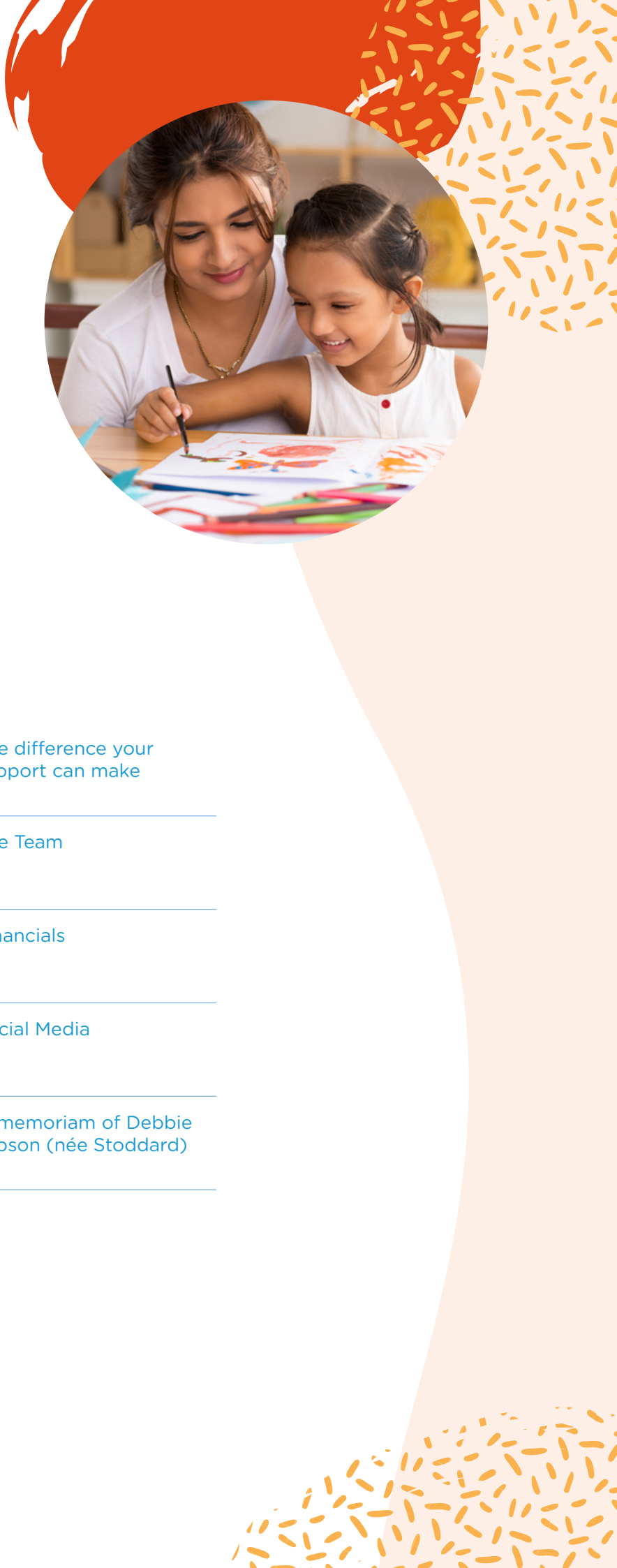


Achievement Report 2019/20





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Foreword

from Norman Goodwin CBE Chief Executive

Last year at this time I wrote about the potential exciting challenges of the coming year and about embracing the many changes and opportunities that lay ahead. None of us envisaged the changes to our world, our workplaces, to ourselves and our families as a result of Covid-19. As an agency – as a group of key workers – we have risen to the challenge and found new and innovative ways of working with and supporting our children and families. The resourcefulness and resilience of everyone has been truly remarkable, despite the personal difficulties these changes have imposed on us.

Undaunted, we placed 112 children for adoption, 83% of them for the Regional Adoption Agencies we work with across the North of England. We placed the 100th child through our Concurrent Planning Service in July 2019 and have now exceeded placing 100 children. Our Centre for Adoption Support and Therapy Service supported over 500 families and children and worked with 60 schools.

Sadly, there are still many children waiting for a forever family. Resources are still stretched within our national adoption system and the impact of Covid-19 and the resulting backlog of cases in the justice system will continue to affect children's lives. We stand ready to do all we can to make a difference for children and we hope that more families will come forward to meet the needs of those children who wait the longest. Our report shows that it can be a positive and rewarding journey, not half as daunting as some expected it to be and that our excellent staff can walk with you and support you all the way through the journey and beyond!

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.

I hope again that you will be inspired by what you read and will continue to support our work in whatever way you feel able.

“

“We placed 112 children for adoption, 83% of them for the Regional Adoption Agencies we work with across the North of England.”





A message

from our Chair of Board of Trustees,
Carolyn Johnson

This has been a momentous record-breaking year for Adoption Matters in welcoming new adopters for 112 children. This is the highest number of children placed since our placement records were recorded in 1955. We have also approved more families than we have ever done welcoming 87 new families

This means new families and fresh starts for the most vulnerable children in our society. Our dedicated staff are inspired to work so hard, practically and imaginatively in ways to change families lives in the difficult days we have encountered this year. It is encouraging to find so many people who have responded to find out about adoption and a desire to open their homes and hearts to support those looked after children for the rest of their lives.

This year has seen the successful incorporation and development of the Durham office which has presented exciting opportunities for finding families in the North-East and more partnerships forged through the Regional Adoption Agencies in that area.

Two of the former DFW trustees joined the Board along with Jamie Bennett, who also completed a sponsored bike ride for Adoption Matters from London to Paris on the hottest days of 2019 which was an amazing achievement. I am grateful to all Board members for their contributions and insight into the Board meetings and the unique experience they bring.

Since our Fundraising & Relationship Manager, Sarah Johnson was appointed, we have enjoyed several fundraising events which have helped to raise our profile on social media and the communities that we serve. The first ever Summer Lunch was held at The Grosvenor Hotel in Chester, a Tandem Skydive raised significant sponsorship and Will Week found several solicitors to participate.

The Ice Cream Farm in Cheshire nominated Adoption Matters as their Charity of the Year and we are extremely grateful to all their staff for embracing our charity with such enthusiasm, generating not only a significant financial contribution but helping to raise our profile to potential new families and supporters.

It is very disappointing therefore that most of the planned Fundraising events have been cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic since March but we have used imaginative opportunities to organise some virtual events.

The potential problems created by Covid-19 were well prepared for by Norman and our staff. Working remotely by using new technology had already been anticipated and our staff embraced this new technology with in house training and since the lockdown have been amazing in switching to working from home seamlessly and enthusiastically. The long-term impact we hope will improve and develop our way of working as a leading charity.

As a result no staff were furloughed and have been very impressive during the crisis in adapting to change, ensuring that the children we place and families we support have not suffered from the service we provide.

I am grateful for the help, support and advice provided by our Board and the tenacity and time dedicated to ensuring that Norman and the staff have the resources required to ensure that the service continues and flourishes despite the challenges raised by the pandemic.

I trust that you will be impressed by our achievements in a difficult, unpredictable year and will continue to support us in our vital work of finding loving families for vulnerable children to thrive in unprecedented times.

Carolyn Johnson



“Our dedicated staff are inspired to work so hard, practically and imaginatively in ways to change families lives in the difficult days we have encountered this year”

Our Achievements

Another record year for welcoming adopters and placing children!

We are again proud of the hard work and dedication of our staff, this year **we placed 112 children with our families**. 112 new starts, 112 forever families! This is the highest number of children placed since our placement records began in 1955. We have worked closely with our Regional Adoption Agency colleagues across the country to secure more children their forever home.



112

112 children were placed with our adoptive families

87

We welcomed and approved 87 new adopters

Our adopters included single people, people over the age of 50, LGBTQ adopters, single adopters and couples from a wide variety of backgrounds all across the country in the areas we work in; the North of England, Stoke, Staffordshire, Shropshire and parts of Wales.

185

185 individuals and couples attended one of our adoption information evenings across the country

170

We visited 170 individuals and couples in their homes to talk about adoption

32%

Of children we placed were in a sibling group of 2 or more children

2.5

The average age of the children we placed was 2.5 years

Local families for local children

Adoption Matters covers the whole of the North of England, parts of Wales, Stoke, Staffordshire and Shropshire. We work very closely with our Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) and Local Authority (LA) colleagues across these areas in finding local **families for local children**.

We know that maintaining community, regional, cultural, education and family links is very important. It also helps to maintain the high quality and ongoing support we offer to our families when we are working with our RAA & LA colleagues with whom we have existing relationships across the areas we cover. We are very proud that over 80% of the children we have placed in 2019-20, are with local families.

There will always be cases when a family who can best meet the child's needs is not local to the placing authority and so we also work with RAAs/LAs across the whole of the UK.

It's not about finding a child for a family, but very much the right family for the child – children are at the centre of everything we do.

The Concurrent Planning Service



Our Concurrent Planning Service, run in partnership with Caritas Care, refined its service area to concentrate on the North West of England. In July 2019, the service marked the 100th placement at a celebratory event attended by partners at Regional Adoption Agencies Adoption Now, AIM, Together for Adoption and Adoption Counts along with several families.

Kate Knowles, Concurrent Planning Practice Manager said, "I'm so proud to have been part of this service since it started in 2014. Our carers never cease to amaze me with their courage and commitment to the children placed with them. These selfless acts, putting the best interest of the children first, really articulate what this service is all about and without them, 100 children would not have had this positive start to their lives."

Karen Barrick, Head of Service, Adoption Now said, "We have worked closely with the Concurrent Planning team over the past 5 years and what we know is that concurrency works, it provides the best outcome for our children. My special thanks go to the carers, who take on this role with uncertainty but also knowing that whatever the outcome, they have been instrumental in giving children a positive beginning."



Concurrent Planning Service Statistics 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

Number of children placed	29
Number of carers approved	17
Number of adoption orders granted	21

For further information about the service, visit:
www.adoptionmatters.org/ccp



Our Centre for Adoption Support

In October 2019, the Centre for Adoption Support became an Adoption Matters only service, offering a comprehensive range of adoption support services to its own adoptive families and undertaking commissioned work.

The Centre has continued to grow into a much valued and respected professional service supporting our families and providing commissioned adoption support services to Local Authorities, Regional Adoption Agencies and educational professionals.

In early 2020, we launched a new website for the service which enables adopters and professionals to book workshop places online.



The Centre for
Adoption Support

The Centre's services expanded in the year to include new workshops and groups including:



Music Matters

This workshop, funded through a grant from Youth Music Network and support from The River Reeves Foundation, aims to support children and young people develop their musical skills. They have the opportunity to learn to play instruments, sing, DJ and write songs to see what it is like to be a musician. One of the best parts of the session is the children can make music together and they have the opportunity to meet other adopted children and build friendships.



Asian adopters support group

The group was set up to allow people who had similar cultural identities to come together and discuss their journeys into adoption within a safe, comfortable environment of like minded people.

Within the group, people benefitted from hearing a direct experience on a child's adoption journey as an adopted adult attended the group. The attendees were able to discuss a wide range of issues from how trauma impacts on children's brains to what therapeutic parenting entailed and the challenges this came with.

Centre for Adoption Support Statistics 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

444 Families accessed our therapeutic support

58 Schools worked with us in the North West

472 People attended our training programmes and workshops

Our Therapy Service worked on 181 Adoption Support Fund contracts with 18 different RAA's

For more information visit: www.adoptionmatters.org/cfas

Our Fundraising

Charity Summer Lunch

On Saturday 6th July, we held our first Charity Summer Lunch at The Chester Grosvenor Hotel. Over 60 people joined us on the day to enjoy a close up Magician, Prosecco Reception and two course lunch, followed by a Fashion Show and talk from Chester based designer Matthew O'Brien.

An amazing raffle and auction was held in the afternoon with some generously donated prizes including a Behind the Scenes Tour around North West Tonight with the team, a week in a Villa in Turkey, £150 meal vouchers and a family photo shoot worth over £250 to name a few. We were delighted to have raised nearly £3,000.

Special thanks to all of our raffle and auction prize donors, which included many businesses and individuals across Cheshire, all of our partners, The Chester Grosvenor, Matthew O'Brien and our Prosecco Reception sponsors First Class Holidays.

Supermarket sweep

Our fundraising efforts were boosted over the Summer and Christmas periods thanks to Waitrose Community Matters Green Token Schemes in Northwich and Chester and the ASDA Green Token Giving Programme in Chester. Shoppers are encouraged to place a green token in the box of the good cause they'd most like to support at the end of their shop.

Coming a very close second for Waitrose, we were delighted to raise over £700 and we came in first place with ASDA in Chester receiving £500.

Adoption Matters Fundraising and Relationship Manager, Sarah Johnson commented: "We are so grateful to Waitrose and ASDA for giving us this opportunity. It's not only vital for our fundraising campaigns it also raises awareness of the need for more adopters in the area and across the country right now for the many children waiting for a family".

ASDA Sealand Road Chester Community Champion Helen Hallmark is pictured presenting Sarah Johnson from Adoption Matters with a cheque for £500.

Tracy Crump from Waitrose Chester is pictured presenting Sarah Johnson from Adoption Matters with a cheque for £370.

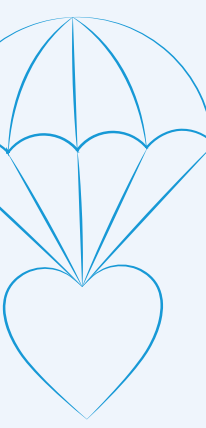




Skydivers reach fundraising heights for Adoption Matters

On Saturday 11 May 2019, eight brave supporters completed the 10,000ft Tandem Skydive at Tilstock near Whitchurch in Shropshire in aid of children's charity Adoption Matters. Their challenge has raised over £3,000 for Adoption Matters.

Five of the thrill-seekers included staff members, Tommy, Deanna, Ollie, Amy and James from the Ice Cream Farm in Tattenhall, Cheshire. Their efforts are just one in a series of fundraising events by The Ice Cream Farm, as the Charity of the Year. Alongside the Tandem Skydive The Ice Cream Farm supported the event by displaying donation boxes across their site and raising awareness about adoption and the shortage of adoptive parents.



“We had a lot of support through Adoption Matters, both at the time and since, through the Centre For Adoption Support.”

Adopters Rachel & Paul share their story:

My husband, Paul and I adopted a sibling group of three children, Sarah, Ryan and Holly, who were just 3 years old and 19 months (twins).

We had come to adoption through not being able to have birth children and had always wanted a large family. It therefore made sense for us to adopt a sibling group. Seeing the family likeness between them then, and as they have grown up, has been a joy. Sibling groups are so often split up because finding families for them is hard and this would have been the case for our three children had we not adopted them.

Our friends laughed at us when we said we were planning to adopt three children at once and we soon found out why when they arrived! Becoming parents overnight was a shock; it was very intense and fairly overwhelming for the first few months.

We had a lot of support through Adoption Matters, both at the time and since, through the Centre For Adoption Support. Once the children were in school and life had settled down I trained as a social worker, working first in child protection before becoming an adoption social worker.

I have worked for Adoption Matters since 2014 and I have found it so rewarding being able to use my personal experience as an adopter when training and assessing adopters now.

As a family we have always been members of a local church and through the church we have been massively supported. Adoption Matters works in partnership with Home for Good, a Christian charity, and through them and the wider church we have been able to help and support many families considering adoption and those that are sometimes struggling with the reality of parenting traumatised children.

Sarah, Ryan and Holly chose to do a tandem skydive in 2019, as they all love a challenge, particularly where there is an adrenalin rush! They have always known about being adopted – we have a family birthday every year to celebrate the day they moved in and we became a family. They also know all about their birth history and background and why they were adopted. This has given them the desire to want to do something for Adoption Matters who brought us together”.

Sarah, Ryan and Holly commented:

“We were really excited to do the skydive jump as a way of giving back to Adoption Matters for all the work they have done in getting us to where we are in our lives today, and for the work that they will continue to do for the years to come for other families across the country. We were delighted that along with the other five team members who took part, that we managed to raise over £3,000!”.



£2,365
raised



Supporter cycles 340 miles from London to Paris for Adoption Matters

When Jamie Bennett saw the Eiffel Tower he knew he had finally reached his goal, cycling from London to Paris over 4 days during one of Britain's hottest heatwaves from 24-28 July 2019, whilst raising an amazing £2,365.00 (+£472.73 Gift Aid) for Adoption Matters.

Jamie was inspired to help Adoption Matters as he was placed for adoption through the charity. Jamie comments:

"Many years ago Adoption Matters placed me with the lovely family who made me who I am; and many years later they reconnected me with the family who completed me. I owe this charity the world so it was a pleasure to support this very worthy cause".

The epic challenge was even more treacherous due to the heat and during Leg 2 in France the organisers took the decision to finish 30 miles early and collect all the participants by coach for fear of heat exhaustion! Jamie battled on finishing on time at the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

Adoption Matters Chief Executive Norman Goodwin, CBE commented: "We all followed Jamie's trip on social media and we were so proud he cycled this huge distance despite the blistering heat! It is always rewarding for us when adopted adults support our charity and we are also delighted that Jamie is now a member of our Board of Trustees, meaning his experience and knowledge as an adopted adult can help influence our policies and practice".





Supporter chooses Adoption Matters 54 years after adopting her two children

Supporters Ruth and Steve Talbot, from Ellesmere Port, Cheshire raised the amazing amount of £6,830 with the Lions Clubs District 105BS.

Ruth Talbot, adopted her two children through Adoption Matters (then known as Chester Diocesan Adoption Agency or CDAS) over 54 years ago, and chose us as her charity to support for the Lions Club District Governor Partner's Appeal 2018/19 during Steve's term of office. The Lions Club has over 1.4 million members worldwide and is the largest service organization in the world. They are dedicated to helping those in need.

Ruth explains why the charity is close to her:

"I have two children who I adopted to give them a secure, loving and stable upbringing. Following my marriage, I applied to adopt a child, however, we ended up adopting two! Julie was adopted in 1965 when she was 5 weeks old and Simon in 1967 at just 6 weeks old. In 1968, I was then blessed with my birth son Mark.

Obviously, all my children had different genes and characters but they grew very close as siblings and remain so to this day. I believe every child deserves a safe, secure and loving environment. Julie and Simon have become fine adults and have grown up children of their own which gives me a warm feeling of satisfaction that I was able to give them a forever home and feel honoured and privileged to have done so.

Mark my birth son also has an adopted daughter who has two children. Isn't that amazing?"



Pictured Ruth and Steve with Fundraising & Relationship Manager, Sarah Johnson.

**£6,830
raised**

"I believe every child deserves a safe, secure and loving environment."



nearly
£5k
raised

Chosen charity for the Chester Cathedral Christmas Tree Festival.

This year we were delighted to be one of the chosen charities for the Chester Cathedral Christmas Tree Festival.

Pictured above: Norman Goodwin (far right) with the winners of the festival, Special Needs Care and Girl Guiding, Cheshire Forest and The Very Revd Dr Tim Stratford, Dean of Chester, Sue Petranca, Events Manager at Chester Cathedral and Jenny Snell from charity Stick n Step.



CHESTER
CATHEDRAL

The festival, which returned for its seventh year in 2019, ran from November through to the first week in January and featured more than 50 majestic Christmas trees decorated by schools and businesses from across Chester and Cheshire. In November, our Centre for Adoption Support Choir hand made some decorations which were hung on our own Christmas tree at the festival.

The festival and the special carol concert "Carols in the City" raised just over £9,800 which, was split between ourselves and the other nominated charity, Stick 'n' Step.

Adoption Matters Chief Executive Norman Goodwin CBE said: "We were delighted to be chosen as a beneficiary charity of this wonderful event which we have been part of for the last three years. We are very grateful for this donation which will help support many more families and children through their adoption journey."





The difference your support can make

£5

pays for refreshments for a child attending one of our Centre for Adoption Support Choir sessions

£25

could fund activity materials for use within a Theraplay support package

£100

could provide a virtual therapeutic consultation session for any member of an Adoption Matters family with one of our adoption professionals

£200

could enable us to deliver a valuable peer support group session for adopted adults

£400

could fund materials for our invaluable Life Story work for children along with a session with adoptive parents to share the work

£1000

would provide a package of intense support for families during times of crisis

Why we do it

Children are at the heart of our work and we believe that their welfare and needs are paramount. Our aim is for them to grow up in a secure and loving family which will best meet their long-term needs and can help them reach their full potential.

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

How you can help

Your donations allow us to provide vital life-long support from the outset of the adoption process, helping new families to understand their child(ren)'s needs and to cope in potentially difficult circumstances. Donations also provide all the 'fun stuff' such as our social activity events.



Raise your **FUNDRAISING** game.



The fundraising website!

For more information about our fundraising plans and how you could help, please get in touch, we would love to chat with you about any ideas you may have.

Email: fundraising@adoptionmatters.org

www.adoptionmatters.org/fundraising



The Team

Our Management and Board of Trustee Teams

Chief Executive:

Norman G. Goodwin CBE

Presidents:

Position Vacant as at 31 March 2019
Bishop of Chester

The Right Reverend Julian Henderson
Bishop of Blackburn

The Right Reverend Paul Butler
Bishop of Durham

Patron:

Sir Mark Hedley

Board of Trustees:

Carolyn Johnson
Chair

Professor David Cracknell
Vice-Chair

Annesley Wright
Company Secretary

Dave Champness

Phil Dyer (retired 2019)

Catherine Gibbons

Professor Elizabeth Harlow

Keith Johnson (retired in 2019)

Joe McArdle

Lynn Pates

David Shield

Jamie Bennett (from Sept 2019)

Strategic Management Team:

Paul Dolan
Service Manager

Anne Fleming
Service Manager
Centre for Adoption Support

Gaynor Richards
Business Development Manager

Jacqui Shore
Service Manager

Susy White
Finance & Operations Director

Social Work:

Hazel Field
Social Work Team Manager

Sally Frances
Social Work Team Manager

Clive Gumbrell
Social Work Team Manager

Julie Hogan
Social Work Team Manager
Concurrent Planning Service

Irene Redshaw
Adoption Team Manager

Amreen Riaz
Social Work Team Manager

David Robinson-Field
Social Work Team Manager
Centre for Adoption Support

Debbie Stoddard (to December 2019)
Social Work Team Manager

Fiona Taylor
Social Work Team Manager

Hedwig Verhagen
Social Work Team Manager
Centre for Adoption Support

Business, HR, Marketing & Fundraising:

Karen Davies
Business & Finance Manager

Diane Handley
HR Manager

Sarah Johnson
Fundraising & Relationship Manager

Jenny MacQuire
Marketing Manager



Financials

Summary Financial Statements Statement of Financial Position

31 March 2020 Adoption Matters	2020 (£)	2019 (£)
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	332,993	351,994
Investments	582,281	500,561
	<u>915,274</u>	<u>852,555</u>
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	1,005,362	924,718
Cash at bank	1,384,984	690,842
	<u>2,390,346</u>	<u>1,615,560</u>
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year	(1,545,027)	(1,070,777)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>845,319</u>	<u>544,783</u>
TOTAL ASSETS BEFORE PENSION DEFICIT	<u>1,760,593</u>	<u>1,397,338</u>
Pension scheme liability	(1,951,000)	(1,742,000)
NET ASSETS	<u>(190,407)</u>	<u>(344,662)</u>
GENERAL FUND	<u>1,760,593</u>	<u>1,397,338</u>
LESS: PENSION SCHEME LIABILITY	<u>(1,951,000)</u>	<u>(1,742,000)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>(190,407)</u>	<u>(344,662)</u>

These accounts are a summary of the information extracted from the annual accounts which were approved by the members of the Board 10th September 2020 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 15th September 2020.

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 2020.

Statement of Financial Activities (Including Income and Expenditure Account)

31 March 2020 Adoption Matters	Total Funds 2020 (£)	Total Funds 2019 (£)
INCOME		
Donations and legacies	62,850	20,785
Charitable activities	4,263,847	3,082,762
Other trading activities	36,057	3,951
Investments	(10,326)	7,750
TOTAL INCOME	<u>4,352,428</u>	<u>3,115,248</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Raising funds	64,894	26,714
Charitable activities	3,924,279	3,509,287
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>3,989,173</u>	<u>3,536,001</u>
NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)	<u>363,255</u>	<u>(420,753)</u>
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS / (LOSSES)		
Actuarial gains/ (losses) on pension scheme	(209,000)	(878,000)
NET (EXPENDITURE) FOR YEAR	<u>154,255</u>	<u>(1,298,753)</u>

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 Auditor's 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.



Social Media

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

 **@Adopt_Matters**

 **/Adoptionmattersuk**

 **/Adoptionmattersuk**

 **/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 re-tweeting. Re-tweets and shares from 'real' people go much further and have more influence than us 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/charity helping us to spread the message far and wide! Our bloggers can be found at:

adoptionmatters.org/blogs

No of Twitter followers:
4,774

No of Facebook likes:
5,045

Instagram followers:
1,053

**Help us grow this for
2020-21!**

In memoriam -

Debbie Jepson (née Stoddard)

**In December 2019, we lost a member
of the Adoption Matters family.**

Debbie worked for Adoption Matters for 8 years. Throughout this time, Debbie helped many families achieve their dream of adopting a child and expanding their family.

Adopters remember Debbie very fondly as someone who was professional, determined and always willing to go the extra mile to support them. As a colleague and friend, Debbie was kind, protective, loyal, considerate and willing to offer a practical and emotional hand whenever needed. Debbie was fun-loving and could be relied on for a good chat and a laugh when it was most needed. Debbie is still very much a part of Adoption Matters and we remember and talk about her often.



What our adopters say about us...



"You have been with us holding our hand like a friend from the start."

"From the initial phone call all the way through the staff have been honest, friendly, knowledgeable and approachable. Made to feel at ease straight away."

Rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

Members of:



Adoption Matters

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

Also offices at:

Blackburn, Durham, Hale,
Leeds, Salford, Stoke & Warrington.

Tel: 01244 390 938

All enquiries: 0300 123 1066

Email: info@adoptionmatters.org

www.adoptionmatters.org

Registered Charity Number: 512892



A proud history of children's futures