



Special Guardianship Orders (SGO)



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wirralfostering.org



What is a Special Guardianship?

Special Guardianship is an order made by the Family Court that places a child or young person to live with someone other than their parent(s) on a long-term basis.

The person(s) with whom a child is placed will become the child's Special Guardian.

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 introduced Special Guardianship and Special Guardianship Orders.

What is the role of a Special Guardian?

Special Guardians can make all the important decisions about the child they are caring for until that child reaches 18 years of age.

It is up to the special guardian how involved the birth parent is in the decision making, and this will depend on the relationship between the special guardian and the parent. Ultimately, in most cases the final decision is the special guardians.

It is important for any child that a good relationship between the special guardian and the parent is always in the child's best interest.

There are a limited number of areas where special guardians are required to obtain permission from the child's birth parents. They include:

- Taking the child out of the country for longer than three months
- Changing the child's surname changing the child's religion
- Situations where consent from everyone with parental responsibility is required by law such as sterilisation of the child or placing the child for adoption.

If a Special Guardian is considering any of the steps outlined above they must ensure they obtain the birth parents' consent or permission from the court prior to carrying them out.

What services can Wirral Council offer me?

Wirral Council has created a new SGO support team, the role of the team is to offer support to new or existing carers of children under a Special Guardianship order. Below is a list of services and advice Wirral can offer you as an SGO carer.

- Therapeutic children's services via CAMHS or through the Adoption Support Fund (ASF).
- You will receive the equivalent of minimum fostering allowance. If you are currently a foster carer and receive skills payments, they will continue for two years. You will also receive birthday and Christmas allowance for 2 years after the order is granted.
- All three and four year old children are entitled 15 hours per week of free childcare during term times.
- Children will remain eligible for Pupil Premium. Support with family time issues, helping to keep family time a positive experience for children.

What Special Guardianship will mean for the child?

The child will have a sense of safety and security in knowing they will live with you as part of the family.

No ongoing statutory intervention from Social Workers including checking the child's room during visits which is something, young people have said is intrusive.

No requirements for multi-agency 'looked after' children's meetings.

Support Services in the Wirral area

Please visit [Familytoolbox.co.uk](https://familytoolbox.co.uk) which is a free online hub that has information and resources for Wirral's parents and carers.

It aims to make resources and support more readily available, putting the power right in the hands of families to work out what you want to change, and what steps you want to take to do that.



SGO Mentors

If you would like to be put in touch with one of our SGO Mentors please let us know. Our SGO Mentors are experienced carers who have been through the SGO process and can provide peer support and advice to you, whether you are considering an SGO or already have an SGO.

SGO Support Group

Our SGO Support group meets monthly and is a chance to meet other carers for an informal chat. Our SGO Family Support Workers will also be on hand to offer support and advice. Contact SGO Support Team for more details.

Training for SGO Carers

We have a comprehensive online training package that you can access via the SGO support team meaning that you can complete training at a time that is convenient to you. If you prefer face to face training, then we also offer this on a regular basis throughout the year. Contact SGO Support Team for more details.

Contact Us

Special Guardianship Order Support Team

Tel: 0151 666 4616 and ask for the
SGO Support Team or

Email: specialguardianship@wirral.gov.uk