

PANEL CHAIR ROLE DESCRIPTION – SELF EMPLOYED

Role Description

1. To chair panel meetings, either virtual or in person, ensuring that all items of business are covered and that the panel operates in accordance with regulations and the policies and procedures of the agency.
2. To prepare for panel meetings, reading panel papers carefully, identifying key issues and alerting the panel adviser if necessary to ensure, as far as possible that the case is adequate for submission to panel.
3. To facilitate the active participation of all panel members in contributing to the panel's consideration of cases and to the making of clear and well evidenced recommendations with the reasons for these.
4. To ensure that all those attending panel are treated with respect and courtesy.
5. To address diversity issues and to promote anti-discriminatory practice at all times.
6. To ensure that clear and accurate minutes are written, which record any serious reservations which panel members may have, and to be involved in checking and agreeing draft minutes with other panel members before they are sent to the Agency Decision Maker.
7. To liaise with the Decision Maker and with other senior managers as required.
8. To ensure along with the panel adviser, that senior managers are aware of issues of concern, in relation both to individual cases and to more general matters.
9. To be involved in the recruitment and appointment of central list panel members and in any consideration about terminating the appointment of a member.
10. To review, with the panel adviser, the performance of central list panel members as the need arises, and at least annually.
11. To assist in developing, promoting and monitoring policies and procedures and high standards of work in fostering in the agency.
12. To assist in planning training for members and to participate in this at least once per year.
13. To safeguard the confidentiality of all panel papers and panel discussions.
14. To take responsibility for the preparation of six monthly reports of the panel's work.
15. To be involved in:
 - Deciding whether a case is adequate for submission to panel.
 - Deciding on the attendance of observers at panel.
 - Deciding on the participation of a panel member who declares interest in a case.
 - Deciding when an extra panel may be necessary.

Person Specification

Experience and qualifications

- Experience, either professionally or personally or both, of the placement of children in adoptive and foster families and of children being cared away from their birth family.
- Experience of chairing complex meetings

Knowledge

- An appreciation of the effect of separation and loss on children.
- An awareness of the richness of different kinds of families and their potential for meeting children's needs.

- An understanding of the purpose and function of the panel and of the agency which the panel is serving.
- An understanding of the adoption process and practice and of the legislative framework for the work of the panel, or the capacity to develop this knowledge quickly.

Abilities

- The authority and competence to chair a panel ensuring that the business is covered and that the panel operates in accordance with regulations and the policies and procedures of the agency.
- Excellent interpersonal and listening skills.
- The ability to communicate well and clearly both verbally and in writing.
- The ability to identify key issues and possible solutions and to communicate these clearly.
- The ability to facilitate the active participation of all panel members in contributing to the panel's consideration of cases and recommendations.
- The ability to manage the expression of strongly held but possibly conflicting views by panel members and to help the panel to reach a recommendation which takes account of all these views.
- The ability to take up issues as required with the agency, liaising with the decision maker and other senior managers.
- The ability, working with the panel adviser, to review each panel members performance when required, and at least annually, ensuring that this is a helpful and constructive process for both the panel member and the panel as a whole.
- A willingness to travel distances typically within the region. Mileage allowance provided.
- At all times the conform to the security measures of the Data Protection Act 1998, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and to the safety of self and others in relation to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Fire Safety Order 2005

Attitudes

- A commitment to keeping children within their own family or community where this is possible and to maintaining Family Time (Contact) between children living in adoptive families and their birth families where this appears to be in the child's best interests.
- A commitment to fostering as a way of meeting a child's needs, where this appears to be in the child's best interests.
- A commitment to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.
- A valuing of diversity in relation to issues of ethnicity, religion, gender, disability and sexuality.
- An understanding of, and a commitment to, the need of confidentiality
- A willingness to increase knowledge and understanding of issues through reading, discussion and training.
- A willingness to contribute constructively to the annual review of their role as panel chair.