

Isolation notes and letters for Covid-19 related absence from the workplace

As the lockdown restrictions are gently eased there will be an inevitable increase in patients contacting practices with concerns and anxiety about their return to work and associated requests for medical certificates and letters. Patients need to be encouraged to discuss this with their employer and not medicalise what could be an anxious situation. Practices should generally try to avoid issuing medical certificates in these circumstances. [ACAS](#) has produced guidance for employees on how to address these concerns. The three main groups are as follows:

1. Those who are self-isolating because they are symptomatic, have a symptomatic household contact or have been told to self-isolate by a test and trace service. These patients can get their own certificate using the online [NHS 111 isolation note tool](#). You may wish to add this link to your practice website. Patients do not need to speak to a GP unless their symptoms are worsening, and they need clinical advice. If a patient does not have an email address, they can have the note sent to a trusted family member or friend, or directly to their employer. The service can also be used to generate an isolation note on behalf of someone else.

2. Those in the stringent social distancing group (vulnerable but not shielded). These patients (roughly equating to those eligible for the annual flu jab) may ask for medical evidence as they will not be eligible for a MED3, which is for certifying due to illness, nor be able to apply for a certificate on the NHS111 isolation note tool. Although this is an occupational health issue and therefore there is no obligation on GPs to provide any evidence you may wish to download and signpost patients to the LMC [template letter](#) which they can print off and use for employers. If they become unwell, point 1 applies.

3. Those in the shielded group (deemed extremely clinically vulnerable). These patients should have received a letter (either centrally or from their GP/specialist) confirming they are in the shielded category which can be used for the purposes of certification off work. The list of qualifying conditions and further guidance (which has been relaxed slightly to allow this cohort to go outdoors in certain circumstances) are [here](#).

Isolation notes and letters for Covid-19 related absence from school

1. There have been reports that as schools re-open, they are requesting medical certificates on fitness to return. Practices are unable to make judgements on individual children's suitability to return to school.

2. We have produced a [template letter](#) to provide to parents which summarises the Royal College of Paediatrics and Children's Health RCPCH [guidance](#) on guiding principles for children returning to school.

3. The rules regarding isolation for children who are symptomatic or who have a symptomatic household member apply as above and parents can get an isolation note from the 111 service.