

# Statement of Purpose

## TACT EAST MIDLANDS



## Introduction

This statement of purpose sets out the vision for our service in East Midlands and our aspirations for meeting the needs of the children and young people we look after. It describes our processes for matching children with foster families and supporting them, the assessment and training of our foster carers, our staffing arrangements and details how many foster care households and children we work with.

## 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 Chief Finance Officer.

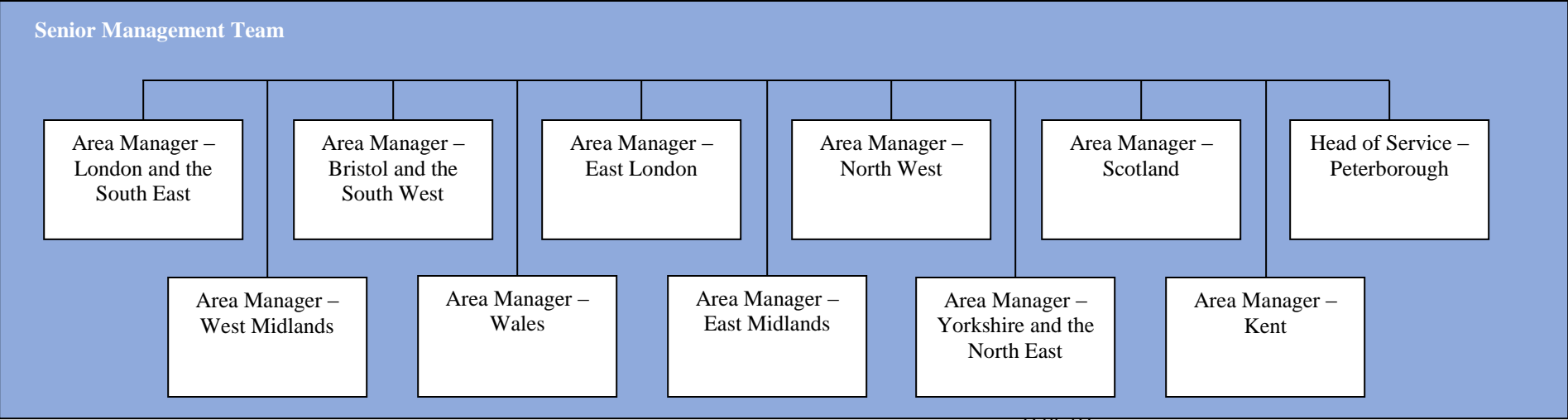
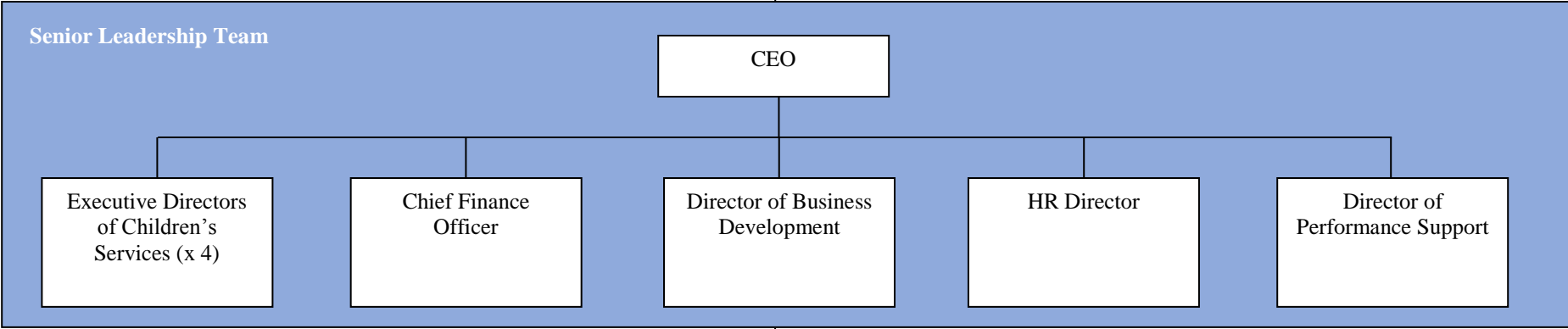
Services are provided from 10 area offices for fostering, one of which also includes adoption. These are: East London, South West England (office based in Bristol), Wales (office based in Cardiff), North West England (office based in Liverpool), West Midlands (office based in Walsall), East Midlands (office based in Kettering), Yorkshire and North East England (office based in Leeds), Scotland (offices based in Edinburgh and Glasgow), South London (covering South London and Kent). We also have a registered adoption agency based in Peterborough.

We are currently expanding our service geographically in the rest of the UK. We will be opening a new office in Bournemouth in 2020. In the East Midlands we are expanding into Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. 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.

Board of Trustees

Finance, Audit and Risk Subcommittee

Children's Services and Safeguarding Subcommittee



## 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

The East Midlands office was opened in 1995 and moved to the present office accommodation situated in Kettering, Northamptonshire in 2003. The office is conveniently located close to the busy A14, which is a good link road between the A1 and M1/M6 Junction and is close to public transport including the rail station. The Executive Director of Children's Services for the East Midlands area is Scott Ruddock who is based in our South Wales office. Ramona Catarig is the Area Manager of the East Midlands office. The social work staff are supported by an administrative team managed by Karen McEwan.

## Range of services provided in East Midlands

- Fostering to children/young people 0-17 years
- Outreach Support Services to children and families
- Child and parent placements
- Assessments
- Foster Carer training
- Support Groups
- Therapeutic support for foster carers
- 24 hours social work support

## TACT East Midlands staffing arrangements:

**Scott Ruddock** is the Executive Director of Children's Services. He joined TACT in 2013 and undertakes the supervision of the Area Managers in Wales and parts of England. His qualifications include:

- Diploma in Social Work (DipSW)
- 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 21 years. Prior to joining TACT, he was a Placements Team Manager and Service Manager in a Local Authority and an Operational Manager for a large children's charity in Wales.

**Ramona Catarig** is the Area Manager for the East Midlands office. Ramona joined TACT in May 2014 as a Deputy Area Manager and was appointed as the Area Manager in March 2019. Ramona's qualifications include:

- University degree in Theology and Social work
- PQSW One Award
- Post Qualifying specialist award Children and Young People and their families
- Level 5 award in leadership and management skills
- Practice teacher
- Accredited facilitator for the Fostering Changes programme

Ramona has worked in social work for 19 years. Prior to joining TACT Ramona worked as a social worker in Romania initially and then as a UK registered social worker in childcare and fostering teams, later moving into therapeutic fostering. Ramona also worked as a Local Authority Fostering Senior Practitioner responsible for the management and supervision of Fostering Social workers.

**The East Midlands area** has two Deputy Area managers, two lead practitioners, four senior supervising social workers, one placement worker and one children's resource worker. The service is also supported by a psychotherapist who works with us for two days/week and the TACT Head of education.

#### **Vacant (Deputy Area Manager).**

**Alan Pickles (Deputy Area Manager)** joined TACT in February 2008. Alan has a BSc. (honours) in Social Work which he obtained in 2006. Alan has twenty years' experience of working with families, children and young people, involving running youth and children's clubs and having worked with drug users and their families, adult asylum seekers, and as a trainer. His experience has been mainly in the voluntary sector, before becoming a social worker in 2006. Alan is a trained facilitator for Fostering Changes.

**Alison Tye (Lead Practitioner)** joined TACT in 2005. Alison has a Diploma in Social Work and an NNEB with a Post Qualifying Certificate in Day Care and Working with Families. Alison has experience of working in and managing family centres, also experience of Child Protection and working in Referral and Assessment Teams and Family Support Teams for three Local Authorities. Alison has completed her PQ consolidation module. Alison is a trained facilitator for Fostering Changes.

**Yvonne Coles (Lead Practitioner)** joined TACT in August 2003. Yvonne has a Diploma in Social Work and previously worked in Family Assessment/Child Protection for six years. Yvonne completed her PQ1 in December 2006 and is a Lead Practitioner for the East Midlands team. Yvonne is a trained facilitator for Fostering Changes. Yvonne has an accreditation award for attendance at a course for work in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation.

**Mark Taylor (Senior supervising Social Worker)** joined TACT in 2003. Mark has a Diploma in Social Work and has previously worked in Intake and Assessment, Child Protection, Looked after Children, Children with Disabilities and Asylum Seekers. His experience has been gained through both statutory and voluntary sectors. Mark is a trained facilitator for Fostering Changes.

**Adair Summerlin (Senior Supervising Social Worker)** Adair joined the East Midlands team in June 2015. Adair has previously worked for local authority as a secure residential worker, outreach worker, family centre worker and relief residential worker. Adair has worked for a private agency as an adoption and fostering social worker and has also worked for the Offenders Management Service in Peterborough supervising and supporting young offenders offering a therapeutic base and guidance. Adair's qualifications include BA Honours in Social Work, Counselling skills

for children and young people. Adair has also undertaken various distance study qualifications through the Open University.

**Hazel Stewart (Senior Supervising Social Worker)** joined TACT in September 2010 and worked as duty social worker until January 2017 when she moved into a senior supervising social worker role. Hazel started her career as a youth counsellor within the voluntary sector in 2002 and gained a Diploma in counselling. In 2005 Hazel worked as a family support worker in Local Authority working with unaccompanied asylum seekers. In 2010 Hazel completed a BA Honours in Social work at the University of Northampton. The degree included completing three placements, two of which were in child care teams – local authority setting and one in mental health. Hazel is a trained facilitator for Fostering Changes.

**Di Ward (Senior Supervising Social Worker)** started working with TACT in May 2018. Di has a BA Hons Degree in Social Work. Di has previously worked within Children in Need and Child Protection Teams mainly focusing on parenting and pre-birth assessments. Di has worked in Children's Homes for 12 years with teenagers with emotional behaviour disorders. Di has worked with adults and children at risk of sexual exploitation involved in prostitution. Di has worked in Fostering for over four years: recruiting, assessing, training and supporting foster carers.

**Michael Higham (Children's Resource Worker)** Michael Joined TACT in June 2017. Michael gained a certificate in Psychosocial Care through Middlesex University in 2012. Michael has previously worked as a Prison Custody Officer, Support Worker for adults with learning disabilities and more recently as a Therapeutic Care Worker for teenagers in a large Therapeutic Residential Community.

**Annette Drain (Placement Officer)** joined TACT in January 2012. Annette has RSA in typing and Level 3 NVQ in Business Administration. Annette has also undertaken a variety of computer software and Human Resources training courses.

### **Specialist Support Staff**

**Amanda Savage -TACT Head of Education.** Amanda is a very experienced teacher and Deputy Head who has also managed residential educational establishments. Amanda's role is to provide advice and support for children, carers and staff on educational matters. Amanda monitors educational outcomes for our children and provides additional support and intervention for those children who require it.

**Steve Jackson - Psychotherapist and Clinical Supervisor** - Steve has 25 years of experience and has worked in areas such as Kent, Yorkshire and the Midlands as both a Social Worker in child-based services including fostering, adoption and post adoption as well as undertaking work as a psychotherapist, in CAMHS, fostering and post-adoption. Steve works 14 hours a week ( Mondays and Tuesdays) for TACT East Midlands, offering the following services: one to one consultations for foster carers; one to one consultations for supervising social workers; group consultations for foster carers, supervising social workers and/or other relevant professionals with a focus on developing a combined understanding of a child with complex needs and a plan to move forward; group presentations for foster carers and/or Supervising Social



Workers.

The area is supported by the Administration Team:

**Karen McEwan is the Administrative Manager** Karen joined TACT in 2006 as a Senior Administrative Officer and became the Administrative Manager in March 2011. Karen has RSA in typing; Private and Executive Secretary's Diploma and has undertaken a variety of computer software training. Karen has an HNC in Printing and Design and Certificate in Marketing. She has passed ILM Level 3 in Leadership and Management.

**Senior Administrators:**

**Vivien Roberts** joined TACT in 2004. Vivien has RSA in Typing and has undertaken a variety of computer software training.

**Liz Dell** joined TACT in April 2008. Liz has RSA in Typing and Word Processing. Liz also has undertaking a variety of other computer software training.

**Amber Gladden** – joined TACT in July 2018. Amber has a range of qualifications including a degree in Social Sciences and Postgraduate Certificates in Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Social Work (Applied Social Studies). She has worked within a variety of roles over the years, both on a paid and voluntary basis, working in areas such as Youth counselling, physical and mental health and general community-based settings. Through her roles she has had the opportunity to develop skills in working with people of all ages and abilities, gained IT and Admin/office-based experience within several settings and gained knowledge of the work undertaken by a wide range of professional organisations. Most recently she spent two years working for the Family Placement team (Adoption and Fostering) at Barnardo's, Yorkshire in an Admin capacity.

**Lesley Blayney** – joined TACT in May 2019 as Admin officer for six months. Prior to joining TACT Lesley worked in primary and secondary schools supporting visually impaired pupils and also as a learning support assistant.

**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. For new placements the Children's Resource Worker will meet each newly placed child and introduce them to the Children's Guide, the activities and participation events they can become involved in.

**Number of approved foster carers**

TACT East Midlands have 64 approved carer households.

**The number of children in placement**

There are 91 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.

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

There have been no formal complaints within the last twelve months.

### **Fostering Panel**

The fostering meets regularly at the Kettering office to consider each application for approval and to recommend if a person is suitable to act as a foster parent. It also recommends the terms of approval; reviews the suitability to continue as carers at the first annual review, and then from time to time; advises the fostering service 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 fostering service may refer to it.

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

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

- Rachel Maloney – Independent Chair
- Sally Stokes – Independent Vice Chair
- Brenda Witted – Independent Education Adviser
- Sue Greenwell – Independent Foster Carer
- Fisnik Tahiri – Independent Panel member (care experienced)
- Ramona Catarig – Panel Advisor
- Social Worker – TACT

### **Recruitment, Assessment and Approval Process for foster carers**

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

- Initial enquiry via telephone, website or web-based routes. An initial enquiry form is completed and allocated for Initial Visit
- Initial Visit carried out by a Social Worker who then makes a recommendation to the Area Manager whether to proceed or not
- If the decision is not to proceed, the enquirer/s is/are informed verbally, and this is followed up in writing. If the decision is to proceed the enquirer/s are invited to attend Skills to Foster preparation course for fostering.
- Following the Skills to foster training if the decision is for the enquirer/s to proceed they will be invited to complete their application to foster
- Once the application is received a decision is made whether the assessment should begin at Stage 1 only or Stage 1 and 2 concurrently and this decision is shared with the applicant in writing. The assessment is allocated to a Form F assessor and references and checks are taken up. When Stage 1 is completed the applicant/s is informed within 10 working days that Stage 1 is complete

and what the outcome is. If during the assessment, information under Stage 1 indicates that the applicant/s is unsuitable to foster and a decision is made to close the assessment, the applicant/s will be informed in writing and advised about complaints process. If during Stage 2 of the assessment, information comes to light indicating that the applicant is unsuitable to foster, a 'Brief Report' must be presented to Panel. The applicant/s is informed in writing that a Brief Report is being presented to Panel and is provided with a copy of this report. If the Agency Decision Maker decides to terminate an assessment, this is a qualifying determination and, the applicant must be informed in writing of the decision, the reasons for it, and that they may, (within 28 calendar days) seek a review of this decision by the IRM or make representations to the fostering service's own panel.

- When Form F assessments are completed, these are presented to the Fostering Panel for recommendation. Applicant/s is/are invited to attend Panel.
- Following consideration of the Fostering panel's recommendation, the agency decision maker decides on whether to approve the applicant/s and they are informed in writing of this decision.

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

- a) The office in Kettering has an annual training programme with training courses being held both in Kettering and several venues in the Fens and Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire areas to ensure training is more accessible for foster carers. The training provision also includes on-line courses. Foster Carers have an individual learning and development plan linked to the programme. Foster carers are supported to attend training and TACT will help with childcare arrangements if needed. Undertaking learning and development is an ongoing requirement for TACT foster carers who are expected to complete their TDS Training Support and Development Standards by the time of their first annual review.
- b) Foster carers are allocated a Supervising Social Worker with a caseload of 10-12 families. Support is offered to foster carers twenty four 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.
- c) Each foster carer's approval is reviewed annually and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> reviews are fully considered by the Panel. An Independent Fostering Reviewing Officer (IFRO) chairs the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> etc reviews. Other reviews can be chaired by the Supervising Social Worker or the Area manager/Deputy Area manager if there are no issues of concern i.e. allegation that requires the attention of the fostering panel. All reviews are considered by the Agency Decision maker.

Currently the review process is changing. Starting with July 2019 all foster carer reviews will be chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer.

### **Monitoring of Fostering Service**

The fostering service is monitored through a quarterly (3 monthly) reporting system that brings together qualitative and statistical data and analyses this to identify continual improvement. This is scrutinised by TACT's Senior Leadership Team and a sub group of the Trustees. The main, but not exclusive, sources of monitoring information are:

- Foster Carer Reviews
- Young People's LAC reviews
- Young People's Feedback questionnaires and the Young People's participation group
- Foster Carer Feedback
- Meetings with Foster Carer Representatives
- Customer (Local Authority) Feedback
- File Audits and carer supervision audits
- Complaints and Compliments
- Findings from allegation investigations
- Placement Disruption Meetings
- Reporting on Children's Outcomes
- Foster Panel Quality Assurance feedback
- Notifications to Ofsted
- Customer Survey Questionnaires
- Ofsted inspection findings
- Staff meetings

Alongside this the service is monitored on a day to day basis via provision of formal supervision for all staff and foster carers, the auditing of case files and supervision records, business reporting and day to day feedback from young people and carer groups. The quality and effectiveness of the complaint's procedure is regularly monitored and kept under review.

#### **Review of Statement of Purpose**

The statement of purpose is reviewed monthly regarding local information and twice/yearly in relation to organisational information.

**TACT EAST MIDLANDS STRUCTURE**

