

The Adoption Panel – How it Works

Why a Panel:

The 1976 Adoption Act and specifically the Adoption Agencies Regulations 1984, as amended by new regulations 1997, require that all Adoption Agencies have an Adoption Panel and there are specific requirements laid down regarding their purpose and composition.

Composition:

Leicestershire Adoption Panel is accountable to the Social Services Cabinet. There are ten named members of the Panel, who serve for appointed time periods, which may be renewed.

The multidisciplinary nature of the Panel is reflected in the membership. The Panel comprises 3 independent members, who bring personal and professional experience and expertise from the voluntary sector, as well as representing a consumer voice; 3 council elected members - one of whom is also a member of the Social Services Cabinet; the Agency's Medical Adviser and 3 Leicestershire Social Services Child Care Managers - one of these, a Senior Manager, is Chairperson to the Panel.

The quorum for Panel is six (6). The Agency's Legal Adviser usually attends the Panel, and, on occasion, there will be a Social Services staff member observing the Panel.

The Adoption Panel is minuted and a copy will be sent to the social worker attending for the case.

When & where does Panel Meetings take Place?

Panel Meetings are held at Leicestershire County Hall, Glenfield, in one of the Committee Rooms and take place once a month on a Thursday starting at 14:00 (occasionally earlier). Deadline for submitting all relevant paperwork is 2 weeks prior to the date of Panel.

The Purpose of Panel:

The Adoption Panel makes recommendations for the Adoption Agency to decide upon. The Panel's recommendations are passed to the Agency's "Decision Maker" (Assistant Director, Children's Services). Decisions are usually made within a few days of the Panel. In special circumstances, the Panel Recommendations and/or Agency's decision might be deferred for further exploration.

The Panel will consider the following recommendations:

- Whether Adoption or Freeing for Adoption is in the best interest of a particular child;
- Whether particular applicants are suitable as Prospective Adopters;
- Whether particular Prospective Adopters would be suitable Adoptive Parents for a particular child;
- Which support services may be appropriate for a child when placed with adopters;
- Whether a Residence Order is in the best interest of a particular child, and whether the applicants are suitable for that child, and
- Whether a Residence Allowance should be payable to particular applicants.

Format for Discussion:

Social Workers are given an approximate time to attend. The Panel Members will have read the papers relating to the case prior to the Panel Meeting and will have a preliminary discussion before the social worker for the case is called in.

During the preliminary discussion, the Panel will have highlighted issues for discussion or points for clarification, and decided on certain questions, which, will be put to the Social Worker. The Social Worker will be asked to update the Panel on any new developments since the reports were written.

Following the discussion, the Panel will make its recommendations. A vote will be taken if there is disagreement among members.

Applicants:

Applicants can attend Panel when they are being considered for approval as prospective adopters and when they are being matched with a child or children. A separate leaflet is available, which explains this.

Confidentiality:

Case papers are collected from all Panel Members after each Panel Meeting and retained by the Adoption Team. All Panel Members have signed a confidentiality agreement and are aware of the confidential nature of the Panel.

For further information:

If you want further information regarding Adoption Panel or other matters relating to adoption, please contact the Adoption Team.

Address:
Adoption Team
Eagle House
11 Friar Lane
Leicester
LE1 5RB
Tel.: 01162995899
Fax: 0116 299 5900