

Achievement report

2014-2015

Looking back
over another
successful year.

www.adoptionmatters.org



a challenging year for the adoption sector

Thirty years ago I was about to make the transition from a well-respected local authority into the world of adoption within the third sector.

The landscape has changed so much over that time, none more so than in the past twelve to eighteen months. The Government has continued to support the sector with the intent of building capacity but this has happened against a backdrop of falling numbers of children being placed for adoption and therefore the reinvestment envisaged has not materialised in the way it was planned. These unintended consequences run the risk of undermining our service and have implications for the adoption sector as a whole.

Our partnership with Caritas Care in developing the Centre for Adoption Support (with the help of a VCS National Prospectus Grant), our Concurrent Planning Service (in partnership with 13 local authorities in the North West) and our Priority Children Project (DfE expansion Grant) are well documented in this report, as is as our work in trying to develop our services into Yorkshire and Humberside and southwards towards the West Midlands.

We have also developed a new partnership this year with four other Voluntary Adoption Agencies across England with a similar heritage to our own and with Home for Good in seeking to reach prospective adopters from a faith based background and bring to their attention the needs of many of the children waiting.

Our Ofsted recognition – three consecutive outstanding ratings and receiving the award as BAAF Voluntary Adoption Service of the Year for the second time in three years bear witness to the dedication and commitment of a fine group of staff, supported by a group of trustees giving clear strategic leadership whilst working in partnership with great families, supporters and volunteers.

There are many challenges ahead but also some great opportunities for us to make a difference to children's futures. I hope through reading this report you will be excited about what we do and motivated to support our work.

Norman G Goodwin CBE
Chief Executive



working together, working it out

When Thomas Hardy wrote: *"...all the little ones of our time are collectively the children of us adults of the time, and entitled to our good care..."* circumstances were very different to those facing us now. Yet the kind of commitment he expressed to our individual and collective responsibility for the wellbeing of all children and young people still needs championing, especially for those who are most at risk, vulnerable or hurt.

Adoption Matters responds actively and creatively by helping to build better lives in loving and fulfilling families. Our response to mounting need is values-driven, child and family focused, evidence based and quality secured. We can only do this by growing and adapting through partnership.

National policy following the UK General Election in 2015 continues to give adoption a high priority which is most welcome. However, a new rationalised framework is emerging.

Fundamental questions are being asked about adoption and the place of Voluntary Adoption Agencies in an improving national childcare system. In 2014 we changed our name to "Adoption Matters" to reflect our widening national role and vision.

We are determined to run an excellent, sustainable charitable organisation with the best professional and business practice - because the best is what children and families deserve. We are under no illusion about the challenges facing them and us. Their circumstances, past, present and future are typically complex and multi-dimensional. Supporting them through the adoption journey to stable and long-lasting permanence in human relationships has to be on the basis of us working together - with them and with other agencies.

So as we celebrate an amazing third in a row 'Outstanding' inspection report from Ofsted in 2014, we acknowledge the importance of everyone's contribution.

We are inter-dependent. We rely on each other for robust and sustained mutual support. Staff, volunteers, trustees, colleagues in partner organisations and especially our amazing adopters and adopted children and young people - they all play their part in making Adoption Matters a very high achiever. I would like to thank each one of you on behalf of all of us.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the vital leadership contribution made by Norman Goodwin and express our delight in him being awarded a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2015, in recognition of a life-time of outstanding service.

Professor David Cracknell, OBE
Chair, Board of Trustees



key achievements 2014-15

Key Achievements:

384 Number of enquiries

60 Number of new
approved adopters

53 Adoption Orders granted

64 Children placed

1 Adoption disruption

77 Number of
prospective adopters
attended prep training



64

We have placed
64 children with
new families



Within that
placement total
there were
16 sibling groups
(39 children)

34

We placed
children on behalf
of 34 authorities



117

We delivered
support to 117
children already
in placement



We received
384 enquiries
from prospective
adopters

our new campaign:

This year we have raised our profile through brand awareness and now position ourselves to the public as a children's charity who specialise in adoption. We have introduced a suite of new marketing materials, posters, leaflets and postcards. In March, we launched our new, mobile enabled, website (below).



“
Adoption Matters
is a children's charity
specialising in adoption
and adoption support.
That is all we do and we
have been doing it for
nearly **70 years**.
”



our campaign message is:

This is our campaign message that encapsulates our company values and outlook on the service that we provide:






Every year, there are vulnerable children needing a stable, caring home through adoption. Some wait longer than others. We want to help change that. Could you?



kpis



In our Agency Strategy document 2014-17 we set out five key ‘themed’ areas of work with a number of targets and Key Performance Indicators:

At the end of Year 1, we have achieved the following:

Theme	Aim	Achievement
 Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the number of applications to adopt by 20% per annum • To increase the number of adopters approved by 20% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeded target – applications up by 40% • Target achieved: We approved 60 new families and placed 64 children despite a significant downturn in numbers of children available for adoption
 Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a holistic adoption support service • Put in place measures to support and maintain a low incidence of placement disruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We established the Centre for Adoption Support as a regional Centre of Excellence with endorsement from the Minister for Children and Families. Over 500 families have benefited from the service • Our disruption rate remains at just 2% which compares favourably with the national average
 Staff, Board & Panels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To grow our staff base to increase capacity and expand our geographical reach • We are committed to ensuring all our staff continue their professional development • To ensure that adoption panels are well supported and effectively managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We appointed 19 new staff members bringing our total to 59. We also appointed additional sessional workers and therapists • All social work staff have undertaken the required 5 days CPD per annum, many of them significantly more, ensuring they are up-to-date with latest developments and best practice • We introduced e-readers to replace panel papers ensuring a simpler, quicker and more cost-effective process

Our Concurrent Planning Service is the only one of its kind in the whole of the North West and is an exciting and challenging opportunity to offer a service which minimises disruption and unnecessary moves for very young children.



Theme	Aim	Achievement
 Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To expand our service into new areas with new office hubs (6 by 2017) and locally based staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We opened our 5th office 'hub' in Salford in January, secured additional space in Warrington for the Centre for Adoption Support and appointed new staff to cover our new regions
 Partners & Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure 5 significant new partnerships by 2017 To remain at the forefront of practice by commissioning and taking part in research projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Target: We have secured new partnerships this year with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Yorkshire & Humberside Adoption Consortium (comprising 15 LAs) * Home for Good * 4 Voluntary Adoption Agencies across the UK In March 2015 we completed a research and evaluation in partnership with the University of Chester which looked at the impact of our Centre for Adoption Support. We are now working with Salford University to scope out a long-term study of our joint Concurrent Planning Service



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Quality

We retained our Ofsted 'Outstanding' rating for a third consecutive period being the only agency in the North West to achieve this milestone.



Jenny MacQuire
our new Marketing
Manager

Reputation and Brand Awareness

We appointed a Marketing Manager to implement a marketing strategy which includes building greater brand awareness, website and social media developments. In the first two months of the strategy being implemented, our enquiry figures trebled.

Our CEO continues to be a driving force in the national adoption agenda as a Trustee of BAAF and CVAA and was delighted to be awarded the CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June 2015 - more on page 14.

We won the BAAF Voluntary Adoption Agency of the Year award in November 2014 for the second time in recognition of our innovative partnership working in adoption support and concurrent planning. More on the award on Page 15.

Financial and organisational viability

We have continued to diversify our income streams, securing significant grant funding from DfE (£1.6 million) to support the national growth agenda and expand into new regions. We also secured an additional £100,000 through the VCS Sector National Prospectus Grant programme to develop CfAS further, embedding it within the region in partnership with 10 Local Authorities.

Rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted



BAAF Voluntary
Adoption Agency
of the Year 2012 & 2014





Innovation

We have continued to work in innovative partnerships with an increasing number of VAAs, Local Authorities and other charitable organisations.

Our Centre for Adoption Support has a unique 'graduated approach model' that has been widely praised by service users, the Department for Education and the Children & Families Minister, Edward Timpson MP.

In March 2015, we held our Centre for Adoption Support Conference, more about the conference on Page 12.

We have branded both of our partnership projects, the Centre for Adoption Support and Concurrent Planning Service and we will be implementing websites for both later this year.

Equality

We have been exploring ways of encouraging more people from different backgrounds to apply to the agency, and targeting activities at specific groups.

We have become a member of New Family Social, the UK network for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) adoptive and foster families, and supported the LGBT Adoption Week in February 2015.

We are continuing to work with faith-based communities through our partnership with Home for Good, and have also provided faith-literacy training to all our staff.

Centre for Adoption Support and Concurrent Planning Service branding.



Pictured left to right:

Susan Swarbrick
Head of Children's Services Caritas Care

Maria Lavelle & Hetty Verhagen
both Social Workers at CfAS

Norman Goodwin CBE
Chief Executive Adoption Matters

Delyth Evans
CfAS Project Manager

Amanda Forshaw
Chief Executive Caritas Care.



the adoption matters team

Chief Executive:

- **Norman G Goodwin CBE**

Presidents:

- **The Right Reverend Dr. Peter Forster** Bishop of Chester
- **The Right Reverend Julian Henderson** Bishop of Blackburn

Patron:

- **Sir Mark Hedley**

Board of Trustees:

- **Professor David Cracknell OBE** Chair
- **Marjorie Hearton**
- **Carolyn Johnson** Vice-Chair
- **Daphne Jordan**
- **Nicholas Lapham**
- **Joe McArdle**
- **Alan Rowntree MBE**
- **Christopher Samuels**
- **David Shield**
- **Sally Winstanley**
- **Annesley Wright**

Company secretary:

- **Annesley Wright**

Panel Members:

- **Janet Barden** (left 31/12/14)
- **Janet Bodie**
- **Brenda Botten**
- **Beverley Burke**
- **Julie Clark**
- **Heather Dickinson**
- **Sara Dubois**
- **Hazel Field** Chester Vice-Chair
- **Nicola Fielden** Blackburn Vice-Chair
- **Carole Hassall**
- **Marjorie Hearton**
- **George Hobbs**
- **Rosemary Jones** Chester Chair
- **Sara Jones**
- **Rashda Kholwadia**
- **Rob Maclese**
- **Mohmed Matadar**
- **Debbie Stoddard**
- **Fiona Taylor**
- **Peter Young** Blackburn Chair

Advisers:

- **Hanif Dudwhala** Muslim Welfare Adviser
- **Andrew Larkin** Human Resources
- **Daphne Jordan** Education

Social Work Team:

- **Janet Barden** Team Manager (left 31/12/14)
- **Ann Davison** Team Manager
- **Paul Dolan** Team Manager
- **Delyth Evans** Project Manager
- **Gwen Laird** Team Manager
- **Clive Gumbrell** Practice Manager
- **Amreen Riaz** Practice Manager
- **Jacqui Shore** Practice Manager
- **Deborah Stoddard** Practice Manager
- **Fiona Taylor** Practice Manager

Project Management:

- **Mike Hall** Project Manager

Adoption Practitioners:

- Nicola Abedin
- Bernadette Bailey
- Liz Boulter
- Lisa Bryan
- Patricia Dalton
- Alexis Draper
- Joanne Ebrey
- Karen Ferguson
- Hazel Field
- Sally Frances
- Ruth Froggatt
- Nick Gore
- Sharon Hesketh
- Julie Hogan
- Furzana Ibrahim
- Nigel Johnson
- Sarah Jones
- Roxanne McGough
- Linda McNeill
- Linda Mullineaux
- Kath Parker
- Vera Parkinson (left 18/06/14)

Adoption Practitioners:

- Ian Pearson
- Claire Roscoe
- Karen Smith (left 05/09/14)
- Aileen Somerset
- Ronnie Sumner
- Corinne Tootle
- Hedwig Verhagen
- Kelly Wise

Social Work Assistants:

- Sally Broadhurst
- Pip Jones

Business Development & Marketing:

- Gaynor Richards
Business Development Manager
- Jenny Macquire Marketing Manager
- Matt Hanson
Relationship Manager (sessional)
- Rachel Walker
Marketing and Fundraising Assistant

Business Section Team

- Susy White Business Manager
- Karen Davies
Assistant Business Manager
- Diane Handley HR Specialist
- Emma Price
Administration Supervisor
- Hafina Thomas
Administration Supervisor
- Sophie Challinor
PA to Chief Executive
- Alison Bate (left 30/04/14)
PA to Chief Executive
- Kerry Sommerton
Finance Assistant

Adoption Administrators:

- Charlotte Davies
- Loraine Exton
- Rebecca Harding
Carol McMahon (left 22/05/14)
Adoption Administrator
- Hannah Martin
- Amy Massey
- Nikki Raistrick
- Jackie Rixon
- Lynn Scott

centre for adoption support conference

Experts in adoption were amongst 100 attendees including local authority representatives, adoptive families, academics and sector professionals at the Centre for Adoption Support Conference, held at the Warrington Peace Centre on Friday 6th March.

The conference highlighted the work of CfAS and the innovative graduated approach model of support. Speakers on the day included: Dr. Cathy Betoine of the iMatter Project, Dr Matt Woolgar from the South London & Maudsley Hospital and a moving account from one of our adoptive parents who accessed CfAS services during the adoption of their 6 year old son. During the conference, delegates also watched a video message sent by Edward Timpson MP, Minister for Children and Families, who commented:

“

Parents need somebody with a deep understanding, who can train them to develop strategies, and to work therapeutically with their child. That's why experience is so important, and - with a combined 140 years between them - families coming into contact with Caritas and Adoption Matters are in safe hands.

Yours is a fantastic partnership for this corner of the country, demonstrating that partnership working, combined with the will of local authorities, is the way forward for adoption support.

”



Edward Timpson MP
Minister for Children
and Families

Dr Matt Woolgar, Clinical Psychologist from the South London & Maudsley Hospital, which provides the widest range of mental health services in the UK, spoke about his partnership work with the Centre and how they are working together to develop a model that can be used in the North West.

chester university research project

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Professor Elizabeth Harlow of the University of Chester reported findings from their research into the Centre for Adoption Support's work. The report concluded that after only six months, all of the respondent families involved in the project reported improvements in their child's emotional and behavioural needs, that parents felt well supported and crises were averted by accessing the Centre's support and training services.

Key learning points were that children may need additional help even when adopted at a young age and that, though resourceful, parents may be in great distress and require assistance. Services promised were provided by The Centre for Adoption Support and were well received, resulting in a positive impact.

Pictured from left:

Professor Elizabeth Harlow

Andrew Mitchell

Norman Goodwin CBE

Paul Moran

David Cracknell OBE

Pauline Doherty



norman goodwin-commander of the british empire cbe

Our Chief Executive, Norman Goodwin was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours with a CBE for his services to social work and adoption.

Norman, who this year celebrates **30 years** with the charity commented:

“

It is a great personal honour for me and fantastic for the agency. I hope that we can continue to raise the profile of adoption and positive outcomes for children.

”



bespoke family finding service launched

With our extensive experience of child specific recruitment we expanded our dedicated family finding team to help meet the needs of hard to place (priority) children.

This new, innovative service doesn't just offer a child profiling service, we find and prepare the right family to meet the needs of the child and offer enhanced profiling and recruitment. The service has already received referrals for children and we are excited about future developments.



we joined the yorkshire adoption consortium

In March we joined the Yorkshire adoption recruitment consortium, Being Family, helping to strengthen our expansion into the region. The consortium, founded in 1990, includes all 15 local authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber area and the three voluntary adoption agencies working in the area. This new relationship provides the opportunity to add our own unique skills, services and experiences for the benefit of adopter families across the Yorkshire and Humber region.



voluntary adoption agency of the year 2014

We were named VAA of the year by British Association of Adoption & Fostering (BAAF) for the second time at the National Adoption Awards in November 2014.

We were delighted with this accolade and Norman commented:

“

It is always good to be recognised in the sector by our peers. We will continue to go from strength to strength to improve outcomes for children.

”



Delyth Evans & Norman Goodwin CBE
accepting the award at the BAAF
Adoption Awards in London.

fundraising

Many of our staff and adopters have raised funds in the last year. Two of our adopter's stories...

Marathon Man Mike

Runner Mike Delap ran this years London Marathon on our behalf. Moira and John Delap from Bramhall in Stockport, adopted Mike through Adoption Matters in 1984 when he was a young baby. They already had three birth children, Jonathan, Hannah and Nick.

Mike said:

“

My parents and I have always been very open about my adoption and a few years ago I started running as a hobby and decided to raise some awareness and a little money for a cause close to my heart. Naturally, I chose Adoption Matters as my main beneficiary.

”

Mike raised **£1,240**



Sarah's 10K run



Sarah Savage, from Wilmslow, completed the Manchester 10K run during the year as a 'thank you' to Adoption Matters for helping her achieve her dream of becoming an adoptive parent to two little girls. Sarah raised £350 in just one week after deciding to enter the race at the very last minute! Sarah commented:

“

The Adoption Matters team has given my husband Rick and I so much in helping us adopt two beautiful sisters four years ago and it was a privilege to be able to do something for them.

”

Sarah was so moved by the adoption process that she decided to train as a counsellor and use her own experiences to support others that are going through their adoption journey.

Sarah raised **£350**

relationship building

We have started to build some strong relationships with businesses, sports clubs and health organisations across the region.

The partnerships are offering a wealth of opportunities such as attendance at events, fundraising and online and social media advertising which we hope will help raise further awareness of our charity.

We were delighted to be chosen by Bolton Wanderers Football Club as their national charity partner for 2015-16 season which will include a special 'Adoption Day' at a future match during National Adoption Week.



Summary Financial Statements Balance Sheet

31 March 2015 Adoption Matters	2015 (£)	2014 (£)
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	179,079	176,079
Investments	404,924	404,924
	<u>584,003</u>	<u>581,003</u>
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	740,352	453,877
Cash at bank	806,588	881,281
	<u>1,546,940</u>	<u>1,335,158</u>
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year	(265,782)	(131,342)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>1,281,158</u>	<u>1,203,816</u>
TOTAL ASSETS BEFORE PENSION DEFICIT		
	1,865,161	1,784,819
Pension scheme net liability	<u>(1,049,000)</u>	<u>(712,000)</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>816,161</u>	<u>1,072,819</u>
DESIGNATED FUNDS		
GENERAL FUND	–	149,189
	1,865,161	1,635,630
LESS: PENSION RESERVE (DEFICIT)	<u>(1,049,000)</u>	<u>(712,000)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	816,161	1,072,819

These accounts are a summary of the information extracted from the annual accounts which were approved by the members of the board on 31 July 2015 and are signed on their behalf by:

Professor David Cracknell OBE, Trustee
Mrs Carolyn Johnson, Trustee

Independent Auditor's Statement

To the members, Adoption Matters

We have examined the summarised accounts set out on these pages. You are responsible as Board members for the preparation of the summarised accounts.

We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the summarised accounts' consistency with the full accounts on the which we reported to you on 10 August 2015.

We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised accounts are consistent with the full accounts from which they have been prepared.

In our opinion, the summarised accounts are consistent with the full accounts for the year ended 31 March 2015.

UHY Hacker Young, Registered Auditors, Chartered Accountants, St John's Chambers, Love Street, Chester CH1 1QN

Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Financial Activities

31 March 2015 Adoption Matters	Total Funds 2015 (£)	Total Funds 2014 (£)
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Donations and grants	31,313	32,378
Fundraising	6,801	10,123
Investment income	9,412	18,795
Service income	2,527,912	2,188,881
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	2,575,438	2,250,177
RESOURCES EXPANDED		
Costs of generating voluntary income	31,167	23,878
Fundraising costs	1,216	730
Charitable activities	2,406,649	1,827,344
Governance costs	56,064	56,156
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPANDED	2,495,096	1,908,108
NET INCOMING RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR	80,342	342,069
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES		
Pension scheme (loss) in year	(337,000)	(86,000)
NET (EXPENDITURE) / INCOME FOR YEAR	(256,658)	256,069

The summarised accounts on these pages are an abridged version of the full accounts of Adoption Matters, which are filed with the Registrar of Companies and the Charities Commission.

The Auditors' report on the full accounts was unqualified. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of the Charity.

For further information, the full accounts, the Auditor's Report on these accounts and the Board of Trustees' Report should be consulted. Copies of these are available, 14 Liverpool Road, Chester CH2 1AE.

how you can help us?

There are many ways you can support our charity...

BT My Donate

MyDonate is the free online fundraising page where every penny goes straight to the chosen charity (apart from a tiny fee taken by credit and debit card companies).

Easy Fundraising

Easy Fundraising is a brilliant way to raise money for Adoption Matters. Shop online from over 2,700 retailers and they'll give a donation every time you buy something, at no extra cost.

Raise money yourself

Have you ever thought about getting active for Adoption Matters? Maybe you fancy the challenge of a marathon, skydive, iron man or something else? We will support you with sponsorship, fundraising and plenty of motivation.

Ebay

Mission Fish is a company that helps charities to auction items via ebay but allows the money to be legitimately donated to the charity, maintaining our status as a non-profit making member.

For more information on any of the above fundraising ideas visit our website at:

www.adoptionmattersnw.org/donate

or contact the fundraising team at:

info@adoptionmatters.org

social media

Since the implementation of our new marketing campaign, we have seen our social media presence increase dramatically.

We have increased our Facebook and Twitter 'likers' and 'followers' by 100%. Social media is so important in all aspects of the business world now and the adoption sector is no different. We would encourage you to like and follow our pages...



 **AdoptionMattersNorthwest**  **@adopt_matters**



Adoption Matters

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Fax: 01244 390 067

All enquiries: 0300 123 1066

Email: info@adoptionmatters.org

Blackburn, Hale,
Salford & Warrington.

www.adoptionmatters.org

CHARITY REGISTERED NUMBER: 512892



Scan here to register your
interest with us.

Rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted



BAAF Voluntary
Adoption Agency
of the Year 2012 & 2014