

**DATED: 08 JUNE 2016**

**FIREARMS GUIDANCE UPDATE**

Since the new firearms process went live from 1st April, the LMC and the BMA have received a very large number of concerns raised by GPs regarding fees payable for responding to the initial letter received from the police. We are therefore issuing guidance (as follows) which is consistent with BMA advice: (<http://www.bma.org.uk/support-at-work/ethics/confidentiality-and-health-records/firearms>). This states that it is up to the GP to decide whether to undertake the work with or without charging a fee.

**Fees for responding to the Police letter regarding firearms**

The BMA and LMC representatives have had discussions with the Home Office, Police and shooting representatives and have faced continual challenges that have been particularly difficult to resolve. It has been made clear that this work is not part of a GP’s contract and therefore GPs are able to charge a fee. Original proposals to improve the process was rejected by ministers and so we have had new processes implemented. There has been a clear message from GPs throughout the country that there are concerns and these have been raised with the Home Office. We will continue to seek further resolutions to the process.

**The LLR LMC recommends the following:**

**BMA revised guidance on fees**

The response to the Police’s letter indicating whether there are any concerns and that a code on the patient’s medical record as been added is not part of a GP’s contract. It is therefore up to the GP to assess how best to proceed taking on board the following factors and guidance:

1. The work involved in responding to the letter is minimal and therefore can be undertaken easily without delay and without a fee.
2. The work involved in responding to the letter requires time and resources from the practice that necessitate a fee to be charged to the patient (the Police should not be charged). We would advise GPs to seek confirmation from the patient that they are in agreement to pay a fee before undertaking the work so not to cause additional confusion or delay. If there is a delay owing to this and you are unable to respond to the letter within the 21 days, please notify the police of this.
3. No one in the practice is available (e.g. on holiday or off sick) to complete the work within 21 days. Please notify the police without delay.
4. The practice does not have the capacity to undertake the work within the 21 days. Please notify the police without delay.
5. That the GP has a conscientious objection to gun ownership and no other GP in the practice is available or able to undertake the work. Please notify the police without delay.

**ADVISE SUPPORT REPRESENT**

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Medical Committee

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