

Kintbury and Woolton Hill Surgeries Guidance on Completion of Non-NHS Forms

Quite often patients request to have their GP complete a form or medical declaration for them. For some matters such as life insurance, the surgery follows national guidance on how this is undertaken. For other forms, guidance is less clear e.g. pension statements, Power of Attorney matters, school admissions and sporting activities including parachute jumping and marathon running. The purpose of this FAQ is to try and explain some of the concerns which arise regarding completion of these forms.

What is meant by non-NHS?

We hold a contract with the NHS to provide 'Primary Medical Services' to our patients. Some items are not included under this contract such as the completion of forms and certificates for non-NHS and certain government organisations. We are not funded nor contractually obliged to undertake this work.

What should I do if I have a form which I require my GP to complete?

Please bring the form to reception. This will then be passed to the doctors, they can then advise as to whether the form can be completed by them, if a charge applies and if an appointment is needed. You will be then contacted by a secretary to inform you accordingly. Please do not book an appointment in order to hand in a form. Please reserve appointments for medical matters.

What happens next?

If a fee is payable a secretary will advise you of the amount and how to pay. We will also advise you if an appointment is necessary and how to arrange this. Upon receipt of payment, a doctor will be passed the form for completion.

Why is there a chargeable fee?

This work is not included in our contract therefore we are not funded for it. The fee covers the cost of the related admin time and also the doctors own time in completing the form. As this is not part of our NHS contract, this work must be completed after NHS work has been done. In reality this means in the evenings, on days off or at weekends.

Why can't you give me a timeframe in which to expect the form completed?

NHS work must be completed first. The workload of GPs has increased considerably over the past few years and will continue to do so. GPs are working days in excess of 12 hours in order to keep on top of their work. Therefore very little time is left for additional work. Unpredictable emergency or urgent situations can arise which require attention. Consequently it is not possible to give accurate turn around times.

The fee or waiting time is unacceptable to me. What I can I do?

Your form will immediately be returned upon your request. There are usually a number of other options open to you. This would depend on the nature of your form but possibilities include Sports Physicians, Occupational Health Doctors, Private GPs and Hospital Consultant. A copy of your medical summary can be provided for a small fee.

Why has the doctor declined to complete all or part of my form?

The reality is that we live in an increasingly litigious society. Risk is an increasing concern for many and 'medical certification' is often seen as a way of underwriting this risk. The GMC's 'Duties of a Doctor' state that GPs must work 'within the limits of their competence.' For any certifications they make they must be certain they are qualified to do so to the standard set by the GMC and be prepared to defend any statements they make. A particular problem is posed by questions which ask GPs to give an opinion as to a patient's fitness or suitability to perform a particular activity or role. This is very open to interpretation. Medical defence insurers report a number of cases where doctors have lost their licence and therefore their livelihood over such matters. Previously a doctor acting in 'good faith' or in the 'best interests of their patient' was a defensible position which was rarely questioned. This is no longer the case and GPs are advised by insurers to ensure we are prepared to defend our actions before a legal body. In summary, if GPs do not feel they are qualified to answer they will be unable to complete a form.