

User guide for the Adoption Register for Wales

For staff involved in adoption



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



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Cenedlaethol | National
Adoption
Service



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
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Introduction

This user guide is aimed at practitioners involved in registering adopters and children on the Adoption Register for Wales. The guide tells you how to register with Link Maker (the service managing the Register) if you are not already registered (see page 6).

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 within a month of approval by the Agency Decision Maker; children within a month of the Placement Order.

Link Maker is the service that will be managing the Register in Wales therefore when the term 'Register' 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. You can receive profile alerts to allow you to view new profiles that have been made available to you and your families.

You can connect your account to a family case and work in tandem with adopters to identify possible matches. Optionally, families can give connected practitioners the ability to edit their profile or manage their enquiries on their behalf.

You can use Link Maker's community features to give advice and support to adoptive families (not just your own) in all stages of the adoption process. You can also create agency events and advertise these to your adopters.

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.



Practice tips – family-finding for children

ARW is designed to help you find a suitable number of appropriate families who are interested in each child. With too little interest you may struggle to find a good enough match, and with too much interest you create unnecessary work for yourself, and emotional stress for many waiting families. The suggestions below should help you to consider a successful strategy from the outset.

Controlling interest

The key here is to carefully make a profile available only to families you may want to consider. If you know that initially you only want to hear from families in a certain area, or who can meet certain needs, or who do, or do not, already have children (for example), make sure this is reflected in the profile availability setting. Use the ‘compatible families’ figures on this page as a guide to the most appropriate start point.

Avoiding delay

Once a profile is uploaded to the Register, most of the response is likely to come within hours. You can set a reminder for yourself from the outset to make this happen automatically, avoiding drift.

Approaching families – be proactive!

As a prospective adopter, there is a difference between seeing a child profile in a list, and being approached by a social worker for that child because they feel you could be a good match. Around a quarter of matches made through Link Maker are identified by social workers showing interest in families in this way, and this strategy finds matches for proportionally more children who might typically wait longer. When viewing families for a specific child, the first few pages of results should include the families of most interest, and interest can be shown in dozens of families if appropriate. There are no limits – you could approach hundreds of prospective families if this is what it takes to find a suitable match, and you have the tools to make this a practical option.



Practice tips – working with families

The profile

Review the adopter's profile together - is it a good representation of them? You have the advantage of seeing other families' profiles, and can help make sure your families cover all of their strengths in theirs. They can hand over the ability to edit the profile to you for a period of time if they prefer.

Showing interest

Explain to adopters that your agency's preference is for them to have a discussion with their social worker before they express an interest. This will help to ensure that expressions of interest are reasonable and appropriate as each expression will generate work for social workers but also adopters will experience disappointment if they are expressing an interest in multiple children when it is unlikely they will have a realistic match with them. Explain to adopters that if they express an interest in children that don't lead to a match they can continue to identify and express an interest in others.

Contacting children's social workers

Explain to your adopters that the agency's preference is for the agency to initiate discussions with the children's social workers in the first instance. Again, this is to ensure that contact is only made where there is a realistic chance of the link being pursued, thus avoiding disappointment.

Chasing for updates

Once a discussion is underway, weeks or even months can go by before update are received. There can be a lot of complex issues holding things up; medical assessments, legal processes, ongoing discussions with other families. It is reasonable that adopters should be kept in the loop, and they may seek your advice on how soon and how often to ask for an update, and whether you or they should do this.



Registering for a Link Maker account

To create your own user account, click the 'Register' button on the Link Maker homepage. On the resulting page, choose the 'Organisation' option and enter the required details.

Register

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

Organisation Adopter/foster carer

You will receive a confirmation email confirming you have entered the correct email address with a link that will activate your account. Your account will then need to be verified by your organisation before you can begin using Link Maker's adoption features.

All staff who are uploading profiles to the ARW should create their own individual user account on Link Maker.

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 children who may wait longer are 'featured' here by Link Maker admin.

Below the 'Featured children' section, you can find two tabs, one for your 'Personal feed' and the other for 'Adoption sufficiency'. 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.

Your personal feed

Showing **community updates** ▾

- All updates
- Just communication updates
- Just community updates

Event: Brendan C
Created by London Borou

 **Walsall, 7th February 2021 at 14:08**
100 miles away
Open to families: In approval Family-finding

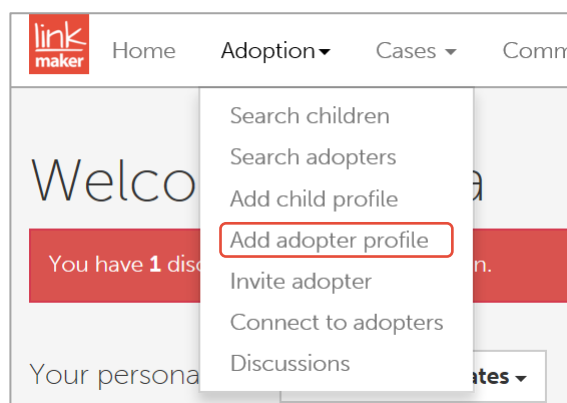
The 'Adoption sufficiency' tab provides you with an adoption sufficiency data dashboard. Here, you can see and export adoption data collected on ARW, such as the number of children matched from a certain region.



Adding a child/sibling group adoption profile

Child adoption profiles are concise for the purpose of identifying possible matches. You may find it helpful to look at other profiles existing on Link Maker to make sure you have the right information at hand.

To create a child or sibling group adoption profile, go to the 'Adoption' menu and choose 'Add child profile'. Choose between creating a profile for an existing case or creating a new case. You will then be asked to fill in basic details for the child/children. As you complete each of the steps, the information you provide will be saved so that you can complete the profile later if needed.



As you follow the steps in creating a profile you will be able to enter the needs of the child/children, the family sought, add any excluded areas, add any photos or videos and choose the profile availability. Profile availability determines who, on Link Maker, will be able to see the child profile.

Once a child profile has been created, you can begin searching adopters for potential matches ([see later section](#)).

If a link has already been identified locally then you can enter the minimum data set (see ARW Guidelines) and only have the profile open to your agency or set the case as hidden/pursuing a link.

Remember all profiles must be bilingual before they can go live. Your agency will have its own internal translation process for this.



Adding an adopter profile

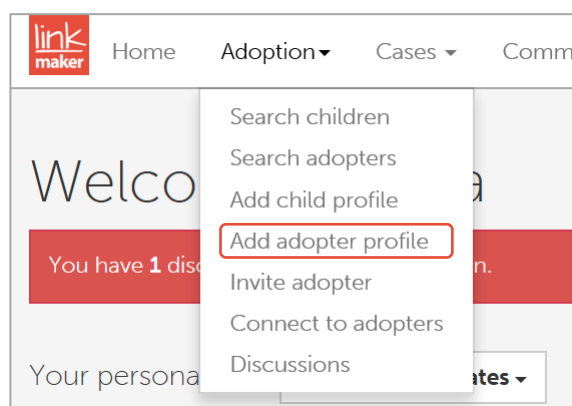
To create an adopter profile, go to the 'Adoption' menu and choose 'Add adopter profile'. Choose between creating a profile for an existing case or creating a new case. You will then be asked to fill in basic details for the family. Designate your main contact for the case and enter their details first. The main contact will receive email notifications and alerts for their account.

As you follow the steps in creating a profile, you will be able to enter the child needs that your family can meet, specify the type of child/children sought, add any photos or videos and set the profile availability. Profile availability determines who will be able to see the family profile.

Once a family profile has been created, you can begin searching child profiles for potential matches ([see later section](#)).

If a local match has already been identified, then a minimum data set can be uploaded and you can designate that it is only seen by your agency or set the case as hidden/pursuing a link.

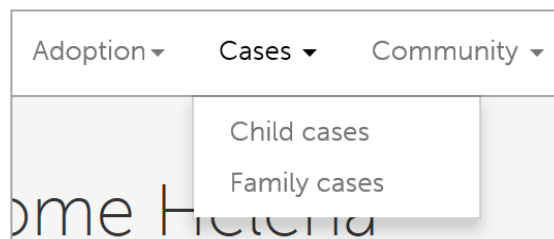
Remember all profiles must be bilingual before they can go live. Your agency will have its own internal translation process for this.





Accessing cases

To access your cases, go to the 'Cases' menu and select the type of cases you wish to see. The 'Cases' page will, by default, be filtered to cases that you are connected to. You can, however, filter your cases and your manager will be able to filter all the cases from your organisation, including cases managed by specific practitioners.



On the 'Cases' page, you'll find an overview of your cases, including any linked profiles, the number of discussions, incoming and outgoing interest, the last activity recorded against the case, the availability of any profiles, and the number of discussions that require your attention.

Click on a case name to navigate to the 'Case management' page for that case. You can connect yourself to any case from your organisation, by clicking on the case name and choosing 'Connect account' from the 'Case management' page. Or, click on a profile name to navigate to the 'Profile settings' page for a specific profile.

Managing a case

To manage either a child or family case, go to the 'Cases' menu ([see previous section](#)) and click the name of the case you wish to manage. This will bring you to the 'Case management' page. Here, you can manage every aspect of the case, such as viewing discussions, documents and reports or adding/managing profiles.

To connect to a case, click the 'Connect account' button. You will then be linked to the case, meaning you can edit profiles and participate in family finding for the child(ren) or family. To disconnect yourself from a case, click the 'Disconnect account' button. You will no longer be listed as a linked practitioner and your permissions will be removed.

Connecting to an adopter means creating a direct link between you and their case. You will both be able to notify one another of child profiles and will have the ability to communicate more effectively. You will have the ability to change the availability of the profile. Optionally, an adopter can give you permission to edit their profile or manage their expressions of interest. For family cases, you can find all the collected contact information for the family in the 'Contact information' tab.



In the 'Case management' tab, you can share the case with other practitioner, connect or disconnect yourself from the case or set the case as inactive. Inactive cases are not subject to activity chasing and will not appear in your active case listing on the 'Cases' page.

Managing a child profile

All settings relating to a child profile can be found in one place, in the 'Adoption profiles' tab of the 'Case management' page ([see previous section](#)). Here, you can view and edit the child profile, view compatible families, change the availability settings, set a main contact and delete the profile ([see later section](#)).

The screenshot shows the 'Adoption profiles' management interface. At the top are tabs for 'Management', 'Adoption profiles', and 'Documents'. The 'Adoption profiles' tab is active. Below the tabs, the profile for 'Jeremy' is displayed. It includes a small photo of a child and text stating: 'This profile has been viewed a total of 0 times since 7th August 2017, and was last modified on 7th August 2017 at 3:05pm'. Below this is a 'Link maker reference: SMP18191'. A series of buttons are listed: 'View/edit profile', 'View compatible families', 'Change availability', 'Change exclusions', 'Set main contact', and 'Delete profile'. To the right of these buttons, there are status messages: 'View or edit this profile', 'Search family profiles that are compatible with this profile', 'Currently hidden from searches. Not accepting interest from families in the approval process.', 'Currently has no area exclusions', 'There is no main contact set for this profile', and 'Delete profile'.

It is imperative that all avenues are explored within Wales and via the Register, before any decisions are made to widen the search. However, in order to ensure there is no unnecessary delay, if there are no appropriate links available within Wales, or specific reasons why a placement outside Wales should be sought immediately (as recorded on the Family Finding Plan and Record), consideration will then be given to the child's details being opened UK wide, as soon as possible. This should be no later than 3 months from the date a full profile was uploaded to the Register.

Managing a family profile

All settings relating to a family profile can be found in one place, in the 'Adoption profile' tab of the 'Case management' page ([see previous section](#)). Here, you can indicate when the family is approved to adopt (if not already stated), view the profile, view compatible children, set a main contact and delete the profile ([see later section](#)).

The screenshot shows the 'Adoption profile' management interface. At the top are tabs for 'Management', 'Adoption profile', and 'Documents'. The 'Adoption profile' tab is active. Below the tabs, the profile for a family is displayed. It includes text stating: 'This profile has been viewed a total of 6 times since 28th July 2017, and was last modified on 31st July 2017 at 1:53pm'. Below this is a status 'Available to all practitioners'. A series of buttons are listed: 'Adoption approval', 'View profile', 'View compatible children', 'Remove this profile', and 'Set main contact'. To the right of these buttons, there are status messages: 'When this family is approved to adopt, you should indicate that here.', 'Search child profiles that are compatible with this profile', 'You may mark this profile for removal. The profile will be hidden straight away, and an administrator will be notified.', and 'There is no main contact set for this profile'.

You will be able to edit their profile from this page ([see previous section](#)).



Searching, bookmarking and showing interest in adopter profiles

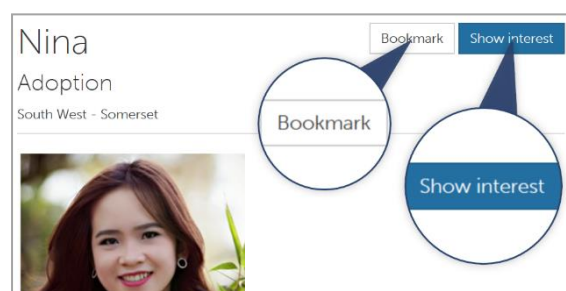
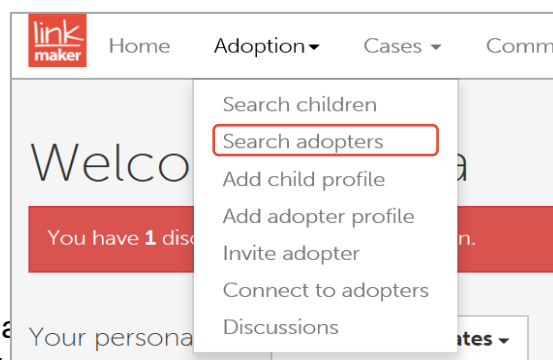
Once you have created a child adoption profile ([see previous section](#)), you can begin searching for potential placements.

To search adopter profiles, go to the 'Adoption' menu and click 'Search adopters'. Here you can filter your search results to find potential matches by using the filters on the right-hand side of the page. Please note that your search results will update automatically.

To find suitable profiles for a specific child profile, you can use the 'Order by compatibility for' filter. Simply, select the child/children from the drop-down and your search results will update to show profiles available to the child/children in order of compatibility.

To show interest in a family, go to the full family profile and click the 'Show interest' button. This will invite the family, and any connected practitioners, to view the child's profile that you are expressing interest on behalf of. The family (or their practitioner) can then choose whether or not to start a discussion.

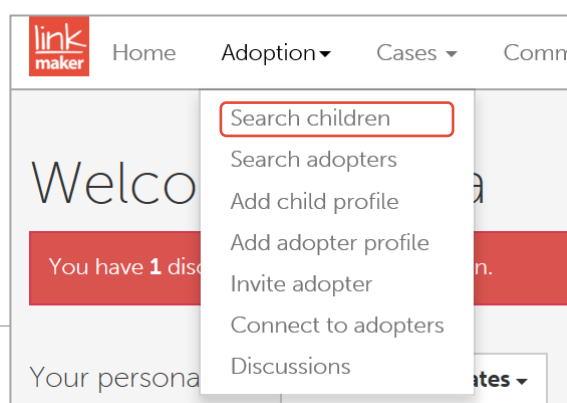
Optionally, you may want to bookmark family profiles to view them later. To bookmark a family profile, click the 'Bookmark' button. These profiles can be found in the 'Bookmarked' tab, enabling you to return to them when you wish to show interest.



Searching, bookmarking and showing interest in child profiles

Once you have created a family adopter profile ([see previous section](#)) or have been connected to a family adopter profile, you can begin searching for potential matches.

To search child profiles, go to the 'Adoption' menu and choose 'Search





children'. Here you can filter your search results to find potential matches by using the filters on the right-hand side of the page. Please note that your search results will update automatically.

You can save search parameters after entering filters on the search page. Once you enter any filters you will see a 'Save new Search' button. Here you can save your search with a custom name to select from the 'saved search' filter that will appear once you save any search.

Save search

You can save criteria for future use by creating a saved search. You can then select this search from Saved searches. To change the search criteria for this saved search, click cancel and revise your search.

Search name

Search criteria

Save new search

To find suitable profiles for a specific family, you can use the 'Order by compatibility for' filter. Simply, select the family from the drop-down and your search results will update to show profiles available to the family in order of compatibility.

You can choose to show interest in a child profile on behalf of your adopters, or notify your adopter directly of a profile you think they will be interested in.

To show interest in a child profile, go to the full child profile and click the 'Show interest' button, then choose an adopter profile from the drop-down. This will invite the child's social worker to view the family's profile and will notify your adopter of the expression of interest. The child's practitioner will then choose whether to start a discussion.

Gavin (0)

Adoption

East of England

Open to **approved families**

To notify your adopter of a child profile, click the 'Notify family' button and choose a family from the drop-down. The family will then receive an email suggesting they view this profile, which will also be added to their bookmarks list.



Optionally, bookmark child profiles to view them later. To bookmark a family profile, click the 'Bookmark' button. These profiles can be found in the 'Bookmarked' tab, enabling you to return to them when you wish to show interest.

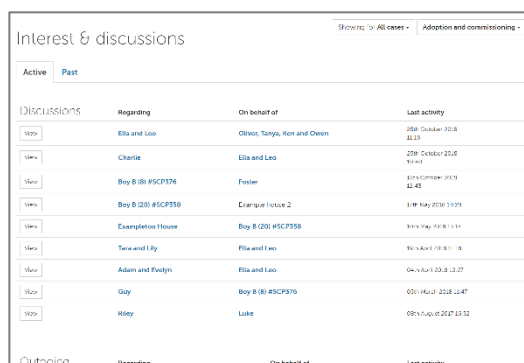
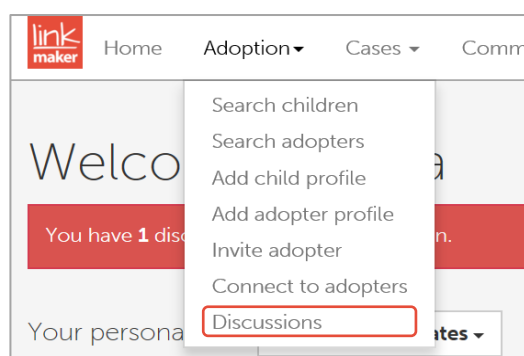
Using the interest and discussions page

The 'Interest & discussions' page is a dashboard for all discussions. You can view discussions relating to cases you are connected to, or view discussions relating to any case in your organisation.

To access the interest and discussions page, choose 'Discussions' in the 'Adoption' menu. Alternatively, 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.

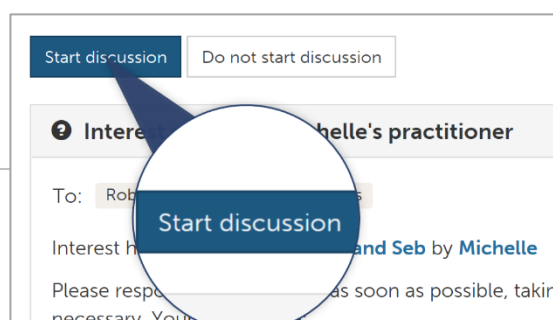
You have a number of filters on this page, enabling you to flexibly manage all cases from one page. The page is separated into four sections: needs attention (for those discussions that require an action); discussions (for active conversations); outgoing (for outgoing expressions of interest that have not yet received a response) and incoming (for expressions of interest in the profiles you manage to which you have not yet responded). You can find all your previous closed discussions in the 'Past' tab.

You are automatically subscribed to discussions relating to cases you are connected to. This means you will receive updates via email. You can choose to subscribe or unsubscribe from discussions whenever you like; just click the 'Subscribe' or 'Unsubscribe' buttons from within the discussion.



Managing incoming expressions of interest

Whether you are managing a child or family profile, you are likely to receive incoming expressions of interest depending on the





profile availability. Once you have received an incoming expression of interest, you can view the profile expressing interest and choose whether to start a discussion with the 'Start discussion' and 'Do not start discussion' buttons.

You will also see an acknowledgement button when an interest is sent to you. You can click this to indicate you have seen the interest and will come back to it. It will delay the automatic opening of a discussion by a further 2 weeks.

A horizontal bar containing three buttons: 'Start discussion' (blue), 'Do not start discussion' (grey), and 'Acknowledge' (blue and highlighted with a black border).

If you choose not to start a discussion, you will be asked to provide some feedback as to why. If you choose to start a discussion, you can then exchange messages and documents with the other party.

There is also a function to set an "Out of Office" if the case allocated practitioner is on short term leave. This function should not be used for longer term absences and in this instance the case needs to be reallocated until the practitioner is back in work.

Please see video link below on how to access this function.

<https://www.linkmaker.co.uk/pages/view/240>

Indicating that a case is progressing to panel

After a discussion concerning a potential placement has been started, the match may progress to matching panel. You can indicate this within the discussion by choosing the 'Progressing to panel' button. The discussion recipient will be notified of this and your discussion will be updated.

A screenshot of a discussion interface. At the top are buttons: 'Send a document', 'Send a message', 'Mark as progressing to panel' (highlighted with a blue circle and arrow), and 'Place in reserve'. Below is a 'Discussion started' section with 'To: family', 'CC: Role', and a 'Mark as progressing to panel' button. The text below mentions 'We strongly encourage you to use the link and document sharing feature'.

Indicating a match has been made

Once a match has been made, go to the relevant discussion and choose 'Mark as match made'. If you are sure that a match

A screenshot of a discussion interface. At the top are buttons: 'Send a document', 'Send a message', and 'Mark as match made' (highlighted with a blue circle and arrow). Below is a 'Marked' section with 'To: family', 'CC: Myra and', and a 'Mark as match made' button. The text below mentions 'Myra and ... discussion has progressed'.



has been made, the child adoption/family adopter profile will be deleted.

In the case of family adopter profiles, the family will no longer have access to Link Maker's family-finding features, although will still be able to use the community areas of the site.

Deleting an adoption/adopter profile will remove all enquiries and links and is a permanent action. Within 20 days of the match being confirmed by both parties, all identifying information held on the adoption/adopter profile will be deleted and only statistics on how our system performed will be retained.

Creating and managing agency groups

You can create your own agency groups (for example, you, your manager and the administrator) to use when filtering search results or setting a profile availability. These groups can be created for your own use, or made available to all practitioners at your agency.

To create an agency group, go to the 'Admin' menu and choose 'Manage agency groups'. Here, you will be able to view and edit all existing agency groups and create new agency groups by clicking the button 'New agency group'.





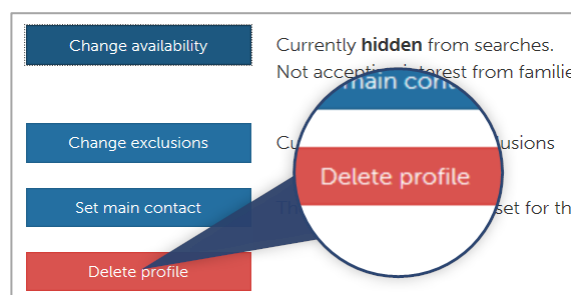
Generating reports

Link Maker offers various reports to help you in finding placements and keeping records. For practitioners involved in adoption, Link Maker provides an available families report, a family finding activity report and usage & match reports.

1. The available families report produces a list of all families on Link Maker who may be a compatible match with specified criteria. To generate the report, go to the 'Admin' menu and select 'Available families'. Now, enter details in the fields provided, such as 'Permanence type' and 'Sibling group size'. This report can be generated multiple times for any combination of criteria.
2. The family finding activity report produces a detailed account of the family finding activity that has taken place on Link Maker for a specified child/sibling group. To generate the report, go to the 'Admin' menu and select 'Family finding activity'. Simply choose a child or sibling group from the drop-down and click 'Generate report'.
3. The usage & match reports can be found by going to the 'Admin' menu and selecting 'Usage & match reports'. By selecting the type of report you wish to generate in the 'Report' field, you can produce one of the following:
 - Usage report: an overview of profiles added, enquiries made and received
 - Child matches report: an overview of children matched, wait times, agencies involved, and who identified matches
 - Family matches report: an overview of families matched and the placing agencies involved

Deleting a child profile

Deleting a child profile is an irreversible action and will make the profile unavailable immediately. To delete a child adoption profile, navigate to the case settings page through the Cases menu. In the 'Adoption profiles' tab, click the 'Delete profile' button. You will then be asked some questions about why you are choosing to delete the profile and whether it has been matched. Once profiles are deleted cases should be set



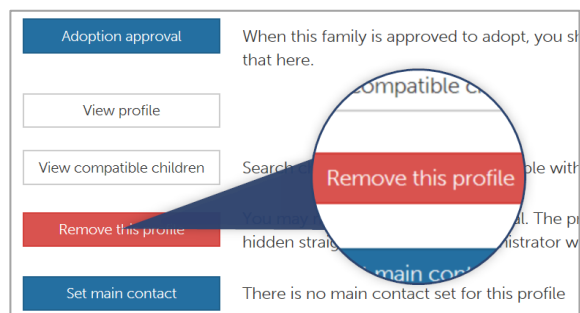


as inactive, the system will prompt you to do this upon deletion.

Deleting a family profile

Deleting a family adopter profile is an irreversible action and will automatically decline any outstanding enquires and links and make the profile unavailable immediately.

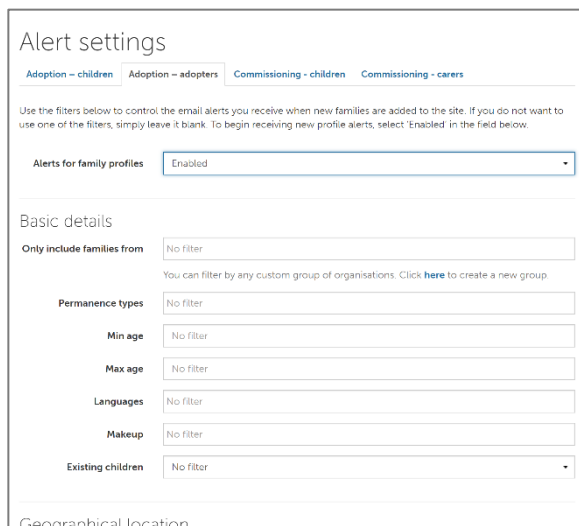
To delete a family adopter profile, navigate to the case settings page through the Cases menu. In the 'Adoption profiles' tab, click the 'Remove this profile' button. You will then be asked some questions about why you are choosing to delete the profile and whether it has been matched. Once profiles are deleted cases should be set as inactive, the system will prompt you to do this upon deletion.



Managing new profile alerts

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

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.

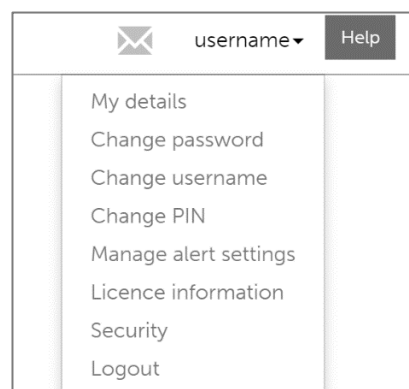




Managing account settings

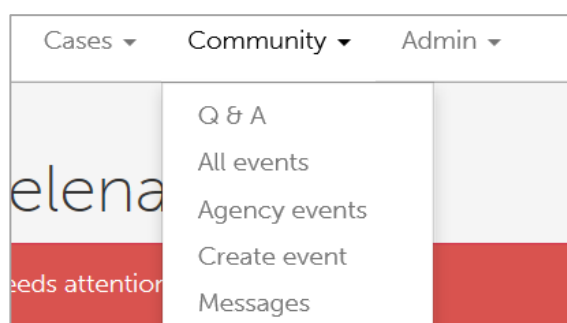
All settings relating to your account, can be found in your username drop-down menu.

You can change details relating to your account, change your password, username or PIN, manage your alert settings ([see previous section](#)), view your licence information, view our security information or logout of your account.



Using community features

The community features on Link Maker allow adopters to share advice and peer support, and find agency resources. As a practitioner, you can help any adopters by answering questions posed on the Q & A. You can use the Q & A yourself to ask advice of other practitioners, or of families also.



You can create agency events and advertise these to your adopters or to other families, as well as hosting a branded area for staff and families from your agency to find support, resources and news. Please contact us for details of this.

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. Alternatively, call our support team on 0843 886 0040.