

## **Launceston Medical Centre**

### **Why GPs charge for Non-NHS work – Patient Information**

The Government's contract with GPs covers medical services to NHS patients, including the provision of ongoing treatment.

In recent years, more and more organisations have been involving GPs in a whole range of non-medical work.

Often they are asked as they hold a position of trust in the community or because an insurance company or employer wants to ensure that information given is true and accurate.

Below are examples of non-NHS services for which GPs can charge their own NHS patients or other institutions:

- Accident or sickness certificates for insurance purposes
- School fee and holiday insurance certificates
- Reports for health clubs to certify that patients are fit to exercise
- Private letters
- Driving medicals
- Letters to airlines verifying medication can be carried on board
- Private Sick Certificates
- Blood tests/injections for work purposes
- Vaccinations for travel
- Copies of medical records
- Ofsted form for work
- Life assurance and income protection reports for insurance companies
- Reports for Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in connection with disability living allowance and attendance allowance
- Medical reports for local authorities in connection with adoption and fostering
- Medical reports for the armed services
- Cremation form fees

There are some NHS Services that GPs cannot charge for:

- Bankruptcy
- Coroners' post-mortem
- Council tax exemptions
- Death certificates
- Stillbirth certificates
- Notification of infectious diseases
- Paternity tests
- Professional evidence in court
- To establish unfitness for jury service

Please note: This is not an exhaustive list and there are other non-NHS services that may incur a fee.

GPs are not obliged to complete non-NHS work for their patients but do so as a service to patients and charges to cover the expense in doing so. We employ a GP to complete this type of work out of normal working hours.

The BMA do not set the fees that GPs should charge but do suggest levels for guidance only.

Non-NHS services are subject to VAT.

Do not expect your GP to process your request immediately. Urgent requests may mean that a GP has to make special arrangements to process the form quickly and could incur an additional cost.

Due to the high demand and time required to complete forms and prepare reports, this inevitably takes the GP away from the medical care of their patients. This in turn dictates the time it will take for the paperwork to be ready for collection/to be sent off. Most GPs have a very heavy workload and an increasing amount of paperwork so find themselves taking work home at night and over the weekends. All this considered, you may be required to wait up to 4 weeks until your form/report is completed.

Sometimes you may require 'just a signature'. This is not as straightforward as it sounds. When a GP signs a certificate or report it is a condition of remaining of the Medical Register that they only sign what they know to be true. So a simple form may involve recalling paper records from storage and viewing the remaining computerised record. Carelessness or an inaccurate report can have serious consequences for the GP with the GMC (General Medical Council – the GP's regulatory body) or even the Police.

You will be advised in advance of the fee you will be charged and an advanced payment will be required to avoid non-collection of completed forms. There is a list of fees in the Waiting Room and on the Practice Website. If you have more than one form that needs completion, present them at the same time to speed up the process.

Please be advised that not all documents require a GP signature – such as passport forms. See the following information of who can:

Your counter-signatory must:

- have known the person applying (or the adult who signed the form if the passport is for a child under 16) for at least 2 years
- be able to identify the person applying, eg they're a friend, neighbour or colleague (not just someone who knows them professionally)
- be 'a person of good standing in their community'
- work in a recognised profession

They can't be closely-related to or involved with the person applying, eg:

- related by birth or marriage
- be in a relationship with or live at the same address as the person applying

Please remember that patients are able to request complete copies of their notes for free. Where information relating to a medical condition or medication is required this may be an alternative.

#### **Version History:**

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