

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Gwaith dilynol ar Ymchwiliad y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg i Wasanaethau Mabwysiadu yng Nghymru | Follow-up to Children, Young People and Education Committee's Inquiry into Adoption Services in Wales

AS 02

Ymateb gan : Julie Wallace

Response from : Julie Wallace

## Consultation questions

### Overview Question

What are your views in the Welsh Government's progress in respect of the 16 recommendations and the 25 'detailed actions' set out on pages 5-11 of the [Committee's report](#).

Although it refers to "assessments", it is essential to use the ones which reveal the information necessary to find appropriate matches between prospective parents and adopted children.

### Question 1

What are your views on the recruitment, assessment and preparation of adopter parents?

I appreciate the need to speed up the adoption process for the children involved but fear this may increase the possibility of mistakes in matching children with potential adopters.

How could this be improved?

There should be more of a focus on the motives of potential adopters, e.g. have they unresolved losses which will interfere with the bonding process? Are they looking for a child to "fix" a relationship? More in-depth assessments of the personality types of potential adopters, e.g. their internal attachment frameworks, experience of being parented themselves. Similar assessments should be undertaken on children if age appropriate.

## Question 2

What is your experience of and view of the matching process and support for the transition?

Sometimes potential adopters believe they can address the complex needs of some children with the basics of love, care and nurture, and then become disappointed and/or disillusioned when the child does not respond.

How could this be improved?

There should be a thorough assessment of a child's emotional/psychological state and an identification of what help is needed. This assessment should be re-visited throughout the child's early years with the adoptive parents, and unresolved difficulties must be addressed with suitably qualified and experienced professionals.

## Question 3

Do you think there is sufficient information and support for children and young people including access to quality life-story work?

No. There are frequently gaps in life story work which contribute to the child feeling confused and filling in the gaps themselves.

How could this be improved?

This work is something which needs to be re-visited as the child matures and their level of understanding increases.

## Question 4

What post-adoption support for children, young people and families (including from social services, education, health and mental health services) is available and what more could be done in this area?

Unfortunately some of these children do not meet the criteria for a CAMHS referral, and if left untreated difficulties become more complex and fixed. There is a woeful lack of child and adolescent psychotherapy available, although this is frequently the treatment of choice for these children and their families.

How could this be improved?

More investment in experienced child & adolescent psychotherapy. Greater communication between the various professionals involved in the process, AND once the child has been adopted. Not all children will require this level of support but most would benefit from some psychotherapeutic involvement, and this should be tailored to the needs of each child and family, i.e. as and when they can make use of it.

### Question 5

Are there any other issues you wish to draw to the Committee's attention?

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