

Statement of purpose

TACT West Midlands



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I. Introduction

The statement of purpose is designed to inform you about the values, and structure of TACT, some information about the recruitment, assessment and training of our carers, and details of staff and placements. The statement is a legal requirement and the issues referred to, laid down in regulation.

1. Organisational history

Established in 1993, formerly known as The Adolescent & Children's Trust (TACT), TACT is the UK's largest charity and voluntary agency providing fostering and adoption services. Our core work involves providing high quality and well supported fostering or adoptive families for children and young people across England, Wales and Scotland. We campaign on behalf of children and young people in care, carers and adoptive families.

TACT is governed by a Board of Trustees with 11 members. The Board has ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the charity, ensuring that it is solvent, properly run and delivering on its charitable objectives. In addition to meeting bi-monthly, a smaller number of the Trustees sit on two sub committees alongside TACT staff; the Safeguarding & Children Services Committee and the Business & Remuneration Committee. The Board delegate day to day leadership of the organisation to the Chief Executive Officer.

TACT's head office is based in Hither Green, London. It includes the corporate functions of finance, human resources, children's service and quality, external affairs and marketing. It is also the office of the Chief Executive and Executive Directors of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Children's Services & Quality and Policy, Communications and Fundraising.

Services are provided from 9 area offices for fostering, one of which also includes adoption. These are; East London, Bristol (covering Bristol & South West), Neath (covering East, West and Mid/North Wales), Liverpool (covering North West), West Midlands, Kettering (covering East Midlands), Leeds (covering Yorkshire), Edinburgh (covering Scotland) and South London (covering South East and including Adoption).

2. Local office history

TACT Birmingham's development began in 2002, with the first full time staff being employed in 2003. The office is now based in West Bromwich, with good access to public transport and motorway networks. Following the move it was decided to re-name the Birmingham office to TACT West Midlands to reflect the wider area the office supports.

II. TACT's charitable objectives are:

- To relieve children and young people who, by reasons of their circumstances, have need of foster, adoptive or substitute care by placing children in foster homes or adoptive placements and by training foster or adoptive parents to deal with the needs of the children in their care.
- Otherwise to promote the care and upbringing and establishment in life of children in need thereof including by promotion of their health, development and education attainment and particularly children in foster or adoptive care.

III. TACT's Aims and Objectives

1. Vision, Mission and Values:

a. Vision – Together we are creating a world where every young person is raised by people who care; where communities flourish because we help young people build lives full of opportunity and choice.

b. Mission – We are harnessing the strength of families, carers, communities and organisations to unconditionally support and encourage children and young people to achieve their full potential.

c. Values

- **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.
- **Engaged** – we want to listen well and respond quickly to the people we work with – children and young people, their birth families, carers, our staff and supporters.
- **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** – we will make every decision based on what is best for children and young people. We will deliver excellent services as efficiently as possible in order to continually invest in the people we work with.

2. Fostering standards

Our standards of care are measured and monitored against the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011 and the UK National Standards for Foster Care.

All carers undertake the TSD Training Support and Development Standards for Foster Care within 12 months of approval.

3. TACT believes:

- All children have the right to a permanent family in which they are able to grow and develop as unique individuals.
- Every child in care should benefit from a specially designed care plan to address their specific needs.
- All children have the right to be involved in planning their own futures.
- All children should take with them memories of a positive experience of their time in care when they leave.
- Individuals with parental responsibility have the right to be involved in making decision about their child/ren's future.
- Proper use must be made of the theory and considerable body of professional knowledge which is available relating to child care and child development.
- Every individual involved in TACT's childcare programmes should benefit from appropriate training and development opportunities.

All people involved with TACT will receive the best treatment possible, irrespective of gender, age, disability, marital status, sexuality, race, ethnicity or religion.

IV. Members of staff at TACT West Midlands Office

1. Management:

Executive Director of Children's Services
Scott Ruddock

Registered Individual and interim Registered Manager
Andy Elvin, TACT CEO

Interim Deputy Area Manager
Diane Green
Joined TACT in October 2016

A qualified Social Worker and have acquired experiences within children services, independent and voluntary sector. Since qualified Diane has gained a range of experience whilst working with families through, advocacy work, safeguarding, looked after children, adoption, and fostering, direct therapeutic work with children, Child Sexual exploitation, Independent Reviewing Officer for both children and foster carers, Placements team and commissioning. In addition Diane has also developed her experience in management. She has a strong sense of commitment to working with services to support children in achieving their goals.

Deputy Area Manager
Michelle Patterson
Joined TACT in July 2009

Michelle qualified as a social worker in 2004. Once qualified she 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 successfully appointed as the Deputy Area Manager in January 2016.

2. Senior Practitioners and Supervising Social Workers:

Lead Practitioner
Vacant

Senior Supervising Social Worker
Caroline Connolly
Joined TACT in August 2006

Caroline qualified as a Social Worker in 2003. She worked in a residential children's environment before moving to an independent fostering agency, where she remained for three years prior to her move to TACT.

**Senior Supervising Social Worker
Simone Letts**

Joined TACT in October 2012

Simone qualified as a social worker in 2008 and holds a Diploma in Social Work. Simone has worked for a local authority from Nov 2008 to when she left in May 2012. She gained experience in child protection, care management, family support, children in need and court work. She then worked for an independent fostering agency in May 2012 where she gained experience in assessing prospective foster carers, delivering training to foster carers, supporting fostering placements and monitoring the outcomes for the children in placement.

**Senior Supervising Social Worker
Sajeeda Begum**

Joined TACT in November 2012

Sajeeda qualified as a social worker in 2006 when she gained a Diploma in Social Work. Sajeeda has worked for the local authority in the children's services, as a social worker and latterly as a Senior Social Worker.

She has gained experience in supporting looked after children, preparing children for adoption and completing reports for court to a high standard. Sajeeda gained her PQ1 in 2009.

**Senior Supervising Social Worker
Claire Milburn**

Joined TACT in May 2016

Claire qualified in 1997, having completed a Diploma in Social Work. She has worked in a variety of children and families teams within Local Authorities; generic, initial assessments, fostering and adoption. Claire has been a Manager within residential care for children for many years, before specialising in fostering. She qualified as a Practice Teacher and completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work Education in 2001. She has worked in fostering since 2003 and been a SSW for 9 years before becoming an independent social worker in 2012 and an approved Local Authority foster carer.

In more recent years Claire has sat on a number of fostering panels as an independent member, completed many Form F fostering assessments and worked as an agency SW within several LA's and fostering agencies.

**Senior Supervising Social Worker
Helen Bishop-Rowe**

Joined Tact in August 2016

Helen obtained her social work degree in 2012. She spent a short time working for the Local Authority duty and assessment team before moving over to the family placements team where she worked mostly in the adoption team. Helen then worked as a Supervising Social Worker for an Independent Fostering Agency for 3 and ½ years before joining TACT. Prior to receiving her social work degree she lived in London for a period of time but returned to the West Midlands to study.

3. Duty placements officer & Children Resource Worker:

Duty Placements officer

Dena Whitmore

Joined TACT in September 2009

Dena qualified as a social worker in 2002, she holds a diploma in social work and has successfully completed her PQ1 qualification in 2007. Dena has worked as a social worker for Looked After Children and in care management. She has also worked for the Local Authority as a Form F' assessor of prospective foster carers, a Supervising Social Worker and also as a duty officer securing and matching placements for children needing emergency foster placements.

Prior to becoming a Social Worker she worked as a nursery nurse/developmental assessor for children with disabilities and life threatening syndromes at a Child Development Centre. As well as holding an NNEB she also holds a BTEC National diploma in Community Care and is trained in basic Makaton as means of enhancing communication skills.

Child Resource Worker

Linda Heise

Joined TACT in May 2010

Linda qualified as an NNEB and worked in a Local Authority Nursery in Birmingham with the under 8's for twelve years. Still working for Birmingham Local Authority, she then moved to a children and families social work team as a senior social work assistant. She has extensive experience of working with looked after children and foster carers.

4. Administration:

Admin Manager

Sharon Higgins

Joined TACT in April 2016.

Prior to joining TACT, she worked at St Thomas's Community Network for 28yrs until the charity closed in 2015 due to lack of funding. Under the umbrella of the charity there were a number of provisions such as a full day care nursery, recording studio, hairdressing salon etc. The main focus being the delivery of training courses for people of all ages in one of the most deprived areas of Dudley. Whilst there she obtained a number of qualifications through her CPD mainly her Higher Diploma in Business Administration and Level 4 in Management. Outside of work and on a voluntary basis she is the secretary for another charity called Friends of Green Park.

Senior Administrative Officer

Julia Applewhite

Joined TACT in April 2010

Prior to joining TACT, Julia worked within a voluntary and community sector organisation as a Strategic Resources Manager.

Julia has studied through the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and attained a City & Guilds in Adult Teaching. Julia's skills and knowledge, together with her business administration background, bring a wealth of experience to her role within TACT.

Senior Administrative Officer

Simen Khangura

Joined TACT in May 2015

Prior to joining TACT as an administrative officer, Simen worked within the logistics sector as a Managed Accounts Administrator. Simen has A Levels in Health and Social Care. Simen was promoted to her current post in December 2015.

Administrative Officer

Vacant

5. Management structure

See page 13 & 14.

V. TACT West Midlands fostering service

1. The fostering panel

The fostering panel is a requirement of the fostering regulations and is updated to meet the criteria set out in the regulations. The panel meets regularly, at the West Midlands office to consider each application for approval and to recommend whether or not a person is suitable to act as a foster parent. It also recommends the terms of approval; reviews the suitability to continue as carers from time to time; advises the charity on the procedures and their effectiveness; oversees the conduct of the assessments that are carried out; and gives advice and makes recommendations on such matters or cases the charity may refer to it.

The panel is chaired by an independent person with many years' experience in child care, and includes members with a wide and appropriate range of experiences.

In line with the regulations of April 2011, there is now a central list from which panel members will be drawn. These include;

- Paul Webb - Panel Chair
- Pamela Williams - Independent Foster Carer
- Susan Curry - Health Representative
- Ronnie Hill - Education Representative
- Anne Gardner - Independent Social Worker
- Simone Letts - TACT Social Worker
- Marium Shafique - Independent Social Worker
- Sharna Mickelwright - TACT member

Non-voting Members of the Panel are:

- Diane Green - TACT Panel Advisor
- Andy Pallas - TACT Executive Director, Agency Decision Maker
- - Legal Advisor
- Dr. K Maisey - Medical Advisor

2. Current services provided by TACT West Midlands

- Fostering to children/young people 0-18 years.
- Outreach support services to children and families.
- Supervised contact.
- Child and parent placements.
- Out of hours placements.
- Assessments.
- Foster carer training.
- Support groups.

3. New services currently being planned or developed

- Remand fostering
- Fostering from children's home to foster home

4. Recruitment, assessment and approval process for foster carers

The following process is followed for any applicants who wish to become approved foster carers:

- a) Initial enquiry via telephone, website, or web based routes.
- b) Allocated for Initial Visit.
- c) Initial Visit carried out and Supervising Social Worker then makes recommendation to proceed or not in consultation with the Area Manager.
- d) If the decision is not to proceed, the applicant/s are informed verbally and this is followed up in writing.
- e) If the decision is to proceed applicant/s must attend Skills to Foster preparation course for fostering.
- f) If applicants decide to proceed the to Form F assessment, the case is allocated to a Form F assessor.
- g) All references and checks (DBS etc.) are taken up.
- h) When completed the Form F assessment all checks and references are taken to the Fostering Panel for recommendation. Applicant/s are invited to attend Panel.
- i) The agency decision maker decides on whether or not to approve. Applicant/s are informed in writing.

5. Learning and Development, Support and Reviewing Process for Foster Carers

- The office has an annual training programme and foster carers have an individual learning and development plan linked to the programme. Foster carers are supported to attend training. Undertaking learning and development is an ongoing requirement for TACT foster carers and now includes on-line courses.
- Foster carers are allocated a Supervising Social Worker. Support is offered 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via a duty system of Supervising Social Workers and Social Work Managers. Foster carer support groups also meet in small geographic areas. Young people who foster are also supported individually and through groups.
- Each foster carer is reviewed annually and the fostering panel or Executive Director endorses the decision of the Area Manager who oversees the review.

The first review and every seventh review are fully considered by the panel.

6. Monitoring of fostering service

The fostering service is monitored through provision of formal supervision for all staff and foster carers, the auditing of case files and supervision records as well as day to day management of the service and support to staff and foster carers. The quality and effectiveness of the complaints procedures is also regularly monitored and kept under review.

TACT also undertakes annual reporting of performance indicators, based on the outcomes central to Every Child Matters philosophy for improving the life chances of all children.

TACT has a participation programme to ensure that the views of children and young people are integrated into strategy and service delivery.

7. Review of Statement of Purpose

The Statement of Purpose is reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually but more frequently as and when information changes. This was last updated in 06.01.2017.

8. Number of approved foster carers

TACT West Midlands has 50 approved carers and there are 7 households currently being assessed as carers.

9. The number of children in placement

There are 59 children and young people in placement. TACT has a clear matching policy and will only place children with suitable carers who can meet the child or young person's needs.

10. The number of complaints and their outcome

None in the last year.

11. Children's guide

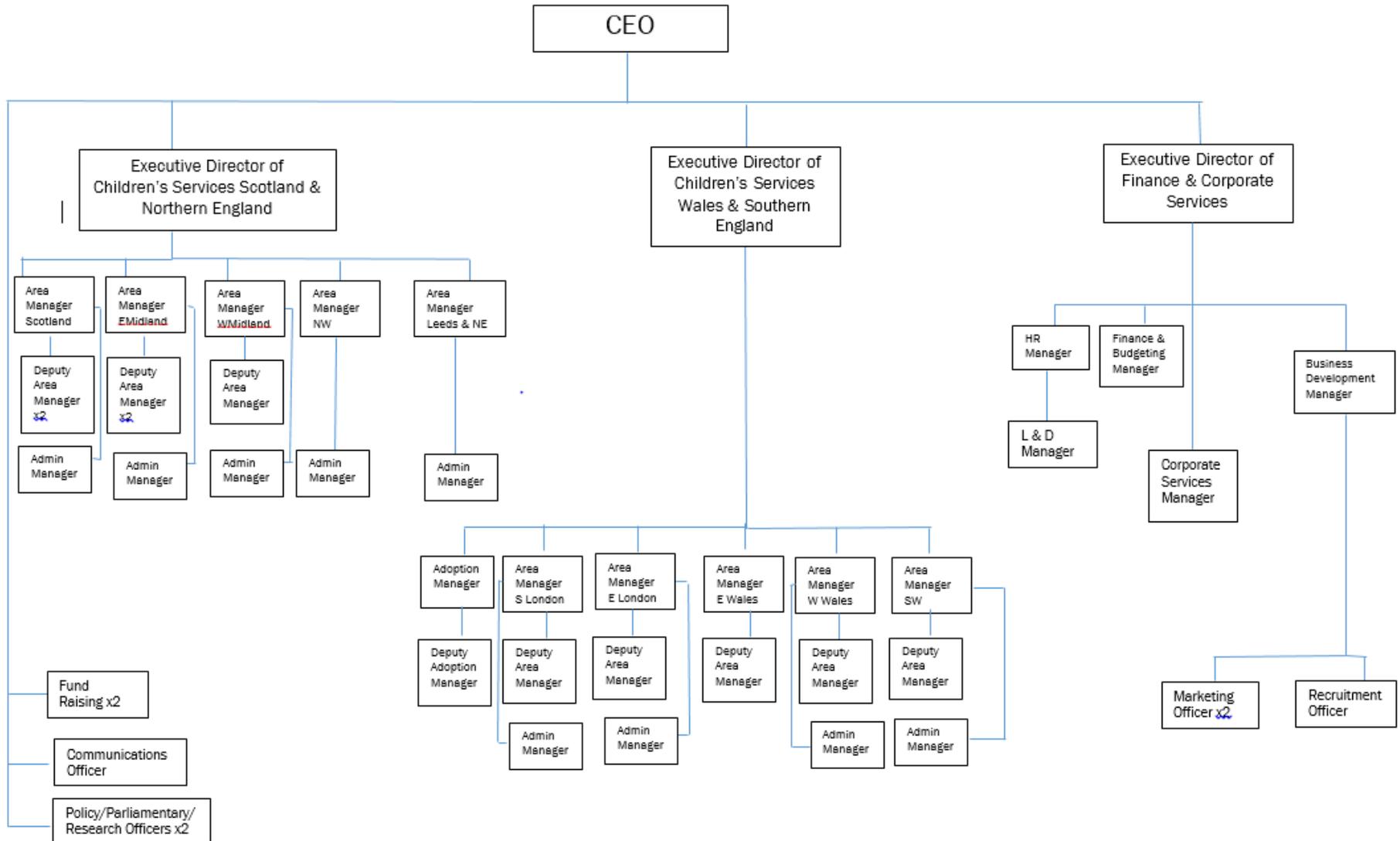
TACT has a guide for children and young people cared for by the charity.

The TACT Children's guides set out clearly what young people can do if they are unhappy about the service they are receiving and they were actively involved in designing and producing these. These are provided in a range of formats, both for young and older children and with a 'drama documentary' called Chloe's journey DVD produced by TACT young people which covers joining a foster family and how to use advocacy/make complaints.

TACT Management structure



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