



adoption matters.

achievement report

2013
2014

a new brand to reflect a growing influence

As all those who have any connection or involvement will readily testify, the changes within the world of adoption and fostering in recent years have been both dramatic and far-reaching.

Never have the challenges facing adoption and fostering agencies been greater in terms of the number of children now coming into care, and never have so many additional Government-led initiatives - and resources - been introduced to meet the challenges.

Never has adoption had such a high profile in the public arena, and never has it been the subject of such intense media and public scrutiny.

The most successful agencies, particularly those in the voluntary sector, have embraced the challenges and opportunities with enthusiasm, and Adoption Matters has been no exception.

We've grown in strength, stature and skills. Our reputation and influence has increased alongside the success we've achieved in our core task of finding new families for children and our contribution to the national adoption agenda. Make no mistake: Adoption Matters now has national influence and a standing to match.

From being a relatively parochial, Chester Diocesan service provider, the agency took on a more regional role, particularly following its merger with the Blackburn Diocesan Adoption Agency. It was at that point in 2007 that we added 'Northwest' to our brand to better reflect our reach.

With our influence and activity now extending nationally, we looked at developing a brand for the agency that better reflected our standing, contribution and ambition and that could provide us with a more effective visual platform for future growth.

We wanted a logo that reflected our achievement, our new capabilities, our passion for innovation and our more forward-looking approach.

We're delighted to unveil our new brand in this annual review. It is the result of months of development and deliberation by staff, services users and supporters. We'd value your comments on the new brand. Please email info@adoptionmattersnw.org

The new brand will roll out across all the agency's activities and channels. There will be a greater use of and emphasis on exploiting social media to widen the adoption debate and increase engagement with potential adopters and supporters.

A new website will be unveiled later this year featuring a range of improvements and innovations including monthly blogs, a new enquiry form, live social media feeds and a unique live chat facility.

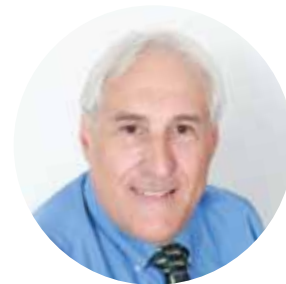
These will help the agency and its information and services become more accessible, more valued and more respected. Please look out for further details on the current website www.adoptionmattersnw.org



Chester Diocesan Adoption Services

1995

addressing the adopter gap



During this year Adoption Matters has played a significant role in conjunction with the other specialist Voluntary Adoption Agencies in meeting the Government's target of placing 1,000 children in adoptive families by 31st March 2014.

In the past year there has been a 27% increase in approvals, and over the past three years we have placed 185 children for adoption including 71 in this latest financial year. Thirty seven of those children were part of a sibling group and this itself is a significant achievement.

We continue to be mindful of the number of children waiting and through our work with a number of specific local authorities and through the "It's all about me" project, we have addressed this specific issue as well as trying to recruit appropriate families to reduce the time a child is spending in the care system.

We have continued to address the adopter gap and well met the new timescales in relation to adopter timeliness. Throughout this report there is mention of our specific figures.

During the year we have seen the first placements in our joint concurrent planning project (with Caritas Care) and our Centre for Adoption Support (DFE funded project), in conjunction with Caritas Care, Wigan, Warrington, St Helens and Cheshire West and Chester, has really made a difference for the many families who are benefitting from it. In this coming year we will be publishing our findings and holding a number of dissemination events with the help of the University of Chester.

With the benefit of the additional funding for VAAs, Adoption Matters continues to grow and there are many new exciting opportunities and developments ahead in the coming year.

Finally I would like to thank all those who have supported us this year and particularly Councillor Jill Houlbrook who in her year as Lord Mayor of Chester, chose us as her charity of the year and with her Lady Mayoress, gave us unstinting support. Thanks also to Blakemere Village and to all of our families, staff, panel members, trustees and patrons. You have all contributed to what has been another exciting and successful year.

Norman G Goodwin
Chief Executive



2001



2007



2014

research, development and innovation



At times of rapid change and new opportunity it is important to keep a historical perspective.

In a year when national attention is focused on momentous events that took place a century ago, it is worth recalling that adoption only became legal in the United Kingdom in 1926 arguably in response to the massive disruption of families in the First World War and the 1918 influenza epidemic.

Another trigger was the development of safe artificial infant feeding that helped practically to support adoption.

Over the last century adoption practice has been transformed, responding to changes in society, parenting and professional knowledge and expertise. We now find ourselves at another turning point in the history of adoption and one for which Adoption Matters is actively preparing itself.

Adoption Matters and its predecessor voluntary organisations in Lancashire and Cheshire have been subject to all these changes but have also actively contributed to them.

During the last year we have built up a clearer picture of the new directions for adoption, assessed the risks

and opportunities and begun to find ways of ensuring that change will secure quality in adoption processes, outcomes and life experience for children, young people and families.

We have engaged with research, development and innovation and our business planning has given priority to maintaining service quality and financial discipline. We have extended our partnership working with government and other voluntary and statutory agencies, growing through collaboration.

So, now we are more confident about our place within the national policy framework and aware of its implications. Adoption Matters is set to play a vital role in that challenging but exciting future.

I am proud to be associated with our amazing adopters and adopted children but also I cannot overstate how much our successful growth, sustained without loss of quality, depends on the staff, voluntary supporters and trustees of Adoption Matters.

Each one has made it possible for Adoption Matters to become and remain “outstanding” and I am immensely grateful to them.

Professor David Cracknell OBE

Chair, Board of Trustees



**OUR
ACHIEVEMENTS
2013-2014**

WE HAVE PLACED

71

CHILDREN WITH
NEW FAMILIES.

WITHIN THAT TOTAL
THERE WERE

18

SIBLING GROUPS
(37 CHILDREN)

WE PLACED CHILDREN
ON BEHALF OF

34

LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

WE DELIVERED ON-
GOING SUPPORT TO

117

CHILDREN ALREADY
IN PLACEMENT.

WE RECEIVED

284

ENQUIRIES FROM
PROSPECTIVE
ADOPTERS.

awards for adoption- friendly organisations

Many employers across the UK - including businesses, schools and other organisations - have responded magnificently to the Government initiative that encourages support for employees who decide to become adoptive parents.

Working hand-in-hand with agencies such as Adoption Matters, some have gone above and beyond acceptance of the introduction of statutory adoption leave and pay by offering positive encouragement to their staff.

Adoption Matters' relationship with MBNA is a perfect case study of effective partnership that has resulted in several successful placements.

To acknowledge the contribution of North West organisations to the adoption cause and encourage others to support adoption, Adoption Matters is launching the first ever 'Adoption Champions' award.

The award is open to all employers across the North West, including public and private sector business, schools and voluntary organisations, who will be invited to enter by setting out how they go the extra mile to inform, enable and support employees in undertaking their adoption journey.

The award will be formally launched later this year with the winners in several categories to be awarded a prestigious 'Adoption Matters to us' wall plaque, promotional materials and publicity.

Further details will appear on the Adoption Matters website www.adoptionmattersnw.org

siblings under the spotlight

National Adoption Week offers a valuable opportunity to encourage more couples and individuals to come forward to offer a permanent home to some of the rapidly growing number of children that are in care and often remain in care for year after year.

Held annually, this year's event will see Adoption Matters focusing on the plight of sibling groups who long for a new family and are desperate not to be split up.

There are more than 200 sibling groups waiting to be adopted in the North West, with just 61 sibling-approved adopters.

The charity has an impressive record of placing sibling groups of up to five children within a single adoptive family. "We've placed many groups of three, four and even five children. It's a record we're really proud of and we're particularly keen to achieve more," said Chief Executive, Norman Goodwin.

"National Adoption Week presents a great opportunity to highlight the dreams of these sibling groups and help create new families for them. If we fail, it will mean that either these brothers and sisters will be separated and go to different families, or that they will remain in care for their entire childhood."

Adoption Matters' campaign will run from 3-9 November and will feature events, social media activity and press coverage.

50%

NEARLY
OF THE CHILDREN CURRENTLY IN
CARE ACROSS THE UK ARE PART
OF A SIBLING GROUP AND YET,
ACCORDING TO THE ADOPTION
REGISTER ANNUAL REPORT,
JUST **36%** OF ADOPTERS WERE
PREPARED TO ADOPT TWO
CHILDREN, WITH ONLY **3%** WILLING
TO ADOPT THREE OR MORE.



nationaladoptionweek
3-9 November 2014

rachel appointed lady mayoress

Adoption Matters found itself with a civic dignitary on its team when the charity's Fundraising and Marketing Assistant Rachel Walker, was officially invested as the Lady Mayoress of Chester.

During a special ceremony at Chester Town Hall, Rachel's mother, Cllr Jill Houlbrook, was appointed Lord Mayor of Chester and Chairman of Cheshire West and Chester Council, and Rachel was appointed to the role of Lady Mayoress.

The Lord Mayor announced Adoption Matters as her chosen charity for the year and, thanks to her efforts and various fundraising events and initiatives including a banquet and a musical evening with the 'Handbag of Harmonies' singers, more than £10,000 was raised to support the charity's adoption work.



RACHEL SAID...

It has been an absolute privilege and a pleasure to accompany my mum as Lady Mayoress for the year. It has provided an excellent opportunity for us to highlight Adoption Matters' work, as well as raising much needed funds.



adoption matters' grant success

Adoption Matters has successfully pitched for three £400,000 grants from the Department for Education.

The DfE decided to award 15 Expansion Grants to voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) to help boost the number of adopters recruited, with a particular focus on adopters who can provide homes for hard-to-place children.

The Expansion Grants Programme is being administered and managed by the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies (CVAA) on behalf of the DfE.

ADOPTION MATTERS
WILL USE THE MONEY TO
SUPPORT A NUMBER OF
PROJECTS, INCLUDING...



A joint project with Caritas Care to develop a seamless recruitment, assessment, early matching and adoption support service through an innovative collaborative sub-regional LA/VAA partnership.



Building sustainable strategic VAA/LA partnerships to increase the scope and scale of adoption services, facilitating early matching and access to on-going support.

This project involves extending our operational boundaries to the south and to Yorkshire and Humberside.

baby first adoption

Adoption Matters was among the first of the UK's specialist adoption agencies to re-launch an initiative, based on the concurrent planning model, that combines fostering with adoption and minimises the disruption for very young children.

The two-year Baby First Adoption project was launched in 2013 in association with colleagues at Preston-based Caritas Care.

Research shows that nationally, 68% of children who have gone on to be adopted through the concurrent planning process have lower rates of emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The service has been rolled out to 13 new authorities across the North West and, since 2013, four sets of carers have been Baby First approved, the first child has been placed and 22 more sets of carers are being trained.

The expansion aims to find 31 new couples and individuals to come forward as potential new carers.

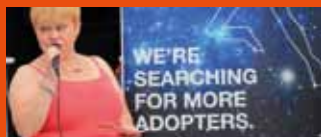
BABYFIRST
> ADOPTION

MIKE HALL, WHO LEADS
BABY FIRST, EXPLAINS...

// **Baby First puts the interests, long-term happiness and stability of children first at every stage. We are looking for carers who are able to care for children whilst plans for their future are decided and who will go on to adopt them if the Courts decide that this is in the child's best interests.** //

a Lancashire mum says thanks

A Lancashire mum to three adopted children hosted Blackburn's first-ever, 'She is Shared' ladies' garden party as a 'thank you' to Adoption Matters and to raise awareness and funds for the charity's work.



Tracey, who adopted Caisha, 18, Kieran, 13 and Connor, 8, through Adoption Matters, said: "I loved telling the people of Lancashire all about adoption and how it has changed my life.

"I really hope that by telling my story it has raised awareness of adoption in the North West and has touched the hearts of some potential adopters. There are so many children looking for mummies and daddies and if the Ladies' Garden Party can help one family come together, I'd be over the moon."

The event is part of a series of scheduled 'She is...' events organised by the women of Hope City Church.

adoption matters out

father's day special

Seventy-one Northwest children celebrated Father's Day with their new dads this year, thanks to Adoption Matters. The charity was delighted to have been able to place a record breaking 71 children in a single year - including 18 sibling groups.

Chief Executive Norman Goodwin said: "We were so pleased to see so many

children celebrate this wonderful day with their new families.

"It's a great achievement but we shouldn't forget that there are still over 6,000 children in the UK waiting to be part of a loving family, and despite the efforts of voluntary agencies such as Adoption Matters and local authorities, there is still a massive shortfall to deal with."

launch of adoption support centre

Adopters throughout the North West are benefiting from a new support centre launched during the year by Adoption Matters and Caritas Care.

The Centre for Adoption Support is based on the University of Chester's Warrington campus in Padgate and houses a new team of specialist social workers dedicated to setting a new standard in the delivery of post adoption support services for adopters across the region.

The team works closely with the Warrington, Wigan and St Helen's adoption service (WWISH) and Cheshire West and Chester local authority to develop a service that is tailored to the needs of each family.

Project Manager Delyth Evans said: "Every child has the right to a happy childhood, so we're here to ensure that each family we work with receives the best possible support.

"Large social settings such as school

can sometimes be very stressful for an adopted child, which is why post adoption support is so important to a child's development and to ensure a smooth transition into their new home."

She added: "People sometimes believe that the relationship between the agency and the family ends once a child is placed - this isn't the case. Our team will continue to work with children and their families, offering advice and support, long after the adoption is finalised."

The Centre for Adoption Support is funded partially by the Department of Education, as well as investment from both Adoption Matters and Caritas Care, whilst working in partnership with the University of Chester's Warrington campus.

Professor Peter Harrop, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Provost of the University of Chester's Warrington Campus, said: "The University is very pleased to support this important partnership initiative."

and about

fashion fundraiser

Miss Cheshire Galaxy wowed the crowds at a special fashion show during the year to raise funds for Adoption Matters.

Chester Fashion Show hostess and reigning beauty queen, Rebecca White, welcomed the city's fashion community to Rosie's nightclub for a glamorous evening of style and live music from Britain's Got Talent runner-up, Alex Kierl.



dispelling the myths

Adoption Matters took part in the Blackburn Diocesan Summer Festival in Lytham in June to promote adoption and highlight the shortage of adopters in the region.

Adoption Matters Blackburn Team Manager Gwen Laird and members of the adoption team attended the event to dispel the myths around adoption, share advice and information about the adoption process and encourage more people in the North West to consider adoption.

chair's OBE

We were delighted in January to congratulate Adoption Matters Chair, Professor David Cracknell, on being awarded an OBE in the New Year honours list.

David has chaired the board of Adoption Matters since 2005.

Chief Executive, Norman Goodwin, added: "We're immensely proud of David's achievement. His support and commitment to our work has been immense."



stephen's hairy moment

One of the highlights of Adoption Matters' fundraising activities during the year was Chester musician Stephen Fowler's brave decision to shave off his carefully nurtured beard!



Stephen, the ukulele player with local group Ooty and the Cloud spearheaded a number of fundraising activities to raise over £370 for the charity.

Stephen said: "The idea came when my mum offered to pay me to shave off my beard - she's never been a fan! It just seemed like a fun way to boost our fundraising efforts."

town hall celebration

Adoption Matters celebrated more successful adoptions with a special event at Chester Town Hall in November hosted by Chester Lord Mayor, Cllr Jill Houlbrook.

Norman Goodwin said: "Chester has always shown incredible support for our work, and I would like to thank everyone who attended the event for their continued help."

Cllr Houlbrook said: "The team at Adoption Matters has done an outstanding job in finding, preparing and securing loving homes for children who want nothing more than to be part of a caring family."

employers' support

Chester-based MBNA has long been one of Adoption Matters' leading supporters.

To mark last year's National Adoption Week, a team from the charity visited MBNA to meet employees, raise awareness of the adoption challenge and encourage more people to consider becoming adoptive parents.

Norman Goodwin said: "We're really grateful to MBNA for allowing us to come on site and speak to their employees, and for all the support they continue to show."

always striving to be better...

The Adoption Matters team is continuously striving to improve the quality and outcomes of the services we deliver.

We have committed ourselves to achieving a number of objectives between April 2014 and March 2015...



Summary Financial Statements Balance Sheet

31 March 2014
Adoption Matters

	2014 £	2013 £
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	176,079	171,166
Investments	404,924	600,000
	<u>581,003</u>	<u>771,166</u>
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	453,877	239,205
Cash at bank	881,281	579,499
	<u>1,335,158</u>	<u>818,704</u>
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year	(131,342)	(147,120)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>1,203,816</u>	<u>671,584</u>
TOTAL ASSETS BEFORE PENSION DEFICIT	1,784,819	1,442,750
Pension scheme net liability	(712,000)	(626,000)
NET ASSETS	<u>1,072,819</u>	<u>816,750</u>
DESIGNATED FUNDS	149,189	164,609
GENERAL FUND	1,635,630	1,278,141
LESS: PENSION RESERVE (DEFICIT)	<u>(712,000)</u>	<u>(626,000)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>1,072,819</u>	<u>816,750</u>

Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Financial Activities

Year ended 31 March 2014
Adoption Matters

	Total Funds 2014 £	Total Funds 2013 £
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Donations and grants	32,378	61,957
Fundraising costs	10,123	7,938
Investment income	18,795	21,003
Service income	2,188,881	1,544,265
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	<u>2,250,177</u>	<u>1,635,163</u>
RESOURCES EXPANDED		
Costs of generating voluntary income	23,878	21,826
Fundraising costs	730	1,291
Charitable activities	1,827,344	1,415,151
Governance costs	56,156	50,543
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPANDED	<u>1,908,108</u>	<u>1,488,811</u>
NET INCOMING RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR	342,069	146,352
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES		
Pension scheme (loss) in year	(86,000)	(279,000)
NET INCOME FOR YEAR	<u>256,069</u>	<u>(132,648)</u>

These accounts are a summary of the information extracted from the annual accounts which were approved by the members of the board on 4 August 2014 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 which we reported to you on 7 August 2014.

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 2014.

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 from Adoption Matters, 14 Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1AE.

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

the team adoption matters northwest 2013-2014

PRESIDENTS

The Right Reverend
Dr Peter Forster,
Bishop of Chester

The Right Reverend
Julian Henderson,
Bishop of Blackburn

PATRON

Sir Mark Hedley

COMPANY SECRETARY

Annesley Wright OBE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Norman G Goodwin

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Professor
David Cracknell OBE

Sheila Whipp
Vice-Chair
until November 2013

Marjorie Hearton

Carolyn Johnson
Vice-Chair
from November 2013

Daphne Jordan

Nicholas Lapham

Joe McArdle

Alan Rowntree MBE

Christopher Samuels

David Shield

Sally Winstanley

Annesley Wright OBE

PANEL MEMBERS

CHESTER

Rosemary Jones Chair

Hazel Field Vice Chair

Janet Barden

Janet Bodie

Beverley Burke

Heather Dickinson

Carole Hassall

Sara Jones
from August 2013

Rob Maclese

Tessa Tarratt until July 2013

BLACKBURN

Peter Young Chair

Nicola Fielden Vice Chair

Brenda Botten

Julie Clarke

Marjorie Hearton

Rashda Kholwadia

Andrew Teale

Margaret Waddington



SESSIONAL WORKERS

Val Capewell
Sheila Curran
Barbara Cutts-Watson
Ann Kitson
Jackie Lloyd
Olive Otway
Imogen Parker
Maureen Whittle
Annette Todd
Sheila Thompson
Therapy Project
Development Co-ordinator



ADVISERS

Hanif Dudwhala Cultural (Islamic)
Daphne Jordan Education
Peter Young Education
Dr Sara Dubois Medical
Dr Pamela Tomlin Medical
Andrew Larkin Human Resources



SOCIAL WORK ASSISTANTS

Sally Broadhurst
Pip Jones



SOCIAL WORK TEAM

Janet Barden
Team Manager

Ann Davison
Team Manager

Gwen Laird
Team Manager

Paul Dolan
Acting Team Manager

Delyth Evans
Project Manager

Nicola Abedin
Bernadette Bailey
Liz Boulter
Lisa Bryan
Patricia Dalton
Alexis Draper
Karen Ferguson
Hazel Field
Sally Frances
Nick Gore
Karen Smith
Sarah Jones,
Linda McNeill
Linda Mullineaux
Kath Parker
Vera Parkinson
Amreen Riaz
Claire Roscoe
Deborah Stoddard
Ronnie Sumner
Fiona Taylor
Hetty Verhagen
Kelly Wise



BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Susy White
Business Manager

Gaynor Richards
Business Development Manager

Hafina Thomas Adoption Administration Supervisor

Karen Davies Assistant Business manager

Rachel Walker
Marketing and Fundraising Assistant

Janet Ward
PA to Chief Executive
(To July 2013)

Alison Bate
PA to Chief Executive
(From April 2013)

Diane Handley
HR Specialist

Charlotte Davies
Loraine Exton
Hannah Martin
Carol McMahon
Emma Price
Amy Wilson

Solicitor and Legal Adviser Helen Broughton, Morecrofts LLP, No.1 Tithebarn, 1-5 Tithebarn Street, Liverpool L2 2NZ
Registered Office 14 Liverpool Road, Chester, Cheshire CH2 1AE
Company Registration Number 1617324, Charity Registration Number 512892

how you can support adoption matters

We owe such a debt of gratitude to the many individuals, families, employers and other organisations who do so much each year to support our team in its work.

Thank you.

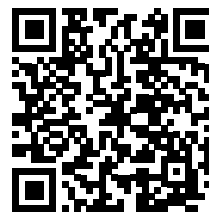
If you'd like to learn more about what we do, support our work or get involved in some other way, please get in touch.

You can support the charity in a variety of ways:

- By inviting us into your work place to tell you more about our work
- By inviting us to talk to your community group, church or school
- By supporting our fundraising and getting involved in events
- By general volunteering in Chester, Manchester, Merseyside, Blackburn, Hale and Warrington
- Through donations
- Considering a legacy

For more information about how you can make a difference please contact our friendly team:

01244 390938 or 0300 123 1066
info@adoptionmattersnw.org
www.adoptionmattersnw.org



tweet us, 'like' us and share our story

Over the last year Adoption Matters has continued to raise its online profile, from posting engaging and creative content to increasing our audience and reaching out to more prospective adopters across the UK.

Our daily social media updates are helping to boost our enquiries, enabling us to talk to key stakeholders online, comment on trending adoption topics and has given us an online voice to communicate easy-to-understand advice to would-be adopters.

We are constantly looking into new ways to use social media channels to amplify our messages and news, and we are excited to be expanding into new platforms later this year.

So join our conversations...

Tweets

Questions about #adoption? Over 65 years of experience gives us a whole load of answers! What would you like to know?

We are not looking for saints. We're looking for people from all kinds of backgrounds, cultures & beliefs who can give an adopted child a secure, stable and loving family. Could this be you?.

Finding mum & dad, dad & dad, mum & mum, dad, mum.....families come in all shapes and sizes! #adoptionparty



[@Adoption_MattersNW](https://twitter.com/Adoption_MattersNW)

and like us on Facebook



facebook.com/adoptionmattersnw.



ADOPTION MATTERS, 14 LIVERPOOL ROAD, CHESTER, CHESHIRE CH2 1AE

TEL: 01244 390938 FAX: 01244 390067 E-MAIL: INFO@ADOPTIONMATTERSNW.ORG

WWW.ADOPTIONMATTERSNW.ORG

CHARITY REGISTERED NUMBER: 512892



ACHIEVEMENT
REPORT 2013 | 14



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