

# PACT Adoption and Fostering

Winter 2011

# Newsletter



## Welcome

2011, our Centenary year, has been exciting for PACT and for many of you at all stages of adoption and fostering. We have been busier than ever recruiting adopters and foster carers and placing children.

Adoption generally has had much media attention this year and we were pleased to feature in many headline articles, not least because of BBC documentaries, *A Home for Maisie* and *Saira's Story*.

Our services were praised in Adoption Tsar, Martin Narey's Report, **"PACT's preparation of adoptive parents pre adoption and support afterwards is impressively comprehensive."**

In April we published research by PACT, Baker Tilly and Cass Business School into the Social Return on Investment. This clearly demonstrated the benefits to society as a whole of adoption by families like yourselves and the positive effect on the lives of vulnerable children.

PACT's adoption services have been rated "good

with outstanding elements" by Ofsted which also highlighted some of the excellent work being undertaken by the teams.

We have listed the adoption orders which have been granted since our last newsletter in April. In addition, over 60 applicants have attended preparation groups, and over 30 children have been placed adopters.

Awareness of PACT's services in London is growing thanks to the hard work and dedication of the former Childlink Adoption Society team members, who make up our London team, and our new Assistant Director for Adoption and Fostering, Jean Smith.

PACT's services are in high demand this year and we ran six preparation groups, and testimony to our professionalism and effectiveness as an agency is news that a number of parents are returning to PACT to adopt for a second time.

2012 is set to follow our trend for growth as we plan to recruit over 100



PACT Adoption and Fostering Director,  
**Satwinder Sandhu**

people to our preparation groups and expand PACT's fostering service. Our FACTS service has also gone from strength to strength this year and continues to expand and deliver support services to more families than ever.

Congratulations to everyone who has moved forward in their adoption and fostering journey. I love hearing about your stories, if you would like to share your experiences please get in touch. Don't forget to tell your friends and family about PACT and encourage them to get involved in any way they can.

Wishing everyone a peaceful and restful time over the Christmas and festive season and a wonderful start to 2012.

Best wishes

## Adoption Orders

The following adoption orders have been granted to our families since the last newsletter.

- Mr & Mrs A, son 3 and daughter 2, Apr 11
- Mr & Ms JW, daughter, 3, Apr 11
- Mr & Mrs LS, daughter 1, Apr 11
- Miss R daughter, 3, Apr 11
- Mr & Ms WG, daughter 6 and daughter 4, May 11
- Mr & Mrs K son, 2, June 11
- Mr & Mrs B son, 1, Aug 11
- Mr & Mrs B, son 4 and daughter 3, Sept 11
- Miss KO, son, 4, Sept 11
- Mr & Mrs L, daughter, 1 Sept 11
- Mr & Mrs S daughter 2, Sept 11
- Mr & Mrs G, son 2, Oct 11
- Mr & Mrs M, a son 4, daughter 3, Oct 11
- Mr & Mrs T, son 2, Nov 11
- Mr & Mrs T, son 4, son 5, daughter, 8, Nov 11
- Mr & Mrs W daughter, 5, Nov 11
- Mr & Mrs G, daughter, 9, son, 4, Dec 11
- Mr & Mrs T, son 11, Dec 11

Many congratulations to all the new families.

# PACT team members

Your PACT social worker is part of a growing adoption and fostering team, with 20 permanent staff and a bank of contract social workers. PACT is based in Reading and Pimlico.

PACT staff now cover a wide geographical area which means we can support prospective adopters and foster carers and existing PACT families in and around London and across the South of England from Bristol to Cambridge and Bicester to Southampton.

Here we are highlighting two team members, firstly, **Hannah Jennings, Duty worker.** All applicants speak to **Hannah** at some point, as she co-ordinates the matching of children with prospective adopters and foster carers. Hannah's day to day job is very busy as she actively searches for children based on meeting approved adopters after panel and with help from their social



This year, Hannah has had an overview of more than 40 placements. She comments, "I get really nervous on behalf of the parents, when they've been visited for a match, and we are waiting to hear from the social workers whether the match can go through, but its worth it when they get the green light and I can phone them to deliver the good news. Just recently I was able to let a childless couple know that their New Year will begin with a baby girl."

workers. Hannah attends Exchange Days where local authorities bring details of the children they are family finding for.



**Jean Smith, Assistant Director for Adoption and Fostering**

**Jean** joined PACT from Action for Children where she started the Black Families projects to increase the numbers of black and minority ethnic people coming forward to adopt or foster.

Jean is championing PACT's drive to attract more BME carers. She says, "Running specialist BME workshops and targeting our marketing is in line with our commitment to help those children in care waiting longest to be placed."

## PACT in London



PACT now has a team of nine permanent staff supporting adopters in London. To celebrate the first year of PACT's services in London, 100 balloons were released in Myatt's Field Park in Lambeth in September. The furthest balloon travelled to the Netherlands, and the top prize, an I-Phone 4. was won by PACT adopter Colleen Leo-Kelly Second prize went to PACT support, Hannah Gill. The balloon race raised over £400 for PACT's centenary fund.

The London team are currently supporting over 40 adopters and prospective adopters from their base in the Pimlico office.

## Adoption support workshops for 2012

PACT adopters and foster carers are invited to workshops after placement to learn about new parenting techniques and to share concerns and successes.

2012 workshops will include:

- Parenting classes
- Talking to children about adoption & Life story work, run with play therapist Mary Corrigan
- Educational transition – coping with secondary transfers and new schools
- Families and friends of adopters
- Understanding developmental delay

For details of these workshops or to suggest topics for future programmes contact, [clare.ewer@pactcharity.org](mailto:clare.ewer@pactcharity.org), Senior Adoption Support Practitioner.

PACT will continue to run a **Fathers Group in 2012**. To join or find out more contact [simon.furlong@pactcharity.org](mailto:simon.furlong@pactcharity.org).



PACT has been awarded a **Children in Need Grant** to fund a part-time play therapist for the next three years. Our Play Therapist runs a session at Preparation Classes, one off workshops for parents and one-to-one play therapy with families.

# Fostering service boost

## Fostering Service Update

PACT Adoption and Fostering Director,  
**Satwinder Sandhu**



In the last few months we have taken time to plan the next steps to grow our fostering service. We have recognised that the small, but highly valued service, needed more infrastructure and recognition at PACT.

I am pleased to announce that PACT's Board have agreed plans to invest in the fostering service to expand it; strengthen the support to carers and develop the range of services we offer to include short term and concurrent fostering. This will allow us to recruit parents who wish to care for children temporarily and those who wish to foster children with a view to later adopting them.

The plans and recruitment of new staff are underway and we look forward to formally launching the new service during Foster Care Fortnight in May 2012.

If you would like to find out more about fostering for PACT or know a friend who has thought about taking up fostering, perhaps because a change in their life circumstances means they now have the time and space to take in children, let us know at [fostering@pactcharity.org](mailto:fostering@pactcharity.org).

## Could you help PACT?

PACT has had a really successful Centenary Year. The Centenary has helped to raise money for a FACTS bursary to help more children and families with expert therapeutic post adoption support.

If you are pleased with the support you have received from PACT and would like to get involved to help us to spread awareness of the charity or help with our fundraising please let us know. There are many ways to support PACT, here are just a few:

### Publicise PACT among your community

Take some adoption and fostering leaflets and posters to display at your local school or place of worship, contact PACT Recruitment and Publicity Officer on 0118 938 7604 or [Francesca.fogell@pactcharity.org](mailto:Francesca.fogell@pactcharity.org).

### Share your story

If you would be willing to come along to speak at an information evening, or to be interviewed to share your experiences for publicity purposes please contact [francesca.fogell@pactcharity.org](mailto:francesca.fogell@pactcharity.org).

To become a **Friend of PACT** or give a **one off donation**

go to [www.pactcharity.org/support\\_us/friends\\_of\\_pact](http://www.pactcharity.org/support_us/friends_of_pact)

### Befriend an adopter

Many prospective adoptive parents find it helpful to have the support of another adoptive parent who knows what it is like to parent adopted children. If you are able to offer support to another family who have recently adopted please contact Simon Furlong, Practice Manager for Adoption and Fostering on 0118 921 7645 or [simon.furlong@pactcharity.org](mailto:simon.furlong@pactcharity.org)

### Follow PACT on Facebook, Twitter

Supporting PACT through social media helps us to communicate with more people.

[www.facebook.com/PACTcharity](http://www.facebook.com/PACTcharity)  
[www.twitter.com/PACTcharity](http://www.twitter.com/PACTcharity)



## PACT in the Media

Many of PACT's families and supporters watched the BBC2 documentary *Saira's Story*, featuring PACT adopter, Saira Khan.

PACT ran a survey of 300 viewers of the programme to learn more about attitudes to adoption. Findings showed that the programme was helpful in raising awareness of PACT as 44% of those who filled out the survey hadn't heard about PACT before. Other findings included:

- 27% agreed that the adoption process is complicated and confusing
- 40% agreed it was slow and takes too long
- 70% agreed that the adoption process is thorough and necessary.

After watching the programme, 45% agreed that they felt positively about adoption.

During National Adoption Week, PACT's Chief Executive Jan Fishwick appeared on BBC News 24. Jean Smith and Satwinder Sandhu were interviewed on local radio and PACT case studies and social media alerts supported the national drive to increase awareness and the positive perception around adoption.

PACT adopter Saira Khan shares her thoughts on Christmas, "This will be our first Christmas as a complete family, mummy, daddy, Zac and Amara. We cannot express in words the joy adoption has brought into our lives. We will be the happiest family this Christmas thanks to PACT. Having Amara feels like Christmas everyday."

# 2012 recruiting 100



## PACT Adoption & Fostering talks

For many of you, your adoption or fostering journey started at a PACT information evening where you heard, first hand, from someone who had been there and done it. We are offering over 100 couples and single people places on our Preparation Groups in 2012. This is part of our plan to grow our services and help more children to find their forever families.

Our information events are an informal chance for potential new adopters or foster carers to meet some of our team and to hear from people who have been through the experience. If you know anyone who is thinking about adoption or fostering please encourage them to get in touch with PACT.

## 2012 talks

- 10th January, Saint Saviours Pimlico, central London at 5pm
- 31st January, PACT Didcot Children's Centre, 7.30pm
- 20th February, Reading Novotel, at 5pm  
A talk for lesbian and gay adopters and foster carers held with New Family Social
- 6th March, RISC, London Road, Reading at 6pm
- 24th April, Central London at 5pm

For details go to [www.pactcharity.org/info](http://www.pactcharity.org/info)

## Children who need families



Many children are waiting to be adopted and PACT has always aimed to help those children in care who wait the longest, or are sometimes over looked when it comes to adoption or permanent fostering. We are working with a number of local authorities to help a few very special children to get noticed and be considered by approved and potential adopters.

Some of the children PACT is supporting include: three brothers between the ages of 4 and 7 who wish to stay together; an asian toddler with some hearing loss; a 3 year old boy who was born prematurely and may have some developmental delay and a delightful six year old girl who has impressed her teachers with her willingness to work hard and help other classmates. To find out more contact [Hannah.jennings@pactcharity.org](mailto:Hannah.jennings@pactcharity.org), tel 0118 938 7600 or visit [www.pactcharity.org/childrenwaiting](http://www.pactcharity.org/childrenwaiting)

## Out-of-Hours Phone number

A reminder that the out-of-hours phone line is available for PACT adoptive and foster families 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

If you need PACT's advice or support urgently and outside of normal office hours please call **07787 834871**.

## PACT Centenary Wall of Faces

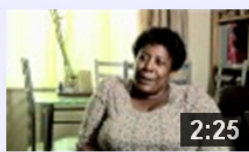
Hundreds of people interact with PACT each day and everyone has a story about what PACT means to them. To mark its centenary PACT commissioned a series of short films featuring people linked to the charity including staff, trustees, supporters and parents who have been helped by PACT's work in the community.

The films have been put together to make a Wall of Faces, a snapshot of the people PACT staff meet every day and their own experiences of PACT. We are very grateful to all those who took part in this project and we hope their stories will serve as an enduring memory of PACT in its 100th year.

You can view all the videos at [www.pactcharity.org/wall](http://www.pactcharity.org/wall)



**Sarah**  
PACT Adopter



**Debbie**  
PACT Foster carer



**Verna**  
PACT Practice  
Manager, London