

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
CABINET MEMBER**

**APPOINTMENT OF EDUCATION APPEALS PANEL MEMBERS**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

1.1 To appoint independent members who may be called to sit on either the Education Admission Appeals Panel or Independent Review Panel to hear appeals in respect of school admissions and exclusions.

1.2 The key point in this report is as follows –

The council has been approached by a person wishing to join the North Lincolnshire panels.

A further application has been received via an existing panel member who sits on similar neighbouring panels.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

2.1 North Lincolnshire Council is the admissions authority for community and voluntary controlled schools and are responsible for ensuring compliance with the Department for Education (DfE) Schools Admissions Code. The Code covers the arrangements for appeals made against refusal of a place at a school. Appeals are heard by an independent Appeals Panel, which consist of three or five members, including at least one "education expert" and at least one "lay member"

2.2 The council is also required, in line with the DfE Exclusions from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England statutory guidance, to arrange an independent review panel hearing in response to a parent request following a permanent exclusion of their child from school.

2.3 The council make arrangements for Education Admission Appeals Panel and Independent Review Panel hearings on behalf of maintained schools and provide this service to Academy schools under a Service Level Agreement.

- 2.4 The existing pool of panel members is very experienced and is relatively small in the context of recent demand for panel hearings.

The pool comprises 16 panel members. However, as a result of all appeals being held virtually in accordance with the updated regulations School Admissions (England) (Coronavirus) (Appeals Arrangements) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (the 2020 regulations), the council is currently only able to draw upon the services of 11 panel members, as some members did not feel confident or comfortable with the software that is required to take part in remote appeals sessions.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, it looks very likely that appeals will be held remotely for some time, which would mean having fewer panel members available for appeals going forward. As such the council is always open to applications from potential new members, which will possibly help to enlarge the available pool.

- 2.5 Two applications to join the panel have recently been received.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 To appoint the two new members to the panels, as outlined in Appendix 1.

- 3.2 To not appoint the two new members to the panels.

### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The appointments are in line with the requirements of the Education (Lay Members of Appeals Committees) Regulations 1994 and School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012.

- 4.2 The legislation states that all panel members must be trained on the respective codes every two years. Training sessions have been arranged for February and March 2021. Following appointment members will be invited to attend the training sessions. As part of the induction for new members, arrangements will be made for them to sit as observers on a panel.

If Option 1 were implemented this would allow a wider selection of panel members and would place less responsibility on current panel members.

- 4.3 Not appointing the two new members to the panels would lead to a smaller pool of panel members and therefore may cause difficulty with availability, particularly with the reduced numbers available currently.

5. **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)**

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. Panel members are not remunerated for the role, where applicable expenses for travel or loss of earnings are met from existing budgets.

5.1.2 Training sessions, to comply with the legal requirement to train panel members will be met from existing budgets.

5.1.3 The service is provided to local academies in accordance with the council's Services to Schools service level agreements.

6. **OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)**

6.1 There are no other relevant implications arising from this report.  
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7. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

7.1 N/A

8. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

8.1 The council is always open to approaches from potential panel members. In addition panel members have, when serving as a panel member for neighbouring authorities, encouraged colleagues to submit applications.

8.2 Subsequently, two applications were received. The applications were cross-referenced with the published role profile to determine the applicants' experience and suitability. In addition the clerks have met both applicants via Microsoft Teams to discuss the role further.

9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 To appoint the two applicants, as set out in Appendix 1, with a view to new members receiving training and being gradually introduced onto panels during 2021.

DIRECTOR: GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report –**

Application forms (Exempt)  
School Admissions Code  
School Admissions (England) (Coronavirus) (Appeals Arrangements) (Amendment)  
Regulations 2020 (the 2020 regulations)  
School Admission Appeals Code of Practice  
Exclusion from maintain schools, academies and pupil referral units in England  
September 2017  
School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012  
The Education (Lay Members of Appeals Committees) Regulations 1994

## **Appendix 1**

New applicants to be appointed to the Education Appeals Panel:

- Deborah Donald
- Nicola Lyons