

Department for Work and Pensions Guidance published on new Fit for Work Service

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The Department for Work and Pensions has published guidance notes in relation to the new Fit for Work service which was

launched in December 2014.

The new service is a telephone advice line and a website, which aims to give more information about work-related health matters to employers and employees, to help absence prevention.

FFW also provides an occupational health service, available to employees upon referral. The referral is triggered by a sickness absence, or an expected sickness absence, of four weeks. It can be made by a GP or an employer, where a phased return to work is deemed possible.

The assessment aims to consider all the obstacles which may prevent the employee from returning to work, and to establish a 'Return to Work' plan, which is communicated to both the employee's GP, and, with the employee's consent, the employer. The employer can exercise its discretion as to whether or not it implements the recommendations included in the plan.

The scheme appears to be a positive step, particularly for companies who would not otherwise have access to occupational health. However, employers should be cautious if they choose not to implement a 'Return to Work' plan, as it could expose companies to a claim for failing to make reasonable adjustments.

Department for Work and Pensions: Fit for Work guidance

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