HMRC Confirmation of Registration

Sheffield LMC

GUIDANCE FOR SHEFFIELD GPs

April 2020

In March 2010 the LMC issued guidance in response to HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) Child Benefit Office requests for confirmation of registration. This had raised particular concerns in relation to the release of confidential information and patient consent.

Following communications with the Child Benefit Office and the General Practitioners Committee (GPC), the LMC offered the following clarification:

- The requests ask for confirmation that a claimant and their children are registered at a particular practice and, sometimes, whether or not they have been seen recently.

- The Child Benefit Office system involves requesting the claimant and the claimant's GP to confirm registration. Therefore, if a GP does not provide the information, the claimant will be asked to provide documentary evidence of their registration.

- Provision of this information is not part of the NHS and, therefore, GPs have no obligation to perform this work. Any GP performing the work is entitled to charge HMRC a fee and the GPC's advice is for GPs to set their own fees for this work.

- On receipt of a written request from the Child Benefit Office, the practice is not in possession of the patient's consent to release any information. Therefore, it would be the practice's responsibility to obtain the necessary consent.

- If the claimant does not have the necessary documentary evidence, they are likely to bring the request for information to the practice. This removes concerns relating to not having / obtaining patient consent. However, the LMC would advise practices choosing to provide the information at the patient's request, to forward their response directly to the HMRC Child Benefit Office, thus ensuring that the information cannot be altered.

The above guidance still stands and also applies to other HMRC departments that now appear to be making similar requests for confirmation of registration, such as HMRC B&C Compliance Operations and HMRC Tax Credit Office.