



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

2023/24





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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 US

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 Executive Board. 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 TACT became a wholly home based organisation, which means that our staff are spread across the UK, rather than being concentrated in a small number of specific locations, ensuring that we are well placed to provide outstanding support to our foster carers and young people.

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





OUR MISSION

BETTER LIVES FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND CARE EXPERIENCED ADULTS

The logo for TACT Fostering is a circular emblem. It features a stylized figure with arms raised in a 'V' shape, positioned above the letters 'TACT'. Below the letters, the word 'Fostering' is written in a smaller font. The entire logo is enclosed within a thin circular border.

KEY STRATEGIC AIMS

- 1 Great Outcomes:** Deliver the best possible outcomes for our children.
- 2 Outstanding People:** Supporting our staff and foster carers to deliver the best possible childhoods.
- 3 Innovate:** A culture of developing and delivering successful services.
- 4 Be The Best:** Be the first choice foster care agency.
- 5 Speak Up:** Advocate for our children, young people and care experienced adults, and encourage them to speak up for themselves.
- 6 A Community for Life:** We will be there for our care experienced people lifelong.
- 7 Generate a Surplus:** Have a strong and sustainable financial position, so that we can invest in our children and care experienced adults.

OUR VALUES



CHILD & PEOPLE CENTRED

We will ensure our decision making is in the best interests of children who are in our care and care experienced people we remain connected to. We will look after our carers' and colleagues' wellbeing and development to ensure they are able to provide the best possible care to our children, young people, and adults.



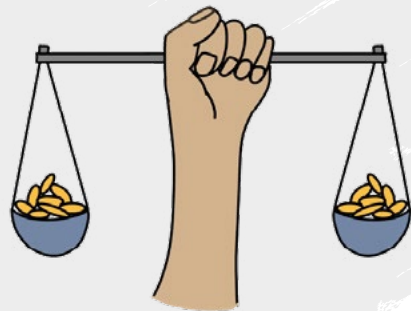
CARING & COMPASSIONATE

We will provide the best care for our children, young people, care experienced adults, foster carers and staff. We will show compassion and empathy in our approach and our behaviours.



CONNECTED & INCLUSIVE

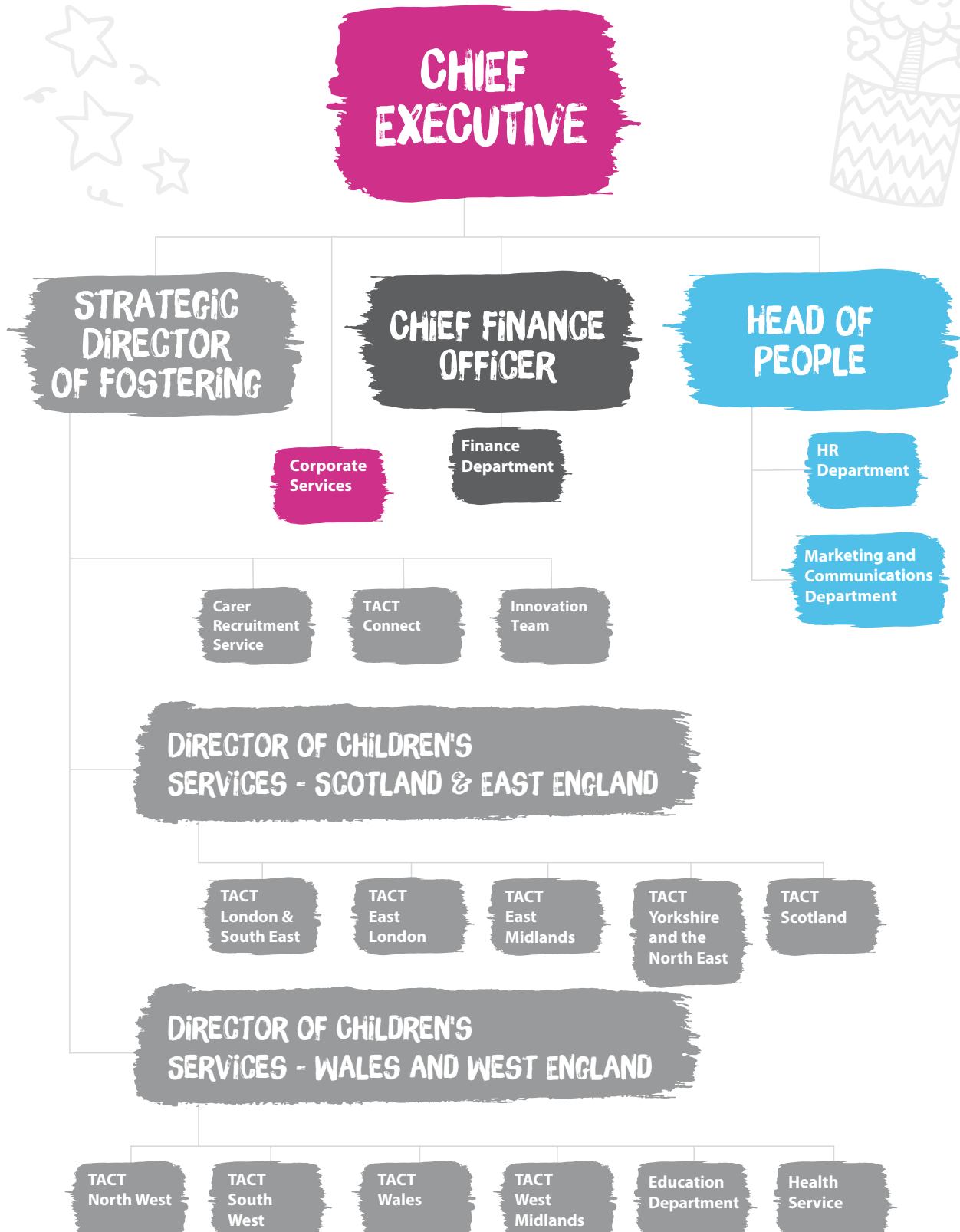
We will provide a safe and trusting environment, where people can connect and support one another by building meaningful long-term relationships that can flourish. We will work to include the views, feelings, and thoughts of all those that work with us, particularly those who may be marginalised.



CHARITABLE & FAIR

We will reinvest our funds into support and services that directly and positively impact the outcomes for children and young people to achieve better lives. We will be an organisation that is fair, courageous and transparent to all.

TACT'S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE





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 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.



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.

Interim: 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.

Continuing care agreements: These are to enable young people to remain in their foster placement post-16 to support their transition to adulthood.



EDUCATION SERVICE

TACT's specialist education service was set up to support foster carers and advocate for children of all ages, to ensure that young people are able to access their educational entitlement of a full time and appropriate education based on their age, ability and needs. The service is overseen by our dedicated Head of Education, and consists of a full time Advisory Teacher in England, dedicated part time Advisory Teachers in Wales and Scotland, a Post-16 Advisor and an Education Support Administrator.

Some of the services the team offer are:

- Supporting carers and advocating for young people.
- Educational meetings
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- Assessments and assistance with any strategies within the school environment
- Funding short falls in resources (e.g. Education Psychology Assessments)

TACT reinvests in employing highly qualified and experienced teachers and education professionals to put children at the centre of all we do, in order to achieve the very best educational outcomes.



BECOMING MORE TRAUMA- INFORMED

Over the next five years we are embarking on a journey to becoming a more trauma-informed organisation. By following a set of trauma-informed principles, we will ensure that individuals feel supported, motivated and engaged, enabling them to provide high levels of care and support to our foster families directly or indirectly through their role.

We will put trauma-informed principles at the heart of everything that we do, to create a strong organisational culture that:

- Realises the widespread impact of trauma, stress and adversity, and understands potential paths for healing and recovery.
- Recognises the signs and symptoms of trauma in children, carers, staff and all others involved in the system.
- Responds by fully and meaningfully integrating, embedding and infusing knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, language, culture, practices and settings.
- Resists traumatisation through our practices, interventions, policies, language procedures and culture.

OUR HEALTH SERVICE

TACT's Health Service was set up to be an advisory resource for social workers, children's support workers, foster carers and external agencies. Overseen by TACT's Head of Health Service, some of the support elements provided are:

A level of clinical oversight for the child, taking into account historical, current and potential health issues

Health-related objectives that can be incorporated into a child's care plan

Therapeutic strategies to support with emotional and mental health issues

Participation in multi-agency review meetings for the child

Providing consistent health advice and support to all professionals involved with a child will help ensure that young people's physical and mental health is prioritised.



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 lifechanging 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 run regular engagement events for our young people throughout the year both on a national and local level. These opportunities serve a range of purposes:

- **Opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with staff and carers across the organisation.**
- **A space to allow children to be with other children who will have experience of being in care and to form friendships.**
- **Providing a fun space to consult, 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.**
- **Provides evidence from children and young people as the basis for improving standards and outcomes for children and young people.**

At TACT all local teams are also supported by an Engagement and Activity Practitioner who is 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.



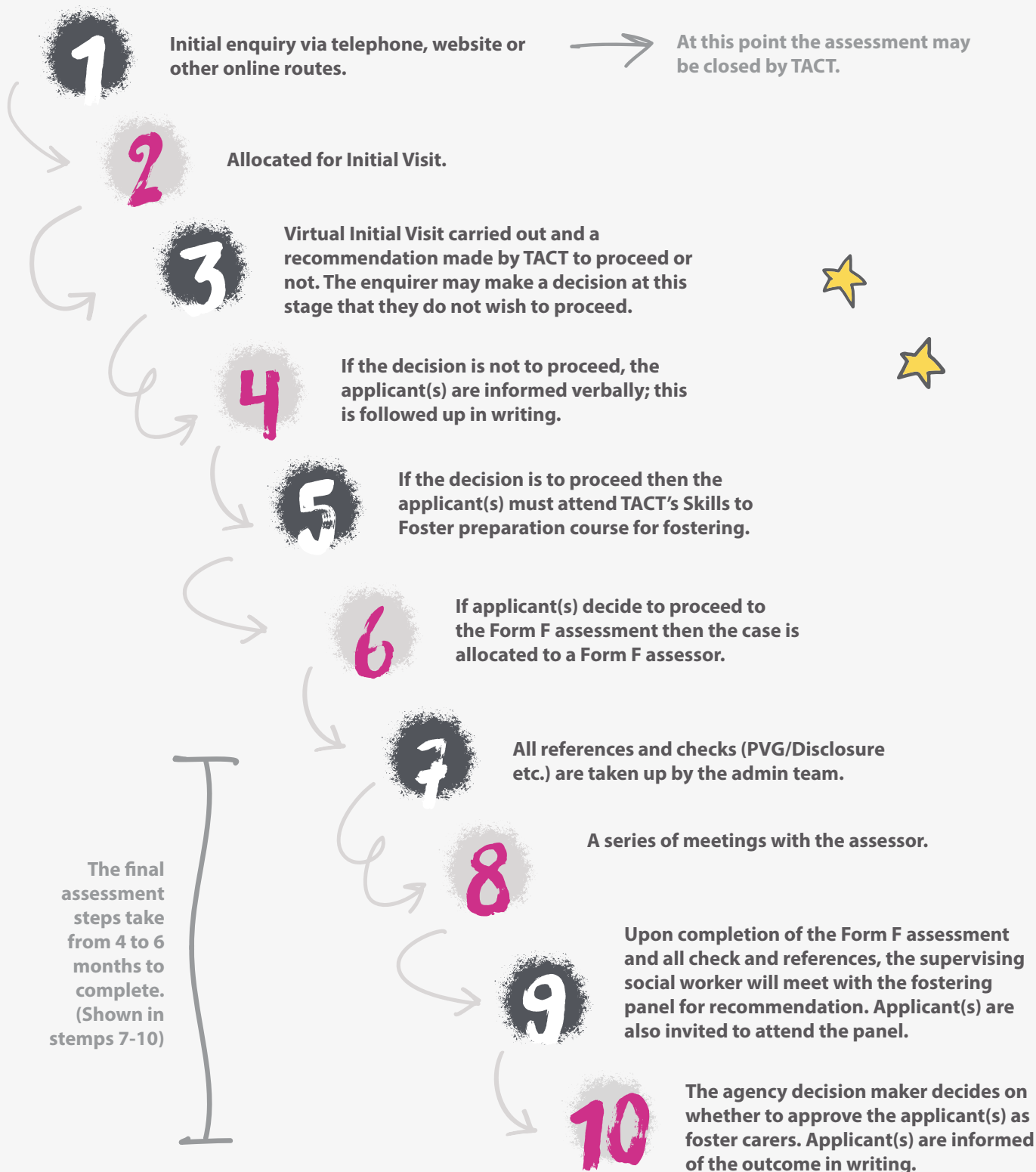
TACT CONNECT

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

Below is the recruitment process for anyone wishing to become a TACT foster carer. Recruitment of foster carers is managed centrally by a dedicated team.





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

Director of Children's Services 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.



REGISTERED OFFICE INFORMATION

Registered office: TACT West Midlands, Innovation House,
Coniston Court, PO Box 137, BLYTH, NE24 9FJ

TACT West Midlands is registered and inspected as an independent fostering agency with ofsted, registration number SC056442.

The last inspection of the TACT West Midlands was from 13th to 17th August 2018 and received an outcome of good.

Responsible individual: Andy Elvin

Registered manager: Michelle Patterson

Michelle Patterson Joined TACT in July 2009. She qualified as a social worker in 2004 and worked with the Local Authority in an Area Office dealing with child protection and care management.

Michelle then went to work for an Independent fostering agency until 2006 when she moved to another agency prior to her move to TACT as a senior supervising social worker. Michelle was appointed as Deputy Area Manager in January 2016 and then Area Manager in March 2018.

LOCAL STAFF STRUCTURE

TACT Trustees

Chief Executive Officer

Director of Children's Services

Area Manager

Deputy Area Manager

Senior Support Social Worker(s)

Engagement and Activity Practitioner

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. Last reviewed May 2023.

Registered Charity Numbers: England and Wales 1018963 | SC 039052

