

Happy New Year from the PDA Union

The PDA is the largest organisation of pharmacists in the UK, with 28,000 members

PDA Union is an organisation with 2,500 Boots pharmacists and pre-registration pharmacists plus more than 25,000 other pharmacists, trainees and pharmacy students across the UK. We wish you and your family a happy and prosperous New Year. We are also taking this opportunity to raise awareness with you about the ballot at Boots starting on 4 February because your vote can make a huge difference for pharmacists at Boots now and beyond.

What's this about?

If the PDA Union can win the ballot then pharmacists will be able to speak through us as an independent trade union to negotiate matters relating to your pay, hours of work and holidays. We'll also be able to appoint safety representatives so we can address those matters impacting on your physical and mental health at work. That's just the legal minimum that we'll be able to do and we'll be working to find ways to make sure the management listen and act on any other issues that matter to pharmacists too.

Things can get better

We know that Boots demand a lot of their 7,000+ pharmacists and we know that despite the various management-controlled mechanisms for having a say at work, such as the PPP, pharmacists still have concerns.

As with any large employer, not all managers behave appropriately all of the time and not all company policies benefit employees. That's why individuals need an independent trade union on their side.

Though most people, most days, are not in conflict at work, nevertheless every day we are helping a Boots pharmacist or pre-registration pharmacist somewhere to resolve work-related issues. In fact issues at Boots account for a disproportionate share of the cases we handle.

This can include instances of bullying, redundancy, discrimination and unfair disciplinary processes and sadly these things can happen to anyone.

Senior management are trying to stop you having an independent voice

The company's senior management have spent over six years using the court system to prevent pharmacists having this independent voice at work, but this changed in June last year when 87% of those voting in a ballot of pharmacists and pre-registration pharmacists voted to end the arrangement with the BPA which prevented us from applying for recognition.

This means after 6 years Boots pharmacists finally have the chance to get an independent voice at work and this next ballot will complete that process.

Regrettably, we have no doubt the senior management will want the number voting to fall short of the legal threshold so that they can continue to deny you an independent voice at work.



Why the PDA Union?

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.

Thousands of our employed and locum members work in community pharmacy so we have an experience and insight into the sector which is second to none.

We use our knowledge to help individuals and to campaign to make this better for pharmacists and pharmacy.



We want to ensure pharmacists at Boots have:

- Fair reward
- Safe and healthy workplaces
- Job security
- Professional respect at work
- Career development

Why Boots?

We chose to start our recognition efforts at Boots, but by no means do they end there and so this coming ballot matters to all pharmacists across community pharmacy and beyond.

One of the reasons we chose Boots is because they are the largest employer of pharmacists in the UK, after the NHS. Once pharmacists are able to negotiate better terms and conditions at Boots it directly helps the most pharmacists in any one employer. Boots is very influential in the pharmacy sector and we know if we can improve conditions there, it will influence other employers, hence we'll indirectly improve conditions for others too.

So you're not just voting for improvements in your own terms and conditions, but for the wider pharmacy profession for years to come.

What will happen if we win?

Once we are recognised PDA members will be able to select a committee of Boots employed pharmacists to represent all pharmacists at the company. We will support their training and the committee will listen to pharmacists to determine priority issues to raise with the company. Supported by our experienced employment team they will negotiate for improvements at work.



What things will you discuss with management?

Here are some examples: Pharmacists want to be paid fairly for all the work they do and all the time they spend on work-related activity. Pharmacists want pay scales and performance management processes that are transparent, fair and easy to understand.

Pharmacists want a faster closure of the company's gender pay gap. Pharmacists want safer pharmacies where adequate resourcing prevents undue stress and where they can enjoy both their career and good mental health.

Help us keep in contact with you

Senior Management can communicate directly with you anytime they wish, but we have only limited access to all Boots pharmacists. We've sent you this card and enclosed note via the independent person who is looking after the forthcoming ballot at Boots.

They have added your name and address on the outside of this envelope using data provided by Boots and unless you are a PDA Union member or have given us your details, we cannot contact you directly.



Please help us keep in contact with you. You can read the latest about Boots recognition and all our other activity on our website <https://www.the-pda.org/archive/news/> and by following us on your choice of social media platform. If you're not already a PDA member you can join us here: <https://www.the-pda.org/join/> and you will then receive updates directly from us.