



# Managing Attendance Policy - Annex 5: Statement of Fitness for Work or "Fit Note" Guidance for Headteachers and Line Managers

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Policy reviewed and updated: 10/2023  
Scheduled date of next review: 09/2025

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## Update Information

This model policy will be subject to ongoing review and may be amended prior to the scheduled date of the next review in order to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or best practice (where appropriate).

## 1. Guidance for Headteachers and Line Managers

From July 2022 the Department for Work and Pensions updated the law for the statement of fitness for work, i.e. the "fit note", so that it can now be issued by nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists and physiotherapists in addition to doctors (hereafter referred to as "healthcare professionals"). This means that employees may be issued a fit note by health professionals other than a doctor as long as they are discussing the employee's fitness to work. These health professionals should be treating the employee through NHS services.

A new version of the fit note is also now in circulation (see [Appendix 1](#)). There will be a period when both the new and previous version of the fit notes are legally valid.

### 1.1 Getting a Fit Note

The healthcare professional will only issue the employee with a fit note if their health condition affects their fitness for work.

Fit notes are not required:

- If the employee is fit for work
- If the employee is off sick for 7 calendar days or less, because the employee can self-certify for this period. The fit note will still be required as evidence that an employee cannot work due to injury or illness from the eighth day of sickness absence.

### 1.2 Rules of the Fit Note

The fit note should be from the healthcare professional who is treating the employee. The healthcare professional can also issue a fit note based on a written report from another healthcare professional.

Fit notes can be handwritten, computer-generated and printed out or computer-generated and sent digitally to the employee. Duplicate fit notes can only be issued if the original has been lost.

### 1.3 Assessment of Fitness to Work

The fit note should state the health condition the employee is suffering from.

The fit note enables the healthcare professional to indicate whether the employee:

- Is not fit for work
- May be fit for work taking account of the following advice.

The healthcare professional will discuss with the employee how their health affects what they can do at work or the employee can raise this themselves. The healthcare professional will think about the employee's fitness for work in general rather than just their current job. Employees will not automatically be assessed as unfit for work just because they have a health condition. Employees should ask the healthcare professional to give practical advice in the fit note about what the employee can do at work (without this impacting on their medical condition), rather than simply record a health condition or the symptoms. The employee should then discuss this advice with their line manager, to see if any changes can be made to assist their return to work.

**NB:** Employees do not always need to be fully recovered to go back to work, and in fact it can often help their recovery if they go back to work as soon as they are able to.

The tick boxes in section 4 of the form enable the healthcare professional to indicate the kind of general adaptations that might help the employee to return to work. This is not binding. Adaptations include:

- A phased return to work: a gradual increase in work duties or hours
- Altered hours: changing employee's work times or total hours
- Amended duties: changing employee's work duties
- Workplace adaptations: changing aspects of employee's workplace. If the school cannot reasonably make any changes, they do not have to.

If, after having taken advice, it is not possible to put in place the suggested alterations, the fit note should be used as if the healthcare professional had advised the employee to be "not fit for work". The employee does not need to return to their healthcare professional for a new statement to confirm this until the duration of the existing statement has elapsed.

Where the "fit note" indicates that the employee "may be fit for work..." and the suggested alterations **do** include a phased return in respect of hours worked, the school should consider the following advice:

- Refer the employee to Occupational Health before any phased return is put in place. The referral form should be accompanied by the employee's job description and a copy of the fit note together with a detailed explanation of the implications of the healthcare professional's advice and the management issues in response to this advice.
- Any phased return will be in accordance with advice from Occupational Health, which will have taken into account the healthcare professional's advice given to the employee on the fit note.
- The terms and conditions of the phased return will be as detailed in the Managing Attendance Policy and Annex 4 – Guidance on Phased Returns to Work.

Section 5 of the fit note should confirm the dates the employee is signed off from work. This will either be from the date of the assessment, or between a particular start and end date. These dates are inclusive (so a fit note dated from 02 March to 10 March will no longer apply from 11 March onwards). This section may cover a previous period if the healthcare professional thinks that the employee's condition has affected their fitness for work before the assessment.

### 1.4 Issuer's Details

This section has changed from the GP's details to the issuer's details to cover the different healthcare professional who can now issue a fit note for employees.

The fit note must include the issuer's name and profession and the address of the medical practice. If the fit note does not include these details it is not valid and the school could reject it. The requirement for the form to be signed in ink has been removed and replaced by the issuer's name and profession.

The changes to the fit note will not impact on the present arrangements for payment of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and occupational sick pay.

For further information about fit notes, please visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

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## 2. Appendix 1 - Sample Statement of Fitness for Work ('Fit Note')

**Statement of Fitness for Work**  
**For social security or Statutory Sick Pay**

Patient's name

1 I assessed your case on:

2 and, because of the following condition(s):

3 I advise you that:  you are not fit for work.  
 you may be fit for work taking account of the following advice:

4 If available, and with your employer's agreement, you may benefit from:  
 a phased return to work  amended duties  
 altered hours  workplace adaptations  
Comments, including functional effects of your condition(s):

5 This will be the case for   
or from  to

6 I will/will not need to assess your fitness for work again at the end of this period.  
*(Please delete as applicable)*

7 Issuer's name

8 Issuer's profession

9 Date of statement

Issuer's address

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**27 Oct 2023**

Annex has been reviewed and refreshed. Refer to the Schedule of Amendments for full detail. [Schedule of amendments](#)

**28 Jun 2021**

Annex has been reviewed and refreshed. Refer to the Schedule of Amendments for full detail. [Schedule of amendments](#)