




Family Connections Service (FCS)

Background

- One connected carers assessment team (CCAT) was situated within each of the 8 districts within Hampshire. They had 9 permanent social workers in the team and were reliant on independent social workers to complete assessments.
- It was identified that there was a need for a single team, with one team manager to have consistent oversight and drive the expansion of the service to not only assess connected carers, but to provide post Special Guardianship Order support.
- The Family Connections Service was formed in August 2021.

Role of the Family Connections Service

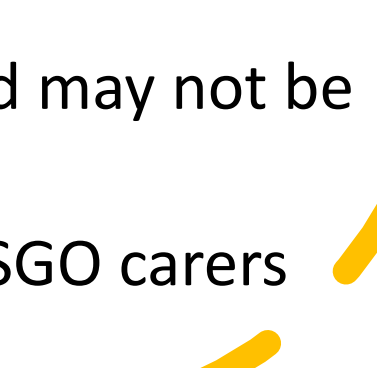
- To complete connected carer/Special Guardianship Order (SGO) assessments for children subject to Public Law Outline, if the case is in care proceedings or where a private Special Guardianship application is going to be made.
 - To complete an assessment when a child has been placed in the care of connected carers whilst also providing the supervising social worker role to them until they are fully approved at fostering panel.
 - To provide post Special Guardianship Order support for Special Guardians including Adoption Support Fund applications for Special Guardians.
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Care Order vs Special Guardianship Order

Care order

- Local Authority share parental responsibility with parents
- Child is Looked After by the Local Authority
- Statutory visiting, reviews and Health Assessments/PEPs

Special Guardianship Order (SGO)

- SGO carer shares parental responsibility with parents, with the greater share
 - Child is not a Looked After Child and may not be open to Children's Services
 - Support is offered to the child and SGO carers under the SGO regulations
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Post SGO support

Under the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005, Local Authorities are required to make arrangements for the provision of special guardianship support services in their area to meet the needs of those affected by special guardianship. These services are defined as:

- Financial support
- Support groups for Special Guardians, parents and children under SGOs or being considered for an SGO.
- Support with managing contact including mediation services.
- Therapeutic services for the child under SGO.
- Support to build and maintain the relationship between the child and Special Guardian including training for the Special Guardian to meet the particular needs of the child.
- Counselling, advice and information.

What next?

- Relaunch the team once the recruitment process has finalised
- Implement the post SGO support service
- Provide ongoing training across teams within Hampshire

