

One Adoption West Yorkshire



**Voice and Influence of Adopters,
Children & Young People Report Card-
April 2022 to March 2023**

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



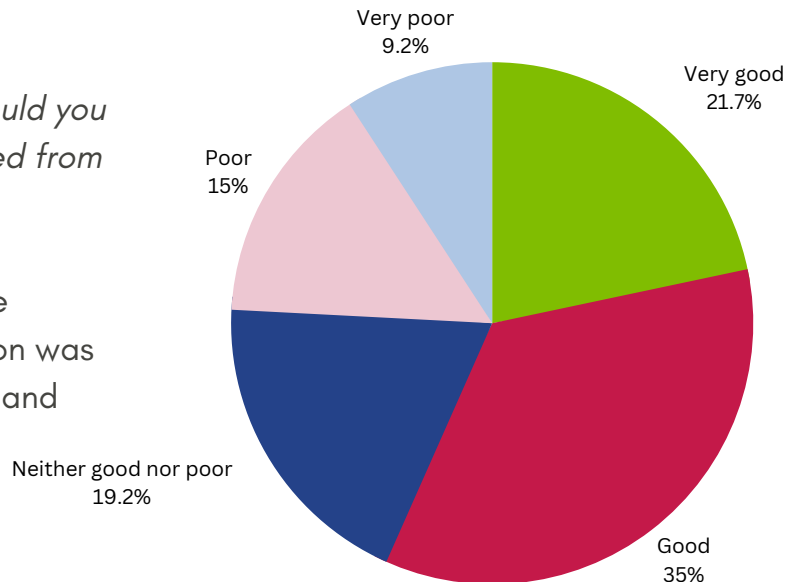
Best ideas - what has worked?

Annual Adopter Survey

The One Adoption West Yorkshire 2022 adopter survey was completed by 129 adopters in September.

In response to the question:
"Over the last 12 months how would you rate the service you have received from OAWY?" The results were...

The main positive theme from the comments relating to this question was staff - being reliable, supportive and helpful.



Here are some of the comments:

"Our adoption social worker is kind and warm. My daughter was happy to meet with her and was set at ease. I've found her to be helpful and communicative."

"Very pleased with the proactive nature of K with my post adoptive support assessment."

"Social workers are second to none and very helpful. They go above and beyond."

The main constructive theme from the comments relating to this question was support (availability and time to access).

Here are some of the comments:

"Took a while after contacting the duty social worker for help to get allocated, but very quick after that."

"A long wait to receive post adoption support..."

"Very long wait to be allocated a social worker. Much longer than timescale given."

Early Advice and Support Team

Since the 2022 survey OAWY has introduced the Early Advice and Support team (EAS) to help improve people's experience when accessing support. The EAS provide an initial response to callers from the first call they make. This team has been in place since January, has a dedicated Team Manager and four experienced adoption support workers.

Initial feedback from families and third parties has been positive:

"Thank you again so much for all your help, this is really going to make a difference for all of us, we can't wait to get started."

"Thank you so much for emailing me support and I have logged into website. I really feel like we have so much support as a family now."

"Lovely to talk it all through, thank you for being a sounding board, it has been really helpful."

Q's mum ended the call by saying that this is the first time she has spoken to somebody, and it has been constructive, and she now feels that there is a way forward.

H thanked me for giving her the time to talk and for providing her with new resources she had not known about.

Adoptive mum F said my call had been so helpful and she wished I could be available all the time as I had understood her daughter's difficulties so well.

"Can I just say a big thank you for your help today it means so much and hopefully we can help J move forward as he reaches adulthood."



Fun Days

Following the success of the regional OAWY fun day held in May, two further events were held in October and March.

Prospective adopters were able to submit questions about the children or expressions of interest after they had watched the presentations in their own time. Across both events 65 adoptive households registered to attend, represented by 11 different adoption agencies.

49 children were profiled (20 single children, 10 sibling groups of 2 and 3 sibling groups of 3). We received 26 expressions resulting in 2 matches.

Here are some comments from those who attended:

"The people running the event were lovely and did an amazing job."

"It was well organised and relaxed. There was a good ratio between adoptees and adopters."

"Generally, the event was well organised, positive and clearly brilliant for the children."

"It was our first experience of a day like this. We were very impressed."

These fun days have been funded by the national adoption team.

Due to their success two more will be held in 2023, July and November.



Letter Swap - Contact Pilot

Link Maker developed a new system called Letter Swap which supports a broader and more flexible range of contact between adoptive and birth families. OAWY started the Letter Swap pilot in August 2022 and it will run until the end of October 2023. There are now five birth and five adoptive families making use of the system. Typically, families will exchange messages at set time periods. However, one family has decided to remove all restrictions and communicate freely by message and pictures. Formal feedback will be captured and reviewed when the pilot ends.

Outdoor meet-ups for families

OAWY introduced 'Welly Walks' in Wakefield and 'Walk in the Woods' in Birstall following requests from families for in-person family events to be reinstated following COVID.

The Huddersfield and Wakefield teams organise the walks every half term at Oakwell Hall in Birstall and in different parks/ outside spaces across Wakefield. Plans are in place to start regular walks at venues in Bradford and Leeds in 2023.

The outdoor meet-ups provide an opportunity for families to come together and walk and have access to their local adoption support team workers.

The walks usually have around 10 or more families who attend.

Families have fed back that:

- They like meeting other adoptive families (especially those who had children placed during the pandemic),
- Their children enjoy playing with others and making new friends
- It's a good opportunity to get advice from adoption support workers



The walks are also used to promote the core offer and as such some families have started attending support groups off the back of this.

Tweens Groups

The Tweens Groups for Leeds and Wakefield was launched September 2022 and ran until April 2023. Four tweens attended and the team in the process of gathering feedback from them and workers.

The main theme picked up from the Tweens was that they didn't want it to stop! So, a venue for the second group is being sought with a view to start in September 2023.

The Bradford area already has an established Tweens group and a Teens group.

Adoption Panel

Based upon feedback from the panel survey the biggest change made this year is that panel members to move into the waiting room when the adopters first join so that only Panel Chair and Advisor are there initially, and they can introduce themselves and explain how everything works.

There is also a lot of work going into making panels more diverse.



Adopteens update

'Adopt a Change' - Training the professionals

The logo for Adopteens, formerly known as AT-ID, is displayed in a stylized, bold font. The word 'ADOPTTEENS' is in a larger, more prominent font, with 'FORMERLY KNOWN AS AT-ID' written in a smaller font below it. The text is white with a blue outline, set against a solid orange background.

On 13 February 2023, over 60 professionals travelled from as far as Brighton and Wales to attend the Adopteens 'Adopt a Change' Training held in York. A wide range of professionals attended, including social workers from different teams; family finding, post adoption, fostering, as well as mental health professionals and therapists.

The training, designed and delivered by young people, consists of six workshops across the day around school life, identity, relationship building, and a Q&A session all run by members. The Adopteens coordinators are very proud of the young people, and have taken away what went amazingly and what improvements can be made. This was the first full day session which has been run and to say it was amazing is an understatement. The young people and coordinators look forward to continuing working on the training and are excited about what the future holds.

70% of the people who gave feedback worked directly with young, adopted people and 90% of those people said they had learnt something from the training.

90% of those people also said that thought it would directly impact their practice!

Here are some quotes of how people attending the training will use what they have learnt in their work with young people.:

'I will definitely refer to the Identity questions when doing life story work with YP.'

'Already have plans to use the mood boards to get to know young people better.'

'Yes, we are already discussing how we can include what we learnt within our children's groups we offer for young, adopted people'

'Yes, I will use the school bell idea in my next training and in school meetings.'

'Yes - the questions about identity really stuck with me. I also think the handouts for school are really helpful.'

When asked what people learnt from the training, these are some of the comments received:

'I learned that not every professional, i.e. teachers, lecturers etc., know much about adoption and fail to support young, adopted people in school and college. I also learned that young, adopted adults find strength in each other and probably discuss their problems with other adopted people more than with their parents or friends who are not adopted'

'That adoption is a constant - that it remains in the background - it may not be an active issue, but it often seems something with needs attention - that this changes throughout a person's life'

'Each of the exercises we did, provided opportunity to learn and understand different perspectives and ideas. I wasn't aware of Adopteens before the training and have found the flyers and handouts very useful and informative. I really liked the identity questions, gave much food for thought when talking with birth parents/families, foster carers and children's social workers, and what we need to know to be able to share with children and young people.'

Online surveys reviewed

To encourage more feedback from those OAWY work with, the agency has simplified all online surveys by reducing the number of questions asked. It has also made sure there are surveys in place for all the training and events offered.



Best ideas - what's next?

Arc Box - Contact Pilot

Arc Box is a contact system that OAWY will be trialling from July 2023 for a period of six months with around five families.



Interactive Audits

Interactive Learning Audits (ILA) will be introduced in 2023/24 following a successful pilot the previous year. ILAs involve a OAWY manager having a conversation with those who have been involved in the adoption process, including the children when appropriate. The ILAs will ensure the voice of those the agency works with is captured, enabling actions to be planned based upon their responses.

Supporting Connections

Following research with young adoptees and feedback from adopted adults OAWY has created a supporting connections strategy which is being implemented in 2023/24. The strategy covers a number of elements relating to contact and identity, including a support offer for those aged 18+ years.



Adoptees film

Adoptees are looking to create a film with young people about education experiences with the aim of looking at how education can better understand and meet need.

Complaints

In 2022/23 OAWY received 12 complaints. All complaints OAWY receive are responded to, investigated and where suitable, lessons learnt are implemented.

Complaint type	No.
Breakdown in adoption process	3
Access to personal information	1
Post adoption support	3
Staff attitude	1
Request new social worker	1
Contact not adhered to or disputed arrangements	3

