



Angela's story

"On March 17th last year, my granddaughter Grace came home from school to find her mother dead in the chair.

Grace was just 11 years old.

The history of my daughter's abuse to me, and to Grace, is horrific. There has been no conclusive proof, as yet, as to the reason for her death, but we did take 117 empty vodka bottles from her house, which was in an awful, awful state. So was my daughter's body, God bless her. For Grace to see her mother like that was just so sad. There is to be an inquest later on this year.

Grace was locked up with her mother for a year during covid, and she suffered terrible emotional abuse. She also witnessed abuse by her father to her mother and had to phone the police on 999 on four occasions. Her father did not live with them but every time he came to see them there was trouble.

When I took over Grace's care, she hadn't been allowed to see me for two years, almost three. This led to me suffering from anxiety and depression to the extent that I took a massive overdose hoping to escape from the horrors of living.

Grace is bedwetting, traumatised, has anger issues, trust issues, so many problems, and is also being investigated for foetal alcohol syndrome disorder (FASD). I didn't know where to start to help her. All I had on my side was love.

I did a Google search and found Kinship. I called and left a message. I received a call back that day from the Kinship headquarters from a lady called Sian who put me in touch with a project worker called Victoria.

Victoria was fantastic. She was kind and compassionate, but she was also really very efficient. She has been an invaluable source of information, and also of practical help. She has been kindness personified and has always been there for me when things have gotten so bleak I've not known which way to turn.

She encourages me, points me in the right direction and has arranged courses on FASD so that I have a much better understanding now than I had before. In fact, I wasn't aware of the condition.

She has obtained funding for me to buy essential things like a washing machine and a dryer, which I desperately needed due to Grace's nocturnal enuresis. She arranged for me to have a bed, a computer, everything this child needed. When Grace came to me she had nothing. All her things had been thrown away when the house was cleared.

Every step of the way, Victoria has been there for me when I've needed her. Emotionally and financially she has gotten me through. I am only in receipt of my basic pension and family allowance so this has been just amazing.

I really don't know what Grace and I I would have done without her knowledge and support. She runs an online group which is also really, really helpful because I thought I was on my own, but I'm not. Being able to relate to other grandparents and carers whose circumstances are different but who are all looking after kids has been really, really beneficial.

Knowing I'm not alone, and that I can ask for help directly from Victoria or to the group is such a relief, it has lifted a huge weight off my shoulders.

Grace and I have a long, long road to travel, but I know with the help of Victoria at Kinship, we do not have to travel uncharted territory alone.

I cannot give enough thanks to her or the organisation.”