

## Step 3: Maintaining communication throughout absence



### KEY FACT:

- Maintaining communication is vital. If you stay in touch with your employer while you are off work, you are much more likely return to work and stay in work.



### WHAT TO DO:

- Obtain a Fit Note from the GP for any absence over 7 consecutive days.
- Send the Fit Note to your employer.
- Claim Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if appropriate. [See the GOV.UK website for more details and to understand how to claim SSP.](#)
- Keep in touch with your employer in the ways you agreed ([see step 1](#)). Keep them informed of your work intentions as best you can.
- You may find it helpful to arrange to meet a trusted colleague outside of the workplace. You do not need to talk about work, but this can help you to stay connected with work. This can help to make returning to work feel less scary.



### WHAT TO SAY: In your meeting with the GP

- GPs are experts in healthcare, but *they do not always know about your work or employment matters.*
- Before you meet with your GP, think about what you are going to say/ask. Make notes and take them with you. The exercise below can help you with this. For more tips about how to talk to your GP about mental health see the [Mental Health Foundation website.](#)
- You might find it useful to think about how your mental health impacts on your work, and what might be useful to help you manage this.
- You might also want to take a friend/ family member with you if you feel that would be helpful. Many people with mental ill-health find it difficult to remember details, so having someone there to support you can be useful.



### EXERCISE:

[Preparing to talk to your GP](#)



### WHAT TO SAY to your employer:

Once you have met with your GP or a health professional and have obtained your Fit Note, you can let your employer know. You can use the template email/letter below to edit and send to your employer. Or, if you need to have a phone conversation, you can use the telephone checklist below to help you with this. Try to include as much information as you can.



## TEMPLATE EMAIL/LETTER:

[Letter/ email to edit and use to tell your employer you will be off work, including information following your conversation with your GP.](#)



## CHECKLIST:

[Checklist for telephone call to tell your employer you will be off work following your conversation with your GP.](#)