

Adoption Support Service

Statement of purpose 2022-23



Parents And Children Together

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:

- Coronavirus Act 2020
- The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
- Working Together 2020
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Adoption: National Minimum Standards 2014
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- The Adoption and Children Act Register Regulations 2014
- 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

Contents

PACT's aims and objectives	4
PACT's services	5
Principles and standards of care	6
Responsible Individual and managers	7
Monitoring systems and quality assurance	7
Staff	7
Assessment of need	8
Compliments and complaints	8
Review of statement of purpose and children's guides	8
Sustainability	8
FACTS	9
Children's guide to adoption support	9
Response to the Covid-19 pandemic	9
Registration authority	9
Feedback	10
Appendix one: staff	11
Appendix two: organisation chart	12
Appendix three: concerns and complaints procedure	13



PACT's Aims and Objectives

PACT's aim is to build and strengthen families through adoption, adoption support and through our community work.

The main objectives of PACT's adoption support service are to:

- Provide a range of quality services which can promote best outcomes for children who need permanent placement.
- Consider links and the support needed for children (for whom adoption is the plan) with PACT families who can meet their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic needs whilst recognising that no child should wait indefinitely for the 'ideal' match.
- Provide comprehensive support packages to families and support them to achieve stable and successful placements.
- Provide services for children, adopters, birth relatives 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 and maximise available resources.
- Ensure all staff are appropriately recruited, supervised and trained to fulfil PACT's functions.
- Ensure that accurate and up-to-date records and management information is maintained 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.
- Provide adoption support services within the prevailing legislative framework including the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services and relevant regulations.

PACT's Services

PACT supports adoptive parents to meet the needs of children for whom local authorities and regional adoption agencies are seeking placements.

Adopter champions (peer-to-peer support)

Adopter champions support families at any stage of their adoptive journey as a peer. Having adopted themselves, their expertise and lived experience can be of great benefit to families who need support.

Strengthening Families Team

The Strengthening Families Team of therapeutically trained social workers work alongside the family's social worker when additional support is needed. The Team also work with families post adoption order, at any time up to when the child reaches the age of 18 years old.

FACTS

The FACTS (Family And Children Therapeutic Support) service is a consultation and therapeutic service with trained therapists with extensive adoption experience. Services provided include (but are not limited to) clinical psychology, family therapy, DDP, Theraplay, therapeutic life journey work and many creative therapies for example play, drama and music. Services are commissioned by the responsible local authority (who may recover the cost from the Adoption Support Fund).

Specialist education lead

The specialist education lead at PACT can provide support for adopters and schools in various ways. These include helping to navigate the education system or supporting families when they are embarking on the admissions application process. The specialist role also includes working directly with educational professionals and schools with tailored training and advice regarding adopted children's needs.

The Adopter Hub

PACT's online adoption support service The Adopter Hub allows parents and professionals access to forums, webinars and one-to-one webchat. There are eLearning modules available to registered users which parents and professionals can use to extend their learning at a time and pace suitable to them.

Other support services

Other services available to PACT families include:

- Post approval training and workshops
- Attachment focussed parenting training
- Regular newsletters
- Family fun days
- Support groups for adoptive parents
- Therapeutic activity sessions for adopted children of all ages
- Adoptee voice support groups for older adopted children and young people

Access to information from adoption records

PACT assists and supports people seeking information about their adoption and family history if they were adopted through one of the following adoption agencies:

Childlink Adoption Society, formerly Church Adoption Society (Please note this is not the Church of England Children's Society), Church of the Latter Day Saints, Oxford Diocesan Council for Moral Welfare, Oxford Diocesan Council for Social Work, PACT (Parents And Children Together).

Principles and Standards of Care

- The child's welfare and safety will be the paramount consideration and will be central to PACT's services.
- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a stable and loving family, which can meet their needs throughout 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 plan made in the child's best interests.
- Children's birth parents/guardians and families and adoptive parents and families will be valued and respected.
- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved. Children and young people who have been adopted, adoptive families and birth families all 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 will be recognised and positively valued and promoted.
- Adoption is a service in which the child's needs are always paramount.



Responsible Individual and managers

PACT's adoption service director is the Responsible Individual and the Agency's Decision Maker (ADM) making decisions following recommendations from the adoption panel.

The service director holds strategic responsibility and accountability for the adoption service and the assistant service director is the Registered Manager of the adoption support agency. Managers hold day-to-day operational responsibility for the management of their team/service.

The service director attends trustee board meetings and reports to the lead trustee for adoption. Staff may report any issues to the service director to be raised with the board.

There are no branches of PACT at the present time. There are adoption teams based in Reading, London and Brighton, managed from the head office in Reading. Adoption support services are provided to all teams.

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 advertises its complaints process.

Feedback on service quality and effectiveness is sought via a variety of means whenever support services are provided.

As part of the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies (CVAA), membership of regional Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB) and RAA governance boards, PACT's adoption support 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 2017 PACT's adoption services were awarded an outstanding rating by Ofsted.

Staff

Supervision and annual appraisal processes are used for monitoring and evaluation. Objectives are set annually and reviewed regularly. Staff learning and developmental needs are assessed and form the basis for the learning and development plan.

See appendix one and two for details of staff.



Assessment of need

When adopters or adoptees approach PACT for an adoption support service, the receiving worker will help identify the type of service which might best meet their need.

If one of PACT's support services is appropriate this will be identified as an option and the referral process will be discussed.

It is recognised that one service will not fit all requirements and should PACT services not be taken up or found useful, support will be given to signpost to other services or to the appropriate local authority with information regarding assessments of need.

Compliments and complaints

PACT wishes to improve and develop its services and welcomes feedback at all times, verbally or in writing. PACT is particularly grateful for observations and feedback by those who consider that our services could be improved and acts on any suggestions as to 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 have a concern or a complaint about PACT's services, or you are a child or a person acting on behalf of a child, PACT has set out the framework for this. There is a leaflet *We value your feedback* which explains the process and is available on our website. Printed copies are available on request. If you have any queries about this process, please contact us.

Adopters will also be provided with information about how to access the complaints procedures of the local council responsible for the child's placement where the concerns relate to the work of that agency.

See appendix three for details of the complaints procedure.

Review of statement of purpose and children's guide

This document has been formally approved by PACT's Senior Management Team. It will be reviewed annually and, if necessary, revised. The children's guide has been reviewed by the PACT Adoptee Voices group.



Sustainability

The agency operates in a financially prudent manner, employing robust strategies and undertaking due diligence in all of its decision making. We monitor accounts regularly with oversight from the board of trustees and the agency's accountant, making decisions and taking appropriate measures in a timely manner to ensure the continued operation and stability of our services and staff team. Certified annual accounts indicate that the adoption service is financially viable and is likely to have sufficient funding to continue to fulfil its statement of purpose for the next 12 months.

FACTS

Adopters referred to the FACTS service will be given information about the service it is proposed they are to receive, what is involved in that particular service provision and how the service will be monitored to ensure that it is delivering the intended outcome.

Children's Guide to Adoption Support

All children will be given a guide to PACT's adoption support services on placement. The guide is appropriate to the child's age and understanding and will inform them of 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. The Children's Guide also contains information on how a child can find out their rights, how they can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted, if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors, and how to secure access to an independent advocate.

Response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Due to the global coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic, PACT had to transition from face-to-face working to developing methods of remote working. In order to continue to support families, our adoption support team and FACTS service have therapeutically supported children and families via platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Our educational lead and adopter champions have been able to advise adopters on issues such as home schooling and managing transitions back to school via telephone support and online, and our groups for adopters and adoptees have been held virtually.

Due to the vulnerability and the trauma that many of the children placed with our adopters have suffered, we have also recognised that for some there has been a need to visit and see children and families face to face. The adoption support team and FACTS team have been working flexibly and, using risk assessments, have enabled direct contact with families when needed.

Moving out of the pandemic, PACT will continue to carry out its full range of support for adoptive families flexibly using a combination of direct and virtual support until all work that is required can be completed face to face.

Registration Authority



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

General helpline: 0300 123 1231

Email: 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

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

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: Lorna Hunt, Responsible Individual



Date: 29 April 2022



Appendix one: staff

Lorna Hunt - Adoption Service Director

Lorna is the Responsible Individual of the adoption service and is a qualified social worker having worked in children's social care for more than 32 years. Before joining PACT in October 2018, Lorna was Assistant Director of Children's Services for two Berkshire local authorities for more than eight years. Lorna has a MA in social work and a diploma in management.

Mandy Davies - Assistant Service Director

Mandy is the assistant service director and Registered Manager of the adoption service and 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).



Julie Stolland - Adoption Support Team Manager

Julie 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.

Therapeutic social workers

PACT has therapeutically trained social workers with a broad range of qualifications, experience and skills, including those in Theraplay, therapeutic life journey 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.

Amy Thompson - Specialist Education Lead

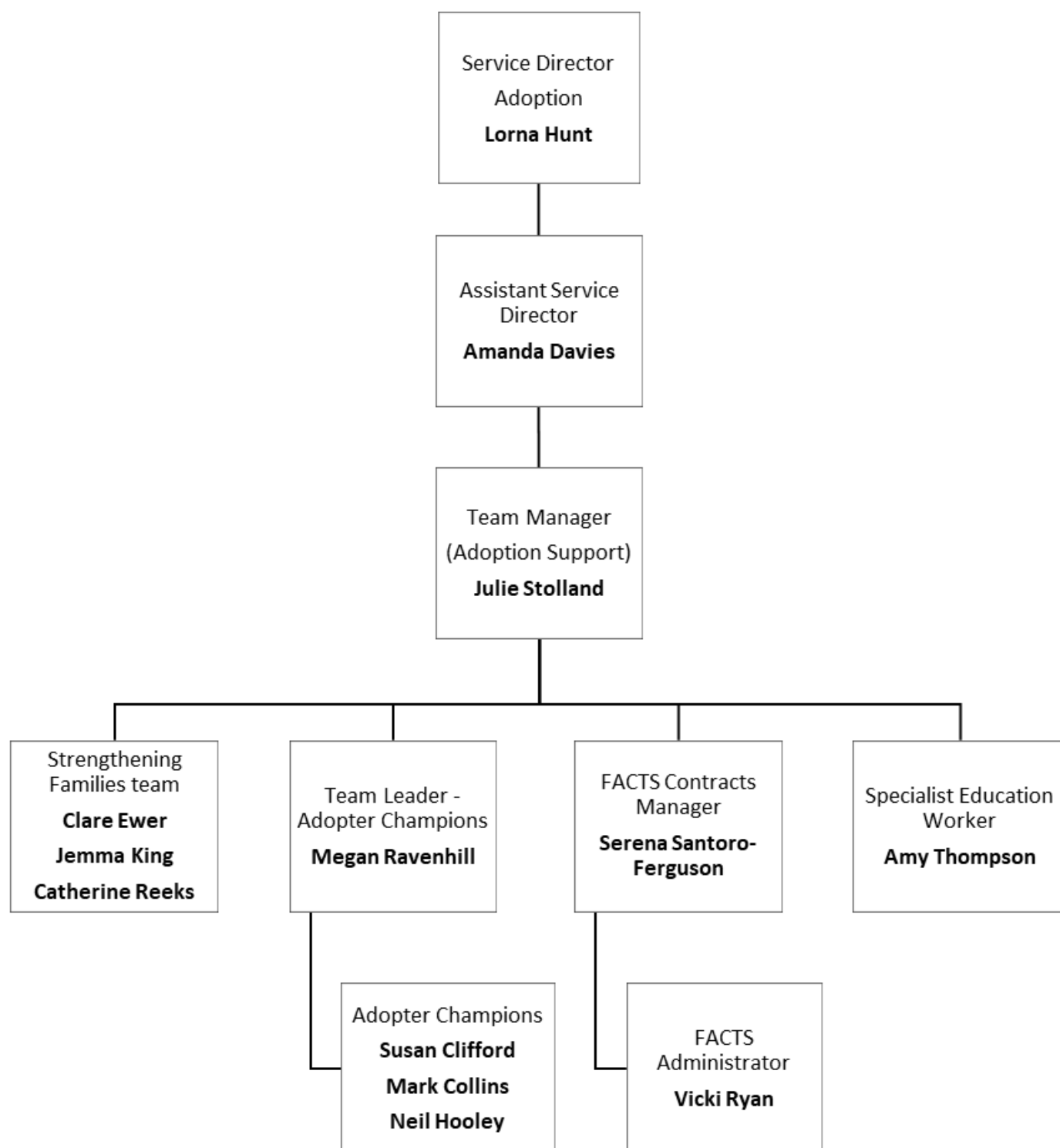
Amy is an adoptive parent and a teacher with more than 20 years experience in a range of settings. Prior to adopting she was also a former deputy headteacher.

Adopter champions (peer-to-peer support)

The adopter champions are all experienced adoptive parents with a range of in-depth knowledge, skills and hands-on experience including:

- Adopting siblings
- Adopting older children
- Helping children to understand their own story and revisiting this at different ages
- LGBT adoption
- Behavioural support, such as eating, sleeping, aggression, anxiety, regression and general behaviour that is deemed as challenging

Appendix two: Adoption Support Team Organisation Chart



Appendix three: complaints procedure

If you have a concern or a complaint you must start at level 1 and go through the process. We recommend that anyone wanting to raise a concern or a complaint obtains a copy of PACT's complaints policy as the below is only a summary.

Level	Procedure	Response
1	If you are unhappy with the service provided we hope that you will feel able to tell the person who is working with you promptly	We will attempt to resolve any issues or problems at this stage in an open and communicative way.
2	If you would prefer not to speak to the person you are working with or if your concern is about the person you are working with you can contact their manager, either by telephone, letter or email, or by asking to see them. Most problems can be resolved by discussing them with the people who manage the service.	In these instances, and where minimal investigation is required, managers may use an informal resolution process to resolve the situation. To do this we will discuss your concerns with you, keep a written record of the issue, make an effort to resolve the issue within 28 days of hearing your concern and provide you with an outcome either by phone or in writing.
3	If you are unhappy with the responses received at Level 2 and feel your concern/complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily you should write to the chief executive officer (CEO) unless the concern/complaint is about the CEO, in which case your concern/complaint should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Any Level 3 complaint must be made in writing, either by email or letter and must contain full details of your complaint and an outline of why you remain dissatisfied.	Your complaint will be formally acknowledged within five working days, and the CEO/Chair of the Board of Trustees may look into your complaint or arrangements made for a senior member of staff or appropriate person from within PACT to investigate. You will receive the findings within 28 working days of your Level 3 complaint being received by PACT – unless there is a justified reason why this is not possible, in which case you will be alerted to any revised time frames.
4	If you are not satisfied with the response from the CEO/Chair of the Board of Trustees you have the right to appeal to PACT's board of trustees. You are required to write again to the CEO within 28 working days of receipt of PACT's response to your Level 3 complaint. You are required to explain why you are still not happy with PACT's response and you should highlight what outcome you are looking to achieve.	Within 14 working days, the CEO will appoint an Independent Investigating Officer (IIO) who has six weeks to examine the complaint. You will be invited to a meeting to discuss the IIO's conclusions and final decision. The CEO will consider the recommendations of the IIO and write to you, you will then have the opportunity to submit any final written feedback within 14 days of receipt of the report. If required, a panel of three PACT trustees who will have had no involvement with the complaint will review your final feedback and all documents and provide a written response with a final outcome within 28 working days.

Further Notes

- On points of law, complainants should consult a solicitor
- Appropriate resources will be made available for people with disabilities and for people who need additional support with written or spoken English
- At any level a complainant may be accompanied by a friend/family member but not a legal representative
- Confidentiality agreements regarding PACT's work will be maintained
- If you are unsure who a workers line manager is please contact PACT's offices 7 Southern Court, South Street, Reading, RG1 4QS Telephone 0118 938 7600 - E-mail: info@pactcharity.org
- Concerns and complaints that reach level 3 will be recorded as formal complaints

If having gone through all levels and you remain dissatisfied, you should consider contacting Ofsted:

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

General enquiries: 0300 123 1231. About concerns: 0300 123 4666

Website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk