

Requests for certifications of absence

Requests for certification of absence from the workplace relating to COVID-19 may fall into five categories:

- 1. Symptomatic so isolating for seven days**
Patients can and should self-certify for the first seven days as normal if they are unfit to work. 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 for a certificate and the online tool can provide an isolation certificate as described below.
- 3. Household contact symptoms so isolating for fourteen days as per government advice**
GPs cannot be, and are not, the gatekeeper of the statutory sick pay system and can only provide certificates for the purpose of illness, not in relation to government advice regarding self-isolation. Employers are responsible for putting in place arrangements for home/remote working where this is possible. Where it is not, the employee may self-certify and return to work following the relevant absence which their employer may authorise as per government advice. Isolation notes are available for those requiring to evidence self-isolation due to household contact symptoms.
- 4. At risk group so following government advice**
Where they do become unwell during or after this time, point 1 and 2 applies. They do not need to contact their GP.
- 5. Those in full time education who are symptomatic or requiring self-isolation.**

There is no requirement to issue certification to schools or colleges to confirm absence. These organisations must work with parents and students to ensure that any absence is appropriately recorded, obviating the need for a 'doctor's note'. They do not need to contact their GP.

People unable to work for more than seven days because of coronavirus (COVID-19) can now obtain an isolation note through a new online service.



Online isolation notes

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.

As isolation notes can be obtained without contacting a doctor, this will reduce the pressure on GP surgeries and prevent people needing to leave their homes.

For the first seven days off work, employees can self-certify so they don't need any evidence for their employer. After that, employers may ask for evidence of sickness absence. Where this is related to having symptoms of coronavirus or living with someone who has symptoms, the isolation note can be used to provide evidence of the advice to self-isolate.

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](#).

The notes can be accessed through [the NHS Direct Wales Coronavirus Symptom Checker](#) and via NHS 111 (<https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/>). 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.