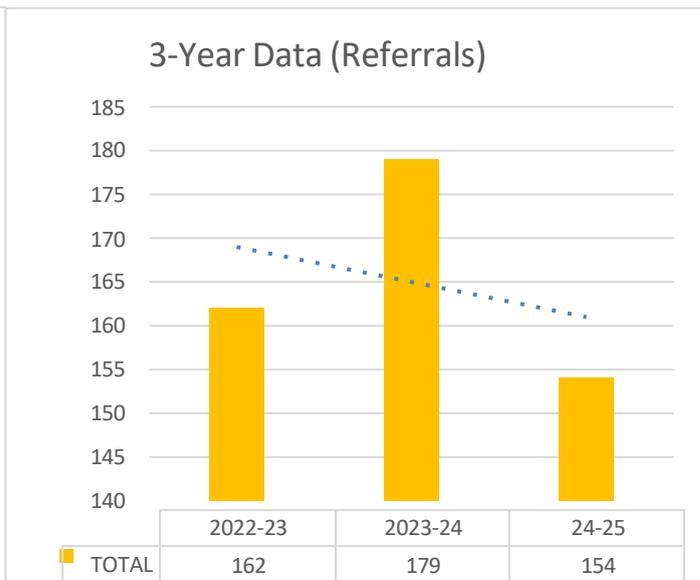
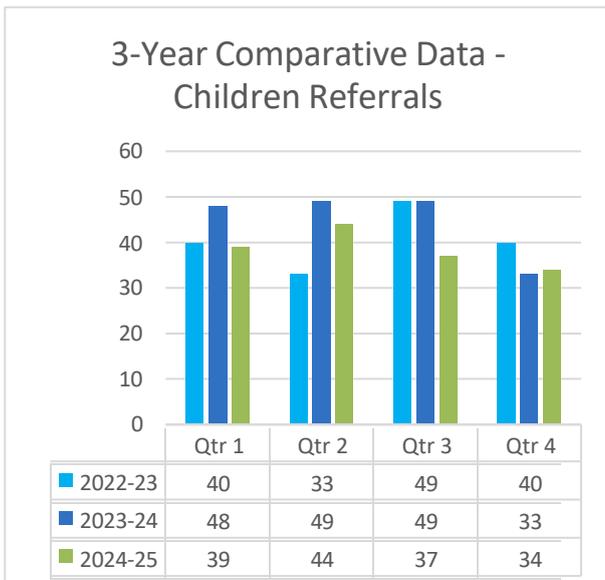
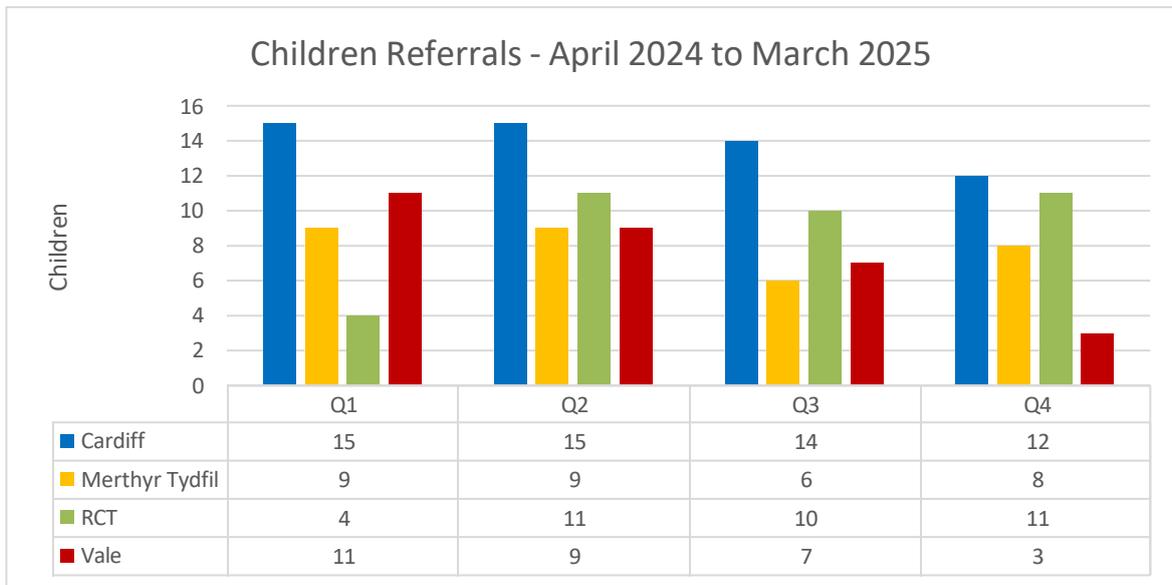


Appendix 1

Family Finding

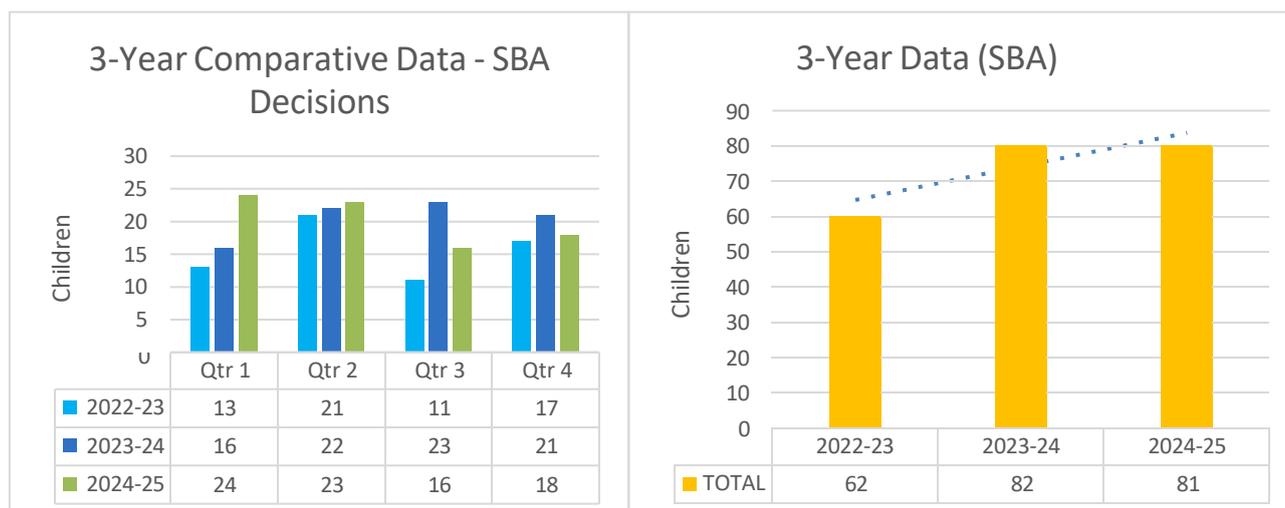
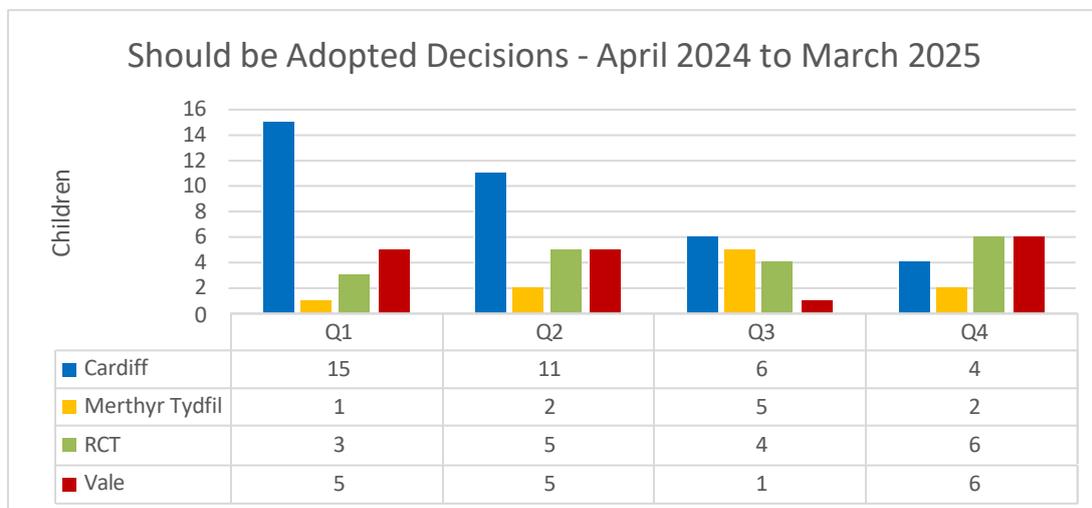
Referrals

154 children have been referred to the service in 2024-25 (34 during Q4). Referrals to VVC have been steadily rising in recent years which is later reflected in the SBA decision and PO activity. The 3-year data shows that the previous year (2023-24) had a sharp rise and therefore referrals for this year have levelled to the previous year (similarly to data held for referral rates pre-2022).



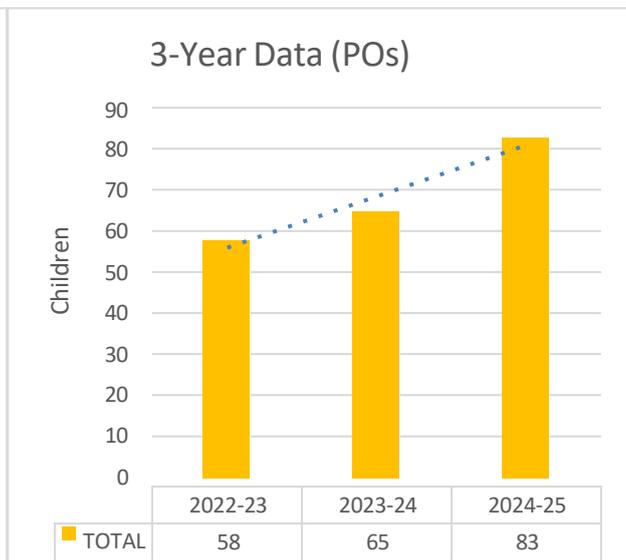
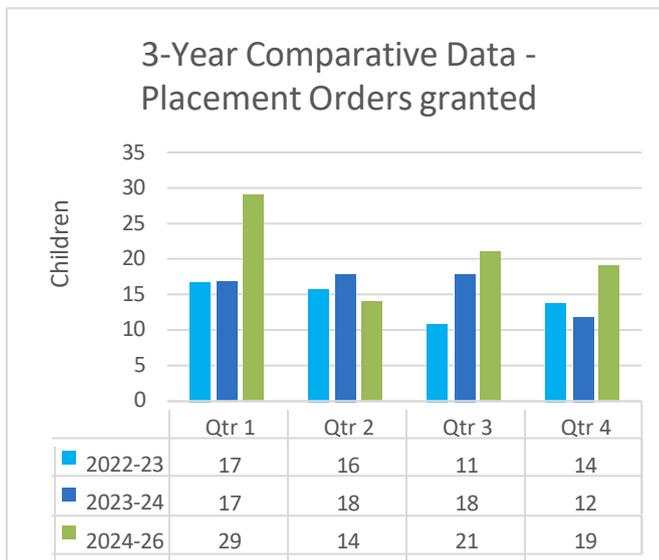
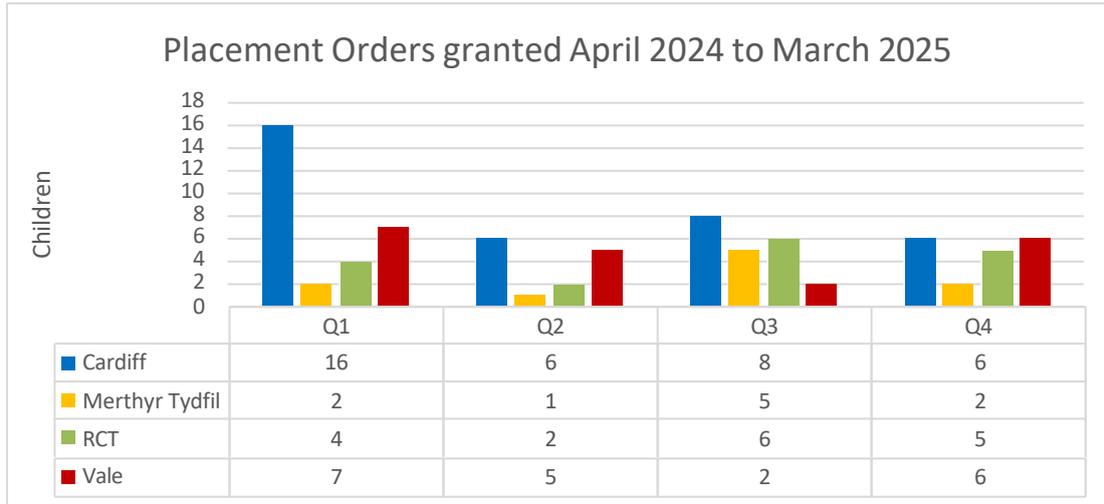
Should be placed for adoption (SBA) Decisions

81 SBA decisions have been made in the year to date (18 in Q4) which is on par with the previous year. The 3-year data has seen a rise in SBA decision activity over the past two years which is to be expected with a sustained level of referral activity and a peak last year.



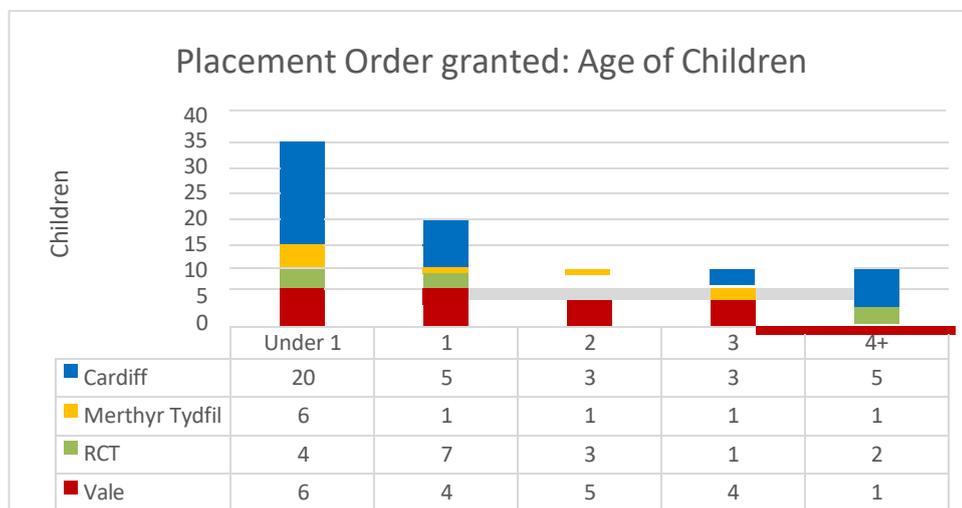
Placement Orders

83 Placement Orders have been granted in 2024-25 (19 during Q4). This has been a marked increase from the previous couple of years and is in line with the rise in referrals observed last year. The number of placement orders increased by almost a third (28%) this year, which has had a marked impact on the family finding activity and demand for adoptive placements.

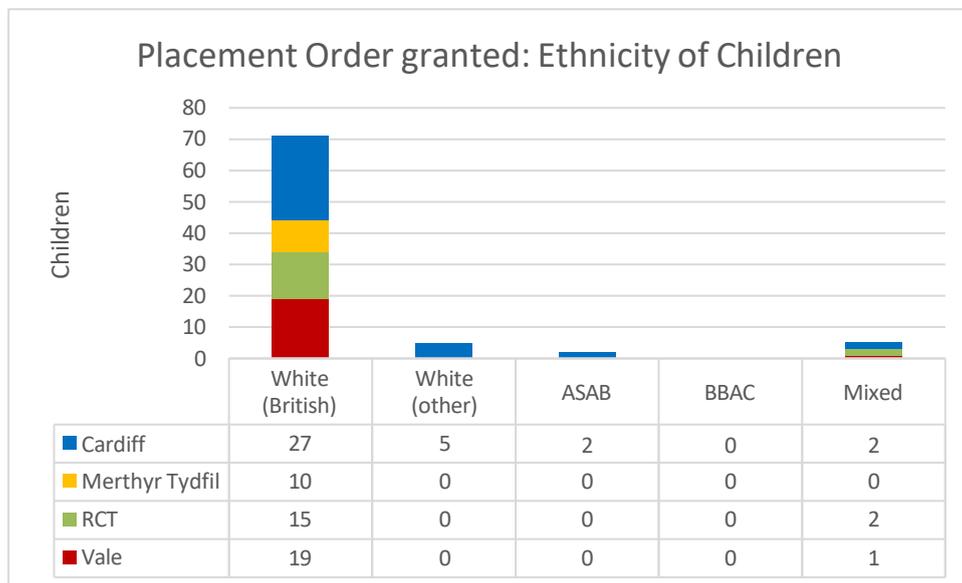


Demographics

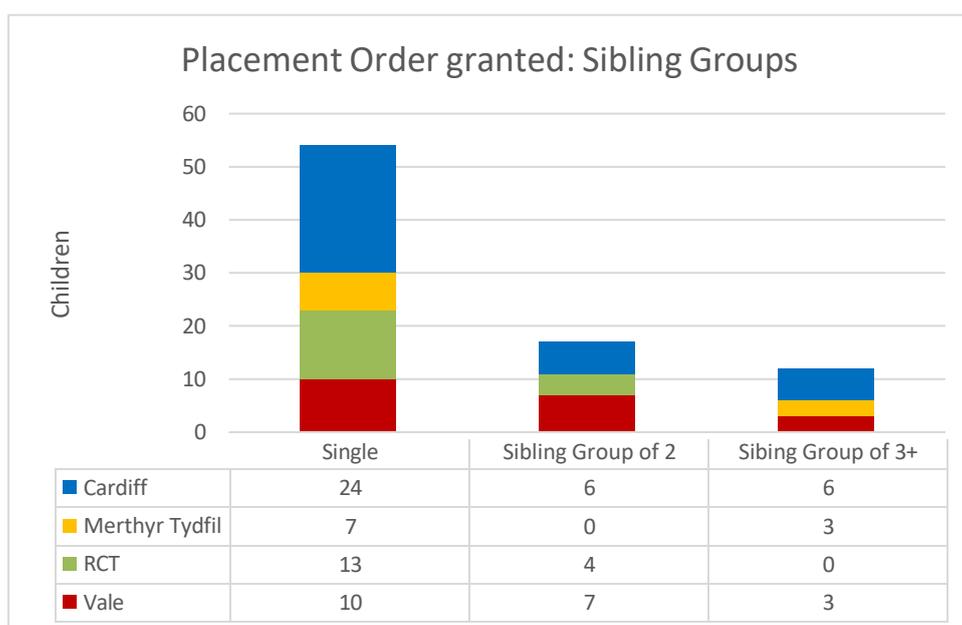
64% of children with Placement Orders granted this year to date are infants aged 1 or under. Just **11%** are considered 'older' children aged 4+.



86% of children made subject to a Placement Order this year are White British and a further 6% are of another white heritage (in all cases white European). Only five children (8%) with a Placement Order granted in 2024-25 are of a BAME heritage.

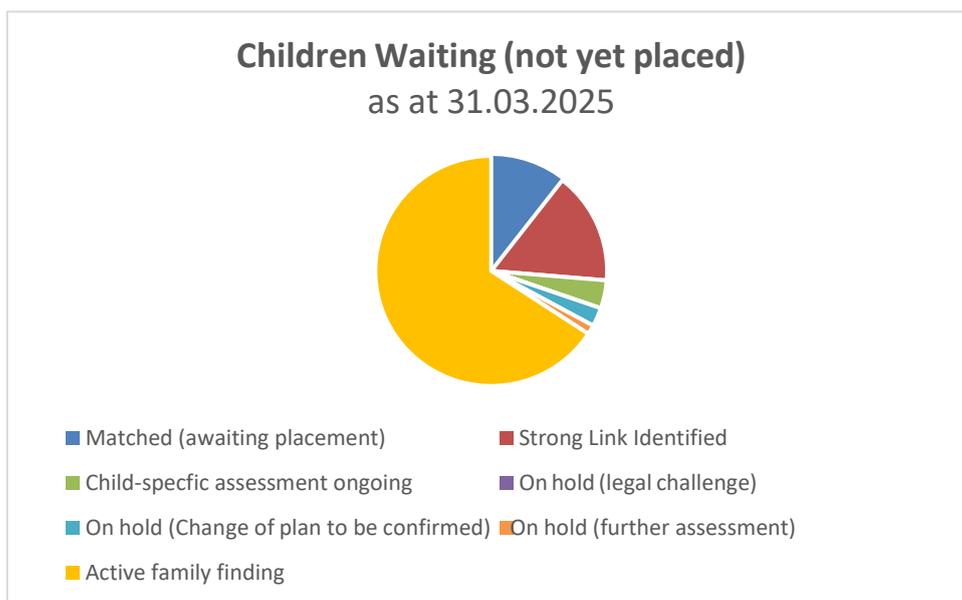


From the following data we can see that almost half (47%) of children receiving a Placement Order this year to date are now being sought an adoptive family as part of a sibling group. This is represented by 9 sibling groups of two and 4 sibling groups of three. Locally and nationally, there are limited available adopters for a sibling group, particularly for groups of 3 children or more. This will have an impact upon the length of time siblings may wait to identify a potential match.



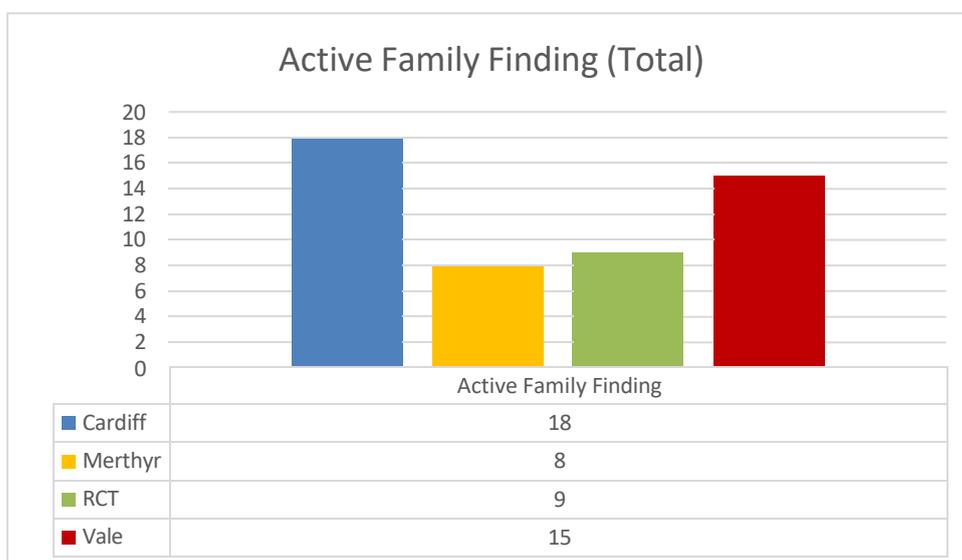
Children Waiting:

The following graphic outlines the current position for children with a Placement Order (or relinquished) awaiting an adoptive placement and represents a total of **76** children as at 31.03.2025, a figure that has continued to rise during the year given the challenges in identifying adopters and the continued rise in Placement Orders. The majority are in active family finding. A small proportion are on hold for a reassessment of their needs/change of care plan proposed. A significant number (20 children) have either been matched or are awaiting matching panel and so positively we are anticipating a high level of placement activity in Q1/early Q2 of 2025-26.

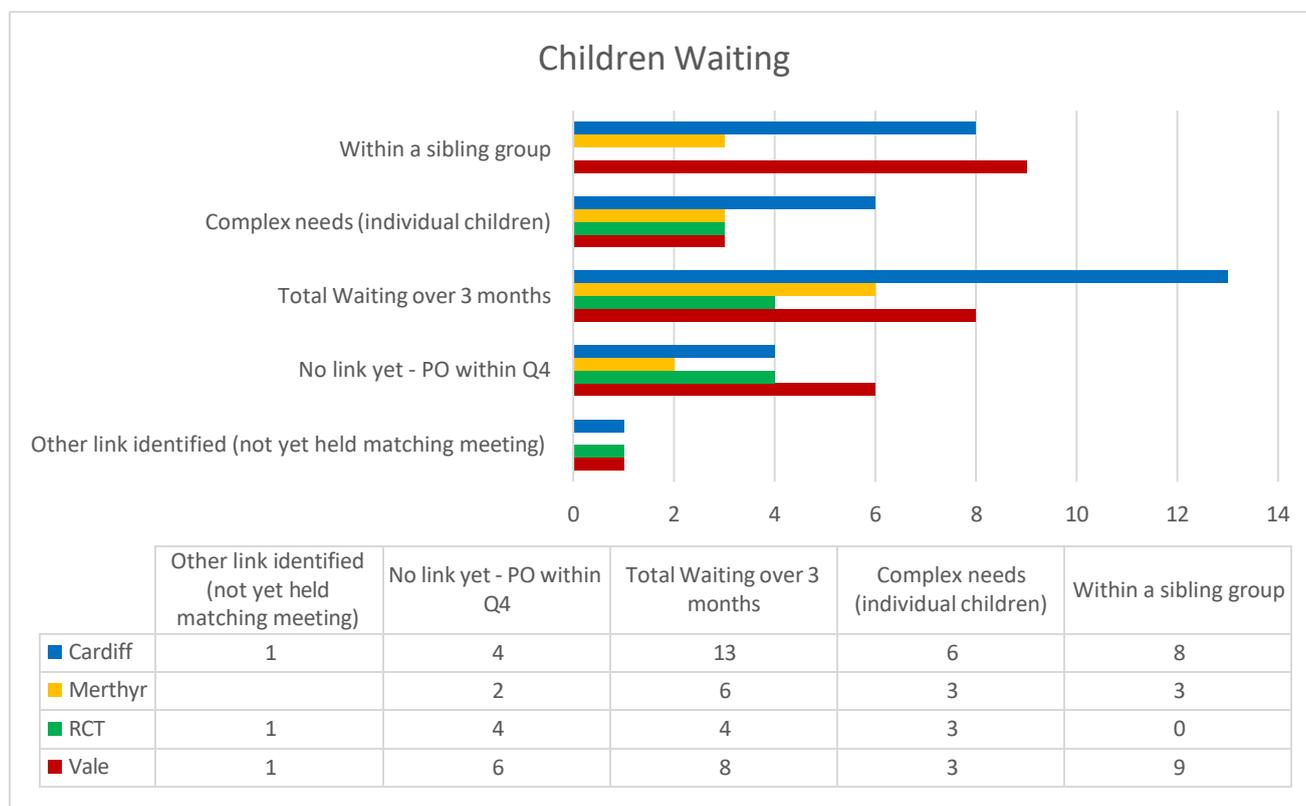


Additional Children Waiting Data:

Of the **50** where there is Active Family Finding they can be broken down by L.A. as follows:



The below outlines some of the features of the family finding for children waiting. It evidences the challenge of family finding for children who are being profiled within a sibling group (who represent 40% of our children waiting without a strong link). 30% of children waiting are also identified as having complex needs, the majority of these relate to medical/genetic needs rather than specifically relating to complex trauma/attachment needs.

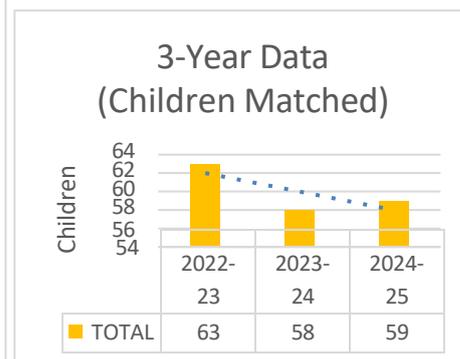
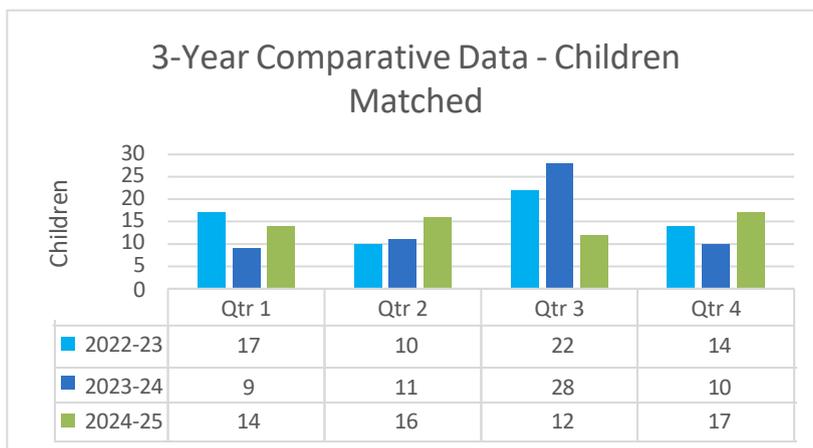
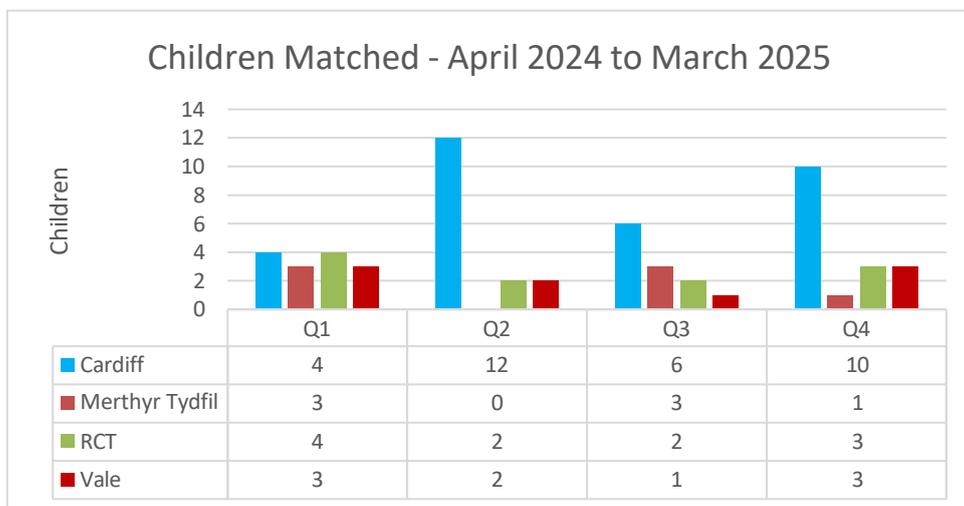


All those with additional complex needs are being profiled externally via LinkMaker and profiling to other agencies. Where spaces allow, they have also been profiled via the Wales national profiling event and spaces at Activity Days are considered on a case-by-case basis. For some children with additional complex needs the environment of an activity day is not always a positive experience for them and so cannot be used for every child. We have also made use of a national profile exchange event held in March 2025 which has resulted in some tentative links being explored.

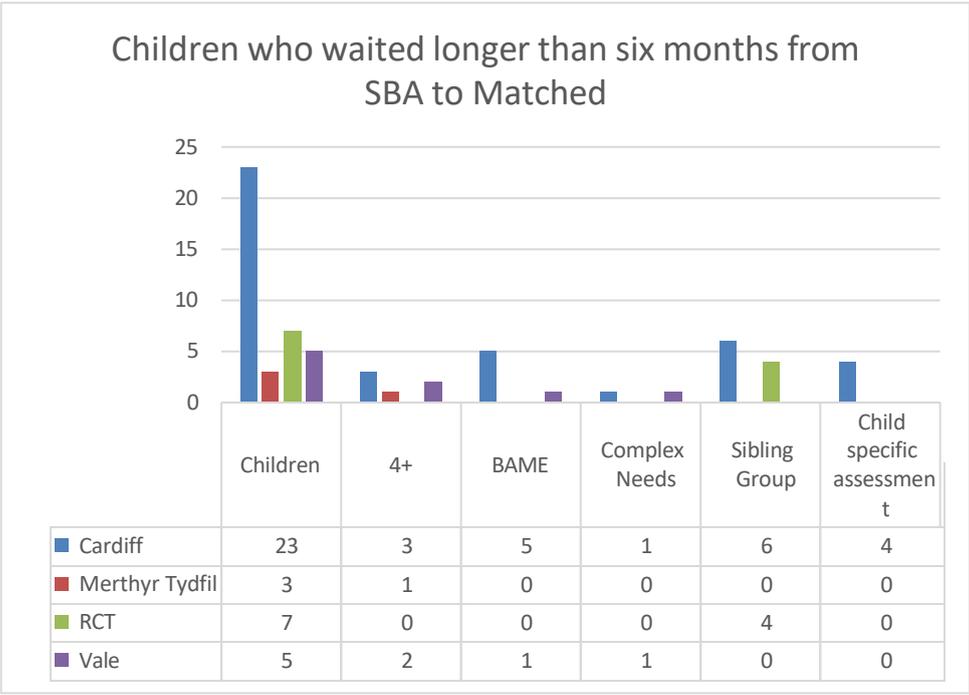
Children Matched

A total of **59** children were matched with adopters during 2024-25 (17 in Q4), the majority of which have now already been placed with their adopters with other placements due to take place shortly. Sadly 1 child matched with adopters during quarter 4 did not proceed to placement – introductions had commenced but ultimately one of the couple in this case did not feel able to proceed and so the match had to be ended. This child was able to remain with their existing foster carer to minimise the disruption this may have caused.

Matching activity remains on par with previous years and there are likely to be a high proportion of placements made in Q1 of 2025-26.

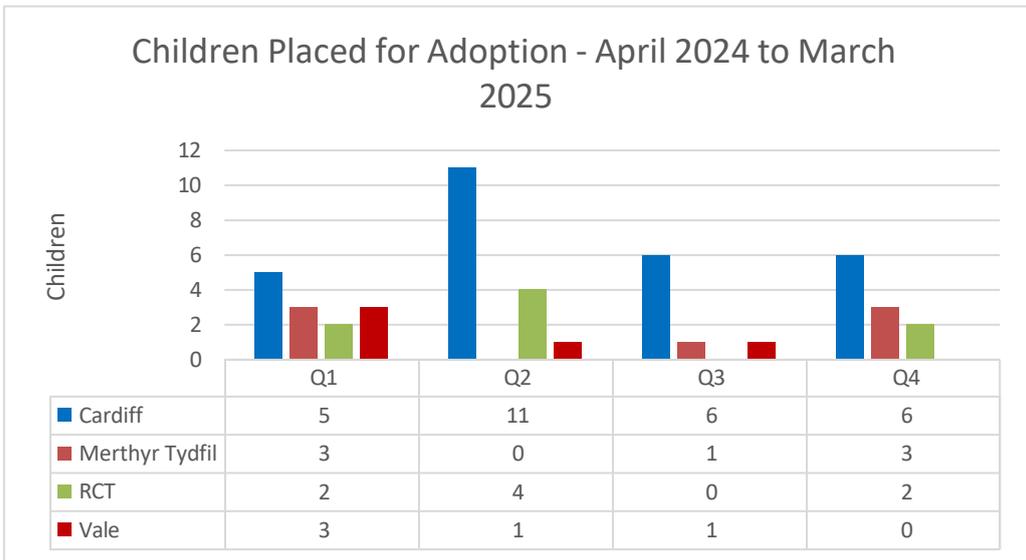


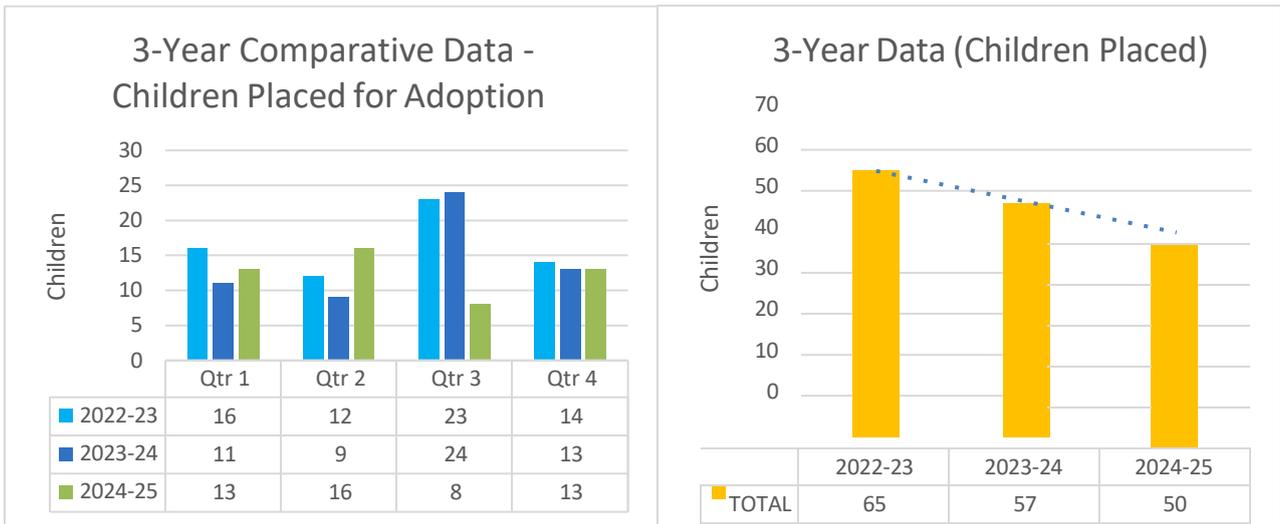
As the figures below show, 75% waited longer than 6 months from their SBA decision to Matching. This performance measure doesn't however account for the time elapsing between SBA decision and Placement Order. Positively included in this figure are 3 children who had a previous match not proceed after introductions breakdowns and one child placed again after an adoption disruption as well as four children where there was a child-specific assessment (foster carer or adopter of previous sibling) which needed to be completed prior to matching. It also includes two children where there was a significant legal delay preventing matching from proceeding.



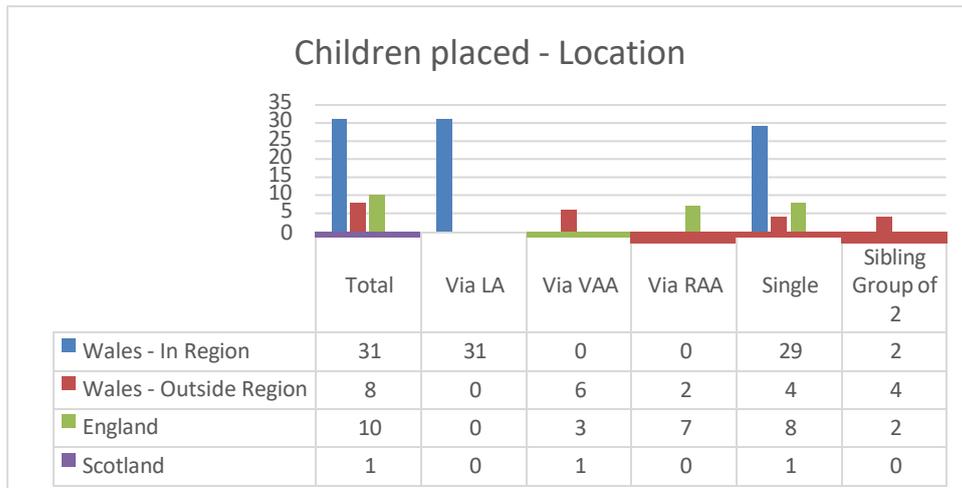
Children Placed

50 children have been placed for adoption this year. As observed below this shows a declining trend over the past few years in contrast to the increase in Placement Orders and therefore children requiring adoptive placements. The national challenges around family finding are outlined in the following section of this report.





As the following graphic shows, **62%** of our children have been able to be placed with in-house adopters. This is a decrease from past figures which represented in the 70-75% region and is in line with predictions made at the outset of the year about the greater reliance upon external placements due to the challenges in local adopter recruitment combined with higher numbers of children needing adoption.



'Modern Adoption' Considerations in the placement of children

Contact:

All but 3 children placed have both indirect and direct contact arrangements in place, however for the majority, these relate only to those with their foster carers (reflected in national performance figures as 'significant others'). The 3 children with no direct contact were either adopted by their former foster carers/WEP carers and so there are no previous carers to retain contact with.

In terms of other direct contact arrangements, around 1/3 of children placed in 2024-25 have a plan for direct contact with a birth relative, almost all of which are with birth siblings. 1 child is to have ongoing direct contact with a birth parent and 1 with another birth relative.

Contact remains a live discussion at all SBA decisions and is reviewed again at matching for children and the reasons for not being able to consider this are recorded. Currently the nationally devised contact assessment tool is either not being routinely used within the local authorities or not being provided at the point of the SBA decision/matching. This may be beneficial for local authorities to consider in enhancing the evidence of the extent of their considerations and decision-making.

Birth Relative Meetings:

A total of 13 children's adopters had initial meetings with birth parents during the year to date which represents around ¼ of children placed.

Life Journey:

Consistently with previous figures **100%** compliance in providing draft life journey materials was achieved at matching and also in the completion of a life journey checklist at the time of the SBA decision.

Historically the more challenging aspect of this has been the completion of finalised materials being with adopters by the 2nd adoption review and the more recent inclusion of a checklist at this stage also.

Positively **100%** compliance has been achieved in delivering the life journey books to adopters by the second adoption review. Compliance in relation to Later Life Letters by the 2nd review remains slightly below this target with 65% achieved by the 2nd review. There is currently a pilot being undertaken for some of the local authority life journey workers to prepare the later life letters as well given their experience and excellent compliance with the other life journey materials. Checklist data appears generally high now across the local authorities, however no data has been provided by Cardiff for the year and therefore their figure is set at 0% which lowers the regional return for QA checklists to just 30%.

M53 - The number of children with a Should Be Adopted (SBA) decision for whom the Life Journey Work planning checklist has been completed and reviewed at the SBA decision.

This figure is 100% for children with SBA decisions.
This is managed by the Family Finding Manager

M20a – Children where life journey material is provided at matching panel

	Matches	Life Journey Book	Later Life Letter	% Life Journey Book	% Later Life Letter
Cardiff	32	32	32	100%	100%
Merthyr	7	7	7	N/A	N/A
RCT	11	11	11	100%	100%
Vale	9	9	9	100%	100%
TOTAL	59	59	59	100%	100%

M20 - Children who had their 2nd review in the quarter		M21 - Children who had their 2nd review and life journey materials were available.				M54 – Life journey QA checklist completed		M55 – Quality of Life journey materials reaches acceptable standard as defined in the QA Checklist	
	2 nd Reviews Held	Life Journey Book at 2 nd review	Later Life Letter at 2 nd review	% Life Journey Book	% Later Life Letter	QA checklist completed at 2 nd review	% QA checklist completed	Acceptable standard	% Acceptable standard
Cardiff	15	15	8	100%	53%	0	0%	0	0%
Merthyr	3	3	3	100%	100%	3	100%	3	100%
RCT	1	1	1	100%	100%	1	100%	1	100%
Vale	4	4	3	100%	75%	3	75%	3	75%
TOTAL	23	23	15	100%	65%	7	30%	7	30%

Adoption Orders

58 Adoption Orders were granted in the year (14 in Q4). Adoption Orders show a slight decline from previous years in line with the reduced number of children placed.

