



# **VALE, VALLEYS AND CARDIFF ADOPTION COLLABORATIVE**

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE 2026**

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Regulation 4 and Schedule 1 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (Wales) Regulations 2019 require all service providers to provide a written statement that sets out the aims and objectives of the agency, the services and facilities provided. This Statement of Purpose is made available upon request to children who may be adopted, their parents & guardians, prospective adopters, adoptive families requiring support services, adopted persons, birth families and staff. It is available in English and Welsh and will be made available in other languages or formats as required.

## **BACKGROUND**

Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) brings together the adoption services of the following local authorities:

- Cardiff Council
- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- Vale of Glamorgan Council

It is one of the five regional Collaboratives which form part of the National Adoption Service in Wales (NAS). The Vale of Glamorgan Council host the Collaborative.

In March 2015 Welsh Government published the (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015, known as “The Directions Powers”, which prescribe the regional areas and the governance structure for the service at a national and regional level.

The Collaborative became operational on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 when adoption services within the four partner authorities merged to form one integrated regional service.

The office address and contact details for VVC are:

Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative,  
Ty Jenner,  
Gladstone Road,  
Barry,  
CF63 1NH

0800 023 4064  
[contact@adopt4vvc.org](mailto:contact@adopt4vvc.org)



The appointed manager of the Collaborative is:

Elizabeth Dickinson  
Address as above

## **SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Overarching Aim**

The overall aim of the Collaborative is to provide a comprehensive, high quality adoption service to meet the needs of children requiring adoptive placements, prospective adopters, adoptive families, adopted adults, birth parents and others affected by adoption. Through partnership working, pooled resources and the development of consistent processes, the Collaborative is committed to delivering better outcomes for all those requiring a service within the regional area.

### **Objectives**

- To carry out the functions of the National Adoption Service and deliver a comprehensive adoption service on a regional level
- To ensure compliance with legislation, regulations, minimum standards, local procedures and the Performance Management Framework set by the National Adoption Service
- To ensure services are carried out in a timely and efficient way and based upon the assessed needs of those persons requiring a service
- To ensure that services are provided which support the cultural, linguistic, religious, language and communication needs of individuals
- To ensure those persons seeking approval as adoptive parents are welcomed without prejudice and delay and that their applications are considered on their individual merit
- To develop and review a recruitment strategy which ensures a range of adoptive placements are available regionally or through external agencies to ensure timely placements for all children where the placement plan is adoption
- To provide a child focused placement service to ensure children are appropriately matched with adopters who can meet their needs throughout their childhood
- To provide advice and guidance (referred to as a counselling service within regulations) for birth parents and families affected by adoption
- To provide pre and post adoption support service, in line with meeting the assessed needs of children and young people
- To establish effective working links with key stakeholders and other Collaboratives
- To maintain effective working links with local authority Children's Services Departments to ensure the agency functions in relation to children requiring adoptive placements are maintained

- To utilise and build upon examples of good practice within the region and promote consistency, excellence and continuous improvement
- To comply with the requirements of external audit and inspection
- To ensure systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of the service and the views of service users are considered as part of these processes

## SERVICES

### Eligibility

The Collaborative is responsible for providing a service to the following persons:

- Children looked after within the region requiring an adoptive placement
- Adopted children, young people and their families requiring an assessment of their support needs post the making of an Adoption Order
- Adopted children placed within the regional area by an external local authority requiring an assessment of their adoption support needs beyond the three-year transfer point
- Persons over the age of 21 years seeking approval as adoptive parents
- Persons from within the regional area seeking to adopt a child from abroad
- Persons seeking to adopt a stepchild
- Persons seeking to adopt a non-related child, who has had their home with the person for three years preceding the application or for 12 months if they are the foster carer for that child
- Birth relatives of adopted children through the provision of post adoption contact
- Adopted adults who are living within the region or, if they were adopted after December 2005, were placed for adoption by one of the partner agencies
- Relatives and the descendants of adopted persons requesting information from adoption records and/or an intermediary service

### Responsibilities of VVC

- To provide information, a timely initial response and follow up to all enquiries from prospective adopters
- To provide counselling, preparation and pre-approval training for all persons seeking approval as adopters and to ensure that assessments are completed in a timely way
- To provide support to adoptive families post approval and placement
- To undertake assessments of stepparent and non-agency adopters on behalf of the Court
- To assess and support persons who are seeking to adopt a child from abroad
- To provide adoption Agency Advice to the Agency Decision Maker as part of the decision-making process in respect of the adoption plan for the child

- To provide a family finding and linking service for all children referred for an adoptive placement
- To provide opportunities for contact between the child and birth family post adoption through the post adoption contact service
- To provide a birth parent counselling service for parents and relatives of children where the plan is adoption
- To provide a service for those adopted adults seeking access to their adoption information and those seeking to be re-united with their birth families
- To provide an access to information service to relatives and the descendants of adopted persons seeking information and/or contact with the adopted person
- To undertake assessments of post adoption support needs of children and their families
- To deliver the role & responsibilities of the Adoption Support Services Adviser (ASSA)
- To establish and maintain a regional Adoption Panel in line with regulatory requirements and provide Agency Advice to Panel
- To maintain a management information system to ensure timely, consistent performance reporting to the regional Management Board, the Joint Committee and the Director of Operations for the National Adoption Service
- To review the quality of the service on a six-monthly basis and provide an annual report of the service in line with the Collaborative Agreement which underpins the running of the service

### **Responsibilities of partner agencies**

The following functions are retained by each individual local authority:

- The assessment, care planning and review of children in need and those referred and placed for adoption.
- Maintaining the functions of the Agency Decision Maker in respect of children requiring a Should be Adopted decision.
- Assessing the support needs of children requiring adoption.
- Responsibility for the choice of adoptive placement and working with the Family Finder in matching the child with the prospective adopters.
- Decision making in respect of the funding of adoptive placements outside the regional area.
- Decision making in respect of the provision of Adoption Allowances and packages of support for adopted children based upon their assessed needs.
- Maintaining the responsibilities of the Agency Decision Maker in respect of decisions relating to refused requests for access to information from adoption records.



## **SERVICE DELIVERY**

The regional service is delivered from three functional teams covering the recruitment and assessment of prospective adopters, finding families for children requiring adoption and the provision of post adoption support services.

### **Recruitment and Assessment of adopters**

#### **Enquiry stage**

The Collaborative welcomes and encourages enquiries from individuals and families interested in adopting residing within the regional area and from different cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds, regardless of marital status, employment, gender, sexual orientation or disability. Enquiries can be made by email via VVC's mailbox ([contact@adopt4vvc.org](mailto:contact@adopt4vvc.org)), telephone (0800 023 4064) or via VVC's website ([adopt4vvc.org](http://adopt4vvc.org)). Potential adoptive applicants living outside the region can also be considered.

Marketing materials available via our website, social media and in the public domain are available bilingually in English and Welsh. Enquirers are provided with an information pack and are followed up by the Marketing Officer. The preferred language and any communication needs of the enquirer are ascertained at the initial point to ensure information, correspondence and communication can be provided in a language of choice and are recorded on the system to reflect this. Enquirers are actively offered whether they would like correspondence and communication in Welsh. Correspondence or applications made in Welsh will not be treated any less favourably than those made in English, and that there will not be a delay in response to any correspondence or applications received in Welsh.

Enquirers who wish to proceed are offered an opportunity to attend an Information Session facilitated jointly by the Team Manager and Marketing Officer. These sessions are provided bi-monthly or more frequently as the need arises. Initial home visits are undertaken predominantly by our experienced Marketing Officer, or by members of the Recruitment and Assessment team. Home visits are for those persons interested in taking their enquiry further. Where Welsh-speaking practitioners are not available, Welsh translation services can be offered for information events, visits and assessments for those whose language preference is Welsh.

The purpose of the initial recruitment stage is to provide information about adoption, the competencies required to become an adopter and the range of children requiring adoptive placements in order that potential applicants are enabled to make informed decisions about whether they wish to submit a Registration of Interest.

## **Assessment**

The assessment and approval process is carried out in accordance with the Adoption Agencies (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. The process is in two stages.

Stage 1 begins with applicants submitting a formal Registration of Interest. Stage 1 is predominantly concerned with providing further information and relevant training in respect of adoption and completing necessary checks and references. A three-day training course is provided for prospective adopters in conjunction with a neighbouring collaborative, Western Bay. This training is co-facilitated by an Adoption Support Therapist and a Recruitment and Assessment Social Worker who are experienced and knowledgeable in adoption.

Prospective adopters are required to consent to a series of checks being undertaken during Stage 1.

These include:

- Identity checks and checks of documentation to support any changes of name, including marriages, civil partnerships and divorce certificates where relevant
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure on each applicant and all members of the household over 18
- References from 3 personal referees who have known the applicant(s) for at least three years and also relevant previous partner checks
- Local authority checks from the area where the applicant(s) has lived since the age of 18
- Employer reference from the current or most recent employer and consideration of references from past employers where the applicant has worked with children
- Medical examination by the applicant's GP which are screened and summarised by the agency Medical Adviser
- Any other source that the Social Worker feels necessary to support or verify information required for their report.

Issues arising from the checks are discussed with the individual applicant although references are treated as confidential unless permission to share has been given. The DBS check may ascertain that there are offences which may preclude the progression of the Registration of Interest, although less serious offences may be discussed and balanced against the skills and qualities being offered by the applicant. The outcome of stage 1 checks will determine whether prospective adopters move to Stage 2 which is the assessment stage.

Applicants are supported to make their own written contributions to the PAR. Where applicants have specified Welsh as their language of choice, they may make their written contributions in Welsh and Welsh translation will be sought by the assessor. Assessments

of all prospective adopters are carried out using Coram BAAF Prospective Adopter Report (PAR) by a qualified Social Worker. Details of what is needed and explored within the assessment are covered within the contents of the training provided.

During the assessment all members of the household, including existing children are interviewed and their views obtained. Adult children who no longer live in the home are interviewed wherever practical and feedback sought about their experiences of being parented by the applicant(s).

Where necessary the Social Worker will seek additional information from schools, other professionals, previous employers or extended family members who have knowledge of the applicant/s and/or their parenting abilities.

A Coram BAAF Health and Safety checklist is completed covering all aspects of health and safety within the home including the risks posed by pets.

Subject to the requirements of legislation and guidance on the disclosure of records, the PAR assessment report is shared with the applicant(s) who have up to 10 days to make representations in respect of the report. The report will be provided to the applicant(s) in their language of choice. Information given in confidence by referees is not disclosed although referees are encouraged to share this with applicants where this will assist the assessment and decision-making process.

### **Approval**

All completed assessments are presented to Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Adoption Panel. The Panel is made up of people who have either personal knowledge of adoption or have a professional expertise in this area. The Adoption Panel is chaired by a person independent of VVC and many of the Panel members are also required to be independent of the service. The Agency Advisor role to the Adoption Panel is provided by one of the managers within the service.

The role of the Adoption Panel is to consider each application and to make a recommendation as to the suitability of the applicant(s) to adopt. The Panel may also give advice on the number and ages of children who would best fit with their abilities/preferences. The Panel also makes recommendations in respect of the matching of children with prospective adopters as detailed later.

All Panels are held virtually, and applicants are invited to attend the Panel when their application is being presented and make their own representation in relation to the recommendation. Where applicants' language of choice is Welsh, Welsh translation services can be offered during the panel process. The applicant(s) are informed verbally of the recommendation of the Adoption Panel on the day. The decision regarding approval is made

by the Head of Children's Services (the Agency Decision Maker) in the local authority in which the applicants reside following consideration of the assessment and the Panel's recommendation.

Applicants who are not considered suitable to adopt will be provided with written notification of the reasons for the refusal and have a right to make written representations to the agency for the decision to be reconsidered within 28 days of the decision. They can also request their case is considered by the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).

The Independent Review Mechanism is operated by the Welsh Government and allows access to an independent Panel, which will make a recommendation to the agency for consideration. This is not an appeals process and the agency can decide not to uphold the IRM Panel's recommendation.

### **Following approval**

The assessing Social Worker will continue to support the applicants following approval.

The approval of the adopters will be subject to review after 1 year if a child is not placed. This may involve updated checks and presentation to Panel in cases where it is recommended not to continue with approval as adopters.

All approved adopters are registered with the Adoption Register for Wales (ARW) which should be completed within the first month of approval.

### **Intercountry adoption**

Persons seeking to adopt from abroad are subject to the same assessment and approval process as domestic adopters and are assessed to the same standards. A fee will be charged for the service and a copy of the inter country adoption charging policy can be provided upon request.

There are also a number of additional requirements in respect of the assessment of intercountry adopters. The assessment will cover the applicant(s) suitability to adopt a child from abroad and their ability to meet the requirements of the particular country in terms of age requirements, health and financial status. Prior to their application to be assessed as prospective adopters, applicants are advised to check that they can meet the eligibility criteria of their country of choice as well as the eligibility requirements in the UK.

Following approval, the assessment, checks, medical reports and references together with the Adoption Panel minutes and the ADM decision are provided to Welsh Government. The Welsh Government endorses the application and liaises with the Westminster Department of Education (DoE) to request they issue a Certificate of Eligibility for cases covered by the Hague Convention. A separate additional fee will be charged by the DoE for this certificate.



The authorities in the country concerned will consider the application and if approved, the applicants will be added to the waiting list of approved overseas adopters until a match is identified.

When the family has been matched and introductions have taken place, the family will return with the child to the UK and will have to comply with immigration and entry clearance arrangements. Depending upon the country of origin of the child, the prospective adopters may need to notify the local authority and apply to the court for an Adoption Order.

Families who have adopted children from abroad may seek advice and assistance and are entitled to an assessment of their support needs should this be required.

### **Non-agency adoptions (commonly referred to as stepparent adoptions)**

Persons seeking to adopt a stepchild or non-related child are required to notify the service of their intention to adopt in writing. In the case of a stepparent application this notice should be signed by the step- parent and the birth parent. If the application is in relation to a non-related child, then the notice should be signed by the applicant(s).

The Collaborative operates a waiting list in respect of non-agency adoptions which is subject to regular review. A Social Worker will be appointed to undertake the assessment on behalf of the court and provide a completed Annex A Suitability report. The report is detailed and contains information about the child, family members and the birth parents. The birth parents will be contacted by the Social Worker to ascertain their views on the proposed adoption. The Social Worker will also need to confirm the child's understanding of adoption and although this is dependent upon age there is an expectation that prospective adopters encourage openness and understanding with the child in respect of their status.

Applicants consent to Disclosure & Barring (DBS) checks in respect of anyone over 18 years age living in their home. In cases where children are not related to the applicant/s, full medicals in respect of the child and applicants are required alongside referee checks. Applicants are responsible for meeting any fees incurred as a result of these checks.

When the Social Worker has completed the report, an application must be made to the court by the applicant/s with the prescribed fee.

Following the application, the Court will arrange a Directions Hearing and set a timetable for the completion of the report and the enquiries to be made in respect of the application. A CAFCASS officer will be appointed to obtain the consent of the birth parent/s to the adoption. In the event of consent being withheld, it may be necessary for applicants to instruct a solicitor to represent them during the court proceedings.

The Social Worker's role is to assess whether adoption is in the best interests of the child and to offer support and remain in contact with the family until the conclusion of the court process. Detailed information regarding non-agency and step-parent adoption is included on the Collaborative's website and anyone exploring this option is advised to fully consider this information ([Non-Agency / Step-Parent Adoption](#)) prior to submitting their written notice.

### **Family Finding**

All children who may require a plan for adoption are referred to VVC from the partner authorities following an assessment and planning process within the relevant local authority and formulating a proposed twin-tracking plan for adoption or alternative care plan. Children from parents considering adoption for their children on a voluntary basis (known as relinquished children) are also referred. The language of choice for children, their birth parents and foster carers will be ascertained at the initial referral point to ensure information, correspondence and communication can be provided in their language of choice and this is recorded on the system to reflect this. Enquirers are actively offered whether they would like correspondence and communication in Welsh. Correspondence made in Welsh will not be treated any less favourably than those made in English, and that there will not be a delay in response to any correspondence or applications received in Welsh.

Referrals are allocated to a Social Worker from the Family Finding Team who provides information and guidance (referred to as 'counselling' within regulation) to the birth parents in relation to the plan for adoption, seeks birth parents' views on the plan of adoption and liaises with the Social Worker with case responsibility for the child regarding the progress of the plan. Those children for whom the relevant local authority identifies an alternative permanence plan will be withdrawn from the twin-tracking referral for adoption.

Decision making in relation to whether a child should be adopted is undertaken by the Head of Service or by a delegated person in the local authority with responsibility for that child. This person will be the Agency Decision Maker (or ADM). Relinquished children are referred to the Adoption Panel for a recommendation as to whether adoption is in the child's best interests before being considered by the ADM.

As part of its' delegated functions, VVC co-ordinates the adoption decision making process for each local authority. The referral information is sent to the relevant Medical Adviser to enable the adoption medical on the child to be undertaken and the ADM is provided with a pack of required information in order to make the decision about whether the child should be placed for adoption. The Agency Advisor role to the Agency Decision Maker is provided by one of the managers within the service.

Following the making of a Placement Order, the Family Finding Social Worker works closely with the Social Worker for the child in securing a suitable adoptive family to meet the child's



needs. The child's cultural and religious background, ethnicity and any linguistic needs are considered as part of this process.

The process of securing the right match for the child involves obtaining a full profile of the child's background, particular needs, health issues, their attachment, support needs and the proposed contact plan for the child following adoption. Other considerations in matching involve the geographical location of the proposed placement, the wishes and feelings of the birth parents and the child if he or she is of an age to express a view.

The Family Finding Social Worker will initially establish if a potential match can be identified from available adopters approved by VVC. All children are required to be registered with the Adoption Register for Wales (ARW) within one month of their Placement Order (or relinquished decision) but if there is no suitable match available within the region, the Family Finder will seek approval of the local authority to refer the child for an external link via the Adoption Register for Wales and Linkmaker, which is a national family finding and linking database. This may involve the child being placed for adoption outside of the region where the funding for the relevant interagency fee must be agreed by the relevant local authority.

Potential matches for a child are followed up by the Family Finding Social Worker, Child's Social Worker and Social Worker supporting the adoptive family via a home visit(s). The purpose of these visits is to share relevant information about the child and their background, to assess whether the prospective adopters could meet the assessed needs of the child and to ascertain the views of the prospective adopters in relation to the proposed match.

Once a match has been identified, an internal matching meeting is held and chaired by the Family Finding Team Manager within VVC to confirm support for the proposed match and to formulate the matching plan for the child. The matching plan is considered by the Adoption Panel for a recommendation as to whether the proposed match can meet the needs of the child prior to a decision by the ADM. Prospective adopters are enabled to meet with the Medical Adviser for the child, their foster carer or any person relevant to their care prior to attendance at the Adoption Panel. Further opportunities may be given to meet relevant persons who have known the child by the provision of an 'Understanding the Child Day' where possible and prioritised for those children aged 3+ or within a sibling group where one child is aged 3+.

Wherever possible the Family Finder will seek to arrange a one-off meeting between prospective adopters and birth parents. The decision to offer this is based upon a risk assessment completed by the Social Worker with case responsibility for the child, the willingness of prospective adopters and of birth parents (or other relatives where appropriate) to participate.



A series of meetings between the child and adopters will be arranged prior to a formal introductory period to assist in building connection. These meetings will be supported by the foster carer(s) and Social Workers where necessary. These meetings are termed 'pre-meets' or 'bump into' meetings. Following the making of the decision by the ADM, a period of planned introductions for the child and the prospective adopters is put in place to enable a successful transition for that child into their new family. Prospective adopters are remunerated for travel expenses to these visits and supported with accommodation locally if they reside outside the region.

The placement is supported by the assessing Social Worker for the adoptive family and the Child's Social Worker until the making of the Adoption Order. Statutory visits and reviews of the child's placement are undertaken by the placing authority.

This arm of the service is supported by two grant funded Social Worker posts to assist with preparing children for placement for adoption and one post which co-ordinates the provision of Life Journey work in conjunction with partner agencies. Life Journey practitioners are situated within each of the local authorities, and they provide a life journey book(s) for the child. The child's Social Worker remains responsible for providing children with a Later Life Letter. All life journey materials will be provided in the child's language of choice.

### **Adoption Support**

The Collaborative has a responsibility for assessing adoption support needs under the Adoption Support Services (Local Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2005. These Regulations require the appointment of an Adoption Support Services Adviser (ASSA). The ASSA for VVC is the Adoption Support Manager.

The Adoption Support Services (Wales) Regulations 2019 prescribe the categories of persons and the type of support and circumstances in which support may be provided. Adoption support services are prescribed as:

- Assistance to adoptive parents, children and related persons in respect of post adoption contact arrangements
- Services which may be provided in relation to the therapeutic needs of a child in respect of their adoption
- Post adoption assistance to support a child's relationship with their adoptive parent(s) which may include training for the adoptive parent to support the child's needs and respite care
- Assistance where an adoption placement or disruption has occurred or is likely to occur
- Assistance to adopted persons and relatives of adopted persons over the age of 18 in obtaining information in relation to the person's adoption and facilitating contact where required

- Provision of services to enable groups of adoptive children, adoptive parents and birth parents to discuss matters relating to adoption

An assessment of adoption support needs forms part of the planning for all children being placed for adoption.

The Adoption Support Plan is considered:

- As part of the decision-making process as to whether a child should be placed for adoption
- When considering a match for a child and when the child is placed
- As part of the statutory reviewing system for children placed for adoption
- When an Adoption Order is made
- As part of an assessment of post adoption support needs

Prior to the making of the Adoption Order the Social Worker for the child will have the responsibility for undertaking the assessment, preparing, implementing and reviewing of the Adoption Support Plan. Reviewing the plan forms part of the statutory review process by the placing authority following the placement of the child.

The Regulations require placing authorities to contact the authority where a child may be placed before the decision to place is made to ascertain if the required support services are available within the area. This is the responsibility of the ASSA. The placing authority remains responsible for the assessment of the support needs of the child for three years following the date of the Adoption Order. At the three-year point responsibility for assessing the support needs should this be required transfers to the resident authority.

Requests for an assessment of post adoption support needs can be made directly by adoptive families to VVC or can be referred via other services. The preferred language and any communication needs of adoptive family are ascertained at the initial point to ensure information, correspondence and communication can be provided in a language of choice and are recorded on the system to reflect this. Adoptive families are actively offered whether they would like correspondence and communication in Welsh. Where Welsh-speaking practitioners are not available, Welsh translation services can be offered for support services, visits and assessments for those whose language preference is Welsh. Correspondence made in Welsh will not be treated any less favourably than those made in English, and that there will not be a delay in response to any correspondence or applications received in Welsh.

Assessments of post adoption support are completed an Adoption Support Social Worker. Assessments undertaken by Social Care Officers within the team are undertaken under the supervision of the Team Manager. The assessment will make a recommendation as to the best service to meet the assessed needs of the child and their adoptive family. This may



involve signposting to universal services or other specialists in the local authority, providing support directly from the Adoption Team or seeking funding from the authority where the family reside for an externally commissioned service. A revised Adoption Support Plan will be completed, and this plan will be updated as required.

The Adoption Support Team works closely with the Children Looked After Support Service (CLASS) which covers RCT and Merthyr Tydfil CBC and the Enfys service covering Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Referrals in respect of post adoption support are screened by both services with a view to behavioural or therapeutic interventions being directly provided or alternative provision being recommended to the responsible local authority. The responsibility and decision-making for funding identified post-adoption support services remains with the relevant local authority, informed by the assessment of support needs and consideration by either CLASS or Enfys.

VVC provides universal support activities for adoptive families by way of twice-yearly family fun days, a weekly family Hub and Sports Activity Group for children and young people during term time.

The Adoption Support Team has three grant funded posts which specialise in particular areas of service delivery:

The PATHways Co-ordinator is responsible for the assessment and referral of families requiring support in line with the services provided by Adoption UK's national PATH service.

The Children & Young Person's Co-ordinator is responsible for referring and supporting children and young people to the Connected Service also provided by Adoption UK. This post directly supports the Connected groups which are provided on a weekend monthly basis.

The other grant funded post is a part time Birth Parent Adviser who provides support to birth parents and families of adopted children and young people. A quarterly Birth Parent Support Group has been established.

The Adoption Support Team also has 2.5 Social Care Officer posts which provide individual and group support to children and young people and support with post adoption contact.

VVC maintains a post-adoption contact service for adopted children and their birth relatives. Indirect contact exchanges via VVC's Letterbox service are facilitated by the Post Adoption Contact Social Worker and Post Adoption Contact Social Care Officer. This includes the provision of advice and support for both parties on preparing correspondence and liaison regarding the scheduling and arrangements for contact. The preferred language and any communication needs of parties to letterbox agreement are ascertained at the referral point

to ensure information, correspondence and communication can be provided in a language of choice and are recorded on the system to reflect this. VVC also provides support for facilitating and supervising direct contact arrangements between adopted children and their birth family. Post adoption contact needs form part of the plan for the child and are subject to risk assessment. Plans for direct contact are usually made at the point of matching a child with adopters and liaison takes place with the Adoption Support Manager to consider the Adoption Support Plan in relation to post adoption contact. Direct contact plans are subject to ongoing risk assessment and review.

VVC also provides advice, support and access to information for adopted persons and birth families for adoptions which took place before December 2005 and pre 1976 adoptions are prioritised in terms of waiting times. The support may take the form of an intermediary service, but this is dependent upon the consent and welfare of those involved. A service for persons adopted after December 2005 is also provided. The requirements for this area of work are set out in the Pre- Commencement Adoptions (Wales) Regulations 2005 and the Post Commencement Adoptions (Wales) Regulations 2005.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCESS**

The Collaborative adheres to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Complaints Procedure. All complaints are dealt with via this process although some complaints involving a service being provided by one of the partner authorities which may require a joint investigation of the complaint. The Complaints Procedure recognises the need to resolve complaints at the most informal level possible, and the emphasis placed upon staff to endeavour to resolve difficulties as soon as they arise. Adopters, prospective adopters, birth families or others receiving a service are entitled to use the complaints procedure if they feel they cannot resolve the difficulty with the individuals concerned or their managers. The Complaints Procedure offers a two-stage process, a local resolution stage and if the complaint cannot be resolved at this stage, a formal investigation stage by an independent person. Complainants may choose to go to the formal stage at the outset.

A complaints factsheet "**Complaints – How to be heard**" outlining the process is available to all service users on request and is also available via the Vale of Glamorgan's web page [Social Services Complaints](#) and complaints may be made in the language of choice. Complaints and correspondence made in Welsh will not be treated any less favourably than those made in English, and that there will not be a delay in response to any correspondence or applications received in Welsh.

A record of complaints and compliments is held by the Collaborative and the Complaints Department for the local authority and information used to improve the quality of service delivery.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE SERVICE**

The governance structure of the Collaborative is by way of a Joint Committee Management Board and Operational Group. There is a Collaborative Agreement in place signed by each of the partner authorities detailing the governance structure and the roles and responsibilities of each of the parties.

The Joint Committee is comprised of an elected member from each of the partner authorities and their respective Heads of Service, the Chair of the Management Board and Regional Adoption Manager. The Joint Committee meets twice a year and is responsible for approving the VVC'S Annual Plan, Annual Report and annual budget for the Collaborative. The Joint Committee is chaired by a member from one of the partner agencies on a biennial basis.

The Management Board is comprised of Heads of Service from the four local partner authorities with membership from a voluntary adoption agency, Health and Education and the National Adoption Service. The Board meets quarterly and is chaired by a Director of Social Services from one of the partner authorities on biennial basis.

The Operational Group is comprised of Operational Managers from each of the partner authorities and VVC Managers and meets on a quarterly basis. The Operational Group is chaired by one of the Operational Managers on a triannual basis.

The performance of the region is measured against a Performance Management Framework developed by Welsh Government. The regional service is required to report against this framework on a quarterly and annual basis to the Director of Operations for NAS.

The Regional Adoption Manager reports on the performance of the region to the Joint Committee, Management Board, Operational Group and to the local authority Scrutiny Committees in each of the local authorities within the region on an annual basis.

Regulation 39 of The Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019 require the service to undertake a Review of the Quality of Service on a six-monthly basis. These reviews form the basis of the annual report to the Scrutiny Committees.

Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the service is undertaken in a number of ways:

- **Annual Improvement Plan** - The plan details the actions required to improve the performance of the service and service delivery. The plan is approved by the partner authorities and is required by NAS as part of the regional reporting requirements
- **Supervision** - All staff employed in the adoption service receive regular individual supervision in accordance with the Vale of Glamorgan's Supervision Policy

- **Team Meetings** - Individual Teams meet on a regular basis to discuss service specific issues and a meeting of the whole service team is facilitated on a bimonthly basis. These meetings consider performance and ways to improve service delivery
- **Adoption Panel** - The Adoption Panel provides a quality assurance function and provides feedback to the service about the quality of work presented
- **Service User Feedback** - VVC encourages feedback from any person in receipt of a service from the Collaborative. Service user surveys in respect of specific service areas are in place and the findings are collated centrally. A system of check- ins with adoptive families a year following the making of the Adoption Order and at the three-year point has been developed and the findings are collated centrally and reported to the service. A system to seek the views of birth parents following the making of the Adoption Order has been developed. This information is used to inform reviews of the quality of the service provided by VVC
- **Governance structure** - The reporting framework in respect of service provided by VVC as outlined in the Collaborative Agreement provides another mechanism for evaluating the service and identifying gaps in service provision
- **Compliments** - A record of compliments received are reported and recorded centrally.
- **Complaints and representations** - Complaints and representations received are also contribute to the monitoring and evaluating of the service providing information on service trends and gaps in provision

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

The service is managed by a Regional Adoption Manager and four Managers who manage the service functions of Recruitment & Assessment, Family Finding, Adoption Support and the Business Support Team. The Regional Adoption Manager reports to the Head of Children's Services for the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

All staff within the service are employed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The service has a staff establishment of 5 managerial posts, 14 full time Social Work posts, 18 part time Social Work posts, 4.5 Social Care Officer posts, 1 full time Recruitment and Marketing Officer post and 2 full time and 5 part time Business Support posts.

An organisational and staffing structure is contained under Appendix 1.

The Regional Adoption Manager is appropriately qualified and experienced having been employed in the field of social care since 2008. The manager holds a degree in Social Work (BA) and Postgraduate Certificate in Managing Practice Quality in Social Care.

All Social Workers employed in the service are professionally qualified, experienced practitioners registered with the Social Care Wales. They all have over three years' post



qualifying experience in statutory childcare and adoption. The unqualified practitioners employed in the service are supervised by an appropriately qualified Team Manager.

### **CSSIW ADDRESS AND CONTACT DETAILS**

Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative is regulated by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

The address of the Inspectorate is:

Welsh Government Office,  
Rhydycar Business Park,  
Merthyr Tydfil,  
CF48 1UZ

0300 790 0126

[ciw@gov.wales](mailto:ciw@gov.wales)

**Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative May 2026**



Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption | **Mabwysiadu**  
yn y Fro, y Cymoedd a Chaerdydd

## Appendix 1: Staff Structure

