

WAF Survey April 2017

Summary of Results

Introduction

Of the currently approx. 700 WAF members, 99 replied to the recent survey. That is an approx. 14% response rate. The survey consisted of 15 questions, the result of which can be accessed on request. The following will only present a summary of the detailed and varied responses.

There were responses from all 10 WAF groups (local and pan-London), numbers broadly reflecting the size of each group, i.e. Hackney/Islington and Southwark accounting for the most responders (27 and 29 respectively). The heads and coordinators of groups all have access to the figures, and will – if necessary – respond directly to the groups on matters specific to them.

Likelihood of recommending WAF to others

We are very happy to report that the overwhelming majority of responders were extremely likely (70.4%) or very likely (14.3%) to recommend WAF to other adopters, making a total of 84.7%. A further 10.2% were neutral. This is a fantastic result.

However, we shouldn't be resting on our laurels.

5.1% had ticked extremely unlikely (4.4%) or unlikely (1%) to recommend WAF. This group we are of course particularly interested in knowing more about. Thankfully, these 5 responders left comments suggesting reasons behind; they stated that the events had been too overwhelming for their children, and that WAF was too inflexible about setting up new groups and events. That said, four of these responders also reported that we were a friendly, supportive group, that allowed for honesty; that WAF is very efficient in forwarding information about events and research groups; that they have made friends through the groups and that WAF is very special to them. Which sounds all-together more positive than 'extremely unlikely' to recommend.

Background of responders¹

The responders were overwhelmingly white (79.6%) and female (86.6%); 11.3% were male and 2.1% preferred not to say. Ethnically, 5.1% are mixed/multiple ethnicities, 4.1% Asian/British Asian and 7.1% Black/African/Caribbean. 1% had another ethnicity and 3.1% preferred not to say. This compares well with current national figures for children in care (no data was found on the ethnicity of adopters).

¹ <https://www.adoptionuk.org/press-media/adoption-facts-and-figures> or <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2015-to-2016>.

2% declared they had a disability. The majority of responders were straight (85.6%) and living in a couple (83.5%). 16.5% were same sex families, which is somewhat higher than the national average for same sex adopters which was 9.6% in the year ending in March 2016. The higher figure may reflect the London demographic. 13.4% came from single parent families, which is slightly higher than the figure of 11% quoted in the national statistics for the year ending in March 2016.

Joining WAF

There was a good spread of when the responders had joined WAF, from 2013 onwards.

Interestingly, people join WAF through a range of means: most via other adopters/word of mouth (38.3%), followed by recommendation from a social worker (26.1%). Linkmaker also accounted for a notable part (7.4%). Internet search led 6 responders to us.

Activities and events

Most responders either had attended or were attending one or more WAF events regularly. Over half (56.5%) the responders have used the support groups (parent, single and/or prospective adopters' events), the parent group being the most attended with 41.4% attending or had attended. Responses concerning the playgroup clearly stated that while a number of people have used and enjoyed them, their kids were now too old to attend. A number of people requested events for older children. At present the only events allowing for this are the family meet ups, which had been used by 45.7%.

The blog was clearly very popular with 56.6% reading the blog regularly.

Money

A great majority said paying a subscription or similar would not turn them off membership. However, there are no plans for membership fees or anything similar, and WAF remains strongly wedded to the notion of being free or very low cost so as to be as accessible as possible for all.

Comments

The comments left by the majority of the responders left a wealth of constructive feedback and ideas.

In short WAFers wanted more groups, more events, for working parents, for the stay at home parent, for the whole family, for adults only, for parents of toddlers at locations closer to their homes, at timings that suited them better. They also wanted groups specifically for teenagers, for parents of disabled or chronically ill children.

Hopefully it goes without saying that we are not able to meet all those expectations/requests. WAF is run entirely by volunteers, as it has no staff. That means that nothing takes place in WAF without the initiative of a dedicated parent. WAF wouldn't be without them.

At the moment we identified the following suggestions:

- Coffee mornings (one group has already planned them for adults only)
- Group specifically for parents of teens. If this pertains to you, reading this, we also recommend the POTATO group (<https://thepotatogroup.org.uk/>).
- Group specifically for families living with disability or chronically ill children.
- General membership across WAF. It should be noted that WAFers are welcome to join any group that may be of interest to them (we have several members who belong to more than one group)
- Child care – subsidising or reimbursing. This has long been a wish for the single adopters group, but perhaps we should also consider it for the wider community of WAF? The board, and its Services Committee, is considering the options.
- Strengthening family meet ups to appeal to older children.
- How do we appeal more to dads?
- Annual report from the Chair to WAFers as one of several means to strengthen the relationship and communication between board and WAFers.

In conclusion, this survey shows we are doing well right now; and that if we have any more willing parents, there are lots of opportunities to do more.

This comes with huge thanks for all who play an active role in WAF on a daily basis, who give their time and ideas so willingly, and thanks to all those who responded. You have given us so much to ponder over and act on.

Marie Louise
Chair and Trustee

22 June 2017