

## **Advisory Board**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Purpose**

The Children's Commissioner has established an Advisory Board to provide strategic advice and challenge to herself and her team.

The Advisory Board advises on how the powers of the Children's Commissioner can be used to best effect to promote and protect children and young people's rights, thereby improving outcomes for children and young people in England.

#### **Constitution**

The Advisory Board is a requirement of the Children and Families Act 2014, which shall comprise of representatives from across Children's and wider sectors.

Secretariat duties are performed by the Children's Commissioner's Executive Assistant.

The Advisory Board is not accountable for the policies, financial or other management affairs of the Office.

Individual members carry no personal liabilities or risks.

#### **Membership**

The Advisory Board comprises of ten members, including the Chair. The Chair of the Advisory Board is selected by the Children's Commissioner from members of the Board.

The members, being influential figures from across the children's sector and wider civil society, each member bringing specific expertise and knowledge:

- Track record of excellence at strategic policy and delivery;
- Track record of high strategic or operational performance to support services relevant to children, young people and families.
- Proven knowledge and experience of policymaking and public affairs.
- Knowledge of the role, remit, powers, and duties of the Children's Commissioner as defined in legislation.

The work of the Advisory Board shall be undertaken with due regard to the seven principles of the Code of Conduct (the Nolan principles) for those in Public Life.

The Children's Commissioner may on occasions, invite officials from the DfE, other government departments and her team to attend the Advisory Board meetings to provide an update on existing work or commissions.

### **Appointments and tenure**

The term of office for members is three years. However, there may be occasions when their terms of office can be extended.

A member of the Advisory Board may stand down at any time from Advisory Board membership obligations. Three months' written notice of their intention to leave is required, but the Children's Commissioner accepts this may not be possible in every situation.

In the unlikely event that the Children's Commissioner deems it necessary to remove a member from the board because of substantial risk to the Office of the Children's Commissioner, the Children's Commissioner shall write to the member concerned, stating in detail the reasons for terminating the membership, and allow twenty working days for the member to respond in writing.

### **Duties and responsibilities**

As experts in their respective fields, to provide advice, support, scrutiny and challenge to the Children's Commissioner, to facilitate the effective delivery of the Children's Commissioner's statutory responsibilities.

To advise the Children's Commissioner on the key issues and challenges facing children, families and the sector at large.

To act as a critical friend and sounding board for the Children's Commissioner regarding policies and proposals, informing the policy and strategic priorities.

To strengthen relationships between the Children's Commissioner and the wider children's services network across the statutory and voluntary sectors as appropriate.

To promote the work of the Children's Commissioner.

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Advisory Board members shall treat all Advisory Board business and communications with the Children's Commissioner in their roles as Advisory Board members, as confidential unless it is clearly indicated that a public statement will follow their discussions.

### **Attendance**

Advisory Board membership infers a commitment to attend a minimum of three and a maximum of six meetings per year. Members should be amenable to contact between meetings via email or telephone, on a limited basis and only as strictly necessary.

### **Reporting**

The minutes of the Advisory Board meetings are formally recorded and submitted to the Children's Commissioner.

### **Frequency of Meetings**

Meetings are held four times per year with dates published one year in advance. Scheduled dates will only change in exceptional circumstances. Attendance is recorded and published as part of the annual reporting cycle.

### **Location**

Meetings take place either at the Children's Commissioner's Office, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT, or virtually.

### **Remuneration**

Advisory Board members do not receive a fee but are eligible to claim reasonable expenses for travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on the Children's Commissioner's business. Claims for expenses should comply with the rules and principles set out in the Children's Commissioner's Financial Procedures.

### **Conflict of Interest**

Members must declare conflict of interest that may arise in the course of the business of the Children's Commissioner, and declare any business interests, positions of authority or other connections with organisations relevant to or likely to conflict with the business of the Office of the Children's Commissioner. Declarations of conflicts of interest are recorded at the start of each meeting.

### **Date of Next Review**

May 2024

## **Appendix 1**

### **The Seven Principles of Public Life**

All applicants for public appointments are expected to demonstrate a commitment to, and an understanding of, the value and importance of the principles of public service. The seven principles of public life are:

#### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

#### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

#### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

#### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

#### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.

#### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

**Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.