

One Adoption West Yorkshire



Voice and Influence of Adopters, Children & Young People report card April 2021 to March 2022

Outcome: Children and adoptive families to have an influence over decisions affecting their families' lives and the services we provide.



Best ideas - what has worked?

Annual Adopter Survey

The One Adoption West Yorkshire 2021 adopter survey was emailed to adopters in October and completed by 108 adopters.

When asked 'What do you think we do well? The themes from the comments were:

- Support: education, groups, events, resources & training
- Social workers – genuine, understanding, helpful.

When asked 'What do you think we could improve on? The themes from the comments were:

- Support and timeliness of it.
- Communication – speed and what's available.
- Staff – consistency, retention and more of.
- Support for older children.

Here are some of the positive comments received:

"Best social workers ever"

"TM our social worker has been more than brilliant at supporting us.

Without her I really think our daughter may not have remained with us."

"Our adoption support team is brilliant, but under-resourced. They go above and beyond in terms of supporting us and our adoptive family."

"We've been impressed with the support at a very stressful time.

Really quickly managed to get help and support in place. Very much appreciate having N in our lives."



National profiling event

One Adoption West Yorkshire facilitated a national virtual profiling event in September. Regional adoption agencies from across England joined to profile children of Black African/Caribbean heritage and mixed Black African/Caribbean heritage who they were actively family finding for. The event was an opportunity for approved adopters to view information about a range of children across the country waiting for adoption. Profiles were created by Family Finding social workers via pre-recorded videos which were available to be viewed over one weekend, hosted on the One Adoption website.

Prospective adopters were able to submit questions about the children or expressions of interest after they had watched the presentations in their own time. 56 adopters registered to attend represented by 35 different adoption agencies.

19 children were profiled including 4 sibling groups of 2. We received 13 expressions of interest with 2 links being explored.

Here are some comments from those who attended:

"We thought it was an excellent event and find it a lot more personal than link maker."

"We really appreciated hearing from the children's social workers directly and getting a clearer picture of each child."

"We did like hearing from the foster carer and seeing a few extra photos and videos."



Local profiling events

One Adoption West Yorkshire held six profiling events in 2021/22 with one of the events being sibling specific. Across all the events:

- 99 profiles were presented (70 part of a sibling group and 29 individual).
- 109 expressions of interest received.
- There have been 3 linking meetings for sibling groups of 2.
- 2 sets of siblings (2x groups of 2) have been matched and now placed for adoption.
- 694 families registered for these events. 54 have been OAWY families and the rest external.

Here are some comments from those who attended the events:

"The accessibility of this event, being able to hear information and revisit at your own pace was a huge positive."

"It was very helpful to have more information about children compared to their Link Maker profile, without having to travel."

"It's great that I can attend at any time over the weekend so I can fit it into my schedule and look at the profiles at my leisure."

"Fantastic really. We appreciate the effort everyone put into this so much!"

"This was our first online event for family finding and found this to be a positive experience."

"The event was well run and organised."



TRECS Support Group

TRECS group - the trans-racial, trans-cultural, trans-ethnic adoption support group was formed in January and is for parents who have adopted children from a different race, ethnicity and/ or culture to their own.

The group meet monthly to discuss the importance of racial and cultural identity for adopted children, with sessions supported by OAWY social work staff.

The group meet online but plan to hold some sessions face to face when people feel safe to do so. OAWY offer the group to OASY and OANH and we have had adopters from Sheffield also attending. There is no formal feedback mechanism in place yet, but one parent emailed to say:

"Sincere thanks for all you're doing it's a really fantastic group."



Partnership with Adoption UK

Adoption UK have supported many families in One Adoption West Yorkshire through the mentoring service they run, and have also helped support families around transitions in education. Adoption UK will be continuing to provide these services for any families in West Yorkshire in the future.



Partnership with PAC-UK

ADOPTTEENS
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Adopteens 'Voices of Adopted Teens' film was released publicly just before Christmas and has received positive feedback on social media. It is available to watch on the [PAC-UK YouTube channel here](#).

Filling the Gap 18 - 25 Therapeutic Group

This 1-year pilot group started in September and runs monthly at the PAC-UK Leeds office. The group consists of a diverse group of young, adopted adults from the region.

The themes have varied while the group has been running but has highlighted consistently the need for such groups to bring young adults together at a time in their lives where support is probably at its most crucial.

Themes that have emerged as part of the group include:

- Access to records.
- Contact arrangements (support pre 18 and what happens post 18).
- Age of adopters and impact this has on their growing children.
- Experience of therapy.
- Life story work.
- Varying experience of social workers/social work support.

Feedback from participants has been excellent:

"Really helpful to be able to discuss with adopted young people."

"Having the young adults there giving their real-life experiences added so much more to the workshop".

"The focus on the lived experience of adoption was great and thought provoking."

"The Adopted for Life workshop was excellent; it was so powerful to hear the adopted adults speak and hear their experiences of accessing adoption support. Lots of thinking to do about how we can better meet the needs of our young people - thank you."

"The workshops were amazing, particularly the adopted for life with the Adopteens - really powerful."



Best ideas - what's next?

Fun Days

Fun days will be relaunched during 2022/23. The first of which will be a regional Fun Day, led by OAWY held in May. Children and families from North, South and est Yorkshire will be in attendance.



Increase adopter engagement

In 2022/23 we will be looking to increase adopter engagement with our core offer of support services at the point of enquiry.

Improving help and support for teenagers and young adults who are moving towards independence.

We will be producing a clear core offer for the website for 18+ year olds and collaborating with LAs for pathways to services for those not able to live with their families.



Letter swap – contact pilot

Link maker have developed a new system, Letter swap, that supports a broader and more flexible range of contact between adoptive and birth families. One Adoption West Yorkshire will be piloting this new system for nine months with 10 families.

Improve participation and voice and influence in service development and delivery

We will:

- Review the surveys we send to prospective adopters.
- Review the voice of the child and birth family in life appreciation days.
- Review the feedback mechanism following work with children.
- Implement an interactive audit tool.
- Develop systems for communicating with birth family members and share their feedback.

Involving adoptive parents

As part of OAWYs review of EPP we will be involving adoptive parents by linking with Adoption UK.



Voice and influence of the child

To enhance the voice and influence of the child we will be exploring ways for them to 'inspect' and feedback on our service.

Rebuild group provision

We will be focusing on rebuilding the group provision for teens and tweens that was ceased during the pandemic. In addition to the existing Bradford group, we are looking to set up groups covering Calderdale/ Kirklees and Leeds/ Wakefield.

Adopteens

Activity days – Adopteens have the following activity days planned for the West in 2022:

- Zoom cheesecake making.
- Wreath making workshop.



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