

Top Tips for Employing Locums

Before absence

1. Check the Medical Council register to ensure the locum has current registration with the Irish Medical Council.
2. Satisfy yourself that the locum is suitably competent and adequately qualified for GP work. Where the locum is not well known to you, request an up-to-date reference. A telephone reference may be more practical than a written reference.
3. Ask the locum GP for verification of identity, eg, sight of passport. If from overseas, confirm the locum's right to work in Ireland.
4. It is a condition of your policy of insurance that you obtain evidence that any locum you employ has adequate medical indemnity cover to work as a GP locum and for the number of weekly sessions required.
5. Check the locum has been Garda vetted. It is noted that the out-of-hours co-operatives undertake a Garda vetting check on all new locums and such checks should also be carried out by individual GPs where practical.
6. Keep documentation of all the above in the locum's personnel file.

During absence

7. Give the locum a comprehensive induction including;
 - i. An up-to-date 'Induction Sheet' with general information such as local referral guidelines, methods of reviewing and requesting investigations, location of emergency equipment, location of panic buttons/ emergency call system, emergency numbers, details of practice protocols etc as a quick reference sheet for the locum.
 - ii. Introduce the locum to all staff and provide a list of staff members' names, roles and contact details – more important than you think!
 - iii. Ensure all locums have a personalised log-in on your practice software for consultations, not just as "locum" or under anyone else's log-in.
 - iv. Ensure you or your practice manager spend some time familiarising the locum with your software system, particularly if they have not previously used that system.
 - v. Comfort breaks – location of bathrooms, where to make tea / coffee etc!
8. It is best practice to have a handover of any critical patients to the locum before they begin and from the locum as their locum period ends.

After absence

9. Retain a log of all locums employed by you including their full contact details, indemnity details and the dates of locums carried out at the practice.
10. Consider holding a brief 'exit interview' with the locum. Enquire about any problems during their tenure, any patients they have concerns about who would benefit from early review, and in particular any critical or urgent referrals they made, which should be followed up in order to ensure safe continuity of care.

The contents of this publication are indicative of current developments and contain guidance on general medico legal queries. It does not constitute and should not be relied upon as definitive legal, clinical or other advice and if you have any specific queries, please contact Medisec for advice.