

Sickness Absence Policy

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Policy Statement

This policy sets out what you must do if you're sick as well as how we'll manage your absence and your return to work. It also talks about occupational health support, and your role in this process.

It's non-contractual and may be changed in the future. If you have any questions about it, please contact HR Services.

Who does it apply to?

This policy applies to anyone with a GB contract of employment.

Policy Detail - What do I need to know or do?

From time to time, you may need to take absence from the business due to sickness. Both physical and mental conditions could have an impact on you at work and you might experience symptoms that vary from day to day (for example, debilitating menopausal, menstrual symptoms, or diabetes). During such times, you are encouraged to have open discussions with your manager around work and any support you may require. Upon your return to work you must be well enough to perform your duties to the expected level.

You must always follow any local site/customer rules in relation to quality and food safety, these will usually confirm a minimum period of time-off for certain types of illness. If you're not sure what these are please ask your manager.

You are responsible for maintaining good health and taking necessary precautions to prevent illness. You should prioritise your well-being, seek medical advice, when needed, and follow any recommended health guidance and practices. If you're not doing everything you can to get better, this may impact your discretionary company sick pay.

You can find information about things that Britvic has in place to support your wellbeing, health and lifestyle, on the Health and Lifestyle Benefits page on our intranet. This includes access to a free and confidential 24/7 counselling and support service, and any advice and support you receive is totally confidential.

We care about the health of our employees and are committed to creating an inclusive working environment where everyone can feel safe to discuss their health and wellbeing. We encourage you to speak to your manager if you have concerns about your health or wellbeing, so we can provide you with support and guidance.

If you have a condition that requires support during work, possible reasonable workplace adjustments may be accommodated to support you.

Reporting, Contact during Sickness and Certification

You must ring your manager to let them know that you're unwell and not able to work. You should do this at least an hour before the time you're due to start work, or in line with any local sickness reporting requirements. Unreported absence is considered unauthorised and may result in disciplinary action being considered.

If you need to have an operation, please let your manager know and give as much notice as possible. You should discuss with your manager any advice your consultant has given you about the likely time off you'll need to recover and any information about your expected recovery plan. Your manager may ask for documentation to support this. Procedures which are purely cosmetic are normally not considered as sickness and you should book the time off as annual leave instead.

You must keep in touch with your manager regularly whilst you're off to let them know how you are, any support you may need, and when you'll likely be returning to work. For shorter absences, this will usually be daily. However, depending on the nature of your illness, your manager will agree with you how often you'll stay in contact during your sickness absence.

You can self-certify your sickness absence for up to 7 calendar days. If you're absent for more than 7 calendar days (including non-working days) you must provide us with a fit note from your Doctor to cover the time that you're off. Please arrange for these to be sent to your manager without delay, as this may impact the payment of any sick pay.

Either you or your manager will need to log your absence record in myHR, and this should be updated if your absence continues, with any fit notes attached.

Sick Pay and other Benefits

If you're off sick and follow the requirements set out in Britvic's Standard Terms and Conditions of Employment and this policy, we'll pay you in line with your entitlement to statutory sick pay or discretionary company sick pay.

Service	Maximum Total Discretionary Payment
Less than 1 year of service	4 weeks full pay in any rolling period of 12 months, capped at 4 weeks full pay for any continuous period of incapacity exceeding 12 months.
More than 1 year of service/less than 5 years of service	13 weeks full pay in any rolling period of 12 months, capped at 13 weeks full pay for any continuous period of incapacity exceeding 12 months.
More than 5 years of service/less than 10 years of service	26 weeks full pay in any rolling period of 12 months, capped at 26 weeks full pay for any continuous period of incapacity exceeding 12 months.
More than 10 years of service	26 weeks full pay, then 13 weeks half pay in any rolling period of 12 months capped at 26 weeks full pay, then 13 weeks half pay for any continuous period of incapacity exceeding 12 months.

All contractual benefits, apart from your pay, will normally stay in place during sickness absence. If you receive SSP only, you need to be aware that this may impact some benefits and it changes your bonusable pay.

Your manager will let you know when your discretionary company sick pay is exhausted, and HR Services will normally write to tell you before you've exhausted your entitlement to SSP and send you an SSP1 form, so you can explore any state benefits that you may be entitled to.

Discretionary Company Sick Pay

Discretionary company sick pay and the rules when payment may or may not be made are detailed in Britvic's Standard Terms and Conditions of Employment. In addition, discretionary company sick pay may not be paid if you do not follow this policy, or:

- If the absence immediately follows any disciplinary allegations or, fact finding/investigation exercises, or performance issues being raised with you.
- If you do not follow any recommended health guidance or are not doing everything you can to get better.
- If the absence sequence becomes suspicious e.g. regular or frequent patterns e.g. Friday or Monday absences or during a period of declined holiday.
- If your absence is unauthorised.
- If you fail to carry out any reasonable management requests in relation to your health or absence.
- If you fail to provide regular updates to your manager about your absence or ability to work.

Managers will periodically review discretionary company sick pay in line with this policy and Britvic's Standard Terms and Conditions of Employment. If they decide to withhold payment, they will write to you to let you know the reasons for this.

Returning to Work – Self Certification

You'll need to meet with your manager when you return to work and ensure that your absence has been correctly logged on myHR, clearly reflecting your return to work date. This should be done on your first day back or as soon as possible. The meeting should determine your fitness to return to work, as well as addressing any issues underlying your absence, offer any appropriate support, and where appropriate, inform you if any further action is being taken in regards to your absence levels.

If your manager has concerns about your fitness for work, we may defer your return to work until further medical information has been gathered. If a phased return to work plan has been agreed, we'll pay you for the hours that you work. Arrangements on how your pay could be topped up will be discussed with you by your manager, for example, using your holiday entitlement, or any remaining discretionary company sick pay. If this isn't possible, any hours not worked as part of a phased return will be unpaid.

Managing Absence

Whilst we understand that you may need to take time off to recover from an illness, we will manage unacceptable absence levels, as this can adversely affect the business and your colleagues. You're responsible for meeting and maintaining satisfactory attendance levels and good health standards.

Your manager will consider any periods of absence(s) and discuss any concerns about this with you. They may do this through an absence improvement meeting, in line with our trigger points.

The purpose of these meetings is to identify the root cause(s) of any absence as well as addressing and resolving potential issues and agree any necessary support needed as soon as possible, leading to a satisfactory and sustained improvement in your attendance. The focus should be on what you need to do, any appropriate support and how any subsequent absences will be managed. Your manager should make a record of all discussions and they may issue you with an absence improvement warning, outlining the expected improvement required in your attendance and any appropriate support or actions.

If following an absence improvement warning being issued to you, there isn't a sustained improvement, or further triggers are reached, then further improvement warnings may be issued, which could ultimately lead to your dismissal with notice.

If you have a medical condition which causes you to take a longer period of absence, you'll be expected to return to work as soon as possible following your illness or injury. Taking Occupational Health advice into account where appropriate, we'll consider both modified duties and redeployment on a temporary basis, to help you return to work.

Your manager will hold regular **welfare meetings** with you, which are important to help us understand both your needs and our business needs, in accordance with legislation. Managers should make a record of all meeting discussions and confirm any actions to you in writing.

We will use return to work plans to set objectives for your return to normal contractual duties. We will also take into consideration any adjustments which have been recommended by a medical practitioner.

It's recognised that some medical conditions can cause persistent or long-term ill health which may affect your ongoing ability to fully perform your contracted role. In this case, longer-term alternative duties may need to be considered and managers should continue to review these where appropriate.

If after considering medical evidence and options for support, you are unable to perform your contracted role due to your ill health, we'll invite you to a meeting to formally review your absence. We will endeavour to take every measure to support you and explore all opportunities, including redeployment, to aid your return to work. However, if we're unable to identify any alternatives which are deemed suitable, then we may make a decision to terminate your employment, with notice, on the grounds of capability associated with your ill health. You can have a companion (colleague/TU rep) with you at that meeting and you'll be given the right to appeal the decision.

If you're a member of our company pension scheme, we'll review what support may be available under our ill health early retirement scheme. Any support given under the scheme is the decision of the pension scheme Trustees.

Absence Triggers

Unsatisfactory absence levels can adversely affect the business and have a negative impact on colleagues, so managers may follow the steps detailed below in order to address this. At each stage your manager will outline the expectations for improvement and identify any actions and appropriate support needed, to encourage consistent and sustained levels of attendance.

These absence triggers are used as a prompt for managers to discuss absence concerns and to determine whether an improvement warning is needed, to drive a sustained improvement in your attendance at work. Managers may use their discretion to re-issue a warning where you have absence within a short period following the expiry of an absence improvement warning, or this may result in a higher sanction, where appropriate. If you're absent for part of the warning period, this period will be suspended and re-started again on your return to work. Expired warnings will stay as a record on your file.

The following should be used as a guideline, with possible outcomes:

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Triggers</u>	<u>Possible outcomes</u>
Informal	3 occasions of any duration or 2 occasions of absence (when added together equal 2 calendar weeks) or 1 occasion of 28 calendar days or more, within a rolling 12 month period	Informal absence improvement warning letter
Stage 1	A further 1 to 2 occasions of any duration, within 12 months of the return to work date of your most recent absence <i>(Managers should give consideration to whether attendance improvements have been made within the 12 month period)</i>	Stage 1 absence improvement warning on file for 12 months
Stage 2	A further 2 occasions of absence of any duration or 1 occasion of 28 calendar days or more, whilst a Stage 1 absence improvement warning is active	Stage 2 absence improvement warning on file for 12 months
Stage 3	A further 2 occasions of absence of any duration or 1 occasion of 28 calendar days or more, whilst a Stage 2 absence improvement warning is active	Dismissal with notice

If you're asked to attend a formal absence improvement meeting, you may have a companion (colleague/TU rep) with you, and you should let us know if there are any adjustments you need, to enable you to fully participate in the meeting. You'll be reminded of this in your invite letter, and, where possible, we'll give a minimum of 24 hours' notice of the meeting.

Managers should raise an askHR in advance of holding a Stage 3 absence improvement meeting, or at any stage of the process should they need further support or guidance.

Appeals may be made in line with our appeal guidance and will be detailed in your outcome letter, where applicable.

Occupational Health

At any time, we may ask you to have a medical assessment through our Occupational Health provider. This may be with an Occupational Health Advisor or Doctor, an

independent clinician or a report from your treating physician(s). Any medical records will be handled in line with current legislation.

Your manager should talk to you about why a referral to Occupational Health is appropriate. Once the Occupational Health report is received the report will be shared with your line manager, and referring manager, where this is someone different. You must co-operate with us in obtaining relevant medical reports and payment of discretionary company sick pay is dependent on you doing so. Your failure to co-operate may result in disciplinary action and you may be in breach of this policy and your terms and conditions of employment.

Managers can refer to the Guide to Making Occupational Health Referrals on the company intranet, which offers guidance on when and how to make a referral.

What happens if I don't follow this policy?

It is our personal responsibility to do the right thing for ourselves, for each other, and for Britvic. This behaviour is the beating heart of our "Own It" value. Not doing the right thing or asking for support, could impact your myPerformance end of year rating, and any potential breach may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

If you don't follow this policy your absence may be treated as unauthorised and this may have an impact on you receiving statutory sick pay and discretionary company sick pay. Unauthorised absence may also result in disciplinary action being considered.

Related Documents

The following related documents can be found on our [Policies and Disclosure](#) page on Focus:

- Britvic Standard Terms and Conditions of Employment
- Time Off Policy
- Companion Guidance
- Appeal Guidance
- Wellbeing and Resilience Policy