

PDA Update in Boots

July 2023



Welcome to your July 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.

Equal Pay for Equal Work webinar

By Daniela Rusalim, Regional Representative for East of England and NAWP Vice President

On 23 February 2023, the PDA hosted a webinar with the focus of how men and women in the same employment performing equal work must receive equal pay, including contractual terms. The pharmacy sector is not shielded from the national trend of pay disparity and, during this cost-of-living crisis that we are experiencing, it is a good time to re-focus on this matter.



The aim of the presentation was to make our colleagues aware of their rights, equip them with tools and knowledge, and inspire them to take action if they feel they are affected by unequal pay.

The main points of the presentation, which was well attended, were:

- Equal pay for equal work is a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 and differs from the gender pay gap, which is the difference between average pay for men and women across an organisation.
- Equal work is like for like work – where the job and skills required are the same or very similar. It can also be work rated as ‘equivalent’, using the same skills, or involving work of equal value.

Our speaker, Daniela also talked about material factors that an employer may use to explain pay differences and what a member should do if they are not getting equal pay.

We recommend that you contact your PDA Representative if you require further support or guidance on this subject and/or if you think you may need to make an equal pay claim. Please also read the articles in the links below which will give you more information on what equal pay means and how it affects not just your basic pay, but overtime pay, bonus pay, pension, holiday pay, redundancy pay, sick pay, working hours, annual leave allowance, and benefits.

Learn more

- [Equality Trust](#)
- [Equal pay at work](#)

Joint Negotiating Body updates

By Gordon Finlayson, National Representative and Regional Representative for Scotland

The Joint Negotiating Body (JNB) is the title of the annual negotiations that occur between the PDA Union and Boots UK.



Before submitting our pay claim to the Boots team, the union seeks the views of its members.

The PDA Reps Network in Boots is constantly communicating with our members, and we know that many members wish to have their voices heard, especially when it comes to pay, terms and conditions. To facilitate this, the union hosted a membership engagement evening on Wednesday 17 May. The evening was hosted by the four PDA Union National Reps; Gordon Finlayson, Nicola Rees, Nav Bhogal, and Hala Jawad. We were joined by Paul Moloney, PDA Union National Officer who is lead negotiator

at the JNB.

A brief overview of the JNB process was given, followed by a question and answer session where members put forward various views on what should be included in this year's claim. Several issues were raised, including previous sub-inflationary pay increases, payment for training, salary for independent prescribers, and recognition for length of service.

This event was the first step in getting members' views. On Friday 19 May, a survey was sent to all members. We hope that you took the time to let us know your thoughts. The results of the survey and the evening will provide us with the information to put together a claim that reflects what is important to Boots pharmacists.

Over the next few weeks, our claim will be submitted to Boots and the negotiations with Boots will begin in August.

If you have any questions or would like any more information, please contact gordon.finlayson@pda-union.org.

Learn more

- [Boots pay position statement](#)

Health and Safety update

By Richard Evans, Regional Representative for Northern Ireland

The Health and Safety group have recently focussed on reducing in-store pharmacy accidents by way of increasing awareness of why and what type of accidents normally occur, the most common being tripping over unstacked containers. A collaborative 'Safety Matters', reminding teams how to store goods yet to be put away, was released along with a message highlighting what effects an accident can have on an individual and their family. In our latest JCC, we further emphasised this 'ripple effect' in a BootsLive headline for [World Day for Health and Safety at Work](#).



We have also made changes to accident investigation procedures, where the PDA Rep will get relevant notification earlier so that an accident investigation can be completed and actions put in place quickly to avoid any repeated incidents. We believe that working with the company representatives is a good way of ensuring that our members are working in safe environments.

With the cold spell in the winter, our attention was drawn to some serious health and safety issues that exist in our stores which have either not been properly reported, not escalated appropriately, or that had work outstanding for a considerable period of time. Our regional reps will follow these issues within our health and safety role as a matter of concern for those particular stores. Please let us know if there are maintenance issues within your working environment that you feel have not been addressed appropriately.

Learn more

- [Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents \(RoSPA\) campaigns](#)
- [It's Time to Stay Safe at Work](#)

Recent JCC updates

By Richard Evans, Regional Representative for Northern Ireland

The last two JCCs were held in January and April with very similar themes around workload, recruitment and retention, wellbeing, and problems with our pharmacy dispensing system.

The meetings start with a brief recap on recent company and union news, noting that the company is performing well and the union is improving its membership and position year on year.

The Health and Safety partnership continues to evolve their investigation procedures with a faster, easier, stepwise approach to investigate, discuss, and seek improvements to our workplace environments.

The first cohort of pharmacist IPs were graduating in May and the company welcomes 54 new IPs in our stores. The window for the third intake was open for April and a reminder of the most important factor for having a DPP in place before applying was essential.

Most of our meetings have centred around wellbeing, and the recent email sent to the bargaining unit with the question "How are you feeling at work?" had a huge response.

We were able to discuss the issues with the Boots Senior team and noted the similar topics of concern with the last Boots company colleague survey. Columbus, we are being assured, is the main priority. With transfer to the cloud complete, there has been a huge resource brought in to focus on system stability and issues with third party servers. We highlighted the issues that members were facing and the impact that outages and fragmented operating of key aspects had on running the pharmacy business adding to the already high workload. Other issues included pension schemes, pay for company assigned training, work environment issues, resource levels, workload, and overall pharmacy communication. Recruitment and retention is still an issue and, although Boots are recruiting more pharmacists, there are still over 600FTE positions available.

A member good news story

By Tom Graves, Regional Representative for North West and Merseyside



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, we were able to assist a member subject to a pay deficit.

In our rep's own words:

"The office got in touch, forwarding me the details of a member who had returned after over a year off on a combination of maternity leave and sickness absence. A payroll error on her return meant that she had been without pay for over 12 weeks, with minimal help forthcoming from her line manager. After a few calls and emails, the company paid her correctly and agreed that she was owed company 'sick pay' amounting to a back pay of £15,000. This goes to show that getting in touch with the PDA can result in a good, swift outcome without the need for a formal grievance."

For a rep to help you, please [join the PDA Union](#), otherwise we can only give you basic advice. Occasionally, for more serious or complex matters, we ask you to contact our Birmingham office

who will take more details from you and will work with you and your local rep to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

A welcome to our new trainee pharmacists

By Darren Ayres, Regional Representative for Greater London South

The PDA Reps Network in Boots would like to welcome you all to your training year at Boots the Chemist.

The PDA is here to offer you support and advice during your trainee pharmacist year, and then throughout your pharmacy career.

Membership of the PDA is free for trainees, and you'll have access to resources that will help you throughout your training year. We urge all of you to visit the [PDA website](#) to see what is available and join us.



The PDA Reps Network wishes you all the best of luck in your training year and if you need any advice, guidance, or just a chat then please contact one of your PDA Reps.

Learn more

- [Trainee pharmacist membership](#)
- [PDA Reps Network in Boots](#)
- [Pharmacist Support](#)
- [Boots Lifeworks](#) (Username: boots, Password: care)

Join us today!

The PDA Union 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!](#)

Learn more

- [PDA Reps Network in Boots](#)