



# Introduction to the Adoption Panel

We all need a little extra  
help sometimes...

## For more information

Tel: (01472) 326292 option 2

Email: [fosteringandadoption@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:fosteringandadoption@nelincs.gov.uk)

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# Welcome to this introduction to the North East Lincolnshire Adoption Panel

**We hope this introduction will help to answer some of your questions about attending panel.**

## The role of the Adoption Panel

The Adoption Panel is an independent body of up to 10 people which considers two matters relating to adoption:

- Whether someone is suitable to adopt a child
- Whether an approved adopter(s) is/are suitable to become the adoptive parent(s) of a specific child

The Adoption Panel makes recommendations to the Local Authority. The Local Authority makes the final decision.

## When does the Adoption Panel meet?

The Adoption Panel meets on the second Tuesday of each month, except in December, when the Adoption Panel meets on the first Tuesday. The Adoption Panel begins at 9:30am.

## Where does the Adoption Panel meet?

You will be informed via letter of the venue of each panel.

## What time will I have to attend?

Once your panel date has been confirmed, the panel administrator will write to you to advise you of the time you will need to arrive.

## Where can I park?

Details of parking will be included in the letter you receive from the panel administrator.

## What happens when I arrive at the venue?

There is a waiting room available for anyone attending the Adoption Panel. Explain to the reception desk you are attending the Adoption Panel (You do not need to give your name or any other details). You will then be shown to the waiting room, refreshments are available. There may be other prospective adopters and social

workers waiting with you.

## Will I go into panel at my appointed time?

Yes, you should be ready to go in at that time. Sometimes there can be a wait if business is over-running. Adoption Panel members work hard to try and ensure they keep to time, please accept our apologies in advance if your appointment time is delayed.

## What should I wear to panel?

There is no dress code. Please come in clothing you are comfortable in, smart casual would be recommended.

## What if I have any special needs?

If there is anything we can do/arrange in order to ease your visit to the Adoption Panel please inform the panel administrator before the Adoption Panel starts.

## How do I contact the Adoption Panel administrator?

Telephone: (01472) 326292 option 2 email: [fosteringandadoption@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:fosteringandadoption@nelincs.gov.uk)

## Do I need to bring anything to the Adoption Panel?

Prospective adopters are always requested to bring their family book, both to the Adoption panel for their initial approval and to any subsequent matching panel. Social workers are advised to bring a copy of any reports submitted to the Adoption panel. In cases involving children, social workers should bring the child's life story work. There may be occasions when further classification if required and other documentation may be helpful.

## Who sits on the Adoption Panel?

There are rules requiring who may be an Adoption Panel member and for how long. There must be at least four people who are independent of the Local Authority.

Panel members currently include:

- Chair of the Adoption Panel
- Social worker and vice chair
- Medical adviser
- North East Lincolnshire Council elected members
- North East Lincolnshire Council social worker
- Independent members with experience of adoption

Panel advisers currently include:

- Professional adviser
- Adoption Panel administrator.

## What is the procedure at Adoption Panel meetings?

Panel members will have read all the reports prior to the meeting. Before you are invited to join the meeting, panel members will have had a discussion and clarified any questions they wish to ask of you.

The panel chair will then come out to meet you in the waiting room, introduce themselves and briefly explain how the meeting will be conducted. You will then be invited to accompany the panel chair into the panel meeting.

The tables are arranged in a square. Panel members sit around three sides of the table; prospective adopters, foster carers, social workers sit together on the fourth side of the square.

The chair asks everyone to introduce themselves in turn (including yourselves).

The Medical Adviser is then asked to give a summary of all the medical information (Foster carers will not be in the meeting room when the medical details or other personal details of prospective adopters are discussed). The Legal Adviser then summarises the legal position of children and advises the Adoption Panel on any legal issues pertaining to prospective adopters.

The meeting then moves on to the discussion

phase. The chair invites panel members in turn to ask their question (the question could be to the prospective adopters, social workers, or when a match is being considered, to the foster carers).

It is really important to stress that there will be no "trick questions". Questions will simply be to clarify issues; to give you a chance to expand on comments in the report; or to give you the opportunity to provide additional information.

Once the chair has ensured all the questions have been asked and all the information gathered, she will summarise the discussions and invite panel members to make their recommendations.

## How will I know the recommendations of the Adoption Panel?

At the North East Lincolnshire Adoption Panel, prospective adopters and social workers remain in the meeting while the Adoption Panel arrives at its recommendations.

You will therefore know immediately the Adoption Panel recommendations and the reasons for those recommendations.

## What recommendations can the Adoption Panel make?

Essentially there are three recommendations that can be made:

- To recommend if an applicant or applicants are suitable to adopt
- To recommend whether a child should be placed for adoption with particular prospective adopters
- Recommend that adoption is in a child's best interest if the case is not going through Courts

Adoption Panel must also consider contact arrangements and support services.

## What happens next?

After the Adoption Panel meeting, the recommendations of the Adoption Panel are considered by the Adoption Agency Decision Maker (a senior Children's Services Manager) and decisions or proposed decisions will be notified to those attending within seven working days.