



## **Guidance for Solicitors on Advising Accident Victims to Visit GPs in Personal Injury Cases**

The Government has expressed concern at the burden placed on the resources of general medical practitioners when accident victims are advised to visit their GP by solicitors where no treatment or diagnosis is required but merely a note on the record of the injuries sustained. This problem was highlighted in the Cabinet Office report, Making a Difference: Reducing GP Paperwork published in March 2001 and a commitment was given to issue best practice guidance.

The following guidance for best practice has been issued and is aimed at ensuring that patients only visit their GP when appropriate, in an effort to minimise the burden on the limited resources of GPs.

1. Solicitors should not automatically advise all accident victims to visit their GP following an accident unless they need diagnosis or treatment.
2. It is not appropriate to advise accident victims to see their GP for no other reason than to have minor injuries recorded, for example, where the victim has minor cuts and scratches. This service is not provided by the NHS.
3. Where no diagnosis or treatment is sought but the solicitor considers that a record of the injuries is advisable, for evidential purposes, other methods of recording the injuries should be considered first, for example:
  - (i) taking photos where the injuries are visible;
  - (ii) the solicitor making a detailed note of the apparent injuries;
  - (iii) referral to a forensic medical examiner or other appropriately trained doctor who has indicated that they are willing to provide this specialist service.
4. Solicitors should consider the circumstances of each case and use their judgement about whether to advise a visit to a GP.

**This guidance has the support of the following organisations:-**

