

The SGO Support Team

# Special Guardians and their Families



## A Support Guide



CHILDREN  
& FAMILY  
SUPPORT



Warwickshire  
County Council

# What is a special guardian?

A special guardian is someone appointed to care for a child following a Special Guardianship Order (SGO).

This is a private law order made under the Children Act 1989 and it is intended for those children who cannot live with their birth parents but provides greater security than long term fostering.

The special guardian will have parental responsibility for the child, allowing them to make parenting decisions in their interests, but without the separation of family ties that adoption may bring.

We can provide carers with support in cases where the child was previously Looked After by Warwickshire County Council before the SGO was granted, and where this order was granted in the last 3 years. When the 3 year period from the making of the SGO has expired, the Local Authority where the Special Guardian lives is responsible for providing support services.

## This guide includes:

- Information about practical, emotional and financial support for special guardians
- Information about the Warwickshire Children and Families SGO Support Team
- Helpful links to useful information and support options
- Training options for special guardians in Warwickshire

## Who is this guide for?

This guide is for special guardians and their families living in the Warwickshire area or who have been assessed by Warwickshire County Council.

In Warwickshire, Special Guardianship Orders are a common route towards permanency for children or young people who are unable to live with their birth parents.



# Children and Families SGO Support Team

All special guardians have a support plan. These include help for the children, their carer and their family and the child/young person's birth family.

The plans are based on the needs of those involved but typically include details around health, education, emotions, identity, finance and housing.

The team is made up of supportive and experienced professionals who can offer you help, advice and guidance around the things on your support plan.

They run a telephone helpline and also work very closely with the Family Information Service to provide the best possible advice and guidance to special guardians and their families.

## Education

Under a special guardianship order children will continue to have priority for school admissions and will still receive pupil premium.

For children in Warwickshire, involvement of the Virtual School will continue or the SGO Support Team will help people access virtual schools in other areas. The SGO Support Team can advocate on behalf of special guardians to access support for education.

## Emotions and Behaviour

The SGO Support Team can offer training or help special guardians to find information about a range of emotional issues. They can also signpost to health and education services, such as RISE (CAMHS), or carer support groups so people can share their experiences.

If qualifying criteria are met, they may also be able to help you apply for funding for specific therapies through the Adoption Support Fund (ASF).

## Family Time and Identity

The SGO Support Team can offer advice around any issues with family time arrangements and work with special guardians to help children build a sense of identity. They can support carers to access and understand the importance of life story work.

## Finances

The SGO Support Team work closely with the Children's Safeguarding and Support Teams and the Family Information Service to ensure SGO carers continue to receive all eligible financial support. If you tell them about any changes in circumstances, they can give you the best advice and guidance possible.



# Children and Families SGO Support Team

## Health

Special guardians and the children they care for can meet with a nurse to assess children's health and look at any needs they may have. If needs are not being met the SGO Support Team can help signpost to health services to get more support.



## Housing

The SGO Support Team can help special guardians find answers to questions around housing through effective signposting.



## Training

The SGO Support Team offers a wide range of online and face to face training opportunities including:

- Making placements work
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Emergency paediatric first aid
- Attachment
- Protective behaviours

## Further information

To find out more, call the helpline on **01926 742228**  
or email **sgo@warwickshire.gov.uk**

For more information to support you or your family, visit  
**<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/children-families>**