

## **WALLINGTON FAMILY PRACTICE**

### **Why do GPs charge fees – Your questions answered**

#### **Isn't the NHS supposed to be free?**

The National Health Service provides most health care to most people free of charge, but there are exceptions. Prescription charges have existed since 1951, and there are a number of other services for which fees are charged. Sometimes the charge is made to cover some of the cost of treatment, for example, dental fees. In other cases it is because the service is not covered by the NHS, for example, medical reports for insurance companies, claim forms for referral for private care and other letters and forms which require the doctor to review the patient's medical records.

#### **Surely the doctor is being paid anyway?**

It is important to understand that GPs are not employed by the NHS. They are self employed, and they have to cover their own costs such as staff, buildings, heating, lighting etc., in the same way as any other small business. The NHS pays the doctor for specific NHS work, but for non-NHS work the fee has to cover the doctor's costs.

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

- Private prescriptions
- Private sick notes (if requested for the first 7 days when patients can self certificate)
- 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
- Some travel vaccinations
- Private medical insurance reports
- Holiday cancellation claim forms
- Referral for private care forms
- Other letters requested by, or on behalf of, the patient

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

Medical reports for an insurance company  
Some reports for the DSS/Benefits Agency/DVLA  
Examinations of local authority employees  
Police

#### **Why does it sometimes take my GP a long time to complete my form?**

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

#### **I only need the doctor's signature - what is the problem?**

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. Therefore, in order to complete even the simplest of forms, the doctor needs to check the patient's medical record carefully. Carelessness or an inaccurate report can have serious consequences for the doctor, with the General Medical Council or even the Police.

## **What will I be charged?**

The BMA recommends that GPs tell patients in advance if they will be charged, and how much. It is up to the individual practice to decide how much to charge, but the BMA produces lists of suggested fees for the Doctors to use as a guideline.

## **Charges at Wallington Family Practice**

We have a guide to private fees available at reception, and they are also listed below.

You will be asked to pay the fee preferably by Debit/Credit card and you will not be given this item until the payment has been made. We do not hold cash on the premises so please try and ensure you bring correct money if paying by cash.

## **What can I do to help?**

Not all documents need signature by a doctor. For example, you could ask another person in a position of trust, who may be willing to sign a passport application or other similar document free of charge, eg bank manager, teacher, accountant.

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 will cost more. We normally say you should allow a minimum of 10 working days for the processing of such forms and always ring to check they are ready before you attend to collect them.

## **What is covered by the NHS and what is not?**

The government's contract with GPs covers medical services to NHS patients. In recent years, more and more organisations have been involving doctors in a whole range of non-medical work.

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**Private Charges**

|  |                      |  |
|--|----------------------|--|
| <b><u>Certificates/Prescriptions</u></b>   |                      |  |
| Private sick notes   |                      | <b>£30.00</b>  |
| Other vaccination certificate  |                      | <b>£18.00</b>  |
| Private prescription (Malaria, private patients & for items issued in anticipation of being required when outside UK only – see above) |                      | <b>£18.00</b>  |
| <b><u>Reports/forms</u></b>  |                      |  |
| DVLA   |                      | <b>As advised by DVLA</b>  |
| Fitness for gym/sports, freedom from infection, fitness to travel  |                      | <b>£30.00</b>  |
| Holiday cancellation form  |                      | <b>£30.00</b>  |
| Insurance claim forms & form to appeal decision re: DVLA, Attendance Allowance, etc  |                      | <b>£30.00-63.00</b>  |
| <b><u>Insurance</u></b>  |                      |  |
| GP report for insurance applicants (written or template)   |                      | <b>£104.00</b>   |
| Detailed reports that require in excess of 30 mins   |                      | <b>£179.00</b>   |
| GP supplementary reports or letters  |                      | <b>£30.00</b>  |
| Copy of doctor's report to insurance company (up to 6 months after)  |                      | <b>£18.00</b>  |
| Consultation with doctor to discuss the report   |                      | <b>£35.00</b>  |
| <b><u>Access to Medical Records</u></b>  |                      |  |
| Fee (GDPR 25.05.18 ) for copy notes/access   |                      | <b>Free of charge unless request manifestly unfounded or excessive</b>                                       |
| Access Charges:  | Access fee           | <b>Free of charge</b>  |
|  | Photocopying charges | <b>Free of charge</b>  |
|  | Postage              | <b>As incurred</b>   |
| <b><u>Miscellaneous/letters/reports</u></b>  |                      |  |
| Private consultation – per 15 min/Nurse or 10 min/GP (if home visit required additional time/travel will be charged)                   |                      | <b>£35.00</b>  |
| Housing/social services letters  |                      | <b>£30.00-63.00</b>  |
| Pro-forma report (no exam eg 20 mins)  |                      | <b>£89.50</b>  |
| Letters:   | Very Short letter    | <b>£18.00</b>  |
|  | Short letter         | <b>£40.00</b>  |
|  | Letter & Extract     | <b>£67.00</b>  |
|  | Detailed letter      | <b>£95.00</b>  |
|  | Extra info           | <b>£30.00</b>  |
| Power of attorney cert and personal will competence  |                      | <b>£50-100 depending on time taken &amp; whether consultation takes place in surgery or at patients home</b> |
| <b><u>Medicals</u></b>   |                      |  |
| Short medical exam and report – less than 30 mins (due in advance and non-refundable)  |                      | <b>£95.00</b>  |
| Standard medical exam and report – up to 45 mins (due in advance and non-refundable)   |                      | <b>£137.00</b>   |

- **Passport signing is not undertaken by any doctor at the practice**
- **The Metropolitan police will pay a fee of up to £38.00 for a brief/basic statement/report and there is a form to complete to claim this fee which should be provided by the patient requesting the report or from the police. Further charges may apply if a request is made for more detailed information.**

<https://www.bma.org.uk/pay-and-contracts/fees/fees-for-gps/what-to-charge-your-patients-guide-for-gps>