

TACT calls for new national care service for children, families and care experienced people

Thursday 16 September, 2021

TACT – UK's largest dedicated fostering charity, has today published a paper urging the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (IRCSC) to recommend that the DfE establish a ground-breaking **new national care service** – the **National Care Family (NCF)**, covering fostering, adoption, kinship, residential, foster, and secure care. The proposed service would also take over responsibility for children who return to their birth parents from care and the secure youth justice estate.

The creation of an exclusive dedicated body will mean that Local Authorities (LAs) will no longer hold parental or operational responsibility for children in public care.

In addition to the existing range of support given to children in the care system, the National Care Family would perform new and long needed duties such as supporting birth parents whose children return to them from care, and providing assistance for care experienced adults. Being care experienced would become a protected characteristic with an automatic entitlement to lifelong support.

What we currently do for children and young people in care, and care experienced people, is simply not good enough. It is true that many children are protected from harm by the care system, and for a significant number of children it is transformative. But it is also an inescapable fact that when children in care are compared with children in the general population, they tend to have significantly poorer outcomes in a number of areas, such as educational attainment, and mental and physical health.

Children and young people who grow up in care are up to four times more likely to suffer from poor health 30 years later than those who grew up with their parents. Care experienced people are estimated to represent between 24% and 27% of the adult prison population, despite being less than 5% of the overall population. It is time that we took drastic action to change the narrative and tackle the negative outcomes for too many care experienced people.

Andy Elvin, TACT CEO, said: "All children in care, or in families created through social services' intervention, require a Service that is dedicated to them and their families. LAs will never be able to prioritise this group lifelong. If we merely try to re-purpose the current systems/structures, we will simply get more of what we already have. The solution has to be a wholly different place, not a reformulation of what we currently have."

TACT's paper provides a vision for the new Service. The detailed design and creation of such a Service should be shaped by those experts by experience who can best inform this process, and those within the current system who accept and embrace the need for radical change. The new Service must be co-designed and co-produced by those whose lives it aims to transform.

[The paper can be accessed by clicking on this link](#)

For all media enquiries, interviews, images and information please contact the TACT Communications Team via j.luxton@tactcare.org.uk or telephone: 07793580418

Notes to editors:

TACT (The Adolescent and Children's Trust) is the UK's largest dedicated fostering charity and we've been helping to provide loving families for vulnerable children for over 25 years.

As a charity, we put young people at the heart of every decision and we passionately believe that all children deserve to live in loving, safe and stable homes. Unlike some commercial fostering agencies, we are not driven by profit.

We are passionate about providing a voice for children and young people in care and care experienced people. Their needs and views are at the heart of everything we do. We actively campaign to influence government policies and argue for positive changes that enable young people to achieve their full potential.

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