

# insight

The magazine of the **Pharmacists' Defence Association**



pda  
national association of  
women pharmacists

pda  
BAME pharmacists'  
network

pda

pda  
ability network

Introducing the PDA  
Equality, Diversity &  
Inclusion Networks



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# Either everybody lives in a world based on equality, or none of us do

*Introduction from Mark Koziol, PDA Chairman*

**Pharmacy exists within the wider world where many people are working hard to tackle inequality. We therefore not only have a responsibility to improve equality in pharmacy, to make a difference for individuals in our profession, but we also have to play our part in improving the wider picture too.**

From the work that we do in defending the interests of our members, we know that issues faced by individual employed or locum pharmacists in the workplace can involve discrimination against them, due to their race, gender, disability, sexual identity or some other protected characteristic. This is why working for improved Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) has always been a core part of what we do at the PDA.

In 2020, the PDA provided a secure future for the National Association of Women Pharmacists (NAWP), which had existed for over a century but due to the lack of a home and an infrastructure, faced being closed down. We also launched new EDI networks for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Pharmacists (BAME Pharmacists' Network), Pharmacists with Disabilities (Ability Network) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pharmacists (LGBT+ Pharmacists' Network).

These thriving EDI networks enable pharmacists, whether PDA members or not, to proactively join and work together to tackle the issues of inequality that we face as a profession. This booklet highlights some of their activity.

## Equality is everybody's issue

My parents were not born in the UK, and I had the experience of

being "the foreigner" while I was at school, being discriminated against (sometimes ruthlessly) throughout my school years because of my nationality. More recently, following an accident I was temporarily disabled and spent nearly 5 months in a wheelchair. I was astounded to find that at the sight of me being in a wheelchair, people would either look away or not communicate with me directly, preferring instead to ask my 13-year-old daughter who was pushing my wheelchair "is he alright?". I learned a little about the painful treatment of disability by those who felt that I was different to them. As a father with children, I feel very blessed to be in a mixed-race family, but I have found it quite difficult to find the words to use when my 5 year old son who I love so dearly could not understand why the teacher at school was calling him Mowgli.

All of us, whoever we are or wherever we live will have our own, perhaps even painful experiences of discrimination; we will have either seen it in action, or in some way, either directly or indirectly be the victims of it. In this day and age and in our society, discrimination is not just that thing that makes us feel so awful as human beings, it is also in a more technical way, that legal protection that someone has failed to observe.

Some may have been discriminated against because of one characteristic, for example the failure of an employer to provide a reasonable adjustment for a person with a disability. Some may have been discriminated against due to more than one characteristic (known as "intersectionality") for example, the stereotyping of black women. Whilst others may not have ever faced any discrimination



themselves, but they have likely seen its corrosive effects.

Every individual's experience of discrimination is different, just as every person's life is different. There is no hierarchy of one type of discrimination being worse than another. It is all utterly wrong, and we must commit to working hard to deliver equality across all types of characteristics.

Whatever our own experience, we must think and work in such a way that we can become an ally to those who face other forms of discrimination, the kind that we may not personally experience, and "Allies" are very welcome in each and every one of our networks.

The PDA was set up to tackle injustice in pharmacy in whatever form that takes. Our equality networks are not a box ticking exercise, we established them because we really are very determined that they make a real difference. That is why we are delighted with how popular the EDI networks have become. From where I sit and from the conversations that I have had with the most senior figures in our profession, I can assure you that they have already begun to make a difference.

**If you are a pharmacist that shares our view that "Either everybody lives in a world based on equality, or none of us do" I sincerely hope that you will join us in this important work.**

# Examples of discrimination from PDA casework files

Here are some examples of discrimination cases in which the PDA has supported members. Pseudonyms are used instead of the members' real names.



## Pregnant pharmacist's role restructured

As part of a restructure exercise a hospital trust deleted a senior post and told "Emma" that she would have to go through a competitive interview process for another post.

Emma had concerns that a proper process had not been followed and she may have been discriminated against as she was pregnant. Emma then discovered the trust had hired a new employee into a role that could have been given to her as a suitable alternative role and so would have protected her from redundancy.

The PDA assisted Emma with raising a grievance and provided continued support once she was not working due to being on maternity leave.

Ultimately the PDA helped Emma to negotiate an exit from the employment with a financial settlement.

## Too old for a bonus?

"Bal" was denied a bonus by their employer because they were retiring.

The PDA gave Bal advice on the law relating to age discrimination and assisted with a formal grievance process, attending the meetings and drafting the particulars of claim and supporting the member through the Employment Tribunal process.

The employer settled the claim, by agreeing on a payment to Bal before the details were disclosed in a public hearing.

## Bullying of a disabled employee

"Dave" had been employed by a pharmacy multiple for 6 years and had been off with stress/depression/anxiety and believed he was now being bullied as a result.

Dave's medical conditions could be classed as a disability, so this was potentially discrimination.

The PDA assisted Dave to raise a grievance, assisted him to appeal when that was declined by management and then supported him with taking the situation to ACAS conciliation where eventually the employer made an offer for a five-figure settlement. Mutual agreement was reached to terminate the employment.

# Leadership in a global pandemic (#PDAbame)

**The BAME Pharmacists' Network provides a platform to share the personal stories of those who have experienced racism and to highlight how members addressed or resolved this.**

## **The BAME Network inspires others through showcasing personal stories of how people have effected change and are demonstrating leadership.**

The network also undertakes practical initiatives and over the last 12 months, BAME Pharmacists' Network members have engaged in several significant and proactive initiatives including events, publications, and campaigns, including **#GetVaccinated** which has been successful in activating pharmacists to advocate, particularly to vaccine-hesitant communities, for the Covid-19

vaccination programme using a multilingual approach through social media.

The campaign called on pharmacists to not only stay safe by getting the Covid-19 vaccine, but to also talk to their patients in the local community and those who know and trust them, to help dispel the Covid-19 vaccine myths.

The PDA **#GetVaccinated** campaign is important for pharmacists to be involved in, the videos are a powerful way to show people that many health care professionals have already

had the vaccine. They know that by having it, they are protecting themselves and their loved ones."

Sherifat Muhammad Kamal, Vice President of the PDA BAME Network, said: *"Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy and the impact on its uptake by the BAME community is of great concern. As pharmacists, we can all help inform and educate our patients as to why they should get vaccinated."*

Find us on YouTube by entering '**Pharmacists' Defence Association**' into the search box.

# Women in pharmacy leadership (#PDAanawp)

**NAWP's mission is to "enable all women pharmacists to realise their full potential and raise their profile by being educationally, socially and politically active."**

## **The Committee, led by President Naina Chotai, seeks out opportunities to make a positive difference for women pharmacists in all areas of practice and in all stages of their career.**

To mark International Women's Day 2021, the NAWP Committee hosted an event to hear from four women pharmacists working in different roles within pharmacy to talk about their careers, how they got into their positions, what advice they would give to others aspiring to their roles and the importance of role models and allies in addressing discrimination, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

NAWP President Naina Chotai who chaired the event said: *"We were privileged to hear from four inspiring pharmacists in our 'Women Leading in Pharmacy' event. All four speakers have chosen to challenge the norm and have excelled to leadership roles in their pharmacy careers. Our leading pharmacists were open and honest about the challenges they faced but cited 'belief in yourself' and 'finding your own tribe' to remain motivated in your journey. The rewards each of our pharmacists have achieved is an inspiration to all established pharmacists as well as to those embarking on their career journey."*

A key area of NAWP's work recently has included responding to the Department of Health and Social Care's Women's Health Strategy, in which the Committee identified areas of health inequality and how pharmacists have a critical part to play in supporting women's health and widening access to health advice and treatment in highly accessible, familiar surroundings. Their response also focused on the significant role that employers can play in advocating for health in the workplace and removing the stigma associated with women's health concerns.

## NAWP factsheets

To get the conversation started about issues affecting women's health, NAWP has produced a series of factsheets, downloadable from the PDA website, which help to raise awareness and provide useful information on health-related matters including the menopause, cervical and ovarian cancer. For more information, scan this QR code or visit:

[www.the-pda.org/resources/factsheets-and-guides](http://www.the-pda.org/resources/factsheets-and-guides)



# Ability Network – for pharmacists with any physical or mental health disability (#PDAability)

**Did you know that 1 in 4 people will experience mental health problems every year? Over the last two years, over 15 million working days were lost due to work-related stress, anxiety and depression.**

### Many employers provide training for their employees around resilience and wellbeing.

At the PDA, we recognise the importance of self-help resources and signposting towards relevant information, such as that provided by our charity partner **Pharmacist Support**, as these are invaluable tools to strengthen colleagues, especially in these unique times.

However, we must also emphasise the importance of employers taking responsibility for the wellbeing of their employees. **Trades Union Congress (TUC)** research indicates that the biggest causes of stress at work are workload, cuts in staff, changes at work and long hours, all of which are directly related to the work environment and culture, rather than the employee.

Here are 5 actions that the TUC recommends can improve mental health in your workplace:

1. Check if your employer has a mental health policy, which

should include (*but is not limited to*) a definition of mental ill-health, promotion of good mental health, how mental health links to other workplace policies, and the role of line managers.

2. Ensure your employer is providing reasonable adjustments, as these should be provided to people with mental health problems to eliminate any workplace barriers.
3. Talk to each other, as exchanging feelings and experiences can help people maintain their mental health.
4. Raise awareness around mental health in your workplace to dispel the stigma.
5. Work with your employer to reduce stress at work by looking at workloads, bullying, harassment and working hours.

raising and education, and this involves sharing the personal stories of those who have been impacted by disability. Much information received by pharmacists about disability may be positioned as how to help patients manage or treat their condition, however the Ability Network is concerned with helping pharmacists understand how they, and colleagues can continue with their career.

In recent issues of the Ability Network e-newsletter, pharmacists and pharmacy students have talked about how they study and practice while managing conditions including multiple sclerosis (MS), schizophrenia and OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder). To read the full stories, scan the QR code below or visit: [www.the-pda.org/get-involved/networks/ability](http://www.the-pda.org/get-involved/networks/ability)



### Personal stories

The activity of each of the EDI networks include awareness

# Being 'out' as part of the LGBT+ community at work (#PDAIgbt)

**Research carried out by Stonewall in 2018 discovered that when at work, becoming 'out' and open about your sexuality if you are part of the LGBT+ community was still a problem.**

**Over 35% of LGBT+ workers admitted hiding their identity at work due to fear of discrimination, with this rising to 42% for LGBT+ BAME colleagues and 51% for transgender staff.**

A recent survey carried out by the PDA LGBT+ Network found that 75% of members were "out" to their wider friendship circle, yet this figure was not reflected in the workplace, where only 50% said they were out to all of their colleagues. 25% of members reported that they were out to most of their colleagues, with another 18% just being out to

close colleagues, and some not being out to anybody at work. Only 37% of members said they were out to their manager/s.

To improve the situation in the workplace, employers could be encouraged to review certain policies and risk assessments. For example, risk assessments could look at reducing harassment by examining particular risks, such as lone working and patient-facing tasks.

PDA LGBT+ Network Member, Soh Xi Ken (he/him), said *"As much as I am saddened to read that 42% of BAME LGBT+ staff hide their identity at work,*

*I, as a gay Asian man, can definitely relate to this statistic. Employers can definitely do better in amplifying queer voices, supporting them against discrimination and especially microaggressions in the workplace."*

LGBT+ allies can show support by educating themselves and challenging phobia when it occurs. They can also ensure that they include LGBT+ workers in events and discussions, listening to the issues that LGBT+ people raise and respecting their boundaries.

## Pronoun badges

The PDA LGBT+ Network is delighted to announce that pronoun badges and an accompanying flyer are now available and free to order.

Wearing a pronoun badge is a simple but effective way of signalling that you respect people's pronouns and their gender identity. This can mean a lot for colleagues and patients who may feel invisible, or who may be struggling with their gender identity within the pharmacy context. Pronoun badges can also help to open up conversations about gender identity and raise awareness of gender diversity.

For more information, scan the QR code below or visit:

[www.the-pda.org/pda-lgbt-network-launch-pronoun-badges-and-flyers](http://www.the-pda.org/pda-lgbt-network-launch-pronoun-badges-and-flyers)





## About the PDA

**The PDA is a not-for-profit membership organisation and much of our activity is non-insurance related, involving incidents which are very important to pharmacists' employment and their practice.**

Claims that are covered under the insurance contract are handled by PDA staff, which means that problems with professional nuances are dealt with by experienced pharmacists and lawyers who understand the issues and are experienced in defending pharmacists in a wide range of situations.

The primary aims of the PDA are to:

- Support pharmacists in their legal, practice and employment needs
- Represent the individual or collective concerns of pharmacists in the most appropriate manner
- Proactively seek to influence the professional, practice and employment agenda to support members
- Lead and support initiatives designed to improve the knowledge and skills of pharmacists in managing risk and safe practices, so improving patient care
- Work with like-minded organisations to further improve the membership benefits to individual pharmacists
- Provide insurance cover to safeguard and defend the reputation of the individual pharmacist.

## Membership benefits

- **£5,000,000 Professional Indemnity (PI) Insurance\*** (£10,000,000 limit option available for Primary Care and GP Practice based members)
- **£5,000,000 Public Liability (PL) Insurance\*** Cover in the event that a pharmacist accidentally causes damage to a third party or their property.
- **£500,000 Legal Defence Costs Insurance\*** To cover the payment of legal fees for the following:
  - ✓ Employment Tribunals
  - ✓ Professional Tribunals
  - ✓ Prosecutions
  - ✓ In-Depth Taxation Investigation
  - ✓ Injury and Fatal Accidents
  - ✓ Contract Disputes
  - ✓ Jury Service Reimbursement
  - ✓ 24 hour Legal Advice Line.
- **Membership of the PDA**  
There are many extra discretionary benefits of being a member of the PDA, which are provided over and above the protection provided by dint of the insurance cover:
  - ✓ Employment and Professional Support
  - ✓ Locum Contract Dispute Resolution
  - ✓ Professional Advice
  - ✓ Risk Management Development
  - ✓ Active Education and Research Agenda
  - ✓ Proactive Lobbying
  - ✓ Interactive Communication.
- **Membership of the PDA Union**  
Enhances the membership benefits to include automatic rights of representation in disputes with employers and certain collective bargaining rights. This means that in serious job-threatening situations, PDA Union officials are able to accompany members to disciplinary meetings with employers.
- **PDA Plus**  
Giving access to a range of specially-negotiated preferential services for PDA members.

\*The insurance included with PDA membership is arranged and administered by The Pharmacy Insurance Agency (PIA) Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (Register No 307063).

# Read what our members say about us

"Thank you so much, when we thought all hope was lost you pulled through for us and against all odds gave us so much support. We will never forget this. You are the perfect example of what the PDA stands for."

"It's so nice to see all the support offered by the lovely members of the network. Seeing how successful they are gives me a lot of hope for the future of my career. It's so good to see and be involved in all the hard work that's being done to fight the inequalities within pharmacy."

"Thank you once again for your valuable and prompt insight into this matter. It is my most sincere opinion that the PDA provides with the best and unbiased advice in any matter that is presented, for this and many more such instances to come I will be forever grateful."

"To all the amazing people at the PDA. Thank you so much for everything you do! You are all the real superheroes of the world and are truly saving peoples lives out there in ways you might not realise."

"You have been so very kind to me and very supportive through such a difficult redundancy period. I will always be grateful for our phone calls to help me through. I have had PDA cover since I was a pre-reg and it is the biggest comfort."

"My experience of the PDA has been nothing but exemplary. Fantastic, hardworking people who seem to genuinely care about the pharmacists who are registered with them. If only more organisations were like them."

"I am truly humbled by your support, belief and kindness during the most difficult and stressful time of my professional career. Without your guidance and trust, I would not have overcome, but through you, we did overcome the allegations and for this I thank you forever and always."

"It's lovely to see the PDA taking such a proactive role in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), especially coming from one of the communities myself. Thank you for your work and support."

## Getting in touch

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## Let's stay connected. Follow us on social media!

Find us by entering the words '**Pharmacists' Defence Association**' into the search bar on the following sites:



**Not already a PDA member? Join today!**

**Over 32,000 pharmacists have already joined us**

As well as providing insurance cover, we offer a wide range of defence association benefits designed to improve the status and working environment of the individual pharmacist and, by so doing, this improves patient care. For more information, scan the QR code on the right or visit: [www.the-pda.org/join](http://www.the-pda.org/join)

