



Pre-adoption
Post-adoption
Permanency
Advice &
Counselling



annual review 2011/2012



Introduction

Peter Sandiford – Chief Executive Officer

2011/12 has been a year of change and development at PAC. In last year's review I remarked that this, our 25th anniversary year, was an excellent point on PAC's journey for us to take stock and reposition ourselves for the years to come. I couldn't then have foreseen quite what this might mean.

As the year started, as austerity and cuts became the bywords of the time, we recognised the need to 'tighten our belts'. As a result we took the major decision to restructure our support services, including outsourcing our accounts department, resulting in a substantial reduction in PAC's overheads. There were, however, sacrifices: the loss of three much-valued staff members, for whose dedication to PAC over many years I would like to express my utmost gratitude.

Our silver anniversary year was also marked by achievement.

Firstly, we secured the contract for the provision of adoption support services across the North London Adoption & Fostering Consortium and also won a competitive tender to provide services to Hampshire County Council – both highly significant in securing the future of the organisation.

Secondly, in the autumn we held a memorable gala dinner and auction at the Savoy Hotel. The highly imaginative menu was prepared by four celebrity chefs, headed up by Heston Blumenthal OBE, we were serenaded by international operatic tenor James Edwards and the auction – conducted by a senior partner from Sotheby's - included works from among the cream of the contemporary art world, including Russell Young, Julian Opie and Ken Howard. A memorable and highly successful night where old friends met and new friends were made.

Thirdly, premises adjoining PAC came on the market and we decided this was an opportunity not to be missed! Following lengthy discussion at board level we decided to purchase and completed in March 2012. We have now 'knocked through', the dust has settled, and we have a superb building which contains all our Kentish Town based services.

The autumn was also marked by the Prime Minister's announcement of a review of adoption services. As the Minister for Children & Families had attended our gala dinner I took the opportunity to suggest a meeting where he could hear about our services and how we might

contribute to the review; so it was that Franca Brenninkmeyer, Head of PAC's Child & Family Service, and I were invited to the House of Commons to speak with the minister and his advisor, Martin Narey. We were struck by how much they seemed to listen to what we had to say about the need for adoption support services. The minister also agreed to formally open PAC's new premises later in the year.

January 2012 saw the arrival of Lyndsey Marshall in the new post of Deputy Chief Executive. Previously CEO of After Adoption Yorkshire and subsequently Head of Adoption at Hampshire, Lyndsey's role will be to take PAC's services on to the next level – truly ambitious given that Ofsted has already classed us as 'outstanding'!



LOTTERY FUNDED



Adoption: living life to the full

The Big Lottery Fund

In July 2011 we were thrilled to learn we had been awarded a major five-year grant of £468,258 under The Big Lottery Fund's Reaching Communities programme.

Our winning project 'Adoption – living life to the full' puts adoptive parents and adopted children in focus. In addition to supporting PAC's existing work with adoptive families, the money will also be used to develop our services in new directions. It will also allow us to continue the vital work of our Schools Trainer, increasing awareness in schools of the specific needs of children who have suffered trauma.

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) will be assessing PAC on delivering a number of outcomes over the period January 2012 to December 2016:

1. 85% of children referred to PAC and assessed at risk of being returned to the looked after system will have been maintained and strengthened in their family placements, improving their mental health and their life chances.
2. At least 500 adopters will report either making or intending to make positive changes in their therapeutic parenting, thereby increasing the stability of the adoptive placement.

3. A minimum of 80 school staff per annum will attend training workshops and at least 75% of these will report improved understanding and commitment to support their pupils.

New developments will include:

- Closer contact with adoptive parents via a Parenting Forum. This will include a series of themed evening groups for parents and carers (currently scheduled for 2012 are 'Somatic Experiencing', 'Explosive Behaviour' and 'How to have a Christmas that is fest-ful rather than stressful!') as well as the setting up of a dedicated webpage where PAC's team of therapists can post specialist resources for viewing and comment.
- Creation of a Young People's Advisory Group to provide an opportunity for young service users (aged 16 to 25) to communicate their thoughts and feelings about adoption support, as well as to meet each other socially in informal surroundings. This group will meet a couple of times a year and our aim is to make it fun and rewarding for participants.
- Rolling out PAC's Enhancing Adoptive Parenting (EAP) programme - an individualised

parenting programme for recent adopters and permanent carers facing challenging problems in children aged three to nine – in order to increase PAC's evidence base and work towards recognition of the programme by local authorities.

- Increasing opportunities for counselling busy parents by telephone.
- Working more closely with academics and external professionals to validate and adapt our practise models.

A project steering group has been set up with members from each of PAC's service sections – Child & Family, Training and Adult Counselling – to coordinate these activities. Each service will be tasked to ensure that its evaluation systems are operating at optimal level to facilitate prompt and accurate reporting to BIG. This task will be greatly helped by you, our service users, offering your thorough and honest feedback at the end of any piece of work you undertake with us. We thank you in advance for this.





Child and family service

A family's perspective

Our son was placed with us when he was just over three. Diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum, he was a small, frightened child, still in nappies, with a wild temper, deep dark glorious eyes and a wonderful smile.

We had undergone a long period of assessment and many sleepless nights wondering if we were doing the right thing by adopting a child with so many needs and so many unknowns surrounding his development. But we'd fallen in love with him and that drove us on. However we weren't prepared for the emotional roller coaster that would follow.

Where was the "honeymoon period" that we'd heard about? There was no respite from his symptoms of trauma - wakeful nights, hitting, throwing, screaming, tantrums, rejecting food and hurting other children were only some of the ways he would show us how much pain he was in.

I'd already phoned PAC's Advice Line several times in tears and they'd been a wonderful port in a difficult storm. After eighteen months of such intensity I decided to seek assessment for specialist therapy at PAC.

At that first session I must have displayed all the signs and symptoms of a mum on her knees and near breaking point. We were immediately referred for intensive family therapy. Although it took a while to be seen and to arrange funding from the placing authority, the knowledge that help was on the horizon was wonderful!

Once the therapy was in place we went each week for several months, either as a couple or as a family, to a haven of security and support. We were given so much time and richness of expertise, and supported with enlightening and sensitive strategies, both for our son and ourselves. Most importantly, we were given a sense that we were doing a good job as parents with the odds stacked against us!

To be understood and to be heard was so important to us. Our families and friends were full of well-intentioned advice, saying "it's the same with all children". But we knew that what we were dealing with was *not* typical and that we really did need help!

As a family we look back with warmth to our days at PAC. Our son has positive memories and has asked to go back on several occasions! We've had continuing help and support around contact and other issues and feel that PAC will always be there for us.

Among many other things, PAC helped give our son a coherent narrative of what had happened in his life so far. Now 11, he still has many challenges ahead but the gift that PAC has given him will be with him for life.



PAC training

Evidence-based, forward looking

In May 2011 PAC was delighted to welcome back Maggie Rogers as manager of our training programme, following a break of nearly two years. Maggie says:

"PAC offers one of the UK's most well-respected, cutting edge and exciting adoption and permanence training programmes. And what an exciting time to return to a re-energised and forward looking PAC and have an opportunity to influence the direction of training developments in the next quarter century."

In addition to continuing to provide high quality public seminars, workshops for parents and for professionals, and other service user groups, in 2011/12 PAC's Training Department extended the reach of its commissioned training, spreading PAC's expertise as far and wide as Perthshire, Cornwall and Dublin!

Traditionally, much of what is 'known' in adoption and permanence has been based on intuition and anecdotal knowledge. While this has its place, PAC is mindful of the increasing imperative for professionals to evidence the specialist work they undertake.

With this in view, in March 2011 PAC ran 'Evidence-Based Practice', a one-day workshop aimed at equipping practitioners with a grounding in current research into topics such as placement patterns and outcomes, developmental progress following adversity and the effectiveness of adoption support, considering the implications for practice. Facilitated by PAC trustee Professor Alan Rushton, the day included an account of a randomised controlled trial of adoption support ('Enhancing Adoptive Parenting') conducted by Professor Rushton in collaboration with Elizabeth Monck.

PAC is continually improving the evidence-base of its own training programme through the use of more detailed feedback questionnaires. Adoptive parents, for example, are invited to let us know at the end of every training event which ideas they commit to putting into practice, with some families continuing to report on the effectiveness of strategies for up to six months. All of this valuable feedback further enhances our training programme for adopters.

PAC is also currently exploring, in partnership with a major university, the development of a post-qualifying Masters degree in adoption

and permanence. A preliminary programme of study has been designed and PAC will seek funding for further development during 2012/13. An undergraduate module in adoption and permanence, as part of the social work programme, is also proposed.

Comments from participants

*'Excellent trainer, she gave me a lot of confidence that she was an expert in her area.
Fantastic – thank you.'*

The Adopted Child in School
June 2011

'As a parent I feel more optimistic about what I do and how I do it.'

Relational Play July 2011

'I appreciated the use of current and very relevant documentary and film material.'

Working with Attachment Issues in Adults September 2011

'Excellent training, I learnt an enormous amount to help with my work with adopters.'

Post Placement Blues February 2012



The consortium approach

PAC's changing relationship with local authorities

As austerity eats deeper into the resources of local government, many of London's local authorities are combining key services to benefit from economies of scale and improve efficiency. PAC's provision of adoption support services is adapting to these changes.

Some of our longest-standing subscribers are joining together into 'consortia' for the delivery of adoption services. On 1 October 2011 PAC entered into an agreement with the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium (NLAFC) – made up of the boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington.

A major benefit of the consortium approach is an enhancement in the working relationship between PAC as the provider of services and local authorities as the service commissioners. PAC attends regular meetings with the adoption managers who come together from all five boroughs to discuss the progress of the contract services. PAC staff are also invited to contribute to NLAFC's practice meetings.

Two of the partner authorities – Barnet and Enfield - have traditionally offered monthly, locally-based PAC counselling outreach

surgeries, facilitated by qualified and experienced PAC counsellors, to service users exclusively within their borough. Under the new agreement, adopters, permanent carers, birth relatives, adopted adults and professionals who reside or work in any of the five NLAFC authorities can now choose between attending the Barnet and Enfield surgeries or opt for sessions at PAC's Camden premises. Benefits of this for individual service users include flexibility of location, date and time of appointment, plus a shorter waiting time.

In addition, by balancing busy surgeries with quieter ones, the space available can be more fully utilised, more service users can be seen and their needs better met. Where a cancellation occurs, there is now also a much better chance of this being filled at short notice.

As well as counselling outreach sessions, birth mothers in Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington are now able to access two free drop-in meetings, one fortnightly in Kentish Town and one every two months in Enfield. The drop-ins offer a confidential space in which women whose children have been adopted, or are in other forms of permanent care, can talk about their

fears, feelings and loss, supported by a qualified PAC worker.

From the point of view of member boroughs, the consortium approach enhances efficiency by facilitating the pooling of resources. For example, under a contract between an individual local authority and PAC, additional elements (such as parent or family consultations) may need to be purchased from PAC, or on occasion remain unused; consortia members, on the other hand, can distribute components of their contract with PAC between themselves as needed, reducing both over and under usage.

Further efficiency and flexibility is achieved by consortia commissioning in-house PAC training. As well as keeping costs down by utilising a local venue, training topics and approaches can be tailored to boroughs' needs and priorities. In 2011/12, NLAFC delegated staff to commissioned PAC trainings on the topics 'Contact', 'Social Networking' and 'Post-Placement Blues'. For 2012/13 the consortium has scheduled 'Working with attachment issues in adults', 'Parenting sibling groups', 'Family and friends (kinship care)' plus 'The adopted child in school' facilitated by PAC's Schools Trainer.

From left to right:
Peter Sandiford CEO, Phillida Sawbridge MBE, Sue Wates MBE



Gala dinner

PAC's event of the quarter-century!

Coinciding neatly with its 25th anniversary year, on 7 November 2011 PAC held the most glittering event in its history – a gourmet dinner and art auction at the Savoy Hotel, London.

Arriving at 6.30pm on a damp autumnal Monday evening, the 230 guests were offered champagne and canapés as they admired the works of art and other auction items kindly donated by a number of high-profile contemporary artists and business people.

The stunning display included pieces by American artist Russell Young - whose work has been bought by the Gettys, Elizabeth Taylor, David Hockney, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, David Bowie and Barack Obama - and respected British artists including Julian Opie, Ken Howard and Tony Heywood. There followed a spectacular three-course dinner, prepared by some of the UK's best chefs, and a brisk auction wittily helmed by Harry Dalmeny, Deputy Director of Sotheby's.

The gala dinner had been a twinkle in our eye for over three years, ever since food writer and critic Matthew Fort, an adoptive parent whose family had been supported by PAC many years ago, volunteered to assemble a team of celebrity chefs for a fundraising event. The final line up consisted of four chefs whose

restaurants share a clutch of Michelin stars - Heston Blumenthal OBE, Jason Atherton, Lisa Allen and Brett Graham.

After deciding to include an art auction in order to maximise fund-raising on the night, we determined in April 2010 to go for it, giving us 18 months to stage the perfect event.

By the time New Year 2011 dawned, we realised we were on a roller coaster. We had booked a room in The Savoy that would hold 250 people. How would we fill all the seats? Would sufficient auction lots be donated?

Many sleepless nights followed, but by June 2011 we had turned the corner: numerous long-time friends and supporters of PAC had been busy spreading the word and putting tables of guests together. Well-known artists, several of them with an adoption connection (two of them had even used PAC's services) began offering us stunning works for auction. We were contacted by international operatic tenor James Edwards, who had also



had sessions at PAC and wanted to help – could he sing on the night? Yes please!

PAC is indebted to the unfailing support of Matthew Fort, and the impressive networking and sheer hard work of the team at Sophie Macpherson Ltd who pulled together all the auction lots and created the



lavish catalogue; to the two event managers and the PR manager who

worked tirelessly to create a perfect night; to the guests, the chefs, the artists and others who donated items for auction; to those who spoke so poignantly on the night about their adoption experiences; and to PAC's founders, Phillida Sawbridge MBE and Sue Wates MBE, who were present to celebrate 25 years of achievement for PAC.

After all the costs were taken into account the night raised a fantastic net total of £45,000 which has enabled the vitally needed expansion and restructuring of PAC's Kentish Town headquarters. Above all, though, this event created a sense of real warmth and commitment towards PAC, often from the most unexpected walks of life, and an expansion of the PAC 'family' – which, for all of us here at PAC, is the most important legacy of all.



New measures

Steve Lane – Chair of Trustees

In March of this year PAC's Board of Trustees and senior managers held an away day – or, more properly, two days – in the beautiful environs of Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Great Park. The event was sponsored by PAC Patron Alistair Niven, Cumberland Lodge's Principal.

I don't think any of us could have anticipated just how significant these two days were to become. This was around the time the Government was beginning to articulate changes to adoption policy as part of its commitment to making adoption simpler and quicker. We needed to make sure PAC was fit for the future and able to respond to whatever challenges government was to place on the adoption community.

The first step was to review our board structure. We were privileged to have so much experience and expertise on the board, but the challenge we were facing was to use that expertise in the best possible way.

With that in mind, we decided to create a sub group to deal with all practice related issues – that is to say, all the areas that are available to our service users. Professor Alan Rushton decided to step down from his role as Chair of Trustees early in order to lead this group and was supported in this by two other experienced trustees, Hedi Argent and Jenny Lord, together with senior PAC practitioners.

With those professionally experienced in adoption and permanence now focussing on practice, the remaining trustees could lead on other matters and I was invited to become Chair. The Practice Sub Group immediately started an in-depth review of all PAC's services, and to look for new opportunities – something which had not been possible within the old structure.

Recognising that we were often pressed for time in our board meetings, another change we agreed was to increase the number of meetings from four to six per year in order to ensure all issues were given adequate scrutiny.

The Board of Trustees and the staff at PAC are committed to providing a quality service for all affected by adoption and permanence. As we enter our second quarter century of operation, these new measures will help us to continue that.

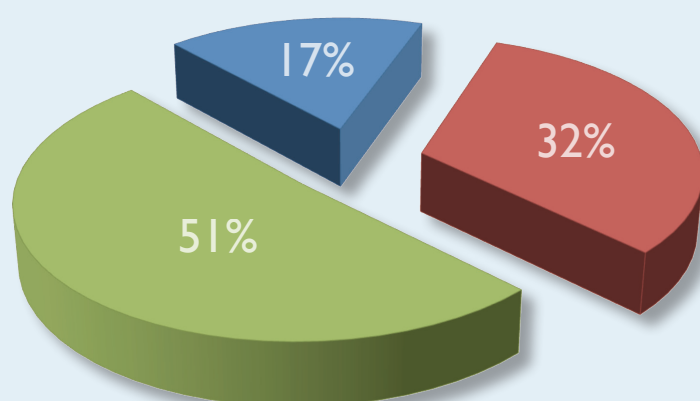
Financial review

2011 – 2012

In 2011/12 PAC's incoming resources totalled £778,509. Incoming funds were generated from three sources in roughly equal measure – local authority subscriptions; fees for consultancy and training; and fundraising income from individual

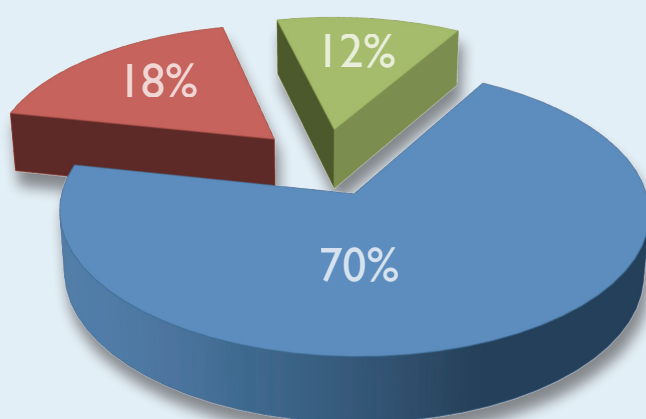
donors, events (including the Gala Dinner), trust funds and foundations. We are working in the medium to long term to increase the proportion of income from fees for our training and specialist counselling services. In this difficult financial landscape

PAC is continuing to develop and innovate within its highly specialised niche of adoption support services, and to make a positive difference to people's lives.



INCOMING RESOURCES

- Fundraising
- Fees charged
- Local authority subscriptions



EXPENDITURE

- Adult and childrens' services
- Training service
- Overheads



**Pre-adoption
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CEO and Company Secretary:

Mr Peter Sandiford

Board of Trustees:

Mr Steve Lane – Chairman

Ms Hedi Argent

Dr Mary Isaacs

Mrs Pamela Lawrence (until May 2011)

Ms Jenny Lord

Mr Barry Morris (from Nov 2011)

Mr Rory O'Reilly

Prof. Alan Rushton

Ms Raina Sheridan (from Nov 2011)

Founders:

Phillida Sawbridge MBE

Sue Wates MBE

Patrons:

The Duke of Richmond

Baroness Young of Hornsey

Baroness Hamwee

Prof. Lord Desai

Matthew Fort (from January 2012)

Jackie Kay

Dr Alastair Niven

Martin Rowson

A big thank you to our many donors during 2011/12, and to the following charitable trusts which have supported us during the year:

The Bergne-Coupland Charity

The Big Lottery Fund

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

The Fitzdale Trust

The Goldsmiths' Company

The Henry Smith Charity

and also to

Hodge, Jones & Allen LLP

who chose us as one of their charities to support during 2011

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Models on pages 4, 6, 7 and 8 are used for illustrative purposes only