

# Statement of Purpose

## TACT WEST MIDLANDS



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## 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 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.

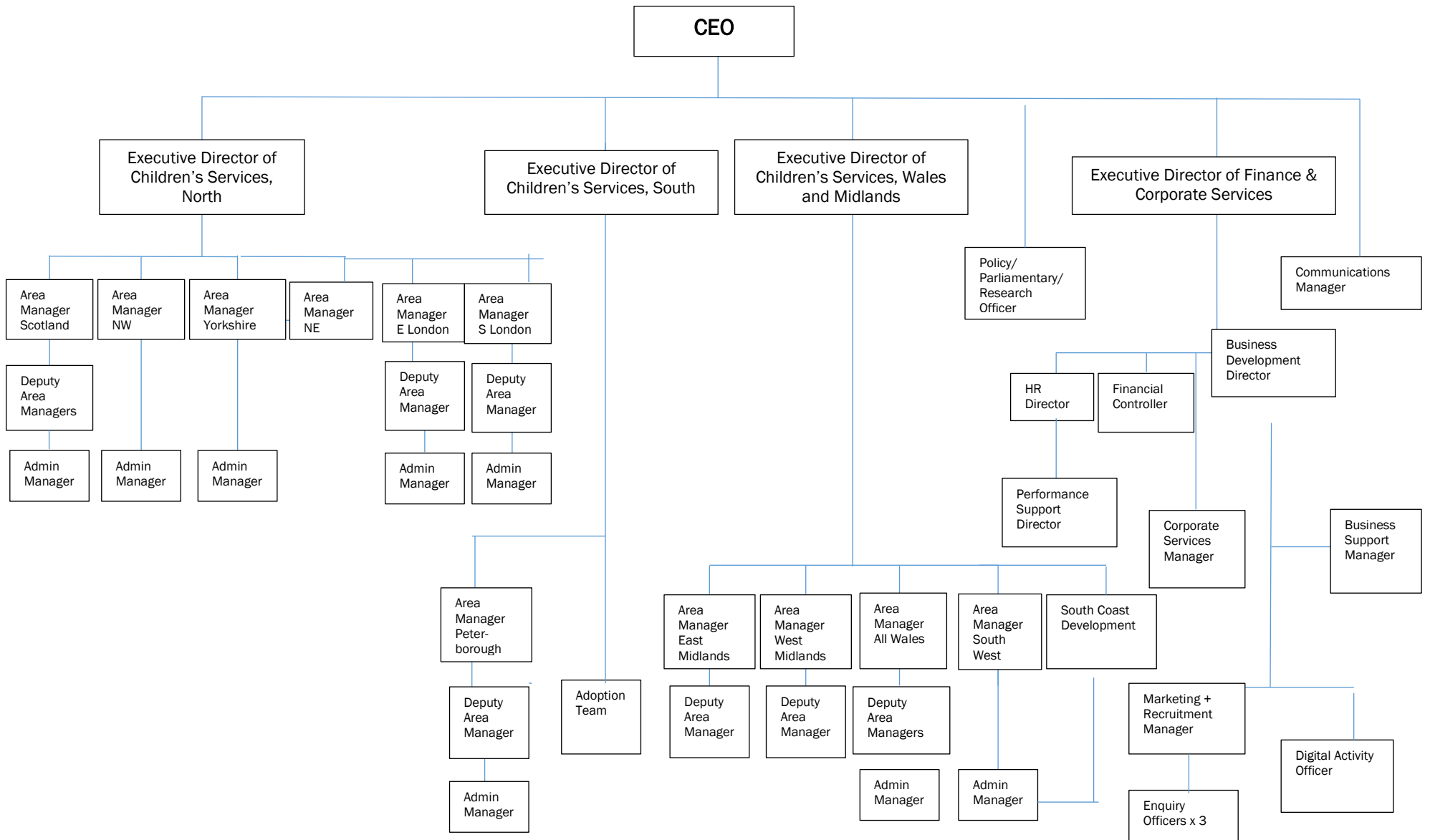
TACT's head office is based in Hither Green, London. It includes the corporate functions of finance, human resources, children's service and quality, external affairs and marketing. It is also the office of the Chief Executive and Executive Directors of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Children's Services & 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, Kettering (covering East Midlands), Leeds (covering Yorkshire, Humberside & the North East), Edinburgh (covering Scotland) and South London (covering South London, Kent) 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 are also expanding Bournemouth and Poole areas under the South West Office and Brighton, Portsmouth 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 expanding 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 have also been chosen to run Peterborough's permanency services (including adoption and fostering services). The contract begins on 1.4.17. Ofsted are already aware of this and an advisor has been appointed.

# TACT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE 2017



## II. 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.

## III. TACT's 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 and young people

## 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.

## 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.

## Local Office History

TACT Birmingham's development began in 2002, with the first full time staff being employed in 2003. Following the move, it was decided to re-name the Birmingham office to TACT West Midlands to reflect the wider area the office supports.

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019, the office will now be based in Walsall, with good access to public transport and motorway networks. The TACT office will still remain in the TACT West Midlands region.

## Members of staff at TACT West Midlands Office

### 1. Management:

#### **Executive Director of Children's Services**

**Scott Ruddock** - Executive Director for Wales and the Midlands.

Scott joined TACT in 2013 and undertakes the supervision of all operational matters for the Wales and the Midlands. His qualifications include:

- Diploma in Social Work
- Post Graduate Certificate in Management Studies
- Post Graduate Certificate in Managing Quality in Social Care
- Practice Teacher Award

Scott has worked in Social Work for over 20 years. Prior to joining TACT he was a Team Manager and Service Manager in a Local Authority and an Operational Manager for a large children's charity in Wales. Scott is a founding member (and continues to sit on the management board) of the Confidence in Care Consortium, made up of four large Children's Charities that work collaboratively to innovate in child care.

#### **Area Manager and Designated Social Worker for the West Midlands**

##### **Michelle Patterson**

*Joined TACT in July 2009*

Michelle qualified as a social worker in 2004. Once qualified she worked with the Local Authority in an Area Office dealing with child protection and care management. Michelle then went to work for an Independent fostering agency until 2006 when she moved to another agency prior to her move to TACT as a senior supervising social worker. Michelle was successfully appointed as the Deputy Area Manager in January 2016. In March 2018 Michelle was appointed Area Manager.

**Deputy Area Manager****Simone Letts***Joined TACT in October 2012*

Simone qualified as a social worker in 2008 and holds a Diploma in Social Work. Simone has worked for a local authority from November 2008 to when she left in May 2011.

During her time with the local authority Simone gained experience in child protection, care management, family support, children in need and court work.

Simone then worked for an independent fostering agency in May 2011. She wanted to be more involved in the care children receive from approved foster carers to ensure that foster carers were meeting the various needs vulnerable fostered children have. Simone furthered her experiences with assessing prospective foster carers, delivering training to foster carers, supporting fostering placements and monitoring the outcomes for the children in placement. In July Simone was appointed Deputy Area Manager.

**2. Senior Practitioners and Supervising Social Workers:****Senior Supervising Social Worker****Caroline Connolly***Joined TACT in August 2006*

Caroline qualified as a Social Worker in 2003. She worked in a residential children's environment before moving to an independent fostering agency, where she remained for three years prior to her move to TACT.

**Senior Supervising Social Worker****Helen Bishop-Rowe***Joined TACT in August 2016*

Helen obtained her social work degree in 2012. She spent a short time working for the Local Authority duty and assessment team before moving over to the family placements team where she worked mostly in the adoption team. Helen then worked as a Supervising Social Worker for an Independent Fostering Agency for 3 and ½ years before joining TACT. Prior to receiving her social work degree, she lived in London for a period of time but returned to the West Midlands to study.

**Senior Supervising Social Worker****Lakhraj Rai***Joined TACT November 2018*

Lakhraj attained a MA in Social Work and BA (Hons) in Youth and Community Work. She is a dedicated, empathic and resourceful professional with extensive experience of working with vulnerable children and families in need of high level support through life changes, trauma and welfare requirements using a skilled approach.

Lakhraj has held a 14-year career in supporting and safeguarding children, working closely with families and professionals in a multi-disciplined setting. In 2012, Lakhraj worked with children, focusing on their needs in a foster or adoption setting, addressing and nurturing through life changes and emotional trauma and ensuring the correct match is made with a new family, whilst retaining links with the paternal family where suitable. This included responsibility for recruitment, assessment and training as part of a dedicated team approach.

Lakhraj is well versed and practised as a Senior Social Worker and Senior Practitioner for many years as well as being a Family Court Advisor for Cafcass. She has worked across both the private and public sector. Lakhraj is adept with applying a focused and analytical approach to all areas of her role.

### **Child Resource Worker**

**Linda Heise**

*Joined TACT in May 2010*

Linda qualified as an NNEB and worked in a Local Authority Nursery in Birmingham with the under 8's for twelve years. Still working for Birmingham Local Authority, she then moved to a children and families social work team as a senior social work assistant. She has extensive experience of working with looked after children and foster carers.

### **3. Administration:**

#### **Admin Manager**

**Sharon Higgins**

*Joined TACT in April 2016*

Prior to joining TACT, Sharon was Office Manager for St Thomas's Community Network for 28 years until the charity closed in September 2015 due to lack of funding. Under the umbrella of the charity there were a number of provisions such as a full day care nursery, recording studio, hairdressing salon etc. The main focus being the delivery of training courses for people of all ages in one of the most deprived areas of Dudley. Whilst there she obtained a number of qualifications through her CPD mainly her Higher Diploma in Business Administration and Level 4 in Management. Outside of work and on a voluntary basis she is the secretary for another charity called Friends of Green Park.

#### **Senior Administrative Officer**

**Julia Applewhite**

*Joined TACT in April 2010*

Prior to joining TACT, Julia worked within a voluntary and community sector organisation as a Strategic Resources Manager. Julia has studied through the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and attained a City & Guilds in Adult Teaching. Julia's skills and knowledge, together with her business administration background, bring a wealth of experience to her role within TACT.



## Management structure

See page 13.

## TACT West Midlands 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 West Midlands 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.

In line with the regulations of April 2011, there is now a central list from which panel members will be drawn. These include;

- Paul Webb - Independent Panel Chair
- Sally Stokes - Independent Vice Panel Chair
- Pamela Williams - Independent Foster Carer
- Susan Curry - Independent Health Representative
- Ronnie Hill - Independent Education Representative
- Marium Shafique - Independent Social Worker
- Lydia Dickinson - Independent Health Representative  
(Children's Nurse and Health Visitor)
- Sally Scott - Independent Social Worker
- Caroline Connolly - TACT Social Worker

**Non-voting Members of the Panel are:**

- Michelle Patterson - TACT Area Manager/Panel Advisor
- Alister Brown - TACT Executive Director/Agency Decision Maker
- Dr. K Maisey - Medical Advisor for TACT

**2. Current services provided by TACT West Midlands**

1. Fostering to children/young people 0-18 years.
2. Outreach support services to children and families.
3. Supervised contact.
4. Child and parent placements.
5. Out of hours placements.
6. Assessments.
7. Foster carer training.
8. Support groups.

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

- Remand fostering
- Fostering from children's home to foster home
- Management of Contact (2018)

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

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

1. Initial enquiry via telephone, website, or web based routes.
2. Allocated for Initial Visit.
3. Initial Visit carried out and Supervising Social Worker then makes recommendation to proceed or not in consultation with the Area Manager.
4. If the decision is not to proceed, the applicant/s are informed verbally and this is followed up in writing.

5. If the decision is to proceed applicant/s must attend Skills to Foster preparation course for fostering.
6. If applicants decide to proceed the to Form F assessment, the case is allocated to a Form F assessor.
7. All references and checks (DBS etc.) are taken up.
8. When completed the Form F assessment all checks and references are taken to the Fostering Panel for recommendation. Applicant/s are invited to attend Panel.
9. The agency decision maker decides on whether or not to approve. Applicant/s are informed in writing.

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

- The office 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. Undertaking learning and development is an ongoing requirement for TACT foster carers and now includes on-line courses.
- Foster carers are allocated a 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 and through groups.
- Each foster carer is reviewed annually and the fostering panel or Executive Director 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 that the views 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 01.05.2019

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

TACT West Midlands has 35 approved carers and there are 8 households currently being assessed as carers.

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

There are 51 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 outcome**

None in the last year.

## **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 they 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 DVD produced by TACT young people which covers joining a foster family and how to use advocacy/make complaints.

# TACT West Midlands

