



COVID-19 LMC FOCUS ON FIT NOTES MED3 updated 31 March 2020

Introduction

Where absence is related to having symptoms of coronavirus or living with someone who has symptoms, an isolation note can be used **and not a MED3** to provide evidence of the advice to self-isolate. This can be obtained without going near a GP.

Isolation notes will provide employees with evidence for their employers that they have been advised to self-isolate due to coronavirus, either because they have symptoms or they live with someone who has symptoms, and so cannot work. These are people who are at heightened risk of having COVID-19 or already may exhibit signs of having it but the government is stopping them from asking the GPs for MED3 forms.

Employment and Support Allowance

People who need to claim Universal Credit or [Employment and Support Allowance](#) because of coronavirus will not be required to produce a fit note or an isolation note. More details on coronavirus and claiming benefits can be found [here](#).

GPs are not responsible for employee relations regarding to statutory sick pay and certification where the employee is not ill. Patients do not need MED3 forms from their GPs and patients should be signposted to the 111 or NHS web pages dealing with this.

A patient may agree to home-working during the 12 weeks or if they and their employer both agree, they may be able to stay on the payroll if they're unable to operate or have no work to do because of coronavirus, this is known as being 'on furlough'. They could get paid 80% of their wages, up to a monthly cap of £2,500.

How patients access the isolation note

The notes can be accessed via [this link](#). After answering a few questions, an isolation note will be emailed to the user. If they don't 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.

There is confusion about patients who have been written to as being in the vulnerable category advised to isolate (need shielding) for 12 weeks. They are not able to obtain an isolation note unless they or a household contact exhibits symptoms but should produce the letter from the NHS (should be with them by 30 March) as proof and/or use the guidance note at Appendix A that states that GP certification is not needed.

Guidance on specific circumstances

Below is a breakdown of potential requests for fit notes, advice and outcome (which in each case is that they do not need to contact their GP for a fit note/MED3 though for extremely vulnerable patients, if they don't get a NHS letter you may wish to check their record for accuracy. They could then use the letter attached to self-declare as extremely vulnerable.

If a patient feels up to working remotely, they should agree this with their employer and they won't need an isolation note. This would be the case for an employee who is shielding due to being vulnerable and has to isolate for 12 weeks after receiving a letter.

Issue	Advice	Outcome
1.Symptomatic so isolating for seven days - used NHS website/111 online/been told by HCP that have symptoms	Patients can use isolation note	They do not need to contact their GP
2.Symptomatic and remaining unwell for over seven days	If they remain unwell and unfit to work after seven days, the current advice is to visit www.111.nhs.uk where there is an online self-assessment tool	They do not need to contact their GP
3.Household contact has symptoms so isolating for fourteen days as per government advice	Patients can use isolation note	They do not need to contact their GP
4.At risk group so following government advice and isolating (shielding) for 12 weeks	If asymptomatic they would let employer know who may be able to set work to do remotely or give leave of absence. Most will have letters as proof of need to isolate. Check whether condition is coded on medical record if they have no letter, they can register if they should have had a letter https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable – issue guidance at Appendix A to help discuss with employer. If they do become unwell during or after this time, point 1 and 2 applies and they can get an isolation note	They do not need to contact their GP (but you may wish to check that their condition is recorded if they haven't been written to)



Michael Wright
Chief Executive
Nottinghamshire Local Medical Committee Limited

Nottinghamshire Local Medical Committee

Representing and supporting GPs

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS OF 'EXTREMELY VULNERABLE' STATUS AND EMPLOYERS

By 30 March you may have received a letter from the NHS advising you to self-isolate for 12 weeks, that with this form may enable discussions with your employer. If you have not received a letter and fall into one of the categories below, you may need to ensure that your GP practice has recorded your condition and may be able to check this via the [NHS App](#). You can also register your condition <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>

There is no requirement for GPs to provide certificates for those self-isolating for 12 weeks.

You may agree to home-working during the 12 weeks or if you and your employer both agree, they may be able to keep you on the payroll if they're unable to operate or have no work for you to do because of coronavirus, this is known as being 'on furlough'. You could get paid 80% of your wages, up to a monthly cap of £2,500. If your salary is reduced, you may be [eligible for support through the welfare system](#), including Universal Credit. [Check if you could be covered by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#).

People falling into this extremely vulnerable group include:

1. Solid organ transplant recipients.
2. People with specific cancers:
 - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
 - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
 - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
 - people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
 - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
4. People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
6. Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

If, at any point, you develop symptoms of COVID-19, such as a new, continuous cough and/or high temperature (above 37.8), seek clinical advice using the [NHS 111 online coronavirus service](#) or, if you do not have access to the internet, call NHS 111. Then you may be able to obtain an isolation note <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note>