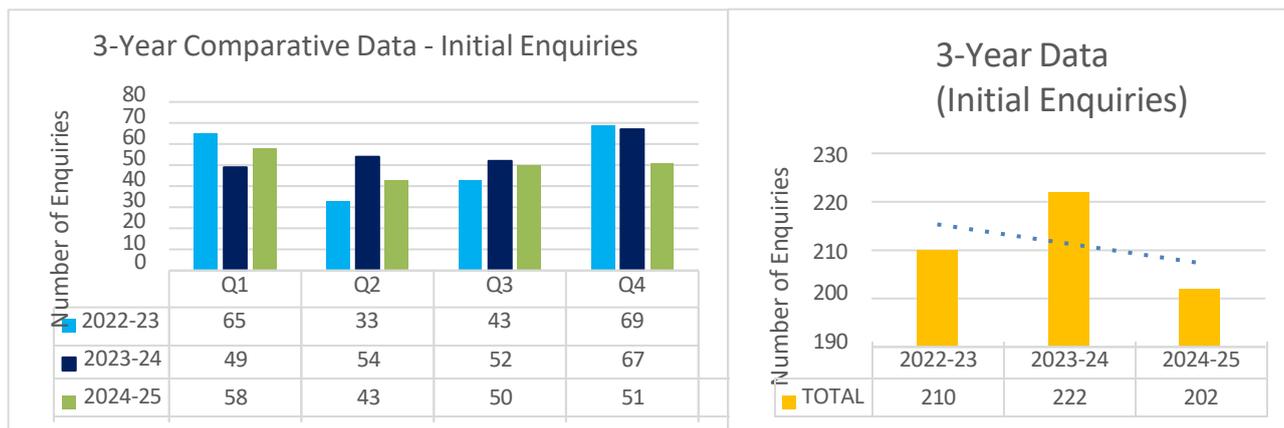


Appendix 2 Recruitment and Assessment

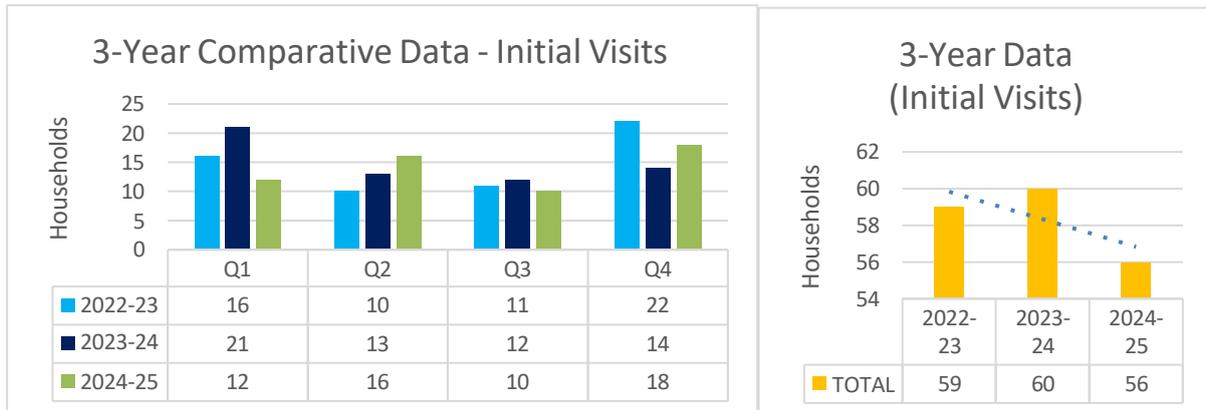
Adopters

202 enquiries have been received in the year to date, suggesting enquiry rates are holding steadily to previous years.



Initial Visits

56 initial visits have been completed in the year to date, showing a slight decline from recent years.



Whilst the number of enquiries and subsequent initial visits has been broadly stable for the past three years, what is stark in the reduction in the number of households making the decision to move forward and attend our 3-day preparation to adopt training course. Just 29 households attended our preparation training during 2024-25, this is compared with 43 households last year (2023-24) and 42 in 2022-23. It is uncommon for those who attend training not to proceed onwards with the assessment process. The issue seems to be individuals are submitting enquiries, finding out information and decide they are either not ready to move forward or postpone beginning the process for several months, often for very logical reasons (to conclude fertility journeys or to move homes or change jobs etc).

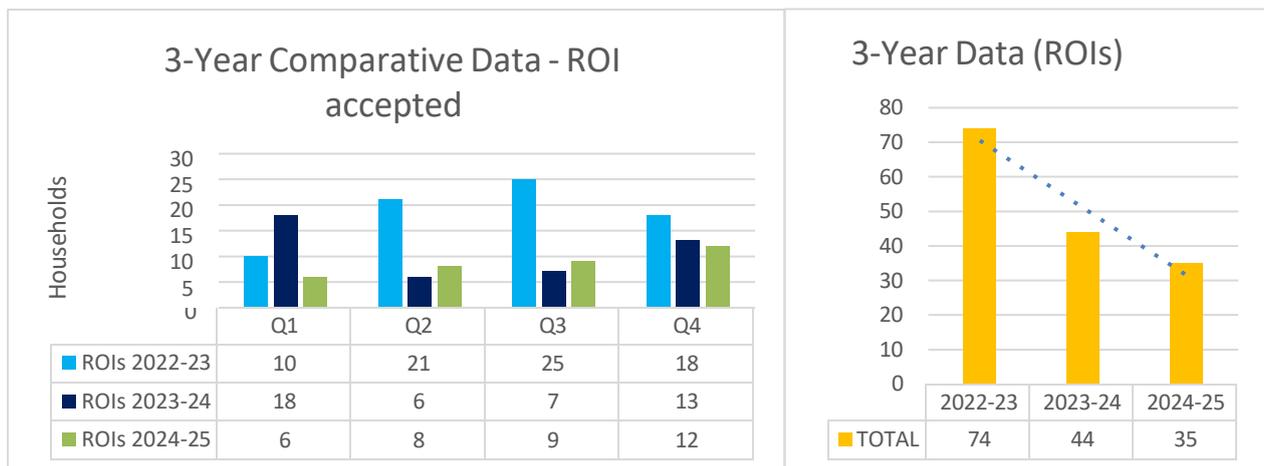
This is a trend recognised nationally, so much so, the NAS central team asked our Recruitment and Marketing Officer to lead a piece of national work collating data identifying the barriers to why people who have made an enquiry have decided not to progress onwards. From the available data, over 75% of respondents stated the following reasons:

- Their enquiry related to a desire to simply acquire information in anticipation of adopting the years ahead but are not ready now
- Cost of living
- Not having an available spare bedroom
- Not yet concluded fertility treatment

It is a source of frustration that these are factors broadly out of sphere of influence. Despite this, we have spent time reflecting on whether the content of our messaging and training is honest yet accessible. We work hard to obtain service user feedback, and we consistently see service users sharing the view that our messaging is honest, accessible and well-pitched.

2-Stage Model

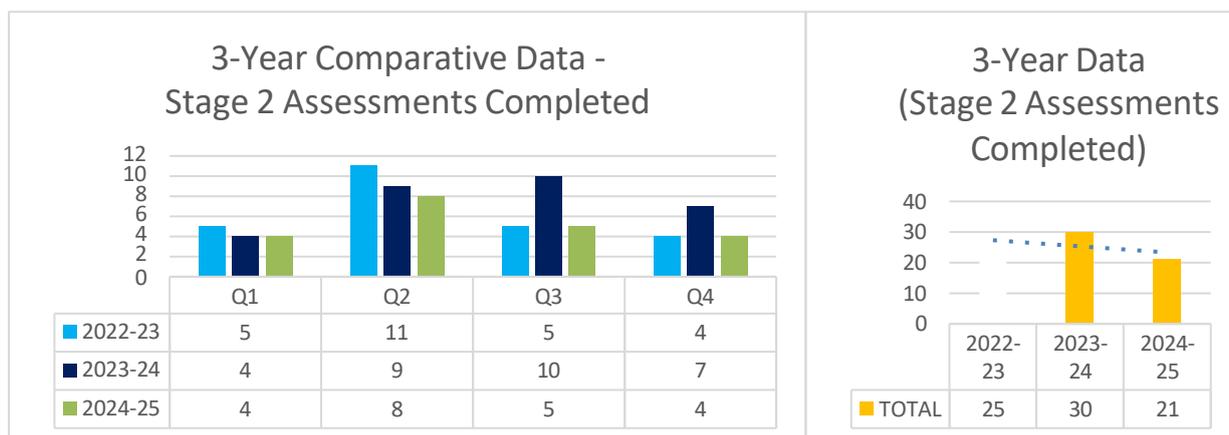
The 2-Stage model is now the embedded recruitment and assessment model. Adoption assessments are commenced following receipt of adopters' Registration of Interest (ROI), of which a further 12 were received during Quarter 4, taking the total figure to **35**. When considering comparative data, this reflects a significant drop in ROIs compared with previous years as can be observed below:



This reduction in ROIs will have implications for adopter approvals in the next year (2025- 26).

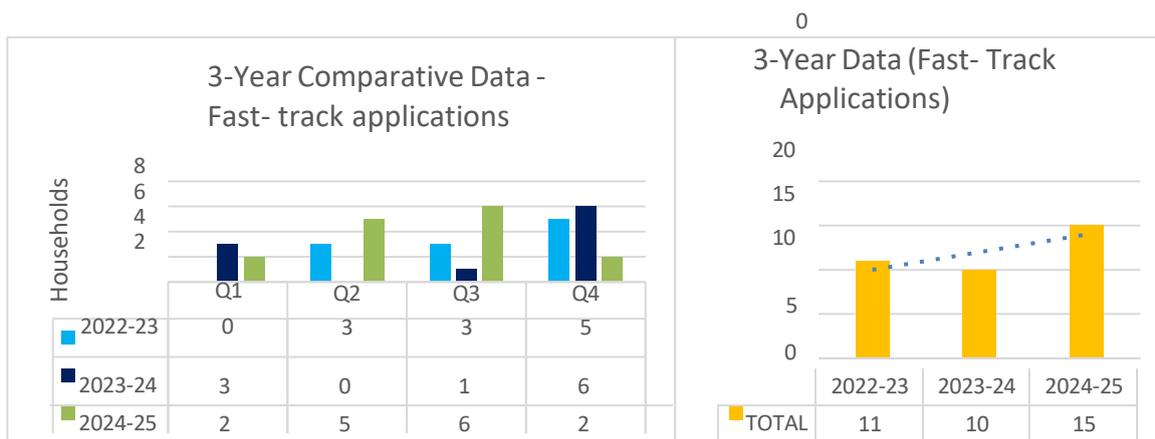
Stage 2 Applications

Stage 2 applications reflect those adopters who have progressed through initial checks into a full assessment. **21** Stage 2 Assessments were completed during the year which as the following graphic shows does represent a decrease in recent years. Positively, **100%** of Stage 2 assessments were completed within the expected timeframe of 4 months.



Fast-track applications.

This area of work has seen a rise and relates to applications from those who have previously adopted and foster carers applying to adopt a child in their care. **15** new fast-track applications were received during the year. Fast-track applications relate to those who have adopted previously or already-approved foster carers applying to adopt.

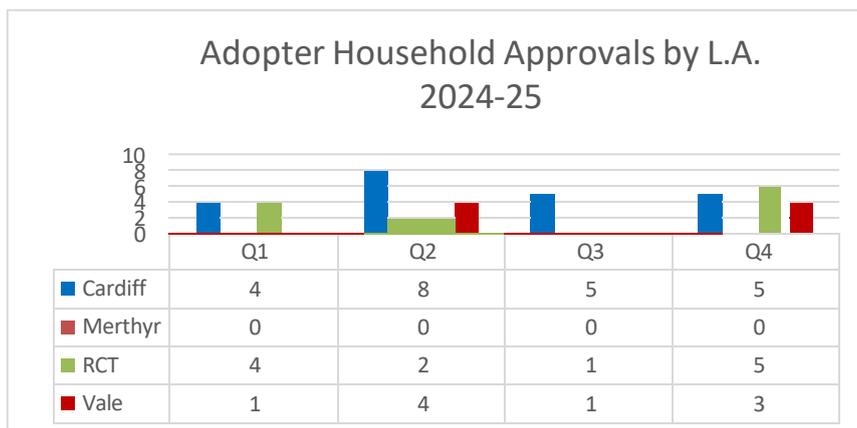


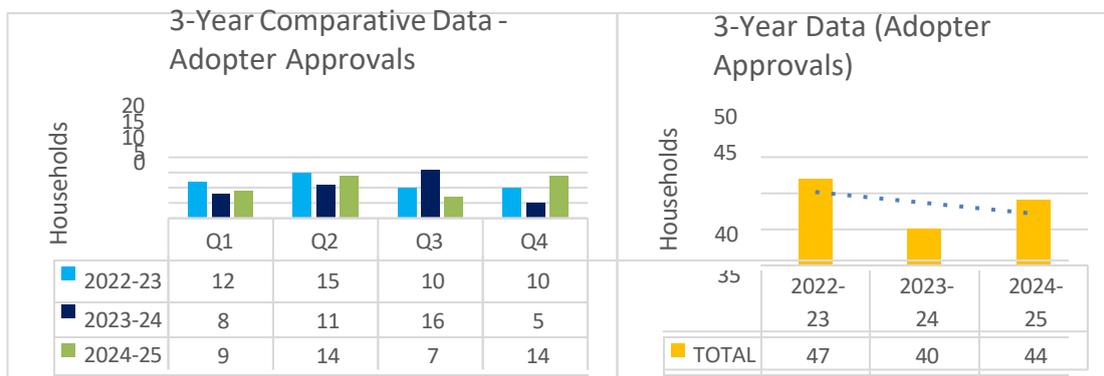
These assessments include child-specific assessments for foster carers applying to adopt a child in their care subject to a Placement Order. There are further child-specific assessments for second-time adopters applying to adopt their child's birth sibling in addition to other adopters hoping to be matched with a second child.

There has been a rise in these applications over the past year. It had been agreed that workers based within the Family Finding team would undertake the majority of these due to the loss of permanent staffing equating to 1.5 posts based within Recruitment and Assessment. This staffing reduction formed part of cost saving requirements agreed by management board and were achieved by deleting 1.5 posts when they became vacant. Whilst a number of these assessments have been absorbed, the continued rise in the number of Placement Orders has meant that this is no longer sustainable given the observable decrease in other adopter assessments. Consideration is now being given on a case-by-case basis as to which team can undertake the assessment, based on capacity.

Adopter Approvals

44 adopter households have been approved in the year to date (14 during Q4). This represents a small increase when compared to the previous year (40), although there remains a broad decline when compared to previous years, which is inline with national trends.





Out of the 44 households approved a specific proportion were approvals relating to specific children (3 were foster carers wishing to adopt specific children already in their care and 9 in respect of existing adoptive families wishing to adopt the subsequent siblings of previously adopted children). In comparison, the previous year, VVC approved 40 new households. Of those, 7 related to specific children (4 foster carers and 3 second time adopter assessments). In comparison, the number of '1st time' adopters available to consider children with care plans of adoption has the same for the past two years (33).

WEP

A small but growing area of our work has been Welsh Early Permanence (WEP). During 2024-25 a total of 9 households were dually approved for adoption and WEP (3 Cardiff, 3 RCT, 1 Merthyr Tydfil and 2 Vale of Glamorgan). Positively, 3 WEP placements were made (1 Merthyr Tydfil child, 1 RCT child and 1 Vale of Glamorgan child).

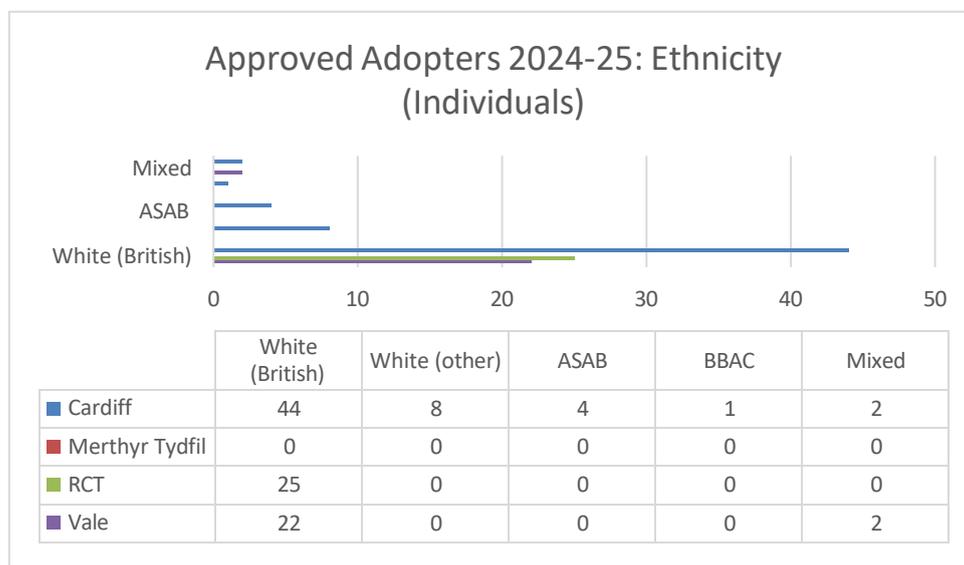
Out of the remaining 6 approved WEP households, 1 has had to withdraw owing to changes in their health, a second withdrew owing to change in their position (they no longer wished to adopt), 3 have secured traditional adoptive matches leaving 2 WEP families left available to consider suitable WEP children (1 RCT household and 1 Cardiff).

An area for focus in the year ahead is working more closely with key stakeholders within the 4 children's services frontline teams in order to identify suitable WEP child referrals in a timely manner, so opportunities are not missed.

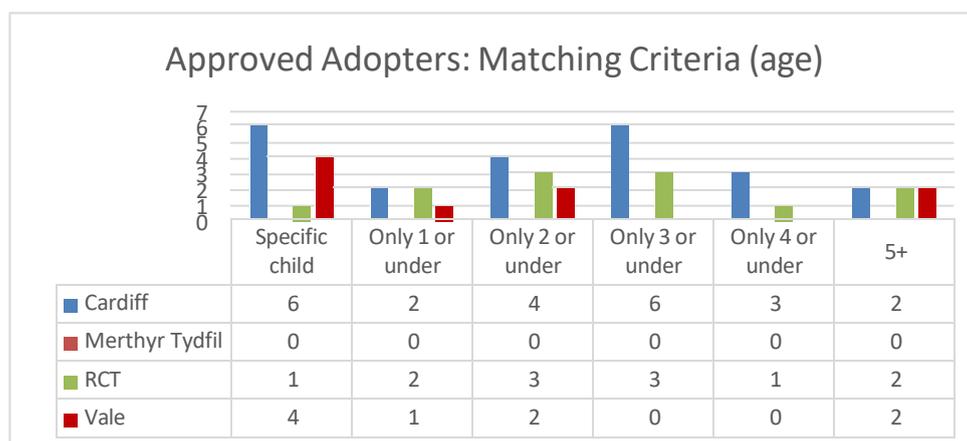
Demographics:

As observed below, of individual adopters approved **84%** are of White British heritage and therefore reflect a similar proportion of the children for whom we have placement orders.

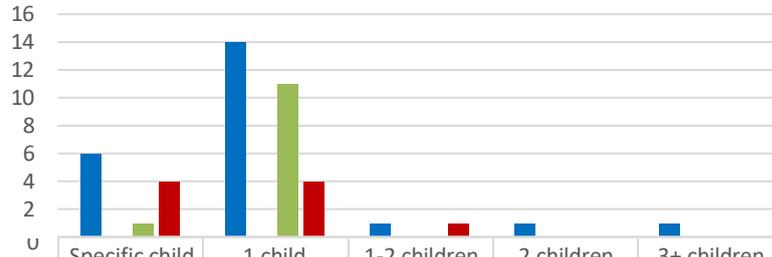
8% of adopters are of a BAME or Mixed heritage. Notably the adopters approved who are of a BAME heritage reside in the same local authority area, Cardiff (or the neighbouring authority the Vale of Glamorgan), as those BAME children for whom we are seeking an adoptive family. This is one of the ongoing challenges in terms of family finding for these children in achieving permanence within our own resources and often having to look externally.



We have also included the age-range and number of children adopters are being recommended for at approval. This can be compared with the children currently waiting and does identify a gap specifically for sibling groups at present in the needs that our adopters are able to consider.



Approved Adopters 2024-25: Matching Criteria (siblings)



	Specific child	1 child	1-2 children	2 children	3+ children
■ Cardiff	6	14	1	1	1
■ Merthyr Tydfil	0	0	0	0	0
■ RCT	1	11	0	0	0
■ Vale	4	4	1	0	0