

**Albany House Medical Centre
3 Queen Street
Wellingborough
NN8 4RW**

www.albanyhousemedicalcentre.co.uk

☎01933 234 900 – Appointments (08:30 to 17:30) and enquiries (09:30 to 17:30).

☎01933 234 905 – Visits and emergencies (not appointments) direct line (08:00 to 18:30)

When we are closed: Call 111



**Albany House Medical Centre
PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET**

Fees - A brief guide for patients

Isn't the NHS supposed to be free?

The NHS provides most healthcare services to people free of charge, but there are some exceptions. Prescription charges have existed since 1951. In other cases, the NHS has decided that the service is not part of the patient's healthcare and it will not fund the GP to provide that service. These are referred to as non-NHS services.

What is covered by the NHS and what is not?

The Government's contract with GPs covers medical services to NHS patients. Sometimes the only reason that a GP is asked to provide information is because they hold a position of trust and responsibility and someone wants to be sure that the information provided to them is true and correct.

Examples of Non-NHS services for which GP's can charge their NHS patients:

- Accident/sickness insurance certificates and reports
- Photocopying of medical records
- Certain travel/holiday vaccinations
- Private medical insurance reports
- Reports for 'fitness to start a diet regime.'
- Medicals for HGV/Taxi/PSV
- Elderly Driver Medicals
- Holiday Cancellation forms
- Shotgun Certificate Verification
- Driving Licence Forms

A complete list of non-NHS services is beyond the scope of this leaflet – our staff will advise you if a charge for a service will apply.

GP practices are under no obligation to provide non-NHS services but most choose to do so in order to provide a necessary service to patients.

Examples of non-NHS services which GP's can charge other institutions include:

- Medical reports for an insurance company
- Some reports for the DSS/Benefits Agency
- Examination/report for local authorities/Ofsted

Why does it take so long for my GP to complete a form or report?

Time spent completing forms and preparing reports takes the GP away from the care of our NHS patients. GPs have a heavy NHS workload—paperwork takes up an increasing amount of time. GPs do not regard most non-NHS services as urgent; NHS work will always take priority over non-NHS work.

I only need a doctors signature—what is the problem?

When a doctor signs a certificate of report, it is a condition of the Medical Register that they only sign what they know to be true. In order to complete even the simplest of forms, the doctor might have to read a patient's entire medical record.

VAT Charges

The Practice has made a decision to provide only essential non-NHS services. Therefore we fall under the threshold at which VAT registration is required.

What do I do if I need a non-NHS service?

Bring the form (or post in) or write down what service you need.

You must pay in advance (either the full fee for a fixed-fee service or a deposit if the fee is variable). You will be asked to sign a consent form.

You may specify if you will collect in person or posted to you (in which case we ask you to provide a SAE). If you want a third party to collect for you, they must come in with a written letter of consent signed by you.

Anyone collecting may be asked for identification in the form of a photo driving licence or passport.

How fees are calculated

All non-NHS services require GP, nurse and administrative time to provide. If these services were not paid for by patients, then there would be less time for NHS services.

In very few cases, our fees are based on agreement reached by the British Medical Association (BMA) with other bodies such as local authorities. But, in most cases, practices are allowed to set a level of fees to reflect the costs of providing the service.

Some fees are fixed; others are variable because the workload can only be determined after the event. In these cases our fee schedule reflects a range. You will be asked to pay the lower end of the range of the deposit and any additional fees on collection.

For more information about charges visit the British Medical Association Website at: www.bma.org.uk