

VOLUNTEER PANEL MEMBER ROLE DESCRIPTION AGREEMENT

This role is voluntary and unpaid; however, expenses can be claimed as necessary.

Role Description

1. To read the circulated papers carefully before the meeting and attend the meeting 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 meetings of the panel as specified by your agency.
4. To be prepared to attend additional panels if possible if requested.
5. To participate with other members, in advising on policy and procedural matters as required.
6. To address diversity issues and promote anti-discriminatory practice.
7. To safeguard the confidentiality of all panel papers and panel discussions.
8. To participate in induction and training which will be at least one day per year.
9. To participate constructively in the annual review of your central list panel membership.
10. To adhere to the agency's panel member 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 will be necessary for certain panel members.

Knowledge

- An appreciation of the effects of separation and loss on children.
- Awareness of the richness of different kinds of families and their potential for meeting children's needs.
- Some understanding of the purpose and functioning of the panel and the agency that the panel is serving or a willingness to learn.

Abilities

- Good listening and communication skills.
- The ability to read, process and analyse large amounts of complex and sometimes distressing information.
- The ability to make an assessment and form a view based on the written and verbal information presented to the 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 panel meetings as required, arriving on time, and to attend at least one training day each year.

Attitudes and Values

- A commitment to keeping children within their own family or community where this is possible and to maintaining contact between children living in foster families and their birth families where this appears to be in the child's best interests.
- A commitment to fostering as a way of meeting a child's needs, where this appears to be in the child's best interests.
- 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 your central list and panel memberships and, as required, to that of other panel members and the Chair.

Jennifer Lord and Deborah Cullen (2022) 'Effective Fostering Panels' Coram BAAF.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE:

- Experience to support fostering panel volunteer work.
- Willingness to commit to attending panel meetings, annual training and appraisal.
- An understanding of the teamwork required.
- Understanding of the Fostering Service panel members role
- Ability to meet the requirements of the role.
- Willing to undertake training.
- Able to use initiative and judgement whilst volunteering for the Agency/charity.
- This volunteer role will be subject to a standard DBS check

Foster Care Matters will do our best to:

- Introduce you to how the organisation works and your role in it and to provide appropriate training and support for your agreed role.
- Provide regular meetings with a staff contact so that you can tell us how you are getting on and get feedback from us.
- Respect your skills and experience and try to match them with the right role for you wherever possible.
- Do our best to meet your individual wishes.
- Reimburse you for agreed and reasonable expenses incurred in accordance with the expenses policy.
- Make necessary arrangements to ensure your health, safety and welfare as a volunteer.
- Offer equal opportunities to everyone who wants to volunteer.
- Provide access to trained members of staff to support, guide and advise you.

What the agency/ charity aims to agree in return:

- Aim for high standards of efficiency, reliability and quality in my volunteering.
- Give as much notice as possible whenever I cannot carry out volunteering time when expected.
- Support, respect and adhere to the Agency's rules, policies and procedures including all aspects of safeguarding/child protection, health & safety, equal opportunities, data protection and confidentiality.
- Always consider and protect the Agency's good reputation in my actions and conduct.
- Act responsibly and within the law.
- Maintain the confidential information of the Agency and its service users.
- Let my staff contact know first if I have any problems so that we can find a solution together.
- Failure to meet the terms of this formal volunteering agreement may result in the termination of the volunteering role with us.

Role Description Agreed

Volunteer

Name		Date	
Signed			

Contact Manager

Name		Date	
Signed			