

Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust

Locum Reimbursement Policy 2007/08

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust (PCT) will consider locum reimbursements to both GMS and PMS practices inline with the Statement of Financial Entitlement (SFE) for the following specific purposes:

- Adoption leave
- Maternity leave
- Paternity leave
- Sickness leave
- Prolonged study leave
- Suspended doctors

Applications for the payments listed above should be submitted direct to the Contractor Payments Manager, Family Health Services, Victoria Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EL.

Guidance regarding the claiming process and eligibility criteria is detailed below.

2.0 CLAIMING ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 Claims for the costs incurred in respect of locums are to be submitted to the Family Health Service, together with the claim form and full documentation to support the claim, at the end of the month during which the expenses were incurred. (see attached claim form LOC 6)

3.0 FULL TIME WORKING HOURS

3.1 37.5 hours is the notional number of hours taken for full time working and any pro rata payments for part time working will be based on this.

4.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND ELIGIBILITY

4.1 In order to agree eligibility for locum reimbursement the contractor must first submit an application form (LOC1), to the Contractor Payments Manager, at the Family Health Service. Each application will then be considered by the PCT against this Policy. Practices should not assume that reimbursement has been agreed until the practice has received formal notification of the decision in writing.

4.2 The PCT will endeavour to respond to requests for locum reimbursement as quickly as possible.

4.3 Locum reimbursements will not be paid if the contractor is already claiming another payment for locum cover in respect of the GP performer on leave from the PCT.

- 4.4 Locum reimbursements will not be paid if the locum is a partner or shareholder in the contract or already an employee of the contractor, unless the GP performer on leave is a job share.
- 4.5 Locum reimbursements will not normally be agreed if:
- a) the PCT offers to provide locum cover and the contractor refuses the offer without good reason
 - b) the GP performer on leave had the right to return but that right has been extinguished
 - c) the contractor has engaged a new employee or partner to perform the duties of the GP performer on leave and is not carrying a vacancy in respect of another position which the GP performer on leave will fill on return.
- 4.6 Once locum arrangements are in place the contractor must inform the Family Health Service if :
- a) there is to be any change to the locum arrangements, or
 - b) there is to be a change to the contractors arrangements for performing the duties of the performer on leave, for whatever reason.
- 4.7 Contractors are expected to make their own adequate insurance cover arrangements for periods of absence due to any of the reasons listed in paragraph 1.1 where locum reimbursement payments are not agreed.
- 4.8 Once the claims have been approved for reimbursement the appropriate claim forms will be sent to the Practice.

5.0 PAYMENTS FOR LOCUMS COVERING MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND ADOPTION LEAVE

- 5.1 If an employee or partner of a contractor is a performer to the Contract, and providing they satisfy the relevant entitlement conditions under employment legislation, then the PCT will consider the payment of locum fees for ordinary maternity, paternity, and adoption leave. The leave of absence must be more than 1 week.

(i.e. ordinary leave refers to the leave entitlement available via statute and not to any locally enhanced periods of leave. Therefore the maximum period for locum reimbursement for maternity leave and adoption leave for the parent who is the main care provider is 26 weeks, and 2 weeks for paternity leave and adoption leave for the parent who is not the main care provider).

- 5.2 Payments are only payable if the contractor satisfies the following list of conditions. If the contractor breaches any of these conditions the PCT may withhold payment.

Any agreed locum reimbursement will be subject to a maximum of £978.91 per week based on a 37.5 hour week with pro rata payments being made if the GP on Leave has a commitment of less than fulltime.

- a) In the case of maternity leave, the Family Health Service must be supplied with a certificate of the expected date of confinement, or a private certificate providing comparable information.
- b) In the case of paternity leave, the Family Health Service must be supplied with a letter written by the GP performer confirming prospective fatherhood and giving the expected date of confinement.
- c) In the case of adoption leave, the Family Health Service must be supplied with a letter from the GP performer confirming date of adoption and name of main care provider and countersigned by the appropriate adoption agency.
- d) The PCT must be provided with written records demonstrating the actual cost of locum cover, together with locum signatures to confirm the amounts received.
- e) For Paternity and Adoptive Leave (not main carer), the maximum amount normally payable is £978.91 (maximum claim is for two weeks).
- f) For Maternity, and Adoption Leave (main carer), the maximum reimbursement normally payable in respect of locum cover is £978.91 per week.
- g) In the case of exceptional circumstances practices may make an exceptional claim for further reimbursement from week 3 of the leave for main carers and/or maternity leave. The PCT will consider funding above the minimum status within the SFE if the practice already has or will have, more than one whole time equivalent (wte) GP performer absent from the practice at any one time, ie. sick leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave or prolonged study leave.
- h) Exceptional claims should be submitted to the Family Health Service with full details of the reason for the claim, and the case will be considered by the PCT.

6. PAYMENTS FOR LOCUMS COVERING SICKNESS LEAVE

- 6.1 If an employee or partner takes sickness leave and is a performer under the Contract, the PCT will consider applications for reimbursement of locum cover against the criteria listed below.
- 6.2 It will not be considered necessary for a contractor with two or more GP Performers to engage a locum to replace a GP performer on sickness leave, unless the absence of the performer leaves each of the other GP performers (includes Partners and Salaried GPs, but not Retainers) with average numbers of patients as follows:

<i>Absences lasting or expected to last</i>	<i>Full-time GP</i>	<i>Three-quarter time GP</i>	<i>Half-time GP</i>
Not more than 2 weeks	3600+ patients	2700+ patients	1800+ patients
Not more than 6 weeks	3100+ patients	2325+ patients	1550+ patients
Longer than 6 weeks	2700+ patients	2025+ patients	1350+ patients

* The list size count will be taken at the beginning of the quarter during which the locum cover was undertaken.

6.3 The following must apply for cases to receive consideration:-

- a) the leave of absence is more than 1 week
- b) if the performer on leave is employed by the contractor, the contractor must be:
 - i) required to pay statutory sick pay to that performer,
 - ii) required to pay the performer on leave his full salary during absences on sick leave under his contract of employment and the performer on leave has been employed by the contractor for at least 3 months.

If the absence is as a result of an accident, i.e. car accident, sports injury, and the contractor wishes to claim locum reimbursement from the PCT, the contractor must declare on the claim form that they are unable to claim any compensation from whoever caused the accident, or through their own sports injury or holiday insurance the cost of engaging a locum to cover for the GP performer during their absence.

6.4 Any agreed locum reimbursement will be subject to a maximum of £978.91 per week based on a 37.5 hour week with pro rata payments being made if the GP on Sickness Leave has a commitment of less than fulltime.

6.5 The PCT will normally reimburse locum cover for a single-handed GP performer or a job-sharer fulfilling the role of a single-handed GP performer if they are on sickness leave.

6.6 The weekly maximum payment is set out in point 6.4. However in any 12 month period the maximum period in which payments will be made in relation to a particular GP performer are:

- a) 26 weeks for the full amount of the sum that the PCT has determined is payable and
- b) a further 26 weeks for half the full amount of the sum that the PCT has determined was payable.

6.7 Payments are only payable if in addition to the conditions set out above, the contractor satisfies the following conditions:

- a) The contractor must supply the Family Health Service with medical certificates in respect of each period of absence for which locum reimbursement is being claimed
- b) The contractor must provide the Family Health Service with written records demonstrating the actual cost to it of the locum cover. Each locum must sign to confirm the payment they have received.
- c) If the locum arrangements are in respect of a performer on leave who is or was entitled to statutory sick pay (SSP), the contractor must inform the Family Health Service immediately if it stops paying SSP to that employee.

- d) The performer on leave must not engage in conduct that is prejudicial to his recovery.
- e) The performer on leave must not be performing clinical services for any other person, unless under medical direction and with the approval of the PCT.

7. PAYMENTS TO LOCUMS TO COVER FOR SUSPENDED DOCTORS

7.1 A contractor may be eligible for locum reimbursement where:

- a) the contractor is paying a suspended GP performer the full amount of the income to which he was entitled before the suspension
- b) actually and necessarily engages a locum(s) to cover for the absence of the suspended GP performer.

7.2 Payments are only payable if in addition, to the conditions set out in section 4, General Principles and Eligibility, the contractor provides, on request, written records demonstrating:

- a) the actual cost of locum cover. Each locum must sign to confirm payment received.
- b) that it is continuing to pay the suspended GP performer the full amount of the income to which he was entitled before the suspension

7.3 The maximum amount payable per week is £978.91

8. PAYMENTS IN RESPECT OF PROLONGED STUDY LEAVE

8.1 A contractor may be eligible for reimbursement where the contractor actually engages a locum(s) to cover the absence of a GP performer on Prolonged Study Leave. The PCT will apply the conditions set out in Section 4, General Principles and Eligibility, when considering applications.

8.2 Applications must be submitted to the Family Health Service giving full details of the study leave to be undertaken, the additional qualifications or experienced to be gained by the study and how this will subsequently benefit the health community. The PCT will consider each application on its own merits.

8.3 Claims under this section may only be made if:

- a) The study leave is for at least 10 weeks, but not more than 12 months.
- b) The educational aspects of the study leave have been approved by the local Director of Post Graduate GP Education, having regard to nationally agreed guidance.

8.4 The PCT will need to determine claims under this section with regard to affordability, having regard to the budgetary targets it has set itself.

8.5 Payments are only payable if in addition to the conditions set out in section 4, General Principles and Eligibility, the contractor also provides the PCT, on request

with written records demonstrating the actual cost to it of the locum cover, including locum signatures to confirm payments made.

8.6 The maximum amount payable per week is £978.91. There may also be an additional entitlement of an educational allowance payment of £133.68 per week.

9. THE ROLE OF THE LMC

9.1 The PCT will initially make the decision regarding locum reimbursement. If the contractor wishes to dispute the decision they can request local resolution. They may also request that the LMC be involved. Similarly the PCT may request the LMC to be involved in order to resolve the matter locally.

9.2 If the matter cannot be resolved locally then the contractor will have access to the dispute resolution procedure. Any dispute may be referred to the Secretary of State for consideration and determination if :

- a) the PCT so wishes and the contractor has agreed in writing
- b) the contractor so wishes even if the PCT does not agree.

September 2007

DECLARATION BY GP TAKING LEAVE

I certify

- that any locums for which additional funding is claimed will be necessarily deputising for me when I am absent from the practice because of sickness or confinement/paternity leave/adoption or while I am attending a course accredited for the purpose of payment of postgraduate education allowance.
- that if any financial compensation towards locum costs to cover this period of leave is received from any other source the practice will notify the PCT immediately and where necessary repay any over claimed additional funding received.
- that the information given on this form is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge.

If the doctor is sick and cannot fill in or sign the form, a Partner or the Practice Manager can do it for them. If this is the case please state below.

SIGNATURE DATE

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PRINT NAME

PRACTICE STAMP :

**RETURN FORM TO : Glyn Fenner, Contractor Payments Manager, Family Health Service,
Victoria Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EL**