

Protocol for obtaining adult medical reports (AH report) for prospective adoptive applicants during the Covid-19 pandemic

Regulation 26(b) Adoption Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2005 (as amended) states that, when carrying out the Stage 1, pre-assessment process, an adoption agency must 'obtain a written report from a registered medical practitioner about the health of the prospective adopter following a full examination...'.

Following advice from the CoramBAAF health group, Welsh Government has agreed for the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, that if a GP is able to complete an Adult Health (AH) report using a quality video consultation, using the additional Part C (7) to the AH form as an option to guide this discussion where needed, this will provide the information required in the regulation.

Both a face to face examination and a remote examination are, therefore, compliant with regulation 26(b).

The CoramBAAF Adult Health (AH) Form

Where possible, it is recommended that the AH form is completed in the usual way [<https://corambaaf.org.uk/coronavirus/health>].

For clarity Part A is completed by the Adoption Agency; Part B is completed by the adoptive applicant (self-declaration); Part C is completed by the applicant's GP from records and physical examination; Part D is completed by the Medical Adviser to the Agency.

The information obtained from an applicant's GP records is an important component of the Adult Health assessment. The GP carries out a physical examination and also records medical conditions, current health issues and lifestyle factors. If the applicant has attended a health appointment and been examined physically in the previous year, the GP will have access to this information and could utilise it.

CoramBAAF AH form with GP Video consultation

If the usual process above cannot be followed, GPs are encouraged to conduct a record review and a video consultation, including history taking and online conversation, to complete the health assessment without the usual face-to-face consultation.

It is also a requirement for the GP to obtain a blood pressure check and urinalysis result, and for them to ask the applicant to supply measurements for Body Mass Index (BMI) calculation. The GP will make arrangements for these with the applicant.

The physical examination section (Part C, section 7) in Form AH would not be completed in the usual way, but GPs are experienced in using appropriate questions and history taking. If a GP noted a clinical reason for a further physical exam during a video consultation, they would then arrange this.

There is now an additional section on the standard Form AH with alternative questions replacing the face-to-face part of the physical examination. These help to elicit symptoms or signs of undiagnosed conditions in the way a physical examination seeks to do. This is included as an option to assist GP's to gather the relevant information if needed. Section (Part

C (7)) form is attached or can be accessed via <https://corambaaf.org.uk/coronavirus/health>. The GP will need to complete Part C sections 1-6, 8-11 in the usual way.

A GP record review alone cannot be described as a full examination. CoramBAAF has consulted with its expert health group membership and has agreed that if a GP is able to complete an Adult Health report using a quality video consultation as described above, that this will provide the information that is required in the Regulations.

Referring an applicant to the GP

A revised standard letter for GPs has been developed for use across Wales. Agencies should use the updated letter to the GP which makes him/her aware of the option to complete a virtual consultation instead of a face-to-face physical examination.

Where agencies are aware of ongoing applications with an outstanding medical it is advisable to resend the request using the new letter and enclosing the updated Adult Health (AH) form and additional Section (Part C(7)).

Medical Adviser role

In normal circumstances, the Medical Adviser will complete Part D of Form AH and provide a summary report and advice to the adoption panel and the adoption agency.

It is particularly important in the current pandemic situation that the Medical Adviser comments on how the health information has been obtained and whether there is important missing information. The Medical Adviser can express their opinion about the adequacy of the information available, and advise on any further information that is required. The Medical Adviser can also be contacted by the GP should they have any questions or concerns about completing the medical in this way.

Please be aware that the previous version of the CoramBAAF “Self-Declaration of Health Form for use during Covid-19 pandemic” issued in April 2020 should no longer be used for adoptive applicants in Wales as it is not compatible with Welsh Regulations. The new process outlined in this protocol will replace this in any event.