

**FAO Collette Stevenson MSP**  
**Convener**  
**Social Justice and Social Security Committee**

Dear Ms Stevenson

Re Kinship Care

The Kinship Care Advice Service Scotland is funded by Scottish Government to provide services to Kinship Families and Practitioners across Scotland. This service has been hosted by Adoption UK Scotland (AUK) since 2020 alongside the Association for Fostering, Kinship and Adoption Scotland (AFKA) and supported by CPAG.

The Social Justice and Social Security Committee in its last session on Kinship Care omitted to involve the national service and submissions and meetings were later held with both Kinship Carers from the Advisory Group and Managers from the KCASS service.

We have become aware of a call for further submissions and discussions around the implementation of the recommended allowance for Kinship Carers and that this has not included a request for submission from the national service provider.

KCASS provides a helpline for Kinship Families and over the last few weeks has answered multiple questions from Kinship Carers about the introduction of the recommended allowance and has compiled comments which have been shared with our Scottish Government Colleagues.

Our Kinship Carers Advisory Group is involved in the Kinship Care Collaborative and represents the voice of Kinship Families across Scotland.

The KCASS Practitioners Forum where representatives of all Scotland's 32 Local Authorities attend to share developments in Kinship Care Practice met on 25 October and the new recommended allowance was the main topic of discussion for practitioners. Scottish Government colleagues were in attendance and heard directly on the issues for social work practitioners in supporting Kinship Carers and answering queries about the allowance and its implementation plan.

We would draw the following points to the Committees attention:

- Kinship Carers have generally welcomed the recommended allowance which will bring consistency in financial support to families across Scotland.
- Carers are obviously keen to know when these backdated payments will be made and to receive communications from their Local Authority about this. There has been a delay between the announcement of the allowance and further communications with most at this point, continuing to be unclear about timelines.

- Both Kinship Carers and Practitioners who support families want to know whether the allowance will be linked to inflation and how any annual uplifts will be calculated or indeed if there will be any increases linked to the cost of living.
- Custom and practice in many Local Authorities has been that there was separation between age 5-10 and 11-15 age brackets with older children's allowances being greater. For 29 of the 32 Local Authority areas, the combining of these brackets means Kinship Carers of children aged 11-15 will receive no increase and will stay on their current payment. This has been challenging to understand.
- For Kinship Carers who hold a Kinship Care Order and receive allowance under the Kinship Care Assistance (Scotland) Order 2016 they would like clarification that parity continues for these families.

The KCASS service would welcome your consideration of these areas at the Committee and if we can be of any assistance to the Committee, we would be very pleased to support your work.

Yours Sincerely

Fiona Aitken  
Director, AUK  
KCASS

Angie Gillies  
Director, AFKA  
KCASS