



Gwasanaeth  
**Mabwysiadu**  
Cenedlaethol

National  
**Adoption**  
Service

# Life Journey Work Newsletter

Issue 4

# National Adoption Service Life Journey Work Newsletter 2024



The theme of this Life Journey Work (LJW) newsletter is 'It takes a village...'. The first part has updates from each of the regions and the second part focuses on the contribution that a wide range of people can make to Life Journey Work (LJW).

Wales continues to perform well, in relation to Life Journey Work, compared to the rest of the UK as recognised in the annual Adoption Barometer report.

However, there is no room for complacency, and we need to keep working to ensure that every single child has Life Journey Work and materials that are tailored to their individual needs and are of the best possible quality. In addition to the Life Journey Work Framework, Toolkit and Practice Guide, launched in 2018, we are fortunate to have a network of specialist Life Journey coordinators in each region who can provide advice and support to others regarding the preparation of Life Journey Work materials and direct work with children, young people. Here are their updates concerning the work going on in each of their regions.

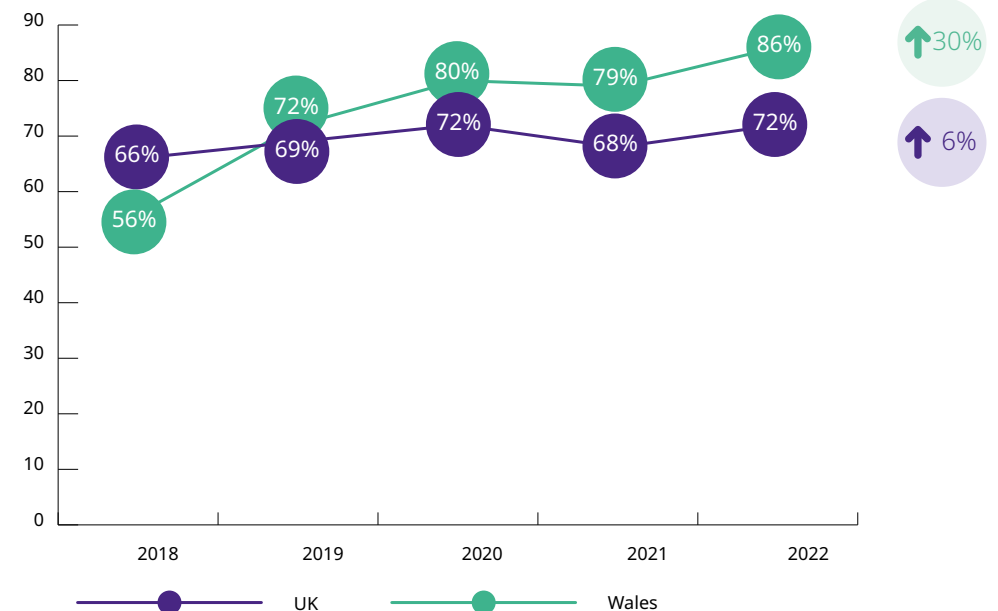
## Chris Holmquist

Adoption Support Development Manager, NAS Central Team.

## Trends over time: Life story materials

In January 2019, the National Adoption Service in Wales published substantial new guidance for practitioners as part of a long-term focus on life journey and identity in adoption.

Proportion who rated life story materials as 'good' or 'adequate' 2018-2022 (UK and Wales)



**Source:** *The Adoption Barometer, A stocktake of adoption in the UK.*



---

# National Updates

---

# South East Wales Adoption Service



South East Wales Adoption Service  
Achieving More Together



## Raluca Miklovits

Over the last year Raluca has been busy with ensuring that the Life Journey Work materials across SEWAS continued to improve, both in terms of the timing as well as their quality. As the Life Journey Work coordinator, she has been reading all the draft Life Journey Books and Later Life Letters completed for the Matching Panel and has continuously provided social workers with feedback. The

feedback has focused on encouraging a more child friendly approach when describing the early years trauma, so that children grow up with a better understanding of their narrative. To complement this work, she has been providing regular Life Journey Work training to social workers, foster carers, IROs and all the other Childrens Services practitioners, making sure that they all have the same “puzzle like” approach to giving children their narrative.

She has also been meeting prospective adopters, mainly around the time of their Matching Panel, to discuss their view of the draft Life Journey Work materials and to plan their contribution to the books. Raluca says, “It has been so refreshing to see the adopters’ commitment to giving children a coherent, detailed narrative and I am so much more hopeful about the future of Life journey Work in SEWAS”.



# Mid and West Wales Adoption



**Mabwysiadu**  
Canolbarth a Gogledd Cymru  
**Adoption**  
Mid & West Wales



## Sian Gibbon

Sian continues to deliver training to colleagues in local authority childcare teams as well as to foster carers, prospective adopters and adoptive parents across the region. These events have been very successful in raising awareness of how different key people can contribute towards the development of the Life Journey work, in order to provide good quality Life Journey materials for adopted children.

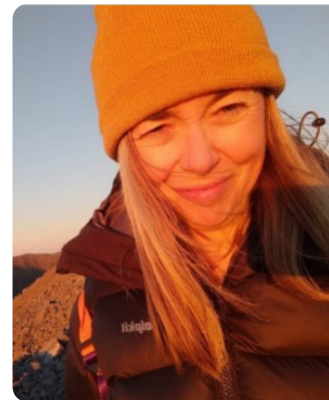
Life Journey Work consultations are now being held more regularly to support childcare professionals with the planning, gathering information and development of the narrative within the Life Journey materials for adopted children. Sian also provides support to childcare professionals with the quality assurance of draft and final versions of the Life Journey work materials. She also continues to monitor the support needs of adoptive families in relation to Life Journey work. Following recent feedback from adopters, Sian is in the process of developing a new workshop for adoptive parents, with a focus on when and how to share Life Journey materials with adopted children. This new course will be introduced to adoptive parents in Spring 2024.

# North Wales Adoption Service



**Gwasanaeth Mabwysiadu**  
Gogledd Cymru | North Wales  
**Adoption Service**

\*Parallel or metaphorical stories contain a narrative that is similar to the child's actual history, but uses fictional characters, such as animals. This enables the child to process and integrate the events and associated thoughts and feelings more easily.



## Sarah Ryan

Sarah Ryan, Life Journey social worker for the region, has been working with the 6 local authorities across North Wales to coordinate a Life Journey training plan for the region. This has been face to face training to support social workers with writing good quality Life Journey material. The training includes the background to Life Journey work, the NAS performance measures and good practice guides. It also explores how to write about a difficult story, putting together a clear narrative for children using examples from a CAR B and translating this to a primary school age book. The training is very practical and gives attendees creative and therapeutic activities to build relationships with children. The feedback from this training has been positive. Sarah continues to offer 1:1 meetings for social workers and adopters to support them with their Life Journey needs.

Sarah is also exploring with social workers and adopters the use of **parallel stories\***, to support younger children, especially those with a very complex history.

The next challenge for NWAS is to look at the NAS performance measures and create Task and Finish groups across North Wales to re-embed and relaunch Life Journey work across North Wales. So, watch this space!

# Vale, Valleys, and Cardiff Adoption



Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption | Mabwysiadu yn y Fro, y Cymoedd a Chaerdydd



## Tina James and Sara Jones

It has been a busy year and Sara and Tina's dynamic plans for developing the service continue, with an ongoing focus on promoting Life Journey Work within VVC and across the partner Local Authorities. VVC is very fortunate to have a team of dedicated Life Journey Workers, who collaborate with birth parents, social workers and adopters to produce life journey books. The life journey workers are based in each of the local authorities and Tina and Sara say it is a privilege to meet with them regularly to share practice ideas and hear about their innovative and passionate approach to the work. Sara and Tina are excited to be rolling out half day workshops for adopters, to really delve into life journey work, from early 2024. These workshops will be delivered six times a year and offered to all adopters at the post-approval



stage. Tina and Sara have started to form links with the VVC Birth Parent Advisor to explore together how birth families might be supported to make their vital contribution to life journey materials. They have also developed a range of tools and resources to support parents and practitioners with life journey work and will soon be in a position to include all of these tools and resources on a dedicated life journey work section of the VVC website.

# Western Bay Adoption



## Sarah Vaughan

WBAS Life Journey Team have been working hard to develop support for adoptive families this year. They are now offering a rolling programme of workshops for adopters that we hope will give them more confidence and practical ideas in sharing their child's life journey information with them. The workshops are split into two age groups, 0-5 years and 6 years upwards. The workshops are based on stages of development and what children understand and will be curious to know at these stages. The team advise on how to use the life journey materials that families have, as well as using children's books, films and play, in helping children to understand their journey to adoption. Alongside this they are developing their social media presence on their private sites, to promote resources such as children's books and suggesting creative ideas, to give their adopters ways to introduce and talk about adoption to their children. They are currently promoting books to enable parents to talk to their children about how families are made up in different ways including adoption and that show families are diverse and come in all shapes and sizes.



# Adoption UK Cymru



Adoption UK provide a range of training for adoptive parents and professionals, including training in connection with Life Journey Work. Some of this training is specifically for adoptive parents in their first 3 years of adoption and some training is for anybody affected by adoption.

Adoption UK is planning to offer opportunities for adoptive parents and practitioners to come together to discuss life story issues with facilitation by staff who have the lived experience of managing this into adulthood. Adoption UK is also developing services to support adopted people and will have the benefit of learning from the perspective of the adult adoptee as well as the growing adopted child. The CONNECT service supports adopted children and young people across the country and their voice will increasingly be heard to inform our practice in this area.

[Here is a link](#) to the details of Adoption UK Cymru's training courses.





---

**It takes  
a village...**

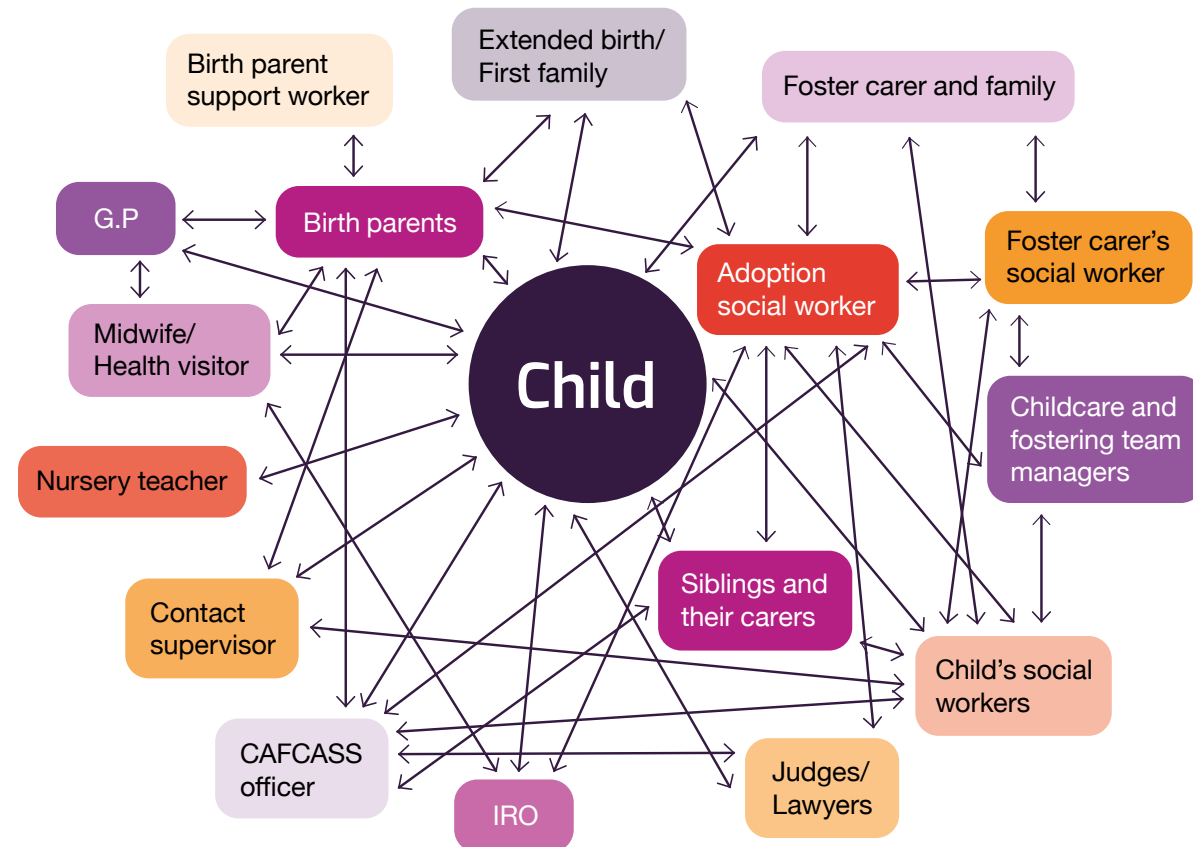
---



# It takes a village...

It is said that 'it takes a village to raise a child'. In the same way, good Life Journey Work is not the task of just one person but involves all the people who care about and have responsibility for a child. Each of them can contribute to materials that will help the child to grow up with a rich and coherent narrative and a sense of themselves as an individual who has value and who others care about. Wider involvement will also help a child to feel an enduring connection to people and communities, which can mitigate the sense of loss and disconnection that many adopted people feel. The diagram shows a typical network around a Looked After child and possible connections between all involved during the twin-tracking stage.

In most cases primary responsibility for gathering LJW information and creating the Life Journey Book and Later Life Letter is the child's social worker, but they cannot do this in isolation. The social worker must do everything they can to encourage the child's **first family\*** to share information for Life Journey Work, even though this will often be challenging, given the profound loss that the family is experiencing and the feelings of anger and resentment that typically accompany it. However, there are likely to be a range of other people who have had regular contact with a child and have got to know them and their story. Each person, whether in a professional or informal role, will have their own perspective. Together all these individual perspectives will help to build a richer narrative that can help the child as they grow and develop to understand their journey up to that point.



---

# It takes a village...

---

One of the people outside the first family, who will know the child really well is their foster carer. South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) have produced a range of podcasts called, [‘Talking Adoption’](#). In one of these, foster carer Jen talks to Raluca, the regional LJW coordinator, about filling in forms to gather Life Journey Work information, and how she is able to provide everyday details, that might otherwise be lost.

*Raluca: “Tell me something, ... a nugget of information that ... if it wasn’t for this form ... you ... wouldn’t have provided ... the adopters with..?”*

*Jen: Possibly ... first foods and things like that - maybe you would have missed that. Giving them that information of whether they liked food initially, because ... if they’re sort of eating well, when they leave you, you tend to talk about what they’re doing now rather than what they did six months ago. I always try and put across how much we loved them and that they were cared for and they were special”.*

A professional, who often sees a child through the whole of their journey from the first social services involvement, right up to the adoption order is the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). In another of the podcasts, Kath, an IRO, speaks about the perspective that she is able to bring to LJW.

*“I think from an IRO point of view that our perception or involvement with that child is always going to be different to the social worker. So, we’re always going to come from the point of, birth mum and dad attended your event, this is what they talked about in the review. This is what they wanted for you..... it’s quite nice from an IRO point of view, to be able to give that perspective. And, give that child a little bit of understanding around birth parents attending their reviews, and ... if they didn’t, why they felt that they couldn’t, and why they found it was too difficult to do so”.*

---

# It takes a village...

---

The IRO can also play a vital part in monitoring the progress of LJW, from when the child is first accommodated right the way through to the last adoption review before the child is adopted. Another person who has a key responsibility in ensuring that LJW takes place and is of a good quality, is the manager of the social work team. This is no easy task, given the pressures on social workers and competing priorities. This is vividly reflected by Rhoda, the team manager for a busy child protection team, talking to Raluca.

*“There’s lots of other pressing court demands that we have to fulfil. So, it’s always been one of those challenges for me as a person, as a practitioner to be able to fulfil not only the piece of work, but a good quality piece of work. So when I did come into the management role, it was something that was on my mind to bring onto the agenda for my team and to keep on the agenda and I wanted to ensure that every young person, not just the children we are placing for adoption, but all young children who are in long-term foster care have a basis of life journey work available to them because of how crucial it is for the life course moving forward.”*

VVC has invested in employing dedicated Life Journey workers, based in each of the local authorities. Rozenn, initially a contact supervisor and subsequently Life Journey worker for a child, talks about her experience of gathering and annotating a wide range of information and using this to prepare the Life Journey Book for them.

*“I was able to write a detailed profile of the parents, such as activities they used to enjoy as children and adults, games they liked to play, the father’s favourite sport teams. There were photos as well of birth mother as a child that showed how much the child looked like her.*

*I managed to get pictures of family members that the child spent time with, as they spent a few years with birth family - marked with names and dates. There were also pictures of the child at different stages showing how much they grew and changed: including photos of the child as a newborn in hospital, and the birthdays and Christmas times they shared with birth family. There are also photos and memories of them with their carers, with text explaining the reasons why the child could not stay with them.”*

---

# It takes a village...

---

Her involvement continues up to and beyond placement.

*“After the child moved in with the adopters, birth mother bought a memory box for them with photos, which we checked were appropriate and also a slipper that they loved; their mother kept the other one. The mother and carers shared memories they wanted the child to know such as the song that used to always settle them, the dog they love. All these were shared in their book. And most importantly that they were loved.*”

*There was also information and photos about the adopters and the transition: the toy the adopters provided and when they met...”*

Emma, a Children’s Guardian, who works for the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS), talked to Raluca about being asked to contribute to children’s Life Journey Work and how important it is when children as they get older are able to appreciate the different perspectives that various people had about the circumstances surrounding their early life and how crucial decisions about their future came to be made.

*“... everybody has got a different view about the thing that has happened during the case and sometimes social workers have a slightly different perspective. And quite often I will be reading their final evidence statement to the court, and they’ll say something like, ‘Oh well, even though the child is loved, they’ve not been able to look after them’. And sometimes I think that’s an overly causative way of putting it and it needs to be, you know, a balance about the positives and the negatives that are presented to the child. And so, I really appreciate being able to ... give a slightly different perspective. And I can say about my personal experiences - meeting with the parents and meeting with the child - it’s nice for a for a child to be able to look back and have links to the things that have happened, especially for somebody that’s been part of quite major decision making: that would be quite important.”*

---

# It takes a village...

---

Having good quality LJW materials is vital, but unless adoptive parents are encouraged, supported and willing to use and adapt them as the child grows, their usefulness may be limited.

Sian, an adoptive parent, who moved to Wales from England, talked to SEWAS adoption support manager, Luiza Bivolaru, about being committed to helping children to learn about their background and the challenges of using LJW materials that were not as good as they might have been.

*Sian: "... our three children arrived at the same time as they're birth siblings. ... so it was pretty full on from day one. The life story folders that arrived with them weren't great and our social worker had concerns about them from the start. We were very keen for them to know their story right from the start. And so, with guidance from our social worker ... we did a photo display of the birth family and foster family, and we hung it up in our kitchen. And this could be easily turned around if visitors came. And we would quite simply take any opportunity that came our way to talk about their early life. So, our eldest was nearly four at the time and very vocal. So thankfully through her comments and questions she gave us plenty of opportunity to be able to refer to the photos, to familiarise them with names, faces and connections. And this ... soon became a normal part of our lives, and it gave our children a basic narrative of their early life,"*

Sian goes on to describe how, as the children developed, the adopters realised that they needed to adapt Life Journey materials, while continuing to encourage open conversations about adoption, but also to seek professional advice and support when it was required.

*"As they got older, I was one of those parents that always intended to get a good life story book sorted. And of course, life is incredibly busy and I never, got round to it. There never seemed to be the time to have the headspace to do this properly. You know, we had three children and yeah, it was hectic. We were surviving and starting to thrive. But you know, your focus was on surviving mostly in those early years. So, I always felt bad that we didn't have this life story book ... but actually with the photos, as they got older ... their questions or their comments start(ed) to be more emotionally loaded. So again, that was helpful to be able to get them to express what they might think about what had happened and more about their story. So, it really was conversational, and only as and when it cropped up, but I have to say we were quite ... on the ball the whole time, so we didn't let opportunities pass!"*

---

# It takes a village...

---

*“When our eldest was coming up to 10 years old, her ... questions became ... became more specific and more in depth, which we considered to be a good thing. But as is true for many adopted children’s early lives, our children’s story had some pretty difficult and complex elements to it. And I particularly felt that I needed to seek out professional guidance on how this information could be delivered.”*

Sian demonstrates a brilliant understanding of the need for LJW to evolve in line with changes in the child’s cognitive and social development and thus their understanding of their own story. She and her partner are clearly very resourceful, capable and committed, but at the same time they appreciate that there are times when it is helpful to seek professional advice and support.





---

**On the  
receiving end...**

---

---

# On the receiving end...

---

Sarah Ryan, Life Journey social worker in NWAS has provided the following anonymised account of to illustrate the importance of Life Journey Work and how it is intimately connected with contact:

Cadi is 19 years old. She lives with her Mum and Dad in North Wales. They promoted Life Journey work by creating a home environment in which adoption is talked about freely. Cadi had a Later Life Letter and also a letter from her birth mother or 'Mam Bol'. Unfortunately, she did not receive a Life Story book.

Letterbox contact has been very important in Cadi's life and following her adoption she received cards every year from her grandparents, birth mother and birth father 'Dad Bol'. When Cadi was 7 years old, her birth father died. At this point her older paternal birth sister, Jane, asked the Letterbox coordinator if she could take over from Dad Bol. Jane wrote really engaging and beautiful letters which Cadi and her family responded to.

*Cadi: The person, or as I should say the 'people' who have really helped me understand my story with my adoption are Mum and Dad as well as my birth sister Jane. Mum and Dad were happy enough to answer the questions that I had when I was curious about my adoption... They also knew a bit of information about my mum and dad, not a lot though. I am very grateful and very appreciative to have them as my parents. They gave me a bit more understanding about my past and to why I was adopted and who I've been with before coming to them. They've helped me understand my story over the years. Jane has had a massive impact on this as well. Despite only knowing her properly for a year, every time I've gone to see her, I understand more and more about my past. She's given me so much information which I'm so grateful for. I'm extremely grateful to have her as my sister, she is honestly the best and I love her for it. She has allowed me to understand new information but has also helped with how I've felt with a certain emotion. I'll forever be grateful for her.*

*Sarah: What did you feel was missing from your Later Life Letter, what other information would you have liked to have had?*

*Cadi: What I felt like was missing in my letter was information about my birth dad. The letter is mostly about my mum and nothing about my dad. Growing up, it felt like I never knew him or got any kind of image of him in my head whereas I had an image of my birth mum in my head. It would have been nice to have more information about him, for example where he was from, why he moved to Wales etc.*



A young man and a woman are looking at a tablet together in a library setting. The man is on the left, wearing a dark blue hoodie and a patterned scarf, and the woman is on the right, wearing a white shirt. They are both smiling and looking at the tablet. In the background, there are bookshelves and other people, including a woman in a white shirt and a man in a white shirt. The entire image has a red overlay.

---

# The NAS Life Journey Framework and Good Practice Guide

---

A key part of the National Adoption Service approach to Life Journey Work is the Life Journey Work Framework, which outlines 5 stages during a child's journey from entering the care system, when we need to particularly focus on Life Journey Work.

# Life Journey Work Framework

This is to be used in conjunction with the NAS Life Journey Work Good Practice Guide



Gwasanaeth  
Mabwysiadu  
Cenedlaethol | National  
Adoption  
Service



## STAGE 1 Child becomes Looked After

1. LJW should begin as soon as a Child becomes Looked After. This will include: Information, photograph and memento gathering.
2. Everyone with a role in the Child's life has a responsibility for this.
3. The LJW planning checklist should be used. The Child's Social Worker has a key role in LJW with and for the Child.
4. The Child's Foster Carer is an appropriate partner in LJW work with the Child.
5. All LJW should be carefully recorded and securely stored.
6. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will be responsible for monitoring the LJW for the Child.
7. Birth family 'counselling' and independent support should be offered to birth parents and other close Birth family members. The Birth family should be actively encouraged to contribute LJW for the Child.
8. Any gaps in Birth family information should be completed, where possible, prior to the final hearing.

## STAGE 2 Placement Order granted

1. The Child's Social Worker and Foster Carer, and other professionals as appropriate, should agree upon the narrative to sensitively explain the plan for adoption to the Child.
2. The plan for LJW for the Child should be regularly reviewed to ensure that it sensitively meets the Child's current needs.
3. The LJW planning checklist should be used.
4. Written consents should be obtained from Birth family, Foster Carers and any other third parties as appropriate, to include photographs, or any information that does not pertain directly to the Child.
5. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will continue to be responsible for monitoring the LJW for the Child.

## STAGE 3 Linking and matching

1. Prospective Adopter/s will have been prepared and had training on the importance of LJW.
2. Collaboration between the prospective adopter/s and the key person involved in the production of Life Journey materials should occur before matching Panel.
3. Life Journey materials should be quality assured in readiness for Matching Panel. They should provide a coherent narrative for the Child and include a draft Later Life Letter.
4. A plan for LJW post placement should be prepared. This will form part of the Adoption Support Plan.
5. Consideration should be given to holding a Life Appreciation Day for the Child.
6. The timing of final contact between Birth family and the Child should be thoughtfully planned to ensure it meets the needs of the Child. Photographs and details of the contact should be carefully recorded for the Child.
7. The prospective Adopters should prepare introductory materials for the Child, such as a photo book with pictures of themselves and their home.
8. The Adoption Panel should check that Life Journey materials have been quality assured and have been shared with the prospective Adopters.
9. The Agency Decision Maker should check that the Adoption Panel has discussed the Life Journey materials.
10. Contact agreements should be prepared by the Adoption Social Worker in consultation with the Birth family and prospective Adopters, according to the Adoption Support Plan.
11. Future plans for contact between the Child and his/her previous Foster Carer/s should be promoted.

## STAGE 4 Transition

1. There should be a clear plan for transition for the Child.
2. The Child's Social Worker and Foster Carer, and other professionals as appropriate, should agree upon the narrative to sensitively share information about the new family with the Child.
3. Once the Agency Decision Maker has approved the match, the Child Care Social Worker and Foster Carer will sensitively tell the Child and share the materials provided by the prospective Adopters.
4. The Child's emotional needs should be central to the planning.
5. One professional should be identified to take the lead in coordinating the introductions process.
6. The Child's Foster Carers and prospective Adopters should be well supported by their respective supporting Social Workers.
7. Where appropriate, the opportunity should be made available for the birth parents (and other significant Birth family members) to meet the prospective Adopters. Where it is inappropriate to facilitate this meeting, the reasons for this should be recorded.

## STAGE 5 Placement and ongoing (Post Adoption Order)

1. Support should be available for the prospective Adopters and the Child. This may include:
  - Informal discussions
  - Building the Life Journey narrative of the adoptive family
  - Further information gathering from Birth family
  - Training
  - Direct work
  - Therapeutic LJW
2. Support in facilitating contact with the Birth family should be offered.
3. Contact agreements should reflect the terminology used in the LJW, such as when referring to Birth family members.
4. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will continue to be responsible for monitoring the LJW for the Child at reviews until the Adoption Order is granted.
5. Where information about a change or development in the Birth family's circumstances is known to the Local Authority, section 5.5 of the Good Practice Guide should be referred to in its entirety, in order to determine whether it is appropriate to share this with the Child's Adopter/s.
6. **Life Journey Work does not end.**

More recently a process map has been developed to expand on this. It identifies some key tasks and responsibilities for a range of individuals at each of the stages. The details of the way in which responsibility for specific tasks is divided up is likely to vary slightly from one local authority to another. Therefore each region is able to make minor changes to this process flowchart, to reflect their local arrangements

## Life Journey Work (LJW) process flowchart based on the LJW Framework – National Adoption Service of Wales

STAGE 1: Child becomes looked after		Stage 2: Placement order granted		Stage 3: Linking and matching		Stage 4: Transition		Stage 5: Placement and ongoing (post adoption order)		
STAGE 1	Individuals with responsibility	Tasks								
01 CHILD BECOMES LOOKED AFTER	<b>Child's social worker</b>	Key responsibility for coordinating the gathering of information, photos, videos and mementos etc., as soon as child becomes looked after (CLA).	Ensure All LJW is carefully recorded and securely stored.	Work in partnership with foster carer.	Actively encourage birth family members to contribute to LJW for the Child.	Any gaps in Birth family information should be filled, where possible, prior to the final hearing	Write Child Adoption Report (CAR B), including photos of birth family members. Complete separate advanced agreements for disclosure of identifying information received post 18.	Complete the LJW planning checklist as part of pack for Should Be Placed for adoption Decision (SBPD). <b>Performance Measure A</b>		
	<b>Foster Carer</b>	Act as an appropriate partner in LJW work with the Child.	Carefully keep and annotate photos, videos, mementos from trips, holidays etc. and share them with child's social worker							
	<b>Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)</b>	CLA review identifies plan for permanence	Responsible for monitoring the LJW for the Child.		Identify life journey work as a regular part of the agenda at reviews.	Ensure that LJW is more than a collection of materials but begins to form a coherent narrative for the child's story				
	<b>Adoption social worker (ASW)</b>	Offer Birth family 'counselling' and independent support to birth parents and other close Birth family members, including encouragement to contribute to LJW and engage in contact. Provide advice and support to CSW regarding LJW and contact planning.								
	<b>Others</b>	All those who are involved with and know a child should be asked to contribute personal memories and reflections as part of LJW e.g., all those identified above plus education staff, health staff, CAFCASS officers etc., using tool such as 'My Story So Far'.								
	<b>Life Journey Work coordinator</b>	Provide expert advice/training and support to all above in relation to LJW as an ongoing process.								

A separate one-page document has been developed from this, which outlines the specific responsibilities of the child's social worker.

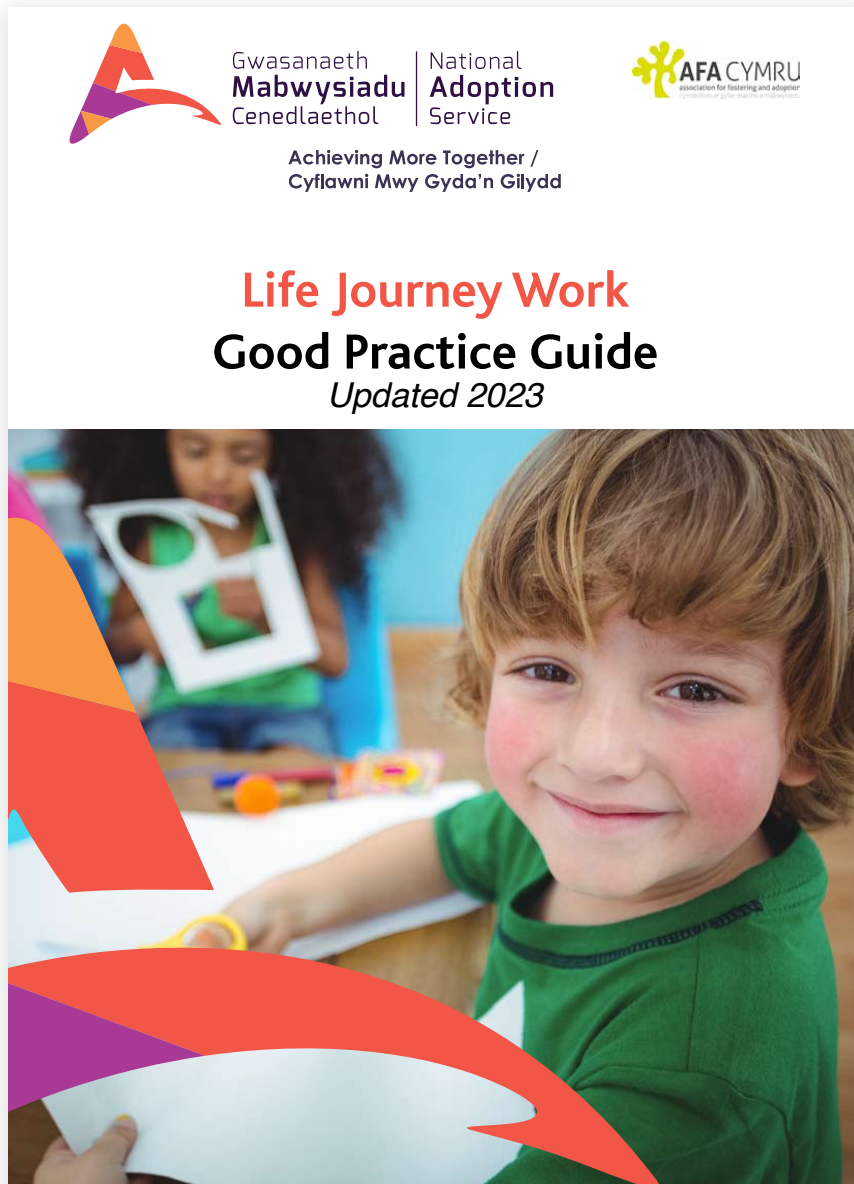
## Child's Social Worker: Life Journey Work (LJW) process flowchart based on the NAS LJW Framework

	STAGE 1: Child becomes looked after	Stage 2: Placement order granted	Stage 3: Linking and matching	Stage 4: Transition	Stage 5: Placement and ongoing (post adoption order)			
	<b>Tasks for the child's social worker</b> (The regional LJW coordinators are available to provide expert advice/training and support at all stages in relation to LJW as an ongoing process).							
1	Key responsibility for coordinating the gathering of information, photos, videos and mementos etc., as soon as child becomes looked after (CLA).	Ensure All LJW is carefully recorded and securely stored.	Work in partnership with foster carer.	Actively encourage birth family members to contribute to LJW for the Child.	Any gaps in Birth family information should be filled, where possible, prior to the final hearing	Write Child Adoption Report (CAR B), including photos of birth family members. Complete separate advanced agreements for disclosure of identifying information received post 18.	<b>Performance Measure A</b> Complete the LJW planning checklist as part of pack for Should Be Placed for adoption Decision (SBPD).	
2	Start to prepare child for transition in partnership with foster carer	Work in partnership with foster carer to identify child's developing needs during transition and beyond.		Work in partnership with ASW to identify prospective adopters with capacity to meet child's immediate and longer-term needs, including continued LJW.		Work in partnership with Family Finding ASW to identify prospective adopter(s)		
3	Update CAR B and prepare Adoption Support Plan in partnership with Family Finding ASW, ensuring that as far as possible any gaps in historical information are filled.		Work in partnership with ASW to identify prospective adopters with capacity to meet child's immediate and longer-term needs, including continued LJW.		Contribute to the preparation of the Trauma Nurture Timeline (TNT). Participate in the planning and attend the Understanding the Child (UcC) Day.		<b>Performance Measure 20a</b> Draft Life Journey Book and Later Life Letter presented to matching panel	
4	Ensure child's emotional needs remain central to planning.	All those involved with the child agree upon the narrative to sensitively share information about the new family with the child.  Following ADM ratification of match, social worker and foster carer sensitively tell the child and share materials provided by prospective adopters.		One professional identified to take the lead in coordinating the introductions process.  All professionals work with others to manage introductions keeping child's emotional needs central, while recognising how others' needs affect the process.		CSW works with ASW to arrange initial meeting between adoptive parent(s) and birth family member(s) if all possible. If not appropriate record reasons for not doing so.		
5	Build LJW narrative of adoptive family, including where appropriate direct work and Therapeutic LJW	Further information gathering from birth family.	Participate in drawing up contact agreements – consistent terminology.	Support facilitation of contact with birth family.	If changes in birth family circumstances, consider carefully whether appropriate to share with Adopter/s.	Liaise with adoptive parents in creating draft and final versions of LJW book and LL letter in relation to content and language.	Provide information to IRO at 1 <sup>st</sup> adoption review regarding progress in preparation of LJW materials.	<b>Performance Measure 20 and Measures B &amp; C</b> Close to finalised Life Journey Book and Later Life Letter provided by 2 <sup>nd</sup> adoption review. QA checklist completed - LJW materials of acceptable standard.

A good practice guide for Life Journey Work was also developed alongside the original framework. This has been slightly amended recently to update it.

### Previous issues

To access previous issues of this newsletter, please click on the links below. Each issue has had a focus on a specific area of Life Journey Work as well as updates on developments in each of the regions.





---

# Useful contacts

---

---

# Useful Contacts

---

Below is a list of the Life Journey Work co-ordinators who are in post across Wales currently. It would be useful to know who to contact in your area if you need guidance, advice or have access to any training opportunities.

## Mid and West Wales Adoption Service

Sian E Gibbon | [SEGibbon@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:SEGibbon@cardiff.gov.uk)

## North Wales Adoption Service

Sarah Ryan | [Sarah.Ryan@wrexham.gov.uk](mailto:Sarah.Ryan@wrexham.gov.uk)

## South East Wales Adoption Service

Raluca Miklovits | [Raluca.Miklovits@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:Raluca.Miklovits@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

## Vale Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Service

Tina James | [tjames@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:tjames@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

Sara Jones | [sarajones@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:sarajones@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

## Western Bay Adoption Service

Sarah Vaughan | [s.vaughan1@westernbayadoption.org](mailto:s.vaughan1@westernbayadoption.org)

If you have developed anything new to help with good practice or know of any information on delivering life journey work please contact your adoption service representative above or the National Adoption Service Central Team on [contact@adoptcymru.com](mailto:contact@adoptcymru.com)





Gwasanaeth  
**Mabwysiadu**  
Cenedlaethol

National  
**Adoption**  
Service

---

Need more help?  
**No problem.**

**Get in touch with NAS Central Team**

Tel: +44(0) 29 2087 3927

E-mail: [contact@adoptcymru.com](mailto:contact@adoptcymru.com)

Website: [www.adoptcymru.com](http://www.adoptcymru.com)