

NETWORK

THE BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR USDAW ACTIVISTS – MAY/JUNE 2021

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPS

KEEPING MEMBERS SAFE
BEFORE, DURING AND
BEYOND THE PANDEMIC

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USD AW

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REPS GO BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

Following a successful vaccination programme, the UK is looking forward to life returning to some kind of normality in the next couple of months.

For many Usdaw members this is nothing new as they have been on the frontline of the pandemic since March last year. When others stayed safe at home, shopworkers, drivers, members in distribution, manufacturing and in funeral services have continued to work tirelessly to ensure that shelves remained stocked, medicine was available, deliveries were made and other essential tasks were carried out.

On top of this, Usdaw reps have also been juggling their reps' duties. The pandemic had a huge impact on the role of the rep and many reps had to deal with new issues such as face coverings, social distancing, safety fears and increased demands from members.

Despite the increased pressure, the increased demands and worries about their own health and safety, Usdaw reps went above and beyond the call of duty. They continued to organise workplaces, represent members, listen to their worries and ensured safe working practices were put in place.

I want to thank all our reps for the incredible work they have done over the last year.

Urdaw will continue to work hard to ensure that the



contribution of its members is not forgotten as we come out of this pandemic. We will continue to lobby the Government for decent pay and conditions for every worker. Our New Deal for Workers campaign calls for a range of measures, including a minimum wage of £10 per hour, secure hours, increased sick pay and job security. We will also demand that any recovery rebuilds our decimated retail sector and revives the high street. And we will also work with the trade union movement to tackle the deep-seated inequality that the virus exposed.

Usdaw General Secretary

Paddy Bellis

A full list of courses can be accessed on www.usdaw.org.uk/onlinelearninggateway these include:

- GCSE Maths Revision (with assessments).
- GCSE English Revision (with assessments).
- Functional Skills Maths Levels 1 and 2 (with assessments).
- Functional Skills English Levels 1 and 2 (with assessments).
- Foundation Maths (with assessments).
- Foundation English (with assessments).
- Everyday English: Punctuation.
- An Introduction to Online Security.
- Equality and Diversity in the Workplace.
- Rights for Younger Workers.
- GDPR Awareness.
- Raising Awareness: Manual Handling at Work.
- An Introduction to COSHH Awareness.
- Workplace Upper Limb Disorders.
- Raising Awareness: Mental Health.
- Raising Awareness: Menopause in the Workplace.
- An Introduction to Substance Misuse.
- Harmful Gambling.



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CALL TO UPDATE TORY CRIME BILL

Usdaw is part of a coalition, which includes more than 30 major retail businesses, that urged MPs to avoid shackling over three million shopworkers to a 'life sentence' of violence, abuse and anti-social behaviour by encouraging them to back an amendment to a flagship Government crime bill which would offer frontline workers greater protection.

However, the Government is so far rejecting the calls stating that 'it remains unpersuaded of the need for a specific offence.' As previous legislation to protect shopworkers in England and Wales failed at the end of the last Parliamentary session, the Government is being urged to change its mind and bring forward an amendment, or new clause, to its Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Bill, which would deliver greater protection for all frontline shopworkers.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Usdaw's 2020 survey showed that nine in 10 shopworkers had been



abused last year and the situation had become much worse during the pandemic. So it is very disappointing that the Government continues to resist calls from across the retail industry for new legislation to protect shopworkers.

"When major retail businesses and the shopworkers' trade union jointly call for legislation, it is time for the Government to listen. In Scotland MSPs voted through a new ground-breaking law to give shopworkers greater protection. We are now looking for MPs to support key workers across retail and help turn around the UK Government's

opposition. Abuse should never be just a part of the job, shopworkers deserve respect and the protection of the law."

Jo Whitfield, Co-op Retail CEO, said: "Violence, abuse and anti-social behaviour towards shopworkers is unacceptable, and it is clear from our conversations that there is appetite across the political spectrum to bring forward new clauses to the Government's Crime (PCSC) Bill, which would provide the protection that frontline shopworkers need and deserve.

"Stiffer sentencing will send out a clear message that criminal behaviour in our communities will not

be tolerated by society, and importantly lets shopworkers – who have gone to amazing lengths to feed and care for communities throughout the pandemic – know that they are being listened to and taken seriously. Assaults and abuse should not be part of the job, and by standing together, I am confident we can encourage the Government to change its mind and bring about greater protection for shopworkers in all our communities."



SUPPORTING PARENTS AND CARERS SPOTLIGHT DAY 2021

SPOTLIGHT ON IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CARERS

Usdaw's online Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight Day, held on 19 May, highlighted the difficulties of juggling work with looking after someone.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "We know that three-quarters of Usdaw members are juggling their jobs with parental and/or caring responsibilities. Most are caring for children, older parents, grandchildren and sick or disabled family members. Even at the best of times it can be difficult to balance the two and the coronavirus crisis has added pressure like never before.

"The majority of those stepping in to provide care during the coronavirus crisis are women in their 40s and 50s in paid work with dependent children of their own. They are providing even more care than they were before with fewer breaks and less support from formal care services. This has left them feeling under pressure, stressed and exhausted.

"Government support for carers before the pandemic fell far short of what was needed. Now with more people than ever providing care, the Government must act without delay to lift the pressure and safeguard carers' economic and emotional



health and wellbeing.

"Throughout the pandemic working parents have largely had to rely on unpaid or annual leave in order to juggle work and childcare.

"Unpaid leave simply is not a realistic option for low-paid parents, most ran out of annual leave and some rearranged their shifts, but this often means cutting back on hours and therefore pay. The disproportionate impact on women's earnings, their ability to qualify for statutory sick or maternity pay and future pension earnings is particularly worrying.

"In the absence of sufficient statutory workplace rights, parents and carers' mental health and

financial security is being negatively affected. The Government needs to do more."

Usdaw is campaigning for the Government to lift the pressure on working parents and carers by:

- Introducing a statutory right to 10 days paid carers and parental leave, to be made available from day one of employment.
- Improving protection from discrimination and redundancy by strengthening the law.
- Improving the rate of and extending the reach of Carers Allowance.
- Introducing a temporary legal right enabling parents and carers to access the furlough scheme.

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Sponsored by Usdaw Insurance. www.usdaw.org.uk/uia Closing date 1 August 2021. Terms apply.

Due to the current situation with Covid 19, the voucher will be despatched as soon as possible after the draw has taken place.

UNION LEARNING FUND UPDATE

UPSKILLING ENDS IN ENGLAND AT CRUCIAL TIME

Last year the Government announced that it would withdraw all funding from the Union Learning Fund (ULF) in England from March 2021. Despite lobbying from the trade union movement, the Government went ahead with this decision.

The Union Learning Fund (ULF) was set up in 1998 to support workers in accessing learning and training in workplaces. The fund was worth £11 million per year and around 200,000 workers were supported into learning or training with union support through the ULF and the TUC.

Although the Government savagely cut the ULF in England, it continues to be supported across the devolved nations of Wales,

Scotland and Northern Ireland. Each nation has committed to support ULF projects in their region for the duration of the projects and all are keen to continue funding beyond that.

In Scotland the Government has agreed to fund ULF projects for a further two years, up until April 2023, with Northern Ireland committing to do the same. Wales has an existing project which will continue until at least April 2022 but have already stated they will look to fund a further round of projects. This means

Usdaw's Lifelong Learning work in these nations will continue to flourish and the project workers looking after those regions will continue to support the excellent work that's been established through the various ULF funds.



SHEPHERDS FRIENDLY SUSTAINABLE SAVINGS



Shepherds Friendly has launched a new Sustainable Stocks & Shares ISA and Sustainable Junior ISA, with the aim of helping you to save for your and your family's futures, whilst making a positive difference to society.

As Shepherds Friendly is a financial mutual that is built on fairness, everything they do always aims to put their members first. They have no shareholders to pay dividends to, and all profits made are paid to members or reinvested for their benefit.

The two new savings plans are designed to not only help you save for the future, but also make a positive contribution to society through sustainable investing, as companies which the fund invests in

must demonstrate a commitment to leadership in environment, social and governance (ESG) factors.

You and your colleagues can open a Sustainable Stocks & Shares ISA from £30 a month or make a single payment from £100. Sustainable Junior ISAs start from £10 a month, or you can make a one-off payment of as little as £100. Additionally, the friendly society is offering Usdaw members an exclusive Love2shop voucher code worth up to £55* when you open a sustainable savings plan with them.

To take advantage of this offer, you will need to use the links below: usdaw.org.uk/SISA to open a Sustainable Stocks and Shares ISA or;



usdaw.org.uk/SJISA to open a Sustainable Junior ISA. Alternatively, you and your colleagues can call Shepherds Friendly on **0800 526 249** who would be happy to assist you. Don't forget to quote **Usdaw** if you're applying over the phone.

*Terms and conditions apply. Please remember, when investing, your capital is at risk. If you have been invested through periods of poor investment performance, and you leave the fund, you may get back less than the current value of your plan. This is known as a Market Value Reduction (MVR)

IN BRIEF

SAINSBURY'S

Sainsbury's is to cut 500 head office jobs while another 650 jobs are at risk as the supermarket closes one of its online grocery packing centres. Supermarkets have been one of the main beneficiaries of consumer spending during the coronavirus pandemic. But the surge in online shopping, which is less profitable than selling via stores and the need to provide protective kit and additional staff to cover for those off sick or shielding during the pandemic, have all hit supermarket profits.

THORNTONS

Chocolate maker Thorntons did not reopen their stores after lockdown restrictions were lifted. The decision to close its 61 shops will put more than 600 jobs at risk. The company said it had been badly hit by the pandemic, which forced its stores to shut their doors during the crucial Christmas and Easter holidays.

JOHN LEWIS

John Lewis did not reopen eight of its stores once lockdown restrictions eased, which put 1,465 jobs at risk. The chain has now axed around a third of its stores in less than a year. John Lewis Partnership said it now expects between 60-70 per cent of John Lewis sales in the future to be made online.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH 2021

LOW-PAID WORKERS IGNORED

Usdaw expressed disappointment that the Government failed to include in the Queen's Speech the union's calls for: a new deal for workers to ensure they are valued, respected and have fairly paid secure jobs; reform of universal credit to tackle in-work poverty or a plan to revive our struggling high streets.

Udaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "This was a missed opportunity to reward the millions of low-paid workers who provided essential services to help ensure the country is fed, healthy and safe throughout the coronavirus pandemic. By not delivering on the Conservative manifesto promise of an Employment Bill, the Government is failing to 'build back better' as we drift back to pre-covid inequalities and injustices.

"Udaw members need lasting and fundamental changes to the way society views all workers. We need a New Deal for 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. There also has to be fundamental reform of universal credit to tackle in-work poverty.

"We are also concerned by the lack of acknowledgement that the UK retail sector has been severely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and desperately needs an urgent retail recovery plan that provides necessary support for the industry.

"Udaw is looking for a protection of shopworkers amendment to the Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill, in the coming parliamentary session, to tackle the growing problem of violence, threats and abuse against retail staff, which doubled during the pandemic and remains high.

"The legislative programme announced goes nowhere near delivering on the Prime Minister's promises to 'levelling up' and to 'build back better'. This shows that they are just empty soundbites and that is deeply disappointing for our members."



STUC LGBT+ CONFERENCE 2021

IMPROVING VISIBILITY AND ADDRESSING INEQUALITY



An Usdaw delegation of members and officials attended this year's online Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Plus (LGBT+) Conference. Usdaw highlighted the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on LGBT+ workers and sought to address longstanding inequality issues that have been entrenched still further by the crisis.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "There can be no doubt that the inequality and discrimination LGBT+ people face has been made worse by the coronavirus crisis. Long standing inequalities in accessing community and financial support, healthcare, housing and employment have all been exacerbated and it is highly likely these inequalities will persist and deepen unless urgent action is taken by the Government to systematically monitor and address the specific needs of LGBT+ people.

"Anyone can experience a mental health problem at any time but discrimination, poverty, prejudice and bigotry all heighten the risk for LGBT+ workers.

"Due to the absence of sexual orientation and trans status monitoring questions in the Scotland Census, evidence of the impact of

the coronavirus crisis on LGBT+ workers has been absent from much of the narrative surrounding the pandemic both in Scotland and across the UK.

"We welcome the ongoing work trade unions and LGBT+ led organisations are carrying out to consult LGBT+ members and make visible their experiences and concerns during the pandemic.

"In a recent Usdaw survey, over 4,000 members took the time to share their experiences of working through the crisis and the impact this has had on their mental health. The survey found that almost three quarters felt anxious about going to work, triggered by fears of catching the virus and customer abuse and harassment. Many LGBT+ members reported experiencing phobic abuse from customers.

"This was the case before the pandemic, but policing face coverings and social distancing have made a bad situation worse.

"The Covid-19 crisis has dominated all our lives and regrettably side-lined many important issues that we have campaigned on over the years. We have to ensure that those campaigns continue and that we build back better after the pandemic."

IN BRIEF

ASDA

Asda is to stop baking products such as bread and pastries in store at its 341 supermarkets, putting 1,200 jobs at risk. In future, Asda's baked products will be made in a central bakery and then warmed in stores. The latest job cuts come less than two months after Asda said 5,000 jobs were at risk from the closures.

TUI

TUI is planning to close 48 more retail stores in the UK, a move that will affect 273 staff. The news comes after TUI announced last year that 166 shops that closed due to the pandemic would not reopen, which at the time was nearly a third of its total.

KEEP INFORMED

For all the up-to-date Usdaw news visit the union's website:

www.usdaw.org.uk/news

MEMBERSHIP

FOR WEEK ENDED 22 MAY 2021

South Wales & Western	44,384
Eastern	55,124
Midlands	52,011
North Eastern	53,592
Scottish	39,967
Southern	56,502
North West	81,316
Total	382,896



KEEPING UP-TO-DATE ON RIGHTS AT WORK

As reps it's vital to stay updated with the latest rules and regulations surrounding workers' rights

No matter where you work or where you're recruiting, our newly updated Workers' Rights Guide will help you stay informed.

Featuring comprehensive information on all aspects of statutory (basic) rights, contractual rights, protection from discrimination and family and maternity rights, the guide is essential reading for both full and part-time workers. You could also use it to demonstrate the benefits

of union membership, by pointing out the difference between the basic rights and those Usdaw has negotiated at your workplace. As we come out of lockdown and union activity begins to return to normal, make sure you're fully equipped and ready to answer questions from members and potential members.

Check out the guide at:
dtp.usdaw.co.uk/211

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

NEW IN!

Leaflets & Booklets

How much has been lost to pension scammers?
(Lft 452)

The Crisis in Retail – Usdaw's Case for a Retail Recovery Plan

Survey Results 2020: Campaign to end violence and abuse against retail workers

Online Courses

ABCs of ICT – IT bitesize course
www.usdaw.org.uk/ABCsofIT

Health and Safety during Covid-19
www.usdaw.org.uk/Covid19course

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

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

Health and Safety Reps Part 1
www.usdaw.org.uk/HSReps1

Health and Safety Reps Part 2
www.usdaw.org.uk/HSReps2

Health and Safety Reps Part 3
www.usdaw.org.uk/HSReps3

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

The Impact of Covid-19 on Domestic Violence
www.usdaw.org.uk/CovidandDV

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

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

Union Learning Rep Part 1: Lifelong Learning and Usdaw
www.usdaw.org.uk/ULRHB1

Union Learning Rep Part 2: The Role of the ULR
www.usdaw.org.uk/ULRHB2

Union Learning Rep Part 3: The Online Learning Gateway
www.usdaw.org.uk/ULRHB3

Using Zoom
www.usdaw.org.uk/zoom



REP SURVEY RESULTS 2021

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis highlights some of the key findings including experience during Covid, training, communications and campaigns

The coronavirus crisis has brought about many challenges across the union.

Despite this, Usdaw reps have gone above and beyond the call of duty, organising workplaces, representing members and ensuring safe working practices.

I cannot begin to tell you how immensely proud I am of the way that reps have responded to the

crisis and the work that has been done.

To ensure the union continues to do everything we possibly can to support you in your essential role, we have recently surveyed all reps. This survey looked at the service and support that the union has provided, particularly during the pandemic.

The union was delighted to receive 1,500 responses to the survey from

reps, health and safety reps and union learning reps. I want to thank everyone who took the time to contribute.

The union is currently reviewing all responses to the survey and will develop an action plan to ensure we continue to support and develop reps.

Here is a summary of the key findings:

KEY FINDINGS:

- Eighty-five per cent of reps have had an induction and nearly eight in 10 have attended basic training.
- Nine in 10 reps find Usdaw emails either useful or very useful.
- Over half of reps believe their role has had a greater impact on the safety and welfare of members during the crisis. Just under half also believe there have been more demands from members.
- Seven in 10 reps have felt supported by the union during the crisis.
- Nearly nine in 10 reps feel the union has ensured politicians understand the issues facing our members during the crisis.

EXPERIENCE DURING COVID

The virus has clearly had a significant impact on the role of Usdaw reps in the workplace. From having to deal with new issues such as face coverings or social distancing to increased fears over the risk of getting ill at work. Over half of the reps surveyed believe their role had a greater impact on the safety and welfare of members during the crisis. This demonstrates the vital work reps do in standing up for our members.

In addition, nearly half of reps felt there had been more demands from members.

I am fully aware that the pressures on reps have increased during the crisis. The union has worked incredibly hard to improve communication with reps and I encourage all reps to get in touch with your area organiser if you ever need support.

Considering the increased pressures and demands, it was especially pleasing that seven in 10 reps surveyed felt supported by the union during the crisis. Furthermore, over three quarters have been able to get in contact with someone from the union when necessary.

In terms of broader support from their employer, six in 10 reps agreed or strongly agreed that their

employer had ensured that the correct policies and procedures were in place to protect members during the crisis. However, nearly a quarter disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Throughout the pandemic the union has negotiated with employers to ensure appropriate policies that protect the wellbeing of members. Reps have played an essential role in ensuring that the agreed policies are put in place.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The survey also looked at the training and support available for reps. Eighty-five per cent of reps surveyed have had an induction and nearly eight in 10 have attended basic training. In addition, the majority of long standing reps, those with greater than two years' service, have attended an advanced training course and a rep development review.

I am pleased to see that so many reps are getting the training and support they need.

As a result of the crisis, newer reps are less likely to have received training. As we hopefully look towards the end of the crisis, Usdaw will continue to prioritise rep and training development.

A significant number of reps surveyed indicated they would be interested in attending Usdaw events online and this is something we will continue to look at how we can deliver.

COMMUNICATIONS

Since the start of the pandemic, the union has worked hard to keep reps and members updated through regular email updates, articles in the union's magazines and the Coronavirus Hub on the website. I know for many reps, these updates have proven incredibly valuable.

Nine in 10 reps reported finding the email updates useful or very useful. Over seven in 10 reps also found the website and *arena* and *Network* magazines to be useful

sources of information. It was also clear throughout that reps really value their interactions with area organisers.

CAMPAIGNS

Udaw's campaigning work has become increasingly important during the crisis. Since the start of the pandemic, the union has worked tirelessly to ensure that the incredible contributions of reps and members are recognised right across society.

Around nine in 10 reps agreed that the union has ensured that politicians understand the issues faced by Usdaw members. Reps felt well-informed on many of our high-profile campaigns, including Freedom From Fear, New Deal for Workers and Mental Health Awareness.

Whether calling for protection of shopworkers, improvements to workers' rights or action to save the High Street, the crisis has highlighted the need for these key campaigns. The survey results have shown that Usdaw's campaigns are understood right across the union and that our reps see the need to deliver on our key goals.

FUTURE WORK

The union is now currently reviewing all responses we received to the survey and developing a plan of action on how we can improve the service we provide to reps. I will ensure that the outcomes of the survey form a key part of our ongoing support and developing reps programme.

Once again, I would like to thank all of our reps for the incredible work they do in the workplace and confirm that the union is committed to supporting you in your role.

FOR FUTHER INFO

www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice

CAMPAIGNS

Keeping you up-to-date on Usdaw's priorities

USDW CALLS TO IMPROVE SICK PAY

Usdaw has expressed disappointment that the 50p increase to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is not enough and that £96.35 per week, is still far too low. SSP does not provide the necessary financial support for millions of low-paid workers who have to take time off because they are ill, self-isolating or shielding.

Usdaw renews its call for a New Deal for Workers and urges the Government to:

- Improve SSP so it reflects average pay, rather than the current £96.35 per week.
- Pay SSP to low paid workers – those earning below the lower earnings limit of £120 per week currently do not qualify for SSP.
- Commit to paying SSP from day one of absence for all absences, removing any reference to three waiting days.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Usdaw has long called for significant improvements to SSP. The coronavirus crisis has highlighted that SSP is too low, meaning that workers are plunged into poverty or forced to

attend work while ill.

"Statutory sick pay is simply not enough to survive on and workers earning less than £120 per week aren't entitled to any statutory sick pay at all. People who are ill shouldn't be worrying about their finances, and they shouldn't be forced into work due to worries about paying their bills. Sick pay needs to be paid from day one, at an individual's normal rate of pay, and it should be paid to all workers.

"Millions of low-paid workers have provided essential services to help ensure the country is fed, healthy and safe throughout the pandemic. Usdaw members employed in supermarkets, the food supply chain,

pharmaceutical distribution and the funeral industry welcomed their key worker status, but that respect and appreciation must not fade into the background when this crisis passes.

"There must be lasting and fundamental change to the way society views all workers. We need a New Deal for 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."

Usdaw's New Deal for Workers calls 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 – 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.

www.usdaw.org.uk/newdeal



HIGH TIME FOR CHANGE

NEW COMMISSION TASKED WITH RETAIL REBUILD

Usdaw welcomed a new independent Commission on Rebuilding Our High Streets, launched by Labour, which brings together experts from retail, leisure and hospitality businesses, as well as representatives of the trade union, local government, co-operative and social enterprise sectors.

Usdaw's general secretary Paddy Lillis will sit on the commission, which will meet regularly over the course of the next six months to offer independent advice to the Labour Party on issues such as:

- How the high streets of the 2020s and beyond can be supported to thrive, as great places where people can shop, socialise, meet, work and live.
- Bringing empty commercial properties back into use for existing and new businesses.
- Levelling the playing field between bricks and mortar businesses and online firms.
- Promoting entrepreneurship and innovation in our high streets, reflecting the needs of local communities.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "The UK retail sector has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic on an unprecedented scale. For an industry already facing significant challenges the long-term impact will be severe.

"Physical non-food retailers were among the hardest hit and have been struggling under the pressure of lockdowns and public health restrictions, costing stores billions in lost sales.

"When shops are allowed to reopen, retailers will face further challenges and there are big questions about how many high street retailers will survive the coming months.

"The crisis in retail has been



further exacerbated by the rapid shift to online shopping, which has grown by 46 per cent over the last 10 months. The longer-term challenges facing the sector combined with the impact of the pandemic has and will continue to be catastrophic for the high street.

CHALLENGING TIMES AHEAD

"Aside from the direct impact on jobs, the crisis will result in gaping holes in high streets that sit at the heart of town centres and communities.

"Landlords will struggle to fill properties; not least given the impact of the pandemic on the hospitality sector that prior to 2020 had been keen to occupy the spaces vacated by retailers in recent years.

"Beyond the impact on business the pandemic is taking a heavy toll on retail workers.

"When the chancellor Rishi Sunak delivered his budget on 3 March 2021, outlining the UK's economic recovery plan to protect jobs and livelihoods, there was no sustained support for those retail businesses most impacted by the pandemic.

"At Usdaw we know the value of

our local high streets in terms of the jobs and services they provide for our local communities.

"We all need to look strategically at what we want our high streets to look like, how we achieve that, and how it can be made to be sustainable for the long term.

"That's why the work of this commission is so important and I am pleased to speak for retail workers on it."

Usdaw's retail recovery plan calls for the following immediate measures:

- Extend the current business rates holiday to at least the end of the year and fundamentally reform this outdated and imbalanced commercial property tax.
- An online sales levy set at 1 per cent, to raise around £1.5bn that could fund a cut in business rates of around 20 per cent.
- Extend the moratorium on shop evictions for rent arrears and find a wider solution around unpaid rents, with contributions from retailers, landlords and Government.

www.usdaw.org.uk/retailrecovery

INCREASE IN ABUSE AGAINST SHOPWORKERS

USDAW CALLS FOR LEGISLATION TO PROTECT STAFF

In April Usdaw gave evidence to the influential Home Affairs Select Committee outlining the need for legislation to protect retail staff.

Over the past few years, the union has seen an alarming increase in the levels of abuse and violence towards shopworkers. More recently, shocking results from an Usdaw survey carried out at the height of the coronavirus pandemic reveal just how bad the situation has become.

Throughout the outbreak, retail workers have been spat at, threatened of being infected with coronavirus and physically assaulted by customers while they have been providing an essential service in very difficult circumstances.

Results from Usdaw's 2020 survey of 2,729 shopworkers across the UK found that 79 per cent said abuse was worse last year.

The survey found that:

- 88 per cent experienced verbal abuse.
- 60 per cent were threatened by a customer.
- 9 per cent were assaulted.

PETITION FOR CHANGE

In light of the continued increase in violence and abuse towards shopworkers, Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis launched a House of Commons petition to create a specific offence of abusing, threatening or assaulting a retail worker with a penalty that acts as a deterrent.

The petition gained widespread media attention when it was launched in August last year with Usdaw officials and reps making over 80 appearances on TV and radio. The petition secured over 100,000 signatures, enough to trigger a debate in Parliament.

In response to the petition, the



influential House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee launched their inquiry.

SUCCESS IN SCOTLAND

In January, the Scottish Parliament unanimously voted for a groundbreaking new law to protect shopworkers. Usdaw campaigned for many years to secure these legal protections.

In addition, Crimestoppers Scotland launched a joint campaign to raise awareness and stop abuse of shopworkers. The key message is to 'speak up 100 per cent anonymously about attacks on shopworkers'. This joint venture is crucial to the new law having the desired impact by making sure criminals understand that assaulting and abusing shopworkers is totally unacceptable.

CALL FOR NEW OFFENCE

In February, 66 senior retail leaders wrote to the Prime Minister urging the UK Government to create a new statutory offence of

assaulting, threatening, or abusing a retail worker.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Our latest survey results clearly show the scale of the appalling violence, threats and abuse faced by shopworkers and demonstrate the need for a 'protection of shopworkers' law. It has been a terrible year for our members, with almost 90 per cent of shopworkers suffering abuse, two-thirds threatened and nearly one in 10 assaulted. We are saying loud and clear that enough is enough, abuse should never be part of the job.

"The UK Government has persistently opposed new legislation, offering little more than sympathy and objecting to the Alex Norris protection of shopworkers bill in the House of Commons. However, we had a great result in Scotland, as MSPs voted through groundbreaking legislation.

"We are pleased to have the opportunity to make the case to the select committee and look forward to their report in due course."

HOLYROOD FINALLY READY TO LISTEN

NE’ER DAY TRADING PETITION SECURES DEBATE

Usdaw has secured a commitment from the Scottish Government to consult on large stores closing on New Year’s Day. The union submitted a petition to the Scottish Parliament and spent a year providing evidence to convince the Public Petitions Committee to press ministers to make progress on a consultation.

Jamie Hepburn MSP (Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills) has written to Usdaw confirming that the Scottish Government will now conduct the necessary consultation, as set out in the Christmas Day and New Year’s Day Trading (Scotland) Act 2007. However, no timetable has yet been set for the consultation.

Usdaw’s Scottish Divisional Officer Stewart Forrest said: “Confirmation that a consultation on large stores closing on New Year’s Day will now take place, after an unnecessary 14-year delay, is

a step forward in our campaign to get a proper break for shopworkers over the festive period. We are disappointed that the minister has not set out a timetable for the consultation and we will continue to press for further progress.

A PROPER BREAK

“As key workers delivering the essential service of keeping the nation fed, shopworkers deserve a decent break over the festive period. They have worked long hours in difficult circumstances throughout the pandemic, faced unprecedented levels of abuse and worried every working day about catching the virus and taking it home to their families. The very least that key workers in retail can expect is that the Scottish Government shows their appreciation for the essential work they’ve done throughout this appalling pandemic by progressing

the call for a proper festive break.

“However this is not just a campaign for the pandemic, our members have for many years demanded a proper break after the extremely busy and stressful shopping period in the run-up to Christmas. Ninety-eight per cent say that large stores should be closed and only 4 per cent are happy to work on New Year’s Day or 2 January. Hogmanay and New Year is a special holiday, but this is not reflected in the experience of many retail workers, with three-quarters saying they spend too little time with friends and family.

“On behalf of Scotland’s retail workers we are urging the Scottish Government to open the consultation so that the legislative processes can be completed in time for 1 January 2022.”

www.usdaw.org.uk/Campaigns/New-Years-Day-Working

HOUSE OF COMMONS HOME AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE

RETAIL CRIME INCREASED DUE TO POLICE CUTS

Policing Minister Kit Malthouse MP was quizzed by the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee on violence, threats and abuse of shopworkers. Under questioning from the committee chair Yvette Cooper MP, the minister accepted the police lacked resources and said that recruiting more officers could make a difference. However, the minister refused to admit that cutting significant police numbers had contributed to increased retail crime and abuse of shopworkers.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: “The minister should have

come clean and acknowledged that police cuts over the last 10 years had led to an increase in retail crime.

“Our latest survey lays bare the scale of the appalling violence, threats and abuse faced by shopworkers and demonstrates the need for a ‘protection of shopworkers’ law.

“However the minister today again refused to accept the need for a protection of shopworkers law. He knows that too many cases go unreported simply because shopworkers don’t have the confidence that they will get a response from the police or that

appropriate action will be taken in the courts. Creating a specific law to protect shopworkers will give them more confidence to report assaults and abuse.

“When retail CEOs, leading retail bodies and the shopworkers’ trade union jointly call for legislation, it is time for the Government to listen. In Scotland, MSPs voted through a new ground-breaking law to give shopworkers the protection they deserve.

“We are now looking for MPs to support key workers across the retail sector and help turn around the UK Government’s opposition.”

ADM: NOT AS WE KNOW IT

Usdaw delegates gathered online to attend Usdaw's 74th Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM), which was held on Sunday 25 and Monday 26 April.

Around 600 delegates, visitors and officials from across the UK participated in the online event. Those who attended also heard key speeches from Labour party leader Keir Starmer and TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady.

General secretary Paddy Lillis, deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen and president Amy Murphy hosted their first online ADM and national executive council member Kate MacLeod ensured the smooth running of her first ADM as chair of the standing orders committee. Due to the conference being hosted online, branches were

asked to discuss propositions in the Final agenda ahead of the event and then cast their votes during the conference.

Delegates took part in the debates on the three Executive Council statements: *All in it Together*; *Job Safety and a New Deal*; and *Politics for Recovery*.

Both the president Amy Murphy and general secretary Paddy Lillis paid heartfelt tributes to the work of reps and members who have been on the frontline of the coronavirus crisis and reflected on a terrible twelve months of the pandemic.

Paddy Lillis said: "I cannot put into words how proud I am of what our members have done on the frontline during the pandemic, working extremely hard to ensure that food remained on the shelves."



A bit different to normal: Behind the scenes at the digital ADM



Pictured L-R: General secretary Paddy Lillis; Deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen; President Amy Murphy and chair of standing orders Kate MacLeod

ALL IN IT TOGETHER

THE UNEQUAL IMPACT OF THE COVID CRISIS

Usdaw deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen moved the executive council statement *All in it together - The Unequal Impact of the Coronavirus Crisis*. He spoke on how the pandemic dramatically exposed the structural inequalities in our society. With women, many of them young women, Black workers, disabled and LGBT workers bearing the biggest health and economic risks from the crisis.

Dave McCrossen said: "The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the reality of contemporary Britain. A country defined by poverty,

insecurity and inequality.

"It has shown that the workers who keep the country going, many of them Usdaw members, are too often underpaid and undervalued, and it has shone a stark light on the deep and persistent structural inequalities which cut across the UK.

"There is no doubt that we have all been affected by the pandemic, but as this executive council statement shows, the health and economic impact of the virus has not been the same for everyone.

"The crisis has highlighted the low pay and poor working conditions

faced by many workers on the frontline – mostly women workers.

"Pregnant women have faced anxiety, uncertainty and discrimination over this period, losing pay or work, with their health and safety poorly protected. Women have also carried a disproportionate burden of unpaid care, filling the gaps left by the closure of schools, nurseries and social care settings, losing hours of work, pay and in too many cases their jobs.

"This crisis has exposed the deep structural race inequalities that exist in our society and the



position of Black workers in the UK labour market. Tragically it took the disproportionate number of deaths of BME workers to bring the truth about racism in society and the workplace into the light.

“BME workers are more likely to be in low paid and insecure work. They are more likely to experience abuse and harassment at work – as they are concentrated in roles that are more likely to bring them into conflict with the public, they are more likely to be working in sectors of the economy that are non-unionised, and so less likely to benefit from the work done by unions to negotiate safe working practices, pay protection and job security.

“The impact of this crisis on disabled people and working carers has been immense and yet their experiences have been absent from much of the public, political and

media debate.

“Over half of those who have died from the virus or from a related illness are disabled, even without the impact of the pandemic, we know that households where someone is disabled or a carer are more likely to be in poverty.

“And Covid-19 has made a bad situation worse, as disabled people and carers face rising costs on reduced incomes, they are at the front of the queue when it comes to redundancy, and the back when it comes to employment or promotion.

“Let us not forget the unequal impact of the pandemic on the LGBT community. For far too many LGBT workers, their experience of the world of work continues to be marred by hostility, stigma and unfair treatment.

“Many already felt the need to hide their sexuality or trans status in the workplace pre-Covid – more feel

they must do this now.

“The pandemic has increased their invisibility and left many thousands feeling isolated and alone. The closure of LGBT specific spaces, the inability to get together with others in their communities, or their experience of being trapped in households unaccepting or hostile to their identities, has all taken a heavy toll.

Conference, make no mistake, the unequal impact of the coronavirus pandemic is no accident, in the words of Baroness Lawrence, ‘It has been generations in the making’.

“The impact of Covid-19 is not random, but foreseeable and inevitable.

“It is the consequence of decades of structural injustice, inequality and discrimination that blights our society.

“We are in the middle of an avoidable crisis.”

POLITICS FOR RECOVERY

CAMPAIGNING FOR POLITICAL CHANGE

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis moved the executive council statement *Politics for Recovery*.

Paddy Lillis said: "The pandemic has changed how we campaign and carry out the political work of the union. We've been less able to bring groups of our members together or to campaign physically on our high streets and in our communities.

"But two things haven't changed: Firstly, we are still faced with a Boris Johnson-led Conservative Government. A Government whose majority is so big, that there are few blocks to their ambitions or their many mistakes."

CAMPAIGNING AND ORGANISING

"The other thing that hasn't changed is the fundamental reason why we, as a trade union, are involved in politics in the first place," said Paddy. "The union exists to improve its members' lives. Sometimes this can be achieved through industrial organising. Sometimes it has to be done through political organising.

"The crisis in retail, the scandal of in-work poverty, the pittance that is statutory sick pay, the massive flaws in the universal credit system and the appalling abuse against public facing workers, all of these issues have come to the fore and there is a new sense of urgency about tackling them.

SUBS INCREASE

Delegates voted overwhelmingly to increase membership rates by **6p a week**.

This means from 27 June 2021 **Scale A** members will pay **£2.54** a week and **Scale C** members will pay **£1.67** a week.

"While our immediate priority is to get out of this crisis we must also make sure that those big, long-term, issues are addressed. Because the recovery cannot, and must not, mean continuing with the old inequalities and injustices."

MEMBER EXPERIENCES

"The union was built upon the collective strength of our members and it is together that we will continue to achieve our aims," said Paddy. "We will continue to use all of the tools at our disposal, from public facing campaigns on the streets in our communities, to focussed lobbying in UK parliaments.

"This is the key strength of our union and our movement. The experiences of our members and their direct involvement in our campaign work and we know that these methods work. More and more, the policy priorities of our members are seen as the priorities for our wider communities and for the governments of the UK.

"From a focus on high streets and the problems facing the retail sector, to the acceptance by the Scottish Parliament, after many years of hard work and campaigning, that retail workers do need and deserve stronger legal protection from abuse and violence. Thanks to that hard work, Daniel Johnson MSP's Protection of Workers Bill was passed unanimously. And we will not rest until that protection is shared by every retail worker in the rest of the UK too.

"We will always campaign to make our members' lives better and these successes show why our involvement in politics is so important. There can be no real, fundamental and long-lasting improvement to our members' lives without political success."



Iain Dalton



Lynn Goodwin

DELEGATE COMMENTS

Iain Dalton F148

"Councils do not consult with trade unions when it comes to the relaxation of opening hours. We should be demanding that Labour-run councils consult with Usdaw on Sunday trading. Our councils should also be pushing for services such as buses to be in public control. We need to take up these issues proactively and we can do that by standing in local elections."

Lynn Goodwin K234

"Unions must stand together and fight. We can never forget where we come from. We have to listen to the grassroots. They must be included and listened to. We all need to stand shoulder-to-shoulder."

JOBS, SAFETY AND A NEW DEAL

PUTTING KEY WORKERS FIRST

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis moved the executive statement *Jobs, Safety and a New Deal*. Despite the incredible contribution retail workers made during the pandemic there is no commitment from the Government to raise the wages of key workers.

"Despite legitimate health concerns, and unacceptable levels of abuse from customers, Usdaw members worked tirelessly, making sure that everyone could get access to the food they needed," said Paddy. "It is simply no exaggeration to say that the remarkable efforts of Usdaw members kept the UK going.

"As the crisis deepened and the Government announced the first national lockdown. The union quickly ensured that our members were correctly recognised as key workers.

"Usdaw also rapidly reached agreements with major employers to protect the clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable, these agreements granted additional paid leave for vulnerable members, to keep them safe at home and financially secure."

USDW FIGHTS FOR MEMBERS

"At the same time, the union was key in promoting rights to maternity suspension," said Paddy. "Meaning that pregnant workers could be paid in full if they were unable to work safely. And for those who remained in work, the union quickly oversaw the introduction of brand-new safety measures, including social distancing, protective screens and additional hand washing facilities.

"Time and again, the union reached ground-breaking agreements to protect the safety of our members and, following discussions with Usdaw, many employers agreed to pay bonus

payments in recognition of our members' hard work. However, each and every agreement was reliant on effective workplace reps, ensuring agreed safety measures were put into place and enforced. The outstanding efforts of Usdaw reps and officials protected the safety of members and their communities, and truly demonstrated the benefits of union membership and organised workplaces.

"All too often over the past 12 months, the lowest paid, and other disadvantaged groups have been disproportionately impacted by the virus. It is unacceptable that low paid workers cannot afford to put food on the table, that retail workers face abuse at work and that so many workers are still on insecure contracts – causing them anxiety and mental health issues.

"Over the last 12 months, Usdaw has committed significant resources to our Freedom From Fear, New Deal for Workers and Retail Recovery Plan campaigns.

"These campaigns can help shape a society that delivers for working people and ensure that the efforts of key workers are not forgotten"

DELEGATE COMMENTS

Rachel Goodwin C043

"Unions must not be side-lined when it comes to rebuilding the economy. And we should rebuild on sound social principles, including a wage that ensures workers do not have to rely on benefits to make ends meet."

Jason Phillips C144

"The last 12 months have shown us that nurses, shopworkers and cleaners are essential workers. We all clapped for them. But we need more than claps, we need society



Rachel Goodwin



Jason Phillips



Val Cooke

to recognise their contribution by paying them a decent wage."

Val Cooke C144

"The job losses in the retail sector are not being taken seriously by the Government. If it had been any other sector there would be uproar. That's why we need a strategy to save the retail sector, treat retail jobs as skilled jobs and ensure workers are paid a decent wage they can live on."

LEADER OF THE LABOUR PARTY KEIR STARMER

WE CAN'T GO BACK TO BUSINESS AS USUAL



Leader of the Labour Party Keir Starmer

Usdaw welcomed Keir Starmer MP, leader of the Labour Party, to give a keynote speech to its online Annual Delegate Meeting.

Addressing over 600 participants virtually, Keir Starmer said: "I'm so proud of the work Usdaw members do, day in, day out. Never has that been more important than in the last year because workers in shops, manufacturing, home delivery and distribution have been in the frontline of this pandemic. You've kept people safe, kept food on our tables and kept medicines in our cupboards. On behalf of the Labour Party I want to thank you all for everything you've done over the last year.

"Now I want to work with you to build a better future. As we recover from this crisis we can't go back to business as usual. We can't go back to an economy based on insecurity, inequality and injustice; where the key workers we rely on are at the

back of the queue for higher pay and better conditions. We need to rebuild the foundations of our economy and forge a future that is centred on justice and security.

AN ECONOMY FOR EVERYONE

"Usdaw's New Deal for Workers is exactly the kind of change we need. Higher pay and equal pay for all workers. A social security system that works and treats people with dignity. An end to ridiculously low sick pay, that's been exposed by the pandemic. And real job security with stronger employment rights from day one and an end to zero-hours contracts.

"I'm also determined that this recovery rebuilds our retail sector and revives our high streets. 2020 was the hardest year for retail that anyone can remember. If 180,000 jobs had been lost in one year in any other sector, there would have been a national outcry. Instead, the

Conservatives have reacted with a shrug, even though another 200,000 retail jobs are predicted to be lost this year. We know the Conservatives don't take retail jobs seriously, but Labour always will because Britain can't recover if our shops and high streets are empty.

"The British people deserve so much better. We're fighting to level the playing field between the high street and online businesses and fighting to protect family incomes. Labour has launched a commission on rebuilding high streets and I'm delighted that Paddy Lillis is going to be a member. The commission is going to look at how we can revive and rebuild our high streets and town centres.

"We won't be able to turn around 10 years of Conservative neglect overnight. Neglect that has seen jobs lost, high streets hollowed out and has led to deep-rooted inequality and injustice; but we do have to start that work now. It will need the whole trade union movement, working alongside business, and a Labour Party that's working under new leadership. I believe this country is crying out for change and that after the last year we owe it to the British people to build a recovery that rewards their sacrifices."

SINGLE CONTRIBUTION RATE FOR NEW MEMBERS

Delegates voted overwhelmingly for a single contribution rate. From 1 July 2021 all new members will join on **Scale A** and pay **£2.54** a week.

Existing members on **Scale C** will remain on **Scale C** and continue to pay **£1.67** a week.

TUC GENERAL SECRETARY FRANCES O'GRADY

GET ORGANISED AND FIGHT FOR CHANGE

Addressing Usdaw delegates via video, TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady praised the work of the union and Usdaw's workplace reps during the pandemic. Whether it was looking after members' safety, fighting 'fire and rehire' or tackling abuse of shopworkers, Usdaw reps had been at the forefront of these campaigns.

In her remarks, Frances O'Grady said: "This pandemic has taken a terrible toll, not least on key workers who have kept the country going; being in work right through the pandemic and putting their own health on the line to look after everybody else.

"The Conservative Government's response was completely inadequate. Allowing the virus to spiral out of control before acting – not once, but twice. Failing to provide the PPE that workers needed. And squandering billions on a test and trace system run by one of the PM's mates.

"As the Government lurched from crisis to crisis, the trade union movement stepped up.

"I am clear in my mind that without the trade union movement working together there would have been no furlough scheme. I know it's not perfect, but over ten million livelihoods were saved.

LOBBYING FOR MEMBERS

"We also worked together on health and safety, right across industries. If it wasn't for the trade union movement, we would have not got the standards we pushed for in Government guidelines. On equality too, whatever our race, religion or background everyone deserves dignity and fair reward at work.

"It's no good the Government telling workers to self-isolate when Statutory Sick Pay is at one of the



TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady

worst rates in Europe. Who can afford to live on £96 per week? We want to see sick pay improved by raising it to at least the real living wage and making sure all workers are entitled; so that you are not forced to choose between doing the right thing and feeding your family.

"Thanks to the vaccines administered by our wonderful NHS, there is light at the end of the tunnel. But we now face an economic emergency. The biggest slump in three centuries.

"We must act now to avoid the despair of mass unemployment. And nowhere does that matter more than in our retail industry. Already battered and bruised by the rise of online and the pandemic, yet the Government has nothing to say about the retail sector.

"We know there is much more to do. The devastation on the high street, the job losses and the redundancies are stacking up. Mass unemployment is enemy number one, our goal has to be full employment."

NEW DEAL FOR WORKERS

"When we do get through this crisis it can't be the case of going back to business as usual. There's got to be change. So we need a new deal for working people.

"We need investment in green technology and public services. Brexit, climate change and artificial intelligence all demand we raise our game.

"To avoid mass unemployment, we need to invest in our high streets, communities and services.

"We need to get organised and fight for change and fight for a new deal. One that recognises that everybody is entitled to a decent job, that means you can afford to look after your family, that's rewarded fairly, that gives you time off to spend with your loved ones and that gives you a voice at work.

"The only independent voice at work, the best force for justice and good for society is trade union organisation.

"Stick together, stay strong and solidarity."



POST-PANDEMIC UNION LEARNING AT CO-OP

To ensure members can access lifelong learning Usdaw works with employers to set up learning centres across many workplaces.

Onsite learning centres established jointly by Usdaw and Co-operative Retail Logistics (CRL) have been a feature of all sites for the past 10 years. Traditionally they have offered a range of learning from taught courses to distance learning packages including English, maths, digital skills and mental health awareness which underpin and provide a pathway to the company's own learning and development programmes as well as offering a variety of personal informal learning.

Many learning centres had to close during the pandemic however as the country recovers, reps and members are ready to re-invigorate the learning centres which have

been at the heart of the learning offer.

Lifelong Learning Proposal for Co-operative Retail Logistics

To do this Usdaw aims to build on good practice from the most successful sites such as Lea Green and Castlewood where hundreds of 'non-traditional learners' have been engaged. The union aims to combine those established successful practices with the new approaches developed during the pandemic to regenerate learning.

The Pilot

The proposal would be to run pilots at five designated CRL sites over a period of three months, to help establish models of best practice which can subsequently be rolled out to the remaining sites as and when agreed. The key objectives of

the pilot would be to work with the company to establish a consistent approach and delivery model, offer a range of learning which supports company training as well as personal development and ensure there is an active network of union learning reps to engage staff and support learners.

Commitments

Both the company and Usdaw would allocate resources to ensure the pilot is a success. The company will provide a dedicated learning centre, including equipment and WIFI at each site and time off for union learning reps to carry out their duties.

Usdaw will provide funding for five union learning co-ordinators to help develop the site as well as a dedicated support officer to implement the strategy and ensure



Photo taken in 2019.
Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis visits CRL Lea Green learning centre.

consistency and good practice is shared across sites.

A WORD FROM THE REPS

Gavin Weston

ULR co-ordinator at Birtley.

“Getting lifelong learning going at Birtley has been a real positive for our members. We have got a new Usdaw learning room and we have been surveying staff to find out what they want to learn. We have people signed up for learning and it’s really helping us build our membership.”

Brian Loughhead *national rep*

“This is an exciting and important initiative for both Usdaw and CRL. Learning centres at each site will have massive benefits for our members and the company. The commitment from everyone, particularly the reps and ULRs and Co-op management has been first class.”

TESCO RETAIL APPRENTICESHIPS 2021

Tesco Retail has re-opened applications for their Apprenticeship Programme for 2021, providing the opportunity for hundreds more colleagues in large and convenience stores to gain a nationally recognised Level 2 Retail qualification.

It has been recognised by Tesco and the provider, Lifetime Training, that Usdaw reps and ULRs play a crucial role in encouraging colleagues to access and remain on the Apprenticeship Programme.

Reps can support members to make the most of this opportunity by finding out as much as possible about

the programme. You can do this by going to the colleague room and typing in ‘Retail level Apprenticeship’.

For further information about getting involved look out for the Tesco Reps’ Newsletter or download a copy of the ‘Reps Checklist’ which you can find at:

colleague-help.ourtesco.com

You can also contact your Usdaw lifelong learning project worker or area organiser for more information.



GOOD HEALTH AND SAFETY IS TOP PRIORITY FOR ALL REPS

Health and safety remains a major issue for Usdaw members, particularly in light of the pandemic. The union needs active health and safety reps now, more than ever.

There are over 3,000 Usdaw health and safety reps working hard across the UK to keep the workplace a safe environment for members. In this issue of *Network* we meet three reps who are passionate about doing just that.

TRACY HONEYMAN

Tracy is a customer service manager at the Tesco call centre in Dundee. Her main role is to answer calls about home shopping orders and clubcard queries. She's worked there for 21 years.

"I've always been passionate about health and safety," said Tracy, 46, who became a health and safety rep in 2019. "A few years ago a friend was involved in a serious workplace accident, it pushed me to put my name down and try to make a difference.

"I'm part of an amazing team of 18 reps, four of which are health and safety reps. The health and safety reps all completed our training at the same time and worked quickly to establish a health and safety committee that meets four times a year. We also have a facilities manager and an operations manager who we can approach with any safety related issues – they do everything they can to support us.

"During the pandemic mental health has been the biggest concern. Tesco has lots of mental health resources that we can encourage members to take advantage of but prevention is always better than cure so I'm

frequently engaging with members to see if there's anything we can do to make adjustments before their mental health is impacted.

"The risk of musculoskeletal injuries is one of the main problems faced by our members. With the quick transition from office to home working at the start of the pandemic, lots of staff were sitting at makeshift workspaces and the risk became significant. Staff are now encouraged to take frequent short breaks when they're working at their desks. This is having a massive impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of hundreds of our staff.

"More recently I've been focused on the air conditioning systems in our outbuildings. Our main office has an HVAC system which can pull in 100 percent fresh air and I was concerned the gym and mailroom, which are housed independently, were running on an old system. We got great news last week – the company has replaced the air conditioning systems in both these buildings with a new state of the art system that pulls in the maximum amount of fresh air. The company investing so much money to replace these units really does show commitment to keeping staff safe.

"I love being a health and safety rep. The other reps joke that I'm a bit obsessed – it's not uncommon for me to spend a Saturday night with a glass of wine reading as much as I can on health and safety. The fact that I was voted in by my colleagues to represent them really means a lot

to me. They have put their trust in me, and I will always represent them to the best of my ability."

BARRIE REA

Barrie has worked as the security guard at Tesco in Glasgow for the past 14 years. His job involves dealing with thefts, product protection and monitoring the general security of the store. He's the only health and safety rep looking after 300 staff.

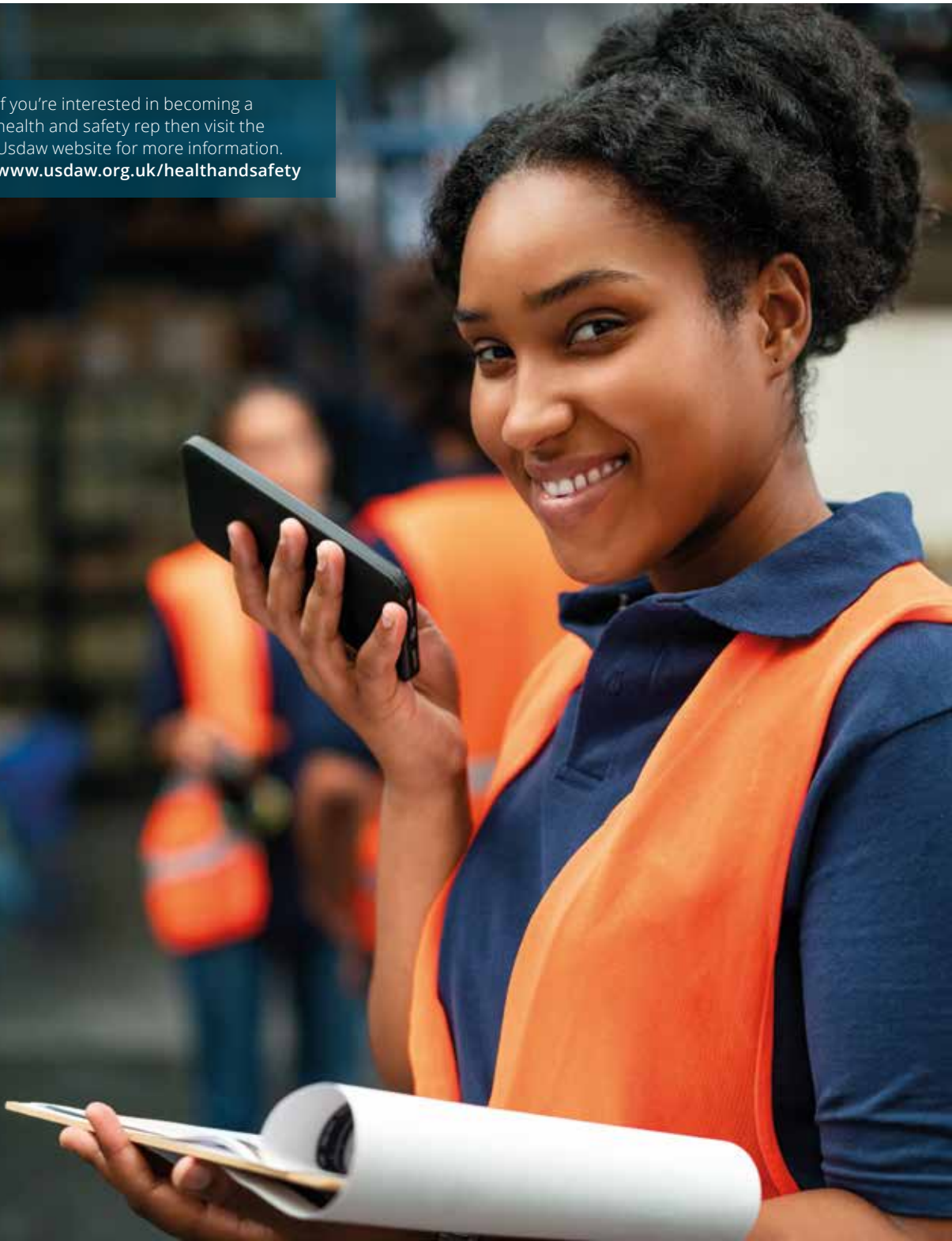
"I've always had a keen interest in health and safety," said Barrie, 41, who became a rep in 2016. "On a daily basis it's my job to investigate accidents and liaise with management about the outcomes. I also look out for any potential hazards that could cause accidents.

"The biggest improvement I have made since becoming health and safety rep is raising the profile of health and safety within the store and developing a good working relationship with management to resolve issues quickly.

"My store never had a health and safety rep and it took time and lots of meetings between me, my area organiser and management to get a system off the ground but we got there. Management will discuss any issues with me and we work as a team to resolve things quickly. Our working relationship is very good.

"We've just opened a new dotcom department so health and safety there is my main focus now. We've had a few issues with back injuries so we've started additional training

If you're interested in becoming a health and safety rep then visit the Usdaw website for more information.
www.usdaw.org.uk/healthandsafety





Tracy Honeyman

so that the drivers know how to lift correctly and what weight they should be lifting. Hopefully this will keep accidents to a minimum.

"As a health and safety rep I would say one of my most valuable tools would be having access to the HSE website where I can look up information if there's anything I'm unsure about. Also being able to contact the health and safety team at Usdaw Central Office is really beneficial, and my area organiser is always on hand if I need anything.

"I really enjoy the role. I enjoy the challenge but I also love making the workplace a safer place to be."

GRAHAM LOGIE

Home delivery picker Graham has been a health and safety rep at Morrisons in Kings Lynn for a year. He's the only rep and health and safety rep in the store looking after 260 members of staff.

"My previous job was in production management and I was responsible for health and safety so taking on the role of health and safety rep at Morrisons felt like the right thing to do and a natural progression for me because of my past knowledge and experience," said Graham, 65. "I'm very passionate about ensuring good health and safety in the workplace and since I became a rep I've made it my mission to raise awareness and make sure safety is top priority at Morrisons Kings Lynn.

"I've carried out a lot of inductions since I became a rep and I always mention the importance of good health and safety at work and that union reps play a big contributing role in that because they can monitor health and safety and raise awareness. A lot of the procedures and processes to make a workplace safer staff don't necessarily see. For example, frequent inspections, dealing with hazards and working with management to reduce accidents.

"My job role as home delivery picker complements my role as

health and safety rep very well because I'm always roaming the store and speaking to staff so I can keep an eye out for hazards and keep on top of any issues.

"While in the role of rep I have raised concerns about crates that are used by home shopping delivery drivers and the use of safety footwear.

"I've also spent some time looking at processes outside the store too for example what happens at the petrol station when the tankers come in and what processes do delivery drivers go through. It's important I don't neglect the staff outside the four walls of the supermarket.

"I have a good working relationship with management and head office which really helps me to carry out my role as health and safety rep effectively. It can be a very lonely life when you're the only rep in a store, and it can be a very demanding and time-consuming role, so it helps to have supportive management and people you can approach to get things done. I've also found the support of my area organiser very helpful and if I need any specific health and safety advice I approach the health and safety team at Usdaw. They are a really valuable source of information and support.

"I get a lot of pleasure out of the role and with my background I feel I've got as good an understanding of health and safety as anyone in the store. To be a good rep you've got to keep pushing on behalf of your colleagues to make a change. My favourite saying is nobody comes to work to get hurt and I do my utmost to make sure that never happens. Morally I'll never walk past a hazard and do nothing about it."



Barrie Rea



Graham Logie

For more information about health and safety in the workplace visit the Usdaw website: www.usdaw.org.uk/healthandsafety

NEW YEAR'S DAY CAMPAIGN TOPS USDAW AGENDA AT STUC

The annual Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) took place in April with delegates from over 50 affiliated unions and trade councils taking part in the online event to set STUC policy for the year ahead.

Top guest speakers included TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady, leader of the Scottish Labour Party Anas Sarwar and Scotland's first minister Nicola Sturgeon.

Usdaw also took an active role in the event with Scottish regional secretary Tracy Gilbert speaking on Usdaw's campaign for all large shops to close on New Year's Day.

"Key workers across the retail sector are not receiving a decent break over the Christmas and New Year holiday period," said Tracy. "Long hours in the busy run up to the holiday period leaves many retail workers too exhausted and with insufficient time off to enjoy the Christmas holidays. This also has an impact on workers in associated sectors such as warehouse and distribution.

"Usdaw's survey of retail and distribution workers in Scotland



showed that most workers come under pressure to work on New Year's Day and more than 95 per cent wanted stores to be closed on New Year's Day.

"Christmas and New Year should be when friends and family can get together to celebrate, relax and unwind. A time when everyone can get a decent and well-earned break from work. But for many retail workers, the festive season doesn't come early, it passes them by.

"In 2007, Usdaw helped to pass the Christmas and New Year's

Day Trading Act to prevent large stores from opening on both Christmas Day and New Year's Day. It is disappointing that the Scottish Government has not yet enacted the legislation. Usdaw is now calling on the Scottish Government to enact this legislation as soon as possible and for a broader campaign to ensure retail workers get a proper rest over Christmas and New Year."

For more information on Usdaw's campaign visit: www.usdaw.org.uk/Campaigns/New-Years-Day-Working

WHAT IS THE STUC?

The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) co-ordinates, develops and articulates the views and policies of the trade union movement in Scotland and promotes: trade unionism; equality and social justice; the creation and maintenance of high quality jobs; and the public sector delivery of services. They support their affiliates in recruiting, organising and empowering workers to work collectively to win better terms and conditions at work.

The STUC represents over 540,000 trade unionists, the members of 39 affiliated trade unions and 20

Trades Union Councils.

STUC policy is set by Annual Congress, which is attended by delegates from affiliated trade unions and trades union councils, each April. Congress elects a general council to oversee STUC policy and campaigning work over the year.

The STUC is a completely independent and autonomous trade union centre for Scotland and is a separate organisation from the English and Welsh TUC.

For more information about the Scottish Trades Union Congress visit their website: www.stuc.org.uk



USDRAW REPS TAKE TO THE TUC STAGE

Some of Usdaw's youngest activists join the debate at the TUC Young Workers' conference in March

A group of young Usdaw activists joined unions from around the country at this year's TUC Young Workers' conference in March. Like last year, the event took place exclusively online using video conferencing software and looked at the challenges faced by young workers and how the TUC can respond.

Special guest speakers across the two-day event included TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady and shadow minister for Women and Equalities Charlotte Nichols MP. Debates took place on the impact of Covid-19, mass unemployment, tackling racism and mental health.

Usdaw took the opportunity to highlight the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on young workers, in particular that they are more likely to be furloughed, lose their job, be in low-paid insecure work and experience abuse.

"The coronavirus crisis has had a devastating impact on the

economy resulting in thousands of workers facing redundancy and young workers have been disproportionately affected," said Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis.

"Although the Government has offered some short-term assistance, it doesn't go far enough to support young workers, whose experience of the job market has long been characterised by low pay and job insecurity.

"Usdaw is calling for employment rights to start from day one, including entitlement to redundancy pay, along with a jobs guarantee scheme for young workers and a legal duty on employers to assess the mental health impact of their policies, practices and procedures.

"We are also alarmed by the significant increase in abuse of retail staff, which doubled during the pandemic. Enforcing social distancing and face coverings are now the primary triggers for abuse of shopworkers. Young workers are

often most vulnerable to abusive customers, because they often work evening and weekend shifts and suffer patronising and derisory attitudes from customers.

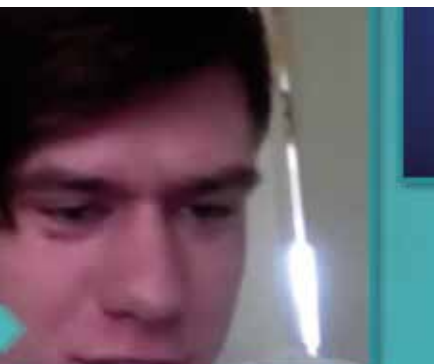
"Retail workers have made an incredible contribution to ensure we get through this appalling pandemic. After the crisis is over, we need a new deal for workers."

Network spoke to Usdaw reps, Jordan, Devon and Alix who all took an active role in the event.

JORDEN COOKE North West region

Shopworker and Usdaw rep Jordan has worked in retail for the past six years. This was his first time at the TUC Young Workers' conference and he delivered a speech on protecting retail workers from abuse, threats and violence.

"I've seen a lot of violence and abuse towards shopworkers but nothing like what we've experienced



during the pandemic," said Jorden, 22, who works at a Tesco Express in Stoke-on-Trent. "It feels like customers don't see retail workers as real people. That's why I wanted to speak about it. Even though we're coming out of the pandemic customers don't like to adhere to the rules put in place to protect them, like social distancing and wearing masks and that can cause friction.

"It feels like it disproportionately affects young workers – we're the ones working late shifts and weekends because we're less likely to have caring commitments. Those shift times are often the busiest, and when there's more customers, we're more likely to experience abuse.

"As well as raising the profile of the Freedom From Fear campaign I think it's necessary to incorporate more training for shopworkers in these situations. With more training we would better be able to support each other and face these challenges as a team."

Jorden became a rep in 2019 and looks after a number of Express stores in his area. He's working part-time while he studies for a degree.

"I found the TUC conference really useful," said Jorden. "It was interesting to see different union's perspectives. For example, with the pandemic, shopworkers are facing abuse, while musicians haven't got an income because there's no industry right now.

"It was also nice to interact with other members of Usdaw who work in different companies and compare the problems they have faced.

"Overall, I felt the conference was really informative. I would really recommend other young members think about attending next year."

DEVON TREWIN

Midlands region

Twenty-two-year-old Devon is a warehouse worker at a Sainsbury's frozen food distribution centre in Northampton. He became an Usdaw rep in March 2020 and is an active member of Usdaw's Young Workers' Committee. This was his first TUC Young Workers' conference and he delivered a speech on stopping mass unemployment of young workers.

"This was actually the first time I'd used Zoom properly so attending the conference was a bit of a learning curve," said Devon. "It's completely different to giving a speech to a room full of people, normally you can read the room and the emotion, but when you're delivering it to your webcam it's not quite the same. I was really pleased with how it went though.

"The coronavirus crisis has impacted all areas, from people having to attend work, placing themselves at increased risk, low-paid workers being furloughed at 80 per cent of their normal pay and those working from home being expected to work additional hours without additional pay.

"I'm lucky that I was able to carry on working through the pandemic, but I know a lot of people who

have been put on furlough, lost their jobs, their businesses or are struggling to reopen. Young workers are disproportionately affected because it's too easy and too cheap for employers to make young workers redundant and the two-year qualification period for redundancy pay means that many young workers do not even qualify for a payment.

"A key method of addressing this must be to ensure that all workers are entitled to three weeks' pay for each year of service. This will help to protect jobs and make it more difficult for employers to make people redundant.

"I think the conference was a very useful experience. Obviously, it wasn't the same as meeting people face-to-face, but it was still interesting to see how the TUC works and hear from all the different unions. It was a really good insight into the trade union movement."

ALIX PARRISH

Eastern region

Alix works at Sainsbury's in Benfleet. This was her first TUC event.

"I thought the conference ran very smoothly considering it was online," said Alix, 26, who became a rep in August last year. "There was ample opportunity to get involved and I found the whole conference very interesting. I particularly enjoyed Frances O'Grady's speech and I thought Charlotte Nichols MP was very engaging. She also took the time to answer everyone's questions – including one which I asked her about how the Labour Party plans to ensure young people continue to be engaged in politics.

"It was sad that we couldn't attend the event in person because I think it would've been good to meet everyone and share stories with people from other unions. Hopefully I'll get chance to attend again in the future."

For more information visit:
www.usdaw.org.uk/youngworkers

SOPHISTICATED SCAMMERS THRIVE DURING PANDEMIC

Pension scammers have used the uncertainty of the pandemic to prey on pensioners and convince them to transfer their pension pots for 'lucrative' returns

Covid-19 is having a significant impact on all our daily lives, at work and at home. Unfortunately, this has been the perfect opportunity for scammers to look at how they can increase their fraudulent activity.

Scammers often approach pensioners with the promise that if they transfer their pension pot they will receive a much better return on their investment, which sounds very lucrative to a pension saver in these uncertain times.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) says there are some tell-tale signs to look out for:

- They promise unrealistic returns – to tempt people in, scammers often promise impressive or guaranteed returns. They'll even play down the risks. If it sounds too good to be true, it often is.
- Scammers might also offer free pension reviews and the chance to release money from a pension even if the individual is under the age of 55, which is not normally

allowed under current pension legislation.

- Don't feel rushed or pressured. Take your time to make all the checks you need. The FCA suggest people should seriously consider seeking financial guidance or advice before changing their pension arrangements.
- To avoid being taken advantage of here are some tips:
 - Pension cold calling was banned in the UK last year so if an individual is approached unexpectedly about their pension and they are in any doubt they should hang up.
 - Reject any unexpected offers made by phone, text or email and never give out bank details if requested from a suspicious or unknown contact.
 - The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) allows individuals to check who is contacting them. [fca.org.uk/scamsmart](https://www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart)
 - Check it's not a 'clone firm' – some scammers try to deceive investors by pretending to be a genuine firm

(called a 'clone firm').

- Check the FCA Warning List.
- Use the FCA Warning List to see if the firm is known to be operating without the FCA's authorisation. Even if a firm isn't on the FCA warning list, it might still be a scam – scammers will change names and details all the time. Usdaw members can talk this through with the Usdaw pensions section.

If you are worried you may have been scammed already act immediately!

- Contact Usdaw's pension section on 0161 224 2804 or email at pensions@usdaw.org.uk
- Contact your workplace pension department to see if they can stop a transfer that hasn't taken place yet.
- Call Action Fraud and report it on **03000 123 2040**
- You should also report what's happened to the FCA either by telephoning **0800 111 6768** or online at: [fca.org.uk](https://www.fca.org.uk)

USDAW PENSIONS SECTION

If you have any questions or require information on any pension related matter, please contact the pensions section at Usdaw:

0161 224 2804

pensions@usdaw.org.uk

www.usdaw.org.uk/pensions

PENSION NEWS

UPDATE TO THE CORONAVIRUS JOB RETENTION SCHEME (CJRS)

The Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) – also known as the Furlough Scheme – will now remain open until 30 September 2021.

If you are furloughed you will receive 80 per cent of your current pay, for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500. Your employer can continue to give you 100 per cent of your pay if they are in a position to do so.

Your employer will remain responsible for paying employer National Insurance and pension contributions. You will continue to pay National Insurance and pension contributions based on 80 per cent of your pay (if your employer is participating in the CJRS).

An employer's automatic enrolment duties will continue to apply as normal, for everyone who is still working as well as staff furloughed as part of the CJRS.

Any furloughed member of staff can ask their employer to join the workplace pension scheme at any time including during the furlough period. You should apply in writing, and your employer must put you into the pension scheme within a month of receiving your request. Your employer has to make pension contributions into your pension pot if you are aged 16-74 and earn

at least £520 a month or £120 per week.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE GUIDED RETIREMENT PATHWAY

Pension Freedoms introduced in 2015 enable an individual with pension savings in a defined contribution pension scheme to choose from a number of options when they wish to crystallise (draw) their pension benefits. However, the choices can be baffling and most people don't seek financial advice (for a number of reasons) when they make a choice.

The pathway will guide individuals to make the optimal choice which is most suited to their personal circumstances without the need to seek private financial advice.

www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/tools/drawdown-investment-pathways

THE PENSION REGULATOR'S PENSION SCAM CAMPAIGN

A scam-busting campaign calling on the pensions industry to commit to six key saver-protecting actions has seen more than 100 pledges since its launch. A month on from the campaign's launch, 117 pledges have been made by pension scheme trustees. A further 37 of those that pledged have also self-certified to confirm they have adopted stringent practices on due

diligence, member warnings and reporting scams demanded by the pledge campaign.

www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk

PENSION WISE USAGE AT 1.2 PER CENT IN PARTS OF UK

Just over one in 100 eligible defined contribution (DC) pension savers are using free Pension Wise guidance sessions in some areas of the country, according to analysis from Just Group.

New regional figures revealed by the Money and Pension Service (Maps) showed that DC pension savers in 2019-20 were about twice as likely to take a session in Scotland, the West Midlands and Yorkshire & Humber compared to those in Northern Ireland, London or the North East.

PENSION QUARTERLY BRIEFINGS

Usdaw's pension section will be posting quarterly briefings on the Usdaw website. The aim is to provide information on a few significant events in the pension's world and supplements the information contained on the Usdaw website. The website contains a host of pension related information about workplace, personal and state pensions.

www.usdaw.org.uk/pensions



PANDEMIC WRECKS MENTAL HEALTH

Usdaw research shows that three quarters of Usdaw members were worried about catching Covid at work

It goes without saying that the last year has been an immensely stressful and worrying time for so many people. Worries about the health of loved ones, isolation from friends and family and job insecurity have been a constant feature of many people's lives. But for many Usdaw members the pressures of the pandemic have been intensified by their experiences as key workers.

New research from Usdaw confirms what many members will instinctively know; that the coronavirus crisis has affected the mental as well as the physical wellbeing of many Usdaw key workers and their families.

Over 4,000 members took the time to share their experiences of working through the crisis and the impact this has had on their mental health. This is the largest survey Usdaw has conducted into the mental health of its members and the results show what a worrying and difficult time the last year has been for so many.

It might not come as a surprise to read that key workers are worried; but the report backs up what many other studies have shown which is that while mental health problems can affect anyone, they have not been equally distributed throughout the crisis. Some groups in society have been at greater risk of developing anxiety and depression because of their unequal position in the labour market. Despite the rhetoric that we are 'all in it together' the fact is that inequality and low

pay are not good for mental health. And the physical as well as the mental health impact of the crisis have not been shared equally. Eight out of 10 of Usdaw members say that the coronavirus pandemic has negatively affected their mental health. Three quarters of the union's members have been worried about going into work with fear of contracting the virus the biggest worry.

YOUNG WORKERS

It may come as a surprise to read that the most worried of all workers are young workers. There is a common misconception that young workers are carefree and have nothing to worry about but the union's survey shows this is far from the case. Eight out of 10 young members told us they feel worried about being in work, with young women the most worried of all. And for young workers their biggest worry centres around customer abuse and hours of work.

One in every two young members report that customer abuse and harassment is causing them to feel anxious about going into work. Men are less likely than women to be anxious about customer abuse; four out of 10 men cite this a source of anxiety compared to six out of 10 women.

We know that younger workers are more likely to be working at weekends and late at night and to be employed on so called 'flexi-contracts', which usually involve

short notice and unpredictable changes to working hours and shifts. Customer abuse is often more of an issue late at night leaving younger workers more exposed.

The fact that they are also more likely to be on precarious or insecure contracts will also have an impact on the wellbeing of young workers. A TUC study from 2014 showed that unstable and insecure forms of working have an impact on workers wellbeing.

Workers without regular hours of work were more likely to experience anxiety and low employment security was associated with higher levels of anxiety as well as depression.

The fact that so many young workers in Usdaw are feeling worried





is also because the retail sector is the third largest employer of young people and the retail workforce has been hit by a storm of closures, job losses and restructuring over the last year and beyond.

It is not surprising that young workers in Usdaw are also far more likely to say that financial worries are currently making them feel anxious. Almost a quarter of young workers said that worrying about money was making them feel anxious compared to only 6.5 per cent of survey respondents of all ages.

ASKING FOR HELP

Despite being the most worried, young members are the least likely to speak to someone about how they are feeling or to ask their

union rep, their manager, a friend or family member for help. And yet speaking to someone about how you are feeling can help – as the national mental health charity 'Time to Talk' say, a small conversation about mental health can make a big difference.

For members overall, eight out of 10 have spoken to someone about how they are feeling, in most cases this is their rep, their manager or a family member or friend.

Usdaw's long-running mental health campaign will be focusing on the particular issues facing young workers and also looking at how the union can better support reps in looking after their own mental health after a year in which they have done so much for members.

SUPPORTING PARENTS AND CARERS

This year's Supporting Parents and Carer's Spotlight Day took place on Wednesday 19 May and focused on the immense pressures that parents and carers have been under over the last year. We can't bring you the usual round up of photos from workplace campaigns but reps took to Facebook, Instagram and their workplace noticeboards to show their support.

Since the crisis began over half of all adults in the UK are now providing care for someone outside their own household. And parents faced repeated periods of necessary school and childcare closures. Usdaw wanted to reflect the fact that members have been under immense pressure and to signal that the union is here to help.



UK SEES INCREASE IN EATING DISORDERS

The number of people experiencing eating disorders has risen sharply during lockdown.

Beat, a charity for people with eating disorders in the UK, has seen a 73 per cent surge in people accessing its services.

There are a number of reasons for this: the breakdown in normal routines, the closure of gyms, stockpiling and worry and anxiety has left many struggling to manage their condition.

What is an eating disorder?

An eating disorder is a mental health condition where an individual

uses the control of food to cope with feelings and other situations. Unhealthy eating behaviours may include eating too much or too little or worrying about weight or body shape.

Anyone can get an eating disorder, but teenagers between 13 and 17 are mostly affected.

With treatment, most people can recover from an eating disorder.

Types of eating disorders

The most common eating disorders are:

■ Anorexia nervosa – trying to control weight by not eating enough food, exercising too much,

or doing both.

- Bulimia – losing control over how much a person eats and then taking drastic action to not put on weight for example being sick after eating.
- Binge eating – eating large portions of food until uncomfortably full.
- Other specified feeding or eating disorder (OSFED) – a person may have an OSFED if their symptoms do not exactly fit the expected symptoms for any specific eating disorders.
- Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID) – ARFID is when someone avoids certain foods,



Symptoms of eating disorders include:

- Spending a lot of time worrying about weight and body shape.
- Avoiding socialising when food is involved.
- Eating very little food.
- Being sick or taking laxatives after eating.
- Exercising too much.
- Having very strict habits/routines or rituals around food.
- Dramatic weight loss.
- Physical symptoms include: feeling anxious, depressed, cold, tired, dizzy, racing heart, poor circulation, not menstruating, extreme weight loss, swollen stomach.

What can I do as a rep to help?

If an eating disorder is left untreated it could have a serious physical and psychological effect on the person which in turn will affect their ability to stay and function at work.

Therefore, it's important reps know what to do if someone approaches them about an eating disorder. It may feel daunting as reps might be unsure about what they should or shouldn't say but the most important thing is to listen with a non-judgemental approach.

When you do talk to someone about their eating disorder, avoid talking about food, healthy eating plans or diets because eating disorders are not actually about food but about feelings. The way the person interacts with food is a coping strategy – it may simply make them feel able to cope with another issue or to feel in control. And don't comment on the person's weight loss or appearance.

Getting help for an eating disorder

The best thing you can do for a colleague is to advise them to seek professional help by contacting their GP. Your colleague might refuse getting help or keep putting it off. It's important to understand why they might be doing this.

For some people the illness is all-encompassing which makes it hard for them to even think about contacting their GP, for others feelings of shame, low self-esteem and guilt might prevent them from seeking help. In this case it might be best to encourage them to get some online support from a charity like Beat which will give them information about the condition, treatments as well as a helpline and a one-to-one web chat.

Treatments for an eating disorder

People can recover from an eating disorder, but it can take time and recovery will be different for everyone. The GP will ask the individual about their eating habits and check their overall health and weight. They may refer the individual to an eating disorder specialist or team of specialists. The treatment will depend on the type of eating disorder but usually includes therapy.

For those undergoing treatment, the support and understanding of an employer is invaluable.

As a rep you could look at options such as negotiating time off so the individual can attend medical appointments, ensuring the person takes regular breaks and giving them some privacy if they feel uncomfortable eating around other people.

limits how much they eat or does both.

What causes an eating disorder?

The exact reasons are not known but an individual is more likely to get an eating disorder if:

- They have a family member who has a history of disorders, depression, or alcohol or drug misuse.
- They have been criticised for their eating habits, body shape or weight.
- They are worried about being slim.
- They have anxiety, low self-esteem or an obsessive personality.
- They were sexually abused.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Beat

Beat is an eating disorder charity that provides confidential advice. www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk

Adult helpline: 0808 801 0677 or youth helpline: 0808 801 0711

NHS

www.nhs.uk and search eating disorders

MANAGING RISKS AS LOCKDOWN EASES

Employers must ensure workplaces remain Covid-secure despite restrictions being eased this summer

Since the pandemic began in March last year, Usdaw, like most organisations, has learnt more about how to keep workers safe once they come out of lockdown.

The TUC report *A Safe Return to the Workplace* sets out the steps ministers and employers should take to prevent another spike in workplace infections as the hospitality and non-essential retail sectors prepare to reopen.

Vaccines and testing offer protection and confidence, but they are not a Covid-19 cure. The effect of the vaccination campaign won't be clear until the majority of the population has had both injections which won't happen before the end of July. People who have been fully vaccinated can still transmit and catch the virus.

As the virus continues to spread in other parts of the world there is also a risk of new variants developing that may be more resistant to the vaccines. Covid infections at work still remain a serious threat.

As more and more places open, it is vital that safety measures are introduced, observed and properly enforced.

COVID-SECURE WORKPLACES

Health experts warn about the need for covid precautions to stay in place.

The British Occupational Hygiene

Society (BOHS) has warned that widespread workforce vaccination is not yet a sufficient control to allow for the removal of other covid measures.

The warning by the chartered body for workplace health experts comes as all the UK's nations began to relax the Covid-19 restrictions. They argue that social distancing and ventilation are likely to be needed in most workplaces to control the risk for some time yet.

Simply relying on vaccination, at least in the coming months, would be a risky strategy for employers.

"The vaccination effort has been an outstanding British science success story and will save the lives of workers, particularly those exposed to the general public and those with some vulnerabilities," said BOHS president Kelvin Williams. "However, until the virus is not as widespread in the population, vaccination alone will not be sufficient."

Noting the general easing of restrictions, Mr Williams concluded, "In social life, people can select the risks they wish to be exposed to but in the workplace, it remains the responsibility of employers to ensure those risks are managed."

RISK ASSESSMENTS

A recent TUC survey of over 2,000 health and safety representatives found that many bosses are still



flouting the rules and failing to take steps to reduce the risk of infections.

It also found that one in four reps were not aware of a risk assessment in their workplace having been carried out.

Employers are required to ensure their workplaces reduce the potential for Covid-19 transmissions by producing a covid-secure risk assessment, ensuring their workplaces are well ventilated and sharing their significant findings with workers. The risk assessments will need to be adjusted as different restrictions are lifted and as the levels of vaccination and infection change.

Everyone wants this to be the



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0161 249 2441

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Tony Whelan
0161 249 2474

General health and safety enquiries email:

healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk

last lockdown but if the necessary measures to reduce the risk of transmission are not put in place there is a risk of a rebound in infections.

VENTILATION, VENTILATION, VENTILATION

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has admitted for the first time in a public document that there is a risk of airborne transmission of the coronavirus responsible for Covid-19.

In the 30 April 2021 update to its online Q&A on Covid-19 transmission, WHO acknowledges the 'virus can also spread in poorly ventilated and/or crowded

indoor settings, where people tend to spend longer periods of time. This is because aerosols remain suspended in the air or travel farther than one metre (long-range)'. At the same time the UK Government has updated its guidance to give more emphasis to good ventilation as an important control measure against the spread of the virus at work.

Unions and many experts have argued for some time that more attention should be given to the risk that the virus could be spread by aerosols of small particles that can stay suspended in the air and can spread throughout enclosed indoor workplaces if there is not

enough ventilation.

It may be true that the main risk is from closer contact with larger droplets that are expelled when someone sneezes, coughs or speaks but there is clear evidence of workplace outbreaks in places such as food factories and offices that aerosol transmission has also occurred.

The problem is made worse in poorly ventilated areas where workers spend some time working together. In many workplaces where Usdaw members work such as larger shops and distribution centres, high ceilings, lots of open doors and movement of people means that general ventilation is



TRAINING VIDEO TO TACKLE VIOLENCE

The latest BRC Crime Survey found over 400 incidents of abuse and violence towards shop staff occur every day – and during the coronavirus pandemic these have increased dramatically.

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) has produced an animated video on de-escalation of violence and aggression in co-operation with the Suzy Lamplugh Trust. The video has been produced as part of the BRC's contribution to the work of the National Retail Crime Strategy Group to tackle the increased levels of violence and abuse that shopworkers face.

The five-minute video explains that abuse should not be accepted as part of the job, employers should have plans in place to deal with situations when they occur which should be shared with workers so they know how to react. The video also gives workers basic advice on how to de-escalate situations and remove themselves from harm. brc.org.uk/nrcsg-against-shop-worker-abuse-and-violence/de-escalation-training

usually adequate. But in more enclosed workspaces mechanical ventilation may be needed to ensure there are sufficient changes of air to prevent the build up of aerosols that may contain the virus.

The latest guidance from the Health and Safety Executive on the topic emphasises the importance of getting fresh air into workplace buildings and relying on support from qualified heating and ventilation experts where there are mechanical ventilation or air-conditioning systems.

Lack of fresh air can cause other health problems apart from the risk of Covid-19 transmission. Over time fumes from work processes can build up, carbon dioxide levels increase as people breathe in and out and other infections such as colds and flu can also be spread by the airborne route. So good workplace ventilation is essential in all workplaces even when the risk from the Covid pandemic is under control.

■ To see the latest HSE guidance on ventilation: www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/index.htm

DECENT SICK PAY FOR ALL

One year into this crisis workers are still expected to self-isolate on statutory sick pay (SSP) of just £96.35 per week. And millions of low-paid workers are still excluded as they earn too little to qualify for SSP, which means too many workers simply cannot afford to self-isolate.

It is unacceptable to force people to choose between doing the right thing and paying their bills, and cases will rise unless self-isolation is universally observed. The Government must fix this problem now. Usdaw's New Deal for Workers campaign calls for a raise to SSP to at least the rate of the real Living Wage.

PAID TIME OFF FOR VACCINATIONS

Recent TUC polling reveals that less than half of firms (45 per cent) are planning to give workers time off to get

their covid jab.

To support people getting the vaccine means offering access to professional health advice and providing paid time off for appointments. Also vaccination status must not be made a condition of employment. This will not build confidence among the workforce, and it could result in legal cases on the grounds of discrimination.

PROPER ENFORCEMENT

Bosses who break the rules and put workers' health at risk must feel the full force of health and safety law. Despite thousands of workplace outbreaks, and hundreds of Covid deaths reported as occupational, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has not fined and prosecuted a single employer for putting staff in danger.

The Government must provide the HSE with the long-term, sustainable funding boost it needs to carry out more inspections and hold employers to account.

Ministers must listen to union concerns. Covid-19 infections at work will remain a serious threat unless working people are able to work without risk of infection, isolate without risk of hardship, and report bad bosses with confidence.

Trade unions fight for safety at work because no life should be disposable, no work should be unsafe, and no boss should be able to escape justice.

FIVE WAYS TO MAKE WORKPLACES SAFE

The TUC has also produced a short video message reminding people of five ways to make workplaces safe – getting people vaccinated, continuing to follow safety measures while they are still needed, ventilation to ensure fresh air in the workplace, paying sick pay so people can self-isolate, and getting workers to join a union.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0BnoK0KjYw

■ See TUC guidance keeping workplaces safe: www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/safe-return-workplace

MINOR CHANGES CAN REDUCE MAJOR INJURIES

ORGANISING TO TACKLE SLIPS AND TRIPS



Poster courtesy of the HSE.

Slips and trips are the most common cause of workplace injuries. They are often dismissed as trivial or workers are told they should just take more care. But they can cause serious injuries or even deaths at work and they can be prevented by eliminating the hazard in the first place.

According to the HSE, slips and trips are responsible for over 600,000 non-fatal injuries to workers every year. As Covid-19 restrictions are lifted and workplaces get busier again it is likely that the risks will increase with greater numbers of people coming back into workplaces.

How can representatives organise around slips and trips?

The Usdaw slips and trips risk mapping tool works in any workplace or work area and is very effective in helping reduce injuries at work. It is simple to use.

First, sketch a rough map of the area. Mark on all the slips and trips reported in the last 12 months (or any relevant period) with crosses.

Secondly when you are doing a workplace inspection, walk round the workplace and talk to the workers to identify any 'near misses' that can be added to the chart. This is a crucial part of the process. As the health and safety rep you are drawing on the experience and knowledge of the members. They can tell you about the times they nearly had an accident and can also tell you why people are more likely to slip or trip in that area. Add the information to the sketch map and the map will quickly highlight any 'hotspots'.

The extra information using the workers' experience of their workplace and involving members to identify problems is vital. Once the problems and their causes have been identified you can discuss them with management and figure out what can be done to remove the hazard that is causing the slipping or tripping risk.

Make sure that you keep the members informed about the

changes and about any successes in reducing the number of injuries.

You could recommend that the employer runs a campaign to tackle slips and trips with union backing. This partnership approach with the employer will help embed a positive working relationship and improve health and safety standards in the workplace. In some workplaces where this has been done, accidents have been reduced by as much as 50 per cent within a few months.

- The HSE also has some useful guidance for employers on its website including case studies and advice on measures to prevent slips. www.hse.gov.uk/slips/step
- Usdaw slips and trips risk mapping tool:

www.usdaw.org.uk and search **risk mapping**

- For further advice or assistance please contact Usdaw's health and safety section.

Phone **0161 249 2474** or email:

www.healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk

MemberOffers

Some 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: Q-Park
Fiat
Startrescue
Vauxhall Cars

INSURANCE

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

MONEY & FINANCE

Debt Advice
Financial Advice
Mortgage Advice
Pensions Advice
Pensions Annuity Service
Shepherds Friendly Savings
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HEALTH & BEAUTY

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

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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
SAA Art Membership
Theme Parks & Attractions

HOLIDAYS

Airport Parking, Lounges & Hotels
Away Resorts
Cottage Breaks
DFDS Ferry Crossing
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STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Three of the union's staff take on exciting new promotions while we say a fond farewell to three long-serving staff and wish them a long and happy retirement

STEWART FORREST

Scottish regional secretary
Stewart Forrest retired in May
after 20 years on the union's
staff.

Stewart, 63, started working for Usdaw in 2000 as an area organiser in Edinburgh. He was promoted to deputy divisional officer in 2007 and again in 2016 to divisional officer.

Stewart's union journey stretches back nearly 50 years to when he joined Usdaw as a butcher at Halls of Broxburn where he became a very active member, taking on the roles of rep and then site convenor.

"Over my 20 years, I have seen the union put members at the heart of everything we do," said Stewart. "As a result, this has led to Usdaw having a high profile in Scotland and with the Scottish Government.

"Among my achievements, I am most proud of my involvement with Daniel Johnson MSP's Protection of Workers Bill, passed in parliament earlier this year. This Act ensures a law that will give frontline retail

workers in Scotland important legal protections from the abuse and violence in the workplace. Also, we have secured a long overdue Scottish Government consultation for all stores to close on New Year's Day in Scotland. This is a fantastic outcome and I am very happy that the Scottish Government is showing their appreciation for the essential work that key workers have done throughout this appalling pandemic.

"I have had a fantastic time working for Usdaw and have met some great people. I would like to wish my successor Tracy Gilbert all the very best for the future.

"I am very much looking forward to my retirement. I will be playing lots of golf. I also recently rediscovered the joys of gardening, so I'm sure I will have lots to do."

TONY CLARE

North West's regional secretary
Tony Clare retired at the
beginning of June after 37 years
on the union's staff.

Tony started working at Usdaw in 1983, as an office junior in the research department. He was promoted to research assistant in 1986 where he looked after most sectors during his time there, including five years working on Tesco. Tony also completed a master's degree in industrial relations and employment law, graduating in 1998.

In 2004 he became an area organiser working out of the union's former Crewe office and was promoted to North West deputy divisional officer in 2014.

"Some of my favourite memories include having work published while working in the research department, winning employment tribunals and negotiating for members as an official and seeing the union membership and reps develop as a DDO," said Tony, 55.

"In recent years I'm proud to have led our high-profile campaign in JD Sports, particularly at the beginning of the first lockdown last year when



Stewart Forrest



Tony Clare



Paul Taylor

Usdaw featured regularly in all the major media outlets.

"For the last 11 years I've also been Usdaw's North West political coordinator, which I'm very passionate about.

"Coming from a dyed-in-the-wool trade union and Labour family it's been a pleasure and a privilege to make a living doing what my mother, father and brothers did voluntarily.

"I'll miss the people of course and being so close to the action in the Labour movement, which I'll continue to be active in.

"My plan is to have more than a fortnight off work for the first time in nearly 38 years!"

PAUL TAYLOR

Warrington area organiser Paul Taylor is retiring in June after 16 years on the union's staff.

Paul started his career at Usdaw in 2004 when he was appointed as a recruitment and development officer following a year on the TUC Academy. He then became area organiser in the North West in 2005.

Prior to joining the staff, Paul worked in the dairy industry for The Cheese Company (now Arla Foods). He was a member of the Transport and General Workers Union until he joined Usdaw in 1986 where he became rep, senior rep, branch secretary, health and safety rep and eventually Usdaw European Works



Tracy Gilbert

Council rep. Paul was also enrolled onto the union's pilot Academy programme in 2003.

In his time as area organiser, Paul has coordinated a national agreement with Expert (AO.com), built up a working Agreement with Bargain Booze in Crewe and worked with Kellogg's Wrexham to maintain its operation in Wales.

"My favourite part of the job has been building up positive working relations with companies and working alongside my Usdaw reps for the wellbeing of the membership," said Paul, 59.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed working at Usdaw. I will mostly miss my reps and the comradeship of my fellow area organisers and colleagues.

"In retirement I plan to spend more time with family and devote time to my various hobbies including writing, animal rescue and conservation, horse eventing and restoring and riding classic motorcycles."

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis wished the trio all the best

"Many thanks to Stewart, Tony and Paul for their dedication, commitment and loyalty to Usdaw. All three made a big contribution to the success of the union in their regions and I know they take the best wishes of their colleagues, reps and members with them into their retirement. We wish them all the very best for the future in whatever direction they choose to travel."

TRACY GILBERT

Deputy regional secretary Tracy Gilbert has succeeded Stewart Forrest as the new regional secretary in Scotland.

Tracy joined the organising staff in Edinburgh in 2007. Prior to that she had been a recruitment and development officer with Usdaw since 2000, having spent a year on the TUC's Academy in 1999.

Tracy was promoted to deputy divisional officer in 2017 working out

of the Glasgow office. She started her role as regional secretary in May.

"I grew up in a council scheme in a mining community during the Thatcher years so had always known about the trade union movement and working peoples' struggles," said Tracy, 48.

"I worked in retail during and after my school years before I started on a Youth Training Scheme with City of Edinburgh Council where I joined Unison. I became a rep and then a full-time elected Unison branch officer at 24 for the City of Edinburgh Local Government Branch with over 10,000 members.

"There isn't much that I haven't done in my time as a lay rep from representing workers, leading a successful strike, negotiating policy and wages for all local government employees across Scotland. As an employee for Usdaw I have had 20 years' experience from gaining recognition agreements, negotiating wages, dealing with site closures as well as working with the reps in all aspects of recruitment and organising, and coaching and developing members and reps across the division.

"I can't wait to get started and continue to embed the one team approach while driving forward the organising agenda and making sure that all our members and reps are supported and encouraged to participate at every level of Usdaw."

ROBERT DONNELLY

Area organiser Robert Donnelly will be relocating from Edinburgh to Morden after being promoted to Southern regional secretary, succeeding Sue Merrell who retired at the end of 2020.

Robert started working for Usdaw as an area organiser in 2011 at the Morden office and then transferred to the Edinburgh office in 2014. He made the move back down to Morden to start his new role in May.

Robert became an Usdaw member over 30 years ago when he started working in retail and initially

became a rep while working at Somerfield. He then started working as a driver at Robert Wiseman Dairies where he continued to be active, successfully building membership at the site.

“More recently in my role as area organiser I’ve been involved with Usdaw’s campaigns, in particular the Freedom From Fear campaign in Scotland and supporting Daniel Johnson’s Protection of Workers’ bill,” said Robert. “I’ve also maintained the role of political coordinator in both the Scottish and Southern divisions.

“In my new role I will be working alongside my colleagues, regionally and nationally, to ensure that our members and reps are supported at all times and get the best service from their trade union.

“I am really looking forward to getting started in the new role, working with old friends and getting to know new ones, to work collectively for our members and reps and grow the union.”

CHRIS MORRIS

Former senior researcher Chris Morris started his role as deputy head of the research and policy department in March.

Chris started working at Usdaw in December 2006 as a clerical



Robert Donnelly



Chris Morris

assistant in the research and policy department following his graduation from a degree in Economics and Business Economics at Hull University. In September 2007 he was promoted to research assistant for the road transport and distribution sector. Nine years later, in 2016, he was promoted again to senior researcher.

“In my role as senior researcher, I have provided support to the union’s Freedom From Fear and Time for Better Pay/New Deal for Workers campaigns,” said Chris. “I have also had responsibility for the union’s policy work on employment rights, low pay and the minimum

wage.

“In my new role, I’ll be supporting the head of research and policy to manage the department and provide the union’s research support service. This will involve resourcing support for officials and reps with pay bargaining and other discussions with employers as well as helping to deliver the union’s important campaigning agenda.

“I’m looking forward to further supporting reps and officials to deliver the best deal for members and hopefully being able to get out and about to Usdaw events in the near future; meeting members and reps in person again.”

HELPING YOU IN YOUR ROLE AS AN USDAW REP

WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION

Usdaw website and enews

For everything you need to help you in your role as rep including sections on legal advice, workers’ rights, health and safety, training opportunities, events and campaigns. You can also download informative leaflets and posters for your noticeboard.

Visit www.usdaw.org.uk

Social media

As an Usdaw rep we recommend

that you follow **UsdawUnion** on **Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube**. It’s a great way to keep up to date. You can also share pictures of your campaigns and events with the union through these channels.

Local office

If you need support or guidance in your role as rep, then don’t hesitate to contact your local Usdaw office where the union’s staff will be happy to help.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

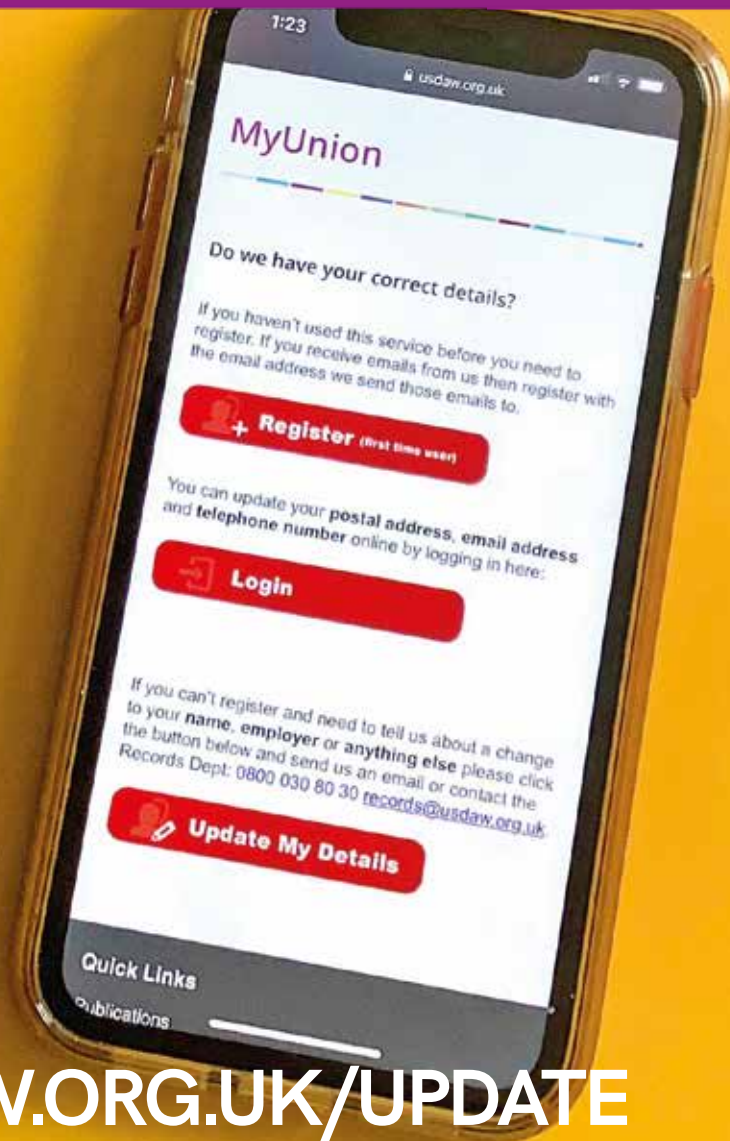
Here at *Network* magazine we love hearing about what reps and members have been up to in and outside of their workplaces – if you’ve got pictures to share even better! We want to hear about campaigns and events, wins for your members, your top tips and members who are going the extra mile to support local causes. Please get in touch, we look forward to hearing from you. Email network@usdaw.org.uk

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