

Statement of Fitness for Work

Summary from “A Guide for Employers”

From 6 April 2010 Statements of Fitness for Work, informally known as “Fit Notes”, replaced Medical Statements, known as “Sick Notes”. Sick Notes were used by employers as evidence that an employee could not work for sick pay purposes.

Many people with health conditions can, with some basic support from their employer, work as they recover from their condition. This helps the individual because for many people work can help recovery and also benefits the employer by reducing sickness absence.

Under the Sick Note system, doctors could only advise their patients on whether their health condition meant that they should or should not work. As a result many people who could benefit from support whilst in work, would be advised that they could not work. Their employers would not have had the opportunity to consider how they could help them achieve an earlier return to work.

To help more people get the support they need to get back to work, the new Fit Note system will mean that doctors can advise that your employee is either:

- unfit for work; or
- may be fit for work.

A doctor will give a “may be fit for work” Statement if they think that their patient’s health condition may allow them to work if they get suitable support from their employer.

If an employee is too ill to work the doctor will advise this just as they did with the Sick Note.

The Fit Note system is not about trying to get people back to work before they are ready, but about removing the challenges to them returning. It is about employers and employees working together and being open and honest. In general, work is good for health and the vast majority of employees place a far greater value on it than just their pay. By working together to find an arrangement that suits both parties, both the employer and the employee will benefit.

A copy of the full Guide for Employers can be found on www.dwp.gov.uk/fitnote