

## Welcome to the March Boots Newsletter

*Keeping you informed of all the PDA Union activities within Boots*

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**We encourage you to share this newsletter with your pharmacy colleagues that are not yet members of the PDA.**

## Store hour reductions

*By Paul Flynn*

**Boots Management recently took the decision to reduce trading hours in a majority of stores across their UK estate. This had potentially meant that some pharmacists were facing significant proposed reductions to hours and accordingly their pay.**

After communications and contact from members into the Boots Reps and Service Centre, the PDA raised some concerns with Boots management about a number of elements of the process.

At the time of going to print, following the PDA raising concerns, there has been a pause to this process for pharmacists while Boots considers how to implement it. The PDA have asked the company to monitor profile of those impacted, to ensure there is no potential discrimination in the process. The PDA want an outcome that compensates enforced losses of earnings and encourages a focus on producing a transparent and fair outcome that means pharmacists want to remain employed by the company.

The PDA organised a member evening at very short notice and within 72 hours of invites being sent it was attended by 140 members. Boots pharmacists were able to have their questions answered directly from the PDA Legal Team and PDA Divisional Reps.

Please find the most up to date FAQ [here](#). If you need individual support, please contact your local rep.

# Joint Negotiating Body (JNB) update

*By Richard Evans*

**We are all aware of the increase in cost of living for everyone and the rise in food and fuel bills.**

The next round of JNB meetings in which the pay for Boots pharmacists is negotiated for the bargaining unit (all pharmacists) will commence early summertime 2022. Feedback on what you would like to see included in the PDA pay claim is always welcome, so please speak to your Regional Rep if you would like to discuss this further.



Meanwhile, the current pay review takes effect in the January pay run with the 2% increase seen in your salary and two months backdated pay along with a day's salary (the second day's salary negotiated payable in March). There was also a time extension allowed to the £100 short notice payments agreed in the final negotiations. We hope to update the salary ready reckoner shortly as it has proved very popular with our members.

The recent Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meeting was regrettably cancelled due to differences of opinion between union and management on what should be discussed and overall content of the meeting. Since then, discussions have developed the understanding of this joint process and the JCC is to be relaunched. With the different perspectives of company and employee representatives, such disagreements will inevitably occur from time to time in this sort of relationship and we will return to discussing health & safety and other members' matters impacting pharmacists at our next meeting.

PDA Reps work hard to hear your concerns and resolve any issues locally and together where possible.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

## Related links

- Join the PDA [here](#)
- [Conclusion of 2021 pay negotiations with Boots UK](#)

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## A brief history of John

*By Paul Flynn*

**John Lester, PDA Divisional Rep and Regional Rep for The West of England has chosen to retire from Pharmacy life after a long and varied career.**

John started his life in Boots baling cardboard and sweeping the stockroom on 1048 Hatfield at the age of 13.

He worked through his university years on Saturdays before commencing his pre-reg in St Albans and then to Milton Keynes where he met his wife, Tracey.

A consummate professional and esteemed pharmacist, his career took him to several pharmacy and store manager roles in the Western region and also District Manager roles in London and the North-West. Other roles in John's career included an Area Business Efficiency Manager, Large store Managerial roles in Western-Super-Mare and the Jersey flagship store. John returned to Somerset in 2005 with positions in Wells and Glastonbury with a period as a Local Pharmacy Area Manager during the Alliance-Boots merger.



John became Pharmacist Manager of Wells Health Centre store and became heavily involved in the PDA Union recognition campaign making sure the concerns of his fellow pharmacists were being heard.

John was appointed as PDA Divisional Rep for Wales and West relishing this role, supporting hundreds of members, pharmacists in Boots and participating in negotiations with the employer, specialising in learning & development issues, until his recent retirement after 45 years of continuous service with the company.

We wish John well in his retirement and thank him for the wonderful contribution he has made to patient care and the PDA.

If you're interested in becoming a PDA Rep, please email [Paul Flynn](#) in the first instance.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

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## Trainee/Foundation year pharmacists receive free PDA membership

*By Richard Evans and Tom Graves*

**The Trainee pharmacist year can be a long and pressured year, whereby a soon to be pharmacist must juggle a full-time job alongside a wealth of training exercises and modules to complete along with regular assessments, webinars and training days.**

The PDA offers networks, support, advice and guidance, and our PDA Education Hub offers a free revision programme with mock exam to help prepare you for your assessment in June or in the Autumn.

PDA membership is free for your Trainee year and in addition to offering national opportunities.

PDA Reps in Boots can provide advice, help you explore your options and signpost you to other relevant sources of support. Reps can help on issues such as poor treatment, access to study time, pay, rating reviews, procedures, and issues with supervisors. The PDA has also helped Trainees to move stores leading to an improvement in their working conditions and their training year as a whole.

Reps also organise a range of supportive events, webinars, and opportunities to network with other trainees from different sectors of membership.

We wish all the Trainee Foundation year pharmacists all the best in the coming months and their careers going forward and will be ready to support at all stages.

If you're not already a member join today.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

## Related links

- [PDA Reps Network in Boots](#)
- [PDA Education](#)

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# HSE Stress and Wellbeing survey results

**The HSE Stress and Wellbeing survey we undertook last October received the largest response to any survey we have undertaken within Boots to date with over 1700 responses.**

It was inspiring to hear the views of so many Boots PDA members, and very insightful to have hundreds of Boots pharmacists who are not PDA members share their views too.

The level of engagement with the survey clearly demonstrates the strength of feeling on issues such as stress and workload by pharmacists and highlights the need for the company to prioritise their health, safety, and wellbeing at work.

The PDA also recognise that this situation has recently been compounded for many by the impact of the changes announced by the employer to pharmacists' hours and pay which were announced after the survey was finalised.

The results of the survey make for concerning reading and include the following information:

45% of pharmacists working at Boots who completed the survey said they were never or seldom able to take sufficient rest breaks

Over 70% of respondents said they often or always had to neglect non-patient related tasks as they had too much to do

Nearly 55% of respondents said they were never or seldom consulted on changes at work

Two thirds of respondents said they always or often had unrealistic time pressures

Your PDA Reps Network in Boots are also PDA Health & Safety Reps and they will continue to collaborate with members, pharmacists and the employer to improve the working lives of pharmacists. PDA Reps will also be requesting the employer reconvene the joint Health & Safety Committee.

Gordon Finlayson, PDA Rep and Boots pharmacist commented,

***“As a Union Rep I am part of a group that communicates monthly with the Boots H&S team to raise concerns of members and to comment on company processes. We are committed to working constructively with the company to improve the working environment in Boots for all pharmacists.”***

You can read more about the survey results below. Please share this article with your pharmacist colleagues and encourage them to join the PDA!

**CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE**

## Related links

- [HSE Stress and Wellbeing Survey for PDA members employed at Lloyds, Boots and Well](#)
- [Boots yet to respond to PDA’s request to waive restrictions on pharmacists who face cuts to hours and pay](#)
- [PDA urges pharmacists to stay safe and take adequate rest breaks](#)

## Get involved

- [Boots pharmacists need to join the union](#)
- [Join the PDA](#)

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# Share your views: use of Pharmacy Unscripted Forum

*By Anne Davies*

**PDA Union representatives like me are practicing pharmacists, we experience our own workplaces, engage with colleagues and receive direct contact from other members. However, we are always keen to hear more from pharmacists in the bargaining unit which we represent.**

We encourage members to utilise company communication channels to raise views and concerns which also helps us know the topics being discussed by the wider pharmacist population at Boots.

One option is Pharmacy Unscripted which is a medium for communication within Boots for pharmacists and store teams. The platform that also has an app available consists of several sections:

Pharmacy news and products, CPD and learning updates and a resource toolkit along with guidance on how to use the platform.

The area that I use the most is the Unscripted Forum - a message board for conversations in the form of posted messages with replies. Each conversation thread is grouped in one of seven



categories which includes 'People' (this category is for pharmacists only).

While detailed matters relating specifically to your employment may be better shared privately with your union representative, we also encourage pharmacists to use the forum to post comments, ask questions, and voice any concerns you have about any issues affecting pharmacists in the business e.g., IT, workload, service problems.

At the moment there are many posts on store opening hours changes, market-based pay and pension schemes available.

If any issue is affecting you or you have a query, then please consider posting about it on Unscripted. Someone may have an answer or a suggestion to resolve a problem. If not, you will have raised awareness of the issue. Many of the PDA Reps review Unscripted and discussion there can help inform issues raised at meetings with management.

**Happy posting!**

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

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## Health and Safety update

*By Richard Evans*

**The PDA Divisional and Regional Union Reps have recently undertaken a Health and Safety training organised by the PDA on all matters relevant to the pharmacy workplace and the members working in them.**

We discussed cases involving typical pharmacy accidents along with workplace stress, covid issues, equality in the workplace, sharing of information, inspection checklists and risk assessments. We have monthly discussions with the company Health and Safety leads on workplace issues and are in the process of setting up a protocol for liaising with company Health and Safety Officers (SOS) when undertaking an investigation if one of our members has been involved in giving extra expert support and advice, should the member require it along with putting actions in place to prevent further occurrences across the estate.

We hope to further expand these courses to cover specific areas such as mental wellbeing in greater depth in the near future.

If any member has a workplace health and safety issue, please contact your PDA Regional Rep for advice.

Your PDA reps in Boots are here to help to solve issues early, locally and together and every member has a right to work in a safe environment.

### Learn more

- [Health and Safety Executive](#)
- [Pharmacist Support's Wardley Wellbeing Hub](#)

## Join our private Facebook group

If you would like to keep up to date with the work of the PDA Union Reps in Boots, we encourage you to join our private Facebook group [here](#).

Please note that sharing/quoting comments or contributions made by members in the group and taking screenshots is strictly against the group rules and breaches confidentiality.