Fitness to Fly Letters

Fitness to Fly certificates do not form part of our NHS General Medical Services (GMS) contract and our GPs are therefore under no contractual obligation to provide them.

The British Medical Association (BMA) advises caution in this area, as there can be significant medico-legal implications. Doctors are only able to comment on information recorded in the patient's notes and on their current health status. They cannot confirm future fitness (e.g. "fit for the duration of a holiday"), as this may be misleading and expose the doctor to legal risk.

Fitness to fly assessments can also be complex, often requiring specialist training and knowledge, particularly for patients with chronic health conditions or during pregnancy. GPs are not trained in aviation medicine, are not indemnified for providing such certification, and do not usually have access to all relevant specialist records (e.g. maternity notes). For these reasons **Om and Shiva Medical Centre GPs do not issue Fitness to Fly letters or certificates.**

We appreciate that this may be inconvenient, but our primary responsibility is to ensure safe and appropriate medical care. Airlines commonly require confirmation that a passenger's condition is stable, including details of:

- the nature, severity, and stability of the condition,
- medication being taken, and
- any relevant information regarding mobility.

Specialist private providers are available who can carry out the necessary assessment and provide certification.

Airline Guidance

Some airlines require a doctor's certificate confirming the stage of pregnancy and that the individual is fit to fly. While a "doctor" may include a GP, it also includes hospital specialists such as obstetricians, who are often better placed to provide this information. Pregnant women may therefore obtain the required paperwork from their midwife or obstetric team. Please note that the GPs at Om and Shiva Medical Centre do not provide fit to fly certificates for pregnant women.

The UK Civil Aviation Authority states that most airlines have medical advisors who make the final decision on whether a passenger is fit to travel. For further information, please refer to their health guidance here: CAA – Health Guidelines for Air Travel.