

Foster Panel Member Job Description and Person Specification

Job Description

1. To read the circulated panel pack correspondence carefully before the meeting, to attend the Panels on time, be prepared to raise issues and to contribute to the panel discussion.
2. To take responsibility for participating in the making of a recommendation on each case, drawing on both personal and professional knowledge and experience.
3. To attend at least 75% of meetings of the panel. Panels are blended between virtual and face to face.
4. To keep confidential and secure all electronic, written and verbal information shared by Ascent staff, Carers and other Panel members.
5. To respond promptly to Panel coordinator/administrator.
6. To manage the Panel's considerations (suitability of foster carers; suitability of respite carers and the matching of children. Foster carers reviews, Allegations and complaints against foster carers and any other statutory responsibilities) and ensure that, if possible, consensus is reached.
7. To ensure that the Panel is clear about the reasons for the recommendations and that these have been accurately recorded and are put before the Agency's Decision Maker.
8. To manage Panel business and the effective participation of all Panel Members. To promote, and ensure that Panel Members promote, equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice in all aspects of the work of the Fostering Panel.
9. To participate in an agreed appraisal system.
10. To undertake to attend and participate in training events that will involve the equivalent to at least two half-day training sessions a year and two additional meetings per annum.
11. To read and approve draft Panel Minutes prior to their presentation at the next Panel.
12. To be prepared to attend additional panels where possible, if requested.

13. To participate, with other panel members, in advising on policy and procedural matters as required.
14. To address diversity issues and promote anti-discriminatory practice.
15. To participate constructively in the annual review of the panel membership.

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.

Knowledge

- An appreciation of the effect of separation and loss on children.
- Awareness of the richness 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 75% of panel meetings, arriving on time, and training each year.

Attitudes

- A commitment to keeping within their own family or community where this is possible and to maintain contact between children living in foster families and their birth families where this appears to be in the child's best interest.
- A commitment to fostering as a way of meeting a child's need for permanence, where this appears to be in the child's best interest.
- 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 the annual review of their panel membership and, as required to that of other panel members and the Chair.