

FIT Note Guidance

Fit Notes Following TFMR: When Language Matters

After a termination for medical reasons (TFMR), you may need time away from work or adjustments to help you manage your return.

When you speak to your GP or another healthcare professional about a fit note, it can be helpful to explain what has happened and how you are currently affected.

Your experience matters

A TFMR is a pregnancy loss following a diagnosis of a fetal anomaly or serious medical condition. For many people, the pregnancy was wanted and the decision to end it was made because of the medical circumstances surrounding their baby.

The language used to describe this experience can therefore feel particularly important.

You may find that different healthcare professionals use different terms in your medical records or on a fit note. Some of these may accurately describe part of what you are experiencing, but they may not fully represent your individual experience.

There is no single emotional response to TFMR. Some people experience grief, sadness, shock, anger, guilt, anxiety or trauma. Others may experience several of these, or something different altogether.

What can be included on a fit note?

A fit note is primarily about your **fitness for work**.

The healthcare professional completing it should describe the condition or conditions affecting your ability to work and, where appropriate, give advice about returning to work or adjustments.

You can explain to your GP that you have experienced a TFMR and describe how this is affecting you now.

For example, you might say:

“I had a termination for medical reasons following a diagnosis affecting my baby. I'm experiencing significant grief and emotional distress and I'm finding it difficult to manage work at the moment.”

Or:

“I understand that the fit note needs to describe my health and ability to work, but I would really like the wording to reflect that this was a wanted pregnancy and a termination for medical reasons.”

You can also ask your GP to discuss the wording with you before the fit note is issued.

If the wording doesn't feel right

You may receive a fit note containing a term that does not feel representative of your experience.

This does not necessarily mean that your GP does not understand what happened. Fit notes are medical documents and the terminology used may depend on the healthcare professional's clinical assessment and the information available to them.

However, if the wording feels upsetting, inaccurate or overly simplistic, **you can tell your GP.**

You could say:

“I know the medical terminology is important, but the wording feels difficult for me because this was a wanted pregnancy and we ended it because of our baby's medical diagnosis. Is there a way of recording this more accurately?”

You can also ask whether a more specific description of your current difficulties would be appropriate.

You do not have to disclose everything to your employer

A fit note is not intended to tell your employer the whole story of your pregnancy or loss.

The purpose of the fit note is to provide information about your fitness for work and, where appropriate, recommendations that may support you to remain in work or return to work.

You can talk to your healthcare professional about what information needs to be included and what you are comfortable sharing with your employer.

You can talk about the impact rather than just the diagnosis

When discussing a fit note, it may help to describe what you are actually experiencing.

For example:

- difficulty concentrating
- feeling emotionally overwhelmed
- disrupted sleep
- exhaustion
- intrusive memories or distressing thoughts
- difficulty being around pregnant colleagues or babies
- anxiety about returning to work
- difficulty managing busy or emotionally demanding environments
- needing time away from work to cope with grief
- finding particular dates, appointments or situations especially difficult
- reduced ability to manage normal work demands

You do not need to experience all of these.

Your GP can assess your individual circumstances and decide whether a fit note is appropriate.

A gradual return may be an option

Being unable to manage your normal work does not always mean being unable to do any work.

The fit note allows a healthcare professional to state that someone **may be fit for work** with appropriate support or adjustments. This can include changes such as altered hours, amended duties or a phased return, depending on the person's circumstances.

For some people following TFMR, a gradual return may feel more manageable than returning immediately to their usual workload.

This might involve, for example:

- shorter working days initially
- gradually increasing hours
- temporarily reducing workload
- changing duties
- additional breaks
- avoiding particular triggers where reasonably possible
- regular review of how the return is going

These are examples rather than requirements. What is appropriate will depend on the individual and their workplace.

Remember

There is no single “correct” way to feel after TFMR.

Your experience does not become less significant because a medical document uses a particular clinical term.

If the wording on your fit note does not feel representative, **it is okay to ask questions and explain what language feels more accurate to you.**

Your healthcare professional's role is to assess your health and fitness for work, while your experience of your pregnancy, your baby and your loss remains uniquely yours.