

Locum Cover Reimbursement for GP Performers on Parental and Sickness leave

Introduction:

GP practices are entitled to claim reimbursement of the cost for providing GP performer cover when a GP performer is on parental leave or sickness leave. The NHS England Primary Medical Care Policy and Guidance Manual¹ (PGM) sets out in detail *The Protocol for locum cover for GP performer payments for parental and sickness leave*. The General Medical Services Contracts Statement of Financial Entitlement Directions 2023² (SFE) sets out the provisions, conditions and payments relating to reimbursement to GP practices for GP performers covering parental leave and sickness leave.

Effective 1 January 2024, NEL ICB will ensure compliance with the following arrangements in respect to reimbursing the costs of engaging locums in accordance with the PGM Protocols and the SFE.

1. Prior approval from NEL ICB before submitting locum claims

As soon as the practice is aware of the intended parental or sickness leave of a GP performer, the primary care team should be notified at nelondon.primarycareclaims@nhs.net. All applications for financial support to cover the cost of locum cover, **with the exception of unplanned sickness leave**, are subject to the prior written approval from the Commissioner.

Applications for parental and planned sickness leave submitted **more than 28 days after the performer has started their leave may not be considered** without good reason. The practice will be required to state the mitigating circumstances of their delayed application if this is to be considered.

2. Application for financial assistance towards locum costs

The following documents will be required, as a minimum, for the initial assessment:

Maternity:

- Completed Locum Cover Application Form (*Appendix 1*)
- Maternity Certificate (Mat B1 form)
- Signed copy of the contract / partnership agreement of the contractor on leave, detailing leave entitlement; and
- Where the practice is employing a fixed term GP to cover the GP on leave, please ensure a copy of the fixed term contract is shared.

Paternity:

- Completed Locum Cover Application Form (*Appendix 1*)
- Letter confirming prospective fatherhood from the applicant/GP performer;
- Letter to include confirmation dates of leave (paternity leave must be taken within 56 days of the birth of the child);
- Copy of the contract / partnership agreement detailing leave entitlement; and

¹ [NHS England Primary Medical Care Policy and Guidance Manual](#)

² [General Medical Services Statement of Financial Entitlements Directions 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

- Where the practice is employing a fixed term GP to cover the GP on leave, please ensure a copy of the fixed term contract is shared.

Adoptive:

- Completed Locum Cover Application Form (*Appendix 1*)
- Letter from the GP performer confirming the date of the adoption and the name of the main care provider, countersigned by the appropriate adoption agency.
- Copy of the contract / partnership agreement detailing leave entitlement; and
- Where the practice is employing a fixed term GP to cover the GP on leave, please ensure a copy of the fixed term contract is shared of the fixed term contract of the locum engaged to cover the adoption leave where this exists

Sickness:

- Completed Locum Cover Application Form (*Appendix 1*)
- Sick certificate covering the period of time on sick leave, including the first seven consecutive calendar days of sickness absence self-certification period;
- Copy of the contract / partnership agreement detailing leave entitlement; and
- Where the practice is employing a fixed term GP to cover the GP on leave, please ensure a copy of the fixed term contract is shared

The Application must be submitted no more than 28 days of the GP performer starting their leave.

Once received, the Primary Care Team will:

- Review the application in line with the relevant section of the SFE and the PGM Protocol to ensure that all of the necessary paperwork; and evidence is complete.
- The practice will be notified of the confirmation of the reimbursements within 28 days of the receipt of the application.

The Commissioner must be notified of any changes to the locum arrangements.

3. Maximum Locum Cover Entitlement:

- The maximum entitlement for locum cover is 52 weeks for parental leave and sickness leave.
- where the ICB agrees to make payments for any period from 27 weeks for additional parental leave cover, the commissioner will pay the lower of either 50 per cent of the weekly rate for weeks 3 to 26 or 50 per cent of the actual invoiced costs.

4. Supporting documents required following approval of application

In addition to the above, where a contractor's application has been approved and this has been confirmed the contractor will be required, as a minimum, to submit the following documents on a monthly basis:

- Completed Locum Reimbursement Invoice Organiser (LIO) (*Appendix 2*)
- locum invoices for the period or payslips for the GP employed on a fixed term basis to cover for the absent performer; and

- sickness certificate(s) covering the period (and evidence of any self-certification for the first seven consecutive calendar days of sickness absence (self-certification period)).

Please note that if a copy of the contract / partnership agreement does not state leave entitlement, the Commissioner will require a copy of the practice's relevant Human Resources (HR) policy detailing leave entitlement. If the policy does not detail entitlement, the Commissioner shall follow relevant statutory guidelines.

5. Submission of claims:

- a. Claims with all relevant documents should be submitted monthly within 14 days of the end of the month during which the costs were incurred no later than 28 days from the end of the month when the cost was incurred to guarantee validation of the claim.
- b. completed LIO/ Appendix 1 with required evidenced invoices/ payslips are to be submitted to the claims team by the 10th of the month for payment in the next payment schedule i.e. any completed LIO/ Appendix 1 with required evidences sent by 10th January which has been validated, payment will be processed in January payment schedule to be paid in February.
- c. If, for exceptional reasons, a monthly claim is not submitted for an eligible claim, the Commissioner must be advised of this in writing detailing the mitigating circumstances as soon as possible and, in any event, not later than one calendar month later than the normal date of claim submission.
- d. Any alternative frequency for submitting claims has to be agreed with prior approval from the Commissioner.
- e. If by prior agreement, the claim frequency is not monthly, and a claim is not submitted, the Commissioner must be advised of this as soon as possible and in any event not later than 14 days after the normal date of claim submission.
- f. All claims must be made on the form set out in Appendix 1 and must include copies of the supporting documentation.
- g. Subject to the claim being validated, the payment will be processed for reimbursement on the next available monthly payment run.
- h. Any changes to the locum arrangements must be notified to the Primary Care Contract team by emailing at nelondon.primarycareclaims@nhs.net.

6. Dispute Resolution

Any dispute between the Commissioner and a contractor arising out of, or in connection with Locum reimbursement payments, where the practice is eligible for locum reimbursement, is to be resolved under the local dispute resolution procedures

Where a practice has met all the requirements in relation to the full and prompt submission of locum reimbursement claims and the Commissioner has failed to make the relevant payments within the required timeframe or explain the reasons for the delay, the practice is entitled to invoke the NEL Local Dispute Resolution Procedure (*Appendix 3*)

Appendix 1



NEL_Locum_Reimbursement_Applicator

Appendix 2



Locum_Reimbursement_Invoice Organiser

Appendix 3



NHS NEL LOCAL
DISPUTE RESOLUTION