

## **Why do GPs sometimes charge fees – surely the doctor is being paid anyway?**

It is important to understand that many GPs (including Morningside Medical Practice) are not employed by the NHS. GP partners are self-employed and have to cover costs in the same way as any other small business i.e. staff, building, heating, lighting, stationary etc. These costs are covered partly by the NHS for NHS work, but private fees also contribute towards these expenses.

## **What costs do the NHS cover and what is not?**

The Government's contract with GPs (including Morningside Medical Practice) covers medical services to NHS patients, including the provision of ongoing medical treatment. However, in recent years, more and more organisations have been involving doctors in a range of non-medical work. Sometimes the only reason that GPs are asked is because they are in a position of trust in the community, or because an insurance company or employer wants to ensure that information provided to them is true and accurate.

## **Do GPs have to do non-NHS work for their patients?**

Whilst GPs will always attempt to assist patients with the completion of forms i.e. for insurance purposes, GPs are not contractually required to do non-NHS work. At Morningside Medical Practice, we do not countersign driving licence applications, complete BUPA & PPP forms, or provide health club fitness to exercise certificates.

## **Who sets the fees for non-NHS work?**

Morningside Medical Practice sets its prices following guidance from The British Medical Association (who are the professional association and registered trade union for British doctors') and benchmarks these fees against other neighbouring practices.

## **Why does it sometimes take my GP a long time to complete my form?**

Time spent completing forms and preparing reports takes the GP away from the medical care of his or her patients. Morningside Medical Practice GPs have a very heavy workload, and paperwork takes up an increasing amount of time, and some take paperwork home outwith normal working hours.

## **I only need the doctor's signature – what is the problem?**

To remain on the Medical Register, the doctor must only sign or complete a certificate or report that they know to be true. In order to complete even the simplest of forms the doctor will check the patient's entire medical record. Carelessness or an inaccurate report can have serious consequences for the doctor with the General Medical Council (the doctors' regulatory body) or even the Police.