



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

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<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Laying of the Adoption Agencies (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (“the Amendment Regulations”) and the Adoption Agencies (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>20th February 2020</b>
<b>BY</b>	<b>Julie Morgan AM, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services</b>

Today, the Adoption Agencies (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (“the Amendment Regulations”) and the Adoption Agencies (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020 have been laid before the National Assembly for Wales.

The Adoption Agencies (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (“the Amendment Regulations”) amend the Adoption Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2005 (“the 2005 Regulations”) by substituting a new Part 4 (Duties of Adoption Agencies in Respect of a Prospective Adopter). Part 4 makes provision for the assessment and approval of prospective adopters by adoption agencies and is amended to introduce a new two-stage process for that assessment and approval. In Stage One (the pre-assessment process, which is limited to two months) all prescribed checks, including criminal record and health checks, are conducted. In Stage Two (the assessment decision, which is limited to four months) the adoption agency reaches a decision about the suitability of the prospective adopter.

The Amendment Regulations will also introduce a requirement on adoption agencies to refer a child to the Adoption Register for Wales within one month of the date on which the adoption agency was authorised to place the child for adoption; and to refer a prospective adopter to the Adoption Register within one month of the date on which the agency decided that the prospective adopter was suitable to adopt a child.

The Adoption Agencies (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020 (“the No. 2 Regulations”) place an additional requirement on adoption agencies in Stage Two of the assessment process when assessing the suitability of a couple to adopt a child, to have proper regard to the need for stability and permanence in the couple’s relationship.

It is imperative that we continue to assess the adoption system in Wales to ensure it is offering the best support available to children and families, to enable those children who cannot return home or be cared for by their wider family to be placed in safe and stable adoptive families. The change in the regulations will go some way in improving the current system in Wales.

The changes will enable the overall operation of the approval process to become more streamlined and more efficient. This will not only result in consequential savings for the adoption agencies in Wales but will benefit the children and potential adopters by making the system less bureaucratic and more efficient and timely.

The changes will also reduce the length of time that children are waiting to be matched with a stable adoptive family by giving immediate access to a national system through which the widest possible range of links from across Wales and (where appropriate) other parts of the UK can be explored. The changes will lead to even more good quality, lasting matches being made.

I want the adoption system in Wales to be the best it can be. I believe that every child should be offered the best opportunity to flourish in a safe family environment where their fundamental needs are met and where they can enjoy the same opportunities as any other child. For some vulnerable children adoption is a positive and effective intervention for meeting their care needs and improving their overall outcomes. I am therefore committed to ensuring that continuing to improve the adoption system in Wales remains a priority for the Welsh Government.