

# Annual Review 2012 - 2013



Brighter futures for children and young people







## Contents

*“We have fostered with TACT for over 12 years now and through ‘thick and thin’ they have listened to us and supported us when needed.”*

TACT Foster Carer

Life as TACT Foster Carers	Page 3
Adopting with TACT	Page 4 - 5
Introduction from the Chair of Trustees	Page 7
Foreword by TACT’s Patron	Page 8
Overview of TACT service over the last year	Page 9
An Area Manager’s perspective	Page 11
Life as a Social Worker at TACT	Page 12
TACT in partnership	Page 13
TACT External Affairs department update	Page 15 - 16
Learning and Development	Page 18
TACT HR	Page 19
Summary of the Financial Year	Page 20
Thank You to our supporters	Page 21
TACT’s Board of Trustees	Page 21

*“TACT has been amazing. This is our second adoption. If the house could take another we would not hesitate to go through TACT.”*

TACT Adopter



## Life as TACT Foster Carers - Sheila and Gareth Cummings

*Sheila & Gareth live in Port Talbot, Neath and are foster carers with TACT Cymru. Their two children have married and left home. When their daughter left to go to University, Sheila and Gareth thought about becoming foster carers. They had always been interested, but decided to wait until then.*

We've now been caring for eight years. During that time we've looked after nine children, as well as offering occasional respite care. We've cared for children aged from three months to fifteen years old.

The best thing about being a carer is that you can give children the chance of a life they would otherwise not have had. We recently cared for a brother and sister who have now been placed for adoption. However, when they arrived, they were considered unadoptable. The boy in particular was very difficult. He would scream, break things and seemed to have no connection with, or love for, his sister. He would walk over her rather than go round her. We tried to look at the world through his eyes, worked on his social skills and kept him at home as much as possible. TACT were very supportive during this period and our social worker Cheryl was always available and helpful.

*"Eventually these children open up and blossom and it's amazing. You can see how they come on and watch the anger replaced with laughter and affection."*

Eventually these children open up and blossom and it's amazing. You can see how they come on and the anger gets replaced with laughter and affection. You can say 'I did that, they didn't have that before'.

We worked as a team with the local authority adoption workers to prepare them for adoption. When they found parents for the children, there was a real mixture of tears as well as happiness. It's not easy letting them go. It's a painful process for you, and you have to be honest with the child.

When they left in January 2013, the boy said to me, 'It will be lovely to have a daddy and a mummy'. The first time the social worker came with new mum and dad, he ran down the drive saying, 'You're going to be my daddy'. That was my reward after two years. He saw I was a bit sad, so he said to me 'You're sad, but you've got Gareth and I've now got a mummy and daddy.'

Now they've moved to their new family we still keep in touch. The new parents have said that we will always be part of the family. We are all going to meet up in the summer in Cardiff.

For me, being a foster carer is the best job in the world. It's challenging, but also so rewarding. You're on a journey from the moment you get the children. What's really great is when they come back and visit. At five a.m. this New Year's Eve we had a knock on the door.

It was the first boy we'd ever fostered who's going to be 19 in June. He just wanted to come back to talk. We had a big hug and he said 'Mam, I'm so pleased to see you'. We talked about what he'd been up to and his plans for the future. It meant so much for him to come back to us.

## Adopting with TACT - Carlette Nijjar

I first thought about adoption after trying to have my own children and realising it wasn't likely to happen. We didn't really feel IVF was for us, so got in touch with the Independent Adoption Service (IAS). We first adopted Anaya during which time IAS merged with TACT. We stayed with TACT for our second adoption with Elisha.

We decided we wanted to adopt through an Independent Adoption Agency as, being a family of mixed race heritage,

we felt they were more able and willing to help us than some of the Local Authorities we approached.

The original adoption did take a long time, although that was partly due to the merger. Looking back on it I can understand why there is a need to take time and go into a lot of detail, as it is so important to make sure you get the right match between family and child.

We adopted Elisha as we felt we were ready for another child and wanted a companion for Anaya. We also felt it would help that the two girls both understood adoption and had it as a shared experience.

The support from TACT was always very good and they always kept us informed. If I had any questions I could just pick up the phone. Adopting the second time round is easier, as you know what to expect and understand the necessary intrusion in your life. We took our time with Elisha's adoption as we knew that it was going to happen.

We attend the Black Adopter's Support Group, hosted by TACT, which provides support and is always very helpful. The group meets up every other month and you can talk about anything you want. There's always someone there you could talk to about your experiences. I also find I'm able to offer help and advice to those currently adopting. There's also a crèche which is great for the girls in getting to know other children who were adopted.

I've also been on TACT's 'Adoption Changes' course. I've found this really helpful for addressing some of the issues we have had to face following adoption.

I'd recommend TACT to anyone thinking of adoption. They have the experience, and they are always thoughtful, kind and sensitive to your needs.

Adoption is about having the right attitude. I think many people only consider it after spending years and huge amounts of money on IVF. If it's not going to happen naturally then you might want to think about adoption first.

*"The support from TACT was always very good and they always kept us informed. If I had any questions I could just pick up the phone."*





## Adopting with TACT - Claire Cath

*"If you're thinking of adopting just go with it and ignore all the stories you hear in the press."*

I always knew I would look to adopt knowing it would be difficult to have birth children. My husband Andrew and I decided in 2009 to go ahead. It was never a big issue for us – I've got two cousins who were adopted so it wasn't a difficult decision.

We initially contacted our local authority adoption service but they didn't want to progress as I've had a transplant. So we got in touch with TACT and they were great from the start. We initially spoke to the Adoption Manager Erica, who was really informative and put us at ease, making it an easy choice to go with them.

We were approved by the adoption panel in December 2011 and found Harvey in June 2012. Everything has been positive

and straightforward since then, moving towards the final adoption order.

Overall the process has been easier than I thought it would be. There's a lot of bad press and a lot of horror stories about adoption. Of course a few issues have come up along the way but my social worker Mercia and TACT have always dealt with them. Harvey has settled really well into his new family.

If you're thinking of adopting just go with it and ignore all the stories you hear in the press. It does take time but at the end of the day it's all worth it.

As for us? Once we've got Harvey fully settled in we'll be coming back for a little girl. We can't wait!



We asked TACT young people and care leavers about their hopes and fears for the future

*"I would have preferred to stay in care till I'm 21, because I'm settled and love my foster family. At 21, I would have felt more capable and more responsible."*



## Introduction from the Chair of Trustees - Geoff Knox



*"I look forward to the future with confidence and optimism."*

Welcome to TACT's 2012-13 annual review. This is my first year as Chair of Trustees and I very much look forward to working with TACT's staff and my colleagues on TACT's board. I would like to thank my predecessor as Chair, Mike Edmonds, for all he has done to help TACT's growth and development over the years.

I would also like to pay tribute to TACT's departing CEO Kevin Williams. In his ten years as Chief Executive, Kevin guided TACT's development into the UK's largest charity provider of fostering and adoption services. We have also become a Sunday Times Top 100 Company, with 2013 being the fourth consecutive year TACT was named as one of the best not-for-profit companies. We wish Kevin the very best for the future.

Recent years have seen difficult times for those providing children's services. Funding cuts have placed an ever increasing strain on Local Authority finances. Voluntary Adoption Agencies in particular have struggled, with some unable to survive a downturn in income.

In the context of such uncertain times, we have closely monitored income and expenditure streams to ensure we operate as efficiently and effectively as possible and maintain appropriate financial flexibility.

Our quality services mean that we are consistently placed on the highest local authority contracting tiers.

Because of this we were able to increase our foster placements during the year by 11.5% to 632, also achieving a modest bottom-line surplus.

We are able to prosper in such times due to the professionalism and hard work of our staff and foster carers. TACT's commitment to improving the lives of the most vulnerable children is recognised and appreciated by those who use our services. It is also evidenced by the quality standards we consistently achieve, and the successes of the children we look after.

TACT is a campaigning charity as well as a service provider. Over the last year we have worked with politicians, policy makers and colleagues in the sector to argue for improvement to the care system. It is a measure of TACT's growing influence that we were the only fostering and adoption charity invited to give oral evidence to the Committee of MPs considering the current Children and Families Bill.

My colleagues on TACT's board and I look forward to the future with confidence and optimism. It is clear that these turbulent times are far from over.

However, the commitment and professionalism of TACT staff and carers will ensure that we will continue to succeed in improving the lives of our most vulnerable children.

## Foreword by TACT's Patron - Lorraine Pascale



*"Giving children these sorts of fun experiences is a vital part of their development and why fundraising is so important to helping TACT's work."*

It is nearly a year since TACT invited me to become its Patron. I was happy to accept as I had seen their commitment to doing their best for the children they care for. Having been both fostered and adopted myself, I know how important it is for a child to find a loving family who can nurture them and give them the confidence to succeed.

Over the last year, much attention has been given to reforming the adoption system. This is welcome, and we do need to help more children find new families.

However, other types of care are equally valuable and should not be overlooked. Because of this I would particularly like to

thank TACT's foster carers for welcoming some of our most vulnerable children into their homes and families.

In 2012 I helped TACT fundraise by running the Nike 10k for them. The money raised goes towards putting on children's activities, events and days out. Giving children these sorts of fun experiences is a vital part of their development and why fundraising is so important to helping TACT's work.

Thank you to everyone who has supported TACT over the last year.

Best wishes,

*Lorraine Pascale*



Overview of TACT services over the last year - David Bradley, Executive Director of Children's Services



*“The organisation is driven by a strong set of values and a real commitment to continuous improvement.”*

TACT has a clear set of value statements that underpin organisational activity and determine how we aspire to deliver services to looked after children through our staff, foster carers and adoptive parents.

As part of this process we have continued to obtain external validation, both from outside agencies as well as ensuring we gain the views of our staff, foster carers and adopters, children and local authority partners. Highlights for 2012 and 2013 include;

- ★ Maintaining our position in the Sunday Times Best 100 Third Sector Top Companies to work for in 2013, now for the 4th consecutive year. As this outcome is entirely related to the views of staff who work for TACT, this shows how working for the organisation is valued by our employees which can only benefit the children and young people we care for. We improved our ranking from 81 in 2012 to 68 in 2013.
- ★ Continued accreditation for the Customer Service Excellence Standard, for the fifth consecutive year. We are now one of the few organisations who are fully compliant with every part of the award. ‘The assessor found that there is clear and compelling evidence that TACT actively uses the Standard as a tool for continuous improvement. Following this assessment 4 elements are rated as compliance plus and 53 are fully compliant’ [May 2013].

- ★ Achieving the Silver Investors in People Award, a step up from the previous Bronze award we had achieved. Comments from the executive summary of the report included; ‘TACT has experienced growth and change since my visit in 2009. What has not changed is the determination of its people to do their very best for children and young people in care’... ‘The organisation is driven by a strong set of values and a real commitment to continuous improvement.’
- ★ Keeping our good or outstanding fostering ranking with the regulatory authorities. During 2012 in England, the two offices inspected achieved a good overall inspection and in Scotland we achieved a score of 5 out of 6 in all four inspected areas, an excellent result. Similar positive feedback was presented about our Wales fostering provision.
- ★ In our social work operations across England, Scotland and Wales we have continued to grow, with an overall increase in our foster carer numbers of 10.8% during 2012/13. In the same period the number of children we looked after also went up by 8.2%. This has been attributable to the work of our experienced, committed and stable workforce, both staff and foster carers, and excellent results in a range of tendering and commissioning opportunities.

- ★ We have continued with our use of LILAC [Leading Improvements for Looked After Children] with the South London office being inspected in 2012. LILAC assessment is carried out by those who have been in care themselves so a positive assessment is very pleasing.
- ★ We have continued to invest in training and development and during 2012/13 have completed an ambitious all staff training programme in Fostering Changes to ensure that best practice is embedded within the organisation. A quote from one of the trainers probably best summarises how we want TACT to be; ‘We have been reminded every single time we have run the facilitators’ course of the quality of the people who work for TACT. They are by far the most friendly and cohesive groups we have trained and this is probably somewhat due to the nurturing nature of the organisation TACT who clearly value their staff and treat them well.

These are challenging times for public services but with the dedication of TACT staff, carers and adopters I’m confident that TACT will continue to provide the very best for those children placed in our care, while ensuring that we are well placed to prosper.

What local authorities say about TACT carers

*“I have observed Alison being very warm and loving towards Adam. Adam responds well to this and is settled in his placement. A very positive placement.”*

*“Mr and Mrs Clark have demonstrated their commitment to Paul’s long term care and this has enabled him to enjoy a stable and secure placement, where he feels safe and valued. Paul is very happy living with Mr and Mrs Clark and does not consider himself as being looked after.”*

*“Alan and Jane provide Kiran with a safe and loving environment. They always have her best interests at the centre of all decision making.”*

*“Nicky has worked very well with the department, services and family in order to meet Matthew’s needs which has helped stabilise the placement for this length of time.”*

\*Children’s names have been changed

## An Area Manager's perspective - Bev Pickering, TACT West Midlands



*“Alongside the growth and progress of our existing services, the recruitment of new foster carers continues.”*

“Without continual growth and progress, words such as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning.”

Mr Franklin must have been talking about TACT!

We constantly strive for improvements, achievements and success for children and young people in TACT care. The last 12 months have seen us continuing to do so in an ever changing world of fostering where developments have been rapid. Along with my peer Area Managers across TACT, it has been a year of consolidation as all professionals have got to grips with the 2011 Fostering Standards, Regulations and Statutory Guidance and Care Planning regulations 2010. We have had to adapt forms and processes, reflect on practice and make changes. Despite the challenges these have brought, there has been a real sense of working together to achieve a sense of normal family life for a child and this has been supported by the Foster Carers Charter.

We have seen the introduction of new Ofsted guidance for Inspections of fostering services and as the Registered Manager for the West Midlands I spent many hours digesting them. We were inspected in September 2012 and a range of staff, carers, children, commissioners and partner agencies spoke with the Inspector.

We were pleased to be able to showcase many aspects of the outstanding work that we do.

TACT has introduced ‘Fostering Changes’ – a training programme for foster carers which aims to develop the skills of carers in turn improving placement stability for the children. All social work staff have undertaken the facilitators course and our 3rd course for carers is about to start. The carers who have already attended have provided some positive feedback and their confidence is inspiring.

Alongside the growth and progress of our existing services, the recruitment of new foster carers continues. We are busy with initial visits, skills to foster groups and assessments and are hopeful of being able to assist more children as our carer base grows.

As an Area Manager, I believe I sit at the point where all the competing demands meet from children, foster carers, Local Authorities and TACT staff and senior management. It's a balancing and prioritising act and I thoroughly enjoy the challenging and rewarding role.

For every time I put my head in my hands and think “Stop the merry-go-round I want to get off,” there is a success story from a carer or child that makes it all worthwhile.

## Life as a Social Worker at TACT - Tania Stuart, TACT Scotland



*“He's developed from being a child who couldn't face the school environment to a settled and content young person with the support around him to achieve his potential.”*

I qualified as a social worker in 1998 having studied and trained at Queens University in Belfast. I'd wanted to become one since I was 16, and I became increasingly politically aware of the inequalities in society, and how some people don't have the same life chances as I had. Before joining TACT I spent 10 years working mainly in Northern Ireland in the area of family and children's social work which included residential child care, family and children's practice team, working with young people at risk in the community and 4 years in inter-country adoption. In 2008 I saw an advert for TACT for their new office opening in Scotland and, feeling like a new challenge, applied for the post. I was the first social worker to join the team.

As a social worker no day is ever the same. It's always very interesting and challenging being part of a growing team with new members and carers joining all the time. There's great team camaraderie, you're allowed to use your initiative and given the support to do so. You feel listened to. For professional development there are always good opportunities for training. For example, I've recently completed the BAAF post graduate certificate course in permanence called ‘Securing Children's Futures’.

My line manager put me forward for the course as he felt that specialised training in this area would meet not only my professional development needs but also be of benefit to the wider development of permanence work which is currently happening within the team.

I feel it would have been difficult to get those sorts of opportunities elsewhere.

It's helping people that make this job so rewarding. For example, one of our first families to be approved took on a child who has now been there for four years. They've taken out a Permanence Order and she has changed her name to their family name, which shows her developed sense of security, identity and belonging. It's been a fantastic success story. To me it shows how the work that we do can change lives.

Another young person, the first child placed at TACT Scotland, has also been with us for four years. When he started with us he simply couldn't cope at school. Now he's in a long term placement and has won awards in maths and is on course to do really well in his exams sitting 8 standard grades (GCSE equivalent) next year. He's developed from being a child who couldn't face the school environment, to a settled and content young person with the support around him to achieve his potential and who now says he wants to go to university.

To anyone thinking of becoming a carer it will be the most challenging thing you do in your life but also the most rewarding. If you foster with TACT, you will be very well supported. Our foster carers always tell that TACT's value base is child and carer focussed so we feel we're doing something right.



TACT in partnership - Andy Pallas,  
Partnership and Contracts Manager



*“We have achieved preferred provider top tier status demonstrating the combination of quality and value for money TACT offer.”*

TACT is committed to developing partnerships with an increasing number of local authorities using our successes in local authority fostering tenders as a platform for this growth. We have partnerships with more than 90 local authorities across England, Wales and Scotland.

In the past year, we had an exceptionally busy time successfully tendering against fierce competition for a number of fostering contracts. We have achieved preferred provider top tier status demonstrating the combination of quality and value for money TACT offer placing authorities with Birmingham, Croydon, The All Wales Framework, The South West – Northern Region Sub Group (Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon & Wiltshire), The Southern Region Sub Group: Bracknell, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Reading, Portsmouth, Slough, Southampton, Surrey, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham, The White Rose Group

(Bradford, Calderdale, Doncaster Kirklees, Leeds & Wakefield) and a place on The Scotland Excel, Falkirk and Glasgow frameworks.

We continue to develop and expand services provided through preferred/ select provider arrangements for: the 19 local authorities of The North West Foster Care Framework Contract, all the authorities in the West Midlands, East Midlands and Eastern Region, together with Haringey, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, South West, South East, East and North East London as well as Edinburgh and Fife in Scotland.

We have extended our parent and child services together with ‘Staying Put’ provision with over 20 children benefiting from that service which is now rolled out over England & Wales.

Through collaborative working relationships we are seeking to develop residential to fostering services in conjunction with a small number of residential providers.



Erica Peltier, TACT Adoption Manager, trekked the Sahara to raise money for post adoption support



## TACT External Affairs department update - Gareth Crossman, Executive Director of External Affairs



*“TACT was invited to give oral evidence to the Committee of MPs looking at the Children and Families Bill.”*

TACT is not only an expert provider of fostering and adoption services. We are also a campaigning charity concerned with all children in the care system. We use our expertise as service providers to lobby politicians and policy makers across the UK to improve the care system.

In February 2013 the children and Families Bill was published. It applies to England and Wales and is intended to be the biggest reform of the adoption system in ten years. TACT was concerned that excessive focus on adoption missed an opportunity to look at reform of the care system as a whole.

We have written parliamentary briefings on the Bill and were invited to give oral evidence to the Committee of MPs looking at it in detail. Following this all the amendments we proposed were tabled by MPs for consideration. As the Bill progresses to the House of Lords we will continue to argue for the changes we are proposing. TACT's detailed briefings are available on our website.

In response to the Government's focus on adoption, TACT joined with seven other charities across the sector to produce 'The Care Inquiry'. The Inquiry looked at all aspects of the care system and proposed wide scale reform of policy, law and practice. It was launched at a Parliamentary event in March 2013.

TACT held fringe events at the annual Labour and Conservative party conferences in September 2012.

The events focussed on the human rights of children in care. As well as the Children's Minister Edward Timpson MP and Shadow Children's Minister Lisa Nandy MP there were a variety of political and other speakers.

In October 2012 as part of Care Leavers Week, TACT held an event in Westminster. 'Visions of the Future' was put together by TACT's own care leavers and young people. It used a range of multi-media formats to set out their hopes and fears for the future.

TACT is one of six charities who have launched the 'Still our Children' campaign to coincide with the Children and Families Bill. This campaign argues for children in care to be allowed to stay with foster carers until age 21 and to extend support from local authorities for all care leavers until age 25. While our lobbying and campaigning work focuses predominantly on the Westminster parliament, we also respond to proposals by Scottish and Welsh governments.

For example, in 2012 we responded to the Welsh Government's "When I am Ready" scheme consultation looking at extending foster care entitlement to 21. We also wrote a response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Children and Young People Bill.

TACT fundraises to support young people's activities and fund additional staff posts. We have had a number of fundraising initiatives over the last year.

Eight runners took part in the London Marathon and people also ran in aid of TACT in events across the UK.

TACT's patron Lorraine Pascale also ran the 2012 Nike 10k in London to raise funds.

In February 2013, four staff members from Questmark, one of TACT's suppliers, climbed Kilimanjaro in support of TACT.

In 2012 we were also successful in a bid to Children in Need to fund a play therapist post supporting our adoption and fostering teams in London.

Looking forward, we shall be working on the Children and Families Bill as it finishes its passage through parliament. We'll support the Government's push to increase adoption while continuing to champion other aspects of the care system. As public sector cuts continue to bite and children's services come under increasing pressure, TACT will continue to be a champion for all those who come into care.

## What local authorities say about TACT Carers

*“Sue and Colin are outstanding carers who have provided Scott with an excellent standard of care and have worked well with children services.”*

*“Eric and Mandy are a warm, nurturing couple whose approach is evident in Chris' behaviour. He settles and responds to emotional warmth having an increasing sense of stranger danger. Eric and Mandy are proactive in terms of Chris' education.”*

*“Pat is a fantastic carer who has given Rachel the stability and care that she needs to have the best chance in life. I have watched Rachel grow and develop since being with Pat and her calm, consistent and caring attitude has shown Rachel that people do care about her, which has in turn enabled her to start caring about and respecting herself.”*

*“Mark and Fiona provide exceptional care for Reuben which is evidenced by the great development he has made.”*

\*Children's names have been changed





A major fundraising campaign by TACT Cymru resulted in a trip to Disneyland Paris for TACT children and young people

## Learning and Development - Martin Clarke, Learning and Development Manager



*“The response from carers has been very encouraging with many positive comments.”*

In 2012 TACT very ambitiously launched a programme to train every social worker in a behaviour management approach called “Fostering Changes”. This is a programme put together by the Maudesley Hospital and Kings College, London. It is rooted in several theories, such as Social Learning theory and Attachment theory, as well as in evidence-based practise, using techniques and strategies that have been proven to work.

We commissioned the “Fostering Changes Training Centre” to train about 100 staff, through six courses (each training course is five days in length) in order for them to then be able to facilitate sessions for foster carers back in their own offices. Carers will then attend a 12 week course learning the techniques.

Our hope is that this training will ultimately benefit the children who come into our care through having more stable placements, by virtue of having more confident and skilled carers, as well as a whole staff group who give consistent advice.

It is too early yet for results to be known but the response from carers who have attended the groups has been very encouraging with many positive comments about the course content and suggestions that this training was exactly what was needed.

Such an ambitious programme has meant fewer other activities but we have increased substantially the access to, and availability of e-learning across TACT for both staff and carers. Some of this meets our “compliance” requirements but there are also opportunities for staff, carers, and indeed the young people in our care, to access lots of other learning that will hopefully aid their personal development and, in the case of the young people, help them boost their CV's when entering the job market.

We have also developed our own e-learning programme and hopefully will be doing more of this in the future. This is being done utilising the skills of Jack Moore, who joined TACT last year on a one year apprenticeship within L&D. This is TACT's first formal apprenticeship, and one that has proved to be very beneficial to both parties.

In 2013/2014 the main emphasis within L&D will be focussing on “resources, not courses”, such as e-resources. We believe this is a more sensible and cost effective way of ensuring that staff and carers remain highly skilled and well performing in the difficult tasks they have to undertake.





*“TACT was successful in 2012 in gaining the Investors in People Silver recognition.”*

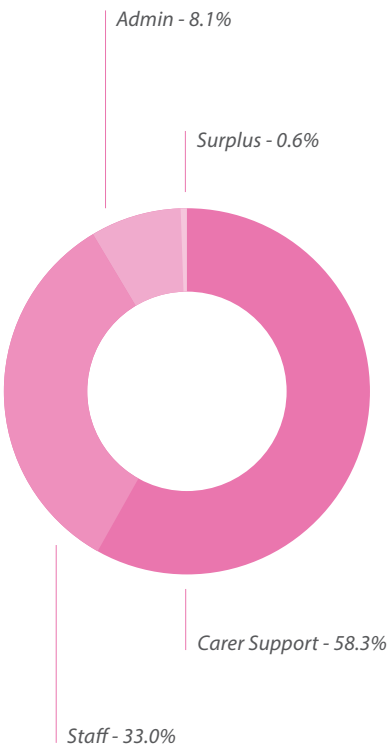
Every good organisation relies on its staff to operate well. We rely on our staff to ensure that we are doing the best for our carers, adopters and the young people we look after. Because of this we were delighted that TACT has successfully, for the fourth year running, made it into the Times 100 Best Not For Profit Organisations to work for. We also maintained the Best Companies 1 star accreditation.

In addition, TACT was successful in 2012 in gaining the Investors in People Silver recognition.

In the last 12 months we have formed a Staff Representative Group. The Group's primary purpose is to receive and consider organisational information from TACT's management.

The Group actively participates in consultation on matters such as Policy Changes, Employees' Terms and Conditions, Remuneration and Working Conditions, Employee related Legislative Changes, Staff Wellbeing, Business Planning, Budgets and Strategic Developments. They are also consulted on decisions that are likely to lead to substantial changes in work organisation or contractual relations.

We have also successfully introduced a new HR self service software package (CIPHR Net) for all staff and managers. This software helps to ensure effective internal communications in order to support our services.



As a consequence of these tenders TACT is now in first place on the first tier in the All Wales and Edinburgh tenders respectively, and Tier 1 in the South West Sub-Group Tender (Northern Region). This is in addition to preferred provider positions attained from a range of other local authorities.

Inevitably these tender wins, as creditable as they are, have been at the sacrifice of higher surpluses rather than turnover. Indeed, overall turnover rose by £1.1m to £20.8m but the surplus fell to £0.14m (2011/12: £0.38m), as price compression took effect. Nevertheless, TACT recruited and approved over 10% more carers and increased the number of children (we looked after) by 12%. However, with over 20,000 referrals and over 1,100 placement moves in the last year, TACT's social and administrative workers were extremely busy.

Every year, significant investment is poured into the recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers in England, Wales and Scotland. Additionally, we continue to adjust foster care allowances upwards to ensure that they exceed the Fostering Network and English/Welsh governments minimum recommended allowances, although we wish we could do more. Already 58p in every £1 of revenue is incurred in foster care allowances, assessments, training, and related expenditure.

One major positive financial action in the last year is the repayment of long-term loans by £0.4m. The borrowing funded growth and the £3.3m of office property

(over the last 10 years) and the loan balances now stands at £2.1m. Consequently, gearing (measure of financial risk) dropped to 49%, from 84% two years ago. This debt will be further restructured to reduce interest costs.

To augment cash balances, debt collection from Local Authorities (LAs) have been pursued assiduously. However, the increasing practice by LAs to create purchase orders for each placement is an administrative barrier inhibiting the debt collection process particularly at year ends. Accordingly, cash collection slowed somewhat but still resulted in positive cash balances relative to short term liabilities (a ratio of 1.23:1). This leaves TACT in a good position to discharge its immediate liabilities.

Reserves for the last year increased to £4.3m (2011/12: £4.2m) in spite of the economic uncertainty and local authority price squeeze. These structures are unlikely to ease anytime soon. Yet TACT has to ensure the continuing efficiency of its operations so that its superlative services to children and carers can be further enhanced. The Trustees are determined to deliver this overriding objective.

Overall TACT is weathering a difficult financial climate steadily and effectively. We are some way from the end of austerity, but in excellent shape to ensure we remain stable and continue to offer excellent services to help young people.



Thank You to all those who have supported TACT over the last year

A Banyte	Laura Grant	Lorraine Pascale	Gareth Wilby
K Bains	Kate and Dan Green	Jamie Pearce	Y Wilson
Becky Bestwick	Angie Hanson	Mark Peel	Ged & Yvonne Woodham
James Boswell	Andrew Harris	Erica Peltier	A Woodward
David Bradley	J Heatley	Karis Rae	Adoption Summer Party
Colin Clecksfield	James Honeyman	Liz Reynolds	Padken Steel Erector Ltd
Alex Condliffe	Carly Humbly	Graeme Robertson	JP Morgan
Andy Cooper	Ronnie King	Jon Scott	Bar Ten Croydon
Helen Cruse	Joe Labuschagne	Richard Sills	The Jack Petchey Foundation
Alison Cruse Morrell	Victoria Linton	Gemma Sills	The Persula Foundation
Ged Doherty	Joao Luis Moraes	Stephen Smith	The Laura Ashley Family Foundation
Justin Edwards	J Marinetti	Natalie Szczytkowski	BBC Children in Need
Sam Edwards	Denise McCoid	Berwin Leighton Paisner	The Kindness Offensive
Sofie Feeney	Sam McMaster	LLP	
Roy Fisher	Brian McMaster	Lowri Turner	
Laura Gaga	J Offenbach	Debbie Watson	

TACT’s Board of Trustees

Geoff Knox (Chair)	Debra Jones
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Richard Grove	Philip Woodman

“Wish we could have started with TACT 22 years ago. It’s so nice to see staff so focused on best outcome for the children. Thank You!”

TACT Foster Carers

Flying the flag to cheer on the Team TACT London Marathon runners



*"The survival weekend was a great experience, even with no sleep! Burnt potatoes, telling ghost stories. I made lots of new friends and would do it again next time."*

TACT Young Person

#### TACT Head Office

The Courtyard  
303 Hither Green Lane  
Hither Green  
London, SE13 6TJ

#### Contact

T: 020 8695 8142  
F: 020 8695 8141  
E: [enquiries@tactcare.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@tactcare.org.uk)  
[www.tactcare.org.uk](http://www.tactcare.org.uk)

