



Information Update: Fit Note 01 July 2022

New legislation comes into force which allows nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists, and physiotherapists to legally certify fit notes, in addition to doctors. To support this, the government has published guidance to help individuals and employers identify the knowledge, skills and experience required to certify fit notes. A new training package is also available and should be completed before taking up this task - this is freely accessible for all healthcare professionals. There is a rollout period from today where GP IT systems will be updated to reflect the change.

We have summarised some of the main points below, however it is important that Employers and Healthcare workers read the guidance here for full details of the changes, training, and governance.

[Fit note - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Certifying fit notes

When first conducting fit note certification, the HCPs who are legally able to certify fit notes should complete the [elfh training modules on fit note certification](#) and have a period of structured mentorship and support. The period of mentorship and support may be variable in length depending on the development of capability and confidence, alongside clinical experience of conversations with the person in the care of the professional about health and work, including shared decision making.

This post registration training and experience will support the development of skills to ensure the HCP is able to operate with professional responsibility and within their scope of competence to deliver the best outcomes for patients. See also Chapters 1 and 4 on scope of practice and statutory regulation.

As a minimum, the HCP should:

- hold current registration with the relevant professional healthcare regulator;
- have certifying fit notes as an agreed part of their role (if employed or operating under a contract);
- be able to articulate that certifying fit notes is in their individual scope of practice;
- be involved with the assessment, diagnosis or care planning of the patient the work and health conversation relates to or be able to form an assessment based on a written report by another HCP;
- be acting in their professional capacity;
- work in accordance with the requirements of their employer and/or contractual arrangements;
- have necessary indemnity;
- review patient medical records where appropriate e.g., to assess the duration of health condition and likely fluctuation or treatment side effects and duration.





How do HCPs work with their employers to start using the fit note?

The new guidance is for HCPs and their employers to work out how to make this change in practice. It covers job roles, scope of practice and how employers can provide in house development opportunities for HCPs new to the task of certifying fit notes.

As four new professions are involved, employers may find it easier to make the changes across impacted staff together. For example, in primary care, it will be important to involve Practice Managers, GP's, Nursing Leads, Nurses, AHP's and Receptionists in the change

Employers of healthcare professionals who may certify fit notes

HCPs that are able to certify fit notes may work in a wide variety of settings. For those that are employed, it is advised that a conversation takes place between the individual registrant and their employer about whether this is an acceptable part of their employment role when certifying fit notes in their employment setting, and the nature of this responsibility.

Legislation [\[footnote 19\]](#) permits fit notes to be certified by certain HCPs (para 1.8). However, it is consistent with overarching regulatory principles of good healthcare practice and ethics for individuals and their employers (where relevant) that they must first ensure they have the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to undertake this task.

What training and experience should healthcare professionals new to the task of issuing fit notes have?

The HCPs who are legally able to certify fit notes should complete the e-learning for health training modules on fit note certification and have a period of mentorship and support when first conducting fit note certification. The period of mentorship and support may be variable in length depending on the development of capability and confidence, alongside clinical experience of conversations with the person in the care of the professional about health and work.

Where can you access the e-learning for health training on fit notes?

The course is hosted on [Programmes - elearning for healthcare](#) and is accessible to all relevant HCPs across all four nations from summer 2022. It is titled 'The fit note' and should take two to four hours to complete.

E-learning for Healthcare training (elfh) - 'The fit note'

HCPs new to the task of certifying fit notes should complete the [elfh training](#). As part of this, employers should consider how best to ensure relevant HCPs have the necessary time and space during work hours to undertake this training and receive any other relevant support (see chapter 2 and paragraph 3.7). Employers may explore incorporating this training module into internal policies or employment terms, depending on context.

[Work and Health - elearning for healthcare \(e-lfh.org.uk\)](https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/)





All HCPs eligible to certify fit notes should have access to the resource regardless of whether or not they have an NHS email address. Once courses are completed the platform produces downloadable certificates which can be used to allow HCPs to evidence their completion of the training to their employers, including when taking up a role with a new employer. Additional information regarding the elfh training can be found in Chapter 1.

Governance

The HCPs legally enabled to certify fit notes are subject to statutory regulation [\[footnote 20\]](#), and therefore registrants must undertake this task in a way that is consistent with their own regulator's standards, requirements [\[footnote 21\]](#) and employing organisation's policies and procedures.

Any eligible registrant starting to take on the task of certifying fit notes should complete the elfh training, in line with regulatory principles relating to maintaining up to date knowledge and skills.

Can healthcare students on clinical practice or healthcare support workers working under delegation certify fit notes?

No, only registered HCPs can certify fit notes.

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