



CHILD PERFORMANCE LICENCES

Guidance for Sheffield GPs

As a result of negotiations between the LMC and Sheffield City Council regarding parents requesting child performance licences, the LMC has received a helpful extract from relevant government legislation, along with the Council's interpretation of the legislation. There are a number of interesting points that GPs may find helpful when patients request GP involvement in their licence applications:

1. In signing a medical certificate a doctor is stating that the child is fit from the point of view of medical illnesses to undertake the activity that they have applied to do. Therefore, if they are walking on stage for 10 minutes for 1 night or acting vigorously for 6 nights a week, it is the doctor's duty to ascertain whether they are medically fit to perform this.
2. It is not the doctor's duty to express any level of expertise or knowledge as to a particular activity their patient may be undertaking, eg acrobatics or trampolining. The likelihood is that a level of expertise or knowledge would only be required when licences are being requested in order for children to undertake sporting activities for profit, eg skating in Dancing on Ice.
3. For simple sporting activities and modelling where an application for a licence is required, a statement by the child's parent should be adequate. There is no need for a doctor's medical certificate, although a number of agencies bypass this regulation by stating that they do not know what sort of activity the child may be undertaking.
4. As this work is not part of GPs' NHS contract, there is no obligation to comply with requests. Any GPs agreeing to carry out this work are entitled to charge a fee. GPs' fees should be met by the body responsible for the production. As many of you will experience, this is rarely a problem with larger television, film or theatre companies, who take on their responsibility appropriately. The problem arises with agencies who refuse to accept children onto their agency without a licence, regardless of any work opportunities and the licence requires renewal every 6 months. It is entirely up to the GP as to whether they continue to renew the licences for these patients if payment is not forthcoming.