Job Description

People Team use only	N/A

Job title	Independent Adoption Panel Chair
Grade	N/A
Service and team	Adopt North East Regional Adoption Agency
Directorate	CYPL
Line manager	Head of Adopt North East and Agency Decision Maker
People management responsibilities	None

Job Purpose

To provide independent chairing of Adopt North East's Adoption Panel, ensuring that all business is conducted fairly, rigorously and in accordance with adoption legislation, regulations, statutory guidance and National Minimum Standards.

The Independent Chair will ensure that panel recommendations are child-centred, evidence-based and focused on achieving the best possible permanence outcomes for children. The role also supports the agency's quality assurance and governance arrangements by identifying themes, promoting good practice and contributing to service improvement.

The Chair must be independent of the Adopt North East Regional Adoption Agency. This is a person who is not:

(i) an employee of Adopt North East
(ii) an elected member of a partner Local Authority to Adopt North East
(iii) an employee of a partner Local Authority who works in relation to the protection or placement of children, or
(iv) Is the adoptive parent of a child of a partner Local Authority placed for adoption in the last twelve months, or
(v) Has been approved as suitable to be an adoptive parent (by Adopt North East or any other Adoption Agency) unless at least 12 months has elapsed since the adoption order was made in respect of the child.

What you'll be doing

- 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.
- To prepare for panel meetings, reading panel papers carefully, identifying key issues and alerting the Agency Advisor to Panel 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 provide a 'casting vote' where the Panel cannot reach a consensus on its recommendation
- To ensure that all those attending panel are treated with respect and courtesy and that Panel remains respectful, anti-discriminatory and child-centred at all times.
- To ensure that Panel is inclusive and actively promotes equality, diversity and equity.
- To ensure that clear and accurate minutes are produced
- To liaise with the Agency Decision Maker and other managers as required.
- To ensure along with the Agency Advisor to Panel that the Head of Service and Agency Decision Maker is made 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 central list panel members and in any consideration about terminating the appointment of a member.
- To review, with the Agency Advisor to Panel, the performance of central list panel members as the need arises, and at least annually.
- To assist in developing, promoting and monitoring policies and procedures and high
- standards of work in the Agency.
- To assist in planning training for members and to participate in this at least once per year.
- To maintain the confidentiality of all panel papers and panel discussions.
- To take responsibility for the preparation of six-monthly reports of the Panel's work for presentation to the Executive Board of Adopt North East.
- 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.

You need to have		**How we will assess these**
Knowledge	• Understanding of adoption legislation, regulations and statutory guidance. • Knowledge of child development, attachment, trauma, separation and loss. • Understanding of the lifelong impact of adoption. • Knowledge of equality, diversity and anti-discriminatory practice. • 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.	Application form Interview References

	• 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.	
Qualifications, training and professional registrations		
Skills and experience	• 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 • Excellent communication and interpersonal skills. • Ability to facilitate challenging discussions constructively. • Strong analytical and decision-making skills. • Ability to achieve consensus while respecting diverse professional views. • High levels of integrity, independence and professional judgement.	Application form Interview References
It would be nice if you also have		**How we will assess these**
Knowledge	• Understanding of adoption or children's services	Application form Interview References
Qualifications, training and professional registrations	• Current or previous qualification as a Social Worker	Application form Interview References
Skills and experience	• Experience of chairing Adoption, Fostering or Permanence Panels.	Application form Interview

	• Social Work, legal, health, education, psychology or related professional background. • Experience of working within a Regional Adoption Agency. • Lived experience of adoption, fostering or kinship care.	References

Other information about the job	
Working Conditions	The role will be hybrid working – on MS-Teams or in-person
Working Requirements and Arrangements	A minimum of one panel per month Attendance at annual training and appraisal
Physical Requirements	The ability to sit through and concentrate on the full business of a Panel
DBS and Safeguarding Checks required	Enhanced
Politically Restricted	This post is not politically restricted under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
Please note: if you use your own vehicle for business, you must have a valid driving licence, MOT, and business use insurance.	

Our Values
We Listen | We Care | We Are Ambitious | We Are Good Value for Money
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
We treat our colleagues, residents and service users with dignity and respect, value differences, and challenge discrimination. We build inclusive teams and encourage diverse voices to shape our work.
Corporate Parenting
We all share responsibility for supporting children in our care – acting in their best interests as any parent would. This is known as corporate parenting and covers anyone working for the Local Authority no matter what their job role is. We promote safeguarding and report concerns appropriately.
Climate Change
We are reducing our carbon footprint by using less energy, travelling smarter, and recycling more. We welcome innovation that makes our services more sustainable.