

GDL21

Guidelines for Issuing Medical Fit Notes (Med3 and Med 10)

Contents:

Number	Heading	Page
1.0	Procedure Statement	2
2.0	Accountabilities	2
3.0	Procedure/Guidelines/details/Actions	3
4.0	Discharge Check list and Discharge Summaries	3
5.0	Equipment	4
	Ordering of Med 3/Med 10 forms	4
	Storage of Med 3/Med 10 forms	4
	Quick Reference Guide	4
6.0	Training for Health Care Professional	4/5
7.0	Med3 Fit note Guidance indicative recovery times	6
8.0	Financial Risk Assessment	7
9.0	Equality Impact Assessment	7
10.0	Maintenance – document control	7
11.0	Communication and Training	7
12.0	Audit Process	8
13.0	References	8

Attachments:

[Attachment 1: Fit Note Top Tips for Clinicians](#)

[Attachment 2: Fit Notes Poster](#)

1.0 Procedure Statement (Purpose / Objectives of the Procedure)

Writing a Fitness to work certificate is a shared responsibility for patients that are admitted into hospital, having elective/urgent surgery, outpatient treatment and require a period of absence from work that is more than 7 days to recover from the illness.

It is important that fit notes are issued to patients in a way which is convenient for them, and which is efficient in how clinical staff time is used. The preferred way of issuing fit notes is electronically as this reduces the administrative burden on clinicians and can assist in speed of access for patients. Digital fit notes have been implemented in primary care Electronic Patient Record (EPR) systems for some time. DWP is working to implement fit notes within secondary care EPR systems, but for now trusts should focus on ensuring paper fit notes are issued when appropriate with the aim to move to an electronic solution.

Fit notes, also known as Med3/M10 are a form of medical evidence that can allow an individual to access health related benefits or evidence eligibility for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). Healthcare providers are required to issue fit notes free of charge to NHS patients for whom they provide clinical care.

It is a common myth that in secondary care fit notes can only be issued for a maximum of defined period such as 2 weeks – fit notes can be issued for as long as a clinician sees fit up to 12 weeks.

2.0 Accountabilities

All Health Care Professional staff who are involved with the admission and discharging process must routinely ask patients about the requirements of a fit note and not refer them to primary care.

The duty to provide a fit note rest with the Healthcare Professional who at the time has clinical responsibility. The need for a fit note following delivery of a secondary care service must be issued by the secondary care provider (NHS Standard Contract 22/23, section 11.12) and not refer the patient to primary care. Currently this is done via paper pads of fit notes.

Fitness to work certificates are:

- A legal document should only contain information that is factual
- Issued only with discussion with the patient about their occupation which may impact on the time required off
- Can be issued on discharge from hospital
- Patient attending Outpatient clinic /review appointment
- This can cover a fully anticipated recovery period in line with recommendations/guidance
- You must document the signing of a medical certificate in the patients notes and discharge summary – this should include the diagnosis, and the exact period of times signed for

3.0 Guidelines Detail

All patients as part of the admission and discharge process should discuss the recovery support required on admission and discharge.

The Senior Clinician e.g. Doctor, Nurse is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the patient understands the recovery timescales
- To identify patients that may require a Med3/Med 10 Fit note, for their employer or as part of the Department of Works and Pensions to access benefits.
- If a patient asks for a fit note, then this must be escalated to the appropriate clinician in the work area if not able to issue a Med3/Med 10 fit note.
- Med 10 are Hospital in-patient certificates (including claims for benefits) and to be issued for Social Security and Statutory Sick pay purposes only. Med 10 is issued for when the patient is not fit for work and the date the person stopped being an inpatient is required.
- Med3 fit notes are issued on discharge and must be issued for the full duration of the recovery time scale advised on discharge. A legal maximum of up to 3 months may be advised following inpatient treatment.
- Advice/sign posting on discharge to primary care for any further follow up support/assessment.
- The clinician assessing the patient must review the medical history, issue the fit note and record the information on the patient records and discharge summaries.
- The Med3/Med10 forms, paper forms must be filled in ink and the stamp of the hospital and address entered in the space provided.
- For guidance on completing the forms see the inside cover of the pad. It is important to read and follow the instructions on the pads/form

4.0 Discharge Check list and Discharge summaries

It is good practice for clinics or discharge letters to GPs to make clear where fit notes have been issued by the provider, the reasons and the exact dates covered. Fit notes are included as part of the Discharge Policy CP04.

While most inpatient fit notes are issued at the point of discharge, they can be issued during any point in the patient's care episode.

Fit notes issued in virtual clinic can be scanned and emailed to the patient

5.0 Equipment Required

Ordering of Forms

Paper Fit notes, ordering of supplies Fit notes Med 3 and M10 is via the Department of Works and Pensions or through General Office

[Order form Med3 and Med10 for Healthcare professionals](#)

[How to order DWP medical evidence forms: guidance for healthcare professionals - GOV.UK](#)

Storage of fit notes

All pre-printed forms/pads must always be handled with care and kept securely. These **MUST** not be left lying around Any outdated or damaged versions must be destroyed immediately via confidential waste disposal.

Report and escalate any losses of pads/forms urgently following your local escalation process. (Datix and escalate to the senior clinician in charge). The Trust will make every effort to investigate fully any suspicion of fraud. It is the policy of the Trust to seek to recover all losses arising from any identified fraud-related activities, and to take such sanctions as are appropriate.

Quick Reference Guide

A short video outlines the process of completing these: [Bing Videos](#)

Poster Guideline for Clinician and Patients

[Attachment 1: Fit Note Top Tips for Clinicians](#)

[Attachment 2: Fit Notes Poster](#)

6.0 Training for Health Care Professional

The following healthcare professionals (HCP) can issue a fit note:

- GP or hospital doctor
- Registered nurse
- Occupational therapist
- Pharmacist
- Physiotherapist

It is recommended that all health care professionals complete the Work and Health training which will give you a general introduction to this area [Work and Health – learning for healthcare \(e-lfh.org.uk\)](#)

The programme has been developed in collaboration with the he Royal College of Nursing, The Royal College of Occupational Therapy, The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, The Royal Pharmaceutical Society and The Royal College of General Practitioners

- Getting the most out of the fit note. Guidance For healthcare professionals – which covers the practical task of undertaking a health and work conversation and completing the fit note form
- Who can issue fit notes. Guidance for healthcare professionals and their employers – which provides clarity for healthcare professionals, their employers and regulators as to which professionals can include this task within their scope of practice.

The training aims to:

1. Help HCPS develop the confidence and skills to have an effective work and health conversation and to be able to understand and communicate (where appropriate) the importance of work as a clinical outcome.
2. Enable HCPs in using their professional judgement to assess the impact of a health condition on an individual's fitness for work.
3. Support HCPs in negotiating and developing an agreed plan with the patient about their health and work, including advice about self-management and workplace modifications (where appropriate).
4. Enable HCPs to complete the technical steps required in the process of completing a fit note and understand options for next steps after a fit note has been certified. For example, signposting

There are 4 sessions in the fit note programme:

- An enabling approach which explains the aims and importance of the fit note
- Key legislation and guidance to help understand the context and dispel any myths
- Making recommendations using case studies and examples of completed fit notes
- Application of the fit note which brings together the knowledge gained to apply to case studies and the final assessment of your knowledge

MED3/Med 10 FIT NOTE GUIDANCE INDICATIVE RECOVERY TIMES

7. Specific Procedures (the times off described below gives indicative recovery times only – decision on the duration the fit note applies for should be based on clinical judgement and tailored to the patient's individual circumstances, such as their role and employment. Further details can be viewed in the Royal College of Surgeons: Recovery from Surgery

Primary total prosthetic replacement of knee joint using cement -6 weeks	6-12 depending on occupation
Removal of internal fixation from bone	3 weeks upper limb 6 weeks lower
Primary open reduction of fracture of long bone and extramedullary fixation using plate	6-12 weeks depending on site and occupation
Primary total prosthetic replacement of hip joint using cement	6-12 weeks depending on occupation
Primary simple repair of tendon	6-12 weeks depending on tendon number and site e.g. flexors longer
Primary prosthetic replacement of head of femur using cement	6-12 weeks
Primary total prosthetic replacement of hip joint not using cement	6-12 weeks
Closed reduction of fracture of long bone and rigid internal fixation NEC	6-12 weeks
Carpal tunnel release	3-6 weeks
Total cholecystectomy	2 weeks
Primary repair of inguinal hernia using insert of prosthetic material	2- 6 weeks depending on occupation
Emergency excision of abnormal appendix laparoscopy	2 weeks
Bilateral dissection tonsillectomy	2 weeks
Extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy of calculus of kidney	2 weeks
Bowel surgery	4 weeks
Bowel surgery with stoma	6 weeks
Skin sparing mastectomy	6 weeks
Lumpectomy – breast	2 weeks
Total abdominal hysterectomy	6 weeks
Vaginal Hysterectomy	6 weeks
Caesarean Section	6 weeks
Varicose vein scleropathy treatment	2 weeks
Peripheral limb angioplasty	2 weeks
CABG	3 months

8.0 Financial Risk Assessment

1	Does the implementation of this document require any additional Capital resources	No
2	Does the implementation of this document require additional revenue resources	No
3	Does the implementation of this document require additional manpower	No
4	Does the implementation of this document release any manpower costs through a change in practice	No
5	Are there additional staff training costs associated with implementing this document which cannot be delivered through current training programs or allocated training times for staff.	No
	Other comments	

9.0 Equality Impact Assessment

An equality analysis has been carried out and it indicates that:

Tick	Options
x	A. There is no impact in relation to Personal Protected Characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
	B. There is some likely impact as identified in the equality analysis. Examples of issues identified, and the proposed actions include:

10.0 Maintenance

Review in 3 years in each service department of any key issues in implementation

11.0 Communication and Training

Training prior to commencement of issue a Med3/Med 10 Fit note, refresher if required

Cascade into each of the specialties via medical and nursing communication

12.0 Audit Process

Paper based forms handwritten issued to patients

Criterion	Lead	Monitoring method	Frequency	Evaluation
Patient/staff feedback questionnaire	Primary and Secondary Care Interface Lead /responsible officer	Feedback from Primary care	Annually	Primary Secondary Interface Group

13.0 References

a. Guidance for hospital Doctors

For further information please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fit-note-guidance-for-hospital-doctors/statement-of-fitness-for-work-a-guide-for-hospital-doctors>

b. Guidance for healthcare professionals

[Fit note: guidance for healthcare professionals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fit-note-guidance-for-healthcare-professionals)

c. Fit Note: Quick Reference Guide:

[Fit Note: Detailed guide for Healthcare Professionals completing the form \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61111/fit-note-quick-reference-guide)

d. [Recovering from Surgery — Royal College of Surgeons](#)

e. For more details guidance on completing forms go to: www.gov.uk/government/collections/fit-note

f. Main guidance products – separately covering healthcare professionals, employers and employees [Fit note - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

g. Ordering fit note pads

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-medical-evidence-forms-how-to-order-them/how-to-order-dwp-medical-evidence-forms-guidance-for-healthcare-professionals>

h. This document outlines the five professions eligible to issue fit notes, scope of practice, roles, settings etc.

[Who can issue fit notes: guidance for healthcare professionals and their employers - GOV.UK](#)

- i. Training modules [The Fit Note - elearning for healthcare \(e-lfh.org.uk\)](#)
- j. Fit note data (primary care in England only)

[Fit Notes Issued by GP Practices. - NHS England Digital](#)

K. GP02 Local Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy

[GP_02_policy_printable_version.pdf](#)

Part A - Document Control

Procedure/ Guidelines number and version GDL21 Version 1.1	Title of Procedure/Guidelines Guidelines for the issuing Medical Fit Notes (Med3 and Med10)	Status: Final		Author: Primary Care & Secondary Care Interface Liaison Lead For Trust-wide Procedures and Guidelines Chief Medical Officer
Version / Amendment History	Version	Date	Author	Reason
	1.0	Dec. 2025	Primary Care & Secondary Care Interface Liaison Lead	Introduction of new guidelines
	1.1	Dec. 2025	Primary Care & Secondary Care Interface Liaison Lead	Inclusion of accessible attachments 1 & 2
Intended Recipients: Medical, Nursing and Allied Health Care Professional				
Consultation Group / Role Titles and Date: Primary and Secondary Care interface Group – June 2025				
Name and date of group where reviewed		Trust Policy Group – December 2025 Policy Management Officer – December 2025		
Name and date of final approval committee (if trust-wide document)/ Directorate or other locally approved committee (if local document)		Trust Policy Group – December 2025		
Date of Procedure/Guidelines issue		December 2025		
Review Date and Frequency (standard review frequency is 3 yearly unless otherwise indicated – see section 3.8.1 of Attachment 1)		December 2028 (Every 3 years)		
Training and Dissemination: Cascade through the Divisional Teams				
To be read in conjunction with: CP04 Discharge Policy				
Initial Equality Impact Assessment: Completed Yes Completed Yes / No / NA If you require this document in an alternative format e.g., larger print please contact Policy Management Officer 85887 for Trust- wide documents or your line manager or Divisional Management office for Local documents.				
Contact for Review: Resham khun-khun				

Monitoring arrangements: Annually	Primary Secondary Care Interface Group
Document summary/key issues covered. Issuing of MED3/Med 10 fit notes to patients as part of their recovery	
Key words for intranet searching purposes	Fit Note

Fit notes

Top tips for clinicians

- All staff involved with admission and discharge processes must routinely ask patients their requirements for a fit note and not just refer them to primary care
- Discuss return to work/recovery timescales when patients attend outpatient departments/pre-operative clinics, emergency portals/fracture clinic and inpatient ward areas as part of the assessment and discharge process
- People do not need to be 100% fit to work
- Always consider if your patient may be fit for work with modifications, for example:
 - a phased return to work: a gradual increase in work duties or hours
 - altered hours: changes to the times or duration of work
 - amended duties: changing duties to take account of a condition
 - workplace adaptations: such as working from home
- Your patient's employer is responsible for undertaking a suitable risk assessment to accommodate your clinical judgement
- If you receive queries from patients and you're unsure of the answer, escalate this to the senior clinician in your area
- Make sure you know where your supplies of Med 10/Med3 fit notes are kept and obtained from
- Issue the Med 3 – fit note for the full duration of the recovery timescales up to 12 weeks maximum
- Keep patient records and discharge summaries up-to-date
- Patients can use Fit notes to support SSP or health related benefits.



Scan the QR code
for a quick
reference guide

Fit notes

If you think your condition might lead to you needing a fit note for work (also known as a sick note), please discuss this with your doctor or clinician today.

Fit notes can be issued by your hospital clinician including doctors, nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists, and physiotherapists.



**Scan the QR code
for more info**