

## **Private Fees and Charges**

### **Why do GPs charge fees?**

The National Health Service provides most health care to most people free of charge but there are exceptions such as prescription charges and NHS dental fees. The NHS does not provide medical reports for insurance companies, claims on private health insurance and other letters and forms which require the doctor to review the patient's medical records.

GPs are not employed by the NHS. The NHS pays the doctor for specific NHS work but for non-NHS work the fee has to cover the doctor's costs. As the doctors are self-employed, their costs – staff, buildings, heating, lighting, printing, paper etc. – must be covered in the same way as any small business.

### **Examples of non-NHS services for which GPs can charge patients:**

- Private medical insurance reports
- HGV licences and DVLA forms
- Holiday cancellation forms
- Letters requested by, or on behalf, of a patient
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### **My form is for a charity event – can you waive the fee?**

We are asked to fill in many forms for charity or fundraising events. The practice does not favour one charity or event over another so the fee cannot be waived.

### **How long should I allow for the work to be done?**

Please allow up to 28 days for the work to be completed. The practice has a substantial volume of non-NHS work to complete weekly and it is all done in addition to the NHS work and hours. An additional charge may be levied for more urgent requests.

### **I only need the doctor's signature – why do I have to wait?**

When a doctor signs a certificate or completes a report, they have to take time to review the patient's records first. Some forms, such as an initial gun licence, require the GP to review the medical records from birth to present day. Each doctor must also pay a three to four figure sum for indemnity each year, a significant proportion of which is solely to cover the completion of these non-NHS documents. Carelessness or an inaccurate report can have serious consequences for the doctor with the General Medical Council or even the Police.

### **How much will I be charged – [please see our list of charges](#).**

### **What happens to my private (non-NHS) request?**

1. All requests for private work need to be submitted in writing. If you are requesting completion of a form, please supply the form and all other relevant paperwork/information.
2. Your request is received and processed by our administration team. The request is documented, and the paperwork is then prepared for distribution to the GP.
3. The GP sets, alters, or confirms the fee payable for completion of the work. We will contact you to confirm this. You are required to pay prior to completion of the work.
4. Once the fee has been paid, the paperwork is given back to the GP for completion.

- 5. Once completed, the GP returns the paperwork to the administration team. The team file a copy to your medical records, complete any further action necessary, and notify you that the paperwork is ready.

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#### **How can I help?**

- Ensure you have enclosed all relevant paperwork and information with your request and completed in full any parts of the form you are required to complete as the patient. Missing information may mean the GP is unable to complete the request and this may lengthen the process.
- Please be patient with us. With certain limited exceptions, such as confirmation a patient is unfit to attend jury service, GPs do not have to carry out private (non-NHS) work on behalf of their patients. Whilst our GPs will always attempt to assist with this where possible, as NHS providers, we have to prioritise NHS care. This means in order for private work to be completed without impacting our NHS service, our GPs complete these requests in their own time. You are welcome to call our administration team for an update on your request and we will do our best to advise you.

LONG FURLONG MEDICAL CENTRE