

January 2011 NEWS from Grandparents Plus

Support our What if we said no? [campaign](#)

Grandparents Plus has launched the 'What if we said no?' campaign to ensure that grandparents who are raising their grandchildren together with other family and friends carers are protected from the impact of welfare reform and public spending cuts. We want to see their contribution recognised, valued and supported. 200,000 family and friends carers, raising around 300,000 children in the UK, who would cost an estimated £12 billion each year if they were in the care system, are largely unrecognised by local and national government – and are set to be hit hard by welfare reform and spending cuts. We are concerned that the cuts will undermine grandparents' ability to care resulting in more children ending up in the care system, at great cost to the tax payer. We will be doing more to promote the issue during the passage of the welfare reform bill, expected in January.

Please back the campaign:

- Email your MP [here](#) and see which MPs have signed the EDM [here](#)
- Donate to the campaign [here](#)
- Join the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Network [here](#)

or Email us at info@grandparentsplus.org.uk with the message 'sign up' and we will add your organisation/name in support of the campaign.

Download the report [here](#) and the press release [here](#).

Grandparents Plus is recruiting - part-time Campaigns Officer (temporary contract for 18 months)

We want to appoint an experienced campaigns professional to spearhead a new campaign, funded by Comic Relief, which aims to raise the profile of older family and friends carers, targeting local authorities and service providers. If you have a strong campaigning track record, experience of local government and an understanding of the child welfare/family policy/older people's agendas then we want to hear from you. In return we offer flexible working, a generous leave package and a supportive, friendly working environment.

Closing date is Friday 28th January. Interviews will be held at our Bethnal Green office on Thursday 17th February.

NEW Spotlight Seminar Series

We are going to spend some time in 2011 focusing on the reasons why grandparents step in to care for children. This can be because of parental substance or alcohol misuse, abuse or neglect, domestic violence, long-term illness or bereavement, disability, parental imprisonment or a combination of factors.

The first seminar will be on Tuesday 2nd February 3-5pm and will focus on parental alcohol and substance misuse. It will be hosted by Baroness Massey in the House of Lords and will include speakers from Mentor UK, Adfam and the Children's Society.

Around 1 in 10 children in the UK are affected by parental alcohol abuse, and around 1 in 25 are affected by parental drug abuse. Some 150,000 children across the UK are being raised by grandparents and other relatives as a result. We anticipate that the rise in heavy drinking, particularly among young women, and in numbers of problem drug users may lead to even more children living with grandparents or other relatives.

These children and their carers are all too often overlooked by service providers and policy makers. Our research indicates that many are struggling on low incomes, and that a high proportion of carers are raising a child with special needs or a disability or have a disability or long term health condition themselves. Only around a third receive any financial support from local social services. We are concerned that in the present climate many carers face cuts to their benefits and to the support they receive from local authorities.

On the day we will be releasing new data from our survey of grandparents raising grandchildren focussing directly upon those who have experienced alcohol and substance misuse in the family.

The seminar will discuss how policy makers, service providers and charities can better respond to carers facing these challenges.

If you would like to attend please email ben.wheatley@grandparentsplus.org.uk to book a place.

Please note that places are limited.

NEW report on grandparents raising disabled grandchildren

The Family Fund is publishing a new survey on Tuesday 18th January which will reveal the enormous financial hardship, health problems, isolation and lack of support that grandparent carers face when they are raising a disabled grandchild. We warmly welcome this report. Our own survey, published in October 2010 showed that almost half of the 1,000 grandparents and other family and friends carers in our Network are raising a child with a disability or special needs.

You can request a copy of the press release or the report from DHA Communications Melissa@dhacommunications.co.uk or phone 020 7793 4035.

About the Family Fund

The Family Fund helps families with severely disabled or seriously ill children and young people aged 17 and under to have choices and the opportunity to enjoy ordinary life. They give grants for things that make life easier and more enjoyable for the disabled child, young person and their family, such as washing machines, driving lessons, computers and holidays. The Fund is a registered charity helping around 55,000 families on the lowest of incomes across the UK. They provide grants to families totalling £33million each year.