

## How much will I be charged?

The BMA suggests fees that GPs may charge their patient 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 the individual doctors to decide how much they will charge, but the BMA produces suggested fees which many doctors use.

The Old Station surgery has a list of fees on display in the waiting room based on these suggested fees and on the website.

## What can I do to help:

- Not all documents need a signature by a doctor and can be done by other professionals. Please check the form and accompanying guidance as you may get a quicker response that way. For example passport applications, you can ask another person in a position of trust to sign such documents free of charge.
- If you have several forms requiring completion, present them all at once and ask your doctor if they are prepared to complete them all at the same time to speed the process.
- 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.
- Do not book an appointment with your doctor to complete form without checking with your doctor's administrative staff as to whether you need to or not

## Can anyone else complete/ sign my form?

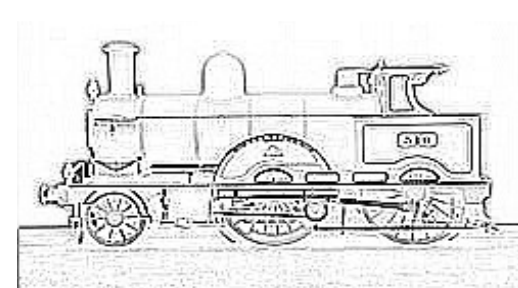
Sometimes the only reason that GPs are asked to complete these reports and form is because they are in a position of trust in the community, or because an insurance company or employer wants to ensure that information provided to them is true and accurate.

## Further information

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

[www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk)

# The Old Station Surgery



## Why your GP charges fees Patient information Leaflet



---

The Old Station Surgery

Tel: 0115 930 1105

[www.oldstationsurgery.co.uk/non-nhs-services](http://www.oldstationsurgery.co.uk/non-nhs-services)

### Why do GPs charge fees?

The National Health Services provided 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.

Your doctor receives a large amount of requests which is often to do with whether your general health allows you to do something e.g. work, receive benefits, drive, play sport, attend school, own a house, a firearm or it is for insurance, court of other medico-legal reasons.

All requests vary in complexity, volume and consistency ranging from signing a certificate which can take minutes, to an in-depth report with an examination which can take hours.

### 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 certificated for insurance purposes
- Holiday cancellation form
- To whom it may concern

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.
- 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 their Old Station Surgery will always try to help their patients when they are able to do so.

### What your doctor is signing

When your 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. They may have to check your entire medical record (some of which may not be accessible on a computer or on site)

Carelessness or an inaccurate report can have serious consequences for the doctor with the General Medical Council (the doctor's regulatory body) or even the Police.

### How long will my form take?

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

When you bring your report to Reception you will be advised there is a fee and a message will be sent to you by the medical secretaries to confirm you are happy with the fee and once you are happy the request will then be passed onto the GP. There is a 28 day turnaround which may be extended due to the GPs workload.



### Why does my doctor seem reluctant or say no to this request?

Your doctor is inundated with work. They have to balance their time with treating the sick, keeping their practice afloat and making sure they are doing all of this safely and within their professional duties as a doctor.

With certain exceptions written within their contract, doctors do not have to carry out non-NHS work. However, may choose to for the benefit of you and other families they treat.

Where a doctor chooses to undertake the work, we advise them to inform and always agree a fee in advance of undertaking work.

Should their volume of work prove to be greater or more complex than expected, the doctor will contact you to discuss how to proceed.