

Sent via email:
To all GP Practices

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17 December 2021

Dear colleagues,

**CHANGES TO REQUIREMENT FOR FIT NOTES TO EVIDENCE
CLAIMS FOR STATUTORY SICK PAY AND ACCESS TO BENEFITS
(EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT ALLOWANCE AND UNIVERSAL
CREDIT).**

A significant part of the demand on GP services is driven by administrative requests such as Fit Notes. Any move to reduce the numbers of requests, even temporarily, is to be welcomed as practices in Northern Ireland continue to maintain core GMS services while stepping up the Covid-19 Booster vaccination programme.

The following changes will be made, with effect from the 17 December 2021. These will be time limited and last up to, and including, 26 January 2022:

- The self-certification period for Statutory Sick Pay will be extended to 28 days (from its current 7)
- There will be easements within the benefits system to enable claimants to access benefits without the need for a fit note.

The extension of the self-certification period will be widely publicised and updated information will be available on NIDirect in relation to this.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Margaret O'Brien
Head of General Medical Services