

## **Volunteer School Appeals Panel Member**

- Are you interested in Primary and Secondary School Education?
- Do you have excellent listening skills?
- Are you able to put people at ease?
- Are you able to make balanced decisions?

If you have answered yes to any of the above, please consider applying to be become a Volunteer School Appeals Panel Member

### **What is the role?**

All parents or carers have the right to make an appeal to an independent appeal panel if their child is not offered a place at their preferred school.

The role of the panel is to decide whether a child, who has been refused a place by an admission authority, should be given a place.

Appellants often become clearer about the options open to them during a hearing and the reasons why a place was not offered at a preferred school.

The appeal panel is independent of the local authority and their decision is binding on all parties, unless overturned by the courts.

### **Why be a panel member?**

For some people the work is helpful for their career, providing them with relevant work experience.

For others, it is rewarding to give people and school representatives the chance to state their case.

### **What will I be doing?**

- You will be sitting on independent admission appeal panels
- Ensuring that parents feel they have had a fair and independent hearing, have been given every opportunity to put their case and have been taken seriously
- Volunteers must be able to listen to two sides of a case and weigh up evidence objectively and impartially.

### **What skills or experience do I need?**

The following qualities will help you with the role of member of the Panel:

- Ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of people
- Ability to read, assess and analyse information and identify key points

- Ability to listen to key information
- Ability to ask questions to obtain and clarify information
- Ability to obtain and weigh up evidence to reach a reasoned and evidence based decision
- Willingness to work as part of a team
- Willingness to take advice

### Equal Opportunities

- Ability to demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities
- Ability to consider people's physical, social and welfare needs

Panel members will be expected to develop an understanding of:

- The admissions process and the guidance /legislation

### **Will I receive training?**

All volunteer Panel Members receive initial and annual refresher training. You will also be fully supported by the Appeals Service.

### **How much time do I need to give?**

This can vary depending on the level of commitment you wish to give. Appeals are arranged for half day or full day.

Appeals are held through the academic year but the peak months are between April and July.

### **Location of Hearings**

Hearings are currently virtual using Microsoft TEAMS.

### **More information**

If you require further information or would like an informal to chat to discuss the above, please contact [zoe.shanahan@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:zoe.shanahan@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)