

# Statement of purpose

## TACT Kent



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## 1. Introduction

The statement of purpose is designed to inform you about the values, structure of TACT, 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. TACT Kent is a new office so this is an initial statement of purpose and will be subject to change and review over the coming year.

### 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 10 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 Children's Services and Safeguarding Committee and the Finance and Remuneration Committee. The Board delegates 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, corporate services, fundraising and communications. It is also the office of the Chief Executive; the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services and the Executive Directors of Children's Services.

Services are provided from 12 area offices for fostering, one of which also includes adoption. These are: East London; Bristol (covering Bristol and the South West); Neath (covering East, West and Mid/North Wales); Liverpool (covering North West); West Midlands; Kettering (covering East Midlands); Gateshead (covering North East and Tees Valley); Leeds (covering Yorkshire); Edinburgh and Glasgow (covering Scotland) and South London (covering South East) and the Peterborough Permanency Service..

TACT are currently expanding our service geographically in a number of areas. We are 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. These expansions are being closely supported and overseen by our Business Development Unit.

TACT also runs Peterborough Local Authority permanency services (which includes the adoption and fostering services).

## 2. Local office history

The registered office in Kent is overseen by Jo Wilson, Area Manager. Social work staff are supported by an Administration Manager and Placements Officer. The Kent office is situated in Northfleet, near Gravesend and covers Kent, Medway, LB of Bexley, Essex and North London.

### 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 the life of children in need thereof including by promotion of their health, development and education attainment and particularly children in foster or adoptive care.

## I. 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 Focused – 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 and young people

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

## II. Members of staff at TACT Kent office

### 1. Management:

**Jo Wilson** is the Registered Manager and is responsible for all operations, services and development in TACT Kent. Jo is newly appointed to TACT having a Diploma in Social Work, a BA(Hons) in Specialist Social Work and a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care. With over 30 years as a practitioner and social work manager Jo brings a wealth of experience to the post.

### 2. Social Work Team:

There are five experienced Supervising Social Workers in the team. All hold DipSW or Social Work Degrees. They all have experience within local authority and independent fostering agencies. The team have specialist knowledge in areas including disability, UASC and child protection.

### 3. Administration Support Team:

The Administration Support Team is led by the Office Manager who has worked in the fostering sector for over 20 years. They ensure the smooth running of the organisation alongside the social work team.

### 4. Management structure

See appendix on pages 11 to 12.

## TACT Kent 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 Northfleet 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 Kent Chair of the fostering panel, Liz Breeze has a background in health but has many years' experience as panel member and Chair. The panel members have a wide and appropriate range of experiences.

Panel members' names and positions:

- John McNally – Independent Member (Social Work background/Vice Chair)
- Bev Ingleton – Independent Member (Education background/Vice Chair)
- Carole Troote – Independent Member (Social Work experience)
- Natasha McDonald – Independent Member (Social care experience)
- Nyasha Musasa – Independent Member (Social Work background)
- Ron St Louis – Independent Member (Education background)
- Caroline Levy – Independent Member (Ex-Foster Carer).

Non-voting Members of the Panel are:

- Jo Wilson – Panel Practice Advisor
- Dr D Cromb – Medical Advisor
- Denise Hayes – Panel Administrator.

### 2. Current services provided by Kent office:

- Fostering to children/young people 0-17 years
- Fostering Assessments
- Foster Carer training
- Support groups
- 24-hour Social Work Support
- Disability Service
- Education Support
- Individual/group therapeutic sessions for foster carers.

### 3. New services currently being planned or developed

- TACT Connect, ongoing support to young people who have left TACT's care

### 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 with 24 hours.
- c) Initial visit carried out and Supervising Social Worker then makes recommendation to proceed or not. Area Manager makes final decision to proceed or not.
- d) If the decision is not to proceed, the applicant/s are informed verbally and this is followed up in writing.
- e) If the decision is to proceed the applicants are invited to attend the 3 day Skills to Foster Preparation group. This enables applicants to make an informed decision about making a formal application to be assessed. It also allows the agency to consider the suitability of the applicants further.
- f) If the decision is to proceed to a formal application, the case is allocated to a Form F assessor.
- g) All references and checks (DBS etc.) are taken up. *In most cases stage 1 and stage 2 of the assessment are run concurrently.*
- h) When Form F assessments are completed and all checks and references are returned it is taken to the Fostering Panel for recommendation. Applicant/s are invited to attend Panel.
- i) The Agency Decision Maker makes the final decision on whether or not to approve. Applicant/s are informed verbally as soon as the decision is made and this is followed up in writing in writing.

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

TACT Kent will have 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. Undertaking learning and development is an ongoing requirement for TACT foster carers and includes on-line courses.

Foster carers are allocated a named Supervising Social Worker. 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; with future plans to arrange groups for young people who foster.

Each foster carer is reviewed annually and the fostering panel or Director of Children's Services endorses the decision of the Area Manager who oversees the review. The first, seventh and thirteenth annual reviews for foster carers are fully considered by the panel. TACT is currently considering reviewing all annual reviews via an independent review panel.

## **6. Arrangements for Staff Supervision, Training and Development**

All staff have a named supervisor and line manager. Arrangements for personal and individual supervision with the line manager is subject to a written Individual Supervision Agreement and each formal session is recorded in an appropriate format. The required standard for supervision is monthly for all social work staff and administration managers, and at least three monthly for administrative staff. This is always recorded, and signed. Sessional staff are supervised in line with the work they undertake and agreed in advance.

TACT's Performance Review and Personal Development Plan are undertaken as part of the overall performance management process. This is to ensure staff are fully able to contribute to the TACT's objectives and therefore assist in its overall development. The Performance Review also provides essential information about the learning needs of staff members and contributes to their training plans and the organisation's development as a whole. Part of the Performance Review includes 360-degree feedback. The Performance Review is carried out within the framework of equality and diversity as outlined in TACT's policies on Equal Opportunities and diversity.

TACT is committed to providing a working environment that not only ensures the achievement of corporate objectives but provides opportunities for all employees to develop their careers. TACT is dedicated to ensuring that all members of staff are provided with learning opportunities to enable them to excel in their role, through both a Corporate Programme and a locally based and individually commissioned training process. There is also a programme of mandatory courses that all staff must undertake annually as directed.

## **7. Monitoring of fostering service**

The fostering service is monitored through the provision of regular 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 quarterly and annual reporting i.e. the quarterly Regulation 35 report and the Annual Panel Report 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 views of children and young people are integrated into strategy and service delivery.

## **8. 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 is the first statement of purpose for the TACT Kent Office. As this is a new service, there will be a review in July 2019 in line the recruitment of permanent Social Work staff and Independent Panel Members.

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

TACT Kent has 47 approved households and there are 3 households currently under assessment.

## **10. The number of children in placement**

There are currently 34 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.

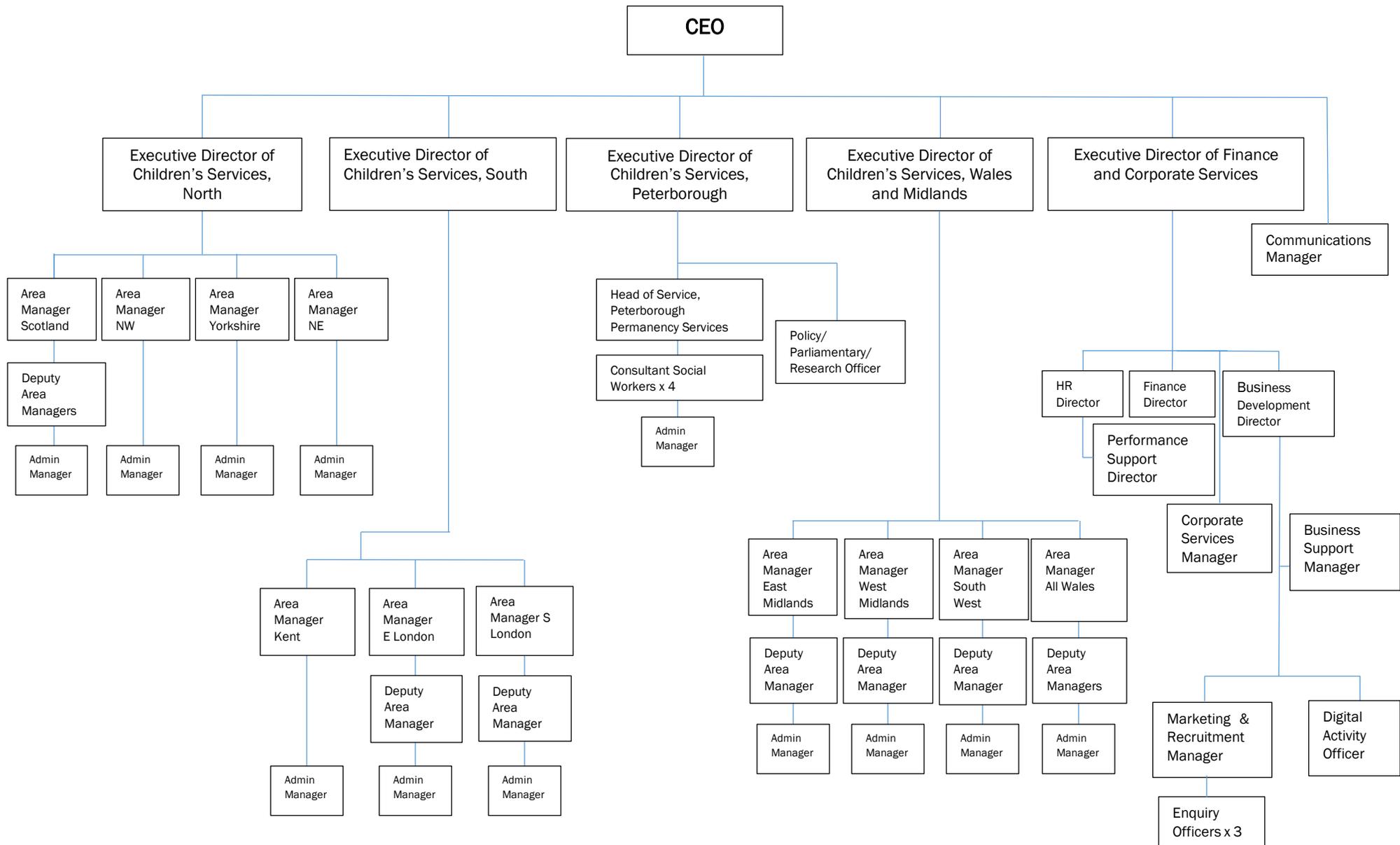
## **11. The number of complaints and their outcome**

This is a new service and there have no formal complaints.

## **12. Children's guide**

TACT has a guide for children and young people cared for by the charity. It has information about being in care, what carers can do to help the young person and it tells them what to do if they are unhappy or wish to complain about something.

# TACT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



# TACT Kent

