

Do not expect your GP to process forms overnight: urgent requests may mean that a doctor has to make special arrangements to process the form quickly and this may cost more.

Not all documents need a signature from a doctor, for example passport applications. You can ask another person in a position of trust to sign such documents free of charge.

How much will I be charged?

The BMA suggests fees that GPs may charge their patients for non-NHS work (i.e. work not covered under their contract with the NHS) in order to help GPs set their own professional fees. However, the fees suggested by the BMA are intended for guidance only; they are not recommendations and a doctor is not obliged to charge the rates suggested.

The BMA recommends that GPs tell patients in advance if they will be charged, and what the fee will be. It is up to individual doctors to decide how much they will charge, but the BMA produces lists of some suggested fees which many doctors use. Grove House Practice has a list of fees on display in the waiting room based on these suggested fees.

Can anyone else complete / sign my form?

Sometimes the only reason that GPs are asked to complete these reports and forms is because they are in a position of trust in the community, or because an insurance company or employer wants to ensure that information provided to them is true and accurate.

For further information on fees that a GP may charge please visit the BMA website:

www.bma.org.uk



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Why your GP charges fees

Grove House Practice

Patient
Information
Leaflet



Why do GPs charge fees?

The National Health Service provides most health care to most people free of charge, but there are a number of other services for which fees are charged. This is because the service is not covered by the NHS. For example, providing copies of health records or producing medical reports for insurance companies.

It is important to understand that many GPs are not employed by the NHS; they are self-employed and they have to cover their costs - staff, buildings, heating, lighting, etc - in the same way as any small business.

More and more organisations have been involving doctors in a whole range of non-medical work.



What sort of services are covered by fees?

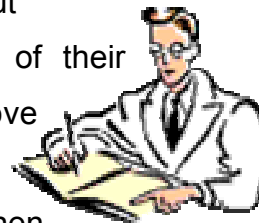
Examples of non-NHS services for which GPs can charge their own NHS patients are:

- accident/sickness certificates for insurance purposes
- reports for health clubs to certify that patients are fit to exercise
- pre-employment medicals, as requested by employers

Examples of non-NHS services for which GPs can charge other institutions are:

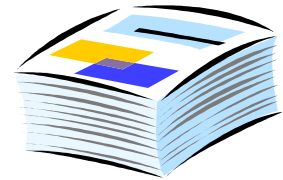
- life assurance and income protection reports for insurance companies
- reports for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in connection with disability living allowance and attendance allowance
- medical reports for local authorities in connection with adoption and fostering

GPs do not have to carry out non-NHS work on behalf of their patients. Although Grove House GPs will always try to help their patients when they are able to do so.



How long will my form take?

Time spent completing forms and preparing reports takes the GP away from the medical care of his or her patients. Most GPs have a very heavy workload and paperwork takes up an increasing amount of their time.



When a doctor signs a certificate or completes a report, it is a condition of remaining on the Medical Register that they only sign what they know to be true. In order to complete even the simplest of forms, therefore, the doctor might have to check the patient's entire medical record. Carelessness or an inaccurate report can have serious consequences for the doctor with the General Medical Council (the doctors' regulatory body) or even the Police.