



**Gwasnaeth
Mabwysiadau
Gogledd Cymru**

North Wales
**Adoption
Service**

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

SEPTEMBER 2020



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1.0 Mission Statement

“Children who cannot be cared for by their own families should be offered permanence through adoption, as an option to achieve safe, well-supported and secure homes to care for them into adulthood. A child’s individual need for a loving home which respects their identity and offers them a positive sense of well-being is at the core of the activity of the individual agency within the North Wales Adoption Service (NWAS)”.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The North Wales Adoption Service (NWAS) became operational on 1st April 2010. It was set up to provide a regional adoption service on behalf of the local authority areas of Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Conwy, Gwynedd and Ynys Môn. In April 2014 the service was integrated into the National Adoption Service. The services provided comply with updated adoption legislation, regulations and statutory guidance in line with the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (RISCA) and in accordance with the policy and procedures of the service, within the resources allocated.
- 2.2 Under the terms of a Partnership Agreement, each individual adoption agency is a member of the North Wales Adoption Service (NWAS) 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. Wherever practicable and desirable, children requiring adoptive parents will be placed within the NWAS area.

3.0 Statement of Purpose

- 3.1 This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with the Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019; Regulations 4 to 5 and Schedule 1 and satisfies the information requirements contained therein.
- 3.2 These statutory instruments require adoption agencies to produce a Statement of Purpose setting out the aims and objectives of the local authority’s adoption service and how the local authority ensures it meets those aims and objectives.
- 3.3 The authority must supply a copy of the Statement of Purpose to those persons listed under Regulation 5(6), namely:
- (a) The Service Regulator (Care Inspectorate Wales)
 - (b) Individuals
 - (c) Any Representatives, unless it would be inconsistent with the well-being of the individual.

3.4 Individuals include:

- A child who may be adopted, their parent or guardian
- A person wishing to adopt a child
- An Adopted person, their parent, birth parent or former guardian
- Any persons receiving adoption support services.

3.5 Representatives include:

- Any person having legal authority, or the consent of an individual, to act on the person's behalf.

3.6 The Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and updated at least annually and in line with any urgent changes or requirements. The Service Regulator, Individuals and Representatives will be notified of any revision to the Statement of Purpose at least 28 days before it is to take effect.

4.0 Children's Guide

4.1 The Children's Guide (Information about the service) has been developed in accordance with Regulation 12 of the Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019 and the necessity to provide information about the service in an appropriate language, style presentation and format to all individuals.

4.2 The Children's Guide is available in various formats in order to ensure that it is suitable for all children based on age and understanding.

4.3 The Children's Guide contains all the information required in accordance with Regulation 12(3):

- How to raise a concern or make a complaint
- The availability of advocacy services
- The role and contact details of the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

5.0 Aims, Objectives and Functions

5.1 Under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 each individual local authority within NWAS is an adoption agency approved and subject to the:

- Access to Information (Post-Commencement Adoptions) (Wales) Regulations 2002;
- Adoption Information and Intermediary Services (Pre-Commencement Adoptions) (Wales) Regulations 2005
- Adoption Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2005,
- The Adoption Support Services (Local Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2019
- The Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019,
- The Adoption Agencies (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2020,

- Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014
- Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016
- Code of Practice - The Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019

- 5.2 The service aims to offer a comprehensive adoption service in accordance with the above statutes, regulations and national minimum standards and as described within its documented policies and procedures and the performance framework set out by the Welsh Government.
- 5.3 NWAS currently maintains joint adoption panels on behalf of Flintshire/Wrexham; Conwy/Denbighshire and Gwynedd/Anglesey. Each panel makes recommendations to the agency on the following matters:
- (a) Whether a relinquished child should be placed for adoption
 - (b) Whether applicants are suitable to adopt
 - (c) Whether a child should be placed with a particular adopter/s
- 5.4 The service aims to provide a range of services either directly or in co-operation with other suitable agencies to children who require permanence through adoption, and to recruit, train and assess prospective adopters and carefully match children with adopters who will meet the child's needs.
- 5.5 The service is committed to applying similar values and quality standards across all types of adoption: domestic, adoptions with a foreign element, and partner of parent.
- 5.6 The service will ensure that services are based upon assessed needs and thereafter carried out in a timely and efficient way.
- 5.7 The service aims to provide a range of services to support adopters and their children following placement.
- 5.8 The service will enable birth families to access appropriate support and/or counselling.
- 5.9 The service aims to provide counselling, access to records and an Intermediary Service to adult adoptees.
- 5.10 The service has a range of information which can be accessed on its website available to all those affected by adoption. www.northwalesadoption.gov.uk or Free phone North Wales Adoption Service: 0800 783 0618

6.0 Values

- 6.1 The service policies and procedures are founded upon the following values:

- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.
- It is best for children where possible to be brought up by their own birth family.
- The child's welfare, safety and needs will be at the centre of the adoption process.
- The child's wishes and feelings will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages.
- Delays in adoption can have a severe impact on the health and development of children and will be avoided wherever possible.
- Children's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language will be fully recognised and positively valued and promoted when decisions are made; following the principles of the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The particular needs of disabled children will be fully recognised and taken into account when decisions are made.
- The role of adoptive parents in offering a permanent family to a child who cannot live with their birth family will be valued and respected.
- 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.

7.0 Status and Constitution

- 7.1 Each individual adoption agency within the North Wales Adoption Service is part of its respective County Council.

8.0 Adoption Agency Partnerships

- National Adoption Service
- Adoption UK
- The four other regional adoption services
- AFA Cymru
- Coram/BAAF
- Wales Adoption Register
- Registered Adoption Agencies e.g. Barnados; St. Davids Children's Society etc.
- Children's Services' Teams
- Fostering Teams
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service – CAMHS
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- Schools & GWE – The School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales

9.0 Monitoring and Review

9.1 In accordance with Parts 9 to 12 of the Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019, the service has made suitable arrangements for regular review of, and continuous monitoring of the quality of adoption services provided.

9.2 Oversight of Adequacy of Resources (Regulation 33)

- The Service Lead will ensure that an Annual Report and Quality of Care Review, supplemented by bi-annual performance reports are provided to the NWAS Partnership Board.
- The Service Lead will ensure that there are adequate systems and processes in place to provide information about any areas that may need closer observation/consideration and/or improvement This includes, but is not limited to:
 - staff turnover;
 - staff sickness levels;
 - complaints;
 - safeguarding issues;
 - inspection reports by the service regulator,
 - inspection outcomes and/or reports from Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and fire service.
- The Service Lead will ensure that there are suitable arrangements in place to alert relevant senior officers immediately where the service is:
 - not complying with policies and procedures;
 - failing or unable to meet or address issues raised in inspection reports; and
 - providing a service not included in the statement of purpose.

9.3 Other reports (Regulation 34)

- The Service Lead has a system in place to submit reports to the Head of Children's Services / Chief Safeguarding and Support Officer or counterpart in each partner local authority that accurately reflects overall service quality and performance. This includes arrangements for the Service Lead to feed back and communicate any urgent matters requiring immediate action and includes, but is not limited to:
 - sudden or unexplained death of individuals using the service;
 - natural disaster;
 - financial irregularities;
 - significant concerns raised by the service regulator or another local authority; and
 - any event which affects staff availability.

9.4 Engagement with Individuals and Others (Regulation 35)

- NWAS will ensure arrangements are in place to obtain the views on the quality of support provided and how this can be improved from:
 - individuals;
 - any representatives of those individuals;
 - staff employed by the service; and
 - any other Local Authority;
 - Care Inspectorate Wales and
 - any relevant Professional Bodies.
- These views will be taken into account when decisions on plans for improvement of the quality of the support provided are undertaken.

9.5 Quality of Service Review (Regulation 39)

- As required but at least 6 monthly we will; assess, monitor and improve the quality and safety of the service. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - the collation and analysis of feedback from all parties listed under regulation 35 (above);
 - 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 regulators;
 - audits of records.
- Additionally we will ensure that audit systems and processes for monitoring and reviewing the service give assurance that a high quality service is provided.
- Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure systems and processes are continually reviewed to enable the Service Lead and operational managers to identify where the quality and/or safety of services is being, or may be, compromised, and to respond appropriately without delay to rectify matters.
- Ensure all feedback is listened to, recorded and responded to as appropriate.
- Ensures information is analysed and that recommendations are made to the service provider as to how and where the quality and safety of the service can be improved.

9.6 Additional Measures

- The adoption service is subject to the National Adoption Service and all County Council systems of monitoring and review. Internal audit processes are used as well as management audits and the staff supervision policy. Each Council's policies on financial audit, human resources and budgetary matters apply to the adoption service.
- All members of staff working in the adoption service have a supervision contract and receive supervision on at least a monthly basis.
- The Head of Children's Services/Chief Safeguarding and Support Officer or counterpart will commission regular reports in relation to the operation of the service and review the reports with other members of their Departmental Management Team and the North Wales adoption service Partnership Board.
- An annual report on the adoption service is provided to elected members and adoption panel members, which details the outcomes achieved and proposals for new developments in services.
- Performance data is collected and returned to the National Adoption Service and Welsh Government as part of the whole service reporting on performance measures.
- A bi-annual performance report and an Annual Report and Quality of Care Review is presented and examined by the NWAS Partnership Board. These reports can be made available to the Scrutiny Committee of each Local Authority, and to panel members of each joint Adoption Panel across North Wales.
- Any adoption services that are commissioned or contracted out are subject to the Host Authority (Wrexham) Council's commissioning or contracting procedures and service level agreements.

9.7 Policies and Procedures

- a) The policies and procedures for recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving and supporting adopters are reviewed regularly as new legislation and regulations are introduced.
- b) All members of the public, enquiring about becoming potential adopters are provided with written information outlining the process.
- c) Adoption panel procedures are issued to all panel members.
- d) Adoption support policies and practice are regularly reviewed and updated as new legislation and regulations are introduced.

10.0 **Services for Children**

- 10.1 Each Local Authority within NWAS remains responsible for the work required in preparing children for adoption. Children whose 'should be adopted' status has been ratified by an Agency Decision Maker will be referred to NWAS for matching purposes. Child care social workers and adoption social workers within NWAS will work together to identify suitable adoptive parents and support the introductory process.
- 10.2 Preparation of the Child for Adoption
- 10.3 Each individual agency within NWAS recognises the importance of preparing a child for adoption. The process includes the child's social worker, the adoption social worker, foster carers, health service professionals, teachers and birth family members who may all work directly or indirectly or have contact with the child during the preparation period. The service will support the work of all parties involved in planning and preparation through:
- a) Allocating a suitably qualified and experienced social worker.
 - b) Minimising delays when adoption has been identified as the child's permanence plan (due by the Child's 2nd LAC Statutory Review – 4 months of placement).
 - c) Assessing the need for adoption support services for both the child and adoptive family
- 10.4 The individual agency within the NWAS will assist a child to understand the reasons for becoming looked after and why he/she cannot return to live within his or her birth family. All children for whom adoption is the permanence plan are provided with relevant literature and a copy of the children's guide relevant to their age group.
- 10.5 The information is designed to inform children in easy to understand language about the adoption process from start to finish.
- 10.6 Where appropriate, children may be given information about prospective adopters who have been identified for them. This information may take the form of photographs or DVD recordings.
- 10.7 For children of sufficient age and understanding counselling will be provided in a form and language that enables them to clearly understand the information provided and to discuss any issues arising. The counselling will be particularly sensitive to the child's ethnicity and religious beliefs.
- 10.8 All children of sufficient age and understanding are encouraged to attend and share their views and opinions at the looked after review meetings. Their wishes and feelings are also included within the Child's Assessment Report for Adoption that is presented to the adoption panel.
- 10.9 Life history information is provided to the child through life story books, which reinforce the child's sense of identity and understanding of their heritage as they grow

up.

10.10 Family Finding and Matching

10.11 Children referred for adoption or subject to twin-tracking are allocated an adoption social worker within NWAS who will undertake the role of family finder.

10.12 The Family Finding and Matching Procedure is as follows:

- (a) The service will be informed of any child likely to be adopted immediately following the looked after child review that endorses a plan for adoption.
- (b) Once the 'should be adopted' decision' is confirmed the childcare social worker will make a referral to NWAS and a search of the database of approved adopters will be undertaken in order to identify any potential adopters.
- (c) An adoption social worker will be allocated by NWAS to undertake family finding activities.
- (d) The child's social worker and the adoption social worker will work together to identify the families to be considered for the child and undertake joint visits to the potential adopters
- (e) One family is selected as a match for the child at a matching meeting.
- (f) A match with suitable adoptive parents will be identified and approved by the panel within 6 months of the agency agreeing that the child should be placed for adoption, providing this timescale is not subject to external factors such as court proceedings or complex issues in matching.
- (g) All children will be referred to the Wales Adoption Register within 1 month after the panel has recommended and the agency has approved their adoption plan, if they have not been placed or if no local match is being pursued. In some cases children will be referred immediately dependent on the child/ren's specific needs.

10.13 The adoption social worker has a number of key responsibilities:

- (a) To work jointly with the child care social worker to develop a clear picture of the specific needs of the child so that an appropriate family can be sought.
- (b) To be pro-active in identifying as many potential suitable matches as possible.
- (c) To work jointly with the child's social worker in presenting any proposed match to the adoption panel.

10.14 Where it is in the child's best interest, the individual agency within NWAS will look to place children with adoptive families within the North Wales area. However, some children may need placing away from their original community for their welfare, well-being and protection.

10.15 All children will be registered with the Wales Adoption Register and will be referred if a local or regional match cannot be found after 1 month.

10.16 Safeguarding the Child

- Child protection is not distinct or separate from family placement including adoptive placements.
- Children living away from home must be afforded the same level of protection as children living within their family.
- Children placed for adoption may be especially vulnerable and they have the same safeguarding needs and rights as all other children. This highlights the importance of the safeguarding, visiting and reviewing requirements.
- It is vital that children placed for adoption are safeguarded, monitored and reviewed and that they and their prospective adopters have access to advice and support.

10.17 Provision of Adoption Support Services

10.18 Post Adoption Order and depending upon assessed needs, a child may receive indirect information on their birth family via the service's Letterbox contact system. All Letterbox arrangements entered into are child focused and must be in their best interests. Adopters and birth parents are encouraged to understand that when an older child indicates that he or she does not wish the information exchange to continue their wishes should be respected. NWAS oversees the system and information is passed between birth family members (including siblings) and children or adopters acting on behalf of children. The details of the type of information to be exchanged, together with the frequency of exchange are set out in a written agreement which all parties sign and are expected to adhere to.

10.19 Birth family members are given assistance to write letters to place on an adopted child's file. If the birth parent does not wish for a local authority social worker to undertake this task with them, a referral will be made to the most appropriate agency, i.e. CAMHS, Family Centres, DEWIS, Educational Psychologist.

10.20 The individual agencies within NWAS provide adoption support in line with the Adoption Support Services (Local Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2019. The child's needs for adoption support services are assessed at different stages of the adoption process. These are as follows:

- When the individual agency within NWAS considers whether the child 'should be placed for adoption.'
- When it is proposed that a child be placed with particular prospective adopters

- When a child's adoption placement is being reviewed.
- If adoption support services are to be provided on more than one occasion and are not limited to the provision of advice and information, an adoption support plan will be produced and reviewed annually or sooner if there is a significant change in circumstances.
- Where appropriate, this will be done in consultation with services such as education or health.
- The primary goal of the provision of adoption support services is to promote the success of adoptive placements. In the event of adoption placements threatening to disrupt, a meeting will be held as early as possible to review the support being provided to the placement, with the aim of preventing a placement breakdown. If the placement does break down, a disruption meeting will be held in order to understand the factors affecting the outcome and to help plan for a future placement.

11.0 Recruiting, approving, training, supporting and reviewing adopters.

11.1 Recruitment

- 11.2 NWAS is aware of the changing demographic nature of the local area and welcomes applications to become adoptive parents regardless of gender, sexuality, marital status, race, religion, disability, culture or employment status. In meeting the needs of individual children, NWAS recognises the need to provide a diverse range and choice of adoptive parents.
- 11.3 NWAS will develop a range of recruitment materials and organise local promotional events as well as participate in national campaigns on a regional basis.
- 11.4 Applications are welcome from anyone over 21 years of age and each enquirer receives a personalised response from a dedicated recruitment officer. Wherever possible, an information leaflet and response form is sent out within 5 days (usually within 24 hours) and further contact made on receipt of the completed response form between 7 and 14 days.
- 11.5 Following receipt of the response form, the recruitment officer or an adoption social worker will arrange an initial visit to the prospective adopter(s) as soon as reasonably practicable. The visit is designed to provide the prospective adopters and their family with further information on what adoption involves, to conduct an initial interview and to answer any questions that the potential adopter may have at this stage.
- 11.6 Further information on becoming an adoptive parent, including a step-by-step guide can be found on www.northwalesadoption.gov.uk or **Free phone North Wales Adoption Service: 0800 783 0618**

11.7 Assessment and Approval

11.8 The assessment to become an approved adopter is a two stage process undertaken by NWAS adoption social workers and involves the following stages:

11.9 Safeguarding checks

- Applicants are required to complete an application for enhanced enquiries to be made with the Disclosure and Barring Service. In addition, written consent is sought to allow a number of checks with other agencies, including the NSPCC, the Probation Service, Local Authorities, Health Services, CIW and any other statutory agency relevant to the particular family.
- Birth certificates, marriage and divorce certificates will be viewed in addition to any passport or driving licence in order to verify the applicant's identity
- Verification of the applicant's employment history is undertaken.
- The names and addresses of 4 referees are required who will be asked to provide written references. A minimum of 3 of these referees will be visited and only one of the referees can be a family member.
- If the Applicant(s) has / have children of pre-school or school age, contact will be made with the relevant Health Visitor or Head teacher
- If the Applicant(s) is / are in employment, references will be obtained from their employer
- If the Applicant(s) has / have been in a previous relationship, contact will be made with previous partners

11.10 Preparatory Training

- Applicants will be required to attend a preparatory training course. If couples apply both partners are expected to attend. NWAS uses the Preparing to Adopt training programme recommended by the British Association for Adoption & Fostering (BAAF). Preparatory training groups take place across the agencies at least six times a year. Training takes place over three days and the main subjects covered are as follows:
 - The adoption agency's procedures in relation to assessment of prospective adopters and placement of a child for adoption
 - The adoption and approval process including the legal procedure in relation to placement for adoption
 - The significance and legal implications of adoption for a child and his / her family
 - Contact between the child and birth parents or relatives
 - The children needing adoption including age range, gender and likely needs and background.
 - Safeguarding the child.
 - Identity and contact matters

- Attachment
 - The skills needed to be an adoptive parent
 - Adoption support services
 - Understanding of adult attachment and resilience
 - Inter Country aspects, if applicable.
 - The role of the Independent Review Panel
- An adoptive parent and representatives from partner agencies attend in order to assist those undergoing training and assessment in order to answer the prospective adoptive parents' questions.
 - Training will also be provided for Family and Friends of applicants accepted into the process.

11.11 Home Study

- Using the Prospective Adopter Report format, the social worker undertaking the assessment will explore the applicants' motivation and understanding of adoption, their attitudes, expectations and lifestyle, leisure activities and interests, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background and understanding of issues of discrimination. Consideration will also be given to the community facilities and the accessibility of Education and Health services.
- Applicants are also required to complete a work book which will be presented to the Adoption Panel at the approval stage.

11.12 Approval

- Following the successful completion of the assessment process, a report will be presented to the adoption panel for a recommendation as to 'suitability to adopt' of the prospective adopters. Applicants will have been given the opportunity to read and comment on the completed report prior to panel, and are invited to attend the panel in person.
- The majority of adoption panel members, including the Chair are independent of the adoption agencies and NWAS and act in a quality assurance role to ensure that appropriate standards are maintained.
- Following a recommendation by the adoption panel, the final decision on approval is considered by the relevant agency decision-maker. The decision is then communicated both verbally and in writing to the prospective adopters in accordance with the prescribed timescales (usually verbally within 24 hours, with written confirmation the following working day).
- Adopters are approved on a generic basis; however the assessment should reflect the adopters' strengths, circumstances, commitments and the accommodation

available. This may be amended to reflect any change in circumstances and experience at an annual review.

- All approved adoptive parents awaiting placements will undergo a review of their approval at least annually, in accordance with the regulatory requirements under Regulation 30 of the Adoption Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2005. The main aim of the review is to determine whether the prospective adopters remain 'suitable to adopt', and to take into account any change in circumstances.
- The adoption panel should consider the review report and make recommendations to the agency decision-maker.

11.13 Appeal

- The right of complaint or appeal procedures apply to anyone who feels that they have not been treated fairly or that they have been misrepresented within the process of assessment or approval. Applicants can access Wrexham County Borough Councils Complaints Procedure at the conclusion of Stage One of the Assessment process. Only at the conclusion of Stage Two are Applicants able to access the Independent Review of Determinations process.

11.14 Adoption Support Services

- Approved adopters will be supported from the point that the child is introduced to them through to the making of an Adoption Order and beyond as necessary. An assessment of the family's support needs will be completed by the placing authority and they will be offered support services to meet those assessed needs which will be subject to annual review or sooner should there be a significant change in circumstances
- Visits by the childcare social worker to adopters with a child in placement will take place weekly until the first review and then in accordance with the recommendations of the review, and at least 4 weekly, thereafter until the Adoption Order is made (Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015). Additional visits will be undertaken when adopters are being considered for children or undergoing the matching procedure.
- Once a child has been in an adoptive placement for ten weeks, an application for an Adoption Order can be made. Arrangements will be made by the court for a First Directions' Hearing at which all relevant actions are detailed and the adoption social workers will support adopters through this process.
- In accordance with regulatory requirements the each agency has a nominated Adoption Support Services Adviser.

12.0 The Adoption Panel

12.1 The composition, terms of reference and functions of adoption panels of the individual agencies within the NWAS are set out in the:

- Adoption Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2005
- Adoption Agencies (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

12.2 The adoption panel is a body of people who are empowered to consider and recommend to the agency whether:

- A relinquished child should be placed for adoption
- A prospective adopter is suitable to be an adoptive parent
- A prospective adopter would be a suitable parent for a particular child (this includes adoption with a foreign element).

12.3 The recommendation of the panel is referred to the agency decision-maker who will decide whether or not to endorse the panel's recommendation. The agency decision maker should make a decision on the recommendations of the panel within 7 working days of the panel meeting. The agency is required to notify in writing the relevant person(s) (birth parent or guardian in respect of a proposed plan for adoption of a child; prospective adopter in respect of a suitable to adopt consideration; birth parent or guardian of a child and prospective adopter in respect of a matching recommendation). The child's social worker will share the information with the child in an age related way.

12.4 Single agency panels consist of no more than 10 members, (joint panel no more than 11 members) including:

- Two social workers in the employment of each agency, each with at least three years relevant post-qualifying experience in child care social work, including direct experience of adoption work;
- The Independent Chairperson;
- The person nominated as the Medical Adviser to each agency. The Medical Adviser may nominate a deputy in his or her absence who will also be a voting panel member;
- At least three other independent persons, not being employed by the agency. (This may include at least 2 individuals with personal experience of adoption e.g. an adopter and an adopted person over the age of 18 years, and specialists in education or child and adolescent mental health);
- Other members might include a birth parent of a child placed for adoption;
- A legal adviser and the agency's adviser to the panel also attend panel meetings;
- An elected councillor, from the council of each agency (optional / as good practice).

- 12.5 All panel members are subject to DBS Checks. The individual agencies within NWAS have in place guidance around potential conflict of interest (both personal and professional) to ensure fair treatment of applicants. Where applicants are personally known to panel members or vice versa, panel members can be informed in advance to ensure that contingency arrangements are made which includes the panel member standing down during the discussion of that assessment.
- 12.6 Panel members are provided with bi-annual reports on the adoption activities of the agency. They also regularly receive relevant papers and information to enable them to contribute to the formulation of policy and practice in relation to adoption. Practice issues arising from panel discussions are considered and actions agreed to promote better practice.

13.0 Adoptions with a Foreign Element

- 13.1 The service provided will be compatible with statutory requirements and nationally recognised standards and codes of practice.
- 13.2 NWAS will provide initial counselling and advice which will enable prospective applicants to understand the process of adopting a child from overseas and reach an informed decision as to whether to proceed with an application. Prospective adopters and staff members will be given access to IAC (Intercountry Adoption Centre) in order to receive training and additional information and guidance on the process for the individual countries.
- 13.3 Should the prospective adopter request to be assessed by NWAS the service will complete the home study report as required for the approval of the prospective adopters, including an assessment of their adoption support needs. A fee will be charged for this service.
- 13.4 Prospective adopters for inter-country adoption undergo the same preparation training as domestic adopters, although additional information is given regarding cultural issues and the legislative framework surrounding inter-country adoption via IAC. Variable costs will be incurred by the adopters depending on the country involved. Prospective adopters are also informed about the specific criteria or procedures applicable in different countries.
- 13.5 Before applicants can proceed to having a child placed with them, they have to be approved as suitable to be adoptive parent(s). They also require notification from the Welsh Government confirming that they have been assessed and approved and that the child will be authorised to reside permanently in the British Isles if entry clearance is granted and an Adoption Order is made.
- 13.6 When the Local Authority is notified of the child's arrival in the UK and of the prospective adopters' intention to apply for an adoption order, a social worker for the child and a supervising social worker for the prospective adopters will be appointed to undertake statutory visiting and reviewing requirements.

14.0 Foster Carers who wish to Adopt

- 14.1 Foster carers who make a formal application to adopt children in their care are entitled to the same information and preparation as other prospective adopters.
- 14.2 Where the child has lived with foster carers for less than twelve months they will be assessed in the same way as any other prospective adopters. However, the assessment will focus on the specific long-term needs of the child in question. Some of the primary issues to be taken into consideration are:
- The quality of the attachment between the child and the foster carers.
 - The wishes and feelings of the child.
 - The actual or likely availability of other adopters for the child.
- 14.3 Where a child has been placed with foster carers for 12 months or more they can make a private application direct to the court and will immediately progress to Stage two of the assessment process, which will take approximately four months in line with the timescales of the Adoption Standards for Wales.

15.0 Partner of Parent

- 15.1 Where a birth parent is in a new partnership and their partner wishes to adopt the birth parent's child, the adoption agency will counsel the family about the process and advise whether an alternative legal order might be more appropriate. After 3 months' notice to NWAS, a direct application to the court can be made by the Partner of Parent and a report will be completed by NWAS in line with the timescales of the Adoption Standards for Wales.

16.0 Services for Birth Families

- 16.1 The individual agencies within NWAS are committed to ensuring that birth parents are fully consulted about the care plans for their children. As part of their commitment to including birth parents in the adoption process all birth parents will be invited to reviews on their children. If the plan is for adoption they will be given written information about what adoption means. Birth parents will also be given the opportunity to read what is written about them within the Child's Assessment Report for Adoption and are encouraged to express their views about the plan for adoption.
- 16.2 Birth family members are encouraged to provide information that the adopted child will need. This should include information about the adopted child's birth and early life, family history, the birth family's views about adoption and contact and up to date information about themselves and their situation. Open letters from the birth family will also be kept on the child's adoption file for the adopted child to access if they so wish.

16.3 Birth Parent Counselling

- The birth parents of any child being adopted through an agency within NWS will be offered:
 - Counselling advice and information in relation to the adoption
 - Assistance in relation to contact with the adopted child
 - Intermediary Services (Please see section 17.0 for more information)
 - Support is also offered to birth family members regarding contact arrangements via the NWS Contact Co-ordinator.

16.4 Relinquished Babies

- There are occasions when parents voluntarily opt to give a child up for adoption. The individual agencies within the NWS recognise that such situations must be handled with great sensitivity. Giving up a child for adoption is not easy for either birth mothers or birth fathers.
- An initial assessment will be undertaken by the relevant childcare team who will explore all options available, in conjunction with an adoption social worker from NWS.

17.0 **Intermediary Services**

17.1 The 2002 Adoption and Children Act recognises the needs of adopted adults, birth parents and relatives who want the opportunity to seek further information or make contact with their birth family or adopted child or let them know of their wish for contact.

17.2 Birth relatives do not have the right to have any identifying information that might identify the adopted adult. However, birth relatives now have the legal right to ask for an 'intermediary service' to provide services including counselling, support and advice, information and searching.

17.3 An intermediary is a person or an organisation that acts as a go-between for two or more people. In adoption the person acting as an intermediary may approach the adopted person on behalf of the birth relative.

18.0 **Adoption Support Services**

18.1 In accordance with regulatory requirements the agency has nominated an Adoption Support Services Adviser. Local authorities are required by law to provide a range of adoption support services to meet the needs of people affected by adoption. These people may include:

- adopted children or children placed for adoption

- adopted adults
- prospective Adopter(s) and adoptive parents of children under the age of 18
- step-children or birth children of adoptive parents; and
- birth parents or relatives, including siblings (full or half) of the adopted child or other people with whom the adopted child has an important relationship, in respect of their need for assistance to support contact arrangements.

18.2 A request for an assessment of adoption support needs can be made at any time by contacting the Adoption Agency.

18.3 The adoption support services may include:

- financial support in order to support the Adoptive Placement
- services to enable groups of adopted children, adoptive parents and birth parents or former guardians of an adopted child to discuss matters relating to adoption
- assistance, including mediation services, in relation to contact between an adopted child and a birth parent, birth sibling, former guardian or a relative such as an aunt, uncle or grandparent, of the adopted child (whether of full-blood, half-blood or by marriage)
- a range of therapeutic services for adopted children for the purpose of ensuring the continuance of the relationship between an adoptive child and their adoptive parent, including training and support for adoptive parents to meet any special needs of the child
- assistance where disruption of an adoptive placement or adoption arrangement following the making of an adoption order has occurred, or is in danger of occurring, making arrangements for the provision of mediation services and organising and running meetings to discuss disruptions; and
- counselling, advice and information.

18.4 Services for Adopted Adults

18.5 The individual agencies within NWAS provide a service to adopted adults as follows:

- Pre-Commencement Adoptions
- People who were adopted before 12th November 1975 are required to see a counsellor before they can be given access to their birth records.
- People, who were adopted after 11th November 1975, may choose whether or not they would like to see a counsellor before they are given the information that will lead them to their birth record.
- After counselling (if provided), adopted adults will be assisted to obtain information on their birth records.
- The purpose of the counselling is to ensure that the adopted person has considered the possible effect of any enquiries, both on himself/herself and on others. It is important that the information sought, and to which the adopted person has a legal right, is provided in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

18.6 Post Commencement Adoptions

- On reaching 18 years the adopted person has the right to receive from the adoption agency:
 - A copy of their birth certificate
 - The information originally contained in the Child's Assessment Report for Adoption prepared for the adoption panel.
 - A copy of court documents relating to the adoption which do not contain protected information e.g. application form, the Adoption Order, guardian and local authority reports
- Written information will be provided to the adopted person about the availability of counselling but there is no legal requirement to receive it before being given the requested information.

19.0 Representation and Complaints

- 19.1 NWAS has adopted the Wrexham County Borough Council Representation and Complaints Procedure that places emphasis on resolving complaints at an early stage. If any complaint cannot be resolved quickly and to the satisfaction of the complainant, a formal "second stage" process can be evoked, involving investigation by an independent investigator. If the complainant is still unsatisfied they must be informed of their right to escalate their complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
- 19.2 All complaints regarding NWAS are monitored by the Customer Services Manager in Wrexham who can be contacted by telephoning (free) 0800 587 6708 who will liaise with their counterpart in other member agencies.

20.0 Independent Review of Determination

20.1 Where the agency considers that the prospective adopter(s) is / are not suitable to adopt a child, the agency is required to send them written notification stating that the agency does not propose to approve them. This is a “qualifying determination”. This notification provides 20 days within which to respond by either submitting any representations to the agency or by application to the Independent Review Panel, which is co-ordinated by the Welsh Government.

21.0 Role of Care Inspectorate Wales

21.1 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.

- The local office of the Care Inspectorate Wales is:

CIW North Wales Region,
Government Buildings,
Sarn Mynach,
Llandudno Junction
LL31 9RZ

Telephone: 0300 062 5032

Fax: 0300 062 5030

Email: CIW@gov.wales

22.0 CONTACT DETAILS

North Wales Adoption Service

3rd Floor, Lambpit Street, Wrexham, LL11 1AR

Telephone: 01978 295311 or Freephone Telephone Number: 0800 085 0774

Visit our website: northwalesadopts.gov.uk

Contact details of Member Adoption Agencies of the North Wales Adoption Service

(a) **Wrexham County Borough Council:-**

Head of Children's Services

3rd Floor, Lambpit Street, Wrexham, LL11 1AR

Telephone Number: 01978 292000

(b) **Flintshire County Council:-**

Head of Children's Services

Ty Dewi Sant, St David's Park, Ewloe, Flintshire, CH5 3FF

Telephone Number: 01352 701313

(c) **Denbighshire County Council:-**

Principle Manager – Children's Services

Russell House, Churton Road, Rhyl, Denbighshire, LL18 3DP.

Telephone Number: 01824 712800

(d) **Conwy County Borough Council:-**

Head of Children's Services

Coed Pella, Conway Road, Colwyn Bay, Conwy, LL29 7AZ

Telephone Number: 01492 574000

(e) **Gwynedd County Council:-**

Head of Children and Family Support Services

Shire Hall Street, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1SH

Telephone Number: 01286 679228

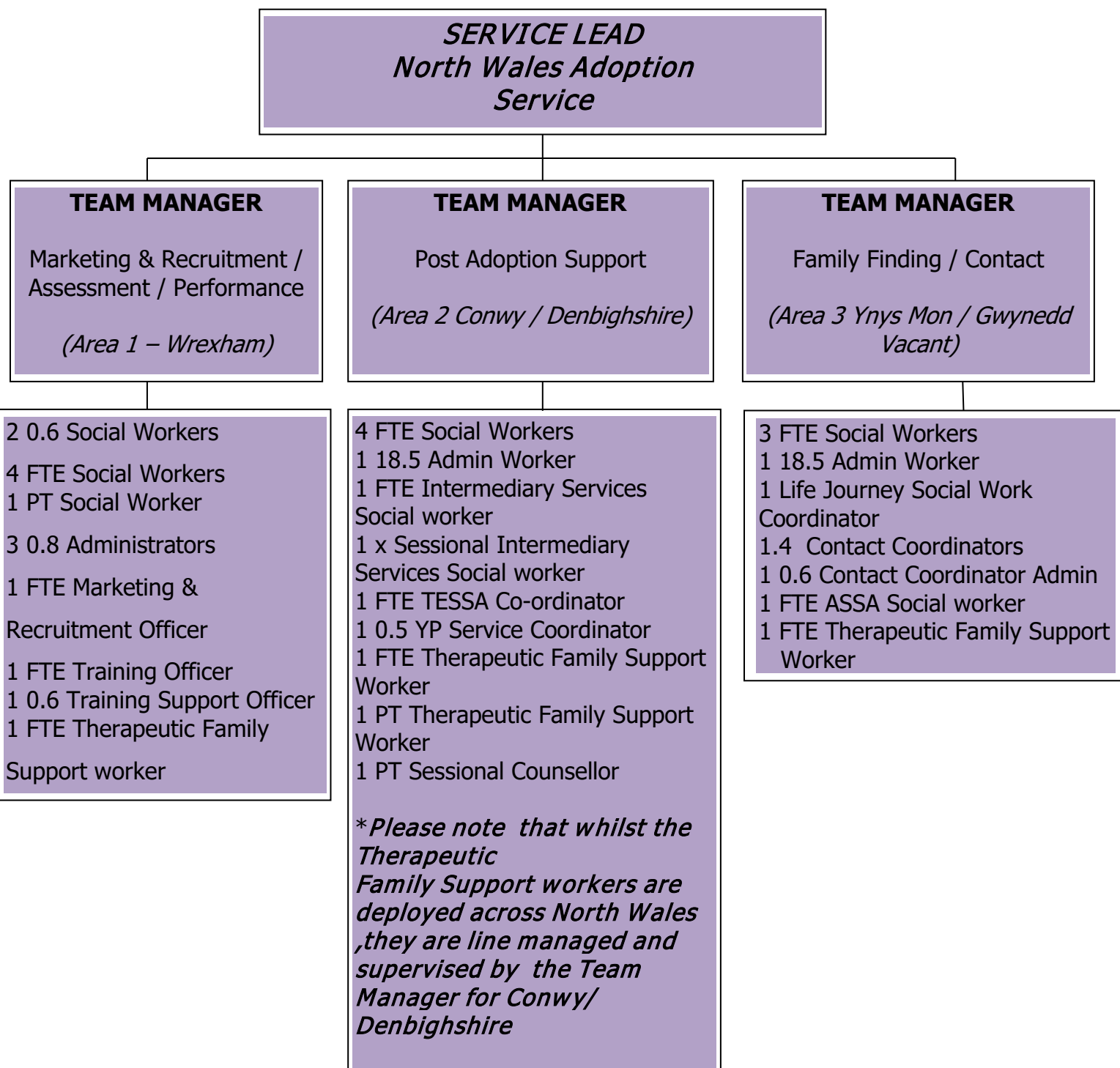
(f) **Isle of Anglesey County Council:-**

Head of Children's Services

County Council Offices, Llangefni, Anglesey, LL77 7TW

Telephone Number: 01248 752708

23.0 Organisational Structure



24.0 Staff

- The following staff members are employed or seconded to the North Wales Adoption Service:

Position	Staff Ratio
Service Lead	1
Operational Manager	3
Social Workers	14
Adoption Support Services Advisor	1
Sessional Counsellor	1
Therapeutic Family Support Workers	3.6
Therapeutic, Education and Support Service in Adoption Coordinator	1
Young person Services' Coordinator	0.5
Life Journey Support Advisor	1
Finance & Administration support	1
Recruitment Officer	1
Training Officer	1
Training Support Officer	0.6
Contact Co-ordinator	1.6
Intermediary Social Worker	1
Administrators	4.25
IT Support	0.5

- As with all other social work staff, the Service Lead and managers have a professional qualification in social work, and extensive experience in local authority work. All social workers are expected to undertake post-qualifying training and are encouraged to achieve the Post Qualifying award in Social Work, including Practice Teaching.
- Specialist posts such as the Therapeutic Family Support Workers, TESSA, Life Journey Coordinator and Contact coordinators have relevant childcare qualifications (minimum Level 3 Diploma/certificate in Children's Health and Social Care) along with extensive experience in local authority work. They have all received bespoke training in their specialist areas of practice.
- Finance and administrative staff are experienced in a range of IT systems and all have a minimum of NVQ Level 2 awards, with some possessing HNC Business qualifications.
- Wrexham County Borough Council is an Investor in People and all its employees are expected to undertake relevant training resulting from bi annual appraisals/developmental reviews.

- All staff with access to children are required to have an enhanced disclosure by the Disclosure and Barring Service and are subject to identity and employment checks in addition to personal references when appointed. Social workers working for the NWAS will understand the key legislation, conventions and policies relating to children and adoption.

- Social workers experienced in adoption work will assess potential adoptive parents for children and produce adoption reports. Those with less than 3 years post qualifying experience will be supervised by a Senior Social Worker or Team Manager. Student social workers will be closely supervised by qualified adoption social workers. Birth records counselling not undertaken by After Adoption will only be undertaken by qualified social workers trained and experienced in this type of counselling and with extensive knowledge of the legislation surrounding access to birth records and the impact of reunion on all parties.

**Host Authority – Management Structure for the
North Wales Adoption Service**

- **Senior Head of Service Children's**
 - **Head of Service - Corporate Parenting**
Jo Spender (Adoption Support Services Advisor)
Responsible for monitoring and controlling Fostering and Adoption Services
-

North Wales Adoption Staff Qualifications and Experience

Stevie Thomas

Seconded by Gwynedd County Council as a Team Manager.

I qualified as a social worker in 2001 and gained my practice teaching award in 2005. Between 2001 and 2005 I completed PQSW 1,2,3,4,5, and 6 before going on to complete Level 5 in Management. I have a Diploma in Neuro Linguistic Practice and have completed coaching training.

I have experience of working within a Child Protection Team, Looked After Children's Team and Fostering Team, prior to my secondment to North Wales Adoption Team in March 2016. During the course of the last 20 years I have worked within the statutory and private sector. I have over 15 years' experience as a Social Work Manager.

I am the Panel Advisor to Gwynedd and Anglesey Adoption Panel.

Amanda Morris

Team Manager taking a lead in the development and delivery of post adoption support services. Having gained a Diploma in Social Work in 2006 I have worked in the field of Fostering and Adoption for 6-years where I was responsible for the assessment and supervision of Local Authority Foster Carers. In addition, within this role I gained experience in matching children to adoptive families.

For the last seven years I have been part of a Therapeutic Service based within a Local Authority Children's Service. As a Senior Social Worker I took a lead in the development and delivery of adoption transition and support services and completed training within this area. This includes Theraplay level 2, Marschak Interaction Method (MIM) training, Video Interactive Guidance (VIG), Life Journey, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy(DDP) training and Sibling Assessment Training.

I have extensive experience in working with children and families pre and post adoption, particularly during transition and the early stages of children being placed within their adoptive families. I am a qualified Practice Assessor and have also delivered training to parents, Foster Carers, Adoptive families and colleagues within the Service.

I am the Panel Advisor to Conwy and Denbighshire Adoption Panel.

Sue Coleman

Team Manager, taking a lead for Marketing & Recruitment, Assessment and Performance.

I was a Police Officer for 20 years, and for 10 years of my service I worked full-time in the arena of Child Protection, working regularly and jointly with Social Services, gaining a good insight into their work. When I retired from the Police Service, my husband and I were assessed and approved as adoptive parents and we subsequently had our son placed with us. The experience was so positive that coupled with my knowledge of Child Protection and Social Work I decided to attend NEWI in Wrexham in 2002 to complete a Diploma in Social Work, with the intention of eventually working in an Adoption Service.

I qualified in 2004 and gained employment immediately within Denbighshire County Council Fostering and Adoption Team, my main role being that of an adoption social worker. Around the same time we also became foster carers and cared for a relative's child, subsequently being granted a Special Guardianship Order for that child. My children are currently 27 and 22, and I extremely proud of them and all they have achieved.

I subsequently became a Senior Practitioner in the Fostering Team.

The North Wales Adoption Service then commenced, however around that time I became the Manager of the Fostering Service and therefore remained working for Denbighshire. It was always my desire to finish my working life in the field of Adoption, as it is an area that I am passionate about. Having seen children who have been removed into the care system from sometimes very difficult backgrounds, and having witnessed their journeys through adoption or long term fostering, I feel privileged to have known and worked alongside some amazing adoptive parents and foster carers in my life, and I have witnessed first-hand how a child's life can be transformed. I cannot think of any better achievement in life than that.

I am excited about my role and hope to help the North Wales Adoption Service go from strength to strength.

I am the Panel Advisor to Wrexham and Flintshire Panel.

Sara Williams

I am a full-time Social Worker, seconded by Gwynedd County Council to the North Wales Adoption Service. I undertake assessments of prospective adopters, provide adoption support and family finding for children, matching children with adoptive families.

Experience – I have 16 years experience, working within Gwynedd's Children and Families Service.

Qualification – I have a BA (Hons) Social Work from Bangor University 2009.

Lisa Jenkins

I am a Social Worker, employed by Conwy County Borough Council, seconded to NWAS. I undertake assessments of prospective adopters, offer adoption support and family finding for children referred to the service.

I am a qualified social worker, gaining a BA (Hons) Social Work in 2012 from Glyndwr University. I am registered with the Care Council for Wales and gained the Post Qualification Award for Social Workers in 2014. I was employed by Denbighshire County Council from September 2012 until January 2017, in the Intake and Intervention Service.

My principle accountabilities were to form and develop working relationships with children, young people and their families to promote positive outcomes for the children. This included ensuring that vulnerable children were appropriately safeguarded, and cared for in permanent, stable, secure and loving families.

Samantha Humphreys

I am a Social Worker, employed by Flintshire County Council, seconded to NWAS. I undertake assessments of prospective adopters (for both domestic and intercountry adoptions), offer adoption support and family finding for children referred to the Service.

Qualifications/Experience – BA(Hons) Primary Education with Qualified Teacher Status, PGDip Social Work. I have worked with children and families over the last 17 years in a variety of roles, including family support, transition support worker (adults), young carers project worker, early years worker, meetings co-ordinator and adoption social worker.

Marjorie Davis

Social Worker – I am employed by Conwy County Borough Council and have been working as an Adoption Social Worker with NWAS since May 2018. In this role I undertake assessments of prospective adopters, family find for children referred to the service and offer adoption support. I have been a qualified Social Worker for many years, having gained a BA in Applied Social Studies and CQSW. I also hold a Post Qualification Diploma in Social Work.

Prior to my current position I was employed by Conwy County Borough Council within Children's Services. I worked in Child Protection, Supporting Children's Team and was a Social Worker in the Fostering Team for 5-years. My last role before joining the Adoption Team was as a Social Worker in the Safeguarding and Legal Team from July 2009-May 2018.

I have been a member of Conwy's Adoption Panel and am currently a Social Work Member of the Conwy and Denbighshire Fostering Panel.

Helen Kinney

I am a Social Worker, employed by Wrexham County Borough Council. I undertake assessments of prospective adopters, offer adoption support and family find for children referred to the service. I have a Diploma in Social Work and am registered with the Care Council for Wales. I have experience of working in Child Protection, with Looked After Children, Children in Need and Court work. I have a NEBS Introductory Management Certificate.

Tracy Ennis Roberts

I am a Senior Social Worker (Seconded by Denbighshire County Borough Council) to the Adoption Service. I undertake assessments of prospective adopters, provide post adoption support and participate in the training of prospective adopters. My role also involves family finding for children. I am Dip SW qualified, and have a PQ1 award. I worked for 3-years as an Education Social Worker, 7 years in the Fostering Service as a Supervisory Social Worker and have worked in Adoption since 2008. I also have a D32, D33 NVQ Assessor Award, ILM level 3, Level 1 DDP and have a Practice Educators Award. For a period of 8 months I provided management support within NWAS, until a new manager was appointed.

Shirley Viney

Qualified (BA Hons) and a registered social worker based in the North Wales Adoption Service. I hold post-qualifying certificates in social work including the Experienced Practitioner Award and the Practice Assessor Award. My experience is predominantly working with children and families.

Nicola Kernighan

As a Social Worker (Seconded by Flintshire County Council) I have been a member of NWAS for 10-years. Undertakes assessments of prospective adopters, offers adoption support and family finds for Flintshire children. Bachelor's degree in Social Work, Cum Laude. Twenty-two years social work experience includes – LAC, mental health, disability and education welfare.

Lesley Davies

Social Worker employed by Flintshire County Council. I specialise in adoption and have extensive experience within Children's Services, including Child Health and Disability. CQSW qualified

Kathryn Edwards

My name is Kathryn Edwards and I am a registered Social Worker with Social Care Wales. I qualified in 2012 after gaining an undergraduate degree in Social Work from Bangor University. I have been employed by both Conwy and Denbighshire local authorities, working within Looked After Children and Child Protection teams, before joining the North Wales Adoption Service.

Jemma Matthews

I qualified with a Masters degree in Social Work in November 2018. I have completed my Assessed and Supported Year in Practice and my Progression to an Experienced Social Worker within a Child Protection Team with Halton Borough Council. During this time I gained experience of working with,

Children in Need, Child Protection, Care Proceedings, and Children in Care. I also have experience of working with children, young people, and families within an Independent Fostering Team, Residential Children's Home, a Targeted Family Support Service, and charities including Barnardo's, the NSPCC, and the ADHD Foundation.

Gillian Williams

Contact Coordinator for North Wales Adoption Service overseeing direct and indirect contacts for adoptive children and young people. I have worked as a Family Support Worker for Wrexham Council for 14-years. I worked for the Disability Children's Team for 8-years and the Prevention and Support Team undergoing supervised contacts in the court arena for 6-years. I have a NVQ Level 3 in Children and Young People and I am a qualified Person Centred Counsellor.

Philippa Havill

Appointed to NWAS in May 2020 as a Therapeutic Support Worker. I work therapeutically with adoptive parents, children and young people to support the development of positive attachment relationships. I help families manage transitional periods throughout the child's life journey, and promote the best possible outcomes for adopted children and young people.

I have over 25-years experience in social work and therapeutic practice, working exclusively with vulnerable children, young people and their families/carers in both statutory and non-statutory settings, including work for the Health Service and major children's charities. I have worked therapeutically with a wide range of issues both in early intervention and prevention services and with children on the edge of care and children looked after. In the last 10-years of my career I have specialised in working with children and young people who have experienced developmental trauma.

As well as her CQSW, I have completed Level 1 & 2 DDP training and am licensed to undertake the Attachment Style Interview. I also have a diploma in Solution Focused Practice and have completed the foundation year in Systemic Therapy.

Jackie Lloyd

My name is Jackie Lloyd and I am a Post Adoption Social Worker with North Wales Adoption Service. I have worked in fostering and adoption for over 20 years in the Statutory, Voluntary and Independent sectors throughout both North Wales and the North West and have recently returned to North Wales Adoption Service, as a Post Adoption Social Worker in March 2020.

My role as a Post Adoption Intermediary Social Worker is incredibly rewarding and involves working with adopted adults who wish to access their adoption file and gain information about their early birth family history, many go on to meet and build relationships with their birth family members. I also work with historic birth family members who wish to trace someone lost to them through adoption, perhaps a son, daughter or a sibling. Part of my role also includes working with current birth parents and grandparents who have lost their children to adoption, offering counselling, ongoing support and group work.

In recent years I have also worked with adopted children and their families, supporting adoptive placements and adoptive parents in managing behaviours through the provision of Theraplay interventions and via attachment based programmes. I have worked as a Senior Practitioner, Fostering and Adoption Trainer, Panel Member and Children's Therapeutic Social Worker.

I hold the following Qualifications: Diploma in Youth & Community, Diploma in Family Placement, Diploma in Counselling, Diploma in Social Work, Advanced Diploma in Therapeutic Life Story work and Theraplay.

Denise Roberts

As the North Wales Adoption Service Training Officer I am responsible for identifying, organising, facilitating and evaluating training related to adoption across the six North Wales Authorities. This includes the training needs of NWAS Social Workers, Adoption Panel Members, Child Care Social Workers and Prospective and Approved Adopters. I am a qualified Social Worker with 24-years experience, having practiced in Fostering and Adoption for the past 19-years. Level 1 & 2 DDP, Diploma in Therapeutic Parenting and Level 1 & 2 Theraplay.

Alaw Jones

Marketing and Recruitment Officer for NWAS. My role involves reaching out to prospective adopters, responding to enquiries and completing initial visits.

I graduated with a 2.1 in Childhood Studies, and completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Bilingualism.

I am an adopter myself, and adopted my daughter through NWAS. My positive experience with NWAS inspired me to change my career from being a Nursery Assistant to work for the Service.

Carole Langford

Business Support Manager – responsible for payment of financial support arrangements to adopters and foster carers. Carole supervises the other administrative staff within the service and provides guidance to adopters on issues relating to benefit entitlement. When a child is looked after for 12-months or more a Junior ISA is set up for them. When the Share Foundation is notified that the child is no longer looked after, a letter is received – this is then forwarded to the child's Social Worker to pass on to the adopters to contact the Share Foundation as the adopter is the person who has parental rights. NVQ4, RSA3, HNC (Business) with extensive experience in both public and private sector.

Larry Groom

Administrative Assistant primarily responsible for the management of the CHARMS database IT system, also responsible for collation of data for management reports. Set-up and maintenance of Panel Members in

CHARMS. NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration, RSA3, CLAIT II, Microsoft Office Suite (less Front Page) and CHARMS.

Claire Pearce

Letterbox Contact Administrator. I am responsible for the day to day management and coordination of letterbox contact arrangements, and input of agreements on the CHARMS database.

Sarah Picken

I joined the North Wales Adoption Service as a Business Support Assistant in 2011. My main admin responsibilities include carrying out duties as the Panel Administrator for the Flintshire and Wrexham Adoption Panel. I take enquiries and referrals from birth parents and relatives wishing to access support and counselling services, along with adopted adults who wish to access their adoption records and intermediary services for adopters and birth relatives hoping to trace birth family members. I am also responsible for the collation of data for management reports. I have a NVQ Level 3 qualification in Business Administration.

Manon Roberts

Part-time Administrative Assistant, primarily responsible for the collation and distribution of reports for the Adoption Panel and the dissemination of information resulting from the Panel's work. Panel minute taking. Collation of data from management reports. Admin support to the Adoption Service in Gwynedd.

Sue Abbott

I am the Panel Administrator. Prior to retiring from full-time employment at the end of March 2017, I worked within a number of sectors including sales, legal and local authority.

I have previously worked as administrative support for the former Conwy Fostering & Adoption as far back as 2006 prior to the formation of the NNAS, and during this posting I worked processing both Fostering and Adoption matters. My role is to minute Panel meetings so that an accurate record of proceedings is held, compile the paperwork for Panel Members prior to Panel sitting and formal ratification, I also prepare the Agency Decision Makers paperwork following panel for formal sign off.

Pat Fairclough

I work as a Sessional Social Worker for the North Wales Adoption Service. I have an extensive background in working with families, children and young people. For 32-years I worked in the public sector as a Youth Leader, Careers Advisor, Community Social Worker, Intensive Support Worker, (co-ordinating Bail and Remand Foster Care) and a Duty Social Worker. In the NHS I worked as a Senior Social Worker and Therapist for CAMHS, Clinical Supervisor for Junior Staff and YOT nurse. I later also held the post of Child Protection Advisor and Clinical Supervisor to the Safeguarding Children Team, Flying Start Nurses and the Clinical Disability Team.

I was a founder member of Wrexham and Chester Cruise Bereavement Care, training with them as a Bereavement Counsellor and as a Supervisor. For 15-years I worked with Papyrus Prevention of Young Suicide.

My professional qualifications include a B.A (Open) a Diploma in Social Work, H.E Diploma in Counselling and a Post Graduate Diploma in Clinical Supervision. I have trained to level 4 in Attachment with Dan Hughes and trained as a Mental Health First Aider. I am a registered Social Worker and a member of the BACP.

Morwenna Berry

I am a qualified Social Worker and have worked for the North Wales Adoption Service since 2013. Prior to this I worked for Conwy Social Services within the Looked After Children, Legal and Long Term Teams. I gained a Diploma in Social Work through the Open University in December 2003, having worked as a Trainee Social Worker for Conwy for 2-years. In March 2008 I gained a Post Qualification award in Social Work.

Llinos Evans

I recently joined the North Wales Adoption Service as a Therapeutic Family Support Worker; my role involves delivering therapeutic post adoption support to adoptive parents, children & young people.

I have a level 4 Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development, having worked in child & family support for 8 years in a variety of roles including early years, as a play organiser and in the Flying Start Programme.

For the last 9 years my role involved delivering childcare, play work and health & social care (children & young people) qualifications in the work based learning sector. I have a level 3 TAQA Assessor award; level 4 TAQA Internal Quality Assurance Award and a level 4 Diploma in Advice & Guidance.

Lynda Jones

I have experience of working with Children and Families in various settings. During the last 18 years I worked as a Family and Parent Support Worker within the Voluntary sector in Gwynedd with Families First and Flying Start Programmes. Work involved supporting families, assessing needs and working towards meeting those needs either in the home, a group setting or within the community.

Parenting and behaviour support included, delivery of Incredible Years courses, from the Baby, through to the Toddler, School Readiness, Basic, and School Age stage.

Family Links and Nurture links courses were also provided along with Escape, Managing Family Finances, Nutrition, Baby Massage and Nurturing Parents (Mindfulness) courses. I also participated in Evidence based research trials

Qualifications:

NVQ 3 & 4 Education and Childcare

PGE/Certificate in Education

NOS level 4 Working with Parents, Intense support for families with Multiple and Complex needs

Accredited Incredible Years Parent Trainer, IAIM Baby Massage and Nurturing Parents.

Agored Cymru A1 assessor

Sian Messum

My name is Sian Messum and I am a post adoption Therapeutic Family Support Worker with the North Wales Adoption Services. I have experience of working with children and families within the Foundation Phase, the Flying Start Programme and of supporting children with a range of additional learning needs from social and emotional to ADHD and ASD and other complex needs in a therapeutic care home.

My work has involved understanding the individual life experience and story of each child, working in partnership with them, their parents or carers and placing authorities and offering personalised support. I helped children and young people regain trust, and learn strategies for managing past and present difficulties. A focus of my work has been to support children and young people to develop the tools they need to make choices that will improve and transform their lives.

Qualifications

Children's Care, Learning and Development level 3

Social Care (children and young people) level 3

How to connect, empathise and form a genuine working alliance with troubled and troubling young people by David Taransuad

Kirsty Gloyne

I have recently joined the North Wales Adoption Team as the Young Persons Service Coordinator for North Wales.

I am a qualified JNC Youth and Community Worker and hold Diplomas in Healthy Sexual Relationships, Drug and Alcohol Abuse, CBT and Children's Psychology. I am always looking for new courses to extend my knowledge base.

Prior to this role I worked within a specialist Primary and High School with pupils and their families as Pastoral support and Family Engagement. I also work with Young People in supported living schemes. During both of these roles I have worked with LAC teams, LD nurses, various Social workers from across frontline teams and external agencies such as Mental Health, CAIS, Young Offenders and Sorted.

Susanne McCarthy

I'm so pleased to have just been appointed as the Therapy Education Support Service in Adoption (TESSA) Coordinator for North Wales. I am passionate about supporting adoptive families along their journey of building strong

healthy relationships using the bespoke therapeutic approach that the TESSA project offers. I believe that empowering parents with skills, knowledge and peer support to achieve the best possible opportunities for their children to thrive and have a positive experience is vital.

My background has been in education, supporting the most vulnerable children and families to work around barriers to learning and enable them to improve their outcomes in and out of the school environment.

I am a qualified Mental Health First Aider(MHFA) and an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) as well as being trained in some talking, art and play therapies. I enjoy working alongside children to help them process their thoughts and feelings and help them to understand and manage their emotions.

I recently completed a degree in Therapeutic Childcare and I have a great interest in the areas of attachment, developmental trauma and the ACEs study. I have trained education staff and parents to gain an understanding of these areas and how to support children by building healthy, trusting relationships.

I am really excited to be at the start of this journey with North Wales Adoption Service and the TESSA programme and I look forward to playing my part in shaping a valuable and successful service.