

## Dealing with medical records for adopted patients A guide for GP practices

Current adoption legislation requires that all adopted patients are given a new NHS number, and that all previous medical information relating to the patient is put into a newly created medical record. Any reference to the pre-adoptive identity including name and NHS number, or information relating to the identity or whereabouts of the birth parents should **not** be included in the new record.

Whilst changing or omitting information from medical records would usually be contrary to ethical and professional guidance, this is not the case for the records of adopted patients and there is a legal requirement that it takes place.

### If the patient is staying registered with your practice:

- Primary Care Support England (PCSE) will send through a deduction for the patient to your clinical system. An email will be sent to the main contact held for the GP practice detailing the new NHS number and any other amended details for the patient. **Please ensure that the main contact is kept up to date when staff members leave, this can be updated on the online portal.**
- Accept the deduction of the pre-adoptive record and re-register them as a brand-new patient with their new post-adoptive NHS number and any other amended details. **Important: you must not update the pre-adoptive patient record with their post-adoptive NHS number. If this happens, they will not be registered and will miss out on continuity of care.**
- Following the registration, a new medical record envelope will be sent to you, with the patient's new NHS number and other post-adoptive details. The original clinical notes from the pre-adoptive record can be placed in the new envelope.
- You should not make any changes that conceal or alter the patient's clinical history; however, steps should be taken to prevent disclosure of their pre-adoptive identity - for example blocking out all references to the previous name, NHS number and any information that may identify members of the birth family.
- The pre-adoptive identity must be regarded as confidential, and practices must ensure that they have robust systems in place to manage disclosure and/or access.
- If possible, electronic medical records should be merged on the GP practice system with the new post-adoptive details. You must print all clinical information, redact the pre-adoptive NHS number, name and any information that may identify members of the birth family, and then scan it into the post-adoptive record you have created. If you are still unsure, please contact your system supplier for further guidance.

### If the patient is moving area and registering with a new practice:

- The medical record will be requested from you in the normal way.
- You may also be contacted with a request for a summary of the medical history etc., in which case the above guidelines should be followed regarding prevention of the

patient's pre-adoptive identity. **Important: The pre-adoptive identity must be regarded as confidential.**