

# PDA Update in Boots

November 2023



## Welcome to your November 2023 PDA Update in Boots

*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.**

## Pharmacist racially harassed by pharmacy team members

Following a 5-day hearing earlier this year, an Employment Tribunal has upheld 7 allegations of harassment related to race occurring during a shift on 18 July 2020 in a claim issued against Boots and one of its pharmacy technicians. The Tribunal concluded that the treatment of the pharmacist by the pharmacy technician, a pharmacy advisor and the store manager was significantly influenced by (and therefore related to) the pharmacist's race.

The pharmacist was represented throughout the internal grievance processes and at the Employment Tribunal hearing by the PDA. In a detailed written judgment, the pharmacy team members and company managers were heavily criticised by the Tribunal, who found the pharmacy technician and a pharmacy advisor working with the pharmacist during the shift had undermined the pharmacist in his professional role as the Responsible Pharmacist (RP) and insulted him.

The pharmacist, who is black and of Nigerian national origin, complained to Boots about his experience, however the subsequent investigation was described by the Judge as "simply not fit for purpose" lacking a basic level of competence. The grievance manager was "not equipped" for an enquiry of this nature with no specific training on conducting grievances into serious allegations of discrimination. There were unacceptable delays in dealing with the complaints. The Tribunal concluded that the actions of Boots had seriously damaged the relationship of mutual trust and confidence, meaning that the pharmacist's resignation in response to the numerous issues was a constructive unfair dismissal.

Read more [here](#).

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## Boots Trainee Conference and Gala Evening

*By Hala Jawad, National Representative*



PDA Reps Hala Jawad, Mithul Shah and Nav Bhogal were invited to attend the Boots Trainee Pharmacists Conference and Gala Evening at the Coventry BS Arena over the summer.

This was held to celebrate the achievements of trainee pharmacists and provided them with an opportunity to meet some of our PDA Reps, along with key Boots representatives from Learning and Development and the Pharmacy Superintendent's Office.

Hala, Mithul and Nav spoke to our trainee pharmacist colleagues and shared what the PDA do to support trainees with their studies and what support is available if things don't go so well with their training year.

It was a great opportunity for PDA members and reps to meet, and the PDA Reps Network would like to thank the L & D team for their kind invite.

# Health and Safety update – Heading into winter

*By Richard Evans, Regional Representative for Northern Ireland*

Health and Safety affects all of us in the workplace, and your PDA Rep has the authority to investigate any concerns our members raise, such as faulty drawer systems, neglected upkeep to floors or walls, heating and cooling issues, and any other issue you think poses a risk to your wellbeing whilst at work.



Recently our Health and Safety group, consisting of three PDA Reps and two Boots safety officers, has been looking at pharmacy accident trends, with the most common seeming to be pharmacy drawer unit incidents. The group has agreed that there will be increased focus on this issue, with extra information on conducting drawer unit inspections for managers and more awareness for teams to call out any issues between the quarterly inspections. It will also form part of the store risk assessment in future years.

As well as improved guidance on inspections, there will be guidance on ‘dos’ and don’ts’ with regard to drawer system use, information on obtaining replacement parts, and instruction on how to replace the parts. Please look out for these changes and continue to report issues as soon as you identify them.

Winter is coming and we have already had lots of feedback from members regarding the heating systems. In some instances, we have also been able to speed up processes where heating systems needed repair. Be prepared and don’t wait for a cold spell before thinking about what your store will feel like temperature-wise this winter.

It is important to remember to use normal channels, such as your store manager or area manager, in the first instance but, as your representatives, we also want to know about your concerns so we can identify trends and support you where appropriate.

## Learn more

- [Health and Safety Executive](#)

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## Recent JCC updates

*By Richard Evans, Regional Representative for Northern Ireland*

Our PDA Reps Network meets with Boots management in regular Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meetings. The last JCC was held on 26 July in Nottingham, where we were given a positive business briefing by both Mo Hassam and Paul Day on Boots and PDA with highlights including very encouraging sales and new products, along with PDA membership now being over 37,000 strong.

Louise Anderton spoke around the launch of a new Pharmacy Unscripted site in January 2024 in a single framework design for PU and BootsLive. There is also going to be an update on the CPD policy and a series of in-person events next year, probably taking the form of clusters.

There was a Health and Safety update (later report) and a Learning and Development update on the route to IP with 160 pharmacists recently becoming IPs. There was also acknowledgement that there is further work to be done in overcoming the obstacle of DPP which has to be in place before you apply.

Last year's flu programme, whilst not as heavy as 2021/22, was the best operationally and we discussed the upcoming season in light of this, with a focus on simpler training, a shorter season, simplification of systems and a better corporate voucher system.

As per last year, PDA Reps confirmed that they would be collecting feedback from members through engagement events to enable a smoother, less stressful, and workable season for everyone involved.

There was also a Q&A session on the current store closure and the subsequent redeployment operation that has commenced. The PDA Reps are available to help guide members affected in choosing their best options going forward and are contacting affected pharmacists when they are notified of a store closure. It is expected that this process will run for a period of 12 months with closure notices released in three lots from July to January.

## Learn more

- [PDA to support members impacted by decision to close 300 more Boots pharmacies](#)

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## A member's good news story

By Jayesh Ladva, Regional Representative for the North West and West Yorkshire



We like to let our members know how we, as your representatives, support PDA members and, with member consent, we regularly publish a short description of how your PDA Reps have supported one of our members. Remember, we are here to help you and always try to seek a solution quickly and locally without the need for formal processes where possible. In this case, a member discusses our recent member engagement evening that they attended.

*"I recently attended a PDA Union member engagement evening to discuss how to safely manage my workload during the busy flu season. The PDA Representatives were fantastic and I feel much more confident in managing my workload and flu diary to ensure that I only deliver what is safe to do so. I like how they have introduced a template letter for relief pharmacists who often work in different stores and have little control over the number of flu vaccinations booked in each branch they work in. The template letter allows the relief pharmacist to write to the store leaders prior to the flu vaccination season to inform them how many flu vaccinations they feel can be safely delivered whilst manage the existing workload. I really enjoyed the member engagement evening and would recommend these events to all my pharmacist colleagues. They're a safe space where we can discuss issues affecting us in the workplace with our trade union representatives. I didn't realise that my trade union representatives are also front-line pharmacists, and they really understood my issues and concerns. Thank you, PDA!"*

To read about our upcoming events, click [here](#).

## A rep's good news story

*By Gordon Finlayson, National Representative*

I recently supported members in a case where two pharmacists were disciplined by Boots managers over failing to perform the duties of the Responsible Pharmacist (RP). One of these pharmacists received representation early in the process, and the outcome was no sanction. The other pharmacist received a final written warning before contacting the PDA. With the PDA involved, we appealed the latter decision which was overturned but not without a great deal of stress and worry for the member.

It is in the interests of all pharmacists to let the union know of any incidents as soon as possible so that a resolution can be sought in the early stages of any formal process.



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## PDA membership is free for trainee pharmacists

*By Darren Ayres, Regional Representative for Greater London South*



PDA membership is free for trainee pharmacists and includes many important benefits, including indemnity insurance, employment advice and support, and access to PDA education and training.

In particular, we would like to make you aware of the training that is available to members through PDA Education, including our free revision programme for members sitting their exam in June. This includes:

- Practice revision questions and case studies.
- Two 1-hour timed mock exams.
- Tips for revising successfully.
- Support videos to help you navigate the process.

Many of you may already be student members of the PDA but, now that you have started your training year, it's very important that you renew as a Trainee Pharmacist member. To check or update your details before you renew, click [here](#). Please renew your membership online [here](#). If you are not a member, please [join today!](#)

Please remember that your PDA Rep is here to answer any questions you may have or point you in the right direction to appropriate support.

### Learn more

- [Trainee pharmacist membership](#)
- [PDA Reps Network in Boots](#)

## Join us today!

The PDA is the only independent trade union exclusively for pharmacists and is the recognised trade union for pharmacists employed at Boots which means that the PDA negotiates with the employer on pay and other terms and conditions, as well as holding consultative meetings on a range of topics.

PDA membership is built around professional indemnity insurance but also includes employment advice and support, along with the opportunity to connect with other pharmacists to improve pharmacy for all.

You can read more about PDA membership [here](#).

If you are a pharmacist and not yet a member, please [join us now!](#)