**Independent Adoption Panel Chair**

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| **Job Description** | |
| **Post title** | Independent Adoption Panel Chair |
| **No of Days and Pay** | Panel sits twice a month on alternate Wednesday mornings. Panel duration varies, between 4-6 hours.  £450 is paid per Panel |
| **Tenure** | 3 years |
| **Service Area** | Children & Young Peoples Services, Adoption Team |
| **Reporting to** | Adoption Team Manager |
| **Location** | An approved location |
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| **DBS** | This post is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure |

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| **Description of role** |

The Independent Adoption Panel Chair will be responsible for chairing complex meetings and will ensure that assessments of prospective adopters and matches for children are timely.

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| **Duties and responsibilities** |

The Independent Adoption Panel Chair role is outlined as below:

* 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 agency and to actively participate in the development of panel in line with the Signs Of Safety practice model used by Durham Children’s Services.
* To prepare for panel meetings, reading panel papers carefully, identifying key issues and alerting the agency adviser, if necessary, to ensure, as far as possible, that the case is adequate for submission to panel to support the continued development of best practice adoption social work..
* To facilitate the active, participate of all panels 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 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 be involved in checking and agreeing minutes with other panel members before they are sent to the decision-maker.
* To liaise with the decision-maker and with other senior managers as required.
* To ensure, with the agency panel advisor and agency decision maker, that senior managers are aware of issues of concern, in relation to both individual cases and to more general matters.
* To be involved as appropriate in the recruitment and appointment of central list and panel members and in any consideration about terminating the appointment of a member.
* To review, with the agency adviser, the performance of central list and panel members as the need arises and at least annually.
* To assist in development, promoting and monitoring policies and procedures and high standards of work in adoption and permanence in the agency.
* To assist in planning training for members and to participate in this at least one day per year.
* 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 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

• Preparing an annual report on the panel’s work

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| Person Specification – Independent Adoption Panel Chair | |
|  | Essential | |
| Experience & Qualifications | * Experience, either professionally or personally or both, of the placement of children in adoptive and foster families and of children being cared for away from their birth family * Experience of chairing complex meetings * Be a qualified Social worker with a minimum of 3 years experience and current Social Work England Registration | |
| 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 * An understanding of the purpose and function of the panel and of the agency that the panel is serving * An understanding of the Adoption processes and the legislative framework for the work of the panel, or the capacity to develop this knowledge quickly | |
| Skills & Abilities | * The authority and competence to chair a panel, ensuing that the business is covered and the panel operates in accordance with regulations, guidance and the policies and procedures of the agency * Ability to chair complex meetings virtually * Excellent interpersonal and listening skills * The ability to communicate well and clearly both verbally 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 recommendations * The ability to ensure that those attending panel are communicated with respectfully while also ensuring that panel members are able to explore any concerns they may have openly and honestly | |