



# Welcome to your February 2023 PDA Update in Boots

*Keeping you informed of all the union activities within Boots*

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

## Are you caught up in TUPE transfer or store closure?

*By Nicola Rees, Boots PDA Union Secretary, National Rep and Regional Rep for the Midlands,  
Lead Rep for TUPE transfers and store closures*



**After a review of its business, Boots is in the process of selling some of its stores. This process began last year and is still ongoing. This can be a very unsettling and worrying time for any staff member affected and, as PDA Union Representatives, we are here to support any pharmacists going through this process.**

Once the PDA has been made aware of the sale of a store, one of our PDA Union Reps, who is trained in the TUPE process, will contact the pharmacists who work in that store to discuss the process and to understand how the pharmacists wish to proceed. This may include seeking an alternative position within Boots, transferring to the new employer, or, in the case of store closures, may also include redundancy. This is also the opportunity for the PDA Union Reps to answer any questions or concerns that a pharmacist may have about the process.

Once a store sale has been agreed, our trained and experienced PDA Union Reps will then consult with Boots and the new employer in the 'TUPE' transfer process. This is the Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment process. TUPE legislation provides certain legal protections, meaning that contractual terms and conditions, such as hours, pay, holiday, and length of service, will remain unchanged. Our PDA Union Reps will ensure that these terms accurately transfer over to the new employer and will also ensure that each consultation is tailored to the individual pharmacist and covers any individual circumstances, such as honorarium payments, visa transfers, and NPOM payments.

If you are affected by a store sale or closure, please look at our [TUPE Frequently Asked Questions](#) and contact your local PDA Union Rep for any further advice.

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## HeartUnions Week 2023

**From 13 - 19 February 2023, the Trade Unions Congress (TUC) will observe [#HeartUnions week](#). This is a week designed to celebrate and promote the work that unions do for their members, whether winning improvements in pay and conditions or driving change to improve equality and opportunity. It aims to encourage those who are not active union members to join and get involved by telling stories that show how vital unions are for workers and society.**

The [PDA will be joining other unions](#), which represent workers from across the UK's sectors of employment, in highlighting the positive difference that unions make to society through the actions they take through their members.

There will be numerous events taking place across the UK that can be found [here](#), and PDA members and non-members are encouraged to take part, share their stories, get involved, and find out more about the opportunities and benefits that participation with a union offers them. If you have a testimonial or story about how the union or a rep has supported you in the past and want to share it during this week, contact [paul.flynn@pda-union.org](mailto:paul.flynn@pda-union.org) and we can involve it in our campaign work.

With record corporate profits and a significant squeeze on the living standards of those whose labour delivers these profits, it's never been more important to be part of a union.

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## Recent JCC (Joint Consultative Committee) meeting

*By Richard Evans, PDA Union Regional Rep for Northern Ireland*



The last JCC of 2022 was held on 20 October in D80 Beeston. We welcomed Mo Hassam, who has replaced Anne Higgins as the Boots JCC/JNB lead, as Anne has moved to a new role as Pharmacy Director.

The event commenced as usual, with a brief business roundup from Boots and the PDA Union. The Health and Safety section reported an incident of an attack from an animal on a pharmacy colleague whilst they were performing a home visit to a patient. Meetings with the company and the PDA Union's Safety Representatives followed, which led to the development of safeguards that, when implemented, aim to reduce risks of a similar incident occurring in the future.

Learning and Development's key message was that, with the next company IP (Independent Prescriber) intake in February, it is paramount that an applicant has a DPP (Designated Prescribing Practitioner) or DMP (Designated Medical practitioner) organised before applying. The company hopes to be able to support those finding a DPP in future via colleagues in the online doctor team.

Other topics discussed included flu season on future improvements to diary, workload, support staff, and a query line available [here](#). Queries submitted by members had to be looked into in more detail for a response and will be taken on board for future improvements. The holiday booking system was discussed, along with the bank holiday selection and a locum management system (a new system for locums to book shifts off directly with everything managed through the system). Staff only get one choice to submit holidays, and if they can't be accommodated, you'll be contacted before the release of the

approved holidays. Only one choice is available to submit because, where possible, the Deployment team intends to grant first choices.

Most of the time at JCC was spent discussing the ongoing recruitment and retention issues that the company is facing. A pharmacist cross functional team has been established to explore the reasons that have been reported by pharmacists when leaving Boots, such as pay, working hours, workload, and change of career environment. The PDA Union gave substantial member feedback on this issue and stressed the importance of the company conducting exit interviews to understand these issues and inform the development of a retention strategy.

The company gave a short tour of the Boots archives and Sophie Clapp gave a presentation on how the Boots business started and its history. On show was literature and products taken from each decade.

If you think that one of your stores has old memorabilia of pharmacy that could be archived at Beeston, let your rep know and we can pass on this information to the archives.

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## Boots introduce workplace support passports

*By Jayesh Ladva, PDA Union Regional Rep for Northwest England*



**In September 2022, the [PDA Ability Network](#) welcomed the news that Boots had introduced a tool that facilitates communication between line managers and employees regarding their disabilities or caring responsibilities, and the ways the employer can support them.**

A [workplace support passport](#) is a live record of adjustments that have been agreed upon between an individual and their line manager. As it's a 'passport', if the line manager changes or the individual changes job location, the records and requirements within it will travel with the employee. PDA Ability Network members know the frustration of having to repeat disclosures and justify their circumstances each time they have a new line manager, so we encourage all employers to adopt a 'passport' system.

We advise all members to check with their line manager or HR department to find out if they have access to a workplace passport scheme and encourage them to highlight the Boots scheme and ask for a similar process if they do not.

To find out more, click [here](#).

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## A virtual PDA Boots member vaccination services evening

*By Nav Bhogal, Mithul Shah, and Jayesh Ladva,  
National and Regional Boots and PDA Union Reps*



**Attending members were given an update on how the PDA Union Reps have built up a collaborative partnership with the Boots vaccination team. This means they have monthly meetings to discuss any concerns and to provide solutions to some of the current issues that pharmacists face in stores**

**and in vaccination centres. Our aim during these meetings is to improve the delivery of the service from the pharmacist's perspective.**

Jayesh shared some efficiencies that Boots have assured the reps have been brought in for this year's flu season. These include:

- More flu vaccination centres and pop-up clinics.
- Training taking less time.
- Simpler for colleagues and customers.
- Area-led local planning.
- A stronger supply chain.
- A critical people plan.
- Improvements to the appointment diary.

Mithul shared his experience of working in MVC/FVCs. He explained the differences this year compared to previous years and provided information on Outcomes4health, Sonar, and Pharmoutcomes. Some efficiencies included the changes in offering corporate flu vaccinations. Mithul also shared some important information on who is allowed to vaccinate under what circumstances. The Responsible Pharmacist (RP) will always be accountable for the service, whilst the Clinical Supervisor, who could be another pharmacist (including locum), nurse, or pharmacy technician, would be responsible for the service. He highlighted what services are allowed to be provided and by whom, including information on any prior assessments that need to be carried out before vaccination is authorised by certain vaccinators.

The members present were encouraged and welcomed to ask questions and raise any concerns. It was very encouraging to hear members share their largely improved experiences of vaccination services this year.

Mithul Shah, Boots PDA Rep for Central and Greater London North and vaccination hub pharmacist said, *"Recently, the PDA Reps held a members' evening in early October to*

*discuss preparations for the flu service. The reps shared the union's achievements by collaborating with Boots so that members are supported to provide a much better and more efficient flu service this year. It was encouraging to see a lot of members taking the opportunity to join this informative and interactive event, to provide feedback on the flu service, and share helpful tips, as well as share some concerns with the PDA Reps Network to feedback. This event was a great platform which allowed the reps and members to successfully share ideas and work together on resolving issues."*

The PDA Reps hope that the members found the evening informative and provided them with a safe space to share their concerns. The PDA Reps Network in Boots hopes to host more events like this in the future and will continue to try to work with Boots to make flu season more professionally fulfilling and as stress-free as possible.

The PDA needs feedback and can support members who are having issues through the vaccination season. For any specific flu suggestions or concerns, please email [nav.bhogal@pda-union.org](mailto:nav.bhogal@pda-union.org) or speak to your local rep.

The next Boots member event will take place on 28 February 2023. An invitation to the event should have been emailed to you.

## PDA REPS NETWORK IN BOOTS

### Newly qualified pharmacists' evening

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



**At the beginning of December 2022, we held an online evening event for newly qualified Boots pharmacists. This gave the NQ pharmacists the opportunity to meet the PDA Representatives across the country and discover what union membership offered them.**

The evening started with introductions from the PDA Reps Network in Boots, followed by a presentation from Kate Kensington, Head of Education at the PDA, who gave an overview of the training available to members to best prepare them to enter the world of work and ensure they know their rights.

The evening did not follow a strict agenda as we wanted it to be an opportunity for NQ pharmacists to ask the questions that were important to them. In the discussions, we talked about the Boots & Me staff handbook, which provides a lot of information for staff. This was followed by questions about the pensions available when working for Boots. We also briefly

explained the support that reps can offer members during formal process and how beneficial this can be.

As the evening was for both members and non-members, we discussed why it is important to be a member of a union. The greater the membership, the bigger the voice we have when it comes to negotiating with Boots on behalf of pharmacists.

It was great to be able to have this evening for newly qualified pharmacists and going forward this will be a regular event in the PDA Boots Reps' calendar.

Learn more:

- [New to Boots](#)
- [Walgreens Boots Alliance pensions](#)
- [Union membership](#)
- [PDA Education](#)
- [PDA Reps Network in Boots](#)

**JOIN THE PDA HERE**

## How our reps have helped

*By Jayesh Ladva, PDA Union Regional Rep for Northwest England*

### **This is member feedback we have received.**

“I contacted the PDA after receiving an email from my local PDA Rep about the [PDA’s ‘ready reckoner’](#). I’ve been working for Boots since 2012 as a pharmacist and was only receiving 88% of market-based pay. It was incredibly disheartening that, after almost 10 years’ service with the company, I was getting paid 12% less than what the supposed market median was for my role.

With the help of my local PDA Rep, I submitted an in-year pay rise request in early 2022 for a 10% increase. This was approved by my head of customer experience, and, in November 2022, I also got a 4.5% pay rise, which was negotiated on my behalf by the PDA for everyone in the bargaining unit.

Because of the PDA’s help and support, I was able to get a 14.5% pay rise from my employer in 2022, ensuring I am paid above market median for my role for the first time in my career. I cannot thank the PDA enough for bringing this to my attention and for helping me secure an in-year pay rise. If you are not a member of the PDA, I encourage you to all join [here](#).”

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## Health and Safety update

*By Richard Evans, PDA Regional Rep for Northern Ireland*

**The accident review process is ongoing with PDA Union Health and Safety Reps working alongside Boots Safety Officers to ensure that after accidents occur in pharmacies, actions are put in place to maintain a safe environment. We do not have many RIDDOR accidents and year on year this is decreasing, but we would like to remind members to take extra care in keeping floor areas free of potential trip hazards, not overstocking dispensary shelving, and following the shelving inspection schedules on Myhub. The large majority of pharmacy accidents happen due to these factors.**

We welcome any feedback on Myhub and the new store maintenance app that is currently being rolled out to regions. If you have any maintenance issues that you think may be a Health and Safety risk and are not being addressed, your rep may help in remedying the situation more swiftly. Recently, with the cold spell, many members were worried about their store temperatures and the reps were able to centrally flag any ongoing heating issues of concern so that they could be addressed.

Our safer pharmacies survey has recently been available to get a picture of Health and Safety in all pharmacy workplaces in the UK. The PDA is active across the UK promoting the [Safer Pharmacies Charter](#) to ensure a safe working environment for all staff and the delivery of a safe pharmaceutical service for our patients. If you are worried about any unsafe working practice within your pharmacy, let your rep know.

With the current cost of living crisis, there may be more incidents of violence and aggression in our stores. The company is continuing its roll out of Body Worn Video (BWV) to high-risk stores, increasing upgrades of CCTV systems, and continuing connection with the monitoring centre, along with improving the speed of response times.

Look out for the expected release of a new PDA Health and Safety factsheet for more information.

**Previous Boots newsletters can be found on the [Boots](#) and [Resources](#) pages of the PDA website.**