

# Statement of Purpose

## TACT EAST LONDON



## I. Introduction

The statement of purpose is designed to inform you about the values, and structure of TACT, some information about the recruitment, assessment and training of our carers, and details of staff and placements. The statement is a legal requirement and the issues referred to, laid down in regulation.

### 1. Organisational History

Established in 1993, formerly known as The Adolescent & Children's Trust (TACT), TACT is the UK's largest charity and voluntary agency providing fostering and adoption services. Our core work involves providing high quality and well supported fostering or adoptive families for children and young people across England, Wales and Scotland. We campaign on behalf of children and young people in care, carers and adoptive families.

TACT is governed by a Board of Trustees with 11 members. The Board has ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the charity, ensuring that it is solvent, properly run and delivering on its charitable objectives. In addition to meeting bi-monthly, a smaller number of the Trustees sit on two sub committees alongside TACT staff; the Safeguarding & Children Services Committee and the Business & Remuneration Committee. The Board delegate day to day leadership of the organisation to the Chief Executive Officer.

TACT's head office is based in Hither Green, London. It includes the corporate functions of finance, human resources, children's service and quality, external affairs and marketing. It is also the office of the Chief Executive and Executive Directors of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Children's Services & Quality and Policy, Communications and Fundraising.

Services are provided from 9 area offices for fostering, one of which also includes adoption. These are; East London, Bristol (covering Bristol & South West), Neath (covering all of Wales), Liverpool (covering North West), West Midlands (which is also where the Business Development team are based), Kettering (covering East Midlands), Leeds (covering Yorkshire, Humberside & the North East), Edinburgh (covering Scotland) and South London (covering South London, Kent and the South Coast) We also have a registered adoption agency based in London.

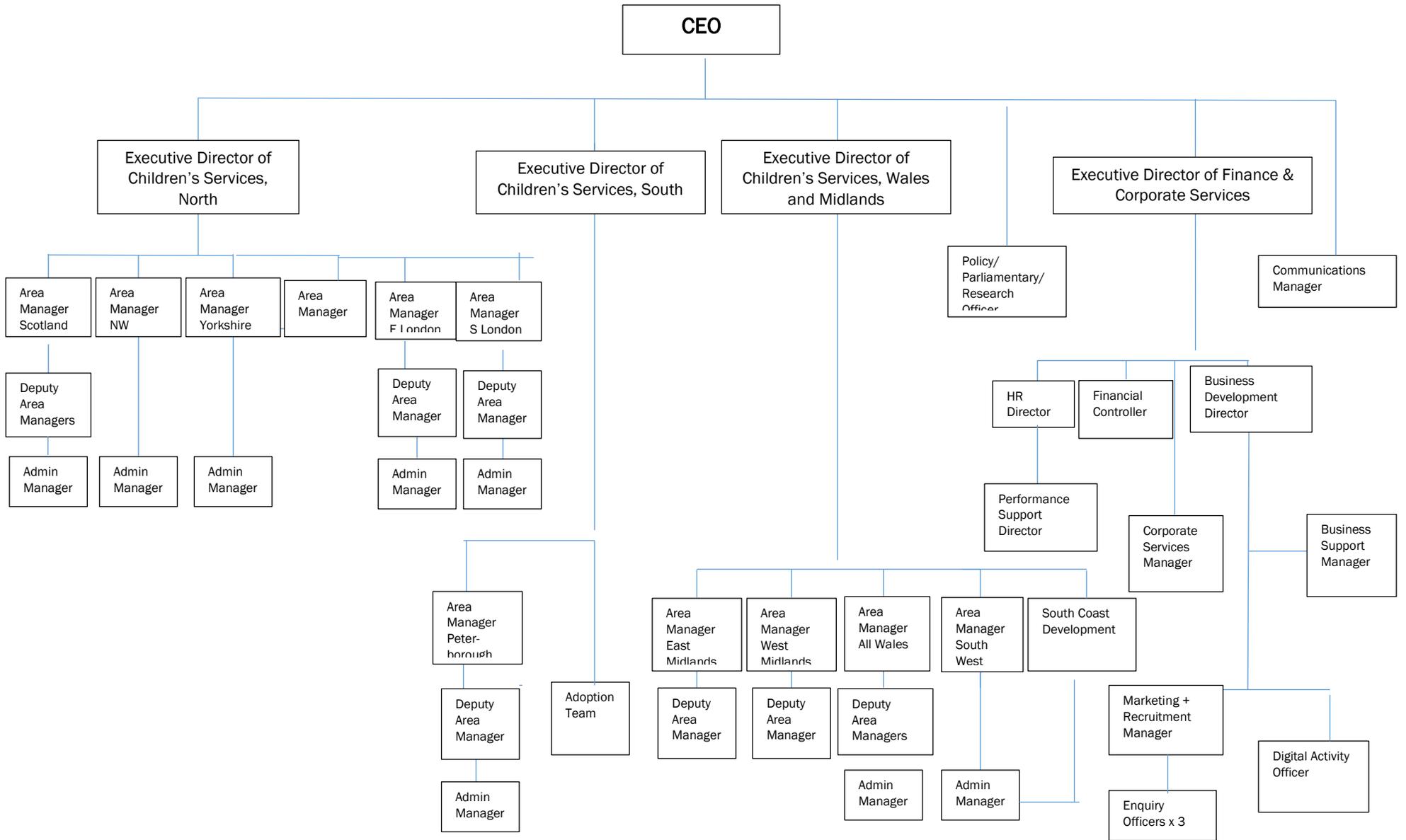
We are currently expanding our service geographically in a number of areas. The North East service, currently being expanded under the Yorkshire Office, will shortly be the subject of an application for Ofsted registration. We have appointed an area manager and recruited a Panel and we are just finalising the lease on our office in the North East and anticipate applying for registration in October 2016. We are also expanding along the South coast between Brighton and Weymouth under our South London Office. In the East Midlands we are expanding into Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire and in the North West we are planning an expansion into Greater Manchester. In Scotland we are expanding through Dundee and up the East Coast to Aberdeen. This expansions are being closely supported and overseen by our Business Development Unit.

TACT have also been chosen to run Peterborough's permanency services (including adoption and fostering services). This is subject to a Cabinet decision in late September 2016. Ofsted are already aware of this and an advisor has been appointed.

### 2. Local Office History

TACT East London was formed when TACT merged with East London Foster Carers in 2005. Social work staff are supported by an administrative team. The East London Office is one of 11 regional offices and covers North and East London, Hertfordshire, Essex and Suffolk.

# TACT STRUCTURAL CHART



## TACT's charitable objectives are:

- To relieve children and young people who, by reasons of their circumstances, have need of foster, adoptive or substitute care by placing children in foster homes or adoptive placements and by training foster or adoptive parents to deal with the needs of the children in their care.
- Otherwise to promote the care and upbringing and establishment in life of children in need thereof including by promotion of their health, development and education attainment and particularly children in foster or adoptive care.

## II. TACT's Aims and Objectives

### 1. Vision and Values:

#### Our Vision

**'Better lives for our children and young people'**

#### Values

- **Aspirational** – by helping others, we grow ourselves
- **Passionate** – we are determined to keep improving what we do. We will ambitiously pursue the best outcomes for everyone we work with and strive for excellence in all we do
- **Customer Focussed** – we shall listen and respond to the people we work with, children and young people, their birth families, carers, our staff, our supporters, local authorities and other stakeholders
- **Fair and equitable** – we will be open and transparent, communicating what we do and why we do it, based on equality and respect for all
- **Beyond Profit** – reinvesting our resources into improving outcomes for children

## 2. Fostering standards

Our standards of care are measured and monitored against the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011 and the UK National Standards for Foster Care.

All carers undertake the TSD Training Support and Development Standards for Foster Care within 12 months of approval.

## 3. TACT Believes:

- All children have the right to a permanent family in which they are able to grow and develop as unique individuals.
- Every child in care should benefit from a specially designed care plan to address their specific needs.
- All children have the right to be involved in planning their own futures.
- All children should take with them memories of a positive experience of their time in care when they leave.
- Individuals with parental responsibility have the right to be involved in making decision about their child/ren's future.
- Proper use must be made of the theory and considerable body of professional knowledge which is available relating to child care and child development.
- Every individual involved in TACT's childcare programmes should benefit from appropriate training and development opportunities.

All people involved with TACT will receive the best treatment possible, irrespective of gender, age, disability, marital status, sexuality, race, ethnicity or religion.

### III. Members of staff at TACT East London

#### 1. Management:

**Jill Plummer** is Area Manager and is responsible for all operations and services in TACT East London. Jill joined TACT in May '17 and has the following qualifications:

- CQSW 1991
- Practice Teachers Award 1994
- PQ child Care Aware and BA honour degree 2001
- NVQ level 4 Management 2005
- Preparing to Teach in the Life Long learning Sector (PTLLS) 2010

Jill has been a qualified social worker since June 1991 and took up her first managerial role in September 2000. Jill worked with “children in need” and Children Looked After before specialising in Fostering in 1995. She has worked in the Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) sector since 2002.

**Christine Henry** is Deputy Area Manager and has worked for TACT since Dec 06. She worked as a manager of a children’s home for 14 years and has worked as a local authority social worker. Her qualifications include CQSW & BA (Hons) Sociology Post Graduate Diploma in Advanced social work.

#### 2. Senior Supervising Social Workers:

**Gilly Prosser** joined TACT in February 2007. Gilly qualified as a social worker in 1993. She has experience of working for local authorities as a senior practitioner and manager and she was a practice manager for the NSPCC. Gilly has also worked as an independent social worker specialising in court work and as a children’s reviewing officer. Her area of expertise was children with disabilities.

**Christine Mortimer** joined TACT in Oct 08. She is a qualified social worker with a DipSW degree and a Diploma in Management. Christine also has a Higher Diploma and was granted a Teaching Fellowship after her Post Graduate studies at University College London. She has worked as a local authority senior manager. Christine was also a foster carer specialising in emergency placements. Christine has experience of managing complex cases and court work.

**Vivienne Henningham** joined TACT in March 2009, having previously worked for Parents for Children since Sep 07. She qualified in 1990 and has worked within local authorities as a Generic Social Worker, then specialised in Adoption and Fostering. Prior to working for Parents for Children she worked for independent fostering agencies.

**Susanna Corner** joined TACT in August 2010. Susanna qualified as a social worker in 1983. She started her career as a residential social worker and has been working in fostering and adoption settings since 1987, both in local authorities and in the independent sector.

**Asif Riaz** joined TACT in December 2013. Asif qualified as a social worker in 2006 and worked in an independent fostering agency for 7 years. During this time he supervised social work

students and other social workers as well as being a member of a fostering panel. He previously completed some work experience with a child protection team.

**Janet Norden** joined TACT in April 2017. Janet is a home-based Social Worker based in the Suffolk area. Janet qualified as a social worker in 1986, she has worked within local authorities and the independent sector as a practitioner and manager. Her experience includes generic social work, Children's Centre Manager, Independent Reviewing Officer, developing and implementing the Common Assessment Framework which was her final practice study in the Advanced Award of Social Work.

**Sandra Edwards** Sandra joined TACT in July 2017, as senior Supervising social Worker. She qualified as a Social Worker in 1996 and she has been working and gained most of her experience within children and families in various settings. She has mainly gained her experience working in local authority fostering teams as a Supervising Social Worker, and panel member. She has Post Qualification in social work and she is a qualified Practice Educator.

### 3. Children's Resource Worker:

**Shirley Thomas** is a Children's Resource Worker. She joined ELF in 2003 and had worked in residential child care prior to joining ELF. Shirley has an NVQ level 3 in Care of Children and Young People (2002) Shirley also obtained a Counselling Award in 1997.

### 4. Placements Officers:

**Beverly Ezekiel** joined TACT in February 15. She previously worked as a director of a textile agency, dealing with all aspects of development and selling of garments, both in the UK and internationally. She has many years of administrative experience.

**Kirstie Seabrook** joined TACT in April 2017. She was part of the administration team in TACT East London before moving into the placements officer role and has previous experience of management and administrative roles in a commercial bank.

### 5. Administration:

The East London area is supported by an Administration Team made up of:

**Susanne Bluff** is Administrative Manager. She joined TACT in January 08 and has previously been an Administrative Secretarial Officer in the RAF and a teacher, both in a secondary school and adult education. Susanne's qualifications include: BSc(Hons), PGCE, AAT Technician level, Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults and the European Computer Driving Licence.

**Anthonia Macgregor** joined TACT in 2007 as a Senior Administrative Officer. Anthonia has over 16 years' experience working with NHS, insurance companies, adoption agencies, local authorities etc; she also convenes training for AFRUCA organisation. Her qualifications include:

- Intensive Personal Asst & Computing Training Skills for Graduates

- Diploma in Secretarial Studies
- BA in Human Resource Management & Health Service Management.

**Diane Rankoff** is a Senior Administrative Officer. She has worked for TACT since 2005 and has previous experience working in a Bank, Solicitors firm and the NHS. Diane's qualifications include: O'level – Maths, English, Spanish, History and European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)

**Elizabeth Tremble** joined TACT in June 09. She previously worked for 12 years providing secretarial/administrative support for investment bankers, and prior to that for 4 years as an air stewardess. She has extensive administrative experience.

6. **Management structure:** See page 13

## IV. TACT East London's Fostering Service

### 1. The fostering panel

The fostering panel is a requirement of the fostering regulations and is updated to meet the criteria set out in the regulations. The panel meets regularly, at the East London office to consider each application for approval and to recommend whether or not a person is suitable to act as a foster parent. It also recommends the terms of approval; reviews the suitability to continue as carers from time to time; advises the charity on the procedures and their effectiveness; oversees the conduct of the assessments that are carried out; and gives advice and makes recommendations on such matters or cases the charity may refer to it.

The Panel is chaired by an independent person with many years' experience in child care, and includes members with a wide and appropriate range of experiences.

#### **Panel members' names and positions:-**

- **Mark Davis** – Independent Chair
- **Margaret Paddyfoot** – Independent Panel Member, ex care-leaver and trainer
- **Donna Brown** – Independent Panel Member and social worker
- **Christine Higgins**- Independent Panel Member with education experience
- **Fisnik Tahiri** – Independent Panel Member & Ex TACT YP
- **Kenita Flynn** – Independent Panel Member and former foster carer
- **Vivienne Henningham** – TACT Supervising Social Worker

#### **Non-voting panel members:**

- **Jill Plummer** – Area Manager and Panel Advisor
- **Dr K Maisey** – Medical Advisor

## **2. Current services provided by TACT East London**

- Fostering to children/young people 0-17 years.
- 24 hour social work support for foster carers.
- Out of hour duty placing service
- Outreach support services to children and families.
- Supervised contact.
- Child and parent placements.
- Assessments.
- Foster carer training.
- Support groups.
- Staying Put – for young people aged 18+
- Support for young people leaving care
- Skills for Life training for young people
- Foster Carer Reps
- Staff training
- Panel training

## **3. New services currently being planned**

- Respite care for children with disabilities

## **4. Recruitment, assessment and approval process for foster carers**

The following process is followed for any applicants who wish to become approved foster carers:

- a) Initial enquiry via telephone, website or web based routes.
- b) Allocated for Initial Visit.
- c) Initial Visit carried out and Supervising Social Worker then makes recommendation to proceed or not. Area Manager makes decision to proceed or not
- d) If the decision is not to proceed, the applicant/s is/are informed verbally and this is followed up in writing.
- e) If the decision is to proceed to Form F assessment, the case is allocated to a Form F assessor.
- f) All references and checks (DBS etc.) are taken up. Applicant/s must attend Skills to Foster preparation course for fostering.
- g) When Form F assessments are completed and all checks and references are returned it is taken to the Fostering Panel for recommendation. Applicant/s is/are invited to attend Panel.

- h) The agency decision maker decides on whether or not to approve. Applicant/s is/are informed in writing.

## **5. Training, Support and Reviewing Process for Foster Carers**

- The office in East London has an annual training programme and foster carers have an individual learning and development plan linked to the programme. Foster carers are supported to attend training through financial packages and childcare arrangements. Undertaking learning and development is an ongoing requirement for TACT foster carers and is now being extended to include on line courses.
- Foster carers are allocated a Supervising Social Worker with a limited caseload of no more than ten families. Support is offered 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via a duty system of Supervising Social Workers and Social Work Managers. Foster carer support groups also meet in small geographic areas. Young people who foster are also supported individually and through groups.
- Each foster carer is reviewed annually and the fostering panel or Director of Country endorses the decision of the Area Manager who oversees the review.

The first review and every seventh review are fully considered by the panel.

## **6. Monitoring of fostering service**

The fostering service is monitored through provision of formal supervision for all staff and foster carers, the auditing of case files and supervision records as well as day to day management of the service and support to staff and foster carers. The quality and effectiveness of the complaints procedures is also regularly monitored and kept under review.

TACT also undertakes annual reporting of performance indicators, based on the outcomes central to Every Child Matters philosophy for improving the life chances of all children.

TACT has a participation programme to ensure the view of children and young people are integrated into strategy and service delivery.

## **7. Review of Statement of Purpose**

The Statement of Purpose is reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually but more frequently as and when information changes. This was last updated in February 2018.

## **8. Number of approved foster carers**

TACT East London has 54 approved foster carer households. There are currently 6 households being assessed for fostering.

## **9. Number of children in placement**

There are currently 61 children and young people in placement. TACT has a clear matching policy and will only place children with suitable carers who can meet the child or young person's needs.

#### **10. The number of complaints and their outcomes**

There were 4 complaints within the last 12 months. 1 was unfounded, 3 were upheld and appropriate action taken.

#### **11. Children's guide**

TACT has a guide for children and young people cared for by the charity.

The TACT Children's guides set out clearly what young people can do if they are unhappy about the service they are receiving and young people were actively involved in designing and producing these. These are provided in a range of formats, both for young and older children and with a 'drama documentary' called Chloe's journey – a DVD produced by TACT young people which covers joining a foster family and how to use advocacy / make complaints etc.

# TACT East London

