

Top ten reasons to derecognise the BPA

1. *Derecognition of the BPA is an essential first step for the PDA Union to be recognised by Boots*

The PDA Union is an independent trade union with over 27,000 members. We're committed to improving your working conditions and benefits. Once the BPA is derecognised the PDA Union will be able to negotiate your pay, hours and working conditions – but this will only happen if Boots pharmacists vote to remove the agreement between Boots and the BPA.

2. *The PDA Union is a certified independent trade union and one of the 30 largest unions in the UK*

Independent Trade Union recognition is commonplace in the UK and helps ensure employees' interests are properly represented and protected. A contented workforce is good for business and we're keen to work with the company to make things better for Boots pharmacists. The BPA is not independent; an independent government adjudicator decided the BPA is liable to interference by Boots and dependant upon the goodwill of the company.

3. *Boots and the BPA are blocking pharmacists from being able to negotiate over their pay, hours and working conditions*

In 2012 the BPA signed a secret agreement with Boots without consulting Boots pharmacists. The agreement was designed to prevent Boots pharmacists from being able to negotiate over better terms and conditions. This agreement infringes the human rights of pharmacists and derecognition of the BPA will help to restore these rights.

4. *The PDA Union employs a team of specialist solicitors, pharmacists and paralegals to defend and support members*

Each week on average eight Boots pharmacists contact the PDA Union for advice and support. The PDA Union provides specialist legal and pharmacy advice and we



have detailed knowledge of how the company operates. Our professional teams work closely together on cases in purpose built modern offices where members can meet the team who are representing them.

The BPA provides support through well-meaning individuals who work for Boots and who are not qualified to offer legal advice. The BPA directs members to a generic legal helpline for any legal support required and operates from the home address of its part time chief executive whose other role is to represent the interests of pharmacy contractors, such as Boots.

5. *The PDA Union fights for your rights*

In 2011, Boots cut pharmacists' premium payments for Sunday and bank holiday working. The BPA decided the cuts were legal and permitted the company to proceed unchallenged. The PDA Union supported many Boots pharmacists in challenging the cuts through an employment tribunal hearing. These cuts were declared unlawful by a judge and compensation awarded. The PDA routinely supports members with employment tribunal claims against Boots and we have secured compensation running into hundreds of thousands of pounds over the years. We are unaware of the BPA having represented, or funded the representation of a pharmacist before an employment tribunal.

6. The PDA Union could do so much more for Boots pharmacists under a recognition agreement

The PDA Union has an excellent track record in getting the right outcome in disciplinary and grievance hearings. Currently our interventions only tackle the symptoms of a problem, rather than deal with the root cause. We know that some Boots pharmacists are unhappy about how their performance is judged, how their holidays are allocated, and others report poor treatment from managers that do not understand pharmacy. Boots pharmacists tell us that they are concerned about low staffing levels and unrealistic expectations placed upon them by managers. A collective bargaining arrangement would give the PDA Union the ability to directly negotiate with the company over these important topics and so much more besides.

7. The BPA will continue to exist if it is derecognised

The BPA has been in existence for almost forty years without needing an agreement such as the one signed in 2012. There is no reason why it cannot continue alongside the PDA Union if it is derecognised. A senior company director has confirmed in court that Boots relationship with the BPA would continue if the derecognition vote was successful.

8. It is in your best interests for the BPA to be derecognised

The PDA Union feels strongly that a recognition agreement with Boots serves the best interests of pharmacists. We are proud of the fact that more than 2,400 of your fellow pharmacists agree and have joined the PDA Union. Under a recognition agreement we will strive to give you good working conditions, competitive wages, improved benefits and the personal respect each pharmacist deserves.

9. You will be more in control of your working life

A recognition agreement will involve setting up democratic structures within Boots specifically to discuss pay hours and other working conditions ready for negotiations with the company. Pharmacists will be able to seek election to these committees to represent their colleagues and have a true independent voice.

10. You can help change the wider pharmacy working environment

Voting to derecognise the BPA, which will lead to the recognition of the PDA Union is just the first step. A successful collective bargaining agreement which benefits both pharmacists and Boots can be used as a template for other organisations. You can help start a movement that will change for the better how pharmacists are treated by other employers.



Some of the PDA Union team (L to R): Paul Day, National Officer; John Murphy, General Secretary; Helen Lewis, Regional Official, Wales & West; Mark Pitt, Assistant General Secretary; Mark Koziol, Assistant General Secretary