

Cleobury Mortimer Medical Centre

Private Charges:

Why do GP's charge fees? Frequent questions we are asked.

Isn't the NHS supposed to be free?

The NHS provides most health care to most people free of charge, but there are exceptions, for example prescription charges, and 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 medical reports for insurance companies, claim forms for referral to private care and other letters and forms which require the GP to review the patient's medical records.

Surely the GP is being paid anyway?

GPs are not employed by the NHS. They are self-employed and 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 fee has to cover the GP's costs.

What is covered by the NHS and what is not?

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

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

- Certain travel vaccinations
- Private medical insurance report forms
- Holiday cancellation claim forms
- Referral for private care forms
- Letter 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 from 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 their patients. GP's have a very heavy work load and paperwork takes up an increasing amount of their time.

I only need a GP's signature – what is the problem?

When a GP 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 most simplest of forms, the GP needs to check the patient's entire medical record. Carelessness or inaccurate report can have serious consequences for the GP.

Why do I need to pay upfront?

In the past we have completed reports and forms before payment has been made, but sadly there has been occasions when the GP has completed the work but the payments has not been made. Therefore, the fee must be paid in advance at the time of the request for the letter or form to be completed or when the appointment for the medical is booked.

For a full list of our fees please visit our website: cleobury.mortimermc@nhs.net