

# Life Journey Work Framework

This is to be used in conjunction with the NAS Life Journey Work Good Practice Guide



Gwasanaeth  
Mabwysiadu  
Cenedlaethol

National  
Adoption  
Service



AFA CYMRU  
association for fostering and adoption  
cymdeithas ar gyfer maethu a mabwysiadu

## STAGE 1

### Child becomes Looked After

1. LJW should begin as soon as a Child becomes Looked After. This will include: Information, photograph and memento gathering.
2. Everyone with a role in the Child's life has a responsibility for this.
3. The LJW planning checklist should be used. The Child's Social Worker has a key role in LJW with and for the Child.
4. The Child's Foster Carer is an appropriate partner in LJW work with the Child.
5. All LJW should be carefully recorded and securely stored.
6. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will be responsible for monitoring the LJW for the Child.
7. Birth family 'counselling' and independent support should be offered to birth parents and other close Birth family members. The Birth family should be actively encouraged to contribute LJW for the Child.
8. Any gaps in Birth family information should be completed, where possible, prior to the final hearing.

## STAGE 2

### Placement Order granted

1. The Child's Social Worker and Foster Carer, and other professionals as appropriate, should agree upon the narrative to sensitively explain the plan for adoption to the Child.
2. The plan for LJW for the Child should be regularly reviewed to ensure that it sensitively meets the Child's current needs.
3. The LJW planning checklist should be used.
4. Written consents should be obtained from Birth family, Foster Carers and any other third parties as appropriate, to include photographs, or any information that does not pertain to directly to the Child.
5. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will continue to be responsible for monitoring the LJW for the Child.

## STAGE 3

### Linking and matching

1. Prospective Adopter/s will have been prepared and had training on the importance of LJW.
2. Collaboration between the prospective adopter/s and the key person involved in the production of Life Journey materials should occur before matching Panel.
3. Life Journey materials should be quality assured in readiness for Matching Panel. They should provide a coherent narrative for the Child and include a draft Later Life Letter.
4. A plan for LJW post placement should be prepared. This will form part of the Adoption Support Plan.
5. Consideration should be given to holding a Life Appreciation Day for the Child.
6. The timing of final contact between Birth family and the Child should be thoughtfully planned to ensure it meets the needs of the Child. Photographs and details of the contact should be carefully recorded for the Child.
7. The prospective Adopters should prepare introductory materials for the Child, such as a photo book with pictures of themselves and their home.
8. The Adoption Panel should check that Life Journey materials have been quality assured and have been shared with the prospective Adopters.
9. The Agency Decision Maker should check that the Adoption Panel has discussed the Life Journey materials.
10. Contact agreements should be prepared by the Adoption Social Worker in consultation with the Birth family and prospective Adopters, according to the Adoption Support Plan.
11. Future plans for contact between the Child and his/her previous Foster Carer/s should be promoted.

## STAGE 4

### Transition

1. There should be a clear plan for transition for the Child.
2. The Child's Social Worker and Foster Carer, and other professionals as appropriate, should agree upon the narrative to sensitively share information about the new family with the Child.
3. Once the Agency Decision Maker has approved the match, the Child Care Social Worker and Foster Carer will sensitively tell the Child and share the materials provided by the prospective Adopters.
4. The Child's emotional needs should be central to the planning.
5. One professional should be identified to take the lead in coordinating the introductions process.
6. The Child's Foster Carers and prospective Adopters should be well supported by their respective supporting Social Workers.
7. Where appropriate, the opportunity should be made available for the birth parents (and other significant Birth family members) to meet the prospective Adopters. Where it is inappropriate to facilitate this meeting, the reasons for this should be recorded.

## STAGE 5

### Placement and ongoing (Post Adoption Order)

1. Support should be available for the prospective Adopters and the Child. This may include:
  - Informal discussions
  - Building the Life Journey narrative of the adoptive family
  - Further information gathering from Birth family
  - Training
  - Direct work
  - Therapeutic LJW
2. Support in facilitating contact with the Birth family should be offered.
3. Contact agreements should reflect the terminology used in the LJW, such as when referring to Birth family members.
4. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will continue to be responsible for monitoring the LJW for the Child at reviews until the Adoption Order is granted.
5. Where information about a change or development in the Birth family's circumstances is known to the Local Authority, section 5.5 of the Good Practice Guide should be referred to in its entirety, in order to determine whether it is appropriate to share this with the Child's Adopter/s.
6. **Life Journey Work does not end.**