



# OUR PROMISE TO YOU

[TACTCARE.ORG.UK/CUSTOMERSERVICE](https://tactcare.org.uk/customerservice)



# OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE PROMISE

At TACT we care about getting things right and your feedback can help ensure that we give you the outstanding service that we strive for.

## When we meet in person

If you are visiting us, a member of our team will greet you on arrival and will ensure you have signed in appropriately. The person you have come to see will meet you within ten minutes of your appointment time.

If we are visiting you we will arrive at the time agreed or contact you in advance if we are delayed and we will always show our ID card.

## When you write to us

We aim to respond with a full answer within five working days of receiving your letter. If this is not possible, we will acknowledge receipt of your letter and keep you informed of progress. We aim to write in a clear, concise and easy to understand way. However if you are unclear about anything please let us know.

## When you phone us

We will answer calls courteously, within five rings and aim to answer your query straight away. If the person that you are calling to speak to is unavailable or the person that you are speaking to is unable to answer your question, we will take a message and get back to you within one working day.

If a member of staff is away from the office, their telephone will be diverted to another member of staff or they will have an appropriate voicemail message giving you details of who to contact.

If a member of staff works from home rather than a TACT office, they will ensure that your call is handled appropriately in their absence.

## When you email us

We will aim to send a full reply within five working days.  
We will ensure that if a member of staff is out of the office for longer than 24 hours, an appropriate 'out of office' message is sent out in response to emails, detailing an alternative contact.

## Your information

We are committed to ensuring that all information we receive is treated and handled in accordance with the principles and requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).



# YOUR FOSTERING ASSESSMENT



## Throughout your fostering assessment...

- We will visit regularly, ensuring that we are on time. We will inform you of any changes or delays in visiting arrangements as soon as possible.
- We aim to undertake your initial visit within ten working days of completing a telephone enquiry (subject to your availability).
- We will invite you to attend a Skills to Foster training group within a month of the initial visit.
- After attending Skills to Foster, if we both agree that we are happy to proceed to the next stage of your application, we will allocate a Social Worker who will be responsible for supporting you through the process.
- We aim to get you approved as a Foster Carer within 7 months of receiving your application. In some cases delays may occur that

are outside of our control. Where these occur we will explain and discuss the implications with you.

- We will share with you any concerns or issues as they arise.
- We will seek feedback from you about the progress of your application.
- We will respond promptly and courteously to any concerns or queries you may raise with us.
- We will inform you about the panel process, and support you in attending the panel.



## If your fostering assessment is stopped

There are two stages of the assessment, what happens if an assessment is stopped depends on which stage of the assessment you are at:

- If we decide to stop an assessment as a result of information obtained during Stage 1 checks (e.g. DBS, references, medical etc), you will be notified of our decision and the assessment will be stopped immediately. In this situation our decision is final, there is no formal appeal process, however you do have the right to make a complaint if you feel that you have been unfairly treated (see page 6 for more information).
- If we decide that your assessment should be stopped as a result of information obtained during Stage 2 of the assessment, a report will be produced detailing the reasons that the assessment is stopping, this report will be presented to the fostering panel. In this situation you will have the opportunity to attend the panel to represent yourself and your application. If the panel agrees with the recommendation to stop the assessment you also have the right to appeal to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).

## After your assessment...

If you are approved at panel, we will continue to engage with you openly and honestly. As a Foster Carer, we will work closely within a respectful relationship, adhering to TACT's core values of being aspirational and passionate about children in care and their welfare.



# COMPLAINTS

We recognise that sometimes raising a concern may not be enough, as such we have set out below the three stages of our complaints procedure.

## Stage One – The Informal Stage

### You should:

Contact the person who is providing the service, to give them the opportunity to put things right for you. This may involve speaking to the Area Manager, or the local Head of Department.

### OR

Contact TACT's Customer Care Officer who will ensure that the most appropriate member of staff follows up the complaint.

### We will:

- Aim to respond the same day to a telephone call regarding a complaint
- Acknowledge a written complaint within five working days
- Provide a written response to a complaint raised during stage one within ten working days of the complaint being received. If this timescale is not achievable

due to some complexity of gathering information, this will be explained in writing setting out a clear date for a response.

- If you are not satisfied at the end of stage one, your complaint should be escalated to stage 2.

## Stage Two – The Formal Stage

You should put your complaint in writing if you haven't already done so. This should be directed to TACT's Customer Care Officer who will contact you to discuss and agree which of the two possible methods most suitable to handle your complaint.

- Mediation – a person not involved in the complaint will assist both parties to discuss the circumstances that led to the problem and try to reach an agreed resolution.
- Investigation – a person not involved in the complaint will carry out an investigation and make recommendations on any findings.

We aim to conclude this process within 28 working days of receipt of the written complaint under Stage 2. The relevant director will write to you setting out TACT's response and,

where appropriate, proposed actions to the complaint. Where more time is required to complete the investigation, the reason for the delay will be discussed with both parties before this deadline.

In the case where there is an outstanding appeal via the IRM, any concurrent complaint regarding TACT's staff or processes will be investigated after the outcome of the IRM process is known. The Complainant will have 28 working days to inform the Complaints officer that they wish to raise a Stage 2 Formal Complaint.

## Stage Three – The Review Panel

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome from stage two of the complaint process, you should:

Write to the Customer Care Officer within 28 working days. You should state in your letter what you are unhappy with and what you think we need to do to put it right for you.

### We will:

- Meet within 28 working days of the request being made. Where a delay is unavoidable, you will be informed of the reasons in writing and advised of the panel hearing date.
- The review panel will be comprised of TACT's Chief Executive, TACT's HR Director and a Trustee of the organisation, who will chair the panel.

- The panel's role is to review the issues, and to ensure that the correct procedure were followed. It is not to reinvestigate the complaint or consider any new issues that may be raised.
- The Panel will review if the decision made at stage 2 was in line with the evidence received at the time of the complaint and with evidence that was presented or emerged during the stage 2 investigation.
- The panel is required to make a decision and record its recommendations within 7 working days of the end of the meeting. The chair of the panel must confirm its recommendations and reasons for them in writing to you, the agency, and anyone else considered to have an interest.

## How to make a complaint

Complete our online form  
[www.tactcare.org.uk/customerservice](http://www.tactcare.org.uk/customerservice)

Email  
[corporateservices@tactcare.org.uk](mailto:corporateservices@tactcare.org.uk)

Telephone  
020 8695 8142

Post  
TACT Fostering,  
Innovation House,  
PO Box 137,  
Blyth,  
NE24 9FJ



## WHAT CAN I DO IF I'M STILL NOT HAPPY?

As TACT's services to children and young people are provided on behalf of Local Authorities, you also have the right to make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

[www.lgo.org.uk/contactus](http://www.lgo.org.uk/contactus)

If you are still unhappy with the outcome of your complaint, you can contact OFSTED who are responsible for ensuring that TACT operates to the standards required by the relevant legislation for adoption and fostering.

Office for Standards in Education  
(OFSTED) [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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