

MEDICATION POLICY FOR FOSTER CARERS



Introduction

This policy has been produced to outline to carers, children, birth parents and social workers, Foster Care Link's policy on the management and administration of medication for children placed with our agency.

Statutory Framework and Guidance

Standard 6.9 of the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011 requires that "Medicines kept in the foster home are stored safely and are accessible only by those for whom they are intended".

Standard 6.10 requires that "Foster carers are trained in the management and administration of medication. Prescribed medication is only given to the child for whom it was prescribed, and in accordance with the prescription. Children who wish to, and who can safely keep and take their own medication, do so."

Standard 6.11 requires that "Foster carers keep a written record of all medication, treatment and first aid given to children during their placement."

Consent

Foster carers need to be clear whether consent is delegated to them to administer medication. This will be ascertained from the placing authority at pre-placement stage or at the placement planning meeting where the plan for managing medication will be clearly stated.

The statutory guidance on this matter states that: "Foster carers must be given, at the time a child is placed with them, written permission from a person with parental responsibility to administer first aid and non-prescription medication and to consent to any other form of medical or preventive treatment as may be agreed within a scheme of delegated authority. This should be recorded in the placement plan." (Fostering Services Statutory Guidance (2011) paragraph 3.61)

Prescribed Medication

At the referral/matching stage and at the placement planning meeting the foster carer and social worker will be notified of whether the child or young person being placed is prescribed any medication. If this is the case, the supervising social worker will ensure that the carer is clearly aware of the specific requirements for managing and administering medication for that placement. Social workers should also consider the impact of any allergies or existing medical conditions at this stage such as asthma, eczema and epilepsy.

Foster carers should not under any circumstances give prescribed medication to anyone other than the person for whom it has been prescribed. It is also important to double check the 'dispensing advice' provided with the medication.

Any medication that is administered must be recorded in the carers' daily/weekly log . This includes time and dosage of medication.

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Carers should note that if an error in administering medicine is made, their doctor should be notified immediately and the child should be taken to accident and emergency at the local hospital if deemed serious enough. The Supervising Social worker and child's social worker must be notified and consulted at this stage.

Non-Prescribed Medication

There will be occasions when carers need to administer non-prescribed medication, such as paracetamol.

Any medication given to a child must be clearly recorded in the daily diary, and the following rules must be adhered to:

- do not administer non-prescribed medication for more than 24 hours without seeking medical or professional advice;
- strictly consider the recommended dosage limits and advice on the medication's packaging in line with the age of the child/young person.
- clearly check the expiry dates on the medication's packaging. All out of date medication should be carefully disposed of so that it is not accessible to children.
- never administer aspirin or any products containing aspirin to any child under the age of 16.
- never administer any laxatives to any child under the age of 7 without consulting your GP.
- never administer any non-prescribed medication of any kind to children less than 3 months of age without consulting your General Practitioner.

Other factors

Children and young people who must apply medication to intimate areas of their bodies need should be given appropriate advice on how to use the application.

Such advice should take account of gender and cultural/religious sensitivities. Foster carers should seek additional support and agreement before offering any such advice.

Carers should personally observe the medication is taken by the child/YP.

Further information

Training provided by Foster Care Link on 'Promoting the Health of Foster Children' includes more detailed information on medication.

Social workers should refer to further guidance in the procedure manual (section 19.8).

NHS Direct can be contacted on telephone number 111 for general advice and guidance. Website www.nhsdirect.nhs.co.uk.