

Job Description and Personal Specification

Post: Chair of Family Placement Panel

Based at:

Reporting to: Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care

Job Description:

- To ensure that all decisions are child focused and in the child's best interests. The child must be the centre of all discussions.
- To champion Permanency Planning for children and to provide objective leadership of the Fostering panel.
- 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.
- To ensure that all those attending panel are treated with respect, courtesy and are made to feel comfortable so that they can contribute as fully as possible to aid good decision making.
- To address diversity issues and to promote anti-discriminatory practice at all times.
- 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.
- To read the circulated papers carefully before the meeting, to discuss any potential issues in advance with the administrator and panel adviser. To attend the meeting prepared to coordinate and to contribute to the panel discussion.
- To take responsibility for participating in the making of a recommendation, on each case, drawing on both personal and professional knowledge and experience.
- To participate, with other panel members, in advising on policy and procedural matters as required.
- To attend at least 85 per cent of meetings of the panel.

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- To be prepared to attend additional panels if possible, if requested.
- To address diversity issues and promote anti-discriminatory practice.
- To safeguard the confidentiality of all panel papers and panel discussions.
- To participate in panel induction and in panel training, which will be at least one day per year.
- *To complete a quality assurance report for each case at panel and to ensure that the views of all members of the panel are incorporated into the report*
- To participate constructively in an annual appraisal.
- *To participate in the annual appraisals of all panel members*
- *To attend the monthly business meetings to contribute to the review of and improvements in panel procedures*
- *To produce an annual report*
- To decide who will attend Panel in addition to Panel members
- To liaise with the agency decision-maker and with other senior managers as required.
- To ensure, with the agency adviser, that senior managers are aware of issues of concern, in relation both to individual cases and to more general matters.
- To assist in developing, promoting and monitoring policies and procedures and high standards of work in Fostering Service.
- To assist in planning training for panel members and to participate in this at least one day per year.
- To be involved as appropriate in the recruitment and appointment of a central list of panel members and in any consideration about terminating the appointment of a member.
- To promote good practice and consistency of approach and fairness by Panel members in assessing carers.
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- To ensure that Panel meetings are conducted in a professional and proper manner and that all items of business are covered.

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- To take responsibility for co-ordination of discussion and time keeping and ensure that all applicants, social workers and managers attending Panel are treated with respect and courtesy

Person Specification:

Experience and qualifications

- Experience, either professionally or personally or both, of the placement of children in foster families or of children being cared for away from their birth family.
- Significant experience of social work and fostering work, and the necessary skills to ensure that the Panel's work is carried out efficiently and sensitively.

Knowledge

- An appreciation of the effect of separation and loss on children.
- Awareness of the richness of different kinds of families and their potential for meeting children's needs.
- Some understanding of the purpose and function of the panel and of the agency which the panel is serving, or a willingness to learn.

Abilities

- Good listening and communication skills.
- The ability to read, process and analyse large amounts of complex and sometimes distressing information.
- The ability to make an assessment and to form a view, based on the written and verbal information presented to panel, and the confidence to articulate this at panel.
- The ability to use personal and/or professional knowledge and experience to contribute to discussions and decision-making in a balanced and informed manner.
- The ability to work co-operatively as part of a multi-disciplinary team.
- The ability to attend at least 85 percent of panel meetings, arriving on time, and to attend at least one training day each year.

Attitudes

- A commitment to keeping children within their own family or community where this is possible and to maintain contact between children living in

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foster 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 in foster care.
- A valuing of diversity in relation to issues of ethnicity, religion, gender, disability and sexuality.
- 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 their annual appraisal and that of other panel members.

Additional Expectations:

- The post is subject to an enhanced DBS check