



GWASANAETH MABWYSIADU
Bae'r Gorllewin
Western Bay
ADOPTION SERVICE



Statement of Purpose

Western Bay Adoption Service
(WBAS)



Updated February 2025

1. Legal Framework

The Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019 and Regulated Adoption Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2019 requires Western Bay Adoption Service to provide a written statement that sets out the aims and objectives of the agency and the services and facilities provided in relation to the adoption of children and the provision of adoption support services.

The legal framework for adoption is the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the regulations and guidance arising from it. The Welsh Government, under Section 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, has issued National Minimum Standards for local authority adoption agencies in Wales and it is the intention of Western Bay to exceed these standards.

Section 170 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 inserted Section 3A into the Adoption and Children Act 2002, gave Welsh Ministers the power to direct local authorities in Wales to enter into regional partnerships with one another. The geographical regions for the partnerships were set out in the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangement) (Wales) Directions 2015.

Western Bay Adoption Service (WBAS) became operational on the 1st April 2015. It was set up to provide a regional adoption service on behalf of the three Local Authority Areas of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend. In April 2014 the service was integrated into the National Adoption Service. The accountability for the quality of the adoption service lies with individual Local Authorities via Specified Arrangements.

Under the terms of a partnership agreement each individual adoption agency is a member of the Western Bay adoption service and as such is committed to the uniform development of adoption services on a regional basis in order to increase the range and choice of adopters for children who require permanence through adoption.

2. Aims & Objectives of the Regional Adoption Service

Western Bay Adoption Service seeks to provide a comprehensive adoption service delivering the highest possible quality service to all parties involved in the adoption process. Its objectives are:

- To assist with identifying children whose best needs would be met by being placed with adoptive families.
- To support and prepare children through the process of adoption.
- To identify and recruit appropriate people to act as adoptive parents.
- To assess and prepare people and approve them as adoptive parents.
- To match children with adopters to achieve good positive outcomes for each child.

- To assess and identify ways of meeting the support needs of families brought together by adoption.
- To assess the support needs of families affected by adoption, including siblings, grandparents and significant others.

Western Bay work to the following values:

- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family, that can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.
- Every reasonable effort will be made to enable and support the child's own birth family to provide a permanent home for the child, when it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- Children whose birth families cannot provide them with a secure, stable and permanent home should have a care plan that considers adoption as a plan of permanence.
- The child's welfare, safety, needs and views should be central to the adoption process.
- Adoption is about meeting the needs of children, including their welfare and safety, not the needs of adults.
- Delays in securing permanency through adoption can have a severe impact on the health and development of children and should be avoided, whenever possible.
- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved and requires lifelong commitment from many different organisations, professions and individuals, who have to work together to meet the needs of those affected by adoption.
- Children's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language will be respected and considered when decisions are made.
- Children will be placed with their brothers and sisters wherever possible, unless this will not meet their individually assessed needs.
- Children will be matched with families who can best meet their needs but they will not be left to wait indefinitely for the 'perfect family'.



3. Organisational Structure, Management and Staff of the Regional Adoption Collaborative

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015 came into force in March 2015. The Directions set out the arrangements for management oversight of adoption services at a regional and national level. A structure chart can be found in Appendix 1.

Western Bay has a Joint committee that meets every 6 months. The committee consists of the Heads of Service from each of the Local Authorities and the three lead cabinet members. It also includes the Director of Neath Port Talbot who is the current chair of the Management Board. The committee scrutinises the budget and annual plan.

Western Bay also has a Regional Management Board that manages and has oversight of the region's operations. The management board consists of the Heads of Children's Services from each of the local authorities and representatives from Health, Education, The National Team and VAAs. The management board meets quarterly. The Region reports to the National Adoption Service, including the provision of quarterly performance data. At a national level, a National Combined Governance Board has operational and strategic oversight of the National Adoption Service. The Management Board is chaired by the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing from Neath Port Talbot.

The service provides to the Management Board and Joint Committee, quarterly data submissions and associated reports aligned to the National Adoption Service performance indicators. The service monitors monthly, quarterly and annual achievements alongside our performance in the previous year.

Quarterly interface meetings with adoption management leads of the three local authorities enable constant monitoring of the service, joint working and setting an improvement agenda. Interface Meetings are held 6 monthly with colleagues from other departments such as staff development, IRO teams and Fostering and external agencies such as health, which enable development of the service and the identification and resolution of any practice issues.

The manager of Western Bay Adoption Service is Nichola Rogers. Western Bay has one office based in the centre of Neath. Co-location of the service is important and being central to all three Local Authorities helps to maintain effective relationships with the childcare teams - supporting the role of the regional service in providing advice and guidance to the childcare teams.

The Service is divided into 4 functions each overseen by a manager;

- Recruitment and Assessment. The staff in this function undertake the recruitment, assessment, training, management and support of adopters. The team is managed by Jodi Farley Morris.
- Twin-Tracking and Family Finding. The staff in this function undertake early work on the twin tracking referrals and family find children for whom the plan is adoption. This team is managed by Antony Hewitt.

- Adoption Support. The staff in this function provide ongoing support to adopted children and their families, manage post adoption contact arrangements, support birth parents and support adopted adults accessing their records. This team is managed by Julia Neilson. For Swansea and Neath Port Talbot families the service has an in-house psychological and therapeutic service which is overseen by Hayley Cleave, Psychologist. For Bridgend families the service links in with the MAPPS team which is commissioned by Bridgend Local Authority.
- Business Support. The team is managed by Tracy Willis.

Staff within the service remain employed by their original local authority employer and are subject therefore to the specific terms and conditions in their own local authority. Managers are required to therefore apply each local authority policy and procedure that is pertinent to individual staff members.

There is on-going training of staff in work-related fields provided by each of the three local authorities. This encourages staff to participate in their individual Continuous Professional Development and in post qualifying training and development.

Social work staff, and alternatively qualified staff within the adoption support service receive monthly supervision. Business support staff receive quarterly supervision. Annual appraisals are being undertaken with all staff members. There is awareness through the induction and supervision process of appropriate policies and procedures relating to staff safety and conduct.

All social workers are professionally qualified and have the skills, competence and experience required to perform their role. A full service structure can be seen at Appendix 2. In line with the Restriction on the Preparation of Adoption Reports (Amendment) Regulations 2005, as amended in 2018, social workers or student social workers without the required qualification or experience, are appropriately supervised in the preparation of reports. In line with the Adoption Information and Intermediary Services (Pre-Commencement Adoptions) (Wales) Regulations 2005 and the Disclosure of Adoption Access to Information (Post-Commencement Adoptions) (Wales) Regulations 2005, any individual who provides disclosure of adoption information counselling who is not a social worker or counsellor, works under the direct supervision of a social worker or counsellor experienced in that work and who takes responsibility for the counselling.

Social work staff are appointed by interview in accordance with equal opportunity good practice and human resources recruitment policies. The Adoption Service Team Managers hold relevant management qualifications. Social workers and managers are registered with Social Care Wales. Personnel files are available for inspection by the appropriate inspectors and managers and include staff qualifications, references and DBS checks (which are renewed every three years via the DBS update service) and other relevant information. Business support staff are suitably qualified and experienced and are provided with relevant training as necessary.

There is one Adoption Panel, drawn from the Region's central list, which meet virtually every Wednesday. A face to face panel is held on a quarterly basis and when this occurs it is held in the regional Office in Neath. There is an Adoption Panel Chair and 2 Vice Chairs. The Agency Decision Maker for each Local Authority is a senior person who does not have direct management responsibility for the Adoption Panel.

The decision maker is a senior manager, who has operational and strategic management responsibility of children's services (see Appendix 3). The respective local authorities retain responsibility for decision making to meet the needs of the children they have or plan to place for adoption.

The Regional Adoption Collaborative operates in line with data protection requirements, as monitored/governed by the Data Controller of Neath Port Talbot who acts as an operational support to the service.

4. Links with External Partners/Agencies

Western Bay Adoption Service is part of the National Adoption Service and works very closely with:

- Children's services teams
- Fostering teams
- Reflect
- Adoption UK
- Health, schools and education services
- AFKA Cymru
- Other Regional Adoption Collaboratives, local authorities and voluntary adoption agencies
- Welsh Government, particularly in respect of inter-country adoption
- Adoption Register Wales

5. Scope of the Services Provided by Western Bay Adoption Service (WBAS)

WBAS provides the full range of adoption services including:

- Development and delivery of services.
- Development and implementation of policies and procedures.
- Development and distribution of information about the service for potential service users, staff, and partner agencies.
- Management of the Adoption Panel.
- Liaison with the Adoption Register Wales.
- Recruitment, training and assessment of prospective adopters.
- Support to approved adopters both prior to and after placement.
- Work with children to find suitable adoptive families.
- Letter box contact and other contact issues.
- Work with adults who have been adopted.
- Counselling of birth families (this function is shared with an external agency).
- Provision of direct support to children and young people.
- Support to birth parents.

6. Work with Children

Direct Work with children that are to be, or have been, placed for adoption remains the responsibility of the childcare teams prior to the Adoption Order being granted. Western Bay will provide advice and support to social workers in the childcare teams on the processes of adoption and may assist in aspects of the work, including:

- Planning adoption for individual children including preparing for their transition to an adoptive placement and ensuring the completion of life journey work.
- Working with birth parents.
- Working with children.
- Preparing assessments and reports for Adoption Panel.
- Matching and linking processes.
- Making and supporting the placement.
- Completion of reports to the Court.
- Management arrangements.

7. Working with Prospective Adopters

7.1 Recruitment

Western Bay has a recruitment strategy and plan aimed at recruiting a range of adopters to meet the particular needs of the children and young people for whom it provides a service. The profile of children with a plan for adoption can change significantly. The Marketing & Recruitment Officer (MRO) in the region has responsibility for annually updating the regional recruitment strategy to reflect changing demands. The MRO for Western Bay is Stuart Goddard. He also has responsibility for supporting some aspects of the National Adoption Service' national recruitment and marketing strategy in order to ensure consistency for enquirers across Wales.

7.2. Eligibility Criteria

People wishing to become adoptive parents must be over 21 years of age (18 years if one of a couple is the birth parent). They may be a couple or a single person and must have adequate space as well as the capacity to meet the needs of a child. People who are interested in becoming adoptive parents will be welcomed without prejudice and will be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process. Enquirers are provided with information at an early stage about the requirement to undertake DBS checks and the specified offences that would be a barrier to adoption (Adoption Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2005, as amended, Regulation 25).

The following process applies:

7.3 Initial Contact

People interested in adoption will make contact by telephone or through the Regional website or the National Adoption Service. When direct contact is made, basic details will be taken, and initial information given. An information pack can be downloaded from the website and/or will be sent to all enquirers. Applicants can be invited to an information session. One of the adoption team will make a visit to applicants. Information on adoption, examples of children needing adoption and details of the processes that need to be followed will be given.

7.4 Stage 1 – Pre-Assessment

An enquiry will be made, and prospective adopters will be advised that a number of checks need to be carried out with their consent. These include:

- Personal Checks – to confirm the identity of the applicant(s).
- Disclosure and Barring Service Checks – to ascertain if the applicant(s) has any relevant criminal convictions.
- Disqualification Checks – to ascertain if the applicant(s) or any member of their household has been disqualified under the Children Act 1989, and the Children (Protection from Offenders) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 1997, or Disqualification from Caring for Children (Wales) Regulations 2004.
- Checks with other local authorities where the applicant(s) has lived in at least the last ten years.
- Checks with other relevant agencies including CIW, Probation Services, NSPCC, if appropriate.
- Applicants will also be expected to undergo medical examinations and provide references.
- On successful completion of this stage the prospective adopter(s) will be advised whether their enquiry will progress to assessment.

7.5 Preparation and Training

Pre-adoption training will be undertaken within the Stage 1 process. The training is provided on a regular basis for prospective adopters and the expectation is that all applicant(s), including second time adopters, will attend preparation sessions as part of the adoption process. Where there are two applicants, it is expected that both applicants will attend. The preparation training provides more detailed information about the specific needs of children who need an adoptive family. Currently Western Bay provide the pre Adoption training course in conjunction with Vale, Valley and Cardiff, Regional Service.

7.6 Stage 2 – Assessment

The stage 2 assessment will be carried out by a qualified social worker using the BAAF/Coram Prospective Adopters' Report (PAR). Adult applicant(s) will be interviewed together and if they are a couple at least once separately. The whole family will be seen together at least once. Applicant(s)' children will be interviewed, and their comments included in the report. This includes adult children who no longer live at home.

Previous partners must be contacted and interviewed if possible. Children from previous relationships should be interviewed where appropriate.

The assessment process will explore issues and challenge perceptions. It is about assessing, with the family, if it is appropriate for them to become adoptive parents, at this time, and the kind of child or young person they would best be able to care for.

The assessment will include the following areas:

- Strengths needed – including the amount of time, energy and space available in the context of the family's existing commitments, the stability and longevity of personal relationships, the family's support networks, experience of meeting challenges, and their willingness to use professional help.
- Issues relating to the family – including motivation, infertility issues, health and disability issues, family structures, exploration of wider family and ability to determine risk, identity issues, discrimination and disability, discipline issues, health and safety issues, financial and accommodation matters.
- Meeting the child's needs – including unidentified needs, attachment issues, identity issues, abuse and neglect issues, behavioural, educational and health and disability issues, contact, needs of siblings, childcare experience of the applicants.

The applicant(s) will be given a copy of Part 1 of the written report (excluding referee statements) and offered the opportunity to discuss or make comments on it. The manager may visit/consult with prospective adopters' part way through the assessment to get feedback, in particular if issues emerge.

7.7 The Approval Process

The Adoption Panel considers all adoption applications and can have an advisory role part way through the process, where there is concern as to whether the assessment should proceed. The adoption service may produce a brief report regarding the applicant's suitability to adopt in cases where it intends to make a negative recommendation. When assessments are completed, the applicant(s) will be encouraged to attend the Adoption Panel and will be sent advance information on the panel. The applicant(s) are told verbally the Adoption Panel's recommendation on the day of the panel.

The relevant authority's designated Agency Decision-Maker considers the assessment and the panel recommendation and makes the decision in the form of a qualifying determination on whether or not the applicant(s) should be approved or whether the matter should be deferred for further work to be done. For all adopter approvals the Agency Decision Maker for Swansea undertakes the ratifications.

In cases where the panel feels unable to recommend approval and the Agency Decision-Maker agrees with this, the applicant(s) will be given written notification, including the reasons for the recommendation, and will be invited to submit written representations to the agency within 28 days and advised of their right to approach the Independent Review Mechanism.

8. Representations to the Adoption Panel

There is a procedure for the Adoption Panel to hear representations in cases where the panel is unable to recommend approval under regulation 30B (8) Adoption Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2005, as amended. The assessing social worker will visit the applicant(s) to give them written notification including reasons for the recommendation. After discussion of the issues, the applicant(s) will be invited either to access the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) (information will be give about how this can be accessed), or to submit written representations to the service within 28 days.

If no representations are received in that time, the Agency Decision-Maker will proceed to make the final decision on behalf of the service, which will be conveyed to the applicant(s) in writing and will include the reasons for the decision.

If representations are received, the matter will be referred to the Adoption panel for further consideration. The Panel will then make a further recommendation to the Agency Decision-Maker who will consider the matter in the light of the reconsidered recommendation and the representations made by the applicant(s). This final decision will be conveyed in writing to the applicant(s) along with the reasons for the decision and including the Panel's recommendation if they differ from that of the Decision-Maker.

9. Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)

The Independent Review of Determinations (Adoption and Fostering) (Wales) Regulations 2010 set up and contain the formal mechanism for an independent panel to review certain adoption agency decisions in relation to prospective adopters. The IRM is run by Children in Wales.

The IRM can be accessed where the adoption agency does not propose to approve a prospective adopter as suitable to be an adoptive parent or considers that a prospective adopter is no longer suitable to be an adoptive parent following a formal review (this is called a "qualifying determination").

The review panel is comprised of no more than five people who must (where reasonably practicable) include two social workers with experience in adoption or family placement, a registered medical practitioner and two people who have personal experience of adoption. The panel is supported by professional advisors.

A prospective adopter(s) makes a request to the Independent Review (IRM) Administrator to review the decision of the adoption agency. The request must be made within 40 working days beginning with the date on which a notification was sent by the adoption agency of their decision. The request must be in writing and state the reason for the request. There are timescales for responding to the applicant, for notifying the local authority and for setting the date for the review panel.

If the Regional Adoption Collaborative receives notification from the Welsh Ministers that a prospective adopter has applied for a review of a qualifying determination by an independent review panel, the service send the following information to the Welsh Ministers within 10 working days:

- All the reports and information which were sent to the adoption panel in accordance with regulation 26 of the Adoption Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2005.
- Any written representations made by the prospective adopter in accordance with regulation 26(6) of the Adoption Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2005.
- Any other reports or information sent by the adoption service to the Adoption Panel;
- The record of the proceedings of the Adoption Panel, its recommendations and the reasons for its recommendations.
- The notification of the decision, together with reasons, sent by the adoption service to the prospective adopter in accordance with regulations 28(4)(a) and (b), 30B(5)(a) and (b) of the Adoption Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2005.

The date fixed for the review will be no later than 3 months after the date that the determination is referred, and all parties must be notified of the date, time, and place for the review no less than 5 working days before the date fixed for the review.

The IRM panel's recommendation must be that of the majority and may be made and announced at the end of the review or reserved. The recommendation and the reasons for it must be recorded without delay in a document signed and dated by the chair. The IRM Administrator must send a copy of the recommendation to the Regional Adoption Collaborative which made the qualifying determination and the prospective adopters no later than 10 working days after the date on which the recommendation is made.

The recommendation is then considered by the Agency Decision-Maker who can decide whether or not to refer the recommendation back to the Adoption Panel for consideration or to make a final decision.

10. After Approval

Supporting applicant(s) in the period following approval is important and approved adopters will be visited and their situation formally reviewed every 12 months, or sooner if there has been a significant change in circumstances. Updated DBS checks will be requested after 2 years and updated medical examinations every 12 months.

The names of approved adopters will be entered on the Adoption Register Wales.

11. Inter-Country Adoption

People wishing to adopt children from abroad will receive a service to the same standard as domestic adoptions. A fee will be charged for the service. When an application is made to adopt a child from overseas, the inter-country adoption process should take account of the legal requirements of both countries.

Further sources of information:

The requirements in England and Wales are set out in a range of legislation and guidance, outlined on the Department for Education and Skills and Welsh Government websites. The primary source of information is the “Inter-Country Adoption Guidance and Information on Process” which was updated by the Welsh Government in November 2012. The requirements for individual countries are summarised in fact sheets available at www.gov.uk/guidance/intercountry-adoption. The website also provides a useful link to the Home Office UK Border Agency, which sets out the rules on entry to the country.

The Regional service will provide information about overseas adoption procedures, offer counselling to those wishing to adopt a child from overseas and to people adopted from overseas, and assess applicant(s)' suitability to be adoptive parents (to the same standards as for domestic adoptions). There is a nationally agreed fee for this.

Preparation classes will be similar to those for domestic adoptions but with additional elements covering the particular challenges of adopting a child from overseas. There are a number of additional requirements for the assessment of intercountry adopters:

- The report will include an assessment of the applicant(s)' suitability to adopt a child from another country.
- Some sending countries do apply age restrictions and this may be a relevant factor for some applicant(s) as they consider their options.
- Investigation of each adoptive applicant's health and consideration of any health risks, including those associated with lifestyle, should follow domestic adoption practice.
- The financial status of applicant(s) should be established and referred to in the report. This should cover both current financial status and probable status after placement, if there is likely to be a change. Some countries require applicant(s) to provide documentary evidence of income, savings and property value. It should be remembered that one of the immigration conditions is that the prospective adoptive child will be maintained and accommodated adequately without recourse to public funds by the adoptive parents. Therefore, applicant(s) in receipt of public funds can only be considered for overseas adoption if they will not have to rely on further additional public funds to support their child.

- The financial status of applicant(s) should be established and referred to in the report. This should cover both current financial status and probable status after placement, if there is likely to be a change. Some countries require applicant(s) to provide documentary evidence of income, savings and property value. It should be remembered that one of the immigration conditions is that the prospective adoptive child will be maintained and accommodated adequately without recourse to public funds by the adoptive parents. Therefore, applicant(s) in receipt of public funds can only be considered for overseas adoption if they will not have to rely on further additional public funds to support their child.
- As with domestic adoptions, the Adoption Panel is required to consider the suitability of adoptive applicant(s) and to make a recommendation to the Agency Decision-Maker.
- The Adoption Panel should have an understanding of both domestic and intercountry adoptions and should consider the suitability of adopters in the same way regardless of the type of adoption being considered.
- The decision making and notification processes are the same as for domestic adopters.

There are also additional requirements following approval and these include:

- The assessment and all the checks, medical reports and references together with the Adoption panel minutes and the Agency Decision-Maker's decision are sent to the Welsh Government who endorses the application and forwards this to the Intercountry Adoption Casework Team (IACT), Level 0, Riverside House, Bishopsgate, Feethams, Darlington, DL1 5QE. A fee will be charged for this.
- The IACT will issue a Certificate of Eligibility on behalf of the Welsh Government.
- The authorities in the country concerned will consider the application and, if the application is approved, the applicant(s) will be added to the waiting list of approved overseas adopters until the authorities can match them with a child.

When the family has been matched with a child and introductions have taken place, the family will return with the child to the UK and will have to comply with immigration and entry clearance requirements. Depending on the country of origin of the child, the prospective adopters may need to notify the Local Authority and apply to the Court for an Adoption Order.

Families who have adopted children from overseas may seek advice and assistance from the Local Authority. This should be given if an assessment of need indicates that services are required. All parties are also entitled to an assessment under the Adoption Support Regulations.



12. Step-Parent Adoption/Non Agency Adoption

When receiving initial enquiries about step-parent adoptions, the Service will provide advice and guidance on the process and on the alternatives which may be available. If the applicants decide to proceed, the work will be undertaken by an adoption social worker.

13. Arrangements for Adoption Support

Western Bay Adoption Service provides access to adoption support across all aspects of the service by all those affected by adoption. In addition to this, the creation of an adoption support model has been developed using a co-creation approach to the design of the service.

Specific to Adoption Support the service will:-

- Respond to the immediate and long-term needs of birth parents, siblings and other birth relatives involved in or affected by adoption.
- Provide access to a range of universal adoption support provisions, such as post approval training for adopters, support groups for adopters, children and specialist groups as needed including signposting to services within the region where this is provided by other agencies.
- Develop a skilled staff group who are able to provide access to individual support from a named adoption worker or commissioned therapeutic services for children, adopters and birth relatives.
- Provide an 'Post Adoption contact Service' for the confidential exchange of information between adopted children and their birth relatives as appropriate.
- Facilitate direct contact between adopted children, their siblings and birth relatives where there is a 'direct contact' agreement.
- Meet the needs of adopted adults seeking information about their adoption history, and of others seeking information about, and searching for, their relatives who have been adopted.
- Provide a range of financial support services to eligible applicants in line with the Adoption Allowances Regulations 1991 (for existing placements) and the Adoption Support Services (Local Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2005.

14. The Adoption Support Services Advisor (ASSA)

The role of the ASSA is divided between two managers the manager for Twin Tracking and Family Finding, who takes a lead responsibility for children. In addition, adoption support post adoption order is the responsibility for the manager of Adoption Support. Adoption support needs for children are assessed as part of the matching and placement process contained in the adoption support plan and are scrutinised by adoption panel and the child's Agency Decision Maker. Post adoption order, adoption support is assessed on request and a range of adoption support services, universal, targeted and specialists are available.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Service

Western Bay operates within a Nationally agreed Quality Assurance Framework. In accordance with Parts 9 to 12 of the Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019, Western Bay has in place a suitable arrangement for regular review of, and continuous monitoring of the quality of adoption services provided. All services also comply with performance monitoring and evaluation requirements lead by the National Adoption Service as well as their local authority systems for monitoring and review. Internal audit processes are used as well as management audits and staff supervision policies are adhered to.

16. Regular Feedback

Systems are established for routine feedback to be sought from all participants in the adoption process. This information is evaluated on a regular basis and informs both the quarterly and annual reports and practice development.

17. National Performance Data

Western Bay records and monitors their performance in delivering adoption services. The data is for regional and national use; it is reported to the Regional Joint Committee, the Regional Management Boards, the NAS national governance meetings as well as to Welsh Government and Ministers bi-annually.

The aim of performance measurement is to improve adoption performance across Wales. Performance measures are recorded quarterly; they reflect the performance of local authorities and the Regional service in relation to family finding activity, Adopter assessment, Life-journey work and all aspects of adoption support. Performance data is also collected in respect of the Psychological and therapeutic service and in respect of the Welsh Government grant funding.

The National Adoption Service may set goals (based on need) in relation to any or all of the above in any given year; these are available in the relevant Annual Report and Plan and inform the Recruitment and Marketing Strategy.

The data from the Adoption Register Wales is also reported quarterly including to the Welsh Government.

18. Quality of Service Review

A quality-of-service review must take place at least every six months. This is required of the Service (regulation 39 Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019).

The quality-of-service review must include, but is not limited to:

- The collation and analysis of feedback from those listed under regulation 35(1) (individuals, representatives of those individuals, employed staff, any (other) local authority or local authority in England);
- Issues and lessons learned in the analysis of complaints and safeguarding matters.
- Patterns and trends identified through the analysis of notifications, safeguarding matters, whistleblowing concerns and complaints.
- The outcome of any inspection reports from the service regulator.
- Audits of records

In addition, on an annual basis, the quality of service report summarises the work of the adoption service including the adoption panels, gives examples of successful or particularly good working practices, gives performance indicators and highlights any concerns about the maintenance of adoption standards, provides a full budget statement, details any training needs, reviews the functioning of the service and suggests changes or developments, and outlines a work programme for the adoption service for the forthcoming year.

Practice issues will be addressed at the Management Board if significant matters arise.

19. Summary of Complaints Procedure

The complaints procedure requires staff to attempt to resolve complaints informally, whenever appropriate. However, when complaints do need to be dealt with formally there is clear policy, procedural and guidance information available. Complaints specifically in respect of Western Bay are dealt with by the manager within the service who has responsibility or the Regional Manager. Where policies and procedures need to be amended in response to the outcome of complaints, mechanisms are in place to highlight specific areas for change. Where a complaint is received by the service but relates to one of the three local authorities, the complaint is forwarded to the complaints department to be addressed.

All complaints are registered with the host local authority. The adoption agency fully adheres to, and complies with, Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Council's Representations and Complaints Procedures - Section 24d & 26 of the Children Act 1989 and the Local Authority Social Services Act (Complaints Procedure) 1970.

20. Role of Care Inspectorate Wales

The role of the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in relation to adoption agencies is outlined in the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) 2016 (RISCA). The Act provides a regulatory framework covering amongst other matters; the management, staff, premises and conduct of social care agencies. The Inspectorate will monitor the performance of local authorities in the discharge of their functions under the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

Further information about CIW, including copies of inspection reports, can be found on its website:

<https://careinspectorate.wales/>

If you have a complaint regarding the actions of an individual social worker or care worker, you may wish to contact:

Social Care Wales: Social Care Wales, Southgate House, Wood Street, Cardiff, CF10 1EW;
Telephone: 0300 30 33 444; Email: info@socialcare.wales Website: <https://socialcare.wales/>

Address and Telephone number of Children's Commissioner for Wales:

Children's Commissioner for Wales

Oystermouth House

Phoenix Way

Llansamlet

Swansea

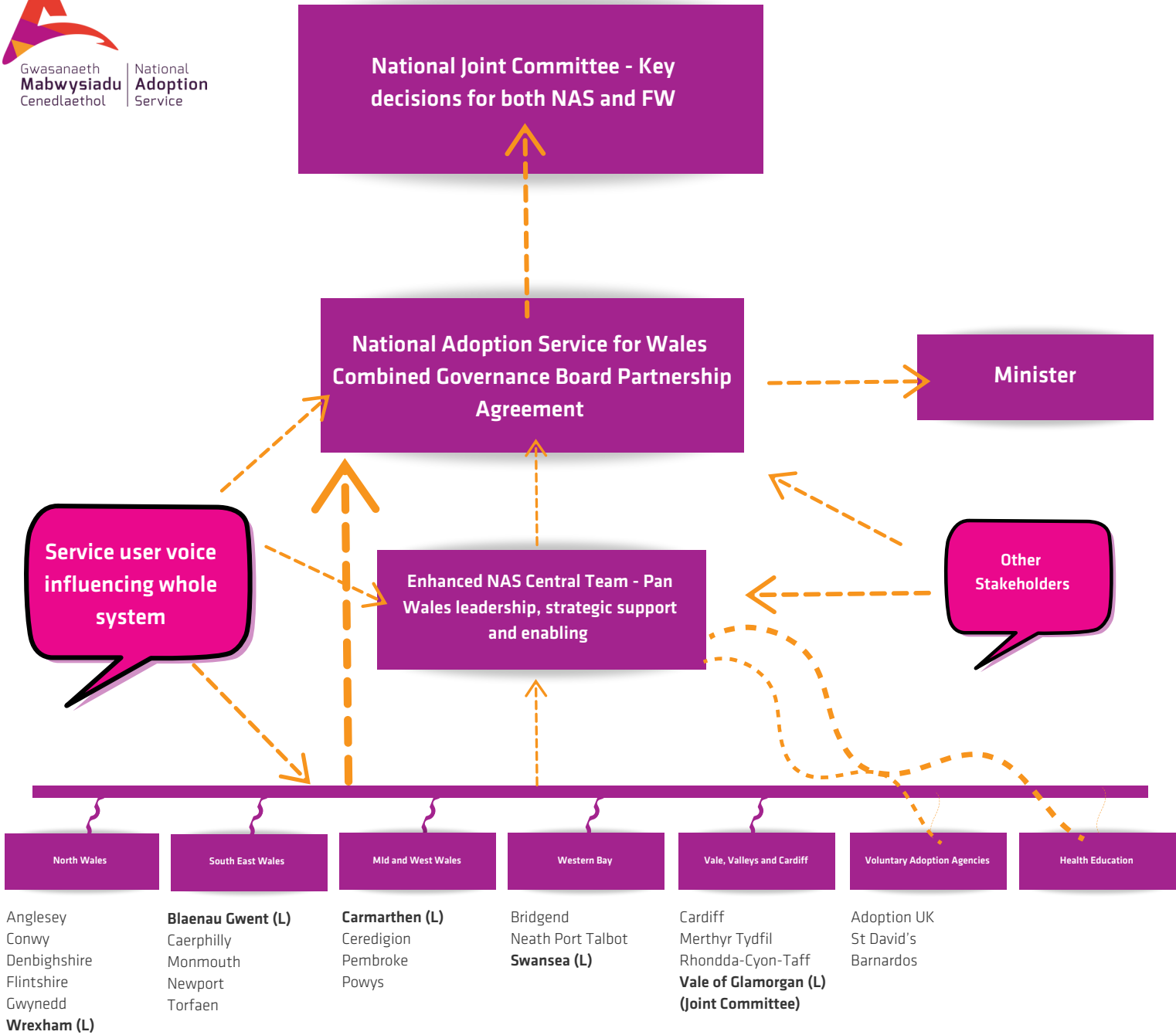
SA7 9FS

Tel. 01792 765600

Appendix One – National Structure



National
Adoption
Service



Appendix Two – WBAS Structure

Western Bay Adoption Service - Structure February 2025



Regional Manager
37 hours ss65183



Appendix Three - Agency Decision Makers

Bridgend Council

David Wright

**Deputy Head of Children's Social Care
Children's Services, Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate
Bridgend County Borough Council
Civic Offices**



Neath Port Talbot Council

**Keri Warren
Head of Children And Young People Services,
Neath Civic Centre
Neath**



Swansea Council

**Julie Davies
Head of Child and Family Services
Swansea Council, Guildhall Swansea**

