



# REQUESTS FOR MEDICAL EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF BENEFIT CLAIMS AND APPEALS

## Guidance for Sheffield GPs

GPs, as certified medical practitioners, have a statutory obligation to provide statements of incapacity to patients on their list (Fit Notes/Med3) and certain information to a healthcare professional working for the Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA) on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) when requested (ESA113/FRR2).

There has been a recent update with regard to patients who are being treated for cancer, with the guidance on FRR2 completion having been amended. Please see *DWP Medical (Factual) Reports* for more information, which can be accessed via: [http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/website/IGP217/files/DWP%20Medical%20\(Factual\)%20Reports.pdf](http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/website/IGP217/files/DWP%20Medical%20(Factual)%20Reports.pdf).

Under their NHS contract there is no requirement for GPs to provide reports or offer an opinion on incapacity for work to anyone else, such as Citizens Advice (the LMC has made it clear to representatives of advice centres that they should not involve GPs in this process). In addition, we have received assurances from the DWP that patients are not asked to request information directly from their GP. If Jobcentre Plus or the CHDA considers that further medical evidence is necessary, they will seek it, and they will be responsible for paying any fee to the doctor for providing the report.

When refusing to provide information directly to the patient, the practice would be advised to:

1. Inform the patient that mechanisms are in place for relevant information to be requested from GPs by a number of organisations involved in the process.
2. Make it clear that the refusal to provide medical evidence should not be taken as having any bearing on the case in question.

If the patient thinks that further medical evidence is necessary to support their claim or appeal, they should contact Jobcentre Plus or the CHDA, clearly stating their reasons for believing that further evidence is necessary.

Further information about the CHDA, their role in the benefit claim and appeals processes and a Q&A section for GPs can be found at [www.chdauk.co.uk](http://www.chdauk.co.uk).