

Private charges

Why do GPs 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, 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 costs - staff, buildings, heating, lighting etc - in the same way as any small business. The NHS pays the doctor for specific NHS work, but for non-NHS work the will charge a private fee.

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

- Certain travel vaccinations
- Private medical insurance reports
- Holiday cancellation claim forms
- Referral for private care forms
- 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
- Examinations of local authority employees

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 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 entire medical record. 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 Valley Medical Centre

At Valley Medical Centre we have a list of fees available at reception, and they are also listed below.

Private Charges – as from October 2014

Certificates	Price
Private sick note	£15.00
Cholera certificate	£20.00
Other vaccination certificate	£20.00
Private prescription for drugs not normally prescribed for patients travelling abroad	£16.00-£50.00
Fitness to travel certificate without examination	£20.00

Reports/Forms	Price
Student health questionnaire without examination	£20.00
BUPA, PPP ect, claim forms insurance reports	£84.00
School fees insurance forms	£84.00
Holiday cancellation forms	£20.00
Completion of form to appeal decision made re DLA, Attendance allowance etc	£84.00
Power of Attorney – patient needs to be seen in practice	£110.00
Camp America without examination	£20.00
Camp America with examination	£45.00

Full Medical Examination

The charge for all the following Medical Examinations is: £120

- Pre-employment
- Visa application medical
- Medicals for third parties
- HGV/TAXI Medicals
- PSV Medicals
- Elderly driver medical
- Diabetic driver medical
- Sports medical eg, Diver, gliding etc
- Seat belt exemption examination and report
- Fitness to travel examination and report
- Visa application medical
- Oil rigs fitness

NB. All medicals must be paid for upon booking of the appointment. As we need to allocate half an hour of GP time to each medical examination this fee is non-refundable if the patient fails to attend the appointment or cancels at less than 2 hours notice.

THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS.

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 form free of charge. (Teacher, Accountant, etc)

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.