



NAS 2021 Newsletter



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Cenedlaethol

National
Adoption
Service



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

Foreword from Suzanne

I'm so pleased to be introducing this year's newsletter. It's packed full of all the great things that have happened over the last year; I hope you will find it interesting, informative, and useful.

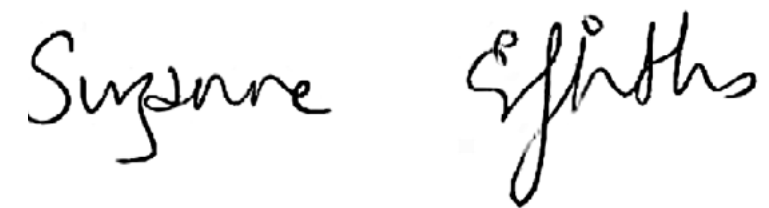
As I write, I am also reflecting on the fact that this has been another very hectic year. A year where all Local Authorities, Regional Services, and Voluntary Adoption Agencies, as well as the NAS Central Team, have been busy providing services, continuing the important work of improving them, whilst also continuing to operate in the different way that the ongoing pandemic requires.

I am pleased to say that we have delivered on so many commitments and I am confident that this will have contributed to supporting adoptive families across Wales. We are very aware that family life continues to be more than a little 'different' and we remain committed to doing our utmost to be responsive in all we do, as well as innovative where we need to be.

So, a very big thank you to all Welsh adopters, as well as to foster carers and many others who are part of the 'team' that help us do our work to place and support children. Similarly, a big thank you to staff in all services that are part of, or linked to, the National Adoption Service for Wales. You all continue to amaze me with your determination and commitment which makes it a delight for me to continue leading the service.

Thank you again for your support throughout 2021.

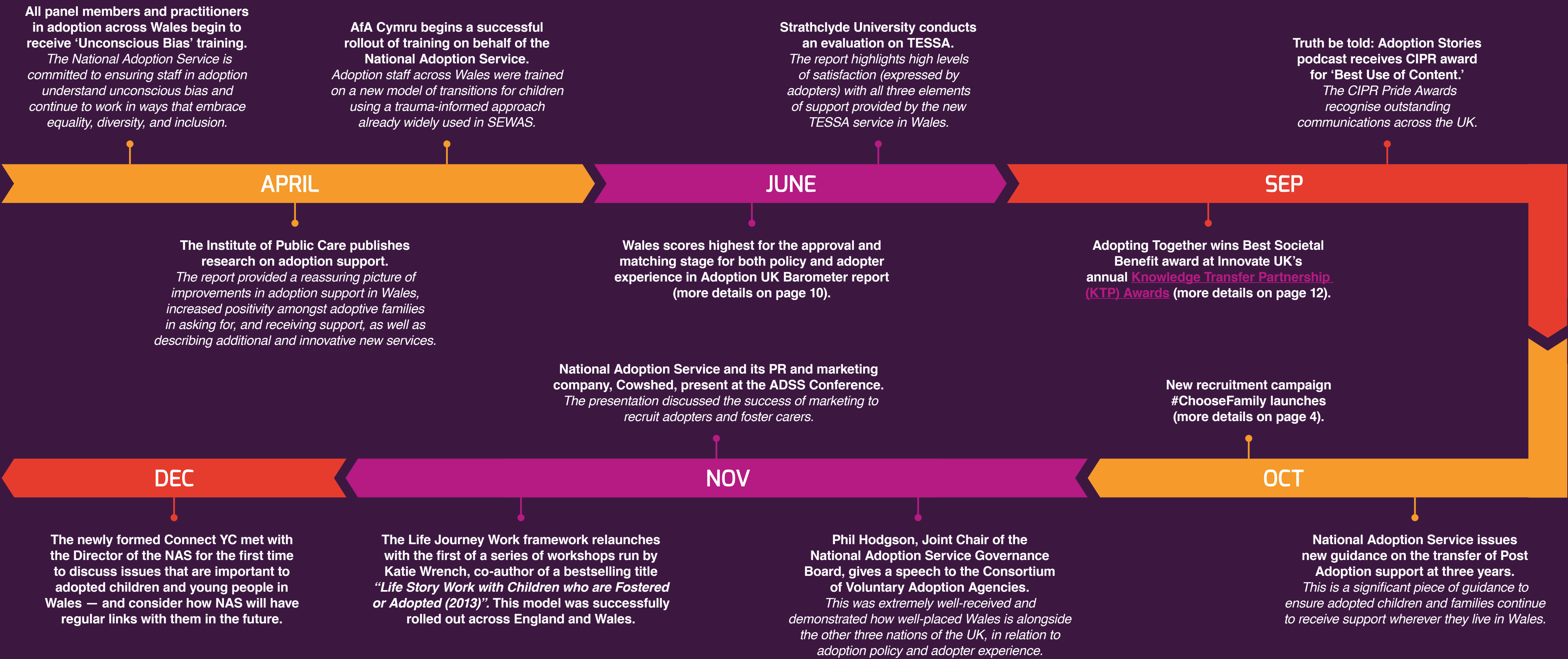
Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful, Happy New Year!



Director of the National Adoption Service for Wales.



2021 highlights



Choose Family campaign

#ChooseFamily is a campaign to open people's hearts and minds to children who wait longer to be adopted.

Launched during National Adoption Week, #ChooseFamily centres on the stories of adopters, the adoptees and their family memories – the ones that make you laugh 'til you cry and cry 'til you laugh. The campaign aims to show that regardless of who you adopt, the feeling of family trumps all and is what gets you through all of life's ups and down.

Over 50 adoptive families came forward to be part of the campaign and 14 of these stories were selected to show a range of families.

Read more about the campaign here:
adoptcymru.com/choosefamily

**You're coming
home to us
tonight, and
every single
night.**

Caroline and Siobhan,
adopters

#ChooseFamily

Adopters. Adopted adults.
Adoptive grandparents,
aunties and uncles.

**We'd like to share the
moments that make
you a family.**

#ChooseFamily

**Share the
moments
that made
you a family.**

#ChooseFamily

**We were her
last chance.
I can't bear
to think
about that.**

Amanda,
adopter

#ChooseFamily

Around Wales – updates from your local service



Mabwysiadu
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru
Adoption
Mid & West Wales

Adoption Mid and West Wales

It has been another busy year for Adoption Mid and West Wales as we continued to adapt to new ways of working.

This year we piloted our Attachment Aware Schools programme. Cosheston School, in Pembrokeshire, became the first school in the region to successfully achieve bronze awareness, by demonstrating a good level of understanding of attachment and implementing creative ideas and staff training.

We started working with a local organisation to further our recruitment activities and support staff who have adopted. We successfully ran a Q&A session with staff at Pembrokeshire College, who are also supporting the #ChooseFamily campaign in staff e-newsletters and digital screens, throughout the college.

We ran a 'What kind of Superhero are you?' competition this year, to highlight life journey work to families. The entries from the children ranged from a video clip of a poem to great drawings.

As we head into 2022, we're looking to strengthen our commitment to finding adoptive families for the children who wait the longest and we will continue to support our adopters and their families. We will also look to roll out our Attachment Aware Schools programme across the region, and continue to seek other organisations and businesses to strengthen their support to staff who have adopted and to assist us with finding more prospective adopters.

Social links:

www.adoptionmwwales.org.uk
www.mabwysiaducgcymru.org.uk
www.facebook.com/adoptmwwales
www.instagram.com/adoptmwwales
www.twitter.com/adoptmw_wales



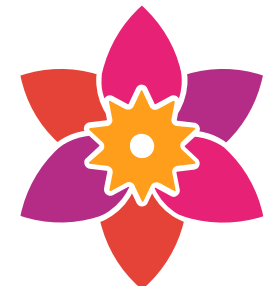
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Around Wales – updates from your local service



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Gogledd Cymru

North Wales
Adoption
Service

North Wales Adoption Service

On July 5th 2021, we launched the North Wales Life Journey work forum for practitioners across North Wales.

70 practitioners from across North Wales attended this forum which showed that there is a strong interest in Life Journey work.

We were also so pleased and very grateful when renowned life story work author and practitioner Katie Wrench agreed to speak and support our first North Wales forum. Katie is an inspirational speaker and the feedback from the forum was excellent.

We are in the process of planning our second one. The date will be February 7th and will focus on the use of creative and metaphorical/parallel stories in supporting children to understand their life.

If you would like to have any further information on Life Journey work in North Wales contact Life Journey social worker Sarah Ryan sarah.ryan@wrexham.gov.uk.

Social links:

www.northwalesadoption.co.uk

[@mabwysiadugogleddcymru](https://www.instagram.com/mabwysiadugogleddcymru)

[@nw_adoption](https://www.facebook.com/nw_adoption)



South East Wales Adoption Service
Achieving More Together

South East Wales Adoption Service

SEWAS has seen great results in switching to using digital, pre-recorded, and online resources to continue our work in these difficult times. This has resulted in...

The Recruitment and Assessment team has seen a rise in the number of enquiries from potential adopters and are on target for an increase of 20% on the previous year. The number of adopters approved has also increased and we're currently on target for an 80% increase compared to last year.

The Family finding team has matched 41 children with adoptive families in the first half of this year. They have also provided “**understanding the child**” days for all families adopting sibling groups, children over two years of age, and children with more complex needs.

The Adoption Support team has continued to provide support to our adoptive families by holding 20 online events throughout the year, creating a Circle of Security group for more in-depth training on the parenting theory, and has referred 38 families to TESSA for additional support.

Social links:

www.southeastwalesadoption.co.uk

[@SEWASAdoption](https://www.instagram.com/SEWASAdoption)

[@sewasadoption](https://www.facebook.com/sewasadoption)

Around Wales – updates from your local service



Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption

This year we've continued to embrace blended working across our service. This has created new opportunities to integrate virtual sessions, particularly, into our matching process, which has been well received by all involved:

“The experience we had was nothing short of amazing and our family finder was outstanding. She was so efficient and had everything lined up and prepared so there were no delays! I also want to say how fantastic our social worker was and still is. She's so supportive and has been since the day she was assigned to us!”

“The use of ‘bump in’ meets was very useful to form positive relationships with the foster carers and our child.”

We've continued to build our marketing, based on the now rich source of data we have collected from the last few years. We can now tailor our content more specifically than ever to a wider, more diverse audience.

Our adoption support team have continued to support a vast number of families by providing contact, signposting, training, and wrap-around support. This included launching a new, pilot, support group for Welsh-speaking adopters facilitated by a Drama Therapist. We've received a good level of interest and we're excited to see how this expands over the coming year.

Social links:

www.adopt4vvc.org

📷 [@vvcadoption](https://www.instagram.com/vvcadoption)

[@vvcadoption](https://www.facebook.com/vvcadoption)



Around Wales – updates from your local service



Western Bay Adoption

A busy and rather rapid year has once again passed. Here's a look back at some of our highlights in Western Bay...

Firstly, the successful implementation of the two-stage model has reduced waiting times for adopters and children. It has also reduced the demand for social workers due to earlier checking and assessing. The Recruitment and Assessment team has worked hard to make this a success.

Over 206 adoptive families from across the area attended our 'Summer of Fun' events which ranged from forest school, gymnastics, music sessions, and paddleboarding. These were well received with one adopter commenting:

"I hadn't realised how powerful it would be for me and L to be part of a play session with other children who are adopted - despite being little, she is making sense of it and was excited to go somewhere with other adoptive families."

On social media, our #WeAreWesternBay campaign brought some smiles and plenty of chat as social workers and managers shared a child photo and their motivation for turning up and doing what they do, every day.

Social links:

westernbayadoption.org

[@WesternBayAdoption](https://www.facebook.com/WesternBayAdoption)

[@BayAdoption](https://www.instagram.com/BayAdoption)

[@western_bay_adoption](https://www.instagram.com/western_bay_adoption)

#OurFamily



Barnardo's Cymru

It has been a busy and exciting year in Barnardo's, with over 350 people making enquiries to adopt which is lovely to see.

We are delighted to have been able to approve 14 adoptive households to date this year, far exceeding our target.

We have placed 10 children in eight adoptive households so they will all be sharing a very happy Christmas and are looking forward to the next year together.

We are especially proud of being able to support two adopting together placements, enabling children who have waited for the longest to be adopted — and another will be moving ahead early next year.

We have a fully staffed and motivated team who are working as hard as they can to match children into their adoptive homes and families. We are seeking an adoption manager to help us all on our journey and working towards the Welsh Government wish to keep Welsh children in Wales.

From all of us at Barnardo's, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and we look forward to creating more families in 2022.

Social links:

[facebook.com/barnardoscymrufosteradopt](https://www.facebook.com/barnardoscymrufosteradopt)

Around Wales – updates from your local service



St David's Children Society

Here at St David's, we are really proud that just over a third of our placements and our approvals in 2021 have been to families who identify as LGBTQ+. St David's has historically placed a high number of children with LGBTQ+ families, this year we saw our highest percentage ever. From sibling groups, 'older' children, and families who adopt through the Adopting Together Service, our LGBTQ+ families continue to provide forever homes for children with a plan for adoption. Here, Damian who adopted with his partner through St David's, tells his story three and a half years in bit.ly/3ducGv6

Social links:

www.adoptionwales.org

[@AdoptionWales](https://twitter.com/AdoptionWales)

[@st.davids.childrens.society](https://www.facebook.com/st.davids.childrens.society)

[@StDavidsChildrenSociety](https://www.instagram.com/StDavidsChildrenSociety)



Around Wales – updates from your local service



Adoption UK Cymru

The Adoption Cymru team has continued to successfully support families online throughout the year. We have also trialled a few in-person and hybrid events where safe and appropriate to do so.

In February, we hosted a virtual election hustings event, hosted by Betsan Powys, which focused on ensuring a fair chance for adopted young people. On behalf of the National Adoption Service, we established an Adoption Youth Council whose members asked questions during the hustings event.

We were delighted to be awarded a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, to extend our peer support activities for adopters in their early years. The First 1000 Days project helps adopters to build their support networks from day one, through local peer-led services across Wales.

With support from the Welsh Government, schools in Wales were able to access a wealth of resources and training opportunities to support teachers. This included professional Adoption UK membership for 200 schools, and a fully-funded, tailored training session to help schools recover from the impacts of Covid.

2021 also showcased our strong collaborative working with partners in the National Adoption Service, which helped to ensure another successful year.

Social links:

www.adoptionuk.org/wales

 [@aukcymru](https://twitter.com/aukcymru)

[@aukcymru](https://www.facebook.com/aukcymru)



The Adoption Barometer 2021

NAS is pleased that the Barometer report paints a positive picture for Wales again. For the third year running there was strong engagement from Welsh adopters and it provides a much valued 'reality check'.

With 80% of responders from Wales likely to encourage others to adopt and 83% feeling optimistic about the future, the findings are a vote of confidence. The report reiterates the importance of the work we are doing through the National Adoption Service to improve adoption services across Wales, as well as the necessity to keep it up!

It is important that we recognise and celebrate the improvement that has already taken place.

Of particular note is:

- approval and matching where there is further improvement and Wales is the only UK nation to score 'good' for both policy and adopter experience
- improvements for families where a child has been recently placed and timeframes for receiving support
- Welsh adopters are significantly more likely to receive life journey materials in a timely manner

The good news is the report provides an encouraging basis from which to tackle the ongoing 'issues' that the report identifies and we are not complacent about the need for continued improvement.

NAS will continue to work on understanding adoptive parents, children, and young people's priorities for support and is actively working on many of these e.g. support and guidance for parents on areas such as contact, more services to meet social and emotional needs, adoption 'aware' training for education professionals and sensitive, timely, life journey support.

The Barometer's focus on the transition to adulthood is helpful, re-enforcing the importance of support being available as and when issues emerge. This is the approach that NAS is putting in place. It's beginning to work for many families which is great but we recognise that there is still a way to go.

NAS remains committed to listening to adoptive families and working with our partners to continue the improvement journey.

Around Wales – updates from your local service



Association for Fostering and Adopting (AfA Cymru)

We are delighted to offer new adoption learning opportunities delivered by our new Trainer Consultant, Emma Simpson. For further information and booking [Workshops - AFA Cymru](#). To commission any of our courses, visit [Training Request - AFA Cymru](#).

We are starting to see the impact of **Post Commencement 2005** regulations as children adopted after December 2005 reach adulthood. We are supporting practitioners in becoming more familiar with the new legal framework and thinking about how to structure and develop services.

On behalf of NAS, AFA Cymru and SEWAS, we worked together to develop and deliver training and resources that align with the NAS Good Practice Guide on Transitions and Early Support.

We now have an **All Wales template that will be used for both the Trauma Nurture Timeline and Understanding the Child Day** and a **Resource pack for practitioners**.

NAS commissioned AFA Cymru to develop an All Wales Early Permanence framework which has been designed to facilitate **Welsh Early Permanence** to be available for a range of children, not just young babies. NAS will launch the framework at its annual conference on 1 March 2022, with subsequent plans for dissemination and implementation across Wales.

Social links:

www.afacymru.org.uk

[@AFACymru](#)



Around Wales – updates from your local service



Adopting Together Service

We've had another busy and successful year at the Adopting Together Service. Since the Service went live in May 2018, we have matched 25 children with their lifelong families, and are supporting another five children to move before the end of the financial year. This is transformational for all the children and families involved, particularly as so many of these children were on the cusp of their plan changing to long-term fostering. We have had such positive feedback from the families involved regarding their experience of the four components of the Adopting Together Service and the difference it has made in their adoption journey.

Our families have been supported through our psychology-led service throughout their adoption journey once a match has been identified - before their child/ren are placed, during transitions and introductions, followed by psychological consultations once they begin their new family life. We have had overwhelmingly positive feedback from those of you who have adopted through the Service.

Adopting Together Service has recently received national recognition for its impact and societal benefit, receiving a national award for best societal impact from Innovate UK for the KTP partnership between St. David's Children Society and Cardiff University. This was despite impressive co-nominees in this category. This is the third award that Adopting Together has received for innovation, societal benefit, and impact.

Social links:

- www.adoptionwales.org
- [@AdoptionWales](https://twitter.com/AdoptionWales)
- [@st.davids.childrens.society](https://twitter.com/st.davids.childrens.society)
- [@StDavidsChildrenSociety](https://www.instagram.com/StDavidsChildrenSociety)



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Adoption Register Wales (ARW)

ARW has been working hard this year to arrange and facilitate family-finding events for children across Wales.

The first online profiling event was held in March 2021 with three subsequent events being held throughout the year in June, August, and November. Adopters from across Wales were invited to attend these events virtually.

44 children were profiled, many of whom have additional complex needs and have been waiting for the longest. 85 expressions of interest were made in total for 32 of these children. So far, there have been four confirmed successful matches made as a result of these profiling events, with other potential matches still being explored. Further online profiling events are planned for 2022.

An **Adoption Activity Day** was held in Cardiff in October. Twenty children were referred and featured in the profiling booklet and 13 children attended the event with 25 Welsh adoptive families. The event received positive feedback and resulted in 23 expressions of interest in total for 12 of the 20 children. Three children have gone on to be successfully matched with families who attended the Adoption Activity Day with other possible links still being explored. Another Adoption Activity Day will be held next year.



Coming in 2022



Join the Big Adoption Conversation

Join the Big Adoption Conversation on Thursday 27th January 10.00am to 12.30pm and help shape the future priorities for adoption in Wales.

This free virtual event is for adoptive families, adopted people, social workers, representatives from the Welsh Government, senior managers, strategic planners, and practitioners in the adoption community.

Using the latest survey results of Adoption UK's Adoption Barometer report alongside other information, this is a chance to shape the priorities that will guide the work of the National Adoption Service and its Adopt Cymru 2025 plan.

There will be workshops on the following:

1. Teenage years and transitions to adulthood
2. Education
3. Contact with birth family
4. Becoming an adoptive family

Visit www.adoptionvoices.wales to find out more and register.

We look like startled rabbits in headlights in our first picture together.

Karyn, adopter

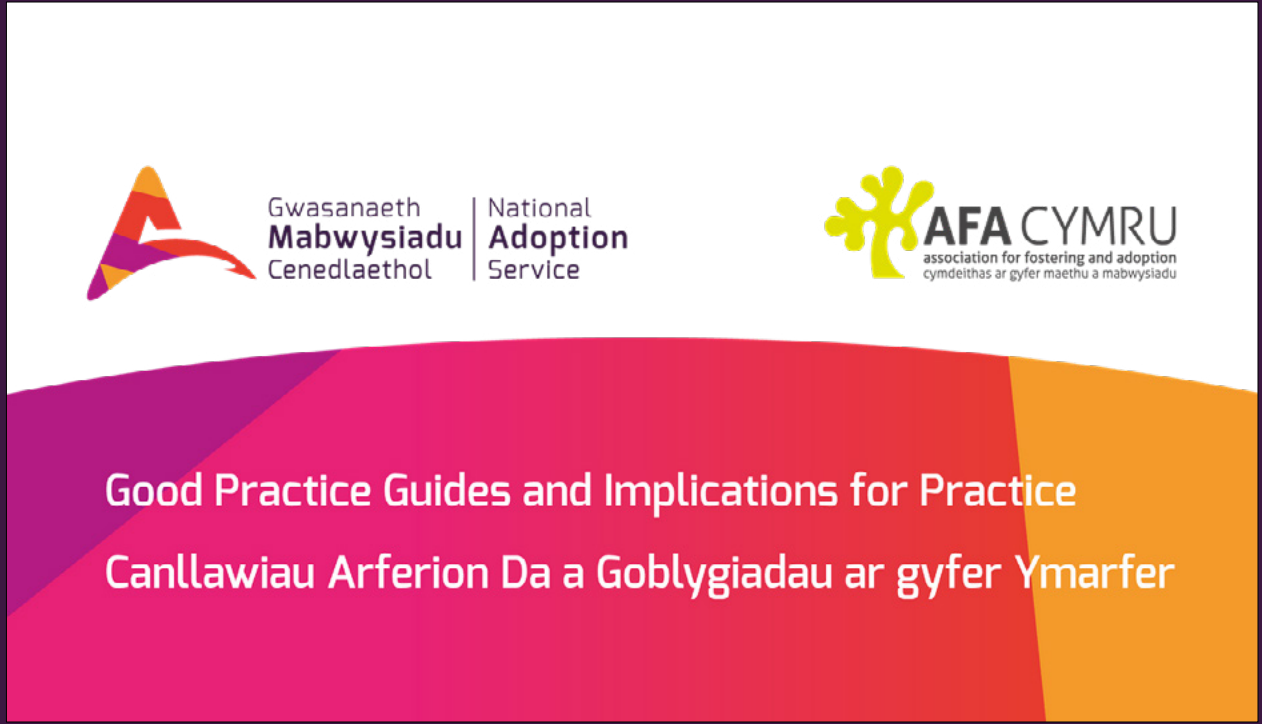
#ChooseFamily

#ChooseFamily campaign phase two

Late January will see the return of the #ChooseFamily campaign with TV, radio, and digital advertising planned pan-Wales. Our TV advert is inspired by the stories told as part of the first phase of the campaign and will be on screens from January 17th.

Thank you to all the adopters, adopted adults, regional marketing teams, and social workers for their input and ideas. We look forward to more success with this campaign in 2022.

Please do like and share using #ChooseFamily @nas_cymru.



Good Practice Guides App

To help social workers access information on adoption support, working with adoptive parents, transitions and early support, and contacting birth parents when out and about, we have created an app as a one-stop destination for all four Good Practice Guides on the go.

The app will be available to social workers and free to download from the IOS and Android app stores early next year.



Thank you



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Adoption Register **Wales**