



PRIVATE FOSTERING REPORTS

Guidance for Sheffield GPs

Following a number of queries from practices, LMC and Sheffield City Council (SCC) representatives met to clarify the role of private foster carers and SCC requests for medical information identifying concerns regarding safeguarding.

Private fostering arrangements occur whenever a child is under the age of 16, or under the age of 18 with a disability, and is housed with another member of the public for any period of longer than 28 days. This may be a member of the extended family, a family friend or for the purposes of an educational trip etc. First degree relatives and periods of less than 28 days do not fall within this legislation.

Under *The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005*, there is an obligation for these carers to notify SCC and there is an obligation on SCC, under safeguarding arrangements, to check on both the facilities and the private foster carers. There is no financial remuneration involved in this for SCC or the foster carer.

It was accepted that a simple declaration that there were no safeguarding concerns should suffice in most cases. Therefore, it was agreed that SCC would request GPs to state if they had any safeguarding concerns regarding private foster carers in a simple yes or no statement. If the answer was no, there would be no fee incurred. If the answer was yes, SCC may need to request a more detailed report from the GP, for which a fee would be payable.

The payment SCC makes for a GP report that relies on reviewing the patient's notes is £24.36, which SCC would pay on receipt of an invoice. However, if a more extensive and complex report is appropriate, SCC have suggested that a fee would be agreed with the GP prior to work being undertaken, which again would be payable on the production of an invoice. As a guide, SCC states that the Local Authority pay £73.86 for a report for prospective adopters which includes a medical examination.

Further information about private fostering arrangements can be accessed via the SCC website at:

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/caresupport/childfam/fostering/privatefostering.html>.