# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **The National Adoption Service in Wales – 10 Year Anniversary** |
| **DATE** | **06 December 2024** |
| **BY** | **Dawn Bowden, Minister for Children and Social Care** |

On 6th November the National Adoption Service celebrated its 10-year anniversary. I was delighted to have the opportunity to attend a celebratory event at the Norwegian Church in Cardiff, to celebrate the outstanding accomplishments that have been achieved since it was launched.

The National Adoption Service was borne out of significant concern about adoption services in Wales, including the quality and the quantity of Welsh adoption services, equity in provision across the geographical diversity of Wales, and long timeframes for adopters, and children.

At the time our approach to structuring the National Adoption Service was innovative - there was no similar service anywhere in the UK. We went from 22 separate local authority services to 5 joined up regional collaborative adoption agencies, with the National Adoption Service, acting as a responsive, forward-thinking ‘central hub’ for the provision of adoption in Wales.

This regional collaborative model has been successful in delivering significant improvements. We now have a shared strategic direction, and local government and its partners have committed time and resources to work creatively to address the challenges of providing a consistent, high quality adoption service.

The arrangements have also helped us deliver better joint commissioning of adoption services, and supported productive partnerships with third sector organisations, which have resulted in improved sharing of good practice, and creative and promising initiatives for the future.

Some of the key achievements include:

* + Improved time frames for approval of adopters and diversity in recruitment of adopters.
  + Children now placed in a timely way, with fewer waiting, more siblings placed together and more children placed in Wales.
  + Improved provision and quality of life journey work.
  + Increased availability of adoption support, and more services provided to birth parents.
  + A national performance framework which has provided the sector with an accurate profile of adoption services in Wales, the needs of children placed, and a means of identifying areas for improvement.
  + Launch of the *Adoption Support Commitment* which gives a clear promise to provide targeted offers of support for all adoptive families in Wales, including specialist and therapeutic services, for those who need them most.
  + Introduction of a Wales Early Permanence Framework to provide clarity and support for children looked after and cut down on the number of transitions they experience through their journey in care.
  + The development of a successful bespoke support service for adopted children **and young people called *Connected,* w**orking alongside our third sector partner Adoption UK Cymru***.***
* Improved satisfaction with the service as evidenced by feedback through the Wales wide annual consultation event ‘The Big Adoption Conversation’ and the UK wide Adoption Barometer study.

I am proud to say that Wales has a National Adoption Service that is owned and run by local authorities working together. I am also proud of the significant contribution that has been made by the third sector. It is that shared commitment to excellence that has made the National Adoption Service a success, and which has led to real improvements for all those affected by adoption.

I am delighted with what has been achieved so far and I commend the National Adoption Service for what it has done over the last 10 years. Whilst we have experienced extensive service change and improvements, this is a continuous journey, and going forward the Welsh Government will work with the National Adoption Service and its partners, to further improve and create a modern, responsive and forward-thinking adoption service throughout Wales.

I would like to extend my thanks to all those involved in making the adoption sector what it is today. It is through their dedication and hard work to improve services for all those affected by adoption, that we have been able to achieve so much.