

Role Title: Independent Person - Complaints
Salary: £25 per hour
Location: Home based
Report to: Customer Care Manager

About Us

Bradford Children and Families Trust (BCFT) is dedicated to transforming the lives of children, young people, and families across one of the UK's most vibrant and diverse cities. We work in partnership to safeguard and support children, ensuring they are safe and able to reach their full potential. Our focus is on continuous improvement and innovation—expanding early help and family support, strengthening fostering and care leaver services, and investing in new models of care that enable children to thrive in their communities. We value collaboration, inclusion, and professional growth, all while driving positive change for Bradford's children and families.

Why This Role Matters

The Independent Person provides objective, impartial oversight of Children's Social Care statutory complaints at Stage 2 and contributes to the fairness and transparency of Stage 3 Review Panels. The postholder ensures investigations are robust, child-centred, and compliant with the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 and associated statutory guidance.

The Independent Person plays a critical role in upholding trust, transparency, and fairness within our statutory complaints process. By providing impartial oversight of Stage 2 investigations and participating in Stage 3 review panels, this role ensures that complaints are handled with integrity, that the voice of the complainant—especially children and families—is heard, and that outcomes are child-centred and compliant with statutory guidance. Your contribution helps maintain confidence in our services, supports learning and improvement, and reinforces our commitment to accountability and safeguarding.

Job Overview

The Independent Person ensures that Stage 2 complaint investigations are fair, proportionate, child-centred, and aligned with statutory guidance and Trust policy.

You will work alongside an Investigating Officer, reviewing case files, testing evidence, raising appropriate challenge, and ensuring that the investigation remains focused on the issues raised at Stage 1 without unnecessary expansion.

You will also attend Stage 3 Review Panels as required, offering objective insight into the adequacy and fairness of the Stage 2 investigation and supporting transparent, informed panel deliberations.

Assignments are offered on an ad-hoc basis, with timescales set by statutory requirements—for example, Stage 2 investigations should be completed within **25–65 working days**, and Stage 3 panels held within **30 days** of request.



Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Provide impartial oversight of Stage 2 investigations to ensure fairness, proportionality, and a child-focused approach.
- Participate in investigations by reviewing records, interviewing relevant parties (where required), testing evidence, and identifying gaps or inconsistencies.
- Ensure the investigation addresses the issues raised at Stage 1 and remains appropriately scoped.
- Uphold complainants' rights, including access to advocacy, information, and adjustments for inclusion.
- Ensure adherence to statutory timescales and Trust procedures, including restorative practice principles.
- Produce a clear Independent Person report summarising your view on the findings, the quality and fairness of the investigation, and any concerns about process, evidence, or balance.
- Identify themes, learning, and recommendations that contribute to systemic service improvement.
- Attend Stage 3 Review Panels to answer questions about the Stage 2 investigation and support transparent decision-making.
- Declare all potential conflicts of interest and maintain independence at all times.
- Handle sensitive information securely and ethically, in line with statutory and Trust requirements.



About You

We are looking for applicants who can demonstrate that they meet the following requirements:

- **Competency Checklist**

- Experience of complaints handling or investigations in children's services, social care, or related public sector domains.
- Understanding of statutory complaints frameworks, including the Children Act procedures and Ombudsman principles.
- Strong analytical skills, balanced judgment, and excellent written communication.
- Ability to engage empathetically and professionally with children, families, and staff.
- Understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion principles.
- Understanding of safeguarding principles and the importance of hearing and representing the child's voice.
- Ability to explain findings to complainants and professionals in accessible, appropriate language.
- Ability to meet statutory timescales and avoid delays.
- Ability to evaluate investigation reports and assess compliance with procedures.

Before work is allocated, the Trust will make safeguarding enquiries as appropriate, which may include consulting the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if concerns arise that meet the LADO threshold. This is to ensure that Independent Persons are suitable to work with children and that no known safeguarding concerns exist that would prevent engagement.



Safeguarding Responsibilities

Bradford Children and Families Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children who use our services and as such expects all staff to share this commitment.

Successful applicants will be required to complete the relevant safeguarding checks. An enhanced DBS check will be requested.

We are an equal opportunities employer.

What we offer

- Competitive fee rates per assignment
- Flexible, ad-hoc working arrangements
- Full induction and mandatory safeguarding training
- Access to guidance, briefings, and professional development opportunities
- Support from the Customer Care Team throughout each investigation
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion across all roles within the Trust

