

## WHAT PDA UNION RECOGNITION WILL MEAN FOR YOU



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# It's time to be taken seriously

PDA Union recognition is an historic opportunity for Boots pharmacists and pre-registration pharmacists to improve their working lives and secure a better future. The opportunity to vote for recognition has been eight years in the making. We want you to understand the advantages of having the PDA Union by your side, looking after your interests, so you can cast your vote with confidence that it's the right thing to do.

Until now, important decisions affecting your working lives have been unilaterally imposed on you by the company. If the PDA Union is formally recognised by Boots, this will change, because discussions about improved terms and conditions will be covered by a legal negotiation framework.

The company will have to listen to pharmacists because working together as a trade union, you will have the right to a real say on your pay and conditions through this framework, as well as enhancing health and safety at work.

We believe this would be a significant step towards improving the working lives of pharmacists in Boots and beyond. Please don't underestimate the importance of using your vote; it's your opportunity to express your views.

**Every single vote counts, and can make the difference. If not enough people vote then nothing will change.** Please also tell all your Boots colleagues about this very important vote.

## Who can vote?

The employees eligible to vote are called a "bargaining unit", which comprises:

- All store based and relief pharmacists, including advanced practitioners and care services pharmacists
- Pharmacist store managers, excluding flagship store managers
- All pre-registration pharmacists.

# Vote and raise money for charity

We want all Boots pharmacists and pre-registration pharmacists to feel part of the democratic process by having their voice heard. To encourage participation, last time we donated £1 for every vote cast in the ballot to derecognise the BPA, making a total charity donation of more than £3,000. We want to thank all Boots pharmacists and pre-registration pharmacists who helped make this donation possible. We pledge to do the same again for this ballot.

**For every vote cast by members of the bargaining unit, the PDA Union will donate**



Pictured L - R: Sara Johnson, Macmillan Fundraising Manager, Rajani Patel, derecognition applicant, Mark Pitt, PDA Union Assistant General Secretary

**£1 to a charity chosen by Boots pharmacists, regardless of whether the vote was in support of PDA Union recognition or against it. No one will know how you voted as it will be a secret ballot.**

# How PDA Union recognition will work for you

If enough Boots pharmacists and pre-registration pharmacists vote to recognise the PDA Union, we will be able to negotiate on matters that **relate to (and include)** pay, hours and holiday.

Our objective is to forge a constructive relationship with senior management to secure a better future for you, your colleagues, your patients and the company. We will establish a Joint Negotiating Committee and other structures comprising of Boots pharmacists and pre-registration pharmacists who will be supported by union representatives.

This committee will negotiate with senior Boots managers on behalf of the circa 7,000 pharmacists and pre-registration pharmacists in the bargaining unit.

In addition, Boots pharmacists will be eligible to be appointed as legally-recognised health and safety representatives.

Pharmacists and pre-registration pharmacists have already started to tell us what things need improving at Boots. Here are some of the initial improvements we will negotiate for with the senior management:

## Better pay, improved transparency

Boots pharmacists and pre-regs have told us	What the PDA Union will do if recognised
<p>Boots' "market-based pay" system uses closely-guarded data and a secretive process that is not disclosed to its pharmacists. Boots itself has a significant influence on the market pay rate, as it employs around one third of all community pharmacists and pharmacist managers.</p> <p>Boots pays pharmacists a starting salary which is just 80% of the market average, potentially driving down the overall market average over time.</p> <p>Hundreds of loyal and long-serving Boots pharmacists have missed out on annual pay rises under the "market-based pay" system. Others have had very limited pay rises and newly qualified salaries have seen very little change for over ten years.</p>	<p>Negotiate for higher pay to reflect the value pharmacists and pre-regs add to Boots as a pharmacy-led company and the increasing number of services pharmacists are expected to provide.</p> <p>Negotiate for a fair, transparent process for awarding pay rises, which doesn't preclude pay rises for people with long service or who have previously served in more senior roles.</p> <p>If required, gather our own data to support the pay demands of Boots pharmacists and pre-registration pharmacists. Share relevant salary data, to increase confidence that individuals are being treated fairly.</p>

## Protection and enhancement of benefits

Boots pharmacists and pre-regs have told us	What the PDA Union will do if recognised
<p>Valuable benefits such as final salary pension, premium payments for bank holiday, Sunday and late night working, half day Christmas shopping, two annual CPD days and others, have been depleted or lost in the past few years.</p>	<p>Protect your existing benefits and work to enhance them in line with what can be expected from a company of Boots' size and resources.</p>

## Fairer, more reasonable performance appraisal

Boots pharmacists and pre-regs have told us	What the PDA Union will do if recognised
<p>Performance ratings can be unfair, which affects subsequent pay rises and bonuses.</p> <p>Individual targets are not always explained or agreed, and may be unreasonable.</p> <p>Ratings are decided behind closed doors using a forced distribution process which demands that up to 1000 pharmacists are classed as underperforming no matter how well they actually perform.</p>	<p>Negotiate for a fairer, more transparent process, reasonable objectives agreed at the start of the year and no moving goalposts. We believe that the gender pay gap can be reduced through negotiating better pay &amp; reward processes.</p> <p>The process should be easy to understand and use for both managers and front-line pharmacists.</p>

## Better bonus, improved transparency

Boots pharmacists and pre-regs have told us	What the PDA Union will do if recognised
<p>Bonus is calculated based on company profit, but senior management doesn't explain what the profit target is or how it's calculated.</p> <p>Individuals have missed out on bonus when the company has done really well, and yet been given a part bonus at other times, even though the company didn't hit its targets.</p> <p>Walgreens Boots Alliance made around £4 billion profit last year, in no small part due to the hard work pharmacists and pre-regs do at Boots.</p>	<p>Ensure a fair, transparent bonus process, so that you know how it's calculated and what you are on track to receive.</p> <p>Negotiate for a higher bonus that reflects the value pharmacists and pre-regs bring to Boots as a pharmacy-led company.</p>

## Pre-registration pharmacist training

Boots pharmacists and pre-regs have told us	What the PDA Union will do if recognised
<p>Pre-regs sometimes feel as if they're used as an "extra pair of hands" rather than being treated as a professional in development who's there to learn from the experience.</p> <p>The company will not support cross-sector experience in hospitals for pre-regs and will not indemnify them for it.</p>	<p>The PDA Union believes actual hospital and other cross-sector experience is an essential part of professional development and we will endeavour to influence the company to change its position as the largest community training placement provider. Membership of the PDA is free for pre-registration pharmacists and pre-reg members are indemnified for their work in cross sector hospital placements.</p>

## Paid training time

Boots pharmacists and pre-regs have told us	What the PDA Union will do if recognised
Pharmacists are sometimes required to complete training in their own time for services they deliver at the company's request.	Negotiate paid training time, including wherever the training is designed to deliver services for the company.

## Protected lunch and rest breaks

Boots pharmacists and pre-regs have told us	What the PDA Union will do if recognised
Pharmacists often work through their lunch and rest breaks, or remain signed in as the Responsible Pharmacists to allow the company to trade. Breaks are frequently interrupted.	<p>Ensure the company honours and promotes the legal right to an uninterrupted break.</p> <p>Ensure pharmacists and pre-regs get paid and receive benefits for the hours they work.</p>

## Pay whenever signed in as Responsible Pharmacist (RP)

Boots pharmacists and pre-regs have told us	What the PDA Union will do if recognised
Pharmacists may be asked to sign in as RP before or after work - using an 'Advance Declaration' - taking criminal, civil and regulatory responsibility remotely for the operation of the pharmacy. This allows the company to trade, but pharmacists don't get paid for this.	Enter into negotiations to secure proper remuneration for pharmacists who wish to use the "Advance Declaration" process.

## Better holiday entitlement and booking process

Boots pharmacists and pre-regs have told us	What the PDA Union will do if recognised
<p>Pharmacists have to book their holidays up to 18 months in advance.</p> <p>Pharmacists have to wait until they've accrued 20 years' service to get 30 days holiday. Those with less than 5 years' service get 25 days.</p>	<p>Negotiate for improved holiday entitlement, and a sensible holiday booking system which balances legitimate work obligations against the right to a personal and family life.</p> <p>In the NHS, for example, staff get 27 days on appointment, 29 days after 5 years and 33 days after 10 years' service (plus 8 bank holidays in each case).</p>

## Improved work-life balance

Boots pharmacists and pre-regs have told us	What the PDA Union will do if recognised
The company can be inflexible in its rota demands, for example in relation to weekend working. Weekend working expectations have increased.	Negotiate a better work-life balance through fairer, more reasonable policies that take in to account individual circumstances.

## Equality

Boots pharmacists and pre-regs have told us	What the PDA Union will do if recognised
<p>There's a 21% (mean average) / 5% (median average) gender pay gap across the company.</p> <p>The company hasn't published figures on any ethnicity pay gap.</p>	Negotiate equal pay for an equal role, regardless of gender, ethnicity or other protected characteristics.

## Improved health and safety

Boots pharmacists and pre-regs have told us	What the PDA Union will do if recognised
Health and safety at work, and patient safety, is important to them.	<p>Appoint and train Boots pharmacists as legally-recognised health and safety representatives to improve safety, working with the company.</p> <p>Amongst other things, representatives will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigate accidents, near misses, and other potential hazards and dangerous occurrences in the workplace;</li> <li>investigate complaints made by an employee they represent about their health, safety or welfare in the workplace.</li> </ul> <p>We know the impact a dispensing error can have on a pharmacist's mental wellbeing. We will be seeking to work with the company on initiatives to improve how pharmacists are supported following errors..</p> <p>Encourage Boots to adopt our Safer Pharmacies Charter, which includes commitments on ensuring safe staffing levels, adequate rest breaks, not imposing self-checking in any pharmacy, respect for professional judgement, a good whistleblowing culture, access to a pharmacist and the physical safety of staff. The company must provide the appropriate working conditions and resources to support them to maintain and improve in these areas. Request appropriate measures as detailed in the PDA policy on Violence in Pharmacies.</p>



# What else can the PDA Union do for you?

As an independent trade union, PDA Union members have access to specialist trained union representatives in the event they face disciplinary or grievance proceedings.

We have an excellent track record in defending our members and securing good outcomes. If formally recognised, we could do so much more. We believe that many of the problems pharmacists tell us about could be dealt with more effectively at source through a collective bargaining agreement: we all know prevention is better than cure. In addition to the statutory negotiating topics (relating to pay, hours, holiday and safety culture)

we will also seek to work constructively with the company on other issues pharmacists and pre-reg's tell us are important to them. This includes:

- The provision of support for mental health and wellbeing at work
- Expenses payments, including improvements to the processing and payments system and ensuring fair remuneration;
- Improved career pathways that help pharmacists develop, whatever stage they are at in their careers.



Some of the PDA Union team (L to R): Paul Day, National Officer; John Murphy, General Secretary; Helen Lewis, Regional Official, Wales & West; Mark Pitt, Assistant General Secretary; Mark Koziol, Assistant General Secretary

## About us

The PDA Union is the largest organisation of pharmacists in the UK, with 28,000 members. We were established in 2008 by pharmacists, for pharmacists to ensure that the interests and reputations of individual pharmacists, pre-registration pharmacists and pharmacy students are protected and at the fore of the profession. We are one of the thirty largest trade unions in the UK and continue to be run by pharmacists, exclusively for pharmacists.

We are the only independent trade union exclusively for Pharmacists in the UK. The difference with an independent trade union is that we work for you, you can talk to us in complete confidence and we employ our own expert pharmacists and lawyers who can give you the advice and help when you need it. You can read the latest about Boots recognition and all our other activity on our website:

[www.the-pda.org/archive/news](http://www.the-pda.org/archive/news)

# What pharmacists say about the PDA Union

“Once again I thank you both for the great work you have done on my behalf. I’m now starting to get some peace of mind from the financial stability obtained from getting the settlement.”

**“Thank you for all your support, I have received excellent advice and even just the supporting ‘listening ear’ from the PDA really does make such a difference.”**

“Thank you again for everything you and the PDA are doing for me.”

**“May I take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for all the help and advice you have provided for me throughout this case. I couldn’t have done it without your kind guidance.”**

“Thank you soooooo much, Your support has meant the world to me, You are fantastic at your job.”

**“I cannot thank you enough for your support throughout this process and just knowing someone is there has been so reassuring. Without the advice of the PDA this would have been so much more stressful and lonely, so thank-you all.”**

“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. Thank you so much for all the help and support you have provided me.”

**“I have found this a very stressful situation, which I know you realised. I’d just like to say an enormous “THANK YOU” to you and your team. Your professionalism and guidance has been exemplary and I’m really not sure what would have happened without you on my side. I can’t bring myself to imagine the various terrible possibilities. Yes I know it’s your job, but to those of us who find ourselves at this end of the process you are very much more than just someone doing a job.”**

“I will continue to champion the work of the PDA among fellow pharmacists especially the ones in employment who perhaps do not see the need to belong to a union.”

**“Thank you. I would not have achieved this success without your invaluable support. Justice prevailed. Looking forward to relaxing, without all the added weight on my mind. Thank you again, I’m truly grateful for everything.”**

## Getting in touch

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