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IMPROVING THE PROCESS FOR ISSUING FIT NOTES IN PRIMARY CARE

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Background:

The United Kingdom government has provided guidance to healthcare professionals who issue Fit notes. This project aimed to review how closely this guidance was being adhered to in the primary care setting and ascertain if any improvements could be made.

Aims:

To improve the process for issuing Fit notes in the primary care setting.

Methods:

50 Fit notes issued in November 2022 were reviewed to determine:

- If this was a first issue or renewal and if the correct procedure had been followed;
- The means by which Fit notes were issued;
- Whether the Fit note had 'Not fit for work' or 'May be fit for work' ticked.

Results:

- There were 2 instances where a first Fit note was issued via an e-consult without a consultation;
- There were 6 cases where a request for a Fit note was made via a task and the patient had been issued 3 or more Fit notes without review. In 5 of the 6 cases this was identified by the healthcare professional and an appointment to discuss this was made;
- 50/50 (100%) of Fit notes issued had 'Not fit for work' ticked.

Conclusions:

The results show that the practice was meeting most of the government recommendations but that there was room for improvement in certain areas. Based on these results a series of recommendations have been made and a practice policy has been created which gives both clinical and administrative staff guidance to follow.

References:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fit-note>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/articles/sicknessabsenceinthelabourmarket/2021>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fit-note-guidance-for-healthcare-professionals>