STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

2019/20

TACT
Fostering
South West

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LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Statement of Purpose is designed to inform you about the values and structure of TACT with some information about the recruitment, assessment and training of our carers, and details of staff and placements. This Statement of Purpose has been developed in accordance with regulations, statutory guidance and national minimum standards as applying to fostering providers, including:

- Care Standards Act 2000
- The Children & Young Persons Act 2008
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Fostering Services (England) Regulation 2011
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards (2011)
- The Disability and Equality Act 2010
- Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD) for Foster Carers

As part of the regulatory requirement, a copy of the Statement of Purpose will be provided on the TACT website.

ABOUT TACT

TACT was formed in 1992 by a group of local authority service managers who were also qualified and experienced social workers. The decision to form TACT originated as they had expressed concerns that the rapid changes were resulting in a lack of adequate foster care and adoptive placements.

As local authorities were encouraged to provide home-based foster care in place of large residential children's homes, Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) like TACT were established all over the country to find homes for children and young people.

TACT was established as a charity from the outset to ensure that any surplus income was reinvested into the organisation, helping to meet the needs of looked after children.

TACT is a registered charity (1018963 and SC 039052) and a company limited by guarantee (2779751 – England and Wales).

As a charity we have a board of trustees who are responsible for providing leadership and developing a clear long-term strategy for the organisation.

The day to day running and decision making is delegated to chief executive, Andy Elvin and the senior leadership team. The board of trustees playing an important role overseeing the systems of financial control, promoting high ethical standards and monitoring regulatory compliance.

TACT has grown both in size and scope and there is now a national network of TACT offices in England, Wales and Scotland.

The type of care offered to individuals is based primarily upon one thing; the best needs of the cared for child or young person. The whole ethos of TACT is based around ensuring the best quality of life for those in care.

To this day our core remit is to provide high-quality, child-centred fostering and adoption services. However, we also campaign on behalf of children in care, carers and families.

OUR VISON & VALUES

BETTER LIVES FOR OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ASPIRATIONAL

By helping others to grow, 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 and local authorities.

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 services for our carers and improving outcomes for children and young people.

KEY STRATEGIC AIMS

- **Our services – provide and develop a diversified and innovative range of services to children and young people who are on the edge of care, in care or leaving care.**
- **Thought leadership – position ourselves as a 'go to' organisation for best practice and develop our reach within the sector to improve outcomes and services for young people.**
- **Our children and young people – supporting and enabling children & young people so that they can recover from trauma & go on to develop their confidence, well-being and skills and achieve their ambitions.**
- **Participation and consultation – engaging with young people, carers, our staff and other stakeholders so that their views and aspirations help to shape, deliver and improve services.**
- **Consistently outstanding – investing in our staff, carers and partnerships, always striving for excellence.**
- **Our sustainability – maintain a robust and sustainable financial and governance model while allowing for growth and development.**

OUR STAFF

- All registered managers are professionally qualified in line with the requirements of regulations and national minimum standards.
- All social workers are professionally qualified and registered individually with HCPC (from December 19 to be transferred to Social Work England). Some have post qualifying specialist awards and experience related to working with children and young people in foster care.
- A considerable number of people work for our organisation on an independent, self-employed basis across a variety of roles. This may include workers who support young people and encourage participation, education staff, therapists and independent fostering panel members, chairs and vice chairs. All our staff have appropriate experience and qualifications and have access to supervision and support with a dedicated line manager.
- Safer recruitment and right to work checks and enquiries are carried out on all staff to ensure that the welfare of children and young people are safeguarded. For all staff including casual and self-employed staff verification of any necessary formal qualifications is obtained.
- All staff who undertake work for us on a permanent, casual and self-employed basis, are covered by appropriate professional indemnity and public liability insurance.

TACT'S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

SERVICES PROVIDED

TACT offers a range of placement types for potential foster carers.

Emergency: we have carers who can provide unplanned / emergency placements for individual children or sibling groups.

Short breaks (respite): we have foster carers who provide short break / respite placements either on a regular basis or one-off holiday breaks. These can be for children living at home with their birth parents, children within our full-time placements or children from other fostering agency / Local Authority placements.

Short-term: placements are described as short term whilst care plan arrangements are being made. This can be for a considerable period, while long-term plans are being formulated.

Long-term/permanency: placements are available with long-term foster carers who can take individual children or sibling groups. Long-term placements are matched in accordance with placing authority procedures.

Children with disabilities: TACT can provide specialist placements for children and young people who have a severe learning difficulty, a physical disability or who need complex medical care.

Parent and child: We can provide placements for parents (under and over 18 years old) so that they can receive support in developing parenting skills. Foster carers can assist local authorities with their assessments by providing information relating to parenting capacity/capabilities.

Solo placements: these placements are offered to children who could be a risk to other children and young people, or whose behaviour is so challenging that carers cannot offer enough support if other children are present.

Sibling placements: many of our carers can care for large sibling groups to enable children to stay together.

Specialist placements: our carers also provide placements for children who are at risk of child sexual exploitation, trafficking, and /or display harmful sexualised behaviours. Young people on remand for offending and alternatives to residential care are also considered specialist placements.

Staying put arrangements: these are to enable young people to remain in their foster placement post 18 to support their transition into adulthood.

MODEL OF CARE

At the core of how we operate is a commitment to achieve the best possible outcomes for children in our care. Support is individually tailored to the children in placement.

PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

TACT wants to make sure that young people are at the heart of everything we do, so we are constantly looking for ways to help young people to be involved in the organisation. Participation takes many forms, from involvement with marketing, communications, project development, lobbying parliament, training or even helping to run the show by working with TACT's trustees.

We understand that being looked after can be a life-changing experience for young people in care, so we welcome their voices being heard and potentially being able to support those who are finding the experience more difficult.

A good example of this involvement is through TACT's national children's champions that meet regularly, chaired by Andy Elvin, CEO. The group serves a range of purposes;

- **Consulting, listening and hearing the voices of children and young people, by providing them opportunities to participate in decision-making and how TACT works to serve them.**
- **Using evidence from participation as the basis for improving standards and improving outcomes for children and young people.**
- **Delivering innovative and excellent opportunities to young people through a well-trained and skilled workforce that have access to enough resources.**

At TACT all local offices are also supported by a Children's Resource Worker (CRW) that's available to meet with young people and carers for any reason. This is in addition to a dedicated social worker supporting every young person and carer.

CHILDREN'S GUIDE

When TACT arranges a placement for a child or young person into a new family, the child or young person is provided with an age appropriate copy of our guide to foster care.

This is intended to provide them with details about TACT, what foster care means and provides answers to frequently asked questions. It's also an important opportunity to ensure that every child or young person is aware of the support that's in place and how they can make use of this, including raising a complaint, if necessary.

RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS FOR FOSTER CARERS

The following process is in place for any applicants who wish to become approved foster carers with TACT:

1. **Initial enquiry via telephone, website or other online routes.** → At this point the assessment may be closed by either enquirer or TACT.
2. **Allocated for Initial Visit.**
3. **Initial Visit carried out and the supervising social worker then makes a recommendation to proceed or not, in consultation with the area manager.** → When this point is reached the enquirer may choose to withdraw.
4. **If the decision is not to proceed, the applicant(s) are informed verbally; this is followed up in writing.**
5. **If the decision is to proceed then the applicant(s) must attend TACT's Skills to Foster preparation course for fostering.**
6. **If applicant(s) and TACT decide to proceed to the Form F assessment then the case is allocated to a Form F assessor.**
7. **All references and checks (DBS etc.) are taken up by the admin team.**
8. **A series of home visits by the assessor.**
9. **Upon completion of the Form F assessment, all checks and references, the supervising social worker will meet with the fostering panel for recommendation. Applicant(s) are also invited to attend the panel.**
10. **The agency decision maker decides on whether to approve the applicant(s) as foster carers. Applicant(s) are informed of the outcome in writing.**

The final assessment steps take from 4 to 6 months to complete. (Shown in steps 7 – 10)

SUPPORT, TRAINING AND REVIEWING CARERS

SUPPORT TO FOSTER CARERS

- A fostering support service is available 24 hours a day via the Emergency Duty Team. This is provided by qualified fostering social workers and area managers.
- Each area has a fostering support team that provides support groups for carers, including topical presentations from relevant professionals and ongoing learning and development.

TRAINING FOR FOSTER CARERS

- Training is organised by the local fostering team. This covers all areas of training required to meeting the required Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011.
- All carers have access to an extensive online suite of courses and webinars.

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

- All foster carers are allocated a supervising social worker whose role is to supervise and support the household.
- Foster carers receive monthly supervision visits or support, and more frequently as necessary. An unannounced visit is carried out at least once per year.
- Carers are expected to maintain written recordings about each child placed and these are discussed during supervisory visits.
- Supervising social workers attend placement planning meetings, pre-disruption and disruption meetings, adoption introductory meetings and children in care reviews wherever possible.
- During office hours, carers can contact their supervising social worker for advice, information and support whenever necessary. If the supervising social worker is unavailable the duty social worker or a manager will respond to urgent requests.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- Fostering allowances are in line with the National Minimum Standards and are paid fortnightly in accordance with a published schedule. We provide all carers with written guidance on what these allowances cover and what additional expenses may be claimed.
- Foster carers are also paid a fostering fee.

REVIEW OF FOSTER CARERS

- Foster carers are reviewed annually.
- Foster carers will be reviewed more frequently if, for example, there is a major change in their circumstance or they are subject to a complaint or allegation.
- The report is presented to the fostering panel or Agency Decision Maker for recommendations regarding re-approval, de-registration or change of registration as required.
- The review process is interactive; the format enables the recording of significant events, changes within the household, the number and range of children between reviews, specific issues within the placements, standards of care, abilities and knowledge of carers, provision of a safe caring environment and working as a team.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

There are a range of systems in place to monitor and evaluate the provision of TACT fostering services, to ensure they are effective and that the quality is of an appropriate standard;

- Carer annual reviews
- Children's feedback forms
- Annual staff appraisals
- Monthly supervision of carer(s)
- Regular supervision of staff
- Feedback from carers regarding training
- Feedback from carers via annual service satisfaction questionnaire
- Feedback from other professionals
- Feedback from local authority/ trust workers at children's LAC reviews
- Feedback from local authority/ trust workers prior to carer(s) reviews
- File audits
- Quarterly performance reviews
- External monitoring via regulatory bodies

Executive Directors conduct file audits and internal reviews of their services.

COMPLAINTS, ALLEGATIONS AND WHISTLEBLOWING

Whistleblowing is the reporting of a concern in the public interest that something is happening within TACT that should not be, or not happening that should be. It is based on the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA).

TACT is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity, accountability and practice and concerns can be raised via the whistleblowing process.

The aim of the TACT complaints process is to resolve a complaint at the most informal level possible. Complaints can be made in writing or orally to any member of staff, up to and including the CEO.

The stages to managing any complaint are:

- Stage 1 Local Resolution
- Stage 2 Independent Investigation
- Stage 3 Review of Process

Details of the complaint's procedure can be found in the carers handbook or on the TACT website.

Fostering
South West

REGISTERED OFFICE INFORMATION

TACT SOUTH WEST

Registered office: The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2QQ

TACT South West is registered and inspected as an independent fostering agency with ofsted, registration number SC050500.

The last inspection of the TACT South West was from 24th to 28th July 2017 and received an outcome of outstanding.

Responsible individual: (Andy Elivin)

Registered manager: (Elaine Graham)

Elaine Graham is the Area Manager and is responsible for all operations and services in TACT South West.
Elaine joined TACT in 2003 and has the following qualifications:

- Certificate of Qualification in Social Work
- Certificate in Advanced Child Care
- NVQ Level 5 in Management
- Certificate in Welfare Studies
- BA (Hons) in Social Science
- Certificate in Personnel Practice
- Certificate in Training & Development
- Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement
- Solution Focus Brief Training
- Managing Practice Learning

Elaine qualified in 1991 and has many years' experience working within Fostering and Adoption.

As of 24th November 2020, the TACT South West office has:

40 approved fostering households

51 children and young people in placement

7 young people have remained with their carers as part of a staying put arrangement.

LOCAL STAFF STRUCTURE

TACT Trustees

Chief Executive Officer

Executive Director of Children's Services

Area Manager

Senior Support Social Worker(s)

Children Resource Worker

Placement Officer

Administration Manager

Administration Officer(s)

REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Statement of Purpose is reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently as and when information changes.

LILAC · We are a Living Wage Employer · disability confident COMMITTED · The Sunday Times 100 Best Not-for-Profit Organisations to Work For 2018 · Best Company 2018 · Children & Young People Now Awards 2019 Finalist