

NETWORK



The bimonthly magazine for activists – November/December 2016



TRANSPORT CONFERENCE

SUMMER SCHOOL2

RESPECT FOR WORKERS

... RECRUITMENT ... ACADEMY1 ... EQUALITIES ... NEWS ... SATA ...

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Comment

General secretary John Hannett

It has been another tough year for our members and reps, who have had to cope with widespread change and reorganisation within many of the big companies we deal with.

The outlook for the economy remains bleak with both the highly respected Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Resolution Foundation, warning that workers can expect real wages to remain below pre-recession levels until at least 2021. They also expect the coming decade to be the weakest for wage growth since the 1900s.

We have seen a concerted attack on workers' rights and collective bargaining in the last six years and that looks set to continue. Successive Tory-led governments have made it easier to hire and fire workers by introducing tribunal fees, and increasing the threshold to claim unfair dismissal from one to two years. Too many workers are in insecure jobs and we have seen the continued rise in the use of zero-hour contracts and low wages.

Any hope of a change in the Government's policy has been quickly dispelled after prime minister Theresa May first promised to put workers on company boards only to renege on that pledge within weeks of taking office.

It's in times like these that unions in general, and Usdaw in particular, come into their own. Our reps and officials continue to battle for our members despite the difficult economic and political climate.

While membership is slightly down on this time last year, we have continued to invest in our reps' training programme and our activists have done a tremendous job again during 2016.

Our campaigns have also won support from members, reps, the general public and hundreds of politicians in Westminster and across the national assemblies. So our work continues with as much determination, energy and drive as ever.

On behalf of the executive council I want to offer my best wishes for the festive season to all of our reps and members and I look forward to working with you in the New Year.



John Hannett



Usdaw
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

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LET'S GET SOCIAL



IN BRIEF...

Legal proposals could hit workers

Government proposals to raise the limit for cases in the small claims court for all personal injury claims, including workplace accidents, from £1,000 to £5,000, could see thousands of workers miss out on important compensation awards.

The Ministry of Justice launched a consultation process in November it said to clamp down on a so-called epidemic in whiplash claims, but unions believe if workplace accidents are included it will deny workers access to justice and increase the risk of serious health and safety risks going undetected.

Closures imminent at M&S

Marks and Spencer could close around 60 clothing and homeware stores in the next five years as it looks to reverse its faltering high street performance.

Deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "We again urge M&S management to abandon their long-held resistance

to recognising Usdaw as the union to represent its staff.

"Usdaw has thousands of members working for Marks and Spencer and the staff now need, more than ever, the representation and support of an independent trade union.

"At this time of great uncertainty, staff need to be assured that an experienced and knowledgeable trade union is interrogating the company's business case for this store reorganisation. Given the opportunity Usdaw would ensure that all avenues

to save jobs are explored and staff are treated with dignity, fairness and respect.

"Staff in all M&S stores will be extremely concerned about what the future holds, as the company sets about this store reorganisation, which could affect up to 100 stores. This five-year review will be a dark cloud hanging over thousands of staff.

"We will continue to provide our members with the support and representation they require throughout this difficult time."

The company announced pre-tax profits fell by 88 per cent to £25.1m in the 26 weeks to October 1. Its ailing clothing and home division struggled again. The company will also leave 10 overseas territories, which are currently making a loss.



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Herbie Taylor remembered

Former North West division area organiser Herbert, (Herbie) Taylor died in October, he was 88.

Herbie joined Usdaw in 1951 when he worked at the Birkenhead Co-op's bottling plant where he later became the convener.

He was appointed area organiser at the Liverpool office in 1974 and retired 20 years later.

In 1993, Herbie had a street 'Herbert Taylor Close' named after him in Tuebrook, Liverpool in recognition of his work with local housing associations in deprived inner-city areas.

He also worked with people who had difficulties finding suitable housing.

General secretary John Hannett paid this tribute:

"Herbie was a popular figure



among reps and colleagues in the old Liverpool division, not only as an official but as an active member of the community.

"He will also be remembered for his work in some of the more deprived areas of the city.

"He championed the cause of finding affordable, suitable housing for young people in the Liverpool area."



RESPECT WEEK

Activists and officials in Wales and Scotland took the Freedom From Fear campaign message of Keep Your Cool to their respective assembly and parliament in November.

The lobby followed a similar event in Westminster in October and Labour Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) turned out in force to support the union.

The politicians heard real life stories of how shopworkers had been verbally abused, threatened and in some cases assaulted.

Divisional officer Nick Ireland led the Wales contingent. "Life on the front-line of retail can be pretty tough for many shopworkers. Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign seeks to tackle violence, threats and abuse against retail staff by working with employers to promote respect and make shops safer for staff and customers alike.

"The statistics are shocking with nearly one in ten shopworkers assaulted in the course of their duties, but almost a third of them didn't report the incident. It's clear violence, threats and abuse against workers is one of the great scourges of our society."

Jayne Bryant AM turned out to show her support: "Retail



staff have a crucial role in our communities and that role must be valued and respected. I was delighted to welcome Usdaw and their members working in retail to the Senedd. I join with Usdaw in asking the public to 'keep their cool and respect shopworkers'."

Meanwhile in Holyrood Daniel Johnson MSP said: "The Usdaw delegation explained the need for stiffer penalties for those who assault workers; a simple stand-alone offence that is widely recognised and understood by the public,

police, CPS, the judiciary and most importantly criminals.

"The SNP Government previously voted down the Protection of Workers Bill at stage one, opposing the general principles of the Bill and refusing to give it detailed parliamentary consideration, despite wide support from the trade union movement and others.

"Labour remains committed to legislating to provide shopworkers and all workers with valuable protection against assault."

IN BRIEF...

Full-time jobs at a premium in retail

The fall in the number of full-time jobs in retail looks set to gather pace, according to the employers' organisation the British Retail Consortium.

It expects job losses and store closures to accelerate as sluggish growth in wages, competition on the high street, expensive business rates and inflation damage the sector.

It also said the weak pound, in the wake of the Brexit vote, will increase prices of imported goods.

New rates for 'real' Living Wage

The Living wage Foundation announced its new rates in October with a UK hourly rate of £8.45 and a London rate of £9.75.

The campaigning charity organisation based in London said its UK rate was 17 per cent higher than the Government's minimum for over 25 year-olds of £7.20 an hour. A number of companies have signed up to the Living wage.

More at: www.livingwage.org.uk

ACADEMY1

This year's Academy1 graduates celebrated the end of their six-month secondment with the union at a special farewell dinner in November.

This year 58 activists – the biggest intake in the Academy1's 14 year history – completed the programme.





IN BRIEF...

Food processing jobs at risk

Usdaw has started negotiations with the 2 Sisters Food Group after it announced proposals to close the retail packing operation at its Merthyr Tydfil site with 350 potential job losses.

The company is proposing to move the work to another site in Cornwall. Divisional officer Nick Ireland said: "This is devastating news for the loyal and hardworking staff at the site, especially so in the run up to Christmas.

"Usdaw will be doing everything we can during the 45 day consultation process to look in detail at the proposals with a view to safeguarding jobs, maximising future employment at the Merthyr Tydfil site and securing the best deal possible for staff. We will be giving our members our full support, advice and representation during the consultation process."



Reshuffle at distribution network

Meanwhile, Alliance Healthcare has announced intentions to change its distribution network in Scotland. The company wants to take over and invest in an existing DHL (Boots) operation in Coatbridge, which would mean the closure of the existing Alliance Healthcare site in Livingston.



Reps' positivity

The majority of reps are positive about their experience and receive good support from Usdaw, the latest reps' survey has shown.

The new approach to developing new reps is also paying off with the vast majority of respondents saying; they are proud to be Usdaw reps, that their role is interesting and varied, and that they can resolve issues with management on behalf of their members.

Other results revealed:

- 96 per cent of new reps say they have had an induction within four weeks
- 80 per cent believed that their training has helped them to

recruit, represent, and inform members of the benefits of Usdaw membership, and develop good relationships with managers and raise issues on behalf of their members.

When asked about the union's campaigns:

- 46 per cent of rep respondents say that they have been involved in one of Usdaw's campaigns.
- 97 per cent of those who were involved said that Usdaw provided them with the tools/information/resources they needed to help them with the campaign
- 93 per cent of those who were involved and received support from Usdaw were overwhelmingly in agreement

that the support they received was helpful.

The vast majority of reps said they are fully aware of FirstCall Usdaw. Scoring highly were awareness of free legal representation and the free will writing service for members and their partners.

More than 9,000 surveys were distributed, the vast majority by electronic means with a response rate of 23.7 per cent, the highest return since the first survey was held in 2007.

The profile of the typical respondent in this survey showed a higher response from newer reps, while in 2014 experienced reps made up the majority of respondents.

Activists Say No To Racism



Top: On the campaign trail at Tesco Extra Walsall and (above) activists at Sainsbury's Heaton Park, Manchester

Reps and members continued to support the Say No To Racism campaign by holding promotional events in their stores across the UK. The national initiative has taken on added significance since the upsurge in racist incidents following the Brexit vote in June.

More at: www.usdaw.org.uk

Pension gap



Former BHS owner Sir Philip Green could strike a deal with the Pensions Regulator by Christmas over the company's pension deficit, or he could walk away and face a lengthy legal battle, according to press reports.

Green is said to have upped his initial offer of £250m to 'over £300 million' to fix BHS's £571m pension black hole. However, there is speculation the Pensions Regulator has rejected the offer.

The regulator launched enforcement action in October against Green and BHS's former owners over the failure to agree a deal. The Pensions Regulator has sent a 300-page warning notice to Green, his retail group Arcadia, and Dominic Chappell, whose Retail Acquisitions owned the department store when it collapsed in April.

COLD COMFORT

Working families could still be around £2,000 worse off when Universal Credit is rolled out in the UK despite prime minister Theresa May's recent claims she was on the side of working people.

These figures were revealed when Tory chancellor Philip Hammond delivered his Autumn Statement in November offering little support to Usdaw members struggling to make ends meet.

"There is little incentive to work extra hours when the marginal tax rate under Universal Credit is still 75 per cent for income tax payers," said general secretary John

Hannett. "That means for those doing extra hours on the increased rate of National Living Wage they will only get to take home £1.89 of every extra £7.50 they earn.

"Remember more than 90 per cent of the cuts are still being applied to Universal Credit, which is a ticking time bomb that will leave many working families much worse-off when they are transferred onto it.

"Our own figures suggests that a couple with children, both working for the new National Living Wage rate of £7.50 an hour (effective from April 2017), one working full-time and one part-time, would be £2,881

worse off on Universal Credit compared to the current rate of Tax Credits."

Other main points from the Statement include:

- The National Living Wage will rise from £7.20 to £7.50 in April, for those aged 25 and over.
- Insurance Premium Tax will rise from 10 to 12 per cent in June 2017 (adding £51 to the average household's insurance bill).
- Cold calls offering unrealistic investment opportunities to people cashing in their pension pots will be banned.
- Fuel duty will be frozen.
- The personal allowance will go up to £11,500 in April 2017.

IN BRIEF...

Usdaw continues to strengthen in UK

Deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis gave an upbeat message to delegates at the biennial Sata conference as he outlined how the union had grown, was in a good financial position, but was not content to sit back on its recent success.

"We have invested heavily in the training we provide for reps, the Academy programme has excelled and up until recently we have used 72,000 hours for reps on stand-down," he said.

"While other unions are losing members we continue to buck the trend. We know it's very difficult out there with all the changes we've seen this year but in our 125th year I'm confident the union can be here for another 125."

■ More on the Sata (Supervisory Administrative and Technical Association) conference on page 23.



Deal cut at Timpsons

General secretary John Hannett met with Timpson director Gouy Hamilton-Fisher to sign an agreement with the high street chain that covers members in their concessions in Morrisons stores.

Usdaw signed a similar agreement covering former Max Spielmann staff working in Tesco stores, who were transferred to Timpson in 2015.

Activists meet up at union's national training centre in November



Newly elected branch officers at their six-day tailor-made course.



North West activists at their introductory health and safety course.

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Packed agenda for drive

LGV and dotcom drivers gathered in Cheshire for their annual conference in November, *Network* was there too...

The logistics industry adds £11bn to the UK economy but is unknown and undervalued by the public and is plagued by an image of long hours and low pay, **Rob Ffello** MP and a member of the commons select committee on transport, told conference.

"Being an LGV driver is a skilled occupation and the economy depends on the industry far more than people realise," he said.

"We know competition is tough, margins are tight and rates of pay in the sector are not where they should be.

"We're also facing a demographic time bomb where there are more retirees from the sector than new entrants. Insurance and other costs of getting into the industry are prohibitive with someone in their early 20s facing an initial cost of between £2-3,000 with insurance costs on top of that.

"This is a sector that's been overlooked by successive governments and faced under-investment for many years. The figures we uncovered showed an average LGV driver on around £10.54 an hour, only £1.52 higher on average than a van driver.

"With a poor public image, drivers having to sleep in their cabs, with inadequate road side facilities too, is it any wonder so few people are coming forward to work in the sector? Drivers are more likely to have health issues like sleep apnoea, diabetes, weight gain and they also have to contend with congested roads and demanding schedules.

"Clearly more needs to be done to attract more recruits to the sector, to improve the rewards for drivers and shift the public's perception of the industry.

"We know people are put off by the long hours so we need to see more part-time vacancies made available. We also want to get more women and ethnic minorities into the sector.

"I want to raise the industry's profile in parliament and in society, which is difficult enough but with the added uncertainty that Brexit brings we have to work even harder to get the positive changes we all need."



Don't let Brexit fallout penalise drivers

Protecting workers' rights is the key concern for drivers as the UK moves towards Brexit over the coming months, delegates agreed.

EU inspired decisions on holiday pay, working hours and job protection have to be safeguarded but activists fear the Tory Government will not consult with the unions.

As part of a workshop on the implications of Brexit, senior researcher **Chris Morris** explained: "Important rights on redundancy and discrimination have also come from the EU and the Tories have already said they want to get rid of these protections," he said.

"Usdaw's position is clear – workers should not pay the price of Brexit – so we need to be clear how we want to progress from here."

Delegates discussed the pros and cons of the Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC), the Working Time Directive, periods of availability, the Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment regulations (TUPE), health and safety, the cost of getting into

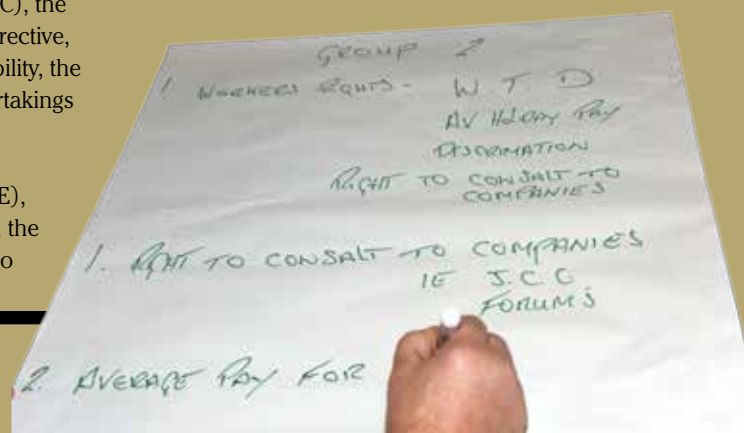
the industry for young drivers and the shortage of drivers.

Delegates agreed it was important that overseas drivers should sit the CPC course in the UK and that the costs of training and licenses should be met by companies.

National officer **Irene Radigan** added: "No matter what we think of the EU it's important we as a union have a clear strategy of what we want from the Brexit process.

"If the UK government want to take away these rights what do we want to replace them with?

"That's why strong organisation in the companies where we organise and negotiate is so important, without it we could end up losing rights we have had for many years."



rs



*Pictured above l-r:
Rob Ffello MP,
Irene Radigan,
Chris Morris,
Doug Russell and
Jon Paul Brown*



*Pictured below right:
Conference delegates
and, left, a workshop
in session*

Co-op logistics aims to improve safety for road users

Conference also heard from **Jon Paul Brown**, national transport manager at the Co-op, on how his company is looking to protect vulnerable road users.

He explained how the company was investing in its fleet and driver training to minimise accidents involving pedestrians, motorbike riders, cyclists and the elderly.

"Around 870 vulnerable road users were killed last year with more than 62,000 injured," he said. "We want to make our drivers and vehicles as safe as possible and we also want to raise awareness in the community among our customers and staff."

Delegates saw the safety measures introduced by the Co-op including additional use of cameras, truck design and lights

designed to reduce incidents among its 2,500 fleet. The company was also working with local schools and local authorities to raise awareness of the risks involved. "For us it's all about prevention. I'm passionate about the safety of our staff and the road using public. We'll never stop every incident but our aim is to prevent as many as we can."

Delegates welcomed the presentation and discussed cyclists in particular, who came in for widespread criticism for among other things, not wearing hi-vis clothing, having inadequate lighting, running the lights, undertaking and weaving in and out of traffic. "Whatever happened to the cycling proficiency test at school," a number of delegates asked.

Government's funding cuts leaves sector vulnerable to risks and exploitation

The last six years has seen the Government ruthlessly cut the funding of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the enforcement agency, reducing its preventative role massively, Usdaw safety officer **Doug Russell** told conference.

In his workshop aimed at van drivers, he explained the last two Governments had aimed, but failed to change safety legislation. However, simultaneous funding cuts to local authorities had also put workers at greater risk.

"The HSE has been cut by 50 per cent and inspections by local authorities, who for most Usdaw members enforce the law, have dropped by more than 90 per cent," he said.

"This makes the role of the safety rep even more important.

"Reps have legally protected rights to investigate; potential hazards, complaints, and accidents and to inspect the workplace as well as conduct their usual duties of representing workers.

"We know the issues faced by our van drivers; lone working, road accidents, handling heavy crates, stress of delivery schedules, abuse from customers, access to toilets and much more.

"We can only begin to address the issues if we are well organised in the sector and where our reps use their rights. Support and advice is available from local area organisers or from

me in the safety section at central office."

Delegates discussed problems associated with delivering into people's homes, safety concerns when lifting heavy weights over difficult terrain or up numerous flights of stairs, the importance of risk assessments, pressure on delivery schedules, irresponsible cyclists and dangerous driving conditions.

National officer **Irene Radigan** added: "I'd encourage our drivers to submit any industry specific propositions to next year's Annual Delegate Meeting so we can have a full debate on the issues facing the industry.

"It's here where we need to establish our policies and priorities for Usdaw drivers in these challenging times."



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In the SPOTLIGHT



South Wales and Western division's Roy Pitty answers Network's questions...

Why did you become active?

I wanted to give a voice to the drivers in my depot. We already had a couple of reps who were primarily office based and they had done, and continue to do, an excellent job representing our members. However, I felt the drivers had particular issues relating to their job that perhaps only a fellow driver would fully appreciate and would be able to articulate in the right context.

I was convinced to give it a go. I've never looked back. I love it. I've got a pretty good relationship with most of my members and I'm lucky enough to have a good working relationship with the local management team too, which means that most issues can be sorted out with just an informal chat or an email. I think it's important to try and get a good relationship going with your managers.

What do you enjoy the most?

Being there to help is the main thing. Knowing that they have trust in me to do the best I can for them gives me a great feeling of satisfaction. The more I do and the more I get involved, the greater my knowledge becomes.

I've also made some great friends through Usdaw. If I've got a problem that I'm not sure how to deal with I know that

I've got at least a dozen other reps around the country that I can contact as well as my area organiser Li Grant, who has been an amazing support along with my national officer Daniel Adams. It's like a massive family, all digging in to help each other out.

Is there a downside?

The expectation from some that you can perform miracles. You have to be realistic. You don't have a magic wand and you're never going to make everybody happy. We always try for the best possible outcome for any issue we deal with but it's important to have a fall-back plan B position that you would settle for instead.

What's been your stand out moment?

It wasn't anything groundbreaking but it was something that I highlighted to management about some members starting their shifts in the last 15 minute window of the enhanced night payment hours, but without receiving any financial reward for it.

This had gone on for over a year. It was an oversight of the company and resulted in a number of drivers getting around £70 back pay. As I say, nothing out of the ordinary but enough to give the members some confidence in me to do the right thing by them.

Is recruitment easy in your workplace?

I think our density is currently around the 55-60 per cent mark overall but the density of

just the driving staff is in the high seventies. I'd love it to be higher. We don't have a particularly high turnover of staff so pretty much everybody who wants to join, has.

Any new starters are approached immediately. We've got a great noticeboard that's regularly updated as well as leaflets and information around the building. The minutes from any meetings that I attend are displayed on several noticeboards. Sometimes the only thing you can do is to keep people aware of Usdaw and to make sure that everybody knows who you and the other reps are.

What are the most important issues for your members?

We currently have a couple of issues we are pursuing on the driving side of things such as excess payloads and the way overtime payments are calculated and implemented.

We are also trying to get clarification around the EU legislation on the 48 hour working week. Wage negotiations will be starting soon and as a member of the JNC I'll be attending these meetings and with the recent fall out from Brexit, members are obviously concerned as to how that may influence the discussions around potential wage increases.

Would you recommend being a rep?

Yes. Do it. You won't regret it. It's fascinating and challenging but enormously rewarding and enjoyable, but will take up some of your spare time. So make sure you have some 'free time' in your life before committing to it.

Fact File & trivia

EMPLOYER... *AAH Pharmaceuticals*

JOB... *Courier*

AGE... *48*

LIVES... *Paignton, Devon*

JOINED USDAW IN... *2013*

BEEN AN ACTIVIST SINCE... *2013*

UNION POSITIONS HELD...

Rep, health and safety rep, branch chairman, JNC rep and I'm on the driver working party.

PREVIOUS JOBS... I've been many things, including a postman, milkman, baker and bedroom furniture fitter!

SPARE TIME... I like relaxing with my fiancée, Kellie. I enjoy reading, studying, cooking, listening to music, trying to keep fit, running and seeing family and friends.

MY FAVOURITE BOOK...

Going To Sea In A Sieve – Danny Baker. The guy is a hero of mine and a broadcasting genius.

LAST FILM I SAW... was I, Daniel Blake. Everybody needs to see this film. Heartbreaking and eye opening.

BEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE SO FAR... Aside from having children, crossing the finish line of the London marathon. It is a feeling I'll never forget. I also raised nearly £3,000 for my chosen charity, the MS Society.

EXPERT TRAINING

Network called in at this year's summer school2 to talk to a cross-section of activists and the deputy head of education Nigel Williams...

Who is summer school2 aimed at?

It's the next step up for reps who have either been on summer school1, or Academy1 or who hold senior union positions within their workplace. It gives activists the choice of studying one of the four in-depth courses on offer, either: health and safety, politics, women and organising, or trade unions and organising.

What do the individual courses deliver?

The safety course is the latest addition to the school and reminds reps of the relevant legislation, how to organise, campaign and use best practice. The politics course looks at how the relationship between unions and political parties has evolved. Women and organising focuses on the particular issues faced by women workers in terms of pensions, maternity leave and

recruiting and organising in their workplaces. While the organising group take in international issues and look at how Usdaw compares to other unions.

Are there any similarities?

All the courses have guest speakers, who are all experts in their fields. The atmosphere is relaxed with group work and individual support from tutors for each student. Each group has a mix of people in terms of age, occupation, ethnicity, gender and geographical spread.

What sort of feedback do you get from students?

Very positive. Spending a week in a former stately home, in beautiful grounds, with a group of friendly like-minded people – what's not to like? Lifelong friendships are forged at summer school and it's a vital step in any rep's union journey.

What do you want the students to take from the school?

We want to help re-energise the reps and give them plenty



of information and knowledge which will help them in their practical day-to-day role as reps. We want to increase their confidence and to encourage them to become more involved, take on more responsibilities and become more competent reps.

SUMMER SCHOOL2:

- Is open to reps who have completed summer school1 or the Academy or who have experience as an activist
- Is held in mid September for one week
- Runs from Saturday to Saturday
- Activists stay at Wortley Hall (a former stately home), near Barnsley
- Accommodation and food is provided
- Travel expenses are reimbursed
- Class sizes are between 10-15
- Activists also get some individual tuition and support

More information and details of the application process at: www.usdaw.org.uk/education



Adrian Maddocks on organising



Kellogg's branch secretary Adrian Maddocks, 42, has 15 years experience as a rep at his Wrexham site and comes from a family of trade unionists. He chose the unions and organising group.

"This week really took me out of my comfort zone," he said. "We ran a campaign day on Supporting Parents and Carers in nearby Barnsley with the local MP. This was a first for me and I learned a lot from watching how other people interacted with the public. It was a great confidence builder.

"Our site is very different from others so I gained an invaluable insight into how other reps operate. I've picked up some very useful campaigning tips and organisational skills.

"It was my first visit to Wortley Hall and it's a fantastic place. It was great to meet the other reps and talk about their courses and swap ideas.

"It's a very friendly atmosphere and I felt at ease straight away. I'd recommend it."

Zarina Saleem on women

Tesco rep Zarina Saleem, 57, was in the women and organising group, and went to summer school1 in 2014.

"I found the pensions information very helpful," she said. "There's been a lot of changes at work and I was never 100 per cent sure but listening to Usdaw's pensions officer Debra Blow has made it much clearer.

"We also looked at working women's everyday life so everything was covered from maternity rights to national insurance and worker's rights. We also looked at how the position of women has changed and it was interesting to compare my mother's working environment with mine.

"This is a very focused course while

summer school1 is more general and looks closely at the workings of the Annual Delegate Meeting. Getting to know other reps and working in small groups was particularly useful. I really enjoyed the week."



Justin Smith on safety

Academy1&2 graduate and XPO Logistics driver Justin Smith, 50, was in the health and safety group.

"We covered everything from COSHH regulations, to the Health and Safety at Work Act, to the rights reps have to help them do their job," he said. "It was a great refresher course and more. We compared how different reps operate and shared best practice, there was a great deal of variation and we all learned from each other. It was all about problem solving, knowledge sharing and exchanging information.

"It's hard work, long nights and with

lots to take on board, but it's a very enjoyable week. The tutors are great."



Sharon Milner on politics

Boots cosmetics consultant Sharon Milner, 46, has been a rep for five years and was in the politics group. She completed summer school1 last year and made her maiden speech at this year's Annual Delegate Meeting.

"It's all about confidence for me and summer schools give you so much it takes you to another level," she said.

"I'm new to the political scene and wanted to learn as much as possible and I've done just that.

"This week has filled in a lot of gaps in my knowledge and it's proved politics is all

around us. It's not somewhere 'out there' it's here in our communities, our workplaces, everywhere.

"What's clear to me is that we need more working class people in politics as councillors and MPs. You don't have to be super-intelligent to do it and you mustn't be put off by the language politicians use. I think they use it deliberately to deter people like us. I'd love to see an MP try and live on the minimum wage.

"This course met all of my expectations and made the subject very accessible."



Your chance to grow wi

Active reps who want to develop their involvement in the union, expand their expertise and improve their organisational and communication skills should think seriously about applying for next year's Academy1 programme.

That's the advice from deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis who has just announced the beginning of this year's application process.

"Our award-winning Academy is now in its 15th year and has

been a phenomenal success," he said. "It's the ideal training ground for reps with a mixture of on-the-job training, expert tuition and the support and advice of one of our area organisers in the divisions.

"It's no surprise that the vast majority of our new officials have been on the Academy. Some have also gone on to get full-time jobs with other unions too, so it's clear we are doing something right.

"The Academy probably represents the pinnacle of our reps' training and once completed our activists return to their workplace with a much greater skill set than when they started. They'll also be better informed about how to organise in workplaces and understand why it is so important to the future success of the union.

"It's not easy but with the training and support available 99 per cent of reps will complete their six months and feel much better about their role, more confident in themselves and determined to make a difference in their workplace."



Paddy Lillis

The first Academy in 2003... four of the 15 went on to become area organisers



Academy applicants should have:

- An active commitment to Usdaw
- The potential to recruit and organise in different types of workplaces
- A willingness to fully participate in all aspects of the Academy programme

How to apply:

You can apply for Academy1 in the following ways:

- Fill in the **postcard** included in this issue of *Network* and return it to the Freepost address
- Download the application form from the website at: **www.usdaw.org.uk/academy**
- Email: **academy@usdaw.org.uk**
- Call: **0161 224 2804**
- Write to:
**Paddy Lillis, Deputy General Secretary,
The Organising Academy,
Usdaw,
188 Wilmslow Road,
Manchester M14 6LJ**



10th Academy1



Next year's Academy1 recruitment process is now underway, Network talks to two of this year's intake...

The Academy – a fantastic experience for Mike

I've learned more in three years as an activist than my 30 years in retail, says 56 year-old Mike Faulkner from Liverpool.

"I came to the union late but I know I've found something I'm good at and I really enjoy. It's been an incredible journey," said Mike who works for Tesco in Bidston.

"Before the Academy I did a lot of stand-down, which was perfect preparation for my six months out with the union.

"I spent time in Express and Extra stores, B&M stores, Boots, Sainsbury's and Poundland.

"They each have a very different culture, and it was interesting getting to know the staff

and management.

"One of the best things about doing this is the relationships you build with other companies.

"I've done a lot of work with Co-op and One Stop stores, and I've learned a lot about the businesses. It's gone really well.

"Yes you have the down times when nothing appears to go right, but then you have the support of your coach and the other people on the Academy.

"These bad days are far outweighed by the times when you have a really positive and productive day and everything goes right.

"I would say to anybody considering the



Academy, go for it!

"It's a fantastic experience and you learn something new every day."

The Academy has changed me for ever, says Nia

The Academy has been the best experience ever and given me the confidence to take on new challenges and develop new skills, says 52 year-old Nia Williams (pictured on the left), a Co-op cluster rep from Llanrwst in North Wales.

"I can't get over the change in me in such a short time. I feel as though I could take on anything and anybody now. It's amazing.

"As my first language is Welsh and I'm from a Welsh speaking area, I've never had the confidence to converse effectively in English and now I speak with managers and people in authority in both languages.

"Also being a rep with the Co-op I'd never dealt with big stores and other companies.

"The help and support I've had from everyone involved with the Academy has been superb.

"I felt nervous and out of my depth at the assessment centre prior to being selected. I didn't have experience of some of the campaigns I thought they were mainly for the larger stores. But I stuck at it and the support from everyone was amazing. When I came through it I was really proud of myself.

"I've had a sensational journey with the Academy. I've learned so much and worked with some brilliant reps and officials. I'm so much more confident in my ability than I was six months ago.

"I've also made a lot of new friends.



"I'd certainly recommend the Academy to any rep who wants to develop further and improve their skills."

What happens next?

Successful applicants will be invited to a divisional development centre for two days to meet with tutors to discuss how the Academy works and if it is suitable.

**ACADEMY1 APPLICATION FORMS
MUST BE RECEIVED BY
27 JANUARY 2017**

ACADEMY1 STARTS ON 8 MAY 2017

The Academy in numbers:

Since 2003 **584** reps have graduated from the Academy
72 have gone on to take up full-time positions with Usdaw
14 have gone on to take up positions with other unions
110,000 the increase in Usdaw's membership since 2003



ADVICE & SUPPORT



FAIRNESS AT WORK



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EQUALITY MATTERS

November saw the popular Black Members' Weekend celebrate its 23rd birthday in Manchester...

This year it was bigger than ever with more than 40 members getting together from workplaces across the UK, and for almost two thirds of delegates it was their first time at the event.

Discussions this year included domestic violence, lifelong learning, encouraging more black workers to join the union and the rise in racist attacks and abuse post Brexit. A number of guest speakers also joined the delegates.

Brexit backlash

Racist attacks increased by 58 per cent following the Brexit result in June, but Usdaw reps responded with an unprecedented show of support for their colleagues and communities facing abuse by putting the union's new 'No Room for Racism' workplace campaign material on display in their workplaces.

"The impact of the divisive campaigning that surrounded the EU referendum saw a massive spike in racist attacks," said equalities officer **Jo Bird**.

"However the response

from Usdaw activists has been phenomenal with hundreds of reps and members eager to show solidarity and promote our anti-racist message."

Hope not hate

Delegates also heard from **John Page**, head of organising at Hope not Hate, an anti-racist charitable and campaigning organisation.

He said: "Trade unions are a key ally in our struggle against racism as your movement is based on the principles of 'Unity is strength' and 'we have more in common than things that divide us.' These messages are crucial in our struggle against racism and for equality."

Conference also discussed the issue of domestic abuse and the practical help reps can offer to members in abusive relationships who might be experiencing problems at work. **Polly Harrar**, founder of the charitable organisation, The Sharan Project, spoke about the particular difficulties women from South Asian communities face.

The Project has recently launched a new campaign 'Our Girl' which aims to raise awareness of 'forced marriage', increase reporting and reduce the number of people at risk.

"There is a huge difference between an arranged marriage and a forced marriage," she explained. "An arranged marriage is where both partners give their consent – a forced marriage is where one or neither partner consents."

Workshop sessions explained how to spot the possible signs that someone might be facing 'forced marriage' and the do's and don'ts when it comes to supporting them. Over the weekend members organised a raffle where more than £100 was raised for the Sharan Project.

The learning agenda

Mobile Union learning rep from Eastern division **Debbie Newman** spoke about her passion for Lifelong Learning and how, especially for those who feel that they missed out at school, getting involved in learning with the Union can boost their confidence and increase their skills and knowledge.

She was joined by **Simon Attipoe**, who works for Tesco Fennylock, he explained what a difference signing up to the English and maths courses has made to him.

"It was this experience that

made me realise I wanted to become a union learning rep myself," said Simon. "I have encouraged many members on my site, particularly those who don't have English as a first language, to sign up. It's a real success story."

Question time

Both the general secretary **John Hannett** and deputy general secretary **Paddy Lillis** held a Q&A session with delegates.

They both welcomed the effectiveness of the workshop in encouraging newer and less active members to get more involved in the union. However, they acknowledged there was still work to do.

"There is evidence that black and Asian members are under involved in the union," said John. "If Usdaw fully reflected the diversity of the sectors in which we organise we'd expect at least 13 per cent of our activists to be black or Asian. We are currently at around 7.5 per cent of our reps and just over six per cent of branch officers are black and/or Asian.

"Yes we've made progress but that is because the union takes positive action by organising events like this weekend."





Janet Nicholson – a great opportunity for reps like me

Janet Nicholson, 46, works at Sainsbury's, Brixton Hill, South West London. She has been a member for six years and a rep for two years.

"This was my first time at the weekend and an amazing new experience to be at a union event where black members are the majority, openly discussing issues

that affect them.

"The guest speakers were excellent, very interesting and informative.

"The highlight for me was listening to mobile union learning rep Debbie Newman and learner Simon Attipoe from Eastern division. They explained how they encouraged members

to get back into learning and how they set up a learning centre in their area.

"The social event gave us a great opportunity to relax and get to know each other.

"This weekend is a great opportunity for reps like me to meet up and learn from my colleagues right across the UK."

Jackie Brown – we discussed all the relevant issues

Jackie Brown, 56, works at Sainsbury's, Arnold in Nottingham. She has been a member for 12 years and a rep for 18 months.

"This was my first time at the Black Members' Weekend but definitely not my last. I can't wait for next year's.

"I made so many new friends

right from the minute I got off my train in Manchester and it was as if we'd known each other for years.

"The weekend was really varied and well organised from the role play to the question and answer sessions, and everyone joined in.

"We discussed very relevant issues ranging from the rise in racist attacks and abuse post-

Brexit to union learning and encouraging more black workers to join the union.

"Although I already felt confident in my role as a rep this event made me realise how much support there is from the union.

"I thoroughly enjoyed it. I'd recommend it to everyone."



Lukuman Mohammed – it was positive and productive

Lukuman Mohammed, 42, works at Morrisons in the North west division. He has been a rep for just under five years, a health and safety rep and a union learning rep for the last three years.

"It was a very positive and productive event and really well attended.

"It was great to see so many senior people from the union turn up like Paddy Lillis and John Hannett as well as Jo and Ruth from the equalities department.

"There were opportunities to speak to them and for them to speak to us about what the union is doing for its members.

"The organisers thought about everything from the accommodation to the topics we discussed and the speakers who were invited.

"I think everyone came away more informed and much more confident than when they arrived."

James Miene – a wonderful experience, a real eye-opener

James Miene, 50, works at Sainsbury's, Edinburgh. He has been a member for six years and a rep for six months.

"I've done other courses and attended Scottish TUC black members events before but this national Usdaw weekend is the best. It was a wonderful experience.

"The workshops were an eye-opener and the topics were so relevant to what is happening in our workplaces. We could all relate to the issues discussed.

"It was so well attended but we need to continue to encourage more people to come along as they bring fresh ideas and experiences.

"It's a great way to communicate with both members and reps. I've already been in touch with another rep I met from my division and we're going to meet up in Edinburgh.

"I came away feeling more confident in my knowledge and with more belief in my own ability to become a better rep."



Usdaw sent two delegations of lay activists and senior officials to the TUC and Labour Party conferences in the autumn where they spoke up on all of the key concerns of Usdaw members...

The scale of sexual harassment at work is truly shocking despite us being in the 21st century, general secretary John Hannett told conference as he welcomed the TUC's recently published *Still just a bit of banter?* report.

The research sheds light on the nature and extent of sexual harassment in the workplace and revealed that young women are particularly vulnerable, with two-thirds experiencing sexual harassment at work and four out of five women experiencing harassment not reporting it to their employer.

"The TUC has put the issue back where it belongs, on the agenda of employers, policy makers and politicians," he said.

"We have been working with employers to negotiate robust harassment policies that deliver practical results for women.

"Usdaw empowers our reps to send out the unequivocal message that harassment has no place whatsoever in the modern workplace; but despite this, sexual harassment persists and continues to damage the working lives of most women workers.

"We fully support the call for urgent action to promote respect and dignity, ridding every workplace of violence, abuse and harassment.

Congress delegates agreed to: Reach out to young workers and demonstrate the relevance of union support, work with employer organisations to change behaviour at work and support unions to tackle sexual harassment in the workplace.

Tory attacks condemned

Conservative plans to penalise low-paid workers by reducing their access to in-work benefits and imposing sanctions on people who are struggling to find the right working hours, were attacked by deputy general secretary **Paddy Lillis** when he addressed conference.

"In recent years, there has been a relentless assault on benefit claimants," he said. "Too often people are demonised as 'skivers' and some in the media want to convince us that claiming benefits is simply a lifestyle choice; there has been a clear strategy to dehumanize those who are reliant on the welfare system – it is totally unacceptable and wrong.

"During the last parliament, the Government cut nearly £17 billion from the annual welfare budget, taking money from working families who already had to choose between having a



meal or paying the gas bill. "The Government is now planning further cuts to in-work benefits through the introduction of the new punitive system of Universal Credit.

"It's clear that, despite Tory claims, Universal Credit is designed to deliver even further cruel cuts to the welfare state.

"Working people should be able to earn enough to be able to live comfortably, the Government's plan to remove in-work benefits will not solve the problem of in-work poverty."

Say no to racism

President **Jeff Broome** praised the work of reps who challenge racism, particularly in the wake of the Brexit vote, which some people saw as a green light to abuse migrant workers.

"We know that racism has

never gone away in this country, but certain groups and individuals have expressed views they previously wouldn't have dared to," he said. "That's why it is so important that we stand together to challenge racism.

"In the days following the referendum result Usdaw launched our 'No Room for Racism' campaign, with a range of literature and materials to give the campaign a real presence in workplaces. I'm proud to say that our reps have truly embraced this campaign.

"Events have been held in workplaces the length and breadth of the UK with thousands of members and non-members involved.

"Racism will not be tolerated in Usdaw organised workplaces. So I want to thank our reps for their excellent response."



TUC delegation 2016

UNITY KEY TO VICTORY

Workers want a radical alternative to the Tories austerity agenda, said deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis as he addressed conference as chair of the Labour Party at the annual event in October.

“Labour exists to fight social injustice, to campaign for equality and to ensure everyone in society is guaranteed a decent standard of living,” he said. “We have a duty and responsibility to the people and the communities we represent; to get ourselves into a position where we can win the next general election.

“Whatever our differences, we must remember that what unites us is more than what divides us. We must never forget we are all on the same side.

“We need to turn our attention to the policy agenda. Let us debate, discuss and take decisions in the spirit of unity. Let us organise ourselves as an effective opposition to the Tories and prepare ourselves to campaign to win – without winning, our principles and policies mean nothing.”



Deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis



Labour Party delegation 2016

Pay is the most important issue

The lives of too many working people are blighted by poverty, general secretary **John Hannett** told conference during the economy debate.

“Six million people are paid less than the Living Wage. Even more workers do not have enough hours of work to get by: 1.7 million workers are on zero-hour contracts and a further 5.4 million under-employed.

“It’s a modern-day scandal that so many workers have no security of employment, no security of hours and certainly no security of income.”

John Hannett went on to criticise the Government’s so-called living wage aimed solely at over 25-year-olds and called on anti-union companies to engage with Usdaw.

“Our challenge as a trade union is to negotiate workers onto the real Living Wage,” he said. “But that can only happen

if we recruit and organise staff into the union; but we also need positive engagement from employers. Together we can help grow the business, while ensuring staff are treated with respect, involved in decision making and properly rewarded for their work.

“So I say to employers like M&S and B&Q, who currently don’t recognise Usdaw, to drop their opposition to staff being represented by an independent trade union. If you are genuinely a good employer, who treats your staff well and with respect, you have nothing to fear from an independent trade union like Usdaw – we are problem solvers not problem causers.”

No more Philip Greens

Labour shadow chancellor **John McDonnell** pledged to clampdown on dodgy takeover deals in the wake of the BHS scandal. “We’ll shake up how our major corporations work and change how our economy is owned and managed,” he said.

“We’ll clamp down on the abuses of power at the very top. There’ll be no more Philip



Shadow chancellor John McDonnell MP

Greens under Labour and we will legislate to rewrite company law to prevent them – including legislation to ban companies taking on excessive debt to pay out dividends to shareholders. We’ll also rewrite the Takeover Code to make sure every takeover proposal has a clear plan in place to pay workers and pensioners.”



Join the Labour party at:
www.usdaw.org.uk/labour



Trio look to retirement



Irene Radigan



Lawrence Wason



Denise Gordon

Two senior officials and a lifelong learning project worker have retired recently...

Irene Radigan

National officer Irene Radigan retired in December after 28 years on the union's staff and almost 40 years' union membership. She joined Usdaw in 1978 and went on to become convenor at Rowallan creamery in Kilmarnock, and held a number of divisional roles.

Irene, 55, was appointed an area organiser in 1988 and moved from her native Scotland to work out of the Newcastle office.

Then 26, she was one of the youngest organisers in Usdaw and just under ten years later she would be appointed the youngest national officer when she took up her position at central office in late 1997, only the second woman to hold the role.

Initially her main responsibilities were for the retail food sector and distribution where she looked after the fast-growing Tesco membership and Irene was instrumental in delivering the groundbreaking partnership agreement in 1998. She later switched responsibility to the transport sector in 2007.

"Udaw has been my life," she said. "It's all I've known. From negotiating terms and conditions on-site, fighting illegal Sunday trading in the late '80s, the arrival of Wal-Mart in the UK, the growth of Tesco – it's been an amazing time and one of massive changes.

"The union has transformed itself too and without that we wouldn't be in the strong position we are now in.

Irene will return to her native Scotland, to Mauchline in Ayrshire, where she intends to

spend more time with her family and friends. "I've no firm plans. I'm going to take some time out but I may reignite my involvement in Scottish politics, we'll see.

"I've loved what I've done over the last four decades but it's the right time for me. It's been a great job and I've been paid for a job I'd have done for free. It's been a pleasure."

Lawrence Wason

Scottish divisional officer Lawrence Wason has called time on his lifelong association with Usdaw after he retired in December after 21 years on the staff and a membership that stretches back to 1973.

Lawrence, 60, was a founder member of the Broxburn Bacon branch at Halls of Broxburn near Edinburgh and went on to become convenor at the site in 1978 looking after around 1,200 members.

He joined the organising staff in 1995 and was based at the Edinburgh office. Promotion to deputy divisional officer followed in 2004 before he was appointed to divisional officer in 2007 when he moved to the Glasgow office.

"I always wanted to be an area organiser so everything after that was a bonus," he said.

"I've worked with some tremendous people and many former colleagues who have helped me through the ranks over the years. We've shared many highs and a few lows too – the closure of Halls being one of them.

"There've been many changes as well within the union since I joined. We are more methodical these days, we're more accountable too. The Academies have helped as has the training for reps. So all round we're a more professional organisation now.

"I've been a lifelong Labour Party activist and seen the Tories from Thatcher in and out of power and unfortunately back again. And I've seen Labour all but wiped out in Scotland at the last election. No one saw that coming, so it's a long way back."

As for the future Lawrence intends to 'relax and enjoy' his retirement. "I'm going to put my feet up. I'll also be spending more time with my wife and our three granddaughters, hopefully improving my golf and doing some travelling.

"I've had a fantastic time with Usdaw and given the chance I'd do it all over again."

Denise Gordon

Lifelong learning project worker Denise Gordon retired in October completing 13 years in the education department and 26 years after she first joined Usdaw.

The 61 year-old joined Usdaw in 1990 when she worked for Littlewoods mail order in Shaw in Oldham. She took on the role of learning rep in 1999 and joined the union's staff in 2003 in the North West division.

"It's been exciting times, opening new workplace learning centres, seeing new reps taking on the role and progressing. It's an incredible feeling watching a learner achieve their first qualification ever.

"I'm sure I'll be able to keep myself busy! I'm heavily involved with my local bowling and darts club and I enjoy my trips to Portugal. I'm also looking forward to spending more time with my husband Terry and our eleven grandchildren.

"I'm going to miss all the reps and my colleagues and I wish Usdaw and our reps every success with the learning agenda."

UNION APPEALS TO MANAGERS

It was a busy weekend for Sata reps at their biennial conference in November, Network was there too....

Increases in the national living wage will pose major challenges for Sata as they begin to take in more and more supervisory and managerial grades, national officer **Daniel Adams** told conference.

"As a union we need to be ahead of the curve and not following the living wage minimum, set to be around £9 an hour by 2020," he said.

"This is a challenge for company pay structures across the economy as workers will rightly ask themselves why they should take on more responsibility when their hourly rates are only marginally above the legal minimum.

"It's been a hugely difficult time for Sata reps as most companies have changed, removed or restructured their managerial grades during the last 12-24 months.

"If ever there was a time for supervisors and managers to be in the union then it's now. We've seen what's happening in M&S where changes are being railroaded through.

"We also know tribunal fees are stopping many workers seeking justice through the legal system so the only hope workers have is to be part of the union."

First class Firstcall

Usdaw's Legal Plus service is the best cover provided by any union in the UK, **Daniel Whipp** of Rowley Dickinson Solicitors told delegates.

"High street firms can't compete with it and to make matters worse they will take at least 25 per cent of any compensation," he said.

"Often they will also insist a claimant takes out an expensive insurance policy against losing. So for example, if you are awarded £2,000, the high street firm take £500, your insurance premium costs £400 leaving you with just £1,100. With Usdaw you keep the whole £2,000."

Daniel reminded conference of the additional accident cover, including road traffic accidents, for family members living at the same address, the free-will service, the free advice offer, representation for work-related prosecutions (eg age-related sales, or driving offences) and a discounted rate for probate and conveyancing issues where appropriate.



Daniel Whipp



Daniel Adams

"Sata reps have a key role to help promote Legal Plus and FirstCall Usdaw and it will help recruit new members too. Don't forget unless you're in the union it's unlikely you could afford to take a case to a tribunal since the introduction of fees, which are currently around £1,200.

"Add to all of this, advice on pensions and health and safety and you'd be foolish to go anywhere else but Usdaw."

Helping Mencap

There are 1.4m people with a learning disability in the UK and while 900,000 are of working age only 63,000 are in paid work, Mencap's **Zoe Purdy** revealed to conference.

"This is a shocking statistic so it's important we get good employers to help us bridge this gap," she said. "Employers who don't have a diverse workforce are missing out on a vast



Zoe Purdy

pool of talent. Our clients are conscientious, hard working, reliable and customers respond positively to companies who take on a worker with a learning disability. We don't want special treatment for our clients, and nor do they.

"Union reps can help Mencap break down the barriers and myths around employing someone with a learning disability. We are happy to come into workplaces and explain what we do, what our clients can do and how together we can change people's lives."



Sata
Supervisory, Administrative,
and Technical Association

Campaign days drive recruitment

Busy reps are using the Freedom From Fear and Lifelong Learning campaigns to boost membership...

Tesco, Uttoxeter

Academy1 organiser Denise Evans teamed up with the reps at the Uttoxeter Tesco Superstore in Staffordshire to help them organise their first in-store campaign.

“With Respect for Shopworkers Week in mind the team chose the Freedom From Fear campaign as it gave them the opportunity to speak to customers and explain the kind of incidents staff have to deal with,” said Denise, 55, who works at the New Oscott Tesco Extra store in Sutton Coldfield.

“Many were surprised to learn about the procedure staff have to go through with Challenge 25 and the problems this can cause with some customers even by just asking for ID and even worse if they have to refuse a sale.

“The reps felt the campaign day really got the message across. It was a huge success and highlighted a lot of issues that shoppers hadn’t thought about before.

“It was great to raise the union’s profile in the store and to see the reps working together building their confidence and developing their own organising skills.”

Denise is one of the 58 reps on this year’s intake who have just completed

six months with the Organising Academy.

She added: “The Academy has been an amazing experience. My confidence has certainly grown. I’ve learned so much on the six-month secondment away from my own store, working with new reps and officials entirely on union projects and campaigns.

“When I look back now it’s hard to believe the Uttoxeter store is just one of the 28 stores I’ve been involved with during my time with the Academy.”

Martin Brower, Basingstoke

Busy night shift worker and rep Anna Beszterda has managed to combine studying and being a mother at her distribution site in Basingstoke and is looking to help her colleagues get the most out of the on-site facilities.

The 27 year-old general assistant works at the Martin Brower centre, formerly Keystone distribution, which supplies fast food outlets such as McDonalds.

“I’ve been a union learning rep (ULR) for three months,” said Anna. “I’m a learner myself and completed a level 2 Diploma in Business Administration and Functional skills and now I’m studying for my level 3.

“I took on the ULR role to help my colleagues gain qualifications so they could be proud of their achievements too.

“I know how difficult it is to work full-time especially on nights and be a mum and learn at the same time, but it is possible!

“And it pays back, as soon as you receive your certificates, you look at them and think – it was worth it!”

She has been helped by fellow rep Mick Grodynski, lifelong learning project worker Lawrence Miller and the site’s head of HR Martyn Hall. “I’m learning more about my new role every day. It’s such a nice feeling when people thank you for being their rep,” added Anna.



TESCO UTTOXETER



MARTIN BROWER/MCDONALDS

“We organised our first lifelong learning event in October and it was a huge success. Spanish, Polish and ESOL courses were very popular with 25 people signing up for courses on the first day. We recruited six new members too bringing membership to just under 90 per cent.

“We have our own learning centre and support from our local college. Everyone is committed and keen to learn and management is very open to learning and new innovations. It’s a very positive environment to work in.”

Tesco, Warwick

Academy rep Andy Sadler combined with mobile union learning rep Fiona Kerr to deliver a variety of online learning courses at the Tesco superstore in Warwick.

English, maths and foreign languages were among the most popular with new members signing up for the first time and others returning for more.



View the Recruitment and Organising Gallery on the UsdawUnion Flickr page

Membership for week ended 19 November 2016

South Wales and Western	50,899
Eastern	65,002
Midlands	56,403
North Eastern	60,019
Scottish	45,688
Southern	63,169
North West	94,747
Total	435,927



“It was a very successful day, it went really well,” said dotcom driver Andy, 53, who works at the Tesco Extra store at Cross Point in Coventry.

“Staff were surprised at the variety of courses on offer. The ever-popular sign-language was a big hit, as was the basic, intermediate and advanced computer skills courses with one member interested in writing his own app.

“We also had a member who had already completed a learn at home course who wanted to sign up for another. That’s what I enjoy most about lifelong learning watching people develop, not only their skills but more importantly their confidence.

“Comments from staff were really positive ranging from ‘we didn’t realise what was on offer’ to ‘the last course was great, what can I do next?’ and ‘all of this is available through the union and free?’”

“There are no learning room facilities in the store at the moment but I’m

sure it could be arranged if the demand continues to grow.

“It’s always good to have someone like Fiona at these events as their experience is invaluable in guiding people in the right direction.

“As for me I enjoy being a rep. I’ve done stand-down and just finished my time on the Academy. As an activist I’ve had excellent training and completed many courses. I’ve enjoyed every new challenge.”

Tesco Extra, Kettering

Dotcom picker and Academy organiser Stevie Cassidy joined forces with reps at Kettering Tesco Extra to promote workplace learning to staff at the Northamptonshire store.

“We don’t have a union learning rep at this store but we knew many members had asked about courses and the learning opportunities available,” said Stevie, 28, who has been a rep for two

years and works at the Tesco Extra store in Corby

“We wanted to encourage members to come forward and chat with the reps and discuss the kind of learning and courses they would be interested in.

“It was very successful, we had a lot of interest from staff in the store and also from the Dotcom drivers.

“The feedback was really positive and we even have a member who wants to take on the role of ULR.

“One of the drivers, who is also a volunteer with the St John’s Ambulance service, offered to help run an uncertified first-aid session once we have the new ULR in place and providing there is enough interest.

“Reps are keen to start working alongside the new ULR and run another learning day. As for myself, it was another great opportunity, not only to work with a superb team of reps, but also to highlight the work the union and its reps are doing to promote the learning campaign.”

Mental health and Legal Plus

Tesco, Fenny Lock

It was a team effort when the reps at the Tesco Fenny Lock warehouse in Milton Keynes ran a Mental Health Awareness day in September.

They were supported by charities Bipolar UK and Mind, and from the Milton Keynes Neighbourhood Employment programme and a local mental health centre to get the message across to colleagues that mental health is a union concern.

"The day went very well," said union learning rep Gary Cooper, 61, who helped co-ordinate the day.

"We were set up in the staff restaurant and the learning centre doubled up as a quiet room where people could talk personally with the various representatives.

"There was information on mental health and useful contact numbers for people to take away with them.

"After the awareness day I had three members of staff who wanted some guidance and to be pointed in the right direction for help.

"Many colleagues, including those who missed the day, have been asking when we're holding the next one.

"One of the main points we wanted to get across was to encourage workers to speak to their rep who can then offer information on where members can get help."

Equalities officer Ruth Cross provided the union team with Usdaw's set of publications too. "Not only did the event offer support and advice to individual members, it also sent out a clear message that it's OK to talk about depression, anxiety and other mental health problems."

Primark, Ipswich

Reps at the Primark store in Ipswich recruited 16 new members in total after a successful Legal Plus day in September with a magnificent seven signing up on the day.

New reps Maria Brill and Donna

Curtis worked closely with area organiser Gary Renwick and stand-down rep Leanne McGregor to arrange the event.

"We've never been involved in a union campaign before so it was a brand new experience for us both," said Donna, 50.

"Gary was brilliant, so supportive and encouraging. He helped us with every aspect of planning and delivering the day to make sure it all ran smoothly and it was a complete success.

"We were also delighted with the support from our HR manager Ray Challoner before and on the day itself."

Leanne McGregor, 45, usually based at the Kings Lynn store 60 miles away, echoed Donna's positive remarks. "Maria and Donna are keen to promote the union to build the membership and there's no better way to do this than holding a Legal Plus day," she said.

Organiser Gary Renwick from the Bury St Edmunds office agreed. "It's an ideal way to help build a bigger profile in companies such as Primark where there is a huge potential for membership. Highlighting the many benefits of union membership did pay off," he said.

"Although the reps already have a membership base at the store the potential to build on this is massive. It couldn't have gone any better as the event generated a lot of interest in-store."

Tesco, Market Weighton, York

Sainsbury's rep Michele Jones has come a long way since taking on her first union role at the Pocklington store four years ago.

She is now a union learning rep and branch chair and has just completed six months as an Academy Organiser.



TESCO FENNY LOCK



PRIMARK IPSWICH

"I enjoy every aspect of my union work and the opportunity to take on a variety of new challenges," said Michele, 49, who lives in York.

"My latest role with the Academy has been my biggest learning curve so far. "I've worked closely with reps at the Karro Food Production site in Malton and the Sainsbury's distribution site in Sherburn.

"Both very different workplaces and set-ups compared to my own background in retail but each experience has been equally beneficial in terms of personal development.

"With the Academy there's no two days the same. The back up and support from your coach, fellow Academy reps and all the officials in your division is there whenever you need it.

"We held a successful Legal Plus



Email the Network team: network@usdaw.org.uk



Visit the Usdaw website at: www.usdaw.org.uk



TESCO MARKET WEIGHTON



MORRISONS YATE

day at the Tesco superstore in Market Weighton in East Ridings in September and recruited five new members on the day.

"Its success was down to the reps team who worked extremely well together to advertise the event and organise an appointment list of time slots for members who wanted to see the solicitor.

"There was a lot of interest from staff for the free will-writing facility as well as a range of personal legal queries. Holding the event in-store created a real buzz and helped to show members and non-members the benefits of joining."

Morrisons Yate, Bristol

Reps at the Morrisons store in Yate, Bristol held their first union event and

used a Legal Plus day in September to recruit new members and raise Usdaw's profile.

"It was a huge success," said store rep Chris Green, 62, who has been a rep for seven years and a health and safety rep for four years. "Members were really impressed with what our legal service could do for them,"

"Both myself and fellow rep Wendy Dracup were really grateful for the help of our area organiser Adrian Grabarski and Academy rep Marie Pollard.

"We had so many positive comments from staff. "Most people said they were delighted they could book an appointment at work with the union solicitor Keri Howarth, who was marvellous by the way.

"And that they could arrange their wills for free and also discuss a range of legal issues without having to leave

their workplace.

"The event not only showed the legal service off in a good light but the union too and getting new members signed up was the icing on the cake.

"We've lost count of how many people who have asked when are we holding the next one. It might just have to become a regular event!"

Marie Pollard was full of praise for the store reps. "The Academy has given me the opportunity to work with activists like Chris and Wendy, who did a fantastic job making the Legal Plus day a real success," said the 56 year-old, a rep for six years at the Sainsbury's store in Ashton, Bristol.

"Both are dedicated reps who are keen to improve their skills and promote the benefits of the union in their workplace."

More photos at: www.usdaw.org.uk

Winter safety warning

Winter is on its way. At some stage snow and ice may cause problems up and down the country. Employers should have plans in place to deal with the problem before it happens. Check out Usdaw's winter advice.

Heating systems should have been serviced before the cold weather hits. Employers have a duty to maintain a reasonable temperature in indoor workplaces at all times.

The Approved Code of Practice to the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations states that 16 degrees Celsius (or 13 degrees Celsius for physically strenuous work) is normally the minimum requirement.

There will be some indoor workplaces where this cannot be done. In such cases employers should try to minimise the time spent in the cold. They should also take other steps such as providing suitable protective clothing.

If the heating breaks down or if it can't cope in exceptional cold spells, then the employer should have a back-up policy in place. Hiring temporary heating, providing free hot drinks, relaxing uniform and dress codes, and giving more frequent breaks may all be appropriate depending on the circumstances.

For outside workers; minimising exposure, protective clothing and access to somewhere warm for rest breaks are required.

Preparation is everything

Employers should stock up on salt and grit so that yards, delivery areas, points of access etc are kept as clear of ice as possible to ensure the safety of people using them.

Leaking pipes and spillages should be repaired and cleared to stop ice forming and creating slip hazards. Good lighting in and around the workplace can also reduce the risk of an accident.

Warm clothing is important when working in cold conditions outside or even indoors where it is difficult to maintain a reasonable minimum temperature. This should be issued as Personal Protective Equipment if a risk assessment dictates and should not be left to the whim of a manager.

Usdaw reps should regularly inspect the workplace and ensure control measures are implemented to minimise the risk to members during cold periods.

Where members drive for their job, employers should provide refresher training on defensive driving in winter e.g.

- checking lights, wipers, etc. before going out;
- checking the weather forecast before doing deliveries;
- carry a mobile phone, shovel, flask of hot tea/coffee and have a blanket on board.
- And it should be clear that the driver can abandon a journey if it isn't safe

Travel safety checklist

Travel to and from work can be a problem when snow and ice is around. People are advised to follow Government advice on whether it is safe to travel. If you drive your own car to work there is useful Government advice on driving in winter conditions.

Check out the Highways Agency advice at www.highways.gov.uk

If you don't think it is safe to attempt the journey, follow any procedures set by your employer about contacting work to say you won't be in.

Even if you do decide to travel remember the journey will take longer and take basic precautions in case there are further delays. For example:

- check the weather forecast and road conditions
- consider other routes
- consider other types of transport
- allow extra time for your journey
- ensure that your vehicle is prepared for the journey
- carry warm clothing, blankets, hot drinks, a torch, a shovel, and suitable footwear
- tell someone at your destination what time you expect to arrive.

UNDER YOUR SKIN

There are over 40,000 new cases of occupational skin disease reported every year in the UK with experts convinced there are many more who suffer in silence.

The damage can become permanent for some workers, resulting in chronic

conditions that do not get better even when they are removed from the cause of the damage.

The two main forms of skin disease for Usdaw members are Irritant Contact Dermatitis and Allergic Contact Dermatitis

Irritant Contact Dermatitis (ICD)

Regular exposure to chemicals or processes, which damage the skin can result in more serious problems.

If the outer protective layer (the epidermis) is damaged then chemicals and infection can get deeper. Itching, redness and swelling may be the first signs of damage.

If it is ignored the long term effects can include serious infections, pain and flaking or scaling of the skin. If you have hands that are cracked and swollen or are weeping from open wounds, it isn't only painful and disfiguring. It can also

affect your ability to do your job.

Wet work is one of the main causes of ICD. Workers who spend more than two hours a day with their hands in water or who have to wash their hands more than 20 times a day are at risk.

It isn't only hairdressers who are affected. Usdaw members who work as cleaners or in catering or food processing are exposed to the risks of wet working.

Other things that can cause ICD include soaps and detergents, solvents and some foodstuffs (eg onions).

Allergic Contact Dermatitis (ACD)

ACD affects smaller numbers of workers than ICD. Symptoms are similar, but the big difference is that the worker has become sensitised as a result of exposure.

Even the smallest exposure after that can trigger a reaction.

Substances that can trigger an allergic

reaction include beauty products and fragrances, some food and plant products, printing inks, glues, nickel and natural latex (which is sometimes used for gloves).

According to the HSE, employers should follow a 3-step programme to protect workers from skin diseases.

What you can do

AVOID: Where possible remove the hazardous substance altogether or substitute it with a less-damaging alternative. If this can't be done look at engineering solutions to avoid contact – e.g. using tongs or other long-handled tools.

PROTECT: Personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, aprons and overalls can provide protection where it is not practical to avoid contact. However, any gloves provided must be the right type and must fit the worker. Wearing waterproof gloves for long periods can itself cause a problem because they trap sweat inside the glove. Barrier creams and moisturising creams can also be useful in some situations.

CHECK: Where there is a known risk of skin injury, the employer should appoint a competent person to carry out regular inspections of workers hands to look for signs of damage.

They should also inform workers of the risk and train them to report any symptoms at an early stage.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPS' CHECKLIST

- Keep your eyes and ears open.
- Ask members if they get itchy skin, rashes or other problems at work?
- What do they think is causing the problem?
- Pay particular attention if there are

In conversation with Pat Herschell...

“

I work at Morrisons Carmondean, Livingstone in

Scotland, as a stock and systems assistant. I have been a rep since 2007.

As a rep I aim to maintain a safe environment and encourage best practice.

We have about 70 per cent membership density at our store and I'm one of two trained reps. At the moment we don't have a rep on nightshift. I've done part one and two of the union's training courses. I would advise anyone who is interested in being a safety rep to find out about the education and support the union provides.

We discuss with management any suggestions or issues as and when they arise. A typical day for me is checking the fire exits are clear and ensuring any potential slips or trips hazards are dealt with. You can never be too careful, so we take practical measures like putting up posters on the noticeboard and reminding staff of any risks.

My proudest moment was when the company agreed to my suggestion of free flu jabs for staff which they've provided for a couple of years.

I have also dealt with car park lighting, the smoking area being too far away from the entrance, late night working and transport issues when on extended hours at Xmas. So now the car park lighting has been adjusted, the smoking area has been moved and travel arrangements have been put in place.



members working as cleaners or in catering or food processing.

- If there is an issue, check that management have done a risk assessment?
- Are they following the Avoid/Protect/Check approach, which the HSE recommends?
- If gloves are needed are they the right type. Are they available in the right sizes? Are they replaced when necessary?
- For high risk workers is there a competent person who does regular skin checks?
- Are the workers themselves trained to do their own checks and to report any concerns?

There is more valuable information on the HSE website:

www.hse.gov.uk and search **dermatitis**



Your Pictures



TWEET DECK

Some of Network's favourite tweets to @UsdawUnion

@a_gannon516
I'm very happy to have become an @UsdawUnion rep. Looking forward to the new role.

@millard1973
At Westminster with @UsdawUnion Freedom from fear campaign with MP's. Abuse isn't part of any job.

@ChiOnwurah



Shopworkers deserve #respect16 #FreedomFromFear violence, threats or abuse. I'm supporting @UsdawUnion campaign

@MGreenwoodWW



Show support for @UsdawUnion #FreedomFromFear campaign - show respect to our shopworkers

@AngelaRayner



Very happy to support @UsdawUnion Keep your cool respect shop workers freedom from fear campaign

SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD



Clockwise from top: Tesco Talbot Green, Llantrisant; Morrisons Morfa, Swansea; and Tesco Brixton.



Pictured in: Tesco Woodend, Aberdeen; Tesco Bradley Stoke, Bristol; and Tesco Truro.





A dedicated space to share your news, views and achievements. Let us know what you have been up to and you could win £50! Please send letters/emails and photos to either of the addresses given above. We reserve the right to edit all letters published.

Membership loyalty celebrated



Clockwise from top left: Lynne Huxtable, Tesco Roberorough, Plymouth; Christopher McCall, Midland Dairies E115 branch; Paul Bailey, Tesco Extra Dunfermline; Julie Rhodes and Agnes Earley, Shop Direct, Raven Mill, Oldham.

Picture round-up



Clockwise from top left: Recruiting in Morrisons Chesterfield; Tesco St. Austell's Legal Plus day; Maidstone Morrisons Legal Plus day; Tesco Congleton campaign for Freedom From Fear; Tesco Knocknagoney encourage colleagues to 'Get online'; South and West Midlands Federation School; Summer School support the TUC's 'Fair Play Qatar' campaign.



Correction... In the September/October issue of Network we mistakenly labled a picture 'South Wales and Western federation school' when it should have been the 'South and West Midlands federation school'.

KEEP YOUR RESPECT SHOPWORKERS COOL

See more Respect Day pictures at:
www.usdaw.org.uk/gallery



PRIMARK KINGS LYNN
Eastern division



TESCO EXTRA CARDIFF
South Wales and Western division



CO-OP NORTON CANES
Midlands division



TESCO BOGNOR REGIS
Southern division



TESCO CLECKHEATON
North Eastern division



MORRISONS CHESTER
North West division



MORRISONS HAWICK
Scottish division