



Home Office

INDEPENDENT FAMILY RETURNS PANEL MEMBERS

Recruitment Information Pack

August 2023



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Bronze



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Welcome Note 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 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 via Teams meetings, 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 quarterly 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 two panel members with a background in either law enforcement, social care, housing or legal sectors (with a focus of safeguarding). 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 above field 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.

Helen Chamberlain

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 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 Panel usually 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 as required by the Home Office, the meeting is conducted 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 - up to six times per year either virtually or in person. These meetings give Panel members the opportunity to meet with key Home Office officials involved in the family returns process, and to discuss policy and practice issues.

Role Description

Job Title: Member of the Independent Family Returns Panel

Roles Available: Two

Remuneration: The role is remunerated at £200 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 in Central London on occasion.

Reporting to: Minister for Immigration (via the Panel Chair)

Purpose:

To complement its existing members, we are seeking two new Panel members with either a background in law enforcement, social care, housing or legal sectors (with a focus of safeguarding).

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

- Senior experience of working in a public protection statutory setting, either from the law enforcement, social care, housing, or legal sectors (with a focus of safeguarding children and adults at risk).
- 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.

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, 11 September 2023.

Please submit the following 3 documents, clearly labelled. In order to apply, you will need to click on one of the links below, depending on if you have already set up an account on the new Cabinet Office Public Appointment website.

<https://apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk/create-account>

<https://apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk/auth/sign-in>

- 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 the site the form at Annex B (attached separately), relating to conflicts of interest.**

Please submit your application documents as 3 separate attachments and note that short-listed candidates will also be required to complete and return a separate form in relation to referees and nationality information.

Please note the following:

- We cannot accept applications submitted after the closing date.
- Applications will be assessed solely on the documentation provided. Please refer to the advert and checklist to ensure you have provided the necessary documentation.
- 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 Moses Hutchinson-Pascal at: Moses.Hutchinson-pascal@homeoffice.gov.uk

If you have any queries about the recruitment process for this role, please contact: publicappointments@homeoffice.gov.uk

If helpful to you, there is guidance available on writing a supporting statement on the public appointments webpages: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-appointments>

Indicative Timetable

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

Closing Date	23:00, Monday 11 September 2023
Short-list Meeting	Expected w/c 25 September
Candidate Interviews	Expected w/c 23 October
Meeting with a Minister (if required)	Expected 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 (Panel) 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 panel for the Member recruitment will be chaired by Christine Smart (Public Protection Unit, Public Safety Group, Home Office), and consist of Helen Chamberlain (IFRP Chair) and Richard Childs QPM as the independent member.

The Home Office Public Appointments Team will acknowledge your application 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 whom to invite for final interview. Further details about the format will be provided to you in advance.

We encourage a diverse workforce and welcome applications from all suitably qualified people. This role is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Appointable candidates from this recruitment round, but not subsequently appointed, can be included on a reserve list, which Ministers may choose to appoint from as future IFRP vacancies arise. However, please note, there is no guarantee of appointment in such circumstances.

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.

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

Terms of Appointment

Nature of Appointment: You are not an employee of the Home Office or the Independent Family Returns 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 as an Independent Family Returns Panel member will be made by the Home Secretary. The appointment will be for a period of three years. Re-appointments can be made at the end of the period of office 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; appointments may be terminated prior to the conclusion of the period of appointment.

Remuneration and Time Commitment:

- The role is remunerated at £200 per day. Travel and subsistence expenses incurred on Panel business will be reimbursed.
- The expected time commitment is one day per fortnight.

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.

Pension: The role is not pensionable.

Security clearance: The successful candidates will be required to have or be willing to obtain security clearance to Security Check (SC) level. 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 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, or Part 2 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1989;
- anyone who has failed to make a payment under a county court administration order;
- anyone subject to an order under the Insolvency 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 13). Failure to do so may result in sanction up to and including dismissal.

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 role 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 Board 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.

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 on the form will be treated as confidential, and used for statistical purposes only. The form will not be treated as part 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 (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.

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.

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.