TACT
Fostering
London and the East

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

2021/22

CONTENTS

4. About Us

6. TACT's Vision and Values

8. TACT's Organisational Sturcture

10. Services Provided

11. Model of Care

12. Participation Strategy

13. Recruitment, Assessment and Approval Process for Foster Carers

14. Support, Training and Reviewing Carers

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

16. Registered Office Information

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 US

TACT was formed in 1992 by a group of local authority service managers who were also qualified and experiences 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.

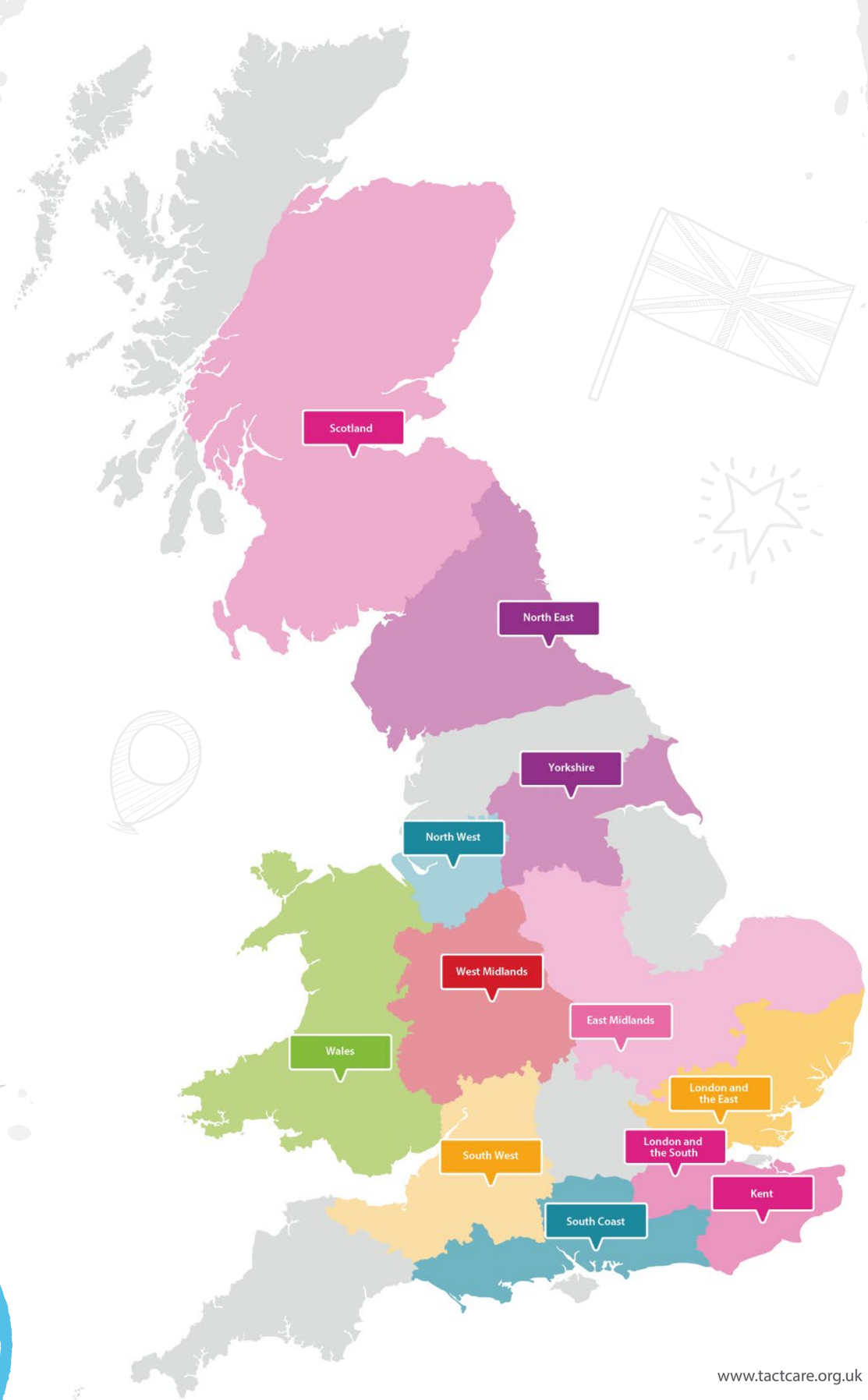
As a charity we have a board of trustees who are responsible for providing leadership and developing a clear long-term strategy for the organisation.

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

As a National Fostering Charity, TACT have teams located across England, Scotland and Wales. In 2020, we made the decision to become a permanently home-based organisation – having seen the benefits of home working during the Coronavirus pandemic.

The decision to remove our physical offices means that our staff are now spread more widely across the UK, rather than being concentrated in a small number of specific locations and even better placed to provide outstanding support to our foster carers and young people.

We will continue to provide high quality face-to-face training and meet regularly with our foster carers, however we will now have the ability to ensure this is in the exact locations where our foster carers need us most.



BETTER LIVES FOR OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

OUR VALUES

ASPIRATIONAL

By helping others to grow, we grow ourselves.

PASSIONATE

We are determined to keep improving. 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.

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.

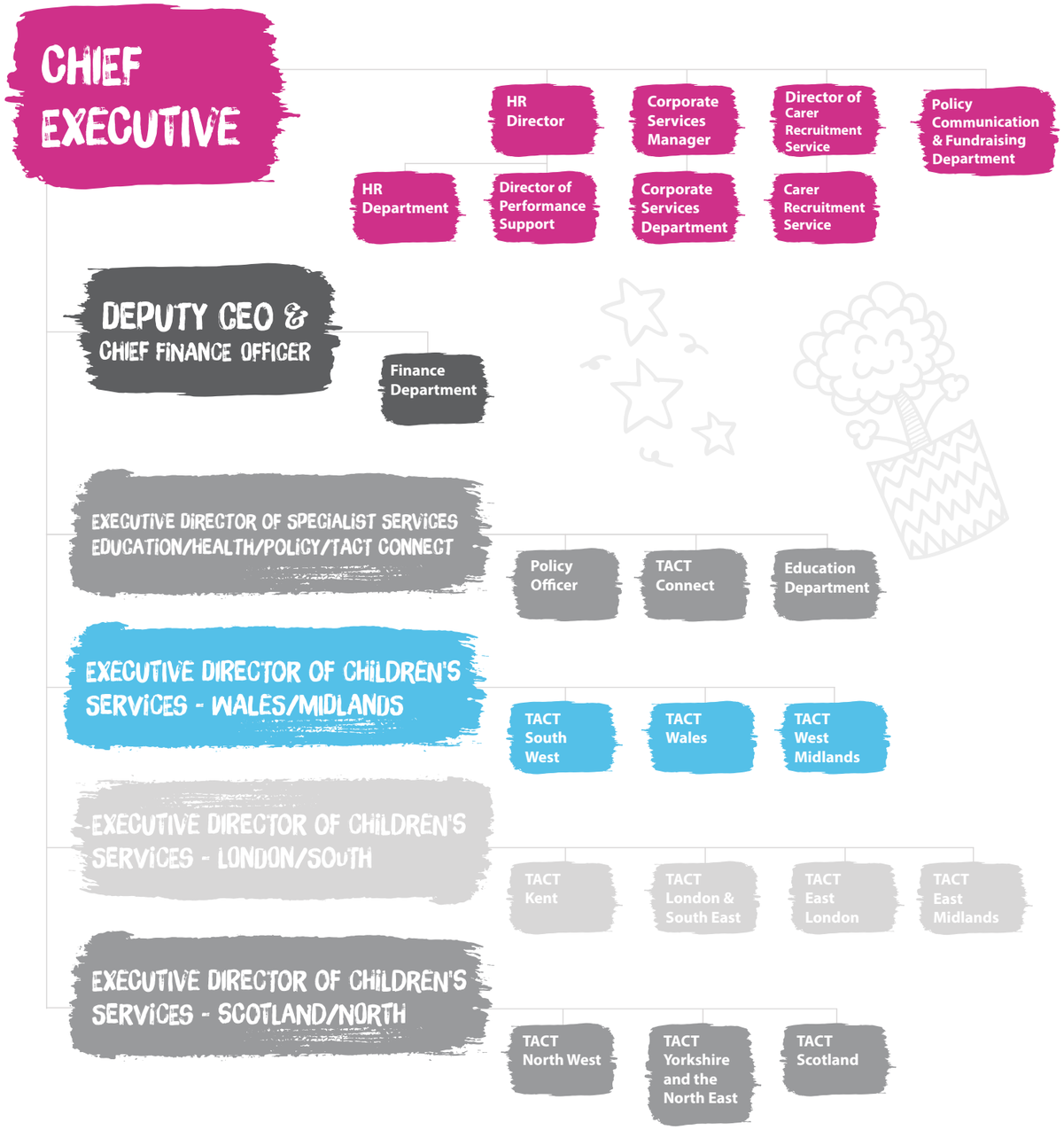
BEYOND PROFIT

Reinvesting our resources into services for our carers and improving outcomes for children and young people.

KEY STRATEGIC AIMS

- **Our services** – providing and developing 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** – positioning ourselves as a 'go-to' organisation for best practice and developing our reach within the sector to improve outcomes and services for young people.
- **Our children and young people** – supporting and enabling children and young people so that they can recover from trauma and go on to develop their confidence, well-being, skills and achieve their ambitions.
- **Participation and consultation** – engaging with young people, carers, our staff and other stakeholders so that their views and aspirations can help to shape, deliver and improve services.
- **Consistently outstanding** – investing in our staff, carers and partnerships and always striving for excellence.
- **Our sustainability** – maintaining a robust and sustainable financial and governance model while allowing for growth and development.

TACT'S ORGANISATIONAL STURCTURE



OUR STAFF

- All registered managers are professionally qualied 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 sta, therapists and independent fostering panel members, chairs and vice chairs. All our sta have appropriate experience and qualications 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 sta to ensure that the welfare of children and young people are safeguarded. For all sta including casual and self-employed sta verication of any necessary formal qualications 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.

SERVICES PROVIDED

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

Emergency: An unplanned placement, reviewed within 3 days and can be extended up to 12 weeks.

Short breaks: A placement which forms part of a planned series of short breaks.

Short-term: A placement which is in place for less than 24 months, not secured by a permanence order.

Long-term: A placement which has been in place longer than 24 months not secured by a permanence order.

Permanent: A placement secured by a permanence order.

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.

Child and Parent: 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 sibling groups to enable children to stay together.

Complex needs placements: Our carers also provide placements for children who are at risk of child sexual exploitation, trafficking, and/or display harmful sexualised behaviours and can provide placements for children and young people who have a learning difficulty, a physical disability or who need complex medical care.

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.

EDUCATION SERVICE

In 2019 TACT launched a new Education Service that is accessible to our staff and foster carers, for the benefit of the young people in our care.

Educational attainment for children in care is significantly lower than their non-looked after peers. Our Education Service aims to close this gap and ensure that the children in our care receive the best possible education.

TACT's Head of Education works with Virtual School Heads, as well as Supervising Social Workers, Local Authority Social Workers and schools, advocating solely for the child's interests and ensuring that the most appropriate resolution is found to the issue in question.

MODEL OF CARE

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

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 and communications, to 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.

TACT have two young people's participation groupsthat 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 outcomes for children and young people.**
- **Delivering innovative and excellent opportunities to young people through a well-trained and skilled workforce who have access to enough resources.**

At TACT all local teams 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 and what foster care means, providing 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.

TACT CONNECT

TACT Connect is an innovative program that provides our care-experienced adults with access to a supportive community as well as grants, practical support, information and guidance. We aim to be there to celebrate success as well as lend a helping hand when required.

At TACT we recognise that leaving care is a challenging time for young people, especially as many will not have the help of a supportive family network. As a young person in care, they are surrounded by professionals dedicated to their welfare. TACT Connect aims to ensure that care-experienced people will continue to be supported throughout their life by those who have had experiences similar to their own, as well as TACT.

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 TACT.**
2. **Allocated for Initial Visit.**
3. **Virtual Initial Visit carried out and a recommendation made by TACT to proceed or not. The enquirer may make a decision at this stage that they do not wish to proceed.**
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) decide to proceed to the Form F assessment then the case is allocated to a Form F assessor.**
7. **All references and checks (PVG/Disclosure etc.) are taken up by the admin team.**
8. **A series of meetings with the assessor.**
9. **Upon completion of the Form F assessment and all check 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 stemps 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 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 ensure carers provide supportive, protective and nurturing care and work within TACT's policies and procedures.
- 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 for 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 and children in care reviews wherever possible.
- During core working 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
- Regular supervision of carer(s)
- Regular supervision of staff
- Feedback from carers regarding training
- Feedback from carers via an 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 and accountability, so 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 carer's handbook or on the TACT website.

TACT
Fostering
London and the East

REGISTERED OFFICE INFORMATION

Registered office: TACT London and The East, Innovation House, Coniston Court, PO Box 137, BLYTH, NE24 9FJ

TACT London and The East is registered and inspected as an independent fostering agency with OFSTED, registration number SC063688.

The last inspection of TACT London and The East was from 5th to 9th February 2018 and received an outcome of good.

Responsible individual: (Andy Elvin)

Registered manager: (Mary Richard-Paul)

Mary Richard-Paul is the Area Manager and is responsible for all operations and services in TACT London and the East. Mary joined TACT in August 2012 and her qualifications include:

- BA HONS Social work 2012
- Accredited facilitator of the Fostering Changes Programme
- PEPS 1 and 2 (Practice Education) 2017
- Accredited facilitator of Fostering across Borders Caring for Unaccompanied Migrant Children
- Mary is currently studying Level 5 NVQ Diploma in Management and Leadership
- Apprenticeship in operational and departmental management.

Mary joined TACT as a Supervising social worker before progressing into senior roles. In 2018, as a deputy area manager she developed the placements service and was instrumental in supporting the successful merger of another fostering charity with TACT the following year. In June 2021, Mary became the area manager for London and the East.

Mary's pre and post qualifying experience is in Early years, Family Support and Fostering.

As of June 2021, TACT London and the East has:

42 approved fostering households.

50 children and young people in placement.

5 young people have remained with their carers as a part of a continuing care arrangement.

LOCAL STAFF STRUCTURE

TACT Trustees
Chief Executive Officer
Executive Director of Children's Services
Area Manager
1 Deputy Area Manager
3 Senior Support Social Worker(s)
1 Supervising Social Worker
1 Children Resource Worker
2 Placement Officers
1 Administration Manager
4 Administration Officers

REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Statement of Purpose is reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently as and when information changes. Last reviewed on 1st August 2021