

Title: Procedure for Issuing and Dealing with Medical Certificates to Patients/Clients

Reference:	CRG/025
Distribution:	1
Version:	1

Surrey Oaklands 

NHS Trust

I have received and read this document and will implement the action specified in preparation for the effective use of this procedure.

Name of responsible person:	Job title:
Signature:	Date:

Procedure for Issuing and Dealing with Medical Certificates to Patients/Clients

1. Introduction

- 1.1 When a person has been admitted to hospital, any benefits they receive may be reduced. Also, people who are employed when admitted into hospital will also need to claim Statutory Sick pay. This document outlines the procedure to be taken for the issuing of medical certificates to patients/clients in the care of Surrey Oaklands NHS Trust, and notifying the Benefits Office.
- 1.2 A 'Designated' Patient Affairs person is someone who has been delegated this task by their Manager/Service Leader and has been inducted in carrying out the procedures laid out in this policy.
- 1.3 The storage and issuing of pads of medical certificates is an administrative task and must only be undertaken by the 'Designated' Patient Affairs person.
- 1.4 The issuing of individual hospital medical certificates (MED 10, yellow one, see Appendix 1) must be undertaken by the 'Designated' Patient Affairs person.
- 1.5 The issuing of individual medical certificates (Med 3, white one, see Appendix 2) for 'out-patients' is the responsibility of Medical staff.
- 1.6 The term 'patient' throughout this document refers to patients, clients, residents and service users.

2 Process for Notifying the Benefits Office

- 2.1 The Trust has a duty to inform the Benefits Office when a patient in receipt of benefit has been admitted as an in-patient and it is the Trust policy to do so. Consequently the 'Designated' Patient Affairs person will notify the appropriate Benefits Office when a patient who is in receipt of benefits has been admitted as an in-patient.
- 2.2 On admission, a 7 day self certificate SC2 must be sent immediately to the Benefits Office by the 'Designated' Patient Affairs person, for patients who are still employed and entitled to Statutory Sick Pay.
- 2.3 On admission the form BR409 must be completed, signed by the patient and sent to the appropriate Benefits Office:

Immediately where the patient has been

- a) Transferred from another hospital

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- b) Admitted within 28 days of a previous discharge
- c) Transferred directly from residential accommodation (private or local authority).

After 2 weeks where a patient is receiving

- a) Attendance Allowance
- b) Constant Attendance Allowance
- c) Disability Living Allowance

After 4 weeks all other benefits and admission.

2.4 The patient's must give their consent, and notification must be sent on form BR409 that must have the patient's signature authorising disclosure of the information.

2.4.1 Where patients are unable to give 'informed' consent due to their mental or physical condition, decisions to pass on information will be taken by the health professionals concerned on the basis of the patient's best interests and, as necessary, the views of relatives and carers. (To be reviewed in light of the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 which comes into force in October 2001 at the earliest)

2.4.2 Where a patient refuses to give his/her consent, the 'Designated' Patient Affairs person must explain to the patient the consequences of failure to inform the Benefits Office of their admission into Hospital. These are:

- a) He/she will be in breach of the terms and conditions as laid down in their Benefits book.
- b) Overpayment may occur, which will have to be repaid at a later date.
- c) His/her benefits maybe reduced if he/she is unable to repay the excess incurred.
- d) The Benefits Office also can reduce any future income from other benefits until the debt is paid.

2.4.3 If a patient continues to refuse to give consent, they should be given a final warning about the consequences of their failure to do this, but their ultimate decision should be respected. The patient's refusal and details of all the information given to them about the consequences of failure to inform the Benefits Office should then be carefully documented in the patient's health records and the Patient Affairs Officer records

2.5 Form BR409 (see Appendix 3) must be filled in by the patient with/without the assistance of the 'Designated' Patient Affairs person and sent to the appropriate Benefits Office in respect of any patient.

2.6 If the patient/client is in receipt of benefits, they may have an order book or someone may be holding the order book for the patient/client. Inside the front cover

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are details of what benefit the book represents. (Please refer to this order book when completing form BR409 to identify correct particulars.)

- 2.7 Where the benefit is not being paid by order book, or the book is not available, it may be possible to complete the form from information given by the patient/client or someone acting on his/her behalf.
- 2.8 If the patient/client receives more than one payment, send only one form BR409 but take care to tick all the relevant boxes in the "What benefit is the patient receiving" section.

3 Provision of Patient Information to Benefits Office

- 3.1 The Benefits Office may request a medical report in processing applications for certain benefits, such as Incapacity Benefit, Disability Living Allowance /Mobility/Care Components. This information is received in a manner that is in accordance with NHS policy on the secure handling of patient/client confidential information.
- 3.2 The patient/client must be made aware that the Benefits Office may be required to make such requests and authorisation from the patient/client is an integral part of the benefit form.
- 3.3 Requests from the Benefits Office for the provision of hospital Case notes, X-rays and factual reports in respect of a patient/client's claim for benefit should be supplied without charge. Circular No. HSG 94(8) HSC 99(001)
- 3.4 It is not necessary for patients/clients or their representatives to exercise their rights under the Data Protection Act 1998 to obtain information to support a claim for benefit.
- 3.5 With regard to the provision of hospital case notes, the Benefits Office would prefer to receive photocopies of the original documents, unless otherwise specified.
- 3.6 Requests must be met within ten working days of receipt. This is to assist the Benefits Office in the timely and accurate assessment and payment of benefits.

4 Issuing Medical Certificates

- 4.1 The issuing of individual medical certificates (Med 3, white one) is the responsibility of Medical staff for 'out-patients'. (See Appendix 2)
- 4.2 The issuing of individual hospital medical certificates (MED10, yellow one) must be undertaken by the 'Designated' Patient Affairs person. (See Appendix 1)
- 4.3 As a general principle full pads of medical certificates must not be given out. However, in exceptional circumstances, the 'Designated' Patient Affairs person may issue the Home/Ward Manager a pad of medical certificates, but they must accept responsibility for the issuing and safe storage of these certificates within the set guidelines.

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- 4.4 In the above circumstances only one pad of medical certificates will be issued at any one time.
 - 4.5 A record must be kept of all certificates issued to patients/clients, including date of admission to Hospital, date certificate issued and length of time. If a duplicate is issued a note of this must also be made. 'Duplicate copy' must be written on the certificate as well.
 - 4.6 Where a hospital certificate is being filled out by a 'Designated' Patient Affairs person on behalf of a patient/client, he/she must sign the back of the form and put a tick in the box as per the Benefits Office's instructions.
 - 4.7 A record of where the certificate was sent must be kept if this is done on behalf of the patient/client.
 - 4.8 The Service Leader/Line Manager must ensure that someone is nominated to replace the 'Designated' Patient Affairs person in cases of long term sick (more than a week) and annual leave of more than one week. (This person must be inducted in the procedure as laid out in this document)

5 Storage of Medical Certificates (Med 3/5/10)

- 5.1 The ordering and secure storage of medical certificates is an administrative task and is the responsibility of the 'Designated' Patient Affairs person. Therefore, Hospital Medical Certificates MED10, Med3 and Med5 are to be ordered only by the 'Designated' Patient Affairs person.
- 5.2 These must be kept in locked drawer/cupboard and given out on request.
- 5.3 There must be a logging system in place to account for all pads of certificates issued, including the name, status and place of work of the person accepting responsibility and the date the certificates were issued.
- 5.4 With reference to Med 3 certificates, these will be stored and issued by the 'Designated' Patient Affairs person. Where this responsibility has been delegated to someone else i.e. 'ward clerk/medical secretary, he/she must accept the responsibility for the safe and secure storage. Pads of certificates must not be issued to Doctors, unless they are willing to accept the responsibility as stated above. Certificate will be issued to doctors only upon request.

6 Patient/Client on leave

- 6.1 The Benefits Office must be informed whenever a patient goes on leave so that their benefits can be adjusted accordingly. The 'Designated' Patient Affairs person must be notified of this via the ward 'daily statistics form' and the Trust 'leave forms'. 'Leave forms' must be filled in by the ward/home staff and forwarded to the Designated' Patient Affairs person.

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7. References

- 7.1 Health Service Circular 'The Provision of Patient Information by NHS Trusts to the Department of Social Security'. HSC 1999/001 Issued Sept 1999
- 7.2 NHS Management Executive HSG (94)8 'Patients receiving social security benefits.'

8. Enquiries

Any enquiries in relation to this procedure should be addressed to Elaine Gould Health Records Manager.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Sample of MED 10 'Hospital' Medical Certificate
Appendix 2 Sample of Med 3 'Out-Patient' Medical Certificate
Appendix 3 Form BR 409
Appendix 4 Form SC2 Statutory Sick pay

Related Policies and Procedures	Issue Date	Reference

Document drafted by: Elaine Gould, June Scott, Designated Patient Affairs Group Members

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