



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu | National
Cenedlaethol | **Adoption**
Service

**Achieving More Together /
Cyflawni Mwy Gyda'n Gilydd**

What we have done this year **2017-18**



A short summary for children, young people and adults

There is also a full report. Just ask for a copy, or download it from www.adoptcymru.com



INTRODUCTION

It's been nearly four years since the National Adoption Service (NAS) was launched. In this time, we've helped improve the lives of children, young people and adopters across Wales.

This report shows all the hard work done between April 2017 and March 2018 by adopters, adopted children and young people, as well as professional staff.

Our focus has been on placing children quickly in good homes, and making sure they have the support they need after placement.

We've continued improving our services, and launched exciting new initiatives like the Life Journey Work Framework, the NAS Adoption Champions, and the Adopting Together Scheme.

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in NAS – we look forward to improving adoption support with you over the next year.

The National Adoption Service was launched in November 2014.

This is the fourth Annual Report.



What is the NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE?

We are an organisation that brings together the local adoption services from across Wales. We are here to ensure that services are the best they can be for adoptive families.

The National Adoption Central Team works with:

22 Welsh local authorities who work with children who are looked after

5 Regional adoption agencies that are managed by local authorities in Wales

5 Voluntary adoption agencies

A Governance Board, who makes sure the service is run properly

Advisory Groups, who support specific areas of our work, such as Life Journey Work





The HEADLINES from 2017-18

We always try to improve the lives of the children, young people and adoptive families that we support. In the past year, services have been getting better than ever. Last year:

- More than 300 children were placed in their new adoptive homes
- Around 300 children had their adoption orders granted, which means that the adoptive parent(s) become the child's legal parent(s) for life.
- Another 350 children are ready to be matched or placed with their adoptive parents
- We've supported over 500 children with our services such as 'Talk Adoption' which encourages children and young people to take part in events about adoption
- There are over 3,370 letterbox contact arrangements which means that birth relatives and adoptive parents stay in contact by exchanging written information about their lives
- We've provided services to over 320 birth parents
- We've received more than 200 requests for access to birth records and more than 150 requests for help in making contact with birth families
- We've also received more than 60 requests for support from birth siblings and other relatives.

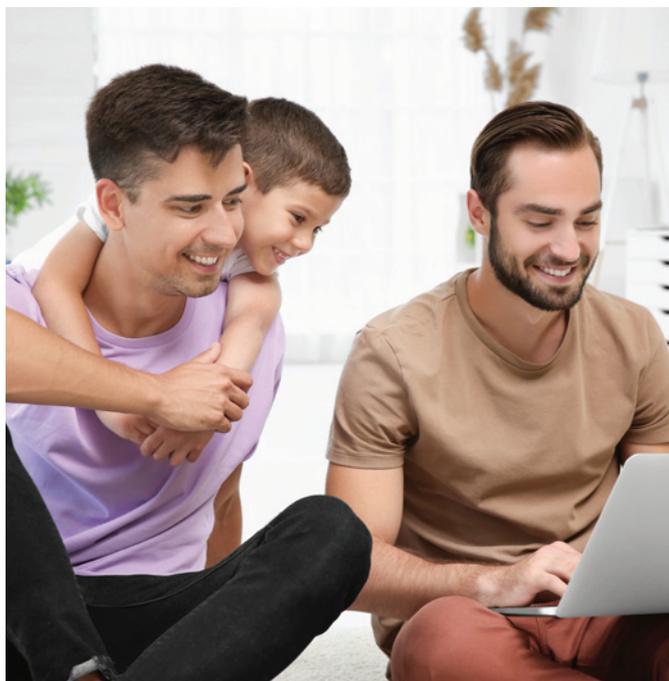
Interesting FACTS

- Children are being placed with adoptive families quicker than before
- Nearly one third of placements were sibling groups (brothers and sisters together)
- Nearly all adoption placements are successful
- More people want to adopt

When the National Adoption Service started, we wanted to make positive changes to adoption services.

Our AIMS were:

- Increase the range of adoptive homes available
- Reduce how long children wait for placements
- Provide good support to adopters and children
- Make sure everyone had access to the advice and services they needed
- Continue to improve adoption services



To achieve these AIMS, this year we focused on 3 key areas:

- Improving support for children, young people and adoptive families
- Placing children effectively
- Improving our communication and processes





KEY AREA

Improving support for children, young people and adoptive families

SUCCESSSES

- We have developed a National Framework, so every local service has the same aims and plans
- We're offering more practical support for children, young people and families
- We're working with local government to make more money available for adoptive families
- We developed a handy toolkit on "Life Journey Work in Adoption" with children, young people and adopters. This information is for professionals who work with children and their future adoptive families

WITH OUR PARTNERS WE HAVE DONE THE FOLLOWING

- Adoption UK launched "The First 1000 Days" in adoption, which gives support to adoptive families for their first three years
- We've helped education services, like schools, to support adopted children
- We're trying to improve access to mental health and well-being services for children, young people and adopters

NEXT STEPS

- We will improve access to specialist advice on adoptive parenting and being adopted
- We will update our training for adopters
- We will offer better assessment and support for children and families once they've been placed
- We will help other agencies and services become more aware of adoption
- We will continue our work on letterbox contact arrangements





KEY AREA

Placing children effectively

SUCCESSSES

- We have placed children with adoptive families quicker
- We are telling people about our work on radio, online and social media to find new adoptive families
- St David's Children Society launched "Adopting Together", which finds permanent adoptive families for children who have been waiting the longest
- We've held "Adoption Activity Days" through the Wales Adoption Register, where adopters and children can meet and enjoy activities together before being matched

NEXT STEPS

- We want to upgrade the database for the Wales Adoption Register
- We will continue searching for more adoptive families



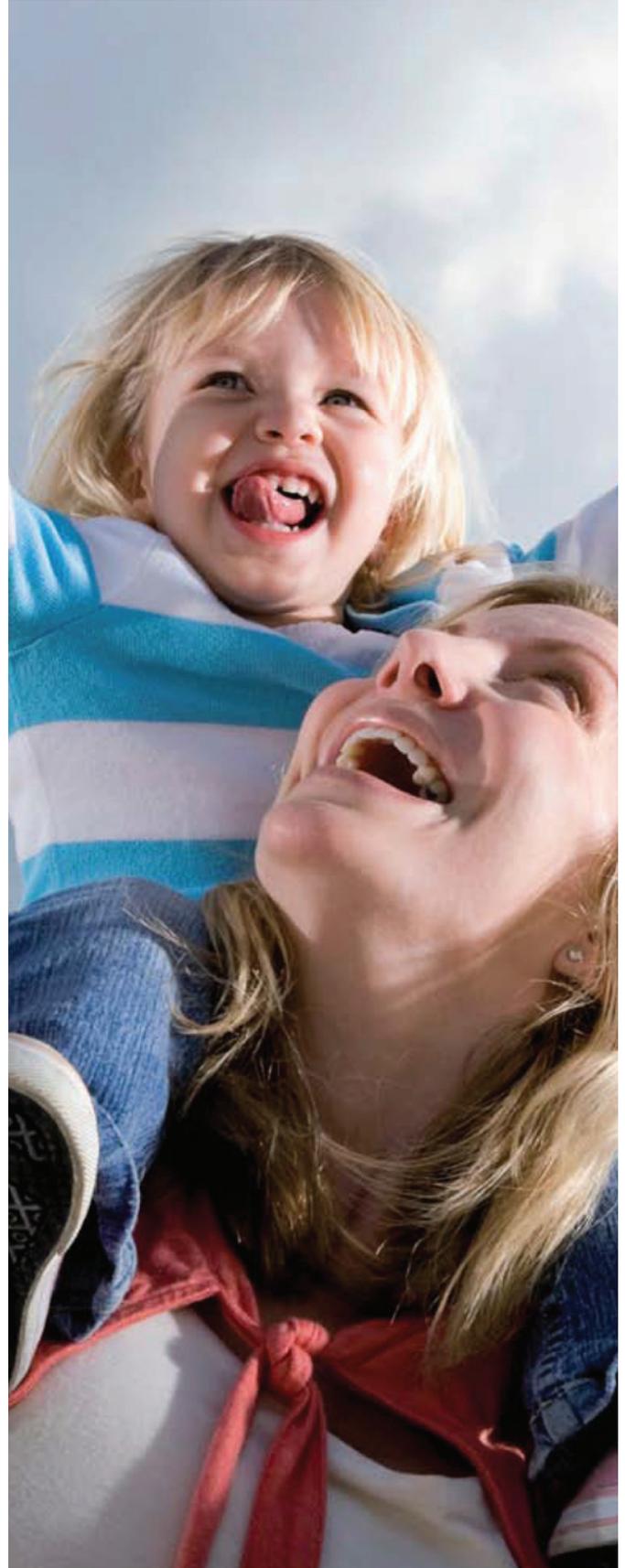
Improving our communication and processes

SUCCESSSES

- We improved how we run our services and admin to place children quicker
- We held fun events with adopters and adopted children
- "Talk Adoption" monthly groups help children and young people to learn new skills and build relationships
- Our support groups for children and young people are very popular
- We're developing a newsletter for children, young people and adoptive families
- We spoke with adopters through "Adopter Voice" meetings and surveys to improve our post-adoption services
- We've improved the professional skills in our support for children, young people and adoptive families

NEXT STEPS

- We want to improve our systems and data storage
- We will hold more "Talk Adoption" events
- We will develop more resources like newsletter webpages and support groups for children, young people and adoptive families
- We will improve our communications with children and families after placement



Our PLANS for 2018-19

In the next year, we will work with children, young people and adoptive families to provide the best adoption services and support we can.



Our AIMS:

Making good placements

- Focusing on the needs of children and young people
- Introducing a new register and database

Improving support

- Selecting which types of support are priority, and find funding
- Continue the support we already offer

How we will ACHIEVE these:

- We will think about what kind of adoption service we want to be in the future
- We will involve children, young people and adopters in our planning
- We will push for positive changes in the law
- We will improve our professional skills to provide the best service possible





The National Adoption Service was created to improve services for all those affected by adoption in Wales.

The National Adoption Service (NAS) for Wales, launched in November 2014, is an innovative collaborative for the provision of adoption services. It brought together Welsh local authority adoption services into a three-tier structure which includes partnerships at all levels with Voluntary Adoption Agencies based in Wales, Health and Education Services, as well as others.

At local authority level all 22 Welsh councils continue to provide services to all looked after children whilst identifying and working with those children for whom a plan for adoption is appropriate.

Regionally, local authorities work together within five regional collaboratives to provide a range of adoption services. Each regional collaborative has links with the voluntary adoption agencies, health and education. The services provided differ in each collaborative but all provide the adoption agency functions for children, recruit and assess adopters, offer counselling to birth parents and advice to adopted adults. Some currently directly provide adoption support services, whereas in others this remains with their local authorities.



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