



**Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Dewi Sant**

**St David's
Adoption
Service**

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

UNDER SOCIAL CARE REGULATIONS AND INSPECTION (WALES ACT
2016).

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ABOUT THE PROVIDER

	St David's Children Society
Service provider	<i>St David's Children Society is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (Registration No: 509163) and a company limited by Guarantee (Registered Cardiff 1546688). St David's Adoption Service is the brand name of the St David's Children Society's adoption service</i>
The address of the service provider	Lambourne House, Llanishen Business Park, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF14 5GL
Legal entity	Charitable Company
A responsible individual	Jason Baker
Service manager	Anna Nyamhotsi Martina McCrossan
The name of the service	St David's Adoption Service
Service address	Lambourne House, Llanishen Business Park, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF14 5GL

SECTION 2

A DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCATION OF THE SERVICE



St David's provides adoption services to families across all of Wales. The service's office is in Cardiff.

SECTION 3

VALUES, VISION, MISSION AND RANGE OF NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUALS FOR WHOM THE REGULATED SERVICE IS TO BE PROVIDED

VALUES



Open Door - we are available, accessible and open to people who are interested in ensuring stability for children across Wales.



Genuine Welcome – we offer a warm, genuine and honest approach to how we deliver our services.



Inspirational Outlook – we are enthusiastic, creative and progressive in developing and delivering our services.



Responsible Leadership – we are supportive, responsive and leading, building long-lasting relationships with people and professionals.



Supportive Professional – we are dedicated and reliable in offering expertise in service delivery.



ST DAVID'S ADOPTION SERVICE

Vision - Every child with an adoption plan in Wales is found a loving family and supported to be the best that they can be.

Mission – Every adoption journey starts with a child. Our modern and responsive adoption service enables and supports our families across Wales to help children grow and thrive throughout their lives, valuing all relationships that are important to them.

A) A RANGE OF NEEDS WE CAN SUPPORT

St David's Adoption Service provides adoption services across Wales.

The Team provides the following range of adoption services including:

- Recruitment, training, assessment and approval of prospective adopters.
- Recruitment, training, assessment, approval and therapeutic support to Adopting Together families.
- Support to approved prospective adoptive parents both pre and post placement.

- Pre-approval including linking and introductions, post approval and post adoption support groups.

For adoptive parents approved by St David's Adoption Service and children adopted by them we provide:

- Regular support groups and opportunities to meet other adopter families
- Pre- and post-placement we have an annual celebration / Fun Day and Christmas party.
- Ongoing support and training
- Support with contact arrangements as and when needed, including support to adopters who are accessing the Local Authority letter box system
- Support to adults who have been adopted through the service
- Post Adoption Support which may include direct work with the family and acting as advocate in respect of access to other services such as therapeutic support, PATHway, education and health.



- Signposting to other appropriate resources including, where appropriate, financially supporting such resource
- Liaising with the placing or receiving local authority to ensure appropriate supports and services are in place.



ACCESS TO BIRTH RECORD INFORMATION

- Access to information/births records counselling service is offered to all adults where the Society was the placing agency.
- Where St David's was the placing adoption agency an intermediary service is available to help establish contact between adopted adults and birth relatives, if appropriate, for those adopted before 30 December 2005.

St David's in partnership with AUK, have been commissioned by the National Adoption Service to pilot a small project to deliver an access to records and intermediary service to those affected by historical adoption practices. The Regional Collaboratives retain statutory responsibility for adopted people and birth parents referred to the pilot.

ADOPTING TOGETHER SERVICE

- From May 2018, St. David's, in partnership with the other Voluntary Adoption Agencies in Wales (Barnardo's Cymru and AUK Cymru) and therapeutic partner, The Family Place has led on an innovative service called 'Adopting Together Service' (ATS).



This service emerged from a need identified and supported by the National Adoption Service to recruit families for children who had been waiting over 9 months for an adoptive family or children with high level complex needs. St David's takes referrals to the Adopting Together Service from all Regional Collaboratives (which consists of all 22 Local Authorities in Wales).

The ATS model is unique in that it brings together four key components, some of which are deemed best practice, under one distinct umbrella, as a seamless service. These components include recruitment of prospective adopters, Team for Child Meetings, structured transitions informed by therapeutic practice, and follow up psychological consultation meetings. All prospective adopters are linked with an Adopting Together buddy.



THE ASSOCIATION FOR FOSTERING, KINSHIP and ADOPTION (AFKA) CYMRU

Formed on 7th September 2015 as the Association for Fostering and Adoption (AFA Cymru), it was rebranded in 2023 to AFKA Cymru to reflect the kinship care services delivered to professionals.

Its day-to-day operational services of training, consultancy, professional advice and information are delivered independently of St. David's, it is by law governed by St. David's Children Society under the terms of its charitable status.

AFKA Cymru seeks to promote a Knowledge Hub and Good Practice Centre across the spectrum of permanency planning for children and young people. The services provided by AFKA Cymru are not regulated activities under the scope of the Adoption Support Services (Wales) Regulations 2019.

AFKA Cymru's Trainer / Consultants facilitate our Adoption Preparation Training. Anyone that is in the process of or has adopted through St David's Adoption Service are able to access a range of training opportunities provided by AFKA Cymru free of charge.

B) AGE RANGE OF PEOPLE USING SERVICE

- 21 years and over prospective adopters and adopters
- Children aged 0 – 18 who are placed with St David's families
- Adopted adults and relatives 18 years and over where St David's was the placing adoption agency.

C) GENDER OF PEOPLE USING THE SERVICE

- All genders

D) NUMBER OF PEOPLE ACCESSING ST DAVID'S SERVICES

- Over 300 prospective adopters enquire each year about becoming adoptive parents. On average 35 families have an initial visit with an average of 20 families per year being approved as adopters.
- On average 30 families per year access post adoption support and an average of 75 families attend the post adoption support events.
- On average 15 enquiries are made each year with regard to an access to records and/or intermediary service. This excludes those referred to St. David's through the pilot project.

HOW THE SERVICE IS PROVIDED BY ST DAVID'S

HOW ST DAVID'S CONTRIBUTES TO THE ADOPTION SUPPORT PLAN.

St David's Adoption Service is proactive in working with families in identifying and supporting adoption support needs at all stages in the process. This happens through assessment, post approval, matching and post placement.

It includes ensuring adopters and children's voices are represented within the Prospective Adopters report (PAR), the Adoption Placement Report (APR), Adoption Support Plan and Adoption Placement Plan (APP). Local Authorities have the primary Responsibility for ensuring the child's needs are paramount and stated through the Child's care and support plan and adoption support plan.

STANDARD OF CARE AND SUPPORT

St David's Adoption Service recognises that adoption is lifelong. We are committed to providing training to families pre and post adoption. We offer advice and information to individuals and families throughout their individual adoption journey and families who have adopted through St David's can come back and request a service many years after the Adoption Order was granted. Our lifelong offer is open to families brought together by adoption, including siblings, grandparents and significant others.



St David's is committed to protecting, promoting and maintaining people's safety. This is embedded through training offered to prospective adopters, adopters and staff such as safeguarding awareness and child development, and therapeutic parenting.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019) introduced the role of Designated Safeguarding Person. Within the Agency the named DSP is Anna Nyamhotsi.

St David's has clear policies in respect of data protection including GDPR, safeguarding, equal opportunities, complaints, finance and administration, health and environment, safety, security and management of risk, monitoring and evaluation, staff development and training, staff management, staff recruitment, service-user involvement and volunteers. We offer a warm welcome to prospective adopters and adopters regardless of age (must be over 21), disability, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, whether single, married, cohabiting or in a civil partnership.

Adopters and prospective adopters need to reflect the diverse backgrounds of the children, young people and families who access our services, and we welcome adopters from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This is also true for staff recruitment, and we are committed to achieving a diverse and representative workforce at all levels of the organisation that reflects the communities we work within.

St David's monitor and measure our standards in accordance with the statutory framework for England and Wales and the regulatory framework for Wales.

Working practices reflect regulatory and legislative requirements and we aim to promote prospective adopters, adopters and staff well-being.

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS FOR PEOPLE USING THE SERVICE

- As a registered charity, St. David's Children Society is not a public body. However, we recognise that language is an essential part of a person's identity and that the needs of Welsh speaking service users are a key part of the equal opportunities agenda in Wales as outlined in The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
- St David's Children Society has therefore adopted the principle that in carrying out its work in Wales it will treat English and Welsh language on the basis of equality and provide an active offer of providing services in the Welsh language.

ST DAVID'S STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

A) NUMBERS AND QUALIFICATIONS OF STAFF

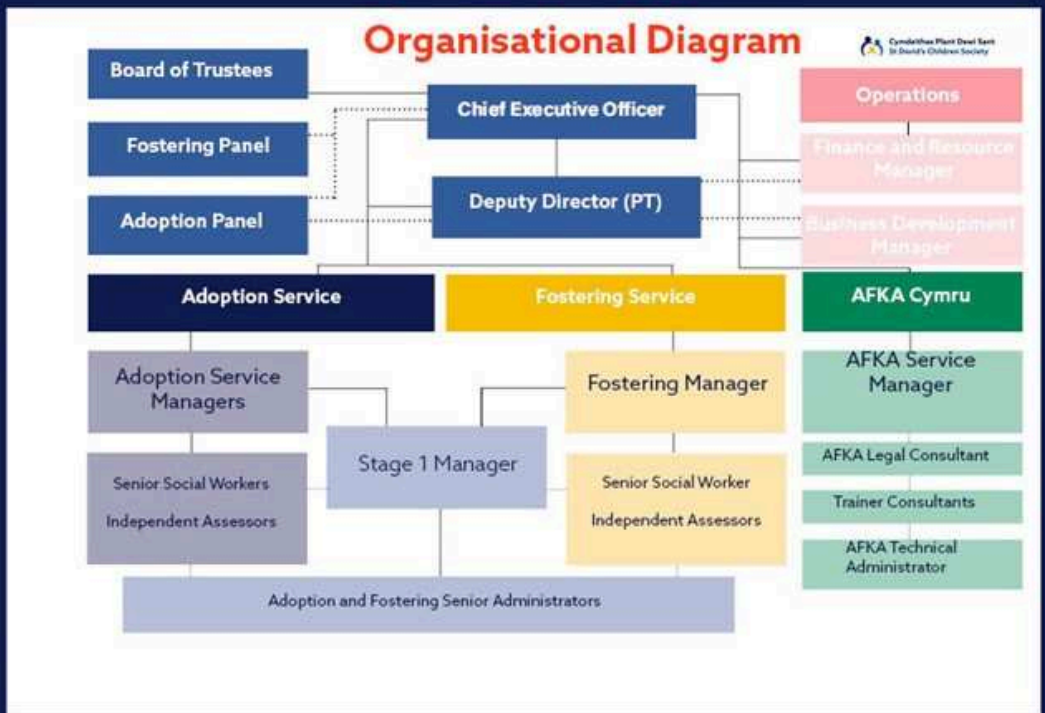


Diagram 1

CEO/RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL - Diploma in Social Work, Master's Degree in Social Work, Post Grad Cert in Manager Development Programme

DEPUTY DIRECTOR/REGISTERED MANAGER

ADOPTION SERVICE - Bsc Hons Social Work, DIPSW, Post Grad Cert Management, DDP Level 1

ADOPTION SERVICE MANAGER / REGISTERED

MANAGER - Bsc Econ Social Work, DIPSW, NVQ Level 4 Management, DDP Level 1.

8 Senior Social Workers

All relevant social work qualifications
(Dipsw/Degree/Masters in Social Work)

Within team

- DDP Level 1
- 3 DDP level 2
- 8 Theraplay Level 1
- 1 Diploma in Solution Focused
- Therapy

Other Staff

8 Independent Social Workers all with relevant social work qualifications

B) SPECIALIST STAFF

There are currently three senior social workers who specialise in therapeutic transition work for the Adopting Together Service and a total of four permanent members of staff have been trained in Theraplay Level 1, with one trained in Theraplay level 2. All social work staff are DDP Level 1 trained, a further three team members have achieved DDP Level 2. Several of our Independent Social Workers are trained in Theraplay and/or DDP.

Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) Level 1 is offered to all social work staff employed at St David's. Theraplay Level 1 is offered to social work staff who are undertaking transition work.

Social workers completing Access to Records work are offered specific training including pre and post commencement regulations.

C) SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS

The work of individual members of the team is monitored through regular supervision and yearly appraisals. All members of the team have daily access to managers and the CEO as required.



St David's Adoption Service is committed to ensuring that its services are effective, efficient and of a high standard. It continually monitors and evaluates the operation of the adoption team, the Adoption Panel and administrative procedures through

- performance monitoring
- gathering and evaluating service user feedback
- formal supervision of staff
- Appraisals of staff and Panel (yearly)

- auditing case files
- auditing supervision files
- identifying trends in compliments, complaints, notifications and safeguarding concerns
- responding to recommendations from Inspections

Exit interviews are carried out with all staff leaving the Society with their agreement, and their views are taken into consideration in all aspects of continuous improvement of St David's as a learning and transparent organisation.

D) STAFF TRAINING

All staff are offered an induction and as part of that are offered core training including: Equal opportunities, Health and Safety, Data Protection (GDPR), Adoption Agency Regulations and Guidance, Safeguarding, complaints, database, Welsh language policy. They are all provided with the Employee Policies handbook.

Further training is provided based on the specific role of the individual in the organisation, and in keeping with practice developments and research in adoption. For example, social workers receive further Safeguarding, Adoption Preparation Training, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy – level 1, Sensory Integration, Post Adoption Depression, the Role of Panel and observation of Panel, Theraplay overview and information about Adopting Together.



Additional training is identified for individual staff through the probation period, yearly appraisals and all staff are asked to comment on their training needs through regular supervision sessions.

Team training days are provided on average twice throughout each year and the social work team have an opportunity to meet on a regular basis for group supervision for peer support and information sharing.

SECTION 6

ST DAVID'S FACILITIES AND SERVICES

INFORMATION ABOUT THE FACILITIES TO SECURELY STORE RECORDS

The Agency ensures that case records relating to Staff, Advisers, Trustees, Panel members, Service-users and Volunteers are kept securely and that arrangements for access are clearly laid out and in keeping with data protection and confidentiality requirements.

All staff of St David's Children Society who process personal data must comply with the Data Protection Act and GDPR. Infringement of the Data Protection Act/GDPR 2018 by staff may expose the Society and the individual to legal action and claims for substantial damages. Any infringement of the Act will be treated seriously by the Society and may be considered under disciplinary procedures.

The Agency will co-operate with those bodies or persons exercising a legal right to access information. The Agency will create and maintain case records which meet legislative requirements.

Case records are stored using Charms database and where applicable lockable security cabinets. The organisation holds Cyber Essentials certification, which reflects the systems and processes the organisation has put in place to ensure that information stored electronically/on a cloud system is securely protected. Historical records are stored through an approved external provider, with access only to authorised personnel. All records kept will comply with the Regulated Adoption Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2019 (Reg 30).

Adoption records will be securely stored for 100 years where an Adoption Order has been made. Where adopters have been approved but no match identified, their record is stored for 15 years. Where there has

been a placement which has ended due to a disruption pre-Order the adopters' record are retained for 15 years and children's files are retained for an appropriate period as determined by the Agency (taking into account circumstances relating to safeguarding processes and disruption processes).

Case records which are destroyed will be shredded and disposed of as confidential waste.

All staff have regular supervision and yearly appraisals where learning needs are identified. Ongoing staff training is provided to ensure St David's consistently meets the needs of its service users and staff and staff have access to relevant external training courses, in house training days, group / peer supervision and specialist training where appropriate.

Service-users are represented on both the Board of Trustees and the Adoption Panel and we measure the impact of our interventions with service users through a systematic evaluation process. We are increasingly adopting a model of co-production in recruitment and training and in respect of the design and delivery of our Adoption Services.

ST DAVID'S GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY MONITORY ARRANGEMENTS

See Diagram 1 (page 12) for the structure of service.

MEASURES TO MONITOR, REVIEW AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF CARE AND SUPPORT

Quality of Service

Quality Assurance is undertaken by the Agency at key stages from the service users first point of contact through to post placement and post order support. Evaluations from these stages are used to constantly improve all aspects of service delivery and informs recruitment activity, training and adoption support services.

The Agency has welcomed independent scrutiny of the way it delivers its services with the introduction of consultation questionnaires as a critical component of the quarterly performance reports, six monthly and annual Quality of Care review under RISCA. Quality of service delivery is further monitored through evaluation of post adoption support services. Collation and analysis of all feedback will be used to drive forward service improvement.



Service users, staff the Board of Trustees and young people from AUK's Connected group co-produced the Agency business Plan (2023-2026) setting out an ambitious framework for service delivery over the next three years. Work plans aligned to the Strategic plan are reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees and set out the objectives and KPI's for service delivery.

Adopters and young people contributed to the brand, mission and value statements of the Agency sharing collective ownership of the organisation. A comprehensive review of narrative and brand was undertaken using a co-production model with adopters, staff and stakeholders involved in developing a new strategy and visual identity. With effect from 17th October 2022 the new name of our adoption service changed from St David's Children Society to St David's Adoption Service. Wide ranging consultation, including families, concluded that this change would better represent us as a modern Adoption Service providing greater clarity with our service users about what our actual service offer is. This does not change our legal entity; St David's Children Society remains registered as a charity with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (Registration No: 509163) and a company limited by Guarantee (Registered Cardiff 1546688). St David's Adoption Service is the brand name of the St David's Children Society's adoption service.



Service users sit on the Board of Trustees and Adoption Panel influencing Agency culture at the highest level of governance.

The Agency operates in a culture of continuous learning and uses best practice models and up to date research to inform practice.

St David's evaluates lessons learnt from complaints, safeguarding matters and disruption of adoption placements. Patterns and trends are analysed both within the context of the quarterly performance reports and Quality of Care reports (reg 43/ Reg 49 under RISCA arrangements) and lessons learned assimilated into practice.

Feedback from Inspection reports is made widely available to staff, Adopters and Board of Trustees and recommendations on service improvements implemented in a timely way.

Aggregate data on adoption activity is collated on a quarterly basis for the National Adoption Service and comparators made on performance with partners in the statutory and voluntary sector. This data is also reviewed for pattern and trends for management and Trustee meetings, as well as annual Panel reports, to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to meet projected demand.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

St David's Adoption Service positively encourages comments and observations concerning its services. The Society has a formal Complaints Procedure, which is made available to all service-users at their first point of contact with the Society.



The complaints' procedure encourages informal resolution of difficulties before they become complaints. However, if matters cannot be resolved, any complaints are forwarded to the Chief Executive, who initiates a formal investigation. Where necessary an independent person will be appointed to investigate the complaint. The Chief Executive monitors all complaints and reports on these in the quarterly and annual reports for Board of Trustees.

If Agency is not minded to recommend approval or continued approval, the prospective adopter/s may choose to access the IRM (Independent Review Mechanism) who offer an Independent Review of Determinations.

Aggregate data on adoption activity is collated on a quarterly basis for the National Adoption Service and comparators made on performance with partners in the statutory and voluntary sector. This data is also reviewed for pattern and trends for management and Trustee meetings, as well as annual Panel reports, to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to meet projected demand.

COMPLIMENTS

We celebrate our successes and when we receive compliments about our staff or the service we are providing this is shared with the respective team member. They are also recorded on quarterly board reports and within the performance reports and quality of care reports to assimilate best practice into continuous learning.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTING PEOPLE USING THE SERVICE, STAFF AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

St David's Adoption Service is committed to promoting an open, inclusive and welcoming culture. We seek feedback from service-users and staff in order to inform future service provision and to assess the efficiency and quality of its service provision.



We seek service users' views throughout the adoption process. Information is used to inform the future planning and development of the Society's Adoption and Adoption Support Services, for management and Board reports and for dissemination through the Society's Evaluation and Monitoring Programme.

Feedback from training events informs training needs analysis for adoptive applicants and adopters.

Prospective and approved adopters are asked their views and opinions via a variety of mechanisms including questionnaire and Survey Monkey at the point of-

- After the pre-approval preparation training and at all training events
- As part of end of Stage One Review
- After attending the adoption panel
- At annual reviews in the event of a match not being identified in that timeframe
- At the second review after the child is placed
- After an adoption order is granted
- Via support groups

The Responsible Individual also consults with adopters as part of quarterly visits to the service under the Regulations and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act, known as RISCA. This consultation is used to analyse any specific trends in respect of what the organisation is doing well and what areas it needs to improve on. Action plans are monitored through Quality of Care reports, which come under Reg 49 of RISCA.

The experiences of adopters who are accessing the Adopting Together Service are being captured through feedback forms and in addition to this the Service is using the Warwick Edinburgh Wellbeing scale to measure the impact of interventions on parental efficiency and general wellbeing.

Adopted Adults and other persons receiving an Access to Records and/or Intermediary service are consulted at the conclusion of their involvement with the service.

Every effort is made to seek the views of children placed for adoption through the Society and their views recorded to inform future adoption service planning.



Post-adoption groups for children of various age ranges (including Christmas and Summer events) have usefully informed the development of the Service's Adoption Support Services for Children. The voice of the child is also sought through the consultation questionnaires sent to IRO's at the time of the child's second review.

Systems have been developed to consult with other stakeholders including health, education and childcare social workers at the point of the child's second review. Questions asked have comparators to those asked of IRO's and include whether they feel that children and adopters have been heard and had the opportunity to proactively contribute to their lives and whether children have been supported to maintain their overall wellbeing and continuous development.



Panel Members' views are sought on an annual basis through their individual panel appraisals and from the annual Business meeting, and their evaluations are used to inform the continuing development of the Panel process. The Panel Chair is consulted every 3 months through a quarterly business meeting with the Agency Panel Advisor and Agency Decision Maker.

Service-users are represented on both the Board of Trustees and the Adoption Panel. With St David's Business Plan there are clear objectives to work within a model of co-production that will facilitate service users actively participating in the future design and delivery of the service.

Team members are consulted at each supervision session, in team meetings, at in-house and commissioned training events, in group supervisions and in yearly appraisals. They are also consulted via Survey Monkey every quarter to inform the Responsible Individual Reg 42 visit. Any patterns and trends are analysed in respect of service improvement. They are also consulted during Team Development Day events. Analysis arising from this consultation informs agency processes and practice and service design.





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