

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of Item:	<i>The National Fostering Service and Foster Wales National Joint Committee - reducing the quorum for the meeting</i>
Cabinet Member:	<i>Menna Trenholme</i>
Relevant officer:	<i>Sharron Carter Williams</i>
Date of meeting:	07/07/2026

1. Decision Sought:

- 1.1 Cabinet approval to reduce the quorum of the National Fostering Service and Foster Wales National Joint Committee from 60% to 40%, provided that at least three regions are represented.

2. The reason why the Cabinet must make the decision:

- 2.1 Every local authority must make a formal decision in the Cabinet on the operational functions of the National Fostering Service and Foster Wales National Joint Committee.
- 2.2 Every other local authority in Wales has agreed to the change and most have by now signed the Deed of Variation. A request is made to make the decision by July 2026 to enable amended arrangements to be considered and implemented through the Meeting of the National Fostering Service and Foster Wales National Joint Committee in October 2026.

3. Introduction and Rationale

- 3.1 The National Adoption Service was established in 2014 to strengthen and improve the adoption service across Wales. Following the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directive 2015, every local authority agreed on national, regional and local governance arrangements for the service. Following a review in 2018, changes were introduced to simplify these arrangements and strengthen accountability.
- 3.2 Foster Wales was developed more recently to support local authorities with specific fostering functions, particularly the recruitment and retention of foster carers. To avoid duplication, reduce costs and make the best use of resources, it was agreed that

the national functions for fostering should be governed alongside the National Adoption Service.

- 3.3 The National Joint Committee provides strategic supervision of the work of the National Fostering Service and Foster Wales National Joint Committee on behalf of the 22 local authorities in Wales. Through these arrangements, every local authority receives an overview of the national services and functions undertaken by the Director and the Central Team.
- 3.4 Every local authority agreed formally to establish the Joint Committee through its local governance arrangements, before signing a legal agreement to support its work. The Cabinet Member responsible for children's services in every local authority is a member of the Joint Committee, along with relevant officers and stakeholders.
- 3.5 Since April 2024, it has been responsible for supervising the work of the National Fostering Service Wales and Foster Wales on behalf of every local authority in Wales.

4. The rationale and justification for recommending the decision

- 4.1 The first meeting of Joint Committee was held in April 2024. Since then, three further meetings were arranged, but it was not possible to hold two of them as there was no quorum. This occurred despite efforts to facilitate attendance, including consulting with members on suitable dates and times, establishing delegation arrangements, and making direct contact with members to confirm their availability.
- 4.2 At the most recent meeting where there was no quorum, in May 2025, the members of the Joint Committee expressed concern regarding the current arrangements and called for the review of the quorum requirements of 60%.
- 4.3 Following discussions with stakeholders and officers, a proposal was made to amend the quorum arrangements by reducing the requirement to 40% of members, provided that representation from at least three of the adoption and fostering regions are in attendance.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The proposed changes to the quorum represent a technical amendment to the current governance arrangements to improve practicality and to enable the Joint Committee's business to be conducted effectively. The change does not affect the structure, terms of reference or core functions of the Joint Committee, and therefore there is no significant change to the basic governance arrangements.

5.2 The change supports business continuity and reduces the risk of failed meetings due to a lack of quorum, ensuring that the Joint Committee can achieve its functions more effectively.

5.3 Therefore, it is recommended that the Cabinet approves the change in quorum as noted in Section 1, and that the Deed of Variation is signed to enable the implementation of the amended arrangements.

6. Views of the Statutory Officers.

6.1 Chief Finance Officer

6.2 No objections to the decision sought from the perspective of financial propriety.

6.3 Monitoring Officer

6.4 As this National Joint Committee as well as its constitution has been established through agreement of the Cabinet a decision to amend the quorum is also a Cabinet matter.

List of Appendices:

1. Quoracy of the NJC