

GLOUCESTERSHIRE LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE



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To whom it may concern

16th June 2010

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORTING LETTERS FOR HOUSING ALLOCATIONS

The bearer of this note has been to see a GP stating that if the GP writes a supporting letter it will help them to gain extra points for housing allocations. The Gloucestershire Local Medical Committee, which represents all GPs in the county, has agreed that this is not the appropriate way for Housing Authorities to obtain medical information. Providing medical information of this nature is not part of a doctor's terms and conditions of service under the NHS. Putting pressure on the patient to obtain information of this kind is unfair on the patient and the doctor. It leads to time-consuming, unnecessary consultations and often to embarrassment.

May I draw your attention to the booklet "Making a Difference" issued by the Regulatory Impact Unit of the Cabinet Office in June 2002, still extant, which states that:

"GPs will be approached regarding housing allocations only when their input is essential and no-one else can provide it." The guidance in this booklet has been endorsed by the Local Government Association.

The best person to advise you on the applicant's medical need for housing is your own medical adviser. That adviser is free to contact the applicant's GP, provided they have first obtained informed consent from the applicant to do so and that they understand that such information is outside NHS service and so justifies a fee.

I would be happy to explain matters further if necessary.

Yours sincerely

Mike Forster
LMC Lay Secretary