Introduction

Parents And Children Together, PACT, also known as Oxford Diocesan Council for Social Work Inc, is a Company limited by guarantee, registered in England (No. 1636098) and a Registered Charity (No. 285214).

PACT is registered as a voluntary adoption agency and restricted to providing domestic adoption, therapeutic support and post adoption services within the requirements of:

- Working Together 2018
- Adoption: National Minimum Standards 2014
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Adoption and Children Act (Register Regulations 2014)
- The Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- Statutory Guidance on Adoption – update 2013
- The Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012
- The Adoption Agencies and Independent Review of Determinations (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Adoption Support Agencies (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005
- The Adoption Support Service Regulations 2005
- The Adoptions with a Foreign Element Regulations 2005
- The Adoption Information and Intermediary Services (Pre-Commencement Adoptions) Regulations 2005
- The Disclosure of Adoption Information (Post Commencement Adoptions) Regulations 2005
- The Restriction on the Preparation of Adoption reports Regulations 2005
- The Suitability of Adopters Regulations 2005
- The Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003
- The Adoption and Children Act 2002
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PACT’s Aims and Objectives

PACT’s aim is to build and strengthen families through adoption and by our community work.

The Adoption Service aims to work within the legislative framework, comply with the National Minimum Standards, regulatory requirements and best practice guidance for Adoption Services.

The main objectives of PACT’s Adoption Service are to:

- Provide a range of quality services which can promote best outcomes for children who need permanent placement.

- Recruit, prepare and support sufficient adopters from diverse backgrounds to provide permanent family care for children where their individual needs and history will be understood, valued and respected.

- Adhere to permanency planning timescales as set out in adoption legislation, in order to avoid delay and maximise each child’s opportunity to experience a stable and secure family life.

- Provide effective and efficient Adoption Panels to enable prospective adopters’ assessments to be progressed without delay.

- Provide a comprehensive support package to achieve stable and successful placements.

- Provide an efficient and responsive assessment service for children, adopters and adopted adults in respect of adoption support services in conjunction with other agencies.

- Maintain effective partnership with other adoption agencies.

- Ensure that cost effective services are provided and commissioned which maximise available resources.

- Ensure that accurate and up to date records and management information is kept in relation to adoptive parents and services and to maintain confidentiality and security of adoption records.

- Ensure service users are fully involved and consulted on service delivery and service development.

- Treat all service users with respect and without prejudice or discrimination.

- Ensure all staff are appropriately recruited, supervised and trained to fulfil PACT’s functions.
Principles and Standards of Care

- The child’s welfare and safety will be the paramount consideration and will be at the centre of PACT’s adoption process.
- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a stable and loving family, which can meet their needs through childhood and beyond.
- All children will have the same opportunities irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, disability, culture, religion, language and sexual orientation.
- Delay in the adoption process can have a significant impact on the wellbeing of children and must be kept to the minimum necessary to achieve the child’s best interests.
- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved. Children and young people who have been adopted, and their adoptive families have access to a range of services and supports to meet their assessed needs.
- Children have the right to be listened to, express their wishes and feelings and participate in decisions about their future. They will be encouraged and enabled to do this at all stages of the adoption process and in a way that is appropriate to their age and understanding.
- A sense of identity is important to a child’s well-being. To help children develop this, their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language and sexuality need to be recognised and positively valued and promoted.
- All efforts are made to minimise waiting times for children to be matched with families.
- Children’s birth parents/guardians and families and adoptive parents and families will be valued and respected.

Responsible Individual and Managers

PACT’s Chief Executive is the Responsible Individual and the Agency’s Decision Maker, making decisions following recommendations from the Adoption Panel.

The Service Director holds strategic responsibility and accountability for the service and is the “Registered Manager”. The Adoption Team Managers hold day-to-day operational responsibility for the management of the service.

There are no branches of PACT at the present time. There are domestic adoption teams working from Reading, London and Brighton, managed from the Head Office in Reading.

There are no conditions in place relating to the registration of the agency.
Monitoring Systems and Quality Assurance

PACT continually monitors and evaluates its service at every stage of the adoption process to ensure quality and effectiveness. PACT welcomes feedback from service users and has a well-advertised complaints procedure.

Feedback on service quality and effectiveness is obtained at various stages along the adopters’ journey, including after training, after the adoption panel and following the making of an adoption order.

Service users actively participate in adoption workshops and share their own experiences of the adoption process with other adopters.

In addition to service user’s feedback there is an internal auditing process that informs the agency’s ongoing service development plans.

As part of an Adoption Consortium, membership of the (local) ALB and as a member of BAAF’s Regional Voluntary Adoption Agency Group, PACT’s Adoption Service actively considers and shares good practice and policy development.

The Adoption Service is inspected on a three-yearly basis by OFSTED (the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills). In 2014 and in 2017 the PACT adoption agency was awarded an Outstanding rating by OFSTED.

Panels

PACT’s central list of Panel members receive regular training and update reports of the work of the Adoption Service including adoptive applicants awaiting placement, progress of the cases it has considered and the outcome of reviews.

The central list of Panel members will be informed of any allegations made against prospective adopters or members of their household and the outcome of the investigation into the allegation.

The Adoption Panel will provide feedback to PACT every six months on the quality of reports being presented to Panel. The Panel will produce a brief annual report (to include information such as membership, statistics, an account of activities and information on key issues of interest/concern) which will help to integrate the work of the Panel into PACT’s wider work.

Applicants and social workers are invited to complete feedback sheets after Panel. This feedback is given to Panel to inform their practice.

All disruptions are reported to Panel, and disruption meeting minutes are shared with panel members and discussed.

Panel members are appraised annually.
Staff

The Service Director is a member of the Adoption Committee, a subcommittee of the main Board. Staff may report any issues to the Service Director to be raised at the Committee.

Staff one to one supervision, appraisal and the audit process enable the monitoring and evaluation of staff performance. Objectives are set annually and reviewed regularly. Staff learning and development needs are assessed and form the basis of the Learning and Development Plan.

See Appendix One for details of adoption staff.

Recruitment, approval and training of prospective adopters

The Adoption Service recruits, prepares, assesses and trains adoptive families for children for whom adoption is the plan.

The Adoption Service is open and inclusive. It welcomes prospective adoptive parents irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, culture, religion and disability. It recognises that children need adopters from all kinds of backgrounds, both single and couples, and that the ability and willingness to meet a child’s needs is the most important factor.

Prospective adoptive parents are given training and support to help them understand the backgrounds and needs of children with plans for adoption and to see the situation from the child’s point of view.

PACT offers potential parents the opportunity to consider assessment as Foster For Adoption carers or to offer a child a permanent home through a Concurrent Placement, that is intended to move later to adoption.

Adoption Support

PACT recognises the life-long nature of adoption. The Strengthening Families Team, the Family And Children Therapeutic Support service (FACTS) and the Team of Adopter Champions work alongside the adoption teams to support and assist the creation of secure and stable families.

PACT works closely with the Consortium and with Local Authorities and Regional Adoption Agencies nationwide with the aim of finding a child/children that is the right match for the family. The Placements Team works alongside the Adoption Teams and the adopters to secure the match; support is also available from the FACTS service, as needed.

Adopters are provided with a range of information and support following approval and/or placement to assist them in the adoption task. Training, workshops, support groups, social events and individual therapy and support from members of the Strengthening Families Team or the FACTS service is available to all PACT families.

Upon the making of an Adoption Order, the social worker will undertake a final visit and complete a “closing summary”. Adopters will be advised of how to contact PACT for support in the future and how to request an assessment of need for Adoption Support Services from the relevant Local Authority (PACT will assist the Local Authority with applications to the Adoption Support Fund when appropriate). Adopters will receive regular newsletters and details about social events, ongoing training and support services. All PACT adopters are able to access The Adopter Hub (PACT’s online adoption support portal). The Adopter Hub provides information and support to adopters through webinars, eLearning, forums and one-to-one web chat to adoptive families.
Support for intercountry adopters

PACT has, in the past, recruited, prepared, approved and supported adopters who adopted a child from abroad. Whilst this is a service no longer offered by PACT, we remain committed to providing support to inter-country adopters who adopted through PACT. If the family needs help they may contact PACT and after an assessment by our Strengthening Families Team, receive services from that team, or if more intensive therapeutic support is needed, through FACTS or their Local Authority.

Compliments and Complaints

PACT wishes to improve and develop its services and welcomes feedback, verbally or in writing, at all times. PACT is particularly grateful for observations and criticisms by those who consider that our services could be improved, and acts on any constructive suggestions on how improvements might be made at any stage. Positive and constructive observations are also welcome. Feedback evaluation forms are used by all services.

If you wish to make a formal complaint about PACT’s services, or you are a child or person acting on behalf of a child, the leaflet Compliments, Concerns and Complaints explains the process. The Complaints process is also detailed in Appendix Two. If you have any queries about this process, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Adopters will also be provided with information about how to access the complaints procedures of the Local Authority responsible for the child concerned, where the concerns relate to the work of that agency.

Independent Reviewing Mechanism

The Independent Reviewing Mechanism (IRM) can consider applications from potential and approved adopters where the agency has decided not to approve them, or to terminate or change their terms of approval. Prospective adopters are given written information about the role of the IRM as part of their preparation process; they are also provided with information about the IRM when being prepared for presentation to panel.

Review of Statement of Purpose

This document has been formally approved by PACT’s Senior Management Team and Adoption Committee and will be reviewed annually and, if necessary, revised.
Children’s Guide

All children and young people are given a guide to PACT’s adoption support services. The guide will inform them of all the services PACT offers, what it means to come to PACT for a service and how they can make their views known about the services they receive.

Registration Authority

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

General helpline: 0300 123 1231

General enquiries can be made by email to enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

PACT’s most recent inspection report was completed by Ofsted in January 2017 and the rating given was ‘Outstanding’. A copy can be downloaded from our website or via the link below. A printed copy will be made available on request.

http://pactcharity.org/about-us/ofsted-inspection

Feedback

PACT welcomes feedback about our policies and procedures so if you have any comments about this Statement of Purpose, please address them to:

Service Director
Parents And Children Together
7 Southern Court
South Street
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 4QS

Signed:
Jan Fishwick, Registered Provider

Date: 21/05/2019
Appendix one: Staff

Jan Fishwick OBE
The Responsible Individual and Agency Decision Maker of the Adoption Service is Jan Fishwick, Chief Executive, who joined the agency in March 2008. Jan has over 40 years’ experience of adoption and fostering; Jan came to PACT from the London Borough of Brent, before which she had worked for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea as well as a number of other Local Authorities. She is a member of the Board of the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies, regional Leadership Boards and Regional Adoption Agencies steering groups, working to advise and influence Government policy on adoption. Jan holds an MPA, a CQSW and is a qualified executive coach.

Lorna Hunt
Lorna is the Registered Manager of the Adoption service and is a qualified social worker having worked in Children Social Care for over 32 years. Before Joining PACT in October 2018, Lorna was Assistant Director for two Berkshire Local Authorities for over eight years. Lorna has a MA in Social Work and a diploma in Management.

Sarah Stollard
Sarah is PACT’s Panel Advisor, and Quality Assurance Officer. She has been a social worker for nearly 30 years and has always worked in the field of children and families, firstly as a social worker and then as a manager. She became a children’s Guardian in 2003 and continues to practice alongside her work as panel advisor and is the lead for quality assurance.

Adoption Managers

Mandy Davies
Mandy Davies has worked as a social worker in family placement for more than 25 years; she has spent the majority of her career in a Local Authority working within fostering and adoption, joining PACT in 2013. Mandy is a qualified social worker and also holds the post qualifying award (PQ1).

Louise Hartley
Louise has over 20 years’ experience working for children’s services; firstly working with primary aged children with SEN in the education system and since 2007, working in various social work teams -including pre birth hospital assessments, adult mental health, child protection, early intervention and youth offending and directly in adoption since joining PACT in 2014. Louise has a BA (Hons) in Social Work and The National Certificate in Counselling.

Jo Auburn
Jo has a Bsc (Hons) in Psychology and Sociology (1989) and BA (Hons) in Social Work (2009). Jo has previously worked in a children’s residential setting with teenagers in care, in a Local Authority within both the Children in Care and Child protection Teams and as a supervising social worker for Independent Fostering Agencies before coming to PACT originally as a senior social worker.

Julie Stollard
Julie Stollard joined PACT in September 2013. She has many years’ experience in child protection, adoption and fostering, most recently in adoption support. Julie is a qualified social worker and holds the post qualifying awards (PQ1 and PQ2) and an NVQ5 in management.
Social Work staff

PACT has a number of appropriately qualified, registered and experienced staff who work within the adoption service, many of whom have undertaken therapeutic training to support their work with PACT families.

PACT also engages qualified and experienced contract social workers to undertake pieces of adoption work. Each has a personnel file compliant with the regulations. Supervision/consultation is provided by a permanent member of PACT’s staff.

Therapeutic Social Workers

PACT has therapeutically trained social workers with a broad range of qualifications experience and skills, including those in Theraplay, Art and Play Therapy, Family Therapy, Therapeutic Life Story Work and DDP.

FACTS therapists

PACT has a number of appropriately qualified, registered and experienced staff from a range of different professional disciplines available to work therapeutically with families. Each has a personnel file compliant with the regulations. Supervision/consultation is provided by a permanent member of PACT’s staff.

PACT Adopter Champions

A small team of PACT Adopter Champions offer help, advice and reassuring support to families pre or post adoption. They are all experienced adopters who have in-depth knowledge of the adoption process and hands-on experience of raising adopted children.
### Appendix 2: Complaints Procedure

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<th>Level</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Time for response</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Raise the complaint with the person concerned who will try to resolve the issue.</td>
<td>Initial Acknowledgement letter within 24 hours</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Formal response within 14 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Make the complaint verbally or in writing to the *Line Manager of the person concerned.</td>
<td>Initial Acknowledgement letter within 24 hours</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Formal response within 28 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Send complaint in writing to the Chief Executive. (Or, if the complaint concerns the Chief Executive, to the Chair of the Trustee Board). The complaint will then be looked into and a response provided.</td>
<td>Initial Acknowledgement letter within 24 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Formal response within 28 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>If you are still not satisfied, you should write formally to the Chief Executive requesting that an Independent Investigating Officer examine the complaint. The officer’s written report should then be sent to you, and you will then have the opportunity of responding in writing to a panel of three PACT Trustees, none of whom will have had any involvement with the issues raised.</td>
<td>Initial Acknowledgement letter within 24 hours</td>
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<td>Independent Investigating Officer will be given six weeks to provide a report (reasons for any delay will be provided)</td>
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<td>Decision of Trustees within 28 days</td>
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**Further Notes**

*On points of law, complainants should consult a solicitor*

A. Complaints can be started at Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3. If the complaint first reaches the Chief Executive in writing, the complainant may be given the opportunity of consideration being given at Levels 1 or 2.

B. Please indicate with any complaint if your first language is other than English.

C. At any stage a complainant may be accompanied by a friend but not a legal representative.

D. Confidentiality agreements for agency work will be maintained.

E. If you are unsure who the line manager is please contact PACT’s offices 7 Southern Court, South Street, Reading, RG1 4QS Telephone 0300 456 4800 or 0118 938 7600 - Email: info@pactcharity.org

F. You may contact Ofsted, (General enquiries), Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

  General enquiries: 0300 123 1231
  Website: http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted
  Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
  About Concerns: 0300 123 4666

  You can contact the office of the Children’s Commissioner for England, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

  Enquiries: 020 7783 8330
  Website: http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/about-us