

NETWORK

THE BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR USDAW ACTIVISTS | MARCH/APRIL 2022



CELEBRATING GREAT ACTIVISTS

USDAW RECOGNISES REPS
IN GLITTERING CEREMONY

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NO RESPIRE FROM COST OF LIVING

It's been two years since the pandemic began, a life-changing event that impacted us in ways that we couldn't possibly have imagined.

The vast majority of Usdaw members were suddenly recognised as key workers delivering essential services yet their pay did not reflect the enormity of their contributions.

Low-paid workers, already struggling to make ends meet, will be heading into Spring with rocketing food and fuel prices, soaring energy bills and real wages struggling to keep pace. The planned increase to National Insurance contributions in April will have a devastating impact on families across the UK. The Resolution Foundation has calculated that the average household will lose £1,200 during 2022.

The Government has very deliberately started to link the cost of living crisis to the war in Ukraine. A cynical strategy to push the message that we all need to make sacrifices. However, we cannot let this kind of rhetoric deflect from the facts that it was this Government that weakened public services through a decade of austerity, failed to regulate the energy market, failed to properly invest into alternative sources of energy, allowed wages to stagnate, saw foodbanks soar in towns and cities and wrote off the billions



that were lost due to covid fraud and error. The causes of this crisis were already in place well before the war in Ukraine.

Food and fuel poverty is not unavoidable. It is a political choice made by the Government, who for too long has abdicated its responsibilities to charities and food banks. This is not a long-term strategy. What we need is substantial action from the Government to help low-paid workers through the cost of living crisis. We need a new deal for workers with a minimum wage of at least £10 per hour immediately.

Usdaw General Secretary

Paddy Lewis

When you have finished with this magazine, give it to a workmate.



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- Support while you deal with your money worries, for as long as you need their help.

 **USDAW**

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SPRING BUDGET FAILS TO DELIVER

Usdaw branded the Spring Statement as a missed opportunity to help low paid workers cope with the cost of living crisis, as the Retail Price Index (RPI) tops 8 per cent, the highest it's been in over 30 years.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Today was an opportunity to deliver the prime minister's promise to 'build back better', but regrettably the chancellor stuck to 'business as usual'.

"As the cost of living crisis rages, with RPI reaching yet another 30-year high, the measures which included a 5p cut to fuel duty, the possibility of cutting the basic rate of income tax from 20p to 19p (in two years' time) and raising the threshold for the amount people earn before they pay national insurance to £12,570, are simply not enough.

"Too many workers are struggling to make ends meet in low-paid insecure employment and are desperate for substantial help from the Government. Usdaw has called for a minimum wage of at least £10 per



hour for all workers, along with an end to precarious short-hours and zero-hours contracts, but the Government is simply not listening.

"The chancellor remained silent on Universal Credit and as things stand, claimants will only get a 3.1 per cent increase when inflation is over 8 per cent - a big cut in income for the lowest paid workers.


"The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has warned

that if the benefit increase stays as it is, nine million low-income households will be impacted - to the tune of £500 a year.


"I'm afraid the Government has today not done what workers need in the face of the cost of living crisis.

"The Government has simply failed to understand the scale of the challenge faced by millions of workers across the country."

Have you been affected by the cost of living crisis? Do you want to share your story? Get in touch and help us raise awareness.

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CAMPAIGNING FOR CARERS

GOVERNMENT CARELESS ABOUT CARERS

Unpaid carers often face additional costs associated with needing to keep those they care for safe, providing extra care, nutrition, and support and many face financial hardship as a consequence of their caring responsibilities.

To better understand how carers are coping financially, Carers UK surveyed 3,300 carers and found that the financial pressure many are facing is now unsustainable. Forty five per cent of unpaid carers are currently unable to manage their monthly expenses and 46 per cent feel the oncoming increases in energy bills will negatively affect their own physical and mental health or that of the person they care for.

Many said they were having to take difficult steps to manage their monthly expenses; 58 per cent have cut back on heating and 14 per cent have already fallen into arrears with their energy bills

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "The vast majority of care in the UK is provided by family and friends. Without their willingness and ability to provide the care they do, local authority social services and the NHS would collapse under

the strain. So the Government owes them a great deal.

"Never has it been more important to recognise the vital role carers play and call for improvements to the support they receive. Over the last two years many thousands of working people have stepped in to fill the gap in care caused by the pandemic and thousands more have upped the amount of care they give. The time is right to again put the focus on carers and seek greater support for their role from the Government.

"All too often carers feel life is a pressure cooker of competing demands, with worries about money, time off work, their own health and that of the person they are caring for. The support carers received before the pandemic fell far short of what was needed. Now, with more people than ever providing care, the Government must act to recognise and properly reward their enormous contribution."

Usdaw and Carers UK are calling on the Government to:

- Increase Carer's Allowance and other benefits in line with current inflation predictions for

April 2022. Carer's Allowance is set to rise by only 3.1 per cent in April 2022, while inflation (CPI) is expected to reach 8 per cent.

- Immediately extend the Warm Home Discount scheme to ensure that it includes carers. This is in recognition of the additional energy costs often faced by unpaid carers.
- Increase the level of carers' benefits including Carer's Allowance so that it is no longer the lowest benefit of its kind.
- Raise the earnings limit for those claiming Carer's Allowance, so that it is at least equal to 16 hours work at the National Living Wage (and pegged to it in future).
- Provide a Carer's Allowance Supplement to all carers with an entitlement in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, as those in Scotland have received since 2018, so all carers across the UK receive the same level of support.

Are you, or have you been a carer? Get in touch and share your story to help us raise awareness and strengthen our lobbying efforts.

COST OF LIVING

INFLATION YET AGAIN HITS NEW 30-YEAR HIGH

As the cost of living crisis rages across the UK, the annual consumer price index rate of inflation hit 6.2 per cent adding further pressure to households already struggling to make ends meet. Measured by the retail price index, which more accurately reflects Usdaw members' spending, inflation is 8.2 per cent.

The Office for National Statistics said the largest contributors to growing inflation were increased

energy bills and fuel prices.

The Bank of England warns that CPI inflation could reach 8 per cent next month, driven by the 54 per cent rise in the energy cap that is set to come into force on 1 April and will affect 22 million households.

The result of Usdaw's Cost of Living Survey shows how much the crisis is already affecting workers in low-paid industries, even before April's uplift in the energy price

cap and the increase in National Insurance contributions.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Low-paid workers will be heading into Spring with rocketing food and fuel prices, soaring energy bills and real wages struggling to keep pace. The planned increase to National Insurance contributions in April will have a devastating impact on families across the UK."

network@usdaw.org.uk

UN ANTI-RACISM DAY

USDAW PROUDLY MARCHES AGAINST RACISM



Marching in the Anti-Racism Rally in Cardiff

Usdaw proudly supported the national demonstrations against racism in Cardiff, Glasgow and London held over a weekend in March. The UN Anti-Racism Day saw international protests taking place in cities around the world under the slogan 'World Against Racism & Fascism'.

The national demonstrations were an important and timely reminder that Britain remains an unequal society where the colour of your skin makes you more vulnerable to unemployment, low pay, poor health, harassment and abuse.

It is well documented that Black and minority ethnic workers and communities have been

disproportionately affected by coronavirus, with the most devastating impact being the high number of deaths, especially among key workers delivering essential services.

Only this week a council report found racism had been a likely factor in a black schoolgirl being strip-searched by Metropolitan police officers over unfounded suspicions that she had cannabis.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Thousands of people showed their solidarity with and support for those people and communities facing bigotry and hate.

"Racism and racial harassment takes many different forms but the

result is the same - stress, health problems, loss of confidence and real psychological and physical injury. It affects all aspects of a person's life leaving them feeling isolated, marginalised and unable to exercise their rights or live their lives as they choose. It often results in workers leaving their jobs rather than face continuing harassment.

"Usdaw's own 'No Room for Racism' campaign involves the union's reps running workplace campaigns all year round; doing what our reps do best, standing up for workers, bringing people together. They engage members, non-members and employers with our anti-racist message - 'not in my name, not in my workplace!'"

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ITUC

UKRAINE CONFLICT UNITES LABOUR MOVEMENT

Usdaw joined the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) on a global day of solidarity with Ukraine.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has left thousands dead and forced millions to flee their homes. The United Nations has called it the fastest-growing refugee crisis since the Second World War.

The relentless shelling of major cities like Kyiv and Mariupol has exacerbated the humanitarian catastrophe as shelling cuts off power stations and other supply lines, effectively trapping people in a war zone in freezing temperatures, with dwindling food and medical supplies.

Several rounds of diplomatic talks between Russia and Ukraine have failed to stop the war. The United States and the European Union have



imposed tough economic sanctions and pressure from consumers across the world has led to hundreds of businesses suspending operations in Russia. In addition, the UK has imposed sanctions on over 350 Russians including oligarchs and their families.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Today we are standing in

solidarity with the people of Ukraine, who continue to suffer in desperate circumstances because of Russia's illegal invasion. Russian attacks on Ukraine have had a devastating impact on millions of civilians; leaving homes, workplaces and infrastructure severely damaged and causing a humanitarian crisis." network@usdaw.org.uk

CRYING OUT FOR AN AGREEMENT

BOOHOO CHANGE STILL A WORK IN PROGRESS

Despite representing workers at Boohoo's warehouse and call centre in Burnley along with the head office in Manchester, the company refuses to recognise Usdaw, leaving staff without a real voice at work.

Retired judge Sir Brian Leveson was appointed to provide oversight for Boohoo's 'Agenda For Change' programme following its supply chain scandal, which found that some workers in factories supplying some Boohoo brands were being paid less than the minimum wage.

Sir Brian's final report said, 'challenges and difficulties' remain at the fast fashion giant, stating that the company needs to operate ethically through its supply chain and within the business.

Usdaw continues to urge Boohoo

to not only clean up their supply chain, but also engage with the union to help repair their reputation and ensure their own staff are treated with fairness and respect. Something they promised to do when in front of the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee.

Sir Brian Leveson's report said: "I have no doubt that there will continue to be challenges and difficulties along the way and Boohoo must be prepared to demonstrate that, in relation to each aspect of its business, it has exercised due diligence to ensure that legal and ethical standards have been maintained by all both in the business itself or, just as important, in its supply chain."

Usdaw regional secretary Mike Aylward said: "It is very disappointing that Boohoo has not made any progress on working with Usdaw since the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee recommended the company engages with us. We again ask Boohoo to take the simple step of sitting down with Usdaw to explore how we can work together.

"Boohoo could go a long way towards repairing their damaged reputation by meeting with Usdaw and engaging in a positive relationship. The company needs to clearly demonstrate to their employees, customers and the communities they operate in that Boohoo is serious about being an ethical trader."

SCOTTISH LABOUR CONFERENCE

WAGING WAR ON LOW PAY IN SCOTLAND

This year's Scottish Labour Spring Conference, held at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall over a weekend in March, saw an Usdaw delegation call for action to tackle the deepening cost of living crisis facing working people in Scotland.

Usdaw regional secretary for Scotland Tracy Gilbert said: "Many low-paid key workers, who kept the country going through the pandemic, were already struggling to make ends meet and now find themselves in a cost of living crisis, as a result of the UK Government's damaging actions and the SNP's total failure to act. With food and fuel prices increasing, energy bills soaring and real wages falling, our members need clear action to tackle rising costs.

"Spiralling household bills are putting many under pressure at a time when real wages are now lower than in 2008.

"A report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that poverty has risen steeply in recent years, with 19 per cent of people now in poverty in Scotland. The report also states that without more action, based on current modelling the Child Poverty Act target in Scotland will be missed.

"Rising energy prices combined with the planned increase in National Insurance contributions in April, will have a devastating impact on families in Scotland. The Resolution Foundation has calculated that the average household will lose £1,200 during 2022. In a survey of Usdaw members, 70 per cent were already struggling to pay energy bills.

"There must be lasting and fundamental changes. We need a New Deal for Workers: a minimum wage of at least £10 per hour immediately, an end to insecure

employment and action to ensure that retail jobs are no longer underpaid and undervalued.

"Low-paid working people desperately need substantial action to help them through this cost of living crisis."

Usdaw calls on the UK and Scottish Government to urgently use the powers they have to ease the cost of living crisis through:

- A windfall tax on North Sea oil and gas producers, to fund removing VAT on domestic energy bills for a year and expanding and increasing the warm homes discount.
- Scrapping of the planned increase in National Insurance contributions.
- The SNP Government to provide a £70 supplement to the winter fuel payment for low-income pensioners and struggling households.

TUC DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE

ONE-SIDED FLEXIBILITY STRETCHING WORKERS

An Usdaw delegation of officials and members attended the online TUC Disabled Workers' conference. Usdaw highlighted the many key roles disabled workers have and the need to remove barriers to work with positive employee centred flexible working.

A survey by YouGov carried out for the TUC in October 2021, found that 90 per cent of disabled workers wanted to work from home for the foreseeable future.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "The majority of low-paid disabled workers continued to go out to work during the pandemic. Yet despite government and employer rhetoric about valuing key workers

many disabled workers feel unheard and undervalued.

"Public attitudes to disability show that significant numbers of people believe that disabled workers are a burden and take more than they give, but without disabled workers key industries like retail and food manufacturing would be unable to function. Millions of key workers are also disabled workers.

"One sided employer driven flexibility has a detrimental impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of disabled workers. Lack of control over working hours, short notice changes to hours and low hours contracts make it difficult for disabled workers to manage their

work/life balance.

"Positive worker centred flexible working can be a reasonable adjustment for disabled workers if it removes a barrier they face to doing their job. Unions are challenging casualised forms of flexibility that only work for the employer.

"At this year's conference Usdaw is calling on the TUC to be clear that flexibility isn't just about home working and ensure the voice of disabled workers is heard when campaigning around flexible working."

Are you a disabled worker? Get in touch and share your story to help us raise awareness about disability.

IN BRIEF

HELLOFRESH

HelloFresh, the meal kit company, is to open a new distribution site in Derby this Spring, creating 450 jobs.

MÜLLER MILK & INGREDIENTS

Müller Milk & Ingredients has launched a recruitment drive to maintain a 99 per cent delivery rate for its own-label dairy customers. The company is looking to fill more than 150 vacancies spanning dairy production, distribution operatives and driver roles.

ALDI

Aldi has announced that it will recruit 200 new apprentices across the UK in 2022.

Apprentice roles will cover everything from store workers to logistics and HGV drivers. The supermarket is expected to create a further 2,000 permanent roles across the UK this year.

MEMBERSHIP

FOR WEEK ENDED 26 MARCH 2022

South Wales & Western	42,425
Eastern	51,414
Midlands	48,070
North Eastern	49,963
Scottish	37,118
Southern	51,534
North West	78,370
Total	358,894

WELSH LABOUR

CHAMPIONING WELSH LABOUR



Keir Starmer speaking at the Welsh Labour Conference

Regional secretary Nick Ireland chaired the Welsh Labour Conference in Llandudno over a weekend in March. His keynote address celebrated key workers who deliver essential services, praised the First Minister's response to the pandemic and highlighted Labour achievements in government.

In the Chair's address to conference, Nick said: "During the past two years many of us have experienced loss and heartache at the hands of the virus and our conference will help us all reflect on a very challenging time.

"Throughout the pandemic we have seen the very best of the labour movement with our First Minister at the forefront, leading Wales in a calm, assured and measured manner. Thousands of trade union members continued to work every day in hospitals, in our public services, in our schools and members from my union, Usdaw, making sure we had food on our tables; whether working in supermarkets, driving deliveries or making the food itself.

"As we campaign to win town halls up and down Wales, we can do that with a sense of pride, unity and achievement. Labour in Wales has given us: free prescriptions; free breakfasts for every primary school child; the best childcare offer for working parents in the UK; we didn't have to re-introduce bursaries for nurses, because they were not scrapped in the first place; fracking

doesn't have to be prevented in Wales, because it has never been allowed; Welsh Labour are building council houses again; abolished the right to buy; children in Wales are protected from physical punishment, and railways are back under public control."

"Our manifesto for the Senedd elections last year set out to build on those achievements. It was bold, radical and has the people of Wales at its heart. Welsh Labour has since delivered a Young Persons Guarantee, giving every young person, a guaranteed offer of a job or a place in education, training or help to start their own business.

"Giving our amazing care staff, who helped us through the pandemic, a fair deal at work with the implementation of the real Living Wage. And we will help keep our communities safe by putting 100 more Police Community Support Officers on our streets, funding 600 in total across Wales.

"These policies are already happening with more to come. More jobs in building low carbon homes; abolishing single use plastics and creating a national forest for Wales. And after two years of the pandemic, a covid recovery in our NHS and schools. Bold – yes. Radical – yes. For the people of Wales – always. It's been the privilege of a lifetime to be chair of Welsh Labour."

www.usdaw.org.uk

CAMPAIGNS

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

COST OF LIVING CRISIS RAGES IN UK

Charities have joined the chorus of voices asking the Government to intervene to soften the impact of the cost of living crisis. Against a backdrop of soaring inflation, food, energy and petrol bills, millions of households are worried about making ends meet.

Usdaw's cost of living survey, of almost 6,500 members, found that three-quarters of low-paid key workers feel worse off than last year, two-thirds rely on borrowing to pay everyday bills, with half of them now struggling with repayments and almost three-quarters report that financial issues are affecting their

mental health.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Too many low-paid key workers, who kept the country going during the pandemic, are coming out of the crisis feeling much worse off.

"The Government must provide substantial support for these working households, who are already struggling to make ends meet.

"The Spring Budget was an opportunity to deliver the prime minister's promise to 'build back better' into action, but regrettably the chancellor missed the chance as he stuck to 'business as usual'. As the cost of living crisis rages,

with RPI reaching a 30-year high, the measures outlined in the Spring Budget are simply not enough."

Usdaw is calling on the Government to help workers through the cost of living crisis by:

- Scrapping the 10 per cent National Insurance increase due in April.
- Increasing financial support for those facing fuel poverty, funded by a windfall tax on highly profitable energy companies.
- Developing a proper social security system, Universal Credit does not provide a safety net.
- Immediately increase the minimum wage to at least £10 and scrap unfair youth rates.



VOICES OF KEY WORKERS ON THE FRONTLINE OF THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Retail worker, North East:

"Losing sleep, conscious that our life savings are now below £1K, despite spending only on very bare essentials, and this is before the energy prices have increased."

Retail worker, South West:

"It's always been a struggle to get by but somehow we manage by cutting back. With the cost of living nowadays I am not sure how we are going to be able to do this. I have a child and work to provide for us, but her needs come first and cutting back on my own to be able to accommodate this could be a challenge in the future if prices go up again just for the basic necessities. The cost of living is uncertain and a worry for workers on low wages."

Retail worker, Wales:

"My rent increased by £55 last November and my utility bill has gone up by £40 per month since my supplier stopped trading last

September. This is before you take into account rising fuel and food prices."

Retail worker, Midlands:

"Financial struggles have been impacting my mental health tremendously and also been impacting my performance at work. With food prices, energy bills and national insurance on the rise, I find it worrying that someone in a management position is still living pay cheque to pay cheque."

Warehouse worker, Scotland:

"After gas, electricity and food prices going through the roof I feel I'm always struggling. I cannot make my money last for the month and I can barely heat my home."

Retail worker, North West:

"Combination of soaring costs on energy and food are only going to make the poor struggle to make ends meet. Throw in the national insurance hike and petrol/diesel

prices remaining high, what little wage rises we will get will make us all so much worse off. People who were classed as 'key workers' will, as usual, suffer the most."

Retail worker, South East:

"Everything's just getting out of control with the prices increasing. This time last year I could do a weekly shop for £68 for two people. Now I'm looking at £98 for the same shop."

Retail worker, Northern Ireland:

"My husband works full time and I work part time - our circumstances around childcare don't allow us to do any more than what we're doing and we can afford to simply live, just live, bills are always paid, we make saving anything extra a priority for Christmas for the kids, but it leaves nothing else. If prices continue to rise for essentials, it could get tough."

network@usdaw.org.uk



FREEDOM FROM FEAR SURVEY RESULTS

STATS SHOW RISE IN ASSAULTS

Usdaw's annual survey results, published at the beginning of March, found that abuse, threats and violence against shopworkers remained high yet confidence in reporting incidents was low.

Nearly 3,500 staff were surveyed and the research revealed:

- 90 per cent have experienced verbal abuse.
- 64 per cent were threatened by a customer.
- 12 per cent were assaulted.
- 61 per cent said they were not confident that reporting abuse, threats and violence will make a difference.

The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) also published their annual crime report which confirmed Usdaw's findings. The ACS report found that 89 per cent of shopworkers suffered verbal abuse. ACS also found that on average convenience store owners spend over £5,000 on crime prevention, which effectively results in a 9p 'crime tax' on every transaction made in these local small shops.

These shocking statistics once again demonstrated, that Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign is as relevant today as when it was launched over two decades ago.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "It is shocking that nine in 10 of our members working in retail are suffering abuse from customers, with far too many experiencing threats and violence. Particularly concerning is the one-third increase in assaults, up from 9 per cent in 2020 to 12 per cent in 2021. So, it is extremely worrying that nearly two-thirds are not confident that reporting these issues will make any difference.

Violence, threats and abuse have long been a major issue for shopworkers, which is why Usdaw launched its Freedom from Fear campaign. For years we have

worked closely with the Association of Convenience Stores and others across the retail sector to provide evidence, jointly campaign and lobby Government for action to stem this growing problem. Although the situation is bleak, there are some early signs that our work with retail employers may be starting to make a difference.

"The Protection of Workers Act came into force in Scotland in August 2021. By the end of the year nearly 300 cases were under investigation by the Scottish Police. While we still do not have similar laws for England, Wales or Northern Ireland, the Westminster Government has given its support to an amendment to their Policing Bill that would make violence against workers a statutory aggravating factor when sentencing.

"However, faced with such appallingly high levels of violence and abuse, and with shopworkers' almost complete lack of confidence in the ability of the system to give them the protection they need, much more needs to be done. The Government must provide the co-ordination needed to ensure that retail employers, police and the courts work together to make stores safe places for our members to work and for customers to shop."

Usdaw annual survey full results: www.usdaw.org.uk/FFFSurvey2021

SHARE YOUR STORIES

We're always keen to hear from members to help us build our campaigns. If you've been affected by the issues mentioned in this article, or if you've an interesting story to tell, get in touch at:

network@usdaw.org.uk



Some of the comments from shopworkers responding to Usdaw's annual survey:

"Customer in his 60s waited for me to finish my shift then tried to stab me at the bus stop because he had been made to wait in a queue outside the shop."

"I work as an internet shopping picker. Customers will be rude and vent their frustration on you, saying you're in their way, you are picking the food they need, you shouldn't be picking all the food off the shelves. They swear at you and say they are paying you wages."

"Customer walked me into a corner and threatened my life for not stopping a maskless customer entering the store."

"My employer gives apologies and £50 gift cards to customers who complain, even if these complaints have been found to be unsubstantiated. Would be great if they would ask for our side of the story and evidence before rewarding abusive customers and apologising to them."

"After being spat at, then four weeks later physically assaulted, I walked out and went on sick for eight weeks, had to go onto medication for anxiety and had a breakdown."

NEW DEAL FOR WORKERS

During the coronavirus crisis, millions of workers stepped up in the most difficult of circumstances to keep the country going. They adapted to huge changes in an extremely short time, working under intense pressure and providing a lifeline to their communities.

Udaw supported members throughout the pandemic and initiated a campaign for the Government and employers to recognise that too many workers have been undervalued for too long. The union made some gains, with many more members now on over £10 per hour.

If the country is to truly 'build back better' after the pandemic, there must be lasting and fundamental changes.

Udaw's New Deal for Workers calls for:

- **A minimum wage of at least £10 per hour** for all workers immediately, ending rip-off youth rates and providing a living wage.
- **Minimum contract of 16 hours per week**, for everyone who wants it, that reflects normal hours worked and a ban on zero-hour contracts.
- **Better sick pay** for all workers, from day one, at average earnings.
- **Protection at work** – respect for shopworkers, abuse is not a part of the job.
- **A proper social security system**, Universal Credit does not provide a safety net.
- **Job security**, with day one employment rights for unfair dismissal and redundancy.
- **Fair treatment and equality for all workers**, including equal pay.
- **A voice at work**, stop rogue employers refusing to engage with trade unions and end 'fire and rehire'.

YOUNG WORKERS' WEEK

Reps spent the week talking to young workers about the issues that concern them, the benefits of Usdaw membership and being part of a movement.

Young Workers' Week, held from 14-20 March, was an important opportunity for Usdaw reps and activists to showcase the benefits of union membership for young workers. Over 180 events were held at workplaces, colleges and street stalls across the country as part of the first in-person week since 2020.

Every young workers' week has a theme and this year it was mental health in the workplace.

Employment has a significant effect on mental health. Being in work can be a positive experience providing financial security, more structure and an increased sense of purpose. Many jobs also provide opportunities to meet new people and form long-lasting bonds.

However, other aspects of work have a negative impact, particularly on young workers. Young people are disproportionately affected by insecure contracts, unpredictable working hours and are more likely to be given repetitive tasks. Assumptions that young workers

are carefree or have fewer responsibilities than older workers also mean they are given an unfair share of weekend and late night shifts, which puts them at increased risk of abuse, threats and violence.

CLIMATE CHANGE

A 2021 survey of 10,000 young people, led by Bath University, found that 60 per cent of respondents were very or extremely worried about climate change. For young people who are at increased risk of experiencing the more severe effects of a heating planet, the feeling is they are being let down by a lack of government action: 65 per cent of UK respondents agreed that governments were failing young people and just 28 per cent said they trusted politicians to properly address the climate crisis.

HOUSING

The average age of a first-time buyer in the UK is now 32. In many areas, even modest homes are now

beyond those who do not have financial assistance from their family either as money for a deposit or living with them rent free.

Sections of the media are fond of claiming that young people just need to cut back on luxuries to get on the housing ladder, when the reality is that the high cost of rent and utilities acts as a trap that keeps young people in a cycle of insecure work and often substandard rented accommodation.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a great tool for enabling people to keep in touch, but it is not without risk. Young people often report feeling that they have to constantly engage with their social media accounts for fear of becoming cut out of their social circle. Research has shown that a need to chase 'likes', and a feeling that they always need to present the best version of themselves, can lead to lower self-esteem and increased rates of anxiety.



Rep Megan Wilkinson explaining union benefits during Young Workers' Week at Tesco, Northwich.



YOUNG ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH CHARLIE GOUGH

Network magazine spoke to Charlie Gough, a 21-year-old Tesco rep from the Wirral, about the experiences of young workers.

How did you get involved in Usdaw?

I joined Usdaw in 2019 and became a rep in November 2021. I've always been quite political and passionate about trade unionism and I come from a family of trade unionists, so when a gap opened in our store for a rep I thought I could make a difference.

What have been your priorities as a rep so far?

I've been busy trying to engage the young workers and non-members in my store. The pandemic meant that some of the new starters weren't introduced to Usdaw during their inductions but I've found that once I managed to speak to them and they have the function of the union explained to them, they're receptive to joining. I've started to get more involved with the wider campaigning work of the union too. I was at

an event in Bolton during Young Workers' Week which was really rewarding and something I want to do more of.

The theme for Young Workers Week was workplace mental health, what's been your experience of how work can affect wellbeing?

Work definitely has a massive impact on mental health. It can be a good thing; for me personally I find that going to work can be an escape from outside pressures. And during the pandemic, work was a lifeline for a lot of young workers. Universities and colleges were closed so work became something that helped us feel less isolated; the social aspect of leaving the house and interacting with colleagues and customers became much more important.

Work can have an adverse affect as well. With the cost of living going up, people can feel under pressure to overwork themselves because they feel they need to work every hour available to ensure they can make ends meet. It's really

important for people, particularly young people, to try and leave some energy for things outside of work. And while most customers are great there are still some flashpoints for abuse, particularly over the pandemic when colleagues were trying to keep everyone safe with the social distancing measures. Everyone was feeling tense but there's never an excuse to take it out on shopworkers.

Is the cost of living crisis having an impact on your life?

I'm going to have to be a lot more careful with my spending. Everything is getting more expensive, from food to energy to fuel. The tenancy on my flat ends in July, so I'll be moving back in with my parents for a year to try and save money. I think a lot of people's social lives will be taking a hit because they won't be able to afford to go out. Despite what sections of the media like to make out, most of a young worker's salary goes on essential bills not luxuries.

There's a lot of negativity in the news, do you find it hard to stay in a positive mindset?

It can be hard sometimes. It feels like a constant stream of bad news, with war, climate change and everything else on a 24-hour news cycle. And the pro-Conservative media seem more interested in using unfair generalisations of young people to stir up division to suit their own ends, when they could be trying to build co-operation so we can look for ways to address the climate crisis and try to build a better future for everyone.

I find my union work really helps me stay positive. Helping people on an individual level, getting small wins, is something I derive optimism from. Good news doesn't get clicks but positive things do happen every day and it's important to fight for them and celebrate them, and that's something I hope to achieve through my work with Usdaw.



OUTSTANDING USDWAW REPS

Activists took centre stage at Usdaw's 16th annual organising awards in Manchester. The event is unique in the trade union movement and helps to properly recognise the outstanding contribution Usdaw reps make in the year.

The ever-popular event took place in Manchester and saw talented and committed reps from all seven divisions attend a ceremony to celebrate the very best recruiters,

organisers and campaigners in the union.

General secretary Paddy Lillis, deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen and president Jane Jones played host and presented national awards to the winners in nine categories.

"Last year's event was cancelled due to the pandemic so I am delighted to host this year's in-person event," said Paddy, during his opening speech at the awards.

"It has been an incredibly difficult period for everyone due to the pandemic and all the challenges and distress it has caused. Usdaw reps have been at the forefront and continued to do an amazing job in supporting members, their communities and their families.

"The Organising Awards are our chance of recognising and thanking the reps for their hard work. It is a real achievement to be nominated by your region.



National winners: Graham Logie, Karen O'Neill, Tony Penn, Michelle Whitehead, Mike Kewin, Innocent Igjehon, Mark Halfpenny, Becky Smithers and Colin Jones.

"Without people like you, Usdaw would not have made the fantastic progress it has made over recent years. Obviously not all of Usdaw's activists are here tonight, so many thanks to the thousands of Usdaw reps who have not won awards but have worked hard, day in day out, on behalf of the union.

"The union's Academy programme was cancelled in 2020 and 2021 but I'm delighted we can restart it in 2022, along with our stand down

programme which allows reps to spend short periods seconded to Usdaw out in the field, recruiting and organising.

"The exceptionally high standard of nominations confirms that we have some of the best recruiters, organisers and campaigners in the trade union movement.

"I want to congratulate every nominee and take this opportunity to thank our reps for all their hard work and commitment to Usdaw."

MOST PROMISING NEW ACTIVIST **BECKY SMITHERS** Solent H075

After becoming a rep in September 2020 Becky went straight to work organising her Sainsbury's store. Her hard work paid off with her store now enjoying impressive membership levels. Becky has also identified and developed new reps and gone on periods of stand down.

"I'm chuffed I won, said Becky. "I really didn't think I was going to get



Deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen, general secretary Paddy Lillis, Outstanding Achievement organising award winner Mark Halfpenny and president Jane Jones.

it. I'm a lockdown rep as I became a rep in 2020. It's been a hard slog so it's brilliant being recognised and appreciated like this."

HEALTH AND SAFETY REP AWARD
GRAHAM LOGIE

West Norfolk General C063

Graham has overhauled health and safety practices in his Morrisons store since he stepped up to the role in 2020. Keen to ensure everyone works safely, Graham is quick to raise issues with management. In a relatively short period of time, Graham has made a huge difference.

"When I joined Morrisons I jumped at the chance to become a health and safety rep," said Graham. "I enjoy mentoring my colleagues around the importance of health and safety. I've had a lot of support from the union and winning an award for what you enjoy doing is fantastic."

EQUALITIES AWARD
INNOCENT IGIEHON

Leeds and District Tesco F146

Innocent is a highly regarded activist

who is brilliant at running campaigns and has taken the lead in a number of different areas, including the Freedom From Fear campaign and Pensions. However, he specialises in equality and promotes the equality agenda in a fun and inclusive way. His warm and approachable manner means he's also a great recruiter.

"It's amazing to win, said Innocent. "This is for all members and non-members and especially for the black community. I've learned so much since I became a rep so I'm very grateful. It's a morale booster and I want to thank everyone who helped me."

UNION LEARNING REP AWARD

SHIRLEY ANN SMITH

North Yorkshire Tesco F102

Shirley demonstrates how the learning rep is vital to ensuring the success of the apprenticeship scheme in Tesco. Shirley supported the programme by promoting it, holding 1-2-1s with all the candidates and setting up a WhatsApp group to ensure the candidates could provide encouragement and support for

one another. Thanks to her valiant efforts, not a single person dropped out.

"I'm totally overwhelmed at winning the award," said Shirley. "It's fantastic to know that the union recognises and appreciates the work reps do everyday."

CAMPAIGNS AWARD
MICHELLE WHITEHEAD
Midcounties Co-op E070

Michelle is at the heart of the Freedom From Fear campaign in the Midlands region. A regular in the media, her hard work has led to greater public awareness of the issues affecting retail workers as well as bringing new members into the union.

"I was flabbergasted when they read my name out," said Michelle. "I won the award for every person in retail because we all go through the same harassment and abuse every single day, every single week. I'm so proud my company, Midcounties Co-op, allowed me to have a voice. I will carry on using my voice to fight on behalf of my members."

TEAM RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISING AWARD

B&M DISTRIBUTION REP TEAM MIKE KEWIN & COLIN JONES NW B&M Distribution K240

This team has organised across five B&M distribution sites to build a strong union presence of nearly 2,000 members. Because of high turnover they've all had to become expert at selling the union. With the new member count growing each year, it's clear that this impressive, dedicated team is going from strength to strength.

"I'm over the moon," said Mike. "I don't feel like I deserve this award. I'm a rep because I like helping people and sticking up for them. And I get a lot of pride from the work I do."

"It was such a surprise to win," added Colin. "This award shows that our hard work doesn't go unnoticed."

"I want to thank all reps in B&M for the great work they do every day and our area organiser for all the support he has given us."

INDIVIDUAL RECRUITMENT AWARD KAREN O'NEILL

Tesco Banking Glasgow G372

Karen is an exceptional recruiter

who has been bringing in new members for many years in Scotland. Her passion for organising has seen her achieve great success and increased membership in a wide range of workplaces. A veteran of stand down across Glasgow, Karen is skilled at tailoring her technique to suit her audience.

"I didn't think I was going to win so it was a lovely surprise to be recognised for the hard work you do," said Karen. "It's been a great night, as I've got to see lots of old friends and make some new ones."

INDIVIDUAL ORGANISING AWARD TONY PENN

NW Hermes K012

Tony has an impressive track record of organising within Hermes having recruited over 600 members in the last two years alone. His diligent approach to inductions has helped him maintain 100 per cent density at his Bolton base. Tony was also instrumental in persuading Hermes to recruit staff directly rather than using agency workers, a move that has helped him boost Usdaw membership and find several new reps.

"I feel shocked I won," said Tony. "I

wasn't really expecting it especially when you look at the competition, I'm surrounded by a roomful of fellow reps doing a great job. I'm really pleased I won but it won't change anything as I will continue to help and support my members like I've always done."

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

MARK HALFPENNY Corby Industrial E010

For nearly 30 years as rep and convenor at RS Electrocomponents, Mark has earned the respect of members, reps and officials alike. Mark has seen it all at his site with redundancies, pension scheme changes and difficult wage negotiations. At the same time, he has managed to build strong membership at his site and a very active rep team. Mark's contribution to Usdaw cannot be overstated.

"I feel elated and humbled," said Mark. "It's been a long road to this. You don't become a rep in order to win awards, you do it to help your colleagues. But the acknowledgement is fantastic. To get an award like this, to even be considered is amazing."

REGIONAL WINNERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



SOUTH WALES AND WESTERN REGION

STANDING (from left):
Janette Parker, Kath West,
Barbara Wilson (NEC), Joanna
Gregory and Crian Williams.

SEATED (from left):
Tracy Cannard (NEC), Emma
Woodfine, Nick Ireland (RS),
Kay Timbrell (RCC) and Mark
White.

Continued...



EASTERN REGION

STANDING (from left):
Robert Cowell, Paul Cullen,
Simon Vincent (NEC), Val
Cooke (NEC), Philip Waite
(DRS) and Terry Monksfield.

SEATED (from left):
Hristo Zdravkov, Barry
Bosher, Graham Logie,
Stephen Peaty, Gareth
Davies, Nigel Scully (RS) and
Brian Lewis (RCC).

NEC National Executive Council
RCC Regional Council Chair
RS Regional Officer
DRS Deputy Regional Officer



NORTH EASTERN REGION

STANDING (from left):
Neil Brunyee, Angela
Partington (RCC), Joanne
Thomas (RS), Cathy Godfrey
(DRS), Jo Crumplin (NEC)
and Mike Dixon (NEC).

SEATED (from left):
Leanne Johnson, Michelle
Hargreaves, Janet Haggis,
Innocent Igiehon, Sandra
Gair, Charlie Johnson and
Sharon Armstrong.



SOUTHERN REGION

STANDING (from left):
Jamie Gull (DRS), Matthew
Cooper-Teague, Steve Titus,
James Conlan, John Barstow
(NEC), Mick Attwood, Keith
Jones (NEC) and Robert
Donnelly (RS).

SEATED (from left):
Kim Peters, Angelika
Zywocinska, Belinda Davies,
Becky Smithers, Vanessa
Jackson, Su Patel (RCC) and
Wendy Lewis.



MIDLANDS REGION

STANDING (from left): Shannon Hilton, Gareth Davies (DRS), Mark Halfpenny, Gary Barnes, Leo Lanzoni and Philip Core.

SEATED (from left): Karl Lockley (NEC), Anita Adamczyk, Manjit Birdi, Nicola Fitzsimmons, Michelle Whitehead (RCC), Kate Macleod (NEC) and Gavin Dudley (RS).



SCOTTISH REGION

STANDING (from left): Paul Watson (RCC), Derek Duncan, Ross Stewart, Robert Killin (NEC), Tony Doonan (DRS) and Tracy Gilbert (RS).

SEATED (from left): Karen O'Neill, Susan Donaldson (NEC), Sharon Hamilton, Madeline Kavanagh, Jacqueline Martin, Elaine Clydesdale and Caroline Shanks.



NORTH WEST REGION

STANDING (from left): Tony Penn, Mike Aylward (RS), Mike Kevin and Ben Warren.

SEATED (from left): Justin Donaghy, Terry Adair (RCC), Sandra Birt, Will Peters and Colin Jones.

MISSING A BEAT

Can you recognise the symptoms of a heart attack? A new campaign from the NHS helps you do that.

NHS England has launched a new campaign to help prevent heart attack deaths. The campaign aims to encourage more people to dial 999 as soon as they experience the early signs of a heart attack. Worryingly, the NHS found that less than 50 per cent of people knew what these were.

What is a heart attack?

A heart attack is when the supply of blood to the heart is suddenly blocked, usually by a blood clot. A lack of blood to the heart may seriously damage the heart muscle and can be life threatening.

Cardiac arrest

Many people confuse cardiac arrest with a heart attack. These are two different conditions. Cardiac arrest occurs when the heart suddenly (and often without warning) stops beating. It is triggered by an electrical malfunction in the heart that causes an irregular heartbeat arrhythmia. The heart cannot pump blood to the brain, lungs and other organs. A person can lose consciousness within seconds and could die if they don't receive treatment.

Covid and heart attacks

Research has started showing that people who've had Covid are at an increased risk of suffering from a heart attack. Research from Washington University (published in Nature) found that:

- Covid survivors are at a 63 per cent increased risk of having a heart attack within a year – regardless of their age or how ill they were.
- Overall, those who had Covid were 55 per cent more likely to suffer a heart complication compared to the

uninfected.

Researchers suspect that the virus attacks the body's cells, which can cause damage to heart tissue and the immune system, which can then trigger heart problems.

Survival rates for a heart attack

In the 60s, seven out of 10 heart attacks in the UK proved fatal. Today, there are more than 80,000 hospital heart attack admissions in England every year and seven out of 10 people survive a heart attack, this rises to nine in 10 for those who seek early treatment. Therefore it is crucial to recognise the early symptoms of a heart attack.

Common symptoms of heart attacks

There is a misconception that when someone is having a heart attack they will have symptoms so severe that they will fall to the ground clutching their chest. This is incorrect, the early symptoms aren't always severe and can include sweating, uneasiness and tightness in the chest. The symptoms to look out for are:

- Sweatiness.
- A sense of unease.
- Chest pain – a sensation of pressure, heaviness, tightness or squeezing across the chest.
- Pain in other parts of the body – it can feel as if the pain is spreading from the chest to the arms (usually the left arm is affected, but it can affect both arms), jaw, neck, back

and tummy (abdomen).

- Feeling lightheaded or dizzy.

SYMPTOMS IN WOMEN

The myth that women experience different symptoms is incorrect and can lead to misdiagnosis and even death. Women who have heart attacks experience the same key symptoms as men.

Inequalities costing women's lives

This misconception that heart disease and heart attacks mostly affect men and that men and women experience different heart attack symptoms is costing women's lives.

The British Heart Foundation reported that each year 35,000 women are admitted to hospital - an





average of 98 women a day. In the UK, women are twice as likely to die from coronary heart disease as from breast cancer.

The British Heart Foundation's briefing found that women fared worse than men at every stage of their heart attack experience. It showed:

■ **Delay**

Women often delay seeking medical help, which can reduce their chances of survival.

■ **Misdiagnosed**

Women are 50 per cent more likely to receive a wrong initial diagnosis, which increases the risk of dying.

■ **Substandard treatment**

More than 8,200 heart attack deaths in women in England and Wales could have been prevented if they

had received standard treatment including bypass surgery and stents.

■ **Excess risk**

Risk factors for heart disease such as smoking, high blood pressure and diabetes, are often more deadly for women.

■ **Poor aftercare**

Women are less likely to be prescribed statin and beta blockers when they are discharged, despite the evidence that these lower the risk of subsequent heart attacks or stroke.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- British Heart Foundation www.bhf.org.uk 0300 330 3322
- www.nhs.uk/conditions/heart-attack

A heart attack is a medical emergency and can be life threatening.

People experiencing any of these symptoms should phone 999 immediately for an ambulance, regardless of their sex.

The NHS advises that while waiting for an ambulance it may help to chew and then swallow a tablet of aspirin (ideally 300mg), as long as the person having a heart attack is not allergic to aspirin. Aspirin helps to thin the blood and improves blood flow to the heart.



ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH BEV JAMIESON

Usdaw rep Bev Jamieson, 46, talks about how the union reignited her love of learning and how campaigning can change things for the better.

Where do you work?

I work at Sainsbury's in Heaton Park as a Customer Experience Colleague; the role involves supporting our colleagues on the tills when they need additional help, for example fetching an item a customer has forgotten. Before that I used to be a team leader but I was made redundant in 2018.

Why did you become active?

I became a rep in 2013 after my manager asked me to put myself forward. I was a bit apprehensive at first but my manager thought I had the right qualities for the role. He said I was good with people, I cared about my colleagues and I would bring balance and fairness to the role.

How did you find your Usdaw training?

I left school after my GCSEs and have not set foot in a classroom for over twenty years. I'm a very hands-on person so I didn't think education

was for me. That was until I did the shop stewards training. I was so nervous before I went but once I was there, I absolutely loved it. I was hooked after that first session. It was exactly the kind of boost I need to put myself forward for other training. Following that, I went on Academy 1 in 2015 and Academy 2 in 2017 and all I can say is wow! Wow! Wow! The support I got from the area organisers and trainers was amazing. I know it sounds like a cliché but it felt like one big happy family. It was friendly and supportive. If one of us had a bad day, then we would all lift each other

up. No-one got left behind. I knew there and then, that being an activist was for me.

What was it like being a rep during the pandemic?

I saw it all! The panic buying, the toilet roll saga and the queues snaking outside. It wasn't easy working through this and I was extremely worried about catching Covid. Back then it was even more frightening as we didn't really know much about Covid except people were dying every day. Abusive customers made things even harder for us. At first people were complying with the rules but very quickly people became frustrated and started taking it out on us. Abuse was hurled at me and my colleagues every day.

It's all very scary and upsetting. I try not to let it affect me and take it home with me but it's hard not to have a wobble. I try to empathise by putting myself in their shoes and think that maybe their having a really bad time, maybe they're at the end of their tether but even then, there is no excuse for that kind of language. And it wasn't just the language it was also the aggressive and intimidating behaviour that went with it.

That's why I'm such a big supporter of Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign. And I'm chuffed that the Government has finally conceded that we need a law to protect shopworkers.

What's it like organising such a big store?

It was tough at first. The store I work in used to be the biggest store outside of London. We have over 400 colleagues and when I became a rep there was only one other rep. Density was low so we both knew we were taking on a huge challenge. But we were keen to get stuck in and get the store organised.

I started with inductions and tried to pick up members there. I love running campaign days so I used these as an opportunity to reach

out to my colleagues and let them know about the union and how we weren't just about representation. The Freedom From Fear campaign was really good for this as most shopworkers have experienced some kind of abuse or violence. Explaining the campaign, listening to colleagues and asking them to sign petitions is a really good way of introducing members and non-members to the union. It took time to build the union but we're in a pretty good place now with a team of four reps and density standing at over 60 per cent.

You were on stand down recently, how did you find it?

I did a week of stand down in my store so that I could focus on recruitment. Even though we have good levels of membership, I know recruitment has had to take a back seat because of the pandemic. It was good to spend some uninterrupted time in the store and get back to basics such as mapping the store, trying to recruit non-members, attending face-to-face inductions and generally talking to my colleagues to see how they are coping and whether they have any issues. During the week I managed

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

If you would like to be our next AID, get in touch and tell us what you've been doing in your workplace.

network@usdaw.org.uk

to recruit 31 new members as well as identify a potential young activist.

The activist is a student at university who also works part time at the store. She has a really good insight into the mental health issues affecting young workers and what we can do to support them.

Mental health is such a big issue in our store that I'm planning to run a mental health campaign in the coming weeks. I'm hoping she will also have the time to get involved.

What's next

I actually have an 18-month plan! I'm really into politics and I'm a member of the Labour Party. I'm very active in my ward so I'm hoping to apply for the Jo Cox Women in Leadership Programme. I got into politics when I became a rep. For me, being a rep and being political goes hand-in-hand. I believe we can change things together.



Bev out campaigning on Academy2 in 2017

WOMEN BEARING THE BRUNT OF THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Usdaw campaigns for measures that will address the crisis facing working people including £10 per hour, a windfall tax and an overhaul of universal credit.

Alongside other unions, the Labour Party and campaign groups, Usdaw is pressing government to take urgent action to tackle the cost of living crisis.

Several research studies show that women will be particularly hard hit by the current crisis.

There are several reasons for this:

- Women are more likely to be low paid and in poverty, therefore have been hit harder by cuts to social security and public services.
- Women have lower levels of savings than men and are more likely to be in debt.
- Women's caring responsibilities mean that they are often less able than men to increase their hours

of paid work and childcare costs have increased well above the rate of inflation for several years in a row.

Usdaw's own research shows that women are twice as likely as men to be contracted to work less than 16 hours a week and the figure is even higher for disabled women. While the cost of living crisis is having a serious financial impact for everyone, women are more likely to highlight pressures including not expecting to be able to afford to go on holiday this year and to report that financial worries are having an impact on their mental health.

That's why Usdaw is campaigning for a range of measures that will

urgently address the crisis facing working people including:

- New Deal for Workers including an immediate increase in the minimum wage to at least £10 per hour for all workers, tackling insecure employment and a ban on 'fire and rehire'.
- A windfall tax on North Sea oil and gas producers, to fund removing VAT on domestic energy bills.
- Scrapping the planned increase in National Insurance contributions.
- An urgent and fundamental overhaul of Universal Credit to ensure it provides a social security benefit that supports low-paid workers.

www.usdaw.org.uk/equality

ILO'S VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT CONVENTION

CONVENTION RECOGNISES GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The UK Government has finally ratified an International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention which comes after years of campaigning by unions worldwide.

This is the first legally binding international standard for workers which deals solely with the issue of violence at work and which recognises gender-based violence.

The UK Government has been dragging its feet on ratifying the Convention. The fact they have finally done so means unions and other campaigners can now

push for this to be translated into legislative change and other measures to bring the Convention into effect.

Whilst ILO Conventions might seem far removed from the day-to-day efforts of reps and officials to win a better deal for members, they give us an important framework for preventing and tackling violence and harassment at work.

Convention 190 is particularly important because it makes it clear that the world of work goes beyond the workplace to include domestic violence and also

recognises that women and girls are at much higher risk of gender-based violence both in work and beyond the workplace.



TUC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

USDAW DELEGATES SPEAK UP FOR WOMEN

The cost of living crisis is just one of the issues that women in the labour movement came together to discuss at this year's TUC Women's Conference which recently took place online.

Usdaw's delegation made a powerful impression, with women speaking up on flexible working and automation.

Usdaw president Jane Jones was elected to represent Usdaw on the TUC Women's Committee along with Usdaw rep Su Patel, both will be a strong voice for Usdaw women in the TUC.

Miscarriage

The issue of rights for women who have a miscarriage before they are 24 weeks pregnant was discussed at both TUC and Labour Party Women's Conferences. At present women in this situation are not just dealing with the devastating loss of their baby but are also struggling with the reality that they are not entitled to either maternity or bereavement leave and will instead have to rely on their company's sick pay scheme.

Given that many of our members have a very negative experience of

sickness absence procedures, it is deeply troubling that women who have lost their pregnancy before 24 weeks could be subjected to an unsupportive sickness absence procedure. Usdaw supported the call at both conferences for women to be entitled to more support and was disappointed that the Bill introduced by Sarah Owen MP to extend parental bereavement leave to include women who have miscarried or whose baby was stillborn before 24 weeks did not succeed. We will continue to support campaigns on this issue.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

ORGANISING FOR EQUALITY IN PENSIONS



International Women's Day at Tesco Springhill in Birmingham.

International Women's Day took place on 8 March. We used social media and a press releases to reiterate our stance that women continue to be overrepresented in low-paid, low-hours and insecure work and that it is finally time to value women's work properly.

Usdaw's focus for International Women's Day this year

was on pensions inequality. Auto-enrolment in pensions has led to an improvement in the numbers of women saving for their pension, but the amount saved by men is still significantly more. Usdaw has called for further reforms of auto-enrolment so that more low-paid and young workers are enrolled in pension schemes.



RECRUITING MEMBERS IN THE WORKPLACE

Mohammed Rashel Ahmed, 35, talks about his experience of stand down and shares his recruitment tips.

Where do you work?

I work as a Pharmacy Counter Assistant at Tesco in Padiham, Burnley. I've been there since 2014 and became a rep in 2018.

What made you stand as a rep?

I became a rep because Usdaw has always been there for me, I wanted to give something back. I also like the fact that trade unions stick up for people being treated unfairly and fight for working people. By supporting and helping my colleagues, I get to play a small part in this. I have experienced

unfairness at certain points in my life and found it difficult because I didn't know who to turn to for help. I don't want others to feel like I did. It's a big responsibility but it's also a huge privilege, and I hope I can do it for years to come.

How did you find your rep training?

Overall, the training was first class and the teachers were fantastic. The training gave me the confidence to represent members and I learnt how to organise and prioritise my workload, as well as learning how to stay calm in heated situations. The training also helped me get to grips with company policies which is vital when it comes to supporting members.

You were on stand down recently, how did you find it?

I was really grateful for this opportunity. I was on stand down for a month and I learnt so much about recruitment and being a rep. Being on stand down meant I got to visit lots of different companies and have conversations with non-members. It was interesting to hear their concerns and issues and see how different companies operate their union agreement. In 14 days, I managed to recruit 59 members, which I was really proud of.

What did you do for January Membership Week?

We had a good Membership Week in our store. A week before the event, I created a poster to invite members

SHARE YOUR STORY

If you would like to be featured in Network, get in touch and tell us what you've been doing to recruit and organise your workplace.
network@usdaw.org.uk

and non-members for a drop-in session. I held the drop-in session in the canteen as I knew I would get to see most of my colleagues throughout the day. The day went really well and I had members and non-members approach me with queries and questions while they were having a brew, some of which I managed to resolve on the spot. Having the event in an informal setting, which was also visible and accessible, really helped and I recruited a number of colleagues.

What would you say to someone considering being a rep?

I would say go for it! Being a rep is an amazing opportunity not only to help your colleagues but also for personal development. As a rep you get a lot of training and opportunities that you wouldn't otherwise get. I have learnt so much about trade unions, representation and workers' rights since I became a rep. This has helped boost my confidence both in my professional and personal life. In turn, this has made me want to learn more and really push myself.

What's next?

The months ahead are pretty busy. I've got another round of stand down coming up in March so I'm really looking forward to that. I'll be attending ADM and Black Members Weekend Workshop. In the meantime, I'll be preparing for the Academy 1 assessment. My area organiser Annette Bott has been brilliant and supported me every step of the way, so I hope I get on and make her proud.

MOHAMMED'S RECRUITMENT TIPS

Explain the cost and the benefits

The cost of membership comes up regularly which is understandable as money is tight for a lot of people. So, you have to explain exactly what they'll be getting for their money. That's why it's very important to be prepared. As a rep you should know how much it costs a week and be able to outline the benefits such as representation in grievances, disciplinarys and sickness meetings, legal cover for accidents (in and out of work), and discount for things like cinema tickets.

Success stories

I think word of mouth goes a long way. Whenever I represent someone and have a successful outcome, I ask them to share it with non-members. I've had non-members come up to me asking to join after they've heard from a colleague that I had successfully helped them with an issue.

Retaining members

I know recruitment is a big part of being a rep but retaining members is equally important. I make sure to check in with members regularly to see how they're doing and to see if they have any issues. Sometimes people don't want to approach you because they think that their issue is minor or they feel a bit nervous about talking to someone else about it, approaching them helps mean you tackle those small things before they become any bigger.

Knowledge of company policies and company developments

You cannot represent your members without having a good

knowledge of your company's policies. In my store I get a lot of questions around policies and restructures so, I always make sure I know my policies. I have access to my staff handbook and I read the emails the union sends out when they are updating us on changes within the company. Members and non-members have more confidence in you when you know your stuff.

Questions and answer session

After my presentation at inductions, I always leave time for questions. Non-members always have a lot of questions which I think is a good thing as it gives me the opportunity to address any misconceptions they might have. Usdaw has produced a handy leaflet that outlines the benefits of being an Usdaw member so I make sure I know it off the top of my head.

Utilising monthly meetings

There are three reps in my store including me. We all work together as a team to make sure our noticeboard remains updated and we share the responsibilities of recruitment, organising and representing between us. We work to ensure that issues and concerns get resolved before they snowball. Our agreement allows us to have a two-hour meeting every month. We always utilise these monthly rep meetings to share information and learn from one another. Since the drop-in session was so successful at Membership Week, I suggested we make this a regular thing and dedicate 1 hour of our monthly meeting to this. My fellow reps agreed and we will be doing this going forward as it's a really good way to engage both members and non-members.

REPRESENTING IN GRIEVANCES

Representing members in grievances is a big part of a reps job, here's some tips on how to get it right.

Usdaw reps play a vital role in protecting members' interests. Grievance and disciplinary procedures help to protect members' terms and conditions and ensure that managers treat their workers fairly and consistently.

Individual Grievances

Usdaw members will turn to their rep when they have an issue at work. In most cases reps will deal with individual grievances. An individual grievance is when an employee raises concerns to the company relating to their terms and conditions of employment, to their statutory rights or the way they are being treated.

Collective Grievances

Reps may also have to deal with a collective grievance, which is more than one person raising the same issue such as a health and safety matter.

Informal resolution

Where it's possible to do so, settling concerns informally is often less stressful for everyone, as solutions can be reached more quickly. Where problems at work are not resolved informally, they will move to the formal grievance process.

Fact Finding

The first thing you will need to do when a member approaches you with an issue is to find out the facts, so you can decide what kind of issue it is. Make sure you ask the following

key questions:

- **Who?** – name(s) of those involved.
- **When?** – date and time of incident(s).
- **Where?** – place of incident(s).
- **What?** – nature of the issue; what has happened?
- **Why?** – The member(s) explanation of why it is an issue and how it may be fixed.

Make sure that you get the full story from whomever you represent and that their story stacks up with other evidence.

Before the Meeting

Make sure you know:

- The date and time of the grievance meeting.
- You are entitled to reasonable paid time off to prepare for the meeting so arrange time off for you and your member to talk about the case.
- Ensure you have all the relevant information, documents and facts relating to the member's grievance.

Managing Members' Expectations

Reps also need to ensure the outcome members are seeking is reasonable. If you feel that the members' expectations are unrealistic then you have a duty to advise them accordingly and try to find a more reasonable outcome.

Know your agreements, staff handbook and employment contracts

To effectively represent your

members, you will need to have a good working knowledge of your union agreement, staff handbook (which should outline policies, procedures and timescales) and contract of employment.

Timescales

Make sure that managers stick to timescales, and that you do too. If there are no formal timescales,





agree your own timescales with the manager.

During the Meeting

- You have the right to represent your member. You are not there as the silent witness or as moral support.
- Assist the member to make their case clearly and simply.
- Make sure the manager assigned

to hear the case is impartial and hasn't predetermined the outcome of the meeting.

- Have copies of the agreements and procedures you refer to.
- If management refer to a policy or procedure, ask them to show it to you.
- The rep (or the member) can call for an adjournment at any time.
- Let the manager know what

outcome the member is seeking.

Always Keep a Written Record

Always keep written notes throughout the meeting and ensure that the outcome is recorded. If there is a note taker, make sure you get a copy of their notes too. The member is entitled to a copy of the note taker's notes. If they don't reflect the discussions, or they are misleading, the discrepancies should be challenged and corrected when the notes are read through.

Keep copies of any relevant documents, including witness statements, letters, emails and outcomes. Remind the member to also keep a copy of all letters/ documents relevant to their case.

GDPR

Under the General Data Protection regulations, you will need to deal with personal data fairly, securely and confidentially. The union has produced a booklet and an online short course that provides guidance for you to follow. For more details go to: www.usdaw.org.uk/gdprcourse

After the grievance meeting

- The employer should inform the member of the outcome of the grievance meeting, in writing, within the timescales of their grievance procedure.
- The rep should advise the member of their right to appeal within the relevant time limit if the member is not satisfied with the outcome.
- Always seek advice from your area organiser in whether the case should be pursued to an Employment Tribunal. Remember there are strict time limits for Employment Tribunals so don't forget to give the member the Legal Plus Postcard reminding them of their rights.

Help and Support

Remember that Usdaw is here to help you. If you need some help or advice, speak to your area organiser.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

The 2016 intake of the Usdaw Organising Academy¹ saw 58 Usdaw activists embark on a six-month secondment, working full-time to help organise and grow the union in their patch. Many graduates are still active within the union and seven of them went onto become area organisers. *Network* caught up with some of the graduates to find out what they've been up to since 2016.

JAY ZILIK

Area organiser, Waltham Cross

After Academy¹, I took on periods of stand down, completed Academy² and became active in my local Labour Party before being appointed as an area organiser in 2017.

I really enjoyed the Academy, it made me a much more confident person and improved my skills as a recruiter and organiser. It definitely had a significant impact on my life. I'm currently mentoring two prospective Academy candidates who I hope will enjoy it and get as much out of it as I did.

STEVIE CASSIDY

Area organiser, Redditch

The Academy programme has changed my life completely. Before 2016 I was very shy and nervous but being on Academy gave me the confidence to achieve my goals and progress within the union. After Academy¹, I completed Academy² in 2017, I then worked as a mobile union learning rep for a

year, and became an area organiser in 2021. I also sit on the regional executive committee for the Labour Party in the East Midlands, and I've campaigned on behalf of Labour parliamentary candidates across the country. I can honestly say that it's thanks to the Academy that I've come this far.

ANDREW SADLER

Area organiser, Redditch

When I finished Academy¹, I carried on as a rep while working as a Tesco Dotcom delivery driver. I successfully completed Academy² in 2017, spent a period as a mobile learning rep, and was appointed to the role of area organiser in November 2019. The Academy programmes developed me as a rep and gave me



ACADEMY1 2016 STATS:

- 58 completed
- 40 still members
- 32 still active
- 7 now area organisers

the confidence to engage in roles that I wouldn't have been able to do had I not been on the programme, and all the training helped me enormously when I became an area organiser.

CIARAN PINKNEY Area organiser, Newcastle

The Academy experience was amazing. I was lucky to be part of a great team with two brilliant tutors, Tracey Howton and Warren Scott, which helped me grow as a person and gave me the belief that I could progress within the union. After Academy1, I went on to complete Academy2 and became an area organiser at the Leeds office in 2017. I'm also federation co-ordinator and political co-ordinator for the north

east region. I'd fully recommend applying for the Academy, it can be challenging but it really is life-changing.

LLOYD TOWNER Area organiser, Faversham

Where have the years gone! After my Academy1 journey I was given the opportunity to complete Academy2 where my confidence levels grew further. I also continued on periods of stand down and completed a TUC employment law diploma, all of which I thoroughly enjoyed and in January 2019 I was appointed as area organiser. I look back with fondness at Academy1 and would encourage any rep to put in as much effort and commitment as they can, as the

more you put in the more you'll get out.

ANDREW FIRMAN Area organiser, Warrington

I learned so much in my time on the Academy, not just about organising and recruitment but about the inner workings of the union. It was a bit of a rollercoaster ride at times but it was thoroughly enjoyable and the six months flew by. It really gave me the bug and made me want to do more for the union. I went on to complete Academy2 and would have done Academy3, if there was one! I was also voted onto the National Executive Council in April 2021 before stepping down when I became an area organiser in September.

CRIAN WILLIAMS

Ebbw Vale

I'm still based in the Tesco store I worked at while on Academy and I'm still active in the union. I hold a number of lay roles including shop steward, safety rep, learning rep, forum rep and I'm also a branch secretary. Academy1 really boosted my confidence in recruiting, made me a better negotiator and helped me in my role as a mobile learning rep. I've been honoured to twice win the regional learning rep award at the Organising Awards, first in 2016 then again at the 2021 awards, and I hope I can win the national award one day.

SUE COOK

Leeds

Academy1 did wonders for my confidence and self-esteem. I'm still working for Argos/Sainsbury's, I'm a shop steward, safety rep and I'm on our national negotiating committee. As well as looking after my local members, I travel across the UK helping members who are

at risk of redundancy or going through changes to their terms and conditions. The Academy experience also meant I had the courage to get involved with politics and stand as a local councillor for the Labour party.

SAMSON MUTEKE

Malton

While in the Academy programme I was elected as the union convenor at Malton Bacon Factory, a position I still hold. From 2018-2021 I served as a regional councillor and member of the equalities forum in the North East region, and I am still active within Usdaw's national equalities programme. In 2019, I was elected to the standing orders committee at the 73rd ADM. Outside work I am the Labour candidate for the Malton ward in the upcoming local elections and am in the second year of a degree in Human Resource Management. The Academy taught me leadership skills, helped me rediscover other abilities in myself and ignited a passion in me to help our members, fellow reps

and the local community. I would recommend it to all Usdaw reps.

JANINE BOWLER

Rotherham

After completing Academy1, I went on to complete Academy2 in 2017 and I'm still an active rep to this day based in Tesco in Wath-upon-Deane. I've run numerous campaigns and I'm chair of my branch, chair of my regional political committee and secretary of Yorkshire federation school. The confidence I gained from the Academy and with Usdaw's backing and encouragement I got involved in politics. This led to me becoming a Labour councillor in 2019. I never thought politics was for me but after getting more involved with the union, I felt inspired to try and change things for the better.

SCOTT REDPATH

Selkirk

Completing Academy1 was one of the best experiences of my life. It gave me the belief that I could do



anything I wanted, and the reps I met on my course have become friends for life. I still work for the Co-op and I carried on being an active rep. I'm also branch secretary and a member of the Scottish regional council. I also stood for election as a Labour councillor, sadly I was unsuccessful but I'll be standing again, if I get the chance. If anyone is thinking of applying for the Academy I'd say go for it. It's hard work, but what you learn is well worth it.

EMMA CUNNINGHAM Belfast

After Academy1 I successfully completed Academy2 and remained a rep for Tesco. I was chair of the North West regional young workers' committee until I became overage, and I was privileged to represent Usdaw at the Irish Congress of Trade Unions conference. The Academy was a brilliant experience from start to finish. The tutors were incredible and really helped me get comfortable with the written work, and I even developed a passion for

WHAT IS THE ACADEMY?

Usdaw's Academy1 is a specialist six-month training programme that provides active reps with the opportunity and skills to recruit and organise across all sectors and companies in their region. Reps who are selected for Academy1 will work for the union for six months, on secondment from their employer, mentored by an Usdaw official. They also receive four weeks of classroom-based training to supplement their

on-the-job role. The Academy runs from May to November with the recruitment process starting in January each year. It is open to reps who have shown a firm commitment to the work of the union and have demonstrated they are capable of, or have the potential of, recruiting and organising beyond their own workplace.

Find out more by going to www.usdaw.org.uk/academy

learning that I didn't know I had. I also met some great friends who even now are there for advice or just a good chat.

THOMAS O'BRIEN Belfast

Since completing Academy1 I've continued working for Asda but I've changed stores and been promoted to section leader. I completed Academy2 in 2018 and I'm still an

active rep which is something I take great pride in doing. Going through the Academy gave me skills I'll have for life. It taught me how to speak up for myself and the members I represent, and it made me want to improve myself and push myself further. During the Academy myself and the other Northern Ireland reps formed an instant bond, we became close friends and are all still in close contact to this day.





GET YOURSELF ORGANISED

In the first of a series of articles with advice on how health and safety reps can get organised to make best use of their legal functions, we take a look at the practical things you need to do to organise yourself and your time.

Facilities for the job

The Safety Representatives' and Safety Committees' Regulations (SRSC Regulations) entitle you to 'facilities' from the employer to enable you to carry out your functions as a safety rep, but what that means in practice depends on what is available, where you work and what you can persuade the employer to make available. You can

build up your resources as you go along. Facilities may include:

- Somewhere secure to keep your papers.
- A place for consulting members in private.
- Access to a telephone.
- Access to noticeboards, internal mail, other communications systems and copying facilities in your workplace.
- Access to a PC for doing reports, using your employer's intranet system, etc.
- Use of a quiet area to write letters, read reports, etc., particularly if your workplace is noisy or crowded.

The more of these your employer

provides, the more effectively you will be able to do your rep role. If your employer has a genuine commitment to health and safety, they should give you all the help they can.

Plan ahead

Plan your diary for the year ahead. Set the dates for regular inspections of the workplace and agree them with management. If there are other safety reps in your workplace work together to make sure all areas are inspected. Also include dates for rep team meetings, health and safety committee meetings, branch meetings or other important events. Under the SRSC Regulations you

CONTACT

Health and safety officer

Doug Russell
0161 249 2441

Health and safety assistant

Tony Whelan
0161 249 2474

General enquiries

healthandsafety
@usdaw.org.uk

the message across. When you are talking to a non-member make it clear that you are the union health and safety rep. You can take up health and safety issues that affect all the workers you represent but you can only pursue individual issues if the person is a member.

Keep your paperwork in order

One of the problems with being a union rep is that you soon start to collect all sorts of bits of paper and emails, some of which will be very important and need to be kept where you can find them in the future. For paperwork, a lockable filing cabinet is the easiest storage space to use. But even if a cabinet is not available, it is important to keep your files in order from the start. You will probably want to keep:

- Communication between yourself and your employer (letters, emails, notes of phone calls etc.).
- Communication between yourself and other union members.
- Hazard information sheets on materials and equipment you use.
- Safety Committee minutes.
- Checklists and inspection reports.
- Details of your employer's written safety policy and safety instructions.
- Union health and safety publications.

Get enough folders to keep them in. When you get a new piece of information, ask yourself whether it belongs in an existing file or whether you need to start a new file for it. Remember any personal information about a member such as accident reports or health details must be kept confidential for GDPR.

You should adopt a similar approach if you are using digital file.

Keep up-to-date

Usdaw keeps reps informed on health and safety through the Network magazine and reps' emails. If you are not getting your own copy of Network or regular email alerts, contact your local Usdaw office to make sure your details are correct

on the membership system.

You can also sign up for free weekly e-newsletter called Risks from the TUC to keep in touch with the wider world of occupational safety and health. Go to the TUC home page <https://www.tuc.org.uk/> Look for Stay in Touch at the bottom right-hand side, enter your email address and follow the instructions. You can sign up to get emails about all sorts of information from the TUC but to get Risks make sure you tick the box for 'Health and Safety Newsletter'.

Keep in touch with your fellow reps

Networking with other Usdaw reps is vitally important. It can sometimes be a difficult job being a union rep so keeping in touch with fellow reps is a good way to support each other. It is also a handy way of sharing good practice and helps with keeping you up-to-date with what is happening. Where there are other Usdaw reps in your own workplace it makes sense to work as a team. Even if you are the only rep where you work, there will be other reps nearby who work for the same employer or are members of the same union Branch. These days it is even easier to keep in touch with mobile phones, emails and social media.

Your branch secretary or area organiser should be able to help you make contact with fellow reps in your area or employer.

If you are interested in keeping in touch with reps from other unions to discuss health and safety, there's a forum on the TUC Union Reps website:

www.tuc.org.uk/unionreps-online-community-reps

are entitled to paid time to carry out your functions as a health and safety rep. If you do have difficulty getting time off to do inspections or to attend meetings keep a note of the details and talk to your Area Organiser.

Talk to the workers you represent

As the union health and safety rep, it is important that workers can get in touch with you to raise any concerns they may have. Both members and non-members need to know who you are and how to get hold of you. Posters on notice boards, leaflets in the canteen, messages in a staff newsletter or on your company intranet system can all help to get

If you would like to feature in our magazine, get in touch and tell us what you've been doing in your workplace.
network@usdaw.org.uk

REMEMBER THE DEAD: FIGHT FOR THE LIVING

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY



International Workers' Memorial Day is the day when the international labour movement remembers those who have been killed or injured in workplace accidents and those who have died from occupational diseases. The event started in Canada and the US in 1986 and has been supported by Usdaw, the TUC, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and by the British Government.

Theme for IWMD

This year the theme for IWMD chosen by the International TUC is the same as last year - 'Make health and safety a fundamental right for all workers'. The theme reflects the ongoing campaign by the international workers movement for the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to make safety and health a fundamental right at work. Three years have passed since the ILO Centenary Conference agreed that this would be done.

In that time around 8.1 million people have died as a result of their work, and even more now live with life-altering injuries and illnesses because their employer did not protect them. www.ituc-csi.org/International-Workers-Memorial-Day-2022

ITUC

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary said "The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated beyond doubt that working people can't wait for this any longer. Workplace deaths are preventable deaths and the latest figures show that a worker dies at least once every ten seconds. By doing this the ILO will be making a start on cutting this appalling toll of death and injuries."

The ITUC also wants governments to:

- Ratify and implement ILO health and safety conventions.
- Establish national health and safety bodies bringing unions and employer representatives together.
- Require occupational health services for all, and proper compensation including making Covid-19 a recognised occupational disease.

Udaw calls for a reversal of cuts

In Britain, we already have the HSE as the national body that brings unions and employers together. However, cuts to HSE funding and recent Government policies have weakened its effectiveness. Usdaw is calling for a reversal of the HSE cuts and for HSE to strengthen its

work with unions and employers. We also want to see more HSE and Local Authority inspectors to enforce health and safety law and we want the inspectors to work with union safety reps when they do workplace inspections.

What Can You Do for Workers Memorial Day?

- Arrange a display in your workplace. Usdaw will be producing a poster and leaflet for reps to use in the workplace on IWMD.
- Wear a purple 'forget me knot' ribbon. Ribbons, car stickers and posters can be bought from Greater Manchester Hazards Centre.

Events in your area

Find out about events in your area and visit the TUC online Memorial Wall or the TUC Workers' Memorial Day Timeline at:

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/wmd>

International Developments

To keep track of international developments check out:

www.28april.org

Pictures

If you run an event for IWMD send us a picture at:

www.network/org.uk

INFECTIONS ON RISE AGAIN

COVID WORKPLACE PRECAUTIONS NEEDED

Usdaw has condemned the prime minister's decision to end all legal controls on Covid-19 a month earlier than had been planned. Covid infections are increasing across the UK, with around one in 16 people infected. Removal of the legal requirement to self-isolate makes it more likely that people will feel pressurised to go into work. Low-paid workers who can't afford to take time off will be under greater pressure because Statutory Sick Pay will no longer be available from day one of the infection. And scrapping free tests from the beginning of April

means that many people who are infectious, but have mild symptoms, will bring their infection into work and pass it on to others. The success of the vaccination programme and the fact that the current variant of the virus is less harmful for most people is good news. However, the number of people developing 'long-covid' is still on the increase.

Even though there is no longer a legal requirement to wear masks in shops in England, Usdaw is continuing to ask the public to respect shopworkers by wearing face coverings, observing hand

hygiene and maintaining social distancing.

The HSE advice to employers is clear. Even though the covid regulations have been relaxed, employers should continue to reduce the risk of transmission at work. In particular, they must ensure there is adequate ventilation and suitable arrangements for cleaning and good hand hygiene. HSE is also very clear about the need for employers to consult with their workers on their Covid-19 risk assessments.

www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus

LIMIT COULD SAVE LIVES

DIESEL FUMES STUDY

A study by experts from Utrecht University shows that the introduction of an occupational exposure limit for diesel engine exhaust fumes (DEEF) could save many deaths from lung cancer. They estimate the effect of a 'health-based' control level (1 microgramme of elemental carbon per cubic metre of air) and the control levels proposed by the Dutch Government (10 microgrammes per cubic metre) and by the EU (50 microgrammes per cubic metre). Even the EU limit would make a substantial difference if properly

implemented, reducing the death toll by a fifth.

By contrast there are no proposals to introduce an occupational exposure standard for DEEF in Britain. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) estimated in 2012 that there are 605 deaths a year in Great Britain from diesel engine exhaust related lung cancer. However, a 2019 report from Hazards magazine noted that the real UK figure could be over 1,700 deaths per year, more than 1,000 more deaths each year than the official HSE estimate.

The TUC has criticised the Government for failing to take the action necessary to protect workers and failing to regulate DEEF as a cause of occupational cancer.

For more details see the article in the free weekly health and safety e-news from the TUC:

www.tuc.org.uk
search **Risks 1033**

MATERNITY WEBINAR

Usdaw is organising a webinar with Maternity Action on occupational health and safety rights for pregnant women on:

Thursday 21 April, 1–2.30 pm.

Maternity Action employment lawyer Jo Chimes will be running the webinar. She will be discussing:

- What's involved in a pregnancy risk assessment.
- Time off for antenatal appointments including those with shift work.
- Impact of employment status - focus on permanent employees working short hours and additional shifts - not self-employed or workers/agency.
- Reasonable adjustments to hours and working conditions.
- Right to be offered a suitable alternative job on similar terms and conditions.
- Suspension on full pay.

The webinar will be held on Zoom and is free for any Usdaw member to attend.

To sign up for the webinar and to get the Zoom joining details, members should contact equalitymatters@usdaw.org.uk

ARE YOU A DRIVER REP?

Get in touch and tell us what you've been doing in your workplace.

network@usdaw.org.uk

MemberOffers

CARS & TRANSPORT

Car Hire
Car Maintenance
Car Parking: Q-Park
Fiat
Griffin Motoring
Startrescue
Vauxhall Cars

INSURANCE

Accident Protection Cover
Home/Motor/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
The Co-op Credit Union

HEALTH & BEAUTY

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

LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

Beer52
Cinema at home: Chili.com
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
Virgin Experience Days

HOLIDAYS

Airport Parking, Lounges
& Hotels
Away Resorts
Cottage Breaks
James Villa Holidays
Lost Luggage Protection
Parkdean Resorts
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Don't forget about the Union's free legal services such as free will writing and Legal Plus.

www.usdaw.org.uk/legal

www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

*Terms and Conditions for individual offers on the website.

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Usdaw NHS Dental Plan

USDRAW DENTAL PLAN

Do you have an NHS dentist?

Get up to £500 of NHS cover with this simple and straightforward member benefit exclusively available to Usdaw members. It costs £11.50 per month and you get money back each time you visit your NHS dentist, meaning no more costly treatment bills, plus you're covered immediately as soon as you join the plan.

To find out more go to: www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

CINEMA

Catch the latest blockbusters and save money on tickets

Get up to 40% off next time you visit the cinema with fantastic discounts available at over 300 nationwide venues. Whether you are seeking action, romance, comedy or thriller, enjoy great savings every time at local and nationwide chains such as ODEON and Vue*.

To find out more go to: www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*



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STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Training officer Jenni White retires after 23 years' service and former Tesco rep Graham Menzies takes up his new role as area organiser in the Scottish region.

JENNI WHITE

Jenni White, training officer for the north west region, retires after 23 years' service.

Jenni, 59, started working for Safeway in 1987 and within 12 short months she was the rep and health and safety rep. In 1999 she became the training officer for the eastern region and transferred to the north west in 2000. She became a fully qualified teacher after she completed her PGCE in 2007.

"I always say I became a rep by accident. One day I went on holiday and when I returned, I found out that I had been nominated by my colleagues to be the rep. I agreed to do it until they found someone else, but they never did!

"Being a rep was a life-changing moment for me as it gave me access to a huge amount of learning and training. Being a rep, representing members and standing up to employers, also gave me the confidence to go to Ruskin, the trade union college in Oxford in 1995, where I completed a diploma in Sociology.

"After this, I completed a degree in Sociology at Bristol University. Just before my final exam, I applied for the training officer's position and got it. By that point I had accumulated quite a lot of experience training people both within and outside of a union setting. When I worked for BT, I was responsible for training the new call handlers and as an Usdaw rep I helped run workshops for Black Members Weekend, back when it was first set up.

"I loved being a training officer. I got to meet people from all over the country and I will really miss

that. The most rewarding thing has been training reps and then seeing them go on to do amazing things such as becoming activists, national executive members, regional councillors, area organisers and even regional secretaries.

"The first thing I need to do when I retire is to finish renovating the bungalow. I also want to learn a new language and go on holidays without having to check my work schedule. At some point I want to knuckle down and write a book for the children in my family but for the moment I'll be happy to sit on my patio with a cocktail."

GRAHAM MENZIES

Former Tesco rep and activist Graham Menzies is the new area organiser at the Aberdeen office.

Graham, 30, joined Usdaw in 2010 and became a rep in 2015. He held a range of lay positions in the union before being appointed to Usdaw's staff in January.

"I'd always wanted to be involved in the union movement," said Graham. "Most of my family are reps for different unions so it was a constant presence when I was growing up. From an early age, I understood how important it is to help and support others.

"In my time as a rep I completed Academy 1 and would have done Academy 2 if it hadn't been cancelled because of Covid, and I won the regional organising award for most promising new activist in 2016.

"My proudest moment was chairing the Scottish regional conference last year, alongside the President and General Secretary.



Jenni White



Graham Menzies

"Being an AO is a big step up in terms of the amount of information I've had to take in so far, but I'm really enjoying it. My patch is huge, covering most of northern Scotland and including 52 Co-ops as well as branches of Tesco, Morrisons, Argos and a shortbread factory.

"My priorities are to increase membership density in stores and engage with my new reps. I want to make sure the reps have all the support they need to go as far as they want on their union journey.

"I can't wait to get out and about and really get stuck in."



RIGHTS FOR WORKING PARENTS AND CARERS

Everything you need to know about supporting parents and carers including rights and benefits.

The union's annual Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight Day is on 18 May, but our members are juggling paid work with their commitments as a parent and/or carer all year round – so as a rep it's important to stay fully informed on the relevant rights and benefits.

These two leaflets are invaluable parts of any rep's Usdaw library. Featuring comprehensive, straightforward advice on all

aspects on rights at work and benefits for working parents and carers, they should be your first port of call when you need to support a member who's struggling to balance their paid work with their caring.

Make sure you bookmark dtp.usdaw.co.uk/343 and dtp.usdaw.co.uk/381 in your phone's web browser so you can view these leaflets whenever you need them.

NEW IN!

Leaflets & Booklets

Usdaw Supporting Young Workers (Leaflet 396)

Social Media and Mental Health (Leaflet 425)

Supporting Young Workers - Workplace Mental Health (Leaflet 450)

Urinary Incontinence (Women's Health Series: 16)

Members' Guide to the Annual Delegate Meeting

Survey Results 2021: Campaign to End Violence and Abuse against Retail Workers

Posters

Wanted...Usdaw Reps (Poster NB8)

Wanted Union Reps ... could you fill this space? (Poster NB16)

Ten good reasons to join Sata (Poster R4)

Usdaw The Union for Young People at Work (Poster R54)

Domestic Abuse (Poster R56)

Equalities Calendar 2022

Sexual Harassment A4 Poster (SH1)

Online Bitesize courses

A Play on Words – English Bitesize course – www.usdaw.org.uk/English

CV Writing - ICT bitesize course www.usdaw.org.uk/CVWriting

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

Maths and Money Matters – Maths Bitesize Course www.usdaw.org.uk/mathsmatters

Organising and Recruitment Part 1 www.usdaw.org.uk/RecruitOrg1

Organising and Recruitment Part 2 www.usdaw.org.uk/RecruitOrg2

Using Zoom - online bitesize course www.usdaw.org.uk/zoom

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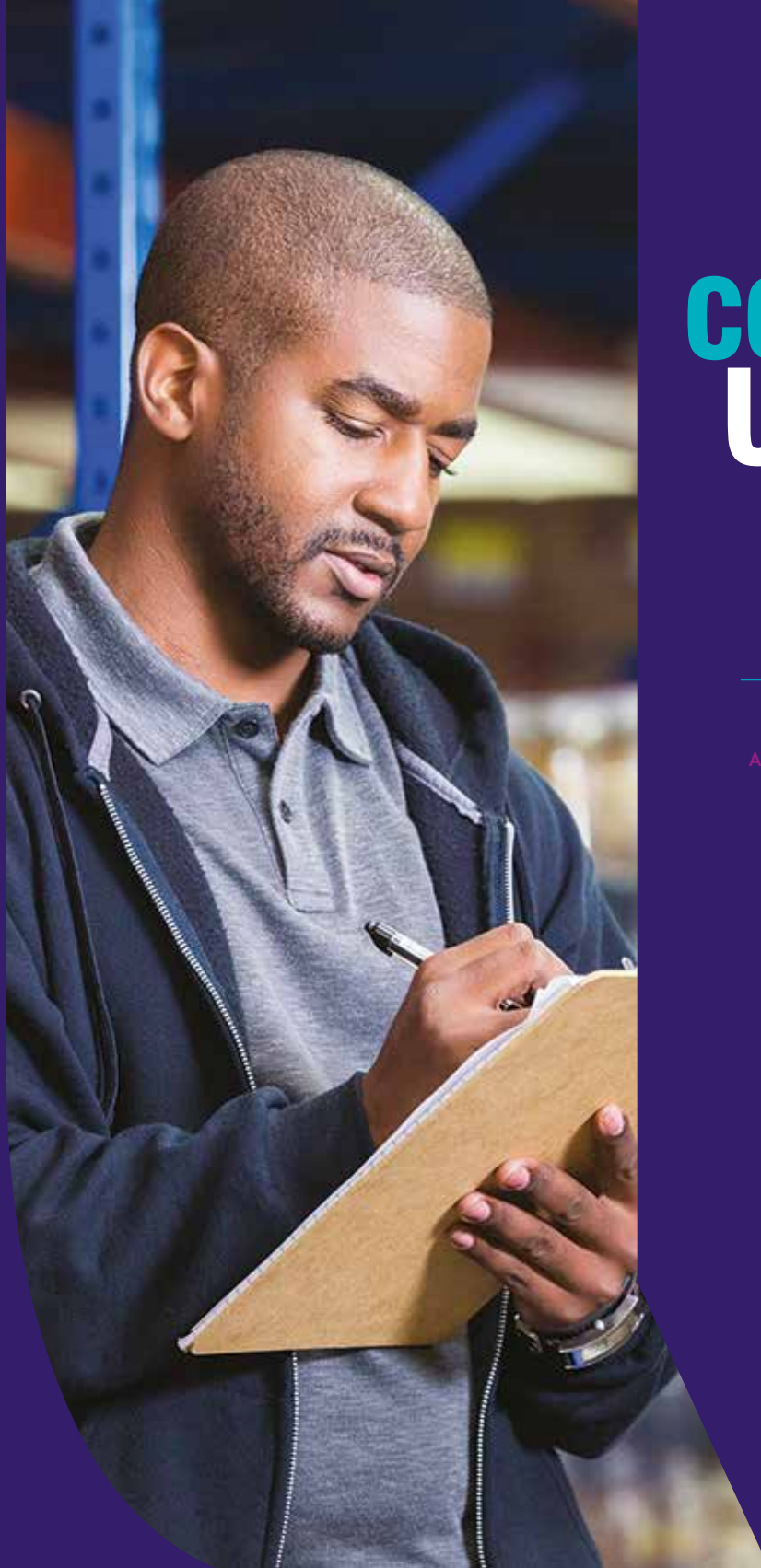
OVER TO YOU



Top: Leafleting for Labour for the local council elections for Baillieston Glasgow.

Middle: Tesco staff in the Wolverhampton store highlighting LGBTQ+ awareness.

Bottom: Northern Federation workshop on recruitment and organising in the workplace held in North Shields.



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