



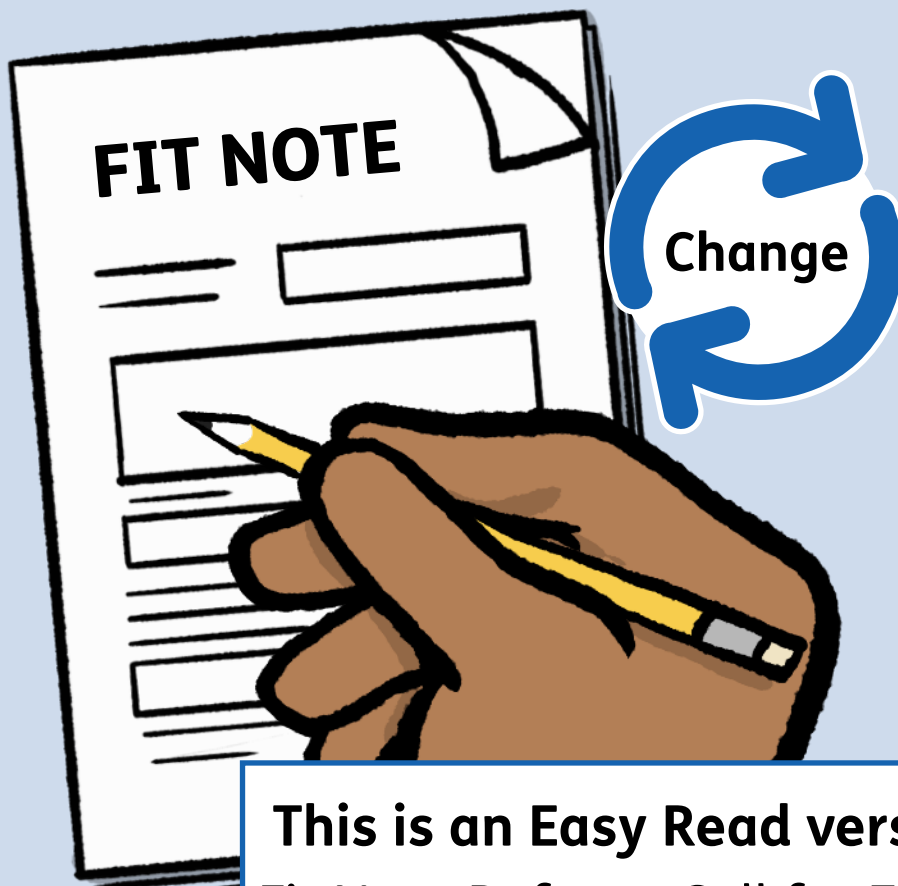
HM Government



Easy  
Read

# Changes to fit notes

What do you think?



**This is an Easy Read version of:**  
Fit Note Reform: Call for Evidence

# Easy Read



This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



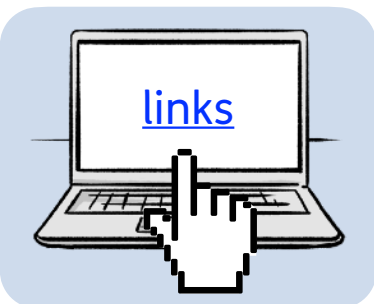
This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the booklet.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.

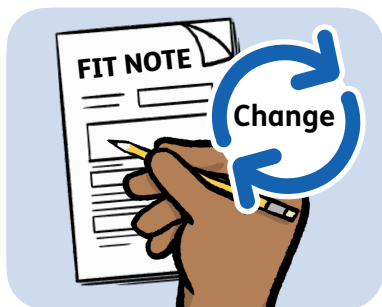


[Blue and underlined](#) words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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# About this booklet



The government is suggesting making changes to the way **fit notes** are issued in England.



A **fit note** is an official document from a healthcare professional, like a doctor, that says whether you are well enough to work. They used to be called 'sick notes'.



You need to get a fit note if you are off work for a while, usually more than 7 days.



We want to try a new approach to fit notes that will be better for employers, employees and healthcare professionals.



Before we make a decision, we want to know what you think.

Please read this booklet and answer the questions by Monday 8 July 2024.

# A new approach



We want local doctors to be able to spend more time giving care to their patients, and less time issuing fit notes.



We are suggesting that people who need a fit note would go to another member of staff from their local NHS, instead of their doctor.



The NHS member of staff would be specially trained to talk about the person's health and how it affects their ability to work.



They would give the person help and advice to get back to work with the right support from their employer.

If people had the right help and advice and the right support from their employer, they would be:



- More likely to go back to work sooner.

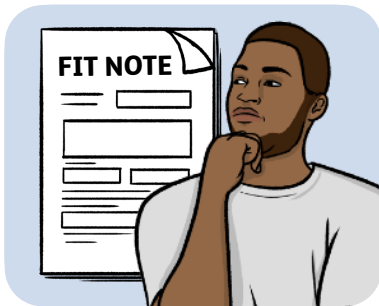


- Less likely to be off work in the future.

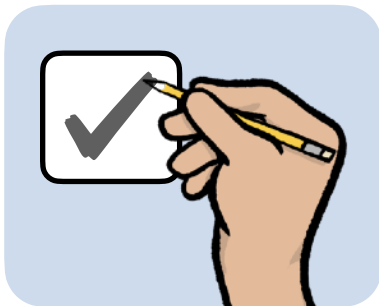


The NHS member of staff would also be able to issue a fit note if the person needed time off work.

# Questions



We want to know what you think, and hear about your experience with fit notes.



Please answer the questions that start on the next page.



You do not have to answer all of the questions if you do not want to.



We follow the law about keeping your answers safe and private.



# About you

**Question 1:** Which of these options best describes you?

*Please tick one box.*

- ☐ I have used a fit note for time off work
- ☐ I work for a large company that employs lots of people
- ☐ I work for a smaller company that employs a few people
- ☐ I am a healthcare professional
- ☐ I work for a local council, health or care service
- ☐ I am an academic

*There are more options on the next page.*



☐ I am part of an organisation that will be affected by changes to fit notes

☐ Other



**Question 2:** If you are answering for an organisation, what is its name?



**Question 3:** If you are a healthcare professional, which of these do you work in?

*Please tick one box.*

☐ Primary care

☐ Secondary care

☐ Community or social care

☐ Other

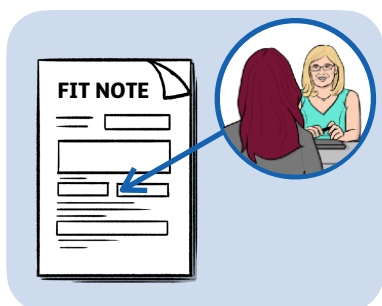
# The way fit notes are issued now



At the moment, people ask for a fit note from a healthcare professional, like their local doctor.



But many healthcare professionals are not specially trained to talk about a person's health and how it affects their ability to work.



The healthcare professional can add more information to the fit note about how the employer can support the person back to work.



The healthcare professional can say that the person 'may be fit for work' if the employer follows the advice given on the fit note.

**6**  
**100**

But this only happens with around 6 in every 100 fit notes that are issued.



**Question 4:** How well do you think the way fit notes are issued is working at the moment?

*Please tick one box.*

Vey  
well

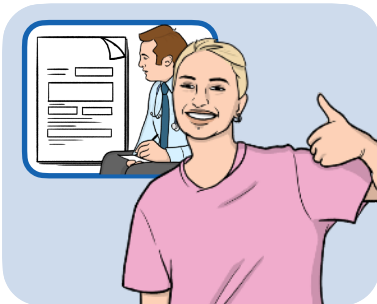
Well

Neither

Badly

Very  
badly

Not  
sure

☐☐☐☐☐☐

**Question 5:** What works well with the way fit notes are issued now, to support people's work and health needs?

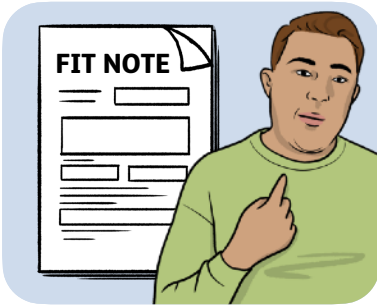
*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 6:** What do you think could be better about the way fit notes are issued now, to support people's work and health needs?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*

# People with experience of using fit notes

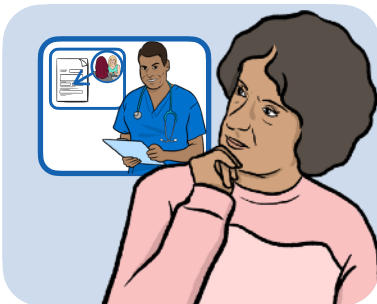


Please answer these questions if you have experience using a fit note for time off work.

## May be fit for work



Healthcare professionals can say that a person 'may be fit for work' if the employer follows the advice on the fit note to support the person back to work.



**Question 7:** How useful is the 'may be fit for work' option on fit notes, to support people's work and health needs?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



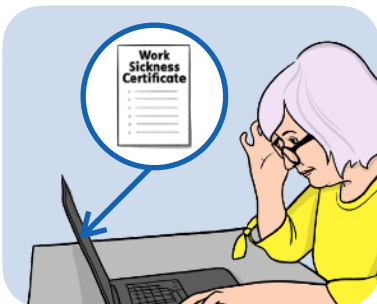
**Question 8:** On a fit note that says a person 'may be fit for work', what other information could be included to help the person go back to work?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*

## Work sickness certificates



**Work sickness certificates** are documents that can be used instead of a fit note, for time off work.



Instead of getting a fit note from a local doctor, some people pay for a work sickness certificate online, from a private healthcare provider.



**Question 9:** Have you ever paid for a work sickness certificate online, from a private healthcare provider?

*Please tick one box.*

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Not sure



**Question 10:** What made you decide to buy a work sickness certificate online?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 11:** Can you tell us what it was like to buy a work sickness certificate online?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 12:** If the work sickness certificate gave you advice to support you going back to work, how useful was the advice?

*Please tick one box.*

Very  
useful

Useful

Neither

Not very  
useful

Not  
useful  
at all

Not  
sure

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐






**Question 13:** Please tell us if you found the advice given in the work sickness certificate useful or not.

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 14:** Was the work sickness certificate accepted by your employer?

*Please tick one box.*

☐

Yes

☐

No

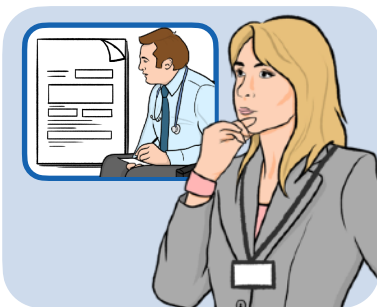
☐

Not sure

# Employers' experience



Please answer these questions if you have experience with fit notes as an employer.



**Question 15:** How well do you think the way fit notes are issued is meeting employers' needs at the moment?

*Please tick one box.*

Vey  
well

Well

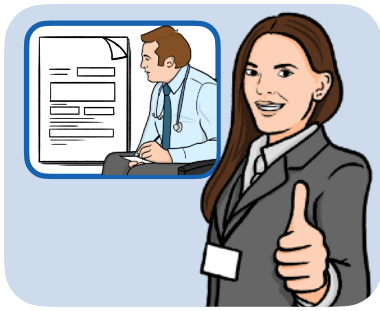
Neither

Badly

Very  
badly

Not  
sure

☐☐☐☐☐☐



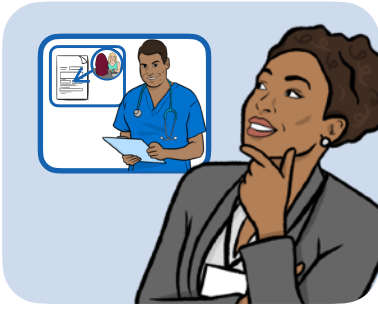
**Question 16:** What works well with the way fit notes are issued now, for employers?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 17:** What could be better about the way fit notes are issued now, to meet employers' needs?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 18:** On a fit note that says a person ‘may be fit for work’, what other information could be included to help employers support people back to work?  
*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 19:** What do you think employers need to help them talk to employees about their health and ability to work?  
*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 20:** Has an employee ever given you a work sickness certificate, from a private healthcare provider?

*Please tick one box.*

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Not sure



**Question 21:** What was it like to be given a work sickness certificate?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 22:** If the work sickness certificate gave advice for you to support the person back to work, how useful was the advice?

*Please tick one box.*

Vey  
useful

Useful

Neither

Not very  
useful

Not  
useful  
at all

Not  
sure

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐


**Question 23:** Please tell us if you found the advice useful or not.

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*

# Healthcare professionals' experience



Please answer these questions if you have experience issuing fit notes as a healthcare professional.



**Question 24:** How much do you agree or disagree that issuing fit notes is a good use of local doctors' time?

*Please tick one box.*

Agree  
a lot

Agree

Neither

Disagree

Disagree  
a lot

Not  
sure

☐☐☐☐☐☐



**Question 25:** Please tell us why you agree or disagree with fit notes being a good use of local doctors' time.

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 26:** What can be done to improve the way fit notes are issued, to help healthcare professionals give more health and work support?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*





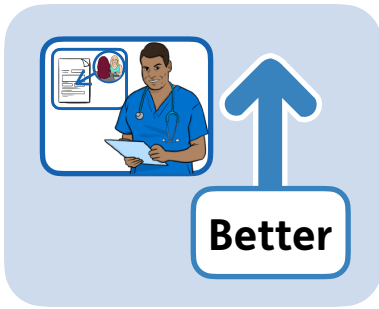
**Question 27:** What would help healthcare professionals to talk to people about their health and how it affects their ability to work?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 28:** What makes it harder for healthcare professionals to talk to people about their health and how it affects their ability to work?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 29:** What would help healthcare professionals to give better advice in fit notes where they say a person ‘may be fit for work’?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 30:** What makes it harder for healthcare professionals to give better advice in fit notes where they say a person ‘may be fit for work’?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 31:** What could the government do to support healthcare professionals to talk to people about their health and ability to work?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 32:** Which people do you think would benefit most from talking to them about their health and ability to work?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 33:** How would we identify those people who you think would benefit most from talking to them about their health and ability to work?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 34:** What do you think is good or bad about people paying for work sickness certificates online, from a private healthcare provider?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*

# Collecting information



These questions are for everyone to answer.



**Question 35:** What knowledge, skills and support would healthcare professionals need to fully understand how someone's health affects their ability to work?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



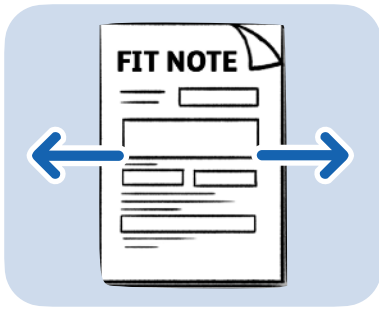
**Question 36:** What knowledge, skills and support would specially trained members of staff need to fully understand how someone's health affects their ability to work?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 37:** How could we use phone and online systems to collect information to support people back to work?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 38:** How could fit notes be better linked to other forms of work and health support, like **rehabilitation**, **occupational health**, and employment support?



**Rehabilitation** is helping people recover after an injury or illness.



**Occupational health** is keeping people safe and healthy at work to stop injuries and illnesses.

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 39:** What could be done to encourage healthcare professionals to give out more ‘**may be fit for work**’ fit notes?

‘**May be fit for work**’ fit notes are given to people when being in work might be the best thing for them.

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*





**Question 40:** Can you give any examples of where fit notes have worked well in supporting people to work and stay in work?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*



**Question 41:** Is there anything else you would like to tell us about fit notes and the way they are issued?

*Please write your answer in up to 300 words.*

# Thank you



Thank you for answering the questions.

We need your answers back by  
Monday 8 July 2024.

Please send your answers back by:



- Post:  
The Fit Note Team  
Department for Work and Pensions  
Caxton House  
Tothill Street  
London  
SW1H 9NA



- Email: [fitnote.team@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:fitnote.team@dwp.gov.uk)



We will have another survey later in the  
year about new rules for issuing fit  
notes.

This Easy Read booklet was produced by [easy-read-online.co.uk](http://easy-read-online.co.uk)