directly before the SGO was made.



If a foster carer decides they wish to progress to an SGO, and the plan is agreed at the child in care review meeting an assessment will be completed and put before the court.

You are a foster carer for an independent agency, and the social worker for the child will arrange for the assessment to be undertaken.

An SGO support plan will also be prepared in consultation with the foster carer.

For information about the ongoing support provided once the SGO has been granted please see our additional leaflets:

- **SGO support post-order**

or our

- **One-minute briefing on SGO support**

Contact details for the SGO Support Team

If you would like further information on anything related to SGO support, please contact the team.

Email: SGOandPrivateFosteringSupportTeam@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Duty phone number: 0121 303 2621

