



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Cenedlaethol

National
Adoption
Service

NAS 2026 Newsletter



Foreword from Suzanne

I am pleased to be sharing this year's newsletter with you, featuring news, information and highlights from 2025, in addition to looking ahead to 2026. I hope you will find the content interesting, informative, and useful for the year ahead wherever you are in Wales.

2025 was once again a very busy but exciting year for everyone in the National Adoption Service. All the Regional Adoption Services, Local Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAA) aimed to ensure that quality information and support was provided for everyone – from initial adoption enquiries through to our adopters using post-adoption services.

This year I announced my retirement at the end of March 2026. It's been the greatest privilege to be in this role, taking NAS from a concept in a document to a collaborative that has achieved real change and improvement over the last 11 years. However, I haven't done this alone, and many thanks go to you for the role you have played and also to my team. The time has come for someone to take over the reins and bring fresh eyes and energy to this amazing organisation.

In 2025, NAS delivered on many important commitments:

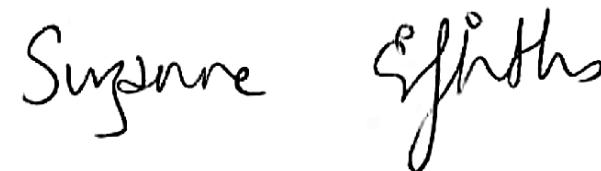
- We piloted an updated CAR B (Child Adoption Report) developed in collaboration with Coram BAAF, a new document which will assist us to meet the needs children in line with modern adoption practice in Wales.
- Our campaign 'Now is a Good Time' was launched, to encourage more people to consider adoption, as the number of children waiting for adoptive families continues to rise while the number of new enquiries to adopt have declined.

- We launched and implemented a new Qualities and Skills Framework which will support improvements in adoption work and assist practitioners across Wales undertaking adoption assessments.

As we move into 2026, we are still very much aware of the challenges faced by all families in Wales, due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis amongst other things, and we want to reassure everyone that support is still available. Please do contact your local region, or VAA, if you are experiencing difficulties relating to adoption.

I would like to finish by saying a massive thank you to all our adopters, foster carers and others who are part of the 'team' in Wales. You all show incredible commitment and support in helping to place and support children in loving homes. Additionally, I must express my gratitude to the staff for all the services that are part of, or linked to, the National Adoption Service for Wales – your commitment to your work does not go unnoticed.

Wishing you a Happy New Year!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Suzanne Griffiths', consisting of two lines of cursive script.

Director of the National Adoption Service for Wales

Highlights of 2025



Highlights of 2025



Well-deserved recognition for our director

We're incredibly proud to share that our director, Suzanne Griffiths, has been awarded an MBE in the King's New Year Honours for services to children's social care.

This is a well-deserved recognition of Suzanne's leadership, dedication and tireless commitment to improving outcomes for children and families across Wales. Congratulations Suzanne!



Highlights from your local services across Wales



Adoption Mid and West Wales



Mabwysiadu
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru
Adoption
Mid & West Wales

AMWW now has a new post of Regional Adoption Manager. Claire Phillips is excited to join the other RAMs across Wales, working closely with NAS. Her main priority moving forward will be to progress the CIW improvement plan. AMWW's inspection reflected several areas of excellent practice.

Recruitment of Adopters

AMWW is now working closely with the commissioning teams and has been joining fostering recruitment events. In Powys (Mid) we attended 55 events, and have seen a significant increase of adoption enquiries.

Activity Fun Days

Summer activity day was held in Pembrey Country Park and a Forest School Day in October Half Term. These days bring together families for a relaxed, supportive and enjoyable day.

Connect

The Connected Support group is being held monthly in Carmarthen, with parents being supportive and the young people engaging and enjoying the activities. We are aiming to develop an online Mid Wales group in the Spring with bi-annual meet ups.

Life Journey Work

Adoption support staff are advancing their skills in providing in-house Therapeutic Life Journey Work with two members of staff completing the Professional Certificate in Therapeutic Life Story Work and Therapeutic Life Story Work Diploma.

Support Around Life Story

Our monthly Support Around Life Story Support Groups continue to bring professionals together from across the region, offering a collaborative space to explore direct life story work and the creation of meaningful life journey materials.

Fathers Support Group

In Mid and West Wales two male Adoption Social Workers (Nick Guy and Neil Webb) have launched a new support group for adoptive fathers as a result of feedback that men and fathers are sometimes overlooked when we arrange events. We recognize that becoming a father—through any path—can bring emotional, practical, and financial challenges. With an established group now keen to meet regularly, we plan to hold meetings every two months throughout 2026.

Find us at:

 adoptionmwwales.org.uk/

 mabwysiaducgcymru.org.uk/

 facebook.com/adoptmwwales

 instagram.com/adoptmwwales



North Wales Adoption Service 8th Annual Family Fun Day

North Wales Adoption Service held its 8th annual family fun day in September. This much-loved family event is keenly awaited each year by our adoptive families. This year we welcomed over 94 families and 150 children to the event.

Life Journey Work

Our Baby Steps group is for parents of children 0 to 6 years to discuss all aspects of life journey work. It is facilitated by Sarah Ryan and Susanne McCarthy in partnership with our Therapeutic practitioners who run a stay and play session for the children.

Advertising Campaign

With support from the NAS Central Team, we secured funding to cover a bus-rear advertising campaign. Fifteen buses travelled for six weeks between August and September across all six North Wales Local Authorities. Next year, our goal is to increase our visibility within the community, share more information about our service activities, support our adoptive families, and recruit more dedicated parents for children awaiting adoption.

Community Engagement & Events

NWAS continues proactive outreach through participation in key events: The Eisteddfod was a major success in visibility and professionalism, generating valuable networking opportunities with professionals including the Welsh Language Commissioner, Safeguarding Partnership Board and media contacts.

Our Marketing & Recruitment Officer is building new partnerships across NWAS's six Local Authorities.

National Adoption Week (NAW)

Bilingual virtual information events were arranged.

MRO made contact with all 55 libraries across North Wales, posted a Blanket Bears book and arranged two library-based initiatives, including readings and a social media campaign.

Looking Ahead

NWAS will continue expanding its presence in the community, strengthening partnerships, promoting adoption services and supporting families—ensuring more children find loving, permanent, nurturing homes.

Find us at:

 northwalesadoption.co.uk

 facebook.com/mabwysiadugogleddcymru



SEWAS had their Care Inspectorate Wales inspection this summer, and the report was published on 25th September 2025. Some important highlights for us include examples of good practice and positive feedback. This included that our adopters are well prepared and supported, children are safe and that the service is child focused.

Events

SEWAS raised awareness at community events such as the Hay Festival, Blaenau Gwent Pride, National Play Day, Chepstow Family Day, Pride in the Port and the Usk Show. We celebrated National Adoption Week with our SEWAS bear, Enfys, going out on the road across our 5 LA's and documenting his travels on social media. We (and he) engaged with the community at organised events, pop up stalls and we even had Newport civic centre lit up in purple to mark the occasion.

We arranged a number of events for our adopters and their families such as Sailing Sessions, Water Sports Activity Day, Maggie's Voice (horse riding), Stay and Play Sessions and ran the Connected Group for Young People jointly with Adoption UK. We also hosted our annual family fun day which is always a huge success and loved by both families and staff.

Regulating Through Activity

Adopters attended our Regulating Through Activity Workshop run by a Sensory and Attachment Specialist OT. This group helps adoptive parents to learn more about sensory needs and attachment in collaboration with the CAMHS Clinical Strategic Lead OT and Gwent Psychology Service. This was part of a pilot which hopes to develop packages of intervention and support for children who have suffered trauma which impact on sensory processing and integration. This group is an excellent example of working in collaboration with Health. Parents who attended this group said they found it eye opening, informative and useful and said that it gave them new ideas to support their children.

Find us at:

-  southeastwalesadoption.co.uk
-  facebook.com/SEWASAdoption
-  instagram.com/sewasadoption

Vale, Valleys, and Cardiff Adoption



This year we continued to raise awareness of adoption in our four local authority areas. We hosted stalls at Pride Cymru in Cardiff on behalf of NAS as well as VVC, Barry Pride and the Vale of Glamorgan show which created a great opportunity to speak to the public and connect with adopted people, birth family, and adoptive families. Alongside these events we also sought new opportunities to reach our communities such as hosting stalls at Trago Mills and the Pontyclun Craft Fair.

Digital Platforms

We focused on using our digital platforms to share stories from adoptive families and our staff to offer a deeper insight into the complexities of adoption. These were well received and shared onward.

National Campaign

Two of our adopters took part in the national campaign 'Now is the time' which raised awareness of our service across Wales. We also took part in New Family Social's adoption and fostering week which raised awareness of our service nationally.

Events

We attended the Hay Festival with SEWAS and the Urdd with Western Bay to support our partner agencies. We also joined Foster Wales on their stall at the St David's Centre twice this year and we plan to continue to work in close partnership with them for events in the coming year.

Find us at:

-  adopt4vvc.org
-  [instagram.com/vvcadoption](https://www.instagram.com/vvcadoption)
-  [instagram.com/mabwysiadufcc](https://www.instagram.com/mabwysiadufcc)
-  [facebook.com/vvcadoption](https://www.facebook.com/vvcadoption)
-  [facebook.com/mabwysiadufcc](https://www.facebook.com/mabwysiadufcc)

Western Bay Adoption



As we reflect back on 2025 there are a number of developments and highlights that we are extremely proud of as a service.

Recruitment / Family Finding

New approaches and partnerships are paying dividends in terms of matching and better outcomes for children. Activity Day events that we held in the second half of the year have produced some promising results with an amazing 9 matches emerging directly from the days. We've also been working hard to improve our relationships with Foster Carers during the year through coffee mornings and more formal meetings to discuss children's needs, transition and any challenges as they move towards adoption.

Marketing and Outreach

We were pleased with the impact of our outdoor advertising in form of back of bus and petrol pumps adverts in addition to large bridge banners. It was also a pleasure to be at the many high-profile events across the region such as the Wales Airshow, Mumbles Raft Race whilst also joining regional and national colleagues at the Hay Festival.

Adoption Support

A busy year for this area of the service as we launched new virtual hubs for Life Journey Story and Contact and our new 'Connected Circle' support group for families. Connected Circle groups are based on the elements of Theraplay and were created in response to the difficulties that new parents can experience early in their family journey. We've had some great feedback from the group including: "I would 100% recommend the Connection Circle group to other families!".

A highlight from our much-loved WBAS Youth Clwb this year was the event that the members organised and managed for Easter. This involved two of the young people making a Dragons' Den style pitch to the Youth Bank for event funding - which was so impressive they were even awarded extra money! The dinosaur themed event, attended by 40 of our families was a huge success with great feedback from all that attended!

Positive CIW Inspection

We were inspected by the CIW in early September and were pleased with the results with several areas of good practice being identified throughout the service. This is a testament to the hard work put in by staff every day.

Find us at:

-  westernbayadoption.org/
-  facebook.com/westernbayadoption
-  twitter.com/bayadoption
-  instagram.com/western_bay_adoption

Barnardo's Cymru Adoption Service



Newid Plentyndod.
Newid Bywydau.
Changing childhoods.
Changing lives.

This year, we have focused on growing our adoption community and deepening our practice around creative approaches to staying in touch. Supporting families to nurture children's identity and maintain safe, meaningful connections has remained central to our work.

Leading Organisation-Wide Practice Improvements

We took a leading role within the wider Barnardo's organisation by establishing a Staying in Touch Working Group. Its aim is to ensure all adoptive families receive consistent guidance, tools, and resources to help them maintain meaningful staying in touch connections for children. A key achievement of this group has been the development of our new Staying in Touch Guide.

New Training Offers

To support adopters throughout their journey, we launched two new training programmes this year.

- **Creative Approaches to Staying in Touch** explores a wide range of connection-building approaches.
- **Understanding Birth Family Experiences** provides a trauma-informed perspective on the circumstances and experiences of birth families.

Strengthening our Community

Community has remained a cornerstone of our work, and we were delighted to bring families together at a series of events across Wales. Highlights included summer outings to Techniquest and the Xplore! Science Centre, followed by Halloween-themed trips to pumpkin patches across the country. We rounded off the year with our much-loved December pantomime visits.

Launching our Adoption Padlet

A major milestone this year was the launch of our brand-new Barnardo's Cymru Adoption Padlet. This easy-to-navigate online space brings together practical tools and resources, and essential information designed specifically for the needs of our adoptive families.

Looking Ahead

As we move into next year, we are committed to increasing our work with birth families to ensure their voices, experiences, and perspectives are meaningfully reflected in the support we provide to adoptive families. Strengthening these relationships will help us build even more compassionate, inclusive, and child-centred practice.

Find us at:

barnardos.org.uk/wales

facebook.com/barnardoscymrufosteradopt/



In what remains a challenging landscape for adoption, St David's is pleased to report steady enquiry numbers and successful adoption placements. This progress reflects the impact of our renewed recruitment and marketing strategy, helping more children find loving, forever homes while connecting families with the support they need.

Funding

We are thrilled to share that we've secured three years of funding for a dedicated Children and Young Person Worker through the Children in Need Grant. This role will offer tailored one-to-one support and group activities, helping children and young people thrive in their post-adoption journey.

Cardiff Half Marathon

Last year's Cardiff Half Marathon was also a true highlight. Seventeen amazing runners raised over £9,000 to support post-adoption services across Wales. We're already gearing up for 2026, with 20 runners signed up and ready to make every mile count, in both the Cardiff Half and the London Marathon.

Summer Celebration

Our Annual Summer Celebration was one of our biggest yet, bringing together over 70 families in Cardiff for a day of laughter, magic, and creativity. Other highlights included the growth of our North Wales events, seeing more and more families come together, and our ever-popular Christmas Party.

Team News

We're delighted to welcome Zia Swinbourne to the team. With over a decade of experience across assessments, post-adoption support, and intermediary services for adopted adults and birth families, Zia brings invaluable expertise to every stage of the adoption journey.

New NAS Access to Records Pilot

It's been a busy second year for the Pre-1976 Access to Records and Intermediary Service. By the end of the year, all five Regional Services were referring to the service. Evaluations from service users throughout the year—including their interactions with our colleagues in the Regions—have been positive.

As we reflect on a year of growth, success, and joyful milestones, we're excited for what lies ahead. With strong foundations, dedicated staff, and an engaged community behind us, 2026 promises to be another year of hope and positive change for children and families across Wales.

Find us at:

-  www.stdavidsadoptionservice.org
-  facebook.com/stdavidschildrenssociety
-  instagram.com/stdavidsadoptionservice

In 2025 AFKA Cymru celebrated our 10-year anniversary.

Thank you to all those who have supported us over the past 10 years. Please see our celebratory video on our home page - [Association for Fostering, Kinship and Adoption - AFKA Cymru](#)

Adoption Quality & Skills Framework

Throughout 2025, AFKA Cymru has supported NAS with the implementation of the Adoption Quality & Skills Framework. This framework serves as an overarching reference tool for practitioners, establishing a clear set of qualities and skills essential for successful adoptive parenting. This year we have focused on supporting practitioners to use this framework in practice. Thank you to everyone who attended the sessions, we hope you enjoyed learning from us as much as we enjoyed learning from you.

Finding and Building Adoptive Families for Children in Wales: Good Practice Guide

Thank you to everyone who we consulted with and worked alongside to produce the new NAS guidance for family finding in Wales. 2025 was a busy year compiling this publication and we look forward to the launch in early 2026 and the upcoming training events in spring.

Assessment Form Updates

AFKA Cymru has been working alongside NAS to review the current CAR/B and PAR forms, which are currently being revised by Coram BAAF. We continue to consult with the sector to ensure that the revised forms are fit for use in Wales.

Events and Workshops

During 2025, we facilitated workshops and training events for adopters and practitioners, including facilitating NAS' Conference in October. It was a great opportunity for us to meet so many of you in person. We have many more areas to explore over the coming year. We hope to see you at our training and conference events. We look forward to consulting and working with you all in 2026.

Find us at:

 afkacymru.org.uk

 AFKA Cymru

Saying Goodbye and Welcoming new Leadership

We said a farewell to our director, Bek Burns in January 2025, and Jane White stepped in to the role, followed by Mandy Rowsell returning to AUK as Head of Service in June 2025.

Breaking Down Barriers in Education

We continued to deliver our Welsh Government funded training for educational staff focusing on helping them to support adopted learners within the classroom. This year the training was extended to Early Years Settings and Secondary schools in Wales. We also introduced new 'Education Cafe's' for a more interactive space for professionals to come together and think about the challenges and strategies that can be used in schools. These sessions are still open for booking for Educators via: www.adoptionuk.org/supporting-care-experienced-learners

Our Adoption Alliance project works with young people (aged 14+) in North Wales looking to get schools to understand the needs of adopted young people in school. This year, with support from Youth Friendly, they created a short animation around the impact of Bullying at school. A school resource pack to accompany the animation will be available shortly. The short film can be accessed here: vimeo.com/1127144945

Connected Service: Making Connections and Building Skills

Our Connected groups supported over 200 children and young people in groups across Wales. This included a range of activities from cooking and crafting to climbing and raft building!

Our Connect Voices Youth Council continue to meet and had their first ever in person meeting this year where they focused on recruiting more members to the Council. The Council members have been busy this year, feeding into the National Adoption Service's annual report and working on how they can increase the impact of adopted young people's views and opinions in 2026.

PATH MDT Service

At the beginning of 2025 we started delivery on our new Multidisciplinary Team MDT service within PATH (Psychology and Therapy Hub). The PATH MDT service begins with an initial meeting to gather detailed information from the family and the

referrer, followed by a multidisciplinary team discussion to agree a formulation - a shared understanding of the family's needs - which then guides the development of an individualised intervention plan. Each referral typically receives an average of 10 sessions, shaped around the formulation to ensure support is targeted, coordinated and effective. We received 111 referrals for MDT across 2025 and worked with 295 families in total across Wales.

We also continue to provide psychological therapy and peer support to adopted adults through the National Adoption Service's Access to Records funding, delivered in collaboration with St David's Adoption Service to ensure specialist therapeutic support is available to those exploring their adoption history. Across 2025, we saw 25 adults (11 new referrals) in some form as part of adult pathway.

We continue to be open to new referrals for psychological therapy and peer support for anyone adopted pre-1976 and accessing records or an intermediary service. Referrals can be made through adoption social workers in regional or voluntary adoption agencies.

Adoption Community

In 2025 there were two Big Adoption Conversation events focussing on Emotional wellbeing through the eyes of Adoption and Understanding the relationship Between Health, Education and Adoption. These interactive events allowed us to gather your views which will be used to inform NAS policy and procedure moving forward.

We are now focusing on 2026 and have launched our annual Barometer which we ask you to complete. It takes just 10 minutes and by completing it you can help us hold decision makers to account on adoption policy and practice.

[Complete The Adoption Barometer 2026 survey here.](#)

Find us at:

 adoptionuk.org/wales

 facebook.com/aukcymru

Adoption Register Wales (ARW)



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

The ARW team continue to meet regularly with practitioners from across Wales to support timely family finding for children and adopters. Refresher training for staff on using the Register/Link Maker was held in April and October. Another session is planned for February 2026 with more dates offered later in the year.

A profile writing workshop was held on the 1st October to help practitioners improve the quality of written profiles for children and adopters. We received positive feedback from staff who attended and therefore plan to hold another workshop in 2026.

We held an Adoption Exchange Day on the 26th March in Cardiff. This was the first Exchange Day that ARW have held since the Covid 19 pandemic.

Prospective adopters were invited to attend the event where they could meet family finders and social workers from across the 5 Welsh Regions.

In total 97 children from across Wales were profiled at this event. 14 families attended and 20 expressions of interest were made which resulted in 3 successful matches.

On the 28th June we held our 10th Adoption Activity Day in Cardiff. The event was jungle themed with 39 children from across Wales featured at the event. 34 children attended on the day with their foster carers and social workers and 19 families also attended. The event resulted in 35 expressions of interest with 8 successful matches - the highest number of matches made at an Adoption Activity Day in Wales to date.

Planning is now underway for the next Adoption Activity Day which will be held on the 21st March 2026. If you are an approved adopter and interested in attending please speak to your adoption agency and they will refer you to us.



The Adoption Barometer 2025

This year there were 3591 responses UK-wide, with 370 of those in Wales.

Wales was also the only UK region to score 'good' for all elements of the assessment of current national policies in the early stages. Overall, adopters and adoptees in Wales are generally more positive than in other nations.

Whilst the overall findings were positive, there is still work to do to support adult adoptees, with only 70% feeling confident that suitable support is available when obtaining historical records while 32% had diagnoses or treatment delayed due to lack of medical history.

Take a look at the key statistics on the next page ➔

Key statistics in Wales



85% of new adopters agree their training prepared them well.



39% of families are facing severe challenges.



64% of families who accessed core support said it had a positive impact.



74% of adopters are satisfied with the quality of enhanced adoption support.

Partner Highlight

Talk With Me

Your child's brain is amazing! It's constantly growing and making new connections. When you play, listen and talk with your little one, you help them learn to talk and give them the best start in life. Talk With Me has lots of tools, tips and advice to help you get your little one talking. The little things you do with them will make a big difference, now and in their future.

Find them at:

 gov.wales/talk-with-me



Coming in 2026...

As we enter 2026, the National Adoption Service will be continuing to support adopters, adopted young people and the adoption community across Wales; continuing to better inform prospective adopters on the needs of the children waiting and raise enquiries for the children currently waiting to be adopted.



To find out more on what's coming up in 2026, follow us and the local services across Wales on social media for the latest updates and news.





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National
Adoption
Service

**Need more help?
No problem.**

Get in touch

Tel: +44 (0) 29 2087 3927

E-mail: contact@adoptcymru.com

adoptcymru.com