

# TACT

## STRATEGIC PLAN

2019/20 – 2022/23



**BETTER LIVES**  
FOR OUR **CHILDREN**  
AND  
**YOUNG PEOPLE**

October 2019

# INTRODUCTION

TACT has a strong track record of providing good and outstanding fostering and adoption services across England, Scotland and Wales. We will continue to do this not just by measuring our success in respect of inspection results but on the stability and support that we can offer to our children and their foster, adoptive and kinship families. We will also look to measure long term outcomes for the children we care for as this is the ultimate measure of our impact. We will invest in our staff, development of our volunteers and their wellbeing – focusing on safe recruitment, high levels of training, support and wellbeing services. This will be backed up by suitable infrastructure including efficient systems and processes.

We will aim for all our child facing services to involve children and families in their design and production, thus creating a virtuous feedback loop. This allows those with experience of care and providing care to further improve the quality of our services ongoing. In connection with our non-child facing services we will strive for excellence so that these services may underpin the success of our child facing services. We will do this by ensuring sustainability, safeguarding and safety. This will be supported by excellence in Governance, Finance and Human Resources to assist with the continued success of the charity.

## CONTEXT

The current operating environment has been impacted significantly by the financial crisis of 2008 that has led to the erosion of local authority funding. TACT's fees have ceased to cover all costs and our margins have reduced whilst we have endeavoured to provide the best services that we can, for the children we look after and the foster families that we support.

For TACT to continue to thrive after the celebration of its 25th Birthday in 2018 we need to ensure our financial situation is strong, stable and sustainable. We want to generate a healthy surplus to allow us to invest in innovation and service improvement. To do this we need to implement significant changes to our business model and this work has started.

TACT does not wish to achieve a particular turnover, but we aim to be the right size to be the best. This will enable us to achieve our vision.

# OUR VISION



**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 FOCUSED**  
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.



**OUR VALUES**



**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.

# OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

We plan to build on the success of the charity and this three-year strategic plan lays out a number of aims and objectives, charting a path for the future, identifying the major themes and key activities. It will allow us to measure our effectiveness.

Our strategy will be governed by four aims. They are:

1. **To enhance the life chances for all of our children, improving their attainment and achievement.**
2. **To be an excellent organisation and the agency of choice for our foster carers and the employer of choice for our people.**
3. **To be a sector leader through investment in innovation and service improvement.**
4. **To be financially strong, stable and sustainable through generating a healthy surplus.**

The Charity's key strategic objectives are a framework to guide us as we move forward and help us achieve the goals set in our strategy and to measure our success.

These objectives are:

1. **To improve educational, health and wellbeing outcomes for all of our children and young people.**
2. **To have children and their families at the heart of everything that we do and ensure that they co-design and co-produce our services.**
3. **To be recognised as providing high quality provision in England, Scotland and Wales.**
4. **To strengthen our foster families in terms of diversity, capacity and resilience.**
5. **To achieve a surplus year on year that can be re-invested in the charity.**

6. **To be innovative in our approaches and act as a driver for change in the sector.**
7. **To promote the views and voices of children in care, care experienced adults and their families, in order to increase public understanding and to improve the care system.**

## OUR PLAN

A strategy will be developed for each service area within TACT to deliver these strategic objectives:

1. **Children's Outcomes**
2. **Fundraising**
3. **Carer Recruitment and Retention**
4. **Our People**
5. **Innovation**
6. **Finance and Business Development**



# 1. CHILDREN'S OUTCOMES

## BACKGROUND

TACT's raison d'être is to improve the wellbeing and life skills of looked after children and to prepare our children to thrive in society. TACT has a strong reputation for supporting foster carers to achieve positive outcomes for children.

Research has identified that looked after children and young people are at increased risk of a range of poor outcomes, many of which are interdependent. TACT seeks to improve the educational, health and other outcomes for children placed with us to enhance their life chances. We provide families where children feel safe, valued and enjoy the stability that enables them to achieve. We support our foster families to be environments where children thrive and can go on to lead happy, successful, independent and responsible adult lives.

All our services are rated good or better by the relevant inspectorates.

## PLAN

- To continue to strengthen the focused support we offer to foster carers and young people across all regions and countries in order to improve the educational, social and health outcomes of our children.
- To develop our processes for evidencing the impact of our work on our children's outcomes and use the information available to further develop child centred practice.
- To further involve care experienced young people in the co-design and co-production of the services they receive.

- To engage and support our care experienced young people as they move into adulthood and beyond.
- To have no limits to our aspirations for our children, young people and care experienced adults so that they may achieve their full potential.

## 2020 – 2023 targets:

1. 100% of children who are in need of support from the Head of Education are referred.
2. 100% of children and young people are in full time education or training appropriate to their needs.
3. 75% of children who leave TACT between the ages of 18 and 21 go on to employment, further education or vocational training.
4. The percentage of children leaving their foster family in an unplanned way is below national benchmarks.
5. 100% of children report feeling safe and listened to in their families.
6. 100% of children placed for over 3 months have an Outcomes Tracker completed.
7. TACT will be able to provide evidence for how it responds to children and young people's voices at both a governance and operational level in service design and delivery.
8. 80% of children provide feedback on a regular basis.
9. Further develop TACT Connect so that we can stay connected to our children in adulthood and celebrate their achievements and offer support where necessary.

## 2. FUNDRAISING

### BACKGROUND

TACT have historically had low levels of fundraising and have only achieved 1% - 2% of income through this route. Fundraising can provide additional resources for investment and innovation and cover costs of services we provide that are not within our core contractual terms.

### PLAN

- To seek to obtain government grants together with trust and foundation grants.
- To attract corporate sponsorship (achieving charity of the year status) and individual donations.
- To look for "in kind" donations to cover items such as office space, IT equipment and furniture.
- Seek pro bono services.
- To create an endowment. Many charities have created endowments to provide predictable, long term, revenue streams to support the provision of services especially those that are non-commissioned. We target having £500,000 in the endowment by the end of this plan.

### Targets for 2020 through to 2023:

1. 2020-21: Fundraising to account for 2.5 % of overall income.
2. 2021-22: Fundraising to account for 3% of overall income.
3. 2022-23: Fundraising to account for 4% of overall income.
4. Endowment will be £500,000 by 2022/23.

## 3. CARER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

### BACKGROUND

We want to be the agency of choice for foster carers. We offer highly skilled social work support, therapeutic input, a varied and relevant training offer and a dedicated out of hours service.

However, the fees that we pay our foster carers are increasingly uncompetitive in the current marketplace. The majority of those who leave TACT either retire or take permanence orders (adoption, SGO) in respect of their children. Staying Put is also taking up an increasing amount of our capacity.

### RETENTION/CARER FEES

### PLAN

- Increase foster carer fees and allowances.
- Regularly benchmark the TACT offer against competitors.
- Enquiry officers to maintain a spreadsheet of enquirers expressing concerns regarding fee levels.
- Through co-design and co-production with our foster carers we will ensure that we maintain the high level and quality of social work and associated support to our foster families. Services such as the dedicated OOH service, manageable social work caseloads, CRW's and specialist psychology support are key factors in the retention of our carers. We are launching a carers portal to improve communication and access to resources for all of our carers.
- Increase foster carer capacity through organic recruitment. We will further improve our Refer a Friend scheme as our best carers are often brought to us by our existing carers. We will aim to get 5% of carers through this route. We are

working with Accenture to forensically scrutinise our whole recruitment process and will take forward their recommendations.

- Increase our carer base through mergers with likeminded fostering agencies and through acquisitions, if appropriate.

### 2020 – 2023 targets:

1. TACT aim to increase foster carer's fees and allowances.
2. Improve conversion rate of enquiries to approved foster carers to 3%.
3. Ensure that potential carers move through our recruitment and assessment process within 26 weeks - barring special circumstances.
4. Regularly survey carers and children to inform improvements in our service.

## 4. OUR PEOPLE

### BACKGROUND

TACT employs a diverse staff group at all levels and will build further on this. TACT have good staff retention rates and offer an attractive employment package, a range of wellbeing support including mental health first aiders and impressive training and development opportunities to develop careers.

### PLAN

- Invest in our Leadership Team to ensure they continue to create the right culture to deliver our objectives.
- Support and invest in our staff with regular induction training and ongoing learning and development opportunities.
- Deliver high quality ongoing training and performance improvement support for our existing and new staff.
- Address our systems, IT and processes to ensure that we have the right operating systems, infrastructure and talent to support a charity of our size in this environment.
- Deliver against our pay framework ensuring fairness and equity.

### 2020 – 2023 targets:

1. Retention rates of 85% or above.
2. To be an employer of choice with high levels of employee engagement.
3. To promote a health and wellbeing culture.
4. To ensure employees have equal opportunities to ensure they are able to develop their careers.
5. To ensure that staff have the right tools and environment to do their job.
6. To continue to be a living wage employer.

## 5. INNOVATION

### BACKGROUND

Innovation is at the core of what we do. Co-design and co-production with our care experienced young people and adults and foster families will underpin our approach. We are an organisation that embraces innovation and will encourage fresh ideas that could work and will encourage ideas from all quarters. Through this we will find new ways to improve outcomes for children. Innovation will also impact on diversifying our income streams.

Innovation has two components:

- A continuous improvement programme for all our existing services.
- New innovations that positively impact the organisation.

### PLAN

- Develop a business/commercial model setting out how TACT will offer consultancy and who within TACT will be responsible for and involved in this.
- To continue to strengthen income diversification through training (Confidence in Care, FASD) and innovative practice (Step Down, Parallel Parenting).
- Be open to new ideas from all quarters through schemes such as the successful 25@25.

### 2020 – 2023 targets:

1. To develop our consultancy and training offer so as to increase income.
2. To run regular 25@25 schemes to encourage existing service innovations and wholly new services.

# 6. FINANCE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

## BACKGROUND

We need to take action to improve our reserves and to place the charity on a stable long-term financial footing. We need to ensure a sustainable financial and operating environment, to facilitate the delivery of our services and to achieve our objectives.

The existing financial strategies were set in 2015. These strategies have not been regularly met. These strategies will remain in place, but we must ensure that we take action to achieve them. Underpinning this work will be concerted action to increase income. TACT have historically been in the lower quartile for pricing across the market and have not been achieving a consistent surplus leading to deficit budgets.

## FINANCE

1. To ensure a sustainable financial and operating environment to facilitate the delivery of services, and achievement of TACT's objectives.
2. TACT's priority is to concentrate its efforts on restoring the Balance Sheet Reserves position.

## 2020 – 2023 Financial targets:

1. Achieve a Net Surplus of at least 2% measured after Investment in Growth for the year ending 31st March 2020.
2. Achieve a Net Surplus of at least 4% measured after Investment in Growth in subsequent years.
3. That the Surpluses referred to be retained by TACT to re-establish its Reserves.
4. Achieve and maintain Free Reserves equal to 50% of Indirect Costs.
5. Achieve and maintain Cash Resources at a minimum level of eight weeks Operating Costs.
6. Maintain a Gearing Ratio of 10% or Less, which is subject to review in relation to Growth Projects.
7. Review performance of individual services within TACT to ensure that we are meeting targeted performance.

# CONCLUSION

TACT is in a good position to realise the aims of this strategy. All of the aims are dependent on us driving through the necessary changes to our business model.

The road to success has no end. TACT is continuously setting the standard for innovation and quality to achieve "better lives for our children and young people".

**TO FIND OUT MORE PLEASE  
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