

**Job Description**

**Job Title: Independent Panel Chair Fostering**

**Salary Grade: N/A**

**SCP: N/A**

**Job Family: Independent role**

**Job Profile:**

**Directorate:**

**Work Environment:**

**Reports to:**

**Number of Reports:**

Your normal place of work is currently at the Sandhill Centre, but this may be changed.

This position requires an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check.

**Purpose:**

To chair complex meetings and effectively manage the Fostering Panel. To demonstrate expertise in childcare planning and child development with detailed and up to date knowledge of the legislative framework for fostering, and a comprehensive understanding of the National Minimum Standards and Regulations and current good practice initiatives. To ensure that the panel functions in a non-discriminatory manner and has an inclusive approach.

**Key Responsibilities:**

* To chair Panel meetings, ensuring that all items of business are covered and that the Panel operates in accordance with Regulations and Guidance and the policies and procedures of the Fostering Service provider.
* 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.
* 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 and courtesy.
* 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 check draft minutes before they are sent to the Agency Decision Maker.
* To liaise with the Fostering Service Decision Maker and with other senior managers as required.
* To ensure, with the Panel Adviser that senior managers are aware of issues of concern in relation both to individual cases and to more general matters.
* To be involved in the recruitment and appointment of new Panel Members and in any consideration about terminating the appointment of a Panel Member.
* To review, with the Panel Adviser, the performance of Panel Members with an annual appraisal.
* To assist in developing, promoting and monitoring policies and high standards of work in the Fostering Service in Together for Children.
* To assist in planning training for Panel Members and to participate in at least one day per year of training.
* To safeguard the confidentiality of all Panel papers and Panel discussions.
* To be involved in:

deciding whether a case is adequate for submission to Panel

deciding how many Panel Members are required for a Panel

deciding on the attendance of observers at Panel

deciding on the participation of a Panel Member who declares an interest in a case

deciding when an extra Panel may be necessary

the preparation of a six monthly report on the Panel’s work

**Statutory requirements:**

In line with the Together for Children’s Statutory Requirements, all employees should:

Comply with the principles and requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in relation to the management of Together for Children Sunderland’s records and information and respect the privacy of personal information held by Together for Children Sunderland.

Comply with the principles and requirements of the Freedom in Information Act 2000.

Comply with the Together for Children Sunderland’s information security standards, and requirements for the management and handling of information.

Use information only for authorised purposes.

Undertaking the duties of the post in accordance with the Company’s Equal Opportunities Policy, Health and Safety Policy and legislative requirements and all other Company policies.

**Author**: Viv Sear

**Date**: 28.11.19



**Person Specification**

**Job Title: Independent Panel Chair Fostering**

**Role Profile reference:**

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| **Essential Requirements** | |
| **Qualifications and Experience:**   * Experience either professionally or personally or both, of the placement of children in foster care and/or kinship care via connected carer routes. * Substantial experience of chairing complex meetings. * Social Work Qualification and registration with HCPC (Social Work England from 1.12.19). | Application Form Interview |
| **Knowledge and understanding of:**   * An appreciation of the effect of separation and loss on children. * Awareness of the richness of diverse kinds of families and their potential for meeting children’s needs. * An understanding of the purpose and function of the Panel and of the Fostering Service Provider which the Panel is serving. * An understanding of the Regulations and National Minimum Standards underpinning fostering and of the legislative framework for the work of the Panel. | Application Form Interview |
| **Ability to:**   * The authority and competence to chair a Panel ensuring that the business is covered and that the Panel operates in accordance with Regulations, Guidance and the policies and procedures of the Fostering Service Provider. * Excellent interpersonal and listening skills. * The ability to communicate well and clearly both orally and in writing. * The ability to process and analyse large amounts of complex and sometimes distressing information. * 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 its Recommendations. * The ability to ensure those attending Panel are communicated with respectfully while also ensuring that Panel Members are able to explore openly and honestly any issues of concern they may have. * The ability to manage the expression of strongly held but possibly conflicting views by Panel Members and to help the Panel reach a recommendation which takes account of all these views. * The ability to take up issues as required with the Fostering Service Provider, liaising with the Panel Advisor, Agency Decision Maker and other senior managers. * The ability, working with the Panel Adviser, to review each Panel Member’s performance annually, ensuring that this is a helpful and constructive process for both the Panel Member and the Panel as a whole. * A commitment to ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved for children in care. * A commitment to ensure foster carers are well supported in their role of caring for children with a range of needs. * A valuing of diversity in relation to issues of ethnicity, religion, gender, disability and sexual orientation. * 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 complete a six-monthly report to the Agency on the role and input of the Panel. | Application form Interview |
| Commitment to Equal opportunities | Interview |

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