



GUIDANCE FOR PRACTITIONERS AND LITIGANTS IN RELATION TO
ADOPTION PROCEEDINGS

1. This guidance relates to applications for an adoption order in terms of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007. This guidance will take effect immediately.
2. Schedule 4 Part 1 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 authorised the use of electronic signatures and the electronic transmission of court documents.
3. Due to the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, guidance for practitioners and litigants was issued in relation to the electronic submission of documents. That guidance directed that all documents in relation to new and current proceedings in the sheriff court should be lodged electronically by email to each local sheriff court.
4. Electronic documents in adoption proceedings cannot be retained and sealed. Accordingly, with the easing of some restrictions it is appropriate now to revisit the guidance referred to in paragraph 3 above in so far as it relates to adoption proceedings.
5. All original petitions, birth/marriage certificates, local authority reports and any other documents lodged electronically must now be submitted in hard copy form. The sheriff clerks will identify all adoption proceedings to which these arrangements apply and will contact the relevant parties/agents. Documents requested by the sheriff clerk shall be lodged with the Court within 14 days of any such request. A covering letter should be provided, setting out the case reference number with an inventory of all documents enclosed.

6. Court staff will ensure that all hard copy documents are placed within the process until proceedings are concluded. Thereafter, all documents will be placed in an envelope, sealed and retained by the Court in terms of rule 25 of the Act of Sederunt (Sheriff Court Rules Amendment) (Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007) 2009.
7. The guidance referred to in paragraph 3 no longer applies to new and existing adoption proceedings. All documents relating to such proceedings should be lodged in hard copy form.

Sheriff Principal D C W Pyle
Sheriffdom of Grampian, Highland and Islands

14 May 2021