

SOP 10: Induction & Ongoing Training of Volunteer Assessors

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Induction and Ongoing Training of Volunteer Assessors

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 10

1. Purpose

This SOP defines the process for inducting newly recruited trainee Volunteer Assessors (VA) and the ongoing training of VA. It should be considered in line with SOP 6: Appointment of Assessors.

Definitions:	
Trainee	A newly recruited VA undertaking their first shadowing opportunities.
Second	A VA with sufficient experience in the type of rescue being assessed, to be able to attend and contribute to the assessment, without the support of a Trainer. They will not lead with the administration of the assessment. A VA who has been assessing as a lead or solo assessor for some time may also be a second assessor for a different type of assessment, if they do not have prior experience in that area (e.g. they have been assessing centres for a year, but are attending their first assessment of a foster network)
Lead	A VA with sufficient experience in the type of rescue being assessed, to be able to attend and contribute to the assessment, without the support of a Trainer. They will lead with the administration of the assessment, such as setting the date, ensuring paperwork is received for review, and leading on communications
Solo	A VA with sufficient experience in the type of rescue being assessed, to be able to carry out the assessment process in its entirety, without the support of another assessor. These assessments are only of existing ADCH members undergoing re-assessment. They will be responsible for the entire assessment process following introduction, through to reporting. If at any stage they identify a reason for including another assessor, they can ask the staff team for support in providing this.
Trainer	A VA with sufficient experience in a wide range of assessments, who is able to carry out the entire process with the rescue being assessed, whilst simultaneously providing a training opportunity to an trainee VA by showing the process and explaining the ADCH

	process to them, as well as how they are effectively assessing whether or not the standards are met in the rescue.
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2. Scope

This SOP applies to all newly recruited trainee Volunteer Assessors and contains information on what to expect from ADCH in terms of onboarding, training and support to fulfil the needs of the role as outlined in the [role profile](#).

3. Upon recruitment

When a Volunteer Assessor has been successfully appointed to the role, they will receive a welcome email containing:

- A short introduction presentation to ADCH covering ADCH's mission statement, history, values, future plans, details of our Members, roles of staff within ADCH and the roles of volunteers within ADCH.
- The Volunteer Assessor Handbook covering relevant information about the role.
- A copy of this SOP.
- An invitation to attend an induction meeting with the Volunteer Manager.

4. Induction Meeting

During the Induction Meeting the Volunteer Manager will:

- Ensure the VA has access to the Assessors' Area of the ADCH website and understands how to log in to the area. The Volunteer Manager will then give a brief tour of the Assessors' Area drawing attention to the following:
 1. The 'My Assessor Role' area
 2. The 'Assessment Tools' area
 3. The 'Members' Benefits' Area
- Check ADCH has all the correct details for the VA, including emergency contacts.
- Explain the initial shadowing training process for VA.
- Explain that when carrying out assessments, they are acting on behalf of, and representing the views of, ADCH and not (if applicable) their employer.
- Gain consent to share that a new VA has joined the ADCH volunteer team via the Volunteer Voices newsletter (name, ADCH Role and other job details, photo).
- Provide a list of tasks for the VA to complete ahead of their first shadowing visit:
 1. Read the risk assessment for conducting visits, the latest version can be found in the [Assessor's Area](#).
 2. Send a passport style photo to the Volunteer Manager so an ID Badge can be created for the VA.
 3. Read and understand the Minimum Welfare and Operational Standards, and Principles Underpinning ADCH Standards and Assessments, both of which are available on the [webpage here](#).
 4. Read and understand the Benefits of ADCH membership leaflet.
 5. Explore the Assessors' Area of the ADCH website: [Assessors Area](#).

5. Initial training: Shadowing

- The Volunteer Manager will coordinate a minimum of two shadowing opportunities for trainee VA with experienced VA/Volunteer Assessor Trainer. Prior to each shadowing opportunity, the Volunteer Manager will discuss with the trainee if they have any questions/areas they would like support with and ensure that the VA Trainer providing the shadowing opportunity is aware of these questions/areas.
- After each shadowing opportunity, the Volunteer Manager will discuss the trainee's experience with them and whether further shadowing opportunities would be useful for the trainee.
- Ideally, trainee VA will shadow different VA; shadow assessments of rescues caring for dogs and cats; and different types of rescue set-up (centre, boarding facilities and foster homes). However, this may not always be possible due to logistical constraints, and the trainee's own prior experiences may dictate which of these are more important to cover.

6. Progression from Trainee Assessor to Second/Lead/Solo Assessor

- After completing a minimum of two shadowing opportunities for a species and rescue set-up the VA has prior experience of from their current, or previous, employment and/or voluntary roles, if they feel comfortable to do so, a trainee VA can become a Second Assessor for assessments with this species and rescue set-up.

Example:

A trainee VA who was is currently working for a cat rescue centre may be a Second Assessor for a cat rescue centre alongside after completing two shadowing opportunities providing at least one of these shadowing opportunities included cats in a rescue centre.

- After completing one assessment as a Second Assessor for a species and rescue set-up they are familiar with, if they feel comfortable to do so, a VA can become a Lead (or Solo) Assessor.
- If a VA wants to carry out an assessment for a species and/or rescue set-up they do not have experience of from their employment and/or volunteering history, they will need to be a Second Assessor on this type of assessment and be competent in assessing this species before they can become a Lead (or Solo) Assessor for this type of assessment. To become competent, it will be necessary for an Assessor to have proactively engaged in learning about this species, including attending ADCH species-specific training.
- Assessors should recognise the importance of seeking support from ADCH if anything arises on assessment visits which is outside of their knowledge or experience.

7. Volunteer Assessor Trainers

- Volunteer Assessor Trainers are experienced Assessors who have a background from their employment and/or volunteering history of training and/or mentoring others. VA Trainers will be responsible for assisting in the training of trainee VA in conjunction with the Volunteer Manager by providing shadowing opportunities.
- Before a VA can become a trainer, they should:
 1. Have experience of training staff and/or volunteers from their employment and/or volunteering history
 2. Be an experienced VA who has carried out a sufficient number of assessments in a given rescue setting. Typically, this would mean a VA being in role for a minimum of two years and having completed a minimum of four assessments, but a VA's past experiences and circumstances will also be considered.
- If a VA considers they meet the above criterion, they should express interest to the Volunteer Manager who will then arrange for the VA to have an interview with a member of the staff team. Once a VA has become a trainer this will be recognised and an updated ID badge issued.

8. Ongoing training for Volunteer Assessors

- As part of Volunteer Assessors commitment to their role and ongoing professional development, they will be required to attend regular meetings and training provided by ADCH.
- ADCH provides a variety of training, support and networking opportunities for Assessors, such as a training video library, live sessions, Assessors' Learning Circles and Annual one-to-one Check-Ins.
- Training opportunities will be shared with Assessors via email as part of Assessors' Updates communications.

The content, timing, format and subject matter of training opportunities may evolve as volunteer needs, project priorities, and available information develop.

9. Quality assurance for Assessors

- Opportunities to ensure consistency and provide quality assurance across the work of Assessors will be developed over time.
- Assessors will be required to participate in these opportunities as part of their commitment to the role and the work of ADCH.

10. Further Guidance

Further guidance can be obtained from the Volunteer Manager (michelle@adch.org.uk).

Version History

Version	Changes Made	Date	Made by
V.1	Published		