

# HR Newsletter

## October 2015

### **New Government Service - Fit For Work Service**

#### **What is it?**

This new Government service is a helpline service that sick employees can be referred to. The service is to identify all obstacles that are preventing them returning to work (obstacles are e.g. health issues but also social, physical access, and any other problems preventing a return to work) and to create a plan to facilitate a return to work.

#### **Who is it for?**

It is for employees who have been (or are expected to be) absent for 4 weeks. It does not include self-employed freelancers and does not include employees who have used the service in the past 12 months.

#### **How will it work?**

The GP (or employer) can refer sick employees to the service. The service staff will contact the employee within 2 days of a referral (usually via telephone - but can carry out face to face meetings) and discuss the issues with them and create a return-to-work plan.

In this plan there will be recommendations for the employer to consider. These recommendations may be a phased return or workplace adjustments etc. They recommendations are not legally binding, however for disabilities they will /should be part of the employer's reasonable adjustments responsibility

#### **Who will benefit?**

Employee - this should open a constructive dialogue with their employer and allow a speedier return to work and a return to normal pay.

Employer - It should provide a concrete plan that can ensure sick employees return to work and don't take too much sickness and also allow compliance with the reasonable adjustments duty

### **Contacts**

#### **England and Wales:**

Call: 0800 032 6235                      web: <http://fitforwork.org/>

#### **Scotland**

Call: 0800 019 2111                      web: <http://www.fitforworkscotland.scot/>

**Direct.gov:**     <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fit-for-work-guidance-for-employers>