



Things You Need To Know As A Rep

Reps' Guide



Introduction

This briefing is aimed at brand new Usdaw reps like you. We want to make sure you know your basic rights about:

- Getting Started – The Role of the Rep.
- Organising and Recruitment.
- Representing Members.

Udaw is delighted that you have taken on the role of the rep and we are here to support you in your new role. You may already have other reps in your workplace that will also support you. Please find out who they are and introduce yourself.

You became a union rep as soon as you were elected by your members in the workplace. You are now entitled to everything in this leaflet – and do not have to wait until you have attended your first Usdaw training course.

Your Usdaw Area Organiser will meet with you very soon to talk through your role and support you. Meanwhile, please do not hesitate to contact them for help or advice at any time. They will expect to hear from you. For more information, help and advice visit: www.usdaw.org.uk



Getting Started - The Role of the Rep

The role of the rep is to:

- Build membership in the workplace.
- Represent and speak on behalf of members.
- Consult with members and to keep them informed of the benefits including: Usdaw's FirstCall Accident Claim Line and Legal Plus Scheme.
- Develop good working relationships with managers and to raise issues on behalf of your members.

You are entitled to the following:

- Paid time off to recruit new members.
- Paid time off to support and represent members.
- Paid time off to attend Usdaw courses.

- Copies of company policies and procedures, for example, Sickness Absence Procedures.
- Access to a phone (to contact the Union office or your Area Organiser).
- Access to somewhere private to speak confidentially to members.
- A noticeboard to promote Union information.
- Somewhere safe to store your Usdaw paperwork.
- And where available, access to a photocopier and email.

Check your Company/Usdaw Agreement as many of these allow more facilities for union reps, eg the right to attend rep team meetings in company time.



Organising and Recruitment

A crucial role of the rep is to recruit employees into Usdaw. Our aim is 100% membership in each workplace. This means:

- We have more influence when it comes to resolving problems in the workplace and raising issues – like pay and conditions – with your company nationally.
- Everyone gets the opportunity to understand what Usdaw can do for them and the support that you can offer to members if they have a formal meeting with a manager – in other words, everyone has an opportunity to join.

Recruiting New Starters

- People are most likely to join the Union when they very first start work. Company inductions of new starters give a rep the best opportunity to recruit.
- An induction is your chance to have a chat with new employees. Make sure you have plenty of leaflets and membership forms. It is always better to get people to sign up straight away – that way they will have Usdaw's protection immediately.
- Check with other reps in your workplace and Personnel/HR regularly to find out when inductions are taking place.

Recruiting Existing Employees

- This is an important task for a rep. You may find that some employees have never been asked to join Usdaw, even if you have an Agreement that encourages all employees to join the Union.
- Make sure you know who your members are first. You can get a membership list from your Area Organiser or local Usdaw office.
- Take the time to speak to non-members about what Usdaw can do for them – as well as speaking to existing members and keeping them up-to-date on Union information.



Representing Members

Another crucial role of the rep is to speak up for members at meetings with managers. These can be informal meetings or procedures which are more formal, for example:

- **Grievance meetings** - where the member or members raise an issue with the company.
 - Members should always try to resolve their issues informally first with their immediate line manager.
 - **Disciplinary meetings** - where the company raises an issue with the member.
 - Remember the main aim of the disciplinary procedure is to help a poorly performing member of staff to improve - and not to punish them.
 - You are entitled to see all the documentation including CCTV footage, witness statements etc relating to your member's case, to enable you to prepare for any formal meeting.
 - You have the right to reasonable paid time off to meet with your member and prepare the case - at this meeting, you should have all the management documentation.
- You have the right to stop the meeting at any time - this is called an adjournment. For example, you can adjourn:
 - If a member has a disciplinary or grievance meeting and no reps are available to represent them on that particular day. The member has the right to representation and they can reasonably request that the meeting be adjourned until a rep is available.
 - If you have not received all the paperwork or not had sufficient time to prepare or speak to the member.
 - If you need to seek advice from your Area Organiser.
 - If you need to check company procedures or policies.
 - If the member gets distressed during the meeting.
 - If a manager produces new evidence that you have not seen.

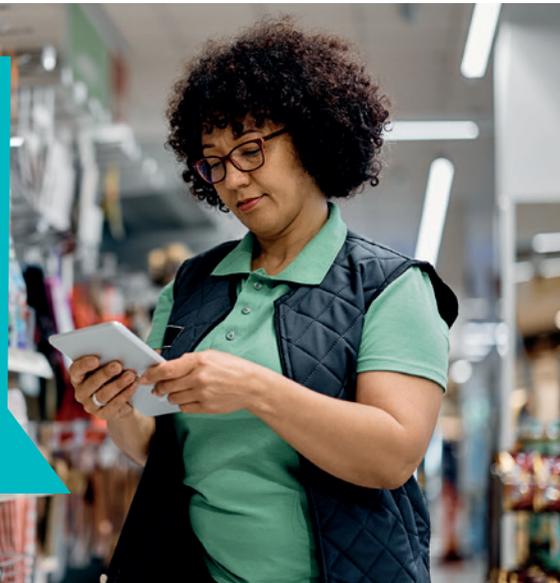
- You have the right to speak on behalf of your member and to put their case forward to managers during the meeting.
- You have the right to take your own notes as well as check and receive any notes that managers have taken.
- Contact your Area Organiser immediately if a member is dismissed or you are dealing with a member's grievance.
- The member has the right to appeal to the next level of management if they think the outcome of the meeting is unfair. There are time limits and procedures to follow for appeals, so speak to your Area Organiser immediately after any meeting.

You will shortly receive a three part handbook comprising; *Getting Started - The Role of the Rep, Organising and Recruitment and Representing Members* that will assist you in your new role.

In the meantime, good luck and don't forget to contact your Area Organiser to introduce yourself or if you need help at any time (your call will be returned as soon as possible).

Data Protection

As a rep you will regularly come across personal data and information about your members. Data Protection is therefore an important aspect of the rep's role and 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/gdprguide





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