



Home Office

INDEPENDENT FAMILY RETURNS PANEL CHAIR

Recruitment Information Pack

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Foreword from Sue Young, Director Public Protection

Dear candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming the Chair of the Independent Family Returns Panel. The Panel has an important, statutory safeguarding role in relation to the removal of families with children aged under 18, who are not entitled to remain in the UK, but who have refused to depart voluntarily.

The Independent Family Returns Panel considers, and may make recommendations to the Home Office on, plans drawn up to enforce the removal of families who are in the family returns process. The Panel's remit is to ensure that such plans take full account of the need to ensure that the specific welfare and safeguarding needs of the children, within the context of the family unit as a whole, are met during the removal process. Panel members bring expertise and senior levels of experience from a range of professional backgrounds, including the fields of medicine, social care, education, psychiatry/mental health, and law enforcement.

The Chair leads regular telephone conferences with panel members to consider individual family removal plans, and chairs a quarterly meeting with Home Office officials to consider trends and wider policy developments and their impact on safeguarding issues. The Chair may be called on to represent the work of the Panel publicly and to engage with stakeholders. The Chair is also responsible for compiling an annual report on the work of the panel and identifying any broader safeguarding issues about policies or practices, raised in the course of its work, which require further consideration by the Home Office.

At a time of significant change, safeguarding issues continue to be at the heart of the work of the Department as it develops new immigration policies and procedures in response. Returning families to their country of origin can be complex and challenging. If you have the skills and experience set out below and would like to contribute to further developing this critical safeguarding role we look forward to hearing from you.

Sue Young

Public Protection Director

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 Annual Reports on its work. The latest report can be viewed [here](#).

The Panel comprises an independent chair and eight members, with a mix of educational, 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 any detention period in such cases is kept to a minimum.

Selected Panel members normally meet to consider cases on a weekly basis, 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 as necessary to form each case consideration Panel.

In addition, Panel members attend a meeting with Home Office officials which takes place in London on a quarterly basis. This meeting gives Panel members the opportunity to meet face to face with key officials involved in the family returns process.

Role Description

Job Title: Chair of the Independent Family Returns Panel

Roles Available: 1

Commitment: 1 – 2 days per week

Remuneration: £500 per day,

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, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF on occasion.

Accountable to: Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Immigration

Purpose:

The Chair is appointed by the Home Secretary to oversee the operation of the Independent Family Returns Panel ('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 Sponsorship Unit 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 its 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 up to twice a week, depending on demand, 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 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.

Part Two – Personal abilities and behaviours

- 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.

Due Diligence: Please note that as part of the recruitment process, due diligence, including social media checks will be undertaken on the appointable candidates.

Response Instructions

If you wish to apply for this position, please supply the following by **23:00 on 30 September 2019**:

- 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 B**, relating to referees, diversity, nationality, political activity and conflicts of interest.

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

Further Information

If you have any queries about any aspect of this role, or merely wish to have an informal discussion, then please contact Lucy Vaughan, for the Home Office on 07717 423 566 or email lucy.vaughan@homeoffice.gov.uk.

If your query relates to the public appointments process, then please contact Christine Ugborogho in the Public Appointments Team in the first instance on 0207 035 8241.

Indicative Timetable

Please note that these dates may be subject to change.

Closing Date for Recruitment Advertisement	30 September 2019
Shortlist Meeting	14 October 2019
Candidate Interviews	4 November 2019
Meeting with Minister (if required)	Post interview

Selection Process

This role is being competed in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments (December 2016)¹, which sets out the regulatory framework for public appointments processes. The Code is based on three core principles – merit, openness and fairness.

An Advisory Assessment Panel (AAP) will sift applications, assessing each application against the essential criteria, to produce a shortlist. Subject to Ministerial agreement, they will then conduct interviews to ascertain which candidates are appointable to the role.

The competition will be chaired by Sue Young (Director, Public Protection, Crime, Policing & Fire Group, Home Office) and consist of Maria Leon (Director, Returns Preparation, Immigration Enforcement, Home Office); Lee John-Charles (Head of Litigation Division B, Government Legal Department) as independent member and a fourth panel member (TBC).

The panel will ensure the appointments are made in accordance with the Code.

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

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.

¹
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578498/governance_code_on_public_appointments_16_12_2016.pdf

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.

We encourage a diverse workforce and welcome applications from all suitably qualified people. Appointments to the Review Bodies are regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

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

Appointment Term

- Your appointment as the Chair of the Panel will be made by the Home Secretary.
- The appointment will be for a fixed period of three years.
- Re-appointments can be made at the end of the period of office for a further term of up to three years at the discretion of Ministers, subject to a satisfactory appraisal of performance and mutual agreement.
- It should be noted that this post is a public appointment; the post holder will not be an employee of the Crown, the Home Office or the Panel.
- Appointments may be terminated prior to the conclusion of the period of appointment.

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.

Time Commitment

Members are expected to attend Panel meetings and associated working group meetings as needed. Overall, commitment will equate to 1-2 days per week, depending on the Panel's work programme.

Location: Panel meetings take place once a week by conference call. Members 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.

Availability: The successful candidate will be encouraged to take up this appointment for May 2020, subject to the successful completion of pre-appointment checks and security clearance.

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.

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 during 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.gov.uk.

Standards in public life: You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct. Candidates will be expected to abide by the “Seven Principles of Public Life” set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (see below, page 16).

Registration of interests: The purpose of these provisions is to avoid any danger of Panel members being influenced, or appearing to be influenced, by their private interests in the exercise of their public duties.

Public appointments require the highest standards of propriety, involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity, in relation to the stewardship of public funds and the oversight and management of all related activities. This means that any private, voluntary, charitable, or political interest which might be material and relevant to the work of the body concerned should be declared. It is important, therefore, that you consider your circumstances when applying for a public appointment and identify any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived.

There is a requirement to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest you may have in being appointed to the Panel in a separate form. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest will be fully explored by the Panel at interview stage.

Political Activity: Panel members will need to show political impartiality during their time on the Panel and must declare any party political activity they undertake in the period of their appointment. Details of the successful candidate’s declared political activity must be published by appointing departments when the appointments are publicised.

The Political Activity Declaration will be kept separate from your application and will only be seen by the Panel prior to interview – the Panel may at that stage explore with candidates 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.

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.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Disabled Persons

The Home Office is an accredited user of the government's "Disability Confident" disability symbol, which denotes organisations which have a positive attitude towards disabled applicants. Applicants who meet the minimum criteria in the job specification are guaranteed an interview (GIS). Selection will be on merit. If you wish to apply for consideration under this scheme, please complete the form in Annex B. It is not necessary to state the nature of your disability.

Whether you choose to apply under the GIS 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.

Centre for Public Appointments Database: As set out in Annex B, if you consent, we will retain your CV and contact details for the purposes of alerting you to any opportunities that may arise in future. We will also share your CV and contact details with the Centre for Public Appointments in the Cabinet Office who may use it for this purpose. They may also share it with other Government Departments so that they can contact you about such opportunities. You may withdraw your consent to your information being processed for this purpose at any time by contacting dpo@homeoffice.gov.uk.

Under certain circumstances, by law you have the right to:

Request access to your personal information (commonly known as a "data subject access request"). This enables you to receive a copy of the personal information we hold about you and to check that we are lawfully processing it.

Request correction of the personal information that we hold about you. This enables you to have any incomplete or inaccurate information we hold about you corrected.

- Request erasure of your personal information. This enables you to ask us to delete or remove personal information where there is no good reason for us continuing to process it. You also have the right to ask us to delete or remove your personal information where you have exercised your right to object to processing (see below).
- Object to processing of your personal information where we are relying on a legitimate interest (or those of a third party) and there is something about your particular situation which makes you want to object to processing on this ground.

- Request the restriction of processing of your personal information. This enables you to ask us to suspend the processing of personal information about you, for example if you want us to establish its accuracy or the reason for processing it.
- Request the transfer of your personal information to another party.

If you would like to review, verify, correct or request erasure of your personal details, object to the processing of such or request that we transfer a copy of such to another party please contact dpo@homeoffice.gov.uk.

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, it 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.

The Commissioner for Public Appointments regulates and monitors appointments to public bodies to ensure procedures are fair. We are required by the Commissioner for Public Appointments to retain information about the people who apply for public appointments within his remit, and make this information available to him for audit purposes, if requested to do so. Information you provide in your application may therefore be made available to the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the Commissioner's auditors on a confidential basis in order to help fulfil the Commissioner's formal complaints investigation role and for audit purposes.

Our data protection policy is in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the requirements of the Commissioner's Code of Practice. The Commissioner's requirements relating to the information we collect about applicants are set out below:

- Your initial contact details, including your name and address will be held by the Home Office for a period of at least 2 years.
- If you submit an application form, the form and any supporting documentation will be retained for at least 2 years.
- Information held electronically, including your contact details and the monitoring information which you provide will also be held for at least 2 years.

If you would like these details to be removed from our records as soon as this recruitment exercise is complete, please contact Colette Talbot on 020 7035 3501.

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
Third Floor, Peel Building
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

We will reply to your complaint within 20 days. If, after receiving our response you are still not satisfied, you may contact the Commissioner for Public Appointments:

The Commissioner for Public Appointments Room G/8, Ground Floor 1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ. Tel: 0207 271 0849.

ANNEX A – THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

The principles of public life apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the civil service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, NDPBs, and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also have application to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.