

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 20

Ymateb gan : Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn

Response from : Isle of Anglesey

### 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](#).

I agree with **recommendation 1 that the direct service delivery role of the National Adoption Service should be** 'significantly strengthened from that currently set out in the *Social Services (Wales) Bill* consultation document. The service should have a central delivery role and employ staff to work on a range of adoption. It should not be 'owned by local authorities' as set out in current proposals. The lead role within the Service should be a senior independent role, reporting to a multi-agency board, and ultimately accountable to the relevant Welsh Government Minister'.

In my opinion local authority ownership results in inconsistent access to service across the region and inequalities in pay differentials and career / developmental opportunities for staff, this will inevitably affect recruitment and retention.

Recommendation 2 – In relation to concurrent planning for permanence, local authorities require support to develop specialist fostering to adoption / permanence provision. I would welcome a review into possible barriers to providing this and any pilot programme implemented by NAS.

### Question 1

What are your views on the recruitment, assessment and preparation of adopter parents?
Recruitment should be targeted to need within local authorities, particularly the need to place older children and sibling groups together.
How could this be improved?
Improved communication between local authorities and adoption services.

### Question 2

What is your experience of and view of the matching process and support for the transition?
Transitions have in our experience been successful. Matching meetings are chaired by the adoption service. I feel there needs to be representation by experienced local authority senior staff at matching meetings.
How could this be improved?

### Question 3

Do you think there is sufficient information and support for children and young people including access to quality life-story work?
No. It is unclear what the role of the regional adoption service is post adoption in terms of providing ongoing support and services.
How could this be improved?
Clearly defined roles and responsibilities between the national service and local authority. I am of the opinion that adoption specific follow up and support should be offered by the adoption service.

## 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?

Adopted children are typically referred to the department as children in need. Retention issues within children's services often means that first responders are often not adoption experienced.

There is a lack of clarity in my view with regards to what the adoption service will provide and whether this can be provided in a timely manner.

The adoption service facilitates the post adoption contact mailbox system and contracts out intermediary services and adoption information services.

A parent and toddler group is funded by the local authority and facilitated by adoption service staff.

Numbers of birth parent counselling referrals to the service are very low. Support for birth parents is an area that needs to be developed.

Adopted children can access universal services as for any other child. No priority is given to adopted children. The therapeutic needs of adopted children are unlikely to meet the criteria for services from CAMHS. It is difficult for social workers to identify appropriate therapeutic services to address need. Social workers can access CAMHS consultancy, however it is difficult for CAMHS to advise where they are not working with a child directly.

I would support **Recommendation 11: CAMHS and therapeutic service – 'The Welsh Government should, as a matter of urgency, work with the Welsh NHS Confederation in respect of provision to adopted children to audit current provision and identify gaps, considering the issues highlighted in our evidence with specific attention to access to specialist therapeutic services'**.

I would also support the view that adopted children be given the same priority as looked after children in terms of their eligibility for threshold services and other universal services, particularly education and CAMHS.

I would support the need for a consistent national approach to post adoption services, particularly financial support. There needs to be clearly defined systems and processes in place with appropriate business support.

How could this be improved?

Consistent adoption support services across the region.

Wider provision of therapeutic services from CAMHS.

Development of adoption support services by NAS for children and birth parents.

In my view the focus of the adoption service appears primarily concerned with adopter recruitment, assessment and approval with limited resources available for post adoption support.

### Question 5

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

No.