



## PRESS RELEASE 22.04.2024

KINSHIP DEMO, HOLYROOD, 25.04.2024 11AM – 1PM

We will be demonstrating on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024, this marks 10 years since our last demo which resulted in the ruling that Kinship Carers in Scotland deserved better and LAC (looked after) and formally LAC and At Risk of Becoming LAC Children under Kinship should be afforded the same **SUPPORT** as children in foster care.

This has never happened ten years on we still have no parity or equality with foster care in Scotland. Our concerns and demands are:

1. The lack of social workers means kinship comes last in the pecking order for support. Where respite entitlement comes in there is none for kinship carers and if there is there is very few who receive this. Our demand has always been for parity and equality, we demand to know why after 10 years this is still not the case.
2. The blatant discrimination of our most vulnerable age group 11 – 15-year-olds, this is proven the most vulnerable group of care experienced children. As when they leave primary education into higher education in Scotland their home life becomes more difficult. Trying to keep our children in education is a task in itself as they try to find their identities in life which is difficult enough for children with a settled home life never mind one of a care experienced situation. We demand a review of the 11 – 15-year-old payment as we cannot keep a child of this age on the same payment as their younger peers aged 5 – 10. This reads as ridiculous as it sounds. We have been advised this is under review, this review has been ongoing since the National Minimum Payment was announced in 2023, we demand immediate action on this.
3. The Scottish Government made a Promise to our young people that this would be the happiest and fairest place to grow and thrive. We believe this has not been upheld, if it was not for kinship carers The Promise Scotland would never be fulfilled, this is a well-known

fact. Over 70% of siblings in care are in kinship placements, if it was not for kinship these children would not be together, that is damning. We stress this is not about us but if it was not for us our children would not be together. We demand that the Scottish Government formally recognize, in law not guidance, that Kinship placements are proven to be the best outcome for children in care.

4. Kinship leaves the door open for those who can eventually return to their birth families this means there is a second chance at a family life. Foster care and adoption cannot provide this, only kinship can.

A baby going into foster care at birth will ultimately be adopted out of the system by one year old. We have had mums get children back after five years.

The service we provide, the love and the blood bond which keeps not only families together but offers the chance of reunification with a child's birth parent(s) needs to be the top priority, however in Kinship we provide 1<sup>st</sup> class service receiving a 3<sup>rd</sup> class support from our Local Authorities.

5. In the words of a long term foster carer in our network who is now a kinship carer *"I used to think kinship carers had it easy compared to us as they are family. We were so wrong. The lack of support given to us versus that of foster care is astounding and heartbreaking. We are at breaking point without support, this would never have happened with a foster child". In the words of many other carers, who are sadly bereaved "our children are dying, the authorities are not listening, we are raising our children's children, we are heartbroken and our children are being let down, still we get up every day put our own grief to the back of our mind and we raise our grandchildren". We demand that Kinship is never referenced as VOLUNTARY; we have no choice. We need our situation recognized officially, especially in bereavement.*

*Our demand is:* We are already grieving parents, we aim not to be bereavement ones. We look after our grandchildren so the State can support ours, where this is the support, its missing, we demand our children are supported to allow us to support theirs.

6. We are weary now of not being, as promised, equal in support to adoption and foster services whom now ironically run kinship care. We have been against this since 2020 yet Foster and Adoption were awarded another contract under AFAK. These are the very organisations whom in 2014 refused to support us, when we took The Scottish Government to The ECHR they said *"kinship are foster are totally different and neither the twain shall meet"*.

*Our Demand:* THIS IS OUR SERVICE AND WE WANT IT BACK, TO RUN IT OURSELVES FOR KINSHIP.

We do not forgive, and we certainly won't forget.

Please join us as we let The Scottish Government know we will not be silenced.

RESPECT US OR EXPECT US.

Follow us on X: @ScKinship.