

Children's Services

Code of Conduct for Fostering Panel Members

1. Any Panel member who has either personal or professional knowledge of a case under consideration by the Panel will declare their interest by advising the Chair or Panel Adviser at the earliest opportunity. They should not wait until the Panel meeting to notify, as this may affect Panel quoracy.
2. Panel members will read papers in advance and come fully prepared to contribute to the Panel meeting. Panel members will use the preparation form provided and ensure the Chair receives their comments and questions well in advance of the Panel meeting.
3. Panel members inform the Panel Chair or Panel Advisor if they have any concerns about gaps in information in the paperwork prior to the Panel meeting wherever possible.
4. Panel members will model the Dorset Council behaviours of respect, responsibility, recognition and collaboration and will express their views in the Panel meeting in an honest straightforward and sensitive way.
5. Panel members will understand that confidentiality is essential to their role and will comply with all its associated data protection requirements.
6. Panel members will not discuss cases without all members being present in the meeting unless advised by the Chair that a member has left the meeting for an appropriate reason and that the Panel remains quorate.
7. Panel members will be welcoming and courteous to other members and to those presenting and will listen to and reflect on others' views.
8. Panel members will act in a non-discriminatory way; they will identify and address equality and diversity issues and promote inclusion.
9. Panel members will consider each case on its own merit; they will ask questions of clarification where they require this and will make their own evidence-based recommendations.
10. Panel members will arrive on time for panel meetings whether held in person or virtually and maintain their attention and attendance throughout the meeting.

11. Panel members will attend at least 75% of the Panel meetings they are asked to attend each year. Panel members will check minutes carefully and confirm or suggest amendments to these within the required timescales.
12. Panel members will ensure that Panel paperwork is kept securely and shredded or returned to the Fostering Service when the Panel meeting is completed and that any downloaded documentation held on personal IT equipment is deleted immediately following Panel meetings.
13. Panel members will participate fully and constructively in annual reviews of their performance where required to do so. Panel members will inform the Fostering Service immediately if they are charged, cautioned or convicted for any criminal offence, or if any criminal proceedings are pending. Panel members will inform the Fostering Service immediately of any professional disciplinary matters and of any significant changes of circumstances that may impact on their suitability to be a Panel member.
14. Panel Members will attend at least one joint training event held between the Fostering Panel and the Fostering Service annually.
15. At their annual review and at other times, panel members will evidence their ongoing development in the role and will demonstrate awareness of guidance and current issues affecting children, young people and foster carers.