

Taking sick leave

Employees can take time off work if they're ill. They need to give their employer proof if they're ill for more than 7 days.

If they're ill just before or during their holiday, they can take it as sick leave instead.

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Self-certification

If employees are off work for 7 days or less, they do not need to give their employer a fit note or other proof of sickness from a medical professional.

When they return to work, their employer can ask them to confirm they've been off sick. This is called 'self-certification'. The employer and employee will agree on how the employee should do this. They might need to fill in a form or send details of their sick leave by email.

Fit notes and proof of sickness

Employees must give their employer a doctor's 'fit note' (sometimes called a 'sick note') if they've been ill for more than 7 days in a row and have taken sick leave. This includes non-working days, such as weekends and bank holidays.

If employees are self-isolating and cannot work because of coronavirus (COVID-19) they can get an ['isolation note' online from NHS 111](#). They do not have to go to their GP or a hospital.

If they are off work with any other illness, they can get a fit note from a GP or hospital doctor. If their employer agrees, a similar document can be provided by a physiotherapist, podiatrist or occupational therapist instead. This is called an Allied Health Professional (AHP) Health and Work Report.

Fit notes are free if the employee has been ill for more than 7 days when they ask for one. The doctor might charge a fee if they ask for the fit note earlier.

The fit note will say the employee is either 'not fit for work' or 'may be fit for work'.

If it says the employee 'may be fit for work', employers should discuss any changes that might help the employee return to work (for example, different hours or tasks). The employee must be treated as 'not fit for work' if there's no agreement on these changes.

Employers can take a copy of the fit note. The employee should keep the original.