

Role Description and Competencies

Independent Report Writers

Background information

Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) is inviting suitably qualified and experienced professionals to become part of an established bank of Independent Report Writers to provide independent reports for children's hearings.

These reports provide a range of assessments about babies, infants, children, young people and their families including risk assessments, education, psychiatric or psychological assessments, contact and parenting capacity assessments and ensuring the right support is in place for children with additional needs and disabilities. We are looking for confident and experienced people from a range of professional backgrounds with various specialist skills.

The report writers work as independent consultants undertaking assessments and compiling reports as requested by children's hearings. Individuals in this highly skilled and flexible bank of writers will be called upon, whenever needed, depending upon their skill set and the type of requests made by Panel Members under the following legal rule:

Rule 61(1)(b) of the Children's Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011 (Rules of Procedure in Children's Hearings) Rules 2013 provides that a when considering deferring a hearing, Panel Members can 'require the Reporter to obtain any report from any person which the children's hearing considers would be relevant to any matter to be determined by the hearing'.

Main Activities/ Responsibilities

1. To undertake all necessary and proportionate investigations to assess and make a professional recommendation in response to the children's hearings brief.
2. To obtain the views of the child, families and professionals where appropriate, as part of this assessment.
3. To reach, put forward and articulate reasoned and considered recommendations which will assist a children's hearing in achieving a decision in the best interests of the child.
4. To provide a written report within a 7-week deadline to limit delays to children's progress.
5. To ensure the report and discussions are clear, jargon-free and include child-friendly information.
6. To attend and participate in any children's hearing in relation to the case.
7. To treat information sensitively, securely and confidentially, in accordance with CHS Information Governance protocols and in a way that minimises any risk of data breach or upset to the child or others.

8. To participate and contribute to learning about good practice and development of independent report writers including attendance and participation at regular training and development sessions.

Person Specification

	Essential / desirable	Assessment method
Qualifications: A relevant degree or appropriate professional qualification in psychology, psychiatry, social work, education or other relevant discipline	Essential	Application
Membership of appropriate professional body	Essential	Evidence of membership
Significant experience in working with children and their families in a trauma-informed way and undertaking professional assessments of strengths and needs, within their field of expertise	Essential	Application
Demonstrable track-record of writing clear, concise, evidence-based and outcome-focused assessment reports	Essential	Application/Interview
Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, particularly with children and on complex or sensitive issues	Essential	Application/Interview
Ability to work to clear deadlines	Essential	Application/Interview
Working knowledge of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) practice model	Essential	Application/Interview
Evidence of continuous professional learning and development	Essential	Application/Interview
Evidence that the needs and rights of children and their families are reflected in professional practice	Essential	Application//Interview
An understanding of the Children's Hearings System	Desirable	Application/Interview

Report writers will:

- Act in accordance with the terms of engagement agreed as part of their membership of the bank of independent report writers
- Treat information sensitively, securely and confidentially
- Work in accordance with the terms agreed at the outset of the specific case

In addition to a successful application and interview process, you will be required to provide the following information to Children's Hearings Scotland to be included in the bank of independent report writers:

- Two satisfactory references
- Join the PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) Scheme or undergo a PVG Scheme update prior to formal appointment
- Evidence of membership of an appropriate professional body
- Evidence of qualifications, work history, additional training and other relevant information to demonstrate skills and experience

Payment

Each report request is an individual as each child. Therefore, payment for completion of reports will be agreed in advance, with quotes prepared in line with Children's Hearings Scotland's fee guidance for independent reports. An hourly rate will be agreed with CHS if successful in joining the bank.