

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
20 MARCH 2019	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Executive Director People and Communities Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Sam Smith, Cabinet Member for Children's Services.	
Contact Officer(s):	Andy Pallas, Executive Director of Children's Services, TACT Peterborough Sue King, Head of Service, TACT Peterborough	Tel. 01733 317448

PERMANENCY PLACEMENTS REPORT

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: Executive Director People and Communities Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Notes the contents of the report which provides an update of the partnership between Peterborough City Council and TACT including information in respect of the fostering and adoption agencies' work and the innovation programme. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted annually to Corporate Parenting Committee and members have also requested an update on innovation.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 To provide an update to the Corporate Parenting Committee in respect of the role of TACT and the outcomes for children in care.
- 2.2 This report is for Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No.
 - 2.4.4.2 To receive statutory reports in relation to the adoption, fostering, commissioning, looked after children services and children's homes with a view to recommending any changes.
 - 2.4.4.6 To monitor the quality of care delivered by the City Council and review the performance of outcomes for children and young people in care.
- 2.3 This links into the Children in Care Pledge under:

Respect - We will respect you as individuals, with differing wants, needs and beliefs and tailor the service you get to fit you.

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 **Introduction**

TACT Peterborough is an innovative partnership between Peterborough City Council (PCC) and TACT to deliver permanency services to children and families which came into being on 1 April 2017.

4.2 **Staffing structure and updates**

The management of the service is carried out by TACT Executive Director Children's Services, the Head of Service and 5 managers.

Four social work teams are led by consultant social workers who have thematic leads on adoption, family group conferencing, fostering and recruitment. The admin manager oversees the general and panel admin posts' work. All managers were part of the original Peterborough City Council (PCC) service.

There are 36.9 full time equivalent posts in the service including 2 apprentices. Staffing levels within the service have remained stable throughout the last year with turnover running at a low 5%. There are no agency staff currently within the service.

4.3 **Contract changes/variations**

On December 2018 the four members of the Access to Resources Team (ART) and one finance member of staff were TUPE'd back into PCC as the resources funding those posts and the external placements budget was returned to PCC. This was a necessary change agreed between PCC and TACT benefiting both parties.

TACT submitted its response to the PCC and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) tender. The outcomes to this process should be known by April 2019. If successful CCC Adoption and Special Guardianship support services will be added to the PCC Adoption and Special Guardianship Support services under the RAA contract and Fostering will remain under the Permanency service contract.

4.4 **Staff wellbeing & development**

The service holds bi-annual all service meetings and a Christmas meal for staff.

A bi-monthly newsletter 'Touch base' updates staff about any business and staff changes.

Team wellbeing events have been held including Bollywood dancing, lunches and Escape rooms.

A member of staff will become a mental health first aider following training in March 2019.

TACT celebrated its 25th anniversary during 2018 with a special event involving carers and staff in Birmingham.

There are 5 members of staff who are practice educators. In the last year 3 student social workers have completed 70 and 100 day placements. Four students have recently started placements.

4.5 **All members of staff complete mandatory annual safeguarding training. This is face to face for social work staff and online for admin staff.**

Fostering

The service continues to improve in quality, as evidenced in July 2018 PCC Ofsted inspection. *“Foster carer recruitment, training and approval are effective. Assessments of foster carers are of good quality. The fostering panel addresses issues within assessments thoroughly, and carers’ reviews consider the views of children in placement.”*

Twelve carer households have been added to the service since April 2018 with another 3 coming through before April 2019. Most of these have been recruited for the services’ main area of need: older teenagers and sibling groups. Two Independent Fostering Agency carer households have transferred to the Permanency service.

The service currently has 92 Mainstream households caring for 150 children. There are 4 link/short break and two supported lodgings households with a focus on increasing numbers in these areas.

“Children are matched appropriately to carers, and children receive high quality, stable care. For the small number of children who have had several placements, this has been appropriate and well managed. Disabled children achieve permanence and stability in placements that meet their long-term needs”

“Children in care benefit from very effective multi-agency working to meet their needs. Many carers benefit from input from a ‘looked after children’ psychologist. These carers include families of children returning home from care”.

Support for carers is well developed with regular support groups continuing to be provided separately for carers of teenage and younger children with guest speakers attending. Subject matters recently have been counselling approaches, the ART service and Safeguarding.

4.6 Innovations

TACT was successful in securing an innovation fund grant of £1.2 million for a 3-year period for innovative practice. Below is a summary of the innovations. The programme is being evaluated by Natcen to determine the impact on such factors as placement stability and reduced numbers of children in care. This will be available following the 3 years.

Strength based profiles - a children’s profile template was produced following a short life work group which is used for all children needing a placement.

Mediation for contact - for kinship carers and birth parents to support them with conflict resolution in relation to the contact arrangements.

Attachment Aware City - TACT supported the virtual school to introduce a programme of attachment awareness in schools. This will be extended to include carers in the next phase.

Family Group Conference - a consultation with the Family Rights Group supported the service redevelopment and expansion, to meet the needs of families and children in Peterborough building on the expertise in the area.

VIPP (video interactive parenting programme) - staff have been trained by the Tavistock to deliver this NICE recognised therapeutic parenting intervention.

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) training - staff and carers have been trained to understand how to de escalate conflict and challenging situations with young people.

Trauma Informed Practice Conference - Professor David Shemmings spoke to TACT staff, carers and partners about current research.

Mindfulness groups - carers have attended 8-week sessions to learn how to manage stress in their lives to support carer wellbeing.

Parallel Parenting - 4 foster carers and 2 staff have been trained in this evidence-based model, where they work alongside birth parents to return children home.

Carer retention schemes:

Foster carer Buddy scheme - All new carers are attached to a carer buddy prior to approval. There are 8 'buddies' who can offer the service.

Allegation support - a foster carer has been trained to support others who are facing allegations.

4.7 **Engagement**

The Foster Carer Committee continues to be well attended and the Committee takes responsibility for organising activities and events. Recent guests have included Myra O'Farrell, Head of Corporate Parenting and Sara Thompson, Manager of Transport with whom positive discussions have taken place as the group is keen to be involved in developing the service offer in partnership with PCC.

The Committee runs its own social events supported by TACT enabling children both looked after and those of the carers to meet up and have fun. Also carers develop friendships and support networks. During the half term holidays activities are organised at Bounce and in the longer holidays Wicksteed Park. The July 2018 Summer BBQ saw an attendance of 150 and the Christmas Party nearly 200. 150 tickets were secured using local charitable funding for the Pantomime at the Cresset. Special Guardians and their children have been included in these events.

Perk box has been introduced to all TACT carers including those in Peterborough. This arrangement has been extended from the staff well-being strategy to a TACT wide one with those signed up receiving regular emails with perks, discounts and freebies from big name brands.

The second annual Carers Dinner and Dance with a live band took place in February 2019 with increased numbers and was enjoyed by all.

The first TACT foster carer survey took place during the summer of 2018 providing positive feedback on our carers' perspective of the progress and development of the service since April 2017. Satisfaction levels of over 90% were recorded in respect of the way the service treated them and their families and the focus on the children and young people they fostered and in how they were communicated with. Carers particularly liked the regular newsletter, the newly revised Foster Carer handbook and the 24/7 Out of Hours support service.

91% stated they would recommend TACT Peterborough to others interested in fostering. 98% scored the quality of training at 7/10 and over and the current training programme as meeting their needs.

4.8 **Adoption**

The highlights have been as follows:

The Ofsted inspection of PCC confirmed the strength in adoption services by TACT and praised the joint work to achieve early permanency for the majority of children with adoption plans.

“Good-quality practice and outcomes for children in achieving adoption has been sustained since the last inspection. A wide range of children achieve permanency through adoption, including older children, children with complex needs and groups of brothers and sisters. The timeliness of adoption for the 23 children adopted in the last 12 months has improved. Fostering for adoption (FFA) is a strength in Peterborough local authority, underpinned by robust arrangements for planning for unborn children. Post adoption support and support to special guardians are effective, and there is good use of the adoption support fund to support trauma-informed practice with children and families”.

FFA is the placement choice for most children with a plan of adoption with 12 of the 19 children being adopted since April 2018 having a period of living with their family under FFA arrangements.

The number of adopters approved for FFA has continued to increase from 66% last year to 83% in this period.

A high number of enquiries (approximately 15%) go on to become adopters.

There were no disruptions in adoptive placements of Peterborough children in this period, continuing the trend for placement stability.

4.9 **Special Guardianship**

Thirty one orders have been made since April 2018 which will exceed those of last year (21) .

The service has also worked alongside PCC staff in undertaking approaching 100 viability assessments.

4.10 **Family Group Conference**

Currently we have 3 experienced full time FGC coordinators, consisting of one permanent and two sessional FGC workers.

37 conferences have been held since April 2018 involving over 50 children. A prioritisation system is in place which ensures that the families in the most need receive the service.

4.11 **Participation**

TACT's assistant Children's Resource worker, a young person previously looked after by PCC, continues to be involved in direct work with young people aged between 6 and 11 years to help improve their social skills. She is working with PCC children's participation officer on a project 'Passport to Independence' and links in with other TACT Children's Participation Workers. She was also a panel member at the TACT 25th Anniversary.

TACT funded the recent PCC Children's Awards 2019.

TACT is expecting that the fostering part of the Permanency service will be inspected by Ofsted at some point before July 2019. The action plan has been completed and the service is currently focusing on evidencing a robust attention to audit.

5. **CONSULTATION**

5.1 N/A

6. **ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT**

6.1 N/A

7. **REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

7.1 Corporate Parenting Committee members to be informed of outcomes for children in care.

8. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

8.1 N/A

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 All financial arrangements are subject to the scrutiny of the Joint Governance Board chaired by the Service Director - Children and Safeguarding[PCC and CCC].

Legal Implications

- 9.2 This is a factual report for noting by the Committee, so no legal implications on this basis.

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 N/A

Other implications

- 9.4 This report provides Corporate Parenting Committee with an oversight of the role TACT play with providing children in care and care leavers with accommodation and support,

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 None