

From the Director of Primary Care



Via Email

To: Chief Executives of Health & Social Care Trusts

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Dear Colleagues

ISSUING Med3s ON HOSPITAL DISCHARGE AND FOLLOWING OUTPATIENT PROCEDURES

We have been made aware that in some instances the proper procedures for issuing of Med3 forms following a hospital stay or an outpatient procedure may not be being followed. This letter asks you to ensure your organisation has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure Med3s are issued where necessary, to avoid patients having to make separate appointments with their GPs.

When it is known that a patient requires a period of convalescence and is unable to attend work, the hospital consultant/doctor should issue the initial Med3 form to the patient as they are likely to be best placed to gauge likely recovery time. The assessment should be integrated into areas of care where it can be reasonably anticipated that a patient's medical condition will result in the need for a fit note. For example:

- A patient who presents themselves in A&E with a broken leg. It would be appropriate to issue a fit note for a period consistent with the anticipated incapacity, where the injury prevents them from returning to work;
- Postoperative patients upon discharge. The level of incapacity should be considered and where recuperation prevents return to work a fit note should be issued; and
- Mental health patients under regular review by the mental health service could also have the fit note process integrated into their review process.

Guidance on how and when hospital doctors should use the fit note can be found at the following link

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/communities/fit-note-gps-guidance-ni.pdf>



The integration of the fit note process will, in addition to ensuring the most appropriate professional makes the initial assessment of the patient's fitness to work, avoid patients having to make an appointment to see their GP solely for the purpose of obtaining a fit note.

On a practical point, stocks of Med3 forms can be obtained from the Business Services Organisation.

I very much appreciate your support on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Lee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

MARK LEE