

2014 - 2024



Gwasanaeth  
**Mabwysiadu**  
Cenedlaethol

National  
**Adoption**  
Service

# Annual Report

## 2024/25

**Celebrating 10 Years  
of the National  
Adoption Service**

A summary  
report for  
ALL ages



# Hi!

from our  
Director

It's been **10 whole years** since the National Adoption Service (**NAS**) began helping children and young people in Wales find families and improve adoption services, and we're so proud of what's been achieved.

This year, we've worked hard again to:

- Help more children move into safe, loving homes
- Make it easier for adopted people to understand their past
- Support families better, earlier, and for longer
- Keep improving how adoption works across Wales

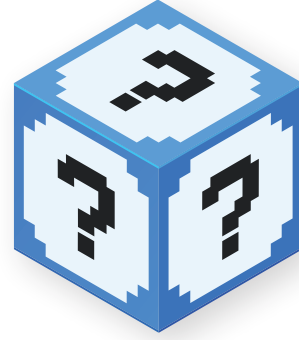


There have been tough times too, like rising living costs and growing demand for support, but we're staying focused on doing what's right for children, young people and their families.





# So... what is NAS



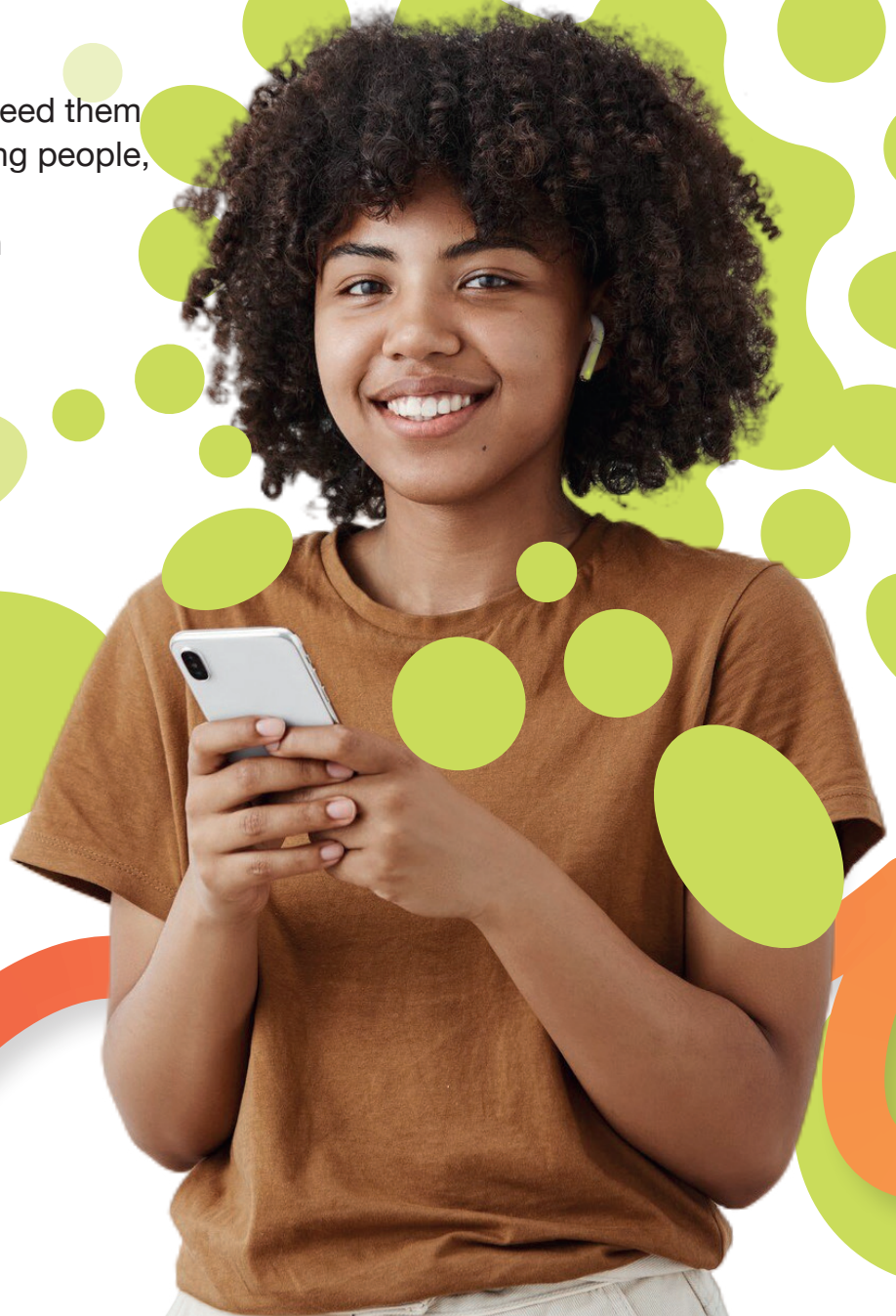
NAS is an organisation that brings together all services to make adoption better in Wales.

We bring together:

- The 22 local authorities in Wales (people in charge of things like housing, social services, roads, and even waste collections)
- Adoption Charities
- Professionals in health and education.

Together, we:

- Find families for children who need them
- Support adopted children, young people, and their families
- Help birth parents stay in touch where it's right
- Make sure adopted adults can access their information when they're ready.



# Our journey: how NAS has changed adoption in Wales since 2014

## Finding homes

- Over **3,100 children** have been adopted into **2,500 caring families**.
- Around **4,200 children** under 18 live with adoptive families in Wales, and **7,500 adopted adults** live here too.
- Around **310** children leave care through adoption each year.



## Support and connections

- Each year, we support about **1,000 children** with adoption plans.
- We've helped more than **4,000 children** stay in touch with birth family, through letters or in-person visits.
- We are working towards having the same support standards across Wales, thanks to our **Adoption Support Framework**.

## Spreading the word and shaping change

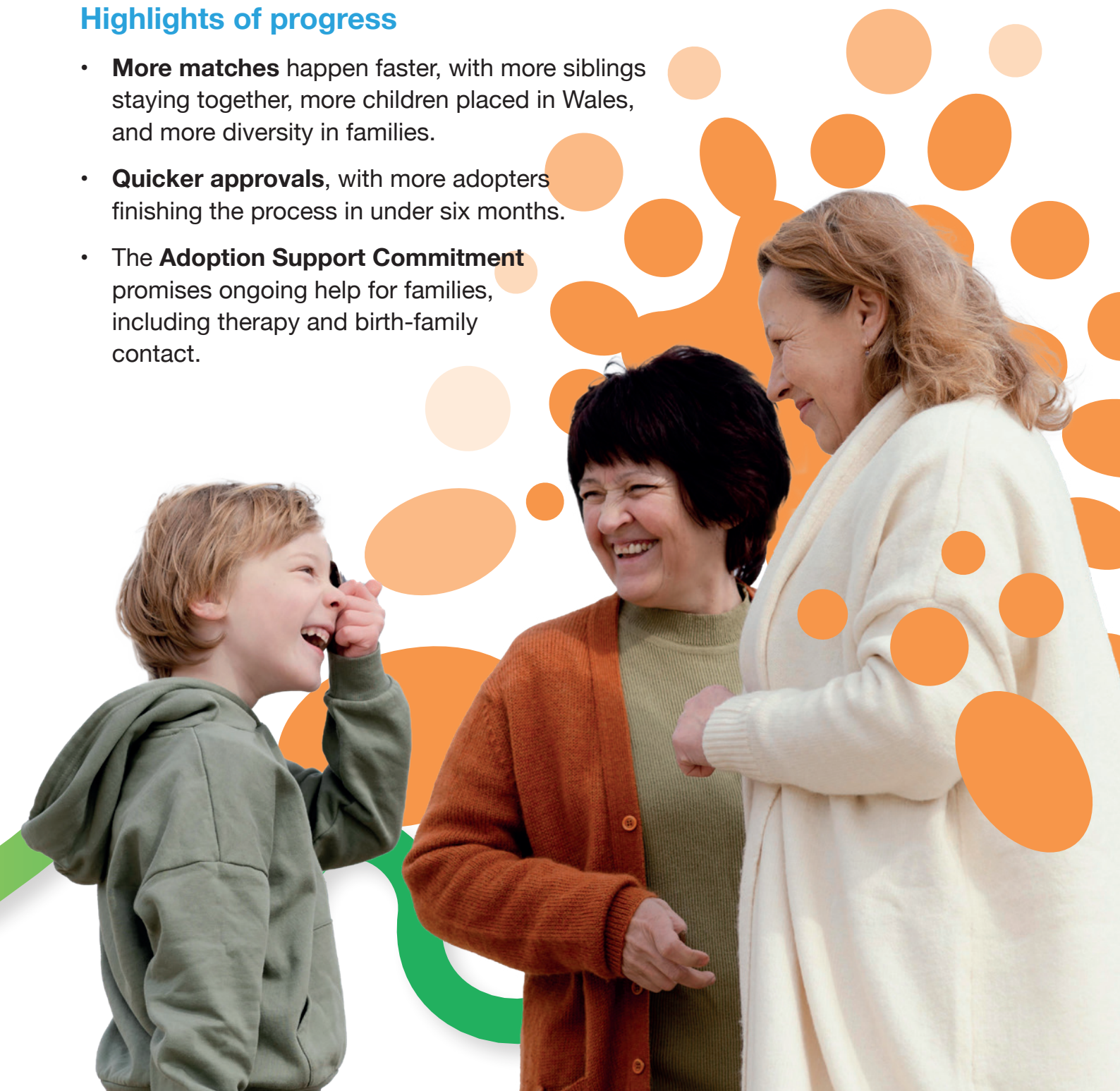
- Award-winning campaigns like See the Whole Child, Be the Parent..., and Choose Family help people see what adoption is about.
- We make sure adopters and young people have a voice, through **Adopter Voice**, **Connect Voices**, and the **Big Adoption Conversation**.
- Digital tools like the **Adoption Register for Wales** and our website help save time and effort for everyone involved.

## Working together

- We train adopters, social workers, teachers, and health workers. We teach things like **Life Journey Work** and **therapeutic parenting**.
- We joined **Zero Racism Wales** to work to make adoption fair for everyone.
- During COVID-19, we used video calls, online therapy, and digital training so families stayed supported.
- **Welsh Early Permanence (WEP)** means young children can live with their adoptive family earlier, giving them a more settled start.

## Highlights of progress

- **More matches** happen faster, with more siblings staying together, more children placed in Wales, and more diversity in families.
- **Quicker approvals**, with more adopters finishing the process in under six months.
- The **Adoption Support Commitment** promises ongoing help for families, including therapy and birth-family contact.





# What we did in 2024/25

## Finding families:

- Placed over 200 children in adoptive families.
- More children were matched with adoptive families through the **Adoption Register for Wales**.
- Dozens of young children were placed early through **Welsh Early Permanence**.
- Our campaigns used **TikTok**, **Spotify** and **Instagram** to bust myths and encourage more people to adopt.

**Mini story:** One couple didn't think they'd be "the right type" of parents, but with support, they were matched with a child who now has a stable, loving home.

## Support that makes a difference

Being adopted is a lifelong journey, and we want families to feel supported all the way. This year:

- Over **1,600 children** had support in place.
- The **PATHway service** helped over **300 families** with advice, therapy and peer support.
- About 390 children and young people were involved in the **Connect service**.
- Our **Life Journey Work** toolkit helped more children understand their story. Now, 65% of children have these materials by their second adoption review.

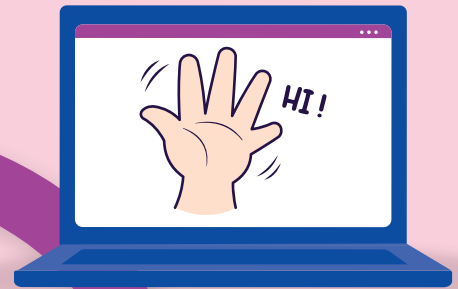


## Keeping in touch with birth families

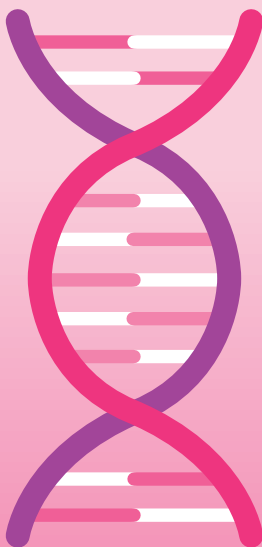
Some children can stay connected to their birth family, and we help that happen in safe, planned ways. In 2024/25:



- Over **4,000 children** had letterbox (indirect) contact.
- More families are now meeting in person when it's right for the child.
- Staff had extra training so they can help make contact plans that are sensitive and right for the child/young person.



**Real-life example:** A child/young person had video chats with their birth parent before meeting in person. Everyone worked together to make it feel safe and positive and to make sure the child/young person was the one choosing the contact they wanted.



## Understanding the past

We believe everyone should be able to know where they come from, if and when they're ready. This year:

- We continued a **pilot service** to help people adopted before 1976 access their records.
- We made new plans to improve how records are stored and shared.
- We've seen more people using **DNA testing and social media** to connect, so we're offering more support.







## Behind the scenes

A big part of our work is helping services run fairly and consistently across Wales. This year:


- A new national **Joint Committee** met for the first time to help make decisions
- A full review of the **finance needed** to run the service was done so we can plan better in the future.
- We joined **Hay Festival** and the **Eisteddfod**, ran activities for families, and held big events like the **Big Adoption Conversation** where people come together to talk about what's important to them.



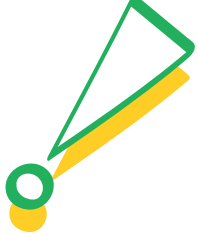

# What children, young people and families told us



"Being adopted made me strong and I had an amazing childhood."



"The preparation sessions helped a lot. The bottle of love meant so much to him."



"Thank you to everyone who helped me when I was moved to my new family."



# The numbers behind the story of 2024-25 at NAS

**65%**

of children got  
Life Journey  
materials early

**310**

children  
adopted

**1,600+**

children receiving  
support services

**389**

young people  
joined [Connect](#)  
groups

**4,000+**

letterbox  
contact plans

**10**  
years of NAS



# What's next?

## Over the next year we want to:

- Match more children with families who understand their needs.
- Make it easier for adopted adults to find information about their adoption.
- Keep improving support for birth parents.
- Listen more closely to adopted children and young people.

We're also working on a brand-new strategy to guide our work until 2026, and your ideas are helping shape it!



...and  
finally

## A word from our Director

We've come a long way in 10 years, and we're proud of the progress, but we know there's more to do.

We'll keep listening to what you need, and we'll keep working with families, professionals, and the Welsh Government to make adoption in Wales the best it can be.

## Want to find out more?

Check out the NAS website: [www.adoptcymru.com](http://www.adoptcymru.com)



# Glossary

## **Adopter Voices**

A way for adoptive parents across Wales to share what they think and help make adoption services better. It's managed by Adoption UK and NAS, who hold free forums and workshops, to talk about important topics like support after placement, contact, education, and Life Journey Work. Networks like this help NAS hear directly from families and make changes based on what adopters say.

## **Adoption Register for Wales**

A secure online system that helps match children who need adoptive families with approved adopters across Wales. It's like a private, safe matching tool used by professionals.

## **Adoption Support Commitment**

This is a promise from NAS to help adoptive families every step of the way. Adoptive families will have a main contact person, get specialist support for their child, and be guided to things like life story books, therapy, school help, and contact with birth family.

## **Big Adoption Conversation**

A yearly event where adopted people, birth families, adopters, and professionals meet (in person and online) to share experiences and ideas about how to make adoption in Wales better.

## **Connect Voices**

A youth council for adopted children and young people in Wales (run by Adoption UK and NAS). People aged around 10–23 meet, share ideas, and help shape adoption services, such as deciding what events to run, what resources to make, and how NAS talks about adoption online.

## **Good Practice Guide**

Easy-to-follow instructions NAS writes for social workers and other professionals so everyone across Wales works in the same, high-quality way (for example, a guide on how to arrange safe contact or write Life Journey books).

## **Hay Festival**

A world-famous book and ideas festival held every May in Hay-on-Wye. NAS ran family activities there this year to raise awareness about adoption and chat with visitors.

## **Joint Committee**

A group of councillors from across Wales who meet twice a year to oversee the work of NAS and Foster Wales, agree budgets, and check progress. They are like a “board of governors” for adoption and fostering.



### **Letterbox contact**

A way for adopted children (or their adoptive family) and birth family to stay in touch by swapping letters, emails, or cards through a safe service, like posting notes into a special, private letterbox.

### **Life Journey Work**

The books, photos, and activities that help an adopted child understand their own story – where they were born, who is in their family, and why they were adopted.

### **PATHway**

A Wales-wide service (run by Adoption UK) that gives adoptive parents expert advice, peer-support groups, and access to professionals like psychologists so they can better understand and respond to their child's needs.

### **Pilot service**

The name for a new service that's being tested to see how well it works before it's made available everywhere, for example, helping people adopted before 1976 find their records.

### **Strategy**

A long-term plan that guides how NAS works and what it focuses on, like helping more children find families, improving support, and listening to young people's voices.

### **Support plan**

A written agreement that lists the help an adopted child and their family will get, such as therapy sessions, school advice, or equipment, and who will provide each bit of support.

### **Therapeutic parenting**

A compassionate and structured way of parenting that helps children who've experienced trauma or early hardship feel safe and understood. It's based on routines, empathy, and emotional connection, rather than punishment. Parents use a PACE approach—Playful, Accepting, Curious, and Empathetic—to understand feelings and support growth [Oklahoma Fosters+2Adoption West+2TACT+2](#).

### **Welsh Early Permanence (WEP)**

A way for very young children to live with their potential adoptive family earlier, before the courts finish the process, so they have fewer moves and more stable care from the beginning.

### **Zero Racism Wales**

A pledge that many people and organisations in Wales have signed. It means saying no to racism and promising to treat everyone fairly, no matter their race or background. They want Wales to be a place where prejudice doesn't get ignored.



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National  
**Adoption**  
Service



**National Adoption Service  
Central Team**

c/o City of Cardiff Council  
Room 475 County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff CF10 4UW  
T: 029 2087 3927  
E: [contact@adoptcymru.com](mailto:contact@adoptcymru.com)  
[www.adoptcymru.com](http://www.adoptcymru.com)



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