

Private Fostering Reports

Sheffield
LMC



GUIDANCE FOR SHEFFIELD GPs

November 2024

Following a number of queries from practices, we met with Sheffield City Council (SCC) representatives to clarify the role of private foster carers and SCC requests for medical information identifying concerns regarding safeguarding. We subsequently issued guidance in 2012. We became aware of a number of changes and, as such, have agreed revised guidance with SCC.

Private fostering arrangements occur whenever a child is under the age of 16 year, or under the age of 18 when the child has a disability, and is cared for by an adult who is not a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, step parent (by marriage or civil partnership), sister or brother, and where the child is to be cared for in that person's home for 28 days or more. The 28 days should be continuous, however, the continuity is not deemed to have been broken by the occasional short break and less than 28 days do not fall within this legislation. In a private fostering arrangement, the parent retains parental responsibility.

Where a child is to be placed with private foster carers, SCC must be notified in writing at least 6 weeks before an arrangement begins by the parent(s), other person with parental responsibility, or the private foster carer, where they are involved in the making of the private fostering arrangement or are aware of the proposal. Where no prior notification of a placement is given, private foster carers must notify SCC of the placement immediately. Notifications are made to Sheffield's Safeguarding Hub.

SCC procedures set out that there is a requirement that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Children's Services records checks are undertaken by the Service for the private foster carers, all members of the household and frequent visitors over the age of 16 years. Two written references are also sought. However, there is not a requirement to undertake a full medical; rather 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. SCC has stated that they currently pay £73.86 for a full foster carer medical and £24.36 for an interim medical for SCC foster carers.