

## Understanding Medical Reports: GP Fit Note, OH Report, and Specialist /GP Report

As a manager, navigating the various types of medical reports can be challenging, but understanding the differences between them is crucial in effectively managing employee health and absence. Here's a simple breakdown:

### 1. GP Fit Note

- **What It Is:** A GP fit note, was previously known as a "sick note," is a document provided by a General Practitioner (GP) when an employee may be unfit for work due to illness or injury. It's designed to inform you whether an employee can work, and if so, what adjustments might be needed.
- **New vs. Old:** Unlike the old sick notes, which simply stated whether an employee was fit or unfit for work, the new fit note (introduced in 2010) offers more guidance. It can suggest adjustments like altered hours or lighter duties to help the employee return to work sooner, even if they're not fully recovered.
- **When to Use:** The GP fit note is useful for short-term absences or straightforward cases. It's a good starting point for understanding an employee's health status, but it's often quite basic and not tailored to specific workplace needs.
- **Pros:**
  - Quick and easy to obtain.
  - Provides basic information on fitness for work.
- **Cons:**
  - Limited detail, especially for complex cases.
- Not always focused on how the employee's condition impacts their specific job role.

### 2. Occupational Health (OH) Report

- **What It Is:** An OH report is a detailed assessment conducted by an Occupational Health professional, focusing on how an employee's health affects their ability to work and what can be done to support them in their role.



- **What It Includes:**
  - A comprehensive evaluation of the employee's health.
  - Specific recommendations for workplace adjustments, like changes to duties or hours.
  - A prognosis, or outlook, on the employee's condition and potential return to work.
- **When to Use:** An OH report is particularly valuable for managing long-term or complex health issues. It's ideal when you need more detailed advice than what a GP fit note provides, especially when you're looking to make specific workplace adjustments or when initial adjustments haven't been effective.
- **Pros:**
  - Tailored advice specific to the workplace and job role.
  - Helps ensure legal compliance with health and safety and equality laws.
  - Provides a clear plan for managing the employee's return to work or ongoing health needs.
- **Cons:**
  - Requires time and resources to arrange.
  - May take longer to receive than a GP fit note.

### 3. Specialist/GP Report

- **What It Is:** A specialist or GP report is a detailed medical opinion provided by a consultant or specialist in a particular field of medicine. It gives in-depth insight into a specific health condition.
- **What It Includes:**
  - A detailed diagnosis and description of the employee's condition.
  - Information on treatment plans and recovery timelines.
  - Sometimes includes notes on the condition's impact on work, but this is not the primary focus.
- **When to Use:** These reports are best used when there's a need to understand a complex or rare medical condition in depth. They are useful for getting a clear medical diagnosis but may not offer practical workplace advice.
- **Pros:**
  - Provides detailed information on specific health conditions.
  - Useful for understanding complex or rare health issues.



- **Cons:**
  - May not be focused on workplace implications.
  - Often needs to be supplemented with an OH report for workplace-specific advice.

