



**The Wales School for Social Care Research
Ysgol Ymchwil Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru**

School of Psychology

Studentship Title:	PhD. Studentship funded by the Wales School for Social Care Research.
Research Area/ Project Title:	Securing permanence for children placed for adoption: Explaining pre-placement and pre-Adoption Order breakdown, its consequences and the contrast with successful matching.
Location:	School of Psychology, Cardiff University.
Expected Start Date:	1 st January 2018
Duration:	Studentships can be undertaken on a full-time basis over 3 years (100% WTE) or part time over 6 years (50% WTE).
Deadline for Application:	December 8 th 2018.

Description of Research Opportunity:

The number of children waiting for an adoptive placement is rising. Children in care are among the most vulnerable in our society, with recent estimates highlighting that the average number of adverse experiences that children placed for adoption have been exposed to is four (e.g. maltreatment and domestic violence; Wales Adoption Study, cited in National Adoption Service annual report 2016-2017). The moral imperative to make haste in securing permanence for this group of children has to be weighed against the risks of matching children with prospective adopters without enough consideration of the suitability of a so-called 'match'.

The phase between identifying a *match* between prospective adopters and a child, a *placement* with a family for a child (or sibling group) occurring, and an *Adoption Order* being approved, is precarious. The psychological cost to children who have already experienced separation and trauma is of great concern, as is the long-term cost to society of children continuing to move around the care system, often at the same time as other vulnerable siblings. This doctoral research will address these questions:

1. What is the profile of adoption matches not proceeding and of pre-adoption order breakdown (disruption) in Wales since the formation of the National Adoption Service in 2014?
2. What factors do social workers and allied professionals consider important when matching children with families (e.g. professional practice and family processes)?
3. Which placements break down before the adoption order and why?
 1. What role do management and key performance indicators (e.g. timeframes for action) play in placement breakdown?
 2. What factors characterise children and prospective parents whose placement plan breaks down and how does this contrast with those whose plan for adoption proceeds?
4. What practical lessons can be learned from the experiences of those involved in the transition between a proposed match and an adoption order being granted?

Award:

The studentships will commence in January 2018 and will cover your tuition fees (at UK/EU level) as well as a maintenance grant. In 2017-18 the maintenance grant for full-time students was £14,553 per annum. As well as tuition fees and a maintenance grant, all School of Psychology students receive conference and participant money (approx. £2250 for the duration of the studentship). They also receive a computer and office space, additional funding for their research, and access to courses offered by the University's Doctoral Academy and become members of the University Doctoral Academy.

Eligibility:

Full awards (fees plus maintenance stipend) are open to UK Nationals, and EU students who can satisfy UK residency requirements. To be eligible for the full award, EU Nationals must have been in the UK for at least 3 years prior to the start of the course for which they are seeking funding, including for the purposes of full-time education.

As only one studentship is available and a very high standard of applications is typically received, the successful applicant is likely to have a very good first degree (a First or Upper Second class BSc Honours or equivalent) and/or be distinguished by having relevant research experience.

How to apply:

You can apply online - consideration is automatic on applying for a PhD in Psychology, with a January start date (programme code RFPDPSYAB).

Please use our online application service at www.cf.ac.uk/regis/general/applyonline/index.html

Please specify that you are applying for this particular project.

Application deadline: 8th December with interviews (either in person or by Skype) being held on 15th December and decisions being made by 18th December 2017.

General Information:

The School of Psychology is one of the largest and most successful in the UK (<http://www.cf.ac.uk/psych/>). The School's excellent standard of research and teaching has been recognised in every Research Assessment Exercise. It has its own brain-imaging centre (<http://www.cf.ac.uk/psych/cubric/>), enhancing the international-leading research in behavioural neuroscience, cognitive ergonomics, forensic, social and developmental psychology.

Cardiff is the youngest capital city in Europe and the fastest growing in the UK. It plays host to many national and international sporting events at the Millennium Stadium (<http://www.millenniumstadium.com/>). Culturally, the city is thriving, with the Wales Millennium Centre (<http://www.wmc.org.uk/>) in Cardiff Bay. Cardiff is in very close proximity to the beautiful Welsh countryside (<http://www.breconbeacons.org/>), has a two hour rail link to London and a (cheap) one hour air link to Paris and Amsterdam (<http://www.cardiffairportonline.com/>)

Please address any informal enquiries to:

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