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#PDAstudent



Welcome to the February 2024 PDA Student Newsletter

In this edition, read about how PDA Student Reps are continuing to campaign on the issue of pharmacy students being left out of the scope of the NHS LFS and two student members experiences of the 2023 EPhEU Congress and the 2023 FIP World Congress. Also, learn more about how you can get involved in one of the PDA's four EDI Networks!

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PDA students continue to campaign for fair funding – now with the support of their MPs!

Many PDA members are corresponding with their local MPs about the unfair funding for pharmacy students, including Sir Ed Davey, leader of the Liberal Democrats and Sir Keir Starmer, leader of the Labour Party.

Members of Parliament have raised the concerns with Andrew Stephenson, Minister of State for Health. In his responses he has confirmed that, "...the NHS Learning Support Fund (LSF) was expanded in 2020 to include non-repayable grants of at least £5,000 per academic year..." for nursing, midwifery and AHP courses but not pharmacy as, "at that time, pharmacy courses were not eligible for the NHS bursary and are therefore outside the scope of the LSF arrangements."

To end the unfair treatment of pharmacy students is precisely the point of the PDA Students' campaign. Andrew Stephenson also says that, "the government keeps the funding arrangements for all healthcare students under close review" and that, "NHS England acknowledges that funding to support students with the costs of clinical placements is inconsistently paid."

The campaign continues to call on the Minister to change the LSF eligibility so that MPharm students can also receive fair funding.

[**Join the campaign and send a letter to your MP now!**](#)



PDA Student Reps go international

Last year, two PDA Student Reps joined the PDA on international delegations to represent its growing number of student members. Bhavna Keshwala, Portsmouth University student attended the Employed Community Pharmacists in Europe (EPHeU) congress in Oslo, Norway and Ramisa Ahmed, Portsmouth University student attended the 81st International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) World Congress in Brisbane, Australia.

EPHeU Congress



Bhavna said, "I went to the EPHeU conference in Oslo, Norway in October 2023, and delivered a presentation on the fundraising organised by pharmacy students at my university for the Medicines to Ukraine campaign. I spoke about the significance of the cause, what we achieved through the campaign, and the struggles that we overcame.

An invaluable part of my experience was engaging with the leaders of pharmacy trade unions from various European nations. I gained insights into the differences and commonalities in international pharmacy practice. I will always carry forward the message that despite having different backgrounds, cultures, and mindsets, it is our role to always use our skills and knowledge to provide the highest level of care for our patients.

Attending the conference has been a truly eye-opening experience, providing me with an understanding of the expansiveness of pharmacy and the countless global opportunities within the profession.

I was grateful to the PDA for giving me this remarkable opportunity and I intend to use the skills and knowledge acquired when taking part in future endeavours."



FIP World Congress



Ramisa said, "I had an invaluable experience attending the FIP World Congress with the PDA. I now have a stronger passion for pharmacists' involvement in humanitarian aid and achieving a sustainable future guided by UN development goals for 2030. The knowledge and skills that I have gained will be instrumental in sharing that passion with fellow students and trainees.

One learning that I will carry forward is how we can utilise our differences in skills, mindset, and ideas to collaborate towards a better future.

A fundamental teaching for me was attending sessions hosted by countries around the world, which taught me how differently pharmacy is practiced. This was extremely beneficial and gave us all a unique perspective on addressing healthcare-related challenges we may have in the UK. I am extremely grateful to the PDA for providing me with this opportunity and I hope that more students will participate in global health awareness and education."

Attending PDA Reps training as a student

*By Molly Chambers, PDA Student Committee Member for Kingston University
and Isla Shah, PDA Student Committee Member for Strathclyde University*



We were kindly invited to attend the PDA Rep's training on 14 to 15 of November 2023 in Quorn Grange. The course, PDA Reps part 1, is the first of a series of courses that PDA Reps are able to attend and are available to PDA members from all sectors and has recently made available to student reps.

We learned a lot over the two days, not only about being a student rep, but also about continuing to be a workplace rep. We covered a comprehensive range of material, from skills and abilities a rep needs to knowing your legal rights as a union member and rep, as well as looking at the history of trade unions and what they've done for labour rights.

We analysed workplace and university grievances and disciplinary policies from the perspective of trade unionists and learned more about supporting members with their issues. We gained fresh perspectives on the importance of being a PDA Rep and what it means to be part of a trade union. We developed our communication and public speaking skills with other reps.

Everyone on the course was incredibly welcoming, and we met reps from a multitude of sectors all in varying stages of their career. Some reps had just joined the PDA and others had been PDA Reps for years. This helped not just us but everyone in the room to gain new insights that were not previously considered.

The educators who led the course were engaging and created a positive learning environment. We left feeling much more confident in our abilities as reps, and we'd like to express our gratitude for this opportunity and urge other reps to endeavour to attend training sessions if given the chance. If you'd like to attend PDA training please email students@the-pda.org.

[Look out for more reps training and PDA events here](#)



PDA Student Reps join the TUC's Young Workers winning at work event

By Asa Abdulrazzaq and Kandace Peirera, Cardiff University students



PDA Student Reps at Cardiff University, Asa Abdulrazzaq and Kandace Peirera attended the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and TUC Wales young workers winning at work event on 18 November 2023. Below they've written about their experience:

This was our first TUC event and it was an amazing experience that exposed us to new ideas regarding young people at work and the forces acting against them. Some highlights were meeting a guest speaker called Becky who used to work for the airlines. Becky talked about how at some workplaces the number of years you work at a company can be valued above the skills you have. This can be detrimental for young workers as they most likely won't have as many years working for a company as others.

We also had the opportunity to speak with the Welsh Minister of Economics, Vaughan Gething regarding the PDA's campaign for fair funding for pharmacy students and asked his thoughts on extending this to Wales. He encouraged us to have a meeting with members of the Welsh government about it, in particular those in charge of the pharmacy contract.

Overall, it was an amazing experience and an incredible day. We learnt a lot and would encourage any of PDA members in the future to attend something of similar nature.

The GFTU's Young Members Development Weekend and the importance of unions

By Leah Wakefield-Coates, PDA Student Rep and Cardiff University student



PDA Student Rep, Leah Wakefield-Coates recently attended the General Federation of Trade Union's (GFTU) Young Members Development Weekend and has reflected on her experience and what she learned during the weekend.

This November, myself and two other pharmacy students were fortunate enough to attend this year's GFTU Young Members Development Weekend at the Quorn Grange Hotel in Loughborough.

The weekend provided me with a great insight into how unions work, why they're important, and what I can do to support my union.

Trade unions have played a pivotal role in shaping the modern workforce and championing the rights of workers. The significance of trade unions cannot be overstated, as they serve as powerful advocates for workers, creating equitable workplace conditions and contributing to the overall well-being of employees.



[Click here to learn more](#)



The PDA's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Networks



The PDA has four Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Networks which student members can get involved in for FREE. These networks are, the National Association of Women Pharmacists (NAWP), the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Pharmacists Network (BAME Network), the Disabled Pharmacists Network (Ability Network) and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pharmacists Network (LGBT+ Network).

NAWP was founded in 1905 and in January 2020 it became the PDA's first EDI Network followed by the PDA BAME Network, the PDA Ability Network, and the PDA LGBT+ Network in April 2020. The networks provide a structure through which members can work together to proactively address and campaign around different forms of discrimination and its causes and consequences.

All four of the PDA's EDI Networks are FREE for student members to join and are a great way for students to get involved in the work of the PDA. Students have the opportunity to join one of the network's committee's like the Immediate Past President of the LGBT+ Network, Scott Rutherford who became president of the network while they were still a pharmacy student. There are also many chances to join in the network's events such as the PDA NAWP Network's annual International Women's Day event and contribute to the network's newsletters, campaigns and more!

Those who are interested in joining a PDA EDI Network for free and potentially sharing their experiences around EDI can do so by either clicking the link below or by scanning the QR code. Don't forget to look out for opportunities to join one of the network's committees!

[Click here to join a PDA EDI Network for FREE today](#)



PDA Chairman gives evidence to the Westminster Health and Social Care Committee

In January 2024, PDA Chairman, Mark Koziol gave evidence as part of the Health and Social Care Committee's inquiry into pharmacy. Mark discussed a range of topics such as the state of morale among the pharmacist profession, the two pharmacist policy, and the changes to the pharmacy standards and independent prescribing which will affect students.

Mark discussed that the value of a pharmacist's role is in the clinical check and facing patients rather than the assembly of medications. By taking this approach it would also reduce the workload pressure that is being placed upon pharmacists.

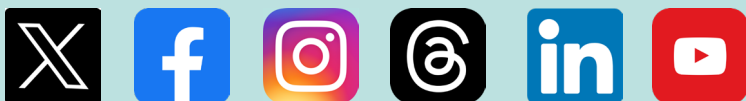
Mark then went on to talk about how the academic workforce is being stretched as more schools of pharmacy get introduced and how there aren't enough qualified independent prescribers (IP) in community pharmacies to supervise newly qualified IP's as part of their training. Mark continued by explaining how becoming an IP is an exciting opportunity for anyone who wants to become a pharmacist however, many with an IP qualification are not using their qualification on a daily basis. Independent prescribers need to use their skills while working day to day to utilise their unique abilities.

[Click here to learn more and watch the session](#)



The PDA is proud to be actively engaged in discussions surrounding the future of the pharmacy sector and to represent the interests of our members in these crucial conversations. We want to hear from our student members. Get in touch with the PDA Student Committee by emailing, students@the-pda.org.

Let's stay connected. Follow us on social media. [#PDAsstudent](#)



Just search 'Pharmacists' Defence Association' on any of these platforms.

For more information or to join the PDA, visit: www.the-pda.org