

Boots Pharmacists News

February
2019

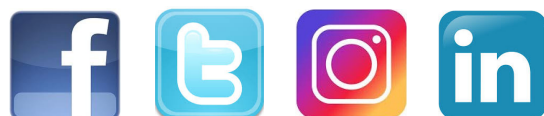
LET'S WORK TOGETHER



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Time to be taken seriously



Boots pharmacists and pre-registration pharmacists will have the ability to negotiate better working conditions and address safety concerns, if enough vote “Yes” in the postal ballot for PDA Union recognition, due to start on 4 February.

A successful outcome to the ballot will secure an independent voice at work through the PDA Union and pharmacists will then be able to speak up through the union structures. If pharmacists win the ballot, for the first time, the company will be legally obliged to listen to the profession upon which the business is built.

In the last issue of Boots Pharmacists News, we set out what Boots pharmacists and pre-registration pharmacists can expect to be improved if they vote to recognise the PDA Union. Regrettably, senior Boots managers have continued to try to prevent them securing an independent voice at work, by opposing PDA Union recognition. So in this issue, we look at how management has responded to the concerns of pharmacists without the PDA Union recognised.

Promises, Promises!

We don’t blame the current management as individuals; we understand that they each have a manager setting their objectives and, like many of the senior management we’ve quoted later in this document, will likely move on to other roles in due course. However, they are the current spokespeople the company puts forward, so it is legitimate to look at what they and their predecessors have said.

Since Boots pharmacists successfully derecognised the BPA, the senior management has once again been talking about listening to the voice of pharmacists - with lots of emails, videos, and updates being issued recently. Unlike working through an independent trade union, if pharmacists want to challenge management about what is said through these management-controlled channels, individuals put themselves in the spotlight. In addition, the company is not required to act on anything that pharmacists say.

These are the same sort of senior management behaviours we saw back in 2012 when Boots pharmacists first applied for PDA Union recognition. That intense activity faded away after Boots found a way to prevent its pharmacists securing improved working conditions through an independent union – the blocking “sweetheart” agreement with the BPA.

We’ve looked into our files and found previous statements that company spokespeople have made about improving conditions for pharmacists, so that you can judge for yourself if these promises have been met.

Here are a selection of quotes, and we’ve put some further examples on our website here:

www.the-pda.org/boots-recognition/boots-promises

2013	<p>“Since our second quarterly update sent to you last month...</p> <p>We’ve already started working hard on improving the way we listen to and communicate with our pharmacists...</p> <p>We train all our store managers in pharmacy operations”</p> <p>Boots ‘Pharmacy Update’ newsletter, March 2013, launched soon after Boots pharmacists first sought PDA Union recognition.</p>
2014	<p>“We will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start the transformation and simplification of our pharmacy operating platform to make it easier and simpler for our healthcare colleagues to provide even better patient care e.g. the launch of Total Care Solutions • Invest significantly in our pharmacies to ensure we have all that we need to look after our patients • Review and simplify our pharmacy processes so we can drive greater care and be ready for our new pharmacy systems • Simplify our store operating procedures – ensuring they are intuitively designed, easy to find and focused on what our people need to know.” <p>Boots One Healthcare - Big Book of Let’s Feel Good, May 2014.</p>
2014	<p>“On Tuesday I, together with several members of the leadership team, had the privilege of joining the Pharmacist Partnership Panel (PPP) to hear first hand from our pharmacists what it’s really like at the moment.</p> <p>They spoke passionately about the significant challenges you face – including workload, resource, recognition and more.”</p> <p>...</p> <p>“We need more hands on deck to run our pharmacy business. We don’t have enough dispensers and we know there’s too much admin. Over the past two months we’ve recruited over 400 dispensers, but we know that more of our existing dispensers have decided to move on so it still feels difficult.”</p> <p>...</p> <p>“We’re re-measuring all activity in ACI – particularly services – so that from April it will better reflect what it takes to run a pharmacy nowadays.”</p> <p>...</p> <p>“My commitment to you all is that we’ll continue to look at ways to reduce workload and ensure that we do everything we can to help you give the best patient care and help us grow. We’ve already met this week with the BPA and will meet with the PPP next week to talk through our plans.”</p> <p>Karl Crane, Boots UK Director of Stores, UK and Ireland – Letter to all staff, September 2014 (left Boots in February 2015).</p>

2014	<p>“Our ACI timing activity will re-base what it takes to run a pharmacy at Boots for the first time in many years and will help us see the size of that challenge... We know that we have to take workload out of our pharmacies. In December and January we’ll look at this. We have to be clearer in how we explain ACI and resourcing too.”</p> <p>PPP meeting review. Meeting chaired by Andrew Caplan, with updates on resourcing from Marc Donovan, 26 November 2014.</p>
2014	<p>What would make Christmas even more special? Four of the six responses included “More resource”, “Less workload”, “more time for customers” and “more people in stores”.</p> <p>Listen up Latest, from Colleague Engagement, December 2014.</p>
2015	<p>“What would make us feel even better?” Four of the six responses included “more time to spend with customers”, “reduced pressure”, “more people to do the work”, “more time with managers”.</p> <p>Listen up Latest, from Colleague Engagement, January 2015.</p>
2015	<p>“The overall feeling is that although the overwhelming majority of colleagues would recommend Boots as a place to shop, significantly less colleagues would recommend Boots as a place to work. Colleagues continue to love helping customers, working with great colleagues and our brand. Workload, staffing levels, increasing pressure and management issues are the key things people would like to see improvements on.”</p> <p>Boots Colleague Engagement – Organisational Intelligence, update to senior management, National Forum and the PPP June 2015.</p>
2016	<p>“I fully appreciate that such significant changes in pharmacy feel challenging, especially alongside increasing workload and customer expectations, which is why we’re working hard to reduce complexity and workload in our stores and pharmacies wherever we can. Working together with all our teams, we are committed to finding ways to alleviate such pressures, whenever and wherever they occur, through listening, collaborating and where necessary adapting how we work locally to improve the situation.”</p> <p>Letter from Simon Roberts, President of Boots, 20 April 2016. Simon Roberts left Boots in June 2016.</p>
2016	<p>“I know from the many comments you have given me that workload, resource and capability are continuing to be the biggest concerns that you have in stores at present.”</p> <p>Letter from Kevin Birch, May 2016 (Retail and Pharmacy Operations Director for the UK and ROI, he left Boots in June 2018).</p>
2017	<p>“Large amount of work to do with SOPs, Professional Standards and audit. Concern over pressure to handle a safe pharmacy – worry that expectations are unrealistic, can we look at frequency?”</p>

	PPP meeting review 31 January 2017. Joined by Andrew Caplan, Richard Bradley and Marc Donovan.
2018	<p>"I'm absolutely confident that the resource is there to deliver the patient care. I am confident that we have enough staff."</p> <p>Richard Bradley, BBC Inside Out, January 2018</p>
2018	<p>"We've also invited the PPP onto workstreams covering key themes from the feedback that you're consistently sharing [including] workload, staffing and resources."</p> <p>Richard Bradley, Pharmacy Now, August 2018.</p>

Boots pharmacists tell us these management commitments over the years have either not been met or that any temporary changes are not sustained. Members tell us that there is no reason to believe yet another round of promises will solve the daily challenges they face in the workplace, any more than the earlier ones did.

By contrast, the recent Central Arbitration Committee judgement said of the PDAU's efforts to give you an independent voice at work that **"It speaks of a commitment and level of support that has been undeterred by the frustrations and set backs of the process"**.

What formal recognition would mean

A better way is possible. We've made it clear to Boots that we want to work positively to create an environment where patients, pharmacists and the company's shareholders all benefit. We want job security, fair treatment, professional respect and appropriate reward for pharmacists. We want to work collaboratively with management to solve challenges and make the most of opportunities together. It's a sensible and professional approach.

Formal recognition would give the ability to improve working conditions by speaking collectively through our union. Whilst this won't happen overnight, we keep to our promises. We will show the same determination to support Boots pharmacists we have always had, regardless of who is in charge at Boots. **Every vote matters in the ballot.**




The view from the botanical gardens

In October 2018, Boots advertised the virtues of the work/life balance in head office, including the **“on-site gym, range of catering options and cafes and beautiful botanical gardens for taking some time out.”**

We're pleased that staff at head office can enjoy these benefits, but it is important that the senior management that work in this comfortable environment should also be aware of what life is like on the front line, serving patients.

Pharmacists would like to see senior company decision-makers work shifts in real pharmacies, but this doesn't happen and issues are not resolved. It's time to improve the working conditions of front-line staff in Boots pharmacies.

Alongside better pay and conditions, stores need to be safe and secure for the pharmacy team and for patients.








Boots UK
 95,040 followers
 23h

This week is **#WorkLifeWeek** and it's all about promoting well-being at work and a healthy work-life balance.

Did you know at our Support Office in Nottingham we have a range of facilities to encourage the positive well-being of our colleagues? Including an on-site gym, a range of catering options and cafes and beautiful botanical gardens for taking some time out.

www.boots.jobs **#LetsFeelGood**

How we already help

Standing together in our union, pharmacists have a voice. The difference the PDA Union can bring is that we are independent of the company, and representatives are protected by the legal rights secured by trade unions.

Members too have protection when speaking to an independent trade union and, like our lawyers, our representatives can exercise legal privilege in keeping discussions confidential. We can raise individual issues anonymously and identify trends from around the business and the country. The PDA Union also has the overall strength of more than 28,000 members standing together across the UK as the pharmacy profession.



Under employment law, skilled PDA Union representatives are already able to support and represent colleagues formally in internal disciplinary and grievance meetings. If things escalate to an employment tribunal, coroner's inquest, Fatal Accident Inquiry or regulatory hearing, our team can continue to support members with their cases.

While the senior management's actions continue to try and prevent you getting an independent voice at work, our team continues to help pharmacists at Boots with the issues they face.

Once we are recognised, we hope to be able to do more to prevent such cases reaching these stages in the first place. We want to resolve issues locally and quickly before they become disputes, allowing all those involved to reach an appropriate outcome and get on with their lives and careers. As pharmacists we know prevention is, after all, better than cure.

Join us here: www.the-pda.org/join



STOP THE PRESS: Walgreens Boots Alliance has announced it intends to cut \$1Billion of costs per year from pharmacies.

Companies have certain legal obligations under UK employment law to consult with recognised independent trade unions before making decisions on redundancies or business transfers. This is yet another reason to vote **"YES"** for PDA Union recognition.

About the PDA

The PDA (Pharmacists' Defence Association) is a not-for-profit membership organisation that looks after the interests of individual pharmacists. The PDA is staffed by experienced pharmacists and lawyers and is supported by an extensive advisory board.

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 provide insurance cover to safeguard and defend our members' reputations

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 to improve 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.

Getting in touch

The Pharmacists' Defence Association

The Old Fire Station, 69 Albion Street,
Birmingham, B1 3EA

Tel: 0121 694 7000

Email: enquires@the-pda.org

Website: www.the-pda.org

Membership Benefits

- **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.
- **£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.
- **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).