

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

Designation: Independent Fostering Panel Member **Grade:** Casual

Main Purpose of the job:

We are looking to recruit independent Fostering panel members with a variety of professional and personal experiences to join our central list of panel members to ensure we have sufficient members to enable panel to carry out its regulatory functions.

We are interested in recruiting people from a range of diverse backgrounds and experiences but particularly in candidates who are social workers with 3 years post qualifying experience working with Children with Disabilities and in those working in the health sector including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Responsibilities and Personal Duties:

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 held face to face.
4. To participate with other panel members, in advising on policy and procedural matters as required.
5. To address diversity issues and promote anti-discriminatory practice.
6. To respond promptly to Panel coordinator/administrator.
7. To Safeguard the confidentiality of all panel papers and panel discussions.
8. To participate in an agreed appraisal system.
9. To participate in Panel induction and in Panel training, this will be at least one day per year.
10. To be prepared to attend additional panels where possible, if requested.
11. To participate constructively in the annual review of your central list panel membership.
12. 12. To adhere to the boroughs panel members code of conduct.

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.
- A social work qualification and registration with SWE or Health qualification is necessary.
- A relevant qualification that demonstrates an ability to read complex information.

Knowledge

- An understanding of neglect, trauma, separation, and loss on children who are cared for by the Local Authority and in foster care.
- Understanding of the diverse needs of children who are looked after and in foster care.
- 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.
- Must be IT literate.

Abilities

- Good listening and communication skills.
- The ability to read, process and analyze 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.

Panels take place once a month although additional panels may be held when required. Panel meetings are held face to face.

Fees for full day panel attendance are £250 and £150 for half day panel. The fee includes reading and preparation time.

DBS Disclosure Required? **No** **Basic** **Enhanced**

(Tick as appropriate – guidance available from your HR Advisor)