

Job specification



Job title: Panel Advisor
Service: Together for Adoption
Grade: G12
Reporting to: Service Lead – Together for Adoption

Your job

Working in a Regional Adoption Agency (Together for Adoption), employed by Wigan and providing services to them and partners, Warrington, St Helens, Cheshire West & Chester, and Halton, you will be responsible for managing the Adoption Panel Service.

You will support staff from the regional adoption agency, partner agencies and panel members, enabling a strength-based approach to service delivery across the adoption panel. You will meet the statutory requirements of panel, and support staff and their prospective adopters to attend panel without any unnecessary delay. You will offer effective management oversight and ensure that the service is of a high standard.

You will be central in supporting the development of panel members and those involved with attending panel, including a wide range of multi-agency professionals from our partner agencies, to foster a culture of continued learning, and the support and adoption of best practice for ongoing professional development.

You be responsible for the supervision and management of the Adoption Panel Administrator as well as the recruiting, retaining, training and appraising of a wide and diverse range of professional and independent panel members with the aim to deliver high quality, efficient and outstanding adoption services for families and children, and partner Local Authorities.

Panel sits once a week and are combination of virtual and face to face (in Warrington), where all cases from Together for Adoption and our five partners are presented. You will quality assure paperwork in advance of these meetings, liaising with legal, medical and governing body professionals to seek advice where necessary and provide professional advice to the Adoption Panel on the day. You will ensure that arrangements for Panel are coordinated in advance to allow for smooth running and that required reports are appropriately presented, actions are followed-up.

The Council is committed to complying with the European General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and meeting the requirements of the Information Commissioner's office (regulating data protection compliance in the UK). It is your responsibility to ensure that the work you undertake is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations.

In this job you will

In the next 12 months, you will:

- Quality assure papers being prepared for Panel to make sure they meet the necessary standards and that all relevant papers are available.

- Act as professional advisor for adoption Panels regarding Panel procedures and practices, the impact of any recommendations made by the Panel, and all relevant current and proposed Government legislation and guidelines.
- To be responsible, with the support of the Panel Chairs, for ensuring that applicants, adoptive parents and workers attending panel are treated with respect and all questions / matters raised are appropriate and managed sensitively.
- Provide advice and guidance to a range of professionals within the partner local authorities, to support with training needs and driving practice standards within individual teams.
- Provide advice and guidance to agency decision makers relating to cases heard at panel as requested.
- Work towards recruiting a diverse range of panel members to reflect modern Britain and the demographic of the geographical area.
- Ensure that the voice of the child and birth parent are valued, respected and considered as part of panel member training and that this is reflected in recommendations made.
- To take the lead on ensuring that there is a robust training and support package for all panel members to prioritise meeting children's needs by sharing and discussing relevant events, safeguarding issues, changes and updates to practice.
- To undertake with the assistance of the Panel Chairs, the development and performance review of the 30+ members of the Adoption Panel and to be responsible for the induction programme for new Panel members.
- To ensure that feedback is collected, analysed and fed back to Panel and key staff.
- To work with the Panel Chair and Panel administrator to ensure the Agency Decision Maker receives final minutes in order that all decisions are made within timescales. To ensure that the Panel process is completed to the point of decision making and all outcomes are recorded, and final versions of minutes and other documents are signed and filed.
- To provide quarterly reports on panel data, and quality assurance reports for the work of the Panel for presentation to the senior managers group and Partners executive. The role contributes to the ongoing development of the adoption service and you will sensitively evaluate, evidence and analyse practice and performance and feed back to panel and key staff.
- Embedding a culture of learning and reflective practice to assist with the development of services, informed by evidence based, best practice and disseminating learning from case reviews and disruptions to panel members.
- Support the service to ensure that cases are heard efficiently and in a timely manner at panel to ensure that a variety of adoptive families are available at the earliest opportunity for children with a plan of adoption or a plan of Fostering for Adoption therefore reducing demand within statutory services and contributing to the corporate objectives within your service area.
- Ensure that robust monitoring systems are in place so that availability on panel is carefully managed, cases are heard without delay and panels are run as cost effectively as possible whilst adhering to adoption regulations.

On an ongoing basis you will:

- Ensure you operate within GDPR guidelines by regularly reviewing data held and destroying information in line with retention schedules

- Be a counter signatory for signing off supplier invoices through Agresso within the adoption agency.

In this job you will need

You must be able to demonstrate the following essential requirements:-

- Degree in Social Work practice or equivalent (CQSW, DipSW, CSS, PQCCA) with at least five years relevant post-qualifying experience.
- Current registration with Social Work England.
- Relevant experience within adoption and experience of management as a team manager, senior practitioner or practice educator.
- A good understanding of the purpose and range of function of Panel
- Knowledge and fundamental understanding of current research, innovation, and good practice standards in relation to children & families and adoption provision at a national level.
- Knowledge of statutory and legislative frameworks which underpin safeguarding children, working together, collaboration and effective planning to ensure that children receive the help they need.
- The ability to manage a heavy workload under pressure and meet competing deadlines.
- Excellent time management and organisational skills.
- Good listening and communication skills.
- The ability to work as part of a team and as an individual, with an innovative approach to recognising problems and providing solutions.
- To be able to work independently and in partnership with colleagues, panel members and other professionals across Together for Adoption and its 5 partner agencies. The ability to work co-operatively as part of a multi-disciplinary team.
- Excellent time management and organisational skills. Able to respond flexibly to the demands of the post and prioritise and meet deadlines.
- An understanding of the effect of separation and loss on children/young people.
- Awareness of the richness of different kinds of families and their potential for meeting children/young people's needs.
- An understanding of the purpose and function of the Panel.
- Good listening and communication skills.
- The ability to read, process and analyse large amounts of complex and sometimes distressing information.
- The ability to take up issues with a range of professionals such as the management team for Together for Adoption, team and senior managers within the 5 partner local authorities, the Panel Chairs, medical advisors, or if appropriate the Agency Decision Makers.
- An understanding that children/young people should remain within their own family or community where this is possible and a commitment to maintaining contact between children/young people living in adoptive families and their birth families where this appears to be in the child/young person's best interests.
- A commitment to adoption as a way of meeting a child/young person's needs, where this appears to be in the child/young person's best interests.

- A commitment to safeguarding and promoting children/young people's welfare in adoption.
- A valuing of diversity in relation to issues of ethnicity, religion, gender, disability and sexuality and the drive to promote this within the panel through training, coaching and modelling and active recruitment to the panel.
- An understanding of, and a commitment to, the need for confidentiality.
- A willingness to increase knowledge and understanding of issues through reading, discussion and training.
- A willingness to contribute constructively to your annual review and, as required, to that of other members and the Chair.

Our culture

For us, it's not just about all we achieve as an organisation, but how we do it. Therefore, all employees are expected to display our **Team Wigan** behaviours.

Be Positive... take pride in all that you do

Be Accountable... be responsible for making things better

Be Courageous... be open to doing things differently


Be Kind... be helpful, generous and thoughtful towards yourself and others

#TeamWiganDeal


Together we will


Deliver Deal 2030, working alongside our communities to make Wigan Borough an amazing and inclusive place to live and work, building a better future.

We will


 Genuinely care for you and your wellbeing.

 Champion a culture that inspires you to thrive.


 Listen and engage with you to bring your ideas to life.


 Celebrate your contribution and support you to reach your goals and aspirations.

I will

 Look after my wellbeing and be kind to myself and others.

 Work with others across #TeamWigan to be courageous, innovative and embrace technology.

 Share my ideas and be accountable for making things happen.

 Own my development and let my passion and positivity shine through.