

Bewbush Medical Centre

Bewbush Place

Crawley

West Sussex

RH11 8XT

Dr N. Storer, Dr R. Kottyal, Dr M. Chaudhry

Telephone: 01293 592230

Fax: 01293 592231

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Employee Requests for Short-Term Medical Certificates

It has come to our attention that members of your staff may be requesting their General Practitioner to provide medical certificates in support of short absences from work due to illness.

I am writing to advise you that since the introduction of self-certification for statutory sick pay purposes in 1983, **General Practitioners have not been obliged to issue certificates for periods of sickness of less than seven days' duration.** It is clearly a waste of valuable NHS resources for patients to see GPs for no other purpose than to provide a short-term medical certificate, and the introduction of self-certification was designed to prevent this from happening.

It is no part of a GP's role to support employers' occupational sick pay schemes in this way and we would encourage employers to rely on self-certification for such short-term absences from work. If you, as an employer, wish to make your own arrangements for the examination and verification of an employee's illness, this may be done via an occupational health service or by arrangement with a patient's GP **on a private basis.**

We would recommend that standard organisational procedures, such as those recommended by ACAS, can provide employers with a way of dealing with employees who may be abusing the self-certification process and/or who have a record of persistent short-term sickness absence. You may also find the website www.managingabsence.org.uk useful. This has been produced in partnership with a wide range of organisations including the TUC, Federation of Small Business and the CBI.

Yours Sincerely,

Bewbush Medical Centre