

Loughton Health Centre

A Teaching Practice

The Drive, Loughton, Essex IG10 1HW ♦ Tel: 0208 502 5000 ♦

Dr T Ally ♦ Dr A U Ahmed ♦ Dr A Ding ♦ Dr Z Bakht

June 2025

Non-NHS Services

Statement of costs (Fees charged)

Why do you charge for some work?

The National Health Service provides most health care to most people free of charge, but there are exceptions such as prescription charges. The NHS does not employ GPs; it has a contract with them to provide NHS general medical services for their patients. Sometimes, however, GPs are asked to provide additional services, which fall outside their contract with the NHS, and in these circumstances, they are entitled to make a reasonable charge for providing them, for example medical reports for insurance companies, referral forms for private care and other letters and forms which require the doctor to review the patient's medical records.

Our policies and our fees are aligned with guidance produced by the BMA.

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

- Certain travel vaccinations.
- Private medical insurance reports.
- Statements of fact relating to general health e.g. for children's dance classes.
- Letters requested by, or on behalf of, the patient.
- Holiday cancellation claim forms.
- Referral for private care forms.

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 occupational health.
- Requests from solicitors for patient records.

Appointments

Depending on the work requested, you may be required to attend an appointment or discuss the paperwork via a telephone consultation with the doctor. Due to the range and nature of the requests we receive, we may only be able to advise of this once we are in receipt of the form. Please allow sufficient time when making requests.

Frequently Asked Questions

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 covers these costs for NHS work, but for non-NHS work the fee has to cover the doctor's costs.

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. 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 be sure that information provided 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 – the majority work up to 70 hours a week – 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. In order to complete even the simplest of forms, therefore, the doctor will likely 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 or even the Police.

Consent

If you are requesting work on behalf of someone else, we will require consent from the patient before we can proceed. Due to Patient Confidentiality we must always request our own consent; we are unable to accept consent through a third party organisation, this is particularly relevant to the requesting of medical notes by insurance companies. The timelines above refer to the number of days once we have received consent from the patient to act and where appropriate the fee has been received.