



This is the March/April 2025 edition of our regular SWAC newsletter. It is for anyone working in or with a SWAC agency, to keep you up to date with what's happening in adoption in the region and nationally. The SWAC agencies are Aspire Adoption, Adopt South West, Adoption West, PACT, CCS Adoption and Barnardo's.

Please feel free to pass it on to your colleagues!

SWAC Open Sessions

These are held monthly and are open to anyone, in any role, working in or with a SWAC agency, whether as a social worker, support worker, in an administrative capacity, as a panel chair or panel member – all are welcome! They are also open to social workers in the local authorities linked to the SWAC RAAs.

The Open Sessions are all held virtually via Teams. They take the form of a presentation by a speaker followed by questions and discussion so are suitable for social workers to record as CPD. There is no need to sign up in advance to them, just join us on the day. The Teams link is embedded in this newsletter, or you can email Heather or Becky for it.

We are now trying to record these sessions so do ask if you would like access to any of the recordings. We will only be recording the presentation, not the discussion which follows, so attendance in person is still always best.

The programme to the end of October 2025 is as follows:

On **4th March 2025**, from **9.30 am to 11.00 am**, **Vicky Swift** from Adoption England will lead a session on **the use of digital technology in maintaining relationships post-adoption**, including the evaluation of the Letter swap pilot.

[Click to Join - Use of digital technology in maintaining relationships post-adoption](#)

On **8th April 2025**, from **9.30 am to 11.00 am**, **Gillian Ruch** from the University of Sussex will talk to us about their **Talking and Listening Project and Kitbag**, resources to help social workers engage and communicate with children.



[Click to Join - Talking and Listening Project and Kitbag](#)

On **13th May 2025**, from **10.00 am to 11.30 am**, **Tam Cane**, Senior Lecturer in **Social Work and Social Care**, also from the **University of Sussex** will give us **An Introduction to the AFDiT**, the Anti-racist Framework for Decision making and Transitioning children from minoritised racial and ethnic groups into transracial adoptive families.

[Click to Join - Introduction to the AFDiT](#)

On **17th June**, from **9.30 am to 11.00 am**, **Ruth Copson** from the **University of East Anglia**, will lead a session on **Maintaining relationships in adoption: why is change needed and how can we achieve this?'**

[Click to Join - Maintaining relationships in adoption](#)

On **9th July 2025**, from **9.30 am to 11.00 am**, **Jane Poore**, a trainer consultant, and **Alexandra Conroy-Harris**, one of the legal consultants from **CoramBAAF**, will present a session on **Adoption with Consent**, often referred to as relinquished babies, looking at legislation, practice and recent case law.

[Click to Join - Adoption Consent](#)

On **14th August**, from **9.30 am to 11.00 am**, **Katy Burch** from **Oxford Brookes University** will share the **Adoption England Evaluation of Family Finding Events** and will lead a discussion on what works in family finding.

[Click to Join - Adoption England Evaluation of Family Finding Events](#)

On **9th September**, from **9.30 am to 11.00 am**, **Sarah Johal**, the **National Adoption Strategic Lead**, will tell us about what is happening nationally in adoption, sharing data and trends and talking about the work of Adoption England.

[Click to Join - National Adoption Strategic Lead](#)

On **7th October**, from **9.30 am to 11.00 am**, **Lynn Snow**, a paediatrician, a looked-after children's designated doctor, and a former adoption medical adviser, will share her knowledge of **Post Adoption Depression**.

[Click to Join - Post-Adoption Depression](#)

For more information about SWAC please email heather.freeman@ccsadoption.org or Becky Hosken at becky@ccsadoption.org



Let me know if there are any other topics that would be helpful to your practice, or if you know of anyone who would be able to run a session for us.

SWAC Best Practice Sessions

These are reflective sessions for those working in a specific area of adoption work, in whatever role, to meet with colleagues from across the region to share good practices and dilemmas. They are held via Teams every couple of months. These are open groups so you are welcome to come along to any which are relevant to your role whenever you can. There is no need to sign up for them or to book in advance.

We will, as usual, send the Teams links out for each meeting but they are also included below.

11th March 2025 9.30 am to 11.00 am - Panel administrators

[Click to Join - 11th March - Panel Admin](#)

18th March 2025 9.30 am to 11.00 am – Those supporting birth relatives

[Click to Join - 18th March - Supporting Birth Relatives](#)

20th March 2025 9.30 am to 11.00 am – Family finders for children and adopters

[Click to Join - 20th March - Family Finders for children and adopters](#)

21st March 2025 10.00 am to 12.00 noon – Panel chairs

[Click to Join - 21st March - Panel Chairs](#)

24th March 9.30 am to 11.00 am – Front door, marketing and recruitment and assessment workers

[Click to Join - 24th March - Recruitment & Assessment](#)

25th March 9.30 am to 11.00 am – Those working in adoption support

[Click to Join - 25th March - Adoption Support](#)

25th March 11.30 am to 1.00 pm – Those providing access to records

[Click to Join - 25th March - Access to Records](#)

16th April 9.30 am to 11.00 am – Panel advisers

[Click to Join - 16th April - Panel Advisers](#)

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12th May 2025 9.30 am to 11.00 am – Panel administrators

[Click to Join - 12th May - Panel Administrators](#)

12th May 11.30 am to 1.00 pm – Those supporting birth relatives

[Click to Join - 12th May - Those Supporting Birth Relatives](#)

14th May 9.30 am to 11.00 am – Family finders for children and adopters

[Click to Join - 14th May - Family Finders for Children and Adopters](#)

14th May 11.30 am to 1.00 pm – Front door, marketing and recruitment and assessment workers

[Click to Join - 14th May - Front door, marketing and recruitment and assessment workers](#)

15th May 9.30 am to 11.00 am – Those providing access to records

[Click to Join - 15th May - Those providing access to records](#)

19th May 9.30 am to 11.00 am – Those working in adoption support

[Click to Join - 19th May - Those working in adoption support](#)

SWAC Management Board Meetings

There are two SWAC Boards, the SWAC Governance Board and the SWAC Operational Management Board.

SWAC Governance Board

The strategic priorities and funding arrangements for SWAC are determined by the SWAC Governance Board. Board meetings are held every 3 months to include the SWAC Project Lead and the Heads of Service of the participating agencies.

The next meeting of the Governance Board will be held on **16th April from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm.**

SWAC Operational Management Board

Membership of the Operational Management Board is for each agency to decide, depending on the structure within their agency, but those attending are likely to be at the service manager or team manager level and should reflect that the work plan for

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the Operational Management Board will cover all aspects of adoption work. The first half of each meeting is for discussion of general adoption matters, relevant to all managers regardless of their role. The second half of the meeting will focus on a different area of practice on a rolling basis.

It is important for each agency to be represented on this Board. Those attending are the main link at an operational level between SWAC and their RAA or VAA, taking information about SWAC back into their agencies and helping to shape the SWAC offer.

The next SWAC Operational Management Board meeting will be held via Teams on **6th March 2025** from **12.00 noon to 2.00 pm**. The focus for the last hour of the meeting will be on adoption support.

SWAC Adoption Exchanges and Monthly Profiling Events

In the past, SWAC has held face-to-face Adoption Exchanges 3 times a year for social workers to profile children waiting to be matched and for prospective adopters and professionals to attend. However, the number of adopters waiting has been so low that these have all been held virtually over the last year. The distinction between the Adoption Exchanges and the monthly virtual profiling events featuring children waiting has become blurred as a result.

The decision has therefore been taken to open the monthly virtual profiling events up to any prospective adopters in stage 2 or approved, as well as adoption workers representing the adopters waiting in their agencies.

It will be for each agency to decide which of their families they would like to offer this opportunity to.

The dates for the profiling events for the coming months are as follows, most of which will be held on the first Monday of the month, apart from March and May.

This will be kept under review, and if the number of adopters waiting in the region increases, face-to-face Adoption Exchanges will again be held.

Wednesday 5th March 2025 – **please note the change of date**

Monday 7th April 2025

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Tuesday 6th May 2025

There will be no profiling event in June due to annual leave.

Monday 7th July 2025

Monday 4th August 2025

Monday 1st September 2025

Monday 6th October 2025

Monday 3rd November 2025

Monday 1st December 2025

If you would like one of your **families waiting** to attend, you will need to let Heather know by midday on the **Wednesday before the meeting**. A Teams invitation will either be sent to them directly if they are happy for their email address to be shared or to their worker to forward to them.

Similarly, you will need to let Heather know which **children** you want to profile, by midday on the **Wednesday before the meeting**. Just email with the name of your child or children, dates of birth, ethnicity, whether being placed with a sibling and if the child has any significant additional needs.

Those profiling children will be given time to attend and will have 10 minutes to talk about each child or sibling group. You can share photos and videos but above all, you need to know your little one. Anyone can read a Linkmaker profile, but what works best with these sessions is where the family finder tells us little stories and anecdotes about the child, their likes, and dislikes, to bring them alive.

The agenda is set and sent out on the **Thursday morning** before the meeting. It is important to let Heather know if you had a particular time you would like to attend, to be able to accommodate your request. If you are unable to attend for any reason, please let Heather know as soon as possible, to ensure that there is time to rearrange the agenda. **This is particularly important now that prospective**

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adopters are attending as they may be coming to hear more about a particular child.

Do remember that Heather and Becky are always very happy to circulate children and family profiles around SWAC, or to circulate requests for EP placements. Just email us!

Useful websites

CoramBAAF

Check out the CoramBAAF website for useful information and updates about adoption. They also run training events, some of which are free to those working for agencies who are members of CoramBAAF. Check out the website for the full list of events and courses which they are running in the next few months.

CoramBAAF Adoption Support Plan 2025

CoramBAAF has just published the new ASP (Adoption Support Plan) England (2025). The Adoption Support Plan and accompanying guidance build on work completed by Adoption England, incorporating feedback received through piloting of the form alongside five RAAs during 2024, consultations with Adoption UK, and relevant CoramBAAF forums. The new ASP should be used alongside the Adoption Placement Report (APR) England (2025), which has had minor amendments to reduce duplication.

Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies (CVAA)

CVAA is a network of 34 independent, not-for-profit organisations that provide adoption services across the UK, including Barnardo's, PACT and CCS Adoption. They have an excellent website and run practice workshops, seminars, training and conferences for their members and non-members. There is a cost to these sessions, but they have an excellent programme. Details of their training programme can be found [here](#).

Coming up, on **17th April**, from 10.00 am to 1.30 pm, is an online session on **The Principles of Best Practice in Preparing More Adopters for Brothers and Sisters**, co-delivered by Leigh Smith from Adoption Focus and Leonie Hegedus from Yorkshire Adoption Agency.

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On **29th April**, from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm, they are running an online session titled **Supporting the Traumatized Adopter: Primary Trauma from the Challenges of Parenting their Child.**

On **7th May**, from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm, they have a training session on **Using Mentalization to Support with Adoption Assessments.**

Lots more on the website so do have a look!

Adoption England

Adoption England is a collaboration of Regional Adoption Agencies working together, with a small central team, aiming to improve adoption practices and develop support and services to better meet the needs of children and families. It receives funding from the Department for Education and works in partnership with all agencies involved with adoption in England, including voluntary adoption agencies and local authorities, as well as specialised adoption charities and third-sector services.

There is lots to read on their website so do have a look. For example, check out the National Standards for the adopter journey, for matching and Early Permanence.

The links are below:

[National Adopter Journey Practice Standards](#)

[National Practice Standards for Matching](#)

[National Practice Standards for Early Permanence](#)

They have also recently published interim findings in an **Evaluation of Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to Adoption Support**. Multi-disciplinary approaches to adoption support and multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) have been developing within the context of regional adoption agencies (RAAs) over the last 8-9 years. 'Early adopter' MDTs are now becoming more embedded in One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) and Adoption Counts (AC) and 'second wave sites' are starting to be implemented in 7 other RAA or pan-regional sites in England this year. The evaluation, commissioned by Adoption England from the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University and the University of East Anglia, seeks to explore (2023-2025):

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- The feasibility of implementing multi-disciplinary approaches to adoption support – from the perspectives of both early adopters and second-wave sites
- The actual or potential benefits, including where possible costed benefits, of implementing multi-disciplinary approaches and teams.
- Which outcomes and outcome measures are important to use in this context.

Early (end of Year One) findings have been generated from a range of evaluation activities including theory of change (development) work and allied support for data capture and analysis involving all sites. More in-depth evidence has been generated from the early adopter sites via independently captured via qualitative interviews and a longitudinal survey.

You can read the Executive Summary [here](#).

Adoption England Culture Change Champion Relaunch

Adoption England is recruiting champions across the country to drive change in agency culture around maintaining relationships in adoption. Running since 2023, the project is now relaunching to reaffirm commitment from existing champions and to also welcome new ones.

If you are a professional involved in permanency decisions or work in adoption, this project will support you in making informed choices about helping children maintain connections with their birth family and significant others. Check out who the champions are in your agency and if you don't have one, talk to your line manager about volunteering to take on the role. Find out more [here](#).

SWAC website

We now have a SWAC section on the CCS Adoption website, where you can find details of forthcoming events and other useful information. Do check it out! You can access it by clicking [here](#).

Contact us!

SWAC is hosted by CCS Adoption and is run by a Project Lead, **Heather Freeman** who works 10 hours a week, assisted by **Becky Hosken**, who works for SWAC for 5 hours a week. Heather's email address is heather.freeman@ccsadoption.org
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We are happy to help with any queries you might have or to circulate requests for help or information around the other SWAC agencies or further afield.

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