

# 2022



## Achievement Report 2021/22

01 April 21 – 31 March 22

[www.adoptionmatters.org](http://www.adoptionmatters.org)

Registered Charity Number: 512892



A proud history of children's futures

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## FOREWORD

**Susy White, Chief Executive**

**I will always remember the clock turning midnight, signalling the start of 2022 and my new role as Chief Executive of Adoption Matters, such a proud feeling. After working in the senior management team for 17 years, I am truly excited about the new chapter for Adoption Matters, and what a successful year we have had.**

Together with our dedicated staff, volunteers and board of Trustees, Adoption Matters continues to be at the forefront of innovative practice in the adoption sector. Despite the ongoing challenges that we all faced with returning to a 'normality' following the Covid-19 pandemic, our work finding families for children who wait, supporting families and also adopted adults continues and it was another busy year as detailed in this report.

**We placed 91 children with our families,** again, similar to previous years, nearly half of these children were part of a sibling group. Keeping brothers and sisters together is something we are all very passionate about at Adoption Matters.

**We welcomed 94 new adopters,** an incredible amount of new families created or families expanded, and we are proud of the diverse range of adopters we welcome year on year.

Our Concurrent Planning Service, delivered in partnership with Caritas Care, celebrated its 150th placement in June 2021, making them the largest service of its kind in the country. The service continues to place sibling groups and children up to the age of 4 years old, showing that early permanence is expanding in the adoption sector.

**"The adoption landscape is changing, this is both challenging and exciting for us as an organisation. We look forward to reporting on our progress next year."**

Our Centre for Adoption Support and Therapy Services continue to offer innovative adoption support and this year we expanded our digital offering to children and young people with the Music Moo and Music Matters workshops. The Inner World group is a one of its kind group helping teenagers to regulate their emotions, more on both are featured in this report.

The children we place, our adoptive families and our supporters are such an important part of the future and journey of Adoption Matters and we welcome your input, ideas and feedback.

**Together, we will keep making a difference.**





# A MESSAGE

## from our Chair of Board of Trustees, Carolyn Johnson

**This year has witnessed many changes for Adoption Matters as well as several exciting developments.**

Norman Goodwin retired at the end of 2021 after 36 years working for Adoption Matters; 30 years of which he led the charity as CEO. As a result of Norman's vision, determination and genuine belief in adoption for vulnerable children he gained a significant reputation for Adoption Matters by ensuring that by demonstrating the staff's expertise it has been judged Outstanding by Ofsted in the last 4 inspections; the only VAA in the North of England to have achieved such a star rating. His national contribution in all spheres of adoption gained him the title "Mr Adoption" but he attested that his proudest achievement was placing the many children in adoptive families and supporting many more families.

We said goodbye to Norman at an emotional retirement celebration in January, attended by the staff and trustees past and present and many colleagues whose lives Norman had touched over the years. His expertise, experience and passion will not be lost as he has accepted the Board's invitation to become a Patron.

Appointing a new CEO involved the board, together with independent experts, formulating a rigorous search and interview process for a large field of applicants and we are delighted that Susy White started in the role in January.

A qualified accountant with ACCA who worked in practice before joining Adoption Matters over 17 years ago, Susy has played a pivotal role in Adoption Matters growth and success working closely alongside Norman, in her role as Finance and Operations Director. Her commitment to Adoption Matters is staggering as is her passion and drive to ensure that Adoption Matters continues to grow and develop as a leading voluntary agency and children's charity.

Newly appointed also this year are two trustees, Dr Yvonne Ball and Dr Ravi Thevasagayam. Yvonne is a barrister and has held a variety of roles with the police as well as in the Home Office and the Department of Food and Rural Affairs.

Ravi is a consultant paediatric surgeon at Sheffield Teaching Hospital.

Adoption Matters has achieved so much again this past year and I encourage you to read all the achievements outlined in this report and the impressive contributions made by our staff, panel members, volunteers, the Board of Trustees, and our families and supporters. I wish to personally express my gratitude to all of them for their loyalty, commitment and support.

There are currently 1,900 children waiting for adoption and they are at the heart of all Adoption Matters strives to do. As Adoption Matters recruits, trains and supports individuals and families as adopters I hope you will continue to feel inspired to help its work with any opportunities that you personally identify.

In a challenging and turbulent year of change and financial pressure I am proud of Adoption Matters performance and the difference it has made in its innovative practices for transforming the lives of the most vulnerable children and young people this year.

Carolyn Johnson



# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

This year was a period of exciting change for Adoption Matters as we said goodbye to our CEO Norman Goodwin and welcomed Susy White to the role. As we all began to adjust to life post Covid-19 restrictions, our teams continued to work hard behind the scenes ensuring that we continued with our important work.

We are again proud of the hard work and dedication of our staff, this year we placed 91 children with our families and we welcomed and approved 94 new adopters. Again, our adopters are as diverse as the children we place and included single people, people over the age of 50, LGBTQ+ adopters and adopters from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and cultures.



**91 children were placed with our families**



**we welcomed and approved 94 new adopters**



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



**were deemed 'hard to place', that is children who fall into one or more than the below categories:**

- Over the age of 4 years
- Have additional needs
- A sibling group
- Are from a Black, Asian or other ethnic background



**the average age of the children we placed was 3 years**





# THE CONCURRENT PLANNING SERVICE

Concurrent Planning Service Statistics 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

**19** the service welcomed and approved  
19 new concurrent carers/adopters

**14** children were placed for adoption  
with concurrent carers/adopters

In June 2021, our Concurrent Planning Service placed their 150th child, aged 3 years old. The child's age shows a significant change from the first 5 years of operation when a very high number of very young babies were placed with their carers (70% were aged under 6 weeks old). In the last year, the service has seen a rise in demand for carers for children over the age of 12 months old and sibling groups.

The Concurrent Planning Service formed in 2014, is delivered in partnership by Adoption Matters and Caritas Care. The service offers an early permanence route for some young children in the care system. Now one of the largest services of its kind in the country and covers the whole of the North West including; Lancashire, Greater Manchester; Cheshire; Wirral, Merseyside and parts of Shropshire.

For further information about the service, visit:  
[www.adoptionmatters.org/ccp](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/ccp)



# OUR CENTRE FOR ADOPTION SUPPORT & THERAPY SERVICE

The demand for our support continued to increase throughout the last year as we responded to the prolonged impact of the pandemic upon families.

We realised early on that there was a need for us to offer a different kind of support package to meet our families needs. They needed access to skilled professionals who could help all members of their family to develop effective self-regulation skills, either to get through a difficult period, such as the first months after their child had moved into their home, or needed support as a result of a period of acute family crisis later on. All of our

Centre for Adoption Support staff continued to work tirelessly offering support with telephone and online video therapeutic consultations, online webinars and face to face therapeutic consultations where required. Families shared how much they valued this support.

Centre for Adoption Support Statistics 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

**1120**

people enrolled  
onto one of our  
44 webinars

**38**

children  
attended one  
of our regular  
groups

**136**

families received  
packages of  
support

**54**

Sensory  
packages were  
delivered to 54  
families

**29**

RAMPs (Reducing  
Anxiety  
Management  
Plan) were  
delivered

## Therapy Service

Our therapy service delivered 189 contracts offering a range of therapeutic interventions for children and families.

The therapy service worked with 189 families over the last year. The work has included assessments and a wide range of therapeutic interventions. These have included Theraplay, DDP, EMDR, VIG, therapeutic parenting, therapeutic life story work and work with schools.

The service has also provided groups for adopters and special guardians on dealing with challenging and aggressive behaviours. These groups have proved very successful and will continue to be held next year.

The therapy service currently has 22 therapists based across the North West all of whom continue to provide evidence based therapies for families.

Their work also covers:

- Training and support for adopters managing open adoptions and birth family contact
- Training for Adoption Matters social workers on supporting adopters
- Training for Adoption Matters staff on managing self-harm
- Input to the extended consultation service/early intervention
- Consultation for Adoption Matters social workers including crisis response when placements are at risk of breakdown, assessment of prospective adopters, early support.

For more information visit:  
[www.adoptionmatters.org/cfas](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/cfas)



# CENTRE FOR ADOPTION SUPPORT GETS MUSICAL...

## Music Matters

We continued to deliver Music Matters, in partnership with 'Plugged In' using public funding by The National Foundation for Youth Music. The group was for young people aged from 5 to 25 years. During continued Covid-19 restrictions, we switched to offering the group online. The group was run by three music industry professionals, supported by CfAS team members who guided and supported the children and young people as well as giving them lots of tips and tricks to develop their own individual musical style. One member even recorded their own record! We are planning to apply for further funding to run Music Matters again. Membership is free of charge to all Adoption Matters families and families who are commissioned to work with us by their LA/RAA.

## Moo Music

Moo Music is an established and trusted children's group that use music to inspire children's development. We are really proud to be able to offer our Adoption Matters families the opportunity to join this popular music group for younger children age 0-8 years. We were able to do this with support from funding from the Co-op and plan to run the sessions again next year.

More information on what the Centre for Adoption Support has to offer is available here: [www.adoptionmatters.org/cfas/#offer](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/cfas/#offer)

Or to find out more about Music Matters visit: [www.adoptionmatters.org/musicmatters](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/musicmatters)

The Centre for  
Adoption Support



## Centre for Adoption Support – The Inner World Project

Through fundraising, we were able to offer a new group to teenagers aged 14-16. Our Inner World Group is free to Adoption Matters families exclusively.

This 8 week group aims to offer teenagers the space to reflect upon their own unique inner signals and interpret what they mean, whilst simultaneously learning body-based regulation skills that allow them to connect to and care for themselves. In order to regulate our emotions, we must have the ability to recognise what we are feeling inside our body and what these inner signals mean to us.

By learning how to notice our internal climate, the fluctuations and signals that the body sends us, we have the opportunity to be more in charge of our responses to those signals. The supported group sessions achieve this by offering a range of mindful and creative practices, shared together to provide experiential and reflective learning.

The feedback on the group so far has been amazing and we hope with further funding, we will be able to continue to offer the group to a wider group of young people.

# NATIONAL ADOPTION WEEK 2021

...champions the voices less heard

The week was dedicated to all those impacted by adoption whose stories are often less heard; adopted people, adopters, birth parents and the Children's Services workforce.

We supported the campaign sharing an emotive animated short film, created by illustrator and adopter Garry Parsons featuring real life stories of everyone involved in the adoption process – an adopted child, a single parent, an adopted person, a birth mother, social workers, and family members who watched loved ones go through the process.

We were delighted our Board of Trustee member Jamie Bennett, helped support the campaign.

More information is available here: [www.adoptionmatters.org/naw2021](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/naw2021)





# AWARDED COMMENDED AGENCY STATUS

by national LGBTQ+ Adoption  
and Fostering Charity

In September 2021, following public nominations and a judging panel, we were delighted to receive commended agency status for 2021 by New Family Social's LGBTQ+ adopter and foster carer members.

130 nominations and testimonials for agencies and social workers were received from LGBTQ+ people at different stages of the adoption and fostering process.

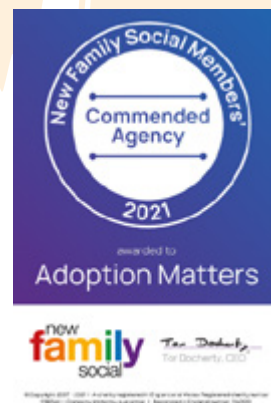
"We're honoured to be a New Family Social Commended Agency, especially as we were nominated by our own families. Vulnerable children need families who are resilient, empathic and who'll advocate for them at every stage in their lives. Our experience has shown us that our LGBTQ+ families have these qualities in abundance." – Susy White, Adoption Matters Chief Executive

New Family Social's nominating members said: "[Adoption Matters is] so child centred, very supportive and really, really had our back through complications".

**"They [Adoption Matters] provide life long support to us"**

Sexuality isn't an important factor when it comes to adoption. What IS important is the commitment, resilience, stability and love that children who have suffered early childhood trauma, ALL need.

For more information and to download an adoption information pack visit:  
[www.adoptionmatters.org/proud](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/proud)



**Pictured:**  
Sara Davies, Dragon's Den reads a story for Adoption Matters.

## Celebrities supported our TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC

Sara Davies, Dragon's Den, BBC North West Tonight's Roger Johnson, together with Actor and Comedian John Thomson, Dame Arlene Phillips and Gail Porter supported our annual Teddy Bears' Picnic and Open Garden on Saturday 21st August.

Children and parents brought along their favourite Teddy Bear and braved the elements to eat their picnics in the grounds and woodland of the beautiful Ashton Grange in Ashton Hayes, near Chester.

Those who decided the weather was a little too inclement were able to take part in the virtual event with amazing stories read by the celebrities together with some great resources including craft videos, recipe ideas, puzzles and even downloadable Adoption Matters bunting.

Event sponsors Gigaloch, a fibre broadband provider who are building a network in the area, also came along with their families.

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the event, especially our hosts Kate and Martin Slack.



Children supporting our sponsors Gigaloch



**Pictured:** Sue and Jacqui attending Stoke Pride 2021 pictured with Mayor of Stoke on Trent, Councillor Chandra Kanneganti

**Pictured:**  
BBC North West Tonight's Roger Johnson.







# FUNDRAISER RUNS 450KM

**in a single month for Adoption Matters**

**£500  
RAISED**

**Our supporter Edward made April, his birthday month, more valuable by giving rather than receiving and ran 450KM for Adoption Matters!**

"I have been lucky enough to grow up in a supportive and loving family but unfortunately a lot of children weren't given that opportunity. Children shouldn't have to start their life without emotional support, guidance or resources. Every child deserves an opportunity to grow up in a secure and caring family which will help them reach their full potential."

At the end of his mega challenge Edward raised an incredible £500 to help us support adopted children and their families – what an achievement – we are so grateful for his support!



**"Every child deserves an opportunity to grow up in a secure and caring family which will help them reach their full potential."**

## THE END OF AN ERA...



Norman Goodwin, CBE

**Adoption Matters Chief Executive Officer, Norman Goodwin, CBE, retired in December 2021, after 36 years working for Adoption Matters, 30 years as CEO.**

Under Norman's leadership and supported by a talented and committed team of staff and volunteers, Adoption Matters has grown and developed to be the Outstanding rated, innovative children's charity and agency it is today. Norman's retirement marked the end of a hugely successful era and the start of a new chapter for the Adoption Matters 'Family'.

Norman remained highly ambitious for Adoption Matters and the sector as a whole and continued to drive the adoption agenda regionally and nationally right up to his very last day of retirement on Christmas Eve 2021. On this date, Norman was honoured to be asked by The Diocese of Chester and Chester Cathedral to read at the Festival of Lessons & Carols (pictured below). A perfect end to his 36 years as Adoption Matters CEO and 43 years in social work.

We are now delighted that Norman has been appointed as our charity Patron.



Carolyn Johnson and Norman Goodwin



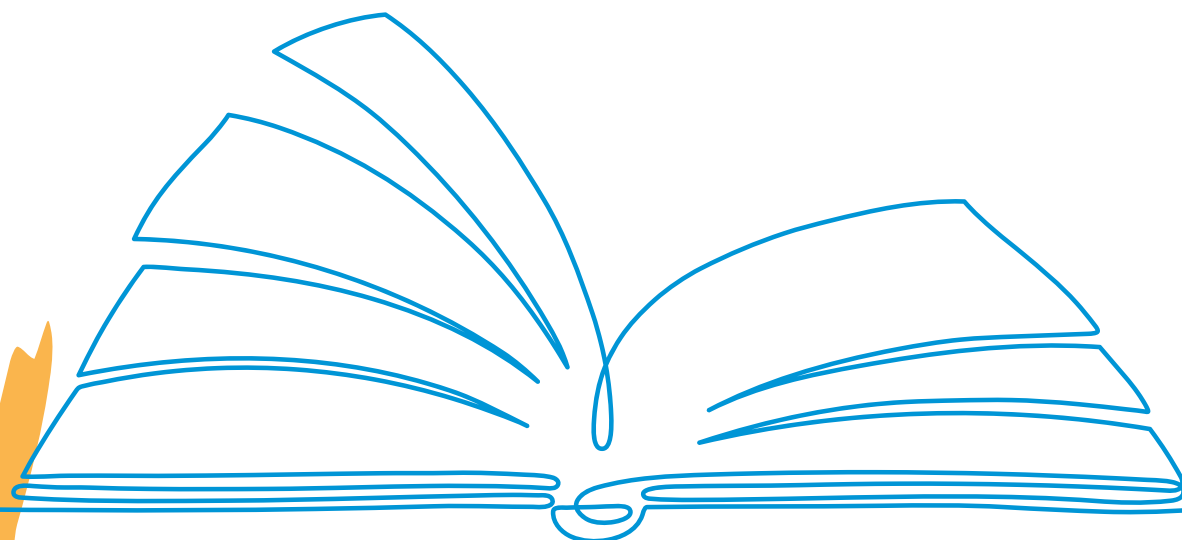
# THE START OF A NEW CHAPTER...

Susy White, Chief Executive



**Susy White was appointed new Chief Executive Officer with effect from 1 January 2022. A qualified accountant with ACCA who worked in practice before joining Adoption Matters over 17 years ago, Susy has played a pivotal role in Adoption Matters growth and success working closely alongside Norman Goodwin in her previous leadership role as Finance and Operations Director.**

Susy commented: "Adoption Matters is a special place to work, we refer to our colleagues as our 'work family' and Norman will be greatly missed by all. I feel honoured to be appointed as Chief Executive of a charity that has been a huge part of my life for nearly 18 years. Together with our dedicated team of staff, trustees and volunteers, I am excited about our future together in continuing with our innovative practices delivering high-quality adoption and permanency services to children, young people, families and adopted adults across the UK."



## The difference your support can make

£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.

Facebook Fundraisers are a great way to raise funds and awareness for Adoption Matters and we are so grateful to all our supporters who kindly asked for donations for their birthdays this year.

To find out more about Facebook Fundraisers, visit: [bit.ly/AMfacebookfundraisers](https://bit.ly/AMfacebookfundraisers)



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](mailto:fundraising@adoptionmatters.org)

[www.adoptionmatters.org/fundraising](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/fundraising)





# Our Management and Board of Trustee Teams

## Chief Executive:

Susy White

## Presidents:

**The Right Reverend Mark Tanner**  
Bishop of Chester

**The Right Reverend Julian Henderson**  
Bishop of Blackburn

**The Right Reverend Paul Butler**  
Bishop of Durham

## Patrons:

Sir Mark Hedley

Norman G. Goodwin, CBE

## Board of Trustees:

**Carolyn Johnson**  
Chair

**Professor David Cracknell OBE**  
Vice-Chair

**Dr Yvonne Ball**  
(appointed December 2021)

**Jamie Bennett**

**David Champness**

**Catherine Gibbons**

**Professor Elizabeth Harlow**  
(retired September 2021)

**Joe McArdle**

**Lynn Pates**

**David Shield**

**Barry Speker OBE DL**

**Mahilravi Thevasagayam**  
(appointed March 2022)

**Annesley Wright**  
Company secretary

## Strategic Management Team:

**Paul Dolan**  
Head of Service Adoption North

**Anne Fleming**  
Head of Service Adoption Support

**Gaynor Richards**  
Business Development Manager

**Jacqui Shore**  
Head of Service Adoption South

**Karen Davies**  
Finance & Business Service  
Manager (from January 2022)

## Social Work:

**Elizabeth Boulter**  
Adoption Team Manager

**Hazel Field**  
Adoption Team Manager (to March 2022)

**Tracy Field**  
Adoption Team Manager

**Sally Frances**  
Adoption Team Manager

**Clive Gumbrell**  
Adoption Team Manager (to October 2021)

**Julie Hogan**  
Social Work Team Manager  
Concurrent Planning Service

**Amy Mather**  
Adoption Team Manager

**Irene Redshaw**  
Adoption Team Manager

**Amreen Riaz**  
Adoption Team Manager

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

**Fiona Taylor**  
Adoption Team Manager

**Joanne Whitworth**  
Practice Development Manager

## Business, HR, Marketing & Fundraising:

**Karen Davies**  
Finance & Business Service  
Manager (to December 2021)

**Diane Handley**  
HR Manager

**Sarah Johnson**  
Fundraising & Relationship Manager

**Jenny MacQuire**  
Marketing Manager

**Debra Corlett**  
Business & Finance Manager (from January 2022)



# FINANCIALS

## Summary Financial Statements

### Statement of Financial Position

31 March 2022 Adoption Matters	2022 (£)	2021 (£)
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Tangible assets	333,219	347,037
Investments	860,052	844,515
	<u>1,193,271</u>	<u>1,191,552</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Debtors	898,541	1,293,961
Cash at bank	893,783	948,427
	<u>1,792,324</u>	<u>2,242,388</u>
<b>CREDITORS</b>		
Amounts falling due within one year	(837,454)	(889,857)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u>954,870</u>	<u>1,352,531</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS BEFORE PENSION DEFICIT</b>	2,148,141	2,544,083
Pension scheme liability	(3,317,000)	(5,040,000)
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>(1,168,859)</u>	<u>(2,495,917)</u>
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>	17,111	1,279
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	2,131,030	2,542,804
<b>LESS: PENSION SCHEME LIABILITY</b>	<u>(3,317,000)</u>	<u>(5,040,000)</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>(1,168,859)</u>	<u>(2,495,917)</u>

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

31 March 2022 Adoption Matters	2022			2021
	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total Funds (£)	Total Funds (£)
<b>INCOME</b>				
Donations and legacies	18,414		18,414	82,000
Charitable activities	4,069,679	15,832	4,085,511	4,831,493
Other trading activities	21,246		21,246	11,063
Investments	12,465		12,465	12,852
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<u>4,121,804</u>	<u>15,832</u>	<u>4,137,636</u>	<u>4,937,408</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Raising funds	69,636		69,636	55,743
Charitable activities	4,476,183		4,476,183	4,151,930
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<u>4,545,819</u>		<u>4,545,819</u>	<u>4,207,673</u>
<b>(NET GAINS/(LOSSES) ON INVESTMENTS)</b>	<u>12,241</u>		<u>12,241</u>	<u>53,755</u>
<b>NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)</b>	(411,774)	15,832	(395,942)	783,490
<b>OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS / (LOSSES)</b>				
Actuarial (gain) on pension scheme	<u>1,723,000</u>		<u>1,723,000</u>	<u>(3,089,000)</u>
<b>NET (INCOME EXPENDITURE) FOR YEAR</b>	<u>1,311,226</u>	<u>15,832</u>	<u>1,327,058</u>	<u>(2,305,510)</u>

These accounts are a summary of the information extracted from the annual accounts which were approved by the members of the Board 6th September 2022 and are signed on their behalf by:

Mrs Carolyn Johnson, Trustee

Ms Lynn Pates, 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 7th September 2022.

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 2022.

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.



**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](mailto:info@adoptionmatters.org)

Registered Charity Number: 512892  
Company Registration No. 1617324

Rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**

Members of:

