
Umbrella Medical

Non-NHS 'Private' Letter Policy

Date agreed by Partners:	17th May 2018
Date of implementation:	
Last Review date:	15 th May 2018
Review date:	May 2020
Person responsible for policy implementation:	MTS/MND
Applicable to:	All employed staff
Version:	2018 v.1.3

Background

We are under increasing demand to provide non-NHS letters for patients, their relatives or carers. These letters are often time very consuming for the doctor, secretaries and receptionists. They place extra strain on our limited resources and divert attention away from clinical care. The surgery is not remunerated for these letters under the terms of our NHS contracts.

The aim of this policy is to structure and rationalise the process whereby letters are requested and completed for a patient.

1. The patient requests a letter

The patient may request a letter during a face to face consultation, at the reception desk, or by letter or phone call. In each instance, the patient will be directed to collect an Application Pack from reception. Alternatively, the doctor may choose to give the patient a copy of the Application Pack themselves.

The Application Pack including Fees Schedule is in **Appendix 1**.

2. The patient completes the application pack and returns it to reception

The receptionist must ensure **all** sections are completed and note the date of receipt.

3. The receptionist passes the application pack to the doctor to determine the fee

The application is passed to the doctor who the patient feels is best to complete the application.

However, if that doctor is on annual leave (or is due to start annual leave within the next week) or if they are not based at that surgery, instead it will be passed to the doctor who saw the patient last. If the patient has never seen a doctor at the surgery it will be allocated to a doctor randomly by the reception.

The doctor should review the application and with consideration to the time, resources and risk for liability the letter entails, should set a fee in accordance with the Schedule of Fees. If the patient has requested the letter urgently, the doctor must consider whether they have the capacity to do so. If they do, the 50% surcharge should be added to the fee (as in the Schedule of Charges)

If it is in some way not necessary, possible or appropriate to complete the letter, then the doctor may either contact the patient directly to discuss this or clearly document the reasons why they cannot complete the letter and pass back to the reception to liaise with the patient.

4. The doctor passes the Application Pack back to reception

The receptionist should call the patient and inform them of the fee. If the patient chooses not to proceed with the letter then the application pack should be shredded.

If the patient chooses to proceed with the letter they must pay the fee in full before the pack is passed back to the doctor for dictation.

The patient should be informed the letter will be ready to collect in **28 days**.

5. The pack is passed back to the doctor for dictation

The application **must not** be passed back to the doctor unless the patient has paid in full.

The doctor dictates the letter as per the Umbrella Medical Dictation Policy.

6 Secretaries

The secretary types the letter and submits it to the doctor for necessary alterations as per the Umbrella Medical Dictation Policy. Once approved, the patient is called to let them know their letter is ready for collection.

7 Collection

The patient collects the letter which has already been paid for in full.