

# OUR YEAR 2018



## RAISING CELEBRATION

by Solomon O.B., TACT Ambassador, poet and care leaver

Wordsworth said Child is the father of man  
Alluding to the crucial role your youth plays in the way  
you grow  
How it moulds you  
How it shapes you

Carves a deep mark into the clay of the person you  
may become

Childhood is the seed of who we may grow to be  
So when roots become severed it is vital for young seeds  
to find new soil  
To be rooted in routine  
Rooted deeply in love  
Rooted in all things needed for us to (fully) flourish

Any threat of the fabric of a child's hood unravelling must  
be handled with the greatest of TACT  
To help keep things together

TACT intact for a quarter century in fact  
A mere fifteen minutes in the hourglass of a century  
But each grain of sand vital  
Every grain of time providing a fluid foundation beneath  
the feet of a child  
As they step along the beach of their youth  
A chance to truly play before time concretes life into  
structure

25 Years - A silver Anniversary  
And that silver has lined the clouded pasts of so many

Thousands in fact  
Think of the collective impact  
The fullness of the years nourished in that time

For each one of those 25  
Multiply that by  
The number of lessons shared over meals prepared  
By talks before bed to alleviate fears  
By each and every tear dried  
By every first bed made for a new arrival  
And the true weight of each year becomes clear

25 years  
An institution moving from youthful to seasoned  
Providing union between the givers of care and those  
waiting to receive it  
Nationwide

Thousands of households where carers and cared for kids  
Can click together to form wholeness  
Provide that missing piece for each other in the puzzle of  
their lives

The form of a TACT carer is shapeless  
No age, race, orientation needed  
Just space inside

25 is a mark in time  
A foundation established with the promise of so much  
more upon the horizon

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# FOREWORD FROM ANDY ELVIN, CEO

2018 was TACT's 25th anniversary and we celebrated it in style bringing together our staff, young people and carers from across the UK at a special birthday event held in Birmingham.

One of the highlights of the event was hearing from our founder Jim Armstrong about how it all began in an office in his attic! It allowed us to reflect on the journey TACT has been on and look confidently to the future. An interesting fact is that Jim always wanted to take over a local authority fostering and adoption service and had talks with a few. So, he was delighted that we had achieved this with Peterborough and that TACT is still leading the way.

On which subject, the Ofsted inspection of Peterborough children's services, including TACT's innovative Permanency Service, was another highlight. Peterborough achieved their first ever "Good" across all areas since the formation of Peterborough City Council as a unitary authority in 1998. The TACT Peterborough Permanency service was roundly praised with inspectors noting that we had created a "seamless service". We are very proud of this as we went into this with the view that "children do not see legal orders" so neither should services. Our service treats foster, adoptive and kinship families equally in terms of access to training, advice and support. We are firmly of the opinion that this is the future of how all local authorities should organize their care services. It would be good if 2019 saw the end of the silos that restrict practice and leave too many families out in the cold. We are grateful for the support of the DfE Innovation Fund for our Peterborough service and it was good to see Chief Social Worker Isabelle Trowler visit us in the autumn.

We had many other inspection successes over the year in East London, the West Midlands, Scotland, Wales, the North East and Yorkshire. Inspections are a useful benchmark, but our view is that we strive for excellence of service to our children and families every day. Through doing this the positive inspection results will follow.

Our children and young people are at the centre of all that we do. So, we were thrilled in 2018 to set up TACT

Connect, our new scheme to stay in touch with all of the children and young people we have ever cared for in the past, and all those in the present and future. We already have a growing database of care experienced adults who grew up in our foster homes involved in designing TACT Connect, and we look forward to watching this grow and flourish in the years to come. Our view is that any decent parent knows what their children are doing and are still involved with them at 25, 35, 45 and beyond. TACT will be there to celebrate successes, offer opportunities to get involved and to lend a helping hand where needed. We are very grateful to the Rank Foundation and Charity Works for supporting this new venture.

I will leave the last words to our wonderful ambassador Solomon O.B. and his poem for our 25th anniversary "Raising Celebration", an extract is below.

*For each one of those 25  
Multiply that by  
The number of lessons shared over meals prepared  
By talks before bed to alleviate fears  
By each and every tear dried  
By every first bed made for a new arrival  
And the true weight of each year becomes clear*

Here's to the next 25 years of TACT



# MATTHEW DOYLE, CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

During 2018 I have had the opportunity to meet many of our children, carers and staff; I've come away from each of these encounters feeling inspired by the way the kids deal with the complex and sometimes traumatic situations that our society has put them in, and by the way our carers welcome these children into their homes and their hearts and support them on their journey to adulthood and the way our staff are so focused on improving the lives of the children and the carers.

I would like to say thank you to our children for working with your foster families and not giving up, and to our carers for the love and kindness you show in often difficult situations. I would also like to extend my thanks to our staff for their dedication to delivering the highest quality support.

The Board has changed a lot since our last annual report, Jon Fayle stepped down as Chair, Geoff Knox stepped down as Vice-Chair and Ann Lee stepped down from the board. On behalf of everyone, my heartfelt thanks for your years of dedicated service to TACT, we would not be the organisation we are today without you.

As this was our 25th anniversary year, we brought everyone together for a special celebratory event in Birmingham, which enabled me to spend time with Jim Armstrong, our founder, and listen to his stories of the early days and the ethos and culture he built, which after 25 years is still engrained into us today. I'll never forget Jim's passing words to me that day – he'll be watching to make sure we live up to the standard that was set for us. We will make you proud Jim.

The Board is currently reviewing our strategy with trustee Martine Bond leading on the development of our plans for the next five years. Martine has created a team from across the organisation to assist, I'd encourage everyone to send their thoughts and ideas to Martine at [strategy2019@tactcare.org.uk](mailto:strategy2019@tactcare.org.uk), we may not be able to provide everyone with a personal response, but we want all your ideas and we will read and consider everything sent to the team.

I'd like to mention a new initiative we started in 2018, which we are calling TACT Connect. This is an initiative for us to keep in touch with care leavers, that has many benefits. The one I'd like to focus on is the one that really sets us apart – being a safety net for our care leavers for

life. This is us taking responsibility after they have left care and being a family for them for life. Many of our foster carers already do this, and we don't want to change this, the new scheme is for those who don't have that continuing relationship or need a level of support outside what their family can offer.

We had a very busy 2018, and 2019 is not going to be any different. We will continue to work towards improving the quality of care and encouraging other providers to lift their performance by showing how it can be done. But do not be mistaken, austerity continues to impact on the social care fabric of our society, and political declarations aside on the end of austerity, Local Authorities continue to face significant financial difficulties. This is not helped by the continuing consolidation of the market by the privately backed for profit providers, making profit for shareholders from vulnerable children is abhorrent and we will continue to strongly advocate to have this stopped.

While we have no desire to be the biggest player in the market, (although we do want to be the best), we need to increase our scale to allow us to compete and generate a surplus to reinvest in the continuing improvement in the quality of care we provide. So, you can expect to see us continue to grow in 2019 in addition to improving the quality of care we provide.

Lastly, I'd like to acknowledge three of my fellow board members, Mary Griffith-Jones, Martine Bond and Philip Woodman, they have gone above and beyond this year with the time, effort and energy they have put into the organisation and they deserve our thanks.



# THE HISTORY OF TACT

**1987**

Jim Armstrong, a social worker for London Borough of Greenwich started the agency MJ Associates from the attic of his then home in New Eltham

**1989**

The agency moved to Hither Green where its head office remains today

**1993**

MJ Associates was re-named **TACT (The Adolescent and Children's Trust)** and became a charitable organisation

**2004**

Merger with Prosibs Fostering Agency

**2005**

Merger with East London Foster Carers

**2007**

Merger with the Independent Adoption Service (IAS)

Merger with Children Law UK (CLUK)

Children Law UK worked to benefit children involved in the justice system. The organisation was incorporated into TACT's external affairs department, which campaigns, lobbies parliament and works with the media on behalf of children in care.

**2009**

Merger with Parents for Children (PFC)

**2017**

TACT has been appointed to run Peterborough City Council's fostering, special guardianship order, adoption and kinship placement services from April 2017.



# HOW IT ALL BEGAN

## TACT Founder Jim Armstrong

Jim was a social worker for London Borough of Greenwich in 1987 when he decided to take the brave step of going it alone:

“I had a lot of experience in the fostering and adoption field, so I thought I might as well put it to good use and start up on my own independent agency. In those days, as it is today, local authorities needed independent agencies mostly to take on the children and young people they found difficult to place themselves with foster or adoptive families. And just as now, the harder to place were sibling groups and teenagers. But they had only a few agencies to choose from then so I saw a good opportunity.”

He started the agency – MJ Associates from the attic of his then home in New Eltham and started with one 16-year-old boy who he placed with a foster carer who lived across the road from Jim. The beauty of being an independent agency was that he could give both carer and young person bespoke support.

A year after the agency was begun the number of clients Jim had had grown enough for him to take on a social worker and an administration person.

In 1989 Jim moved the agency to Hither Green, where its head office remains today. In 1993 Jim decided to make the agency a charitable organisation and renamed it TACT – The Adolescent and Children’s Trust. His reason for making TACT a charity was because he did not want it to be a profit making set up – something he was very opposed to, he wanted to plough any income back into services for children in care, and social services and local authorities were more likely to entrust their looked after children with a charity rather than a commercial agency. From there TACT grew and grew.

Ten years after its inception TACT was employing 30 people and had set up offices in Bristol, Wales and the East Midlands. By that time Jim was 62 and was not in the best of health so he decided to retire.

Now, 25 years on since it became TACT, it is the largest fostering and adoption charity in the UK with offices in England, Scotland and Wales:

“I am incredibly proud that TACT is doing so well, I could not have imagined it becoming so big but it still has the founding ethics and goals at its heart. ”

Two years ago, in partnership with Peterborough City Council, TACT became the first ever independent fostering and adoption agency to fully take over a local authority’s fostering and adoption services, resulting in TACT Peterborough Permanency Service. While this is a ground breaking development, Jim had already considered the concept when he founded TACT.

“I was thinking about taking over a local authority fostering and adoption service about five years into the agency’s tenure but we were just not big enough to take on everything that a local authority can throw at you at the time.”



Left to right: Jim Armstrong (TACT Founder), Andy Elvin (TACT CEO), Matthew Doyle (TACT Chair of Trustees)

# 25 YEARS OF TACT

Staff and foster carers celebrated TACT's 25th Anniversary on the 24th October at the Supreme Banqueting venue in West Bromwich.

The day began with a welcome from TACT CEO Andy Elvin, plus speeches from Jon Fayle – the resigning Chair of the Trustees, Matthew Doyle – our new Chair of the Trustees, and Jim Armstrong – TACT's founder. Jim shared his memories of the early days of TACT, which he started in the attic of his then home in New Eltham, South East London, before it was moved a few miles to Hither Green a short while later. Naturally he was pleased to see how the organisation has grown to become the largest fostering and adoption charity in the UK.

There then followed a panel of foster carers and care leavers who discussed the rewards and challenges of fostering, how they find the care system works in general, plus they offered valuable advice to new foster carers. One of our care leavers – Fanso, paid tribute to the opportunities and support that his foster carers had provided him with, resulting in him developing into an ambitious young man, who is a successful musician, semi-professional football player, and an apprentice at the Doncaster Children's Services Trust.

After a delicious lunch and the chance to do some networking with each other, attendees were treated to live entertainment by two fantastic performers – stand-up comedian and care leaver Sophie Willan and TACT Ambassador, poet and care leaver Solomon O.B. Solomon performed his new spoken word piece written specially to commemorate TACT's 25th birthday, and performed for the first time at the event, plus some of his well-known poems including his winning Grand Slam Championship poem *Unorthodox Beginnings*.

In November, TACT offices in East London, Yorkshire and Manchester marked the charity's 25th birthday with their own special parties attended by local foster carers, followed by information events for anyone interested in finding out more about fostering.



Photos by Jemma Davis, photographer and TACT care leaver



# CARE LEAVERS

## TACT CONNECT

In September we began developing a new scheme called TACT Connect which aims to create a supportive network of TACT care experienced people.

By bringing together people who have been looked after by TACT foster carers, we hope to create a community that will support one another, celebrate each other's achievements and promote TACT's mission, plus have access to our support should it be needed. TACT Connect welcomes all people who have been in the care of TACT in the last 25 years as well as future TACT care leavers.

There will be a number of benefits for TACT Connect members, including events, regular newsletters, and opportunities within TACT, such as foster panel membership. Members will also be able to tap into a range of support including a mentoring system, information on where to access services, and help and advice from other care experienced people, foster carers and TACT staff.

To help steer the development of TACT Connect, a reference group consisting of TACT care leavers, young people preparing to leave care, and foster carers, has been forged to ensure that the scheme succeeds in creating a fully inclusive community, effectively offering services that are genuinely needed by care leavers, and will therefore actually be used by its members.

## CARE LEAVERS VIDEO

On the occasion of TACT's 25th Anniversary, we produced an inspirational and heart-warming video which gave young TACT care leavers a platform to share their experiences of being in care, how fostering influenced their lives, and what their foster carers meant to them.

Charlie (21) who recently graduated from the journalism course at the University of Northampton said: "My foster carer has always been the number one person to go to if I had any problems ever. I just graduated from university and I can say that's because she was able to help and support me."

In all, ten young people from different backgrounds and different parts of the UK took part in the film, in which they also offered advice to children who are entering the care system for the first time such as "don't be scared, you are safe with your carers and just be happy".

All of the young people expressed positive ambitions for their future such as working for the intelligence sector, helping other young people, becoming a top restaurant chef, a famous musician or a foster carer.



# TACT PETERBOROUGH

TACT and Peterborough City Council entered into an innovative and ground-breaking partnership in April 2017, with TACT delivering fostering and adoption services on behalf of Peterborough City Council. How did TACT Peterborough do in 2018?

The TACT Peterborough Permanency Service has had three visits from Ofsted (this must be a record!) since January; one each to inspect the adoption and fostering parts of the service and one as part of the local authority ILAC (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) inspection service where Peterborough gained its first ever good across Children's services. TACT was described as providing a "seamless service model" and leadership was seen as having "a vision, and a great passion for improving services to provide permanent placements for all children who are looked after".

Recruitment of adoptive parents and foster carers has been a priority and was recognised by Ofsted as a strength as was all matching which has contributed to the good progress children have made. The service continues to develop our offer to support all carers, adoptive parents, foster carers and special guardians through our "experienced, committed and knowledgeable" staff group and the therapeutic crisis work and trauma informed practice with children and families that provides stability.

The Family Group Conference service is increasing capacity and becoming more aligned with Council services. We were sad to lose the Access to Resources Team in December but will still be working closely with them as we seek to maximise the use of in-house placement capacity.



Chief Social Worker Isabelle Trowler with TACT Peterborough staff

Innovation has continued at a pace with the Family Tuition scheme, adapting VIPP (Video-feedback Intervention to promote Positive Parenting) for use with all carers, initiation of a carer buddying scheme, a new carer allegation support service, development of strength-based assessments and offering mindfulness groups to all carers and staff. We have also provided attachment groups for carers, supported all carers with Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and trained foster carers as parallel parents to facilitate the planned return of children to birth families.

Our Joint Panel Training day in November focused on therapeutic crisis intervention, therapeutic life story work, innovation programme updates and our experience so far in Fostering for Adoption, an area the service excels in.

We were also pleased to host a conference in October with guest speakers Professor David Shemmings and Dr Alice Loving on "Why we need to stay Trauma-informed and Attachment-focused". It was great to see so many other professionals working with Peterborough children and families attending alongside TACT staff and carers from across the spectrum.

TACT's partnership with Peterborough City Council has made significant improvements to the services we provide, a fantastic turnaround and the result of everyone's hard work.



BBC News Presenter Sanchia Berg interviewing TACT Peterborough staff

# POLICY AND CAMPAIGNING

TACT continues to campaign to positively influence policy affecting children and young people in care across the UK. We seek to impact new and proposed legislation by working with children, young people, carers and other charities, local authorities, policy and political decision makers. We are committed to amplifying the voices of our children and families to ensure that local and central government and other relevant bodies hear them.

01

TACT launched 'Reaching for the best? What children in care and their carers really think about education', detailing the findings from TACT's Education Survey conducted in 2017. The survey was the result of face to face interviews with children and young people in care and foster carers. It gave TACT a rich vein of information and helped us to re-evaluate our approach to education. While many of the children and young people we spoke to had a positive experience of education, our study shows that more needs to be done for the children in our care to fully realise their potential in the current school system. One of our recommendations points toward an improvement of the training for teachers about the needs and experiences of looked after children so they have a better understanding of their needs and better support them in their personal development and protect them from bullying.



02

Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers' Independent Review of the fostering system in England was published. It made 36 recommendations to the government about how the outcomes of children in foster care can be improved. The report was complementary about TACT generally and our approach in Peterborough in particular. Although the Government published a response agreeing with the recommendations in the review that foster parents should be given more freedom to make day to day decisions, some other issues such as improving stability need to be followed up with actions. TACT continues to campaign about the importance of improving placement stability and extending equal support to all forms of permanent care, including adoption, residential care, foster care, returning home or special guardianship.

03

TACT has continued to work alongside and support other organisations seeking the implementation of best practice in children's social care and identifying obstacles that are preventing children in care from fulfilling their potential. In particular, TACT carers, young people and care leavers have collaborated with research led by the Centre for Social Justice regarding barriers for young people who are applying for University. Our Peterborough carers, adopters and kinship carers shared with the What Works Centre for Children in Social Care what they think 'works' so this can influence the design of practice, policy and services for our children.

04

TACT continues to be involved in important sector groups such as the Alliance for Children in Care, the Kinship Care Alliance and the Children's Advocacy Network. TACT is also a member of the Fairer Fostering Partnership, a group of charitable and not-for-profit fostering agencies across the UK that advocate for children in foster care and their foster families. Our CEO, Andy Elvin, is the Chair of the group.

05

Our yearly survey for foster carers again highlighted the vocational and personally rewarding elements in deciding to become a foster carer. "Compassionate Parenting: What Foster Carers Really Think" highlighted key changes that need to be made, including improving the information our carers receive from local authorities about children they care for. To that end, TACT is piloting an approach in Peterborough that moves towards more asset based and balanced information, focusing on children and young people's strengths, not just their needs. The information needs to be focused on "what is strong, not what is wrong" and children and young people need to be involved in the process of putting together this information.

# MY STORY...



## Sally-Ann

I was first introduced to fostering at the age of 11 as my sister was in a mother and baby placement. My understanding of fostering back then was that it was similar to adoption, that people offered stable homes and support to young people, but just not on a permanent basis.

After redundancy from my job in early years education I became a self-employed nanny for two years, and during that time I worked for several foster families. I helped transport children to and from contact with family, monitored phone contact and supported their individual needs. This provided me with a wealth of experience about the highs and lows of fostering, what support is available and the different types of fostering.

I suppose my husband Ryan and I might be considered unusual because we chose to start fostering at just 22 years of age and before having our own children. We just felt ready, and thought it would be easier to bring our birth children into an existing foster family, therefore helping them to be used to sharing their Mum and Dad and hopefully have more resilience to change.

After speaking to other foster carers, we decided to foster through TACT due to the level of support offered and the fact that it is a charity. Although the application process was quite intense we felt very supported by TACT the whole way and we were well prepared for the final panel meeting.

Due to my experience in early years education, the fact I was obtaining an early years degree and our young age, we originally planned to foster children aged 0-7. However, our first placement was a 15-year-old! At first, we were a little nervous about what to expect and how the match would work. Would she respect us as carers, would we get the balance between understanding her and parenting right? Fortunately, other than a few minor challenges expected with parenting a teenager, the placement was very successful and she fitted really well into our family. In fact, being younger carers really helped as she was able to spend lots of time with us and our family and friends, on holidays within the UK, and abroad and day trips.

We found that people would just assume that she was our family member or a friend, which helped when transporting her to social activities with friends and to school, as

she preferred to keep her peers from knowing that she was in foster care. One of the highs as new foster carers was when we had the pleasure of having her as our bridesmaid at our wedding in July 2017. We felt so honoured that she agreed to play such a key role on our special day after only living with us for just a few months.

She stayed with us until just after her 17th birthday, when she decided she wanted to live independently in an area she had lived in previously.

We have had other placements, all either respite or short-term, ranging from one week to several weeks and aged between 7 and 15 years. Although most young people have stayed for a relatively short period of time, we have seen a huge difference in their outlooks, confidence and outcomes. Our teenagers left with important life skills including washing laundry, general house duties, independence and job-seeking skills.

Without meaning to sound too cliché or sentimental, I feel that fostering is something I was made to do. I feel honoured to have found my purpose in life and something worth all the worries and unexpectedness. Most of all, fostering brings feelings of accomplishment, pride and joy.



01

Between April 2017 and September 2018, the new TACT permanency service found families for 41 children including those with complex needs, older children and sibling groups.



02

There were 33 new adopters approved between April 2017 and September 2018, with the majority of them keen to be considered as Fostering for Adoption carers.



03

Our family events have been very popular this year. We organised a Summer picnic, pantomime session, Christmas party as well as Halloween and Easter activity sessions for our adoptive families.



04

Our adoption support groups have increased to also include a monthly Saturday get together for adults and children at a farm! Everyone loves the chance to meet and play whilst having a cuddle with guinea pigs, rabbits and chickens.

05

Therapeutic support from our own practitioners has been extended to more families who have the choice of therapy, VIPP-SD (Video-feedback intervention to promote positive parenting and sensitive discipline) and DDP (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy).

# MY STORY...

## Paul and Steven

Paul and Steven wanted to have their own family and thought adoption was probably the best route, but as a same sex couple they feared they might be discounted as potential adopters. However, a chance encounter changed all that.

Paul said: "We had preconceived ideas about our chances of being considered to be adoptive parents, but then while on holiday a few years ago, we met a same sex couple with an adopted daughter, and suddenly our eyes were opened to the possibility."

Soon after that happy revelation, they applied to Peterborough City Council adoption services – which was taken over by TACT to become the TACT Peterborough Permanency Service.

Steven said: "The application process was quite intense, but we were not treated any differently than other adoption applicants. We never felt judged, just supported".

Soon after approval to adopt, Paul and Steven got news of a possible match – an unborn baby boy who would be briefly fostered after birth to give the couple the chance to get acquainted with him before they hopefully took him home.

Steven said: "We found out on Christmas Eve, and it was the best Christmas present ever. It was so

exciting and a little bit scary at the same time."

Following his birth, Mark\* was placed with foster carer Vicky.

Steven said: "Vicky was amazing, opening up her home to us while we fitted visits around Mark's routine. Eventually, the day came when we could take him home."

Paul said: "When we brought him home it was rather surreal. We placed him in his carry cot in the middle of the lounge and sat looking at him thinking oh my goodness, we have a baby!"

Fortunately, Paul and Steven's relatives rallied around the first-time dads and helped them with the newest member of the family.

Paul said: "Even though we are both from close knit families we were crossing our fingers that our parents would be able to bond with Mark. Fortunately, everyone has been so incredibly positive."

Mark had just turned two years old when his birth mother became pregnant again. It was decided that the baby - Ava\* would be put up for adoption, and Paul and Steven were asked if they would consider adopting her.

Steven said: "By that time, our lives had become more settled, as a family we had got into a nice routine.

Plus we were in our early 40's. So we thought, can we handle having another new born baby? But it felt like the right thing to do. We are both from large families and knew from experience that it is nice to have a sibling to grow up with."

In due course Ava\* joined the family, which is now a happy and thriving unit, if somewhat hectic.

Steven said: "Sometimes we wonder how we manage to get through the day because things can be so busy, but we just do. It helps to be organised, and fortunately we have flexible professions – Paul works in the pharmaceutical industry and I am currently on long-term adoption leave from my nursing job."

Three-year-old Mark is proving to be a great big brother.

Paul said: "Mark is a typically noisy, funny and boisterous toddler, and he is so sweet with Ava. It's like she has always been here and Mark has a real knack for calming Ava down when she gets upset, bringing her toys and making her laugh."

So now Paul and Steve have what they always wanted – their own family, and Mark and Ava can look forward to a bright future, growing up together in a stable, loving family.

\*Real names not used



# MY STORY...

## Laura, TACT Children's Resource Worker and care leaver

I am 20 years old and I went into care, along with my older sisters, soon after I was born because our mother and father neglected us due to their drug and alcohol problems.

I don't remember my first foster placement as I was so young, but at ten months old I was adopted by a couple who split up when I was two, and I remained with my adoptive mother. Unfortunately, our relationship broke down because she was alcohol dependent and abusive, plus I was pregnant with my daughter Naomi, so I eventually went back into care when I was 16.

On my return to care I was referred to fostering and adoption charity TACT which put me into a mother and baby placement, so I could be assessed for my parenting skills and then move on to independent living. However, my first two placements broke down, and at first, I thought it was the fault of the carers, but now I realise I just didn't feel it was necessary to have my skills as a mum assessed.

My social worker and independent reviewing officer addressed the problem by returning me to my favourite TACT foster carers Kris and Dave, which meant I was not subjected to a parenting assessment. I loved being a part of Kris and Dave's family. Kris threw me a baby shower,

I was so overwhelmed I cried. I loved the little things, like watching TV dramas with Kris, and when Dave would make me and Naomi laugh. In the summer they took me and my foster sister to places like London and Hunstanton. They always treated us well and comforted us when we needed to be.

Going in to care as teenager was overall a positive experience. What I said mattered for the first time, and I felt valued and respected. I was able to make my own decisions and the professionals helped me along the way. I learned how to manage money and relationships and I was given advice about my future options including education. And TACT provided access to therapy to help me deal with the past which was amazingly helpful.

When I turned 17, I was ready to move on to independent living with Naomi. Leaving Kris and Dave was stressful but moving out of a family home always is. I got my flat very quickly and I loved it, my TACT social workers came with me to view it and sign the contract and Kris and Dave helped me move in and set up my bills. I had a grant to furnish my flat and having moved in I felt very grown up. Suddenly I had it all, which I never imagined would be possible when I was living with my adoptive mother.

Soon I went back to college to study health and social care level 3. I didn't know what I wanted to do but I knew I wanted to help people like me. Then my personal adviser, Frank, told me about an apprenticeship run by the Rank Foundation group which provides young people with the opportunity to work in a field of their choice and get involved in the community. So, I applied, travelled to London for an interview, and very soon after I discovered my application was successful. I chose to use the apprenticeship to work with children in care, and fortunately TACT Peterborough took me on as an Assistant Children's Resource Worker. I am so excited about the opportunity to help children and young people in care, social workers and foster carers in any way I can, such as speaking on behalf of a young person at child care reviews or other appointments and working as an advocate.

I am in a good place in my life right now, and I attribute a lot of that to the opportunities, support, love and stability that I received whilst in foster care. I want to say to Kris and Dave, and indeed all foster carers, keep doing what you're doing, it isn't easy, so hats off to you guys, and thank you for giving children and young people better futures.

# TACT IN THE MEDIA

TACT continued to be a voice for fostering and adoption in the media.



Our amazing foster carers and adopters continued to let TACT share their inspiring stories through TV, radio, print and online media. In 2018 you could find them in major national newspapers including The Mirror, The Sun and Metro, and also in local media such as ITV Anglia, BBC Radio Scotland, BBC North West, Wales Online, The Yorkshire Post, Glasgow Live and many more, plus specialist media such as Forces TV and Diva Magazine. Photo: Elaine Livingstone



During Foster Care Fortnight, the UK's biggest foster care awareness raising campaign, we took the opportunity to celebrate foster carers who come from a diverse range of backgrounds, circumstances and age groups. Stories by some of our youngest and oldest foster carers were published in News Shopper, Fife Today, Coventry Telegraph, Peterborough Telegraph and Daily Record.



On Siblings Day (April 10) we celebrated the lifelong bonds between brothers and sisters. In TACT we look after over 300 siblings and we believe it is important and beneficial for siblings in care to stay together. TACT carers who foster siblings shared their stories and experiences in a series of blogs on the TACT website. A blog by our foster carer Barbara was published in the Huffington Post.



TACT continued to be the go to voice of expertise on fostering and adoption for national and regional media. This year CEO Andy Elvin appeared in The Sun, Children and Young People Now magazine, ITV Anglia, The Guardian, Community Care magazine and Local Government Chronicle.



# THANK YOU!



We are extremely grateful to all amazing people who ran, cycled, climbed mountains and challenged themselves to help raise funds for children and young people in TACT's care.

This year we received major donations from State Street Corporation, Department for Education, Rank Foundation, British and Foreign School Society and BBC Children in Need. Before Christmas, we received almost 400 toys from Le Toy Van, a UK company which makes beautiful wooden toys. These toys were given to children in TACT's care around the UK to make their Christmas a little merrier. We are also grateful to all our individual donors who continue to support children and young people in our care.

## WHERE THE MONEY WENT



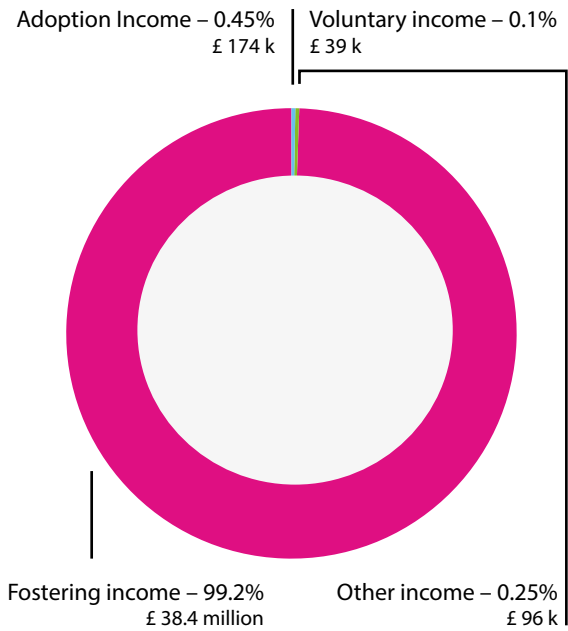
Money raised for TACT is spent on a variety of activities and services which enrich our children's lives and raise their aspirations.

One of those activities is our annual Big Weekend. This August, thanks to our supporters, children and young people in TACT's care enjoyed a fantastic weekend full of adventure, friendship making and fun activities in beautiful Shropshire. With the common experience of being in care, the weekend gave the young people the chance to take part in a range of activities, work in a team, experience group living and challenge themselves in a new environment.

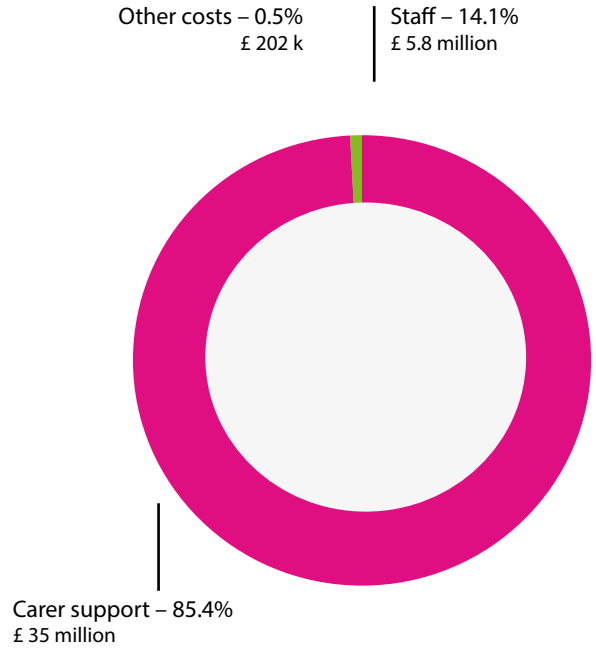
The voluntary income was also used to fund educational support for young people, therapeutic support for children, young people and foster carers, Skills for Life workshops to support young people in their journey to independence, therapy service for adoptive families and regional activity days throughout the UK.

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

## Where our income came from Total income £ 38.7 million



## What we spent it on Total expenditure £ 41million



The majority of our income comes from fostering fees as fostering is our main activity. 85.4% of our expenditure was spent on carer fees, recruitment, training, allowances and ongoing support. Other costs included activities for children and young people which lead to better outcomes for them. We are a charity and when surpluses are generated in any year then they are re-invested into positive activities and services for children and young people in our care.

It is integral to our charitable mission to be at the forefront of innovation in the children’s care sector. With this ethos in mind, the 2017/18 Financial Year has seen us invest in growing our footprint in the UK and pioneering the delivery of new models for permanency services. The most visible of these was our successful bid for the Peterborough City Council (PCC) permanency service and our takeover of the service in April 2017.

Alongside this, we have continued to invest in geographical growth across our pre-existing fostering services across England, Scotland and Wales. As in all such ventures the first years are investment years, which will lead to growth and a return in the coming years.



# SUPPORTERS AND TRUSTEES

As a charity TACT is proactive in generating voluntary fundraising income to support excellent outcomes for the children and young people we care for. This income is spent on a variety of activities and services which enrich our children's lives and raise their aspirations.

Our voluntary income is restricted to projects for children and young people and in the last year has enabled us to provide:

- Our fantastic theraplay service for adoptive families
- A number of regional activity days throughout the UK
- Our annual Big Weekend for young people
- Additional group sessions and therapeutic support for foster carers caring for children with complex behaviours
- Individual therapeutic support for children and young people who require additional support
- Skills for Life workshops to support young people in their journey to independence
- Additional educational support for young people to assist in exam preparation

TACT could not be the organisation we are without support and donations from individuals, corporate partners, Trusts and Foundations. Thank you for your ongoing support.

## TACT Trustees 2018

Matthew Doyle (Chair), Jon Fayle (Chair until October 2018), Leanne Ellis, Leon Farrar, Lisa Waterman, Martine Bond, Mary Griffith Jones, Matthew Doyle, Mike Thomas, Philip Woodman, Geoff Knox (until June 2018)

## TACT Patrons

Lorraine Pascale  
Baroness Howarth of Breckland OBE

## TACT Ambassador

Solomon O.B

## Fundraisers

Joy Burke, Carol Baker, Amanda Hibbert, Ferdinando Sendyka, Mahyar Abbott, Craig Jacoby, Lawrence Jakes, Iain Macaulay, Jorge Rodrigues, Andrew Ives, Claire Sullivan

## Individual donors

Graeme Walker, Russell Braham, Lauren Webb, Homayon Zeary, Toria Jensen, Mark Peel, Stephen Smith, Heaher Pegrum, Dr Massil, S Agnew, T Redshaw, Cerys Llewelyn, Ms K M Jones, Florence Ahiente, John Arthur Baldoc, Justin Edwards

## Major Donors

State Street Corporation, BBC Children in Need, Rank Foundation, Department for Education, Home House, Le Toy Van



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