adoption matters
NORTHWEST

achievement report 2009/10

"To belong in this world
I need the love
of family and friends"

Nathan Bailey
Poetry Competition 2010
Cheshire Under 16s Winner

Ofsted
Outstanding
2007|2008

“In September 2010 I began my 25th year with the organisation. Much has changed in the field of adoption over that time but two things have remained unchanged.

571 enquiries about adoption were dealt with

These are the commitment and resolve of the adoptive parents who offer themselves for the many children we are asked to place, and the conscientiousness, loyalty and professionalism of our staff.

As I write, we have just received confirmation that we have retained our Outstanding status from OFSTED for another three years. We are one of only 18 outstanding adoption agency providers in the country - 13 local authorities and five VAAs. We are only the second agency to retain the award since it was introduced.

We have continued to be at the forefront of efforts to improve services for children through adoption and to look for ways in which we can reduce delay for children, both at a practical level by finding the right families to meet the needs of the children waiting, and by addressing the policy issues that influence this.

It has been a privilege to serve as a member of the Government’s Advisory Group on Adoption and also to promote the benefits of adoption nationally and locally through the media coverage we have achieved.

In the past few months, three of our longest serving members of staff have retired. I would like to pay tribute to Carole Darlington, Elizabeth Dolby and Elisabeth Lane for their significant contribution to the agency - cumulatively they have nearly 70 years of service. Thank you.

We are encouraged by new growth in staff and projects. The development of our Parenting Transitions Programme and our Assessment, Therapy and Counselling Service demonstrates our continued commitment to Adoption Support Services which is not always given the resources and significance it deserves.

We continue to operate in a very difficult financial climate. This is unlikely to change in the immediate future. We are even more grateful to those who continue to support our work financially - individuals, trusts, companies and local authorities.

Please continue to support our work – I hope this Achievement Report inspires you to do so. ”

Norman G Goodwin CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Team Adoption Matters Northwest 2009/2010

Presidents
The Right Reverend Dr Peter Forster, Bishop of Chester

The Right Reverend Nicholas Reade, Bishop of Blackburn

Company Secretary
Anne Gregory

Chief Executive
Norman G Goodwin

Board of Trustees
Professor David Cracknell (Chair)
Canon Daphne Durham
The Venerable Richard Gillings
Anne Gregory
Marjarie Hearton (from 22.03.2010)
Carolyn Johnson
Joe McArdle
Keith Merrett
Alan Park
Alan Rowntree MBE
Canon Christopher Samuels
Irene Walton
Sheila Whipp (Vice-Chair)
Frances Young

Social Work Team
Janet Barden (Team Manager)
Maureen Cotter
Patricia Dalton
Carole Darlington
Ann Davison (Team Manager)
Elizabeth Dolby
Karen Ferguson
Hazel Field
Sally Frances
Nicholas Gore
Gwen Laird (Team Manager)
Elisabeth Lane
Linda Mullineaux
Vivienne Nicholls
Kath Parker
Amreen Riaz
Claire Roscoe
Ronnie Sumner

“The election in 2010 of a new Government created an opportunity to re-think the way in which the needs of our most vulnerable children and families are met.

During this period, we made significant contributions to raising public awareness. We have kept a high profile in Government and the media, especially through the active involvement of our Chief Executive. Our excellent staff and trustees have continued to provide the critical energy and direction that make us an ‘outstanding’ organisation.

The pendulum of national policy seems at last to be moving back towards adoption and fuller partnership with the voluntary sector but the practice of local authorities has been slow to catch up.

Uncertainty and major cuts in local government spending have undoubtedly hindered the opening of new opportunities for adoption.

However, there is still a deep-seated reluctance in some local authorities to engage seriously with voluntary organisations, in spite of clear research evidence that agencies like our own provide very professional services which are high quality, cost effective and locally engaged.

The most serious result of this blinkered perspective is that there are still far too many children and their potential families whose future is unnecessarily held in suspension and in some cases permanently blighted.

It also puts at risk the future of voluntary adoption agencies, a number of which have already had to close. Fair access and fair funding is vital.

During the last year we scrutinised our finances and operations to try and stay within our budget and still provide the best services possible. In spite of this, and some positive news about our pension arrangements, we completed another year when we had to operate at a deficit.

We have explored alternative service developments and will continue to do so but our core focus must be on what we do best and for which we were established. Do help support the cause in any way you can! ”

Professor David Cracknell CHAIRMAN

Business Administration Team

Cora Birchall
Sally Broadhurst (Admin Team Leader)
Loraine Exton
Valerie Johnson (Business & HR Manager)
Emma Pay
Julie Walker
Janet Ward (PA to Chief Executive)
Susan White (Finance Manager)
Amy Wilson
Gillian Young (Marketing & Communications Officer)

Registered Office

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Chester,
Cheshire CH2 1AE

Company Registered Number 1617324

Charity Registration Number 512892

Bankers

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PO Box 289,
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Kent ME19 4TA

Lloyds TSB Bank PLC,
8 Foregate Street,
Chester,
Cheshire CH1 1XP

Auditors

UHY Hacker Young,
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors,
St John’s Chambers,
Love Street, Chester,
Cheshire CH1 1QN

Solicitors

Helen Broughton
Morecrofts LLP
No.1 Tithebarn
1-5 Tithebarn Street
Liverpool L2 2NZ

Professionals present budding poets with prestigious prize

Adoption Matters Northwest unveiled the winners of its 2010 poetry competition at a VIP awards afternoon held at the prestigious Gorton Monastery, Manchester.

The awards were hosted by the longest standing Cheshire Poet Laureate, W.Terry Fox and were attended by many supporters of the charity including the Deputy Lord Mayor of Manchester, Councillor Harry Lyons.

Finalists from across Greater Manchester, Cheshire and North East Wales, Merseyside and Lancashire enjoyed a fantastic afternoon of poetry and acoustic music.

Entries were judged by a panel of professional poets from across the region including copland smith, Jim Bennett, Gill McEvoy, John Lindley, Joy Winkler, Sarah Hymas, Elizabeth Burns, Carol Fenlon and W. Terry Fox.

Neil Clarkson clinched the prize for the Manchester category with his poem, 'Open the Door', which impressed the panel with his interpretation of this year's theme of 'Belonging'.

AMNW Chief Executive Norman Goodwin commented: "We hoped this competition would encourage more people to think about the issues around adoption.

"This year we received over 200 entries to the competition and were delighted to receive the support of Cherie Blair and Edward Timpson MP for the campaign."

He added: "Our special thanks to Gorton Monastery which provided such a wonderful venue for the event, W. Terry Fox for hosting the event and to the panel of judges who made the difficult decision of choosing the winners."

All winning poems are published on the Adoption Matters Northwest website at www.adoptionmattersnw.org.

From the Lancashire entrants, Kate Horsley was named as the winner with her touching poem, 'Rules for looking after Ian'.

Cheshire winners included Emily Packer, who was named the winner of the Over 16s category with her poem 'Fruit Arranging' while Nathan Bailey was crowned winner of the Cheshire Under 16s with his poem 'Belonging'.

Merseyside winners included Bill Dawson, who was named as the winner of the Over 16s competition with his touching poem, 'My Nan', and Catherine Entwistle of Pensby High School for Girls was named as the under 16s winner with her poem 'Homes'.

248
Post adoption enquiries were received

27
applications were taken forward

Kate Horsley
Lancashire Over 16s winner

Rules for looking after Ian

You come with a numbered list
Tucked between a mango
And a toy car in the carrier.

I babble, though I know we
Don't speak a common word.
You're calm. Or maybe bored.

Your rules don't say, advising
Me to water you often,
Feed you, brush your hair

(it flocks like a whorl of black
birds swooping to peck the dark
field of your tender skin).

It would be easy to spoil you,
Disappoint you, lose you,
The instructions don't say

How to keep you safe, or sing
To you at night or how to feel
When, on the journey home

Your head nods on your chest
Each time the bus stops and your
Small hand dreamingly grasps mine.

642
children were referred to the agency

Bill Dawson
Merseyside Over 16s Winner

My Nan

My Nan had brandy in her tea
As she cuddled me upon her knee
She smelled of violets
And candy floss
Always smiling
Never cross

Safe
Protected
Loved

That's how I remember my Nan
Upon her knee
With brandy in her tea

Nathan Bailey
Cheshire Under 16s Winner

Belonging

To belong on this earth,
I need smiles and laughter,
Not insults in my face,

To belong on the earth,
I like high fives from friends,
Not people spitting at my feet,

To belong on the earth,
I want hugs from family,
Not punches from bullies,

To belong in this world,
I need the love of family and friends,
If I don't, then I certainly don't belong.

A new-look website

Adoption Matters Northwest unveiled its new look website in time for National Adoption Week to provide the latest information and support for potential adopters, staff and supporters.

The revitalised site clearly signposts those who may be considering or currently going through adoption to a range of adoption services, useful links and frequently asked questions.

The website includes information on the adoption process and the children who are waiting for adoption, and provides a helpful resource for those who need to know more.

Adoption Matters Northwest now offers a range of information on post-adoption support and information services for birth parents. This section of the website provides advice for the difficult process of tracing birth families.

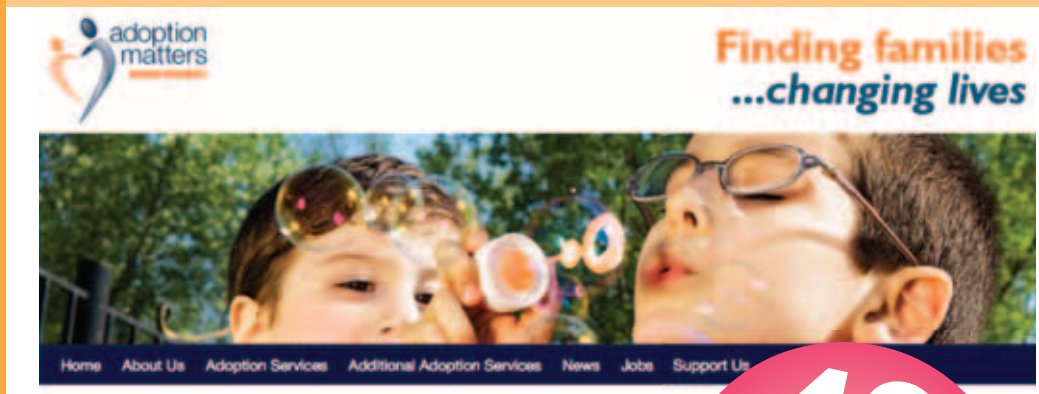
The website will keep visitors updated with all the latest news from AMNW HQ including information on events and activities.

The latest addition to the website is the remarkable online diary of a current adopter, documenting his journey from prospective adopter to new dad.

"We aim to be the number one online resource for potential adopters while providing up to date information for anyone involved in the adoption process," said Marketing and Communications Officer, Gillian Young.

95 children in placement receiving ongoing support

www.adoptionmattersnw.org



You can also follow us on twitter and facebook

43 children were placed from **22** local authorities

'Outstanding' approval from Ofsted

Ofsted inspectors have once again judged Adoption Matters Northwest 'outstanding' in every area of its work in its report of 2010/2011.

The Inspectors praised the agency for its hard-working and professional approach to the recruitment and assessment of prospective adopters.

Employees were acknowledged as having in-depth knowledge and vast experience, helping them to deal with a variety of issues for those affected by adoption.

Norman Goodwin said: "To be named once more as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted is a huge achievement by the whole team. Our work is so much more than a 'job', we touch people's lives every day and hope to offer a service that is both sensitive yet professional."

Norman added: "We hold a great deal of admiration and respect for the families we deal with daily, whether they are at the start of their journey or adopters already with children in placement, and this accolade shows that our achievements have been recognised."

Thank you!

The Adoption Matters Northwest team would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who have offered support for our work over the past year.

Special thanks to three adoption practitioners who retired this year and have made a huge impact on many lives over the cumulative 70 years they worked at the agency. Thank you Elizabeth Dolby, Elisabeth Lane, and Carole Darlington (pictured left to right).

We are unable to name everyone who has given their very gracious support but some of the many people who have helped our work in placing so many children across the Northwest during 2009/2010 include: trustees, adoption panel members, parishes, fundraisers, W. Terry Fox, copland smith, Joy Winkler, Sarah Hymas, Elizabeth Burns, Jim Bennett, Carol Fenlon, John Lindley, Gill McEvoy, Mark Woodger, Elaine Griffiths MBE, Stewart Darkin, Nick Lapham, Alan Carter, Trish Holland and Dickon White.

Heartache and hopes, the online adoption journey

Adoption Matters Northwest has launched an online diary to help inform couples considering adoption.

The latest initiative from Adoption Matters Northwest sees prospective couple David and Lisa Chandler embark on their adoption journey documented through an online column.

The Chandlers agreed to share the heartache and highs with Adoption Matters Northwest as they progress on their journey to becoming adoptive parents.

The column provides prospective adopters with a compelling 'warts and all' account to hopefully help dispel some of the myths surrounding adoption.

David and Lisa had never considered adoption before but after the heartbreak of miscarriage they decided to look into the possibility.

The online diary documents the couple's trials through initial assessment and preparation groups with a social worker, through to the final stages of the process.

In the third instalment of the couple's diary, David describes the process of attending a preparation group.

"From the very first meeting with a social worker, the prospect of getting involved with 'groups' filled us with dread. For so long, our grief had been very private; something we had worked through away from the glare and expectation of others.

"To meet prospective adopters and hear from those who'd been through the same process and come out the other side – and to see ourselves in them – was to be a turning point in our story."

The final instalment of the couple's column will follow the couple as they meet prospective children for adoption and hopefully see the couple's journey reach a happy end.

Adoption Matters Northwest needs YOU!

Against a national background of cutbacks and spending constraints, it has never been more important for Adoption Matters Northwest to have public support for its work.

There are many ways to help support the charity. Whether it's fundraising, volunteering, making a cash donation or allowing us to visit your place of work to share information – your help is vital to the charity's success.

Adoption Matters Northwest would like to thank all those who have assisted over the past year from numerous individuals to some key large corporations and made a real impact in helping to secure homes for 43 children during 2009/2010.

40
Adoption Orders were granted

For more details on how you can make a difference, please contact the Adoption Matters Northwest, team:

Chester Office: 01244 390938

Blackburn Office: 01254 504740

Hale Office: 0161 941 7732

E-mail: fundraising@adoptionmattersnw.org

www.adoptionmattersnw.org

The BBC, Cherie Blair and more!

2011 started with a bang for Adoption Matters Northwest as it achieved primetime BBC TV coverage on topical BBC1 debate show, The Big Questions. Norman Goodwin appeared as a front row audience member on the show alongside high profile guests including MP Esther McVey and the Rt Rev Stephen Lowe, former Bishop of Hulme.

The live show, broadcast in January, focused on a number of topical issues including the controversial question of surrogacy. The show saw presenter Nicky Campbell, who is also adopted, discuss with Norman alternative routes to entering parenthood, including adoption.

This piece of coverage is the latest in a long line of media activity over the past 12 months including Norman's appearance on The Politics Show, trade articles including Third Sector magazine (the UK's biggest charity title) and key regional papers including the Lancashire Evening Post, Liverpool Echo and Chester Chronicle.

The agency also garnered support from key media figures during 2010 for its work including Cherie Blair, hairdresser Andrew Barton and MP Edward Timpson which has helped to generate further media interest.

Balance Sheet 31 March 2010 - Adoption Matters Northwest

	2010 £	2010 £	2009 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets		169,741	180,921
Investments		450,234	550,234
		619,975	731,155
Current assets			
Debtors	257,943		182,300
Cash at bank	262,579		293,006
	520,522		475,306
Creditors:			
Amounts falling due within one year	(98,776)		(90,576)
Net current assets		421,746	384,730
Total assets before pension deficit		1,041,721	1,115,885
Pension scheme net liability		(1,901,000)	(743,000)
Net assets		(859,279)	372,885
Funds			
Restricted		484,539	420,400
Less: pension reserve (deficit)		(285,150)	(111,450)
		199,389	308,950
Unrestricted			
Designated Funds	201,705		251,212
General Fund	355,477		444,273
Less: pension reserve (deficit)	(1,615,850)		(631,550)
		(1,058,668)	63,935
Total funds		(859,279)	372,885

These accounts are a summary of the information extracted from the annual accounts which were approved by the members of the Board on 26 November 2010 and are signed on their behalf by:

Professor David Cracknell
CHAIR

Mrs Sheila Whipp
VICE-CHAIR

Independent Auditors' statement

To the members, Adoption Matters Northwest.

We have examined the summarised accounts set out on these pages. You are responsible as Board members for the preparation of the summarised accounts. We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the summarised accounts' consistency with the full accounts on which we reported to you on 24 December 2010.

We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised accounts are consistent with the full accounts from which they have been prepared.

In our opinion, the summarised accounts are consistent with the full accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010.

UHY Hacker Young, Registered Auditors,
Chartered Accountants,
St John's Chambers, Love Street, Chester CH1 1QN

Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Financial Activities

Year ended 31 March 2010 - Adoption Matters Northwest

	Total Funds 2010 £	Total Funds 2009 £
Incoming resources		
Donations and grants	48,963	44,431
Fundraising	2,494	2,572
Investment income	16,228	45,098
Service income	1,200,879	1,068,688
Total incoming resources	1,268,564	1.160,789
Resources expended		
Costs of generating voluntary income	18,466	19,794
Fundraising costs	3,120	3,427
Charitable activities	1,272,008	1,237,768
Governance costs	49,134	47,021
Total resources expended	1,342,728	1,308,010
Net (outgoing) incoming resources for the year	(74,164)	(147,221)
Other recognised gains and losses		
Pension scheme (loss) gain in year	(1,158,000)	(559,302)
Net movement in funds relating to the year	(1,232,164)	(706,523)

The summarised accounts on these pages are an abridged version of the full accounts of Adoption Matters Northwest which are filed with the Registrar of Companies and the Charities Commission.

The Auditors' Report on the full accounts was unqualified. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of the Charity. For further information, the full accounts, the Auditors' Report on those accounts and the Board of Trustees' Report should be consulted. Copies of these are available from Adoption Matters Northwest.

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