

Covid-19

----- Guidance for practices



Date: 20.4.2020

Please be aware that this is a rapidly evolving situation.

Requests for MED3 'Fit Note'

Requests for certification of absence from the workplace relating to Covid-19 may fall into three main categories. Further information regarding these groups is in the [attached guide](#).

1. Those who are self-isolating because they are symptomatic or have a symptomatic household contact

Patients who are self-isolating because they or someone in their household has Covid-19 symptoms can get their own certificate using the [online 111 isolation note](#) tool. They do not need to speak to a GP unless their symptoms are worsening and they need clinical advice.

2. Those in the stringent social distancing group (vulnerable but not shielded)

Patients in this group may ask for medical evidence they are in this vulnerable group as defined by the government, roughly equating to those eligible for the annual flu jab. Please use the attached template letter as these patients will not be eligible for a MED3 which is for certifying due to illness. If they become unwell, point 1 applies.

3. Those in the shielded group (deemed extremely clinically vulnerable)

This group should receive a letter from the government confirming they are in the shielded category which can be used for the purposes of certification off work. Further information regarding this group is in our [attached guidance](#).

The current Government Guidance for employers and businesses on coronavirus (Covid-19) states;

"By law, medical evidence is not required for the first 7 days of sickness. After 7 days, employers may use their discretion around the need for medical evidence if an employee is staying at home.

We strongly suggest that employers use their discretion around the need for medical evidence for a period of absence where an employee is advised to stay at home either as they are unwell themselves, or live with someone who is, in accordance with the public health advices issued by the government."

Londonwide LMCs would suggest that practices upload the attached letter to their website and requests that if needed by patients they use this letter as the practice will not provide a medical certificate for patients requiring time off work due to coronavirus.

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Dear Employer

Request for medical certification from absence of work related to the Covid-19 pandemic for patients at increased medical risk

Your employee has been following current Government and/or Public Health advice related to the Covid-19 pandemic because they have a condition that places them at increased risk of complications if they contract coronavirus. Specifically, this is because:

- They are following government advice for **stringent social distancing** as they have a qualifying condition as defined here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

This means they should not leave the house unless for essential needs.

- They have received a letter from the government advising them they need to practice **shielding** as they have a qualifying condition making them extremely medically vulnerable, as defined here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

This means they should not leave the house.

Please note the patient has not been clinically assessed but has self-identified as falling into one of the above groups and has printed this template letter from our practice website. Due to the current pandemic and pressure on general practice, we are prioritising the urgent medical needs of our patients and will not be providing a medical certificate for the required period of absence.

Further information for employers is available on the government website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19> There is also useful information on how to support employees on the ACAS website here: <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>. If further medical assessment is required to assess ability to work during this time this needs to be arranged through an occupational health organisation.

By law employers may use their discretion around the need for medical evidence if an employee is absent from work due to a medical reason. We would ask you to apply this discretion to help support NHS general practice provide care for our population rather than being asked to fulfil unnecessary administrative tasks.

Many thanks for your assistance during this challenging time

Lead Partner:

Name of Practice: