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New Member Applications

Standard Operating Procedure

Standard Operating Procedures are designed to be shared with members and new member applicants in the interests of transparency

Key definitions:

Site / Centre:	A single location housing animals, or a group of locations housing animals but under common management
Foster Carer:	Typically a domestic home providing temporary care for an animal, or small number of animals. If a foster home is under the management of a specific site / centre of an organisation it does not need to be separately assessed, but the process for selection and management of foster homes will be assessed

Procedure:

1. After reading the eligibility criteria and guidance on the website, prospective Members either complete and submit their application online or request an application form which may be emailed or posted to the Memberships Officer. Prospective Members will need to provide details of two existing ADCH Members who would be willing to endorse their application. Where this is not possible, prospective Members should provide details of two professional referees e.g. vet, local authority.
2. Relevant accompanying documents should be uploaded to the web form or attached to the postal application form. Accompanying documents will include:
 - A copy of the organisation's constitution
 - Two years of accounts. Where accounts are not available, such as for newly formed organisations, recent bank statements for all bank accounts of the prospective Member should be submitted. Recently formed organisations who do not have two years of accounts will still be considered but assessed again after two years.
3. The Memberships Officer will: -
 - a. check and acknowledge receipt of the application form and supporting information, advising that they will be contacted in the near future with regard to the next steps, or request any further information if needed.
 - b. contact referees to ensure they are happy to endorse the application.
 - c. email all Trustees with basic information about the organisation, requesting approval within 10 days. Where no concerns are raised the Memberships Officer will progress the application.
 - d. add the rescue to the list of applications received in the last 30 days on the members only part of the website. Existing members will have the opportunity to provide confidential comments to the Standards and Animal Welfare Committee. The Committee will maintain objectivity and consider any comments received with care and transparency.
 - e. In light of the current coronavirus situation, the process set out in Appendix A applies to new member assessments.
4. Where possible, the assessment will be carried out within 6-8 weeks of receipt of the application
5. Within 7 days of the visit, the assessors will submit the following to assessment@adch.org.uk: -
 - a. A completed Assessment Form.
 - b. A completed Assessment and Recommendations Report, highlighting any areas that scored less than two.
 - c. The prospective member's action plan or other information, to resolve areas scoring less than two (in complex cases requiring significant facility rebuild, an application may be placed on hold pending further detail).

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6. A final copy of the completed assessment form, but not the Assessment and Recommendations Report, will be sent to the applicant by the assessor/s.
7. The reports and relevant documents are submitted to the Standards and Animal Welfare Committee for approval by email or discussion and decision at the next Committee meeting.
8. The Committee can either approve or decline applications for membership or, in some cases, an application may be referred to the Board of Trustees for a decision.
9. If accepted the Memberships Officer confirms ADCH's decision to the applicant / member in writing.
10. If the applicant is accepted, the Bookkeeper issues an invoice for the membership fee, according to the current fee schedule and on a pro-rata basis for the remainder of the membership year.
11. If the application is declined, the Memberships Officer shall communicate the decision to the applicant, along with whatever other information is deemed appropriate. The applicant shall be informed of the appeal process.
12. For new member applicants with multiple sites, please refer to SOP 4 for assessment process

Appeals

As per the ADCH constitution, the Trustees:

- I. Shall, if they decide to refuse an application for membership, give the applicant their reasons for doing so, within a reasonable timeframe of the decision being taken, and give the applicant the opportunity to appeal against the refusal; and
- II. Shall give fair consideration to any such appeal, and shall inform the applicant of their decision, but any decision to confirm refusal of the application shall be final.

Further Guidance:

Further guidance can be obtained from ADCH staff (enquiries@adch.org.uk)

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APPENDIX A:

External-Assessment of Potential Members - Temporary Changes to Assessment Process

Throughout these documents, “Assessors” refers to both trained and trainee Assessors.

- a. The Memberships Officer will assign Assessors to the applicant. They should confirm they have read this SOP and have no conflicts of interest. Wherever possible, the Assessors will also carry out the external visit at a later date, when it is deemed safe to do so.
- b. The Memberships Officer will introduce the Assessors to the applicant, via email, and provide a copy of the Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards and the corresponding blank assessment form to the applicant.
- c. The Assessors will carry out a pre-self-assessment call remotely via telephone/Zoom. The aim of this will be to gather as much information as would usually be done in discussion on site. The Assessor will also talk the applicant through the ADCH’s Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards, which has already been shared with them, as above.
- d. Applicants will then be asked to tour their facilities using the provided form and score themselves against ADCH’s Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards. Commentary and evidence should be provided against each point, with photographic or video evidence as suitable. It may be helpful to film a video tour of facilities where this shows multiple areas of criteria, such as a walk through a kennel block for example. Applicants operating partially or wholly with a foster home model are referred to standards 58-62.
- e. Applicants will share this information (the Self-Assessment form and recorded evidence) with their Assessor and arrange an amicable time to speak, either by phone or video call.
- f. The Assessor will look at the submitted form and compare with evidence given. Any areas of non-compliance should be discussed, as usual, and plans considered to rectify these. The Assessor may ask for further evidence to be given, where it has not already been provided, such as additional photo or video footage of facilities and supporting documented procedures.
- g. When the Assessor has all the information they need, the application process resumes as normal.

Membership granted after a virtual assessment will be *Provisional Member, pending external assessment*. This will grant access to all member benefits, apart from having a vote in matters where the membership are asked to do so (including but not limited to, constitutional matters). When the Association resumes the normal procedure of external assessments, the Provisional Member will be contacted to arrange an external assessment to grant Full Membership. Provisional Membership is not deemed to be a permanent arrangement.