



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Cenedlaethol

National
Adoption
Service

NAS 2023 Newsletter



Foreword from Suzanne

I am once again pleased to be sharing this year's newsletter with you. We've changed the timing but it still contains all the news and information that we hope you will find interesting, informative, and useful for the year ahead.

2022 was another exciting and busy year for everyone in the National Adoption Service. All of the local authorities, regional adoption services and voluntary adoption agencies continued to work hard to ensure everyone who made contact or were already working with us received the information and support they needed. Following the pandemic, we were pleased that from a very early point in the year services were able to resume the more 'usual' ways of doing things with support groups and activity sessions returning to face-to-face.

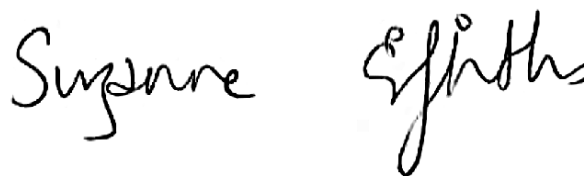
Last year NAS delivered on many important commitments:

- the launch of our award-winning recruitment campaign "Choose Family" TV advert in January
 - the launch of our Youth Council
 - the Adoption Support Commitment was published in June, followed by
 - our second series of the 'Truth Be Told: Adoption Stories' podcast which is already proving to be very popular.
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As we move into 2023, we are acutely aware of the pressures families in Wales are facing due to the current cost-of-living crisis and want to assure 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 very big thank you to all our Welsh adopters, as well as to foster carers and others who are part of the 'team' that help us 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!

Wishing you a very Happy and Peaceful 2023!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Suzanne Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Director of the National Adoption Service for Wales



Highlights of 2022

Timeline

January

#ChooseFamily TV advert launched.

February

Truth Be Told podcast mentioned on BBC Radio 4 Extra.

March

Celebrated LGBT+ Adoption & Fostering Week.

Announced new all Wales partnership with New Family Social.

April

Adopted Youth Councils (CONNECT voices) website and youth councils launch event in Techniquet, Cardiff.

Passport Scheme with Adoption UK launch.

May

Launch of Good Practice Guide & NAS Policy app.

June

Adoption Support Commitment launched.

Adoption UK Barometer 2022 report released.

July

#ChooseFamily campaign wins best Inclusive Advertising Campaign of the Year at Wales Online Diversity and Inclusion Awards.

August

Hosted a stand at the Eisteddfod and a panel at PRIDE.

October

Celebrated National Adoption Week 2022.

Launch of series 2 of Truth Be Told: Adoption Stories Podcast.



Highlights from your local services across Wales

Adoption Mid and West Wales



Mabwysiadu
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru
Adoption
Mid & West Wales

During 2022, we worked with schools to raise awareness at key moments throughout the year when adopted children could find it tougher than their peers, such as transitions to the next class and teacher, and the sometimes-difficult return to school in September. We also attended Powys Pride and Llanelli Pride in the summer and had many discussions with prospective adopters. Since launching The Perfectly Imperfect Pumpkin children's book during National Adoption Week 2022, we've had over 600 visitors to the dedicated webpage, highlighting the important message that it is ok to be different.

We have started to develop a more effective early adoption support focus, encouraging adopters to take up the first 1000 days with Adoption UK, training, and support groups. We are also introducing a system where adoptive families will be contacted a few months after the adoption order has been granted to check that life journey work materials have been provided and that they are happy with the materials.

In 2023, the team are planning an activity day for Mid and West Wales adopters during the summer months. We are looking to broaden our offer of adoption support groups within the region and develop the website to make it easier for adopters to access the support and services they need.

We will continue to focus recruitment campaigns in finding suitable adopters for the children who often wait longer to be adopted, as well as recruit our first Welsh early permanence carers. They will also have the opportunity to discuss how we can support them with sharing the information with their child/ren. Check ins are carried out on an annual basis initially and then at key transition periods, aged, 8, 11 and 13/14.

Find us at:

adoptionmwwales.org.uk/

mabwysiaducgcymru.org.uk/

facebook.com/adoptmwwales

 twitter.com/adoptmw_wales

 instagram.com/adoptmwwales



Through 2022, we have continued to raise the NWS profile by setting up links with regional council's communications teams who help circulate our social media content and also by attending North Wales networking events. We have been focussing on increasing engagement with potential adopters through our content on Facebook and Twitter accounts, whilst preparing to launch our Instagram account in early 2023.

We were successful in placing a number of children & sibling groups in North Wales this year and continue to meet with potential adopters virtually (as our area is vast), however, training has returned to face to face. We also held a hugely successful family fun-day attended by 183 adoptive parents and 150 children

Our staff volunteered to walk the whole of the North Wales Coastal path to raise awareness of NWS but also the importance of children waiting to be adopted and remaining local in North Wales. It was filmed by the S4C Heno and will be completed during National Adoption week 2023.

In September 2022, a TV programme on BBC was produced showing NWS SW Jackie Lloyd helping to trace Gerallt's birth family: [BBC iPlayer - Our Lives - Series 6: Searching for My Other Mam](#).

Find us at:

northwalesadoption.co.uk

facebook.com/mabwysiadugogleddcymru



twitter.com/nw_adoption

South East Wales Adoption Service



South East Wales Adoption Service
Achieving More Together

In 2022, the South East Wales Adoption Service continued to provide our high standard of services for those using our service. 12,449 users visited our website that is full of all the up to date adoption information. Our online advertising has been seen 3,00,000+ times in 2022, helping these interested in the adoption process find our service much easier. A big push in SEWAS this year has been to create and share resources for those using our service, this has included multiple hours of podcasts and many informational videos.

Our adoption support team has run events online and in person for children, parents and birth families. Some of the newest events added to the calendar for 2022 includes a Water-Sports Day for children, a Dad's Group and Birth Parents support group. These events help keep the adoption community in South East Wales contacted and help us support our adopters.

This year South East Wales Adoption Service has seen a 'passing of the torch' in the role of Regional Adoption Manager. Our beloved former service manager Sue retired, and our very own Becky has taken over. We are delighted that SEWAS will continue with the same ethos and work ethic going forward.

Looking forward to 2023 we are excited to bring more of our events back to face to face. As well as a lot of training going into a newly designed 'hybrid' system taking elements from both online and offline training. We also aim to be out in the community even more this year, reaching potential adopters and helping spread information about the adoption process.

Find us at:

southeastwalesadoption.co.uk

facebook.com/SEWASAdoption

 instagram.com/@sewasadoption

Vale, Valleys, and Cardiff Adoption



We have been busy in 2022 raising the profile of VVC by proactively engaging with social media advertising and attending in-person local events again post pandemic. We returned to more face-to-face support activities and had two very successful family fun-days both attended by over 80 families (roughly 200 adults and children).

We've been successful in placing a number of sibling groups within the region this year, we've placed over 70% of our children in-house, and we've also made our first Welsh Early Permanence placement.

Our Recruitment and Assessment Manager, Greg was invited to speak to Anna Ryder Richardson on her BBC radio show earlier this year and was also a guest speaker at the National WEP Conference earlier this year.

One big highlight for us in 2022, was three VVC adopters featuring heavily in the second series of the Truth Be Told podcast.

We're currently trialling a programme of Family Hubs across the region to engage with a broader group of children and adoptive parents. This is being hosted by our two, new Social Care Officers, Nicola and Chris.

In 2023, we hope to be able to attend more in-person local events to continue to raise the profile of adoption in our region and to continue to develop our support services. We're also looking forward to welcoming our new Children and Young Person Coordinator into the service.

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



Engagement and outreach work at high profile events across the Western Bay region was a focus throughout 2022, this resulted in adoption enquiries, more people being added to our mailing lists and accessing adoption support. Our private adopters Facebook group now has 250 members with plenty of engagement and discussion on posts and announcements.

Throughout 2022, 100's of adopters attended our in-house events over the year from our summer and Christmas parties to our various community events such as play groups and animal petting farm sessions.

Our new children's and young people officers have successfully re-launched a busy weekly youth club for older adopted children jam packed with activities and fun. The WBA birth parent team have been busy running sessions and events with birth parents with our Winter wellbeing event being a big success.

We were pleased to see a significant increase in adopter approvals from Bridgend, we focused our activity in this area in light of poor recruitment.

2022 also saw the launch of our Adoption Support Virtual Hub which allows adopters to drop in with problems before they become major issues.

In 2023, we hope to refine and properly launch the new WBAS website, attend high profile events such as the Wales Air Show and take part in lots of team building events. We're also eager to raise awareness around the extra support that can be needed for adopted children to thrive in education through awareness sessions in primary and secondary schools throughout the year.

This year we are launching the Let's Talk Adoption content series. This starts off with a virtual talk by award-winning adoption author Holly Marlow. The series will include physical talks with adopters and social media posts featuring in-house experts on a range of topics.

Find us at:

westernbayadoption.org/

facebook.com/westernbayadoption

 twitter.com/bayadoption

 instagram.com/western_bay_adoption

In 2022 Barnardo's Cymru Adoption Service reviewed our Adoption Support offer for adopters through every stage of their adoption journey with us. This change has been led by the successful recruitment of a Participation Lead, whose focus is on Adoption Support.

This included the following, specialist training from a Play Therapist which we've recently commissioned for another 12 months, bimonthly workshops for adopters which offers support/information around a number of relevant themes and topics, and family social events and a newsletter.

The service within Wales continued to grow in 2022 as we welcomed two new members of staff, as well as a permanent AHoB. This has allowed us to increase our capacity in a number of areas including offering additional support to prospective adopters and their families during assessment by providing bespoke Friends and Family training.

Plans for 2023 are focussed on the on-going adoption support aspect of the service and in April 2023 we will be launching our new training and participation calendar. We are also looking to work in partnership with Adoption UK, with the aim of increasing engagement from adopters with the fantastic support services that Adoption UK has to offer. There are also plans for more family events during Easter, Summer and beyond.

Barnardo's Cymru will also be exploring plans to hold an adopter information day focusing on the children open to the Adopting Together Scheme. This will include offering information on the support available to children who have specific complex needs.

Find us at:

barnardos.org.uk/foster/wales

 twitter.com/BarnardosCymru

facebook.com/barnardoscymrufosteradopt/

facebook.com/barnardos/

 instagram.com/barnardos_uk



2022 saw St David's Children Society turn 80 years old, and to celebrate that, we hosted two celebration events for our families in the summer, one in West Wales, and one in South-East Wales. We welcomed families new and old alongside staff members, trustees, ministers, and colleagues from across the sector to help us celebrate this milestone.

Last year we also completed a rebrand of our adoption services and a slight rename to 'St David's Adoption Service'. This work was the result of working with key stakeholders and a local design team to come up with a modern and fresh logo and design.

As 2022 brought about the easing of restrictions for many people, we hosted regular informal adopter meet ups across the country, hosted in parks, beaches, lakes and other popular walking routes where our families could come together and meet other adopters in their local area. This has led to a monthly meet up in West Wales which is now adopter led and thriving. We are looking forward to continuing these into 2023 with new venues and new families to welcome.

In 2023 we are really excited to begin a group for those families who adopted during the pandemic and as such had perhaps less contact with other adoptive families. We hope to bring these families together at a couple of locations throughout the year.

Find us at:

adoptionwales.org

 twitter.com/adoptionwales

facebook.com/stdavidschildrensociety

 instagram.com/stdavidsadoptionsservice/

Throughout the last year, AFA Cymru has supported NAS with the launch of the Framework for Welsh Early Permanence (WEP). The webinars and events which we have facilitated have been well attended and well received. We are grateful to all the professionals who have supported us with the creation of the framework.

We look forward to launching all our eLearning on WEP within the coming months and are happy to continue our support to the sector with the implementation of WEP in your services.

Moving into the new year we are excited to be working alongside NAS in many areas, one of which being the creation of training for child care practitioners and managers on 'Modern Adoption as a Positive Permanence Option for Children'. Within our training, we hope to inform and inspire the workforce to consider all options for permanence for the children they are planning for. This training will be focused on modern adoption and how children and families can maintain relationships within this permanency option.

Find us at:

afacymru.org.uk/



twitter.com/AFACymru

In 2022, we saw the launch of 3 new membership offers were launched for Adoption UK.

Passport Membership, which offers a complete package of support for prospective adopters. This is fully funded for all prospective adopters in Wales through an agreement with the National Adoption Service.

Adopted Person Membership, for those people who were adopted as a child and are now 18 years and over. For £2.50 a month members get access to webinars, a bimonthly newsletter, regular virtual community group meet ups which bring adopted people together across the UK, access to books from our lending library and support from our team in Wales.

Friends and Relatives Membership, for the extended network of friends and relatives who support children who are adopted and their adopters. For just £2.75 a month membership includes: Access to over 70 webinar recordings on topics such as the adoption process, attachment and helping adopted children with their identity. The Adoption UK lending library, Adoption Today bimonthly magazine and a bimonthly newsletter. Join your adoptive family for days out with other families in stunning venues across Wales.

2023 will be filled with community meet ups, training events and youth group sessions held in every corner of Wales. We know that life isn't easy right for families just now but by getting together and supporting each other we can make it that little bit easier and take some of the pressure off the statutory sector.

Find us at:

adoptionuk.org/wales

 twitter.com/aukcymru

facebook.com/aukcymru

Adoption Register Wales



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

The Adoption Register Team continue to work closely with practitioners across the regions and VAA's to support matching children with adopters, particularly those who are not promptly matched through regional arrangements. They ensure children and adopters are referred to the Register in a timely manner, that the Register data base is kept up to date and used effectively as well as co-ordinating Wales wide family finding activity.

Due to the success of online profiling events held during Covid, the Register has continued to offer a programme of virtual events. The first event took place in July 2022 and took a slightly different format to suit the number of children available to be profiled at that time. a pre-recorded event was held. Over 50 adopters registered to attend a pre-recorded session which they could access via a secure link available for 3 days at times convenient to them. The event featured video profiles of 11 children waiting and resulted in lots of positive interest in the children. One adopter wrote:

"I appreciate the opportunity to be able to attend such an event. The videos bring the children to life and hearing all the information from the social worker and foster carer is really valuable."

ARW held its 7th Adoption Activity Day commissioned via Coram BAAF in November and plans are in place for another event in 2023. These events, which are always well-received by adopters, are invaluable in helping them to get a real sense of the children waiting.



The Adoption Barometer 2022

This year there were 2,515 responses UK-wide, with 181 of those in Wales.

2022's report shows that Wales is currently the only UK nation where adopters - once approved - are already confident that they know where to go for support after placement.

Respondents from Wales were also the most likely to say that their process had run smoothly with no delays, and a higher percentage of Welsh respondents said their life story materials were 'good' or 'adequate' compared to the UK average.

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

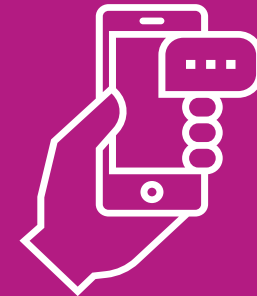
Key statistics in Wales



30% say their family is 'mostly doing well'.



79% say it feels like a continual struggle to get support.



63% contacted adoption support services in 2021.



76% of respondents from Wales would encourage others to consider adoption.



89% would welcome an annual opportunity to review their child's support needs.



2023 will be the fifth year of Adoption UK's annual Adoption Barometer.

Coming in 2023...

Truth Be Told: Adoption Stories Series 2 – Youth Council Episode

Series 2 of National Adoption Service's Truth Be Told: Adoption Stories podcast will draw to a close with the final episode being taken over by the Adoption UK's Youth Council. The episode will give young adopted voices a platform and will allow young people to share their own stories and views on their own adoption journey and the current adoption process in Wales.



To find out more on what's coming up in 2023, follow us and the local services across Wales on social media for the latest updates and news.





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