



**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD  
4<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2004**

**MEMBERSHIP OF MIDDLESBROUGH  
FAMILY PLACEMENT PANEL**

**BRENDA THOMPSON - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR SOCIAL  
SERVICES & HEALTH**

**JAN DOUGLAS - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR SOCIAL  
SERVICES**

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**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Corporate Parenting Board of the membership of Middlesbrough Family Placement Panel and seek confirmation and approval of the membership.

**BACKGROUND**

2. The Adoption Agencies Regulations require that:
  - a) An adoption agency shall establish at least one Adoption Panel and shall appoint no more than 10 persons, including at least one man and one woman.
  - b) The adoption agency shall appoint as chairperson of an Adoption Panel, a person who has appropriate experience of adoption work and others, who shall include: -
    - i) 2 Social Workers in the employment of the adoption agency
    - ii) at least one member of the authority's Social Services Committee
    - iii) the agency's medical adviser

- iv) at least 3 other persons (“independent persons”) not being members or employees of the adoption agency, or elected members where the agency is a local authority, who shall, where reasonably practicable, include an adoptive parent and an adopted person who must be at least 18 years of age.
- c) The adoption agency shall appoint one of the members of the Adoption Panel as Vice-Chairperson who shall act as the Chairperson for so long as there is no Chairperson able to do so.
- d) The Panel is only quorate for adoption matters when at least 6 of its members are present and this must include the Chairperson or Vice-Chair and a Social Worker in the employment of the adoption agency.

3. The Fostering Services Regulations require that a fostering service provider shall establish a panel and appoint no more than 10 members comprising of:

- a) a senior member of staff of the fostering service who is not responsible for the day to day management of any person carrying out assessments of prospective foster parents.
- b) 2 Social Workers employed by the fostering service provider, one of whom has childcare expertise and the other who has expertise in the provision of a fostering service.
- c) at least one elected member
- d) at least 4 other persons (“independent members”) including at least one person who is, or within the previous 2 years has been, a foster parent for a fostering service provider other than the one whose fostering panel is being established.
- e) For the purposes of recommendations in relation to fostering, the Panel is only quorate when at least 5 members are present to include the chair or vice-chair, at least one of the social workers employed by the fostering service and at least 2 independent members are present.

4. A panel member shall hold office for a term not exceeding 3 years and may not hold office on the panel for more than 2 consecutive terms. The only exception to this is the Medical Adviser who remains a panel member for as long as he or she is the agency medical adviser.

5. The Panel meets fortnightly for half a day and is serviced by officers from the Legal Department, Members Office and the Family Placement Service.
6. The Family Placement Panel considers whether:
  - a) Adoption is in the best interests of a particular child and if so, whether an application should be made to free the child for adoption
  - b) A prospective adopter would be a suitable adoptive parent
  - c) An approved adopter would be a suitable adoptive parent for a particular child
  - d) An adoption allowance should be paid for a particular child
  - e) Permanent foster care is in the best interests of a particular child
  - f) A prospective foster carer is suitable to be a foster carer
  - g) A foster carer would be a suitable, permanent foster carer for a particular child
  - h) A foster carer should apply for a Residence Order in respect of a child they are looking after and if so, whether a Residence Order Allowance should be paid.
  - i) The panel also considers reports on the disruption of adoptive and permanent placements, annual reviews of foster carers and 6 monthly reports where either adoption or permanent foster care is the plan.
7. The current membership of the Panel meets the requirements of the Regulations in relation to the adoption and fostering service provided by Middlesbrough Council.

## **OPTION APPRAISAL**

8. Not applicable to this piece of work.

## **FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS**

9. There are no immediate financial or legal implications in this report. There are no specific ward implications as the work of the Family Placement Panel covers the whole of Middlesbrough.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

10. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board approve the membership of Middlesbrough Family Placement Panel as outlined in Appendix 1.

## **REASONS**

11. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons:
- (a) Each Local Authority which acts as an adoption agency and provides a fostering service is required to establish a panel consisting of social work practitioners experienced in adoption and family placement matters, elected Members and independent persons.
  - (b) The composition of the panel is prescribed by the Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983, amended by the Adoption Agencies and Children Regulations (Arrangements for Placement and Review) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulation 1997 and the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

- a) The Adoption Agencies Regulation 1983
- b) The Adoption Agencies and Children (Arrangements for Placement and Review) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 1997
- c) The Fostering Services Regulations 2002

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**APPENDIX 1****Family Placement Panel Membership as at November 2004**

Name	Status	Appointed	Until	Experience
Jenni Cooke (Chair)	Agency Social Worker	January 2003	January 2006	Head of Children's Services
Dr Phyu	Medical Adviser	April 2002	N/A	Consultant Community Paediatrician
Cllr Brenda Thompson (Vice chair)	Elected member	June 2002	Subject to Local Government Election	
Cllr John Jones	Elected member	July 2003	Subject to Local Government Election	
Sandie Dixon	Agency Social Worker	August 2002	August 2008	Family Support Team Manager
Julia Landin	Agency Social Worker	January 2003	January 2009	Quality Assurance and Reviewing Officer
Helen Little	Independent person	January 2003	January 2007	Foster carer for independent agency
Irene Harkin	Independent person	September 2002	September 2005	Adoptive parent
David Sands	Independent person	March 2003	March 2007	Assistant Head of Inclusion. Education
Brenda Hall	Independent person	November 2004 (subject to clearances)	November 2006	Team Manager, Childrens Society

