



Boots customers say: Pay Boots staff proper sick pay!

March 2025

Dear Anthony Hemmerdinger,

Organise is a worker-led platform with over one million members, where people from all sectors, professions and work situations come together to change the working lives of millions of people.

A group of Boots staff are campaigning for proper sick pay, supported by thousands of Boots customers.

They have started a petition which can be found [here](#). One Boots employee says:

"I have long term health problems and i've been in hospital twice. I push myself to carry on going to work as can't afford to be off. No sick pay for 3 days then just statutory sick pay. This causes me stress and anxiety when I'm meant to be looking after myself. The system is unfair as I and my colleagues can't help having health issues."

This is the ask from Boots staff:

Boots should pay sick pay in line with our salary to ease stress and anxiety and to stop the pressure to return too soon. Boots workers often work in close proximity to the vulnerable and elderly, so it is not right that employees should come to work sick, just because they can't afford to take the time off.

In support of Boots staff, more than 25,000 Boots customers have responded to a survey about their views on Boots not paying sick pay. Their voices make up this report.

The personal testimonies included in this report come from members of the public in support of salary aligned sick pay for Boots workers.

67% of people surveyed committed to stop shopping at Boots until you pay sick pay.

Top headlines from the report:

👉 **More than half of Boots customers said they were “angry” that Boots does not pay proper sick pay.**

👉 **More than 7,000 people wrote messages of support to Boots staff about how wrong they believe this policy is.**

What Boots customers are saying:

"Sick pay is the most basic way to protect both staff and customers from spreading illness. In the wake of an event like the Covid-19 pandemic it is scandalously callous, short-sighted, and ignorant for Boots to fail to have a policy in place to provide sick pay. Particularly as Boots delivers pharmacy and health care services, it's the height of hypocrisy and it makes me never want to shop with Boots again."

"As a shop that is partly, if not predominantly a pharmacy, it is farcical that you would not pay your employees sick pay. I am baffled that this is legal and it is also unsafe for your customers. I will be shopping elsewhere until this is rectified."

"How dare you take away the support your employees' rely on at their time of greatest need. The last thing people need is to worry about money when they're already unwell. You make all that profit, pay yourself extortionate amounts but don't want to offer your staff who work a damn site harder than you do a very basic level of support and respect? Shame on you. You are everything that is wrong with the world and we won't be shopping at Boots again until you put it right."

"It's a basic human right to be supported by employers when ill. It is doubly irresponsible to expose vulnerable customers to infection. I will not be shopping at Boots until the policy changes."

"Appalling that Boots, a known and trusted brand, is so contemptuous of its employees that they are denied sick pay when ill. I won't be shopping there from now on. "

What Boots customers are saying:

"I don't want a member of your staff returning to work prematurely because of wage insecurity. Shop staff, especially Boots, should not be in the habit of having sick or infectious staff on their shopfloor. They serve many customers that are frail or are health compromised for their prescriptions & supplements. Stop abusing your staff by imposing poor working conditions!"

"Allowing employees time to rest and recuperate when ill is common decency, but for a pharmacist—whose services people may need when they are sick and thus vulnerable—to be so callous in disregarding employee health when sick employees could endanger customers is unconscionable."

"I work as a carer for elderly and vulnerable people who are at risk. Because of having several times coming across staff that were sick I always insist my client use companies that are not Boots to decrease the risks to them. It's disgraceful that they do not pay their staff to stay away when they are contagious, potentially putting their customers lives at risk. If they changed their policy on this I would consider using them again. They should not entertain staff working when they are poorly and they should not be allowed to make their customers sick. The chances are they are made ill by your customers so it is absurd that you would not pay them for their time off to recover."

What current and former Boots staff are saying:

"I work at Boots and I fear getting sick. It's just not affordable to take a day off. We need all the support we can get."

"As an ex member of staff and a single mother, I can say I would regularly come in to work very sick otherwise I did not get paid. I used to work on the make up counters and would have coughs, colds and other illnesses. Off I asked to go home, I would be bullied into staying."

"How could you be so callous? I always thought synonymous with care. I choose to shop in Boots as I worked there in my teenage years and it felt like family. However we don't treat family like that. Shame on you."

"Boots traditionally supported their staff properly. I worked in the head office in 1996 and the value of Jesse Boot's wife was to look after employees properly and with care and compassion. Destroying these values seems inhumane and destroys the integrity of the founders."

What current and former Boots staff are saying:

"The people that work on the shop floor for Boots are a big part of what makes it a successful business, you should value your staff more, they are not just a number. Having worked for Boots I know this to be a long standing problem. I was once asked to walk 2 hours to work in a bad snow storm as there was no public transport and was not safe to do so."

"I worked for Boots about 20 years ago, when I first started you cared about your employees. Then suddenly we were just a number and no one cared. When it came out that Boots did not pay taxes in the UK we were basically threatened not to speak to any members of the press or we would lose our jobs! That is not the way you should treat your staff nor is how you treat them now. Very disappointed with you!"

Thank you for reading this response from Boots staff and customers.

Organise members are calling on you to respond to this report and pay Boots staff sick pay in line with their salaries.

We look forward to hearing your reply which we will share with Organise members.

To respond to this report, please email Amy Lockwood from the Organise staff team, at amy@organise.network

Sources:

Organise survey of Boots customers:

<https://the.organise.network/surveys/2486/results/public>

