



Kinship Kids First thought not an after thought

Kin Kids Mental Health Animation Launch
October 2021



RAISE AND KINSHIP

The RAISE Team at Merseyside Youth Association collaborated with Kinship Carers Liverpool to better understand the mental health needs of the kin kids in Liverpool. The RAISE team worked with Kinship Carers Liverpool and the kin kids, who enjoyed the project to explore some of the key issues and the resilience factors that play a role in their mental health and wellbeing.

The result was a powerful and emotive amination with a strong youth voice at its heart. It details the daily challenges of kin kids that are often overlooked.

180,000
KIN KIDS IN THE
UK



The Animation



The animation tells a range of stories and experiences, with many children and young people simply not knowing their story and left wondering, why? Was it my fault? I wonder if my parents are okay? Do they think about me? These thoughts often evolve into feelings of being misunderstood, anger, shamed, anxiety, rejection, loneliness and self-blame—the need to keep their lives a secret, emphasising the impact of self and belonging.

It highlights how unequal kin kids feel the support around them is and the lack of fairness regarding support in families and/or between siblings. The role of stigma, ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences), bullying and toxic stress only create further distress.

It celebrates the importance of kinship groups and support in helping them build their resilience, the importance of memory making, having a voice and some sense of control in life, special places that make kin kids feel safe and happy.

The animation calls for all to recognise that we all have a role to play, appropriate, timely interventions for all the family and a trauma-informed approach to kinship care.

Local authorities should:

Information

Provide clear and comprehensive information to kinship carers about the options available to them and any support they may be eligible for, including any support they may be able to access throughout the kin child's life.

Commission

Establish and commission kinship care support services, including counselling, therapeutic support, family therapy, contact support and training resources.

Assessment

In response to a request by a kinship carer, conduct an assessment of the child's support needs in their care (whatever their legal status at that time) where a court, local authority or a professional has determined that child cannot live with their parents.

Named Contact

Consider introducing a named person and contact number with responsibility for supporting applications for eligible kin children to access the Adoption Support Fund and other entitlements (such as priority admissions to school, ensuring schools apply for Pupil Premium Plus) and to promote these supports to kinship care families who may be eligible.

Funding

Assist in setting up, commissioning or grant funding support groups for kinship carers and routinely signpost kinship carers to such groups.

Good Practice

Consider the use of the Mockingbird Family Model and Lifelong Links to deliver support to kinship carers and children in kinship care.

Mutual Charter

Adopt the Mutual Expectations charter, which sets out what families should be able to expect of child welfare services and what children's services can expect from families.



Kinship kids and their families say...

During the launch of the animation kin kids and their families voiced what they wanted to see here in Liverpool:

Raise awareness amongst health profession to recognise kinship families needs

Support kin families to keep children out of Local Authority Care

Improving data collection
So, we are not invisible

Clear concise and free legal advice at the earliest opportunity to get the foundations right to support a secure placement

Support families to make informed choices

Employment, benefits, and support:
To enable kin families to look at what the future may look like and how they will be supported

School support:
To enable schools to identify and support kin families needs

Future Plans

At the launch of the animation, the MYA RAISE Team and Kinship Carers Liverpool wanted to take the opportunity to explore the next steps. Those in attendance were asked:

What do we have?

What works well?

What can we build on? Strengthen?

**BOXED
OFF**

- MYA and KCL collaboration - the animation to raise awareness
- The support networks families already know from each other
- Peer support in kinship kids
- Peer support that's independently run
- Preparation for kinship carers where it is tailored and happening
- Liaising with Virtual School
- Some collaboration between local authorities
- One to one work from the voluntary sector
- Nominated staff in schools that children can build a relationship with
- YC5 Training: Build on it in collaboration with Grandparents, Aunties, Uncles etc.
- JMU training with future social workers by kinship carers
- Build and grow the skills and capacity of the Liverpool Kinship Carers organisation and volunteers
- Can CFAS offer support?



WHAT'S CIRCLING?

We also wanted key people in the city to think about what else was needed.

What further questions needed to be asked?

What more information do we need as a city to better support kin kids in Liverpool.

What things are circling around our heads following the event:

What is the ideal? What does the most supportive journey look like?

We need to learn more about health pathways

What about SEND needs and kin kids?

Does the capacity of the SGO (Special Guardianship Order) teams need to be increased, to enable a further reach to draw down ASF funding for kin kids?

How do we improve how we raise awareness of funding for kinship families?

What training do social workers get around kin kids and supporting their mental health?

What additional programmes and interventions are needed?

Increase mental health support for carers and children and young people in kinship families

How do we engage kinship families from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities?

Key people are still missing from this agenda; how do we bring them together?

Teachers need to be trained on kinship issues.

Awareness raising and increased capacity for therapeutic parenting courses are needed.

Alder Hey/ NSPCC Life story work - is this still available? To whom?

How can the virtual school be more visible to kinship families?

How can the Virtual School support schools with raising awareness and identifying previous looked after child (PLAC)

Could we look at developing 'Prep' groups for kinship carers with trauma-informed training and techniques and strategies?

**When will we receive the
Local Authorities
response to the recommendations?**



We all have a role to play!

We asked everyone to pledge three things they would do following the event to make a difference to kin kids' mental health and wellbeing...

PLEDGE 3 THINGS

Develop links
with MYA/ RAISE

Listen to carers'
needs to influence
change

Joint working and
sharing good practice
with other local
authorities

Identify training
opportunities for
the the organisation

Continue to
promote Kinship
Carers in materials

School support:
To enable schools to
identify and support kin
families needs

Communications:
E-shot, social media,
general promotion of
trauma-informed and
training

Look to support the
development of Kinship
specific training

PLEDGE 3 THINGS

Build into WSA
Self-Assessment
tool

Update the website
around trauma
informed practice

Contact schools to
visit them and raise
awareness

Discuss with schools
how they can support
kinship carers and
children

Continue to plan
further with local
authorities for all
kinship carers

Promote kinship
care to social
workers and
schools

Share information on
virtual schools
website

Talk to all local
authorities have a
relationships with
about the
animation

Circulate the animation
to professional network
of 1,000 professionals
workign with kinship
carers

PLEDGE 3 THINGS

Deliver the kin
kids and mental
health bite size
regularly

Book a date in to
deliver trauma
informed training to
kinship carers

Promote kinship
care in all my work
and practice

Link kinship work to
wider CAMHS MH
partnership and support

Promote kinship
care to social
workers and
schools

Link local work to
Cheshire and
Merseyside work

Unpick some data:
How many school
exclusions are kin kids?
How many kin kids are
taken into care?

Share the bite size
training with Merseyside
Violence Reduction
Partnership colleagues

For more information visit:
www.liverpoolcamhs.com/professionals/kinship-kids/

