

TACT Scotland Adult Placement Service Adult Placement Service

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Announced (short notice)

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Service provided by:
The Adolescent And Children's Trust

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About the service

The Adolescent and Children's Trust (TACT) is an independent, charity-based fostering service. The adult placement service provides foster care to young people who remain in the care of their foster families beyond the age of 18. TACT recruit and support carer families to provide foster care across Scotland. This requires close working with local authorities, who require fostering services from TACT for children or young people in their area.

TACT Scotland are part of a larger UK-wide organisation with bases in England and Wales. The service is managed by an area manager and is supported by two deputy area managers. The service is also supported by departments within the national organisation based in England.

About the inspection

This was an short notice inspection which took place on 26 August 2024 until 23 September 2024. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with two people using the service and 12 responded to our survey
- spoke with one foster carer and 24 responded to our survey
- met with 15 foster carers as part of a carers' focus group
- spoke with seven staff and management and 11 responded to our survey
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with one external professionals and 14 responded to our survey.

During our inspection year 2024-2025, we are inspecting against a focus area which looks at how regulated services use legislation and guidance to promote children's rights to continuing care and how children and young people are being helped to understand what their right to continuing care means for them. Any requirements or areas for improvement will be highlighted in this report.

TACT's fostering service was inspected at the same time as this inspection and a separate report is available.

Key messages

Children and young people were thriving as a result of high quality care. They had developed meaningful relationships characterised by security, predictability and love.

Caregivers provided nurturing, trauma informed care. This was very well supported by staff who were highly skilled , knowledgeable and responsible.

The role of the service's specialist education service has helped to achieve excellent educational outcomes for children and young people and has created a culture of ambition.

Positive outcomes were supported by high quality assessments of caregivers and in the high-level support provided, following the arrival of children to their fostering family.

Young people's rights to continuing care were consistently upheld by confident and knowledgeable staff and caregivers. There was a strong service culture and commitment towards continuing care.

Multi-agency planning for young people, after they turned 18 and ceased to be 'looked after', was lacking. This was mitigated by service-led actions and planning.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for young people and their families, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Young people living with TACT caregivers were thriving as a result of meaningful, compassionate and secure relationships with their caregiver families. Young people benefitted from trusting and enduring relationships because caregivers were well supported and skilled in offering high quality care that was characterised by love, fun, predictability and trust. Young people were fully embraced and claimed as part of their caregiving families.

Caregivers had awareness of the impact of trauma on young people's development and cared for them in a way that was sensitive and responsive to these experiences.

Young people and fostering families benefitted from a variety of support groups and activities. We saw young people's voices being valued through participation and inclusion activities.

Caregivers experienced incredibly positive and established relationships with their supervising social workers and greatly valued staff knowledge, skills, commitment, and responsiveness. We were encouraged to hear about the high level of emotional support caregivers experienced from staff, particularly during times of difficulty. We concluded that the skills and commitment of the staff team, combined with enduring relationships, was integral in enabling caregivers to provide therapeutic and individual care.

Caregiving families were enabled to support young people to understand and exercise their legal and human rights. This was of upmost priority within the service. We saw examples of young people being proactively supported to seek independent advocacy or legal representation that ensured their views were robustly represented in decision-making forums.

Young people were living with their siblings, unless this had been assessed as not appropriate. Caregivers embraced their role in supporting children's ongoing relationships with siblings, family and other people who were important to them. This support was crucial in enabling young people to maintain links with their birth families and, in some cases, help repair fractured relationships.

Young people were very well supported to be fully engaged in their learning and development. We saw many powerful examples of caregivers and staff successfully championing children's right to a high quality and inclusive education.

We were greatly impressed by the service's specialist education service. This service included a designated education advisor and an education advisor for young people aged 16 years and above. This proactive and aspirational approach has helped achieve excellent outcomes for young people within education. Indeed, it has inspired confidence and created a culture of ambition.

A significant strength of the service was in their celebration and championing of young people. Achievements and success, big or small, were celebrated across the service and we found there to be a great sense of pride and reflection for children and young people at each stage of their lives. Personalised gestures and recognition helped young people celebrate milestones and gain confidence for the future.

Young people's safety was of the utmost importance. Staff and leaders within the service were confident and knowledgeable about this area of practice. Staff worked collaboratively with multi-agency colleagues to appropriately respond to risk and concerns.

Caregivers and staff had a solid understanding of young people's health needs and what they require for optimum physical and mental health. Caregivers advocated tirelessly for young people to have timely access to appropriate specialist service when this was needed to enable recovery from trauma, abuse and neglect. This included the use of the provider's own psychological support services. We were aware that the provider is working to develop their health service further with the view of widening access to specialist resources. We look forward to seeing this progress at the next inspection.

The service's re-assessment of foster carers as adult (continuing care) carers were of a consistently high standard. These were evidence based and contained an appropriate balance of strengths, vulnerabilities and analysis. The assessment process was collaborative and transparent and based on positive well-established relationships between foster carers and their assessing social worker. Foster carers reviews took place well within the legal guidelines and foster carers were appropriately involved in their reviews.

The re-assessment and review of foster carers to become adult (continuing care) carers was approached proactively by the service. This was done timeously and in line with a young person's age and plan. Thus, enabling very seamless transitions for young people.

Young people benefitted from well-managed and positive pathways and transitions throughout their care experience. The role of a specialist continuing care senior practitioner helped to ensure that staff within the service were confident about procedures and were able to advocate on behalf of young people. Strong links and communication between the service and local authority colleagues were an important feature in timely decision-making.

Young people's rights to continuing care, beyond the age of 18 years, were consistently upheld by confident and knowledgeable staff and caregivers. This commitment and the use of advocacy or legal advice helped ensure that young people remained in their fostering family for as long as possible and until they felt ready to move on. Indeed, there was a clear expectation that young people would remain in their foster household into adulthood. This was accepted as 'the norm' and we were greatly encouraged to see examples of young people remaining with their foster families beyond the age of 21. It was evident that the service have attached great priority into developing this aspect of the service and there was confidence and commitment towards consolidating this further in the future.

We did not see welfare assessments being completed for young people who were approaching the age of 18 and entitled to continuing care. This is a legal requirement on local authorities. We did not see this impact on outcomes or planning for young people and took confidence in the service's ability to seek legal or advocacy support for young people when required. The service were aware of their role in advocating and promoting the need for comprehensive welfare assessments, in order to support young people's current and future needs.

Young people who leave care were provided with high-quality practical and emotional support. This was based on enduring, established and loving relationships between young people and their caregivers. Young people benefitted greatly from the continuity of natural family relationships. The role of the service was also integral to this with young people also being very much 'claimed' by TACT, who were invested in their future.

TACT Connect service was established relatively recently and provides support and community to young people who live or have lived with TACT foster carers. We were encouraged to learn about what this provides. This includes peer support based on shared experience, participation in the service and this also acts as a 'safety net' for young people or adults. This is expected to make a positive difference to young people's future into adulthood and beyond.

How well is our care and support planned?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for young people and their families, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Young people were supported to achieve very positive outcomes and led positive, healthy, enjoyable and meaningful lives. We found that there was a divergence in planning and reviews for young people beyond the age of 18 and this reflected differing local authority practice. Therefore, there was an absence of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) planning. However, we recognise the role and remit of the service within these. The service actively sought and supported multi-agency involvement to ensure that planning was relevant, good quality and up-to-date. This proactive approach assisted in driving forward young people's plans and highlighting any gaps or unmet need.

We saw creative thinking and the use of service resources when this was required.

Young people received full support to communicate what their outcomes should be and this included the use of advocacy services when appropriate. Indeed, we found young people to be very confident and articulate in expressing their views and this was considered to be a reflection of the care and support they have received from their caregivers and the service.

Young people had personalised safer caring plans that informed levels of risk and risk management. These were complemented by a more general 'family plan' that informed how the caregiving family work to ensure safe care. We discussed with the service that these plans would benefit from greater input from caregivers' supervising social workers to ensure a more robust and collaborative approach to risk management. This is all the more pertinent if multi-agency plans are lacking.

Complaints

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 Children, young people and adults get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
1.3 Children, young people and adults' health and wellbeing benefits from the care and support they experience	5 - Very Good
1.4 Children, young people, adults and their caregiver families get the service that is right for them	5 - Very Good
How well is our care and support planned?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects the outcomes and wishes of children, young people and adults	5 - Very Good

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