

Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Gogledd Cymru



North Wales
Adoption
Service

NORTH WALES ADOPTION SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2011 – FEBRUARY 2012



CONTENTS:	Page:
1. Introduction	2
2. Staffing	4
3. Recruitment	6
4. Adopters	11
5. Children	13
6. Partner of Parent	15
7. After Adoption Section 98 Counselling	16
8. Birth Parent Counselling	16
9. Letterbox and Contact arrangements.	19
10. Training	20
11. Joint Adoption Panels	27
12. Performance Indicators	28
13. Budget	30

1. INTRODUCTION

The North Wales Adoption Service has now been operational for two years. Established in April 2010 as a regional adoption service for the six local authorities, namely Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham and Ynys Môn, the service has seen a significant number of children being referred to the service for matching with prospective adopters, partner of parent applications, and contact arrangements.

The first year of the service was spent establishing the team, developing the database in order to collate the data required for all six authorities, identifying potential matches for children and families and appropriate record keeping. Work has also been undertaken on developing consistent procedures and paperwork across all six authorities for all adoption processes, including adopters' assessments, matching and panel activities and moving children on to adoptive placements.

The first year of the service also saw the establishment of the first Joint Adoption Panel in Flintshire and Wrexham which is now well established and working well. The second Joint Adoption panel for Conwy and Denbighshire was established in the second year of the service with its first panel in January 2012.

Gwynedd and Ynys Môn are currently in the process of setting up the third joint Adoption Panel and it is anticipated that this will be established by the second quarter of 2012-2013.

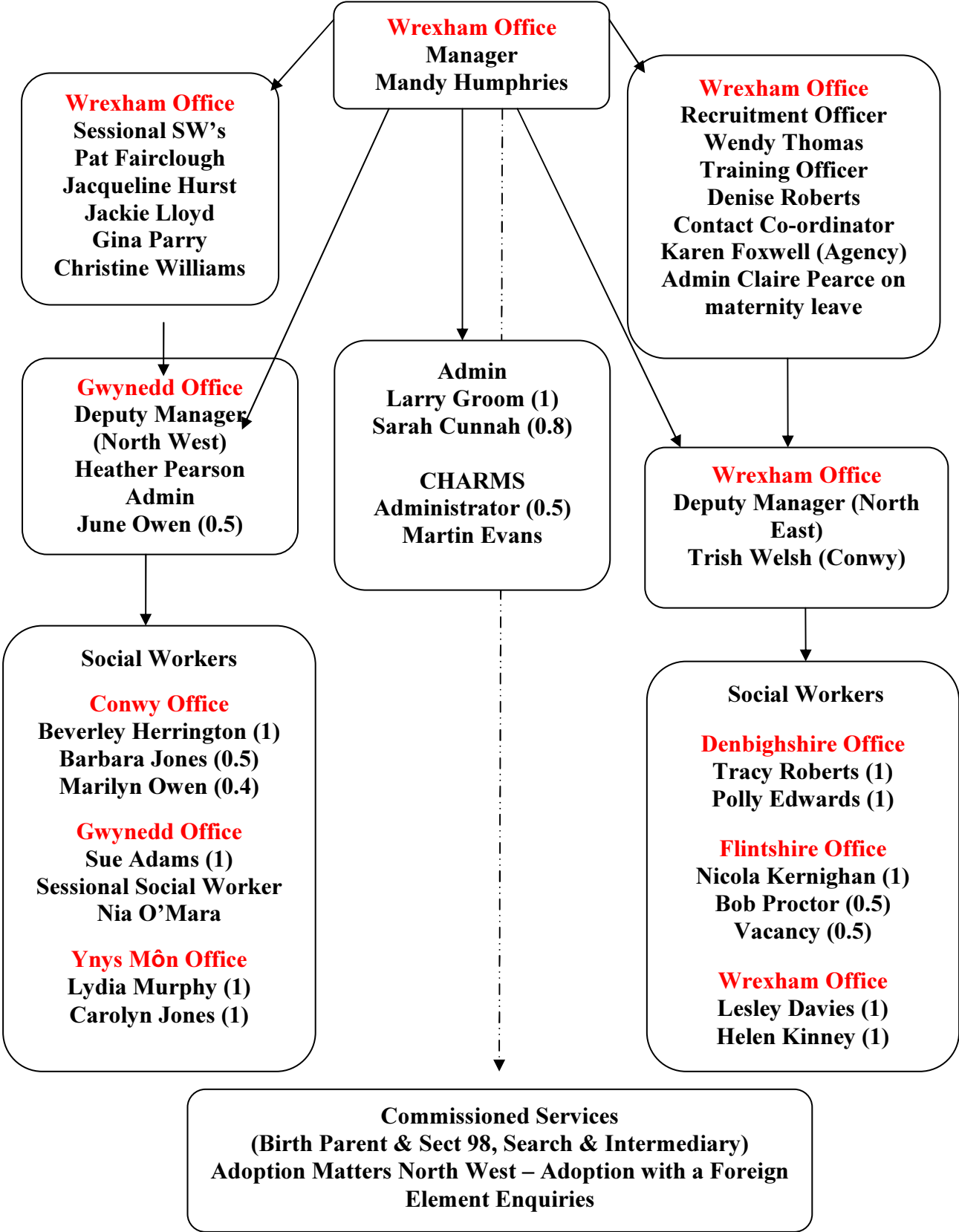
It is acknowledged that during the first year of the service due to issues in the staffing situation training and adoption assessments were delayed. However, the second year of the service has succeeded in resolving many of these issues and the service is now operating in a more efficient and effective manner. The outcome of this will be evidence in the report with improvement in the availability of pre-approval training, allocation of adoption assessments and approval of prospective adopters. In general, particularly in the latter part of 2011-12 NWAS has seen a significant improvement in the following areas:

- A more cohesive and stable staff group including the employment of sessional social workers with a wide range of skills. This has enabled some assessments to be fast tracked where adopters have been identified at an early stage, as having the appropriate matching criteria for specific children.
- A strategic approach to recruitment activity with an emphasis on the recruitment of adopters for sibling groups.
- Improved data collection
- More efficient and effective processing of enquiries through to assessment which has resulted in minimising the wait for adopters and consequently for children who wait.
- Increased number of pre-approval training events
- Introduction of training events for adoption workers, child care social workers and panel members, although in its infancy will be developed more fully in 2012.

March 2012 saw the first Adoption Inspection for NWAS undertaken by CSSIW. Although the inspection focused on Wrexham it was inevitable that the general service provided by NWAS would be considered in its entirety. The outcome of the assessment was very positive with no requirements or priority areas identified for improvement. However, as acknowledged in the Inspection report, the adoption support service is a key area for development and where further investment and resources will be required in order to comply with the standards required.

The priorities for NWAS, the Operational Managers Group and the Partnership Board for the coming months will be consultation, discussion and decision on the future of the service post March 2013. This will need to include proposals on future funding, staffing and resource implications in order to move from a transition service to a consolidated cohesive service in its own right.

2. STAFFING



The NWAS staffing situation has improved during this financial year with low levels of sickness recorded and fewer staff vacancies at the latter part of the year than the previous 12-18 months. There have been some significant changes in staffing to cover maternity leave and the need to recruit additional staff to speed up the assessments of prospective adopters and increase number of enquiries and contact arrangements.

New Starters:

Karen Foxwell - Contact Co-ordinator (Agency Social Worker) – Full Time 28th July 2011 to February 2012. Part Time (0.6) until Monday 19th March 2012.

Denise Roberts - Training Officer employed from August 2011.

Pat Fairclough, Jacqueline Hurst, Jackie Lloyd, Gina Parry, Christine Williams, Nia O'Mara - 6 Sessional Workers recruited in October 2011

Carolyn Jones – Social worker Ynys Môn, November 2011.

Sarah Cunnah – admin in Wrexham to cover maternity leave start date 31st October 2011 – contract currently agreed until July 2012.

Larry Groom – moved from part time to full time in October 2011.

Martin Evans – IT Administrator (0.5) Start Date 7th September 2011 contract currently agreed until September 2012.

Leavers:

Carolyn Homer – Ynys Mon Social Worker retired July 2011.

Bob Proctor – Flexible retirement Part Time (0.5) since January 2012.

Gemma Sandle – maternity leave 4th April 2011

Claire Pearce - maternity leave July 2011.

Tara Jones – admin assistant transferred to finance team

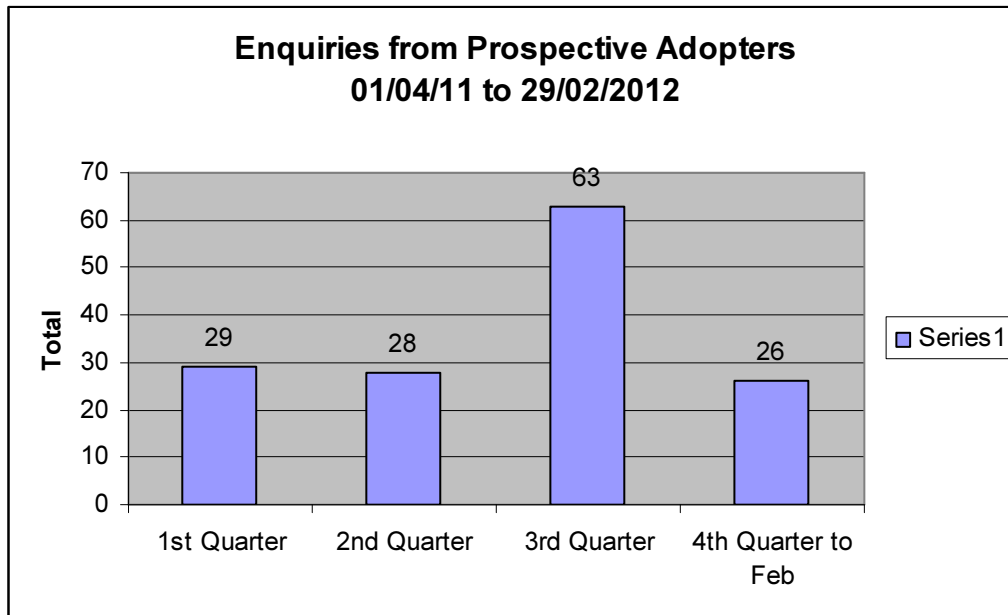
The current situation with staffing is stable having only one part time vacancy in Flintshire since January 2012. This post has been advertised and 5 candidates will be interviewed on Thursday 22nd March 2012.

Karen Foxwell the agency social worker contact co-ordinator has recently given in her notice. Due to the nature of this post OMG agreed to NWAS recruiting a full time permanent social worker to this post. The advert for this post is completed and will be circulated in March 2012. It is anticipated that Claire Pearce will provide administrative support for the contact co-ordinator on her return from maternity leave due to the number of historical contact arrangements that need to be transferred to Head Office, those presently in place, and the new arrangements as more children are placed for adoption. Interim arrangements to cover the post have been arranged via a sessional social worker in order to provide continuity for the service and prevent delay and any backlog of contact arrangements.

Sickness levels for staff have been very low with a total of 26 days sickness recorded since April 2011.

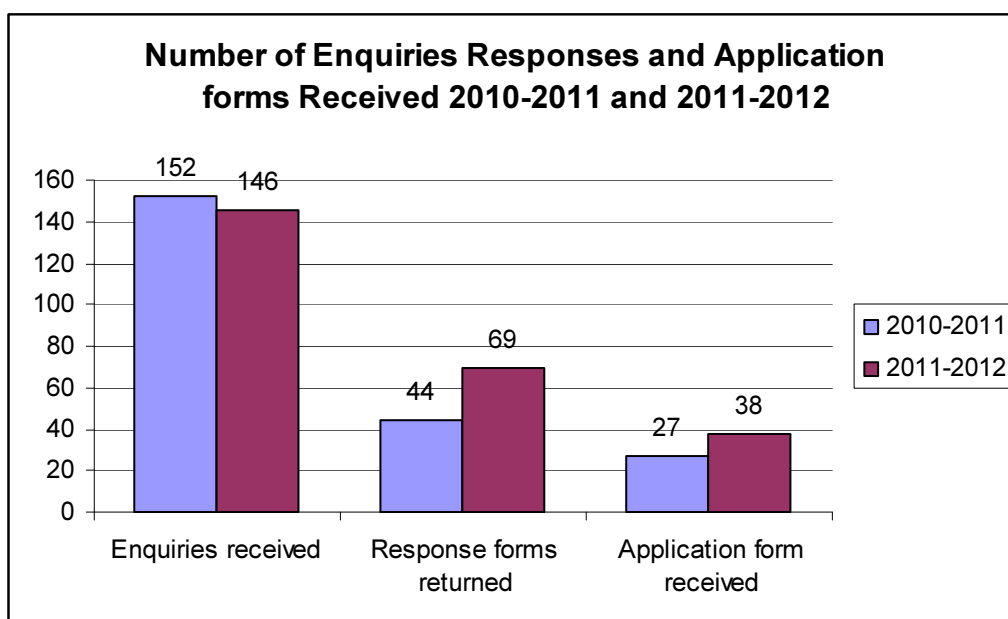
3. RECRUITMENT ACTIVITY

Adoption Enquiries from April 2011 to February 2012



Total Number of Enquiries April 2011 to February 2012 = 146

The number of enquiries received following the recruitment campaign during Adoption Week increased considerably with more than double the amount received from previous quarters. The final quarter includes figures up to February 2012 only.



The number of enquiries received in 2010-11 and 2011-12 is similar however, the figures for 2011-2012 do not include enquiries likely to come in March 2012. There has been an improvement in the number of responses received following initial enquiry and in the number of prospective adopters proceeding with their applications during this financial year.

Number of responses received has risen from **29% to 47%** i.e. additional **27** responses.

Number of application pursued has risen from **18% to 26%** which equates to an additional **11** applications to date. It is likely that additional responses and applications will be received from the most recent enquiries as prospective adopters need time to consider the information given before proceeding.

90% (132) of enquiries were responded to with written bilingual Information packs within 5 working days. The remaining 10% (14) were 2nd time adopters already involved with the service and requesting a second placement. Those recorded as receiving packs after 5 working days relate to a second pack being sent following a no response letter from the service and enquirers were stating that they had not received the initial pack.

The recruitment officer is responsible for following up any enquiries that have not been responded to after one month of receipt of information pack. Enquirers are sent a no response letter and requested to complete a questionnaire on the service provided. In some cases this has prompted some applicants to proceed with application, in most other cases the reasons for not proceeding were given as personal and not due to the service provided.

Results of questionnaires sent to date:

Responses to questionnaire to prospective adopters' enquiries who did not respond following initial information or proceed with the adoption process.

Responses received between May 2011 and February 2012

1. Where did you hear about the North Wales Adoption Service?

37.5% internet/websites;
37.5% Local Authority direct,
25% Family & friends

The following questions were rated 1 = MOST NEGATIVE and 5 being MOST POSITIVE.

2. How would you rate the overall quality of the service you received?

37.5% rated 5
50% rated 4
12.5% rated 3

3. How useful was the information pack sent to you?

37.5% rated 5
37.5% rated 4
12.5% rated 3
12.5% rated 2

4. At what step and why did you feel adoption was not right for you?

Still undecided/ Still considering/ Gathering information for the future
Relationship broke down
Son too young
Counselled out at initial visit
Started a new relationship – expecting baby in 2012
Got married

5. Did you receive the service you expected from the North Wales Adoption Team?

87.5% relied YES
12.5% (1) replied NO but qualified this with the comment –*“it was better than I expected. The woman I spoke to took plenty of time to talk through all my questions and gave very comprehensive and helpful answers to my initial enquiries”*.

6. What changes would you recommend?

62.5% responded - None

i) More personalised service, not just a leaflet, bilingual.

(NWAS leaflets and letters to initial enquiry are bilingual. Initial visit is carried out on receipt of response form and is available in English/Welsh so not sure why this comment was made except that the questionnaire was in English)

ii) Make the process as undaunting as possible. Look at positives for each couple, as much as possible. (Couple counselled out after initial visit).

iii) Adoption process is painfully slow, hope the government makes changes; more funding is drastically needed to fund more social workers, ridiculous amount of red tape.

Recommendations from this survey:

- 1. Improve website for NWAS and ensure that all Local Authorities direct their Adoption enquiries to the North Wales Adoption website.**
 - 2. Questionnaire to be translated into Welsh.**
 - 3. Information leaflet to be updated.**
-

The NWAS Recruitment Officer has an ongoing recruitment plan which includes organising events and open days in local communities across the North Wales region: This has included visits to local supermarkets, community centres, colleges, shopping centres, contact centre in Wrexham etc where the community are able to acquire information packs and have one to one discussion where required. Recruitment activity includes:

- Attendance at major public events e.g. National Eisteddfod in Wrexham, St. David's Market. Information provided by fostering team at the Children and Young People's Partnership Family Festival in Ynys Môn, Fostering & Adoption Information Evening in conjunction with Flintshire Fostering Team,
- Liaison with schools in all six local authorities and attendance at six school open days.
- Posters and information leaflets have been delivered to libraries, doctors, surgeries, dentists, schools, community centres, national parks, contact centres in each authority. They include a free phone number and website address to request further information.
- Information leaflets and posters have been provided to IVF clinics
- Information and advertisements in the local media.
- Interviews on local radio station during National Adoption Week.
- Advertised on employers payslips/buses across North Wales, Broughton website.
- Ongoing open days and events across all six authorities including in local supermarkets, school fetes, National Eisteddfod in Wrexham.

Website: Work on the design of the new website has been ongoing during this period and has now been completed and includes additional information on training and recruitment events and additional information booklets for downloading. The recruitment officer is also meeting with various adopters who are willing to share their stories and include them on the website which will be updated on a regular basis, The site should be going live in March 2012 and action needs to be taken by the recruitment officer and all local authority website departments to ensure that adoption enquiries are referred to the North Wales Website.

Advertisement sibling groups - due to the number of sibling groups referred to the service a targeted recruitment campaign will be undertaken in February /March 2012. This will include advertising in the local media and the circulation of posters across the region followed up by open evenings in April 2012.

Urdd Eisteddfod – Glynllifon, Caernarfon. Plans are underway to attend this event from 4th – 8th June 2012.

NWAS Children's Book about Adoption- The recruitment officer has been researching into publishing a book about adoption for young children pre-school age in the Welsh language. Professor Fergus Lowe in Bangor University (Head of Child Psychology) has been contacted for advice with regard to the appropriate content of the book. Contact has been made with Sarah Jones, Area Manager Coleg Harlech who runs Community Courses on creative writing. She is looking

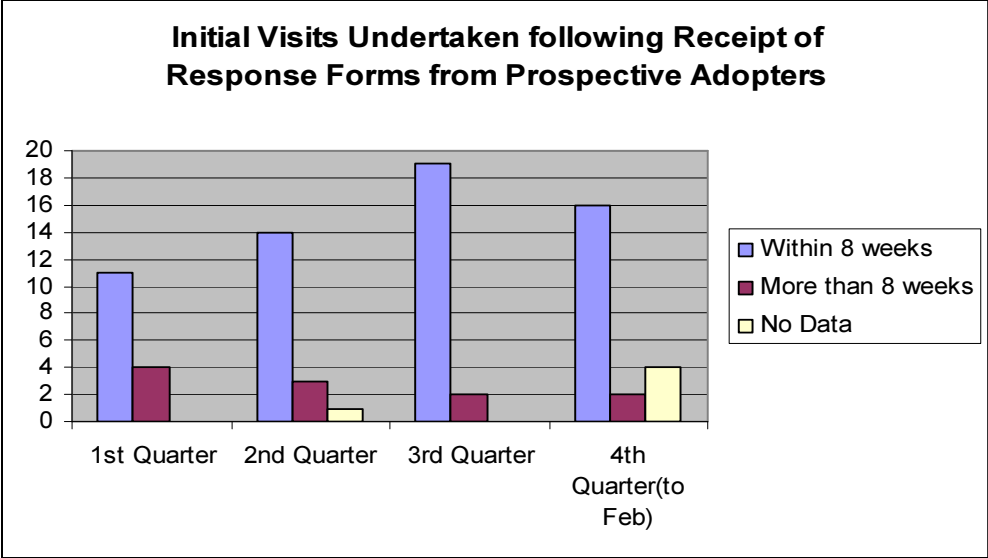
into the possibility of introducing this into one of the courses and has shown an interest in supporting us.

Marketing Questionnaire – sent out to all prospective adopters attending the training in September, October, November, January and February. Responses to be collated in April 2012 and will be used to inform the recruitment strategy for the future.

Education Departments: All six local authority education departments have been contacted with regard to being invited to open evenings and family orientated open days in schools across North Wales.

Initial Visits to Prospective Adopters

The Recruitment Officer has also been responsible for undertaking initial visits across the authority. Since undertaking this responsibility the process has proved to be more efficient.



A Total of 75 initial visits were undertaken between April 2011 and February 2012.

79% of initial visits have been undertaken on time since April 2012. This represents more than a 40% increase compared to 2010-11 from **38% to 79%**.

Costs of travelling across the region and limitations placed on the reimbursement of expenses for the recruitment officer threatened to limit this activity and has been raised at OMG and with the Partnership Board. Access to a pool car is currently being investigated.

4. ADOPTERS

As stated previously the number of enquiries received from prospective adopters is fairly stable, however, responses following initial information and further applications to proceed have increased since April 2011.

To date a total of **146** enquiries have been received from prospective adopters. **69** response forms were received and **38** applications were received after pre-approval training from this cohort.

Number of adopters attending Pre-Approval Training April 2012- March 2012

Attended Training	Conwy	Denbs	Flint	Gwynedd	Wrexham	Ynys Môn	Total
June	2	2	1	2	1	1	9
Sept	2	1	3	3	2	0	11
Oct	1	0	1	2	2	1	7
Nov	0	2	2	1	0	1	6
Jan	1	0	7	2	1	1	12
Feb	2	4	1	3	1	1	12
Total	8	9	15	13	7	5	57

A total of 57 prospective adoptive families (111 participants) attended pre-approval training during April 2011-February 2012. This is an increase compared to the 33 applicants attending training in the previous year.

25% of prospective adoptive couples attended training within 2 months of their initial visit compared to 6% in 2012-11.

14% of prospective adoptive couples attended training within 3 months of their initial visit compared to 12% in 2010-11.

Number of Adopters Allocated for Assessment April 2011-February 2012

Allocated	Conwy	Denbs	Flint	Gwynedd	Wrexham	Ynys Môn	Total
April-June	1	1	0	2	1	1	6
July-Sept	2	3	0	5	0	1	11
Oct-Dec	2	2	4	5	3	1	17
Jan-March	An additional 8/10 applications to be allocated in March.						
Total							34 + 8

50% of assessments were allocated within 2 months of pre-approval training - 67% of assessments were allocated within 2 months of application form being received.

Number of Adopters Approved April 2011-February 2012

	Conwy	Denbs	Flint	Gwynedd	Wrexham	Ynys Môn	Total
Approved Adopters	0	3	2	6	5	5	21

A total of **26** families are under assessment at present with at least **3** applications due to come to panel in March and another **6** in April 2012. This will bring the amount of available adopters to **19**, if recommended by panel and approved, This is extremely favourable to the situation we experienced when on some occasions the number of available adopters had reduced to four or five families.

Two other assessments were completed but withdrawn at the final stages of assessment. One due to some discrepancies in information shared and the second being a being a medical issue. An additional assessment was completed but not approved at panel and has since gone on hold due to a medical issue. Two approved adopters are on hold due to medical issues and alterations to the property, it is envisaged that these will become available again in the next few months.

Number of assessments completed within 6 months of receipt of application form 42% (9). The focus for 2012 will be to increase this percentage and as more effective systems are now in place for undertaking statutory checks and allocation of assessments as well as the availability of sessional social workers this is achievable. Supervision sessions and team meetings will be used to monitor progress of assessments.

Of the remaining 12 assessments which took more than 6 months, reasons for delay were: medical issues, delay in obtaining references and delay in allocation at the beginning of the financial year.

Number of adopters currently available – Total 8 + 2 on hold for potential link – this should increase to approximately 19 in April.

The majority of adopters available at present are only seeking to adopt one child of a young age and are not willing to consider direct contact with birth parents. Only one family will consider 2 children and these may be considered for a sibling group recently referred to the service.

5. CHILDREN

Summary:

Children referred 2011-2012 44

Children Matched/Placed 45 + 2 to panel in March (this includes 27 children referred in 2010-2011)

Children waiting 30

Children Adopted: 22

Number of Children Referred to N WAS April 2011-February 2012

	New Referrals	Matched/Placed	Children Waiting-issues re Family Finding
Conwy	10	7	1 sibling group of 3
Denbighshire	6	2	2 withdrawn possible SGO with grandparents 2 children - parents with severe learning difficulties children 6 and 5 years old
Flintshire	7	2	1 child aged 8 years with behavioural issues 1 child aged 18 months direct contact an issue 1 sibling group of 3 behavioural issues but family due to come to panel in April interested in these children.
Gwynedd	10	4	1 sibling group of 3 –Welsh family from London being considered 1 sibling group of 2 on hold due to updates required on medical issues identified by Family Finder 1 new referral in February 2012 no placement order as yet.
Wrexham	11	3	2 sibling groups of 3 1 sibling group of 2 new referral no placement order 1 on hold potential link
Ynys Môn	0	0	
Total	44	18	

Children who wait referred in 2010-2011

Agency	No: of Children	Reason for delay
Conwy	3 withdrawn	1 sibling group of 3 now being considered for SGO with foster carers
Denbs	3	1 sibling group of 2 aged 7 and 4 years Single placement of 7 year old
Flint	1 withdrawn	Child with FAS long term fostering placement identified
Gwynedd	0	
Wrexham	2 withdrawn	Unable to identify placement – returned to court SGO for foster care for 1 child/decision on second child dependent on re-assessment of birth parents.
Ynys Môn	3	3 siblings separated to 2 and 1 single placements – court requested 6 times annual contact
Total	6	

Total number of matches/placements during this period including children waiting for families referred in 2010-2011 = 45 (one disruption second placement found)

Following data is based on children referred to NWAS 2011-12:

Number of children matched at panel within 6 months of the 'should be adopted' decision = 34% (16)

Number of children matched at panel within 6 months of the 'placement order' = 75%

Number of children matched at panel within 12 months of the 'should be adopted' decision = 40% (18)

Number of children matched at panel after 12 months of the 'should be adopted' decision = 24% (11)

Children placed with adopters out of NWAS area

Out of the 45 (47 in March) children matched in this financial year only two placements have been made with adopters outside the NWAS region.

1 child from Flintshire was placed with a sibling in the Carmarthenshire area.

1 sibling group of 2 aged 7 and 6 years from Conwy were placed with adopters from Edinburgh.

Disruptions – two placements have disrupted during the past 12 months one young child had only been placed a week when the adopters felt they were unable to attach to the child. The child was moved back to his previous foster carers

This is a significant difference to the previous year as 14 children out of 38 children placed out of the NWAS region in 2010 - 2011.

Children placed with NWAS adopters from other authorities

- 1 child from Powys placed in Flintshire
- 1 child from Cardiff placed in Conwy (sibling placed last year)
- 1 child from Coventry placed in Ynys Môn

6. PARTNER OF PARENT APPLICATIONS

	Conwy	Denbs	Flint	Gwynedd	Wrexham	Ynys Môn	Total
Referred April 2011-12	3	4	8	8	12	0	35
Closed	1	2	2	3	6	0	14
Under Assessment 2011-12	2	1	1	0	0	0	4
Under Assessment 2010-11	1	2	4		4	0	11
Potential Assessment following initial enquiries	0	1	1	5	4	0	10
Partner of Parent Adoptions 2011-12	0	2	2	1	3	0	8
Partner of Parent Adoption Orders Granted 2010-2011	-	-	-	-	-	-	6

NWAS is currently undertaking **15** Partner of Parent Assessments and has a potential of another 10 likely to proceed with application.

These enquiries and applications are not prioritised however, where there is capacity or where an application has been filed in court they are allocated appropriately.

Advice from the CSSIW based in Cardiff having taken legal advice from the Welsh Assembly lawyers was that NWAS does not have the power to charge for these applications. However, NWAS has highlighted the issues around the number of these applications and the fact that they affect the core business of the service (i.e. approval of general adopters) in two recent responses to the Inquiry into adoption by the Welsh Government Responses available with this report.

7. SECTION 98 COUNSELLING/INTERMEDIARY SERVICE/AFTER ADOPTION

Total of referrals received April 2011-12	=	92
Total transferred to After Adoption on waiting list of 2010-2011	=	14
Total transferred to After Adoption from April 2011-12 referrals	=	62
Total referred April 2011-12	=	79
Total closed from April 2011-12 referrals	=	20

Waiting list of 30 cases – these can be transferred to After Adoption in April 2012. The number of referrals for this service has increased by approximately 15 cases to date. Due to the number of referrals received there has been a need to prioritise certain cases i.e. birth parent counselling and service users who were adopted pre-November 1975. Despite the need for a waiting list most service users were transferred within two or three months at the end of the 2010-11 and this will be the case for 2011-2012.

Due to the number of cases involved it is unlikely that recruiting additional staff to NWAS to undertake this work and replace the contract with After Adoption would be financially beneficial and more likely to exceed the cost of the contract due to the additional costs and the necessity to travel across the region in order to provide an equitable service. Additional information is currently being gathered with regard to the number of hours required to manage this number of cases in order to ascertain the probability of potential variations to the contract.

8. BIRTH PARENT COUNSELLING

Total number of birth parent counselling referrals 2011-2012	=	10
Total Number closed	=	4

The majority of birth parent referrals are closed due to non engagement of the service users. It has been agreed that After Adoption will close the case if the

service user does not engage following three attempts to make contact. This allows other cases to be transferred from the waiting list.

Questionnaires were sent out to After Adoption cases that had been closed in September 2011 although a minority were returned, those that did were extremely positive about the service provided. This needs to be re-visited for all cases transferred to After Adoption in order to provide evidence for the continuation or termination of the contract post March 2013.

QUESTIONNAIRE RE: AFTER ADOPTION

SECTION 1.

Please state the type of service you requested:

Access to Records	<input type="checkbox"/>	Search and Intermediary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Birth Parent Counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

The majority of response came from service user requiring access to their birth records and intermediary services.

Reason for Closure:

Service requested completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Adoption unable to provide further support	<input type="checkbox"/>

All responses stated that the service requested had been completed.

Please go to Section 2

If you did not take up the service at this stage do you feel you may wish to do so in the future?

Could you suggest another service which you may have found helpful?

N/A

SECTION 2

Please comment on the service provided

All responses stated Yes to the following questions:

1. When contacting the North Wales Adoption Service to request support were you greeted appropriately and informed that the service would be transferred to After Adoption?
2. Were you contacted by After Adoption within approximately two weeks of your referral?
3. Did you have a face to face meeting with staff from After Adoption?
4. Were you offered a visit in an appropriate venue close enough to home?
5. Did the staff maintain contact with you on a regular basis?
6. Due to the nature of the service provided do you feel that the information provided to you was shared in a sensitive and appropriate manner?
7. Were the staff knowledgeable about the issues, able to offer pertinent advice and answer your questions appropriately?
8. Were they able to access your information/records in a timely manner?
9. Did the outcome of the service meet your original request for support?
10. Overall, how would you rate the service provided by After Adoption?
Please rate your answers on a level of 1 to 5

1 = Excellent 2 = Very Good 3 = Good 4 = Average 5 = Poor

All excellent or very good

How could we improve the service? Any other comments?

"I can't find any faults at all"

"Only negative was the wrong postcode on letter to birth mother which caused delay and some distress thinking contact was not welcomed"

Is there a staff person you would like to commend?

Sian Peacock and Dot Foster

9. LETTERBOX AND CONTACT ARRANGEMENTS

Number of letterbox contacts from Denbighshire and Conwy allocated to NWS = 156 (children) with an average of two or three contacts each (Approximately 240 individual contacts.)

Total of new contact arrangements from 2010 to date involve 83 new placements and it is anticipated that this will rise by approximately 40 placements per annum. Many of these will also have a number of individual arrangements.

During the year it has become evident that the contact service is more complex and time consuming than originally anticipated with the need to standardise the procedures across the region, review and mediate between birth families and adopters. Due to the number of contact arrangements being referred and enquiries from relatives, a sessional worker has been employed to support the agency worker to input the data of historical cases. It is evident that a permanent social worker and full time admin support will be required to manage the increasing number of contact arrangements in the future. It has been agreed by OMG that this post can be advertised on a permanent basis and supported by the administrative assistant on her return from maternity leave.

NWS social workers in four areas continue to manage the contact arrangements for their relevant local authority. It is anticipated that these cases will be transferred to the main contact co-ordinator incurring approximately an additional 100 cases.

The situation will need to be reviewed on a regular basis in the coming year in order to ascertain the resources required to manage this service appropriately.

10. TRAINING

The NWS Training Officer took up her post in August 2011. To date she has facilitated four 4 day pre-approval training courses for prospective adopters and one 2 day pre-approval training course for 2nd time adopters. This has involved a total of 57 families (111 participants).

Post training a 'Let's get Started' evening has been arranged for all participants. Applicants are requested to ensure any applications to proceed with assessments are received by that date, CRB checks undertaken and medical forms provided in order to proceed with statutory checks and references. This event also gives applicants the opportunity to gain further information on the process to follow and raise any issues from the training. A further short workshop is presented on this evening on "safe caring".

A NWS course participants Handbook has also been developed eliminating the need to purchase these handbooks from other organisation at a cost of over £25 each.

Evaluations of all the training courses have been very positive to date. Only 2 couples did not proceed following training, one due to the issues raised around contact in adoption and one due to the numbers of children available in North Wales. 2 assessments have been put on hold due to issues raised with current placements where adoption support is being provided which needs to be resolved before second time adoptions are advised

Evaluations of all the training courses have been very positive to date. Only 2 participants did not proceed following training

Evaluation of second time adopters training in November 2011

Questions were asked to be rated on the following criteria:

Not at all	A little	Average	Good	Completely
------------	----------	---------	------	------------

1. To what extent did the course meet your expectations or needs?

16% Completely
67% Good
16% Average

2. How useful was the course in relation to adopting for a second time?

34% Completely
50% Good
16% Average

3. Would you be the quality of the training provided to be of a suitable level?

50% Completely
34% Good
16% Average

4. Any Comments?

- Very good and open to discussion
- Whilst there were some very useful and helpful aspects of the course we felt that the course wasn't very well structured there was no clear agenda or recapping of key points which would have made the course so much more enjoyable. The other key thing was that since all the attendees have had mixed experiences there are some key learning points NWAS could pick up on to improve the whole adoption process.
- Good location
- Thank you very much useful to refresh and share experiences.

Recommendations:

1. Improve structure of the course
2. Identify key learning points raised and incorporate in adoption process where appropriate.

COURSE NAME: PREPARING TO ADOPT

COURSE DATES: January 2012

COURSE TRAINER: Denise Roberts

Questions were asked to be rated on the following criteria:-

Not at all	A little	Average	Good	Completely
------------	----------	---------	------	------------

1. To what extent did the course meet your expectations or needs in relation to:-

Session 1:

- Why a preparation course is necessary and how it relates to the assessment process
- The assessment criteria for the home study

64% Completely
36% Good

Comments

- Made me realise about the adopted children needs more.
- Gave a clear understanding of the process and helped me understand the necessity of it all
- Exceeded my expectations
- Surprised how many couples already had children
- There's loads of information packed into the course – glad there are handouts
- Very thorough, very well paced. Would like to know more about the home study
- The course has been very well presented professionally
- Very in-depth
- Greater understanding holistically

Session 2:

- The meaning of permanence
- The possible ways of achieving permanence
- The legal framework for adoption
- The numbers and characteristics of children needing adoption

73% Completely

27% Good

Comments

- very well delivered and facilitated discussion left nothing unanswered
- again delivered extremely well and clearly/
- a bit of a long leg
- Will be doing further background reading.
- Never would have thought that there were so many different professionals involved in a Childs case.
- Good examples of different childr3ens scenarios – makes you think.

Session 3:

- How children learn to feel secure
- Children's abilities and development
- Why attachment is important for a child's development
- How a child's early experiences affect his or her ability to form attachments

68% completely

32% Good

Comments

- Realised why a child needs to know their past, I thought most would not care.
- Very useful and interesting, helpful.
- Sue's session was excellent.
- So much further reading and understanding is needed for me to be able to feel confident in supporting chronological/ developmental age. Massive topic – briefly looked at. Look at the older child more too.

Session 4:

- What constitutes neglect and abuse
- How abusive and neglectful experiences will affect a child's development and behaviour
- Ways to help children overcome the effects of neglect and abuse

68% completely
32% Good

Comments

- more research can only help me to improve understanding
- So difficult to imagine the huge impact on children in certain instances.
- Good session. No great surprises, sadly but very interesting.
- Good session but sad.
- To my mind the most important section. The issue of help children to overcome the effects of neglect and abuse.
- Missed second day which covered most of this but have touched on thorough discussion (due to bereavement).
- Knew a lot from experience of others

Session 5:

- The immediate and long-term impact of separation and loss
- Why the child's birth relatives and significant others continue to be important to the child's adoptive family
- How contact with birth relatives and previous carers can contribute to the child's healthy development in an adoptive family

68% completely
32% Good

Comments

- Helped overcome my fears and lack of understanding regarding contact and realising the importance of it.
- Thought provoking
- Handled very well and went to lengths to look at modern day life and impact.
- Appreciate the importance of this subject and understanding why. The live case study was brilliant (brought it to light).

Session 6:

- The factors which contribute to a sense of identity
- What “resilience” means in the context of looked after children
- Ways to help build a healthy and positive sense of self-esteem and resilience in children.

73% Completely
27% Good

Comments

- Been thinking of ideas together of how we can achieve this.
- Not sure about the doll's

Session 7

- The difference between being a birth parent and being an adoptive parent
- The issues which will arise over the years if you adopt a child
- Why it will be important for you to continue contact with the adoption agency

68% completely
32% Good

Comments

- thought that I would be looked at as a birth parent completely
- Issues arising was skimmed over as to specifics. A lot of assumptions were made.
- Useful to think about support network and how wide it is
- Well covered and important to cover

Session 8: What happens next?

- Guest adoptive parent or adopted person
- How a match is made.
- Introductions

68% completely
32% Good

Comments

- look forward to next process
- Meeting Paul and hearing his story made it all suddenly real. Got straight through to me and will remain with me.
- Thought it would take longer, happy it doesn't though
- Thorough understanding of this process completed step by step all stages addressed and explained.
- Lots of surprises in information which we had not previously known. Couple of bits differ to initial information on initial contact. *(This related to the number of children available for adoption which the Media had quoted Vs the number of children available for adoption within NWSAS).*

2. Finally, if you have any positive or negative comments about any aspect of the course, the trainer or the facilities, please note them below:

Comments

- I thought the course, and the trainers were excellent. The session with Paul added so much. Even more input from people who've been there would add even more. Thank you.
- Would be interested to keep contact with those from group as we take this journey.
- Talk from adopted person was very good and appreciated.
- Very well presented, on the whole thorough explanations, expansion and discussion was encouraged at all times. Participation was openly welcomed. Excellent that a trainee gave a presentation, very well presented. A wealth of knowledge and experience from all NWSAS employees. Great to have a chat with Paul and hear his views.
- Room temperature.
- Some parties could be silly and could do with having a word to calm it down. *(this was identified by the training officer and addressed with the relevant people)*
- Nice friendly atmosphere, with "normalish people".
- Very informative course which was put over very clearly and I'm sure will prove helpful.
- Found on whole course very informative and in depth.
- All the trainers that took the course were very well trained and excellent at their jobs in the way they answered questions and presentation. Thank you all.
- Many thanks.

Recommendations

- Consider compiling a pool of Adopters and Adoptees who can attend and contribute to this training programme.
- Recruitment officer to ensure she has the latest figures available for the number of children currently seeking an adoptive placement.
- Consider facilitating some form of “social group” to encourage engagement of prospective adopters through their journey.
- Continue to use Student Social Workers for participation in training programme.

Staff Training Plan: The staff training plan FOR 2012-2013 has been completed and sent to the Training Officers Group for agreement on funding from the six local authorities Social Care Workforce Development Partnership (SCWDP) budget allocation. Plan to be made available with this report.

Additional post approval courses for adopters are being developed and will be available in 2012. It is anticipated that all relevant stakeholders will be invited to several of these training course.

Additional Information:

- A new resource manual for prospective adopters has been completed.
- First newsletter for adopters completed
- Workshop on bullying being devised
- Attachment in the Classroom workshop in progress
- Adult Attachment Interview training being researched.
- Contact – post approval training being organised for all stakeholders.
- PAR Assessment and Analysis
- Managing Transitions “moving children on”.
- Compiling a resource library

The following training courses for social workers will have been facilitated by NWAS by the end of March 20112.

9th March 2012 - Training Course on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders – Julia Brown from the FASD Trust.

This course was offered to all NWAS staff, child care social workers and panel members 50 participants attended:

17 NWAS staff
 7 NWAS panel members
 24 Childcare Social work staff/students
 2 foster carers

10 people cancelled within the last few days due to work commitments/cases etc so t final numbers should have been around 60 people to attend. Total Cost £797.30 (£15.95 pp)



evaluation of the
evaluations of fasd cc

23rd March 2012 – Trauma Triggered Behaviour in LAC and Adopted Children – Helen Oakwater

This course has been organised by the training officer, in conjunction with BAAF. 16 places have been made available to NWAS staff at a reduced cost of £1,000. Approximately £60.00 per person.

11. JOINT ADOPTION PANELS

The Flintshire and Wrexham Joint Adoption Panel has now been operational for 17 months since September 2010 and is functioning well. Over the past year a total of 25 cases have been presented to panel.

Should be adopted recommendations:	8
Adopters Approvals:	6
Matching:	9
Reviews:	1
Advice:	1

Appraisals have been undertaken on all Panel members except for the Flintshire Elected member who has been unavailable for the dates offered so far. All panel members have noted that they feel that the panel is now functioning well as a cohesive group. A Joint Panel Training Day was held in June 2011 and a panel business meeting was held in November 2011.



Annual Report
for Joint Panel Flintsh

The Conwy and Denbighshire Joint Adoption Panel was established in January 2012 and is now fully operational. This panel has been extremely busy having met on two occasions and with an additional panel date required in March 2012 involving a total of 10 cases to date, involving:

Should be adopted recommendations:	1
Adopters Approvals:	3
Matching:	6 – total 10 children
(4 sibling groups of 2 and 2 single children)	

Gwynedd and Ynys Môn are currently working together to establish the third joint adoption panel and it is anticipated this should be set up by the second quarter of this financial year.

12. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PERFORMANCE DATA FOR THE NORTH WALES ADOPTION SERVICE - APRIL 2011 – DECEMBER 2012

ADOPTERS					
Report Reference	Task	Performance Indicator NMS	% achieved	Comments	Target %
A1	Information packs sent out to prospective adopters after initial enquiry	7 days	93%	The majority of these were sent out on the same day	100%
			4% longer than 7 days	Total 5 - 3 did not respond stating that they had not received the information. Second pack sent still no response.	
			3% no data	Total 3 – 1 second time adopters and 2 current foster carers all in contact with department prior to adoption application.	
A2	Initial visit undertaken following receipt of response form	Within 0 to 8 weeks	83% within 8 weeks	The majority of initial visits undertaken within 4 weeks were completed by the recruitment officer at the latter part of the year. 17% undertaken within 2 months several of these prior to transfer to recruitment officer	100%
			17% over 8 weeks	Out of the nine waiting over two months 3 were delayed due to enquirers' holidays and 1 due to issues known and checks being undertaken before visit.	
A3-2	Attendance at Pre-approval training after Initial Visit	Within 2 months	36%	Attended within two months 15% attended with 3 months and of the 17 waited more than 3 months 6 were unable to attend the first date offered, 1 waited for 2 nd time adopters course.	50%
A5	Application Form received to Panel Approval Date	6 months	47% within 6 months	Referral received Pre NWAS	100%
			42% more than 6 months 11% No data		

A6	Initial enquiry to Panel Approval Date	8 months	11%	The % of adopters approved within 6 months following receipt of application form has risen each quarter as follows: 1 st 2 nd 3 rd	100%
A8	Approval Panel Date to Agency Decision Maker Approval	7 days	53%	47% later than 7 days – longest date 15 days	100%

CHILDREN					
Report Reference	Task	Performance Indicator NMS	% achieved	Comments	Target %
C1	% of children taken to matching panel from 'Should be adopted	6 months	57%	Of the 43% 22% were matched within 6 months of Placement Order being Granted. 1 child had a placement breakdown and was then matched again. Uncertainty around child's development	100%
C2	% children taken to matching panel from Placement Order	6 months	79%	1 child disruption and second family was matched within 2 months. 2 uncertainty around development	100%
C3	Should be adopted panel date to ADM decision	5 working days	92%	8% more than 5 working days	100%

13.BUDGET

	Actual Expenditure to February 2012	Projected Expenditure to March 2012	Variance
Staffing	236,919	246,062	
Mileage	14,555	16,055	
Training	4519	11,219	
Office Misc	2280	3730	
After Adoption	37,485	49,980	
Computer Costs	7537	18,037	
Support Services	7504	8186	
Finance/HOS	252	9352	
Professional Fees	7863	7863	
Recruitment	12,802	15,000	
Subscription Fees	30	1630	
Total	331,746	387,114	55368

	Projected Income	Projected Expenditure March 2012		
Wrexham Contributions	149,575	387,114		
Other LA Contributions	201,556			
Total	351,131	387,114	35,983	

B/F 2010-2011	144,832
Overspend	-35,983
Total Balance	108,849

Detailed Budget Report attached.