

Deanery Digests are short, plain language summaries of the Department of Education's research outputs. This Deanery Digest is based on the Raised by Relatives report <https://kinship.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Raised-by-relatives-report-march-2025.pdf>

Raised by Relatives – Kinship Carers from Black and Asian Communities

What is this research about and why is it important?

This study was commissioned by Kinship and supported by the KPMG Foundation to better understand the experiences, needs, and challenges of Black and Asian kinship carers in England. Little is known about their experiences; however, the available evidence suggests that more than one in five of the 120,000 kinship children in England live with minority ethnic kinship carers. While Black and Asian kinship carers face similar barriers to other kinship families such as a lack of financial support, they also deal with specific challenges, including cultural stigma, systemic racism and limited access to support and tailored services.

This study aimed to develop an understanding of carers' experiences and provide recommendations for improving support for Black, Asian and marginalised kinship carers and the children they raise. The research team comprised one academic researcher and three peer researchers. Peer researchers have lived experience of the topic being studied. All three of our peer researchers are also kinship carers.

What did we do?

Thirty-seven kinship carers from Black and Asian communities took part in the study. They completed interviews and standardised assessments exploring their experiences, health and well-being, levels of stress, and sources of support. Kinship carers were recruited via organisations from Black and Asian communities, social media, and existing contacts of the researcher, peer researchers and the Kinship charity.

Recruiting kinship carers from Black and Asian communities was challenging because of the additional time needed for researchers to gain their trust; the recruitment information did not resonate with them, as children were not thought of as "someone else's child" (the original name of this study); their fear and mistrust of services; underdeveloped kinship support services within these communities and a lack of awareness and understanding of the term 'kinship carer'.

What did we find?

- **Demographics and well-being:** Most participants were from Black Caribbean backgrounds, with grandmothers and aunts making up the largest group of carers.

Most held a Special Guardianship Order. Carers reported moderate well-being and moderate to high stress levels, with limited access to appropriate support to help them to care for their children.

- **Becoming a kinship carer:** Most carers felt they had no choice but to take on the role, often making the decision under pressure and without adequate support or information. Cultural expectations, generational trauma, and fear of children entering care played a role in their decisions.
- **Lack of support and information:** Carers consistently reported inadequate support from local authorities, particularly regarding finances, housing, respite, and help managing relationships with birth families.
- **Impact of ethnicity:** Many carers believed their ethnicity influenced their treatment by services, with some reporting direct experiences of racism and cultural insensitivity. Stereotypes about family networks in minority communities led to assumptions that carers had more informal support than they actually did.
- **Life as a kinship carer:** While carers saw positive changes in the children and felt pride in their role, they also described family conflict, personal sacrifices, and lack of help as significant challenges.

What does it all mean anyway?

Black and Asian kinship carers face profound financial, emotional, and systemic challenges with minimal support. Their experiences reveal the impact of racism, lack of cultural competence, and systemic neglect within statutory services. Urgent reforms in policy, practice, and service delivery are essential to recognise and meet the needs of these carers and the children they raise.

The study identifies several areas for improvement:

- **Awareness:** A national campaign to raise awareness of kinship care in minority communities, including clearer definitions and support pathways.
- **Housing:** Access to suitable housing, prioritised allocations, and funding for home adaptations.
- **Statutory rights:** Paid kinship leave, financial allowances, and clear entitlements similar to foster or adoptive parents.
- **Culturally competent services:** Training for professionals, culturally tailored support groups, and inclusion of kinship care in social work education.
- **Education:** Improved school support for kinship children, with an emphasis on understanding their specific needs and vulnerabilities.
- **Data and policy:** Better national data collection on kinship carers and children, including ethnicity, to inform policy decisions.
- **Respite and family support:** Access to respite care, support for birth children in kinship families, and help managing family contact.

Further information available at the following links: [Rees Centre's New Kinship Report Reveals Challenges Faced by Black and Asian Kinship Carers | Rees Centre](#) and <https://kinship.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Raised-by-relatives-report-march-2025.pdf>

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