

LMC guidance to GPs on medical reports in support of housing applications



GPs receive frequent requests for medical letters and reports in support of housing applications from a variety of sources - the local authority, housing associations, directly from patients and from patients via Citizens Advice.

The following notes are intended to help you deal with such requests:-

- You are NOT contractually obliged to provide such reports to patients on demand.
- When presented with a request for information directly from a patient, you may respond by referring the patient back to the Local Authority Housing Department.
- A simple poster reinforcing this message forms part of this guidance. In addition, you may wish to offer the patient the model letter in this guidance to give to the Housing Department, housing association, Citizens Advice or other agency which might have suggested or implied that the patient approach the GP direct.
- Information in support of an application based on health grounds should be supplied by the applicant using a form provided by the Housing Department (self-assessment). This should not require any input from the GP or practice.
- Only if additional information is required, does the Housing Department Medical Officer need to obtain it from the applicant's doctor, preferably using a standard form, provided the patient has given written consent. The Medical Officer should seek information which is only available to the GP, eg:
 - » the diagnosis;
 - » severity of the illness;
 - » medication;
 - » likely effect of appropriate rehousing.
- When the Housing Department requests a report you should receive a fee.

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HOUSING APPLICATIONS

**If you are intending to apply for
a council home for health reasons
YOU DO NOT NEED A DOCTOR'S LETTER.**

**You need to complete a self-assessment form which
is available from the Council.**

**If the Council are unable to process your application and need
further information, the Council should write to your doctor in
confidence and request your written consent for your doctor
to provide the information.**

Dear Patient,

Medical Reports to Social Services and Housing Departments

Thank you for asking me to help you by supplying a medical report about you. You need to complete a self-assessment form first and this is usually all that is necessary. This form is available from the Council (Local Authority).

If the Council needs to know any further information it may then wish to see confidential information from your medical record or your full medical record. The Local Medical Committee, which represents all NHS general practitioners in the area, has made it clear to the relevant local authorities that GPs will only supply confidential medical information directly to the Local Authority's Medical Officer when asked to do so by the Officer, provided that the patient (or the patient's legal representative) has given written consent.

The Council should therefore contact you asking you or your legal representative to complete a consent form. Once this has been received they will then write directly to your GP enclosing the written consent and asking your GP to supply confidential medical information which may be all or part of the medical record.

There is therefore no need for you to provide the medical report or to ask your GP to provide it. If you are experiencing difficulties because of your refusal to supply a report, do not hesitate to show this letter to the Local Authority Department or Housing Association.

Yours sincerely,

STATEMENT BY THE LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

MEDICAL REPORTS TO SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING DEPARTMENTS

Thank you for asking your GP to help you by supplying a medical report about you. The Local Medical Committee, which represents all NHS general practitioners in the local area, has made it clear to the relevant Local Authorities that GPs will supply confidential medical information directly to that Authority's own Medical Officer when requested to do so by the Medical Officer, and provided that the patient or the patient's legal representative has given their written consent. The Local Authority has the responsibility of obtaining this written consent and making a direct request to the GP to release the patient's confidential medical information.

There is therefore no need for you or the patient (if you are the patient's legal representative) to provide the Local Authority with a medical report. If you do have any difficulty please do not hesitate to show this statement to the Local Authority Department or Housing Association you are dealing with.