



Foster Care Connect is an independent fostering agency – established in 2004. Our mission is to provide safe and loving home-based care for children and young people in Scotland who are not able to live with their own family. We strive to enable them to achieve and have the confidence to develop and grow healthy relationships at home, in their communities and into adult life.

Foster Care Connect is a not-for-profit agency that is based in Galashiels in the Scottish Borders, we currently employ 9 dedicated individuals who share our similar values and are looking to appoint a new Independent Panel Chair to our Fostering Panel.

At Foster Care Connect the role of Panel Chair is crucial to our success in improving outcomes for our care experienced children and young people. You will need to have experience and confidence in effectively chairing complex meetings with a range of stakeholders, underpinned by a robust knowledge, and understanding of Fostering Panel processes and the legislative context within which the panel operates, including Safeguarding procedures.

You will be responsible for ensuring our Fostering Panel is an inclusive, anti-discriminatory forum which promotes informed and responsible decision making with children at the centre. You will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the legislative framework and National Standards for Fostering, current good practice initiatives, and an expertise in planning for Children in Care and child development. As Panel Chair you will have excellent interpersonal, oral, and written communication skills, experience of managing complex dynamics within meetings and be able to put prospective and approved foster carers at ease.

Your role will extend to supporting the development of our Fostering Service through strong links to the Panel Advisor, Fostering Management Team, and the Agency Decision Maker. The expectation is that you will provide leadership to the Panel by being well prepared; reading panel papers carefully identifying key strengths and issues and alerting the Panel Advisor, if necessary, regarding any concerns.

Effective time management, and the ability to identify and summarise key information will be skills needed to ensure an effective Panel which provides robust recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker.

In addition to chairing the Fostering Panel, there will be a requirement for the Panel Chair to chair business meetings, participate and facilitate in Panel members appraisals and attend various training events throughout the year.

It is desirable that you hold a qualification in Social Work and are registered with the SSSC, with experience, either professionally or personally or both, of the placement of children in fostering families and of children being cared for away from their birth family.

The contract will be awarded for three years subject to annual review.

**Panels take place approximately 6-8 times a year. Each Panel can consist of between 2 to 4 registrations, reviews, or de-registrations. The rate for this post includes preparation reading for the Panel, approval of minutes and travel costs. Full day Panel payment is £500, half day Panel is £300. Any additional hours required will be paid at £40/hr plus mileage.**

Main duties:

- 1 To chair panel meetings, ensuring that all items of business are covered and that the panel operates in accordance with regulations, guidance and standards and the policies and procedures of the agency.
- 2 To prepare for panel meetings, reading panel papers carefully, identifying key issues and alerting the appropriate person in the agency if necessary to ensure, as far as possible, that the case is adequate for submission to panel.
- 3 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, with the reasons for these.
- 4 To ensure that all those attending panel are treated with respect and dignity.
- 5 To address diversity issues and to always promote inclusive practice, upholding the rights of others.
- 6 To ensure that clear and accurate minutes are written, which record any serious reservations that panel members may have, and to be involved in checking and signing minutes before they are sent to the Agency Decision Maker.
- 7 To liaise with the Agency Decision Maker and with other Senior Managers as required.
- 8 To ensure that Senior Managers are aware of strengths and concern, in relation to individual cases and to more general matters.
- 9 To be involved as appropriate in the recruitment and appointment of panel members and in any consideration about terminating the appointment of a member.
- 10 To participate in appraisals of panel members as agreed by the agency.
- 11 To assist in developing, promoting, and monitoring policies and procedures and high standards of work in the fostering services of the agency.
- 12 To assist in planning training for members and to participate in at least one day per year.

13 To safeguard the confidentiality of all panel papers and panel discussions.

14 To be involved in:

- ensuring that paperwork and statutory checks are satisfactory 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 the case;
- deciding when an extra panel member may be necessary;
- the preparation of an annual report on the panel's work.

If you believe you are the right person for this role or would like an informal discussion, please initially contact us at: [enquiries@fcconnect.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@fcconnect.co.uk)

**Closing date: 18.08.2024**