An 'Outstanding' Golden Year



Adoption Matters
Achievement Report 2017-2018





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Introduction

by Norman Goodwin CBE Chief Executive

This past year has been both challenging and exciting.

We believe children's outcomes are central to the successful operation of the national adoption system. There needs to be close co-operation between all parties at all levels of the system to ensure timely placements for children with a healthy supply of suitable adopters who are well prepared and supported for the task they take on. The support of government, government departments and a robust and realistic funding model needs to exist to make this happen.

We seek to do our best for the users of our service and are often overwhelmed by the many positive and complimentary comments received about the agency and particularly about our staff members. To have secured a fourth consecutive Ofsted outcome of Outstanding is no mean feat, however we are not complacent and recognise that we need to build on our successes by engaging in a constant process of development and improvement, particularly in a climate of growing scrutiny and user discernment.

Our 70th Anniversary celebration was a great opportunity to meet with supporters and staff past and present and reminded us of the ongoing vision of the agency and that the baton continues to be passed on from one generation to the next.

During the year that baton was passed on to a new generation of trustees and staff. I would like to pay particular tribute to Ann Davison who played such a central role in the management and growth of the Agency for over 20 years and to Delyth Evans who did so much to set up our Centre for Adoption Support. We wish them both a happy retirement. We also thank our departing trustees who have played a very active role during their trusteeship.

The Centre for Adoption Support is one of our shared services developed in partnership with Caritas Care. During the year we have continued to deliver our existing services as well as develop and deliver new pieces of work. We have also significantly extended our geographical area of coverage particularly in the area of Concurrent Planning and early permanence.

I always like to acknowledge the contribution of all our supporters, volunteers, Panel Members, Board of Trustees and staff, without whom our achievements would not be possible.

The next few years promise to be both equally challenging and exciting and we look forward to reporting on that progress next year.

I hope this report will have inspired new readers to share with us in our mission and for those well versed in our work to continue to support us as well as you have done over these past 70 years.

"The next few years promise to be both equally challenging and exciting"



Introduction

by Carolyn Johnson, Chair Board of Trustees

This is my first year as Chair of Adoption Matters' Board of Trustees although I have served as a Trustee for several years and as Vice Chair for the last few years.

I have been involved for a long period in experiencing the growth, development and success in extending the excellent services of Adoption Matters and sharing in its award by Ofsted as Outstanding for the last 4 consecutive inspections. What an accolade and all due to our outstanding staff and sustained by our trustees and voluntary supporters by their professionalism and dedication to our Agency. I regard Adoption Matters as a large family who share ideas, strategic thinking, time, and commitment led by Norman Goodwin, who is enthusiastically driven to develop and promote the agency locally and nationally. His leadership and encouragement enable us to build on our achievements as outlined in this report.

The life of our Board continues to evolve and our thanks go to those Trustees who have retired and we welcome new trustees who bring complementary skills and experience.

As a family law barrister specialising in public law proceedings, I have seen an escalation in the number of children in care, reaching the highest level since the Children Act 1989 and care order applications reached record levels in 2017. As a consequence, more children are being placed for adoption and many of those have complex needs. Our joint Bespoke Family Finding Service with Caritas Care is growing a reputation in finding families and matching these extremely vulnerable children with selfless adoptive families.

The Concurrent Planning Service and post-adoption support has also continued to grow and has an acknowledged reputation in providing specialist support to adopters. By careful management of our finances, securing significant Government funding grants and developing our Partnerships with Caritas Care and Home for Good we have ensured that these projects are sustainable in the long term.

This year has been a busy one as we work with our Regional Adoption Agency colleagues and expand our services into Yorkshire and Humber, Staffordshire and Stoke, but Norman and our staff take on these challenges calmly and wisely!

Exciting, innovative projects and partnerships are planned for next year and I am optimistic but realistic that Adoption Matters will actively and willingly take on these fresh projects as we all wish to continue to transform the lives of the most vulnerable, deprived and disadvantaged children in our society.

I am extremely proud of the professionalism and approach of everyone in Adoption Matters and look forward to working with you in a way that I have found to be respectful, humane and very rewarding.



"Tam extremely proud of the professionalism and approach of everyone in Adoption Matters"





Our Achievements

April 2017 - March 2018



We approved 47 new adoptive families



We placed 57 children with their adoptive families



32 adoption orders granted to our families



The average age of the children we placed was 3 years



40% of the children we placed were part of a sibling group





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The Concurrent Planning Service

1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018

New tender makes our Concurrent Planning Service the largest of its kind in the country!

The Concurrent Planning Service was awarded a 2 year contract to provide families for 86 babies and young children across the region. Our successful tender builds upon our pioneering work over the last 3 years where we provided over 80 placements and now incorporates all 4 North West Regional Adoption Agencies: Adoption NoW, Adoption Counts, Together for Adoption, Adoption in Merseyside and Blackpool Local Authority (a total of 21 Local Authorities) allowing families from across the region to access this innovative service.

We have also been successful in two grant applications to the DfE Practice and Improvement Fund to expand the service into Stoke & Staffordshire and Yorkshire & Humber regions.

Tracey Coffey, Chair of the North West Adoption Leadership Board commented:

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We are really pleased that Caritas Care and Adoption Matters have been recommissioned to provide concurrent adoption placements across the region. The new service will work with the four new Regional Adoption Agencies in the North West and Blackpool Council. The contract is for 86 placements to be provided over the next two years which is a significant increase on the previous commission. This is credit to the success of the programme in enabling many children to be placed with their adoptive families as early as possible over the last three years. We look forward to working closely with the concurrency team in achieving this new goal".

CCP Statistics 1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018 Number of children placed 30 Number of Adoption Orders 14 Number of concurrent carers approved 28 Local Authorities worked with 21

For further information about Concurrent Planning visit: www.concurrentplanning.org



The Centre for Adoption Support

1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018

Children's choir goes from strength to strength

Our Centre for Adoption Support continues to grow supporting more families and working with more Local Authorities across our regions.

The Centre for Adoption Support choir master, Rosie Shields has won a coveted NODA (National Operatic and Dramatic Association) award for her recent performance as the Witch in 'Into the Woods' performed at The Brindley Theatre, Runcorn.

Rosie, who was herself adopted, leads the Centre's choir sharing her vocal training and talents with choir members. The choir was established in 2016 and grew from 9 to its current 33 members, all of whom are either adopted, have adopted siblings or have parents in the profession.

For further information about the Centre for Adoption Support visit: www.centreforadoptionsupport.org

Anne Fleming, Centre for Adoption Support Service Manager commented:



We are so delighted for Rosie in receiving this prestigious award. It is very much deserved and we are so lucky to have her as part of our choir".

One adoptive parent who attends choir with her children commented:



After some friendly introductions and some vocal warm ups led by the fabulous Rosie, we are transformed into popstars within the hour. You can physically see kids grow in confidence and self-esteem and parents let go and throw themselves into it"

CfAS Statistics 1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018 Families worked with 412 Referrals from Local Authorities 153

Referrals from Local Authorities 153
No of consultations 138
No of workshops 67
Workshop attendees 502



Rosie Shields and her NODA award

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Bespoke Family Finding & Therapy Services continue to grow

The Bespoke Family Finding Service undertakes 'niche' family finding and/ or direct work service built around the individual child's needs.

Working in partnership with our colleagues at Caritas Care, the aim is to create opportunities to identify a permanent family for children with the following characteristics:

Children with disabilities

Older children (aged 4 plus)

Sibling groups

Children from BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic) groups

and children with additional needs.

An extension of this definition also includes children who have experienced or witnessed inappropriate adult behaviour or material as well as children who display child to parent violence. Typically speaking, these children wait longer

for a family. Permanence refers to

adoption and long term fostering.

The service operates a child specific model informed by research* and practice to create equality in adoption for children who wait longer. A unique aspect of this service is to feature children using their original names and photos in the public domain, using a range of marketing methods to help identify potential families.

The service has worked with a number of Local Authorities nationally to explore creative ways to find families for children that wait longer. Some of the Local Authorities have requested repeat referrals due to the creative methods and success in identifying families for children who wait longer.

For more information email the team at: info@bespokefamilyfindingservice.org

Therapy Service

Adoption Matters Therapy Service provides personalised therapeutic intervention based on a structured assessment. All services are covered by the **Adoption Support Fund (ASF)**.

In 2017, the service:

Provided over 300 contracts for ASF submissions

Worked with 60 local authorities across the country.

For more information on our therapy services, email:

in fo@adoption matters.org



We said goodbye to Ann and Welyth

In December 2017, we said goodbye to Delyth Evans, Service Manager for our Centre for Adoption Support. Delyth first worked for Adoption Matters in 1996 in our disabilities service, re-joining in 2013 to set up the Centre. Delyth's vision and passion for Adoption Support aided the Centre to be the innovative service it is today.

In March 2018 we also said goodbye to Service Manager Ann Davison, who retired after 22 years with the agency. Ann was part of the strategic management team for many years and was instrumental in the successful growth of the agency over the years.

We wish Ann & Delyth all the very best in their retirement.

Delyth (right) with Anne Fleming & Norman Goodwin





Ann Davison cutting her retirement cake & sporting her new 'Out of Office' hat!

A new management team for the Centre for Adoption Support

The Centre for Adoption Support welcomed a new management team during the last year. Anne Fleming, former Practice Manager at the Centre is now Service Manager with Hedwig (known as Hetty) Verhagen & David Robinson-Field Practice Managers, both formerly working in the service as Adoption Practitioners.

Having worked together already, the new management team are excited about the future and have lots of new plans for the Centre.

Anne Fleming, Service Manager commented:

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I am honoured to have been 'handed the baton' of CfAS Service Manager from Delyth and am privileged to be a part of the continuing development and growth of CfAS. We are also delighted to have successfully appointed Hetty & David as Practice Managers, they will be a real asset to the future development of the service".







Verhagen

Hedwig (Hetty)

8

*(Planning Transitions for Children moving to Permanent Placement: What do you

do after you say "hello"? Published by Family Futures Burnell, Castell, & Cousins

March 2009; Supporting Children during Adoption Breakdown, Jones, 2017)



Rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted for the FOURTH time in a row!

Adoption Matters were rated Outstanding by Ofsted inspectors for the fourth consecutive time in October 2017, the only agency in the whole of the North West to achieve this. The agency has now been rated

Outstanding since 2008.

In making their judgement inspectors had to consider the experiences of children and families the agency works with taking into account how well they are helped and protected and also the effectiveness of leaders and managers. They also considered the experiences of local authorities who work closely with the agency.

The inspection report detailed some of the reasons for being outstanding as:

- → Staff are passionate about their work and committed to providing the
- → Adopters benefit from an exceptional service throughout their involvement with the agency.
- Staff support careful matching of children with adopters. As a result, despite the complexity involved in many placements, there are few adoption breakdowns.
- → Adopters and children benefit from receiving excellent support
- Children thrive in stable homes where they make good progress and develop a strong sense of identity.
- → Leaders and managers are highly visible and provide inspirational
- The agency is involved in innovative research-based practice which influences adoption and adoption support practice.

The report also highlighted feedback



This is a very special place. Social workers really 'get it' and are nonjudgemental. They are proactive and don't wait for the family to be in crisis."

Adoption Matters Chief Executive, Norman Goodwin, CBE commented:



Achieving a fourth outstanding rating is a great achievement for all staff and Trustees who all work so hard. We are all incredibly proud of the services we offer and continually strive to push innovation both regionally and nationally whilst continuing to offer an excellent service to our families. We are delighted that Ofsted recognises this together with our commitment to ongoing support, something we have been offering as an agency for some time".



Yorkshire team was **crowned Social Worker** of the Year at the

National Adoption Week Awards in October 2017. Rachael was nominated by an adoptive family when she worked for our colleagues at One

Adoption in Yorkshire.

Rachael Cutler, Adoption

Practitioner in our

The adopters said of Rachael in their nomination entry form:

Rachael Cutler wins



We first met her in stage one of the adoption process when she delivered training. Right from the start we were drawn to her openhearted and very real personality. She was clearly a social worker who loved her job and wanted to help potential parents achieve their dream of adopting a child. She has not only gone that extra mile for us, she has walked up hills, run through storms and climbed mountains to allow us to write this with our beautiful daughter beside us.'





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National Adoption Week -Sharing stories, Shining a Light & Supporting Adoption

Board of Trustees Chair Carolyn Johnson with her dog Brock and her puppy daughter Eden!

#SupportAdoption

This year's National Adoption theme was again #SupportAdoption - we asked our adopters, colleagues, partners and Trustees to all help raise awareness by sending us their pictures which we shared online & across our social media channels.





Shining a Light Campaign

As part of our 70th anniversary celebrations and to mark the start of National Adoption Week 2017, we launched our campaign shining a light on adoption.

Trees at the agency head office in Chester town centre, were switched on at the start of National Adoption Week 2017, right through to Christmas with 4076 lights. 4,000 for the children placed for adoption in the 70 years history and 76 placed in 2016.

Chief Executive,
Norman Goodwin CBE, added:



Commemorating our 70th anniversary is important to our charity and this campaign is also a great way to raise awareness and celebrate the achievement of placing more than 4000 children with their forever families across our 70-year history. Last year alone we placed 76 children, the highest number since 1967."







"The support we received was excellent"

- Adopter John

Adopters John & Kathryn shared their story and raised funds for Adoption Matters

John & Kathryn from Whalley took part in a local Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary & All Saints Parish Church to raise funds and awareness for Adoption Matters. The tree also played a very special role in their journey, as it was gifted to their son following the festival for his new home, 28 years after being adopted through the agency.

Having tried unsuccessfully to start a family, Kathryn and John (pictured at Adoption Matters 70th Anniversary Event in September 2017) signed up with Adoption Matters and became parents to Andrew at six weeks-old.

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"The experience is absolutely normal," said John. "I can't think of any difficulty that might not have happened to any family, except you don't have nine months to prepare! There were only a few weeks from the time of knowing about Andrew to him living with us but the support we received was excellent."

"I volunteered on the agency's adoption panel and we go to its carol service every year to offer support and so Andrew can keep in touch with the staff," said John. "But it's also because he went to his first agency carol service 28 years ago as a baby of only a few weeks old with his proud new parents."

adoptionmatters
Whalley Abbey

4.000 likes
adoptionmatters #adoptionmatters 70 #4000+s inlerent
#1947 #proudhistory #childrensfutures #adoption

Q
Q
Q
A

Kathryn and John at Adoption Matters 70th Anniversary Event in September 2017

Adoptee becomes adopter

Mike and his wife Rebekah shared their story during National Adoption Week, of how they adopted siblings, aged 3 and 4, through Adoption Matters.

What makes Mike's story unique is that Mike was also adopted through the agency. Moira and John from Manchester, adopted Mike through Adoption Matters in 1984 when he was a young baby. They went on to have three birth children, Jonathan, Hannah and Nick to became a family of 6!

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Mike said: "My parents and I have always been very open about my adoption and a couple of years ago I ran the London Marathon to raise funds for Adoption Matters. They helped me find the great life and upbringing that I have enjoyed and now my wife and I are delighted to have also adopted our beautiful children through the agency".



Mike and his wife Rebekah

"They helped me find the great life and upbringing that I have enjoyed" - Adoptee/Adopter Mike

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We held a celebratory afternoon tea event at Whalley Abbey in the beautiful Ribble Valley in September to celebrate our 70th anniversary.

More than 70 people from across the north west attended the 40s-themed event including adopters, local authority partners, panel members, volunteers, former staff & Diocesan representatives including the Bishop of Blackburn, Rt Rev. Julian Henderson and the Archdeacon of Lancaster, The Venerable Michael Everitt.

The agency has its roots going back to 1947 with the Blackburn Diocese Adoption Agency and also Chester Diocesan Adoption Services. Those two agencies merged in 2007 forming Adoption Matters.

Chief Executive, Norman Goodwin CBE, added:

Commemorating our 70th anniversary is important to our charity in remembering our past, celebrating our achievements and looking forward to our future. Our aim has remained consistent throughout our history, which is that children's welfare and needs are paramount and we aim for them to grow up in a secure and loving family who will best meet their long-term needs and who can help them to reach their full potential."





















- 1. Staff from the Chester office
- 2. Norman Goodwin, CBE Chief Executive & Amanda Forshaw, CEO at Caritas
- 3. Blackburn staff from Adoption Matters
- 4. Norman Goodwin, Carolyn Johnson Chair of Board of Trustees, & Bishop of Blackburn, Rt Rev. Julian Henderson
- 5. Adopters Sarah & Rick
- 6. Service Managers Anne Fleming, Paul Dolan & Jacqui Shore
- 7. Susy White, Finance & Operations Director, Norman Goodwin & Trustees together with the Bishop of Blackburn, Rt Rev. Julian Henderson & the Archdeacon of Lancaster, The Venerable Michael Everitt.



The Team

Our management and Board of Trustee teams.

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:

Dave Champness

(from September 2017)

Professor David Cracknell

Vice-Chair

(from August 2017 previously Chair)

Catherine Gibbons

Professor Elizabeth Harlow

(from March 2018)

Carolyn Johnson

Chair (from August 2017

previously Vice-Chair)

Daphne Jordan (to September 2017)

Nick Lapham (to September 2017)

Joe McArdle

Lynn Pates (from March 2018)

David Shield

Sally Winstanley

Annesley Wright Company Secretary

Strategic Management

Ann Davison (retired March 2018) Service Manager

Paul Dolan

Service Manager

Delyth Evans (retired December 2017) Service Manager Centre for Adoption Support

Anne Fleming (from December 2017) Service Manager Centre for Adoption Support

Gaynor Richards

Business Development Manager

Jacqui Shore (from January 2018) Service Manager

Susv White

Finance & Operations Director



Social Work:

Hazel Field

Social Work Practice Manager

Sally Frances

Social Work Practice Manager

Clive Gumbrell

Social Work Practice Manager

Julie Hogan

Social Work Practice Manager Concurrent Planning Service

Amy Mather

Social Work Practice Manager Concurrent Planning Service

Amreen Riaz

Social Work Practice Manager

Sue Spruce

Social Work Practice Manager Concurrent Planning Service

Debbie Stoddard

Social Work Practice Manager

Fiona Taylor

Social Work Practice Manager

Hedwig Verhagen

Social Work Practice Manager Centre for Adoption Support

Business, HR & Marketing

Karen Davies

Business & Office Manager

Diane Handley

HR Manager

Jenny MacQuire Marketing Manager



Financials

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Summary Financial Statements Statement of Financial Position

31 March 2018 Adoption Matters	2018 (£)	2017 (£)
FIXED ASSETS Tangible assets Investments	163,048 400,009 563,057	172,072 400,009 572,081
CURRENT ASSETS Debtors Cash at bank	648,954 1,061,826 1,710,780	589,417 1,478,537 2,067,954
CREDITORS Amounts falling due within one year NET CURRENT ASSETS	(455,746) 1,255,034	(565,541) 1,502,413
TOTAL ASSETS BEFORE PENSION DEFICIT Pension scheme liability	1,818,091 (<u>864,000</u>)	2,074,494 (879,000)
NET ASSETS	954,091	1,195,494
GENERAL FUND	1,818,091	2,074,494
LESS: PENSION SCHEME LIABILITY	(864,000)	(879,000)
TOTAL FUNDS	954, 091	1, 195, 494

Statement of Financial Activities (Including **Income and Expenditure Account)**

31 March 2018 Adoption Matters	Total Funds 2018 (£)	Total Funds 2017 (£)
INCOME Donations and legacies Charitable activities Other trading activities Investments	33,406 2,730,782 2,172 8,549	38,592 2,759,588 3,979 8,640
TOTAL INCOME	2,774,909	2,810,799
EXPENDITURE Raising funds Charitable activities	21,997 3,009,315	21,138 2,765,208
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3, 031, 312	2,786,346
TOTAL EXPENDITURE NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)	3, 031, 312 (256, 403)	24,453

These accounts are a summary of the information extracted from the annual accounts which were approved by the members of the Board on 3rd August 2018 and are signed on their behalf by:

Mrs Carolyn Johnson, Trustee Mr Annesley Wright, 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 3rd August 2018.

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 2018.

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.

www.adoptionmatters.org

Social Media

We would encourage you to like and follow our social media pages at:



@Adopt_Matters

•••••



f /Adoptionmattersuk



in /adoption-matters

As well as keeping you up to date with all the latest news and views from the agency, you can help us reach a wider audience by liking, sharing and retweeting. Re-tweets and shares from 'real' people go much further and have more influence than ourselves sharing so you really can make a difference.

A big thank you to our Social Media Champions, our families who blog, tweet and post about adoption and our agency helping us to spread the message far and wide! Our bloggers can be found at:

adoptionmatters.org/blogs



No of Facebook followers: 4298

No of Twitter followers:

Help us grow this for 2018-19!



The Twitter campaign was a fun way of sharing some of our history, historic pictures, adopter stories together with fun facts from the forties. We also asked our audience to engage with us by sharing their stories which many did with wonderful anecdotes."

- Norman Goodwin, **CBE, Chief Executive**









Twitter campaign #adoptionmatters70

We continued our anniversary celebrations by telling our story to our Twitter audience using the hashtag #adoptionmatters70



#adoptionmatters70

Fundraising



Organise a cake sale or bake off



Tackle a mountain climb!

Run a 5K, 10K

or marathon!

How can you help us?

There are many ways in which you can support our charity, one of them being to make a direct donation. We welcome all donations, however big or small and every penny is used to provide essential support for children and families.

To give you an example of how your funds can help:

contact session

empathy doll, designed

training day

family a full consultation

offers a parenting

Every penny of your donations matter. Especially at this crucial stage of our agency growth and development.

If you would like to walk, run, bake, skydive, climb mountains or become a regular donor, please do get in touch.

Visit: www.adoptionmatters.org/donate or call us on **01244 390 938**







Adoption Matters

Registered office: 14 Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1AE

Tel: 01244 390 938

Fax: 01244 390 067

All enquiries: 0300 123 1066

Email: info@adoptionmatters.org

Also offices at:

Blackburn, Hale, Salford, Warrington

& Leeds.

www.adoptionmatters.org

CHARITY REGISTERED NUMBER: 512892

Rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted









Members of:







