

Advisory Board

Terms of Reference

Purpose

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

The Children's Commissioner shall chair Advisory Board meetings. Secretariat duties are performed by a member of the Children's Commissioner's staff.

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 five 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 for those in Public Life.

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 by giving at least three months' written notice of their intention to leave.

In the unlikely event that the 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.

Advisory Board members shall treat all Advisory Board business and communications with the 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 four 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 virtually or at the Children's Commissioner's Office, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.

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

November 2021