



Wessex Local Medical Committees Ltd

Representing:

- Dorset LMC
- Hampshire & Isle of Wight LMC
- BaNES, Swindon & Wiltshire LMC

Supporting:

- Channel Islands

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To whom it may concern:

Wessex Local Medical Committees represent all the GPs in Dorset, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and Wiltshire, Swindon and BaNES. We are often asked questions about the issuing of sickness certification for under 7 days (including weekends) and have therefore decided to offer the following advice:

In 2002 it was estimated that 2.4 million unnecessary GP appointments, plus an additional 37,000 hours of GP time each year, were wasted in the United Kingdom on this task.

GPs are not required to issue sickness certification for periods of less than 7 days as part of their contractual obligations within the NHS.

Most responsible employers accept that excessive short term sickness absence is a management problem rather than a medical one. Management solutions are required, often with the input of an Occupational Health Department. It is therefore extremely wasteful of scarce NHS resources for an employee to attend a GP for every minor illness for the sole purpose of trying to obtain a sickness certificate for their employer.

If an employer requires this, the GP may provide one if they wish, a service for which he may charge an appropriate fee.

GPs have no contractual requirement to provide occupational health services for their patients. Some GPs may be prepared to negotiate a contract with an employer to offer a range of private Occupational Health Services to the company's employees.

Possession of this letter does not indicate that any medical consultation has occurred.

There are a variety of organisations that may be able to help and it may be worth looking at <http://www.acas.org.uk> or www.managingabsence.co.uk.

Any enquiries should be directed to the above address.

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