

# Benefits Bulletin

## Self-certification and Fit Notes - New Rules...

22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021

Issue **9** [2021]

In a move designed to relieve pressure on the General Practitioners and free up capacity to deal with the coronavirus vaccine booster programme and urgent care needs, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has, from **Friday 17th December 2021** put in place the following two changes:

- extending the self-certification period for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from 7 to 28 days; and
- applying an easement so that fit notes are not required for benefit purposes.

Both changes have been introduced by the Statutory Sick Pay (Medical Evidence) Regulations 2021 - [Statutory Instrument 2021 No. 1453](#) and will expire on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022.



It is understood that further guidance on this issue will be made available in the New Year.

Previously, employees and benefit claimants have only been able to self-certify as being too sick to work for a period of seven days.

After this they have been required to evidence their sickness by providing Med3 Fit Notes available from their General Practitioner.

It is understood that information on the rule change was circulated to General Practitioners on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December. This confirmed that there will be no requirement for a Fit Note to access other benefits including, but not limited, to Universal Credit and Employment Support Allowance (ESA). It also confirmed that whilst the new measure should cover the vast majority of Fit Note requests, that General Practitioners may still receive some requests for access to occupational sick pay depending on individual contractual arrangements.

Therefore, for any sickness absences which began on or after 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021, up to and including 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022, employees should not be required to provide medical evidence of sickness, such as a Fit Note, for the first 28 days of absence.

See [HERE](#) for more information.

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