



# Carer assessment panel guidelines

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## Purpose of the panels

Is are convened to assist with deciding the outcome of carer applications. The purpose of the panels is to review assessments and to provide specialist advice and input into the decision making process regarding the suitability of applicants to be approved as general foster carers. Recommendations and rationales regarding carer suitability must be made on the basis of evidence and address the applicant's ability to meet each point of the Standards of Care in the Statement of Standards.

Panels may also be used as a consultative forum by agencies and assessors for advice on potentially complex applications or when consideration is being given to suspending or cancelling a carer's certificate.

In addition to making a recommendation for approval, the panel may also consider the type of care for which approval is given and the number, ages and genders of children to be placed.

It remains the responsibility of the Child Safety Service Centre Manager to make the final decision to approve or refuse an application. If a Child Safety Service Centre Manager is not available the Placement Services Unit Manager can approve or refuse an application.

## Membership of the panel

- Manager, Placement Services Unit or the Foster and Kinship Care Senior Services Support Officer
- Child Safety Service Centre Manager
- Queensland Foster and Kinship Care representative.

## Attendees

- Placement Services Unit representative
- Foster and Kinship Care services representatives for reports being considered at panel meetings
- Assessors for reports being considered at panel meetings.

## Guest Attendees

- Cultural Practice Advisors or an Indigenous representative
- CALD practitioners.

## Roles and responsibilities

All panel members must consider each assessment that is tabled and make a recommendation regarding the outcome of the application. Panel members may also provide ongoing feedback to assessors in relation to the quality of assessments. All panel members, including attendees, are bound by the confidentiality provisions of the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

**The chair of the panel** will be determined on a regional basis and will be responsible for ensuring:

- the participation of all panel members
- issues and concerns raised by panel members are accurately recorded in panel minutes
- decisions are recorded in the minutes.

**The role of the Queensland Foster and Kinship Care representative is:** to participate in discussions and contribute to the panels' decision making and to provide the panels with a broader view of the experience of foster and kinship carers.

**The role of the Foster and kinship care service representative is:** to provide the panel members with any additional contextual information that may impact on decision making in relation to assessments completed by or on behalf of their respective agencies. It is also their role to ensure feedback from the panel is incorporated into current and future assessments and that there are internal agency quality assurance processes to ensure a high standard of assessments are tabled at panel meetings.

**The role of Placement Services Unit is:** to oversee the coordination of the panel process and to provide advice regarding the department's policies and procedures in relation to the Regulation of Care provisions. The Placement Services Unit will also provide secretariat support to the panels.

**The role of the Child Safety Service Centre Manager is:** to consider the recommendation made by the panel and either approve the applicant, and sign the relevant certificate and forms or on the occasion of a non-approval recommendation, sign the non-approval recommendation outcome letter within 10 days of the decision and subsequently follow up with any further review rights of the applicant as required.

**The role of the assessor who has completed the assessment is:** to participate in panel discussions regarding their assessment. Assessors can attend the panel meeting in person, or be available by skype or telephone, to speak to the assessment.

If panel members are unable to attend on the day they must provide a proxy.

Each region may have different referral and coordination processes in place. The agenda and all associated documents should be circulated to panel members at least one week prior to the panel meeting.

## **Out of session panels**

For information about your regions out of session panels please contact your Placement Service Unit Manager or your Foster and Kinship Care Senior Services Support Officer.