

Arena

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Arena is the membership magazine for the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers.

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Welcome

After months of speculation, the Government has finally set a date for the general election, and I am urging Usdaw members to vote Labour on Thursday 4 July.

The past 14 years have shown what a Tory Britain looks like: austerity that cruelly targets the most vulnerable people in our communities; relentless attacks on workers' and trade union rights that create more insecure work; chaotic economics that caused a deeply damaging cost of living crisis, and the effective decriminalisation of shoplifting that blights our struggling retail industry.

We've all had enough. That's why Usdaw is campaigning for Labour.

The next Labour Government has committed to undo the damage inflicted by the Tories and create a fair and more equal future for workers. As well as introducing their new deal for working people within 100 days, their commitments include: action to close pay gaps; create a modern childcare system; tackle child poverty; reform social security; tackle workplace sexual harassment; introduce stronger family-friendly rights; strengthen flexible working; put mental health on a par with physical health; and tackle health inequalities.

Thursday 4 July is your opportunity to elect a government that will put workers before wealth. A vote for the Conservatives is not a vote for working people, their families or their communities. Only Labour will bring about the changes that working people need.

Paddy Lillis, General Secretary



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Labour will set the country on the path to change

In May, the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak finally set a date for the general election. The country will go to the polls on 4 July 2024, which will give voters the chance to kick out the Tories for good.

Even before the election was called, Labour had announced the first six steps it would take in government. These, alongside Labour's new deal for working people and their high street plan, set out a clear vision for a better country.

Labour's first steps for change:

- Deliver economic stability with tough spending rules, to grow the economy and keep taxes, inflation and mortgages as low as possible.
- Cut NHS waiting times with 40,000 more evening and weekend appointments each week, paid for by cracking down on tax avoidance and non-doms.
- Launch a new Border Security Command with hundreds of new specialist investigators and counter-terror powers to smash criminal gangs and strengthen borders.
- Set up Great British Energy, a publicly owned clean power company, to cut bills for good and boost energy security, paid for by a windfall tax on oil and gas giants.
- Crack down on antisocial behaviour, with more neighbourhood police paid

for by ending wasteful contracts, tough new penalties for offenders, and a new network of youth hubs.

- Recruit 6,500 new teachers in key subjects to set children up for life, work and the future, paid for by ending tax breaks for private schools.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis says: "It is only the Labour Party that will deliver the new deal for working people, strengthening rights at work, making work pay and making work fairer. Labour will tackle workplace discrimination, put mental health on a par with physical health and tackle the retail sector crisis. It is a new deal that tackles insecure employment and makes sure work provides the dignity of decent pay.

"Labour show that only they in government will deliver the much needed and long overdue help the retail industry needs. Action on business rates, tackling retail crime and a new deal for working people are at the top of our list.

"Labour's agenda for our members will tackle violence, threats and abuse, make the economy work for working people and deliver fairness in the workplace. After 14 years of austerity and a cost of living crisis, it is clear that only Labour has the plan for change that our members so desperately need."



Tories played political games with shopworker safety



Usdaw criticised Tory ministers for failing to follow through on their promise to create a standalone offence of assaulting a shopworker. The Government did table an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill, which was weaker than the law that already exists in Scotland, but it fell when a general election was called and didn't get through Parliament's so-called wash-up.

Udswaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Last month the Government U-turned on the need to legislate to protect shop workers from violence, threats and abuse, by announcing they would create a standalone offence in their Criminal Justice Bill. This turned out to be a political stunt trying to undermine Labour's commitment on this. I am now not convinced that they ever intended to follow through on this promise, after failing to support the Labour amendment, delaying the passage of the Bill and then allowing it fall before Parliament closed for a general election.

"The dither and delay of this Government, on this issue, over many years, has led to thousands of shopworkers needlessly suffering physical and mental injury. It is

an absolute disgrace to play games with the lives of shopworkers, key workers in every community, on the front line suffering unprecedented violence, abuse and threats in a retail crime epidemic. The Tory record is one of effectively decriminalising theft from shops.

"This, among many reasons, is why we need a Labour Government. Labour is committed to deliver for retail staff in England and Wales the protection of shopworkers law that has existed in Scotland for three years. Labour will end the perverse £200 threshold for prosecuting shoplifters, which has effectively become an open invitation to retail criminals. Labour will provide more uniformed officers patrolling shopping areas and introduce town centre banning orders for repeat offenders.

"We hope that 14 years of Tory failure are about to come to an end, so that our members can secure the changes they desperately need. Shopworkers need the respect that they have long deserved and, regrettably, too often do not receive. We need Labour to deliver this."

Supreme Court to hear the Usdaw challenge to Tesco on their use of 'fire and rehire' to undermine 'retained pay'

Usdaw and leading law firm Thompsons challenged supermarket giant Tesco on its use of 'fire and rehire' in the Supreme Court. The hearing was held on 23 and 24 April 2024 and was the final stage of a long-running legal battle.

Usdaw members employed by Tesco in its Daventry and Litchfield Distribution Centres won a landmark legal victory against Tesco, after the company proposed to remove 'retained pay' by dismissing staff and offering to re-engage them on inferior terms and conditions. Tesco chose to pursue the case further to the Court of Appeal, where the original judgement was overturned.

Following on from this, the Court decided to remove the injunction currently in place preventing Tesco from dismissing these workers. However, Usdaw, on behalf of the members concerned, remained determined to fight on against these shameful 'fire and rehire' tactics and secured leave to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Usdaw national officer Mark Todd said: "It has always been clear to us what we agreed with Tesco in respect of our members in receipt of 'retained pay'. That is that they would have a right to this payment for as long as they remained employed by Tesco in their current role. The agreement was reached at a time when the company needed these individuals to remain in post as it could not have been operationally effective if they had chosen to leave. The workers agreed to remain in the business and relocate on the basis of the guarantee of these payments when they otherwise may have taken redundancy.

"We were therefore shocked when Tesco adopted 'fire and rehire' tactics to try and strip this right away and then chose to pursue a small number of employees through every court in the land to deny them wages. Tesco is a highly profitable business and those profits are generated by the hard work and loyalty of our members. They deserve better than to be subjected to 'fire and rehire' and extensive legal challenges."

Both parties are currently waiting for the Supreme Court's decision.

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Co-op - Usdaw members overwhelmingly accept a 10.1 per cent increase, taking the hourly rate to £12

Members working for Co-operative Group overwhelmingly accepted a 10.1 per cent pay increase. The increase took effect in April and takes the basic hourly rate to £12.

Usdaw national officer Jayne Allport said: "We are pleased to have negotiated this significant pay rise. It is a big help for our members struggling in the ongoing cost of living crisis and recognises their important contribution to the success of the business.

"This increase takes the Co-op rate to the level of the real Living Wage and meets our target of achieving £12 per hour. Workers deserve the dignity of decent pay."

Tesco: Usdaw secures a 9.1 per cent increase in hourly pay taking the basic rate over the real Living Wage

Usdaw has negotiated a pay deal with Tesco that will significantly increase the hourly pay rate for staff in stores and fulfilment centres by £1 per hour to £12.02 per hour. Around 220,000 colleagues across the UK will benefit from this increase, which represents one of the largest investments in pay by Tesco in a single year.

The new rate, which came into effect on 28 April 2024, represents a 9.1 per cent rise in base pay. At the time the headline inflation rate sat at 4.0 per cent. As a result of this deal and previous negotiated settlements, base pay will have increased by nearly 26 per cent in less than two years.

The new pay rates apply to staff of all ages and exceeds the National Living Wage, which currently stands at £11.44 an hour for those aged 21 and over. It also takes staff above the Living Wage Foundation rate outside London of £12.00 and ensures all staff in stores within the M25 are on their rate of £13.15.

Usdaw national officer Daniel Adams said: "This deal not only delivers an inflation-busting increase for Tesco employees but it also demonstrates the value of progressive employers engaging constructively with trade unions at a time when the cost of living pressures continue to be keenly felt by our members. We welcome the company's positive response through our negotiations which have resulted in the largest investment in pay in a single year with the highest entry rate for store employees of any major supermarket."

A library at your fingertips



Usdaw produces a huge range of publications covering every aspect of workers' rights – and they're freely accessible to all our members through our online catalogue.

From hours and holidays to health issues and rights for young workers, everyone will find useful information that helps them understand their rights and entitlements. There's also a series of guides to your workplace and state pension, as well as plenty of information about our free Legal Plus service.

Make sure you've got dtp.usdaw.org.uk bookmarked and you'll have these fantastic resources available at a tap of your phone, anytime and anywhere.

Most popular publications of 2024

- Member Offers (Leaflet 398)
- Your Rights to Breaks and Paid Holidays (Leaflet 352)
- Workers' Rights (Leaflet 211)
- Legal Plus Looking After You and Your Family (Leaflet 312)
- Guide to Maternity and Parental Rights
- Flexible Working (Leaflet 346)
- Mental Health – Where to go for help and support (Leaflet 400)
- Delivery Drivers – Abuse is Not Part of the Job (Leaflet 430)
- 10 Good Reasons to Join Usdaw (Leaflet 261)
- Pension Credit – Guidance for Usdaw members

Annual Delegate Meeting

Delegates gathered in the Winter Gardens in Blackpool for Usdaw's 77th Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM). ADM is the biggest event in the union's calendar with over 1,000 delegates, visitors and officials attending from across the UK.

General secretary Paddy Lillis, deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen and president Jane Jones hosted ADM, while executive council member Jo Crumplin ensured the smooth running of ADM as the chair of the standing orders committee.

Over the four days, delegates took part in lively debates and voted on propositions to decide the union's policies and priorities for the next 12 months.

Delegates also heard from guest speakers Keir Starmer, leader of the Labour Party, as well as Paul Nowak, general secretary of the Trade Union Congress (TUC).

Arena reports on a cross section of the main propositions and debates.

Economy and Finance Debate

Delegates called for the Government to cap the price of essential food to ensure families can provide basic meals. They also supported a proposition calling for the Government to introduce a social tariff to tackle the soaring energy costs.

Carer's leave and allowance

Delegates supported a proposition calling for better paid leave arrangements for working carers that go beyond statutory





Subs Increase

Delegates voted overwhelmingly to increase membership rates. This means from **29 June 2024**, Scale A members will pay **£2.78** a week and Scale C will pay **£1.92**.

minimum rights and demanded an uplift in Carer's Allowance to reflect the valuable work of carers.

Christmas Eve Closing

Delegates backed a call for early closing on Christmas Eve to allow workers to be at home at a reasonable time and ensure they get a proper break over the festive period.

Assisted Dying

Delegates supported a motion on assisted dying with provisions containing significant safeguards to protect terminally ill people to ensure they're not pressured into ending their lives.

Environment Debate

Delegates passionately debated and supported propositions on tackling fly tipping, investing in a green industrial revolution and the introduction of sustainability reps during the environment debate.

Equalities Debate

Usdaw delegates put equality at the heart of the union's agenda and overwhelmingly backed propositions calling for better disabled access, facilities for prayer rooms and outlawing gay conversion therapy.

NEC Statement 'Labour for Equality'

Deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen moved the National Executive Council Statement 'Labour for Equality' and outlined the inequality that has infested the UK under the Tory Government. He also spoke about Labour's proven track



record of legislating for equality and their commitments to introducing measures to bring about stronger family-friendly leave and pay rights; giving carers greater protections; closing gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps; delivering a social security system that provides a safety net for all and boosting the power of unions to tackle inequality in the workplace.

Lifelong learning agreements

Usdaw backed motions for more lifelong learning agreements and renewed the call for reinstatement of the Union Learning Fund.

NEC Statement 'Labour for a New Deal'

General secretary Paddy Lillis moved the National Executive Council Statement 'Labour for a New Deal' and reiterated that the only way to secure real change was to vote for a Labour Government that will fight to deliver policies, pledges and commitments that will improve the lives of working people.

Pensions Debate

Delegates voted on motions to stop further rises in the state pension age and maintain the triple lock to avoid people falling into poverty.

Politics Debate

In a bid to enfranchise more people,

delegates backed propositions to repeal voter ID laws and to lower the voting age from 18 to 16.

Prevention of Abuse

Delegates overwhelmingly backed a proposition calling for employers of smaller stores to address the surging instances of abuse, as well as introducing a message advising callers that any form of verbal abuse targeting call handlers will not be tolerated.

Universal Credit

Delegates called for reform of universal credit, particularly how payment is assessed monthly rather than four-weekly and fails to recognise this common pattern of work for low paid workers.

TUC General Secretary Paul Nowak

"These have been and still are tough times for working people, but they are also hopeful times, because change is within our grasp. Not just the prospect of political change, but the possibility of economic and social change too. The chance to build a fairer, greener, more equal country. A country where workers get decent pay and a secure job. Where everyone has access to great public services and strong unions win good work for all. So, let's take that opportunity, build our movement and win for workers."



Pictured L-R: Jane Jones, Dave McCrossen and Paddy Lillis

Keynote Speech

Keir Starmer received a standing ovation after his keynote speech which thanked Usdaw members for their contribution as key workers and set out plans to tackle retail crime, rejuvenate high streets, deliver a new deal for working people and ensure that a growing economy delivers prosperity for workers.

Addressing delegates, he said: "Nobody in Britain should be in any doubt about the scale of the crime wave on our high streets. The epidemic levels of shoplifting and the persistent plague of antisocial behaviour.

"So today, I am putting shoplifters on notice. You might get away with this under a weak Tory Government, but if Labour takes power we won't stand by while crime takes over our streets. We'll put 13,000 extra neighbourhood police on the beat. We'll scrap the shoplifter's charter, the £200 rule that stops the police investigating theft in your workplace and we will legislate to make sure assaulting and abusing shopworkers is a standalone criminal offence, because you deserve to feel safe at work."

Turning to Labour's new deal for working people, Keir Starmer continued: "We will embark on the biggest levelling-up of worker rights this country has seen for a generation. That's what our new deal for working people will achieve.

"It should be a given that hard work is fairly rewarded. It should be a given that whoever you are, whatever your circumstances, however you contribute, you are treated with respect and dignity at work. That's why we will end fire and rehire, make parental leave a day one right, scrap zero-hours contracts,



strengthen statutory sick pay, boost collective bargaining and make work pay with a real living wage."

On Labour's growth mission, he pledged: "Working people have been told that fair pay, good work and dignity are barriers to growth, but they're not and we will prove it. Labour will make work pay, Labour will get Britain building again, Labour will hold out the hand of partnership to business and together we'll invest in our future. A new direction on growth, from working people, for working people. Higher living standards for every family and community. That is our mission on growth.

Keir Starmer concluded: "If you want a new deal for working people, if you want tougher action on the crime that blights your workplace, if you want a rejuvenated high street or even just a government you can trust to always put the country first, then vote Labour and show Britain is ready for change."

Violence against shopworkers doubles

Usdaw launched shocking statistics from its annual survey of over 5,500 retail staff showing that 18 per cent of shopworkers suffered a violent attack last year, compared to 8 per cent in 2022.

The increase in assaults comes during an epidemic of retail crime with official statistics and reports from retailers showing significant increases in theft from shops. The survey also found the number of assaults has come down since the exceptionally high levels during the pandemic but remains higher than pre-Covid levels in 2019.

In the last 12 months (pre-pandemic levels in brackets, from the 2019 survey):

- 70 per cent (68 per cent) have experienced verbal abuse.

- 46 per cent (43 per cent) were threatened by a customer.
 - 18 per cent (5 per cent) were assaulted.
- In April, the Government announced that assaulting a shopworker will be made a separate criminal offence in England and Wales as part of its response to a wave of retail crime, which is costing the industry £3 billion in security measures and lost stock.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "The scale of assaults, abuse and threats towards shopworkers and extent of the retail crime epidemic has been a disgrace for many years. This has been made worse by police cuts and a failure to legislate to protect retail staff. Usdaw has long called for action that includes



a standalone offence for assaulting a shopworker and that has been vehemently opposed by this Government and their Conservative MPs on many occasions.

"This long overdue U-turn is the culmination of many years of sustained campaigning by Usdaw and others. Our members have had to wait too long for their voices to be heard and common sense to prevail. We will have to see the detail of what they are proposing and it must be at least what we won in Scotland three years ago. It also cannot fall short of Labour's commitments to 13,000 more uniformed officers, patrols on high streets, banning repeat offenders and ending the perverse £200 threshold for prosecuting shoplifters.

"The dither and delay of this Government on this issue, over many years, has led to thousands of shopworkers needlessly suffering physical and mental injury. I hope that whatever the Government is proposing will be substantial and effective in giving shopworkers, key workers in every community, the respect that they have long deserved and regrettably too often do not receive."

Experiences of shopworkers who wanted to remain anonymous:

Retail worker in Swadlincote

When I started seven years ago, you used to get the odd person stealing nappies or baby formula. Now it's more organised. Now shoplifters try to get a basket full of stolen goods past you. In our store, we have people stealing meat, cheese and coffee to sell in the pub. The police don't bother to respond because it's under £200.

Retail worker in Ebbw Vale

A few years back, I had a nasty experience with a young woman. She was 15, inebriated and shoplifting. We tried to stop her, something we wouldn't do now. She proceeded to kick me, spat in my face and accused me of making her have a miscarriage. I later found out she wasn't even pregnant. She got sent down to a young offenders' unit and was ordered to pay me £25 compensation, £5 a month out of her pocket money.

Retail worker in Covent Garden

We live in fear and the only source of protection we have is other members of staff. If we hear someone kicking off at one of our colleagues, we go and stand near them to give them moral support. We literally have a police station across the street from us but that doesn't make us feel any safer because we know that if we called them, they wouldn't bother to come out.



Maternity and Pensions

Even today, the onus is on women to take time off from work or reduce their hours to be a child's primary caregiver. This often leads to a reduction in pay and, as a result, a cut in pension contributions. With so much at stake, it's important to understand what happens to your pension when you're on maternity leave.

What happens to my pension contributions when I'm on maternity leave?

If your employer has automatically enrolled you into a workplace pension scheme, they will be required to continue contributing to your pension scheme at the same level and on the same amount of pay that you were receiving prior to your maternity leave. However, your contributions will be based upon your actual earnings during your maternity leave.

Can I contribute to my pension if I'm taking unpaid leave after my maternity leave?

If you decide to take a period of unpaid leave after your paid maternity leave, you do not need to continue contributing during the period of unpaid leave, but you



can if you wish to do so. Your employer does not have to make any contributions on your behalf (unless your contract of employment states otherwise).

Can I make up for this period of unpaid leave when I return to work?

When you return to work you (and your employer) may be able to pay extra contributions to make up for any period of unpaid leave, depending on the scheme's rules.



How will going back to work part-time affect my pension?

If you go back to work part-time on a lower salary, this will mean that your pension will build more slowly, so you may want to consider paying additional contributions. Most pension schemes will let you pay in more than the standard contribution amount.

What happens to my pension if I do not return to work?

If you decide not to return to work, the

money paid into your pension will remain invested with your pension provider until you decide to have the pension paid to you. Currently, the earliest age at which you can do so is at age 55 (this will increase to age 57 by 2028, unless you have a protected retirement age under your scheme).

Does maternity leave affect my State Pension?

Your State Pension is based on your National Insurance record. Your National Insurance record is made up of the number of years you have paid National Insurance and/or how many years of National Insurance credit you have. You need at least 35 years of qualifying National Insurance contributions or credits to qualify for a full State Pension.

Maternity pay is subject to National Insurance deductions.

If your maternity pay is £242 (2024/25) per week or more, you will continue to pay National Insurance which will count towards your State Pension. If you earn between £123 and £242 per week (2024/25), you will build up National Insurance credits but will not have to pay National Insurance contributions.

The FAQs above are only relevant to pension schemes which are classified as a defined contribution (DC) arrangement. For other types of schemes, contact the pensions section on **0161 224 2804** or **pensions@usdaw.org.uk**

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Labour candidates across key seats

The general election has been called for 4 July 2024. After 14 years of austerity, Tory chaos, and a cost of living crisis that has left Usdaw members feeling worse off, we have a chance to change our country for the better.

Usdaw is supporting candidates in key seats across the country, with Usdaw teams out campaigning for their Labour candidates. Winning these key seats is a step towards getting a Labour government that will deliver the New Deal for Working People that will make such a difference for Usdaw members.

You can be part of your local Usdaw Campaign Team with other Usdaw activists by signing up for our Political Activist Programme here: www.usdaw.org.uk/Members/Usdaw-and-Politics/Join-the-team

Get to know your Usdaw key seat candidates:

South Wales & Western Region



Plymouth Moor View – Fred Thomas

Fred lives locally in Plymouth and is a former Captain who served in the Royal Marines. He campaigns on local issues like lower energy bills, cheaper tolls for locals, and housing.

Fred says: "As a Captain in the Royal Marines, I led teams around the world



fighting for the values we share and serving our country. But over the last decade it became clear that those values weren't shared by the Conservative Government I served. I left the Armed Forces to help Labour win back our country and to fight for a fairer future."



Filton & Bradley Stoke – Claire Hazelgrove

Claire was an anti-poverty activist and campaigner under the last Labour Government, and has worked for charities in the international development, housing and environmental sectors.



Bridgend – Chris Elmore

Chris is the current MP for Ogmore, which is being split as a result of constituency changes. Chris is a hard-working, community-focussed MP, who works to represent the needs of his local community.



Eastern Region



Watford – Matt Turmaine

Matt is a local councillor in Watford, and previously worked in health and social care. Matt has been an active trade unionist for many years.



Norwich North – Alice MacDonald

Alice was born and raised in Norfolk and lives locally in Norwich. Alice has spent most of her career in the charity sector, campaigning against poverty and inequality.



Harlow – Chris Vince

Chris is a local councillor in Harlow. Chris was a secondary school maths teacher for 15 years, and worked for a homelessness charity. He now works for a charity supporting young carers.

Midlands Region



Gedling – Michael Payne

Michael is an Usdaw member from Gedling and is the deputy leader of Gedling Council, representing a local ward in the constituency. Michael has a strong track record of working with trade unions and supporting working families and tackling food and child poverty in the area.



Tamworth – Sarah Edwards

Sarah is the current MP for Tamworth, which she won in the 2023 by-election. She was previously a trade union organiser. Sarah has spoken out on homelessness, the cost of living, and school minibus safety in her community.



Corby & East Northamptonshire – Lee Barron

Lee grew up in Northampton and worked as a union organiser for 20 years. Lee is passionate about making sure the voices and experiences of his community are represented in Westminster, including access to NHS services like GPs and dentists.

North East Region



Leeds North West – Katie White

Katie was born and grew up in the constituency. She is campaigning on key community issues like the cost of living, local high streets and businesses, housing and public transport. Katie is a strong local campaigner, who is focussed on strengthening the voice of her community.



Stockton North – Chris McDonald

Chris is a chemical engineer, having worked in the steel industry for more than 20 years. Chris runs a not-for-profit organisation that develops new green technologies to decarbonise heavy industry.



Cramlington & Killingworth – Emma Foody

Emma grew up locally, and is a volunteer first responder with North East Ambulance Service. Emma is an Usdaw member and works in the Co-op movement, campaigning for a fairer economy, and wants to deliver more police, upgrade local transport and address issues in the NHS.

Scottish Region



Edinburgh North & Leith – Tracy Gilbert

Tracy is an Usdaw regional secretary, who advocates for and represents thousands of working people. Tracy lives locally in Leith and is motivated by her work in the Labour movement to make life better for local residents.

Tracy says: "My direct experience of Labour policies and the trade union movement mean that I am committed to delivering for working people on issues from employment rights to social care, housing and education."



Coatbridge & Bellshill – Frank McNally

Frank was born and raised in Bellshill and is a local councillor serving the community he calls home. He has also served as council convenor for Education and Families in Scotland's second largest education authority.



Aberdeen South – Tauqeer Malik

Tauqeer is a local councillor, and leader of the Labour group. Tauqeer supports bringing new jobs to Aberdeen through Labour's plans to make Britain a clean energy superpower.

Southern Region



Hastings & Rye – Helena Dollimore

Helena grew up in the local area and her first job was in the local Sainsbury's. She is an Usdaw member and has since worked in international development. As well as the cost of living and housing, Helena is campaigning on issues like long ambulance wait times.



Croydon South – Ben Taylor

Ben lives locally in Croydon South, running a business and founding two charitable organisations in the area. One of these was a mutual aid group that helped thousands of residents during the pandemic.



Southampton Test – Satvir Kaur

Satvir is a local councillor and former leader of Southampton City Council. Satvir works with local communities to address longstanding issues like health inequalities and the housing crisis.

North West Region



Warrington South – Sarah Hall

Sarah is a local councillor and Usdaw member, who has a track record of securing investment for



Winning these key seats is a step towards getting a Labour Government.

the local area and of supporting local communities on issues like flooding, improving the local environment and addressing the cost of living.



Stoke Central - Gareth Snell

Gareth was previously the local MP. He has worked in the trade union movement and has a proven record of campaigning for workers' rights and Usdaw members. He is committed to Stoke and to being a local voice for residents.

Gareth says: "Stoke-on-Trent is my home. I love it here and we deserve so much better than more Tory failures. That is why I am standing to be our MP again. As an Usdaw member, I know the challenges we need to be tackling head on."



Clwyd East - Becky Gittins

Becky grew up locally and has worked in the trade union movement negotiating improved rights for working people. Becky has been a local campaigner for a decade and is a local councillor leading on the council's youth violence and knife crime strategy.



Blackpool South - Chris Webb

Chris is a leading voice in Blackpool's charity sector and received a Local Community Hero award for his charity work during the pandemic. Chris works to fight child poverty and is the Chair of Trustees at a Blackpool mental health charity.

Head Office



Bolton North East - Kirith Entwistle

Kirith works for a charity that tackles loneliness and isolation. Kirith formerly worked for the Royal British Legion, and campaigns for support for the Armed Forces community. Kirith is a strong campaigner and is already working on issues like clean rivers, cutting NHS waiting lists and local crime rates.

Kirith says: "I will be a strong voice in Parliament, supporting the thousands of residents across Bolton facing stagnant wages, rising fuel and food bills and spiralling mortgages."

Better rights for carers

Vivienne Groom shares her story about how the DWP treated her like a criminal and seized her inheritance because she was overpaid her carer's allowance.

Vivienne, 59, was prosecuted for failing to declare her income from her part-time job at the Co-op while claiming carer's allowance in 2014.

Vivienne started caring for her elderly mum, Maud, 84, after she suffered a stroke and struggled to look after herself. At the time, Vivienne wasn't working and her initial claim for carer's allowance was legitimate.

"When I started working for the Co-op, I asked Mum's social worker about carer's allowance and was told I was allowed to work and claim it. I didn't look into it any further because I had so much going on. I was round at Mum's every day, before my shift, after my shift and sometimes I was staying the night. I was sorting out her meals, her house, her garden and taking her to her appointments. I even transferred from my job so that I could be closer to her. I didn't have a moment to think."

In 2015, when the Co-op increased Vivienne's hours, she rang the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to tell them that she no longer wanted to claim her carer's allowance. Their response was that someone would look into it and call her



back. "I didn't hear anything back until 2022, when I was informed that I would have to pay back the £16,000 I had received in carer's allowance," said Vivienne.

Vivienne agreed to pay the DWP in monthly instalments of £30. When her mother passed away in 2021, Vivienne inherited £16,000. The Government decided to seize her inheritance and froze her bank account. The only way the DWP could obtain the money was to prosecute her for benefit fraud.

"It was horrendous," said Vivienne. "I barely had to time to grieve for Mum before having to deal with this."

Vivienne attended Chester Crown Court in November 2023. She didn't qualify for legal aid because of her inheritance, even though her account was frozen and she couldn't access her money. She was forced



"The judge was sympathetic and recognised it was an honest mistake."

to represent herself and pleaded guilty.

"As soon as I stood in the dock, I crumbled," said Vivienne. "The judge was sympathetic and recognised it was an honest mistake. I was given a 12-month community order instead of being sent to prison. He was scathing about the DWP's handling of the case and ordered them to calculate how much carer's allowance I would have been entitled to if I had declared my job, but they refused to do so. They wanted to confiscate all my inheritance."

Vivienne's nightmare dragged on for another five months after the DWP initiated proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA), enabling them to ask a judge to order the confiscation of her inheritance. This latest hearing, held in April, with a different judge, ordered the seizure of her inheritance, leaving

Vivienne, who single-handedly took care of her mum for seven years, with nothing.

Vivienne's story has been covered sympathetically in both local and national news outlets like the BBC, the Guardian and the Daily Mail, and has caused an outcry over the appalling way she was treated, as well as igniting a larger debate around how society treats carers. The DWP has also faced criticism for failing to prevent overpayments, despite having the ability to do so, and allowing the recipients to end up in legal trouble.

"It's taken its toll," Vivienne added. "I don't know how I feel. All I know is that I couldn't have gotten through this without the support of my husband, Geoff."

Labour recently announced that it will review the carer's allowance system if it wins the next general election.



Your carer's leave rights explained

On 6 April 2024, a new workplace right came into force that enables working carers to take unpaid time off work to care for a family member or friend.

Here's everything you need to know about the new right:

Who has the right?

The Carer's Leave Act gives employees who provide care for a sick or disabled family member, or friend, a new legal right to a week's unpaid leave from work every 12 months.

Is it a day one right?

Yes, employees have the right from day one of their employment.

Does it apply across the UK?

The new right applies to working carers in England, Wales and Scotland but unfortunately it has not taken effect in Northern Ireland because employment law is devolved to the Stormont Executive.

How do I qualify for carer's leave?

The unpaid leave must be used for the purposes of giving or arranging care for someone who has either:

- A physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than 3 months; or
- A disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010); or
- Care needs related to old age

Does it have to be a family member?

No. It can be anyone who reasonably relies on you for care.

Can I use this leave to care for my child?

If your child doesn't have care needs that are likely to last for more than 3 months and/or they are not disabled, then you cannot take carer's leave.

How much time off can I take?

You can take up to one week of leave every 12 months. A 'week' means the length of time you usually work over 7 days. For example, if you usually work 3 days a week, you can take 3 days of carer's leave. You can either take a whole week off, individual days or half days throughout the year.

How do I request leave?

You must give your employer notice of your intention to take carer's leave. It does not have to be in writing but it can be.

- If you are requesting a half day, or single day, of leave you must give at least three days' notice.
- If you are requesting two or more consecutive days' leave you have to give at least twice as many days as your requested leave period.

For example, if your request is for two days leave, you will need to give four days' notice.

The notice period needs to be in full days, even if your request includes half day amounts.

Can my employer refuse?

Your employer can postpone your request for leave but they cannot refuse it.

They can only postpone your request if they can show that your absence would cause a serious disruption to the running of the business. If they do postpone/delay it, they must:

- Agree another date with you that falls within one month of the requested date for the leave; and
- Put the reason for the delay and new date in writing to you within 7 days of receiving your original request, and before the date you asked for your leave to start.

Do I have to prove I am a carer?

No. Your employer cannot ask you to supply evidence that you are caring.



Retired Members' Conference

Usdaw welcomed delegates to Salford Quays in May for the 33rd Retired Members' Conference.

The conference was organised by the union's pensions officer and chaired by Usdaw president Jane Jones. The first guest speaker was Sasjka Otto, who discussed the Fabian Society's recent Pre-Retirement Poverty Report 'When I'm 64'. This was followed by Jane Bevan from Age UK, who provided an update on current scams in circulation and the increasing problem of digital exclusion.

Pre-Retirement Poverty Report

Sasjka is the author of a new report 'When I'm 64'. The report aims to provide a strategy for tackling poverty before people reach State Pension Age. Usdaw provided feedback for the report and our very own Geoff Page was invited to speak

about his own experiences at the launch of the report on 17 April 2024.

The report highlights that the UK is facing a hidden poverty crisis among 60 to 65-year-olds, looks at the roots of the problem and presents a strategy for solving it. Sasjka's session was interactive and delegates were able to score which of the recommendations they felt were most important and relevant to themselves.

Scammers

Age UK marketing and communication manager, Jane Bevan explained that being scammed can be incredibly distressing, and the impact is often emotional as well as financial. Jane spoke about several scams our retired members needed to be aware of and what they can do to prevent getting ripped off.

The overwhelming message, however,



Being scammed can be incredibly distressing and the impact is often emotional as well as financial.

was that if you've been scammed, there is support available and not to suffer alone.

Members were also given the opportunity to share their own experiences of being approached by scammers and shared how this can happen to anyone.

Digital Exclusion

In Jane's second presentation, she said that 4.7 million older people do not have the basic skills to use the internet successfully. This is inevitably leading to older people feeling frustrated, disempowered and struggling to access and keep up with everyday life. There are numerous reasons why older people

are not online: for instance, a lack of confidence and skills, a lack of trust because of fear of scams and fraud, and some people simply are not interested because they feel they have lived full and long lives without technology.

Jane went on to advise that for those who do want to improve their skills in this area, Age UK can help you to find out what is available where you live; sometimes local colleges will offer free courses and access to equipment, and U3A offer free skills and courses.

Don't Retire from the Union

Just because you are retiring from work doesn't mean you have to retire from the union. You can keep your union membership and play a vital role in your branch's recruitment and campaigning activities. For more information go to www.usdaw.org.uk/269



Phil Core: Metal Detector

Tired of not being able to find heavy metal gigs in Nottingham, Phil Core set up Torturous Promotions to bring live music to his home town.

Usdaw rep Phil Core is respected across the British heavy metal scene for his work staging live music in his home city of Nottingham, under the name Torturous Promotions.

"It started when I was sat in the pub with a couple of friends complaining about the lack of metal gigs in Nottingham," said Phil, 49. "I thought to myself that I could do something about it, so I set up a social media page saying I was looking to arrange some shows and asking for bands to send me their details.

"I got a message off a band asking if I could arrange something for their upcoming tour, so I contacted the Old Angel in Nottingham and booked their events room. We broke even on the night, which I later found out is a good result for a first night. That was on 1 July 2009, so I'm rapidly approaching my 15th anniversary.

"I've been putting on roughly one night a month. In the early days it was more common that I'd be contacting bands asking if they wanted to come to Nottingham, but over time I've established something of a reputation and now bands regularly send me messages asking to play my nights. I just pick the ones I'd personally go and watch, and luckily that seems to attract a decent crowd. I've recently had to move to a bigger venue, so that's got to be a positive.

"Most of the bands I work with come from the UK with a few from the Republic of Ireland. I was supposed to put on a band from Ukraine, but when the war

broke out they couldn't make it over. We turned the night into a benefit for Ukraine which raised about £1,000 for charities that helped those who were affected by the invasion.

"I still get promoter's anxiety before each night. Whatever happens, the venue will need paying, I will have promised the bands some money, the sound engineer will need paying and until the first few people walk through the door I sit there thinking 'I'm going to be out of pocket tonight.' It's a great feeling to see a room full of people enjoying themselves because not only are the crowd having a good time, I know I'm covered financially. And bringing in a full room keeps the landlord happy too!

"The cost of living crisis is hitting people and I've noticed a few of my regulars aren't quite as regular as they used to be. People are thinking harder about how they spend their money, which is completely fair - going to a gig isn't essential. But with that said, there's still a lot of loyalty among metal fans; they're very devoted to the music they love. A lot of bands I work with come away surprised at how many T-shirts they've sold. Nottingham has a really good reputation in the metal scene as somewhere that attracts a good crowd.

"I've been thinking about the future of Torturous Promotions recently. It'll need to take a back seat for a while because my workplace is closing at the end of June and I need to look for another job. Part of me wonders if 15 years is a nice, round number to end it on. But on the other hand, I'm still getting plenty of enquiries.

"I can see myself maybe doing fewer shows but making them more of a special event when they do happen. When I talked it over with my wife, she told me that if I stop I'll miss it and I'll go back in, and I think she's probably right. I'll get that itch. Once it's in you, it's in you for life."



Your gateway to learning

Usdaw members enjoy exclusive access to a brilliant variety of learning opportunities. If you want to join over 100,000 members who have returned to learning through their union, our Online Learning Gateway is a great place to start: www.usdaw.org.uk/learninggateway

What's included?

A wide variety of courses to help you improve your English, Maths or ICT skills, learn a new language, take an NVQ or even study for a degree. There are over 20 different categories on the Learning Gateway for you to check out.

How does it work?

When you access the Learning Gateway, tap on a subject you're interested in and once you find the right course, you can start learning straight away.

Many of the learning opportunities are completely free. If anything does come with a charge, that will be made clear at the outset.

Start your learning journey now at www.usdaw.org.uk/learninggateway

Two Usdaw members share their experiences of union learning

• Lisa Lewis

Tesco community champion Lisa Lewis has found the recipe for success after taking up a union-funded course in cake decorating. Lisa, who has worked for Tesco for 23 years, started baking after Covid and wants to turn her hobby into a business.

"As an Usdaw member, I didn't know



"I would encourage everyone to take advantage of learning because it's a great way of upskilling yourself"

I had access to so much learning,' said Lisa, 40. "When I contacted the union, they helped me find a cake decorating course and funded it. Since then, things have taken off and I've been asked to bake cakes for family and friends. Currently, I'm too busy to fully commit to turning this into a business but it's something I would love to develop in the future."

Lisa was already an active Usdaw member and went out of her way to help her colleagues get to grips with the new payslip and holiday systems. This made her the ideal candidate for the mobile union learning rep role (MULR), which she's been doing for the last six weeks.

"Part of my role involves convincing people that there is value in learning

and that it's never too late to start," said Lisa. "At times, it can be hard to convince people but I try to lead by example. I've done several courses so that when I'm talking to my colleagues, I can tell them what's on offer and what's involved.

"I wouldn't have thought of getting involved in the union if it wasn't for the learning on offer, which put me in contact with the union. I've had such a positive experience that I've also become a health and safety rep which means I'm constantly learning new things.

"I would encourage everyone to take advantage of union learning because it's a great way of upskilling yourself, and you never know when it'll come in handy."

• Derek Irwin

Usdaw shop steward and health and safety rep Derek Irwin is a keen learner, so he took on the role of union learning rep to promote the benefits of learning to his colleagues.

"I got a taste for learning after completing the health and safety course and have been learning ever since," said Derek, 56. "I completed Summer School 1 and 2, as well as courses in counselling, mental health and disability at work. I found the courses to be personally and professionally very beneficial and you can easily fit them around your lifestyle.

"People don't realise there's so much on offer, from 30-minute bitesize courses to apprenticeships. Union learning can improve your employability, give you the confidence to help your children with their homework, improve your digital skills and your general quality of life.

"Even if you're someone who didn't enjoy school, you shouldn't let that put you off. Union learning is nothing like that because you can do it at time that is convenient for you and at your own pace. You're never too old to learn so I would encourage everyone to give it a go."



Usdaw rep and Tesco worker Nicola Rimmer knew who to call after she was knocked off her bicycle by a car in June 2023. FirstCall solicitors took up the case and secured **Nicola** £21,000 in compensation.

“I was coming up to a left-hand turn so I did a quick safety check over my shoulder, and a car drove straight across my path,” said Nicola. **“The impact threw me 20 feet across the road and the car didn’t stop. Luckily there were plenty of witnesses and one of them chased the car while another phoned the emergency services.**

“I suffered two broken fingers, a head injury, a lacerated leg and also needed seven stitches in my upper lip. I was

off work for a month and, although I’m recovered, I have pain in the fractured bones,

some facial scarring and I haven’t been back on my bike since the incident.

“I called FirstCall about a week after the collision. The service was excellent. I was assigned an experienced solicitor, the communication was great and the advice given was superb. I always felt able to ask for advice and I was given full details of the process and the timescales. It’s become my selling point when I’m recruiting new members; if anyone struggles to make a decision, I can share my personal experience of what a great service it is.”

Nicola Rimmer



Driver David Woollard suffered facial injuries when he fell in a car park while making a delivery. FirstCall Usdaw took up his case and worked to secure **David** £6,250 compensation.

David, who works for a pharmaceutical company, was crossing a council-owned car park that was partially excavated. Some of the pavings had been replaced with sandbags, but there was nothing cordoning off the works from the rest of the car park.

"I was walking with a couple of boxes from the van and I suddenly went tumbling over," said David. "I fell face-first

into a steel bollard, fracturing my nose and causing lacerations to my face. There was a lot of blood, and when a passer-by came to see if I was OK I could tell from her face that it looked serious.

"I was off work for a couple of weeks following my fall. I don't have any lasting physical damage but sometimes I get flashbacks to the fall, which can be quite traumatic. I'll never forget the look of horror on that lady's face as I picked myself up off the floor.

"The service from FirstCall was superb. Chris, the solicitor I was put in touch with, did a sterling job of pursuing the claim and keeping me informed. I'm very grateful for the fact that I'm an Usdaw member."

"I'll never forget the look of horror on that lady's face as I picked myself up off the floor."





Marius Teodor was thankful for his Usdaw membership when he was injured unloading a shipping container at his workplace in Liverpool. FirstCall solicitors took up the case and secured **Marius** £4,000 in compensation.

Marius was assigned to unload a container of irregularly stacked boxes. During the job the stack of remaining boxes collapsed, hitting Marius on the shoulder and right arm.

"I had my back to the boxes so I didn't see them falling; I just felt them hit me," said Marius. "I fell to my knees from the pain. It was still very painful that night so I went to the hospital where I was told

I'd injured my shoulder and elbow. I couldn't work or do anything for myself for about three weeks afterwards.

"My Usdaw rep advised me to contact FirstCall, who put me in touch with Jon, from Pattinson and Brewer solicitors. Jon was excellent and provided a first-class service. The company were making false claims and trying to deny that their unsafe practices contributed to the accident, but Jon challenged them every step of the way and secured me a settlement I was happy with.

"I've since changed jobs and I'm much happier after what was a tough period following my injury. I'm so glad I had Usdaw and FirstCall on my side during that time."



Free Injury cover for all Usdaw members and their family

Usdaw's Legal Plus service is one of the many great benefits of being an Usdaw member – and it's completely free. The service has got better and better over the years and has now been extended to cover family for personal injury.

Family members (who live with the member) are now covered for more than just road traffic accidents. They can now make personal injury claims for any non-work related accidents.

The service is free and you get to keep 100 per cent of your compensation (a private solicitor will typically take 25 per cent).

Legal Plus Covers:

- Accidents at work
- Accidents outside of work
- Accidents unrelated to work
- Injuries caused by violent crime and robbery
- Work-related conditions or disease claims
- Road traffic accidents, whether you were in a car, cycling or a pedestrian
- Injury whilst on a package holiday abroad*

Family Members

Family members that reside with an Usdaw member are covered for non-work related accidents anywhere in the UK, and also for accidents/illness whilst on a package holiday abroad*.

**Package holiday claims means accidents, injuries or other personal injury claims covered under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992.*

What to do

To qualify, the member must have been in membership at the time of the accident and fully paid up with their contributions. They must maintain their membership whilst the claim is ongoing.

To register a claim, ring FirstCall Usdaw 0800 055 6333 or complete the form on the Usdaw website. The call is free and lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Legal Plus provides a great range of other services, which include:

- Accidents, injuries and diseases
- Violent crime (CICA)
- Employment
- Prosecutions
- Probate and free wills
- Moving house
- Legal advice not related to work
- Help for your family
- Pensions
- Health and Safety

For more information on what Legal Plus covers and the rules governing the service please go to:

- www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Legal-Advice/What-Legal-Plus-Covers
- www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Legal-Advice/Legal-Plus-Rules

DISCOUNTS & OFFERS



Insurance

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

Leisure & Entertainment

- Beer52
- Bookbeat
- Brewer Craft Beer
- 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
- Theme Parks & Attractions
- TodayTix: Theatre Tickets
- Virgin Experience Days

Holidays

- Airport Parking, Lounges & Hotels
- Currensea: Travel Card
- Eurocamp
- Expedia
- Hotels.com
- Lost Luggage Protection
- Parkdean Resorts
- Travel Insurance
- West Cliff Hotel
- Whitemead Forest Park
- Wightlink Ferries

Miscellaneous

- Big Yellow Storage
- Child-Safe SIM Cards
- Mobile Phones
- TOTUM Pro Card
- International Student ID Card

Health & Beauty

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

Shopping

- Apple
- Canopey
- Charles Tyrwhitt
- Dell
- Discount Card
- Domestic Appliances
- Flowers
- Gift Card Savings
- Halfords
- Lifestyle Vouchers
- Magazine Subscriptions
- Philips Home Appliances
- Usdaw Prepaid Cashback Card
- Usdaw Rewards Cashback
- Virgin Wines

Cars & Transport

- Car Insurance
- Car Maintenance
- Car Parking: Q-Park
- Flexible Autos: Car Hire
- Halfords
- Motorfinity
- Startrescue
- Vauxhall Cars

Money & Finance

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



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

Find out more

www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

*Terms and conditions for individual offers on the website.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

New Travel Insurance Offer

Protect your trip and head off on holiday with added peace of mind. UsdawProtect is offering Usdaw members flexible and affordable travel insurance, with four levels of cover to choose from. or visit: www.UsdawProtect.com/travel



working with Usdaw

HOLIDAY EXTRAS

Discounts on airport parking, hotels, lounges and transfers.

Holiday Extras has been giving you less hassle and more holiday for over 40 years and they are offering Usdaw members an exclusive discount. With savings of up to 13% on Airport Parking, 10% off Airport Hotels, 10% off UK Airport Lounges, and 10% off Airport Transfers, Holiday Extras are dedicated to getting you into the holiday mood before you fly.

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



CURRENSEA

Save over 85% on all transactions while abroad.

Benefit from hassle-free holiday spending thanks to Currensea. Save at least 85% when spending in foreign currencies. As an added benefit, Currensea also offers £15 cashback to all members when you order a Currensea card and make 5 transactions abroad within 12 months of opening an account, regardless of the amount spent.

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



LOST LUGGAGE

Exclusive 50% off proven lost luggage protection.


Almost 25 million bags are misplaced at airports every year. Many of them are never found again. TRACE ME Smart ID works at over 2500 airports globally, reducing your risk of loss by around 100 times. Get a unique Smart ID tag with a 12-month renewable membership, bag search service, and a US\$ 500 Product Performance Warranty, all for just £6.00.

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



Proven Lost Luggage Protection

*Terms and conditions apply to all benefits. See website for details. Offers are subject to change without notice and correct at time of print. Holiday Extras - See website for exclusions. Usdaw Discounts and Offers is managed and run on behalf of Usdaw by Parliament Hill Ltd. Some benefits are organised directly by Usdaw Membership Services. Neither Usdaw nor Parliament Hill are part of the same group as the providers.



Don't let your colleagues miss out on **Usdaw membership** - including **free legal help, representation and advice at work and member offers.**

SIGN-UP A FRIEND

Union membership is your insurance at work

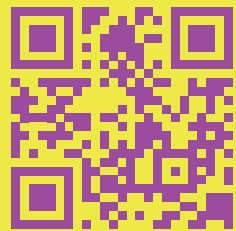
In these uncertain times, it's more important than ever to join a union.

Union members get better pay, safer workplaces, representation in grievances and disciplinaries, access to a variety of learning opportunities, free legal and accident cover, discounts and offers and much more.

Make sure your family, friends and colleagues are

also protected at work by encouraging them to join Usdaw.

For more information on the benefits of being an Usdaw



member, and to join, go to:
www.usdaw.org.uk/Join-Us



A brief guide to Usdaw

Usdaw is the UK's fifth biggest trade union with around 360,000 members. Usdaw helps people at work by negotiating better pay and conditions. Being a member of the union also gives

you the opportunity to have a say in issues that affect your working life. The more Usdaw members there are in the workplace, the stronger the union's voice when talking to your employer.

Where to find information

Usdaw website and enews

For everything you need including legal advice, workers' rights, health and safety, news, training opportunities, upcoming events and campaigns. You can also download informative leaflets and posters, and sign up for email updates.

Visit www.usdaw.org.uk

Social media

As an Usdaw member we recommend that you follow [@UsdawUnion](#) on Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, YouTube and Flickr.

Want to get more involved?

Branch meetings

The best way for members to get involved and stay informed is to attend their branch

meetings. These are regular union meetings run by reps and are a good way of finding out what is happening in your workplace.

Become a rep

Usdaw is always looking for members to volunteer as reps. Becoming a rep gives members invaluable opportunities to develop personally and professionally. For further information, visit

www.usdaw.org.uk/bearep

How to contact the union

If you have a problem at work, always contact your Usdaw rep in the first instance (details can be found on your noticeboard) or contact your local Usdaw office:

www.usdaw.org.uk/Contact-Us

Arena Your health

Your health and your safety at work is a vital part of Usdaw's service. For more advice visit

www.usdaw.org.uk/healthandsafety

Q Disabled fire evacuation

I am disabled and use a wheelchair. I can use the lift at work but if there is a fire and I can't use it, what would happen to me?

Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, owners or occupiers of premises are legally required to carry out fire risk assessments. They must include everyone affected, especially disabled people. If you are a wheelchair user, then they should make sure that in the event of a fire you are either taken to a

place of safety (a refuge) or

evacuated by some

other means such as an e-vac chair or designated fire lift. If you are taken to a refuge, you should not be left alone. If an e-vac chair is to be used the persons using it must be trained to do so.



Q Temperature

As soon as the weather improves in the summer, it gets unbearably hot in the warehouse where I work. Last year, one of the workers in the mezzanine area fainted with the heat. Is there a maximum temperature we should work in?

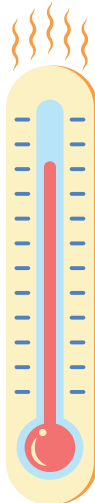
Employers have a duty under current health and safety legislation to ensure a 'reasonable' temperature in the workplace. Where a 'reasonable' temperature cannot be achieved, they must take other measures to protect workers. Unfortunately, the law contains a minimum reasonable temperature but does not specify a maximum.

However, international standards and research by experts show that temperatures above 27 to 30 degrees Celsius are uncomfortably warm, especially when the air is humid. Above 30 Celsius, there is a real

danger that some workers might suffer from symptoms of heat stress – which is more than just uncomfortable and can be damaging to health. Excessive temperatures can lead to sweating, irritability, nausea, headaches,

dizziness, fainting, muscle cramps, extra strain on the heart and ultimately heat stroke.

Usdaw is campaigning for a maximum temperature of around 27 Celsius to be included in the law to make it easier to get extra protection when it does get too hot. Things like improved ventilation, shielding from direct sunlight, provision of cold drinks and more frequent rest breaks can all make a difference, but have to be negotiated. The union's guide on temperature at work has more advice www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Health-Safety/Temperature/Too-Hot-at-Work





Q Safety Shoes

We have to wear safety shoes in the warehouse where I work. Some people don't feel comfortable in the ones that are provided and have bought their own. The manager has said this is fine but they would not be covered if they have an accident. Is this correct?

Your manager is wrong on both counts. If your employer says you must wear safety shoes, your employer should provide them. Workers should not pay for their own shoes. According to the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Regulations, any PPE must be 'suitable' for the user. If people have genuine problems with the standard



footwear provided, your employer needs to pay for any alternative shoes that are needed. If members are paying for their own safety shoes, they should speak to their Usdaw rep about the problem. Even if workers do wear their own shoes, they would still be covered by their employer's insurance if they had an accident.

Q Illness

I was ill at work recently and wanted to go home but my manager said I couldn't and that I had to finish my shift. Is he allowed to do this?

Your employer has no power to force you to stay at work when you are unwell. However, if you go home sick, you should make it clear that is why you are leaving early and follow the sick reporting procedures. You may lose pay for the hours you miss and (depending on your sick pay agreement) for the next three days, if you are off that long. If your manager does not believe that you were sick or if there is an attendance



management policy, you may have to face an interview or even a disciplinary hearing on your return. However, if you genuinely feel ill you should not let this stop you from going home. Depending on the nature of your illness, there may be certain jobs that you should not be doing. For example, if you are feeling faint, you should not be operating dangerous machinery.

Q Extra staff

I work on the self-scan and I am left on my own at busy times. I receive verbal abuse from customers and the pressure of the job causes me stress. I have told my manager that I need help and they say there are no more staff to help. What can I do?



Check with your manager to see if there is a staffing policy for the self-scan. The policy should be clear about the number

of staff required and also the need to schedule additional staff to properly serve customers at busy times. It is also important to make your manager aware that you are feeling stressed because of the pressure of work.

The HSE have stated that stress is the most common cause for workplace ill health and have set it as one of their key priorities. They make it clear that employers have a legal duty to manage work-related stress by doing a risk assessment and acting on it: <https://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/stress/>

Arena



Win! £50

Correctly complete the grid and you could win a **£50** shopping voucher!

Closing date 2 August 2024

(Not open to Usdaw staff)

Word up!

Complete our prize crossword to spell out the hidden word in the yellow squares and you could be one of three members to win a £50 shopping voucher.

Email your answer along with your name and address to:

arena@usdaw.org.uk

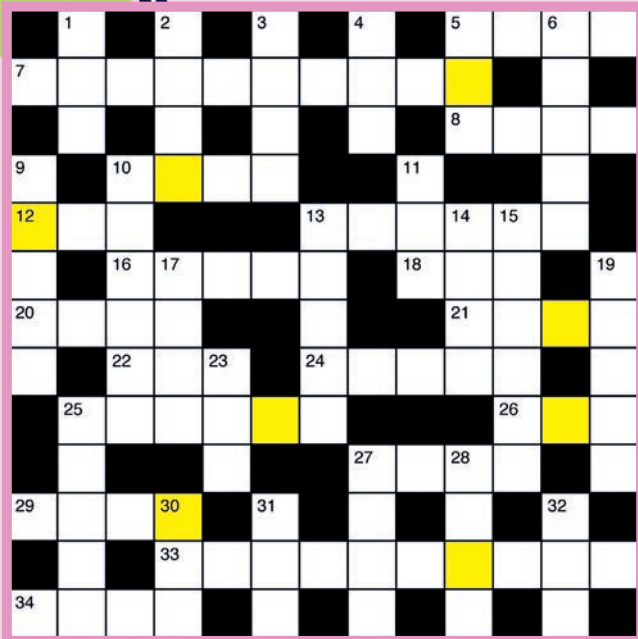
Please put 'xword' in the subject box.

www.usdaw.org.uk/xword

Solutions available from 5 August 2024

Summer winners:

Susan Olech, London
Mark Sawbridge, Bideford
Daisy Paterson, Glasgow



ACROSS

5. Gemstone (4)
7. Mandatory (10)
8. Every (4)
10. German wine (4)
12. Small vegetable (3)
13. Signal fire (6)
16. Happen again (5)
18. Small flap of material (3)
20. Amphibian (4)
21. Move (4)
22. Torn cloth (3)
24. Russian spirit (5)
25. Confuse (6)
26. Frozen water (3)
27. Young deer (4)

29. Tranquil, serene (4)
33. Useless or futile (10)
34. Vendetta (4)

DOWN

1. Recede (3)
2. Grain store (4)
3. Support (4)
4. Carton (3)
5. Whiskey grain (3)
6. Meat in rashers (5)
9. Venomous ill will (5)
10. Capital of Zimbabwe (6)
11. Flying mammal (3)
13. Valiant (5)
14. Barrel (4)

15. Acquire (6)
17. Dutch cheese (4)
19. Zodiac sign (5)
23. Weapon (3)
25. Culpability (5)
27. Unightly fat (4)
28. Wild animal (4)
30. Wet and soft earth (3)
31. Month (3)
32. Single (3)

Arena Our members

Have your say

SEND YOUR THOUGHTS OR
PICTURES TO: arena@usdaw.org.uk



Margaret Tod retires

Margaret started working at Usdaw's Edinburgh office in 1975 when she was just 16 years old. She has worked under eight regional secretaries and six general secretaries.

The Edinburgh office and Margaret are synonymous, and I will always think fondly of both. On behalf of all her colleagues past and present we wish her a very long, very happy and very well-deserved retirement.

Tracy Gilbert
Regional Secretary
Scottish Region



I recently had the chance to meet Kier Starmer when he was shopping and I was on my break.

We had a conversation regarding our Freedom from Fear campaign and the push for a change in law for assaulting a shopworker.

Rob Jones, shop steward
Tesco Newmarket



*Campaigning for
Labour in Croydon*



Here is a picture of our beautiful old boy Cooper (10), helping us welcome a little stray, who my son found running in the road at 4 in the morning. He has now joined our family and is called Remi.

Caron Barry
Bristol

The total income of the Union for the period was £40,853k. This amount included payments of £40,395k in respect of membership income of the union. The Union's total expenditure for the period was £38,506k. In respect of the Union's political fund, its total income was £1,522k and total expenditure was £1,445k. The General Secretary of the Union was paid £123,187 in respect of salary and £51,850 in respect of benefits including employer pension contributions and the provision of a car.

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Union's affairs as at 31 December 2023 and of its result for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

We have audited the financial statements of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (the 'Union') for the year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Changes in Equity, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom

Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Independence

We are independent of the Union in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the National Executive Council's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Union's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Executive Council with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The Executive Council is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters to which the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- proper accounting records have not been kept in accordance with the requirements of the Act; or
- the Union has not maintained a satisfactory system of controls over its transactions; or
- the financial statements are not in

agreement with the accounting records and returns; or

- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of the National Executive Council

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities of the National Executive Council, the National Executive Council is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the National Executive Council determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the National Executive Council is responsible for assessing the Union's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the National Executive Council either intend to liquidate the Union or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if,

individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud
Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Non-compliance with laws and regulations
We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Union and the industry in which it operates, drawing on our broad sector experience, and considered the risk of acts by the Union that were contrary to these laws and regulations, including fraud. We focused on laws and regulations that could give rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements, including, but not limited to, the Trade Union & Labour Relations Act 1992, UK tax legislation and equivalent local laws and regulations.

We also completed the following procedures:

- Review of minutes of meetings of those charged with governance for any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- Review of correspondence with regulatory and tax authorities for any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- Review of financial statement disclosures and agreeing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with

applicable laws and regulations;

- Review of legal expenditure accounts to understand the nature of expenditure incurred; and
- Discussion with management, including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations.

Fraud

As part of designing our audit, we determined materiality and assessed the risks of material misstatement in the financial statements, including how fraud may occur by enquiring of management of its own consideration of fraud. In particular, we looked at where management made subjective judgements, for example in respect of significant accounting estimates that involved making assumptions and considering future events that are inherently uncertain. We also considered potential financial or other pressures, opportunity and motivations for fraud. As part of this discussion we identified the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations and how management monitor these processes.

Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- Reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance for any evidence of fraud or suspected fraud;
- In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, we tested journal entries and other adjustments for inappropriate or unusual journals outside of our expectations, as well as for any significant transactions outside the normal course of business, taking into consideration the scope for management to manipulate financial results;
- Assessing the design and operating effectiveness of controls and procedures relevant to the preparation of the financial

statements and the detection and prevention of irregularities and fraud;

● Challenging the assumptions and judgements made by management for key estimates, in particular in relation to income recognition and calculation of provisions. Our audit procedures were designed to respond to risks of material misstatement in the financial statements, recognising that the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery, misrepresentations or through collusion. There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures performed and the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we are to become aware of it.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Councils website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, as a body, in accordance with the provisions of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Union those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Union as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

BDO LLP, Statutory Auditor, London, UK

Irregularity statement

A member who is concerned that some irregularity may be occurring, or have occurred, in the conduct of the financial affairs of the Union may take steps with a view to investigating further, obtaining clarification and, if necessary, securing regularisation of that conduct.

The member may raise any such concern with such one or more of the following as it seems appropriate to raise it with: the officials of the Union, the trustees of the property of the union, the auditor or auditors of the union, the Certification Officer (who is an independent officer appointed by the Secretary of State) and the police.

Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the Union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of the rules of the Union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against the Union or responsible officials or trustees, he should consider obtaining independent legal advice.

Political Fund Notice

Every member of the Union has a right to be exempt from contributing to the Union's Political Fund or, for those members joining on or after 1 March 2018, the right to withdraw their opt-in to the Political Fund. A form of exemption notice can be obtained by or on behalf of any member either by application at, or by post or email from, the head office of the Union or from the Certification Office for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, 8th floor, Windsor House, 50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0TL. This form, when filled in, or a written request to the like effect, should be sent to the Central Treasurer at the Union's head office or emailed to politicalfundnotification@usdaw.org.uk

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*Confused.com '100+ UK contents insurance statistics 2023'

^oSome examples of non-standard home insurance – felt roof, flat roof, holiday home, residential let.

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