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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 email/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 (page 3) applies to assessments.

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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).
6. A 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. Admittance to membership may be temporarily paused where an assessment concludes that an applicant needs to carry out some work in order to meet the Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards. This will be at the discretion of the Standards and Animal Welfare Committee. Once the changes have taken place, the applicant is asked to submit evidence (such as photographs), and membership can then begin as per point 10 above.
13. 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.

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Further Guidance:

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

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APPENDIX A:

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

Throughout these documents, "Assessors" refers to both trained, and trainee Assessors

Assessment Planning

1. Assessors will confirm that they have read ADCH's Risk Assessment (see Appendix B)
2. Staff and Assessors will check for any issues with crossing borders where relevant
3. Assessors will ensure they have appropriate PPE.
4. Assessors will complete pre-assessment meeting remotely via telephone/Zoom and complete the pre-assessment checklist. During the call, the Assessor will:
 - a. Check with Member that there is no local surge in coronavirus cases, or recent case of coronavirus at the site.
 - b. Liaise with host to understand their requirements and request copy of their risk assessment for having visitors on site.
 - c. Gather as much information as possible that will minimise time on site and contact with Member staff/volunteer.
 - d. Arrange to meet with just one representative from the rescue, at a mutually convenient time.
 - e. Where appropriate, discuss and consider the site layout and check that a second/ Trainee Assessor can be safely included on site
 - f. Advise Member what to expect during and after the site visit.
 - g. Request that Members email any supporting information to the Assessor rather than providing in paper format.
 - h. Ensure hand washing facilities, with soap and water, will be made available at the assessment site.
 - i. In some instances, e.g. when Assessor capacity is limited, or concerns have been raised during initial assessment, the Assessor may request a virtual video tour prior to the on-site visit.
 - j. Rescues working from foster homes or in rented facilities (whether or not they also have other facilities) need to have in place mechanisms to ensure that their animals are cared for in line with the standards. The mechanisms could include written procedures for fosterers and kennel owners, video or physical visits to the premises, training or other processes. The essential concept is that an animal has the same needs and right to good welfare, where-ever they are being housed by an ADCH Member. Members should not rely on local authority licencing as evidence of quality. Members should not apply any lower standards to volunteer fosterers than to paid staff in terms of animal welfare.

Travelling to/from Site

5. Current legislation should be followed with regard to wearing face coverings on public transport and in shared vehicles.

Site Visit

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6. Assessors to avoid unnecessary contact with surfaces and objects.
7. Assessors to maintain social distancing as advised by Government guidelines. Where it is not possible to maintain social distancing a face covering should be worn.
8. Wherever possible the assessment should take place outdoors. For example, Assessors may need to walk through a cattery, but any discussions should take place outside.
9. Assessors should take their own equipment.
10. If, during the visit, an Assessor feels unwell with symptoms of coronavirus, they should return home immediately and follow guidance on self-isolation and testing. The rescue should be advised, via telephone, and test and trace procedures should be followed.
11. Anyone can abort the assessment if at any time they feel unsafe/uncomfortable.

Post-Assessment

13. Feedback and a copy of the assessment, along with any documents/information that might be helpful should be emailed to the Member after the assessment.
14. The application process will resume as normal.

APPENDIX B: ADCH Risk Assessment for external assessment

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Assessors contracting Covid and/or who may be at risk or shielding	Contraction/ spread of COVID 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessors to advise ADCH if they are willing and able to carry out Assessments safely. Assessors to inform ADCH of any change in circumstance. Assessors may wish to consider their vaccination status 	Assessor	2	3	6	
Onsite assessment of kennels / grounds – contact with member organisation staff/volunteer	Contraction/ spread of COVID 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial assessment to be carried out remotely via telephone/ zoom to minimise time on site/contact with Member staff/volunteers. Assessor to liaise with host to understand their requirements and request copy of their risk assessment as this would be site-specific. Checks for local surges of coronavirus cases. Request supporting information sent via email rather than handed over on site. Ensure hand cleansing facilities are available. Ensure appropriate PPE available (Assessor to supply own or obtain from employer) Where at all possible the site visit should take place outside. Where more than one Assessor has been assigned the Lead Assessor should assess whether the layout of the site could accommodate the additional Assessors and any additional risk this may pose. Assessor to avoid contact with surfaces and objects where possible. Assessor to maintain social distancing as advised by Government guidelines. A face covering should be worn if any part of the visit takes place inside 	Assessor	2	3	6	<p>Latent risk of coronavirus infection. Good hygiene (washing hands, not touching face, sneezing, cough into crook of elbow) throughout the day will keep risk to a minimum.</p> <p>If anyone becomes unwell with any recognised symptoms of Covid-19 they should go straight home and follow the latest guidance</p>

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Suspected case whilst carrying out assessment	Contraction/spread of COVID 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessors may wish to consider undertaking a lateral flow test prior to assessment if they are available If Assessor develops symptoms of coronavirus whilst on site, they should return home immediately and follow the latest guidance for testing and self-isolation, and advise the host (by phone etc) 	Assessor	1	3	3	Assessor to ensure track and trace process is followed.
Poor hygiene	Contraction/spread of COVID 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessors to wash hands thoroughly and regularly. Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use 70%+ alcohol-based hand sanitiser if soap and water is not available and hand washing technique to be adopted as directed by Public Health England Avoid touching your face/eyes/nose/mouth with unwashed hands and cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue then throw it in the bin. 	Assessor	2	3	6	
Travelling to and from site	Contraction/spread of COVID 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face coverings should be worn on public transport and in shared vehicles as required by current legislation Wash hands before and immediately after travel. 	Assessor	2	3	6	Contamination post visit to organisation - hand hygiene to be maintained and the use of PPE if required
Use of equipment and paperwork	Contraction/spread of COVID 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Own equipment to be used and not shared to reduce transmission risk 	Assessor	1	3	3	
Post-Assessment briefing	Contraction/spread of COVID 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback will take place remotely and a copy of the assessment and any other helpful advice and guidance will be sent via email. 	Assessor ADCH Staff	1	3	3	
Impact to mental health	Stress/Burn-out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADCH to proactively manage the assessment programme, ensuring individual Assessors are not asked to carry out a disproportionate number of visits. Assessors given opportunity to take a break from the programme at any time without penalty and encouraged to ask if they feel the need to do so 	Trustees ADCH staff	2	2	4	



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