
Sickness Absence Policy

1. Policy Statement

If you feel unwell it's always important to think of your wellbeing and make sure that you are doing what you need to do to get better. This may mean taking some time off work. 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.

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

2. Policy Owner

The policy is owned by the Director of Reward & HR Services, Kevin Blake.

3. Who does it apply to?

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

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

From time to time you may not feel 100%. 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 or menstrual symptoms). During such times, you are encouraged to have open discussions with your manager around work and coping strategies. You must be well enough to perform your duties to the expected level otherwise you should be off sick so you can rest and get better.

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.

Any adjustments to your normal ways of working and work activity as a result of you being unwell must be agreed by your manager before you start doing them.

You can find lots of relevant information about specific health conditions and wellness in general on the myLife community on myLearning. On our intranet, you also have access to the myLife wellbeing portal which is another resource to support you. Through myLife, counselling is available to you on a 24/7 basis. You have the option of talking to a trained professional over the phone or via the on-line chat

facility. This service is free and any advice and support you receive is private and totally confidential.

We care deeply about the health of our people and are committed to creating an inclusive working environment where everyone can feel safe to discuss their health and wellbeing including long term illness i.e. cancer and other health concerns. We encourage you to speak to your manager or another manager if you have concerns about your health or wellbeing so we can provide you with support and enhance your wellbeing through support programmes and benefit schemes.

If you have a cancer diagnosis or disability, possible reasonable workplace adjustments may be accommodated to support you. A 'reasonable adjustment' is a change to the workplace or the way you do things in order to remove or reduce the effect of your diagnosis or disability so that you can do your job.

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 usually do this at least an hour before the time you're due to start work or in line with any local sickness reporting requirements. If you can't speak to your manager leave a message for them to call you back or call their alternative contact person if applicable.

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 holiday instead.

You must keep in touch with your manager whilst you're off to let them know how you are and any support you may need, and when you'll likely be returning to work. Depending on the nature of your illness, your manager will agree with you how often you'll stay in contact during your sickness absence. For short term absences, this will usually be daily. If you're on long term sick your manager may ask to meet with you at your home or another agreed location, you may have a companion (colleague/TU rep) with you.

You can self-certify your absence when you come back to work if you're off for up to 7 calendar days.

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

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 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.

Sick pay is paid in arrears (i.e. in the pay period after the sickness absence started). Your payslip will detail your individual sick pay calculations.

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 changes your bonusable pay.

We'll continue to pay into your pension whilst you have sick pay. Company pension contributions will only be made if you make up your individual contributions.

You'll need to look at the benefit scheme rules for any benefits that you have e.g. if in shareplan, deductions (full/partial) will only be taken if you have enough earnings. It's important that you review your flexible benefit selections. If you receive SSP or no pay, you'll need to talk to us about how you'll make up your contributions. You'll continue to accrue your holiday (contractual and bank holidays) in the normal way during a period of sickness absence.

We'll normally write to tell you before you've exhausted your entitlement to SSP and send you an SSP 1 form so you can explore any state benefits that you may be entitled to.

Discretionary Company Sick Pay Scheme

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 the absence immediately follows any disciplinary issues, fact finding/investigation exercises, allegations or performance issues being raised with you
- If the absence sequence becomes suspicious e.g. regular or frequent Friday or Monday absences
- If your absence is unauthorised
- If you fail to carry out any reasonable management requests in relation to your health or absence
- If you do not attend a meeting to discuss discretionary company sick pay within reasonable timescales
- 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 and if they are considering withholding payment, they should follow these steps:

- Invite you to a review meeting to discuss the reason for absence, discretionary company sick pay and options. You may have a companion (colleague/TU rep) with you
- Hold review meeting and confirm outcome in writing, where appropriate details of your right to appeal the decision
- Inform HR Services if discretionary company sick pay is affected

If you do not attend the review meeting this may result in discretionary company sick pay being withheld pending a review meeting taking place, which will be arranged at the earliest possible opportunity.

Returning to Work – Self Certification

You'll need to meet with your manager when you return to work and log your absence and return to work date on myHR, 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 and offering the appropriate support for your recovery. If you are food handler, you will also need to complete our form and upload this to your myHR time off record.

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 you've seen your Doctor, they may have given their view on how your return to work could be supported or they may also provide information about the impact of your illness or injury on your ability to carry out your role.

Whilst we will consider what your Doctor has said we may defer your return to work until further consideration has taken place with our Occupational Health partners. Depending on the circumstances other policies may also be considered at this stage for example alcohol, drugs and solvents, wellbeing and resilience.

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 your holiday entitlement.

Sickness Absence Management (short term absence)

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

If a concern about your attendance is raised through either monitoring or the return to work meeting, your manager should have a counselling meeting with you.

The purpose of the counselling meeting is to identify the root cause of any absence as well as addressing and resolving potential issues as soon as possible, leading to a satisfactory and sustained improvement in your attendance level. You may have a companion (colleague/TU rep) with you if you wish.

The meeting should focus on what you need to do, any appropriate support and how any subsequent absences will be monitored. Managers should make a record of all discussions and meetings. Generally, the outcome and any timescales and standards for improvement will be confirmed in writing. Timescales should be relevant to the issue and job requirements.

If after the counselling meeting, there is not a sustained improvement this may become a disciplinary matter and disciplinary warnings may be given. Any disciplinary warning will set standards for improvement and identify any appropriate support. If further standards are not met, further warnings may be issued which could ultimately lead to dismissal.

Medical Management Process (long term absence)

If you have a medical condition which means that you need 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, we'll consider both modified duties and redeployment on a temporary basis to help you return to work. A return to work plan will set realistic objectives for your return to normal duties in a timeframe guided by our Occupational Health provider. It's recognised that some medical conditions do take time to achieve a full recovery, in which case longer-term alternative duties may be considered.

Following the medical management process is important so we understand both your needs and our business needs, in accordance with legislation. Managers should make a record of all discussions and meetings and confirm any actions to you in writing.

If after considering medical evidence and options for support, there are concerns about your ability to perform your duties because of your health, we'll invite you to a meeting to formally review the situation.

We'll explore all possible options including redeployment; however, the outcome of this meeting may be that your contract of employment is terminated with notice, on the grounds of capability associated with ill health. You can have a companion (colleague/TU rep) with you at the 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.

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 nurse 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. You must co-operate with us in obtaining relevant medical reports and payment of discretionary company sick pay is dependent on your doing so, failure to co-operate may result in disciplinary action and you may be in breach of your terms and conditions of employment.

Occupational health referrals should be made:

- If you're absent due to an accident or occupational ill health
- If you're likely to be absent for more than 10 consecutive days
- If your manager has any other cause of concern

5. Policy breach and consequences - What happens if I don't follow it?

If you don't follow this policy your absence may be treated as unauthorised and this may have an impact on you receiving discretionary company sick pay.

If you do not meet the obligations we've set out in this policy, it could affect your `Britvic Values and Ways of Working rating on myPerformance. Any false declaration about your absence from work will be considered as a serious matter, this along with unauthorised absence may be dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy.

6. 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