

Portsmouth Independent Appeals Service (IAS) – Panel Members

Salary & job type: Volunteer role

We are looking for volunteers from across the community to join the pool of independent Panel members supporting the Portsmouth School Admission Appeals Panel.

The role provides parents, guardians and carers of school-age children with an opportunity to appeal against a decision to refuse admission to their preferred school.

Applicants will have the opportunity to work flexibly from home as all our appeals are heard during the day, in term time and online using Microsoft Teams.

Unfortunately, we cannot accept your application if you are an employee of Portsmouth City Council or have ever had a personal connection with a member of the Council which might raise doubts about your ability to act impartially.

Why become a Panel member?

For some people, the work is helpful for their career, providing them with relevant work experience. For others, it is rewarding to hear parents/ carers make their case before making a decision based upon the evidence provided. Even if their appeal is not successful, parents/ carers often become clearer about the options open to them during a hearing and the reasons why a place was not offered at a preferred school.

What is the role?

You will be volunteering to hear cases and reaching a decision with other Panel members based on the evidence heard. The Panel is supported by an independent Clerk who provides advice on points of law and procedure and takes notes during the hearing.

All our appeal hearings are heard remotely using video conference facilities hosted by Microsoft Teams.

Who are we looking for?

You will:

- Have a strong sense of fair play and the ability to be impartial
- Have good communication, listening and interpersonal skills
- Be good at working as part of a team but able to express an individual view
- An ability to ask probing questions in a sensitive manner
- Have excellent attention to detail
- An ability to balance arguments and to make decisions based on the facts
- Remain firm and calm under pressure or in emotional situations
- Have access to technology to join virtual Microsoft Teams meetings

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You may:

- Have experience of the education sector eg. as a member of staff or as a governor
- Have experience of working and/ or chairing committees

What training and support will you receive?

Our volunteer Panel members receive training on:

- The legislation, guidance and processes underpinning school admission appeals
- The different types of appeals are heard, and how they differ
- How the appeals process work in Portsmouth
- Microsoft Teams and are provided with tech support during appeal hearings

We will also offer you the opportunity to observe appeals and be mentored by current appeal Panel members.

Once your initial training has been completed, you will receive ongoing support from the Appeals Service including regular update training.

When will we need you?

Initially, we will ask you to observe some appeals so that you can decide if the role is for you. We will then offer you mandatory training after which, you can volunteer for as many appeals as you wish.

The Appeals Service understands the need to be flexible and liaises with our pool of Panel members to work around employment or other regular commitments. You will not be asked to sit on any school appeals where you may have a conflict of interest.

Most appeals are heard between May and July in time for children to start at their new school in September and during this period we may have appeals which take place over several days. We also hear appeals throughout the year, and these usually take place over a half or full day.

The full job profile can be viewed [here](#)

We are a disability confident employer - committed to ensuring that our recruitment and selection process is inclusive and accessible and welcome applications from all areas of society.

We will email applicants from time to time; please ensure you check e-mail folders as sometimes our e-mails may go into spam/junk folders.

Should you require any support in completing the application form please contact recruit@portsmouthcc.gov.uk