

INDEPENDENT CHAIR

Role Profile



Title	Independent Chair	
Grade	GRADE J	
Reference:	N289	
Reports to:	Service Manager (Safeguarding Service)	
Work style Definition	Office based hot-desk/touch down worker	
Job Type:	Professional	
Primary purpose of role	<p>In Plymouth, the Independent Chairs undertake a dual role of Child Protection Officer (CPO) and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). Individual independent chairs will hold caseloads weighted 70-80% towards either role, dependent on the needs of the service.</p> <p>As CPO, chairing child protection case conferences; ensuring correct thresholds and that the plans address risk, and quality assuring practice.</p> <p>As IRO, fulfilling statutory duties towards looked after children as defined in the IRO handbook.</p>	
Key accountabilities and key measures	<p>Role outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As CPO, ensuring the right children are subject to child protection plans, that child protection plans address the identified risk and are SMART and that plans progress appropriately and impact on positive outcomes (70%) As IRO, quality assuring the work of the Department with children in care, and ensuring that children and young people's voices are heard and influence care plans (70%) Taking accountability for managing and chairing complex strategy meetings, including providing cover for allegations management strategy meetings (5%) Ensuring minutes of meetings are produced within departmental timescales and provide an accurate record of the meeting 	<p>Role measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child protection meetings, strategy meetings and statutory reviews meet timescales Audit processes confirm quality of minutes and plans Evidence of participation of children and families in their meetings Evidence of children's voices influencing plans Evidence of IRO visits to children. Evidence of problem resolution processes being initiated and escalated where need be, with positive outcomes for children and young people Child protection plans and CIC plans evidence impact on outcomes for children and young people Minutes are accurate, with appropriate abridgements, and produced to departmental timescales

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring all activity relating to quality assurance and escalation processes is accurately recorded on the child's file (15%) Providing consultation to frontline staff on thresholds, safeguarding practice and matters relating to children in care, on a case by case basis Contributing to the delivery of the PSCB safeguarding training on behalf of CYPFS. Undertaking focused reviews of individual cases or contributing to audit work Undertaking specific tasks requiring significant practice expertise (5%) Acting as part of the departmental management team (5%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's files evidence the impact of the independent chairs' QA Positive feedback on impact of PSCB training Individual tasks meet specified outcomes/timeframes
Key activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that child protection case conferences are timely, quorate and compliant with Working Together, with appropriate and consistent thresholds. Providing leadership to ensure safe-decision making and planning Ensuring children and young people participate in child protection conferences where possible, and that their views influence planning Ensuring statutory reviews for children in care are timely, quorate and compliant with the IRO handbook Ensuring children participate in their statutory reviews, including facilitating children to chair their own meetings where appropriate Visiting children in placement to build relationships with children in care, and ensuring their views are heard and influence planning Quality assuring casework with individual children in care or at risk in the community, providing challenge to ensure best practice and avoid drift Being accountable for escalation and problem resolution processes including chairing problem resolution meetings Ensuring advocacy for individual children (70%) Chairing complex strategy meetings, ensuring safe practice and leading decision-making ensuring accurate and timely records of meetings and quality assurance interventions Acting as a point of expertise for complex CP investigations Providing cover for the LADO (5%) Ensuring the production of timely and accurate minutes of child protection meetings, including abridged versions when appropriate Writing accurate and timely minutes for statutory reviews, including a child 	

	<p>friendly document for when appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring all data is handled with due concern for information security Ensuring all quality assurance interventions and escalations are recorded on children's case files (15%) Providing expert advice to frontline staff and multi-agency partners, including liaising with GALs for cases in proceedings Providing recommendations to the ADM on permanence decisions Participating in the development of and co-delivering the PSCB Child Protection training Reviewing individual cases of concern, including preparing reports for the PSCB serious case review subgroup Participating in audit work Acting as the practice link to service areas or teams Offering expertise to specific departmental or multi-agency forums Contributing to quarterly and annual IRO reporting (5%) Participating in specific management tasks, including undertaking HR investigations, inspection planning or multi-agency case audits Implementing practice changes to ensure delivery against key KPIs, both within the service area and in conjunction with departmental colleagues (5%)
Essential qualifications/ knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree level or equivalent in Social Work e.g. CQSW, DipSW Registration with Social Work England Sound understanding of the safeguarding agenda and of the statutory role of the IRO, the LADO and Adoption and Fostering Panels Understanding of how changes in the economic, political, social and organisational climate can impact on the organisation Sound understanding of best practice, including up to date knowledge of new/emerging initiatives and practice themes Understanding of permanence and adoption issues
Desirable qualifications/ knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masters level qualification in Social Work/Management and Leadership Practice Educator Award Expertise in a specific practice area, e.g. domestic abuse, CSE
Essential experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant experience of working as a statutory social work practitioner, including working in more than one service area Experience in raising practice standards and using quality assurance to secure service improvement Experience of multi-agency working Significant experience of safeguarding, including analysis and providing advice to others
Desirable experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience as a frontline manager in statutory social work Experience of working with adoption

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experience of delivering training or staff development ▪ Mentoring/supervisory experience
Essential skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proven leadership ability ▪ Highly developed analytical skills ▪ Ability to chair complex meetings ▪ Excellent verbal communication skills, including ability to influence and ability to present ▪ Ability to write cogent and structured analytical reports and evaluations in response to casework, HR issues or practice themes ▪ Ability to think strategically and to work across organisational boundaries and silos ▪ Keyboard skills required to create and respond to letters and emails and compile reports ▪ Forward planning required for up to a year in advance required to devise and review child protection plans and evaluate effectiveness of care plans and CP plans against outcomes ▪ Excellent interpersonal skills to challenge decisions made by the team managers and others through to the agreed conflict resolution channels and to be accountable for those decisions ▪ Ability to develop and deliver multi-agency safeguarding training ▪ Skills in direct work with children and young people in order to build relationships and ascertain views
Corporate standards	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In accordance with Council policies and guidance on information management and security, it is your personal responsibility for data protection, client confidentiality and information governance. ▪ Act at all times in accordance with appropriate legislation and regulations, codes of practice, the provisions of the Council's constitution and its policies and procedures. ▪ Work within the requirements of the Council's Health and Safety policy, performance standards, safe systems of work and procedures. ▪ Undertake all duties with due regard to the corporate equalities policy and relevant legislation. 	