

Who to give a fit note to

In most cases employees should give fit notes to their manager or supervisor.

This is so the manager can:

- understand the reason for being off sick
- get an idea of how much time off the employee might need
- support the employee when they're ready to return to work

To check who to give a fit note to, an employee should:

- look at any relevant policy their employer has, for example an absence policy
- check if the staff handbook covers this

They could also talk to:

- someone they work with, for example a manager they trust
- a trade union representative, if they're a member
- HR, if their organisation has an HR department

If an employee wants to give their fit note to someone else

Sometimes, an employee might not feel comfortable giving their fit note to their manager. For example, if the fit note gives details of a sensitive operation they've had.

In this situation, the employee should:

- give their fit note to a suitable alternative person, for example a senior manager or HR
- explain why they're giving the fit note to them
- make it clear if they want it to be kept confidential from their manager

The employee's manager might ask for a copy of a fit note. If the employee does not want to share it with them, they should explain who they've given the fit note to and why.

If their manager still asks for the fit note, the employee should ask them to discuss it with the person they gave the fit note to.

Keeping fit notes confidential

In most cases, an employee's fit note must be kept confidential. Information about an employee's health must be managed in line with UK GDPR.

If an employee asks for their fit note to be kept confidential from their manager, the person they've given it to must respect this.

There might be circumstances where information on the fit note needs to be shared with the employee's manager. For example, to protect the employee's health and safety.

The person with the fit note should discuss this openly and honestly with the employee and:

- explain what information they need to share and why
- agree what details from the fit note they can and cannot share