

Foster Parent Medical Checks

Confidentiality Procedures

Introduction

All applicants to foster are subject to a medical check, which is updated on a three-yearly basis, or earlier if significant changes to their health arise. ISP uses the BAAF Form AH (Adult Health Report) for the initial medical check and BAAF Form AH2 for updates. Form AH/AH2 includes health information provided by the applicant/foster parent, and their GP. The agency's Medical Advisor provides an analysis and advice regarding any implications of health conditions for fostering.

The health of applicants and foster parents is confidential, and the BAAF Form AH/AH2 clarifies expectations and guidance with regard to the sharing and storage of this information:

- The applicant/foster parent gives consent for the health information within the Health Report to be shared with the agency.
- If additional health information is required from specialists, additional consents will be requested.
- The Health Report will be viewed by 'relevant staff'.
- The Health Report will be stored confidentially.

This procedure explains how ISP will manage the confidential information contained within the Health Report.

Consent

The applicant/foster parent gives consent to the Health Report being viewed by 'relevant staff' within the agency.

The applicant/foster parent agrees to notify the agency of any significant changes to their health that may occur between routine medical checks. Views of what constitutes a 'significant change' may vary but we ask that foster parents share any new health diagnoses that require medication or other therapeutic intervention. Should the agency feel that this new health information needs to be shared outside the agency, for example with the social workers of any children currently being looked after, consent to share will be requested from the foster parent prior to sharing. Sharing of information is consistent with our ethos

of openness and honesty, and enables us to support foster parents and children and young people in placement.

If the foster parent does not give consent to share their health information as requested, the agency may commission a review Health Report to obtain the view of the Medical Advisor on the implications of the health condition for fostering. In addition, any safeguarding concerns may necessitate sharing without consent. In such situations, the foster parent will always be informed of the reasons why sharing is required and with whom the information will be shared.

It is rare for medical conditions to prevent an individual from fostering, but health conditions may involve additional support needs for the family and considerations for the care of children in placement.

Sharing

The local team administrator has sight of the Health Report in order to ensure its secure storage, and to share it with relevant staff and the Medical Advisor. The administrator does not read the content of the Health Report, but ensures that those who need to read it are given appropriate access.

The Health Report is held securely and confidentially on our systems and only the Registered Manager, Fostering Social Worker and the Medical Advisor will have access to the full Health Report. The Medical Advisor's role is to provide advice regarding the applicant/foster parent's suitability to foster, and the Fostering Social Worker and/or Registered Manager will consider how the applicant/foster parent's health may impact their fostering role and how the agency will support them to manage any health problems.

The Fostering Social Worker may share relevant parts of the Health Report with the Assessing Social Worker (if they themselves are not undertaking this role) in order to discuss any concerns and anticipated support needs. The foster parent's Supervising Social Worker will be informed of any support needs, and the applicant/foster parent will be included in these discussions.

The Medical Advisor's comments and advice (but not the full Health Report) are included in the Form F assessment report/Foster Parent Review Report. These reports are shared with local authorities when they are seeking to match and place children and young people into the care of a foster parent. Staff within the local ISP centre will have access to this information on a need-to-know basis. For example, Centre managers, supervising social workers and fostering advisors would have access to this information to ensure that they are able to appropriately support the foster family.

Electronic sharing outside of the agency is via the secure Egress email service or via local authority secure encryption.

Storage

The full Health Report is uploaded to the applicant/foster parent's secure Charms record. The record has 'high sensitivity level' status and can only be viewed by staff members who have been given access by the HR department to such confidential data.

The agency's Medical Advisor's report is uploaded to the applicant/foster parent's Charms record. This record is accessible by the local ISP team on a need-to-know basis and is included in the Form F assessment report or Foster Parent Review report which are also stored securely on Charms.

The Charms system is a secure online database and access to records is subject to HR authorisation and is based on role requirements and function.