

Why do GPs sometimes charge fees?

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, providing copies of health records or producing medical reports for insurance companies.

Surely the doctor is being paid anyway?

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. The NHS covers these costs for NHS work, but for non-NHS work, the fees charged by GPs contribute towards their costs.

What is covered by the NHS and what is not?

The Government's contract with GPs covers medical services to NHS patients, including the provision of ongoing medical treatment. In recent years, however, more and more organisations have been involving doctors in a whole range of non-medical work. Sometimes the only reason that GPs are asked 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.

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 or her patients. Most GPs have a very heavy workload and paperwork takes up an increasing amount of their time, so many GPs find they have to take some paperwork home at night and weekends.

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. 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.

Further information

Please note that GPs have no obligation to carry out non-NHS work on behalf of their patients. Whilst GPs will always attempt to assist their patients with the completion of forms, for example for insurance purposes, they are not required to do such non-NHS work.

Further guidance can be found on the British Medical Association's website:
www.bma.org.uk

Holmes Chapel Health Centre - Fees for Non-NHS Services

Please note that our fees are based on regularly updated guidance from the British Medical Association

Non-NHS Service	Fee for Non-NHS Service	
	VAT Exempt ⁽¹⁾ (£)	VAT Required ⁽¹⁾ (£)
Private prescription without a consultation	£12.00	-
Straightforward certificates of fact / Signature (not requiring detailed reference to the medical record)	£17.50	£21.00
Private blood test carried out by the Holmes Chapel Health Centre	£20.00 + Path Lab fees	-
Health club - brief written report to certify that a patient is fit for exercise	£30.00	-
Fitness to attend school examination / Fitness to travel certificate	£30.00	£36.00
Private sick note (incapacity certificate), required by patient for presentation to an employer (except those that the doctor is obliged to provide for statutory sick pay (SSP) purposes)	£30.00	£36.00
Freedom from infection certificate, e.g. for school, travel or employment	£30.00	£36.00
LighterLife Health Questionnaire / Report	£40.00	-
School fees insurance claim forms	£45.00	-
Holiday insurance cancellation certificate	£45.00	-
Holiday insurance certificates, e.g. for high risk sporting holidays	£45.00	£54.00
Health insurance services, where services are aimed at restoring the individual's health (without examination of patient), e.g. validation of private medical insurance (PMI) claim form, to support a claim for benefit in connection with private medical insurance, or completion of a 'pre-treatment' form (without examination of patient)	£60.00	-
Insurance applications, including applications for private medical insurance	£60.00	£72.00
Accident or sickness insurance certificate - short certificate of incapacity (without examination) for patient to claim under accident or sickness insurance	£60.00	-
Long or detailed report / Report on a pro forma, without examination (e.g. 20 minutes)	£87.50	£105.00
Childminder health form	£87.50	£105.00
Fitness to Fly / Drive / Pilots Licence / HGV / LGV / Taxi Driver Medicals (20 minutes, including completion of form)	£87.50	£105.00
Written report without examination, providing a detailed opinion and statement on the condition of the patient (e.g. 30 minutes), such as:	£130.00	£156.00
• Lasting Power of Attorney / Court of Protection assessment of capacity form (COP3) – appointment at the Health Centre	£130.00	-
• Lasting Power of Attorney / Court of Protection assessment of capacity form (COP3) – appointment at patient's home	£180.00	-
• Accident or sickness insurance; to support a claim for payment of benefit under accident or sickness insurance policy – appointment at the Health Centre	£130.00	-
• Accident or sickness insurance; to support a claim for payment of benefit under accident or sickness insurance policy – appointment at patient's home	£180.00	-
• Employment; for pre-employment or on an employee, requested by an employer	-	£156.00
• Fitness for education; to attend university, college, teacher and nurses training, dentists	-	£156.00
• Pharmaceutical trials; report on suitability of patient to take part as non-patient volunteer	-	£156.00
• Private medical insurance: report on prospective subscriber to a private medical insurance (PMI) scheme (e.g. BUPA, PPP, WPA, etc)	-	£156.00
Comprehensive clinical examination including report, certificate or completion of necessary forms (e.g. 45 minutes)	£200.00	£240.00
• accident / sickness insurance requiring examination	£200.00	-
• employment medical	-	£240.00
Patient requests for a copy of their GP Medical Record under the Data Protection Act 1998 ⁽²⁾	£10.00 – £50.00	-

⁽¹⁾ Note on VAT - Where the non-NHS service is principally aimed at the protection, maintenance or restoration of health of the person concerned, VAT will not be charged. However, where a medical report is done solely to provide a third party with a necessary element for taking a decision for insurance or legal purposes, VAT will be applied.

⁽²⁾ GP Practices may charge £10 if all of the patient's record is held electronically, and up to £50 if part of the patient's medical record is held in paper (or other) form.