

Process for undertaking Adult Medicals during Covid-19 Restrictions

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Service:	Adoption@Heart
Distribution list:	Medical Advisors, Designated Nurses, GPs within each Trust, Recruitment & Assessment Team

Given recruiting adoptive parents remains a priority for adoption agencies during the period of Covid-19 restrictions, it is important that solutions are identified for ensuring that we do not experience delays in progressing the medical aspect of the adopter approval process.

Following discussions with Medical Advisors and Designated Nurses across the Adoption@Heart partnership, a process has been agreed. There is now a need for a briefing/directive to be communicated to GP's in each Trust, with oversight from the CCG, informing them of the need for Adult adoption medicals to remain a priority and for applicants contacting surgeries for medical appointments, to be offered these in the normal way, to avoid delay.

The regulatory requirement states that:

"the adoption agency must obtain a written report from a registered medical practitioner about the health of the prospective adopter, following a full examination, which must include the matters specified in Part 2 of Schedule 4, unless the agency has received advice from its Medical Adviser that such an examination and report is unnecessary".

The agreed process in meeting this regulatory requirement during the period of restrictions is as below:

Applicants wishing to adopt, will be advised by A@H to contact their GP's in the normal way following Registration of interest, to book their medical examination.

Applicants will also be required to complete a Coram BAAF self-declaration regarding their medical history.

GP's will be advised by each Trust, that Adopter medical examinations remain a priority, as approving adoptive parents and achieving permanence for children with a plan of adoption, remains a priority, despite the restrictions.

In light of the regulation change enabling applicants to progress to stage 2, prior to the agency obtaining the Medical Advisor report, Adoption@Heart will operate in this way. Applicants will not have access to the Independent Review Mechanism if they are subsequently not approved on the basis of medical information obtained during stage 2. The process will be reviewed at the point where the current restrictions are altered.

CCG Recommendations for Adult Health (AH) medicals

Thank you for your continued efforts to transform your services to support your patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. Adoption services in the Black Country continue to approve adoptive parents and place children without delay despite the current restrictions. GPs have previously completed AH assessments for patients registered with their practice. A statutory requirement, this plays a vital part of the adoption process and should remain a priority for GPs and LAC Health services. There is compelling evidence that delayed or missed opportunities of permanence can significantly affect a child's emotional development.

GPs can use their discretion when deciding whether a face-to-face physical examination is necessary. In many cases this can be undertaken in the normal way, but it will also be acceptable for the GP to have a virtual consultation with the applicant where it is deemed appropriate. The GP can complete part C of the AH form in the usual way and report whether this was a virtual or face-to-face consultation. Any limitations of this type of consultation, along with the rationale, should be clearly documented in the records for audit purposes post pandemic. The AH form will be sent to the medical advisor in the usual way for recommendation to adoption panels.