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By e mail

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Dear Colleague,

New legislation to allow a wider range of healthcare professionals to certify fit notes has been introduced in Northern Ireland.

From 1 July 2022, nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists and physiotherapists will all be able to legally certify fit notes – something that at present only doctors can do. If an employee/potential benefit claimant has been off work with illness for more than seven days a fit note provides evidence of their incapacity and relevant advice on how to support them to remain in or return to work.

This change will be delivered by nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists and physiotherapists in general practice and hospital settings only and recognises the valuable role other professions have to play in providing health and work advice and supporting people to remain in work where possible.

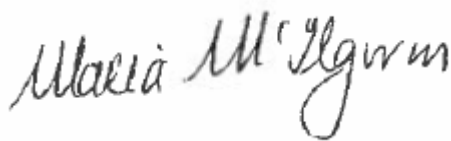
The changes will not have a broader impact beyond ensuring that the amended provisions are consistent with fit notes issued under the amended Social Security (Medical Evidence) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1976 and the Statutory Sick Pay (Medical Evidence) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1985.

It complements the wider direction of travel within the healthcare system by allowing for, and supporting, the increased move towards a diverse and multi-disciplinary workforce and reducing the demand on doctors, particularly in primary care, as being the sole profession that can certify and issue fit notes.

To support this, guidance is [available](#) to help individuals and employers identify the knowledge, skills and experience required to certify fit notes. A new training package is also [available](#) and should be completed before taking up this task - this is freely accessible for all healthcare professionals, including doctors. Changes to IT systems within primary and secondary care will be phased in within Northern Ireland.

Furthermore, HSC Trusts are required to establish good governance arrangements in respect of the new legislation and collaborate with BSO to establish an application process for fit note (Med3) pads.

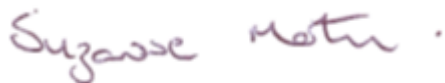
Yours Sincerely,



Maria McIlgorm



Cathy Harrison



Prof. Suzanne Martin

Cc Michael McBride

Lynn Woolsey