

Independent Panel Member

Service	Reporting to	Location	Grade
Legal and Governance	Senior Democratic Services Officer (Team Leader)	At Salford Civic Centre/Online via Microsoft Teams	Volunteer

About the role

What does the school admission appeal panel do?

The role of Independent Appeal Panel is to ensure a fair and independent hearing for those parents or carers who are not satisfied with the Admission Authority's decision to refuse their child a place at a particular school.

The Independent Appeal Panel is set up under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Education Act 2002 to hear School Admission Appeals. The School Admissions Appeals Code requires that each is heard by Independent Appeal Panels which consist of 3 volunteers from various backgrounds.

Our Democratic Services team administers the appeals process, recruiting and supporting volunteers to carry out their role effectively and in line with the School Admissions Appeals Code.

You would be working as part of our established pool of trained panel members who sit on panels and hear the school appeals and decide, on the evidence presented in the hearing, whether to uphold or dismiss the appeals.

Admissions Appeals Panels consist of 3 members and are appointed from the following categories: -

- People who have professional experience of education. At least one Panel Member must fall within this category. ·
- People who are lay members. This is someone who has not been professionally involved in the running of a school or teaching in one. At least one Panel Member must fall within this category.
- The appeal panel should not include any members whose involvement could raise doubts about impartiality. Regulations disqualify certain specific categories of people from panel membership.

This includes:

- Employees of the local authority, school or academy in question
- A member or former member of the governing body
- A teacher or teaching assistant at the school
- A person involved in admission decisions at the school
- A member of the local authority
- A close friend of the appellant

Salford City Council is committed to recruiting people with diverse backgrounds and experiences to serve as panel members.

We are currently looking for volunteers and actively encourage applications from people who belong to communities that are currently under-represented on our panels including:

- Ethnically diverse communities
- Religious communities
- People with lived experience of special educational needs and/or disabled people
- under 50s
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people

Key outcomes

- To sit on the Independent School Admission Appeals Panels with other panel members and to make decisions on individual school admission appeals.
- To work with the other panel members and the Clerk to the Panel to ensure that the Panels' decisions on school appeals are lawful, fair and impartial.
- To ensure parent/carers and external agencies have a positive appeal process.
- To ensure parent/carers, the admission authorities and representatives can easily access the appeals process and are treated with consideration, respect and dignity at all times.

What we need from you

Skills profile: -

- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- To be articulate and have active listening skills
- Good questioning skills
- The ability to read and understand a large number of various documents
- A good understanding of the principles of natural justice
- Appreciation of each individual's differing circumstances and backgrounds
- The ability to act in a calm and considered manner
- The ability to make reasonable and evidence based decisions on individual appeal cases
- To act with integrity, fairness, courtesy and respect at all times
- Ability to work with other panel members.
- To ensure you are kept up to date by attending training events and by reading briefing papers.
- To be conversant and act in accordance with the DfE codes for School Admissions and School Admission Appeals.
- To have regard to the "Best practice Guidance on School Admission Appeals" which is produced by the Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council in association with the National Association of School Appeal Clerks.
- To act within the law as amended when hearing appeals and making decisions.
- To adhere to the law and Salford City Council's policies on confidentiality, data protection and equal opportunities.

- To ensure that the rules of natural justice are adhered to throughout.

Do I need previous experience or qualifications?

You do not need any specific experience or formal qualifications, but you should be a good listener and communicator and have clear decision-making skills.

Volunteers can either be 'experienced in education' or 'lay' but cannot work for the local authority. They must also be able to consider cases impartially and independently.

Commitment/Duration

There is no minimum commitment or duration.

Admission appeals are heard throughout the year, although the peak months are between May and July.

Dates will be set in advance, and you are able to choose how often you sit on the panel. On occasions, there may be a requirement to attend appeal hearings for multiple consecutive days.

Each appeal hearing lasts around 40 minutes and are usually grouped together to create a full day of hearings.

The majority are held virtually on Microsoft Teams, so volunteers need to have access to appropriate equipment and a confidential space to carry out the role. Some in-person hearings may be required, when requested by parents/carers, these will usually be held at the Salford Civic Centre in Swinton. If you are attending in-person appeals, parking will be made available and travel expenses will be paid.

What we can offer you

All volunteers will be provided with initial and on-going training, with observations and feedback where needed.

The work is voluntary, and panel members are eligible to claim expenses (see below).

Morning session	£10
Afternoon session	£10
Full day	£30

Being a panel member can be a rewarding experience for those who wish to contribute to their community.

Our organisation's values

We have four values: Pride, Passion, People, Personal responsibility.

[Our four values](#) are central to the way we communicate about the council and the way in which we behave with colleagues, customers, and partners - so that we live and breathe our values each day.

Our values



Pride

Passion

People

Personal responsibility

Application guidance

We are a values-based organisation so reflecting our values or a values-based approach in your evidence will support your application.

The different sections of this role profile are there to give you an understanding of the purpose of the role. The 'what we need from you' section outlines the minimum criteria you will need to meet within your application.

Role details

Completed by:

Date:

Job code:

Job score:

Date of evaluation: