

Job Description

Job Title	Independent Fostering Panel Vice Chair
Grade	Casual
Reporting To	Fostering Panel Advisor
JD Ref	-

Purpose

The Independent Panel Vice Chair plays a pivotal role in ensuring that Wirral Council's Fostering Panel operates effectively, ethically, and in accordance with statutory regulations. The Vice chair leads panel meetings, facilitates robust discussions, and ensures that recommendations are child-focused, evidence-based, and aligned with the Council's values and procedures.

Main Duties And Responsibilities

Behavioural:

- Enjoy, achieve, create impact, and thrive in the role and organisation.
- Live our values in the role and organisation.
- Ensure all attendees are treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy throughout the panel process.
- Address diversity issues and promote anti-discriminatory practice at all times.

Communication, Engagement and Training:

- Read panel papers thoroughly in advance, identify key issues, and liaise with the Panel Advisor to ensure cases are ready for submission.
- Encourage active participation from all panel members, guiding the panel to make clear, well-evidenced recommendations with supporting rationale.
- Communicate effectively with the Agency Decision Maker and senior managers as required.
- Work with the Panel Advisor to highlight concerns about individual cases or broader service issues to senior management.
- Participate in the recruitment, appointment, and - if necessary - termination of panel members.
- Assist in planning and delivering panel member training and attend at least one training day per year.
- Contribute to the panel's annual report.

Data Analysis and Decision-Making:

- Determine when additional panels are needed.

Performance Management:

- Support the review of panel members' performance, at least annually, in collaboration with the Panel Advisor.

Compliance:

- Adhere to and comply with all relevant corporate policies and procedures including Health & Safety, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Corporate Governance and Code of Conduct.
- Lead panel meetings, ensuring all agenda items are covered and that the panel operates in line with fostering regulations and Wirral Council's policies and procedures.
- Ensure accurate minutes are recorded, including any serious reservations, and collaborate with panel members to approve draft minutes before submission to the Agency Decision Maker.
- Contribute to the development and monitoring of fostering policies, procedures, and service standards.
- Maintain strict confidentiality regarding all panel papers and discussions.

Other:

- Any other duties commensurate with the grade.
- Decide whether cases are suitable for panel submission.
- Approve attendance of observers.
- Manage conflicts of interest.

Role Specific Knowledge, Experience And Skills

Knowledge & Skills

- Understanding of the impact of separation and loss on children.
- Appreciation of diverse family structures and their potential to meet children's needs.
- Awareness of the panel's role within the fostering service and wider agency.
- Knowledge of fostering legislation, standards, and processes—or the ability to acquire this quickly.
- Authority and competence to lead panel meetings effectively.
- Strong interpersonal and listening skills.
- Clear and confident communication - both verbal and written.
- Ability to identify key issues and propose solutions.
- Skilled in facilitating inclusive discussions and managing differing views.
- Ability to liaise with senior managers and escalate concerns appropriately.
- Capacity to support panel member performance reviews constructively.

Experience

- 2-3 years' experience of sitting on a fostering panel
- Proven experience of chairing complex meetings.



ACCOUNTABLE



AMBITIOUS



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PROFESSIONAL

Attitudes & Values

- Commitment to keeping children within their families or communities where appropriate.
- Belief in fostering as a positive and child-centred care option.
- Dedication to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.
- Valuing diversity across ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, and sexuality.
- Respect for confidentiality and professional boundaries.
- Willingness to engage in ongoing learning and development.
- Openness to constructive feedback



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