

NETWORK

THE BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR USDAW ACTIVISTS | NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2022



ABUSE IS NOT PART OF THE JOB

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save the date

16-22 January



Membership Week

Let's make this Membership Week the most successful ever. Get fully involved and contact your local office if you need leaflets/membership forms.

www.usdaw.org.uk/mwjn





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COST OF LIVING STEALS CHRISTMAS

As the cost of living crisis bites, millions of people around the country will be facing a tough winter with many being pushed to breaking point. The challenging economic situation means this Christmas will be just as unpredictable as the last two covid Christmases.

Rising food, fuel and energy costs as well as increased mortgage payments means that millions will spend the festive period cold and hungry. Charities, councils and communities are making up for the failings of the state by providing food banks and warm banks.

In his Autumn Statement the latest chancellor Jeremy Hunt failed to recognise that 12 years of Conservative stagnation, austerity policies and the disastrous mini-budget have left far too many working families struggling to make ends meet.

Usdaw will not accept poverty pay and insecure work. We will not accept children going hungry, or public services stripped back to the bone. Workers deserve better, and workers demand better.

Usdaw will continue to call for a meaningful package of support for working people including minimum wage rates of at least £12 per hour for all workers and an uprating of benefits by at least the level of inflation.



I also want to take this opportunity to thank our army of reps who are doing a fantastic job of supporting members through these difficult times. I know it isn't easy when you yourself have to deal with the same pressures and stresses. Thank you for your hard work and commitment to the people you represent. Your efforts make a real difference to the lives of your colleagues.

I wish you and your family a healthy and happy Christmas and New Year.

Usdaw General Secretary

Paddy Bellis

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

citizens advice



- If you can't pay your bills.
- If you're struggling to pay your rent, want to end your tenancy or are worried about being evicted.
- If you have no money for food.
- Check what benefits you can get.

Citizens advice can advise you on benefits, money, housing, family, health and more.

You can contact via phone/email/live chat.

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/
contactus](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/contactus)

SAMARITANS

- Whatever you're going through, a Samaritan will face it with you.
- 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Via phone or email.

www.samaritans.org

StepChange
Debt Charity

- Free, confidential and expert debt advice and money guidance.
- Find the best solution or service for your individual circumstances.
- Support while you deal with your money worries, for as long as you need their help.

[www.stepchange.org/
contact-us](http://www.stepchange.org/contact-us)

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BUDGET: TOO LITTLE HELP TOO LATE

There was more disappointment for low-paid workers with the Autumn Budget which went nowhere near enough to help with the cost of living crisis.

Ahead of the Budget, Usdaw conducted a survey of over 7,500 members, mainly key workers, and found:

- Over three-quarters have struggled to pay an energy bill over the past twelve months.

- 45 per cent no longer use their household heating.

- Over four-in-10 have cut down on other essentials such as food.

Usdaw criticised the Government's inadequate response to the energy price rises, with household bills already doubled in six months and set for a 135 per cent increase in a year. Average household energy bills were £1,277 in March 2022, climbed to £2,500 in October 2022 and will now rise to £3,000 by April 2023.

The Government has extended its Energy Price Guarantee to 31 March 2024, but the maximum amount that suppliers can charge will increase in April 2023 by 20 per cent. Alongside



this, the Government will not be extending the £400 payment which all households are receiving this winter.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "These eye-watering energy price increases are simply unaffordable for most working people and the situation is much worse for those on pre-payment meters. It is little wonder that too many are struggling to pay their bills, not putting the heating on, avoiding cooking meals and having to choose between eating and heating.

"Despite the chancellor seeking praise for their energy price guarantee, they are still allowing bills

to increase by 135 per cent in a year. At the same time the Government has allowed wages to be devalued by rising prices and in the Autumn Budget they failed to deliver inflation busting increases in the incomes of the lowest paid workers or bring forward the uprating of minimum wage rates and in-work benefits. Instead, the Conservatives continue to punish the lowest paid workers for Conservative economic failures.

"Usdaw will continue to call for a meaningful package of support for working people including minimum wage rates of at least £12 per hour for all workers, regardless of age;

an uprating of benefits by at least the level of RPI inflation; with these measures implemented on 1 January 2023, or sooner.

"Our members need a new deal for workers, which could help give working people the protections they deserve; a new deal that will end low-paid insecure employment, giving workers the dignity of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work."



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'LABOUR BEHIND THE LABEL' DEMO

BOOHOO STAY SILENT AS STAFF PROTEST

Usdaw represents workers at Boohoo's warehouse and call centre in Burnley along with the head office in Manchester, but the company continues to refuse to recognise the union, leaving staff without a real voice at work. On this year's Black Friday Usdaw activists joined a demonstration outside Boohoo HQ in Manchester organised by Labour Behind the Label.

Usdaw continues to urge Boohoo to not only improve working conditions in 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.

The demo highlighted how Boohoo Black Friday sales harm people and harm the planet by promoting excessive consumption of clothing. This business model is killing the planet and driving bad working practices, so people are exploited and underpaid around the world in the race to the bottom on price. The demonstration provided



an alternative view to the marketing of 10p bikinis and showed how fast fashion can damage our world.

Usdaw regional secretary Mike Aylward said: "Regrettably, Boohoo has played fast and loose with their responses to persistent calls for the company to become an ethical trader. They have not made any progress on working with Usdaw since the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee recommended the company engages with us. It feels like they were just saying whatever it took to get them through the MPs' investigation.

"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. We are joining with Labour Behind the Label to seek fairness and respect for fashion industry workers."

MEMBERSHIP FOR WEEK ENDED 26 NOVEMBER 2022

South Wales & Western	42,782
Eastern	51,648
Midlands	47,847
North Eastern	50,699
Scottish	36,681
Southern	50,040
North West	77,976
Total	357,673

Access to **Labour Research** online resources for Usdaw Reps

A first rate service that publishes very useful news and information, designed specifically for reps, on a whole range of workplace topics, such as the monthly Labour Research magazine, Workplace Report, Fact Service and Safety Rep publications.

To access the resources, please log in using the following details at:
www.lrdpublications.org.uk

Username: **usdaw** Password: **Ustdaw1891**

NOT FEELING THE BENEFIT

USDAW CALLS FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS

In the Autumn Budget the chancellor did not extend free school meals to all children whose households were in receipt of income related benefits. The union criticised the Government for this decision but welcomes peers in the House of Lords adding their support.

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour) urged the Government to take action on child hunger by extending free school meals provision. She said: "Hunger adversely affects children's ability to learn, their health and wellbeing. Given all the evidence, why do the Government reject the growing calls for free school meals to the 800,000 children in families on universal credit who do not qualify – or, at the very least, inflation-proof the net earnings eligibility limit to £7,400 set in 2018."

Usdaw's evidence is clear that those in receipt of in-work benefits, typically the lowest income households, are severely struggling through the crisis. In the union's recent survey of members, mainly low-paid key workers in receipt of in-work benefits, 45 per cent no longer use the heating and over four-in-10 have cut down on other essentials such as food.

Usdaw General Secretary Paddy Lillis said: "We welcome peers

adding their voices to the calls for an extension to free school meals and are disappointed that the Government's response is to keep the policy 'under review'. It is clear that in-work benefit claimants need significant additional support to be able to make ends meet.

"Our survey found that over three-quarters of them rely on unsecured borrowing to pay everyday bills, with the majority struggling with repayments. Many respondents to our survey detailed difficulties in affording healthy, nutritious food for their children. While some children

are entitled to free school meals, this does not apply to all in low income families.

"In the longer term free school meals should be provided to all children, to support child wellbeing and improve learning outcomes. As an immediate emergency step, Usdaw is calling for free school meals to be extended to all families on Universal Credit and other income related benefits, which would significantly support child nutrition and relieve the stress and misplaced guilt experienced by their parents."

VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINE OF THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS:

- "I use a food bank as now can't afford one meal a day for my children and me with everything else". **Retail Worker aged 52, Greater London.**
- "I go without meals sometimes so my child has food". **Retail Worker, aged 54, Scotland.**
- "I wake up every night worrying if I have enough to cover the bills or food shop". **Retail Worker, aged 31, South East England.**
- "I have sold sentimental items to buy food. I'm committed to working hard but I'm only just surviving, can't afford luxuries, I feel like a failure to my kids". **Funeral Worker, aged 47, North East.**
- "I wish I could afford to buy decent food including fresh fruit on a large scale". **Retail Worker, aged 41, Midlands.**
- "I can't afford food or clothes for my daughter. We sit with blankets around us in the house or just go to bed early". **Retail Worker, aged 54, Northern Ireland.**

WIN

£100



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Health and Dental Plan

at **WWW.USDAW.ORG.UK/WIN**

Sponsored by Usdaw Health and Dental Plan. www.usdaw.org.uk/healthplan Closing Date 6 January 2023. Terms apply.

TUC DEMAND BETTER

COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO ANTI-RACISM



General secretary Paddy Lillis signed the TUC's anti-racism pledge at Congress in October to commit Usdaw to adopting the TUC's anti-racism manifesto.

The manifesto sets out what the trade union movement will do as a whole to make sure it secures

the economic and social justice of Black communities. Along with the Anti-Racism Action Plan adopted by Congress, it sets out how the TUC will refresh, renew and reboot the movement's campaigning, organising and bargaining work, and what is needed to tackle racial

inequalities in workplaces and communities.

"Today we make a strong statement, not just in recognition of the impressive work of the task force, but also of the need for an ongoing dialogue and engagement within and between unions about how we can truly deliver on the commitments we have set," said Paddy. "This must go far beyond the life of the task force and of course the wider political climate is going to be deeply challenging, for our work on racial justice and anti-racism.

"There is much to be done. Developing Black members' networks, training for reps, surveys of Black workers, joint action plans with employers. All vitally important work, but let us never lose sight of the fact that ultimately, we are about not just changing lives but saving lives. Racism destroys lives."

Visit: www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/trade-union-anti-racism-manifesto

SPOTLIGHT ON THE MENOPAUSE



Udaw were pleased to welcome a group of its reps to head office in November, to help develop the union's new menopause campaign, raising awareness of the menopause as a workplace issue. If you have experience of the menopause please complete the union's survey and help the campaign: www.usdaw.org.uk/MenopauseSurvey

USDW ELECTION

PADDY LILLIS RE-ELECTED GENERAL SECRETARY

Paddy Lillis has been re-elected unopposed to serve a second term as the general secretary of Usdaw, after being the only candidate to receive the required 25 branch nominations.

Paddy has been Usdaw's general secretary since 2018 and was deputy general secretary for the 14 years before that. He was first appointed to the union's staff in 1989 as an area organiser in the Bristol office before being promoted in 1997 to divisional officer in charge of the South Wales and Western division. Paddy has been an Usdaw member since 1978. He joined Usdaw when he was employed as a heavy goods driver at Abbey Meat Packers in Newtownabbey, County Antrim in Northern Ireland.

In his time as general secretary, Paddy has overseen the launch of a number of high profile Usdaw campaigns including the Retail Recovery Plan and the New Deal for Workers. He has liaised with retailers and employers' groups such as the British Retail Consortium to highlight the issues facing the retail sector and led campaigns calling for clear Government action.

"I am honoured to have been re-elected as Usdaw general secretary and I will continue to tackle the many challenges ahead for our union," said Paddy. "Not least is the cost of living crisis that is having a devastating impact on the lives of our members, who are now struggling to make ends meet with prices skyrocketing and wages struggling to keep up.

"I'd like to thank our national executive council for their ongoing support. We have a fantastic team of workplace reps, activists and staff who do a great job of representing our members and their work is crucial in supporting me in taking Usdaw forward."



Branch Officers Course August 2022



Cost of Living campaign, Liverpool



Black Members' Weekend 2022



WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE DIES

Clear and simple advice for members on the practical and administrative side of bereavement

There are few things more stressful than dealing with a death. Not only is there the emotional impact of the bereavement, there are practical things that have to be done – such as notifying the authorities, arranging the funeral and dealing with a will. These steps need to be taken at a time when we feel least able to handle such things, and it can be difficult to know where to get started.

Usdaw wants to be able to help members cope when someone dies, and so we have produced a new fact sheet containing straightforward advice on taking the steps that need to be taken. It also includes details of what financial support might be available to cover the costs of a funeral and to help members cope afterwards.

The fact sheet is available online at: www.usdaw.org.uk/whensomeonedies

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

NEW IN!

Leaflets & Booklets

The Usdaw Home Study
(Leaflet 130)

Training for Members - The Open University
(Leaflet 367)

Things you need to know as a Union Learning Rep
(Leaflet 392)

Supporting Young Workers - Your Rights At Work
(Leaflet 396)

Member Offers (Leaflet 398)

Supporting Young Workers - Workplace Mental Health
(Leaflet 450)

An Usdaw Guide to Maternity and Parental Rights

Posters & Flyers

Are You An Usdaw Rep Looking For Inspiration? (Pensions Poster)

Puzzled By Pensions? - A guide to claiming pension loss in unfair dismissal cases

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

When Someone Dies - Guidance for Usdaw Members

Online bitesize courses

Data Protection Online course
www.usdaw.org.uk/ProtectionOnline

Maths and Money Matters
www.usdaw.org.uk/mathsmatters

Mind Your Head - Mental Health course
www.usdaw.org.uk/mindyourhead

More Than Words - English course
www.usdaw.org.uk/MoreThanWords

Pensions Home Study
www.usdaw.org.uk/PensionsHomeStudy

CAMPAIGNS

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

MEMBERS MEET THEIR MPS TO MAKE THE CASE FOR BETTER PAY

Usdaw members joined a mass lobby of parliament at the beginning of November to make the case for a new deal for workers. Members had the opportunity to meet with their MPs, face to face, to talk about the impact the cost of living is having on them and their colleagues and demanded action now.

The lobby involved members from affiliated trade unions from across the movement and concluded with Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis addressing a mass rally at Central Hall in Westminster.

Ushaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "In times like this we have to stand together. Together our voices are loud and clear. Workers are facing eye-watering bills, spiraling food costs and a mounting housing crisis.

"One in four retail and distribution workers has missed meals every month to pay their bills. More than 70 per cent say that finances are affecting their mental health. Nearly a third won't be switching the heating on at all this winter, because they are so worried about the costs.

"We cannot and we will not let this happen. We will not accept poverty pay and insecure work. We will not accept children going hungry, or public services stripped back to the bone.

"We will not accept yet another Tory prime minister treating this country like their plaything.

"We will mobilise for a general election to get this Tory Government out. We will organise every worker, in every workplace, to win a new deal. A minimum wage that people can actually live on; secure hours and an end to zero hours contracts; sick pay for everyone and from day one of illness; stronger redundancy rights; fairness, equality and a stronger voice at work."

Network caught up with two reps who formed part of Usdaw's delegation.

CHARLIE GOUGH

Charlie Gough, a 21-year-old rep from the Wirral, gave his thoughts on how the day went.

"I'm a politics and history student and I'm passionate about trade unions so when the opportunity to visit Westminster Central Hall came up, I jumped at the chance," said Charlie.

"It was my first time there and it was quite intimidating. I was taken aback by the sheer grandeur and size of it. Even though I had seen it on TV and in photos, you can't really judge the scale until you're there.

"I attended the open forum at the congress chamber. There were some fantastic speakers including trade union officials as well as MPs showing solidarity with workers. The highlight for me was seeing Angela Rayner (Labour's deputy leader) speak. You could tell she comes from a trade union background because

she had a genuine affinity with us.

"Like everyone else, the cost of living is affecting me. I'm at university but had to give up my flat earlier this year and move in with my parents because renting was becoming unsustainable. Now I use public transport to get to my campus, which is also very expensive. But as I see it, it's the lesser of two evils.

"I feel like we need a general election and a new mandate. We've had 12 years of Tory rule and the country is a mess. The constant state of crisis has meant that four Tory prime ministers have imploded and we're now on our fifth prime minister in as many years.

"All in all, the day was such a positive experience and it has inspired me to think seriously about getting involved in my local Labour branch when I finish my degree."

HADI NAQVI

Ushaw rep Hadi Naqvi, 46, shared his excitement of being at Westminster and how he made a case for better pay to his Labour MP Steve Reed.

"Parliament is such an impressive building," said Hadi. "I can see why it's known as the corridors of power and why some politicians can become intoxicated with the idea of being there.

"I had the opportunity to meet my MP Steve Reed and put forward Usdaw's research on how our members are struggling to pay their



bills and the affect this is having on their mental health. Wages are being eroded because they are not keeping up with inflation and now they are being eroded by interest rates going up.

"Everyone I know is affected, all the way from the cleaner to senior managers, they're all feeling the pinch. People are struggling to keep their heads above water and when people struggle to survive other social problems get worse, such as crime and addiction.

"I was very honoured to be given the opportunity to represent Usdaw members. It was a fantastic day. The highlights for me were interviewing Paddy Lillis, who always hits the nail on the head, hearing Mick Lynch, general secretary of the RMT union, speak and meeting representatives from other unions because it makes you realise that you are not alone and that we are all fighting for the same cause.

"The Tories have been in charge for 12 years, at what point does it stop being Labour's fault and start

being the fault of the people who've been in charge for over a decade? You can't keep doing the same thing and expect a different result. That's the definition of insanity and that's where politics is right now.

"For those who say politics doesn't affect them, look again. The Tories announce a mini budget, the economy tanks and you end up with bigger mortgage payments. How much clearer can it get?"

USDW IS CALLING FOR A NEW DEAL FOR WORKERS WHICH INCLUDES:

- *Minimum wage of at least £12 per hour* as a step towards £15 for all workers, ending rip-off youth rates.
- *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.
- *Proper social security system*, Universal Credit does not provide an effective safety net.
- *Job security*, with day one employment rights for unfair dismissal and significant improvements to redundancy protections.
- *Fair treatment and equality for all workers*, including equal pay.
- *Voice at work*, stop rogue employers refusing to engage with trade unions and end 'fire and rehire'.

USDW MEMBERSHIP WEEK: 16-22 JANUARY 2023

START PLANNING YOUR RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

This year has been very challenging for Usdaw. Although the number of new members recruited is close to pre-pandemic levels, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of leavers.

The aim of Membership Week is to help focus efforts on recruitment. During these weeks, all reps are encouraged to have a big push on recruiting new members. The January Membership Week is very important as it provides Usdaw with an opportunity to have a strong start to the new year.

It goes without saying that the union can only ever be as strong as its membership. The larger the membership, the greater Usdaw's influence with employers.

Even in the best organised workplaces, there are non-members who have not been spoken to, or have not had the many benefits of Usdaw membership explained to them. There are also far too many workplaces where membership levels need to be higher.

During Membership Week reps could:

- Have a recruitment drive in workplaces where the opportunity for growth is the largest.
- Coordinate a recruitment day (or days) where all reps can get involved in helping the union grow.
- Target large workplaces where there are no reps, or where the team would appreciate additional support.

Speak to your manager now about time off to organise a stall in the canteen, or time off to talk to new starters/non-members. Arrange your team of reps on to a rota so everyone spends some time focused on this recruitment initiative.

If we all start planning for the week now, we can deliver a massive



boost to our membership across all Usdaw sectors and have the most successful Membership Week ever.

START PLANNING NOW: CHECKLIST

- Speak to your manager about time off to organise an event.
- Order recruitment leaflets and promotional materials in advance.
- Identify areas/departments in your workplace where membership is low.
- Arrange your team of reps on a rota to cover all shifts.
- Contact your area organiser or local office for help.

- Contact the *Network/Arena* team with details of your event and to discuss photographs and coverage in the magazines.

SEND YOUR PICTURES TO network@usdaw.org.uk but please make sure there are no personal details visible in your photos such as newly completed membership forms. If you're on Twitter or Instagram you can follow us **@UsdawUnion** or use **#JoinUsdaw**

FREEDOM FROM FEAR SUMMIT AT WESTMINSTER

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT SHOPWORKERS



Usdaw hosted a summit of retail employers and their representative bodies at Westminster in November to mark the start of the union's Respect for Shopworkers' Week. The group, which included Helen Dickinson OBE, Chief executive of the British Retail Consortium, ACS chief executive James Lowman and Co-op's Campaigns, Public Affairs and board secretariat director Paul Gerrard, looked at the continuing problem of violence, threats and abuse against shopworkers, along with wider issues related to retail crime.

New statistics from an Usdaw survey were released at the event to demonstrate the scale of the growing problem. Interim results from over 4,600 retail staff responses show that in the last twelve months: (pre-pandemic levels in brackets, from the 2019 survey):

- 71 per cent (67 per cent) have experienced verbal abuse.
- 48 per cent (42 per cent) were threatened by a customer.
- 5 per cent (5 per cent) were assaulted.
- 45 per cent said they were not confident that reporting abuse, threats and violence will make a difference.
- 20 per cent of those who had

been assaulted did not report the incident.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "A key part of Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign is working with employers to help make stores safe working environments and protect our members from abuse and attacks. It is shocking that our survey found that seven in 10 of retail staff are suffering abuse from customers, with far too many experiencing threats and violence. While a number of recent triggers for abuse, such as face masks and social distancing, no longer apply; the level of issues faced by retail workers is still higher than before the pandemic.

"The retailer's response to our survey, who employ nearly one million workers, clearly demonstrates the sector's

commitment to tackling abuse of shopworkers and highlights best practice ideas. The aim of this project is to bring the industry together and work collaboratively to tackle violence and abuse. We sincerely hope that all retailers will find this report useful and provide ideas on how to better tackle the issue.

"However, this is not a concern that can be resolved by the retail industry alone. Despite the investment and engagement from so many retailers, violence and abuse have continued to rise. If we are to truly tackle these issues, we must continue to engage with politicians and the police, to press for action on retail crime prevention, detection and access to justice. This summit is another step along our journey to provide 'Freedom From Fear' for all retail workers."

PROTECTING RETAIL WORKERS: SHARING BEST PRACTICES

Usdaw launched a new report at the Westminster summit *Protecting Retail Workers: Sharing Best Practices*. It highlights some of the best practices across the retail industry, which reported to Usdaw in their survey of retailers. The report looks at community engagement, workplace environmental design, physical security, work and reporting procedures, along with supportive managers and employment policies. You can view the full document at: www.usdaw.org.uk/FFFsummit22



RESPECT WEEK IN PICTURES

Usdaw's annual Respect Week returned in November with hundreds of reps promoting the Freedom From Fear campaign in workplaces across the UK





REGIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Campaign support at the Senedd with Carolyn Thomas MS.
2. Tesco Inverurie.
3. Usdaw reps and activist Leroy Smith talk to pupils at Whitefield School, Brent Cross about the campaign.
4. Paddy Lillis visits Tesco Stretford, Manchester to talk to reps and police.
5. Tesco Andover.
6. Morrisons Holbrooks, Coventry with Taiwo Owatemi MP.
7. Tesco Cheltenham.
8. Tesco Wath, Rotherham.







CAMPAIGNING FOR BETTER

A brief guide to Usdaw's Political Fund, explaining what it is and why unions need their funds to effectively campaign on the issues that matter to their members

Politics affects all our lives and that is particularly true for working people. All workers rely on employment rights that were only secured through trade unions running political campaigns to improve workers' lives.

Trade unions need a Political Fund because not everything can be delivered through negotiation. Often, they have needed government intervention to improve important workers' rights like:

- The National Minimum Wage.
- Tax credits to support working families on lower incomes.
- The right to 28 days paid holiday.
- Maternity and paternity leave.
- The legal right to union representation.
- Stiffer sentences for criminals who assault a shopworker.
- Large shops having to close on Christmas Day.

Usdaw's Political Fund supported our campaigns in these and other important areas.

At various points over the last decades, the UK Government has introduced increasingly restrictive legislation on the activities of trade unions. One of these restrictions, brought in by the Conservative Government in the 1980s means that Usdaw is required to hold a review ballot of members at least every 10 years in order to retain its Political Fund.

What is the Political Fund?

Like most large unions, Usdaw maintains a Political Fund. This money is kept separately from the union's general funds and is the only money it's allowed, by law, to spend on political campaigning.

The law sets out what campaign work and other activities are classed as political and because of this, there are a number of things that the union must pay for out of the Political Fund. The activities covered as political is surprising and includes elements of key

campaigns, information leaflets, encouraging members to register to vote, supporting members who want to get involved in politics and supporting the Labour Party.

Why does Usdaw need a Political Fund?

Usdaw works to deliver for members, both industrially in the workplace and through negotiations, but also politically by campaigning for important changes in the law and securing the election of candidates who will support the union's work. It is also important that the views of members are heard, on issues such as workers' rights, housing, the NHS and public services.

The Political Fund allows Usdaw to work with politicians on crucial issues such as stronger employment rights, parents and carers' rights, protecting Sunday trading, preventing cuts to tax credits and the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme, equality in the workplace,



THE POLITICAL FUND ALLOWS USDAW TO WORK WITH POLITICIANS ON CRUCIAL ISSUES SUCH AS EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS, PARENTS AND CARERS' RIGHTS, PREVENTING CUTS TO TAX CREDITS, EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE AND FREEDOM FROM FEAR.

Time For Better Pay and Freedom From Fear.

What Would Happen if Unions Did Not Have Political Funds?

- Unions would not have specific funding to run campaigns against proposals that would damage their members' interests. They could not fight back so effectively against cuts to employment rights or the minimum wage, longer Sunday trading, or further cuts to the benefits that many members rely on.
- They would not have the formal links to lobby for policies that members need, such as legislation to curb zero-hour contracts and short-hours contracts, a higher minimum wage – especially for young people, better support from the police, and justice for criminals who threaten and assault shopworkers.
- The Labour Party would be at a massive financial disadvantage

compared to the Conservatives and would have far fewer resources to run effective election campaigns, making electoral contests unequal.

Result of previous review ballots

In previous review ballots, Usdaw members have overwhelmingly backed keeping their voice by having a Political Fund, with 93 per cent voting in favour in 2013. In 2004, it was 81 per cent; 1995, 82 per cent; and in 1985, 88 per cent.

Isn't it all just about the Labour Party?

Not at all. Over its history, members of Usdaw (and its predecessor unions) decided that they needed a strong political voice and founded the Labour Party. Usdaw remains affiliated to the Labour Party to this day as the best representative of working people political interests.

However, the Political Fund also supports the union's campaigns,

wider political activities and helps to lobby politicians from all parties on issues that matter to Usdaw members. For example, Usdaw has spent years lobbying the Conservative Government to bring in a protection of shopworkers law.

How much do members contribute to the Political Fund?

The Political Fund contribution is 10p per week and is taken out of the normal Usdaw subscription through what is known as the 'Political Levy'. With members contributing only a small amount to the fund, Usdaw is able to deliver significant benefits on their behalf.

When is the next ballot?

The next ballot will be held in 2023. Keep an eye out early next year for updates.

For more information:
politics@usdaw.org.uk

ONCE IN A LIFETIME

Forty-eight reps completed the ultimate organising challenge over the summer and successfully graduated from the union's Academy1 programme in November.

The organising officers, as they were known during their six-month secondment, swapped their day jobs for organising and recruiting in their seven respective regions, working closely with area organisers and training officers.

Network caught up with some of the reps as they celebrated their graduation at a glamorous presentation evening in Manchester.

EMMA WOODFINE

South Wales and Western

The last six months have been extremely rewarding. I have felt a real sense of achievement, building relationships in unknown workplaces, overcoming challenges and improving membership numbers. I have really enjoyed working with other reps and overcoming my fears of public speaking while attending inductions, especially in workplaces that are not my own. I have loved being able to plan my own diary and working week.

There are always going to be those workplaces that aren't as welcoming as others and this can be difficult and knock you back but there is always help and support from your area organiser, other reps and certainly friends on Academy to get you through. I would absolutely recommend the experience, there will be good days and bad days, but it's a very rare and wonderful opportunity. I'm returning to a job



that I love with a lot more confidence and knowledge as a union rep.

GABRIEL GRIGORAS

Scotland

The last six months have been amazing. Challenging at times and often out of my comfort zone, but I've definitely grown as a rep and a person. I have enjoyed everything, from the training, to being out there in different workplaces, interacting with new people and trying to make a difference. Even the homework was vital and helped me remember what the tutors had taught me in class. I have learned so much. If ever I was struggling the training officers were there to give me support. I recommend the experience to every rep. It's one of the best ways to grow and gain skills that are useful not only for your position, but also in

life. You will meet great people and you will create great friendships.

ROBERT FRANCIS

Southern

After doing a period of stand-down I wanted to do more, I also wanted to better my confidence and knowledge of the union so I applied for the Academy. The last six months have been exceptional. I have enjoyed it all. The training that the union provides is excellent and guides you into different experiences throughout your journey. These include one-to-one recruitment, holding a monthly union meeting and planning and running campaigns. The training is exceptional. I'm also proud to have grown membership by recruiting 548 new members over the course of the six months. I have already



“THE TRAINING IS EXCEPTIONAL. I’M ALSO PROUD TO HAVE GROWN MEMBERSHIP BY RECRUITING 548 NEW MEMBERS OVER THE COURSE OF THE SIX MONTHS.”
Robert Francis

spoke to fellow reps to encourage them to apply. The more you put into it, the more you get out.

DARREN OAKLEY Midlands

The last six months have been an amazing journey, I just can’t say anything bad about it. I particularly enjoyed going into companies I didn’t know anything about, recruiting new members and new reps, learning about their policies, gaining colleagues’ trust and making new friends. I was worried about the training but it was enjoyable and we had a great training officer. Usdaw’s clerical staff were also really friendly and helpful, nothing was too much trouble. I would highly recommend it to anyone, it’s an amazing journey. You’re supported all the way and gain friends for life.

WHAT IS THE ORGANISING ACADEMY?

It’s a specialist training course that provides active reps with the opportunity and skills to recruit and organise across different sectors and companies.

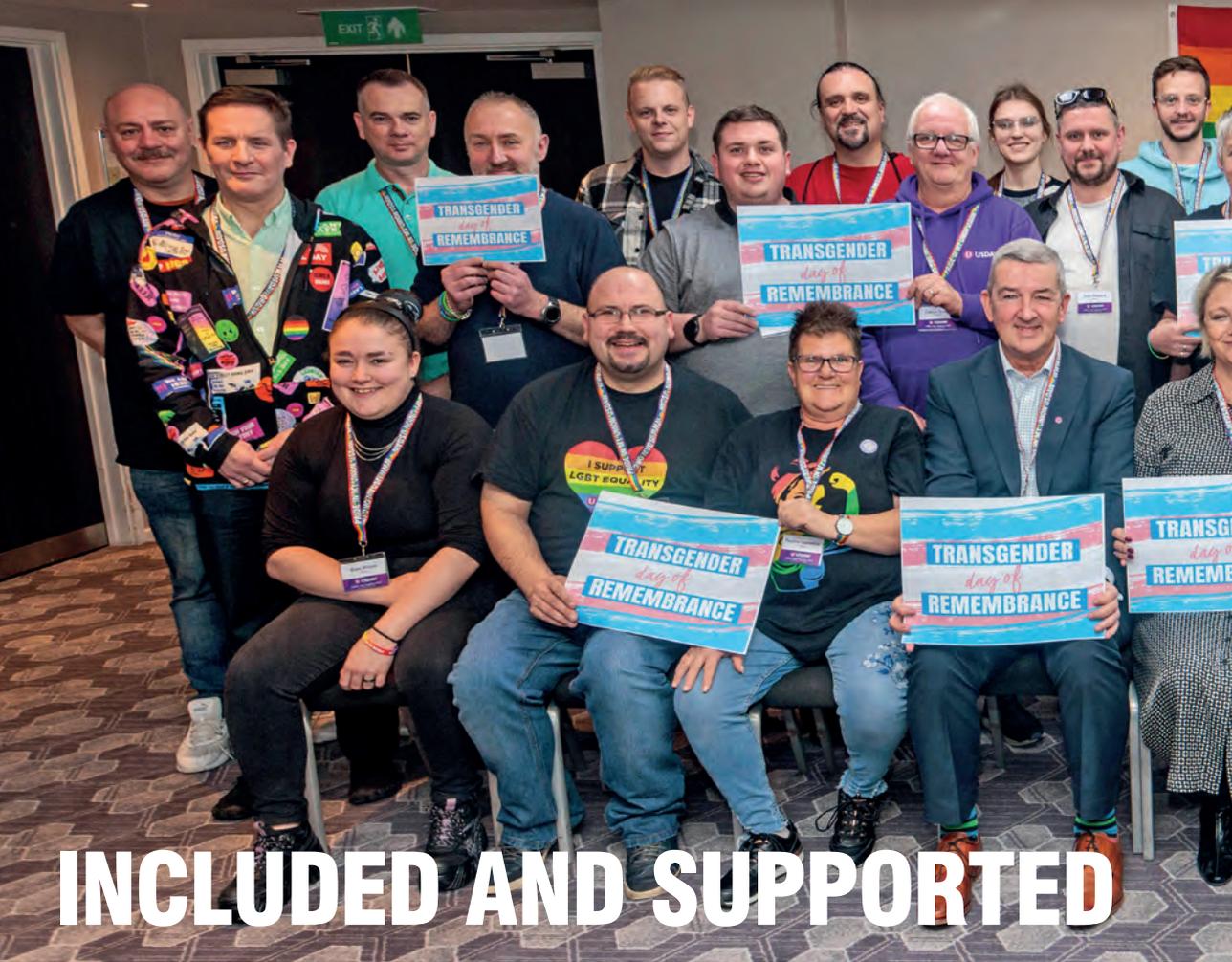
Reps who are successful in the selection process will effectively work for the union for six months, on secondment from their employer, monitored by an Usdaw official. They will also receive four weeks of classroom-based training.

The Academy runs from May to November and is open to reps who have shown a firm commitment to the union.

Usdaw general secretary

Paddy Lillis says it’s an excellent opportunity for reps wanting to play a bigger role in the union. “I have seen first-hand the way it can transform the lives of those who take part,” said Paddy. “Reps who are selected will have a rewarding six months. They will return to work with much developed skills and confidence and will be ideally placed to help build and strengthen our union.”

If you think you’re up for the organising challenge, then speak to your area organiser or branch secretary as soon as possible. Visit the website for more info: www.usdaw.org.uk/academy



INCLUDED AND SUPPORTED

Usdaw's national LGBT+ Get-together took place in November with 30 members from across the union taking part in the two-day event in Manchester.

Organised and coordinated by Usdaw's equality team, the event is an opportunity for LGBT and non-binary members to come together to discuss shared concerns and find out more about what the union is doing to take up the issues that matter most to them.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis, deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen and Usdaw president Jane Jones also joined the group.

Trans Day of Remembrance

The event coincided with Trans Awareness Week with the Sunday being Trans Day of Remembrance. Delegates recognised and remembered trans people across

the globe who have lost their lives to violence by observing a two-minute silence.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Trans Awareness Week is all about raising the visibility of transgender and non-binary people and remembering those who have lost their lives due to transphobic violence. The most recent Home Office figures show that transphobic hate crime rose by 16 per cent on the previous year. Far too many trans and non-binary workers continue to experience hostility, stigma and unfair treatment just for being themselves in work. A TUC study found that half of trans workers experience bullying and harassment at work. As a result many trans and non-binary people feel they have to hide their identity at work.

"Usdaw reps make a real difference to trans members'

lives at work. Reps around the country are providing support for members transitioning at work, making sure employers are aware of trans workers' rights and ensuring everyone is treated with dignity. They stand up for workers facing discrimination and make sure workplaces are safe and inclusive for everyone. Everyone has the right to be themselves at work. Usdaw is committed to calling out transphobia and standing with our trans and non-binary members, colleagues and friends as active trans allies. This weekend we sent out messages of support and solidarity as well as highlighted the guidance Usdaw offers to reps and members."

Non-binary Inclusion

Emma Kosmin, LGBT+ policy officer at the TUC, ran a session with delegates on non-binary inclusion



at work. Non-binary is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. Through a series of open questions, delegates explored what it means to be non-binary, the issues non-binary workers can face in the workplace and wider society and the importance of unions and union reps being active allies to non-binary workers. Delegates explored what workplace measures can be put in place to ensure non-binary colleagues feel seen, included and supported by the union. This included the importance of using a person's preferred name and pro-nouns, inclusive language and uniform policies, supporting awareness days and zero tolerance of discrimination or prejudice towards non-binary people, or people who do not identify exclusively as male or female.

HEAR IT FIRST-HAND FROM THE DELEGATES...

Denislav Shalamanov

Denislav is a shopworker and rep at Tesco Stafford. This was his first time at the conference.

"I was really nervous about attending but it was really welcoming and I felt safe and happy," said Denislav. "I particularly enjoyed that everyone had their stories to share. The workshops and activities were well thought out and made you think creatively and outside the box – they were really useful. I also enjoyed the speeches – you can tell the speakers were passionate about what they do. I would 100 per cent recommend the weekend and would love to go again next year."

Emily Richards

Emily is from Tesco distribution in Goole. She joined Usdaw in 2020.

"I've never been to an Usdaw event before and this was a lovely one to start with. I'm incredibly thankful that my rep nominated me to go. I met some wonderful people and learned some useful information. I found the speech/workshop session that Emma led to be the most interesting. I have no friends or family who are under the non-binary umbrella so it was wonderful to get some clarification on a subject that I'm not familiar with. I thoroughly enjoyed the workshops. They were a place where my group debated the topics brought up quite openly and without any offence taken or given by those involved. I felt very comfortable and would love to go again."

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



ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH CHERYL WILSON

Network spoke with Tesco checkout operator and Usdaw rep Cheryl Wilson to talk about how her previous jobs and getting caught up in a coup in Nigeria gave her the negotiating skills she needed to become a rep in Telford.

What did you do before you started working at Tesco?

In my previous life, I worked for a company that designed and built TV broadcasting stations. I was only 23 at the time but I was travelling to Africa for work. I was involved in a couple of nasty incidents which I managed to talk my way out of. One time, I was locked in our compound during a coup in Zaire. Despite this,

I loved the job because it was exciting, and I got to work with people from different backgrounds and cultures.

How did you get involved in Usdaw?

A few years later, I gave up my job and moved to Shropshire to care for my mother. I applied to work for the brand-new Tesco Home Plus store. Six weeks into the job, Usdaw came in to speak to the new starters. My manager told them, I would make a good rep because I wasn't scared to speak up. At first, I said no but by the afternoon, not only had I signed up to be a member, I had also agreed to stand as a rep.

How did you find being a rep?

For a long time I was the only rep in the store. It wasn't too bad in the Home Plus store because there were only 80 of us but when I transferred to an Extra there were over 500 people working there, and I thought 'oh my god'. My area organiser told me that the first thing I had to do was to get more reps. With a bit of work, I managed to get a nice team of people around me.

You have over 77 per cent density in store, how have you managed to do this?

Inductions are so important and I love doing them. I used to take in a bottle of Lucozade and say the

cost of union membership is the same price as this bottle. A couple of weeks after the induction, I make sure I go and see the new starters, to say hello and see how they're getting on. I always take membership forms and joke 'Here's another form, I know you've lost the one I gave you before'. Sometimes, humour can go a long way. It's also important to develop a good relationship with your line manager and your store manager. Sometimes an informal conversation is enough for an issue to be dealt with satisfactorily. As a rep, you don't need to use a sledgehammer every time. Everyone's struggling because of the spiraling cost of living. It's worth pointing out that you don't get a pay rise because your employer thinks you're worth it. You get one because your union makes a case every year that convinces the company to give you a rise.

You've been a rep for over 15 years, have you seen many changes to your role?

When I started, it was very easy to recruit but over the years it's gotten a lot harder. Now we have a generation of people who don't have a clue what a union is and what it does. The easiest way to explain is by saying having Usdaw membership is like having a firm of solicitors in your back pocket. Work can have such an impact on someone's mental and physical health, why wouldn't you want to be protected and have someone in your corner?

What have you learnt being a rep?

I've learnt that sometimes the best thing you can do for members is to help them do it themselves. This could be clarifying policy or

just giving them the confidence to approach their manager with an issue. It's very empowering for someone to successfully sort out an issue.

You're retiring, how do you feel?

I'm sad to be stepping down. I've loved being a rep. It's not always easy because when someone is pulled up for a disciplinary and they ask you represent them, they will tell you what's really going on. You hear such personal things that you end up taking on their anguish and when you get home you can't get it out of your head.

But being a rep is also very rewarding especially when you find out that a 10-minute conversation you had with someone has made a difference. I once signed up a young

man who said he wanted to be like me, which was very nice to hear.

Do you have any plans for your retirement?

I'll remain active in Usdaw. I'm also thinking about getting involved in local politics. I live in a Tory stronghold and my MP doesn't understand the issues affecting retail. I wouldn't stand but I would love to be involved in driving a campaign to get a Labour MP elected. I'm also looking forward to spending more time working on my Open University degree in cultural and anthropological studies. I want to thank everyone in Usdaw for the training and support they've given me over the years and a special thank you to everyone at the Redditch office.



Cheryl speaking at ADM in May

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

Get in touch and tell us what you've been doing in your workplace.
network@usdaw.org.uk



CHECKOUT CHAT WITH TINA HOLLIS

Usdaw rep and checkout team support Tina Hollis has been busy organising her Tesco store in Mansfield. In the few short months since she got elected, Tina and her fellow reps have increased density to almost 50 per cent.

“I was approached by a colleague who asked whether I would put myself forward for the rep role,” said Tina, 42. “She said, she asked me because I was the kind of person who got things done. I agreed because the previous two reps had left and we needed someone to fill the shortfall. I was elected in May 2022, along with my colleagues Vicky

Child and Dawnya Arrand.

“In my previous life, I was a hairdresser for 22 years and I also worked for a wellness company. The skills I picked up doing these jobs have come in handy for my rep role such as being organised, having good listening skills and engaging in conversations that help me get to the root of the issue. Having a smiley personality also helps.

“When I first got elected, it was a bit overwhelming. We have over 500 people in our store and I wasn’t sure where to begin. But I sat down with Vicky and Dawnya to plan what we were going to do. We knew that

the June membership week was coming up so we started there. We sent off for all the literature and then started figuring out who wasn’t in the union. Once we set up the table, we would approach our colleagues who weren’t in the union. Nothing too formal, I would just go over and have a cuppa with them. I would ask them if they had seen the table and whether they’d heard of Usdaw. At first, I got a few brush offs with people saying they weren’t interested but once I started talking about the benefits of being in the union, they were more open to having a conversation.

TINA'S TOP RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISING TIPS:

Make sure people see you and know who you are

Be visible and vary where you take your breaks so you can catch people you wouldn't normally see. Introduce yourself to people, remind them that you're a colleague as well as a union rep. Put your picture and details on the union noticeboard so members know how to contact you too.

Engage in conversations with your colleagues

Ask them how they are. Hear them out and respect their views. Your conversations don't always have to be about the union, sincere conversations with your colleagues go a long way towards building trust and confidence.

Develop a good relationship with the managers

An adversarial approach gets you nowhere but a relationship based on mutual trust and respect means you can resolve issues quickly.

Get yourself on the training courses

Training is really important. You will learn the knowledge and skills you need to best support your members.

Familiarise yourself with your agreement and your company's policies

You can't represent your members effectively if you don't know what your company's policies and procedures are. Make sure you know the staff handbook and keep referring to it.

Pay rises

When a pay rise comes through it's worth reminding members and non-members that pay rises aren't a given and it's the union that sits down with the company every year to talk about pay. This shows them that they're getting something tangible from their membership.

Usdaw discounts

With the cost of living crisis on everyone's minds, tell people about Usdaw's benefits and discounts. Pick out the seasonal offers and remind people they can save a few quid. During the summer, discounts on holidays, and activities you can do with your children are very popular. In winter, it might be more appropriate to remind people that the offers include breakdown cover, and discounts on cinema tickets and gym membership.

Target your campaigns to your membership

In our store we have a few new dads. I told them that Usdaw offers a free will writing service and encouraged them to take up the service to ensure that their families were provided for, which many of them did.

Utilise what you have

Our store has a wellness room which provides a quiet, safe space for colleagues who may be struggling that day. Here they can take five minutes to gather their thoughts. We've made sure the room is full of Usdaw literature as well as leaflets from GPs and charities that signpost people to the relevant experts.

Emails and communication from the union

Always read the emails and email newsletters that Usdaw sends you. They will tell you the latest news, what's coming up and what you can get involved with. You can sign up to receive enews on the union's website.

Plan ahead

Be organised and plan your diary. Know when Usdaw's campaign days and weeks are happening and make all the arrangements to get involved. Make sure you order your literature for upcoming events in plenty of time.

Utilise the website

Usdaw's website is full of useful information for reps and members and you can download copies of all the latest versions of the union's leaflets and posters on there. You can also keep up-to-date with the latest news and press releases.

Keep your noticeboard updated with the latest materials

You can order lots of great materials from Usdaw's website. It's good to keep refreshing your union noticeboard with different materials too. You can even theme your noticeboard to coincide with Usdaw's campaigns at different times of the year.

Develop a good working relationship with your fellow reps

The three of us work different days and different shifts so it can be hard to meet up in person. We keep in regular contact through Whatsapp where we update each other and get advice on those tricky queries. Being a rep can be challenging because you are dealing with people's lives so our group is a good way of boosting morale and staying motivated.

Remember you're not alone

Everyone needs advice and support at some point. Your Usdaw official and local office is only a phone call away so don't be shy of contacting them if you get stuck or you just need someone to talk to.

What are your top tips?

Sharing your top tips with other Usdaw reps can be really useful and help others to support members.

If you've got some great ideas on how to recruit and organise then please email them to network@usdaw.org.uk so they can be shared with other reps.



Learning reps Natalia Iljinska and Donata Maziarz

PRIORITISING PENSIONS

Usdaw wants members to talk about pensions and make financial plans for their retirement, even if that retirement is many years ahead. The union doesn't want members to feel overwhelmed by the subject of pensions so it's important that reps do their best to make sure it isn't ignored in the workplace. This doesn't mean that reps have to pose as a pensions expert, they just need to give members the basic facts and signpost them to the right places.

One of the best ways to get members talking about pensions is by holding a pensions awareness day. This is a great opportunity to showcase the union's fantastic range of publications and highlight the support that's available.

CO-OP COVENTRY

The active team of seven union learning reps at the Co-op National Distribution Centre in Coventry held a pensions awareness campaign day in September supported by their area organiser Andrew Sadler. The event took place over 24 hours covering the day shift, back shift and night shift so that all reps could get involved and all members could benefit from the campaign. *Network* spoke to employee engagement coordinator and union learning rep coordinator Natalia Iljinska.

Why did you decide to hold a pension's campaign day?

As a rep team we think it's important to be visible so we aim to hold union events on a regular basis and

engage employees in union activities as much as we can. We've never held a pensions campaign day before so we decided it was time to give it a try.

Why was it important to you to run the campaign over all three shifts?

In the past we've only delivered campaigns during the day which means that members and reps who work on the other two shifts can't get involved. It's really important to us that all colleagues know that the union exists and that our reps are visible and approachable. Our team is continuously evolving. We have two learning reps on day shift (Monika and Donata), two on back shift (Marek and Natalia) and three

on nightshift (Aija, Pavel and Steven). I became ULR coordinator about three years ago and that is when I started building and empowering our learning team.

What did you do to prepare for the event?

Firstly, we asked management if we could hold the event. It's important we communicate with our managers in advance of any campaigns and mutually agree on the date and time. When the event was in the diary the rep team got together and had a chat about how we wanted to deliver the campaign. Then about three weeks before the event we got in touch with the pensions team at Usdaw head office to order everything we needed for the campaign including posters, leaflets, questionnaires and booklets all about pensions. We promoted the event on the posters in all key areas of the warehouse and advertised it in our weekly Huddle (depot newsletter) and on the depot engagement Facebook page.

What happened on the day?

We set up the stall in the canteen. We agreed this would be the best place as it's a communal area and we would be visible to colleagues who are more likely to approach us while on their breaks. We put some bunting around the stall and we displayed all the pensions leaflets so there was no doubt about the topic of the campaign.

We were visited by a lot of colleagues who filled out questionnaires and asked questions about their pension in the Co-op or from previous workplaces. Some were interested about how they can increase their pension, what age they can claim their pension and when they can work part time etc. We had number of people who wanted to take information away without asking many questions. We also prepared information packs for staff to take home with them and to give to those that weren't able

to visit the stall. After the event we uploaded some photos to our depot engagement page.

Do you feel like it was a success?

Definitely. Engagement with colleagues was very positive and it was nice to be able to offer them some useful advice. They were happy that their questions were answered and some issues can be resolved. Management were also impressed by the event. There was clearly demand for this sort of campaign and it is good for colleagues to be aware of the help and support our learning team can provide.

Have you held any other campaign days?

We recently held a campaign on Mental Health Day. It was organised and delivered in same style as the pensions day. We had some very good discussions and colleagues approached us in the following days asking for the information pack to help them or their family and friends who were struggling. In between campaigns our team regularly promotes resources and information produced by the union about various health issues. We also do our best to recognise various national days and weeks including National Allotment Week - how gardening can help with mental health, diabetes week, stillbirth and neonatal death awareness, Pride, left handed day, and so on. Of course, we're also keen to promote all the courses available through the union and we've even created our own leaflet with information and links to the bitesize and 12 week courses which we display on our union noticeboard.

Our next big, combined campaign is planned for mid-December, Anti-racism – Show Racism the Red Card, and domestic violence awareness. We are planning to hold many more Pension Awareness Days and our next one is booked in for March 2023.

PENSIONS AWARENESS

More and more Usdaw reps are holding a Pensions Awareness Campaign in the workplace. A typical campaign involves:

- Setting up a stall in the staff area.
- Making information available about pensions (such as copies of the handbook, leaflets and factsheets that Usdaw produces).
- Encouraging Union members to sign up for our Pensions Online Home Study Course.
- Giving facts about their own company pension scheme.

Usdaw members often find that personnel managers are reluctant to talk about the company pension scheme. This might be because the personnel manager isn't confident that they know enough about the scheme or they are nervous about being seen to be giving people financial advice. Usdaw's message to reps is just concentrate on giving colleagues basic facts and signpost them to the Usdaw pensions section.

People may think that joining the pension scheme still isn't right for them but if they have the facts then at least they can make an informed choice. A Pensions Awareness Campaign Day is also an ideal opportunity to encourage colleagues who aren't yet members of the union to join.

Set up your own campaign

Contact the pensions team at Usdaw and tell them when and where you are thinking of holding your campaign – but please give them at least two weeks' notice. They will send you the campaign materials.

www.usdaw.org.uk/pensions

A woman with brown hair, wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt and a black apron, stands in a grocery store with her arms crossed. She has a serious expression. In the background, there are shelves of produce, including lemons and oranges. The text 'LETS TALK DISABILITY AWARENESS' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**LETS
TALK
DISABILITY
AWARENESS**

Disability History Month takes place each year beginning on the 16 November and this year the theme is Disability, Health and Wellbeing.

There are 14.6 million disabled people in the UK, but disability discrimination is still widespread. One in five working age people are classed as disabled, and many more people are reporting a long-term health condition or disability than did so eight years ago. The increase in people reporting a disability is largely due to the growing rise in mental health problems. But despite promises from government, support and access to mental health services has not improved.

Reasonable adjustments are vital to supporting disabled workers to get on in work, but many employers are still unaware of the rights of disabled workers.

To mark Disability History Month, this article is focused on raising awareness of disability and the action Usdaw reps are taking to support disabled workers.

NOT ALL DISABILITY IS VISIBLE

In the UK, one in five people have a disability (as defined by the Equality Act 2010), 80 per cent of which can't be seen.

The majority of physical and mental health conditions as well as many learning, behavioural and developmental disabilities are therefore not visible or immediately obvious to others. Speech and language difficulties, reduced sight, chronic fatigue syndrome, colitis, autism, depression, migraine and asthma are just a few examples of hidden disabilities. There are many, many more.

The issue of hidden disability is important because, although we have come a long way in recent years, the idea that 'real' disability can be seen is still widespread. This means that members living and working with hidden impairments sometimes struggle to get their disability taken seriously by

managers and others.

Chronic pain, breathlessness, dizziness, chronic fatigue, hearing difficulties, anxiety and experiencing difficulties communicating or with concentration, memory and mood – all of these symptoms are invisible but that doesn't make them any less real.

Given this, it's more important than ever, that Usdaw gives reps the tools they need to support members with a hidden disability. To do this, Usdaw has launched new *Not all disability is visible* campaign materials with leaflets, a new poster and a couple of giveaways. The campaign is a reminder to members who might be struggling at work because of a disability that isn't visible to talk to Usdaw.

To find out more about the campaign and order campaign materials visit:

[www.usdaw.org.uk/
HiddenDisability](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/HiddenDisability)

ACTION NEEDED TO CLOSE THE DISABILITY PAY GAP

The Disability Pay Gap Day (7 November), is the day when the average disabled worker stops getting paid for the rest of the year,

compared to the average non-disabled worker. This means that disabled workers will work 54 days without pay this year.

This year the pay gap is 17.2 per cent and means disabled workers take home £3,731 a year less than non-disabled workers. The gap is even bigger for disabled women. Non-disabled men are paid on average 35 per cent more than disabled women. That equates to a huge £7,144 a year.

The analysis shows that there is no let up throughout disabled people's careers, in fact the gap gets worse. The pay gap starts at age 20 at 65p an hour and increases steadily with age to a peak of £3.55 an hour for disabled workers aged 40-44.

Trade unions are calling for the Government to bring in mandatory disability pay gap reporting for all employers with more than 50 employees, and are campaigning to address the underlying causes such as disabled workers being more likely to be in part time work, in lower paid jobs and insecure work.

For more information about UK Disability History Month visit www.ukdhm.org

SUCCESSFUL MENTAL HEALTH DAY OF ACTION

A huge thanks to every Usdaw rep and member who supported Usdaw's first ever coordinated Day of Action on Mental Health in October.

To say it was a great success doesn't do it justice. The response was amazing, with reps and members organising activity in hundreds of workplaces across the country. Thousands of Usdaw mental health surveys were also completed, which will enable the union to better understand the issues members are facing at work and help inform our campaigns going forwards.

Thanks to the hard work of reps and members, the day successfully spread the message that mental health is a workplace issue, it reminded members that they can talk to the Union about issues affecting them at work, and it helped get conversations going, all of which helps to break down stigma.

There will be more to come from our mental health campaign, so watch this space.

For more information about Usdaw's mental health work, visit:

[www.usdaw.org.uk/
Campaigns/Mental-Health](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/Campaigns/Mental-Health)



MENOPAUSE & PENSIONS

For many women, working while going through the menopause can be a difficult and stressful time.

Research by Wales TUC found that eight out of 10 women said their menopause symptoms had a significant impact on them at work.

For many Usdaw members work can make already difficult symptoms harder to deal with. Uncomfortable uniforms, lack of fresh air, working in customer facing roles and late night or early morning shifts are just some of the ways in which work can make menopause symptoms worse. Some women feel they have no option but to give up their jobs or take early retirement because of menopausal symptoms.

A report by the 50Plus Choices Employer Taskforce found that almost a million women have left the workplace because of menopausal symptoms. The report also found that a quarter of women consider leaving work due to symptoms experienced from the menopause.

Following the publication of the report in 2021, Andy Briggs, government business champion for older workers, said women who are forced out of the workforce because of menopausal symptoms could be missing out on important pension earnings which will have a huge impact on their retirement income.

Know Your Pension Rights

Going through the menopause can be a lonely, confusing and worrying time and therefore it's important to know your pension rights so that informed decisions can be made. Usdaw has a number of pension guides and fact sheets to help and below is some information that reps might find useful.

Leaving a pension scheme

If an individual leaves their employer or stops paying contributions to their pension scheme, they do not lose their pension benefits. Any pension pot which has built up remains.

Part-Time Working

If an individual was previously enrolled into a workplace pension scheme, as long as they still meet the auto enrolment criteria, then their contributions going forward should be based on the reduced salary that has been agreed with their employer. If their salary does reduce they need to be aware that less will be building up in their pension pot unless they can afford to increase their rate of contribution.

Ill Health Retirement

If they qualify for an ill health award, what they receive will very much depend on the type of pension scheme they are currently contributing to or have contributed to in the past.

Their workplace scheme will potentially only pay them an ill-health pension if their condition is permanent and only if their condition will completely stop them from doing their own job or sometimes taking on any other job



FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Reps can direct members to Usdaw's Pensions Section (a female pension adviser is available if preferred) or if you would like more information, please contact us on 0161 224 2804 or email us: pensions@usdaw.org.uk

in future.

All health pensions can be accessed from any age and this is why the bar is set quite high to qualify. Every scheme will have a formal process to follow if this is something they wish to pursue.

Early Retirement

Individuals have the right to apply for early retirement currently from age 55 onwards. From 2027 the Minimum Pension Age is set to increase to 57 unless they have a 'protected' Minimum Pension Age in their workplace scheme.

If they have a Defined Benefit pension their regular income will normally be reduced for each year that they access their pension before the Scheme's Normal Retirement Date (NRD), which is usually 65.

If they have a Defined Contribution scheme their pension pot is not reduced as such, however as they are accessing their pot early, it will have had less chance of

building up and there is a possibility that their pot might run out of money at some point in the future.

Flexible Retirement

An employer may offer a flexible retirement policy. This can be helpful if they want to consider 'phasing in' their retirement by receiving their pension and reducing the hours they work. It is up to their employer however, whether they adopt a flexible retirement policy and what the terms and conditions they attach to it.

State Pensions

State pensions are paid entirely separately to any workplace or personal pensions they may have. Unlike workplace pensions they cannot access their state pension early. Everyone's State Pension Age depends on when they were born. To check when they will receive their State Pension and what they might get, they can apply for a forecast by visiting www.gov.uk

Usdaw's Campaigns

Usdaw has been campaigning for better support and more transparency about the menopause at work for a number of years.

Usdaw believes it is time we stopped dismissing the menopause as a personal health issue and start recognising it for what it is – a legitimate occupational health and safety issue and a workplace concern that involves physical and emotional changes that many women find difficult and exhausting.

The union is actively working with employers to implement menopause guidance, policies and support.

If the workplace is making your menopause symptoms worse or your symptoms are making it difficult for you to function at work, then please talk to your Usdaw rep or local office for support. Usually, the support women need at work to manage their symptoms isn't high cost or disruptive and are relatively easy for managers to make.

www.usdaw.org.uk

WORKERS VOICES ACROSS THE UK

Autumn is a busy season in Usdaw's calendar with a number of national conferences taking place.

In the last few months Usdaw delegates have attended STUC Women's conference, ICTU Biennial conference, ICTU Women's conference and South Wales and Western regional conference.

Conferences are a great way of bringing together people from different workplaces to meet other likeminded people, to network and share best practice. Delegates also get the chance to expand their knowledge, engage in debate and shape policy.

At the STUC Women's conference in Fife, Usdaw put forward two motions calling for action to tackle sexual harassment and to address the unequal impact of the cost of living crisis on women workers.

Delegates at the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Biennial Women's conference, held in County Down, called for action to tackle the extensive issues women suffer through sexual harassment.

At the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Biennial conference, held in Enniskillen, Usdaw called for retail workers to be offered specific legal protections from violence, threats and abuse. Retail workers in Northern Ireland clearly felt they'd been left behind while protections had been introduced in England, Scotland and Wales.

Usdaw's annual regional conferences also took place. The theme of this year's South Wales and Western Regional conference was the cost of living and was attended by Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis and the Welsh TUC general secretary Shavanah Taj.



STUC Womens' conference



South Wales and Western regional conference



ICTU conference



ICTU Womens' conference



HARD DRIVE

HEALTH AND SAFETY HITS THE ROAD

Driving for work can be one of the most dangerous activities a worker can do. Hazards include congestion, bad weather, time pressures, fatigue and distraction. Employers have a duty to manage health and safety risks for workers who drive a vehicle on the road as part of their work. Remember, that health and safety law applies to work activities on the road in the same way as it does on a fixed site. Following the law and engaging in good practice can minimise the risk of accidents and even prevent fatalities.

The following are some of the most significant driver health and safety hazards.

Unloading/loading vehicles

Most of the hazards with loading

or unloading arise from the job of manually handling boxes, roll pallets, etc. off the trailer and into a building.

There are also risks of falling from trailers, loads or loading bays and crushing injuries from equipment such as tail lifts. In retail distribution, manoeuvring roll pallets from trailers into the backs of stores can cause particular problems. The pallets may be damaged, wheels may not run true or may jam suddenly, pallets may be too heavy or badly packed so that loads are unstable, the ground over which the load must be wheeled may not be even and flat, and so on.

Reversing vehicles

Many of the deaths and serious injuries in the service sector are caused when reversing vehicles run

over or crush pedestrians. Some drivers have also been injured or killed while leaning out of the cab to look behind while reversing. Drivers should be able to use properly adjusted wing mirrors to avoid any necessity to lean out. Even with visual and audible reversing warnings and properly adjusted mirrors, there may still be blind spots behind the vehicle. In many cases drivers will therefore need the assistance of others to check that the area is clear while reversing. Anyone helping the driver to reverse should not stand in a position where they may be trapped or crushed themselves.

Hitching and unhitching trailers

When a semi-trailer is unhitched from the tractor unit, the front end



CONTACT

Health & safety officer

Tony Whelan
0161 249 2594

General enquiries

healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk

of the trailer is normally supported by a pair of 'landing legs'. Accidents have happened when one of these legs has failed while the trailer is being loaded or unloaded and when drivers are coupling or uncoupling tractor units. Employers should have safe systems of work to make sure that landing legs are used properly, trailer brakes are applied, precautions are taken to stop the tractor and trailer from moving unexpectedly while air and electrical lines are connected, etc.

Stress/fatigue

Stress and tiredness are killers. Timed deliveries, heavy traffic conditions and tight delivery schedules all cause stress – especially for light van drivers constantly in the city traffic situation.

Scientific research shows:

- Many drivers work 12 to 14-hour shifts (this is far too long).
- Driving between the hours of midnight and 6am is particularly dangerous.
- Many drivers show the physical symptoms of stress – including hypertension and ulcers.

Drivers' cabs

This is the driver's 'workroom' but most drivers have no say about cab design. Even the newest and best designed cabs deteriorate quickly so that the following old problems soon re-appear such as noise, vibration, heat and broken equipment.

Cabs with these faults (and dirty cabs) can make the best of drivers irritable – and this can affect their driving. Don't put up with these conditions, report problems and make sure the employer puts them right.

Foul weather

Please see the HSE driving at work guidance which has useful pointers for drivers' health and safety reps: www.hse.gov.uk/roadsafety, and refer to the Government advice to decide if it is safe to travel at: www.gov.uk search **driving in adverse weather conditions**

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please download and read the Usdaw Drivers' Handbook:

www.usdaw.org.uk/drivershandbook

DRIVERS' DISTRESS FUND

Ushaw operates a Road Transport Distress Fund for members who receive work-related penalties for motoring offences.

For more information visit: www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Road-Transport

POLITICAL HIJACKING OF HSE?

There is no TUC representative on the HSE board for the first time in the regulators near 50-year history. The secretary of state for work and pensions has recently appointed two new members to the board, neither of which was nominated by the TUC, to replace the vacancy that had arisen from a TUC member leaving.

The Hazards campaign said the move means the HSE 'no longer operates as a tripartite organisation or at best only pretends to operate as one.' It said it 'urges the secretary of state for work and pensions, to reverse this dangerous and politically motivated path and return the HSE to its independent tripartite origins.' www.hazardscampaign.org.uk search **political hijacking**

DISABLED WORKERS GUIDE

HSE have issued a health and safety guide for disabled workers that explains how employers and disabled workers can work together to make everyone safer.

The guide outlines the process that employers should follow when producing a risk assessment for a disabled worker. It also gives some true-life examples of changes that have been made to ensure that disabled workers can work safely.

This guide will be helpful for a disabled worker and when representing a disabled worker to assist them to obtain changes to their work so they can do their work safely. www.hse.gov.uk/disability/assets/docs/easyread.pdf

REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY AND RACISM

SUPPORTING A NEW GENERATION OF REPS



The TUC has published a report on Health and Safety and Racism which highlights the under-representation of Black workers as health and safety reps.

The authors point out that other research clearly shows that the Covid-19 pandemic disproportionately affected Black workers and their communities and

revealed the inequalities in exposure to risk often driven by direct or indirect racism or discrimination.

Working with focus groups of Black workers and reps, including health and safety reps, the researchers found that one in five disagreed or strongly disagreed that Black workers were equally encouraged to take on union roles

(22 per cent) and specifically union health and safety roles (21 per cent).

The report records how Black workers feel that their health and safety can best be represented, potential barriers to representation and what unions can do to support a new generation of health and safety reps. [www.tuc.org.uk search health safety racism](http://www.tuc.org.uk/search/health-safety-racism)

IMPROVING SECTORS STANDARDS

FOOD PRODUCTION SAFETY

The Food and Drink Manufacture Health and Safety Forum, which is a trilateral forum, between key food/drink trade associations, trade unions and chaired by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), have agreed on an updated common strategy, which provides a framework to drive up the industrial sector's health and safety standards.

The strategy's main objectives are:

- A year-on-year reduction in the overall industry rate of ill health and injury by 10 per cent.
- Effective management of musculoskeletal disorder risks by member companies.

- Effective management of slip and trip risks by member companies.
 - Member companies deploying an effective occupational health management system.
 - Member companies to provide effective leadership and worker engagement on health and safety.
- Industrial reps can use the Common Strategy objectives, to focus on significant health and safety risks to deliver on improving health and safety standards. For more information you can read the Common Strategy on the HSE website at: www.hse.gov.uk/food/common-strategy.pdf

INDUSTRIAL REPS' GUIDE

Recipe for Safety is a great guide for industrial reps highlighting health and safety issues and advice on how to tackle them.

It focuses on machinery, workplace transport, work at height, entry into silos and confined spaces, slips and trips, struck by objects and knives, manual handling, upper limb disorders, occupational dermatitis, occupational asthma, noise-induced hearing loss and work-related stress.

Reps can focus on these twelve key issues, when they review their workplace arrangements. www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg252.pdf



What are the ongoing issues?

Staff are expected to move 1.2 tonne pallets with a hand truck but employee guidance says the maximum weight should be 750 kilos. Pallets are also 1.9m high and should only be 1.2m high. So they're too heavy and too high. We've raised this with management and asked they cut the pallets in half. Speeding traffic is also an issue. There's a 15mph speed limit on site because we've got forklift trucks operating in the area but we have drivers who speed through in cars and vans doing upwards of 40mph. It's dangerous. Air quality is another one. There are some really dusty areas in the warehouse that need to be better ventilated.

Does the role take up much time?

It does take up a lot of time, but as a driver it's difficult to get release time to carry out union duties. We do have regular JCC meetings and site health and safety meetings and my area organiser is working on getting structured facility time for reps. Ideally, we'd also like a union room. As it stands, I'm usually responding to emails when I'm sat watching the TV in the evening at home.

Where do you get information?

I've got the brown book, it lists all the health and safety legislation that requires employers to consult with employees or safety representatives, so I tend to cross reference that against the company's own documentation. Some legislation can seem a bit dated but it's still very relevant. I also speak to the health and safety team at Usdaw head office and my area organiser.

Do you enjoy it?

I do. It's second nature to me. I'm just one of those people, if I see an injustice I have to do something. I've just turned 65 so I'm hoping to retire in a year and I'd like to continue to put that knowledge to some use. Who knows, I may well turn into a health and safety consultant.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REP

Graham Armstrong

HGV driver Graham has been involved in the trade union movement since he started working at Kawneer, an aluminum factory, at 18 and became a rep for the Association of Metal Mechanics. Now a HGV driver for a logistics company, he became an Usdaw health and safety rep last year.

How long have you been driving?

I've been a full time HGV driver for three years, before that I worked in telecoms for 30 years, 15 years as an engineer and 15 years in the office. I was desperate for a change of career so I got my HGV licence about three years ago. I really enjoy being out on the road.

Why be a health and safety rep?

I've been a rep in some capacity since I was 18. So when I changed careers and moved unions from CWU to Usdaw I got straight back into it and became a health and safety rep. I find the role really interesting and enjoy the legislation

side of things. At the site there's about 80 drivers, 100 warehouse staff and about 40 managerial and Admin staff. About two thirds of staff are members. There's only two reps at the minute but we're actively looking for more reps and safety reps. It's quite difficult to get people to be active unless they're particularly interested.

What's involved in the role?

The main thing is listening to people about the health and safety issues affecting their roles and figuring out how we can make things better. Sometimes it's a quick answer or solution and other times it's a long process and lots of research. The best process is for the member to contact the manager directly and then if it's not sorted I get involved, but sometimes people find it difficult to approach and challenge management themselves. But ideally you want the member to manage their grievance and then you can support them as best they need.

MemberOffers

CARS & TRANSPORT

Car Maintenance
Car Parking: Q-Park
Electric Vehicle Charging
Fiat
Griffin Motoring
Startrescue
Vauxhall Cars

HEALTH & BEAUTY

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

SHOPPING

Apple
Charles Tyrwhitt
Dell
Discount Card
Domestic Appliances
Gift Card Savings
Halfords
Magazine Subscriptions
Usdaw Prepaid Cashback Card
UsdawRewards Cashback
Virgin Wines

INSURANCE

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

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
Theme Parks & Attractions
Virgin Experience Days



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

www.usdaw.org.uk/legal

MONEY & FINANCE

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Financial Advice
Mortgage Advice
Pensions Advice
Pensions Annuity Service
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Airport Parking, Lounges & Hotels
Away Resorts
Currensea: Travel Card
Eurocamp
James Villa Holidays
Lost Luggage Protection
Parkdean Resorts
Pontins
Wightlink Ferries

MISCELLANEOUS

Child-safe SIM cards
Gas and Electric
Mobile Phones
TOTUM Pro Card
International Student ID

www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

*Terms and Conditions for individual offers on the website.

Find out more www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

SAVE FOR THE FUTURE



Open a savings plan and get a shopping voucher worth up to £55.

Our endorsed savings partner, Shepherds Friendly, is offering a Love2shop voucher worth up to £55* when you open a savings plan with them, if you are a member of Usdaw. The friendly society offer savings plans for the whole family, ranging from Stocks and Shares ISAs for yourself to Junior ISAs for your child, and more.

*To find out more about Shepherds Friendly's range of savings plans call **0800 526 249** or visit: **www.shepherdsfriendly.co.uk/usdaw**

Please remember, when investing your capital is at risk.

GIFT CARD SAVINGS

Save on your favourite retailers through Gift Card Savings

Usdaw members can buy a range of Gift Cards and eGifts at discounted rates. It's a great way for you to save hundreds of pounds annually. From everyday essentials like your weekly supermarket shop to life's luxuries such as dining out.

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



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Looking for an inspirational gift idea or a treat for yourself?

Then you've come to the right place! Usdaw have teamed up with Virgin Experience Days to offer you a 20% discount on over 2,500 experiences – including special offers! Delivered instantly via e-voucher, or in stylish gift packing, you'll be sure to make someone's day truly special!

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PREPAID CARD

Win £500 towards the cost of Christmas.

With the festive season approaching fast, get the most out of the money you spend by earning up to 8% cashback with the Usdaw Prepaid Card. *Apply between 1st November and 31st December 2022 and we'll enter you in our prize draw:

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*Terms and conditions apply to all benefits. See website for details. Offers subject to change without notice and correct at time of print. Virgin Experience Days - discount code cannot be used against their Excluded Range. Usdaw Discounts & Offers is managed and run on behalf of Usdaw by Parliament Hill Ltd. Further benefits are organised directly by Usdaw Membership Services. See website for details. Neither Usdaw nor Parliament Hill are part of the same group as the providers.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

A long-serving national officer and area organiser retire while Usdaw welcomes a new health and safety officer and a new area organiser for the Eastern region



John Gorle



Rose Houston



Tony Whelan



Lottie Jeffries

JOHN GORLE

National officer John Gorle retires after 34 years of committed service.

John began his journey with Usdaw when he was elected as a Dolland and Aitchison rep at the age of 17. His no-nonsense attitude got him appointed as an area organiser for the Bristol office in 1988 and then as a national officer in 2004.

"I didn't realise it at the time but trade unionism was in my blood from the beginning. My grandfather got sacked from more places than you can name for starting up trade unions, and my mother was a convenor," said John

"In 2004, I got appointed as a national officer and cut my teeth in the non-food retail sector but the 2019 recession meant it was a baptism of fire because businesses like Woolworths, Littlewoods and TJ Hughes went into administration.

"When I took over the Co-op in 2011, it was a bit disjointed, a bit idiosyncratic. Our biggest achievement was modernising the relationship by putting structures in place such as the JCC, having an employee relations agreement and

cementing the rep positions. Getting the Co-op to embrace our Freedom From Fear campaign has also been a big achievement.

"I am extremely proud of having worked for Usdaw. I was a young man from a rough council estate in Birmingham who hated school. The trade union movement gave me a purpose.

"I haven't fallen out of love with the job but 63 feels like the right time to go.

"It's been a privilege to represent Usdaw members regionally and nationally. I will miss working with them. Being a rep is a vocation. They take on some very challenging situations with no real reward.

"The first thing I will do when I retire is catch some winter sun, sit on a lounge and plan the next big adventure."

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "John has been a friend and a colleague over many years. He's a popular member of staff who will be missed by reps and colleagues alike.

"I want to thank him for his long service and wish him a long and happy retirement."

ROSE HOUSTON

Area organiser Rose Houston is retiring in December after 11 years working for the union from the Cardiff office.

Prior to joining the staff at Usdaw, Rose was an active rep at Midcounties Co-op for almost 20 years. She regularly coordinated Usdaw campaigns, recruited and represented members and completed many union training courses including both Academies.

"During my time as an area organiser I've really enjoyed identifying potential reps, taking them through their training and development and on to be great ambassadors for Usdaw," said Rose, 65. "I have encouraged many talented reps to do stand down and Academy. It's very rewarding to watch a rep develop into a confident, empowered person, who members respect and approach.

"I'm really going to miss everyone I work with. It will be strange not having that contact with people every day. I would like to thank all my colleagues for the support and friendship over the last 11 years. I have enjoyed working for usdaw."

TONY WHELAN

Tony Whelan is the new health and safety officer based at Usdaw's head office in Salford Quays.

Tony, 51, started working for Usdaw in 2017 when he was appointed as the union's health and safety advisor. Before joining Usdaw, he worked at Border Force for 17 years and was the PCS shop steward and health and safety rep.

"As Usdaw's health and safety advisor and a former rep, I understand the challenges of being a rep," said Tony. "That's why I want to make sure, I give the reps as much support as possible and I will be looking at updating our guidance, providing toolkits, running webinars and writing materials that reps can use to run effective health and safety awareness days.

"The best part of my job has always been helping reps so, I'm looking forward to engaging with the reps on the issues that matter to them."

LOTTIE JEFFRIES

Lottie Jeffries started her role as new area organiser in the Eastern region in September, joining the team at the Waltham Cross office.

The 32-year-old is no stranger to the trade union movement having previously worked at UNISON as an organiser.

"My first job, at 16, was in retail and I've worked in the trade union movement for 13 years. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else," said Lottie.

"I've always been an advocate for equality, fairness, dignity and respect for all in the workplace regardless of sector, the same ethos applies. I feel very lucky to have a job that aligns with my core beliefs and values."

"It's been quite the journey so far and has been wonderful to meet so many great passionate people. I really look forward to getting to know, support and work with my reps and members."

OBITUARIES

ALAN COLLINGTON

Former Midlands area organiser Alan Collington died in July. He was 80.

Alan retired in 1997 after 20 years' service for Usdaw at the former Nottingham office.

In his time at Usdaw Alan was heavily involved in recruitment at Boots retail and manufacturing. He also played a big part in Usdaw's successful campaign to save the doorstep 'pinta' in the 1980s.

Prior to working at Usdaw, Alan was an electrician and a milkman. He was also an active Labour Party member since 1966 and held positions within his local constituency.

General secretary Paddy Lillis paid this tribute: "Alan was a well-respected and popular organiser during his time at Usdaw and his commitment to the trade union and Labour movement extended well beyond his working hours. Our condolences go to his family at this sad time."

MARGARET THOMASON

Former supervisor Margaret Thomason, one of Usdaw's longest serving employees, died in August aged 90.

Margaret started working for Usdaw in 1955 at the age of 23 in the accounts department. In 1967 she moved to the filing department as assistant

supervisor and then 10 years later she was promoted to supervisor in the insurance department. Margaret retired in 1997 after more than 40 years at Usdaw. General secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Margaret was a popular member of staff and a loyal servant to the union. She will be remembered fondly by colleagues and friends alike. Our condolences go out to her family."

PAULINE RUSS

Retired area organiser Pauline Russ, formerly based at Usdaw's old Swansea office, died in October aged 77.

Pauline joined the union's staff in 1985 and worked at Usdaw for 15 years. Prior to this Pauline came from a background steeped in the Labour movement. She soon became active in the trade union movement when she started working at Tesco and became a rep, assistant branch secretary and delegate to Tesco's divisional shop stewards' committee. During her time at Tesco she also completed a diploma in Trade Union and Social Studies. General secretary Paddy Lillis paid this tribute: "Pauline was a popular member of the union's staff who was well known for her dedication and hard work with the members and reps in her division and the wider union. Our thoughts are with her family and friends."



Alan Collington



Margaret Thomason



Pauline Russ

Email your thoughts and pictures to us at:
network@usdaw.org.uk

OVER TO YOU





P46
Top: Mental Health Campaign Day at Tesco Dentalcom Croydon
Middle Left: Legal Plus Campaign Day at Tesco Extra Gatwick
Middle right: Mental Health Campaign Day at Sainsbury's Nantwich
Bottom left: Cost of Living Campaign at Redruth, Cornwall

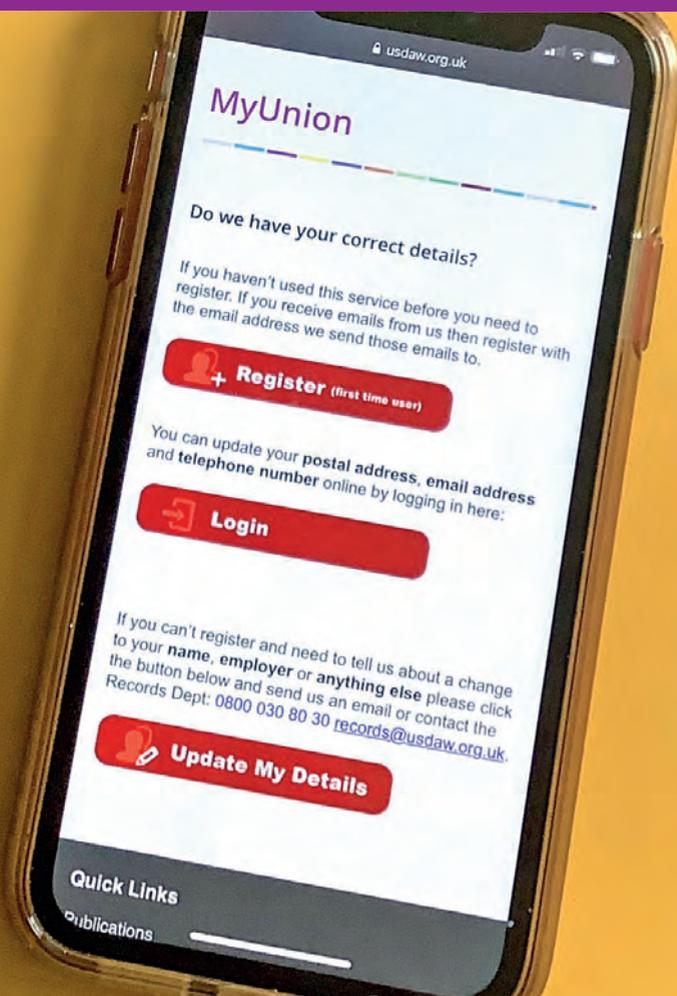
P47
Top: Boots Logistics, Nottinghamshire
Middle L-R: **Manjit Birdi**, from Bernard Matthews, Derby with her Organising awards; West Midlands Labour Party present **Ann Lloyd** with a Merit award; and **Cheryl Wilson** who retired from Tesco Telford Madeley store in October with her Outstanding Commitment award.
Bottom: Tesco Solihull

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