



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

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

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

A short summary for children, young people and adults





hello

The National Adoption Service was set up in 2014 to make services better for everyone involved in adoption in Wales.

We do this by talking to and listening to children, young people and adopters and using their experience to make improvements.

We work together with lots of organisations to make a positive difference and we want to thank everyone, especially the children, young people and adopters and staff for their hard work and dedication.

This short report tells you how we have been doing over the year.

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 Service consists of a small Central Team that brings together and co-ordinates the work of:

- 22** Welsh local authorities who work with children who are looked after and who have a plan for adoption
- 5** Regional adoption services that provide services for these local authorities
- 4** Voluntary adoption agencies

Plus a Governance Board who make sure the service is run properly and groups of professionals who also help to advise on our work.



Everyone has different ideas about adoption, but we know the most important thing is giving children a home and a family that loves and cares for them.

This is the 5th annual report we have published.

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

OUR FIRST 5 YEARS

What we did

- We talked to everyone involved in adoption across Wales, and used their experiences to make adoption easier and quicker
- We helped children find families and helped them tell the stories of their lives
- We made a website for anyone in Wales that is full of information about adoption
- We made the case for more money to help us improve some parts of the service
- We worked with lots of partners like voluntary agencies, local councils and the Welsh Government to make rules and laws better for adopters and children

What we're doing now

- We are helping services to get better at the same level across all of Wales
- We are finding new ways to deal with problems
- We are collecting information to help us make plans for improving
- We are continuing to work with our partners to be more effective

What's next

- We want to find more adopters and make more homes available for children when they need it
- We want to make sure new adopters have better support when they need it by making our Framework for Adoption Support happen
- We want all adoption services in Wales to get better
- We want to make adoption right for Wales and a modern world



— 2019

— 2018

— 2017

— 2016

— 2015



LAST YEAR WE HELPED...

310+

children to move into their new families

280

children had their adoption order granted so their adoptive parents were granted parent status in law



338 A FURTHER CHILDREN ARE READY TO BE MATCHED OR PLACED WITH NEW FAMILIES

212 new adoptive families to be approved for adoption

100+ CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE GOT EXTRA HELP IN THEIR NEW ADOPTED FAMILIES

MORE THAN **3,281** CHILDREN TO STAY IN TOUCH BY LETTER WITH THEIR BIRTH FAMILIES

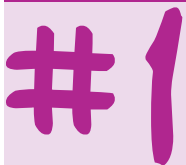


268 birth parents and **38** birth brothers, sisters and other relatives with advice and support

226 people were able to access their birth records and we helped **124** of them to find their birth relatives

OUR THREE PRIORITIES

PLACING CHILDREN WITH FAMILIES



- Putting the needs of children first when finding new adopters
- Using our new Adoption Register for Wales

What worked well

- More people became interested in adopting
- Adopters told us we were quick and helpful
- Some parts of the adoption process got less complicated
- The number of children waiting to be placed were fewer
- Some regions did really well at placing children with complex needs
- We supported the **Adopting Together** service, to help children with complex needs (they won two awards for their good work)
- We made it easier to use our new **Adoption Register for Wales** (it used to be called Wales Adoption Register) to match children and adopters, so adoption is quicker and easier

What we will do next

- We will tell even more people about adopting and make it quicker, easier and more flexible
- We will make services friendlier and have more guides to help staff who support adoptive families
- We will make our new Adoption Register for Wales work well

OUR PRIORITIES

SUPPORTING ADOPTION

#2

- Telling more people about adoption
- Making Adoption Support Framework happen
- Making better laws to support adopting
- Improving training
- Making sure there is money to support adoption services

What worked well

- Services provided adoption support to birth parents, birth families, children and young people, but what support children need is different in different parts of Wales
- Some children who are adopted have difficult pasts, but by helping them understand about where they have come from, they were happier and healthier (we call this their life journey)
- We helped adopters to get better training
- More people in schools and the NHS know about adoption and we made guides to help them
- We are finding new ways to support people, like using **TESSA** (Therapeutic Education Support Service for Adoptive families)
- We continued to work out how we improve contact for children and young people and birth parents
- We talked to everyone, including birth families, local councils and Welsh Government to find new ways of everyone working together
- NAS and Adoption UK Cymru made sure that children and young people still had a service (through Adoption UK Cymru), when After Adoption stopped the 'Talk Adoption' service

What we will do next

- Put extra guides for children, young people, birth parents and foster carers about **Life Journey Work** on our website
- Provide more support and training for adopters and birth families
- Make a guide about what to expect for people thinking about becoming an adopter
- Make an advice leaflet on contact for adopted and looked after children
- Keep working together



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE



#3

- Thinking about what happens next
- Involving everybody who is part of the adoption process in making it better and easier; this is called co-production
- Making the rules around adoption better and fairer
- Seeing who needs extra training

What worked well

- Children, young people and adopters' needs changed over time, so we adapted services to support them
- We talked to lots of people about the adoption process such as, what training they need and how services know what works and what doesn't
- We got extra support for raising awareness of adoption and recruiting new adopters
- We made sure the rules around adoption were about keeping people safe and improved services
- We made sure that the costs of buying adoption placements stayed fair and the same in Wales and England
- We trained staff so they can advise people about adopting from other countries
- We learnt from other organisation's work and notable cases



What we will do next

- Continue to plan ahead

OUR PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR

We've made sure we have funding to keep improving services, we plan to:

Place more children with families

- By getting more adopters and using our Adopting Together service
- By getting more people to use Adoption Register for Wales, so that adopters get matched with children quicker

Improve adoption support

- By making sure we are doing what we promise
- By making more people and professionals aware of adoption
- By using the money that Welsh Government have given us

Think ahead

- By speaking to the experts who are the children, young people and adopters, so they can tell us what works well
- By using technology and information to do things smarter
- By improving the laws and rules around adoption
- By training more people in key areas





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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