



Home Office

# INDEPENDENT FAMILY RETURNS PANEL MEMBERS

## Recruitment Information Pack

March 2021



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

Bronze

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## Foreword from Helen Chamberlain, Chair of the Independent Family Returns Panel

Dear candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the Independent Family Returns Panel. The purpose of the Panel is to provide advice on families, who are no longer legally entitled to reside in the UK and have refused to depart voluntarily.

The Independent Family Returns Panel makes recommendations to the Home Office on the best method of humanely returning individual families to their home country, ensuring the specific welfare and safeguarding needs of the children and family as a whole are met. Panel members bring the expertise of significant and senior levels of experience in range of professional backgrounds, including the fields of medicine, social care, education, psychiatry/mental health, and the Police.

The panel meets by phone, to provide advice on plans for families with children and to endorse and make recommendations in relation to these plans: each meeting takes place with a selection of panel members. We also meet face to face together with Home Office staff, to work on the broader issues relating to this work. The panel also supports the chair in developing annual reports which set out the work of the panel and make recommendations for the further improvement and development of this area of work.

We are currently seeking to recruit panel members from the fields mentioned above. With immigration issues so prominent in national debate, this is a good time to be part of this work. Returning families to their country of origin can be challenging: if you have significant experience in one of the above fields and would like to make a contribution to enabling families in challenging circumstances to maximise the possibility of making a successful transition, we look forward to hearing from you.

## 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:

- in each family returns case where return is being enforced; and
- 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 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 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 in order for it to operate effectively.

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

## Role Description

**Job Title:** Members of the Independent Family Returns Panel ('the Panel').

### Roles

**available:** Four.

**Remuneration:** The role is remunerated at £200 per day, based on an expected time commitment of one day per fortnight.

**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:** Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Immigration Compliance and the Courts, via the Panel Chair.

### Purpose:

To complement its existing members, we are seeking up to four new Panel members. One member should be a qualified medical practitioner:

- general medicine; general practitioner and/or port doctor;
- psychiatrist or senior practitioner with mental health background;

Three members should have safeguarding expertise and knowledge, with expertise in one, or more, of the following areas from a safeguarding perspective:

- children's social care management;
- headteacher or former headteacher; and
- any other relevant safeguarding and mental health expertise from voluntary, public or private sectors.

Experience of mental health issues would be advantageous also. All members will need to possess excellent communication and influencing skills, the ability to work collaboratively with other members, and to constructively contribute to discussions, negotiating between conflicting opinions to reach consensus.

### Key Responsibilities:

Members are appointed as individuals to fulfil the role of the Panel and have a duty to act in the public interest. Members are not appointed as representatives of their particular profession, employer or interest group.

## Members are responsible for:

- being committed to the safe return of families with no right to be in the UK;
- attending and contributing to Panel meetings;
- contributing towards Panel reports;
- examining and challenging, if necessary, the assumptions on which family returns plans are drawn up;
- dealing with cases in a confidential manner, handling information in line with government security classifications; 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

- The ability to bring from their respective areas of expertise, authority, knowledge, and breadth to a complex issue of public interest and importance, and specifically to apply professional expertise to the welfare and safeguarding needs of families
- Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to work collaboratively with Panel members and stakeholders in a multi-professional environment, and to actively and constructively contribute to discussions, negotiating between conflicting opinions and generating options to reach consensus.
- The confidence to deal with difficult situations sensitively, and to take and be accountable for decisions.
- An appreciation of equality and diversity and a willingness to champion difference.
- Evidence of working successfully in a professional, community or voluntary capacity on committees or other decision-making groups, and reaching impactful and timely conclusions.
- If you are a Doctor, you must be registered with the General Medical Council.

#### Desirable

- 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.

### Part Two – Knowledge, Skills and Attributes

#### Personal qualities

- The ability to recognise and draw appropriately on professional expertise with self-awareness.

- Excellent interpersonal skills, having the ability to listen, work effectively with and gain the trust of staff within the organisation and with external stakeholders.
- Personal integrity and the ability to demonstrate authority, commitment, and consistency.

*We value and promote diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity for all. Appointment will be made on merit following an open, fair and transparent competition.*

**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

**The closing date for applications is 23:00, Wednesday 31 March 2021.**

Please submit the following 4 documents, clearly labelled, by email to:

[publicappointments@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:publicappointments@homeoffice.gov.uk)

1. A **concise CV** (maximum two sides A4, minimum 11 font) setting out your career history and including details of any professional qualifications.
2. 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.
3. Please complete and return via email the forms at **Annex B**, relating to referees, conflicts of interest and nationality.
4. In addition, please complete the **Diversity Form at Annex C**. Please click on the link to the [Public Appointments website](#) for further information on recording whether or not you have a disability.

Please include the heading (Independent Family Returns Panel members) in the subject box.

Please submit your application documents as 4 separate attachments.

Please note the following:

- **We cannot accept applications submitted after the closing date.**
- **Applications will be assessed on the documentation provided. Please refer to the advert and checklist to ensure you have provided the necessary documentation We will assess it based solely on documentation provided.**
- **Applications will be acknowledged upon receipt.**
- **Feedback will only be given to unsuccessful candidates following interview.**

### Further Information:

If you have any queries about this role, please contact the Chair of the IFRP, Helen Chamberlain, by email [helen.chamberlain1@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:helen.chamberlain1@homeoffice.gov.uk).

If you have any queries about the recruitment process for this role, please contact Christine Ugborogho on email [christine.ugborogho@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:christine.ugborogho@homeoffice.gov.uk).

## Indicative Timetable

Please note that these dates are only indicative at this stage and could be subject to change.

Advert Closing Date	23:00, 31 March 2021
Short List Meeting	Expected w/c 12 April 2021
Final Panel Interviews	Expected w/c 17 May 2021
Meeting with Home Secretary or a Minister (if required)	Expected post interview

## Selection Process

This role is being competed in accordance with the Government's Governance Code on Public Appointments<sup>1</sup>, which sets out the regulatory framework for public appointments processes. The Code is based on three core principles – merit, openness and fairness.

The panel for the Chair recruitment will be chaired by Maria Leon (Director, Returns Preparation Team, Home Office) and comprise Helen Chamberlain (IFRP Chair); and Lee John Charles (Head of Home Office and Immigration Division, Government Legal Department) as the independent member.

The panel will ensure the appointments are made in accordance with the Governance Code. The Home Office Public Appointments Team will acknowledge your application on behalf of the Home Office and keep you updated on the progress of the competition.

At the short-listing meeting the selection panel will assess each application against the essential criteria and decide who to invite for interview. Interviews are expected to take place at Home Office HQ, central London (dependent on the COVID-19 restrictions in place), and to last for between 45 and 60 minutes. Further details about the format will be provided to you in advance.

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

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/578498/governance\\_code\\_on\\_public\\_appointments\\_16\\_12\\_2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578498/governance_code_on_public_appointments_16_12_2016.pdf)

***We encourage a diverse workforce and welcome applications from all suitably qualified people. This appointment is 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

**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:

- Members will be remunerated at £200 per day.
- 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:** A Member is expected to work one day per fortnight.

**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 candidates will be encouraged to take up their appointment as soon as possible, 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. 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.

**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 3 months or more in the last 5 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](mailto: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 15).

**Registration of interests:** The purpose of these provisions is to avoid any danger of a public appointee 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 IFRP in a separate form. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest will be fully explored by the Panel at interview stage.

**Political activity:** Members will need to show political impartiality during their time on the IFRP and must declare significant 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.

**Disability Confident:** 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. 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 Disability Confident 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.

**Equal Opportunities Monitoring:** The Home Office is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

As part of the application process we ask candidates to complete equal opportunities monitoring information. This will help us to monitor selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. The information in Annex C will be treated as confidential and used for statistical purposes only. The form will not be treated as part of 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](mailto:dpo@homeoffice.gov.uk).

## 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 the Public Appointments Team at: [publicappointments@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:publicappointments@homeoffice.gov.uk).

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 material 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 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.