

Role profile

Job Title:	Chair of Adoption Panel	Grade:	Day/Half rate
Department:	Children and Families (Adopt London West)	Post no.:	43872
Directorate:	Children's Services	Location:	Various

Role reports to:	Head of Service Adopt London West
Direct reports:	Panel Members
Indirect reports:	n/a

Job description

Recruitment practices to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and/or vulnerable adults apply to this post in addition to the requirement to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Purpose of role

- 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 Adopt London West.
- 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 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.
- 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 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 Adopt London West Agency Adviser, the performance of central list and panel members as the need arises, and at least annually.

Key accountabilities

- 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 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.
- Recommendations will be required on the following:
 - Whether adoption is a suitable plan for a child whose parent/s are seeking adoption via consent for their child formerly referred to as a relinquished child.
 - Whether applicant(s) are suitable to adopt
 - Whether a child should be placed for adoption with particular prospective adopter(s)
- 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, with the agency adviser, that senior managers are aware of issues of concern, in relation both to individual cases and to more general matters.
- To assist in developing, promoting and monitoring policies and procedures and high standards of work in adoption services in the Adopt London West RAA.
- To assist in planning training for members and to participate in this at least one day per year.
- To safeguard the confidentiality of 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;
 - Reviewing panel members annually
 - preparing the 6-monthly and an annual report on the panel's work.

- Attending quarterly meetings with the Head of Service

Key performance indicators

- An excellent knowledge and clear understanding of all relevant current legislation and regulations that govern the duties of panel.
- Compliance with legislation, regulations and guidance.
- Ability to enforce good policies and practices in adoption work and raise issues that will need to be considered by Adopt London West and partner Local Authorities.
- Understanding of the principles of good practice in childcare planning.

Key relationships (internal and external)

- Adopt London West Head of Service and Agency Decision Makers of partner local authorities.
- Panel members.
- Children, families and carers.
- Team Managers, Senior Social Workers, Social Workers, ASYEs and students

Authority level

- Responsible for chairing panel meetings and ensure the active participation of all panel members.
- Responsible for the annual review of panel members.
- Contribute to departmental Adopt London West service planning
- Responsible for the on-going review of research and best practice on panel processes and childcare planning.

Person specification

Community and partnership working are essential for all roles as are a commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and ensuring Health and Safety at Work for everyone working at Ealing Council.

Recruitment practices to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and/or vulnerable adults apply to this post in addition to the requirement to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Essential knowledge, skills and abilities

1. A commitment to keeping children within their own family or community where this is possible and to maintaining contact between children living in adoptive families and their birth families where this appears to be in the child's best interest.
2. A commitment to adoption as a way of meeting a child's need for permanence, where this appears to be in the child's best interests.

3. Extensive knowledge and understanding of the emotional impact and psychological issues affecting adopters and adoptees, especially in relation to child development and the effects of separation and loss. This should also include an awareness of the richness of diverse kinds of families and their potential for meeting children's needs.
4. An understanding of the legal duties and function of the panel and of the agency that the panel is serving, as well as the authority and competence to chair a panel, ensuring that the business is covered and that the panel operates in accordance with any regulations and guidance and the policies and procedures of the agency.
5. Excellent verbal and written communication, interpersonal and listening skills to enable meaningful dialogue within panel, the Adopt London West Service and partner local authorities.
6. The ability to process and analyse large amounts of complex and sometimes distressing information, as well as the ability to identify key issues and possible solutions and to communicate these clearly.
7. Ability to ensure full participation of all panel members and consideration of different opinions, while everyone remains respectful while exploring any concerns openly and honestly to ensure that recommendations are made which are in the best interest of the child.
8. The ability to manage the expression of strongly held but possibly conflicting views by panel members and to help the panel to reach a recommendation which takes account of all these views. The ability to take up issues as required with the agency, liaising with the decision-maker and other senior managers.
9. A valuing of diversity in relation to issues of ethnicity, religion, gender, disability and sexuality.
10. An understanding of, and a commitment to, the need for confidentiality.
11. A willingness to increase knowledge and understanding of issues through reading, discussion and training.
12. A willingness to contribute constructively to the annual review of their role as panel Chair, this of other panel members and contribution to the agency's adoption panel annual report.
13. Ability to undertake occasional extra or emergency panel meetings.

Essential qualification(s) and experience

1. Experience of Chairing complex meetings with a number of stakeholders
2. Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of current Adoption practice and the modernising adoption agenda.

A social work qualification is desirable but not essential, lived experience of adoption related issues and experience of managing panel complex meetings is most relevant.

Values and behaviours

Improved life for residents	Trustworthy	Collaborative	Innovative	Accountable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is passionate about making Ealing a better place • Can see and appreciate things from a resident point of view • Understands what people want and need • Encourages change to tackle underlying causes or issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does what they say they'll do on time • Is open and honest • Treats all people fairly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitious and confident in leading partnerships • Offers to share knowledge and ideas • Challenges constructively and respectfully listens to feedback • Overcomes barriers to develop our outcomes for residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tries out ways to do things better, faster and for less cost • Brings in ideas from outside to improve performance • Takes calculated risks to improve outcomes • Learns from mistakes and failures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages all stakeholders to participate in decision making • Makes things happen • Acts on feedback to improve performance • Works to high standards