

Consultants' responsibility to provide sickness certification for patients under their care

Dear

We were recently approached by your patient to provide a sick note.

At a time of ever increasing workload and patients complaining of not being able to get an appointment with their GP, many of our precious appointments are taken up unnecessarily with patients requesting sick notes/ongoing sick notes when these could have more appropriately been provided by their hospital consultant.

We have been reminded by South Staffordshire LMC, which exists by Government statute to support GPs, of the 2010 DWP [Statement of fitness for work guide](#): a guide for hospital doctors which was updated in April 2022 and which contains the following statements:

“The role of hospital doctors in issuing the Statement of Fitness for Work:

Hospital doctors may need to provide all certification for social security and statutory sick pay purposes for patients who are either incapable of work or who may be fit for work with support from their employer. The duty to provide a Med 3 rests with the doctor who at the time has clinical responsibility for the patient.

Hospital in-patients:

Form Med 10 should continue to be issued to cover any period that a patient is in hospital. On discharge from hospital the doctor who has clinical responsibility for the patient should provide them, if appropriate, with a Med 3 to cover a forward period. This is to avoid unnecessary referrals to GPs solely for the purpose of sickness certification.

Many hospital doctors are still unaware that they should, if appropriate, issue Med 3 forms to patients in their care. Not issuing Med 3s denies patients the best care and leads to unnecessary duplication and extra work for GPs. In many cases it is the hospital doctor who is best placed to give advice on the impact of a patient's health condition on their fitness for work”.

In the best interest of our patients and the NHS, can you please provide a sick note when these are necessary for patients under your care.