

PREPARING FOR YOUR IRM PANEL - GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

What information can I send to my caseworker in relation to my case?

- Any further information that you consider supports your case such as important letters or notes of meetings, medical or legal information.
 - It is not usually helpful to send many testimonials or letters of support.
 - It is very helpful to keep your information brief and relevant to the issues which led to the proposed decision by your Fostering / Adoption agency decision maker.
- Any information requested by the IRM. You will be given a date by which to send in the information.

Please note, you will not be allowed to submit any new information/documentation on the day of panel.

What information will you ask my Fostering Service Provider (FSP) / Adoption Agency for?

- All the documents which were submitted to your previous Fostering / Adoption Panel including your response to reports prepared for the Panel and any submissions. Please note, we will not include the minutes of the fostering/adoption panel that led to the Qualifying Determination (QD) letter.
- A copy of the QD letter.
- AH medical reports and medical information, if required
- Other documentation which our caseworker feels would be relevant to your case for example, Form F/PAR, reviews etc
- Questions requiring clarification in advance of panel.

What information will be sent to the IRM Panel members and will I receive a copy?

- 2-3 weeks before you panel, your allocated caseworker will put together a pack of Panel papers which will include documentation submitted from both your FSP / Agency and documents provided by you, the applicant/s.
- A copy of the papers will also be sent to you and your FSP / Agency. However it will not include the following:
 - An IRM legal advisor will supply the panel with a legal report and a medical advisor may provide a medical report, if required. However these reports are not shared with either yourself or your FSP / Agency.

- Any 3rd party information or documents that we do not have permission to share for example, references etc.
- We will also confirm the details of the venue for the IRM panel and the time
- You will not be able to present additional documentation on the day of the panel.
- Applicants will be sent all of the information which is sent to the panel members except for third party confidential information.

There is information I have seen in the IRM panel papers which I have not seen before or I take issue with. What can I do?

There may well be papers you have not had sight of before as the IRM can ask for any relevant papers from the FSP / Agency. If you have concerns about the Panel pack please contact your caseworker.

What is the role of my supporter?

- Most applicants find the panel a helpful experience and feel their concerns have been listened to. However, many people can feel more confident if they have a friend or support worker with them during the panel.
- His or her role is to provide moral support and act as a 'second pair of ears'. He or she is not allowed to speak on your behalf.
- If you decide not to attend panel (although we do advise it is always best to attend) your supporter will not be allowed to attend in your absence.

For further information visit:

www.independentreviewmechanism.org.uk – The official IRM website

www.coram.org.uk/corambaaf-adoption-fostering-academy - CoramBAAF Adoption & Fostering Academy is the leading membership organisation dedicated to improving outcomes for children and young people in care by supporting the agencies and professionals who work with them.

Monday to Friday 9am – 1pm: 0300 222 5775

www.adoptionuk.org - A national charity run by and for adopters

Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm: 0844 848 7900

<http://www.fosterline.info/> - A help and support centre for new and prospective foster carers

Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, 7pm – 9pm every 2nd Wednesday of the month: 0800 040 7675

www.first4adoption.org.uk - The dedicated adoption information service for people interested in adopting a child in England

Monday to Friday 10am – 6pm: 0300 222 0222