

18 March 2020

Re: Coronavirus and requests for Doctor's Notes (Med3)

Dear Patient

You have requested a Doctor's Sick Note from your GP in relation to being off work. The Government's rules around issuing a sick note (Med3) are that a medical professional can only issue a Med3 when an individual has had more than seven continuous calendar days off sick due to an illness (including weekends).

For any period of illness less than seven days, you are able to complete a self-certification certificate and provide this to your employer. In the unlikely event that your employer does not accept a self-certification then your doctor may be able to issue a private sick note for which you may get charged.

In light of the current Coronavirus situation, it is inevitable that a number of employees may be required to quarantine themselves at home for example due to the nature of recent travel, even in the absence of any symptoms of an illness. In these cases, your GP will not be able to issue a sick note as the time off work is not due to an illness, and isn't affecting your ability to work, but rather is a precaution to avoid transmission of any illness that is yet to produce symptoms.

We therefore expect your employer to be sympathetic if you are required to self-isolate for 14 days and to understand that the reason for this is to protect the welfare of your work colleagues and the wider community. We understand that you may also be able to call NHS 111 to request an email confirmation of the suspected Coronavirus diagnosis, to show to your employer if needed.

Whilst we appreciate this may cause some difficulties between you and your employer, equally GPs have a responsibility to prioritise the assessment and management of the healthcare needs of patients who are acutely unwell, rather than spending time dealing with requests for sick notes, particularly when they aren't in a position to issue one.

Also, for children taking time off school, there is no NHS requirement for GPs to provide letters to the school to confirm this. As I am sure you will appreciate, with the rapidly evolving Coronavirus situation, and the already existing pressures on GPs to meet the day to day demands from ill patients, the practice is unable to accommodate a school request for a GP letter. We hope that schools will work with parents to ensure any time off is appropriately recorded, obviating the need for a doctor's note. This briefing has been written for and on behalf of your GP surgery, so please accept this as a reply to your request for a sick note/letter from the surgery.

Yours sincerely



Dr W D Westwood
Honorary Secretary