

GLoucestershire LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE



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To Whom it May Concern

12th March 2010

Dear Sir or Madam,

CHARGES FOR NON-NHS WORK BY GP PRACTICES

The Local Medical Committee is the body set up by statute to look after the interests of general medical practitioners (GPs). The production of most certificates lies outside the practice's NHS contract and they are entitled to charge for the work. In a very limited number of circumstances collaborative arrangements between the various government departments allow local authorities to pass the GP's bill to the Primary Care Trust for payment but none of these apply in this case.

The document entitled 'Making a Difference' was produced by the current Government in 2002 (and is still extant). In it the Cabinet Office instructs all Departments to minimise the administrative load on GP practices so that they can devote their time to their primary role of making sick people well. On p27 and p28 it directs all public sector organisations as follows:

- o 'Do not automatically seek information from a GP... The individual may be receiving certain benefits for which a medical assessment has already been necessary.
- o 'Investigate the use of self-certification ... possibly followed up by further assessment, which should be the exception rather than the rule.
- o 'Consider other appropriate people to provide the required information.
- o 'Contemplate the use of other medical professionals where appropriate.
- o 'Where the information from a GP is essential, ensure that only factual information is requested.'

Of course you need to minimise fraud, but if, after pursuing all other avenues, your council still needs a GP to certify anything about a person then it is the council, not the applicant, which should be prepared to pay for the GP's time in preparing that certificate.

We recommend agreeing the fee in advance.

Yours sincerely

[Signed on the original]

Mike Forster
LMC Lay Secretary