

Kent County Council

Job Description: *Adoption Panel Adviser*

Directorate: Children, Young People and Education

Unit/Section: Corporate Parenting – Adoption

Grade: KR11

Responsible to: Panel Team Manager

Purpose of the Job:

- To act as Agency Adviser to the Adoption Panel(s), through the provision of advice to the Chair, Panel members, agency and agency decision makers concerning:
 - The Agency's policies, procedures and practices
 - Children Act 1989
 - The Adoption & Children Act 2002 and associated regulations
 - Government Guidelines on Adoption
 - Children and Families Act 2014
- To assist with the appointment, performance monitoring, review and termination of core panel members and members of the Central List.
- To be responsible for liaison between the Agency, Agency Decision Makers, Chairs and the Adoption Panel, including feedback on performance.
- Supervise the role of the Adoption Panel Administrators to ensure that an efficient service is provided i.e. minutes are of good quality, and distributed as required, that the booking system is effective etc.
- To attend the Panel as adviser
- The Adviser must be a social worker with at least five years post qualification experience and relevant management experience. Evidence of continuing Professional Development must be maintained. An understanding of diversity and difference issues is essential.

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Work closely with the Head of Regional Adoption Agency to ensure the recommendations following the review of adoption panels are implemented.
- Ensure that panel procedures meet the legislative and national minimum standards requirement and are updated as required.
- Contribute to the preparation for inspections and ensure that the requirements based on the inspection methodology are met.
- Support and challenge panel chairs as appropriate.
- Support Agency Decision Makers in fulfilling their role in the most efficient and effective way.
- Supervise the role of the Adoption Panel Administrators to ensure that an efficient service is provided i.e. that minutes are of good quality, and distributed as required, the booking system is effective and high quality accurate management information is provided.
- Advise social workers, managers and decision makers on matters concerning the adoption process.
- Quality assure and oversee the collation and presentation of papers to the Chairs, Panel Members, and Agency Decision Maker, including cases where the child's adoption plan is not presented to a Panel.
- Highlight children for whom early family finding should be pursued to the Family Finding Team Manager.
- Liaise with team managers to quality assure papers such as the Child's Permanence Report, the Prospective Adopters Report, the Adoption Placement Report, and relevant Special Guardianship Reports.
- Recommend withdrawal or deferral of cases in discussion with the Panel Chair where there are concerns and inform the relevant Service Manager.
- Ensure that Team Managers and Service Managers are provided feedback on individual cases (prior to cases being presented to the panel).
- Ensure that a robust performance management framework is developed and implemented which takes into account the national and internal performance requirements.
- Ensure a robust quality assurance framework is developed and implemented which takes into account learning from current practices and feedback from applicants, social workers, etc.

- Ensure the panel membership is correctly constituted, and reflects a diverse membership in relation to gender, sexuality, race, disability and experience.
- Organise the appointment and review of Panel members and ensure that new panel members are inducted and supported as required in the National Minimum Standards, including Central List members.
- Ensure Panel members' files meet the requirements set out in the standards, including creating a separate file for each Panel member containing a record of DBS check outcomes, signed confidentiality agreement, references, annual review reports etc.
- Put in place a system to ensure that all panel members have a current DBS check with updates taking place every 3 years.
- Ensure the Chairs' annual appraisal is undertaken by the Agency Decision Maker and written up.
- Undertake the annual review of Panel members' appraisal together with the chair.
- Keep up to date with and advise Panels on relevant changes to legislation, practice, policy and research, and ensure any which impact on panel work are implemented.
- Ensure that twice-yearly meetings are held between the Panel Chairs, Agency Decision Makers and relevant senior managers.
- Provide a written quarterly report for agency decision makers and Head of Adoption Service in relation to the practice, policy and organisational issues raised by Panel members and from own observations.
- Ensure that representations to the Agency or to the Independent Review Mechanism are dealt with appropriately.
- Ensure panel chairs' and members invoices' are authorised and paid in a timely way.
- Undertake work as required by the Head of Adoption Service or other senior managers including agency decision makers.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what their main duties are. It may be amended from time to time without change to the level of responsibility appropriate to the grade of post.

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Person Specification: *Adoption Panel Advisor*

The following outlines the criteria for this post. Applicants who have a disability and who meet the criteria will be shortlisted.

Applicants should describe in their application how they meet these criteria.

	CRITERIA
QUALIFICATIONS	<p>Degree in Social Work, CQSW/DipSW or equivalent and registration as a social worker with Social Work England.</p> <p>Proven experience of relevant professional development.</p>
EXPERIENCE	<p>The Adviser must be a social worker with extensive post qualification experience.</p> <p>Experience as an adoption team manager or someone who has more senior management experience and who has experience of adoption.</p> <p>Substantial experience of family placement and work with children and families including complex cases.</p> <p>Experience of successful inter-agency working.</p> <p>Providing consultation, mentoring and developing qualified staff/Social Work Assistants or equivalent</p> <p>Demonstrable experience of working with Adoption in a Professional post-qualifying practice in Children's Services fieldwork setting. (Statutory, voluntary or independent).</p> <p>Experience of care planning policy and standards.</p> <p>An understanding of implementation of Adoption & Fostering Regulations and National Standards.</p>
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<p>Ability to quality assure through supervision, case audit and review to ensure high standards of practice within the team.</p> <p>Ability to communicate effectively with Members, service users, and colleagues at all levels and to build effective partnerships internally and with external agencies.</p> <p>Work to tight deadlines.</p> <p>Excellent oral and written communication skills, including the ability to write and present clearly for a wide range of audiences.</p>

	<p>Ability to work within an Equal Opportunities, non-discriminatory framework.</p> <p>Ability to assess effectively the performance and development needs of social work staff.</p> <p>Effective negotiating and interpersonal skills.</p> <p>Identify, attain and maintain high levels of practice.</p>
KNOWLEDGE	<p>High level working knowledge of current relevant legislative framework and national policy.</p> <p>Ability to interpret and disseminate policy and research.</p> <p>Expertise and understanding of child development and attachment theory.</p> <p>Ability to appraise and develop staff.</p> <p>Ability to interpret and analyse statistical and written information.</p> <p>Understanding/knowledge of adoption, fostering, disability, and children and families issues.</p> <p>An understanding of diversity and difference.</p>
KENT VALUES AND CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES	<p>Kent Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are brave. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge • We are curious to innovate and improve • We are compassionate, understanding and respectful to all • We are strong together by sharing knowledge • We are all responsible for the difference we make <p>Our values enable us to build a culture that is:</p> <p>Flexible/agile - willing to take (calculated) risks and want people that are flexible and agile</p> <p>Curious - constantly learning and evolving</p> <p>Compassionate and Inclusive - compassionate, understanding and respectful to all</p> <p>Working Together - building and delivering for the best interests of Kent</p> <p>Empowering - Our people take accountability for their decisions and actions</p> <p>Externally Focused - Residents, families and communities at the heart of decision making</p>