



Dear Patient,

Re: COVID-19 and requests for GP 'Fit Note

The recent increase in COVID-19 infections and return of Lockdown has resulted in many patients seeking GP Fit Notes in connection with Isolating and post isolation sickness. This guide has been compiled to help you and your employer with the current position on Covid-19 related absences from work.

The Sefton LMC is the statutory body which advises and represents all GPs in the Borough of Sefton on regulations etc applying General Practices and their patients .

In the majority of cases, you do not need to ask your GP for a Fit Note or 'Sick note' for periods of absence due to COVID-19 Coronavirus.

The NHS website (linked below) explains that employees do not need to ask their GP for a fit note if they are off work because of coronavirus. Instead, they can get an isolation note to send to their employer as proof they need to stay at home.

www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test

[If you have any of the coronavirus symptoms listed below](#), current NHS advice is to get a test and stay at home.

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough
- A loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

This is taken directly from the national guidance in relation to COVID-19 only.

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/

Employers may require fit notes for non-COVID-19 health conditions. NHS England has asked that employers exercise discretion in asking for medical evidence to support periods of sickness absence at this time. General practices will continue to ensure that the healthcare needs of their patients are at the forefront of their efforts during this period.

Guidance on specific circumstances

Below is a breakdown of potential requests for fit notes, advice, and outcomes. You might find it helpful to give this letter to your employer to help them to determine the right course of action for your circumstances.

| Issue | Advice | Outcome |
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| <p>1. You have symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19 and must self-isolate for <i>at least 10 days</i></p> <p>N. B – You will usually need to self-isolate for 14 days if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • someone you live with has symptoms or tested positive • someone in your support bubble has symptoms or tested positive • you have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace | <p>Seek clinical guidance 111.nhs.uk/covid-19</p> <p>Follow advice www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/ www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/ www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/</p> | <p>You do not need to provide a ‘fit note’ to your employer.</p> <p>Use isolation note 111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/</p> |
| <p>2. Someone you live with has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive and must self-isolate for 14 days.</p> | <p>Seek clinical guidance 111.nhs.uk/covid-19</p> <p>Follow advice www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/</p> | <p>You do not need to provide a ‘fit note’ to your employer.</p> <p>Use isolation note 111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/</p> |
| <p>3. Someone in your support bubble has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive. Must follow advice and self-isolate for 14 days if both guidance criteria apply.</p> | <p>Seek clinical guidance: 111.nhs.uk/covid-19</p> <p>Follow advice www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/</p> | <p>You do not need to provide a ‘fit note’ to your employer.</p> <p>Use isolation note 111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/</p> |
| <p>4. You have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 App and must self-isolate for 14 days.</p> | <p>Seek clinical guidance: 111.nhs.uk/covid-19</p> <p>Follow advice: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/</p> | <p>You do not need to provide a ‘fit note’ to your employer.</p> <p>Use isolation note 111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/</p> |

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| <p>5. You have symptoms/have tested positive for COVID-19 and continue to be unwell with COVID-19 symptoms after the 14-day isolation period.</p> | <p>Seek clinical guidance: 111.nhs.uk/covid-19</p> <p>Follow advice: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/</p> | <p>You do not need to provide a 'fit note' to your employer.</p> <p><u>Request extension to isolation note or further isolation note</u> 111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/</p> |
| <p>6. You have previously tested positive for COVID-19. You have isolated and no longer have symptoms of COVID-19 but remain unwell and feel you are unfit to work.</p> | <p>Seek clinical guidance: 111.nhs.uk/covid-19</p> <p>Follow guidance: www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/caring-carers-and-long-term-conditions/can-i-get-a-fit-note-without-seeing-my-gp/ www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/caring-carers-and-long-term-conditions/when-do-i-need-a-fit-note/</p> | <p>In the first instance, liaise with your employer to determine whether a fit note is required. If so, contact your GP for a 'fit note'. Employers may require fit notes for non-COVID-19 health conditions if you are unfit for work.</p> <p>If you have been in hospital, a hospital doctor should give you a fit note, as well as a certificate that you have been an inpatient.</p> |
| <p>7. You are "high-risk" from coronavirus (clinically extremely vulnerable)</p> | <p>Follow guidance: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/advice-for-people-at-high-risk/ www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19</p> | <p>You should receive a letter from the UK government to provide to your employer.</p> <p>You do not need to provide a 'fit note' to your employer.</p> |
| <p>8. You lives with someone who is identified as "high risk" from coronavirus (clinically extremely vulnerable)</p> | <p>Follow guidance: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/advice-for-people-at-high-risk/ www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19</p> | <p>You do not need to provide a 'fit note' to your employer.</p> |

You might find the additional information available here to be helpful-

- www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19
- www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/
- www.gov.uk/coronavirus/worker-support
- www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus
- www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/

In the above we acknowledge the extant work of Notts LMC on which we have drawn.

Sefton Local Medical Committee

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