

Breaks Policy

V1.2

Version:	Owner:	Created:
V1.2	People Team	01.12.2009
Published:	Approving Director:	Next Review
June 2026	Director of People & OD	June 2029

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Introduction

BrisDoc supports co-owners, employees, bank workers and other workers to take appropriate rest breaks during their working day. Breaks help protect health, wellbeing, safety, concentration and the quality of care and service we provide.

BrisDoc provides paid rest breaks during rostered and contracted shifts and working hours. This policy sets the minimum organisational approach while allowing services to manage breaks locally in a way that is safe, fair, practical and responsive to patient and service need.

Local managers may agree service-specific arrangements, including the timing, sequencing, recording and practical management of breaks, provided that legal rest requirements, health and safety, fairness and service continuity are maintained.

Legal minimum rest breaks

Adult workers who work more than six hours in a day are entitled to an uninterrupted rest break of at least 20 minutes. The break should be taken during the working day and should not normally be treated as a substitute for starting later or finishing earlier.

Some roles and working patterns, including shift work and safety-critical services, may need breaks to be managed flexibly. Where a statutory break cannot be taken in the usual way, managers should arrange an appropriate alternative rest break as soon as reasonably practicable and should consider whether any repeated difficulty indicates a staffing, workload or rota issue.

Young workers have different statutory rest break entitlements. Managers should seek advice from the People Team before agreeing or rostering work for anyone under 18.

Paid breaks

Planned or agreed rest breaks taken during a rostered or contracted shift are paid. This means that pay continues during the break and the break should not normally be deducted from pay or treated as unpaid time away from work.

The statutory 20-minute rest break is the legal minimum for adult workers, not a BrisDoc maximum. Some services may roster or agree a longer paid break, such as 30 minutes, where this reflects the local operating model, shift length, established local arrangement or service need.

A paid break is still a genuine rest break. Co-owners should not routinely be expected to work through breaks, remain at their workstation, continue taking calls, monitor systems, or hold responsibility for active duties during the break. Where a break is interrupted for an unavoidable service need, the manager should seek to provide a replacement break during the same shift wherever reasonably possible.

Paid breaks do not create an automatic entitlement to additional break time beyond what is planned, agreed locally, required by law, or needed for health, safety or wellbeing reasons. Managers retain discretion to agree practical arrangements for their service.

Planning and taking breaks

Breaks should be planned and taken in a way that supports safe staffing, patient care, confidentiality, appointment flow and service continuity. In services where continuous cover is needed, breaks may be staggered, delayed or arranged around activity levels.

On-shift managers can agree when breaks are taken and how they are recorded locally. Where appointment systems, rotas or local handover arrangements are used, breaks should be

recorded in the way that best supports safe cover and a good patient or service-user experience.

Co-owners should speak to their on-shift manager if they are unable to take a planned break, if service pressures are preventing breaks being taken, or if they need a break for health, wellbeing or safety reasons.

Missed or interrupted breaks

Breaks should not be missed routinely. Where a break is missed or interrupted because of genuine service need, the on-shift manager should use judgement to provide a replacement break where practicable and should consider whether any further action is needed to protect health and safety.

If missed or interrupted breaks become a repeated issue within a service, the manager should review the local rota, staffing model, appointment flow or operating arrangements. The People Team can advise where the issue relates to contractual terms, health and safety, working time, reasonable adjustments or wellbeing.

Additional or discretionary breaks

Managers may agree short additional breaks where this is reasonable in the circumstances. Examples may include fatigue, pregnancy, disability, health conditions, medication, emotional distress following a difficult incident, or other wellbeing or safety considerations.

Additional breaks should be managed locally and applied fairly. They do not need to be centrally approved in every case. Where an additional break is likely to be ongoing, frequent or connected to a health condition or disability, the manager should discuss the position with the co-owner and seek advice from the People Team where needed.

Short comfort, hydration, stretching or screen breaks can be managed sensibly at service level and do not require formal approval where they are reasonable and do not adversely affect safe cover or service delivery.

Smoking and vaping breaks

BrisDoc provides a non-smoking working environment. Smoking and vaping should not take place inside BrisDoc premises, NHS premises, vehicles, entrances or grounds where local site rules prohibit this.

There is no separate entitlement to additional smoking or vaping breaks. Smoking or vaping should take place during normal breaks, off site where required, away from entrances and public view, and in a way that is consistent with BrisDoc's role as a healthcare provider.

BrisDoc encourages and supports co-owners who wish to stop smoking to access appropriate support.

Change Register

Date	Version	Author	Change Details
24.01.09	Draft template	S Brown	
February 2010	V1	S Brown	
August 2013	V1	B Dickinson	Reviewed and approved
May 2022	V1.1	L Grinnell	Review and updates
June 2026	V1.2	M Duncan	Updated to reflect paid breaks