



GWASANAETH MABWYSIADU
Bae'r Gorllewin
Western Bay
ADOPTION SERVICE



Quality of Service Review



April - September
2025



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Bae'r Gorllewin
Western Bay
ADOPTION SERVICE



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



Cyngor Abertawe
Swansea Council

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol



Index

1. Introduction.....	
2. Current Position.....	
3. Staffing.....	
4. Adoption Panel.....	
5. Children.....	
6. Adopters.....	
7. Advertising and Marketing.....	
8. Development of Adoption Support.....	
9. Policies and Procedures.....	
10. CSSIW.....	
11. Local Governance and Monitoring Arrangement.....	
12. Consultation and Engagement.....	
13. Quality Assurance, Compliments, Comments, Complaints, Safeguarding issues, Whistle blowing and representation	
14. Agenda for Change and Future Challenges.....	
15. Overall Assessment of the Service.....	

1. Introduction

The requirement to provide six monthly reviews of the Adoption Service is set out in Regulation 39 of The Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019. The aim of this report is to bring into one document a presentation and analysis of the activity of each of the local authority adoption agencies, operating as a regional service. In addition, Section 15 (c) of The Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015 sets out the responsibilities of regional collaborative to report to the Director of Operations for the National Adoption Service on a quarterly and annual basis.

The report and information within it will be used for:

- The Review of Service (Regulation 39 report).
- Given the broad content of this report it will be used for informing senior managers, cabinets, scrutiny committees and corporate parenting Boards.
- Quarterly and annual reports to NAS.

This report is in respect of the period 1st April 2025 to 30th September 2025. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information presented is an accurate record of the activity and quality of the Adoption Service and consider targets for the forthcoming year.

2. Current Position

The service has settled well in to its new location in Neath town centre and the office space is being well utilised by the whole staff team. The space has a fully equipped play room, direct work room and family meeting space. The new office space is invaluable in terms of the space it provides all of the service activities to be undertaken on site reducing the reliance on external room bookings.

The service has recently been inspected by Care inspectorate Wales and the initial feedback provided was positive. The full report will be available on the 8th October 2025.

Areas identified for development at the end of last year:

Action	Time Frame	By Whom	Update Sept 2025	Status
Undertake 2 case file audits	September 2025 and January 2026	RAM & TM	Complete - 20 cases were audited as part of the inspection process so this will be recorded as Septembers Audit. Audit cycle will then continue Bi Annually. QAF has been updated to reflect this.	
Implement the pre evaluation pack and review after three months	Launch April/May 2025. Review forms September. Consider YP evaluation pack	Whole service	An Initial version was piloted however was considered too time – consuming. A new evaluation form was considered and has been agreed by the adoption support team. The pilot of this will commence from 1st October.	
Re-instate the Adopter Focus group	June 2025	R&A TM MRO	Complete	
Update the YP guide and consider development of an adoption support guide for YP. Consult with YP in designing the guide.	September 2025	RAM Youth Workers	YP guide to adoption (Referral stage) updated. YP guide to adoption support to be commenced in September.	
Review make up of panel to ensure that panel reflects the diversity of our adoption community	September 2025	R&A TM RAM	Complete - 6 new panel members have been recruited.	

Embed the new regional process for accessing an individuals wish to access information	September 2025	Adoption Support TM RAM	Complete -new file request process working well - No waiting list for Access to records cases.	
Assa notifications and process to be reviewed. Audit to consider notifications at matching and 3 years post placement	September 2025	Adoption Support TM RAM	To be commenced	
Review of service structure Review of Budget formula.	September 2025 May 2025	RAM Management Board	November 2025 Completed and agreed In extraordinary board meeting in October	

3. Staffing

Staffing has remained stable throughout the last two quarters with low absence rates. Work has been undertaken to ensure that all staff in work had an appraisal during Q1. Work has continued to take place in respect of agreeing the budget formula to enable the structure of the service to be reviewed. Agreement has now been given for the additional temporary support workers to remain in position until the end of March 2026 whilst the service restructure is undertaken.

4. Adoption Panel

All Panel members have had an appraisal and the themes from these appraisals were shared at the quarterly Business meetings held in July with panel members.

Panel continues to have a central list of members. Panel has continues mainly on a virtual basis although from September a face to face panel will be held monthly which is in line with the feedback the service received from panel members and adopters.

20 Panels were held in the timeframe, with no panels being cancelled due to quoracy issues. Panel was observed by the inspection team and feedback provided was that the service has a well organised functioning panel and panel members were experienced and empathetic.

5. Children

Performance in relation to children can be seen in the performance section at the end of this report, this section will consider the qualitative information.



The number of referrals for children has reduced from 54 in Q1/Q2 last year to 42. Swansea have seen the largest decrease in referrals on previous year from 32 to 20.



There is a similar theme for Placement Orders which reduced slightly from 20 to 16.



The number of children matched in the year was 21 an increase from the same period last year which is pleasing considering the complexity of some. We are seeing the rise in complexity of children's needs.



The number of children placed has also had a small increase from 15 to 18 in this period. Positively all but 3 of the children placed in this timeframe were placed with regional adopter ensuring those children can continue to be supported when the need arises.



During this reporting period the average timeframe from placement order to placement was at 7.9 months just outside of the performance measure.



The number of children waiting and for whom the service is actively family finding has dropped very slightly to 24. The average length of time they have waited is 5.4 months, the shortest time is 1 month and the longest time is 19.7 months.



There has been one disruption of regional children in this reporting period. A disruption meeting has been held and once the report is finalised learning will be considered across the service.



There were 14 Adoption Orders made in the timeframe, a small increase on the amount last year.



Staff in the region continue to embed the Name Change Policy. Of the 14 children who have been made subject of an AOG in the reporting period 79% (3) kept their first name, agreement was given to these three children on the grounds of the risk assessment confirming the need to change. All three of these children kept some aspect of their birth name in their new name.

Family Finding - Activity Day

Due to the number of complex children a decision was taken to hold an internal activity day to enable adopters to spend some time playing and interacting with the children waiting. 26 children attended (4 sibling groups of 2) and 18 single children and 11 sets of adopters.

Why it was so successful –

- potential matches can be explored as part of the assessment sessions/ process.
- TNTL meetings to include the childcare social worker can take place in assessment. This will allow the knowledge and understanding of a child's needs to grow over a longer period of time.
- Matches can be sought on connection and not just perception! Adopters seeing themselves with a specific gender/ age/ number of children – the activity day challenged this! Leading to matches being pursued outside of their matching criteria.
- Connections also enhanced the match, with adopters already having some information on background factors

Outcomes –

- 4 matches proceeding (2 – to social work visits – 2 to matching meeting)
- 4 sets of adopters expressing interest in more than one child – this needs to be more carefully considered alongside the assessing social worker as part of assessment, with the view to a TNTL meeting being arranged with the family once tentative match is determined by adopters

Due to the success of this first internal activity day the service will hold quarterly play opportunities in 2026 to support effective family finding and matching.

6. Adopters

Enquiries and Adopter Approval



The number of initial enquiries to adopt increased slightly in this reporting period. The pattern of enquiries continues to be difficult to predict with some defined peaks and troughs. Most enquiries come through from the Swansea area. The complexity of issues faced by prospective adopters remains challenging.



Adopter approvals remained the same as quarter 1 & 2 last year. Approving adopters in the right location to match with the location of the children we have in family finding remains a challenge.



The number of adopters waiting is 4. This is lower than previous years. The slow start to 2024-25 in relation to enquiries and approvals has meant that we have matched our regional adopters with children reducing the pool of waiting adopters.



The number of referrals for Non-Agency Adoptions slight increase from the position last year - although the robust system in place allows for these to be well managed.

Enquiry through to approval data

Quarterly data has been collected for the purpose of recruitment of adopters from Q1 2022 through to Q2 2025. This data analysis will now continue to support and enhance the marketing strategy.

Data collection has focused on:

- Enquiries
- Initial visits undertaken
- Registration of Interest received
- Attendance at preparation training
- Approval of adopters

It is important to note that an adopter application does not move fluidly from one quarter to another as there can be delays to an application. These delays can include;

- Delay in receiving a Registration of Interest
- Delay in adopters being able to attend a preparation training
- Delay to stage one checks
- Adopters wishing to utilise 'on hold' status (for up to 6 months) between stage one and stage two of assessment

Quarterly data over the 3.5 year span has evidenced an increased number of enquiries in quarters 1 and 2. Quarters 3 and 4 are typically lower by around 5-10 enquiries, on average. The lowest number of enquiries received in any given quarter is 35 and the highest is 60.

Enquiries are responded to on the same day of the enquiry, unless it has been received over the weekend. Initial visits are scheduled in a timely manner by the allocated duty worker, within the recruitment and assessment team.

Q1 this year (2025) brought in the highest number of enquiries, 60. Quarter 2 brought in 41 enquiries.

This is incredibly positive given the other adoption regions report a significant decline in enquiries. We believe this can be attributed to an increase in targeted digital adverts and thoughtful social media campaigns.

41 Initial Visits were undertaken over Q1 and Q2 this year – this does not include any informal discussions the team may have had with prospective adoptive applicants.

This is the highest turn over of Initial Visits since 2022 within 2 quarters. 37 initial visits were the second highest initial visits undertaken and this was in Q1 and Q2 of 2022.

We have received 20 registration of interests up to end of Q2 this year. This is an increase from previous years apart from 2022 whereby 24 applications were received.

We currently have 24 applications in assessment with 12 adopters approved by the end of Q2. Unfortunately, not all of these applications will progress through to approval. Presenting themes for the team and reasons for assessment withdrawal include;

- Unresolved childhood trauma
- Applicants receiving PIP/ESA, declaring they are unfit to work
- Significant mental health difficulties and diagnosis
- Significant financial difficulties
- Change in employment and needing time to be eligible for adoption allowance
- House move
- Significant health changes and circumstances – to include recently overcoming cancer

12 approvals mirrors the year 2024 by the end of Q2. We only had 8 approvals by end of quarter 2 in 2023 and 16 approvals in 2022.

I predict that we should be on target for a similar number of approvals as the year 2024 – 28 approvals. In 2023 we made 27 approvals and in 2022, 31 approvals.

Within WBAS I believe our norm of adopter approvals will fall between 27 and 31 approvals per year. However, you will see from the data, that to get us to this point requires us to process between 187 and 211 enquiries per year and between 40 and 60 adopter applications.

Training

A further enhancement to the adopter training package has also been put in place from September 2025. There will be two new workshops running;

- Adopting with a birth child/ren
- Could you adopt siblings

We know from research that adopters with birth children at home are at higher risk of experiencing an adoption placement breakdown. Given the number of adopters we have with birth children, it was felt that further formal insights and training were required for adopters with birth children. Research is shared with prospective adopters, alongside what additional support, skills and preparation is required for adopters to achieve successful outcomes for our adopted children and their family. This will be a mandatory training.

Given the need to recruit more adopters who will consider siblings, we have put together a workshop. This workshop will also be mandatory for all adopters as it will have combined elements of contact and the importance of this when future siblings are born. Anonymised profiles of sibling groups waiting will be profiled alongside the positive factors of adopting siblings. It will cover the skills required and the support offered by the service. It is hoped that the workshop will promote sibling relationships and plant a seed early on in the process of the possibility of adopting siblings together.

These workshops will be run quarterly and added to the pre-existing training package our adopters need to attend.

WBAS Playgroup

WBAS playgroup is run every fortnight alternating between a Tuesday and Friday. It is held in a community church between. It provides adopters and their children up to school age to meet, play and socialise together. The playgroup usually has between 8-12 children attending, and has created good support and friendships to develop.

We also utilise it for adopters in assessment to grow their support network, which often leads to informal groups being set up as a result. We have also arranged summer trips for the group to Cefn Mably Farm in Cardiff, where the group have been able to enjoy a day out together at the farm, which was a great success. We also arrange a Christmas trip, last year this was at Gower fresh Christmas Trees, where the group were able to enjoy the festive grotto and a visit to Santa.

7. Marketing

We stepped into Spring and the Easter holidays with some outreach work, setting up a trade stand at community and leisure sites across the region such as the Gwyn Hall in Neath and Plantasia in Swansea. To support our families through what can be a challenging time we also produced a 20 page 'Easter Help Guide For Families'.

On social media in the Spring we continued to create content which gained good engagement rates whilst also conveying important messages around areas such as adopter mental health.

May was the start of event season for us with the first one being Swansea Pride. It was a great event with a highlight being our adopter Antoine mentioning on stage during his performance how much of a supportive service we are. Another big plus was having adopted young people join us to help work the trade stand.

Sticking with the events and community May was a busy month as we also supported Foster Wales at their Foster Fest event in Neath, attended the Hay



festival with NAS and also had a trade stand for the full week at the Urdd Eisteddfod in Margam Park!

For Pride month in June we ramped up our LGBTQ+ content online and in the community creating new videos and posts whilst attending network talks.

We also created new stories, video and blog content around Wales Early Permanence (WEP) documenting adopters experiences of the service so far.

Later in the summer we had a blast like usual at the Wales National Airshow, managing a very busy trade stand where our new Spinning Prize Wheel was creating lots of engagement.

The events continued until the end of summer with attendance at the Bridgend Show, Gower Show and an attempt to take part in the Mumbles Raft Race (it was cancelled last minute). We also attended Bridgend and NPT Pride and the Swansea Big Chill Event in the City Centre.

In August we launched a new social media campaign aimed at recruiting adopters for the children who wait the longest.



It's still early days for the campaign so its difficult to judge results.

Performance wise enquiries have been strong over the summer months consistently over 20 a month. Conversion to Initial Visits from the Enquiries as also been at a good rate.

Contributing to this strong performance we reviewed and overhauled our paid digital adverts on Google on social media. The new adverts now employ a much wider range of media and messaging and aim to capture leads from those interested in adoption directly.

Website developments continue as we aim to make the most of increased interest in adoption this summer with a particular focus to come on our adoption support area of the site.

Looking ahead as we plan for National Adoption in Week in October we are aiming to create and release a new video campaign which highlights our support and therapy service and also release a new cook book for families created by our Youth Cwlb.

8. Adoption Support Performance & Development work

Support Services

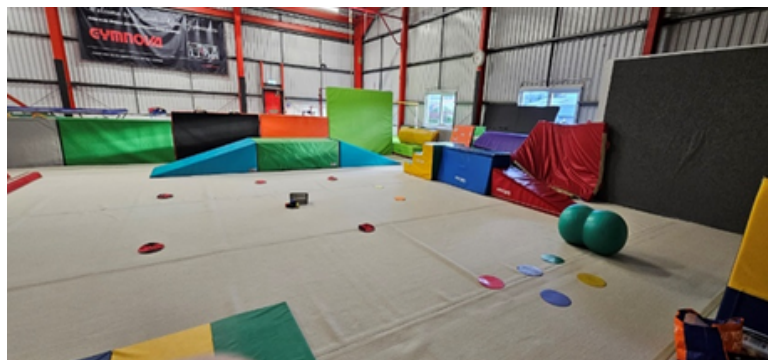
	Virtual Hub and Life-journey and contact hub Being offered in relation to adoption support cases and life journey and contact. 20 families have engaged during the year with the Hubs.
	Access to records There is currently no waiting lists for these cases, 29 referrals were received in this reporting timeframe for BRC, BRIC or Intermediary. There are currently 50 active open cases.
	Young people Currently 22 young people are receiving 121 support, 14 young people regularly attend WBAS youth clwb. There are also 34 Young people registered to attend the Monthly AUK connected group.
	Birth family work There are 68 birth relatives open to the service, these will be being supported with post adoption contact issues. There are also 55 contact investigations open where individuals are being supported to re establish contact with adopted family members.

LEAPlets

On 29 April 2025, we began our seventh block of LEAPlets and this ran until 2 July 2025. This group also coincided with the 2-year anniversary of when we first began our LEAPlets groups, and it resonated with us all how far we have come in the last two years.

LEAPlets is designed to help rebuild children's sensory motor systems and was developed by Sarah Lloyd, who is the founder of the BUSS Model, and from where LEAPlets was developed. LEAPlets typically consists of a 11-week programme which includes 1 parent only session and 10 weeks of child and parent sessions.

To help build the children's systems, we do a lot of activities in LEAPlets, some of which include, action songs, circle time, tactile systems games, sensory motor circuit using gym equipment, story time and some singing. A typical session will last between 50-60 minutes, with new items or activities added each week. The structure of the sessions remains very similar so there is predictability for the children. Our sessions currently run on a Tuesday morning at a local gym.



Our April group comprised of eight children aged just under 3 to just turning 7, and by far was the biggest group of children we have had in one group. Due to numbers, we decided to merge two groups into one and as we like a challenge, we went for it! Thankfully the children were amazing, and their adopters were so supportive. At the end of the round, six children completed the 10 weeks with two families having to drop out part of the way through.

Sarah Lloyd continues to supervise the LEAPlets Team, but since we first began, we have decreased the amount of supervision sessions, as the Team have grown so much in knowledge and experience.

The LEAPlets team consists of 2 group leaders - Claire Roberts and Jo Farmer, (seen here on the left), with a number of core staff who support the sessions. One staff member also films the session for supervision and reflection purposes. Various staff from all domains of the service have been trained and have supported LEAPlets since we began our journey.

We are now busy planning our 8th round of LEAPlets which is due to start on 16th September 2025.



Here are some comments and feedback from our April group:



Youth Clwb

During the period April - September 2025 we have delivered 17 sessions of our Western Bay Youth Clwb. Our young people are aged between 11-17 years old and come from all across the Western Bay Region. We continue to attract on average around 10 young people each week and require 5 members of staff due to the individual complex needs of the teenagers who attend.

Clwb continues to keep to the same structure each week which includes popular activities such as cooking, arts and crafts, indoor and outdoor games. All of these activities provide the perfect opportunity for the group to learn new skills, make new friends, to feel safe and to seek support and guidance from the youth workers.

Our highly skilled and experienced youth work team have regular discussions with young people about a range of issues affecting them. During this period there have been discussions around death, anxiety, adoption, bullying, fighting, school exclusions, ADHD, vaping, periods, personal boundaries, friendships, relationships, breakups, consent, identity, sexuality, drugs, counselling, initiating contact with birth siblings.

The strong relationship we have achieved with our youth group over the last 3 years has helped us to further develop the group. For example, earlier in the Spring, 2 of our young people delivered a “Dragons Den” style pitch to Swansea Youth Bank. They were very successful, and the panel were so impressed they were even awarded extra money! This in turn enabled our wider youth clwb members to plan and organise a Dinosaur themed Easter event for 40 of our Western Bay families. 8 of our youth clwb members volunteered at the event; helping out with attendance lists, refreshments, arts and crafts and outdoor games. They received really positive feedback from all who attended.



Later in the year our 2 Youth Ambassadors shared the success of the event in a presentation to WBAS Management Board. Despite their nerves, the board were very impressed!

During May, we held 4 sessions at Circus Eruption in Swansea. Youth Clwb members learnt new skills in diablo, flower sticks, stilt walking, plate spinning, poi, using unicycles and balance bikes. They were also given the opportunity to work alongside the specialist circus workers trying out tumbling and ariel work too. We noticed that these sessions really helped them to be focussed, to listen, to be brave, to have fun and to build on their self esteem and confidence and to gain recognition for things they are good at.

We were also fortunate to have a visit from Greyhound Rescue therapy dogs Dizzy and Josef with their owners Emma and Chris. The dogs created a very calming influence at Youth Clwb so would definitely be welcome back anytime!



In June, 2 of our members attended Swansea Pride. We walked the parade alongside all members of Swansea's LGBTQIA+ community. Our members then helped out at our Western Bay stall as well as trying on the WBAS Teulu Bear costume and meeting lots of others dressed up in fabulous costumes on the day.

In July we were lucky to yet again have grant money awarded from COAST. This enabled our youth group to attend quad biking, bush craft and a Margam Park BBQ for all of our WBAS young people.

We have also started building a relationship with Adoption UK Youth Participation Worker Chris Richards to encourage our members to join their youth panel and to discuss any issues around adoption.

Welsh Government inspectors also visited during our first week back in September after the summer break and were interested to meet some of our young people and to learn about the important space we have provided for our WBAS young adopted people.

As a result of all these experiences OP has become a Swansea Youth Bank Panel member.

Two of our members have joined the weekly Circus Eruption sessions.

ZS completed Military college and attempted to join the Marines, this was unsuccessful but he is now at a new college completing a Public Services course with an aim to join the fire service.

LG completed her year 11, she has moved on from Youth Clwb and is now attending college.

AH is home schooled and continues to work alongside his mum at their shop. He engaged well with another project and was even able to go on a week-long trip to Norway with them.

The youngest member of our group is now also attending AUK Connected group.

SD continues to enjoy attending DJing club and had the opportunity to perform at a local festival. She has also been training to become a Mental Health Peer mentor and volunteers at Barnardo's Charity Shop.

Quotes from young people after being asked “What have your learnt from attending WBAS Clwb?”



I have learnt how to make friends

I have learnt about boundaries

I have learnt not to shout

I have learnt how to keep my cool

Quote from Mum:

“K is so pleased to be back at Youth Clwb – he would never change coming for anything else”

Needless to say, its been a busy year and our clwb continues to go from strength to strength.

Therapeutic Parenting

We ran another group from the beginning of April till the end of September this year with 3 attendees. Parents feed back that they found the course very informative and enjoyed the course content.

Connected Circles

We ran our first Connected Circles group and had four parents attend with their child. The group is for children aged from 2 – 5 years of age and one parent. Connection Circle is based on Theraplay®, which focuses on strengthening parents’ relationship with their adopted child, through playful and fun activities. From these sessions we identified one child to attend our Leaplets group and one child went on to have 6 further 1 to 1 Theraplay sessions. Parents reported that they found the group fun, informative and nice to get to know other adopted families.

Birth parents

In summary numbers fluctuate month to month particularly during the summer but we always try to reach out. A good example of the workload is during September - 17 were contacted (calls and texts) for our Swansea group - 11 committed to coming with many needing transport and only 5 mums attended on the day.

In April, Seniors Jo and Amy facilitated a webinar for AFA Cymru re contact and birth parent support. In May work was undertaken with RISE in attended Bridgend to discuss their support - 4 new referrals came from this. In July we took our birth mums to St Fagans - 2 separate trips - 11 birth mums attended.

Many of the birth mums were excited for the day out, being on the motorway and experiencing somewhere different putting into perspective how isolated they are. The team also supported 1 mum to attend mental health appointment. In August staff had to chat to mums about appropriate use of social media between themselves.

In September 5 mums were supported on a 121 basis along side the groups. The CIW inspectors were also able to attend a group and meet with the mums who attended.

A number of birth fathers were also supported in a one to one basis during the timeframe to write their annual letter.

Birth Parent Case study

Sue has been supporting one birth mum to engage in indirect contact with her two children (emails and birthday voice notes). Sue and Amy were assessing this Mum to possibly have direct contact with her two children (7 & 10) in the summer. Adoptive mums were very keen for the children to see birth mum during their holiday in Wales particularly due to the 10-year-old pining for his birth mum.

A great deal of support was needed as the assessment identified early on that there were a number of risk factors which could impact direct contact. The main risk being mum being in and out of a toxic and violent relationship. Sue and Amy empowered mum to flee the abusive relationship and seek refuge. The assessment carried out was robust and birth mum being in a place of safety was a significant protective factor. The contact went ahead in July and it was extremely positive for all involved.

Adoptive parents were very relaxed and allowed the children to explore their connection with birth mum whilst being nearby if needed. The children hugged, chatted and held their birth mums hand during the contact. They would return to their adoptive mums for reassurance and comfort which was natural. Beautiful pictures were taken to capture the memories and whilst birth mum was emotional afterwards she was so grateful and thankful for the opportunity to spend time with them. It is hoped this will be an annual get together for the children and a normal part of their staycation in Wales.

Virtual Hub Consultations

Summary

14 attendees from the 13 families scored prior and after the session, 5 moved at least one point up on the confidence scale following their consultation, 7 moved two or more points up the confidence scale and 2 families remained at the same level. Of the 13 families that rated the consultation in terms of helpfulness, 9 families rated the consultation in terms of helpfulness, the average being 8.6.

Signposting from VH

Provision	Families Referred
PAthway	4
Buss	5
Life-Journey support	4
Provision	Families Referred
PAthway	4
Buss	5
Life-Journey support	4

2 families identified diagnosed ADHD/ASD presenting behaviours. 6 of the families reported issues with emotional regulation, aggressive outbursts, rage and biting behaviours. 4 families were experiencing issues with their child having high levels of anxiety and 2 families reported their children displaying self harm behaviours. Four of the cases had adopters who had separated and so their children were also having to manage co parenting routines.

Psychology and Therapy Team

It has been an exciting year of rebuilding our team and evolving our service. Our Dramatherapist and Art Psychotherapist have brought new skills and experience to our team and have integrated well. We have been concentrating on how to ensure the right families are receiving an intervention at the time that is right for them and are in the process of finalising an Information Leaflet about our service. We have started to offer families a Getting to Know You morning which involves a multidisciplinary team planning and carrying out a bespoke assessment and working collaboratively with the family to plan intervention. Our psychologist's role has expanded to include individual assessments with children to help clarify their needs and help the families access resources and provision based on assessed need. This has helped families access support from the disability teams, special education provision and ND assessment as well as therapeutic support within WBAS.

We currently have 14 families accessing Family Therapy, 8 families accessing Drama/Art/Play therapy and our therapists are involved in Therapeutic Life Journey work alongside Adoption Support Social workers.

Our therapists continue to carry out Virtual Hub consultations, along with adoption support social workers, these have proved a valuable way into our service for families who may not have sought WBAS support previously. This allows us to ensure timely intervention based on need.

Our psychologist continues to offer Understanding the Child consultations for complex Family Finding cases and has carried out 6 Trauma Nurture timelines/Circle of Understanding which colleagues report to find very useful when thinking about the needs of the child, both when matching and within the school setting.

9. Policies and Procedures

National Adoption Policies and Procedures which were a collaborative piece of work involving all the regions and VAA's were formally launched in October 2023.

10. CSSIW

The service was last inspected at the beginning of September 2025, a draft report has been received and the final report will be published on the 7th November 2025. An appropriate improvement plan will be put together and shared with CIW by the end of December. The actions on this plan will be reviewed at the Management Board. A number of good practise areas were identified within the inspection.

11. Local Monitoring and Governance

The Management Board is fully compliant with the Directions Powers Regulations, the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) 201. The terms of reference in place.

Monitoring and governance of the service is the responsibility of the Management Board, which now meets on a quarterly basis. The Board members interrogate data provided on a quarterly and annual basis. Strategic decisions are shared with the board for approval whereas, in the main, operational decisions are overseen by the Regional Manager who is supervised by the 'Host' authority Head of Service. The service is measured on both the service plan and the national performance indicators through regular reports, presenting the achievements of the service compared to previous years and where data is available, with other regions across Wales. The formation of a Regional Joint committee has now happened and these meetings will take place twice a year.

A six monthly report is available to Scrutiny Committees in all three local authorities. Periodically, reports are submitted and shared with Cabinet, Scrutiny Panels and Corporate Parenting Cabinets/Committees. Performance indicators are reported to the National Adoption Central team on a quarterly basis, this information is provided to the Advisory Group and the Governance Board of the National Adoption Service.

During this financial year the Regional manager has presented information to all three of the LA's corporate parenting forums, the Corporate parenting Committee in Bridgend, to the Cabinet Committee in NPT and the Scrutiny Committee in Swansea.

12. Consultations and engagement of those who use the Service

The use of survey's and qualitative data continues to be used to receive feedback from families and professionals that have experienced the service. We are in regular contact with our adopters through our closed Facebook page where they are able to also provide feedback about their experience of the service and the events that are run. A recent survey was undertaken with adopters about the events that were run over the summer. A theme from the feedback was that the booking of the events was difficult for adopters who work as the bookings were opened during the day so by the time they went on line in the evening all the places were booked. The service will be changing the booking system for the winter events to ensure that all adopters will have the opportunity to express an interest in the event and places will be allocated at random.

A working group attended by adopters from various stages of the adoption journey is well established and takes place quarterly. The service is also implementing a pre-evaluation pack with all new families who commence with support from 1st October 2025, introducing a wellbeing scale to ensure that the work that is undertaken is positively impacting on individuals wellbeing. Mid point and Post evaluation feedback will also be sought throughout the intervention to ensure that the intervention is achieving the goals set for the family.

Surveys are in place for all workshops, panels, support groups and training events. This feedback has been written up in an evaluation report the main themes of which have been:

- That adopters generally find the training and workshops as informative and a learning opportunity which enabled them to be better equipped to manage their situation although they felt that there was an information overload and some repetition across courses. They also benefitted the most from the practical real life examples and requested more of these in future sessions.
- That communication from the service was good and people generally felt updated about things that matter to them.
- It was apparent in access to records cases that for some people sadly the information they want is not available.
- Timescales for people wanting to access their historical adoption information are improving however the service is still working through legacy cases that have waited for over 12 months.
- Prospective adopters were generally positive about their experience of adoption panel, they felt well prepared to attend panel and felt at ease during their panel experience.

13. Quality assurance, compliments, comments, complaints, safeguarding issues, whistleblowing and representation

There have been no whistleblowing cases in this reporting period. One safeguarding matter have been reported directly to the service which was reported to the relevant Local Authority who commenced the safeguarding process.

Attempts are made to address any complaints received by the service at the informal stage but registered with the relevant local authority within the region. Complaints continue to remain very low with many issues being resolved informally before reaching the formal process. The service has had one new complaints during this reporting period which has been worked in conjunction with the Local authority team as it relates to a contact issue. This is ongoing and is being managed under stage 1. Compliments are collated and shared with staff.

14. Overall assessment of the service

The overall assessment of the service during this reporting period is good and the priorities identified within the good practice guide and the Adopt Cymru plan continue to be developed creatively within the service. Initial feedback from the recent inspection is positive.

The service continues to be able to manage the adoption support function effectively with no waiting list for adoption support. Family Finding and Recruitment and Assessment continue to respond to the challenges of the sector, the level of complexity for both children and prospective adopters is increasing, adopter enquiries remain inconsistent and approving adopters in the locations that the service needs is challenging. The service is mindful of the budget constraints being faced by the Local authorities and has commenced a review of the service structure which has remained the same since 2015 to ensure that the service can remain affordable.

Next steps identified Q3 & Q4 2025-26

Service Timeframe	Timeframe	By Whom
Embed the pre evaluation pack and review after three months	Revised pack to be implemented from October and review in January 2026	RAM Adoption Support team
Devise a YP guide to adoption support. Consult with YP in designing the guide	By end of December	YP Workers
Assa notifications and process to be reviewed. Audit to consider notifications at matching and 3 years post placement	By end of march 2026	RAM Adoption Support Team

Review of the service structure	By end of December	RAM
Implement inspection actions and feedback to CIW by end of December in relation to the actions identified	By end of December	RAM
Review arrangements for CARB training and implement actions that follow	By end of December	TM FF and R&A

Nichola Rogers

Nichola Rogers | Regional Adoption Manager
October 2025

