

APPLICANT INFORMATION FOR PANEL MEMBERS



INTRODUCTION

Since 1993 we have grown from a small charity into the UK's largest dedicated fostering charity and one of the UK's biggest 500 charities in terms of income. From the start we have strived to offer excellent care for all the children entrusted to us and to effect positive change in the wider care system. We have also sought to innovate in order to improve the experience of children and young people in the care system and to transform outcomes.

TACT has continued to undertake a wide range of innovative work across the UK. We have recently added an education service to improve educational outcomes for our children and this is proving to be both a much-needed resource and a great success.

We have also launched TACT Connect, initially with support from the Rank Foundation and now with a significant four-year Lottery grant. TACT Connect recognises that parenting never stops and we aim to stay in touch with all of the children we have cared for so that we can celebrate their successes and offer support when required. TACT Connect is a wholly unique service in the sector. We aim to remain at the leading edge of improving the UK care system.

Over the past few years, we have transformed our approach to fostering recruitment and saw an 11% increase in enquiries about becoming a foster carer in 2020

Underpinning all of this vital work across England, Scotland and Wales are our excellent staff and, of course, our amazing and inspirational foster carers. They are caring for children and young people who are vulnerable, but also full of hopes, dreams, potential and joy. Good foster families provide safe and stable homes and help children fulfil their potential and enable them to lead happy and successful lives.

I hope that you will be interested in joining our Charity.



ANDY ELVIN
TACT Chief Executive

OUR 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 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.

BETTER LIVES FOR OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

KEY STRATEGIC AIMS

- **Our services** – provide and develop 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** – position ourselves as a 'go to' organisation for best practice and develop 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 and skills and achieve their ambitions.
- **Participation and consultation** – engaging with young people, carers, our staff and other stakeholders so that their views and aspirations help to shape, deliver and improve services.
- **Consistently outstanding** – investing in our staff, carers and partnerships, always striving for excellence.
- **Our sustainability** – maintain a robust and sustainable financial and governance model while allowing for growth and development.

ABOUT US

TACT (The Adolescent and Children's Trust) is the UK's largest dedicated fostering charity. Established for 25 years, we currently have over 500 foster carers providing loving homes for over 600 children and young people.

As a charity everything we do is for the benefit of children in care and on the fringes of care. We are beyond profit, which means that all surplus income is invested back into our services to ensure our carers and the children in our care receive the best possible support. We also regularly campaign on behalf of vulnerable children, seeking to influence public policy and argue for positive changes.

TACT is also committed to best employment practice when providing occasional services for our children and families and that includes where we engage people on a self-employed, casual and zero hours basis. In exchange for the convenience of mutually agreeable flexible hours we provide varied and meaningful work, making a direct difference to our children and families. In addition, our casual workers regularly receive development support and our local teams establish close working relationships, regular communication and clear expectations to ensure maximum benefits for both parties from the arrangement.

We are a dedicated Living Wage Employer, guaranteeing that we will pay more than the national minimum wage for all casually engaged roles and registered Disability Confident Employer, supporting fair recruitment, retention and development of disabled people.

OUR FOSTERING SERVICES

Our core work involves providing high quality and well supported foster families for children and young people in the care of local authorities. We passionately believe that all children deserve to live in loving, safe and stable homes. Our team of highly experienced and dedicated staff provide support to foster carers and children 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Working in partnership with local authorities across England, Wales and Scotland, we are dedicated to providing creative, effective and outcome-focused services.

As a charity working in a competitive marketplace within the fostering arena, we are in a unique position as our surplus income and fundraising

provides additional training, services, support and activities that benefit our children and foster carers. As an example of this, we have employed extra support staff, such as a play therapist, to support our fostering teams.

We provide regular opportunities for children and foster carers to meet and share experiences, through activity weekends and carers' support groups.

We are proud of our achievements to date and are committed to continually growing and improving as an organisation and to working tirelessly to help our children and young people to achieve their dreams and aspirations.

OUR APPROACH TO CARE



OUR 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.

Issues that the Education Service work on include:

- Ensuring that every young person receives their educational entitlement
- Gaining school places for any child out of education
- Averting permanent exclusion
- Reducing the number of fixed term exclusions
- Monitoring Personal Education Plans, attainment and progress
- Supporting applications for special schools/EHC plans
- Gaining additional support for educational, social and emotional needs
- Liaising with the Heads of the Virtual Schools
- Promoting education in all its forms and offering on-going career's advice

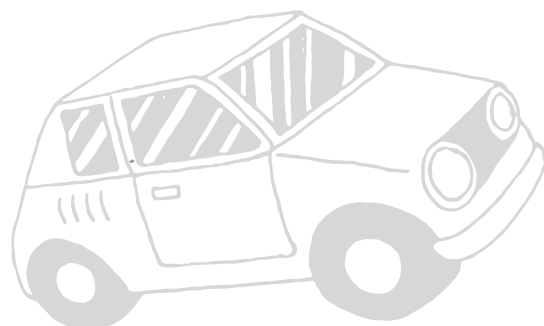
POLICY & CAMPAIGNING

As well as being a service provider, TACT campaigns on behalf of children in care across the UK.

We work with others in the sector and use our experience and expertise on fostering and adoption services to argue for policy change that will benefit young people, carers and adoptive families. We have good relations with politicians and senior civil servants and we write parliamentary briefings and departmental consultation responses on a range of issues impacting on the care system.

Recent policy and campaigning work includes:

- Campaigning for the abolition of profit making in Children's Services in Wales.
- Surveying TACT children, young people and foster carers to make sure that their voices were being fed into the Fostering Stocktake.
- Producing our manifesto, which outlines the top ten policies that TACT works for on a social policy and legislative level.
- Arranging for TACT children and young people to have an audience with the Minister for Children and Families – an excellent opportunity for them to share their views and influence policy development first hand.



TACT CONNECT

TACT Connect is an innovative program that provides our care experienced adults with access to a supportive community plus 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.

TACT Connect has built an impressive network of care leavers that support and celebrate one another, while keeping in touch with TACT. The program offers young people the chance to meet other care experienced people, learn and access new skills and get support in reaching their aspirations. By becoming a member, care leavers receive newsletters packed full of helpful advice and shared experiences, plus invites to events, and the opportunity to be involved in shaping the scheme.

Since its launch in 2018, TACT Connect has made fantastic progress and ambitious plans are in place to grow and meet the needs identified by its members. Plans include regular regional events shaped entirely by members (the next being in Wales in November 2019), a money management workshop, the creation of an online portal for members and the recruitment of regional TACT Connect Advisors made up of care experienced people who organise activity in their local community and engage in research and campaigns.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

TACT is fully committed to providing a harmonious working environment in which employees are able to maximise their full potential and to contribute to business success, irrespective of their age, gender, ethnic origin, race, disability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or marital status.

TACT is committed to identifying and eliminating discriminatory practices, procedures and attitudes throughout the organisation. TACT believes that all employees are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect while at work and to treat others with dignity and respect also when representing the business in any capacity outside of the usual working environment.

TACT expects employees to support this commitment and to assist in all possible ways. Our Equal Opportunities policy aims to prevent discrimination, provide guidance to resolve any problem should it occur and prevent recurrence.

PREVENTING DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT

TACT endeavours to ensure that no employee or job applicant is subject to unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, race (including colour, nationality, caste and ethnic origin), disability, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, part-time status, age, religion or belief, political belief or affiliation or trade union membership. This commitment applies to all the aspects of employment outlined below:

- Recruitment and selection, including advertisements, job descriptions, interview and selection procedures.
- Training for all staff involved in the recruitment of staff.
- Training for all staff to ensure employees are aware of the policy and practice.
- All training in which staff participate will actively take account of equal opportunities issues and address any discriminatory remarks of behaviour.
- Promotion and career development opportunities.
- Terms and conditions of employment, and access to employment-related benefits and facilities.
- Grievance handling and the application of disciplinary procedures.
- Selection for redundancy.

DISABILITY POLICY

Recruitment is carried out on the sole basis of the applicant's abilities and suitability for the job. A disability will not in itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant. Reasonable adjustments to the application procedures will be made as required to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged because of disability.

No applicant will be considered unsuitable for appointment or less suitable than another applicant unless full consideration has been given as to whether a reasonable adjustment can be made to overcome any effect of their disability upon suitability for the post.

When a disabled employee commences employment we will, in consultation with that employee, ensure that such reasonable adjustments are made as required to enable them to work safely and effectively and to secure equal access to the benefits of employment.

DIVERSITY POLICY

TACT actively encourages diversity to maximise achievement, creativity and good practice and bring benefit to individuals and communities. TACT encourages all people it works with and for to contribute to an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued.

The way we work, train and learn within TACT reflects both the mission and objectives of TACT and the spirit and intentions of legislation that outlaws discrimination and promotes equality and diversity.

TACT makes reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offers, where appropriate, additional support to trustees and employees to ensure they are able to take a full and active part in TACT's work. TACT also recognises that its ability to meet these diverse needs is enhanced by having a diverse workforce which generally reflects local populations in the area that it services and which has the skill, knowledge and understanding to achieve the service objectives. It commits itself to valuing diversity in its workforce and to developing and training employees to improve their ability to meet TACT's goals within an overall framework of equality.

TACT IS COMMITTED TO BE AN ORGANISATION THAT:

- Has a workforce generally reflecting the population it serves.
- Accepts that all have a right to their distinctive and diverse identities.
- Understands how valuing diversity can improve our ability to deliver better services to children and young people and so reduce disadvantages.
- Actively consults with staff, foster carers, young people and other stakeholders to ensure that the services, which are provided, are responsive and reflect the diversity of need.
- Provides a supportive, conducive environment where all employees have the opportunity to reach their full potential.
- Allows employees to challenge behaviour that de-values diversity and equality in a safe and constructive manner.

TACT believes that employees have an important part to play in making this happen and it requires every employee to recognise and discharge their own responsibility. It undertakes to listen to its foster carers, young people and customers and to involve them in the development of services, which recognise and value their diversity.

TACT uses its best endeavours to deliver services in a manner that genuinely recognises the role and benefits of an inclusive society that brings opportunities and access, not barriers, to individuals.

EMPLOYEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees have the right to work in an environment which is free from any form of harassment. All employees have a responsibility to help ensure a working environment in which the dignity of employees is respected; employees must ensure their behaviour to colleagues, clients or and customers does not cause offence and could not in any way be considered to be harassment or victimisation.

THE REAL LIVING WAGE

The Charity Governance Code states, as one of many principles of good governance, that charities should recognise their broader responsibilities to communities and wider society. This is at the heart of what we do at TACT and is evidenced by our commitment to tackling disadvantage and improving life chances for our families, children and more and that is why TACT is proud to be a registered Living Wage Employer and is committed to pay more than the national minimum wage for all casually engaged workers.

DISCLOSURE POLICIES

TACT is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, or users of its services, regardless of offending background. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

For those positions where a DBS / PVG check is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a DBS / PVG check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

ENGLAND AND WALES

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service to assess applicants' suitability for position of trust, TACT fully complies with the Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

Where a DBS check is to form part of the recruitment process, we ask all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage by completing a criminal record self declaration form as part of the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within TACT and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Unless the nature of the position allows TACT to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This is the case for most of the positions in TACT such as Social Work, Child Resource Work, Administrative posts, Trustees and Panel Members.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

We make every subject of a DBS / PVG check aware of the existence of the Code of Practice and make a copy available on request. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS / PVG check with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

SCOTLAND

The Code of Practice ("the Code") is published by Scottish Ministers under section 122 of Part V of The Police Act 1997 ("the 1997 Act"). The Code identifies obligations which registered bodies, counter signatories and other recipients of disclosure information issued under the 1997 Act and the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 ("the 2007 Act").

We comply with the Code, the 1997 and 2007 Acts regarding the treatment of individuals who are subject to Disclosure Scotland checks. We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against the subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

We will use a Disclosure Scotland check only where this is considered proportionate and relevant to the particular position or type of regulated work. This will be based on a thorough risk assessment of the position or work and having considered the relevant legislation which determines whether or not a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure under the 1997 Act or a Scheme Record under the 2007 Act is applicable.

STAFF COMMENTS

The best people to tell you what working for TACT is really like are our staff. Here's what some of them have to say:



"I AM REALLY HAPPY WITH SUPERVISION SESSIONS AND FIND THEM VERY SUPPORTIVE."

"THE PERFORMANCE REVIEWS ARE BRILLIANT. YOU GET TO KNOW HOW YOU ARE GETTING ON AND HOW TO IMPROVE."

"I PARTICULARLY ENJOY WORKING FOR A NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION."

"I LOVE WORKING FOR THE BENEFIT OF CHILDREN IN CARE. I AM PROUD OF THE COMMITMENT, DEDICATION AND PROFESSIONALISM OF THE TEAM I MANAGE."

"TACT OFFERS EXCELLENT CONDITIONS AND FIRST CLASS QUALITY SUPPORT TO ITS FOSTER CARERS AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE."

"THE PEOPLE I WORK WITH MAKE COMING TO WORK A PLEASURE."

"THE CHARITABLE STATUS; WORKING TO GIVE CHILDREN BETTER LIVES; THE INSPIRATIONAL FOSTER CARERS; THERE IS A GENUINE DESIRE TO DO 'THE RIGHT THING.'"

"I THINK THAT TACT IS A GOOD EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER."



FIND OUT MORE

Please go to tactcare.org.uk/work-for-tact to see more information about working for TACT and details of our current vacancies.

Pre-employment checks:

Please note that at least two references covering the last three years will be requested, at least one will be a professional reference. A Disclosure & Barring Service check (England & Wales) or Disclosure Scotland / PVG check (Scotland) will be undertaken on your behalf.

If you have any questions please contact the HR Department HR@tactcare.org.uk



Registered Charity Numbers: England and Wales 1018963 | SC 039052

