



Supporting members with individual situations at work

The reason the PDA is an independent trade union is that pharmacists, like any profession, can find that they sometimes experience difficulties or disputes with their employer and only an independent trade union can take some of the actions needed to support members in those situations.

Though an employment contract is between an employer and an individual, employers will typically have “Managers” working for them to represent their interests in the employment relationship. In a large corporation there can be legions of people in “Management” and “Head Office” support functions, all there to protect and further the interests of the employer. Sometimes those numbers are supplemented by external Lawyers and HR consultants, engaged to further represent the employer’s interests, so an employment relationship really can feel incredibly unbalanced.

Being part of an independent trade union, and having 10,000s of your profession on your side can help to balance out that situation. The PDA is the largest pharmacists’ membership organisation and the only independent trade union exclusively for pharmacists in the UK. The PDA team includes senior employment lawyers and experienced pharmacists, all there to help members defend themselves and to enable members to understand, and to exercise, their rights at work.

The PDA’s experience of representing pharmacists is unrivalled and no other organisation has our experience of supporting pharmacists with employment issues. The PDA files show that whether an employer is part of the NHS, a university, a GP practice, a community pharmacy contractor or any other type of entity there can be times when any employer, or people they employ, behave in ways that may disadvantage, discriminate against or injure pharmacists.

Often the PDA cannot discuss the cases in which pharmacists have been supported, principally because members often just want to put their bad experiences behind them and move on without having public reminders of their difficulties; and their wishes for anonymity must come first. Some cases are settled by employers before court hearings reveal in public just how badly they have treated an employee, and such settlements will often include non-disclosure clauses, which also restrict what can be said.

For these reasons, descriptions of cases may have to omit detail that may otherwise identify an individual or employer, but where possible, the PDA will share examples of cases as pharmacists can benefit from an appreciation of what the PDA team can, and do, to help members at work.