

NETWORK

THE BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR USDAW ACTIVISTS – JULY/AUGUST 2020



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LOBBYING TO PROTECT JOBS

Usdaw reps have played a fantastic part during one of the most unprecedented crises of our lifetimes. They have continued to work and support members during the lockdown.

Over the last few months I have spoken to a lot of reps. Listening to them, it is obvious that many of them have been working flat-out to ensure that they're still available when members need them, some even continued in their rep role whilst they were shielding.

Their hard work and commitment can be seen in the safety measures they have managed to negotiate in their workplaces. On top of this, they have been dealing with increased numbers of queries, advising and representing members, recruiting and most importantly, they have been there when members simply needed someone to talk to. I want to once again thank all reps for their hard work.

Like most organisations, Usdaw has been adapting to the changing situation. We've been working hard to ensure reps have the support they need by providing regular updates on the Coronavirus, guidance on recruitment and organising during the pandemic, adapting our learning so that reps and members can access a whole range of courses online and ensuring that Usdaw continues to provide an excellent service to reps and members.

During the last three months we lobbied



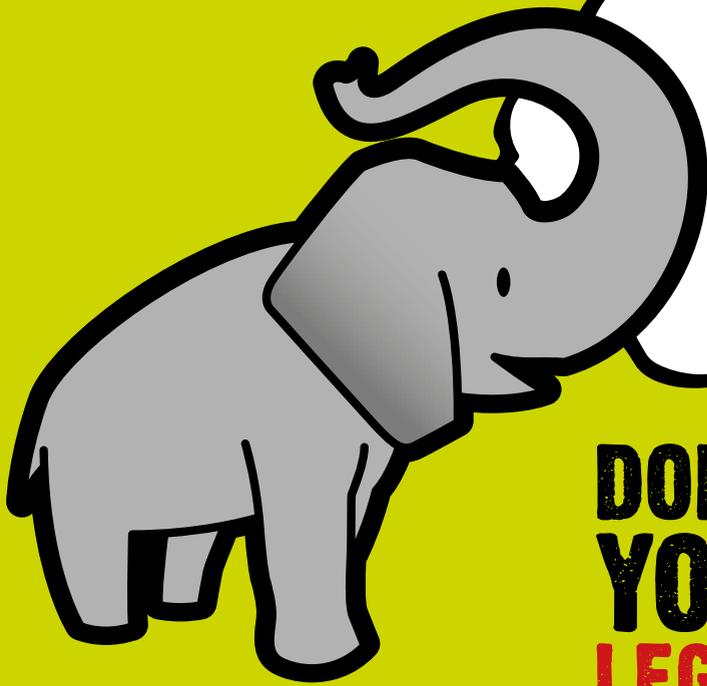
government and employers and managed to secure a number of wins for our members including winning 10 per cent pay bonuses, getting sick pay from day one, enhanced colleague discounts, closure of non-essential online operations, improvements to furlough pay and negotiating improved health and safety measures.

As lockdown eases we will continue to lobby government to do all they can to avoid mass job losses, extend the job retention scheme, invest in green projects to create jobs, give key workers a well-deserved pay rise and to implement a recovery plan for the struggling retail sector.

Let's continue to work together to ensure that once we come out of this crisis we don't go back to the way things were.

Usdaw General Secretary

Paddy Lillis



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Don't forget to email the editor your view network@usdaw.org.uk

UNDERPAID AND UNDERVALUED

Workers in retail, manufacturing, distribution and home delivery have been working around the clock, keeping food on our tables and medicines in our cupboards. They have adapted to huge changes in an extremely short time, working under intense pressure and providing a lifeline to our communities.

Usdaw is working to keep members safe as they work through the crisis. As the union looks past Coronavirus, it is time for the Government, employers and the public to recognise that these workers have been undervalued for too long. They deserve a new deal. Usdaw is calling for:

- £10 minimum wage for all workers, ending rip-off youth rates and providing a living wage.
- Minimum contract of 16 hours per week, for everyone who wants it, that reflects normal hours worked and a ban on zero-hour contracts.
- Better sick pay for all workers, from day one, at average earnings.
- Protection at work – respect for shopworkers, abuse is not a part of the job.



- A proper social security system, Universal Credit does not provide a safety net.
- Job security, with day one employment rights for unfair dismissal and redundancy.
- Fair treatment and equality for all workers, including equal pay.
- A voice at work, stop rogue employers refusing to engage with trade unions.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Millions of low-paid workers have provided essential services to help ensure the country is fed, healthy and

safe through 100 days of lockdown and will continue to do so. Usdaw members employed in our supermarkets, distribution warehouses, food processing sites and home delivery operations welcomed the key worker status, but that respect and appreciation must not fade into the background when this national crisis passes.

"There must be lasting and fundamental changes to the way society views our lowest paid workers. We need a new deal for these workers: a minimum wage of at least £10 per hour, an end to

insecure employment, respect for shopworkers and action to ensure that retail jobs are no longer underpaid and undervalued. It cannot be right that key workers in supermarkets, who are keeping our communities fed, are visiting food banks to feed their own families." www.usdaw.org.uk/Campaigns/A-New-Deal-for-Workers

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CHANCELLOR'S ECONOMIC STATEMENT

RETAIL DESPERATELY NEEDS A RECOVERY PLAN



The economic statement made by the Chancellor Rishi Sunak at the beginning of July made no mention of the tens and thousands of retail jobs already lost or the difficulties the high street is facing, let alone any suggestion of a recovery plan.

Udswal general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "We listened carefully to the Chancellor's statement today and we are truly shocked that he made no mention of the huge challenges the retail industry faces. We recognise the value of a VAT cut for the hospitality sectors, which should have been extended to retail.

"The Government's response to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus emergency on the retail industry, in the form of small business grants, business rates relief and VAT deferral, has helped take some pressure off. However, these interim measures will not sustain the industry for long. We needed to hear today that the Government will adopt an urgent retail recovery plan.

"What the retail sector needs now is a tripartite approach of the Government, unions and employers

to develop a much needed retail recovery plan. We have long called for an industrial strategy for retail to help a sector that was already struggling before the Coronavirus emergency. Now the situation is much worse.

"The Government has a clear choice. Do they want to see the high street go to the wall, or do they want to help save it? Retail is an important feature of our towns and cities, it employs three million people and we need a stimulus package to save the industry."

Udswal called for a recovery plan to be developed with trade unions and retail employers and include:

- Fundamental reform of business rates. The Government committed to a review of business rates earlier this year, but assurance is needed that this will not be delayed further.
- An immediate and comprehensive review of rental values and lease arrangements. In the short term measures are needed to prevent commercial landlords taking legal action for rental defaults during

the lockdown period. In the medium term, a rebalancing of the relationship between landlords and tenants is required.

- Reform of UK tax law to ensure that companies pay their fair share of tax through tackling tax avoidance and the use of offshore havens, with the aim of creating a level playing field between online and high street retailers.
- Funding for local authorities so they can invest in their local economy, transport networks and high streets. We cannot revive our high streets if core services continue to be undermined
- Investment in skills for retail workers, including through union learning and high-quality apprenticeships. This should include an in-depth assessment of emerging trends and potential skills shortages/gaps within the sector.
- A new deal for retail, distribution and home delivery workers based around a real living wage and guaranteed hours.

HOPE AT HOLYROOD

LAW TO PROTECT SCOTTISH SHOPWORKERS FROM ABUSE TAKES A STEP FORWARD

Usdaw has welcomed the Scottish Parliament's Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee unanimously passing to the next stage the Protection of Workers Bill, promoted by Daniel Johnson MSP. Usdaw calls for MSPs to support the measure when it is debated at stage 2.

Usdaw's Scottish divisional officer Stewart Forrest said: "We thank the all-party committee for their diligence, unanimous approval of the general principles of the Bill and recognition that retail workers are subject to unacceptable violence, threats and aggression every working day.

"Shopworkers are at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19, yet they have continued to go to work and help respond to the crisis. Despite this, we have seen abuse, threats and violence against shop staff double this year.

"However abuse of shopworkers is a problem in more normal times and, in our view, the current legal provisions do not sufficiently protect them. The Scottish Government has indicated they too support the intentions of the Bill and will engage in the details



of it. We hope that will lead to a change in the law to better protect shopworkers."

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "This is very welcome news and we hope it will result in the Scottish Parliament leading the way on protection of shopworkers, as they did with emergency service workers, and pass this Bill.

"At a time when we should all be working together to get through this crisis, it is a disgrace that people working to keep food on the shelves

are being abused and assaulted. Action is required. Our message is clear, abuse is not part of the job.

"Retail staff are key workers delivering essential services and that role must be valued and respected, they deserve the protection of the law. Shops are the cornerstone of our communities and we continue to work with the employers to improve health and safety for staff. We also call on customers to stay calm and respect shopworkers."

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IN BRIEF

FRANKIE & BENNY'S

The owner of Frankie & Benny's is to permanently close up to 120 restaurants with almost 3,000 job losses expected as it accelerates plans to restructure.

CENTRICA

Centrica, the owner of British Gas is planning to slash 5,000 jobs. More than half of the job losses will be in management roles as Centrica tries to cut bureaucracy and save £2 billion by the end of next year. The firm reported an £849m loss last year.

BENTLEY'S

Bentley has confirmed it is seeking to make 1,000 job cuts through a voluntary redundancy scheme, shrinking its workforce by almost a quarter as it responds to the Coronavirus pandemic. Two-thirds of workers were furloughed at the height of the lockdown, before the factory reopened at half capacity in May.

TRAVIS PERKINS

Wickes owner Travis Perkins is set to cut 2,500 UK jobs and close 165 stores across its various brands due to weaker than expected demand for building materials. The Travis Perkins chain will be the worst affected, focusing on smaller branches where social distancing rules will be difficult to implement and lower trade will wipe out profitability.

GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

FACE COVERINGS IN SHOPS

The Government announced that face coverings in shops would be made mandatory from 24 July. Those who fail to comply with the new rules will face a fine of up to £100. The move will bring England into line with Scotland and other major European nations like Spain, Italy and Germany.

Face coverings have been compulsory on public transport in England since 15 June. Children under 11 and those with certain disabilities will be exempt.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "It is right to make the wearing of face coverings mandatory in shops, but we must recognise that expert advice says it is an additional protection on top of existing safety measures. There now must be clear and detailed guidance from the Government and we urge them to work with Usdaw and retail employers to draw that up, as we successfully did on joint safety guidance for the reopening of high street retail with the British Retail Consortium.

"Usdaw is urging employers to stay

with the established two-metre social distancing, using screens at tills and limiting the number of shoppers in store at any one time. Employers must also be aware that staff will need regular breaks when they can take their face covering off and have the opportunity to replace it. Staff on tills who are behind screens should not be required to wear a face covering.

"We welcome the indication that shop workers will not be expected to enforce the wearing of face coverings. They are already dealing with more abuse than normal and this could be another flashpoint. There must also be clarity on age identification procedures, under the 'Think-25' policy, when a customer is wearing a face covering.

"We now need a public information campaign to explain the correct use of face coverings, that some people are exempt from wearing face coverings and the importance of maintaining existing social distancing and hygiene measures."

www.usdaw.org.uk

BOOTS

BOOTS TO CUT OVER 4,000 JOBS

Boots announced plans that it would cut around 7 per cent of its workforce within retail, head office and opticians to mitigate the significant impact of COVID-19.

Usdaw national officer Daniel Adams said: "After everything Boots workers have given to their communities and their country as key workers over the past few months, this is bitterly disappointing news and a further blow to the high street.

"We have very little information beyond what is in the media at this stage and urge the Company to

engage with Usdaw so that all options can be explored. The union will do everything it can to support Usdaw members in the coming weeks.

"It's shocking to us that the Chancellor's July economic statement made no mention of the tens of thousands of retail jobs already lost or the difficulties the high street is facing, let alone any suggestion of a recovery plan.

"It is clear more than ever that the Government desperately needs to get a grip of the retail crisis before it spirals out of control."



COVID-19 UPDATE FROM PADDY LILLIS

In all my years as a union rep and official, I have never known a situation that has had such a dramatic impact on Usdaw members in every single workplace across the country as the Coronavirus crisis. Overnight Usdaw members became frontline staff and have been doing a fantastic job in ensuring the country's food supply.

Like organisations across the world the Coronavirus crisis has been extremely challenging for Usdaw. However, we have adapted to the situation and have been

working hard to ensure that we continue to provide the advice and support our members need to get through this crisis.

Behind the scenes we've been lobbying Government to ensure that the needs of Usdaw members are taken into consideration when the Government makes policy decisions to deal with the pandemic. We have also been working with employers to make sure that they are prioritising the safety and wellbeing of Usdaw members during this extremely difficult time.

Thanks to our lobbying we have managed to secure a number of wins for our members including, winning 10 per cent pay bonuses, getting sick pay from day one, enhanced colleague discounts, closure of non-essential online operations, improvements to furlough pay and negotiating improved health and safety measures.

The guidance issued by Government is changing on a regular basis therefore please go to our website for the most up to date information:



www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Coronavirus-Update

SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES

The Government announced a revision to the two-metre rule on social distancing in England. This has been widely reported as a 'scrapping' of the rule, but what the Prime Minister actually said was:

"Where it is possible to keep two-metres apart, people should. But where it is not, we will advise people to keep a social distance of one-metre-plus, meaning they should

remain one-metre apart, while taking mitigations to reduce the risk of transmission."

The 'mitigations' listed by the Prime Minister include:

- Avoiding face-to-face seating.
- Reducing the number of people in enclosed spaces.
- Improving ventilation.
- Using protective screens.
- Closing non-essential social spaces.
- Providing hand sanitiser.
- Changing shift patterns so that staff work in set teams.

The union's position on this is clear, where it is working effectively the two-metre distancing should continue in retail and other workplaces, alongside all of the other measures we've agreed with employers.

WORK

Since 13 May, anyone who could not work from home in England, such as those in construction and manufacturing, were actively encouraged to return to work. Workplaces that are allowed to open must be made COVID-secure, while members of the public are still being encouraged to follow social distancing guidelines.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The guidance on public transport has changed. The Government now says that in England anyone can use public transport, but that people should try to:

- Travel at off-peak times. Use quieter stations and stops.
- Keep changes to a minimum, for example, between bus and train.
- Walk for more of your journey, for example the first or last mile.
- Book your tickets online in advance or pay by contactless.

Face coverings are mandatory on public transport across the UK, unless you are covered by an exemption.

EXERCISE

There are no restrictions on how far

members of the public can travel to exercise outside in England, during which they do not need to follow a time restriction. Following a further Government announcement indoor gyms, sports facilities and swimming pools can reopen from 25 July.

VISITING FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

From 1 June in England, groups of up to six people from different households could meet outside in parks and private gardens 'provided those from different households continue to stick to strict social distancing rules.' While that rule remains in place, a new rule announced on 23 June outlined that up to two households can meet indoors, as long as social distancing guidelines are followed.

As part of the guideline, which came into force on 4 July, up to two households can also stay overnight together in 'self-contained accommodation', which includes hotels, bed and breakfasts and campsites.

The Government previously introduced 'support bubbles', which meant that people who live on their own or are single parents with dependent children could create a bubble with one other household, in which they did not need to follow social distancing guidelines.

FACE COVERINGS

Face coverings in shops were made mandatory in Scotland on 10 July and on 24 July in England. Those who fail to comply with the new rules will face a fine of up to £100.

For more information please go to www.gov.uk

Best wishes and stay safe.

Paddy Lillis
Usdaw general secretary

Black Lives Mat

Over the last few weeks towns and cities across the UK and around the world have seen thousands of people protest following the killing by police of a Black American man called George Floyd.

GLOBAL UNREST

The fact that the murder of one man has sparked global protests should come as no surprise. The death of George Floyd has had such a profound impact around the world not because it was exceptional, but because it was not.

In the USA, the killing of African American men and women by the police is a long and shameful story. Here in the UK the Windrush scandal, the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence, the Grenfell fire and the fact that Black people are three times more likely to be unemployed than white people – are all reminders that racism is not just a problem in the USA.

Racism is not new and yet the sight of tens of thousands of predominantly young people, both Black and white, coming together

to protest against it in this way right around the world is.

Many protestors made the link between the death of George Floyd and the fact that Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people are so much more likely to die of COVID-19.

Government ministers may tell us that Black Lives Matter but their failure to develop any practical proposals for saving BAME lives during the current crisis is one of the main reasons why the current protests have taken off in the way they have.

WHY BLACK LIVES MATTER?

Saying 'Black Lives Matter' doesn't discount the importance of other lives. It's a movement that brings attention to the way that Black people across the world are denied certain human rights by virtue of being Black and how racism needlessly jeopardises their lives.

INEQUALITY KILLS

Even before the Coronavirus crisis, inequalities in health, education, housing and employment shaped

the lives of BAME people, and the current crisis has brought those inequalities to light.

If you are BAME you are more likely to work in insecure, low-paid work, to be unemployed, to live in an overcrowded household and to have less access to green space.

It is these deep and long-standing employment and health inequalities that are putting BAME people and communities in greater danger.

Events in the USA show that racism kills but sometimes it does so in ways that are less visible; poverty, unemployment and unequal access to healthcare can also be fatal.

BAME MEMBERS

And what about BAME members in Usdaw organised workplaces?

The experience of our BAME members has mirrored the trend for BAME workers to be placed in roles that expose them to a high degree of risk, whilst at the same time having less access to sick pay and other workplace rights negotiated by the union.

ter.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MEMBERS SURVEY

A recent Usdaw survey of members' experiences of working during the Coronavirus crisis has shown that BAME members are overwhelmingly more likely to be working in the sectors where the union is less prevalent and not as well organised.

One in five BAME members, compared to one in 100 white members, were working outside the sectors where the union is well established. This included cleaning, security and fast food.

ABUSE AT WORK

Usdaw BAME members were also more likely to report having been threatened or abused at work since the crisis began. This could reflect the fact that the job roles many Usdaw BAME members are doing are those that are more likely to bring them into conflict with the public – for instance acting as marshals and security guards and therefore taking on duties that involve policing entry into stores by customers.

PAY

But the most striking differences are in relation to pay during the crisis. More than half of Usdaw's BAME members reported that they did not know what they would be paid during a period of sickness or self-isolation compared to just over a quarter of white members. This suggests that BAME members are in less secure work and so feel less able to ask their employer about what they are entitled to.

More than twice as many BAME members report not receiving any pay during the crisis compared to white members. They are also less likely to be receiving full average pay or full contractual pay during sickness absence or while furloughed.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

Usdaw along with other unions and the TUC is deeply concerned about the disproportionate impact the current crisis is having on BAME workers. The voices of BAME workers have been absent from much of the debate about the issue and so the TUC are keen to gather

evidence about the situation by hearing directly from them. They are asking BAME workers to share their experiences of the Coronavirus pandemic to make sure that BAME workers' voices are at the centre of conversations about what needs to change.

You can take part in the short survey they are running here www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/9YCCB79

The Government is fond of telling us that we are all in this together but the fact that we live in an unequal society means some people are far more in it than others. We have already seen that London police officers enforcing the Coronavirus lockdown are more than twice as likely to issue fines to Black and Asian people as to white people. BAME people are more likely to work in insecure, low-paid work and live in overcrowded housing which leaves them at a higher risk of contracting the virus and dying from it.

Usdaw will continue to play its part in the struggle for race equality both during and beyond the current crisis.

KEY WORKERS TALK ABOUT BEING A REP DURING COVID

Usdaw reps have gone the extra mile by putting their own fears and concerns aside to ensure they are always available to help and support Usdaw members

Usdaw members are on the frontline of the Coronavirus pandemic.

As the country went into lockdown thousands of retail workers became key workers and continued to work in order to keep the food supply chain going.

Network talks to Usdaw reps about what it was like working through the early weeks of the pandemic and how they juggled their reps' duties during this unprecedented time.

Chris Evans



“WHEN YOU LOOK AT NON-UNIONISED COMPANIES YOU CAN SEE THE DIFFERENCE IN HOW THE STAFF HAVE BEEN TREATED.”

CHRIS EVANS

Chris Evans, a checkout operator at Tesco in Irlam, talks about how he has continued to help and support members even though he's been shielding for 10 weeks.

“For the first two weeks of the pandemic I went into work even though I have a lung condition,” said Chris. “I like my job and I wanted to carry on working.

“It was pretty difficult in the beginning. I've never seen anything

like it. The store was packed every day as though it was Christmas, but it was worse because people were stockpiling. I couldn't understand why they were doing it. If everyone just bought what they needed there would be enough for everyone. It was really challenging for staff because we were having to deal with stressed and aggressive customers while also having to manage our own fears of catching the virus.

“A couple of weeks into the pandemic my manager and team leader thanked me for my contribution but told me it was probably best I went off due to me being at high risk. I'm really grateful that they persuaded me to do this because about a week after I left the team leader went off sick with Coronavirus. I would have been in real trouble if I had caught it.

“I've been off for 10 weeks now but I haven't been sitting still. I have been continuing with my union duties. Advising members over the phone and representing them remotely. I've been kept busy but I wouldn't change this. Most of the queries I have been dealing with were around shielding. People were really frightened and worried and needed someone to talk to.

“I love being a union rep and helping people. I even managed to recruit a BT engineer to the union. He's really chuffed with the service Usdaw provides.

“I have to say Tesco have been brilliant with the way they have treated colleagues. When I look at non-unionised companies or

companies where there isn't a strong union presence you can really see the difference in how staff have been treated. I'm returned to work in June and I look forward to it. Tesco put in place safety measures such as plastic shields, gloves and masks. I feel as safe as you can in a situation like this!

"I look at other countries where people have lost their livelihoods and there has been no safety net, no furlough scheme. I know the scheme isn't perfect but it will provide some security for millions of families around the country.

"I think the NHS has been absolutely brilliant and I really hope the Government recognises their contribution. It's a great institution which has saved the lives of thousands of people including the Prime Minister's. I hope the Prime Minister's experience of the NHS makes him rethink his party's policies of cuts and they fund it properly instead."

HELEN GREAVES

Helen Greaves is a customer assistant in a Tesco express store and has been on the front line during the Coronavirus pandemic. She's been an Usdaw rep for five years and this has been one of the most challenging situations she has encountered.

"I've worked all the way through it," said Helen. "It was really stressful at the beginning because there weren't any real guidelines. Once the guidelines around social distancing came into force we had to get used to them and get our customers used to them, which wasn't easy.

"Only five customers could come in at any one time. We don't have a security guard so we had to do this ourselves. Most of the customers were fine but the older customers really didn't like it!

"Once inside the store we had customers who wouldn't follow the markers. They would take shortcuts and walk past us when we were putting out deliveries. They were



Helen Greaves

"MOST OF US ARE PUTTING A BRAVE FACE ON AND JUST GETTING ON WITH IT."

happy socially distancing from other customers but they didn't seem to care if they got too close to us. It almost felt like we didn't matter because we are 'just retail workers'.

"The safety measures in Tesco have been good. We have plastic screens which do make us feel safer and we also have masks and gloves, if we need them. But despite that it's not easy working in an environment when you are coming into close proximity with hundreds of people. You don't know who's coming into the store and whether or not they are carrying the virus. You don't know if people are self-isolating when they should be or whether they are just ignoring the advice.

"I now think people should have to wear masks in enclosed spaces, like they have to on public transport.

"Retail workers should be recognised by the Government. I don't want us to go to the bottom of

the list again once this is over.

"I want the Government to recognise our contribution by giving us better pay and protecting us against violence. I understand that people are scared but that is never an excuse to threaten shop staff.

"I'm uneasy that the lockdown restrictions have eased. I feel like it's too soon and I'm worried that there'll be another spike which really scares me because I and my colleagues will have to work through it, once again.

"As a rep I make an effort to check on my colleagues to see how they are. Everyone's going through something different and lots of people just want to talk about how they're feeling. Most of us are putting a brave face on and getting on with it. The one positive thing to come out of this is that it's made everyone in the store a lot closer so we look out for one another."

Jason Carroll



JASON CARROLL

Jason Carroll has worked for Pladis in Manchester for 24 years. He is one of a number of reps who are responsible for bringing health and safety changes to the factory in response to the Coronavirus crisis.

“When it became clear that Coronavirus was a serious threat our first concern was to keep all our employees safe and then to keep the supply chain going to ensure job security,” said Jason. “Luckily, management were on board straightaway.

“We re-evaluated our risk assessments and implemented changes such as making sure that hand sanitisers were available at the points where you entered and exited the building. We also set up hand washing and hand sanitiser facilities all over the factory so that colleagues didn’t have to walk far to wash their hands. Following this we implemented social distancing by introducing a one-way system in the factory which everyone, including management had to abide by.

“Around 600 people work in the factory and at any given time about

half of them are on the site. We have two shifts in our factory (7am to 7pm and 7pm to 7am), to avoid congestion we changed the day shift to 6.30am to 6.30pm. This ensured that we didn’t have hundreds of people all coming in at the same time, clocking in and using the changing rooms.

“On the shop floor, where it’s difficult to socially distance, we put up perspex screens to provide protection for our colleagues.

“Break times were staggered and social distancing was strictly imposed in the canteen. Only two people could sit at a table (at opposite ends). A couple of rooms were converted into make-shift canteens to ensure there was enough room for everyone to take their breaks. We even changed people’s lockers so that staff on the same shift weren’t standing next to each other in the locker room.

“Anyone who was off sick or shielding received full pay. They also received boxes of biscuits and flowers from the company to let them know their colleagues were thinking of them. For those who

were coming in and working through the pandemic we negotiated a £40 bonus for every week they completed, which lasted for 12 weeks.

“The first five weeks of this pandemic were manic. I was getting calls at 10pm at weekends from colleagues who were deeply worried. I think this pandemic has severely affected the mental health of a lot of people. I’m lucky that I have a great team of reps to support me otherwise it would have been really hard to get through this.

“The response from the company and the union has been great. We had regular updates from the company and the reps had a Skype meeting with our national officer Dave Gill every Friday. I spent a lot of time talking to my area organiser Declan Byrne who was always there when I called.

“I feel like we succeeded in keeping our colleagues safe without compromising job security. In fact, our company is taking on 55 additional people as demand for biscuits skyrocketed during the lockdown!

Lynn Smith

Megan Parry



“USDAW’S RESPONSE HAS BEEN SPOT ON.”

“I never thought of myself as a key worker. I always thought key workers were doctors, nurses and police officers. But seeing my colleagues work through something as frightening as a pandemic has made me realise that we are key workers and we should be recognised as such.”

LYNN SMITH

Lynn Smith is a dotcom worker at Tesco Leighton Buzzard and has been an Usdaw rep for almost 11 years. Lynn has continued to work through the COVID-19 pandemic and shares her experience.

“I actually got COVID-19 right at the start,” said Lynn. “Both me and my husband were off sick for two weeks. Luckily, we recovered without having to go into hospital.

“After recovering, I returned back to work. The first few weeks were really difficult. We had customers kicking off because they couldn’t get toilet roll or pasta. Having the store limiting certain items did help. However, I ended up having to police it by checking people’s trolleys to make sure they weren’t

stockpiling items. Even with the signs up restricting items we still had customers taking more items than permitted. Some were even trying to hide the items in their trolleys. It wasn’t easy to police and sometimes it was frightening because you knew that certain customers might get aggressive.

“At the beginning staff were so stressed out. They were worried about their own health and the health of their families. At this point the Government’s letters around shielding hadn’t gone out so we were trying to figure out who would need to isolate. This resulted in us being short staffed but everyone was really understanding about why people with underlying health conditions were being sent home to isolate.

“My shift used to start at 6am but now I go in at 2am (or 4am). The store opens at 8am so we need to be in and out before customers start arriving. The dotcom team has been doing this for thirteen weeks and the cracks are beginning to show. People are absolutely exhausted. Some people feel ill from the disrupted

sleep patterns, others will burst in to tears. Luckily, we’ve got some good managers who will take them for a coffee and let them talk or have a rant. The dotcom team is like a family anyway but this has brought us even closer. We all support and look out for each other.

“I really hope that when this is over the Government will recognise the contribution of key workers. If everything just goes back to normal then it means we have learned nothing from this crisis and that actually we don’t really value shopworkers, cleaners, delivery drivers and all those who have had to work during this crisis.

“Being a rep during the pandemic has been challenging but rewarding. Because my shift starts at 2am I don’t see people who work on days. So, I’m getting a lot of calls and messages in the day. Sometimes I feel shattered as I don’t feel like I’m getting a break. But I make sure members have someone to turn to during this crisis. People are going through some really tough times and they share their worries with me. I’ve seen more emotion in the last three months than I have in the last 11 years.

“There have been moments when I’ve also had a good cry. But thankfully I have a very supportive manager and my area organiser Paul Walker has been brilliant. And I definitely couldn’t have got through this without the support of my husband.”

MEGAN PARRY

Megan Parry works at Tesco Pengam Green and has been in work since the start of the pandemic. She talks about the changes her store has made to ensure the safety of the staff and what she would like from the Government.

“At the beginning it was crazy,” said Megan. “It was like Christmas but worse. People were bulk buying and it was really busy all the time. But things have settled down a bit now.”



Jim Glavin

“IF THEY VALUE KEY WORKERS, THEN PAY THEM ACCORDINGLY.”

“I work on checkouts and we are getting a lot of customers saying ‘thank you’ and buying us chocolates to show us their appreciation.

“There have been some customers who have been taking it out on us. I had a couple of colleagues who were verbally abused. Luckily, we have a policy that if a customer is abusive then they have to leave the store immediately. I know everyone deals with things differently but there’s really no need to take it out on us. We’re just trying to do our jobs in really difficult circumstances.

“The other measures in place include plastic screens, hand sanitisers, gloves and masks. We’ve also got the pull-down visors, if we need them. Our store has regular announcements that repeat the message that customers must observe social distancing and that

abuse and violence against staff will not be tolerated. We also have security guards to monitor the number of people coming in and to keep an eye on things.

“Usdaw’s response has been spot on. Thanks to the union working with the company, safety measures were put in place as soon as was possible. Our area organiser Bally Auluk has been fantastic and at the end of the phone whenever we’ve needed him.

“Although it would be good to have the same rules across the UK I agree with the Welsh Government’s response.

“When this is all over I want the Government to recognise the massive contribution of retail workers. The first thing they can do is not extend Sunday hours. That’s a big one for a lot of retail workers. I work on Sundays from 9 to 4. At the moment I don’t mind it but if

the hours were extended then that would become a problem.

“One good thing to come out of all this is how it’s brought people together. At work we are all supporting each another and I’ve also seen communities come together to help those who are ill or vulnerable.”

JIM GLAVIN

Jim Glavin has worked at Muller Milk and Ingredients for 18 years and has been an Usdaw rep for over 13 years. Jim talks about implementing safety measures in his warehouse and missing his granddaughter during the lockdown.

“I work at the Glasgow site with around 200 people,” said Jim. “The warehouse is a 24/7 operation and provides milk and other dairy products to some of the biggest retailers in the country.

“At the beginning it was really tough largely due to the fact that no-one knew what was going on, which was understandable because the lockdown was implemented so quickly.

“As more and more information became available we slowly but surely started putting safety measures into place. This included extending the aisles, putting up notices reminding people to observe social distancing rules, segregating products to avoid people congregating in the same place, implementing stricter cleaning routines, having staggered start and finish times and making sure hand sanitiser was easily available.

“Apart from a couple of people shielding we were lucky in the sense that no-one went off sick with the virus. This meant we managed to cope and remain open throughout the pandemic.

“I worked with the site management team to agree and implement the necessary safety measures. I work on the night shift with about 25 other people. Despite all the safety measures, it’s understandable that some of us are

worried about catching the virus and passing it onto our loved ones.

"As a rep I've been getting a lot of queries from members about the lockdown and safety measures which I've been doing my best to answer. I've had a lot of support from my area organiser Lisa Willis and national officer Daniel Adams, who have been great throughout this.

"I think the Scottish Government's response to the pandemic has been really good and it has earned them the respect of the Scottish people. We're being a bit more cautious about easing the lockdown which I think is only right when you're dealing with the lives of millions of people.

"I am worried about the economic impact of all this. I just hope that when we do come out of this the Government does the right thing by people, especially key workers. If they value key workers then pay them accordingly.

"The hardest part of all this has been not being able to see my granddaughter who is two-years-old. Before the lockdown me and my wife saw her every day but the lockdown meant we didn't see her for months. We finally got to see her the other day which was fantastic."

PAUL WATSON

Paul Watson is a bereavement support officer at Tesco Bank in Glasgow. He has worked for the company since 2006 and is also a rep and health and safety rep. Paul talks about how the working relationship between the union and the company ensured safety changes were implemented as quickly as possible.

"I am office based and work with 13 other reps to look after a site with around 1,800 people," said Paul. "I've still been going into the office every day even though I would qualify for 12 weeks of shielding. I've been going in because I really wanted to be there for our members.

"When it became apparent

that COVID-19 was a serious threat to health I worked with the management team to organise and set up over 750 laptops so that people could work from home, which we managed to turn around in a matter of days.

"The office staff normally sit together at a bank of desks in groups of 12. Once we implemented social distancing this was reduced to six people and the desks were cleaned every day. Hot desking was also halted.

"We managed to negotiate a number of improvements including: signage reinforcing social distancing, a one-way system of entering and exiting the building, 10 weeks full pay and two weeks holidays for people with children who couldn't work from home and those who

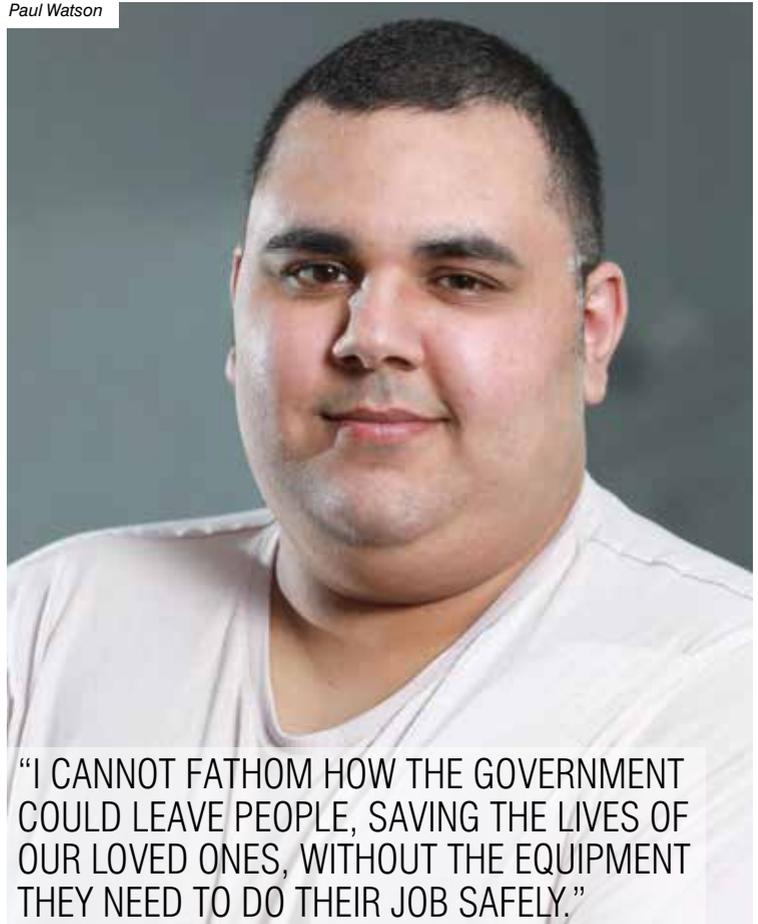
were shielding at home.

"The most shocking thing for me has been the lack of PPE for people working in the NHS. As a health and safety rep I cannot fathom how the Government could leave people, who are saving the lives of our loved ones, without the equipment they need to do their jobs safely.

"This has been one of the most difficult and challenging times I've been through since becoming a rep. However, it has shown me what a huge difference a union can make in the workplace.

"Thanks to the agreement we have with the company we managed to negotiate and implement most of the changes we asked for. Although, it's been tough I have had amazing support from my area organiser Lisa Willis."

Paul Watson



"I CANNOT FATHOM HOW THE GOVERNMENT COULD LEAVE PEOPLE, SAVING THE LIVES OF OUR LOVED ONES, WITHOUT THE EQUIPMENT THEY NEED TO DO THEIR JOB SAFELY."

CHECK OUT USDAW'S ONLINE REPS' TRAINING

Usdaw launches a number of bitesize online training courses designed to help new reps prepare for their role and experienced reps who want a refresher

Usdaw reps play a vital role in the union because they are the face of the union for members and employers. Usdaw is keen to ensure that all new reps get the support they need to represent members and successfully organise their workplace.

That's why Usdaw invests in first-class training for its reps. Usdaw reps are among the best trained in the trade union movement. When members sign up to become reps they take part in ongoing training where they learn how to represent, recruit and organise in their workplace. As part of their role they will also acquire knowledge on workers' rights, employment law, health and safety, pensions and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

There are a wide range of training

opportunities for reps to participate in which don't end when they have completed their initial training. Reps have the option of getting involved in the wider work of the union by attending weekend schools, conferences, ADM, Summer School and Usdaw's Academies. There are also hundreds of online courses that are available to reps.

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus crisis face-to-face training and conferences have been cancelled for the year. Not to be deterred, Usdaw's education department has worked hard to develop new ways for reps to access the training they need so that they can effectively carry out their role.

As a new rep it can be a little daunting taking on the role without the training you were expecting that's why Usdaw has turned some

of its courses into online bitesize training sessions that can be completed in just 20-30 minutes. The courses aren't designed to replace actual training but do attempt to give new reps an introduction to the role, recruitment, organising and representing members. Experienced reps will also find these courses a useful refresher.

Three reps completed the bitesize courses and this is what they had to say:

DAVID VALENTINE

David is a new rep at the Co-op Group in Banchory, Aberdeenshire. As part of his training and development David would have received his shop steward's training to prepare him for his new role. However, before David could start

ONLINE LEARNING WITH USDAW

Usdaw reps are among the best trained in the trade union movement. We want to make sure you're supported every step of the way.

Reps can now sign up for our new digital bitesize courses. They're a great way to become familiar with the different roles and functions of a rep before you undertake any formal training. All courses can be completed by mobile or computer: www.usdaw.org.uk/RepsHandbook

The three-part Reps' Handbook, is also available to read online:

■ *Getting Started: The Role of the Rep (Part 1)*

dtp.usdaw.co.uk/repshb1

■ *Organising and Recruitment (Part 2)*

dtp.usdaw.co.uk/repshb2

■ *Representing Members (Part 3)*

dtp.usdaw.co.uk/repshb3

If you are interested in learning check out Usdaw's website:

www.usdaw.org.uk

or the learning gateway:

www.usdaw.org.uk/onlinelearninggateway



www.twitter.com/usdawlearn



www.facebook.com/usdawlearn

his training the country went into lockdown.

"I work in a convenience store with around 12 colleagues," said David. "I'm the only rep in my store so I really wanted to start my training. I didn't want to be in a position where if a member came to me with a query I couldn't help them.

"The courses are great for new reps like me. They're informative and give you enough information to get you started in your new role. Each course takes about 20-30 minutes to complete so it's perfect when you're sitting down with a cup of coffee. You can do them one at a time or all four in one sitting, which is what I did.

"You're given some information to read and then you have to answer a set of multiple-choice questions. It's pretty straightforward and if you read the information properly you won't have a problem answering the questions.

"Having completed the courses, I feel a little more confident about dealing with member queries. They've also given me a taste of what I'll be learning on the reps training course. I would definitely recommend the courses to other reps. The Usdaw website is also a great place if you need further information on training."

HAZEL UREN

Hazel is a rep, health and safety rep and a union learning rep who works for the Co-op in East Peckham.

"I really enjoy online learning and have already completed a number of courses on mental health, equality and diversity and the TUC's union learning rep course," said Hazel.

"When my area organiser told me about Usdaw's new digital bitesize courses available for reps I jumped at the opportunity. I'm shielding at the moment so it was the perfect opportunity to take up some new learning.

"I completed Representing Members, Organising and Recruitment and the Role of the Rep courses. Although, I have already completed the reps' introductory course at the end of last year, I found these bitesize courses contained useful information and were easy to use. The courses are great for new reps and they're a really good refresher for existing and experienced reps.

"I'm planning to use Usdaw's Online Gateway to complete as many courses as I can. As a union learning rep it's important for me to be familiar with the courses on offer so that I can signpost and encourage my members and help them achieve their learning goals."

JOSS HILL-FINEGAN

Joss works at Tesco in High Wycombe. He became an Usdaw rep at the same time the UK went into lockdown and is participating in some online reps' training.

"I became a rep three months ago when the pandemic started," said Joss. "Due to this, all face-to-face training had to be postponed which means I haven't been able to go on the reps' training course. But I have had a couple of Zoom inductions with my area organiser which have been really helpful.

"While I'm waiting, I've also completed all the reps' training courses that are available online via the Usdaw website. The courses give new reps an introduction to the role of the rep, representing members and how to recruit and organise in the workplace.

"I found the section on inductions particularly useful as it gave me a checklist of what preparation I needed to do beforehand, tips on recruiting, reasons why people should join and a handy Q&A that answers some of the issues that colleagues may raise.

"The courses gave me a really good idea of what was expected of me as a rep and I'm looking forward to doing my reps' training once lockdown eases."



David Valentine



Hazel Uren



Joss Hill-Finegan

DEREGULATION DERAILED

Usdaw successfully pushes back the Government's misguided attempts to deregulate Sundays in the wake of the ongoing Coronavirus crisis

Usdaw has rejected a misguided call for 24-hour shopping on Sundays, after it was reported that the Government was considering suspending Sunday trading laws. The Government claimed it will help the country out of recession, however there is no evidence of this. Shops can already open for 150 hours a week, adding a few more hours on a Sunday will not make any difference to profits, but could be very damaging to shopworkers' lives, our communities and the retail sector.

Usdaw members have worked throughout the Coronavirus crisis keeping the supermarket shelves stocked. This move to deregulate Sunday trading hours seems an opportunistic use of the crisis.

BACKGROUND

Under the Sunday Trading Act 1994 large shops (over 280 square metres) can only open for six hours on a Sunday in England and Wales.

THE ARGUMENT FOR DEREGULATION

Retailers argue that Sunday is the most profitable day of the week. However, it is profitable because of the restricted hours. It is fundamentally flawed to assume that hourly profits on Sundays would continue over a longer period. Opening stores for longer does not put more money in customers' pockets, it simply spreads the same spend over a longer period of time therefore increasing overheads and reducing profits. Sunday trading would not result in any increase in retail sales or in employment and

would have a detrimental effect on small stores.

DEREGULATION DURING THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Sunday trading laws were suspended for the 2012 Olympic Games. However, Usdaw's survey showed that 95 per cent of stores had no increase in customers and two-thirds were quieter or much quieter than normal. Many stores ended their additional opening hours early because they were losing money.

CONVENIENCE STORES

Small stores are exempt from restrictions and the Association of Convenience Stores says that they rely on the income from those few extra hours on Sundays.

IMPACT ON SHOPWORKERS

Longer Sunday working has a big impact on shopworkers, which is why over 90 per cent of Usdaw members remain opposed. Usdaw's survey of shopworkers showed more than 80 per cent already have to work on Sundays and over two-thirds are under pressure to work on Sundays when they don't want to. Only 4 per cent of shopworkers wanted to work more hours on Sundays, while nearly half wanted to work fewer.

RIGHT TO OPT OUT

Although, retail workers have the right to opt out of Sunday working the right is ineffective when employers do not have to offer alternative hours of work on another day. Around half of retail staff have

caring responsibilities and most of them say they struggle to organise care when they have to work on Sundays.

PREMIUM PAY SQUEEZES

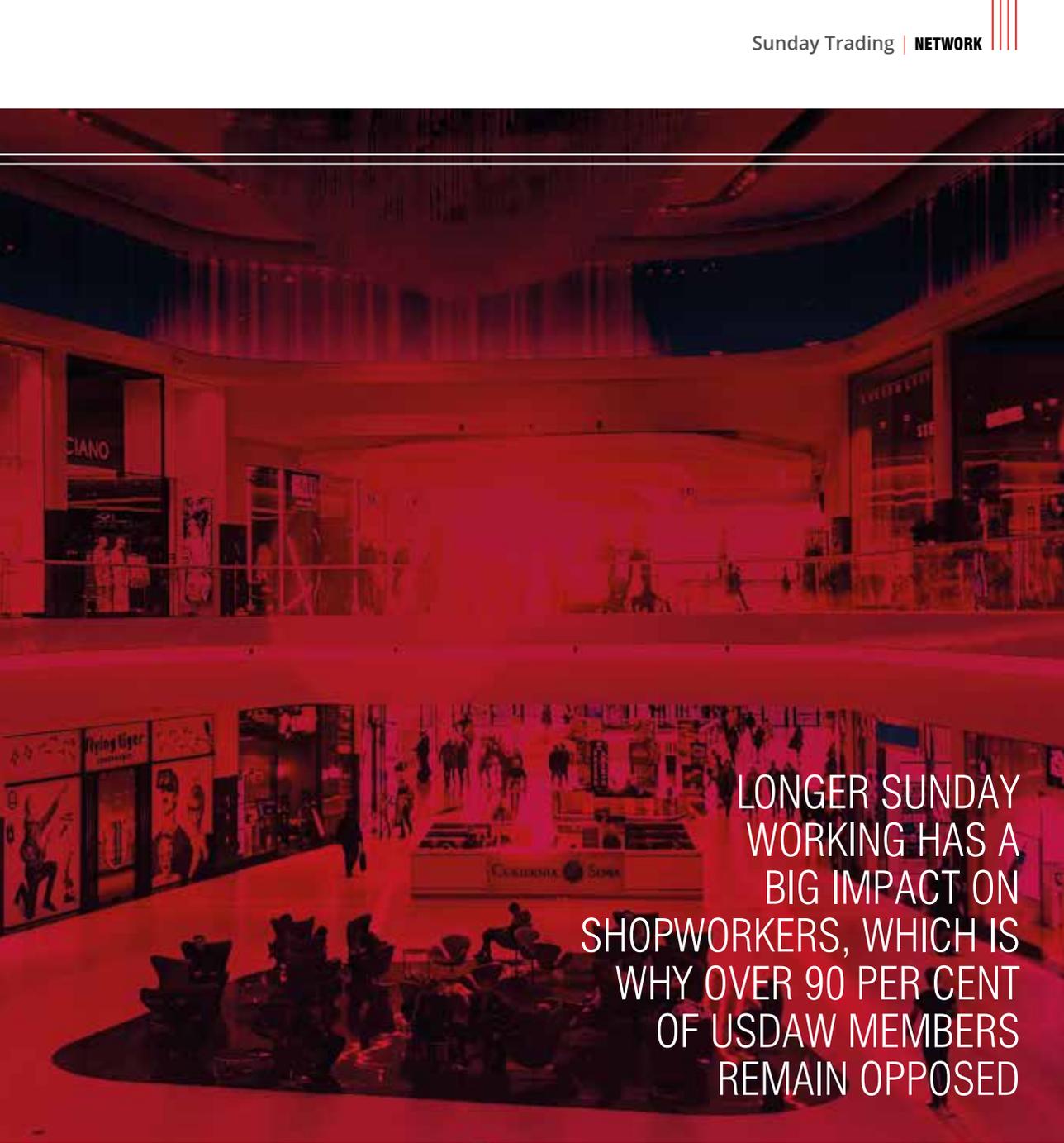
Longer Sunday trading could lower wages, further squeezing premium pay. When Sunday trading was introduced in 1994, many employers responded by ending double-time pay for Sunday working. Shopworkers will end up working longer hours for the same money. If employers were forced to recruit to cover longer Sunday trading that would impact pay because struggling retailers on tight margins will resist increasing their wage bill.

COMPROMISE

Kevin Hawkins, a former British Retail Consortium director general investigated longer Sunday trading under the Government's Red Tape Challenge and said about supermarkets and restricted Sunday opening: "They have all lived with it very well. What we have got is a workable compromise. Most people seem to be satisfied with it most of the time."

GOVERNMENT RETHINK

As *Network* went to print it was reported that the Government will not be pressing ahead with plans to deregulate Sunday trading hours having listened to the arguments. Usdaw welcomed the news and will continue to call for an industrial strategy for retail, which was struggling before the Coronavirus crisis, and a recovery plan involving Government, retailers and Usdaw.



LONGER SUNDAY WORKING HAS A BIG IMPACT ON SHOPWORKERS, WHICH IS WHY OVER 90 PER CENT OF USDAW MEMBERS REMAIN OPPOSED

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: “We appreciate the desire to help the retail sector, but the proposal to undo a long-held and workable compromise on Sunday trading was misguided and overwhelmingly rejected by shopworkers.

“We have long called for an industrial strategy for retail to help

a sector that was already struggling before the Coronavirus emergency. The Government needs to level the playing field on taxation between online and the high street, as well as enable councils to breathe new life into town centres and make them community hubs.

“The Sunday Trading Act is a great compromise that has worked well for

over 25 years and gives everyone a little bit of what they want. It is good news that a divisive deregulation plan has been put to one side and we can now focus on pulling together to tackle the crisis on our high streets and help save our shops and the jobs of the retail workers who have served their communities tirelessly throughout Coronavirus.”

LIFELONG LEARNING DURING THE LOCKDOWN

In light of the ongoing Coronavirus crisis Usdaw's Lifelong Learning team has been working hard to adapt its learning offer for reps and members

The union's Lifelong Learning campaign was launched in 1998 to provide members with the chance to return to education and improve their skills, knowledge and career prospects. Since that time more than 100,000 members have returned to learning to study basic maths and English, ICT, and introductory language classes. Courses in sign language, digital photography and others have proved popular too.

Improving or gaining new skills has never been more vital for our members, but due to the ongoing crisis many workplaces are shut or they have closed their

learning centres. However, not to be deterred, union learning reps, project workers and Usdaw's education department have worked together to develop new ways of promoting the learning agenda and ensuring that during this time of uncertainty members can still access the training they need.

NEW WAYS OF SUPPORTING ULRs

This has included:

- Using social media to get the message out.
- Project workers sending regular newsletters to update union learning reps (ULR).
- Working with learning providers to

move courses online.

- Organising virtual ULR meetings through Zoom/video conferences.
- Using Webinars to keep ULRs up to speed.

ONLINE LEARNING GATEWAY

To make it even easier to take up the learning opportunities on offer, members now have access to the Online Learning Gateway. Through the Gateway members can access courses in English, maths, ICT, languages, CV writing and much more. You can access the Gateway at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/onlinelearninggateway



USDAWLEARN

Usdaw has launched its very own Usdawlearn Twitter and Facebook pages. Follow us for the latest Lifelong Learning news. Also keep checking Usdaw's website for courses being offered specifically to Usdaw members.
www.facebook.com/usdawlearn
www.twitter.com/usdawlearn
www.usdaw.org.uk

USDAW BITESIZE COURSES

Usdaw's education department has also developed a number of bitesize online courses for members and reps. The courses include mental health, vulnerable workers, data protection and pensions.

USDAW HOME STUDY COURSES

Usdaw's Home Study courses help members find out more about Usdaw. There are five units: Unity is Strength, Democracy in Usdaw, Collective Bargaining, Pensions and Vulnerable Workers.
www.usdaw.org.uk/HomeStudy

WHAT CAN ULRS DO?

- Follow [#usdawlearn](https://twitter.com/usdawlearn) on Twitter and Facebook to find out about online and distance learning courses for reps and members.
- Check out the learning opportunities available on the Online Gateway.
- Contact your project worker about the next union learning reps meeting.
- Make sure you have an email address registered so you can receive newsletters.

WANT TO BECOME A ULR?

Usdaw reps play a vital role in the union. If you love learning and helping people why not think about becoming an Usdaw union learning rep.

You will be provided with all the training you need. Remote inductions are taking place so contact your area organiser or project worker for more information.

LEARNING REPS IN ACTION



Muller Wiseman Droitwich

The union learning reps and project worker were keen not to let the pandemic derail the learning at the site. The union worked with the company to ensure that members could still access a range of courses. Thanks to their hard work 61 colleagues signed up for the basic English courses. In addition, their partnership with Shrewsbury College TU education unit meant courses continued to run due to the innovative model of 'remote delivery' which entails a blend of elearning and one-to-one support. Reps have quickly adapted to using technology to communicate with members and help and support them.

McVities Manchester

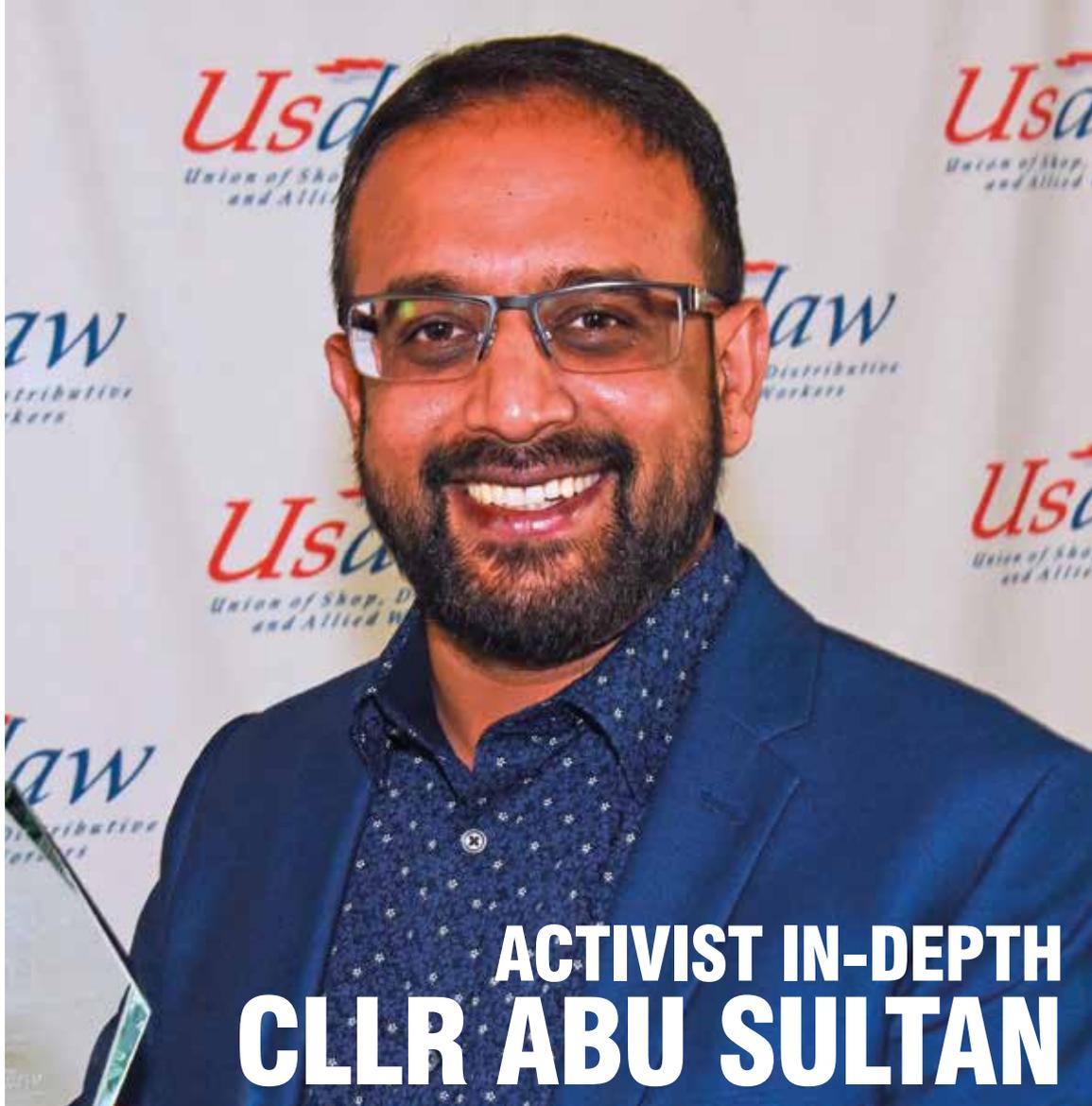
Union learning reps at the McVities Learn 4 U centre managed to adapt the elearning offer by teaming up with the Royal Literary Fund to offer interactive workshops and one-to-one sessions in Life Writing Skills.

Colleagues are given the chance to submit their own life stories during the Coronavirus pandemic that will feature in a printed anthology and create a record of working lives during a time of historical significance.

Tesco Depot Livingston

Learners at the depot worked hard to achieve the first part of their internationally recognised European Computer Driving Licence Essentials qualification. Just when they were about to start on the more advanced qualification the pandemic struck. Union learning rep Karen Petrie worked hard with City of Glasgow College to ensure that the course was moved online, including tutor support through Zoom, ensuring they could access learning during this difficult time.

Usdaw
Learn



ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH CLLR ABU SULTAN

Inspirational Usdaw rep Abu Sultan has taken an active role in the union for over the past 10 years. He's committed to supporting members and reps in his Tesco store in Bedford where he works as an admin colleague, but has also played a crucial role out in the wider community over the years, supporting local campaigns and volunteering for the local Labour Party. In 2019 Abu ran a successful campaign to become a Bedford borough councillor, despite facing some big challenges with his health. He's now looking ahead to hopefully one day becoming an MP. Abu tells *Network* his story...

Where did your journey with the union begin?

I became a rep in 2009 after some encouragement from a fellow rep. As the years went on I increased my involvement with the union, taking part in lots of in-store campaigns, being active with my branch, attending conferences and spending time out on stand-down. In 2012 I completed Academy1, and then in 2014 became a divisional councillor for one-and-a-half terms. Alongside my role as rep I took the skills and experience I had learned with Usdaw and started getting involved in the community. That's when I joined the campaign to save Bedford Hospital

who were proposing to downgrade several of their key services.

Tell us more about the campaign

Initially, in 2013, we set out to save the Riverbank Ward at Bedford Hospital which is an A&E centre for children. The hospital didn't have a paediatric consultant and so it had closed overnight services and parents were forced to take their children to hospitals in Milton Keynes and Luton. As part of the campaign we organised a family fun day at the local park to raise funds which was attended by 3,000 people. Thankfully we managed to get the hospital to reverse their

decision. Other hospital services have since been put at risk because of a proposed merger between Luton and Bedford hospitals so we've been running more successful campaigns to save as many key services as we can.

When did you realise you had a passion for politics?

It was purely because of my involvement with the union that I found that politics was my true calling in life. Before Usdaw I had only voted once and never had an urge to get involved. At the Eastern divisional conference in 2010 the late divisional officer Norrie Slater gave a very passionate speech about how the Labour government was looking at an avalanche of defeat if we didn't do something. Norrie sparked my passion and following his speech I joined the Labour Party and started canvassing with Patrick Hall MP on his campaign in Bedford. He lost by a narrow margin, but I was impressed with his energy and commitment – he really inspired me. Through Usdaw I was also able to attend TULO, the political training school, and I really benefited from that. I learned more about politics and how to be a confident public speaker. I was always one of those people that would only ever speak in public on rare occasions, I wouldn't even feel comfortable to speak out in small groups, but going on these courses gives you the confidence and the training to succeed.

When did you become a councillor?

It was in May 2018 when I got shortlisted to become a candidate for the local elections in Bedford. I attended an interview and selection meeting where I stood against a very well-respected and established veteran councillor who had been in the position for 20 years. I was selected by a margin of just three votes. I ran my campaign from October 2018 and was successfully elected in May 2019. During this

time, I was also battling stage four bowel cancer which had been diagnosed in early 2018. I had radiotherapy and chemotherapy for six weeks, then I had surgery to remove a tumour in October 2018. It was a very challenging time but thankfully I had lots of support from my family and my workplace. My manager at Tesco was excellent. He immediately put in a plan of action to support me by reducing my hours and my workload to minimise stress. And I can't speak highly enough of my Usdaw area organiser Paul Walker. He's always been available for me whenever I've needed him, and that helps a lot. Thankfully I was given the all clear on 3 May 2019 – the same day I became a councillor. Words don't do justice to the feeling of utter joy and elation when you overcome cancer.

Has your outlook on life changed?

Another big challenge I was facing alongside the cancer was managing my mental health. I couldn't have managed without my support system. I've realised how important it is to have people around you. If it's possible, politically I've become more passionate, especially concerning healthcare. When you're elected as councillor you can choose committees to sit on, so I'm now the Labour spokesperson on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. I'm working to protect the most

vulnerable in society, particularly those in low income households.

What's your situation now?

Being a councillor keeps me really busy, but I still have to take it easy and rest. It's about prioritising your workload and time management. As a rep I used to be very involved in workplace campaigns. I also spent a lot of time on stand-down, supporting members in other stores as well as my own, but since becoming a councillor and my health problems I've just been focusing on supporting my fellow in-store reps. I like to keep busy though. When you have any illness your mind can go to a negative place. If I keep busy I don't have time to self-analyse, go through what went wrong, or what I could've done differently.

What's next for you?

The current MP for Bedford, Mohammad Yasin, is my mentor and is advising and guiding me on my political path. My goal is to eventually become an MP. I am who I am because of the training provided by Usdaw, I will never stop being thankful for that. I took the skills I learned from the union into the workplace and into the heart of our community activities. I know I'll have Usdaw's support on my journey to be a parliamentary candidate and that gives me the confidence to go for it.



Supporting the People's March For The NHS when they came to Bedford

DEDICATED REPS KEEP DRIVING

Reps across the UK have been adapting their processes to ensure they can support members

Richard Duguid, Karen Petrie and Gordon Glendinning are all well-established reps at the Tesco distribution centre in Livingston where there are over 1,300 staff working onsite. The team have been working hard during the pandemic to ensure union services are still available for members and that non-members have the opportunity to join. They've also been working with management to implement the changes needed to allow for social distancing, ensuring the health and safety of their colleagues is top priority.

SAFETY FIRST

Warehouse worker and branch secretary Gordon Glendinning has worked at Livingston for 23 years. He became a rep in 2008.

"We're a very well-organised site with an active team of reps," said Gordon. "Before the pandemic we were constantly running campaigns days and lifelong learning opportunities, things were constant. But obviously all that has been scaled back dramatically. It's been a new experience for everybody involved that's for sure."

"At the beginning of the pandemic I don't think people grasped the seriousness of the situation and we had to nudge everyone to get the ball rolling to adapt our work practices for social distancing. But since that time, we've been working with management to ensure the health and safety of staff is top priority and we're now in a really good place."

"Changes that have been made include a one-way system, alternative walkways, using emergency exits at the end of shifts and staggering shift times so people aren't coming in and leaving at the same time. We've also introduced a heat sensor at the front door to check temperatures."

"In the beginning the reps were asked to help colleagues adjust to the changes and ensure everyone was social distancing. In general though, the staff respect the changes and have even contributed their own ideas to improve systems."

"The worry is that if the two-metre rule is relaxed, things will just go back to normal, and if the virus is still around then everyone is still at risk. It's particularly difficult for the vulnerable staff who have been shielding. They're starting to come back to work now and we need to continue to make them feel safe."

COMMUNICATIONS

Warehouse worker and Usdaw rep Richard Duguid has worked at the site for the past 29 years.

"As a group of reps we're used to communicating with management through DC forums and that's how issues are raised and problems are solved," said Richard. "However, at the start of lockdown the forums were suspended. That was a bit of a challenge and we had to make the effort to meet managers directly."

"The rep team have continued to communicate through WhatsApp



Richard Duguid, Karen Petrie and Gordon Glendinning are reps at the Tesco distribution centre in Livingston

which has been invaluable. It's a channel that we've had in place for a while and it's a great way to ensure everyone knows what's going on."

"In terms of keeping in touch with the members, we have a noticeboard that we frequently update and the reps' details are displayed so we can be contacted. Members can approach us if a face-to-face discussion is required as long as they adhere to social distancing."

"The company have continued to recruit new staff and thankfully we've still been able to target non-members through inductions, but social distancing has made things different. Usually you would sit next to staff to have an informal chat about the union but now you're opposite and much further away. And with group inductions you have to speak louder so your voice carries because everyone is



WE'VE BEEN WORKING WITH MANAGEMENT TO ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF STAFF IS TOP PRIORITY AND WE'RE NOW IN A REALLY GOOD PLACE

distanced. Handing out membership forms is difficult too, so we've been encouraging staff to visit the website and sign up online.

"When it came to wage briefings we set up an area in the warehouse but social distancing meant that we could only fit 30 people in that space at one time, so we held several meetings over a period of weeks until we'd briefed all staff. We're hoping to use the same space to get the forum meetings back underway and we've already arranged a health and safety meeting for August."

ONLINE LEARNING

Karen Petrie has worked in the admin department at Livingston for 26 years. She became a union learning rep in 2009 and a rep last year. "Traditional lifelong learning is on hold right now because we can't offer a learning space where social distancing can be maintained," said Karen. "Learning has always been popular onsite and over the past couple of years we've held computer, Spanish and English courses. Before lockdown we were trying to arrange a mental health awareness course but sadly we've had to postpone it.

"We had 12 learners who were in the middle of completing a ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) course when lockdown happened. The course was classroom based and held onsite with tutor support. Thankfully, most of the work was being completed via

an online platform so it was easily switched over to being home-based with tutor support over Zoom and email. The provider, which is the Collective Learning Partnership based at the City of Glasgow College, have even managed to arrange the final exam via Zoom so the learners will be able to complete the course and get their accreditation.

"For now, we're just trying to promote online learning and courses that members can access from home. There's lots of opportunities available through Usdaw and The Open University. We also work closely with local providers who offer a range of free courses which have been very popular and to date at least 30 learners have completed a course, including a few managers.

"We hope that onsite classroom learning will still be as popular when we are able to resume."

SUPPORTING MEMBERS HAS NEVER BEEN MORE CRUCIAL

Usdaw has released a list of top tips for reps to help them carry out their roles and adapt to the difficult challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic

The work Usdaw reps do every day has never been more important. From protecting health and safety at work to ensuring support for those who need it and giving key workers a voice that is heard. However, with social distancing expected to last for a while, it's important to look at how we can adapt processes to continue to recruit and represent members. The union has devised a list of top tips for reps to help them to continue to provide the best service possible for members.

Engage with your employer

Speak to your manager about how they can continue to support the company agreement with Usdaw. Look out for any information from the national officer, or through your division, about what has been agreed with your company, and make sure it is being followed.

Where workplace committees and meetings can't be held in person, agree a way that reps continue to be informed and involved with local issues, have an opportunity to speak to new starters and can continue representing members at work.

Use your Usdaw noticeboard

Keep members informed by regularly updating your union noticeboard or agree a space that can be used to keep members informed, by sharing newsletters, committee minutes, useful leaflets or updates from the union. Make the union visible and display your contact details so members know

who to go to for advice. Download and print the union's Coronavirus poster for your noticeboard at www.usdaw.org.uk/covidpostercol

Contact new starters

Workplace reps are vital to ensure that conversations continue to take place with new starters. Ask your manager to notify you of new starters and give you time to speak to them about joining the union. This could be individually, in small groups, over the phone or video call to ensure distance is maintained.

Many employers have also agreed to include Usdaw leaflets and membership forms within information packs given to new employees.

New starters can join the union online, and you can encourage colleagues to use their phone to register simply and quickly while talking to them. Members in Tesco, Sainsbury's, the Co-op, Morrisons and Argos are now able to join online via check-off.

Talk to non-members

In these uncertain times, it's even more important that we reach out to as many people as possible and strengthen our position as a voice for the workforce.

There may be people in your workplace who haven't been approached about joining the union yet. Even if they have been approached and decided not to join before, they might be open to changing their mind now.

Go Digital

Reaching out to members online has never been more important. Encourage members to visit the Usdaw website and sign up to the mailing list for regular updates and specialist advice covering a variety of topics as well as links to local offices for further support. They can also follow the union on social media.

Many employers also have their own online platform where colleagues can make their voices heard. This can be used to share information with members and raise concerns. You could also speak to your manager to agree to post a message, or send an email to invite colleagues to join Usdaw.

Organise for a Safer Workplace

Employers must put in place measures to protect workers. This can include ensuring government guidance on social distance is maintained, access to hand washing facilities and regular cleaning of workplaces and shared equipment.

Most Usdaw workplaces have been operating throughout the crisis and employers have put social distancing and hygiene measures in place. It's the union's job to make sure they stick to them.

Employers should be engaging with reps and committees on local health and safety issues and risk assessments in the workplace.

Whether you work in retail, distribution or manufacturing, Usdaw has guidance on workplace health and safety measures. Visit www.usdaw.org.uk/coronavirus



Escalate Issues

Raised an issue? No action from your manager? Escalate it using the agreed company policies and speak to your area organiser for support. Issues impacting members' health and safety at work need to be escalated as quickly as possible so they can be resolved. Formal grievances can also be raised where issues are not being addressed.

Rights at work

While Coronavirus has impacted the way we work, most things have not changed. Members are still entitled to the terms set out in their contract regarding pay, hours and days of work. Contracted hours can only be changed with mutual agreement. Other rights still apply regarding rest breaks, parental leave and pay and reasonable adjustments for disabled workers.

The union can't be furloughed

You can still fulfil your trade union duties as a rep, even if you've

been furloughed. Members are still entitled to union advice and representation in grievance and disciplinary meetings and adjustments should be put in place to allow this to happen. This might mean holding the meeting in a larger room to allow for social distancing, agreeing to conduct the meeting by video or conference call or adjusting timescales where necessary.

Check in with each other

Being a rep can sometimes mean it's hard to find time for yourself and your own concerns. This is even more difficult when regular union meetings have been postponed or are held remotely.

Check in with other reps you know for support, ask how they are doing. Swap organising ideas, share stories and keep each other updated on developments.

You could consider setting up online team meetings – contact your area organiser if you need any help with this.

The union is always here for you

Area organisers are still at work representing and advising members and supporting reps.

While they may be unable to visit your workplace in person due to social distancing rules, area organisers will be making every effort to keep in touch in these difficult circumstances by phone, email or text message. They also have the facility to meet with you via Zoom. Please contact your local office if you have any queries, need help reviewing procedures or if you need any additional support.

Membership for week ended 4 July 2020

South Wales & Western	46,114
Eastern	57,668
Midlands	54,193
North Eastern	57,434
Scottish	40,804
Southern	59,173
North West	85,235
Total	400,621

EXCEPTIONAL TEAMWORK IN ACTION





Usdaw reps Brian Knott, Steven Frew, Howard Bailey, John Hislop, Michael Ord, Michael Kelly and Peter Owens make up part of the 23-strong rep team looking after warehouse operations at Newhouse (picture taken before social distancing measures had been implemented)

When it comes to organising in a big warehouse, national rep Steven Frew and his team at Co-operative Logistics in Newhouse are a shining example of why good communication is the key, as *Network* discovered on a visit to the site (before the Coronavirus pandemic) earlier this year.

The 503,000 sq ft state-of-the-art distribution centre in North Lanarkshire opened in 2011 as part of a Co-op investment to update its services. The massive depot replaced operations that were previously handled at sites in Pitreavie, Cumbernauld and Harthill.

Newhouse processes up to 1.4 million cases of goods every week which are then distributed by a fleet of 300 lorries to 600 Co-op stores across Scotland.

It's an immense operation with over 1,000 staff contributing to the smooth running of the site 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Network met up with Steven Frew and his colleagues, Michael Kelly, Michael Ord and Peter Owens in March, who make up part of the 23-strong rep team looking after 550 warehouse workers at the site.

STEVEN FREW National rep

Steven is a warehouse operative and has worked for the Co-op for the past 20 years.

"It's a slick operation here at Newhouse and there's a variety of roles which all contribute to the smooth running of the business," said Steven. "Stock is received and processed, then picked and packed, and finally distributed to the Co-op stores across Scotland. Packaging waste comes back from the stores and is processed here too.

"Technology plays a big part in everyday processes, for example, all the pickers have earpieces to tell them what their task is, what they need to pick and how long they've got to do it, and the forklift trucks have cameras to show what is being picked when it's too high up on the

racking to see. All the stock is kept at specific temperatures, including a big freezer where staff are working at -25 degrees and there's a special temperature-controlled room just for bananas.

"Training from the company is excellent and there's opportunities for staff to learn new skills. All the forklift truck training is done on-site in a specifically designed training area and there are full-time training staff on every shift."

As the only Usdaw rep to transfer to Newhouse when it opened, Steven has spent the last nine years recruiting a team of reps and building membership at the site.

"It took a while to get to full capacity," said Steven, who is also branch secretary. "Reps would come and go, but thankfully we've now got a strong team in place, and as a result, a very well organised site. I've even recruited my two sons – they both work at Newhouse and are reps on the day shift.

"My role as national rep means I'm responsible for representing the concerns of Usdaw members at Newhouse on a national level. I attend quarterly meetings where I'm involved in decisions about contract changes, wage negotiations and any other issues affecting members across the UK.

"The business call me a lead rep but to be honest I just see myself as part of a team. Nothing would be possible without the other reps, we're all there to support each other and face challenges together.

"A big reason why we've got such a well organised site at Newhouse is the relationship the reps have with management. We are consistently working together to make processes more efficient. At the minute we're looking at the process of changing forklift truck batteries. Currently forklift drivers have to wait in a holding area for their batteries to be changed and that can be time consuming, but we're working on a pit stop solution where batteries get changed straight away.

"The Co-op believes in their staff and we're very lucky that they're supportive of our union work. We have a private office just for the reps where we can meet and run surgeries and we've also got the shared learning centre. Management give us the time we need to carry out our roles, because at the end of the day it's about working together for the wellbeing of the staff.

"Co-op are a good company to work for. That's something that you realise more and more when you attend Usdaw events and meet reps from other companies – they are often campaigning for policies that we've already got in place.

"I take great pride in being a rep – supporting my colleagues and making a positive difference in the workplace. When you've worked hard and you get good results for your members that's motivation enough. I think we represent our members really well here and I'm sure they would agree."

MICHAEL KELLY
Night shift rep

Warehouse support assistant Michael has been a rep on the night shift for three years and enjoys the variety and the challenges that the role brings. "I'm constantly on the go, no two days are the same," said Michael who has been a night shift worker for 15 years. "I used to be a health and safety rep when I worked at the Hearthill site and I really enjoyed it, so I was keen to get more involved at Newhouse.

"We're a big operation so there's a lot of members to look after,

whether that's just offering advice, problem solving or representation.

"As a team of reps we're really active and we know the importance of working together and good communication. There's a lot of us and we're all working on different shifts so we need to make sure if something is going on we all know about it. We're constantly keeping in touch over the phone and email and reps will often have crossover meetings between shifts.

"One of the reasons that we work so well as a team is that we're also a support network. Some reps have been in the role for a long time and gained that wealth of experience, so the more experienced reps support the newer reps. It also helps that we've got a good working relationship with management. They're very supportive and understand we're playing an important role in the business.

"Last year I attended ADM for the first time with Steven, that was a big eye opener. You're so used to just seeing the union in your workplace that you don't realise the enormity,"

MICHAEL ORD
Health and safety rep

Good health and safety is of paramount importance, particularly in a large warehouse like Newhouse. Thankfully the well-coordinated team of six health and safety reps on-site have got it covered.

Michael is a health and safety rep on the night shift. He's been with the company for 12 years. "I'm a warehouse operative and that involves picking and loading stock,"

said Michael. "For the last nine years I've been working on the night shift. It's hard work but it's a good job and a good environment to work in.

"I became a health and safety rep about two years ago. I feel very well supported in my role. There's a wealth of experience among the reps here, you can guarantee someone will have dealt with a specific problem or something very similar before.

"Our roles as health and safety reps involve taking on the concerns of the members and working with the management to create a safe and happy working environment. We do a weekly check and inspect walkways and fire exits, but also because of the nature of my job I'm out on the floor so I'll sort minor problems and keep in contact with members as I go along.

"The company are really good when it comes to health and safety. Co-op have a health and safety manager who liaises with the reps here and at the other depots. We also have a monthly meeting with all



CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

As key workers, Steven Frew and his team have remained in work throughout the Coronavirus lockdown.

"Within five days of social distancing being announced the company had enforced big changes to protect staff," said Steven. "There's a one-way system in place and all staff now enter the building through one door and leave through another door. Shift times have been staggered so that staff aren't all arriving and leaving at the same time and the canteen has been rearranged so that it's just one person per table. All the reps have been temporarily stood-down from their union roles to help the company supervise the social distancing rules."

the health and safety reps to discuss any issues we can't address on shift.

"One of the initiatives I've been proud to be a part of was the 'Night Club', a programme brought in by the Co-op to develop night shift workers' understanding of the link between sleep health and mental wellbeing. Staff had the chance to talk to professional sleep specialists and were given advice about the impact of light on sleep, how diet affects sleep and alertness, and how a lack of sleep affects mental health and the natural body clock. It's the little things you've not thought about, like eating regular meals to balance your body, which in the long run is better health and safety and prevents accidents – always good.

"My aim for the future is to continue to prevent accidents and look after people's health in general, particularly on the night shift."

PETER OWENS Lifelong Learning rep

Lifelong Learning is a big part of the union presence on-site. When

Newhouse opened in 2011 a room was allocated specifically for training opportunities for staff and is shared between the company and the union. The room is fully furnished with desks, computers and internet access.

Transport clerk Peter is one of six learning reps on-site. He's worked at Newhouse since 2011. "My job role at Co-op involves working with the drivers, allocating the runs, debriefing, allocating vehicles to doors to routes, making sure that they are taken on and off safely, and converting warehouse paperwork to transport paperwork, so there's quite a lot involved," said Peter, who became a learning rep in 2017. "As a learning rep it's my job to promote and coordinate Lifelong Learning within the depot and advertise the courses that are available so that members take advantage of the opportunities on offer. We want the union to be seen as more than an insurance policy at work, there are so many other positive benefits to being a member.

"We've run many courses on-site in conjunction with local colleges including Excel, sign language, conversational Spanish, dyslexia, dementia and autism awareness. Some colleagues are also doing distance learning courses and use the room to support their studies.

"I think Lifelong Learning is becoming more popular across the site as word spreads. Over the past couple of years we've become more organised, we've got two learning reps on each shift so there's someone who is always available to promote the opportunities and support members who are already learning.

"Being a learning rep keeps me busy but I find it really interesting. I was encouraged to get involved by a fellow rep because of my background – I'd previously worked in the social care industry and particularly enjoy helping people.

"The Co-op promote a good atmosphere on-site. Everyone gets on well here, it's a great place to work."



PENSIONS DON'T NEED TO BE PAINFUL

Usdaw has a whole range of resources to help members understand their pensions from home study courses to the Usdaw website

Since the introduction of auto-enrolment, the radical pension reforms introduced in 2012, many people in the UK now only have access to a Defined Contribution (DC) workplace pension arrangement.

A DC pension should be viewed as a long-term savings plan offering favourable tax advantages – and most importantly your employer must make a contribution on your behalf.

One of the main advantages is that the Government does not tax

you on your pension savings - and the equivalent of this tax saving (known as tax relief) is invested in your pension pot. You can also take up to a quarter of your entire pension pot as a tax free lump sum, from 55 onwards.

You have complete control over where your money is invested but as many of us are not experts where investments are concerned, you will be offered a default fund and you can leave the investment decisions to the experts.

In the event of your death before

reaching retirement, you can leave your pension pot to whomever you like, usually tax free (before 75), but it is important that you complete a nomination form so that the people running the scheme know exactly who you want your money to go to.

When you reach retirement you have a number of options as to how you can access the money in your pension pot. You can take it all as cash, but remember only a quarter is tax free – the rest is taxable. You can draw out a bit at a time or if you prefer a guaranteed income for the

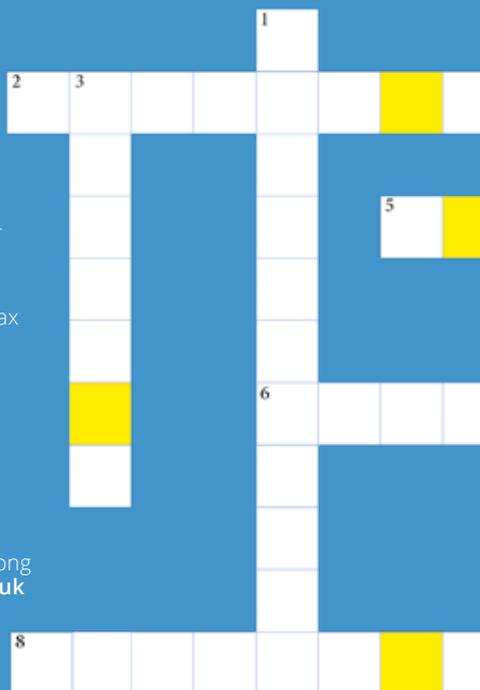
PUZZLED BY PENSIONS?

ACROSS

- 2 Additional money you receive in your pension pot from Government (3,6)
- 5 Type of fund on offer from pension provider if you do not wish to make your own investment fund choices (7)
- 6 Complete this form to ensure any death benefits due go to a beneficiary of your choice (10)
- 7 Later became known as the State Second Pension (15)
- 8 Ground breaking pension legislation Introduced in 2012 (4 ,9)

DOWN

- 1 Free guidance service from Government once you reach age 50 (11)
- 3 You must purchase one of these to ensure you receive a regular income for the rest of your life when you reach retirement (7)
- 4 The amount you can take (tax free lump sum) from your pension pot from 55 onwards (7)



TWO PRIZES OF £30 UP FOR GRABS

Find the hidden word in the yellow squares and email your answer along with your name and address to: pensionscompetition@usdaw.org.uk Please put 'xword' in the subject box. Solutions available from www.usdaw.org.uk/Networkxwordanswers
Closing date: 7 September 2020

COVID-19 CONTROLS FOR A SAFER WORKPLACE

Network guides reps through the hierarchy of controls which ranks risk from high to low

As more and more workplaces open, Usdaw reps will need to make sure that employers are carrying out risk assessments and implementing the most effective controls to ensure workplaces are COVID-secure.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The first steps in organising for health and safety reps involve inspecting the workplace to check whether the employer's COVID-19 risk assessment is being implemented and to talk to workers to identify any outstanding concerns they have. The Government has issued guidance on working safely in different sectors and advises organisations with more than 50 employees that they should also publish their COVID-19 risk assessment publicly on their website so reps should have access to the risk assessment.

At site level management should involve the union health and safety reps in the implementation of the measures identified in the COVID-19 risk assessment. By working together management and reps can ensure that it works in their workplace. Reps will also need to find ways to consult with members either in physically distanced

discussion at work or by online methods so they can make sure that members are satisfied with the precautions.

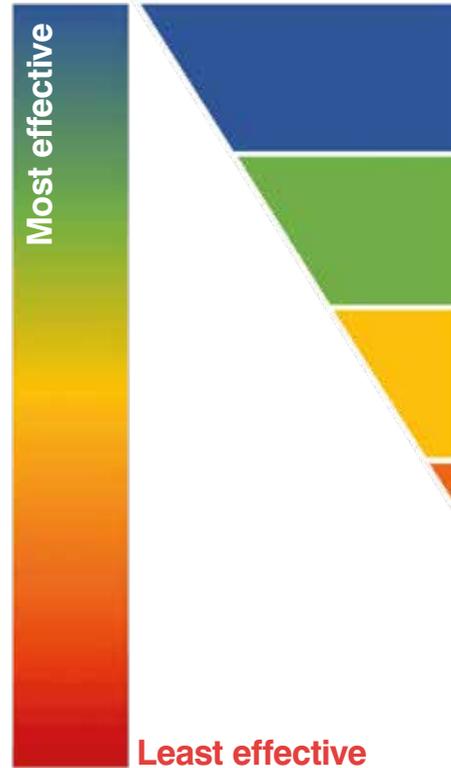
HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS

There are lots of changes in Government rules on COVID-19 at the moment and different routes are being taken by the different UK Governments to the relaxation of the lockdown. This makes it difficult for Usdaw to provide central advice and guidance to reps.

Decisions on what safety measures are reasonable are not always clear cut. Every workplace and activity will be different and control measures will depend on all the circumstances. It helps to remember that health and safety law requires a hierarchy of controls to be applied which ranks risk controls from the highest level of protection and reliability through to the lowest and least reliable protection.

ELIMINATION

Elimination is all about stopping the virus from getting into the workplace to start with. Ensuring that workers do self-isolate when told to do so by the NHS Test and Trace system is an example. In shops, encouraging customers to wear face coverings



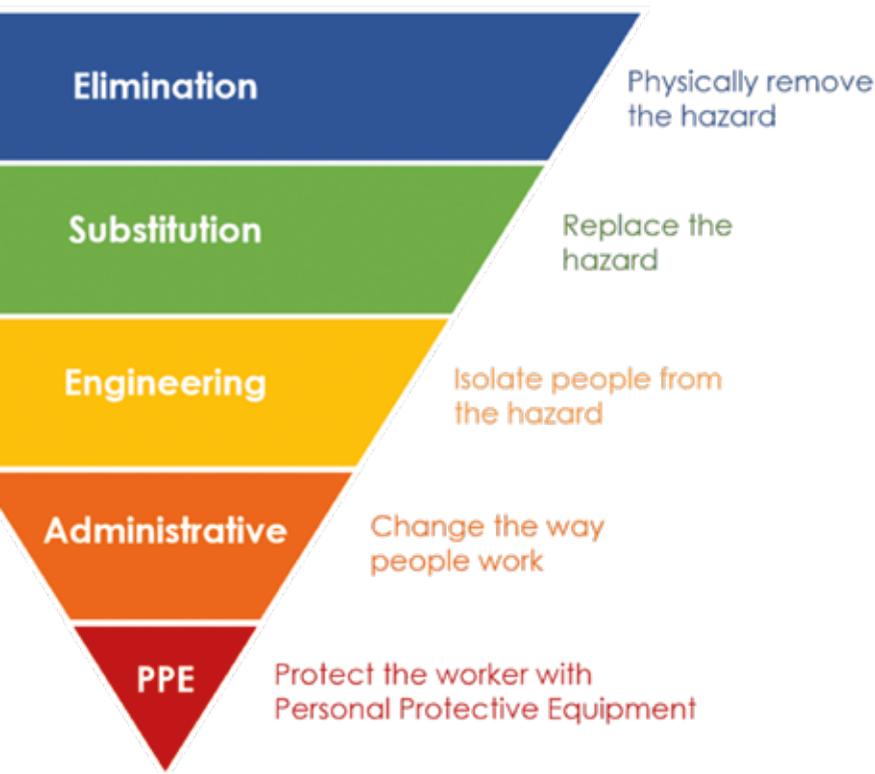
that trap any potentially infected droplets they breathe out is another.

SUBSTITUTION

Substitution and engineering controls include ways of ensuring physical distancing or use of barriers and screens where this cannot be done. Substituting doorstep delivery instead of kitchen table delivery for supermarket online delivery services is one example. In factories rearranging production lines so workers have more room is another. For workers in enclosed spaces, such as factories or call centres, changes to ventilation systems to reduce recirculation of air and introduce more fresh air from outside can be important.

ADMINISTRATION

Administration controls include



MASKS WARNING

There is lots of advice on the best face coverings to wear as legislation has developed for compulsory use on public transport and in shops. Options vary from full face visors, designer masks, scarves and snoods to disposable surgical style masks. Whatever they are made of, experts agree that the main purpose is to protect other people from any germs that the wearer might spread when they exhale. In the USA, concern is growing that some people are using dust masks with one-way valves. Masks with valves are designed to protect the wearer from inhaling small particles. When you breathe in the valve closes and stops the dust. But when you breathe out the valve opens and your breath and any droplets are expelled through the valve. The valve helps to make the mask more comfortable but, in doing so, it may defeat the main purpose of wearing a face covering for COVID-19 prevention. [sf.gov/information/masks-and-face-coverings-coronavirus-pandemic](https://www.hse.gov.uk/information/masks-and-face-coverings-coronavirus-pandemic)

temperature checks on arrival at work, relaxation of picking rates or productivity targets and staggering of start and finish times or break times.

LEAST EFFECTIVE

The least effective safety measures rely on an individual doing something correctly and providing individual protection. These can be following one-way systems around the workplace, washing hands properly and wearing personal protective equipment (PPE).

CONSULTATION

Consultation between the employer and health and safety reps is central to organising around COVID-19. Guidance published by the HSE, *Talking with Your Workers about Preventing Coronavirus*, emphasises this fact. As the HSE explains,

consultation is more than employers telling workers what they are doing. Consultation is a two-way process, allowing workers to raise concerns and influence decisions. It means the employer must open a dialogue with health and safety reps before they implement any risk control measures. Using their legal functions to inspect the workplace and to consult with workers, reps can provide valuable feedback to the employer on the effectiveness of controls. Consultation means that the company must make time available for managers and reps to meet and feed back to the workforce. The HSE publication *Talking With Your Workers About Coronavirus*, can be downloaded here: www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/assets/docs/talking-with-your-workers.pdf

COVID-19 Q&A FOR REPS

Network answers some of the most frequently asked questions on health and safety during COVID-19.

How can I be sure my workplace is safe?

The basic principles your employer is expected to follow remain broadly the same. Wherever you work they must have risk assessments in place to provide the best protection they can. And they must consult with the union to make sure the protective measures are working.

Essential measures include ensuring that workers with symptoms self-isolate and are encouraged to get tested. Managers must not put pressure on them to return to work early.

Physical distancing remains a fundamental control. The 'one-metre plus' policy introduced in June is only for situations where keeping two metres apart is not possible. The 'plus' refers to the extra precautions needed when this is the case such as face coverings, avoiding standing or sitting face-to-face and limiting the time of closer contact. Where two-metre distancing can be achieved it should still be done. Limiting numbers in shops, spreading workers out on production lines

and the other measures that have already been used should continue.

Now that face coverings are mandatory on public transport can I use the bus even when it is crowded?

No. Advice is still to avoid travel at peak times if possible. Wearing face coverings was introduced as an additional protective measure but it is not a magic bullet. When used properly the main benefit is that they protect other people from any germs or infected droplets the wearer might expel when they cough or breathe out. For workers from different households who car-share they are recommended for the same reason.

Now that face coverings are mandatory in shops in Scotland and England does that mean we can relax the other precautions?

No. As the previous answer explains, face coverings are an additional precaution introduced on top of the other protective measures. They will only work if people use them properly and if most customers wear them when they are in the shop. Other measures such as physical distancing, screens on checkouts

and good hygiene are still essential. It is important that shopworkers are not obliged to police the rule on face coverings. Workers already have enough aggression to deal with without having to challenge anyone who is antisocial and refuses to protect others by covering up.

I keep reading about outbreaks in meat factories. Does that mean they are more dangerous places to work?

Not particularly. Meat plants may have featured more because they present an enclosed environment with lots of hard surfaces where the virus can survive. Temperatures are kept cold to protect the product but this may also protect the virus. To keep temperatures down and protect food hygiene, air conditioning is used which recirculates air. There may be other factors. Many plants employ workers who share accommodation and transport to work. Any workplace where workers have to work close together in an enclosed environment is at risk of an outbreak.

For more information visit the Usdaw website.

www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Coronavirus-Update

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healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk





HEALTH & SAFETY REP INTERVIEW RICHARD WATERS

Next nightshift worker and Usdaw rep Richard Waters spent eight weeks of lockdown helping management prepare the Bristol warehouse for staff to be able to return safely to work. One hundred and sixty members of staff are employed at the facility which processes clothing and homeware for Next customers.

"We locked down on the Thursday and I got a phone call on the Tuesday asking me if I would be prepared to come back in and help management to reshape the warehouse to make social distancing possible," said Richard, who has worked at Next for 15 years. "Next wanted to have union input on the alterations they were planning to make. So a team of six of us set to work reorganising the warehouse from top to bottom. It was quite difficult to be honest, warehouses aren't built for social distancing, they're built for productivity. We had to move all the walkways and install a one-way system. Masses of signage was put up telling staff where they could walk, reminding them to socially distance and keep good hygiene.

"There's a packing area where we would've had 40 tables back to back

with staff working at every table and we had to reduce that to just 14 tables. We've since rearranged that area again and now each table is in its own 6ft by 6ft pod so that staff are completely isolated.

"In the canteen we have set up a one-in, one-out system. The only thing that was in use was a hot water machine for tea and coffee but vending machines are being brought back into use with hygiene protocols. And in the car park we've put signage up to make sure everyone reverses into the spaces to ensure they are two metres apart."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

"I've been very impressed with what the company have done at our site, they really have put health and safety first. The changes do affect productivity, operations will be slower because you have to walk further to do things, but management's primary concern has been safety, and thanks to all the work we've done, staff have been able to come back to work earlier and come off the furlough scheme.

"Making the warehouse safe is an ongoing process. We're having to adapt and evolve each week as we

get more staff back into work and as Government guidance changes. I think it will be like that for the next year or so, until social distancing calms down. I can feel normality is creeping back in slowly. It's something I'm very mindful of and I don't want all the work we have done to go to waste or to be ignored.

"Staff are pleased with the measures that have been put in place for their safety. It does put your mind at ease that management have made health and safety a priority, and work is a safe place to be. Most staff are just happy to be back at work."

While Richard has been making his contribution to fighting the pandemic, his wife Danielle has remained in her job throughout lockdown as an intensive care nurse.

"Danielle has been looking after patients with Coronavirus so she really is in the thick of it," said Richard. "You've seen the pictures of all the nurses coming out with bruises on their faces because of the PPE and it is true. It's been a very stressful time for her and every nurse, I imagine they've all been close to their limits quite a few times. I'm so proud of her."

MemberOffers

Some of the offers are temporarily unavailable due to the Coronavirus pandemic but remind your members to keep checking the website for regular updates.

CARS & TRANSPORT

Car Hire
Car Leasing
Car Maintenance
Car Parking - QPark
Fiat
Startrescue
Usdawdrive
Vauxhall Cars

HEALTH & BEAUTY

Comfort Insoles
Gym Membership
My Active Discounts
Usdaw Health Plan
Usdaw Dental Plan
Vision Express

SHOPPING

Apple
Crown Decorating Centres
Discount Card
Domestic Appliances
Magazine Subscriptions
TM Lewin
Usdaw Prepaid Cashback Card
UsdawRewards Cashback
Virgin Wines

INSURANCE

Accident Protection Cover
Car/Home/Travel Insurance
Life Insurance
Pet Insurance
50+ Personal Accident Cover
Free £5,000 Accidental Death Cover

LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

Beer52
Cinema at home: Chili.com
Cinema at home: Rakuten TV
Cinema Tickets
Discount Card
English Heritage
Go Ape
Golf Membership
Magazine App - Readly
Magazine Subscriptions
National Trust Gift Cards
Online Ticket Store
Theme Parks and Attractions
Virgin Experience Days



Don't forget about the Union's legal services such as free will writing and Legal Plus.

www.usdaw.org.uk/legal

MONEY & FINANCE

Debt Advice
Financial Advice
Mortgage Advice
Pensions Advice
Pensions Annuity Service
Shepherds Friendly Savings
The Co-op Credit Union

HOLIDAYS

Airport Parking, Lounges & Hotels
Away Resorts
Cottage Breaks
DFDS Ferry Crossing
Forest Holidays
James Villa Holidays
Lost Luggage Protection
Parkdean Resorts
Pontins
Wightlink Ferries

MISCELLANEOUS

Funeral Planning
Gas and Electric
Mobile Phones
TOTUM Pro/NUS Extra
International Student ID

www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

*Terms and Conditions for individual offers on the website.

Find out more

www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

★SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS★SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS★

Enter for a chance to win an iPad 32GB*



Enter our Free Prize Draw for a chance to win a 32GB iPad

By providing us with your email address and insurance renewal dates, we can let you know more about our range of great value products. Usdaw Insurance provide our members and their families with great value for money Home, Motor, Travel and Pet Insurance.

To enter simply complete the prize draw entry form at: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/usdawipad2020

The Prize Draw closes at 23:45pm on Saturday 31st October 2020. Good Luck!

Win £250 of shopping vouchers with Usdaw Dental Plan

The Usdaw Dental Plan has been running for over a decade and is there to give you money back each time you visit your NHS dentist. It costs £11.50 per month and you get £500 of NHS cover which means no more costly treatment bills.

Would you like to win £250 in shopping vouchers? Enter the free prize draw before the 31st August to be in with a chance!

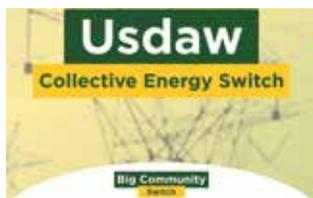
To find out more: www.usdaw.org.uk/healthdentalplan

The Usdaw logo, featuring the word 'Usdaw' in a stylized, cursive font with a red and blue color scheme.

Health and Dental Plan

Usdaw members have been beating energy price rises since 2018!

Since launching Usdaw Collective Energy Switch in early 2018, Usdaw members have already saved up to £120,000 by grouping



together to get a better deal on their gas and electricity.

It's quick and easy with no obligation to switch.

Registration is open so see if you can save money by joining the next auction - just in time for winter!

HOW IT WORKS:

- Register your interest for free before 6th October
 - Our partner iChoosr holds an auction where energy suppliers compete for your custom
 - You will receive a personal offer detailing your potential savings
 - Decide - stick or switch? If you switch our partner iChoosr takes care of the entire process
- Go to www.usdaw.org.uk/switch

fashion & textile children's trust

Financial grants for children of UK fashion and textile families

Grants for Parents & Carers who have worked for clothing, homeware or fabric companies

The Fashion & Textile Children's Trust (FTCT) gives financial grants to the children of parents and carers who work in the UK fashion and textile industry. Their grants can help ease the financial strain of redundancy, furlough or reduced working hours, by covering the cost of essential items for children in the family. www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

*Terms and conditions apply to all benefits. See website for details. Offers subject to change without notice. Usdaw Discounts & Offers is managed and run on behalf of Usdaw by Parliament Hill Ltd. Further benefits are organised directly by Usdaw Membership Services. Please see website for full details.



GET INVOLVED

December 2020 sees the end of the current, three-year term of office of Usdaw's divisional equalities forums and once again they've achieved precisely what they set out to do – given a voice to, and encouraged the greater involvement of, four groups of under-represented members: women, black and minority ethnic members, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members and disabled members.

The forums' strong link with the wider organising and recruitment work of their divisions produces great results. Below are some examples of the practical action the forums have taken over the last three years:

- Organised weekend schools on issues like mental health and tackling sexual harassment.
- Raised the union's profile at regional Pride events.
- Taken the union's national campaigns out into workplaces, organising activity on Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight Days

- and Respect Days.
 - Visited workplaces to talk to members and non-members about maternity rights and tackling racism.
 - Organised successful regional LGBT get-togethers.
 - Been at the forefront of supporting Show Racism the Red Card's 'Wear Red Day' raising vital funds for the footballing anti-racism charity.
- The outbreak of Coronavirus means the union faces an extraordinary set of challenges going forwards. Coronavirus has, for the moment, changed the lives of every one of our members. Understandably we are all looking ahead to some point in the future when life can return to something that at least resembles what it was before the pandemic. When it does the forums need to be ready and able to pick up where they left off. Usdaw is therefore going ahead with the 'nomination process' this year, asking activists who are interested in being a part of their divisional

forum to put their name forward for consideration by their divisional council in October.

There are seats on the forum for the following four groups of members only – women, black and ethnic minority members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members (LGBT), all of whom we know face specific obstacles to getting involved in the union and are under-represented in its structures and at conferences and events. The forums' role is to address this and come up with practical ways to reach out to these groups of members.

If you would like to be involved in your divisional equalities forum please complete the nomination form online at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/DivEqualForum

If you want to find out more about what the forums do or you need a paper copy of the nomination form please contact the equalities section at **equalitiesmatters@usdaw.org.uk** or call **0161 224 2804**.



SUPPORTING MEMBERS WITH FIBROMYALGIA

A useful resource for reps when it comes to helping members with fibromyalgia and the Equality Act

As many as one in 20 people could be affected by fibromyalgia. This debilitating condition is often difficult to diagnose, has no cure and presents as a variety of symptoms, all of which can leave affected members struggling to function at work. It's crucial that anyone suffering from fibromyalgia gets the support they need from their Usdaw rep.

That's why Usdaw's equalities section has produced this guide. Inside, you'll find guidance on the

symptoms of fibromyalgia and a practical, step-by-step plan to determine whether the member meets the definition of a disabled person under the Equality Act (Disability Discrimination Act in Northern Ireland).

You'll also get examples of adjustments that reps have previously negotiated on behalf of their members, to help them stay in work.

Read the guide online now at:
dtp.usdaw.co.uk/436

For a complete list of Usdaw publications and to order visit:
dtp.usdaw.co.uk/PublicationsCatalogue

NEW IN!

Leaflets

Don't retire from the Union
(Leaflet 269)

Puzzled by Pensions? Guide to Pensions & Tax 2020/21
(Leaflet 451)

Usdaw Pensions Guide – 2020/21 edition

Handouts and Posters

A New Deal for Workers (Poster)

UsdawLearn Gateway Poster
(Poster NB23)

UsdawLearn Bingo Card

Online courses

CV Writing - IT bitesize course
www.usdaw.org.uk/cvwriting

Pensions home study
www.usdaw.org.uk/pensionshomestudy

Helping With Homework – new bitesize maths course
www.usdaw.org.uk/mathshomework

Summertime Songbirds - English bitesize course
www.usdaw.org.uk/summertime

Vulnerable Workers Home Study
www.usdaw.org.uk/homestudy5

Staying Safe Online course
www.usdaw.org.uk/SafeOnline

Looking After Your Mental Health
www.usdaw.org.uk/yourmentalhealth

Online Courses for Reps

- 1: Getting Started: The Role of the Rep
- 2: Organising and Recruitment Part 1
- 3: Organising and Recruitment Part 2
- 4: Representing Members Part 1
- 5: Representing Members Part 2

www.usdaw.org.uk/RepsHandbook

Twitter takeover



Chris Elmore MP

Fully support this from @UsdawUnion. Relaxing Sunday trading hours is a kick in the teeth for shopworkers, many of whom have been working tirelessly to ensure we all have essential supplies since this pandemic began.



Craig Andrew

Twenty years ago when I worked in a supermarket, Sunday was the longest shift of the week. A shop needs setting up and closing down, the staff don't just appear at opening time and disappear at closing time.



For Pride month, team manager Patrick Dhalai wanted to know what Pride meant to his colleagues at Morrisons. Watch the video here to find out... https://youtu.be/_J9CRx0MRJU



Alex Norris MP

Violence against shopworkers is completely unacceptable. As non-essential retail re-opens, we must ensure workers are protected.

The Government needs to publish their call for evidence on this issue to finally give shopworkers the protections they need and deserve.



Email your thoughts and pictures to us at: network@usdaw.org.uk



@Unionlearn

@UsdawUnion rep, Andrina Stanislawski recently signed up to study on the online #ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) computer course. A decision which led to new work opportunities. #DigitalSkills @UsdawLearn <https://www.unionlearn.org.uk/case-studies/andrina-digital-driving-seat-thanks-usdaw> #WorkersRights #Sunday @UsdawUnion



Jack Dromey MP

Abuse of shopworkers has doubled during Coronavirus. @UsdawUnion is right, abuse should not be a part of the job. Shopworkers must be able to work with #FreedomFromFear

Marina

Has #lockdownuk ended? This week has seen an influx of customers, less social distancing, more aggressive behaviour. Now more places are open ppl are relaxing like everything over. Frontline has got even scarier. #COVID19 #usdaw #bbcnews #government #BorisJohnson #retail



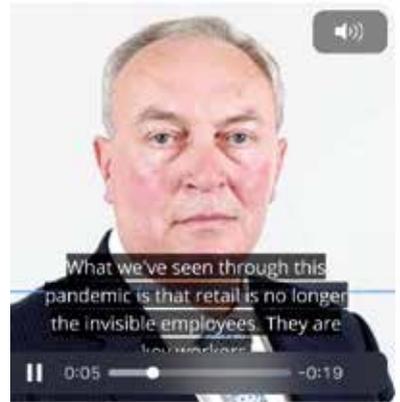
Paddy Lillis

Great to hear that school meal vouchers will be provided over the summer holidays – this will be a real help to thousands of Usdaw members. Big thanks to @MarcusRashford for putting pressure on Government to #maketheUturn



Bloomberg Radio

All that #coronavirus has done, is accelerate a problem that already existed in UK retail says @PaddyLillisGS to #BloombergWestminster. The @UsdawUnion is calling for a new industrial plan for workers as non-essential stores are set to re-open on Monday. trib.al/cSH2vwa



Morning Star

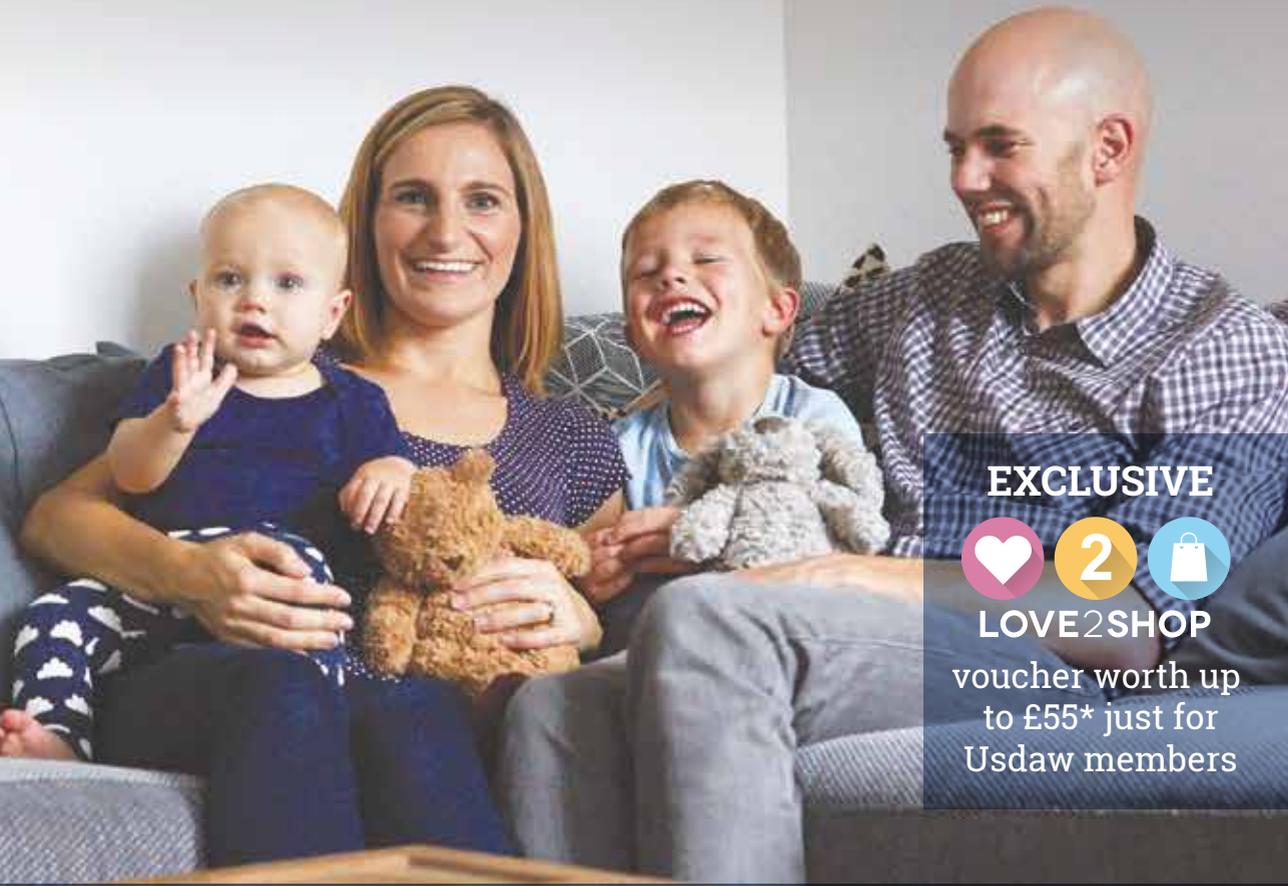
Usdaw general secretary PADDY LILLIS explains there is no benefit to keeping shops open longer on Sundays for the employers or the customers – and doing so would be a massive blow to workers' pay and conditions ow.ly/l1mn30qPOz #WorkersRights #Sunday @UsdawUnion

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Usdaw
*Union of Shop, Distributive
and Allied Workers*