

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page consists of several paper clips of varying sizes and orientations, arranged in a vertical line. One clip is highlighted in green, while the others are grey.

Helping people take
the necessary steps
back to work.

Fit for Work

When can I use Fit for Work?

The advice service is live – visit our website below to find out what's available and how to get in touch.

The referral service is currently rolling out with GPs being able to refer eligible patients to an occupational health assessment. GP referrals will be available nationwide by Autumn 2015, when employers can start to refer too.

A gradual roll-out enables us to build experience, learning and implementation improvements into our roll-out plans

See where the service is live, where it will be rolling out soon and sign-up to receive updates at the website address below.

Further information including guidance and FAQs for employers on Fit for Work is also available at gov.uk

England and Wales

0800 032 6235

0800 032 6233 Welsh language (Llinell Gymraeg)

www.fitforwork.org

Scotland

0800 019 2211

www.fitforworkscotland.scot

Fit for Work

SUPPORT

Managing long
term sickness
and absence
from work.

What is Fit for Work?

Fit for Work offers free, expert and impartial advice to help you to support your patients with health, personal or social matters affecting their work or return to work after a period of sickness absence.

How does it work?

Fit for Work will be supporting your patients by giving them timely access to occupational health professionals who will listen to them and their concerns through an advice service, available through our website and phone line, and a referral service.

With your patient's informed and freely given consent, you will be able to refer your patient to an occupational health professional who will produce a practical step by step Return to Work Plan. This will be tailored around their needs, and can replace the need for a fit note. When obtaining your patient's informed consent you can give them a leaflet which contains information about Fit for Work.

You will also be able to access our advice line for free health and work related advice to help you to support your patients.

Questions about returning to work?
We're listening.

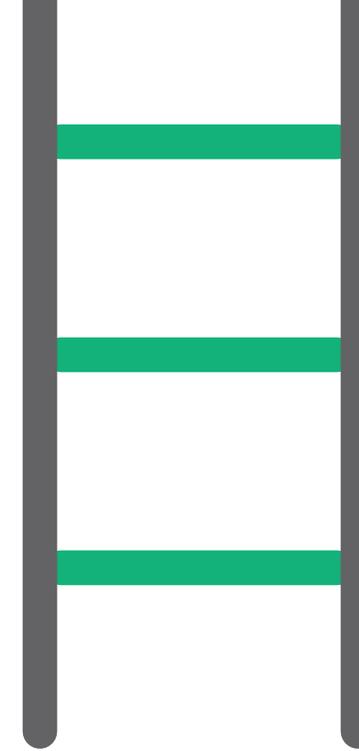


Benefits of Fit for Work

We help provide a step-by-step plan for your patients' return to work

How will Fit for Work benefit me?

Fit for Work is free and confidential. It provides impartial and expert support to enable you to help your patients who are facing extended periods of sickness absence.



It can complement and enhance the service you are able to deliver to your patients by giving them the support they need to return to work.

Once in place, the employer can accept the Return to Work Plan as sufficient information for purposes of Statutory Sick Pay in place of a fit note.

Next steps

Referral

A patient must have given explicit and informed consent to be referred to Fit for Work and for their personal information to be shared with the service. Their consent will also be obtained at each point in the process.

You should consider referring all patients who have been off work for four weeks, or who you judge are likely to be off for four weeks or more, and who, with further help, you think have a reasonable prospect of a return to work. They must also be in paid employment.

Following referral, Fit for Work will contact the patient by phone within two days.

The assessment will be carried out by an occupational health professional and will focus on health, work and personal factors which are stopping the patient from returning to work.

The occupational health professional will then work with the patient to agree a plan about returning to work. The plan will address all the factors that are stopping them from returning to work and provide recommendations to support them back to work.

For more information on the patient journey, please visit our website (details overleaf).

What is a Return to Work Plan?

A Return to Work Plan is a step by step plan that has been agreed with the patient being referred to Fit for Work. It gives recommendations and advice to support them back into work. It will also signpost them to relevant organisations or services which could help. The patient is also able to ask for certain details to be taken out of the Return to Work Plan.

The plan could also include some recommendations from the occupational health professional as to what changes could be made at work to make sure the person is supported. However, the employer will make the decision whether to implement these.

If the patient consents to their Return to Work Plan being shared with you, you will receive a copy of the plan by email which will provide further information on what you should do.

If the patient consents to their plan being shared with their employer, the employer can accept a Return to Work Plan as sufficient medical information for the purposes of determining entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay. Return to Work Plans may therefore be accepted in place of a fit note.

If your patient chooses not to share their Return to Work Plan, or if their employer does not want to accept it in place of a fit note, you can consider whether in your professional judgement a fit note is required.