



CARE STANDARDS ACT 2000

Application to register a Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA) Notes for applicants

[Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg](#) / This document is also available in Welsh

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1. Purpose

- 1.1. These notes are relevant to organisations that wish to apply to carry on a Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA). A Voluntary Adoption Agency must be an incorporated body.
- 1.2. We hope that these notes will assist you in:
 - understanding what you need to think about before applying for registration, and
 - beginning to understand what the Regulations and National Minimum Standards are intended to achieve and the part they play in the registration process.
- 1.3. When you have read these notes and the other documents provided we hope you will have an outline of:
 - what needs to happen before you lodge your application,
 - what we will do when we receive your application,
 - and what we are looking for.
- 1.4. The provision of an adoption service involves issues that are frequently sensitive and difficult to address, but which are significant and often life-changing for children and adults affected by the work that takes place. People delivering adoption services require the necessary skills, understanding and experience to successfully undertake this work. Unprofessional practice or poor service provision can have a profound impact upon the people involved and lead to unacceptable delays in securing permanency for children. Consequently, great care needs to be taken to check that everything is as it should be before an agency can be registered. New agencies are not allowed to operate until they have fully completed the registration process.
- 1.5. The registration process is necessarily detailed and inherently intrusive. We therefore want you to know that the information we collect will be treated carefully and kept in strictest confidence at all times. We also want you to know that inspectors will work with you to make sure everything is done as well and as quickly as possible. We aim to ensure that the children and adults who may use your agency will receive a high quality service. By critically appraising your proposals, we aim to help you meet and exceed the requirements of the [Care Standards Act, the Regulations and the National Minimum Standards](#).
- 1.6. Achieving registration requires a great deal of work on the part of both the applicant and the regulator. Properly approached, it helps to establish a sound basis for a longer term regulatory relationship.

2. Why am I required to register?

2.1 Anyone who intends to run or manage a voluntary adoption agency in Wales is regulated by law. The purpose of this regulation is to:

- make sure that organisations and individuals are suitable to carry out this responsibility,
- check that they have the knowledge and resources needed to provide and sustain a good quality service,
- ensure that they will engage and support staff with the appropriate qualifications, experience, knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the children and adults who may use the service you intend to provide,
- check that any premises used as an office are suitable for the purpose,
- make sure that the service is run satisfactorily, that the records which must be kept are also satisfactory and will help us to check the quality of the service being provided.

2.2 The following sections take each of these points in turn.

3. How do we set about deciding if the proposed responsible individual, manager and key staff are suitable?

3.1 We will do this through the information collected in the application form and other papers we ask you to complete at the same time.

- We will check that the nominated responsible individual and proposed manager are who they say they are, by checking their birth certificate, passport, marriage certificate and any other relevant documents.
- We will look into the background of the responsible individual and manager, undertaking checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and taking up personal, professional references.
- We will check on the physical and emotional health of the responsible individual and manager. We will send their Doctor a copy of the medical history which they provide us with, and ask for their comments.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act says that, for most purposes, after a fixed time people no longer have to declare their convictions.

YOU SHOULD NOTE THAT THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO YOUR APPLICATION TO BE REGISTERED TO CARRY ON A VOLUNTARY ADOPTION AGENCY

3.2 This is important because if your nominated responsible individual or your proposed manager has any convictions, we will need to make a judgement about whether this renders them unsuitable to act in the capacity for which they are

applying. It is still possible to approve applications in this situation and will require an interview to discuss any relevant information disclosed by the DBS check.

3.3 If someone is dishonest in order to obtain registration, they are unlikely to be deemed a suitable person.

3.4 The registered persons are responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are made for screening all staff to the required standard. . In order to do this you may apply to register with the Disclosure and Barring Service. They can be contacted at either, Disclosure and Barring Service, PO Box 110 Liverpool L69 3JD or [the DBS website](#). Registration with the DBS may take some weeks and – if you have not already done so - you may apply for registration as soon as you have decided to begin to prepare your CIW application. Alternatively a number of umbrella bodies are registered with DBS and will be able to undertake these checks on your behalf.

3.5 CIW may at any time require you to demonstrate that you have checked all staff backgrounds to the required standard.

4. How will we check on your knowledge and experience?

4.1 As you will appreciate, there are required standards for the experience, qualifications, knowledge and skills that registered providers and any staff must demonstrate in their application. We will seek to satisfy ourselves that you meet these standards through the information provided in both parts of your application form and in a formal interview with the proposed responsible individual and manager.

- We will ask the responsible individual and manager to provide a full record of what they have done since leaving school. This will include any periods of study, unpaid work and qualifications they have undertaken.
- We will check with previous employers if necessary, even if these have not been given as referees, to establish what relevant skills and experience your responsible individual and manager has.
- We will look at any training courses your responsible individual and manager have attended and, where necessary, check on the detail of what was studied. Where any qualifications are involved we will want to see the certificates and may check details with the body that awarded them.
- Some of this checking will be done by means of an interview, known as the 'fit person' interview. This process will be completed before a formal decision is made about whether your organisation is to be registered and what, if any, conditions might apply to your registration.

5. How will we ensure you employ and support staff with the appropriate qualifications, experience, knowledge and skills?

5.1 We will look at the range and numbers of staff along with their relevant qualifications, experience knowledge and skills. This will depend upon the nature and size of your agency and the range of services you intend to provide. National Minimum Standards set out, in general terms, what these must be. You will need to discuss the particular staffing proposals for your agency with the inspector.

6. How will we go about checking the premises?

6.1 By working from information supplied in the application form and by visiting the building you intend to use:

- We will check that you have sufficient control over the premises you intend to use to ensure that staff and others with a legitimate interest can have access during normal office hours.
- We will check that the premises and any records you keep – whether on an IT system or otherwise can be kept securely.
- We will check that the premises are properly equipped.
- We will check that you have adequate insurance in respect of liability which may be incurred by the agency in respect of death, injury, public liability, damage or other loss.

7. How will we check your proposed way of working?

7.1 We will look at Part 2 of the application form which tells us how you plan to meet the service specific Regulations and National Minimum Standards. We will use the formal “Fit Person” interview(s) to discuss areas where we feel we do not have enough information to make a decision.

- We will look at your proposed means of meeting each of the Regulations and the associated National Minimum Standards.
- We will examine your proposals to assess whether the information you have supplied adequately supports your Statement of Purpose.
- We will look in detail at how you intend to assess, select, prepare and support staff.
- We will look at the way in which you intend to assess and plan services for individuals
- We will examine the documents and information you intend to supply to service users and how you intend to use them.
- We will carefully assess the suitability of the policies you intend to use.

- We will consider how you intend to securely store the range of records you are required to keep.
- We will wish to understand how you will manage, monitor and control the quality of all aspects of the service you provide.

8. Next steps

8.1 It is important that you are familiar with the relevant Regulations and National Minimum Standards for the service you propose to provide. These are listed in full in Part 2 of the application form and can be accessed through our website www.careinspectorate.wales

8.2 Once you have done this, we hope that the structure, purpose and requirements of the attached application forms will become clear. The application pack consists of the following in addition to this guidance:

- Part 1
- Part 2
- DBS request
- Medical declaration
- Financial enquiry
- Fair processing notice

8.3 Should you have any questions at this stage about the requirements and process, we would be glad to discuss these. You should however note that it is for you to prepare and structure your application and you should be prepared to obtain advice from your own independent sources. It is up to you to demonstrate that you will be able to meet – and continue to meet – the requirements of the Regulations and Standards. The onus is on you to provide evidence for this purpose. It would be inappropriate for your future regulator to become involved in advising on the detailed nature of your business decisions, choices and risks.

9. What we do with the information we receive from you

9.1 We process any personal and/or sensitive information we hold about you fairly and lawfully, and we only ask for such information where it is necessary for us to carry out our role. For more information about how we process your personal data, and your rights in relation to this, please see our Privacy Notice at <https://careinspectorate.wales/how-we-use-your-information>, or contact us for a paper copy.

10. Conclusion

10.1 As you can see the process is complex, demanding and detailed. Preparing a satisfactory application can involve a considerable initial investment of time and some unavoidable expense. Nevertheless, we believe, as we said at the outset

of this explanation, that the process of preparing for and securing registration provides an opportunity to lay a sound foundation for the future regulatory relationship between registered providers and CIW.

10.2 We will endeavour to do all we can to make the process timely and the registration process transparent. We hope that you will find this to be the case and we look forward to working with you.