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Reference: HQ/HS/3070

Date: Released 14 April 2010

NEW 'FIT NOTE' TO HELP YOU BACK TO WORK AFTER ILLNESS

With effect from 6 April 2010, the way GPs issue medical certificates has changed.

Previously a GP would sign a 'sick note' which details how long a patient will need off work. From now on, GPs will issue a 'Statement of Fitness for Work', also known as a 'fit note' in which the doctors will still be able to say someone is not fit for work, but they will also be able to indicate what aspects of the job staff can still perform.

Col R Bhabutta, BFGHS AD Healthcare said: "BFGHS welcome the introduction of the fit note as a positive way to support sick and injured civilian staff back to work in a controlled and appropriate manner. Our GPs will do all they can to support this process. However our doctors understand the military context and duties undertaken very well but this is not always the case for civilian jobs. The liaison with the organisations that employ civilian staff across BFG is crucial so that GPs understand the various tasks undertaken by civilian staff in the workplace."

The introduction of the 'fit note' is not about trying to get people back to work before they are ready, but puts the onus on employers to help staff return to work. It also recognises that work is generally good for people's physical and mental health, and that employees can work as they recover from their condition with some basic support from their employer.

Col A Kerr, Garrison Clinical Director in Rhine added: "The fit note is very similar to the 'sick chit' we already use for soldiers in as much as doctors are now able to list what the patient can and can't do. It is an improvement on what we had before."

More information about the fit note can be found in DIN 2010DIN01-071 'Statement of fitness for work'.