

# SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

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23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

Re: **Coronavirus Pandemic and Requests for Doctor's Note (The Med3 'Fit Note')**

Dear Patient

In view of the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, GP practices are experiencing a significant increase in the number of requests for Fit Notes from patients, which are not required in several situations.

South Staffordshire Local Medical Committee has therefore prepared this explanatory note on behalf of your practice as the statutory body that advises and supports all GPs and practice teams across South Staffordshire.

**Requests for certification of absence from the workplace may fall into five categories:**

1. **Personally affected - so isolating for seven days**

According to government regulations, patients can and must self-certify for the first seven days, if they are unfit for work. **They do not need to contact their GP for a note.**

2. **Personally affected and remaining unwell for over seven days**

If patients remain unwell and unfit to work after seven days, the current advice is to visit <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/> to obtain an **Isolation Note** after going through an online assessment tool. **They do not need to contact their GP.**

3. **Household contact affected - so isolating for fourteen days as per Government advice**

Again, patients should visit <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/> to obtain an **Isolation Note** that they can then forward to their employer. **They do not need to contact their GP.**

4. **At risk groups - following government advice**

GPs cannot and are not the gatekeeper of the statutory sick pay system. Employers are responsible for putting in place arrangements for home/remote working where this is possible. Where it is not, the employee may self-certify and return to work following the relevant absence which their employer may authorise as per government advice. Where they do become unwell during or after this time, point 1 and 2 applies. **If a patient in a high-risk group has received a letter starting this week from the NHS advising isolation for 12 weeks, then a copy of that letter can be provided to their employer as evidence. They do not need to contact their GP.**

**Note for Employer:** As per the current [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) S13 Guidance for Employers it should be noted that by law, medical evidence is not required for the first 7 days of sickness. After 7 days, it is for the employer to determine what evidence they require, if any, from the employee. This does not need to be a fit note (MED3) issued by a GP or any other doctor. "Your employee will be advised to isolate themselves and not to work in contact with other people by NHS 111 or Public Health England if they are a carrier of, or have been in contact with, an infectious or contagious disease, such as Covid-19. "We strongly suggest that employers use their discretion around the need for medical evidence for a period of absence where an employee is advised to stay at home due to suspected Covid-19, in accordance with the public health advice being issued by the government.

5. **Those in full time education.**

There is no NHS requirement for GPs to issue certification to schools or colleges to confirm absence. These organisations must work with parents and students to ensure that any absence is appropriately recorded, obviating the need for a 'doctor's note'. **They do not need to contact their GP.**

Our GPs have a responsibility to prioritise the assessment and management of the needs of their patients at this challenging time. We thank you for your support in helping us achieve this.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Gulshan Kaul FRCGP**  
Secretary  
South Staffordshire LMC