

## **Annual Report and Accounts 2024 - 2025**

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## **Chair's Introduction**

*[1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025]*

*In many ways, this year has been one of transitions. Firsts and lasts. Both internally as a staff and trustee team, but perhaps also reflective of many of our members' journeys from tweens to teenhood, to early adulthood and beyond.*

*As at March 2025, we are a 1,700-strong membership, from across over 100 local authorities, with post-placement members with children in age ranges from early years to early adulthood. This wealth and depth of adoption experience extends into all of our services, especially our Peer Support, which you can read further about in the report that follows.*

*We would not be able to run the programmes we do, without our dedicated volunteers - some of whom have been with us from the start, and some of whom have had to step away to make space for other commitments, as the transitional demands ebb and flow. I want to thank all of our volunteers for the hours, months or years of dedication you have given to our community.*

*Enormous gratitude is also due to our staff team. This year, we bid a fond farewell to our first ever paid staff member, Lisa Barker, who stepped down from her role as Director after five years working for We Are Family. Lisa's seminal contributions to growing our charity will continue to have a lasting impact and we want to thank her for her visionary leadership and exceptional organisational talents. This in turn, marks the beginning of a new chapter with a new Director, who we plan to have in post by Summer 2025.*

*And soon I will also be passing the baton on to a new Chair of Trustees, as my six year term comes to an end in November 2025. I continue to chair the board of trustees of the charity in the meantime, including through a Chair recruitment and training phase in Autumn 2025, however this does mark my final Annual Report and Introductory Letter.*

*Which brings us to legacy. What impact do we want We Are Family to have? What changes do we want to see in the sector? How do we best equip our children to thrive? I am proud of the charity's many achievements, however for now, I would like to draw your attention to our highlights from 2024-25:*

- *Members self-reported improvement in confidence, resilience and wellbeing in our annual survey*
- *Our groups delivered over 125 face-to-face events across 50 physical locations*
- *We offered over 50 online meeting opportunities*
- *We ensured user-led services were maintained, that information was regularly sent to volunteers and that the volunteer strategy and programme delivery continued to be developed through co-production*
- *We delivered 2 x 12 hour bespoke peer facilitator training courses to volunteers*
- *We secured new multi-year grant/s and diversified our funding base*
- *WAF evolved the staff team and secured two annual paid internship programmes in partnership with the University of Reading, building on a long-standing relationship.*
- *We successfully piloted 'pay what you can' WAF Talks webinars*
- *We launched the Education Support Programme consisting of a Peer Support Group, Mini Talks Programme and Digital Toolkit for resources and signposting.*
- *We also launched WAF Plus, our unique cultural connections programme & our bespoke Events Feature which makes booking onto events easier than ever.*
- *We leveraged our partnerships to raise the profile of member issues and influence policy development, particularly through appointment to sit on the Adopter Reference Group at the Department for Education.*

*Looking ahead, we will continue to expand the range of peer support groups with the offering of identity and interest-based communities, such as Teens & Tweens; Global majority and dual heritage adopters; and other groups as requested via our feedback channels. We will also build on the important work of the Education Support Programme for both our members, and professionals that would benefit from further understanding on the need for trauma-informed approaches.*

*We will also continue to deliver our year-round digital programme of WAF Talks and the next season of our Podcast, both funded by Adopt London, and now in their sixth year. This season of the Adoption Shared podcast is a theme chosen by our members - "Exploring Adoption, Identity, Belonging and Literature" - and will have a focus on helping adoptive parents have meaningful conversations with their children.*

*On the horizon, we also have plans for our first WAF Big Day Out which will be held this summer, in person, at ZSL London Zoo. Combining a family-friendly workshop, with a community picnic, and free tickets to the Zoo, this is set to be our biggest gathering of WAF members (circa 200!) since our inception. We hope to programme more opportunities for families to connect and forge networks as both parents and children / young people.*

*In our members' own words:*

*"I'd like all adopters to join WAF :) I think one of the best resources for me has been meeting other adopters and learning about their experiences. I tend to be more open now about adopting the girls, and it's incredible the number of adopters and adoptees I meet randomly, who then have amazing stories to share. There is an awesome community out there, and it would be great to make sure as many as possible have access to WAF's expertise and resources."*

*We will also continue to utilise our collaborative approach to working with partners, and leverage our influence at policy tables, to amplify the adopter voice, champion investment, and inspire our vision for a well-resourced, suitably informed, connected adoption community that supports the whole family to thrive.*

*By the time the next annual report comes around, we will have a new Director and Chair of Trustees in post and - along with support from our Board of Trustees, staff team and volunteers - I have no doubt there will be many more milestones to celebrate and ambitions achieved. Thank you for your continued contributions to building our community.*

*You can read more details about many of the points above in the following formal trustees' report.*



Mark Hoult-Allen  
Chair

*The trustees of We Are Family CIO present their tenth annual report, covering the twelve months ended 31 March 2025 ('the year').*

## Reference and Administrative Details

The charity, We Are Family, is a charitable incorporated organisation which was registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2015. The charity's registration number is 1163318. The charity does not have any offices or other premises; its registered address is 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3AX.

The names of all those who served as the charity's trustees during the year, and subsequently, are given below (in alphabetical order by surname), with the start and end dates of the term of office of each given, where relevant:

Name	Start	End
Amy Burns-Thomson	01.06.23	
Esi Cathline	01.03.22	
Mike Clarke	01.03.22	
Liz Davenport (previously Hocter)	08.02.21	
Pauline Gillbanks	14.05.24	
Anita Goveas	01.06.23	
Mark Hoult-Allen	18.11.19	
Diane McGrath	14.09.20	
Sophie Miller	01.09.23	01.04.24
Sobia Shamim	08.02.21	01.04.24
Andrew Taylor-Dawson	08.06.20	
Claire Walsh	16.07.24	
Anna Willow	01.03.22	

## Governance and Management

We Are Family existed as an unincorporated organisation before its registration as a charitable incorporated organisation in August 2015. It was originally founded in 2013 by a small group of adoptive parents to provide locally based peer-to-peer support for adoptive parents. From one group in Hackney and Islington, the organisation grew to seven groups in just over two years. Registration as an incorporated charity was sought to support the organisation's growth, facilitate future fundraising and consolidate its existing reputation within the adoption field.

The charity's constitution provides for the appointment of trustees by the board of trustees, having regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective

administration of the charity. The charity's trustees from time to time are its only legal members (to be distinguished from adopters and prospective adopters who have joined one of the charity's groups and who are referred to elsewhere in this report as 'members').

During the year, the board maintained an ongoing trustee recruitment process with the appointment of two new trustees. The trustees wish to thank Anne-Marie Strong and Sophie Miller who left the board during the year.

The board has four regular board meetings a year whilst also constituting two Away Days each year as board meetings, which means the board meets formally at least six times a year. Meetings during the year continued to be focussed on overseeing the strategy and operations of the charity and the provision of services to members, setting up and reviewing policies and systems for running the charity; and securing funding to ensure the sustainability of the charity.

The work of the board is supported by one standing committee; the Finance, Fundraising and Resources Committee. The previous Programmes and Strategy Committee has been dissolved and the workstreams have been incorporated into the Director role and ongoing Board responsibilities.

## Objectives and Activities

We Are Family's objects are to promote the health and wellbeing of prospective adopters and adopters. This covers the predictable stresses, strain and sense of isolation that comes with being an adoptive parent and in parenting traumatised children. There is a lack of targeted and tailored peer support for adoptive parents during the adoption journey and so We Are Family's key objective is the improved wellbeing of adopters through regular peer support opportunities both online and in person.

The charity's vision is: "We want to see a world in which adoptive parents and prospective adopters feel connected, benefit from peer support and are part of a community which enables them to thrive." Its mission is to work "to ensure that adoptive parents and prospective adopters are part of a community, offering each other support, from a place of lived experience, through the highs and lows of parenting".

The activities of We Are Family fall into the following areas:

- Connection & Relationship - Creating opportunities for connection between adopters
- Information & Inspiration - An extension of direct peer support, gathering member recommendations and experience
- Amplifying voices - Using the voice of the community to support calls for improved support for adoptive parents/families

Our strategic plan for 2023-26 are shown below in Figure 1.

*Figure 1*

SA1: Build & maintain strong foundations "A strong organisation"

SA2: Deepen & expand reach and engagement "More members who are engaged and co-producing"

SA3: Grow targeted service offer "Getting more stuff relevant to them"

SA4: Become a known voice on adopter issues "Sharing their experiences to effect change"

## **Achievements and Performance**

### **Infrastructure and Governance**

**Staffing** - In December 2024, we welcomed back our Head of Operations from parental leave and were delighted to have raised funds to retain our Operations Assistant cover, in the new role of Development & Partnerships Manager, working alongside our Community Development & Engagement Manager and Programme & Content Manager. We also retained our summer intern - originally funded via the University of Reading - in a fixed-term part-time role of Marketing & Communications Manager.

This year marked a period of many transitions, as we bid a fond farewell to our Director - and the charity's first ever paid staff member - who had been with We Are Family since 2019. The first few months of 2025, saw us settle into our new team configuration and begin the recruitment process for our incoming Director, who will join the team in Spring / Summer 2025.

We want to take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Lisa Barker for her seminal 5.5 years of service with We Are Family.

**System upgrades** - This year's Member Hub developments included launching our Event page feature. This provides a simple way for members to see and book events; and for our staff team to more easily promote opportunities and track engagement and attendance. In turn, this has released our volunteers to focus more on delivering peer support and hosting events. We have also begun work on integrating our Education Support Programme, including a digital toolkit with downloadable templates, advice and signposting.

**Scaling model development** - Building on our pilot work with a Regional Adoption Agency in the South East, we have further developed a framework for partnership working and are delighted to be extending our digital and in-person offers further North, through our partnership with Yorkshire Adoption Agency and most recently Adoption in Merseyside. Our attendance and presentation at the Consortium of Adoption Agencies Conference in November 2024, strengthened our position as an organisation that delivers excellent peer support within the sector and has led to multiple dialogues with potential stakeholders.

**Volunteers** - Learning from feedback from our volunteers (who are primarily also adoptive parents and therefore time-restricted) we have continued to evolve WAF's volunteer programme to:

- a) Reallocate all admin tasks to our staff team, allowing our volunteers to focus on delivering 'on the day' support.
- b) Expand our range of 'volunteer profiles' to encourage ad-hoc support through roles such as seasonal and / or occasional volunteer.
- c) Provide additional support and gratitude initiatives, alongside our ongoing Peer Support Training & Supervision, to further nurture and celebrate our dedicated team of volunteers.

## Service Delivery

Our in-person and online peer support offer remains at the heart of We Are Family. We remain true to our roots, by providing talking groups, coffee mornings, and social meet-ups alongside enhancing our provision to include more playgroups, walk and talk sessions, and an array of family-friendly events.

### Introducing WAF Plus

This year, we formalised our cultural connections programme, branding this as 'WAF Plus'. Through WAF Plus, we partner with local organisations to host free or heavily discounted experiences for our members. Activities have included football matches, dance classes, National Trust experiences, pantomimes, planetarium shows and climbing. Such opportunities create safe, fun and relaxed environments for adoptive families to connect with one another.

#### - Feedback from our members who attended WAF Plus events, 2024-25:

*"What a superb evening! This was our first WAF event - you have started with a high bar!! My son was thrilled - his first panto but a safe environment to figure this out!!"*

*"The match experience was amazing, my son was ecstatic, he had a very good time!! Many thanks for the opportunity, we really appreciated it!!"*

*"I have never made bread on a campfire and it was so much fun! Great for the kids to try new experiences - all 3 elements they had never done before (or me!) and they laughed and had fun and it was great to be in the outdoors."*

### Launching the Education Support Programme

In late 2024, we launched a new provision, for the benefit of all of our members across the range of stages and localities. The Education Support Programme has been created following many years of member feedback about the challenges the education system can present for care-experienced children. Funded by the Educational Opportunity Foundation, this is a multi-faceted project comprising bespoke webinars, support group sessions, podcasts, mini talks, articles and resources published throughout the year. Together they form a digital toolkit, designed to empower and equip members with the knowledge and tools to help families navigate the education system.

By the end of March 2025, we reached the half-way point of the Education Support Programme, and our provision included:

- 5 mini talks:
  - *Talking To Your Children About Boundaries* with Anna Linde
  - *Race, Identity, and the Search for Belonging in Adoption* with Dr Alexandra Evans O'Neal
  - *Navigating School as Both Adoptee and Adoptive Parent* with Fiona Myles
  - *Navigating Education as an Adoptee* with Anthony Lynch
  - *Helping Your Adopted Child Feel Safe* with Simon Benn
- Season 5 of the *Adoption Shared* podcast, produced in partnership with Adopt London. This 8-episode season focused on Education support, covering topics including:
  - Building Trauma-Informed classrooms
  - Preparing for school

- Managing emotional and behavioural challenges within education settings
- Tips for supporting home-learning
- 2 webinars covering EHCPs, attachment, and trauma-informed approaches
- 2 blog posts sharing lived experiences and practical strategies
- A Monthly Education Peer Support Group, launched in March and hosted by long-time WAF volunteer and now paid associate, providing a peer led space to discuss EHCPs, transitions, school training, and education challenges
- Feedback from members who have engaged with our Education Support Programme so far includes:

*"I've grown in confidence, as a parent and as an adoption/education advocate. Through WAF links we've managed to get real change and training going at our school."*

*"This was a fantastic presentation. The speaker has shared from the heart and shared valuable strategies."*

*"I would like to try and listen in to more WAF talks because each time I do, it reaffirms to me the value of being an adoptive parent and the joy it brings along the way."*

*"Wow! Very relevant and timely information. It's good to know you are not alone and to hear strategies that have helped others."*

The continuation of this programme will see us build on the above, covering topics, such as understanding trauma and attachment, accessing the support you may be entitled to and navigating identity and heritage discussions. We hope this curation of thematic content will serve as a blueprint for future areas of focused support i.e. Contact with birth / first families; Life story work; Teens & Tweens etc.

We are also proud of the following achievements this year:

#### Peer Support Opportunities & Family Friendly Events

Adopters/prospective adopters connect across various groups. We train and supervise our Peer Support Group Facilitators via our bespoke programme, and they go on to deliver a variety of support via:

- 12 adopter led peer support groups across London, the South East, and developing into the North West.
- 3 identity and / or interested based-groups (Singles, Prospectives & Early Permanence, Education) with a further 3 developing
- Over 125 Face to face meet-ups across 20 physical locations
- Over 50 online meeting opportunities offered annually
- Parent-only meetings with an average attendance of 12 members
- Family-friendly meet-ups with an average attends of 25
- 2 x 12 hour bespoke peer facilitator training courses benefiting 10 volunteers, and 8 Supervision sessions available to our volunteer cohort. Feedback included:

- Feedback from our Peer Support Training Participant & Volunteers, 2024-25

*"This is training that I have truly valued and has benefited me personally as well as within the volunteer role"*

*"[The volunteer training] is certainly one of the best things I've done in the last couple of years in terms of personal and professional development".*



*"The training really is something I'd advocate everybody doing. It has equipped me with skills that I use in the whole of my life, not just with WAF"*

### Digital WAF Talks programme and The Member Hub

We continue to host our regular programme of online webinars / workshops, Podcasts, Blogs resource recommendations and articles via our WAF Member Hub.

'WAF Talks' webinar programme - connecting thought-leaders with our members

- 107 WAF Talks available 'on-demand' in the Hub
- Over 8,000 views of Talks live and on-demand since we began [in 2021]
- Over 900 members engage with the Hub each quarter

'Adoption Shared' Podcast - engaging the extended adoption community with personal stories of adoption that inform, support and amplify the 'adopter voice'.

- 19,413 downloads to 31st March 2025; a 50% growth YOY
- 34 episodes released, with most recent 'Season 5 - focusing on Education as part of our Education Support Programme.'

An inspiring and informative blog, regularly written by adoptive parents, with standout pieces including:

- Educator and award-winning author Robin D. Stevens contributed to our Education Support Programme, exploring identity, learning, and the emotional challenges adopted children may face in school through the story of 'Ezra and the Great Bin Jah Meen'.  
<https://wearefamilyadoption.org.uk/blog/adopted-and-neurodiverse-the-importance-of-representation-in-childrens-literature/>
- Teacher and adoptive parent Jody Tranter shared practical strategies for managing homework as part of our Education Support Programme.  
<https://wearefamilyadoption.org.uk/blog/oh-no-not-homework-by-jody-tranter/>

### Influencing and promotion of adopter voices

We continue to advocate for change through our relationships with service providers on key issues such as the lack of trauma-informed training in schools, the complexity of the adoption process and the particular systemic disadvantages for Black children in care and the issues facing Black adopters. This year, we handed over the coordination of the WAF working group as part of Adopt London's Black Adoption Project, to allow for non-members and non-adopters to join and propel this movement. We Are Family remain in close connection with the project and outcomes, which can be found here:

<https://adoptlondon.org.uk/want-to-adopt/our-children/black-adoption-project/>

We continue to champion the voice of adoptive families through our seat on the Adopter Reference Group (ARG) at the Department for Education. This forum enables us to share best practice, raise concerns, and bring the lived experiences of our members directly into the heart of policy development. Over the past year, we've contributed to key discussions on improving post-qualification training for social workers through the Early Career Framework, as well as shaping updates to the Adoption Support Plan.

In addition, we are invited to attend and inform the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Adoption and Permanence (APPG); a group of MPs and Peers dedicated to raising awareness about adoption issues, improving policies for adopted children and families, and supporting best practices across the sector. This year, our members have contributed to the *Adoptee Voices Inquiry* to gather insights from Young Adoptees aged 13 - 25 to ensure their experiences help shape future policies on adoption.

Looking ahead, significant updates to the level of government investment into the Adoption & Special Guardianship Support Fund look to be on the horizon. We will continue to signpost, represent and advocate for our members, whilst remaining politically neutral in order to best work with, and affect, long-term change and policy-making level.

## Membership & Impact

In both 2019 (original database launch) and 2021 (database v2 launch) there were significant system changes which meant that member totals dropped down and then up again, as some current members did not rejoin the new system but new people joined. We have also periodically cleaned up data and removed accounts, so our membership totals go up and down, rather than just up. However, our growth is clearly shown in the table below (Figure 2).

*Figure 2*

Year Ended	Membership Numbers
31st Dec 2019	449
31st Dec 2020	735
31st Dec 2021	637
31st Dec 2022	1054
To 31st July 2023	1252
To 31st May 2024	1479
To 31st March 2025	1697

In 2024/25, our volunteer numbers grew by 14%, slightly under our annual target of 20% year on year growth.

In terms of Impact, this year we have evolved how we collect membership data. Historically, we have invited our members to complete an Annual Members' Survey, to gather feedback across our services, communications and to help shape the next season of programmes and support. However, to boost engagement, we have moved to offer monthly 'Pulse Surveys'. These involve asking 1-2 simple questions, via email, which provide an accurate and efficient monitoring mechanism based around a key ask.

From our Pulse Surveys across 2024-25, we have received the following feedback across our mission pillars as below:

### Connection & Relationship highlights

- 15 adopter led peer support groups, with a further 3 developing
- 250+ hours of in-person meet up opportunities taking place across over 20 physical locations
- 100+ hours of online meet up opportunities
- 40 hours of peer support training & supervision delivered to our cohort of 40+ volunteers

- 50% of members said they had made a connection with another adopter through We Are Family.
- 59% of members felt more confident in their parenting knowledge and abilities since joining WAF.

- Member feedback across 2024-25 includes:

"The friends that I have made are my true support and family to my family! I could not do this without them!"

"WAF parent peer support groups have been a lifeline to many in our group".

"Monthly single adopter groups have been the best support to keep me sane, during and after the legal process of adopting. In the longer term, I think it is more beneficial than the ASF funded therapy. They helped to normalise my experience in a gently empathic way."

### Information & Inspiration highlights

- Our digital library of WAF Talks content has now been viewed over 8000 times
- 34 Podcast episodes have now been released reaching almost 20,000 total downloads
- Almost 1,000 members engage with our Hub each quarter
- 82% said they had access to more information and resources about adoption since joining
- 50% said they have listened to the Adoption Shared podcast

- Member feedback across 2024-25 includes:

"[The Adoption Shared] podcasts cover a variety of topics and are genuinely insightful. The webinars are excellent as well. I find comfort in knowing our situation is not unique, especially after hearing some of the shared stories and experiences."

"Absolutely everything was unbelievably helpful! My 'tree of supporters' at the start was in full bloom- 5 years down the line it's more like a twig with only a couple of very precious baubles. Honestly I feel less alone from listening to you all. THANK YOU!!"

### Amplifying Voices

Through the Adopter Reference Group (ARG) at the Department for Education, We Are Family has played an active role in addressing ongoing challenges in adopter recruitment, highlighting both barriers and examples of effective practice. Our advocacy has also extended to cross-departmental work with the Department of Health, ensuring the health and wellbeing - both physical and mental - of adopted children remains a central consideration in policy discussions.

We have also brought back regular updates from the Department for Education and Adoption England to ensure our members remain informed, plus contributions from relevant studies, including the findings from the POTATO Group on the long-term impact of trauma on adoptive families, and observations from Al Coates' Churchill Foundation work offering a broader perspective on support strategies for adoptive, kinship, and foster families caring for children with complex needs.

- Feedback from our Deputy Chair and Member, 2024-25:

*"As an adoptive parent, I see first-hand how our advocacy work makes a real difference, turning lived experiences into changes that improve support for families like mine. As a Trustee, I'm proud that we bring our members' voices right to the table where policies are shaped."*

We continue to ask our membership how we can best serve our community and are guided by these responses. Recent examples include:

*When asked: "What do you feel is the biggest challenge you currently face in relation to adoption?" the repeated themes (in order of number of mentions) includes:*

- 1. Education support
- 2. Teens & Tweens Years
- 3. Young Adults / Transitions
- Plus:
- Funding limitations
- Contact challenges
- Transracial challenges
- Sibling challenges
- Child to Parent Violence (CPV)
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

In turn, this has led to We Are Family:

> 1. Creating and launching the Education Support Programme (as detailed previously)  
> 2. Beginning a peer support offering for parents of Teens & Tweens (currently focused on single parents), and programming more WAF Plus events that cater to this age group i.e. skate parks, rockclimbing, stadium tours etc).

> 3. Nurturing volunteer appetite via our Peer Support Training Programme, to host a pilot peer group for parents of young adults.

Plus:

> We Are Family invested in a 1-year subscription for all of our members to Identity Learning; a startup focused on rethinking post-placement support for adoptive and foster families, especially in transracial families.

> We are in early talks with our partners, Yorkshire Adoption Agency, about creating a working group to better understand the experience of dual ethnicity and Black adopters.

In addition, we continue to ensure our Digital Programme represents the myriad of topics and perspectives across the adoption experience, including the remaining themes as listed above.

## Fundraising and Partnerships

We acknowledge that one organisation alone cannot change adoption support, advocate and inform. We believe a whole system approach is needed. We are committed to sharing knowledge, learning and lessons beyond our own context. To this end, we work to build strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, including Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs), Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs), other charities in the sector and policy decision-makers, to share our members' voices and promote the critical importance of peer connections.

We Are Family is also very grateful to various trusts and foundations, organisations and individuals who provided funds to support the continued development of the charity.

- Adopt London (RAA) continued to fund peer support groups and digital resource development in 2024-25 as part of our grant agreement which extends to 2027. Adopt London also generously supports the Adoption Shared podcast and seasonal activity for our groups across London.
- A partnership with Yorkshire Adoption Agency (Voluntary Adoption Agency - VAA) is now in its second year. Beginning with digital access, and now including in-person activities via our WAF Plus programme, we hope to grow peer support activity in this area.
- We are in the final stages of forming a new partnership with Adoption in Merseyside (Regional Adoption Agency - RAA) which, along with digital membership, will see us nurture existing volunteers and grow additional peer support activity in the area.
- Adoption Partnership South East (RAA) made a contribution to supporting our peer support activity across the region of Bexley, Kent and Medway, following their initial investment across 2022-24.
- We are in receipt of a grant for Garfield Weston to support our core cost; and are in the second year of a substantial 3-year grant with City Bridge Trust (2023-26), allowing us to advance our service delivery year on year.
- A grant from the Educational Opportunity Foundation has allowed us to pilot our Education Support Programme, benefiting all member stages.
- We were delighted to receive additional grants from Beacon Lodge, Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust, Gillian Stevenson, Heathrow Community Fund, Henry Smith and the Lyles Local Fund.
- Our fourth crowdfunding effort via the Big Give Christmas Challenge saw us raise just over £4,536 (£2,500 of which was received via a pledge from Adopt London).
- University of Reading has funded a paid internship for another talented student, for the third consecutive year.
- We received the final instalment of The Tudor Trust Development Fund which marks the end of our funding period, for the near future. We are extremely grateful for the transitional support the Tudor Trust has given We Are Family since its early days.
- Partnership discussions continue with various other charities, Regional Adoption Agencies and Voluntary Adoption Agencies.

## Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties and in offering peer-to-peer adopter-led support, through its local and cross-London groups and online service provision.

We Are Family supports the well-being of both adoptive parents and prospective adopters. This is of benefit to both individual adopters, in reducing the stresses and strains of adopting, and their families. Membership of We Are Family, and access to its support network and other services, is offered on an open basis, the only requirement being verification of adopter status by a social worker (at Stage 2 of the adoption process or further).

The charity offers its services free and arranges activities so that they can be accessible to as many parents as possible, and to those with children of a variety of ages. We Are Family strives to be open to all sections of the community and sees developing this as a key aspect

of its work. We Are Family continued to reimburse parents attending the single parent support groups for childcare costs, so that those members could more easily attend. The charity also continues to explore how to meet the needs of specific communities, such as those from the global majority and trans-racial adopters.

## **Financial Review**

### **Summary**

During the year ended 31 March 2025, We Are Family raised £170,652 (prior year: £125,438) and spent £149,808 (prior year: £114,557).

### **Sources of income**

£47,325 of restricted funding was received from the Adopt London consortium of regional adoption agencies, £21,000 from City Bridge Trust, £10,750 from the Educational Opportunity Foundation and £7,000 from Heathrow Community Fund amongst other restricted grants and donations.

£29,150 of unrestricted income was received from The Tudor Trust, £20,000 from Garfield Weston and other smaller amounts were raised through The Big Give amongst other sources, including individual giving.

### **Unrestricted funds**

£54,026 (prior year: £47,010) of unrestricted funding was raised during the year. Expenditure was £59,897 (prior year: £33,676). Total unrestricted reserves at the year-end were £33,561 (prior year: £39,433).

### **Restricted funds**

£116,626 (£78,428) of restricted funding was raised during the year. Expenditure of £89,911 (£80,881) was offset against this. Total restricted reserves at the year-end were £65,811 (£39,096).

The £65,811 left in restricted reserves at the end of the year is due to be spent on staff and project costs in the 2025/26 financial year.

### **Basis of Preparation**

The accounts for the year are drawn up on an accruals basis. Further details are noted in the accounting policies note (1) appended to the accounts. No funds were or are held as a custodian on behalf of others.

### **Independent Review**

The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 have been independently reviewed with the independent examiner confirming that accounting records have been adequately kept, the submitted accounts correspond with those accounting records and that there are no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts.

### **Reserves Policy**

The Board of Trustees has agreed an increased reserves policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed should provide sufficient funding for an orderly wind down of the charity if necessary at some future date. The policy aims to keep reserves equivalent to three months of general operating expenses plus one to two months' worth of staff costs, currently calculated in total at £18,125.

Total unrestricted reserves at the end of the year were £33,561 of which £18,125 has been earmarked in accordance with the reserves policy, leaving £15,436\* in general unrestricted reserves which is due to be spent on core and project costs in 2025/26. (\* Less £12k spent on fixed assets)

## Funding received since the year end

Since the year end the following significant funding has been gratefully received by We Are Family:

- Adopt London | £40,750
- City Bridge Foundation | £42,000
- Educational Opportunity Foundation | £10,750
- Adoption In Merseyside | £5,000
- University of Reading | £3,419
- Yorkshire Adoption Agency | £2,500



## Independent Examiner's Report

### Independent examiner's report to the trustees of We Are Family

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the We Are Family (the Charity) for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

### Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

### Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Name: Tracey Skates

Fellow Chartered and Certified Accountant

Address: 15 Menmarsh Road, Worminghall, HP18 9JT

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025

## Statement of Financial Activities

### For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

£	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2025	2024
Income from Endowments					
From:					
Donations and Legacies		54,026	116,626	170,652	125,438
Fundraising Events		-	-	-	-
Trading Income		-	-	-	-
Interest Received		-	-	-	-
Total		54,026	116,626	170,652	125,438
Expenditure On:					
Raising Funds		-	-	-	-
Charitable Activities		59,897	89,911	149,808	114,557
Total		59,897	89,911	149,808	114,557
Net Income / Expenditure	3, 4	(5,872)	26,715	20,843	10,881
Transfer Between Funds		-	-	-	-
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total Funds Brought Forward		39,433	39,096	78,529	67,647
Total Funds Carried Forward		33,561	65,811	99,372	78,529

## Statement of Financial Position

### For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

£	Notes	2025	2024
Tangible Assets – Member Hub Software & Website	2	20,586	23,858
Cash at bank and in hand		79,274	61,658
Other debtors		40,750	-
Prepayments and accrued income		-	-
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year		(41,238)	(6,987)
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)		78,786	54,671
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		99,372	78,529
Accruals and deferred income		-	-
Net assets		99,372	78,529
The Funds of the Charity			
Restricted Income Funds		22,501	39,096
Unrestricted Income Funds		76,871	39,433
Total Funds		99,372	78,529

## **Notes to the Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

### 1. Accounting Policies

#### Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, except for investments which are included at market value and the revaluation of certain fixed assets and in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)'. Financial reporting Standard 102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Charities Act 2011.

We Are Family CIO meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

#### Tangible assets and depreciation

Tangible assets are included at cost less depreciation and impairment. Depreciation has been provided at the following rates in order to write off the assets over their estimated useful lives:

We Are Family made a significant investment towards the construction of a database and a website, both of which are expected to have a useful economic life of 10 years.

Software & Websites	10% straight line
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## 2. Tangible Assets

	Software & Websites	Total
Cost or Valuation	At cost	At cost
At 1 April 2024	32,729	32,729
Additions	-	-
At 31 March 2025	32,729	32,729
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2024	8,871	8,871
Charge for the period	3,272	3,273
At 31 March 2025	12,143	8,871
Net book value		
At 1 April 2024	23,858	22,393
At 31 March 2025	20,586	23,858

## 3. Income and allocated expenditure by donor/fund

	BROUGHT FORWARD 23/24	Income in 24/25	Spent in 24/25	CARRIED FORWARD 25/26
Restricted				
Adopt London Core	11,381	28,750	13,462	26,669
Adopt London Hub Access	665	-	-	665*
Adopt London Picnics	427	-	-	427
Adopt London Podcast	1,759	6,575	8,293	41
Adopt London Talks	6,838	12,000	12,977	5,861
<i>Adopt London - Sub Total</i>	<i>21,071</i>	<i>47,325</i>	<i>34,732</i>	<i>33,663</i>

Adoption Partnership South East	2,216	1,500	3,055	661
Alex Timpson Foundation	1,848	-	1,848	-
Beacon Lodge	-	5,000	5,000	-
City Bridge Trust	617	21,000	16,371	5,246
Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust	-	5,000	2,500	2,500
Educational Opportunity Foundation	-	10,750	8,368	2,382
Gillian Stevenson Trust	-	4,000	1,078	2,922
Heathrow Community Fund	-	7,000	1,811	5,189
Henry Smith Charity	-	5,000	3,210	1,790
Lyle's Local Fund	-	4,454	2,854	1,600
Magic Little Grants	(139)	-	(139)	-
Prior Year Operating Balance	13,412	-	5,557	7,855*
Tudor Trust Wellbeing Fund	(313)	-	(313)	-
Tudor Trust Development Fund	56	1,995	2,051	-
University of Reading	328	1,602	1,930	-
Yorkshire Adoption Agency	-	2,000	-	2,000
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>39,096</b>	<b>116,626</b>	<b>89,911</b>	<b>65,811</b>
<b>Unrestricted</b>				
Barnardo's	18,000	-	18,000	-
Big Give	373	2,284	99	2,558
Forrester Family Trust	571	-	-	571
Garfield Weston Foundation	379	20,000	10,442	9,937
Individual Giving	2,294	2,041	5,476	(1,141)
Other/Earned income	(5,969)	551	(5,468)	50
Pears Foundation	571	-	-	571

Prior Year Operating Balance	20,269		2,199	18,070*
Tudor Trust	1,943	29,150	29,150	1,943
Woodward Trust	1,000	-	-	1,000
<b>Total Unrestricted</b>	<b>39,433</b>	<b>54,026</b>	<b>59,898</b>	<b>33,561</b>

From 1 April 2021, We Are Family moved from receipts and payments accounting to accruals accounting, where additional tracking was established. The Prior Year Opening Balance represents in part brought forward funds We Are Family has accrued before this tracking was established.

\* Of which, £20,586 in in Fixed Asset values as per Balance sheet

#### 4.Detail of income and expenditure

£	Unrestricted	Restricted	2025	2024
Restricted grants	-	116,626	116,626	78,428
Other revenue	-	-	-	18,000
Unrestricted donations	4,576	-	4,576	6,010
Unrestricted grants	49,450	-	49,450	23,000
<b>Donations and Legacies</b>	<b>54,026</b>	<b>116,626</b>	<b>170,652</b>	<b>125,438</b>
<b>Fundraising Costs</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Fundraising Activities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Advertising & Marketing	(1,337)	-	(1,337)	(1,046)
Accountancy fees	-	(4,920)	(4,920)	(2,316)
Bank Fees	(98)	(21)	(21)	(49)
Childcare Costs - /Trustee/Parents	-	(80)	(80)	(54)
Consulting	(3,728)	(6,931)	(10,659)	(6,283)
Depreciation Expense	(6)	(3,266)	(3,272)	(3,273)
Direct Expenses	-	-	-	(178)
Employers National Insurance	-	(1,116)	(1,116)	(549)
Event Entertainment	-	-	-	(270)
General Expenses	(59)	-	(59)	(546)

Guest Speaker Fees	-	(7,364)	(7,364)	(4,451)
Insurance	(1,116)	-	(1,116)	(826)
IT Consultancy	(4,299)	(13,627)	(17,926)	(4,822)
Interest paid	(2)	-	(2)	-
IT Equipment Expense	-	-	-	(571)
IT Software and Consumables	(1,160)	(2,282)	(3,442)	(4,057)
Other Event Expenses	-	(1,495)	(1,495)	(491)
Pensions Costs	-	(1,774)	(1,774)	(1459)
Postage, Freight & Courier	(20)	(98)	(118)	(25)
Printing & Stationery	(27)	-	(27)	(7)
Recruitment Fees	-	(370)	(370)	(787)
Refreshments	(177)	(152)	(329)	(510)
Salaries	(45,170)	(41,239)	(86,409)	(74,569)
Small Gifts	-	(313)	(313)	(241)
Staff Training	-	(397)	(397)	(325)
Staff WFM Expense	-	(1,326)	(1,326)	(1,222)
Strategy and Training Days	-	-	-	(235)
Subscriptions	(201)	(30)	(231)	(160)
Telephone & Internet	-	(40)	(40)	(96)
Travel - National	(869)	(1,047)	(1,916)	(1,462)
Venue Hire	(1,628)	(1,150)	(2,778)	(2,492)
Volunteers	-	(841)	(841)	(841)
Website costs	-	(344)	(344)	(344)
Charitable Activities	(59,897)	(89,911)	(149,808)	(114,557)
Net Income / Expenditure	(5,872)	26,715	20,843	10,881

#### 5a Fees for the Examination of the Accounts

The Accountancy fees include the cost for the independent examination of the charities accounts.

#### 5b Staff Costs



No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the year of more than £60,000

5c	Average Staff Headcount	This Year	Last Year
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Average number of staff employed in the year	6	4
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5d	Contributions to Pension Scheme	This Year	Last Year
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*Contributions made to a defined contributions scheme all relating to the Unrestricted Fund activities*

£	1,774	1,459
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#### Basis of Accounting

The accounts were prepared on an accruals basis. The accounts were prepared on a going concern basis.

This report was signed on behalf of the Trustees of We Are Family CIO on 3rd November 2025.



Mark Hoult-Allen, Chair