FIT NOTE GUIDANCE [SUMMARY]

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Background

The Fit Note was introduced nationally on the 6th April 2010 following Dame Carol Blacks report of 2008 when an electronic fit note was recommended. However, the system introduced is paper based and substitutes the previous ‘all or none’ declaration of fitness to work and allows consideration of partial or adapted work being undertaken. Those familiar with occupational health reports will already be familiar with the concepts of phased returns, adjusted hours, adaptations and amendments of duties.

The purpose of the Fit Note is to facilitate earlier engagement with rehabilitation processes that are deemed to be of benefit to individuals and this includes the earliest practical return to work. There are also clear benefits for the employer but is accompanied with responsibility to consider any recommendations made and to justify those that cannot be met.

The Fit Note is the replacement of the ‘Sick note’ and remains designated as Form Med 3. See Sample Fit Note as an example.

Form Med 10 notifying of hospital period as inpatient and MatB1 for maternity benefit remain. The other forms cease.
The Fit Note

- Can only be completed by a Doctor
- Is advice to the patient [employee]
- It is not binding on the employer
- Statutory Sick Pay is unaffected.

Referral to OHS

This should be undertaken when –

1. It is recommended by the GP
2. The manager is unsure of how to proceed
3. Work factors may/are a factor for ill-health
4. Disagreement exists between any of the triad: GP, employee, and employer.

Referral may take the form of verbal, written communication or a request to see the employee as under the existing ill-health referral process.

Management responsibility

1. Support the reduction in barriers to a return to work
2. Undertake a risk assessment on returning to work
3. Agree the return to work programme and monitor the process, reviewing the risk assessment as needed.
4. Be aware of any regulations that may apply to the employee and their workplace. This is not a responsibility of the GP and does not have to be considered when they give the generic advice required of the Fit Note.

Resources

Internal:

Human Resources
Occupational Health Service
Unions

External:

http://www.tuc.org.uk/extras/fitnote.pdf