

What we know about **Kinship Care** in Scotland

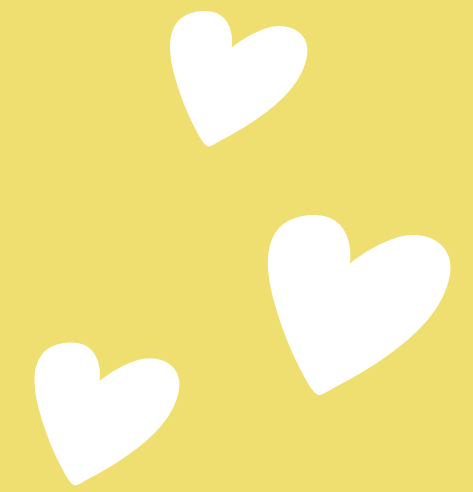
In 2024, the research centres



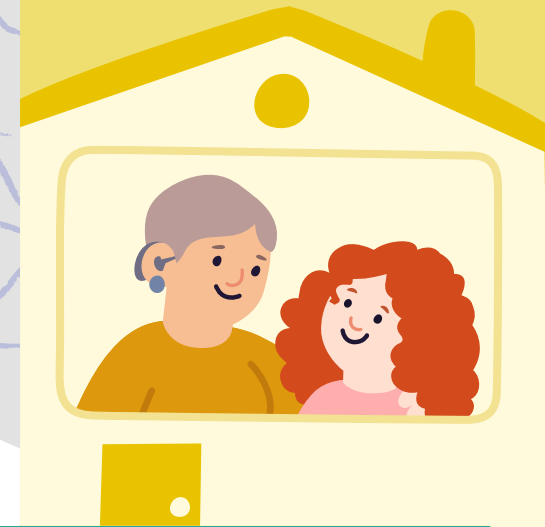
looked for the first time at data about **children and young people**

who lived in kinship care in Scotland.

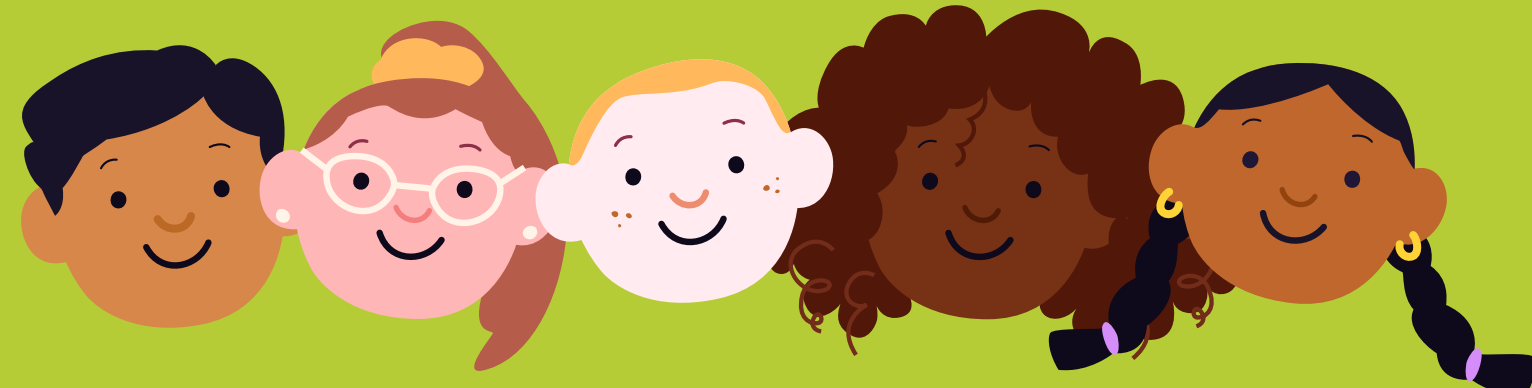
When a child is in need of **care and protection**, the Local Authority has a responsibility for their care.



Kinship care is when this care is provided by a **family member or family friend**, instead of the child's parents.



So we wanted to know more about it,



to **help improve services** and **support for children.**

Kinship care is the **most common living arrangement** for children who go into care.

We used data on the

19,000

children who were in kinship care between 2008 and 2019.

(the most recent information available)

All the information is anonymous.



We did not see anyone's name or personal details.

What did we find out?

Kinship care has become **more common**.

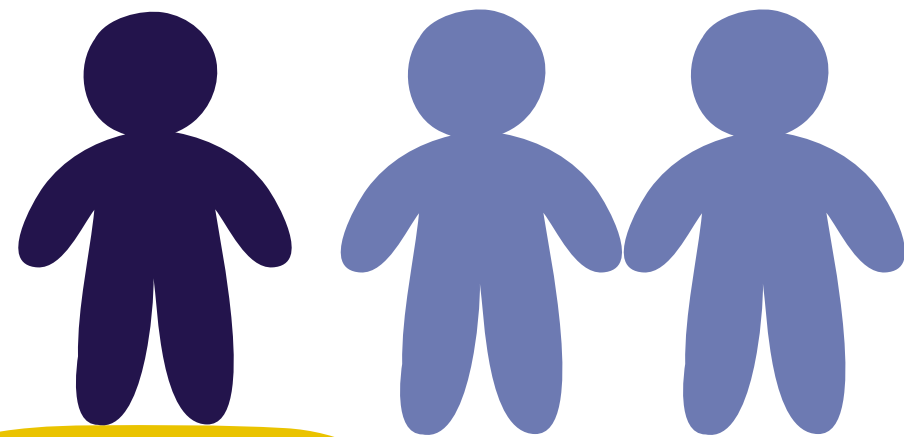
in 2008



1 in 6

children in care
lived in kinship care

in 2019



1 in 3

children in care
lived in kinship care

Over

4,000

children in care
currently live with kinship carers.

More details
on page 19
of the full report

Kinship care is **often the first option**.

Kinship care was the first option of care
provided for more than

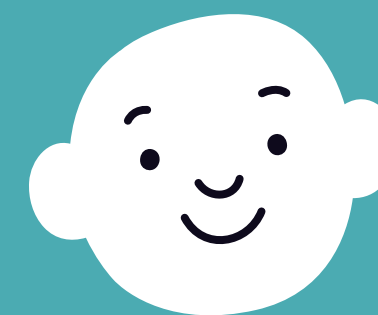
6/10

of the children
who lived in kinship care.



More details
on page 29
of the full report

Kinship care can be
short-term or long-term.



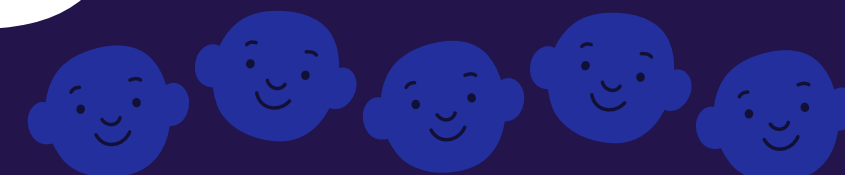
1 in 10

children were cared for
by kinship carers
for less than a month.



1 in 6

children were cared for
by kinship carers
for **more than five years.**

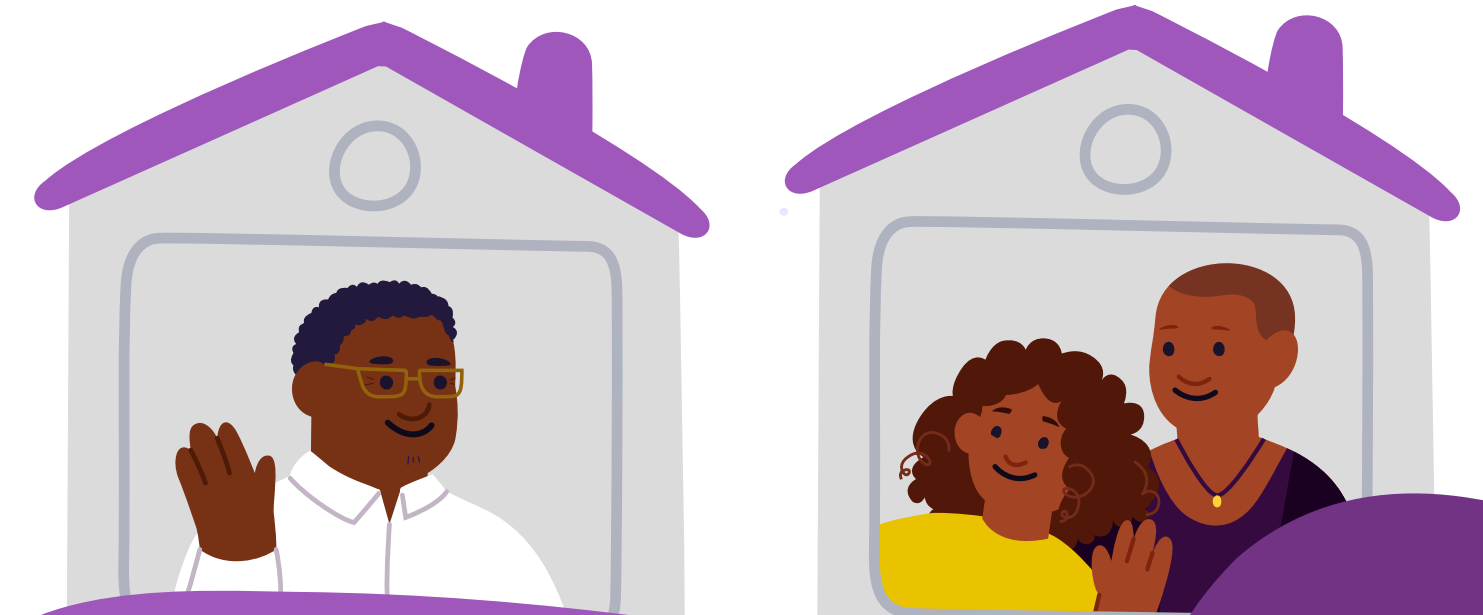


More details
on page 32
of the full report

Many children only ever live with kinship carers while in care.



After kinship care, most children live with family or friends.



Most children either remained within their wider family network...

or returned to live with their parent/s after leaving kinship care.

90%

of children had only ever lived in kinship care during their time in care.

More details on page 27 of the full report

More details on page 34 of the full report

Most referrals to the Children's Hearing System are for

CARE AND PROTECTION

When there is a concern about a child's safety or wellbeing, they can be referred to a Children's Hearing.

Only

8%

of children in kinship care were ever referred to the Children's Hearing System because of an alleged offence.

92%

were only ever referred on care and protection grounds.

More details on page 53 of the full report

Children living with kinship carers often require...

SUPPORT IN SCHOOL

in 2019

72%

of children being cared for by kinship carers had 'Additional Support Needs' at school.

This compares to

31%

of all the children in Scotland.

More details on page 41 of the full report

We can do more to support the education of children who have been in kinship care...

NATIONAL AVERAGE

Between 2010 and 2019 children who had lived in kinship care gained fewer qualifications than the national average.



...but children who had lived in kinship care are doing

BETTER IN SCHOOL

By 2019

Children who had lived in kinship care stayed at school for longer, and gained more qualifications, than they did in 2010.



More details on page 44 of the full report

What does all this mean?

Kinship care
WORKS WELL
for many children

All Kinship families
deserve support...

Kinship carers don't always have the same help, rights and entitlements as others who support children in care.

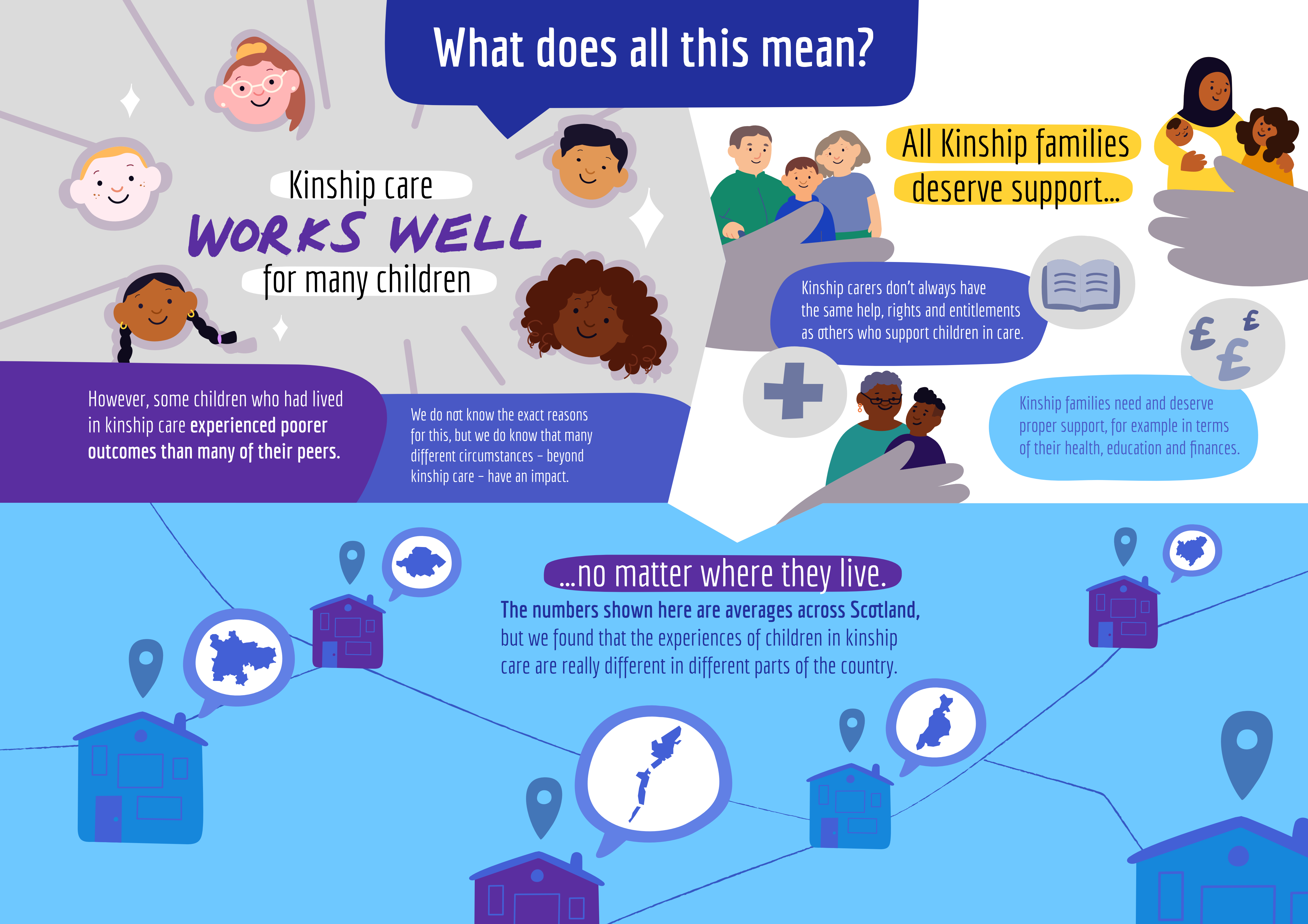
Kinship families need and deserve proper support, for example in terms of their health, education and finances.

However, some children who had lived in kinship care experienced poorer outcomes than many of their peers.

We do not know the exact reasons for this, but we do know that many different circumstances – beyond kinship care – have an impact.

...no matter where they live.

The numbers shown here are averages across Scotland, but we found that the experiences of children in kinship care are really different in different parts of the country.



What else do we want to know?



It is important that these findings are updated when new data becomes available beyond 2019.

To add to our research based on data,
it's important that we also listen to
children and young people
about their own experiences.

According to a 2011 estimate, there are around

9,000
children in Scotland

who are cared for by a family member or a family friend,
but who are not 'in care'. That is, the Local Authority
is not responsible for their care.

The experiences of these children are
not reflected in the data used for this research,
and it would be helpful to understand
more about their lives.

Read the full research report here:

www.scadr.ac.uk/news-growing-kinship-care

For any questions about this research,
contact joanna.soraghan@strath.ac.uk



To find out about support for
kinship families contact:

Kinship Care Advice Service for Scotland

www.kinship.scot

advice@kinshipscot.org

0808 800 0006