

Statement of Purpose

TACT North West



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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 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.

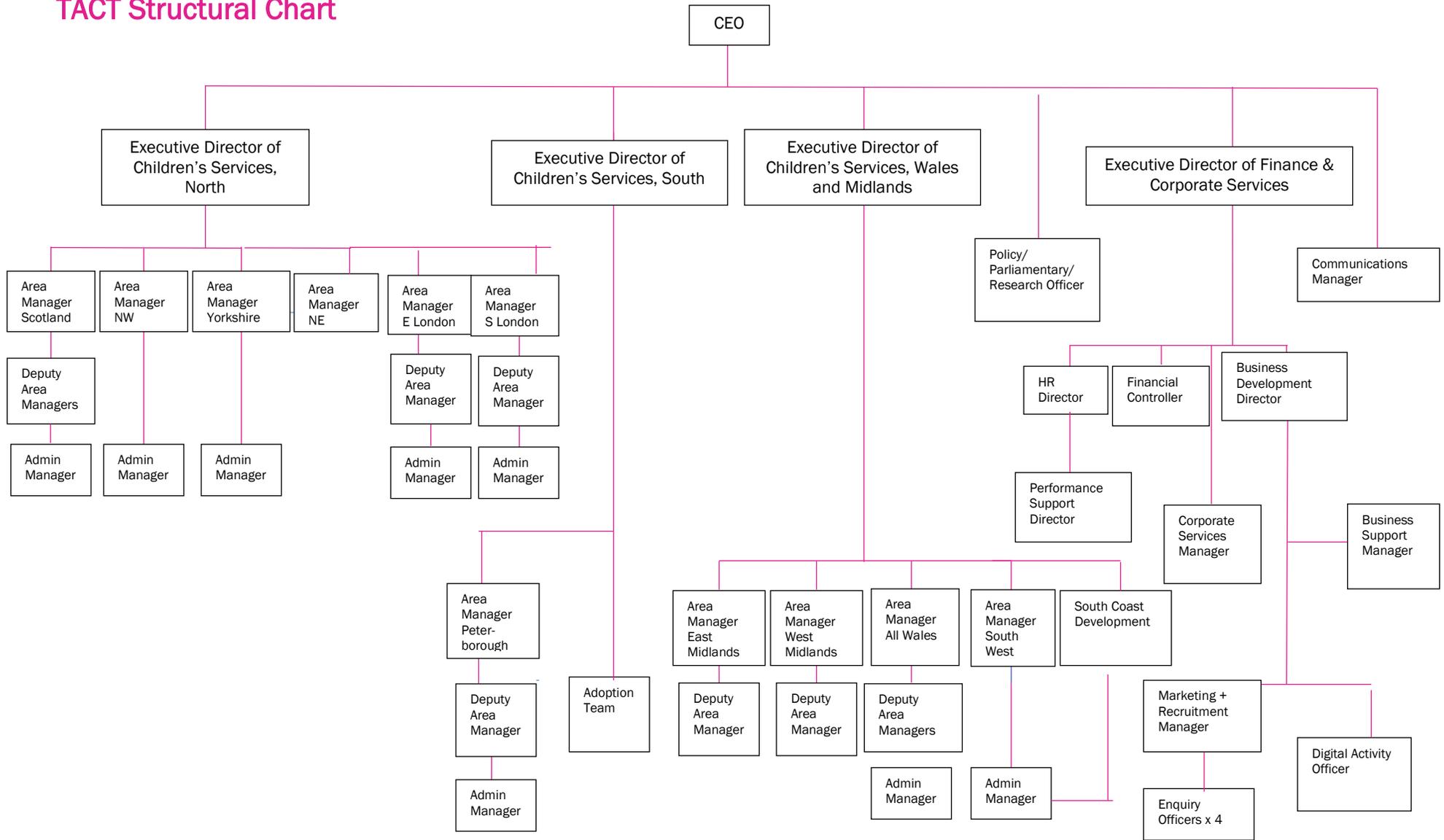
We are currently expanding our service geographically in a number of areas. The North-East service has been expanded and recently registered with Ofsted. We are also expanding along the South coast between Brighton and Weymouth under our South West Office. In the East Midlands we are expanding into Nottinghamshire 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). 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

The Liverpool Office opened in June 2003. Social work staff are supported by an administrative team. The Liverpool Office is one of 11 regional offices and covers The North-West region.

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.

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 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 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

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

I. Members of staff at TACT North West office

1. Management:

👉 **Jon Broadhurst** is the Deputy Area Manager of the North West and has the following qualifications:

- BA Hons
- Dip SW
- PQ1

Jon joined TACT in May 2014 and was appointed Deputy Area Manager. Jon qualified as a Social Worker in 1997 and worked initially within a child protection team before joining a Local Authority family placement team where he became Assistant Manager with the Adoption Team. Jon moved to a large charitable fostering agency in 2005 where he worked as a Children's Service Manager before joining TACT in 2014.

2. Senior Supervising Social Workers:

Peter Walker joined TACT in June 2010. Peter qualified as a Social Worker in 1986. He worked for Liverpool Social Services in child protection and family placements until he joined Foster Carer Services in 2001 where he worked as a Supervising Social Worker for 9½ years.

Lisa Houghton holds an MA in Social Work and qualified as a social worker in July 2012 from Liverpool John Moore's University. Upon successful completion of the course she progressed straight into a post as a Newly Qualified Social Worker at Halton Borough Council. Her experience to date as a social worker has been within a busy safeguarding children's team, however, prior to this, she worked in a number of residential settings with looked after children. Lisa left Halton Borough Council in July 2014 after two years of practice and joined TACT.

Vicky Brandon Joined TACT in July 2018. Vicky qualified as a social worker in 2010 with BA hons in Social Work at Liverpool John Moores University. Prior to this Vicky has ten years' experience working with Children and Young people within various educational and Local Children Centre settings. Upon completion of her degree Vicky Initially worked for three years at St Helens Council as a Child protection/Looked after children's social worker working within a busy safeguarding children's team. In 2013 Vicky worked for Cheshire West and Chester Council within their Integrated Early Support team supporting children and their families supporting and preventing family breakdown. In 2016 Vicky went to work for Wirral Council within a Child protection and Child in need team to gain further experience within a Local Authority safeguarding team.

Amanda Crichton has been a member of the TACT team since July 2018. She graduated from Liverpool John Moores University in July 2016 with a BA Hons in social work. Upon leaving university she secured a safeguarding role with Liverpool City Council, working with Children and Families. Whilst at the local authority Amanda was based in the Assessment/Child in Need Team and in the Care Planning and Court Team. Amanda has always worked with children. Prior to becoming a social worker, she spent 10 years working as a nursery nurse with children aged 0-7 years and she worked for 5 years as a manager of a children's activity program, on board a cruise ship based out of Miami

Placement Officer

Joyce Fitzsimmons joined TACT in March 2009 and is the Placement Officer.

Joyce has a wide variety of experience, including secretarial, administrative support, customer care work, technical support, and project managing. Her previous employment includes working for a large charity and the probation service.

CRW

Jessica May joined TACT in October 2017 as a part time Children's Resource Worker. She graduated from Liverpool John Moores university with a BA (Hons) degree in Early Childhood Studies. Jessica has worked in private/state education in London before working with children abroad for TUI. She worked in a specialist resource base for children with Autistic Spectrum Condition in Sefton before working for Sure Start Centre in 2014. Jessica transferred to Liverpool Sure Start in 2015 where she remained for 2 ½ supporting families and young people.

3. Administration:

The North-West area is supported by an Administration Team made up of:

Maureen Hughes joined TACT in September 2004 and is the Administration Manager. Maureen has vast experience of all aspects of secretarial, administrative support, and customer care work. Her previous employment includes the retail and business sector, and working for another major children's charity which gave her a particular desire to work in this field.

Audrey Cooper joined TACT in September 2017 as Senior Admin Officer. She has experience of many areas of administrative support, including regional admin and HR admin. Her previous employment includes working for several non-profit organisations, in a variety of admin roles.

Sam Welsh joined TACT in September 2006 and is an Administrative Officer. Sam has gained a wealth of experience and is an asset to the team.

4. Management structure

See page 10 and 11.

1. The fostering panel

North West - The fostering panel is a requirement of the fostering regulations and is updated to meet the criteria set out in the regulations. The NW Panel meets regularly at the Liverpool 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; advised 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.

Panel Members' names and positions:

- **Lesley Hollinshead** – Panel-Chair
- **Bruce McDougall** – Vice-Chair/Education Adviser
- **Olive Fallows** – Independent Foster Carer
- **Brenda Wallcott** – Independent Foster Carer & Fostered as a Child
- **Kate Fitzsimons** – Independent – Health Adviser
- **Janet Raine** – Independent – Health Adviser
- **Lisa Houghton** – TACT Supervising Social Worker
- **Audrey Cooper** – TACT Panel Administrator

Non-voting Members of the Panel are:

- **Jon Broadhurst** – Panel Advisor
- **Dr. K Maisey** – Medical Advisor

2. Current services provided by North West

- Fostering to children/young people 0-17 years
- Outreach support services to children and families
- Assessments
- Foster carer training
- Support groups
- 24 hour social worker support

3. New services currently being planned or developed

We are currently developing the fostering service in the Greater Manchester area. We have already established a group of skilled carers in this region to allow us to extend our services to more children and families. We employed a Specialist Social Worker in March 2017.

Joanne Culley is a Specialist Social Worker (New Area Development), appointed in March 2017, with the responsibility for developing TACT's presence in the Greater Manchester area. She is driving the development of the operations and services. Joanne previously worked for the North West team with TACT for 5 years.

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 North-West region 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 online 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; 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 (England North) 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 June 2019.

8. Number of approved foster carers

The North West currently has 35 approved carer households, with several households in the assessment process.

9. The number of children in placement

There are currently 52 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

There have been no complaints within the last 12 months.

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.

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