

User guide – Adoption Register Wales (ARW)

For adopters



Cofrestr Fabwysiadu **Cymru**
Adoption Register **Wales**



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Cenedlaethol | National
Adoption
Service



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government





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Introduction

This user guide is aimed at prospective adopters. The guide tells you how to register with the Adoption Register for Wales if you are not already registered (see page 7).

The Adoption Register for Wales (ARW) is funded by the Welsh Government and hosted by the National Adoption Service with the aim of supporting the matching of children with adopters. It provides a national system so that the widest possible range of links from across Wales, and where appropriate other parts of the UK, can be explored to ensure that a suitable placement can be found as soon as possible.

It is an expectation that all adopters and children are added to the ARW: adopters as soon as they have been approved by the Agency Decision Maker; children as soon as possible following the placement order.

Link Maker is the service that will be managing the Register in Wales therefore when the term 'Register' or 'ARW' is used in this guide you know we are referring to Link Maker.

ARW provides a safe and secure environment to search child and family profiles, show interest in potential placements, start discussions and send documents.

ARW is bilingual and allows you to toggle between English and Welsh, however, all free text must be translated into Welsh before the profile goes live. Please refer to the National Guidelines for the use of ARW on the National Adoption Service website www.adoptcymru.com. Your social worker will be able to explain this further to you.

Before you start...

Plan your family-finding with your social worker. Make sure you understand each other's expectations, to avoid any frustration and misunderstanding. As well as general points (such as how often you will meet together), we suggest the following topics in relation to family-finding on ARW:

- Review your profile together - is it a good representation of you? Your social worker has the advantage of seeing other families' profiles, and can help make sure yours covers all of your strengths.
- Showing interest. You will be encouraged to discuss this with your social worker before expressing an interest. Discuss with them how many expressions of interest they feel it is appropriate for you to have at one time (up to the limit of 5 on Link Maker)? There is no 'one-size-fits-all' with any of these



questions, and your social worker's advice might change over time... keep talking.

- Contacting children's social workers. You are encouraged to discuss this with your social worker before you make a decision as they will often prefer to have a discussion with the child's social worker first. Make sure the right people are in touch, but only discuss a child if you know that both social workers are comfortable with this.
- Chasing for updates. Once a discussion is underway, weeks or even months can go by before you receive an update. There can be a lot of complex issues holding things up; medical assessments, legal processes, ongoing discussions with other families. It is reasonable that you should be kept in the loop, and your social worker will advise you on how soon and how often to ask for an update, and whether you or they should do this.

In any situation, if in doubt, ask your social worker. They are there to support you.

Registering for a Link Maker account

Registering with Link Maker is easy. Visit the [Link Maker website](#) and click the 'Register' button in the top right-hand corner. You will then have two options. Choose the 'Adopter/foster carer' button and select which features you would like to use in the drop-down. To register as an adopter, choose 'Adoption and community features'.

Register

Are you registering from an organisation, or as an adopter/foster carer?

Adoption features are available to prospective adopters with a DBS check (or equivalent) from a UK agency. They allow you to explore profiles of children waiting for adoption or early permanence, share your profile, and make enquiries.

Community features allow you find others for support and friendship. Your community profile will be available only to other adoptive or fostering families (and families-to-be) who have been verified by Link Maker with their agency.

If you are a foster carer and wish to be involved in finding fostering placements using Link Maker, your agency will be able to issue you an invitation.

Which features do you want to use? *

Please select

Now enter your personal details to create your adopter profile and account. You will be sent an activation link through email, to ensure the email address you supplied is correct. If you are an adopter in the approval process, you may not yet be approved for specific needs. Remember to discuss your profile before you write it and also remember that you do not have to upload the profile yourself if you don't want to; your social worker will undertake this on your behalf if this is your preference.

Once you have created your profile, your account will need to be verified with your LA/agency. This process can take up to five working days. During this time, you will still be able to access community features ([see later section](#)). Once your account has been verified you are registered on the Adoption Register for Wales and can begin using Link Maker's adoption features.



Registering through your social worker

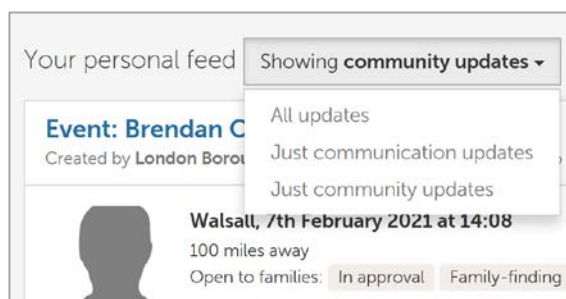
Your social worker can create your adoption profile for you, saving you time. You will receive an email asking you to register your account which will be directly linked to your adoption profile. As your social worker has created your profile, your account will be automatically verified, meaning you can start using Link Maker's adoption features as soon as you register. Through this process, your social worker will be automatically connected to your account and will be handling your enquiries and managing your profile. Being connected to a social worker enables you to communicate about potential matches, and notify them of any child profiles that interest you ([see later section](#)).

About your homepage

You have access to a number of features and quick links from your homepage. A prominent aspect, at the top of your homepage, is the 'Featured children' section. Certain hard to place children are 'featured' here by Link Maker.

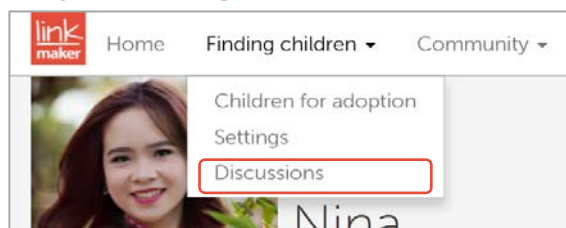
Below the 'Featured children' section, you can find your 'Personal feed'. Your personal feed provides up-to-date information on community and communication updates, as well as any Link Maker announcements that may concern you.

Use the personal feed filter to determine what information you would like to see. Communication updates show recent activity for your cases. You can also find recent news and updates from Link Maker here. To return to this page from any other pages, simply click the 'Home' item in the top menu.



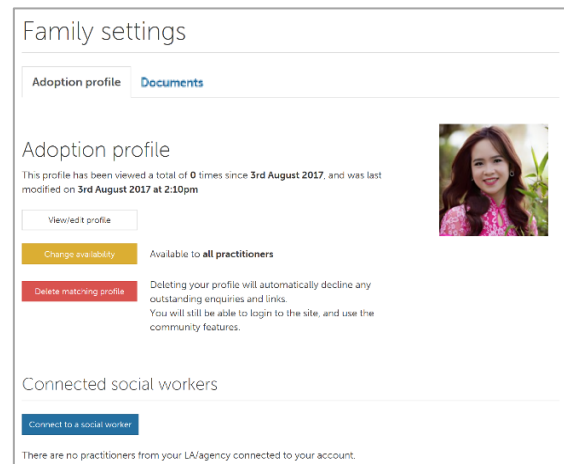
Managing your profile and family settings

All settings relating to your adoption profile can be found in one place: your family settings page. To manage your family settings, choose 'Settings' in the 'Finding children' drop-down menu. You can view and edit your profile, manage your availability settings and find any documents linked to your case.





However, we would encourage you to discuss any changes with your social worker before you complete them. Due to the statutory duty to ensure all profiles are available in English and Welsh the Adoption Agency will need to ensure that any changes are translated into one or the other of the languages.

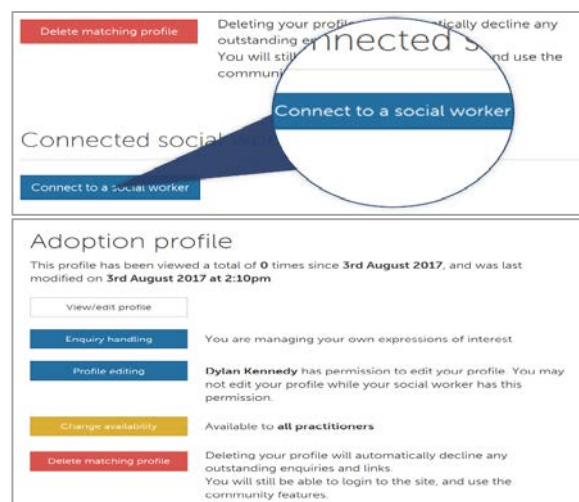
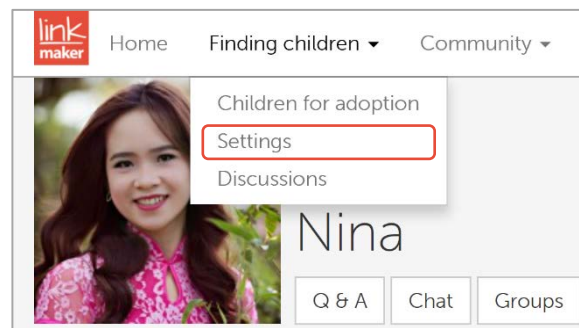


Connecting social workers and managing social worker permissions

Through Link Maker, you can communicate easily and effectively with your social worker in a safe and secure environment. Social workers from your LA/Agency can be connected directly to your adoption profile, enabling you to notify your social workers of any child profiles that you are interested in ([see later section](#)).

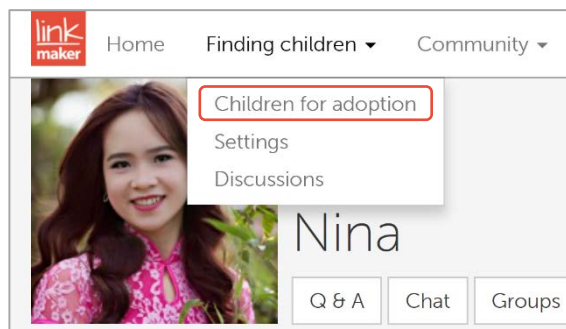
To connect a social worker to your account, go to the 'Settings' page in the 'Finding children' drop-down menu, and choose 'Connect social worker' at the bottom of the page. If you have registered through a social worker, you may find that they are already connected to your account.

You can allow a connected social worker to handle your enquiries or manage your profile which may be easier for you. These permissions can be given through the family settings page by choosing the 'Enquiry handling' and 'Profile editing' buttons. Simply choose a connected social worker from the drop-down and these permissions will be given.



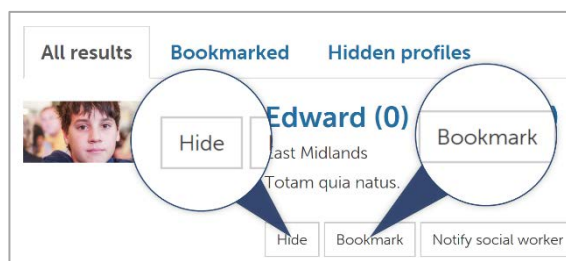
Searching child profiles

Once your account has been activated and verified, you will now have access to the 'Finding children' menu and can begin searching child profiles for potential matches. In the 'Finding children' menu, choose 'Children for adoption'. Here you will find your search dashboard where you can search child profiles by certain criteria, see newly added profiles, bookmark profiles you are interested in and hide those you are not. Your best potential matches, based on your profile, will appear first in this list.



To bookmark a potential child profile, you can choose the 'Bookmark' button on either the search results page, or the full child profile. These profiles will then be accessible in a separate tab, making it quick and easy to find profiles you have previously seen.

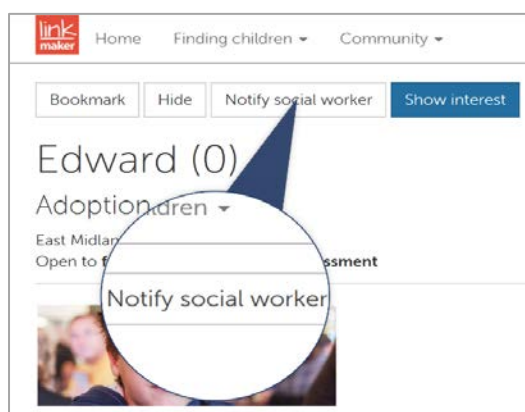
Alternatively, if you know you are not interested in certain profiles, the 'Hide' button works in the same way. These profiles will no longer show in your search results, but will still be accessible in the 'Hidden' tab if you wish to revisit them.



If you are connected to a social worker, you can notify your social worker about a child profile you are interested in ([see next section](#)).

Notifying a social worker

If you have connected a social worker to your account ([see previous section](#)), then you can communicate with your social worker directly about child profiles. To notify your social worker of a child profile you are interested in, click the 'Notify social worker' button on the profile and choose a connected social worker from

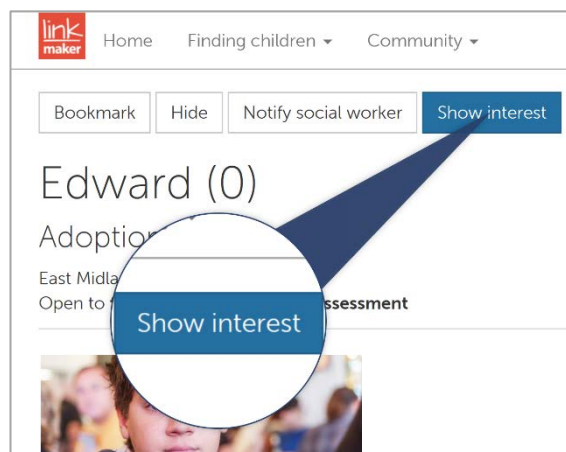




the drop-down list. This social worker will be notified and will be able to view the child profile and express interest on your behalf.

Showing interest in a child profile

Once you have found a child profile you are interested in, click the 'Show interest' button found on the full child profile page. Showing interest in a child profile will invite the social worker for the child/children to view your profile. They will have the option to start a discussion with you so that messages and documents can be shared. Please ensure you have the support of your LA/agency before showing interest in profiles.

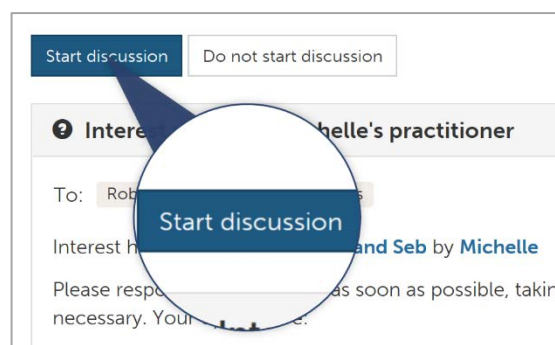


Once interest has been shown, this will appear in your discussions ([see later section](#)). You can withdraw your interest by choosing 'Withdraw interest' in the discussion itself. The child/children's social workers will be notified of this change.

You can show interest in up to five profiles at one time. If you have not received a response within two weeks, you and/or your social worker will be able to contact the social worker for the child directly for an update. From that point, it will no longer count towards the limit of five profiles.

Managing incoming expressions of interest

If your profile has been made available to other social workers, you might start receiving incoming expressions of interest. You will have the opportunity to view the child profile and can choose between starting a discussion, or not with the 'Start discussion' and 'Do not start discussion' buttons.



If you choose not to start a discussion, you will be asked to provide some feedback. If you choose to start a discussion, you can send messages and documents to the child/children's social worker.

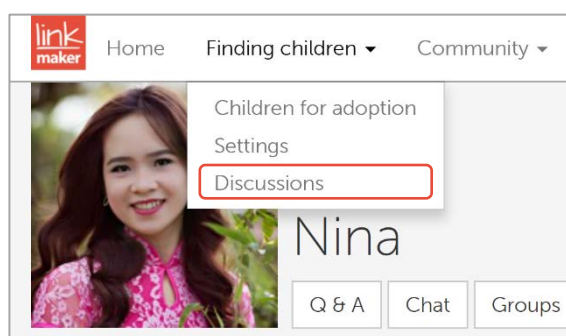


If you are connected to a social worker, you can give your connected social worker permission to manage your enquiries for you. This means they will be responded to incoming expressions of interest on your behalf ([see earlier section](#)).

Using the discussions and interests page

The interests and discussions page acts as your dashboard for all of your enquiries, meaning you can manage all discussions in one place.

To access the interest and discussions page, choose 'Discussions' in the 'Finding children' menu. Alternately, simply click the envelope icon shown in the right-hand corner, next to your username. This icon may appear with a number, indicating that you have discussions that require your attention.

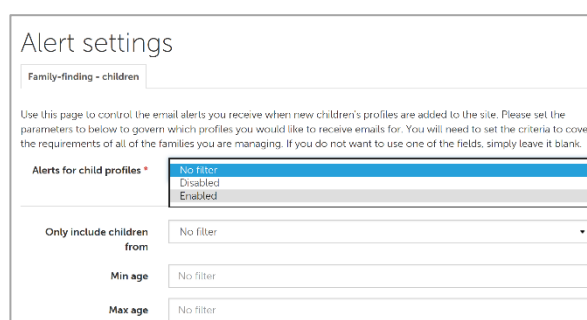


On this page, you can see all active discussions separated into four sections: needs attention (for those discussions that require an action); discussions (for active conversations with children's social workers); outgoing (for outgoing expressions of interest that have not yet received a response) and incoming (for expressions of interest in your profile to which you have not yet responded). You can find all your previous closed discussions in the 'Past' tab.

Managing new profile alerts

With Link Maker, you can receive email alerts when new profiles become available to you. You can tailor these alerts to meet your needs so you are only being alerted for profiles that are relevant to you.

Go to your username drop-down and choose 'Manage alert settings'. To enable alerts, simply choose 'enabled' in the 'New profile alerts' drop-down and continue to fill in your criteria for the profiles you are interested in. Save your settings and you will begin receiving alerts.

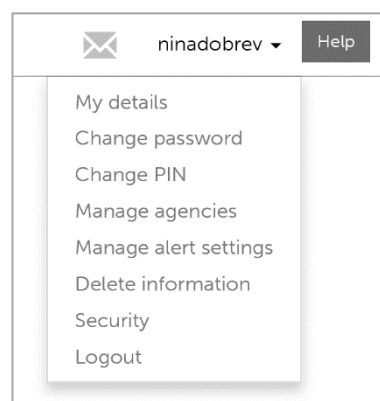




Managing your account settings

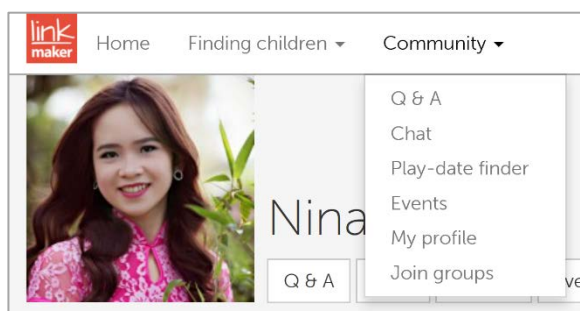
All settings relating to your account, rather than your profile, can be found in your username drop-down menu.

You can change details relating to your account, change your password, username or PIN, manage the agencies you are connected to, delete your matching profile ([see previous section](#)), manage your alert settings ([see previous section](#)), view our security information or logout of your account.



Using community features

You can create a community profile and interact with others in all stages of the adoption process. Community features include a question and answers section, a community chat, a play-date finder, community events and community groups.



All community features can be accessed in the 'Community' drop-down menu.

Finding further help

For further help and support, simply click the 'Help' button in the top menu, next to your username. You can also seek advice and guidance from other adopters with our community features ([see previous section](#)). Alternately, call our support team on 0843 886 0040.