



Home Office

CHAIR OF THE INDEPENDENT FAMILY RETURNS PANEL

Recruitment Information Pack

November 2016



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | Bronze

Contents

About the Independent Family Returns Panel	3
Role Description	4
Person Specification	5
Response Instructions	7
Indicative Timetable	8
Terms of Appointment	9
Annex A – Application Forms (attached separately)	-

About the Independent Family Returns Panel

The Independent Family Returns Panel ('the Panel') was established in March 2011 to provide independent case-by-case advice to the Home Office on how to best safeguard children's welfare during a family's enforced return. This coincided with the national roll out of other key elements of the new family returns process.

Section 3 of the Immigration Act 2014 put the Panel on a statutory footing. In particular, it places a statutory duty on the Secretary of State to consult the Panel:

- a) in each family returns case where return is being enforced; and
- b) in each case where the Home Office proposes holding a family in pre-departure accommodation.

The Nature of the Work

The advice provided by the Panel helps to ensure that individual family return plans take full account of the welfare of the children involved and that the Home Office fulfils its responsibilities under section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009.

The Panel publishes reports on the advice it has given, including information on any cases where the method of return differed from that advised by the Panel. The latest report can be viewed [here](#).

The Panel comprises of an independent chair and eight members, with a mix of education, medical, policing, and safeguarding expertise. The Panel also maintains an overview of the handling of families who are denied entry to the UK at the border to ensure that detention in such cases is kept to a minimum.

The Panel usually meets to consider cases each Tuesday and Thursday, by telephone conference. In very exceptional circumstances, the Panel may be convened at short notice. Members form a pool from which the secretariat can draw in order for it to operate effectively.

In addition, Panel members attend regular meetings with the Home Office in London up to six times per year. These meetings give Panel members the opportunity to meet face to face with key Home Office officials involved in the family returns process, and to discuss policy and practice issues.

Role Description

Job Title: Chair of the Independent Family Returns Panel.

Remuneration: The role is remunerated at £500 per day, based on an expected time commitment of two days per week.

Appointment: An initial term of three years.

Location: Flexible within the United Kingdom. However, the successful candidate will be required to attend meetings at Home Office Headquarters in Central London on occasion.

Reporting to: Minister for Immigration.

Purpose:

The Chair is appointed by the Home Secretary to oversee the operation of the Panel. The Chair has overall accountability for the Panel's work and is responsible for overseeing the operation and output of the Panel, in collaboration with the Home Office Sponsor Team and Family Returns Unit.

Key Responsibilities:

The Panel Chair is responsible for:

- providing effective leadership to:
 - deliver the safeguarding objectives of the family returns policy; and
 - manage the Panel's operation to ensure the necessary level of safeguarding of children's interests;
- representing the Panel and its work to a wide audience, including ministers, stakeholder and interest groups, family representatives, immigration officials, the public and the media;
- examining, and where appropriate, challenging how the Home Office manages family returns to ensure child safeguarding is considered in their planning;
- ensuring the Panel operates under a presumption of openness, in so far as this does not interfere with necessary individual confidentiality requirements; and
- conducting appraisals of Panel members.

The Panel Chair will do this by:

- chairing Panel meetings twice a week, taking difficult decisions on sensitive and complex cases on which Panel members may disagree;
- ensuring all Panel members have the opportunity to be heard and that any significant diversity of opinion is fully explored and discussed;
- ensuring Panel activities remain within an allocated budget;
- maintaining clear, fair and systematic processes;
- developing positive working relationship between the Panel, the Home Office, and other government departments as appropriate;
- publishing an annual report on the work of the Panel and its advice to Ministers; and
- acting in the public interest in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>.

Person Specification

It is essential in your supporting statement that you provide evidence and proven examples against each of the selection criteria in **Part One only** of the person specification, in so far as you are able. These responses will be further developed and explored with those candidates invited for interview, together with the criteria listed in **Part Two**.

Part One – Essential Criteria

Skills, abilities and experience

- A successful track record of leading social welfare or children’s safeguarding issues in the public, private, or voluntary sector.
- Evidence of leadership, providing direction to a team, delivering results through others and handling relationships with senior figures.
- The ability to gain respect and keep the confidence of key stakeholders, including Ministers and senior government officials through effective communication and influencing skills (both oral and written).
- Resilience and the ability to remain independent to achieve objectives in an environment of regular scrutiny by the media, the public, and others.

- Strong written skills – including experience of or evidence of the ability to produce detailed written reports.

Desirable

- Experience of balancing risks and making decisions about vulnerable people in an operational setting.
- Experience of working with children and families from diverse communities and backgrounds and in challenging contexts.
- Experience and understanding of the immigration and asylum system, especially where it affects children and families.

Appointment Part Two – Knowledge, Skills and Attributes

Personal qualities

- The confidence and ability to take overall accountability for the Panel's work and representing the Panel when required before Government Ministers.
- The ability to recognise and draw appropriately on professional expertise.
- Empathetic but decisive leadership that makes progress through consensus, on the basis of written and oral information/evidence.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, having the ability to work effectively with both staff within the organisation and with external stakeholders.
- Personal integrity and the ability to demonstrate authority, commitment, and consistency.

Response Instructions

If you wish to apply for this position, please supply the following by **midnight on Sunday 04 December 2016**:

- A **comprehensive CV** setting out your career history and including details of any professional qualifications.
- A **short supporting statement** (maximum two sides A4, minimum 11 font) giving evidence of the strength and depth of your ability to meet the essential criteria for the role. Please provide specific examples to demonstrate how you meet each of the experience, qualities and skill areas identified in the person specification.
- In addition, please also complete and return via email the **forms at Annex A**, relating to referees, diversity, nationality, political activity and conflicts of interest.

Completed applications should be emailed to publicappointments@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

If you cannot apply online, please post applications to:

Will Nixon
Home Office Public Appointments Team
Ground Floor Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Please note it is your responsibility to ensure we receive your application by the closing date.

Further Information

If you have any queries about any aspect of this role, or merely wish to have an informal discussion, then please contact Linda Robinson in the Home Office Public Protection Unit on 0207 035 0853.

If your query relates to the public appointments process then please contact Will Nixon in the Public Appointments Team in the first instance on 0207 035 5987.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

The Home Office is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, irrespective of race, age, disability, gender, marital status, religion, sexual orientation and transgender.

As part of the application process we ask candidates to complete equal opportunities monitoring information (see form at Annex A). This will help us to monitor selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. The information on the form will be anonymised, treated as confidential, and used for statistical purposes only. The form will not be treated as part of your application.

Interview Access Scheme for Disabled Persons

As a member of the Employers Forum on Disability, we are committed to actively encouraging applications from people with disabilities. Applicants with a disability are guaranteed an interview if they meet the minimum criteria for the appointment, as outlined in the relevant role description. Declaring a disability for the purposes of a guaranteed interview is your decision and is entirely voluntary. If you wish to apply under the Interview Access Scheme, please complete the form at Annex A.

Whether you choose to apply under the Interview Access Scheme or not you can still ask us to make particular arrangements for you when attending an interview. You can also contact us if you want to discuss the criteria for the role or have questions regarding your application.

Indicative Timetable

Please note that these dates may be subject to change. Please let us know in your application letter if you are unable for interview on the date below.

Closing Date for Recruitment Advertisement	Midnight on Sunday 04 December 2016
Shortlist Meeting	w/c 12 December 2016
Candidate Interviews	w/c 16 January 2017
Meeting with Home Secretary (if required)	Post interview

Recruitment Process

This role is being competed in accordance with the Code of Practice (April 2012)¹, which sets out the regulatory framework for public appointments processes. The Code is based on three core principles – merit, openness and fairness.

The selection panel will be chaired by Jeremy Oppenheim (Director of Safeguarding, Crime, Policing and Fire Group, Home Office) and include Clare Checksfield (Deputy Director, Returns, UK Immigration Enforcement, Home Office), Graham Archer (Director of Child Protection, Social Work Reform and LA Protection, Department for Education), and Kathryn Tunstall (Disclosure and Barring Service Board member as independent member). Their role will be to ensure that appointments are made in accordance with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointment's Code of Practice.

The Home Office Public Appointments Team will acknowledge your application and keep you updated on the progress of the competition.

¹ <http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/the-code-of-practice>

At the short-list meeting the selection panel will assess each application against the essential criteria and decide who to invite for final interview.

Interviews are expected to take place in central London and will last for between 45 and 60 minutes. Further details about the format will be provided to you in advance.

The decision to appoint to this role rests with the Home Secretary. Appointable candidates may be invited to meet with her, or another Minister, before a final decision is made. As a result there may be a delay in informing candidates of the outcome of the competition.

Please note: Expenses incurred by candidates during the recruitment process will not be reimbursed except in exceptional circumstances and only when agreed in advance with the Home Office Public Appointments Team.

Terms of Appointment

Nature of Appointment: You are not an employee of the Home Office or the Panel. Accordingly, nothing in this document shall be construed as, or taken to create, a contract of employment between you and the Department or Her Majesty's Government.

Appointment Term: Your appointment will be for an initial period of three years. There is a possibility of re-appointment, subject to a satisfactory annual appraisal of performance and Ministerial agreement.

Remuneration:

- Remuneration is taxable through payroll, but the appointment is not pensionable.
- The post holder can claim reimbursement for reasonable travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred during the course of their duties at rates set centrally.
- Applicants should note that the successful candidate cannot be remunerated for this role if they are being paid for an existing full time role from the public purse.

Location: Panel meetings take place twice a week by conference call. The Chair will attend meetings at Home Office Headquarters, central London, as required, and undertake occasional travel across the UK to represent the Panel. Travel and subsistence costs will be reimbursed in line with Home Office policy.

Security clearance: The successful candidate will be required to have or be willing to obtain security clearance to Security Check (SC) level. Pre-appointment checks will also be undertaken on immigration and criminal convictions. It usually takes between 4-5 weeks to obtain the security clearance. The role will be offered on a conditional basis until the successful candidate has passed all checks. The successful candidate will be encouraged to take up this appointment as soon as possible, subject to the successful completion of all pre-appointment checks.

Nationality: This is a non-reserved post and therefore open to UK Nationals, British Nationals Overseas, British Protected Persons, Commonwealth Citizens, EEA Nationals of

other member states and certain non-EEA family members and Swiss Nationals under the Swiss EU Agreement. There must be no employment restriction or time limit on your permitted stay in the UK. In order to confirm your eligibility for this post, please complete the Nationality form found at the end of this candidate pack. You will not be asked to produce the evidence stated at the application stage but you will be required to do so should you be invited to the final panel interview.

Confidentiality: You will be subject to the provisions of the Official Secrets Act and required to exercise care in the use of official information acquired in the course of official duties, and not to disclose information which is held in confidence.

Disqualification for appointment: There are circumstances in which an individual will not be considered for appointment. They include:

- people who have received a prison sentence or suspended sentence of three months or more in the last five years;
- people who are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order;
- in certain circumstances, those who have had an earlier term of appointment terminated;
- anyone who is under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986; and
- anyone who has been removed from trusteeship of a charity.

Further advice about disqualification for appointment can be given by contacting the Public Appointments Team on publicappointments@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

Conflict of interest: You should note particularly the requirement to declare any potential conflict of interest that arises in the course of Panel business and the need to declare any relevant business interests, positions of authority or connections with organisations and individuals relevant to Panel business. All Panel Members, including the Chair are expected to complete a register of members' interests. This register will be made public via the GOV.UK website and will be updated annually during the term of office.

Political Activity: You are expected not to occupy paid party political posts or hold particularly sensitive or high profile roles in a political party during your appointment as Chair. Subject to the foregoing, you are free to engage in political activities provided that you are conscious of your general public responsibilities and exercise a proper discretion, particularly with regard to the work of the Panel.

You will be required to complete a Political Activity Declaration as part of your application, which will be kept separate from your application and will only be seen by the Selection Panel prior to interview. The Panel may at that stage explore with you any potential for conflict of interest. It is appreciated that political activities may have given you relevant skills, including experience gained from committee work, collective decision making, resolving conflict and public speaking. If, therefore, you have had such experience and you consider it relevant to your application for this post, you may if you choose include it separately in the main body of your application.

Data Protection

The Home Office takes its obligations under the Data Protection Act seriously. Any data about you will be held in secure conditions with access restricted to those who need it in connection with dealing with your application and the selection process. Data may also be used for the purposes of monitoring the effectiveness of the recruitment process, but in these circumstances will be kept anonymous. The ethnic monitoring form is used for monitoring the selection process only. If you do not wish to have these details recorded please return the form uncompleted.

Our data protection policy is in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

If you would like these details to be removed from our records as soon as this recruitment exercise is complete, please contact Will Nixon on 0207 035 5987.

Complaints: If you are not completely satisfied with the way your application is handled at any stage of the competition, please raise any complaint in the first instance with: Will Nixon, Public Appointments Team, Home Office, Ground Floor, Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF. Alternatively email Will.Nixon@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. We will reply to your complaint within 20 working days.