

A Guide to help Grandparents who have a caring role



Produced by Community First New Forest

Grandparents Guide

“Are you a carer looking after your grandchildren?”

“Do you feel overwhelmed?”

“Do you want to talk to other grandparents in a similar position?”

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As a grandparent you are an important figure in your family’s life. You may be providing emotional support or practical advice, or you may be actively involved in caring for your grandchildren. But this is not always easy and sometimes even with all your experience you need help and support too.

This guide will help you find some of the answers and the support you may need whilst caring for your family.

Who can I talk to?

Many grandparents find themselves raising their grandchildren, often without knowing what help they can receive. Each situation is unique, with its own challenges.

You may feel “out of touch” when dealing with everyday situations, such as going into your grandchild’s school, after school activities and understanding what benefits you are entitled to.

“Loving grandparents can make all the difference to family life. As the pace and pressure of daily life increases, the contribution grandparents make has never been more necessary”

(A quote from Denise Robertson from Good Morning)



The good thing is that you are not alone, as many grandparents find themselves in your position. Here at Community First New Forest we have a **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group**.

If you find yourselves back in a parenting role looking after your grandchildren then this group could offer you the advice and support you are looking for.

Come along and chat over coffee, give each other advice and encouragement at this friendly support group, refreshments provided. Everyone is welcome, so if you would like to come along, want more information or would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact:

Project Co-ordinator
Community First New Forest
Tel. 01425 482773
or email cypservices@cfnf.org.uk

Community First New Forest
Archstone House
Pullman Business Park
Pullman Way
Ringwood BH24 1HD
Tel. 01425 482773
Fax. 01425 482666
www.cfnf.org.uk

There are also many other support agencies who can offer advice and a list is included in this guide.

Just because you are looking after your grandchild, it does not mean you need to be stuck at home all day. If you have an under five, there are playgroups and toddler groups that operate in church halls and community centres. Your local library, doctors surgery and local primary school will have information regarding activities available in your area.

Your grandchildren will have the opportunity to mix with other children of a similar age, and you will have the chance to meet other grandparents who may be in a similar position.

Toys and play equipment

It is easy to forget what your children needed when they were young, and the needs of your grandchildren can be challenging. If you are unsure what kind of toys or equipment is appropriate then Parentline Plus offers parenting advice on everything from toys and nutrition to discipline. This is available to grandparents as well as parents.

They are on the internet at www.parentlineplus.org.uk

They also have a confidential email support service as well, manned by volunteers who try to reply within three working days - or if your problem is more urgent, telephone their 24-hour helpline on 0808 800 2222.

Their postal address is:

Parentline Plus
520 Highgate Studios
53-79 Highgate Road
Kentish Town
London
NW5 1TL

Finding toys and equipment can be a challenge. Your local charity shops and car boot sales often have good quality play equipment at the fraction of the cost you would pay in the shops. Young children usually don't care where they come from, just as long as they can play and keep busy.

There is a Toy Library at:
Fordingbridge Sandleheath
Sea Scout Hall
Sandleheath
Fordingbridge
Hants
SP6 3EE
Tel: 01725 517379
Email: jacquiingram@tiscali.co.uk

Everyone is welcome. Parents, grandparents, carers, childminders, playgroups, pre-schools etc.

They are open one day a month on a Thursday, usually the first Thursday but this does change occasionally, so please check before your first visit.

Opening times are 10.30am - 4.30pm. They have a wide selection of toys to suit ages 0-14.

Membership costs £5 per annum and monthly toy hire starts at 50p. Most toys are priced between 50p & £3.00. Games Consoles are slightly more expensive.

There is also “**TEDS**” based in Ringwood which is a Toy Exchange and Donation scheme. The *TEDS* scheme provides an innovative way of recycling and reusing children’s used and outgrown items that may no longer be of use to you, but may be to others. They recycle unwanted toys, books, puzzles, DVD's, bikes, trikes, scooters, ride-on toys, clothes, linens, nursery equipment, changing mats and tables, prams, buggies, travel systems, carry seats and more.

For more information go to www.tedstoysales.co.uk or contact them on 01425 489519 or 07795 109559.

Computers



The use of a computer can fill you with fear; however there is help at hand. There are Computer Clubs available across the New Forest to help and guide you and below are some contacts.

Age Concern Computer Centre
St John’s Church
St James Road
Shirley
Southampton
SO15 5FB
Tel. 02380 368 636

Bringing IT learning to the over 50s
Age Concern Hampshire
1 St Cross
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 9JA
Tel. 02392 591 578

Computer Clubs
Age Concern New Forest East
Southward House
2 Beaulieu Road
Dibden Purlieu
Hampshire
SO45 4PT
Tel. 02380 841 199

“You do not really understand something unless you can explain it to your grandmother.”

- Proverb

Schools

You might also find going into your grandchildren's school and talking to the Special Needs Co-ordinator (**SENCO**) helpful, as the school will often be able to offer extra support to you and your family. Some schools may have an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (**ELSA**) or a Jigsaw Worker, who will work with your grandchildren in school if they are experiencing difficulties and offer you support. You may also be entitled to free school meals.

Your family may be experiencing bereavement, which is a difficult time. Here are two support agencies whom you can contact for support and advice.

Cruse Bereavement - South Hampshire

Tel. **023 8023 2500**

Email: southhants@cruse.org.uk

Simon Says

Child Bereavement Support

Simon Says

Link House

113 Leigh Road

Eastleigh

Hampshire

SO20 9DS

Tel. **02380647550**

Email: info@simonsays.org.uk

Benefits

Did you know...?

From April 2011 working grandparents who provide childcare for a child under 12 will be able to have their National Insurance contributions credited, to help build up their basic state pension.

Financial worries are always a major factor when looking after your family. Sometimes you can become overwhelmed and unsure what you can claim for. Many grandparents are and have been in the same position as you. If you want to talk to others in a similar position to yourself come to **Community First New Forest Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group**.

Overleaf are a list of benefits and allowances you may be entitled to claim if you're raising your grandchildren, and contact numbers.

“Perfect love sometimes does not come until the first grandchild.”

- Welsh Proverb



Child benefit

Child benefit is a tax-free payment to anyone bringing up a child. You don't have to be the child's parent to claim it, but you must have responsibility for them.

The Child Benefit office
Tel. 08453 021 444 or visit the website
www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefit
(textphone: 08453 021 474)

Child maintenance

If you're bringing up a child who has a parent or parents who are living somewhere else.
www.direct.gov.uk

Child Support Agency (CSA)

Tel. 08457 133 133
(textphone: 08457 138 924)
- you can also request an application form from the CSA.



Disability living allowance (DLA)

You can claim DLA for a child with a severe physical or mental illness or disability if they need much more help or looking after than other children of the same age.

Call the Benefit Enquiry Line on 0800 882 200 (textphone 0800 243 355) and ask them to send you a claim pack.

Early years' education

All three and four year olds in England are entitled to 12.5 hours of free early learning per week, for three terms each year, with a 'registered provider' such as a pre-school, child minder, nursery or playgroup. Some large employers provide registered early years' education at the workplace.

Hampshire Childcare and Family Information Team (Cfit)

Tel. 0845 603 5620
Opening Hours:
Monday to Friday 8:00am - 8:00pm
Saturday 9:30am - 4:00pm
Email: childcare@hants.gov.uk

Guardian's allowance

The guardian's allowance is a tax-free payment for people who are bringing up children whose parents have died. In certain circumstances, you may qualify for guardian's allowance when only one parent has died. You don't have to be the child's legal guardian to get guardian's allowance and it isn't affected by income or savings, but you must be receiving child benefit for the child/young person.

Contact the Guardian's Allowance Unit on 0845 302 1464 or visit www.hmrc.gov.uk (textphone: 0845 302 1474)

Pension credit

There are two different types of pension credit: guarantee credit for those aged 60 or over and; savings credit for those aged 65 or over. You may get the savings credit on its own or with the guarantee credit.

For the latest news and how to claim, ring freephone 0800 99 1234 (textphone 0800 169 0133).

Tax credits

There are two types of tax credits:

Child tax credit is a payment intended to support families with children. You can claim it if you, or your partner, are responsible for at least one child or young person who usually lives with you.

Working tax credit is a payment to top up the earnings of low-paid working people (whether employed or self-employed), including those who don't have children. You usually need to be working a minimum of 30 hours a week if you're aged over 25, but only 16 hours a week if you're aged over 50. Working tax credit contains several elements, including additional amounts if you have a disability or childcare costs. The childcare element can help with up to 80% of your childcare costs, to a maximum of £175 a week for one child or £300 a week for two or more children. The amount you get depends on your income.

Contact the Tax Credits helpline:
0845 300 3900
(textphone: 0845 300 3909 or 0845 607 6078)
Or visit the website
www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits

Other benefits if you're on a low income

If your income is below a certain level, you may be entitled to other benefits and services, such as help with the costs of prescriptions and free school meals. You may need to use the tax credits award notice as proof of your income for these benefits and services. For information about them, you'll need to contact the organisations that provide them.

Payments and allowances from local authorities

You may also be able to get extra money from your local authority to help you with the costs of looking after a child. For help and advice on claiming benefits contact:

The Child Benefit office
Tel. 08453 021 444 or visit the website
www.hmrc.gov.uk
(textphone: 08453 021 474)

“A grandparent is old on the outside but young on the inside.”

- Author Unknown

Legal arrangements



“Grandparents are the footsteps to the future generations.”

- Author unknown

Kinship Care

Kinship care is an arrangement where a child who cannot be cared for by their parents goes to live with a relative or a family friend.

Social workers and fostering workers encourage kinship care because they believe that kinship care is better for some children than being looked after by an unrelated foster carer. This is because it may be easier for them to keep in touch with their parents, friends and other family.

A kinship carer may apply to the court for a Residence Order, a Special Guardianship Order or an Adoption Order.

Alternatively, the kinship carer may ask to be assessed as a long-term foster carer for the child.

For further advice and help contact **Sue Veck** from Kinship Care on **01962 847173**

Definition of a Residence Order

A Residence Order is a court order ‘settling the arrangements ... as to the person with whom a child is to live.’ An order made in your favour will mean that your grandchild will live, or continue to live, with you. It will also give you parental responsibility for your grandchild as long as the order continues. This means that you can take most of the decisions that a parent can take about a child’s care and upbringing. However, no one who has a Residence Order may take the child abroad for more than a month or change the child’s surname unless everyone with parental responsibility agrees in writing or the court gives permission. The Residence Order will not affect your grandchild’s legal relationship with his or her parents nor will it take away their parental responsibility. This means that you will share parental responsibility with the child’s mother and also with his or her father if he has ever been married to the mother or he has acquired parental responsibility if they were never married. Even though you have parental responsibility, some decisions can still be taken only by parents with parental responsibility. These include the right to agree or refuse to agree to an adoption order being made and the right to appoint a guardian for the child.

Residence Order Allowance

If the child you're raising is living with you under a Residence Order, your local authority can pay you a Residence Order Allowance. Payment of this is discretionary, and whether you get it depends on an assessment of the needs of both you and the child and on your local authority's policy. The local authority is more likely to agree to pay an allowance if you negotiate the payment prior to obtaining the Residence Order. You should ensure that any financial agreement with your local authority is made in writing. It will be reviewed annually, and you must inform the authority of any changes in your finances.



“Grandparents make the world ... a little softer, a little kinder, a little warmer.”

- Author unknown

Definition of a Special Guardianship Order

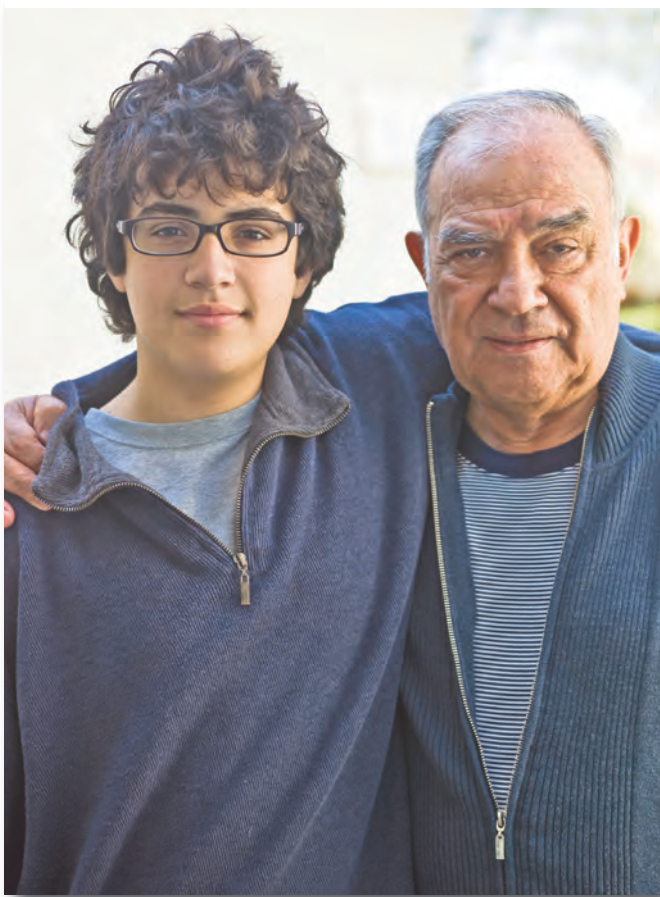
A special guardianship order is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's 'special guardian'. It is a private law order made under the Children Act 1989 and is intended for those children who cannot live with their birth parents and who would benefit from a legally secure placement. It is a more secure order than a Residence Order because a parent cannot apply to discharge it unless they have the permission of the court to do so. However it is less secure than an adoption order because it does not end the legal relationship between the child and his/her birth parents.

Special guardianship allowance

If the child you're raising is living with you under a special guardianship order, your local authority can pay you a special guardianship allowance. Payment is discretionary, and the local authority will carry out a means-tested assessment of your needs. If you've previously been the child's foster carer, you should get a higher rate for the first two years.

Special guardianship is a hugely complex issue. The **Grandparents' Association** has an easy-to-understand guide to help you make decisions on what is best for your grandchildren and you. This is their internet address:

www.grandparentsassociation.org.uk



If you find yourself challenging decisions about discretionary payment what should you do?

- **Seek legal advice.** Search the Grandparents' Association's lawyer's list to find a lawyer close to you. The list is made up of firms - from the Law Society's Children Panel and the Family Panel lists - that have the necessary expertise to deal with cases involving children, grandparents or other family members who may consult them. This is their internet address:
www.grandparentsassociation.org.uk
- **Contact the Family Rights Group's Advice Service:**
freephone 0808 801 0366
(Mon-Fri 10am-3.30pm) for advice for parents of children who are involved with or need social care services.

Making a will

Why it's important to make a will

A will sets out who is to benefit from your property and possessions (your estate) after your death.

Preparing your will

Although it is possible to write a will by yourself, it is advisable to use a solicitor as there are various legal formalities you need to follow to make sure that your will is valid. You may also need legal advice for more complicated matters. A solicitor can also advise you about how Inheritance Tax affects you.

A solicitor may be able to visit you in your own home, care home or hospital.

The cost of writing a will can vary between solicitors and will depend on how complicated your affairs may be and the experience of the solicitor.

As well as solicitors, voluntary organisations such as **Citizens Advice Bureau** and **Age UK** can also help with your will.

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) service helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice.

Tel. 08444 111 444

or check your local bureau's contact details via the website www.adviceguide.org.uk

Age Concern Hampshire

Local Service

Tel. 01962 868545

1 St Cross Road

Winchester, SO23 9JA

www.ageconcernhampshire.org.uk

Below is a list of organisations and websites which you may find helpful

Grandparents First is Grandparents Plus' newsletter for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. It includes grandparents' own stories and also has news, help advice and fun. For further information please email info@grandparentsplus.org.uk

Advice and Support Groups

BeGrand.net provides information, advice and a welcoming community for grandparents.

www.begrand.net

Tel. 0845 4346835

Grandparents Plus

is the national charity that champions the vital role of grandparents and the wider family in children's lives - especially when they take on the caring role in difficult family circumstances.

www.grandparentsplus.org.uk

Tel. 0208 981 8001

Grandparents' Association

is a national charity promoting the role of grandparents. It's a membership organisation, open to all, and provides a range of information on its website and through a helpline.

www.grandparentsassociation.org.uk

Tel. 0845 4349585

ParentlinePlus

Provides advice and support for anyone in a parenting role, including step-parents and grandparents.

Tel. 0808 8002 222

(free and confidential 24 hours, 7 days a week)

www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Grannynet is a one-stop shop full of information for grandmothers who like to be in the know.

www.grannynet.co.uk

HM Revenue & Customs

Information about tax credits and eligibility.

Tel. 0845 300 3900

(8am to 8pm, 7 days a week)

Textphone 0845 300 3909

www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

Hampshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)

Hampshire DAAT

Wellbeing & Partnerships

Hampshire County Council

Elizabeth II Court

Adult Services - 3rd Floor North

Winchester, SO23 8UQ

Tel. 01962 846629 or email

hampshiredaat@hants.gov.uk.

Or contact the **Drugs helpline**

Tel. 0800 776600 or

Alcohol Concern

Tel. 0800 9178282

“Grandparents are a delightful blend of laughter, caring deeds, wonderful stories and love.”

- Author unknown



This factsheet has been produced by Community First New Forest. The information contained in the factsheet has been researched and collated with the aim of supporting Grandparents as Carers. We would recommend that grandparents check all information and, where appropriate, seek legal advice.

We have sought to provide accurate information and acknowledge that information can go out of date. We would recommend that as well as using the information in this factsheet that you make contact with relevant support/advice services to ensure you have access to the most up to date information and advice.

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