

REPS IN-DEPTH



DANIELA RUSALIM

I have been proudly serving my local community as a Boots pharmacist for over 10 years, relentlessly striving to offer the best service possible and benefit my patients. Like many Boots colleagues, I deeply care about our organisation, but I feel that some strategic decisions from senior management have caused huge disengagement amongst the professional workforce, the company's most valuable intangible asset.

I have put my name forward for the role of a PDA union representative because I want to provide support for my colleagues, defend their rights and play an influential role in deciding our company's direction.

Through a comprehensive training programme, I have gained the skills and knowledge to represent colleagues in grievances and disciplinary meetings as well as a deeper understanding of the PDA's mission in shaping the agenda and demanding action from relevant organisations with the purpose of improving pharmacists working conditions.

In my role as a trade union representative I've come across member issues which can be attributed to the following factors:

- Emotional: related to unfair treatment, inappropriate pressure at work due to insufficient staffing levels and members feeling that their concerns are not being addressed
- Instrumental: challenges with support systems and work-life balance
- Informational: issues with transparency and communication
- Appraisal: problems with performance reviews and use of the performance improvement plan

Working together with managers we can resolve these issues to improve members' working lives and staff retention.

Dealing with some member cases can be daunting, but I have all the help I need to be fully effective as a rep from the PDA centre and a great support system within Boots UK. My journey as a trade union representative has been amazing so far and I have received a warm welcome and unwavering support from my head of customer experience, his team and my area manager, from the other representatives, which whom I share a strong connection and most importantly, from my colleagues in the East of England region who have provided remarkable feedback on issues that need addressing as well as impressive solutions to relevant matters.

I attend the JCC meetings and submit issues from members in my area. Gender and ethnic equality are two causes very close to my heart and I am hoping that through the Equality Joint Working Party, of which I am part of, I will influence the company's representatives to start taking meaningful action to address inequality and demonstrate in the process that our company is forward-looking and inclusive.

Advocating the importance of membership to the PDA union is also important to me because the landscape of pharmacy is shifting rapidly and pharmacists will be facing untoward challenges in the near future, reason for which every pharmacist should be considering carefully how their individual interests are represented. The PDA is the leading defence organisation and insurer and they always put members' interests at the heart of their work, and relentlessly work for the benefit of our profession.