

# Thurrock Council

## Information for prospective adopters attending Panel

The constitution of all adoption Panels are set out in [The Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983](#).

The adoption Panel can only make recommendations to the adoption agency on:

- approval of prospective adopters
- matching of children with approved adopters

### Attendance

We hope that applicants will attend unless there are significant reasons why this is not possible.

You are encouraged to attend as part of the adoption agency's policy is to involve you as much as possible in the process, but this is not compulsory.

If you feel unable to attend, this will not affect the Panel's recommendation.

### Attending Panel

Before attending Panel, applicants will be sent an invitation confirming:

- the date, time and venue of the Panel meeting
- an information leaflet and a short written profile of each Panel member, with a photograph

On arrival you will be met by your adoption worker and shown to a waiting area.

Your adoption worker may be asked to join the Panel for an initial discussion to assist Panel on any areas they feel need further clarification.

The Panel Chair will meet you and your social worker in the waiting area and bring you into the Panel meeting where you will be introduced to the Panel members.

Prospective adopters may bring with them a friend or supporter although that person will not accompany the applicant(s) into the meeting. Supporting the applicants is part of the social worker's role.

If an applicant or Panel member are known to one another, the Panel member would withdraw from the Panel at the discretion of the Panel Chair.

If the Panel is running late, prospective adopters will be informed of the likely delay.

All Thurrock adoption Panels follow a similar approach which is as follows:

1. You will be asked if there have been any changes in your circumstances since the prospective adopters report was written. You will be asked if there is anything you would like to add in support of your application.
2. Your social worker will provide a short pen picture of yourselves and a summary of your strengths.
3. The chair will then invite Panel members to ask questions of you. Your adoption worker will be able to help to clarify any of the points or questions raised, but are not expected to answer the questions on your behalf.
4. You will be given the opportunity to ask Panel any question that you may have.

## **After Panel**

After attending the Panel, you will be asked to complete a short evaluation form which will assist the adoption agency in monitoring applicant's experience of attending Panel.

Once the meeting is over you will be asked, together with your social worker, to wait whilst the Panel members deliberate on a recommendation. The chair will join you later to inform you of their recommendation.

Thereafter, applicants will be informed in writing of the agency decision once the Agency Decision Maker has made the decision.

If the adoption agency has not been able to recommend your approval, you will be offered an appointment within 5 working days with your social worker and their team leader to discuss the Panel's reasoning.

If you feel that the recommendation of the Panel was made on the basis of incorrect or omission of facts, you may wish to raise this matter directly with the adoption Panel chair and the executive officer who will arrange to meet you to discuss your concerns.

## **Observers**

There may occasionally be an observer attending Panel to learn about the work of Panel.

If this is the case, you will be told beforehand and you can be reassured that observers – like Panel members – will have signed an undertaking that all information is confidential and cannot be disclosed outside of Panel.