



**adoption  
matters**

A proud history of children's futures

# ACHIEVEMENT REPORT

**1 APRIL 2024 - 31 MARCH 2025**

**[www.adoptionmatters.org](http://www.adoptionmatters.org)**

Registered Charity No. 512892

- 03** A WORD FROM THE CHAIR
- 04** FOREWARD FROM OUR CEO
- 05** OUR ACHIEVEMENTS - ADOPTION
- 08** OUR ACHIEVEMENTS - CENTRE FOR FOSTERING & ADOPTION SUPPORT AND THERAPY SERVICE
- 10** CHARITY AMBASSADORS
- 11** THE SOUND OF HOPE
- 12** LANCASHIRE LUNCH
- 14** CAMPAIGN & PR HIGHLIGHTS
- 15** A YEAR OF FOSTER CARE MATTERS
- 18** MEET SOME OF OUR AMAZING SUPPORTERS
- 24** JOIN OUR LOTTERY
- 25** IN MEMORIUM - DR SHIRLEY ANN LESLIE



**Did you know?**

Between 01 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, the average waiting time from approval to matching for all of our families was four months.

# A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR



Once again, Adoption Matters remains at the forefront of the adoption sector, continually striving to expand and enhance the support we provide. On pages 4-8, you'll find highlights of our achievements over the past twelve months - testament to the vital work we deliver for families, children, and adopted adults alike.

It was a true pleasure to help organise and attend our Lancashire Lunch, held in the stunning home and beautiful grounds of our Patron, Amanda Parker, the Lord-Lieutenant of Lancashire. We were thrilled to welcome 125 guests, raising essential funds and sharing more about our charity's mission. We were especially honoured to have Sir John Timpson, CBE, join us as our guest speaker, his heartfelt reflections on his own fostering and adoption journey left a lasting impression.

Our new charitable fostering service, Foster Care Matters, continues to grow from strength to strength. Later this year, we are proud to welcome our very first foster parents, and I look forward to watching this important service develop and thrive.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to our incredible staff, dedicated volunteers, and generous supporters. Your unwavering commitment ensures we remain focused on providing the highest level of support to children, families, and adopted adults.

After 35 fulfilling years as a Trustee, I have to step down from the Board as my 9 years as chair has concluded. I am looking forward to spending time with our 22 grandchildren and great grandson but will continue to support Adoption Matters as an enthusiastic Associate Member. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve on the Board and to be part of a charity that has played such a significant role in so many lives, including my own.

I am delighted to be passing the baton to Jamie Bennett, who will assume the role of Chairperson in the summer of 2025.

Jamie has been a valued and trusted member of our Board since 2019. As an adopted adult - placed with his family by Adoption Matters and later supported to reconnect with his birth family - Jamie brings deep insight, empathy, and a passionate voice for adoption support and adoptee advocacy.

**Though I'll miss my role deeply, I will continue to follow and support the work of the charity in the years to come.**

## CAROLYN JOHNSON CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES



# FORWARD FROM OUR CEO

It's been another busy and impactful year for Adoption Matters. As the number of children waiting for adoption and requiring foster care continues to rise, the importance of our work has never been more evident.

Despite the challenges facing the children's sector, the unwavering dedication of our staff, trustees, volunteers, supporters, and donors has ensured we remain a vital source of support for families across the UK.

This year, we were especially proud to welcome our first foster parents into the assessment process, and we're excited to hold our first fostering panel this summer.

While this report showcases some of our milestones and achievements, it can only offer a glimpse into the tireless efforts of our team—who, day in and day out, **place children at the heart of everything they do.**

I want to extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of them, our dedicated team, tireless trustees, generous supporters, and volunteers - who help make Adoption Matters the forward-thinking and impactful charity it is today.

Your belief in our mission, and the energy you bring to it, allow us to continue striving for innovation and excellence as we support children and families across the UK.

## SUSY WHITE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Registered Charity No. 512892

# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



We are incredibly proud of the continued dedication and hard work of our staff. Thanks to their unwavering commitment, we remain one of the largest independent adoption agencies in the UK - **welcoming 69 new families** and **placing 81 children for adoption** over the past year.

In addition, we placed a further **15 children in early permanence placements**, a service we are equally passionate about.

Right now, **more than 2,800 children are waiting for an adoptive family**, with numbers continuing to rise. This highlights the ongoing and urgent need for individuals, couples, and families to consider opening their hearts to adoption.

We remain deeply committed to helping children find safe, loving homes—and we thank everyone who joins us on that journey.





69

2024-25

Individuals, couples and families were welcomed and approved to adopt.

81

children were placed with our families.

15

children were placed with our families in Early Permanence placements.



**43%**

of the children we placed were part of a sibling group.

**2.6**

years old was the average age of child placed with our families.

Our Centre for Fostering and Adoption Support and Therapy Service saw another busy year.

With demand for their wide variety of services from families, our regional adoption agency and local authority colleagues and adopted adults, we are proud of the number of children and their families who were able to access support. Full statistics for the year are shown below.

We were delighted to bring back our choir this year thanks to funding - more on page 9.

The cuts to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Fund (ASGSF) imposed this year has posed challenges as this is a vital funding resource, providing essential therapeutic support through the Centre and our Therapy Service.

We are, however, **committed to continue to support our families, as we have done for the last 78 years.** Our fundraising team continue to work hard at raising vital funds to support our charity.

[www.adoptionmatters.org/cfas](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/cfas)



293

Therapy Service contracts delivered to families

344

People viewed our online training videos

155

People attended our webinars



169

Packages of support were delivered to families

144

Families accessed a consultation session with a Therapeutic Social Worker

82

Adopted Adults received an Access to Records service

Thanks to a successful grant of £500 from The Chester Bluecoat Charity, we were able to bring back our Centre for Fostering & Adoption Support **Children and Young People Choir** for 2024-25.

We were delighted to join forces with **AmaSing**, the amazing organisation who performed on TV show, Britain's Got Talent, to offer new dates for adopted children aged 5 to 16 years.

The choir is a chance for children and young people to have some fun and hang out with other adopted children, and maybe learn a new skill, whilst providing a safe and nurturing environment to mix with other adopted children.

One parent said their child **"looks forward to each one and asks regularly when the next session is. The choir leader is lovely and is brilliant at getting the children involved."**

Annie O'Neill, Adoption Matters Fundraising and Relationship Manager, comments:

**"We were absolutely delighted to receive the grant donation from the Chester Bluecoat Charity to help re-ignite our children's choir."**

**This provides a community space for children to come together in a safe environment, learn to sing and record songs whilst also providing a chance for our adoptive parents to meet up and chat with other parents."**

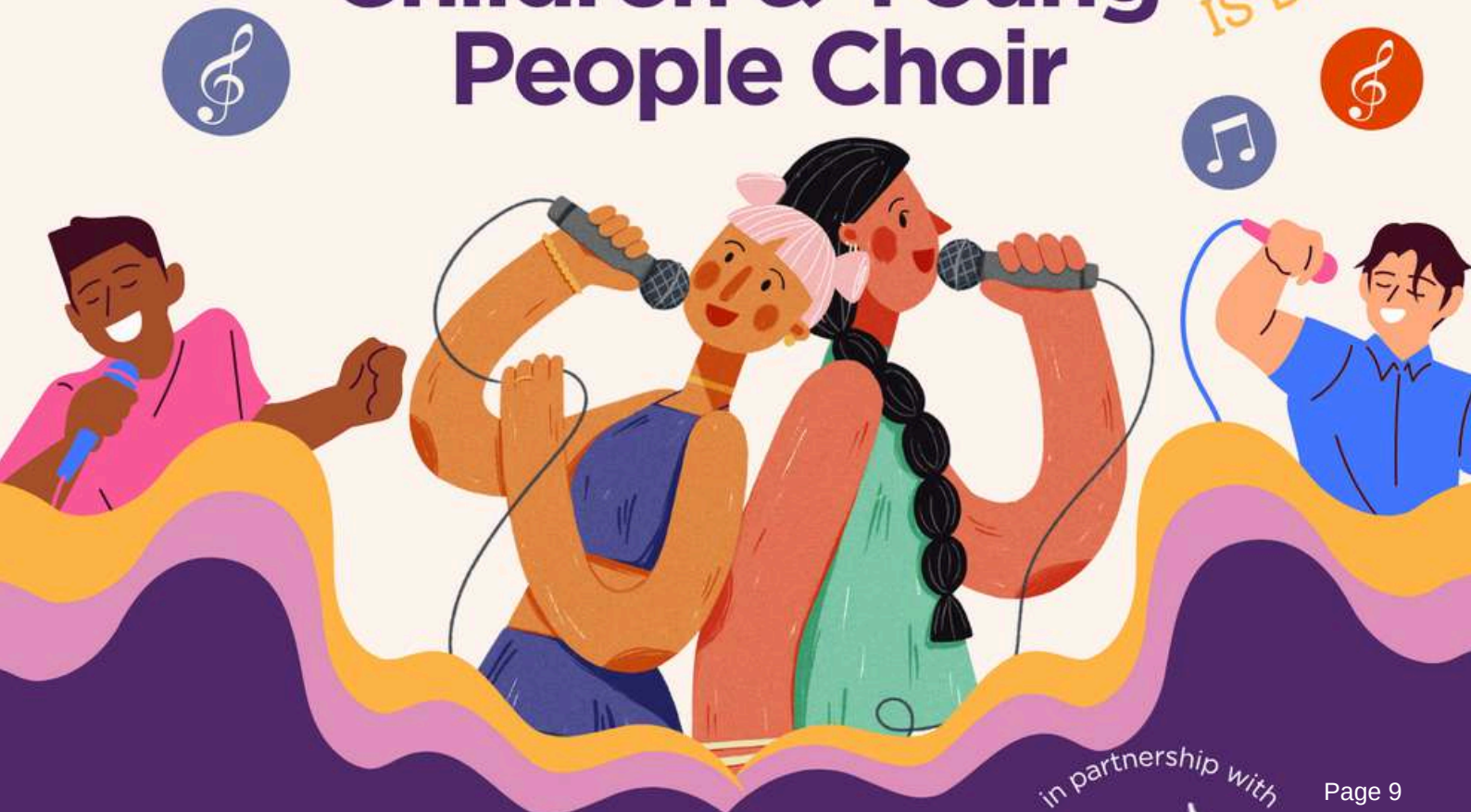
Find out more about our choir at:  
[www.adoptionmatters.org/cfas](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/cfas)



THE  
CHESTER  
BLUECOAT  
CHARITY

# Children & Young People Choir

IS BACK!



in partnership with

Page 9

# OUR CHARITY AMBASSADORS

We were delighted to welcome three Charity Ambassadors. Our ambassadors aim to amplify our mission, build connections within communities, and help support vital resources through fundraising and outreach initiatives. By sharing stories, promoting events, and using their unique voice to champion our cause, they play a critical role in transforming lives.



**CATHERINE RICHARDS**

TV star and Instagram content creator, Catherine Richards, starred in Season One of *Love is Blind UK*, where she spoke openly about being adopted as a baby and was blown away by the response of many other people touched by adoption.

“As an adopted adult, adoption is a cause close to my heart. It is important that we shine a light on the incredible work that Adoption Matters does in finding loving homes for children. Raising awareness is vital to ensure every child has the opportunity for a secure and loving future and I have lots of ideas for the year ahead”



@catherinerichards\_\_



**DEZ DERRY**

Driven by the rate of children entering the care system, North West entrepreneur Dez wants to raise awareness of fostering and adoption and highlight the positive impact adoptive and foster parents can have on a young person's life. Dez was adopted with his two brothers, after being fostered by his parents.

“I owe my Mum and Dad everything. I think the best way to show them just how grateful I am is to help other young people in care find parents like them. Becoming a charity ambassador for Adoption Matters and Foster Care Matters will help me do just that. I am inspired by the work they do and excited about the projects we have planned.”



@dezderryblume



**JEEVAN BRAICH**

Jeevan Braich is a talented British actor from Birmingham, In 2024, Jeevan made his professional debut, aged 17, as Rusty in the London stage revival of *Starlight Express*. Jeevan was in foster care and experienced 13 different foster homes in his early years before being adopted by his family.

“Adoption and fostering are issues very dear to me. I want to share my story and reach out to other young people who may have been in the position I once was. As charity ambassador for Adoption Matters and Foster Care Matters, I hope to raise awareness and show the world what a child who experienced several foster placements like I did can achieve. I am so excited to work with the team to and reach a new genre of audience.”



@jeevanbraich

# THE SOUND OF HOPE

In October 2024, we were pleased to support the UK release of the global film, *Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot*. Inspired by the powerful true story, the film follows Donna and Reverend Martin as they ignite a fire in the hearts of their rural community to embrace children in the foster system.

The film was Executive Produced by Letitia Wright (star of *Black Panther*) who is passionate about raising awareness of the story.

Whilst the film does not portray modern UK adoption and we know that US and UK adoption is very different, we hope the film continues to inspire people to think about the children waiting here in the UK and to think about both adoption and fostering.

Black children often wait longer for adoption and fostering in the UK, something Adoption Matters works hard to change by inspiring more people in Black and ethnic diverse communities to consider adoption and fostering

On Monday 7 October, Adoption Matters Chief Executive, Susy White, attended the Parliamentary and Gala Screening in London.

Susy was honoured to meet Donna and Reverend Martin, Letitia Wright and Nika King who plays Donna in the film, Joshua Weigel the director, as well as Dr. Krish Kandiah and Rachael Maskell MP, who chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Adoption and Permanence. <https://soundofhopemovie.co.uk>



Susy & Nika King



Susy & Donna Martin



Susy & Donna Martin



Susy & Dr. Krish Kandiah & Rachel Maskell MP



Susy, Letitia Wright, & Nika King

# OUR LANCASHIRE LUNCH

In October 2024, we held our Lancashire Lunch at Browsholme Hall, Lancashire. Our Patron, Amanda Parker, Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, was so kind to offer her beautiful home as a venue for the event. After a welcome address from Amanda, guests enjoyed a Cava and canapé reception, followed by an exquisite three-course lunch, sourced all locally in Lancashire.

After lunch, special guest and speaker, Timpson Group founder, adopter and foster parent, Sir John Timpson, CBE, talked about his unique personal insight into adoption and fostering. Sir John talked with passion about his and his late wife Alex's adoption and fostering journeys – the couple had three birth children, adopted two sons and were foster carers to 90 children over 31 years.

After Sir John's uplifting speech, a charity auction was held with some amazing prizes on offer, all generously donated by the charity's supporters.

Adoption Matters' Board of Trustees chair, Carolyn Johnson commented:

**"We were so honoured that Sir John joined us at our event and that Amanda, and her husband Robert, hosted us in their spectacular home. I want to thank everyone who attended for supporting our charity. All funds raised today will help us reach many more adoptive and foster families and support them on their own unique adopter and foster family journeys now and in the future."**

**The event raised £5,500 for our charity.** Annie O'Neill, Fundraising and Relationship Manager, commented:

**"I echo Carolyn's words and also want to thank all the generous people and companies who helped make this wonderful event happen through sponsorship and their kind donations."**

**Pictured:** Adoption Matters CEO Susy White, with Sir John Timpson, CBE, at the event



# OUR LANCASHIRE LUNCH



\*L-R: Carolyn Johnson, Adoption Matters Chair, Amanda Parker, Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire and Adoption Matters Patron with her husband Robert.



\*Norman Goodwin, CBE former CEO of Adoption Matters with Susy White, CEO.



\*Ann O'Neill, Carolyn Johnson Adoption Matters, John Blackley, who ran the charity auction and Karen Palfreyman of Foster Care Matters



\*Sir John Timpson, CBE



\*Adoption Matters Patron, Sir Mark Hedley chatting with guests



Guests enjoying the canapé reception and the event.



\*Image credit: Cheshire Life and Lancashire Life Magazine

# CAMPAIGN & PR HIGHLIGHTS

Our marketing and PR teams have been working tirelessly to raise awareness and help with recruitment of more families for the many children waiting. Highlights in the last year included:

- Our adopters Rachael and Paul being part of the **National Adoption Week 2024** YouCanAdopt campaign and featuring in local and national press.
- Taking part in collaborative campaigns including **Big Adoption Day**, a voluntary sector campaign and **Nobody Knows Me Better**, a North West campaign working with our Regional Adoption Agency colleagues.

- Achieving full page coverage of our Lancashire Lunch in both **Lancashire and Cheshire Life Magazines**.
- Our adopters Morgan and Derry and Peter and Andrew featuring in a national **BBC News** article.
- Our charity ambassador, Dez Derry, speaking on **ITV News Granada Reports** to discuss adoption pay for self employed adopters and his own adoption journey.



NEWS SPORT VOICES CULTURE LIFESTYLE

LIFE STORIES

## 'I went from zero children to being a mum to three kids overnight - including a newborn baby'

Rachael Doman, 40, always knew she and her husband Paul wanted children, but after seven years of failed IVF attempts, she went down the foster-to-adopt route. She tells **Charlotte Cripps** about the massive shock that happened next



Sunday 27 October 2024 06:00 GMT



Rachael Doman and her husband Paul with their three children (Captioned)



## Lost Boys and Fairies: 'My husband and I cried like a baby watching it'



Andrew (left) pictured with Peter and their child. The pair watched the TV show and really resonated with the adoption storyline

For adoptive parent Peter Hunt, the power of the show was how accurate the small details were. He and his husband Andrew adopted their first child in 2019, and found the series brought back memories of their experience.



# A YEAR OF FOSTER CARE MATTERS

Our sister service, Foster Care Matters, had a busy first year, raising awareness and starting to recruit our first foster parents. Highlights included:

In September 2024, we were delighted to be chosen as Cheshire's Silk Radio Charity of the Week. Karen Palfreyman, Service Manager and Deb Reid, Recruitment and Family Matching Co-Ordinator, recorded an interview which aired as a Podcast.

Karen talked about our not for profit fostering agency, covering vital topics like the urgent demand for more foster homes, all inclusivity of fostering, the support available to our foster parents, fostering allowances, and a detailed guide on becoming a foster parent.

Visit: [www.fostercarematters.org.uk/news-article/silkradio](http://www.fostercarematters.org.uk/news-article/silkradio) to listen.



Foster Care Matters joined Adoption Matters in proudly supporting **LGBTQ+ Adoption and Fostering Week** in March 2025. Led by New Family Social, the UK's peer-support charity for LGBTQ+ adopters, foster carers and special guardians, and the title of this years campaign is the rallying call of 'Change Lives in 2025'.

Change Lives in 2025 emphasis this by sending out an urgent call to those within the LGBTQ+ community who could consider becoming either an adoptive parent or a foster parent.

Last year, 1 in 5 adoptions in the country were to same-gender couples. However, the actual number of adoptions to these couples fell by 40 from 2023.

Although there are no official statistics on the number of LGBTQ+ foster parents, their contributions are more than evident in the lives of the children they care for.

Visit: [www.fostercarematters.org.uk/proudtofoster](http://www.fostercarematters.org.uk/proudtofoster)



# AWARENESS EVENTS!

The Foster Care Matters team has been busy hosting recruitment stands and events across the North West - getting out into local communities is at the heart of what we do. It's vital in helping raise awareness about the urgent need for more foster carers, and gives us the chance to have meaningful conversations about all things fostering. It's been a joy to meet so many wonderful people along the way!



# OUR FIRST BIRTHDAY!



One year on, Foster Care Matters has made incredible progress in supporting and promoting fostering across the North West and Stoke on Trent areas. The team celebrated at their first Prepare to Foster Training Course with a cake!

Karen Palfreyman, Registered Manager at Foster Care Matters, reflected on their journey:

“It’s hard to believe it’s been a year since we began this amazing adventure. Since opening, we’ve had the privilege of helping so many people explore fostering, both online and in person. Each conversation moves us closer to our goal of creating brighter futures for children in need.

From guidance to support and encouragement, our team is committed to making dreams of becoming foster parents a reality.”

Deb Reid, Recruitment & Family Matching Coordinator at Foster Care Matters, shared recent milestones:

“This year, we launched the IE Hub, a fostering finance tracker that helps applicants understand their financial situation throughout the fostering process and identifies potential benefits. We’re proud to be the only fostering agency offering this resource. Our newsletter, Foster Care Matters Natters, has also gained popularity, with more subscribers each week. The feedback from our families means everything to us, and we’re delighted to have them onboard.”

*Karen added:* “As we reflect on this remarkable first year, we’re deeply grateful for the incredible community supporting us. **Together, we’re making a real impact on the lives of children and families. Looking ahead, we can’t wait to reach new milestones and continue this journey with more families.**”

**Pictured:** Centre Adoption Matters CEO, Susy White with Deb Reid (left) and Karen Palfreyman (right) of Foster Care Matters.





# THANK YOU

To all our supporters!

We couldn't have done it without your generous support.



**adoption matters**

A proud history of children's futures

# MEET SOME OF OUR AMAZING SUPPORTERS OVER THE LAST YEAR



## THE GREAT NORTH RUN TEAM

Five determined Adoption Matters supporters joined 60,000 other runners to battle with the wind and rain to take on the 13.1 miles from Newcastle to South Shields in the Great North Run on Sunday 8th September 2024.

The team was spearheaded by Adoption Matters Fundraising and Relationship Manager, Annie O'Neill, and it consisted of her husband Jon O'Neill and friends Jacqui Bickerton, Stewart Holland and Elizabeth Dunstan.

The final member of team Adoption Matters was adoptive dad David Neal, who also completed the Great Manchester 10K in support of our charity last year.

**Together they raised an amazing £3,200** for our charity.

Annie commented:

**“As a charity, Adoption Matters is incredibly proud, thankful and grateful to our five amazing runners, who crossed the finish line in excellent times, and to those who have supported them”**

To find out more about how YOU can fundraise for our charity, visit:

[www.adoptionmatters.org/fundraising](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/fundraising)

# KATE & MARTIN'S GARDEN PARTY

Our generous supporters, Kate and Martin Slack, welcomed children and families to a Charity Garden Party on Saturday 29 June at their home in Ashton Hayes, Cheshire.

Families and members of the public enjoyed their picnics in the grounds and woodlands of the beautiful Ashton Grange in Ashton Hayes and the afternoon of fun included a Forest School, children's entertainer, a children's tombola, a raffle and a cake sale of mouth-watering home baked goods courtesy of Kate and some of the local villagers.

Children had a great time taking part in the Forest School sessions led by Budding Minds, a chance for them to develop their confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in the natural setting of the inspiring woodlands.

Annie O'Neill, Fundraising and Relationship Manager, commented:

**“Kate and Martin are long-term supporters of our charity and this is now the fourth event they hosted on our behalf, opening their gardens and home.**

**“This year, Kate and Martin really did most of the hard work and we are so grateful to them. We are delighted that the event raised over £600 for our charity. We do hope to continue the tradition with an annual event so watch this space!”**

Adoption Matters would also like to thank Sharon from the Community Team at Tesco in Warrington for donating prizes to our event raffle.

**Pictured:** Annie O'Neill, Fundraising & Relationship Manager, Volunteer Robert Gilbert and Carolyn Johnson, Adoption Matters Chair.





The **Centre for Fostering and Adoption Support**  
 A unique support and therapy service supporting adoption, permanency and fostering

Thanks to a very generous donation from the **Bloomfield Trust**, we have been able to offer our families support when they need it most. Focusing on neurodiversity, we were able to:

**Support to families:**

- ✓ Deliver 42 therapeutic consultations to families offering Neurodiversity support
- ✓ Create a bespoke webinar for families on Neurodiversity in Children which is now part of our training calendar.

**Topics covered:**

- Poor sleep habits
- Setting boundaries
- Neurodiverse related aggression
- Communication with schools
- Building self-esteem

**Feedback from families:**

“ A listening ear without judgement is just so helpful and feels **like a warm hug when few others understand.**

It was reassuring to be **listened to by someone who understood.** It helped me decide to reach out to post adoption support.

It helped to talk everything through and I really appreciate all the practical suggestions you provided too... **Huge amount of progress in the last fortnight.**

”

**THANK YOU**



# COLOURS FASHION SHOW

We held a 'Colours Fundraising Fashion Show' on Friday 15th November 2024 in Goostrey, Cheshire. With over 90 attendees, the event was a great success **with £1,500 raised.**

Lindsey Arrowsmith (pictured with her family below), a member of the team at our Centre for Fostering and Adoption Support, was instrumental in helping bring the event to life and the local villagers of Goostrey together.

Lindsey commented: "It was a pleasure and an honour to help organise the Colours Fashion Show – the village, as well as friends and family, came out in force and had a great night.

The local community has been so generous in supporting our charity and I am so delighted with the total raised. All of the hard work and planning was so worth it as it allows us to provide so many more therapeutic services that we are so passionate about."

Local pub, The Space Invader, provided a pop-up bar for the guests to enjoy and the owner, Chris Jennings (pictured below with his daughters), also shared a percentage of the profits made on the night.

Karen Palfreyman, our Foster Care Matters Service Manager, attended on the night to raise awareness of fostering too.

Annie O'Neill, Adoption Matters' Fundraising and Relationship Manager, commented:

"The event was fantastic! It was heart-warming to see so many people come together and have such a great evening while supporting a fantastic cause – we raised an excellent amount of money which will help us offer more support to our families.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to everybody who attended, the Colours team, all businesses and individuals who donated to our raffle and Chris from the Space Invader pub for all of their support, kindness and generosity.



Left to right: Annie O'Neill - Fundraising & Relationship Manager, Karen Palfreyman - Service Manager Foster Care Matters, Jacqui Shore - Head of Adoption and Sue Spruce - Senior Adoption Social Worker.



Left: Lindsey Arrowsmith with members of her family



Chris Jennings from the Space Invader, with his daughters



Karen from Foster Care Matters



## WHAT YOUR SUPPORT CAN DO!

**£5**

Pay for refreshments for a child attending one of our Centre for Fostering & Adoption Support Choir sessions

**£35**

Fund activity materials for use at in a Theraplay Support Package

**£100**

provide a virtual therapeutic consultation session for a family or family member with one of our professionals

**£400**

would provide a package of support for families during times of crisis

**£1,000**

fund materials for our invaluable Life Story work for children plus a session for adopters to share the work

### Why we do it

Children are at the heart of all we do. There is currently an urgent need for more adopters and foster parents across the UK.

Our aim is for children to grow up in a secure and loving family that will help them reach their full potential through adoption, early permanence or foster care.

### There are many ways you can support our work

You can support us through a variety of ways. Through direct donations, fundraising events or sponsorships; we will offer you dedicated help and support. Or through your company, church or school. Together, we can tailor a partnership or package to suit your needs. Visit: [www.adoptionmatters.org/fundraising](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/fundraising)

### How you can help

Every year there are vulnerable children who enter care who need stable homes. Some wait longer than others for adoption and some children are placed in foster care far away from their homes and everything familiar to them.

**We want to help change that.**

**Can you help** us raise vital funds to support many more families and children?

# Join our **lottery** and help support more **families**

You could win up to **£25,000** tax-free for just £10 a month

**With your help**, we can offer more vital support to our adopter families, adopted adults and many more touched by adoption.

By joining our lottery for just £10 per month with 22 prizes in every monthly draw, including:

- **£5,000 first prize**
- **£2,000 second prize**
- **20 third prizes of £50**

What's more, the first prize winner will also be automatically entered into a BONUS draw for a chance to **win an extra £20,000**, bringing the total potential first prize to £25,000.

As a thank you, you will also receive a free Gourmet Society membership - offering up to 25% discount in thousands of restaurants nationwide, and big discounts on takeaway pizza, cinema trips and theme parks.

**Visit: [bit.ly/adoptionlottery](https://bit.ly/adoptionlottery)**



You must be aged 18 or over to take part in our lottery - please see T&C's for full details. Stay in control. Gamble responsibly. For support, visit [www.BeGambleAware.org](http://www.BeGambleAware.org)



Children are at the **HEART** of all we do.





# IN MEMORIUM

## Dr Shirley Ann Leslie MD FRCPsych

7<sup>th</sup> December 1932 - 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025



**BY NORMAN G. GOODWIN, CBE  
PATRON AND RETIRED CEO OF ADOPTION MATTERS**

I was privileged to work with only 5 chairs during my now 40-year association with Adoption Matters.

Shirley was the middle one of the five.

Shirley was appointed during 1998, initially shadowing the then chair John Eager who had been appointed as the first chair of the new Chester Diocesan Adoption Services when we branched out of the Diocesan Board for Social Responsibility in 1992.

Whilst still working closely with the Diocese, our work with older children was developing and our desire to become relevant to potential adopters and regional media in trying to recruit adopters, we decided to rename and rebrand the organisation. The outcome of that exercise was us becoming Adoption Matters.



Shirley and the Trustees played a crucial role in enabling the agency to enter this new phase of our development and ensuring that new trustees and people who played a key role within the organisation brought a level of professional knowledge and experience with their input that was beneficial and necessary for us going forward.

Shirley was born in Blackpool in 1932 and went to Blackpool Collegiate and then to Liverpool University. She took a medical degree followed by an MD. She was a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Her work was based at Booth Hall Children's Hospital, Manchester. She was frequently instructed to advise the Official Solicitor when he represented children in significant childcare cases.

This experience was very helpful in us identifying the right placements for children and preparing potential adopters for caring for, children of challenge.

Shirley was an active member of St. Andrew's Church Cheadle Hulme.

Outside work, she was a member at the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir and Manchester Cathedral Cantata Choir and frequently attended concerts in Manchester and Buxton. She was a single woman with many friends who revelled in travel and the countryside.

Shirley was chair until April 2005 when she handed over the baton to David Cracknell.





# IN MEMORIUM

**Dr Shirley Ann Leslie. MD FRCPsych**

7<sup>th</sup> December 1932 - 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025



**BY NORMAN G. GOODWIN, CBE  
PATRON AND RETIRED CEO OF ADOPTION MATTERS**

After stepping down as Chair, Shirley continued to support the work of Adoption Matters, faithfully attending events and Annual Meetings, and continuing to financially support the ongoing work of our charity.

**WE ARE GRATEFUL TO SHIRLEY FOR ALL SHE GAVE IN SUPPORT OF THE ORGANISATION OVER A LONG AND LASTING ASSOCIATION.**



Shirley taking over from John Eager as chair and a very young-looking CEO as an onlooker!



Shirley beginning her role as Chair pictured against the CDAS banner which had been commissioned for the 40th anniversary events in 1995 bearing the logo that had been used from CDAS becoming a separate organisation in 1992.

Pictured top right: A portrait of Shirley wearing the medal of the regional President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.



[www.adoptionmatters.org](http://www.adoptionmatters.org)

Registered Charity No. 512892

**Head Office: 14 Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1AE.**

Covering the whole of the North of England, Stoke, Shropshire and Staffordshire.



[www.fostercarematters.org.uk](http://www.fostercarematters.org.uk)

Foster Care Matters is part of the Adoption Matters family.

**Ofsted Outstanding since 2008**