

Fact Sheet - Becoming a Guardian

A Guardian is someone that is legally appointed, in a Will, to take care of a child or children, if everyone with parental responsibility has passed away.

You will be responsible for every aspect of the child's wellbeing, as if you were that child's parent. You will need to ensure the child's general safety, as well as provide shelter, food, clothing, education and medical treatment for the child.

As the legal guardian for the child you will be responsible for:

- Deciding where they live
- Choosing which school they go to
- Making medical decisions such as what treatment they receive, operations they will have etc.
- The values and religious beliefs that they follow
- What activities they participate in

Essentially, you will become a "parent" to the child, and will be expected to treat the child as you would your own.

You will also be financially responsible for the child. This means you will need to give some consideration to the cost of becoming a legal guardian. Taking care of the child's financial needs requires paying for food, shelter, school trips, school uniform, clothing, holidays, extra-curricular activities etc.

Some people set aside a sum of money for the guardians to help with the costs of raising their child so you may wish to discuss this with their parent, particularly if there is more than one child involved.

You will also need to consider any lifestyle changes you might have to make, should you become the legal guardian. These can include:

Where you live – Are there enough bedrooms? Is there enough space? Do you have a garden? Is it in a good location to the child's family, school, friends etc.

Your job/career – Will you need to change your working hours? Access a nursery or childminder? Will you need to give up your job? How will you cope financially?

Your vehicle – Do you drive? Is your car big enough for the entire family?

Becoming a child's legal guardian is a big responsibility, and you should make sure that you are prepared for the role should it ever need to be fulfilled.

Contact us if you have any questions or queries about becoming a guardian, and if you need help with appointing guardians for your own children.

