

Being a member of
The City of Edinburgh Placing in Schools Appeal Committee
what will it mean for me?

WHO ARE MEMBERS?

Committee members are lay tribunal members who **volunteer** to sit on the City of Edinburgh Placing in Schools Appeal Committee. They are people from the community who come from a wide range of backgrounds.

WHAT DO APPEAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS DO?

The role of an appeal committee member is to decide whether the education authority has made the correct legal decision in turning down placing requests for schools in its area. Before each hearing, appeal committee members are sent reports and papers relating to individual cases. Members must prepare thoroughly for each hearing, reading the papers to make sure they are fully informed as to the circumstances and reasons for the appeal.

During a hearing appeal committee members should:

- ensure that their practice in the hearing is fair and that everyone at the hearing is given the opportunity to speak and present their case
- make clear, well founded decisions based on the information, both written and oral, presented at the hearing

HOW ARE APPEAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS SELECTED AND APPOINTED?

Members of the appeal committee in Edinburgh are appointed by the City of Edinburgh Council. For new members this normally involves completing an application form and attending interview. The initial period of appointment is three years.

WILL I NEED TO TAKE TIME OFF WORK TO ATTEND APPEALS?

Appeals take place on week days during daytime hours. Our busiest period is between May and July when members can be called upon to attend once or twice a week on average, sometimes for full days. Outwith this period the time commitment reduces to once or twice a month. For those members who are in employment, this usually means asking their employers for time off work. Many large employers support voluntary work but it is advisable to speak to your employer and line manager to ensure they will support you in your application.

WILL I RECEIVE ANY TRAINING?

As a new member, you will take up a programme of training to prepare you for your role. All members must carry out pre-service training and attend a minimum of two appeal hearings as an observer.

Pre-service training provides the foundation of knowledge that appeal committee members need to enable them to fulfil their statutory duties and to develop and practice necessary skills. Members who successfully complete this training will then take up their appointment and sit on appeals.

You will develop skills such as:

- leadership
- teamwork
- effective communication
- decision making

All of these skills can be of great use in other areas of your life.

COMMITMENT

The time commitment required to be a member can be considerable particularly from May to July as outlined above and you need to think about this carefully before applying. As well as attending training, appeal committee members are expected to prepare in advance of each appeal. Then there is attendance at the appeal hearings themselves. You have to be prepared to commit to this important role.

KEEPING INFORMATION SAFE

As a public body the City of Edinburgh has responsibilities under Data Protection legislation. The papers that you will receive in advance of attending an appeal will contain extremely sensitive information about children, young people and their families. Every member is responsible for keeping this information safe at all times, including when travelling to the hearing.

WHAT SHOULD I DO NEXT?

You can either complete the application form online at

[Insert Web Link](#)

or request a paper application from schoolappeals@edinburgh.gov.uk