

# insight

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

Summer 2021



## A Call To Action For Pharmacists

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# Letter from the Chairman



**In a recent Pharmacy Magazine podcast, the Chief of Community Pharmacy Scotland, Professor Harry McQuillan was delighted that a senior civil servant had recently used the phrase 'Team Pharmacy' to describe the relationship between the negotiating body for pharmacy owners and the civil servants.**

From this statement, one would be forgiven for thinking that senior Scottish civil servants have forgotten about the actual players in the team – the large number of employee and locum pharmacists who face patients every day. Several features in this magazine and especially the one on page 6 demonstrate why if the interests of employees and locums continue to be marginalised by the government, then pharmacy practice in Scotland could

end up being developed in a way that would not only be detrimental to individual pharmacists but also to the public.

The significant influence of the pharmacist owners in Scotland is in principle a good thing, but the government has a duty to seek a balance of views in the public interest. The days of every pharmacist owning their own pharmacy are long gone and these days the vast majority of pharmacists are employees or locums.

In the same podcast, Professor McQuillan explained that he would seek a financial incentive for pharmacy owners, to enable pharmacists to prescribe. A noble objective perhaps, if you are the representative of pharmacy employers, but where are the discussions about incentives for the prescribing pharmacists? These are the employees and locums who will be making a very significant professional and intellectual investment to pass their IP qualifications, they will be taking the clinical and regulatory risks by diagnosing and prescribing. These investments are no less worthy or important than those being made by pharmacy owners who may have taken a bank loan to purchase a community pharmacy and who incur business risks. Or is it going to be proposed that like the Covid vaccination programme (page 6), the owners are paid the fees and it is for them to decide how much if anything, they want to pass on to the prescribers?

Such matters can only be resolved when the interests of employee and locum pharmacists across all sectors are properly represented in discussions about the future of pharmacy practice.

In a Pharmacy in Practice podcast, when asked what he thought about the growth of the PDA and whether the unionisation of pharmacy was a good thing? Professor McQuillan explained *"it seems to give a sense of professional non-unity and I'm not so convinced that is a good thing."*

That pharmacists seeking to organise themselves in a pharmacists' trade union and striving for greater fairness and recognition is considered to represent 'non-unity' demonstrates why the government must consider more than just the view of the owners.

Already, in recognition of the vitally important front-line role being played by pharmacists during the pandemic, recently, the Welsh Government agreed that going forward, tripartite meetings should be held between representatives of the government, the owners and the PDA Union. Such a proposition has not yet been agreed by Scottish Government, but we are determined that it must be.

For if the Scottish government gets too close to the interests of business owners, some of whom are large multinational companies and is distanced in its considerations from the interests of those who are delivering patient facing services, then this will undoubtedly become a problem for the Scottish government.

## It's time to act.

Members in Scotland have called upon the PDA to address this imbalance and we are answering that call. We are deploying a significant increase in operations and in this magazine, we describe some of our immediate steps. We have a powerful story to tell on behalf of all employee and locum pharmacists across all the pharmacy sectors and at an increasingly important time; As we emerge from lockdown, the issue of pharmacy supervision is yet again being raised by the employer representative bodies. We call on all pharmacists to join the cause by joining the PDA and invite those who want to play an active representational role in Scotland to step forward and be a part of the solution. (see page 10)

Let us ensure that **'Team Pharmacy'** can flourish as an institution where WIN WIN solutions are found and the genuine interests of **ALL** its constituent parts are properly respected and represented.

**Mark Koziol M.R.Pharm.S**

# PDA Union joins the STUC

**The PDA has affiliated to the Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC), adding the voices of 2,500 PDA members to the combined voice of Scotland's workers. The PDA Union's affiliation will commence immediately and will amplify the voice at work of employed and locum pharmacists in Scotland.**

The STUC represents over 540,000 trade unionists in Scotland, the members of 40 affiliated trade unions and 20 Trades Union Councils. They speak for trade union members in and out of work, in the community and in the workplace, in all occupational sectors and across Scotland. STUC representative structures ensure that they can speak with authority for specific sectors, such as healthcare. It has regular meetings with Scottish Ministers and other relevant politicians and the PDA aims to play an active role in that space. STUC also speaks for the interests of women workers, black workers, young workers, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender workers and other groups of trade unionists that otherwise suffer discrimination in the workplace and in society.



STUC General Secretary Roz Foyer said: *"We are delighted that the PDA Union has affiliated to the STUC. Pharmacists have been on the front line during the pandemic, delivering vital services in this challenging period. Their joining with us is further confirmation that there are no no-go areas for trade unions in representing every job and profession in Scotland. We really look forward to working with the PDA in the period ahead, to support their members' priorities."*

PDA Director Paul Day said, *"Our 2,500 members in Scotland will undoubtedly benefit from our union being part of the STUC. We are a relatively new union and over the last 12 years have organised pharmacist professionals in both the public and private sector to have a stronger voice at work, to further the equality agenda, improve safety for patients and employees, start to restore rates of pay which have been subject to real terms cuts over recent years and rebalance the influence private sector employers have over pharmacy policy. With many pharmacists practicing in local pharmacies, in the heart of Scotland's communities, we are proud that more and more of these key workers are also trade union members."*

## Tax Relief on PDA membership fee agreed with HMRC

**Always keen to ensure the best value for PDA members, after several years of negotiations with HMRC, the PDA has been approved by the Commissioners for HM Revenue and Customs under Section 344 of the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 with effect from 6 April 2018.**

The Inland Revenue has agreed that members are now allowed to claim tax relief as a deduction from earnings from employment for their PDA subscription, less the amount of £15 each year which has been agreed as the proportion attributable to the PDA's union activities as well as any £10 fees paid for joining any of the PDA's equality networks (such as the National Association of Women Pharmacists (NAWP), the LGBT+ Pharmacists Network, the BAME Pharmacists Network and the Ability Network for pharmacists with disabilities) as these aspects are not allowable by the HMRC.

This significant boost to the value of PDA membership to pharmacists means that the real cost of membership, will reduce due to the tax relief agreed.

### How to calculate a tax refund and make a claim

#### 1. Establish the membership fee paid

- Go to [www.the-pda.org/membership/](http://www.the-pda.org/membership/)
- Login and the payment information will be displayed
- Click on the "download PDF" button to download and save this information.

#### 2. Deduct any disallowed portion

Ensure that £15 is deducted from the annual membership fee from each year's payment, before making any claim.

Ensure that the amount claimed also excludes the cost of being a member of any of the PDA Equality, Diversity & Inclusion networks.

#### 3. There are different ways of claiming the tax relief on the membership fees:

- A member's regular accountant that advises on their tax affairs, can advise on the re-claim.
- If a self-assessment tax return is completed, members can claim the relief on the employment page of the return.
- If no annual tax return is filed, members can claim tax relief using form P87: Tax relief for expenses of employment.
- HMRC processes are often updated, but at the time of writing, a claim can be made by telephone. If expenses in a previous year have already been claimed and the total expenses are less than £2,500 for professional fees and subscriptions, the HMRC can be called and the relief requested. HMRC contact details are on the HMRC website.

Please also see the HMRC website for further details, including allowable expenses, eligibility, and claiming back tax for past years. Whilst the PDA is not directly able to provide tax advice, a standard membership benefit is access to



a Free Tax advice Service. This is available during business hours on **0344 571 7976**.

#### 4. Wait for the tax to be refunded

The system works as a refund on the qualifying part of the membership fee with relief being sought from HMRC only after the full membership fee has already been paid. The HMRC reclaim system does not allow the tax refund to be deducted directly from the PDA membership fee.

#### HMRC

Those members who contact the HMRC should quote the following reference number **T164470319/TEM**.

#### Claims for previous years – an added bonus

The HMRC decision takes effect from the 2018-19 tax year and therefore pharmacists who were already PDA members during these and in any later tax years, can claim retrospective relief against their membership fees for those years, subject to HMRC time limits and the deduction rules described previously.

## PDA secure Morrisons U-turn

**The Supermarket multiple reverses its decision to block £500 payment from Scottish Government to its employees within hours of PDA raising the issue.**

On St Andrews day 2020, the Scottish government announced a "Coronavirus (COVID-19): £500 payment for health and social care staff" with the recipients to include Community Pharmacists and others. The PDA welcomed this recognition from the Scottish government.

On the morning of Thursday 18th February, pharmacists employed by Morrisons reported to the PDA that their employer had decided to block them from receiving the recognition payment.

As the PDA raised concerns with Morrisons by lobbying Peter Fulford, the Superintendent Pharmacist and board member of the Company Chemists Association, to clarify the company's position, a significant outpouring of outrage occurred and spread rapidly. By lunchtime, Scottish Members of Parliament joined the endeavor and started to tweet their concerns. The PDA also called upon Community Pharmacy Scotland (CPS), the owners' representative body, to confirm if any other CPS members also intended to block payments to their pharmacists.

By the afternoon PDA members at Morrisons in Scotland



advised the union that the company had explained that they would not block the payments after all. While the PDA is pleased that the original decision was rapidly reversed, it remains concerned why company management made the decision in the first place and that it required anxious pharmacists to raise concerns before this stance was changed. Furthermore, the PDA was told by CPS that it believed that it had no remit or authority to comment on any individual member's considered response to the £500 government payment. Which begs the question that if CPS cannot answer questions related to fees received by contractors from the government, or answer to concerns relating to their conduct relating to government funding, then who can?

## PDA members at Rowlands concerned as some told they will receive no pay increase

**The Rowlands annual pay review took effect on 1 April and the new arrangements for 2021 were communicated just a week before that effective date. The PDA was contacted by pharmacists at Rowlands that had concerns about the company's decision and communications regarding pay rates, including from some who reported that their Regional Leaders phoned individuals to tell them there will be no pay increase this year.**

The PDA has seen a written communication dated 25 March in which the company say they are "delighted" to announce their new pay arrangements. Amongst other changes, it is understood that the company have graded their

individual branches, setting pharmacist salary ranges for each class of store. This means that different salary maximums now apply in each class of branch.

### Pharmacists should organise in their trade union

Employers are only able to unilaterally decide pay arrangements where there is no independent trade union recognised. The PDA encourage all those employed at any multiple that takes the above approach to join the PDA without delay. Once the PDA Union has sufficient members supporting trade union recognition, an application can be made on behalf of employed pharmacists at the company. Such recognition processes have already been successfully

completed by pharmacists at the largest two community pharmacy employers in the UK.

Once recognition is secured, pharmacists at that employer who volunteer to become union representatives can be trained to negotiate the pay on behalf of their peers and with support of the PDA Union's central team. Three pay settlements have been secured at Boots since recognition began in 2019 and the first pay negotiations at LloydsPharmacy commence later this year for a 2022 implementation.

In the meantime, individual PDA members concerned about changes to their contract or other conditions at work should contact the PDA Service Centre.

## Scottish Government tables "4%" pay offer for NHS employees working in Scotland

**Following the Scottish Governments proposal to offer 4% pay increase to NHS employee's the PDA is taking a close look at the small print. It is clear that the proposed settlement is not 4% for all employed staff in NHS Scotland. For the majority of healthcare professionals and many PDA members on NHS pay bands, up to band 7, then it is 4%. However, for many others on bands 8a-8c it is only 2%.**

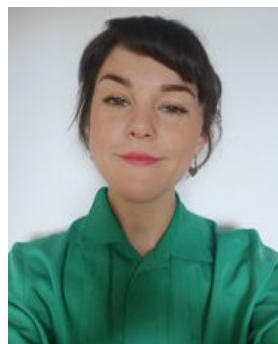
Paul Moloney, PDA Union National Officer commented: *"While the headline figure of 4% is significantly above inflation, it is*

*measured with many of those in senior, demanding positions being offered a much smaller increase.*

*However, it is a huge improvement on the English Government's scandalous 1% offer."*

Health service trade unions in Scotland are now consulting their members on the offer and the PDA Union encourages members working in NHS Scotland to let us have their views by emailing us at: [policy@the-pda.org](mailto:policy@the-pda.org).

# National Association of Women Pharmacists



The National Association of Women Pharmacists (NAWP) is an organisation within the profession in the UK that concerns itself with issues of special relevance to female pharmacists. NAWP was founded in on 15 June 1905 and so has over a century of proud history supporting women pharmacists. From 1 January 2020, NAWP began a new chapter as a network of the Pharmacists' Defence Association and since then, its membership has grown dramatically.

Edinburgh pharmacist Eilidh Milliken is the Honorary Secretary of NAWP in addition to working in two roles: one as a Hospital Pharmacist and the other as a Homeless Outreach Pharmacist.

Eilidh said: *"An intersectional approach to representation is important to the NAWP committee given that the needs of women from different backgrounds are often not understood. I have a particular interest in the overlap between women and those belonging to the LGBTQI+ community. Intersectionality is relevant to both pharmacists as professionals and to our patients."*

Membership is open to all UK pharmacists and former pharmacists (e.g., retired or taking a career break) and all UK pharmacy graduates, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual identity, disability, nationality, hours worked or employment status. All pharmacists irrespective of gender may join the network: NAWP welcomes friends and allies – people who will support equality and fairness for women pharmacists. For more details: [www.the-pda.org/get-involved/networks/nawp](http://www.the-pda.org/get-involved/networks/nawp)



## PDA Covid-19 vaccination portal helped over 1100 locum pharmacists

**When the NHS announced that Covid-19 vaccinations for all healthcare staff would be prioritised, but would be organised through employer networks, the PDA was concerned that since many locums work for a large number of employers, some locum pharmacists would inevitably be missed.**

Consequently, the PDA developed a web portal, enabling locums to register their details so that the PDA could effect the necessary introductions to the various Scottish Health Boards.

Through this arrangement, the details of more than 1100 locums were passed on to the NHS across the UK and those individuals should by now have all been vaccinated. Going

forward, anyone working in a frontline healthcare role who has still not had a vaccination should contact their local health board.

Alison Jones, Director of Stakeholder Engagement at the PDA said: *"Because we were concerned about the interests of all pharmacists, we provided the portal for any locum, whether already a PDA member or not, to support them to access a Covid-19 vaccination as a priority."*

*"Throughout this pandemic, the PDA has taken action to help the profession, as well as providing support to our members, in what has been a period of unprecedented challenges. We are really pleased that so many locum pharmacists were helped by our portal."*

## Why pharmacists should join the PDA

**Membership of the PDA in Scotland gives employed and locum pharmacists a strong independent voice in sectors where employers have an established and significant influence, and where the profile of pharmacists has historically been lower than that of some other healthcare professionals.**

The PDA works to bring the right representational balance to these environments across the UK, with each additional PDA member joining, giving the combined voice of pharmacists more profile and influence.

As various features in this magazine indicate, this PDA's influence and infrastructure in Scotland is set to increase even further.

The PDA is now the largest pharmacist membership body in the UK. Through research, policy development and campaigning the PDA also influences pharmacy and the wider world of employment, directly and by working with partners across the UK and internationally.

In addition, PDA membership supports each member with:

- Legal Defence Costs Insurance

- Professional Indemnity (PI) Insurance
- Public Liability Insurance
- The PDA Service Centre which provides professional and employment advice
- Access to PDA Education and other training and events
- INSIGHT magazine and other communications, including risk management guidance and more
- Membership of the PDA Union
- Locum Contract Dispute Resolution
- A donation to Pharmacist Support
- Discounted membership of up to four Equality, Diversity and Inclusion networks
- The PDA Plus range of additional discounts and offers, secured using the purchasing power of our 32,000 + members
- You can claim tax relief against the majority of your membership fee

**To join the PDA visit our website:**  
[www.the-pda.org/join/](http://www.the-pda.org/join/)

# Covid-19 vaccination session rates are indicative of a wider problem for pharmacists in Scotland.

**Fluctuating arrangements around Health Board fees for providing Covid-19 vaccination sessions in Scotland have caused significant unrest for pharmacists. The PDA has consulted with health boards and government representatives and has provided individual advice to many members and concludes that this debacle has been caused by systemic problems for pharmacists in Scotland which must now be addressed.**

## What are the issues?

The task of vaccinating the population of Scotland is vast and the NHS does not have a large enough workforce. Consequently, the government agreed that Health Boards could supplement their cadre of vaccinators by relying on primary care professionals, such as pharmacists, dentists and optometrists and paying them £231 for a 3.5-hour session.

It is not in dispute that these additional healthcare professionals have significantly increased the capacity of the vaccination centres. A letter from the Chief of Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board (GGCHB) to the PDA has thanked all those pharmacists who have helped to boost the capacity of the NHS.

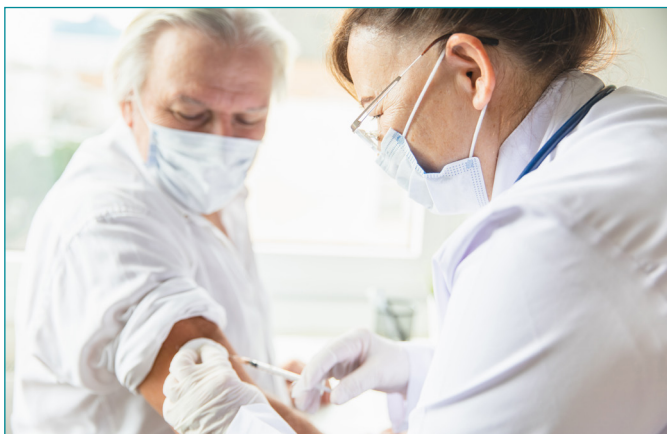
## Rates of pay

There is a difference in the payments being made to NHS employees, principally nurses, versus the amount paid to the self-employed health professionals for supporting the vaccination programme.

However, there are important differences with conditions between NHS employee's and the self-employed pharmacists and others from primary care. Whilst the self-employed pharmacists will not only have engaged in specific training and endured Hepatitis B vaccinations as did their NHS colleagues, additionally, they would have had to have purchased their own specialist Covid-19 vaccination indemnity insurance.

Unlike the NHS employed nurses, they would not have been provided with the benefit of NHS holiday pay, maternity, or NHS pension benefits. Importantly, they would also have taken the additional risk of not being provided with any NHS sickness leave benefits if they fell ill themselves and could not work, perhaps even for a prolonged period due to long Covid.

However, while these factors explain why the NHS decided to pay a higher hourly rate for each session, there is clearly a public concern as to the scale of the difference in rates. In principle, the PDA believes **that the nurses should be paid more for supporting the Covid-19 vaccination programme.**



## Allegations of how pharmacists have applied to service the sessions.

Concerns have been expressed that some pharmacists have used technology to book available vaccination sessions. Although the precise allegations have not been made public, pharmacists working as self-employed individuals will often use technology to book their work for the months ahead as will many of their usual clients and locum agencies. In this way, shift patterns are covered efficiently, giving those who need the cover certainty and peace of mind.

That pharmacists have supported the programme and booked up sessions in

the ways described will not have in any way impacted upon the taxpayer. Patients will have had the benefit of having their vaccination centres operated largely at the capacity that the NHS had hoped for.

Allegations have also been made that some of these sessions have been swapped with other pharmacist colleagues. In self-employed contracts, the ability by a self-employed individual to substitute another suitably trained and qualified self-employed pharmacist into their existing bookings is an important principle of holding self-employed status; established by the Inland Revenue. In such circumstances, the person organising the substitution should make this apparent

to the employer as soon as possible. These substitution requirements apply equally to the optometrists and the dentists.

Therefore, although allegations have been made that some individuals may have illegitimately undertaken sessions booked by colleagues, it is not yet clear on what basis this occurred as it may be an entirely legitimate process. The PDA fully support transparency and fairness

in public procurement and maintaining the standards of conduct expected of regulated health professionals and welcomes a fair, fact-based investigation into the allegations. The public will expect that any allegations are properly investigated and explained.

## Pharmacists treated differently to other healthcare professionals.

Pharmacists have a long history of administering flu vaccinations in community pharmacies and they are accomplished vaccinators. In the Covid vaccination programme, pharmacists have provided support and training to optometrists and dentists who have

joined a vaccination programme for the first time. Additionally, evidence coming in from across the whole of the UK has shown that a successful vaccination programme requires much more than just the administration of the vaccinations. Pharmacists, with their unique skills around medicines have taken responsibility for the wider pharmaceutical care of patients and the management of the vials. Many matters must be attended to before getting to the point where a vaccine is ready to administer. These pharmaceutical care issues may include the management of the vials to ensure that their out of fridge time allowances are observed. An activity complicated by the fact that each vaccine has different storage requirements. Sequencing the use of the vials through the recording of batch numbers and correct releasing. Ensuring that there is no swap over between the different vaccines in use. Importantly, there is the job of taking charge of the vaccine risk management and patient safety agenda. Disseminating safe practice information, based on examples of untoward incidents and lessons learned by pharmacists in other parts of the UK to other healthcare professionals. Indeed, pharmacists are not only distributing and displaying risk management posters in vaccination centres, but they are also supplying colour coded stickers to assist with the prevention of accidental swap overs and all at no cost to the NHS or the taxpayer.

The vaccination risk-management posters and sample stickers being used by pharmacists in the vaccination centres are available to all pharmacists in Scotland; samples are enclosed within this magazine.

Despite these important patient safety services delivered by pharmacists, the Scottish government has announced that pharmacists are now to be treated differently to the optometrists and dentists.

The government has clarified that whilst individual optometrists and dentists are still invited to support the vaccination service on the £231 sessional rates set by the NHS, these sessional rates for pharmacists can only be paid to pharmacy business owners and it is for those business owners to decide who if anyone, they wish to send to undertake the activity. Even if it happens to be the same pharmacists that covered the service previously, it is the pharmacy business owners who can then decide how much of the sessional fee they wish to pay them and how much they wish to keep for

themselves.

Self-employed pharmacists have been told by the NHS that they can still book to support the vaccination service direct, but if they do so, then it has to be either on a voluntary basis for no pay, or for the same rates of pay that the nurses receive, but with all of the inherent costs and risks that they would have to bear themselves and none of the employee benefits such as holiday pay, maternity and pension benefits and sickness protection.

### **This is grossly unfair**

This is not only inexplicable, but it is grossly unfair. Why does the government not attach any value to the important patient safety role that pharmacists can deliver? What possible say should be given to often large multinational pharmacy owners about which self-employed pharmacist should help with the NHS Covid vaccination service or not? What is the benefit to the taxpayer of paying the owners the money? Furthermore, with locum, pharmacists being self-employed individuals, how could the model proposed by the government where the work of a self-employed locum would be rostered by a community pharmacy owner, ever be a viable one?

When the PDA surveyed pharmacists in Scotland as to what they thought were the reasons for this change, more than 70% felt that this was because employer representatives had raised concerns about pressures on locum rates and supply with the government.

**The Chief Executive of the GGCHB wrote to the PDA and explained;**  
***"The Pharmacy [Owners] are uniquely placed to balance participation in the vaccination programme with ensuring patients have continued access to the essential pharmaceutical care services and their own business needs."***

The PDA is not aware of there being any pharmacist shortages in Scotland and so these explanations do not stand up to any scrutiny.

Pharmacists experienced in delivering vaccinations and additional patient safety benefits by managing the vaccines, many of whom are supporting other healthcare colleagues enabling them to vaccinate

patients are being excluded from the programme by unfair treatment by the government and the perceived business needs of the pharmacy owners.



### **Created a shortage of vaccinators.**

Ultimately, the actions of the government have harmed the public interest by estranging pharmacists from the process and this has resulted in acute shortages of vaccinators. During the weekend of 22nd and 23rd of May, at least one large vaccination centre has sent out urgent appeals due to a shortage of vaccinators.

### **Scottish Government has questions to answer**

When the PDA spoke to the government about this, it was told that where historically individual optometrists and dentists had been placed onto the NHS performers list, pharmacists, for some reason had not. When the PDA asked who this had been agreed with, no answer was given.

It would appear that the Scottish government have paid more attention to the business needs of pharmacy owners – many of whom are large multinational operators, than they have done to the legitimate business needs of the local Scottish self-employed pharmacists. They have also paid more attention to the act of administering the vaccination, than the important pharmacist patient safety role upon which the vaccination programme is reliant upon.

**This lack of government awareness that the pharmacist workforce has its own aspirations and has specific benefits to offer the health service independently to that which is offered by the more traditional community pharmacy network offering is a serious concern that must now be addressed. It is time that their thinking was better informed.**

# PDA Union representatives – Boots and LloydsPharmacy

In 2019, through two high profile ballots, pharmacists at Boots secured trade union recognition. This enables them to have negotiations on their pay and other conditions, being consulted on workplace changes and having a network of union representatives working in company time across the UK. In 2021, pharmacists at Lloyds secured that same outcome without a ballot being required as a voluntary agreement was reached with their employer. The PDA is keen to support pharmacists at other employers securing the same rights for them with their employer.

While the PDA has a strong central team with significant experience in pharmacy, trade unionism and the law that support our representative networks, recognition is fundamentally about pharmacists being enabled to speak for themselves.

## Some of the representatives in Scotland



Paul Flynn who works in Glasgow, explains his experience of becoming a rep: ***"I have always been concerned with justice and equality, my pharmacist father also represented colleagues through disciplinary and grievance procedures on behalf of the PDA. I was first aware of the PDAU from him telling me of how he supported them through the process and the gratitude of pharmacists for his help in their hour of need was very inspiring. When the opportunity arose to be a PDAU representative I was initially a little unsure of whether I was experienced enough and had the skills to perform the role. The training and support that I have had through the PDA have however left me in no doubt of my capacity to help colleagues. The training provided has been thorough and varied and I always know support is a phone call or email away".***



Gordon Finlayson, is a relief pharmacist in Aberdeenshire and a PDA union Divisional Representative.

***"I have worked at Boots for a total of 20 years, in which time I have seen many changes both within the company and the profession as a whole. I have been a regional committee member and trade union representative for the PDAU for 3 years and seen firsthand the excellent work they do in representing the interests of individual pharmacists. With the experience I have gained I look forward to helping build a more positive, constructive relationship between Boots and its pharmacists. I am proud to be both a Regional and Divisional PDAU representative at Boots. Gordon was also recently elected as the PDA Union National Executive member for Scotland.***



Brian Henderson, PDAU National Representative at Lloyds Pharmacy  
Brian the rep for Lloyds in Scotland is just a month into the role.

***"I graduated from Strathclyde University in 2001, then completed my pre-reg year with LloydsPharmacy and qualified in 2002. I have worked exclusively in community pharmacy with Lloyds, mainly in the positions of Relief Pharmacist and Pharmacist Manager. I joined the PDA in 2020. I have been in my current role as Base Pharmacist (Prison Contract), since 2018. I see the recognition agreement between Lloyds and the PDA as a genuine opportunity to help improve working conditions for Pharmacists in Lloyds. As a National Representative, I hope to play a part in making that happen by supporting colleagues and representing their views."***

# Could you be a PDA Rep?

The strength of the PDA union is in its members standing together. The union has representatives at workplaces and universities across the country, supported by the PDA central team, who play a vital role in the union structure. If you don't already have a PDA rep in your workplace perhaps you can take on that role?

## What is the role of a workplace representative?

The most important job of a PDA workplace rep is to make members and potential members aware that the PDA Union is independent from the employer, giving a strong collective voice for all pharmacists. Strong union groups experience fewer workplace issues, receive better pay and have improved terms and conditions of employment. This voluntary role is vital to the work of the PDA and will help to ensure that more pharmacists are aware of who the PDA is, what it does, what support and advice is available, and how members can get involved.

The workplace rep role includes:

- **Being an Ambassador for the PDA and its work on behalf of pharmacists**
- **Communicating with colleagues at work and feeding back to the PDA and the Regional Committee about any emerging issues and concerns**
- **Recruiting friends, colleagues**

**and other pharmacists to join the PDA**

- **Promoting the PDA and its networks on social media**
- **Raising awareness of the PDA's current campaigns such as Violence in Pharmacy, Safer pharmacies Charter and Wider than Medicines Strategy**
- **Getting involved in PDA events, the National Conference and other supportive PDA programmes.**

Workplace reps have certain rights under employment law. If the PDA is recognised by an employer, employee's have more rights than if the PDA is not yet recognised. Trade union recognition is a formal agreement with an employer for a particular union to undertake collective bargaining on behalf of that employer's staff. Collective bargaining typically covers terms and conditions of employment (pay, hours and holidays), discipline and grievance matters, health and safety, allocation of work, and redundancy. It often extends to cover professional development and change management.

The PDA has recognition agreements with a variety of employers, with Boots and Lloyds pharmacy being the largest multiples in community pharmacy. The PDA also has recognition in other pharmacy sectors, including in some hospitals. If the PDA is recognised by an employer, employee reps are entitled to:

- **Statutory paid time off for union**

**duties and training**

- **Approach non-members about joining**
- **Somewhere to display PDA materials**
- **Reasonable use of facilities, such as email, telephone and a photocopier for union activity**
- **Use of rooms for meetings.**

Reps have the right to access documentation that affects members including job descriptions, staffing structures, pay and conditions of service documents, and local employment policies.

In non-recognised workplaces, the rep does not have the right to collective bargaining; however, members are still able to access individual assistance from the PDA. In particular, all workers have the right to be accompanied in a formal grievance or disciplinary hearing, and so may be accompanied by the PDA workplace rep if they have received appropriate training. Strictly speaking, this is not a right to 'representation'; however, as a companion, Reps can attend a hearing and confer with their colleague but cannot answer for them. If a rep is not available to act as a companion on the date of the hearing, the member involved can suggest another date within five working days and the employer should postpone the original hearing. Also, reps have a right in law not to be victimised for acting as a companion for a colleague.

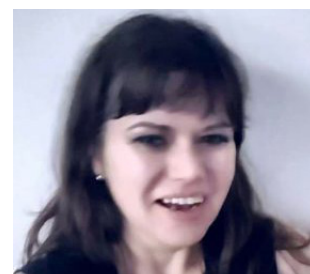
## Meet the PDA Union Scotland Committee



**Iain Speirits is a primary Care pharmacist in Glasgow and the Chair of the PDA Union Scotland Committee.**

*"Since qualifying in 2002, I have spent the majority of my career in general practice as a prescribing support pharmacist. I have always retained a specialist interest in cardiology and now work 0.4 in post-MI and heart failure.*

*I am involved in PDA Union to help ensure that individual pharmacists' voices are better heard and represented, so that we may further develop our profession in a clinical direction to provide best possible patient outcomes."*



**Emma Richmond is a Community Pharmacy Locum in Edinburgh**

*"I am a community locum pharmacist with many years of experience with a background in ethics. I became involved with the PDA Union to help to protect and defend pharmacists against injustice and to promote the profession to the public."*

# PDA is seeking a National Officer for Scotland

**As part of a significant development in its infrastructure in Scotland, the PDA is delighted to announce that it is seeking a National Officer for Scotland to join its existing Organising & Engagement Department.**

The PDA is the largest pharmacists' membership organisation in the UK and the only Independent trade union exclusively for pharmacists affiliated with the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC).

Organisation and Engagement Director Collette Bradford said;

*"It is obvious that individual pharmacists in Scotland are in need of a greater PDA representational infrastructure so as to protect and represent their interests. We are delighted to announce that we are now seeking an experienced pharmacist to join the growing team in Scotland."*

An important strength of the PDA has always been that many of its key officials maintain a pharmacy practice role for at least one or two days a week. In turn, the pharmacist joining the PDAs Organising & Engagement Department to support members and activities in Scotland, will be expected to keep up to date with practice by maintaining their practice role for at least one or two days per week.

This new representative role will be part office/part home-based and mobility across Scotland will be a necessity. Candidates will need to have some experience of leadership or leading change programmes and be confident and passionate about standing up for the interests of individual pharmacists.

## Do you want to be the National Officer for PDA?

**Making a difference to the lives of employee and locum pharmacists in Scotland.**

***This role is about representing, promoting and protecting the interests of individual pharmacists in Scotland to the Government, the NHS and other important stakeholders especially patient representative groups.***

In considering ways to develop new roles for pharmacy, it is about ensuring that a fair balance is achieved between the interests of the employers and those of the employee and locum pharmacist workforce. Creating WIN WIN pharmacy practice scenario's for the government, the NHS, the tax payer, the employer, the pharmacist and most importantly, for the patient.

The key responsibilities will include;

- **Engaging members in developing strategic policy for individual pharmacists across all sectors in Scotland**
- **Representing the PDA in its role as member of Scottish TUC**
- **Supporting pharmacists in individual workplace representation episodes in hospital, community and primary care pharmacy**
- **Supporting the remuneration programme for employee and locum pharmacists**
- **Representing the PDA in meetings with other key stakeholders, including Government representatives, the NHS, Health Boards, other healthcare professions, and patient representative groups**
- **Engaging with the pharmacy and national media in Scotland**
- **Playing a key part in ensuring the correct balance of power and representation between NHS, employer representative bodies and pharmacists.**

**PDA members in Scotland who would be interested in this role are invited to send their CV to: [recruitment@the-pda.org](mailto:recruitment@the-pda.org)**

# Violence in Pharmacy

## Pharmacist is hit by a chair thrown by a patient

**Shocking CCTV footage released by the PDA on World Day for Safety and Health at Work shows the extent of a recent attack on a pharmacist at their place of work, resulting in personal injury.**

While this is an extreme case, unfortunately, attacks in the workplace are not rare occurrences. Worryingly, many pharmacists and their teams are still subjected to violence and abuse as part of their day-to-day experience at work while delivering NHS care.

The link to this footage can be found on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebBCATGHu0s>

Consistently, in surveys of PDA members over the last three years, more than one-third of pharmacists do not feel safe for at least half of their time at work, and 20% reported not feeling physically safe for most, or any of their working time.

Alison Jones, Director of Stakeholder Engagement at the PDA, said: *"Nobody should accept being abused, threatened or assaulted as part of their job, yet too often that is the attitude that has been able to develop. Every time violence has been accepted, and the aggressor has avoided any consequences to their actions, it has condemned colleagues to the greater risk of reoccurrence. That is why the PDA is reiterating the call for zero tolerance and for the sector to take further steps to protect its workforce."*

Alison continued: *"The shocking footage released by the*



*PDA is just one example of the incidents that pharmacists are reporting to our advice lines. As well as a zero-tolerance approach, further steps are needed to prevent this from happening."*

The PDA has had a long-standing campaign to stop violence in pharmacies and is reiterating its focus for the pharmacy sector to work with it to secure the other four measures detailed in the policy, and also a risk assessment tool which enables pharmacists to be able to assess and then reduce the risk of violence in their pharmacy. The PDA has called on the government to help fund those measures and asked the regulator to ensure that all pharmacies are obliged to prevent violence as part of regulatory standards.

In Wales and Northern Ireland, the PDAs Violence in Pharmacy initiative had had the formal support of the respective Police Authorities and a jointly run awareness campaign.

The PDA's Violence in Pharmacy policy and risk assessment resource tool is available on [www.the-pda.org/violence-in-pharmacies/](http://www.the-pda.org/violence-in-pharmacies/)

## PDA supporting pharmacists in their early career

### The Prov- reg arrangements

**The PDA has always supported those new entrants to the profession; however, the last 18 months has required never before seen levels of support in Britain.**

The PDA is a UK-wide organisation and in Northern Ireland the regulator, PSNI, delayed the 2020 pre-registration exams by just a few months after which they were held in the normal way. However, the decisions by the GPhC to not only delay the exams significantly, but to simultaneously introduce on-line exams for the first time and create provisional registration left a cohort of new professionals facing additional challenges in the middle of a pandemic as well as uncertainty for many employers.

In addition to making changes to PDA membership categories to ensure the PDA could support members in these new circumstances, the PDA team have also been in near constant discussion with the GPhC throughout the year to ensure the voice of the future registration exam candidates was heard as detailed plans for the exam and registration were being decided and implemented.

Student and preregistration membership

of the PDA has always been FREE and this last year PDA Education online courses were added to support pre-reg exam candidates in their preparation as a further benefit of that membership with hundreds of provisionally registered pharmacists and resitters taking advantage of that support.

The PDA has also been ensuring members understood their options on when to sit, how to nullify a sitting if appropriate and how to appeal an exam result. The 2019-20 cohort of trainees has been the subject of significant discussion in the profession and the next exam sitting is in July 2021 when the majority of what some call the "forgotten" cohort, those that began their pre-reg year in the middle of the pandemic, are also expected to sit an online exam. Due to the exam date delays, they may become provisionally registered first, something they too did not expect.

This Summer, the nomenclature of "Pre-reg" is replaced by "Trainee Pharmacist" and the PDA will continue to support these individuals as they seek to join the profession, with information, events, training courses and guidance.

## Scottish Pharmacy Awards



**The Scottish Pharmacy Awards went online in 2020 and virtual attendees of the Scottish Pharmacy Awards were still able to celebrate all of the hard work and dedication of pharmacists. The PDA continued as the long-term sponsor of the pharmacy student leadership award category. This 2020 winner was Jennifer Pryor of Robert Gordon University.**

Before enrolling at RGU, Jennifer was a clinical nurse specialist in acute pain management so when the IPE society (of which she was a member of the committee) was planning the Journey of the Surgical Patient event, her input proved hugely valuable.

Applications for the 2021 awards will open later this year and the PDA are delighted to continue to sponsor the student leadership category. All being well, it is currently planned for the awards evening to go ahead with an evening ceremony and black-tie dinner in Glasgow in November 2021.

# WHY JOIN THE PDA?

- ✓ We defend our members when they are faced with a conflict
- ✓ We proactively lobby the individual pharmacist's agenda
- ✓ We challenge employers, regulators and government on behalf of our members
- ✓ We arrange insurance cover to safeguard and defend our members' reputations



## What our members say about us...

"I want to thank you for all your help and advice. Without it, I do not think I would have felt able to stand up for myself and my rights."

"I would like to thank you for your help and support from last year. It was an extremely difficult period for me."

"I'm not sure what I would have done without the help of the PDA."

"A final heartfelt thank-you to the PDA. I do not know what I would have done without all your help."

"I shall just say a BIG thank you from the bottom of my heart.. truly for your excellent advice and opinion."

Visit our website: [www.the-pda.org](http://www.the-pda.org)

Call us: **0121 694 7000**



| representing **your** interests |