

# NETWORK

THE BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR USDAW ACTIVISTS | SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022

**FREEDOM  
FROM FEAR**

**RESPECT WEEK 2022**

EVERYONE DESERVES TO BE SAFE AT WORK

RETAIL | DELIVERY | WAREHOUSE | MANUFACTURING |  **USDAW**



# RESPECT WEEK IS COMING

14-20 November

RAISING AWARENESS THAT  
ABUSE IS NOT PART OF THE JOB





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# WEALTHY TO BENEFIT FROM TORY BUDGET

**S**weeping tax cuts for business and the already wealthy have been announced by the Government, as the UK faces soaring inflation and its worst cost of living crisis in decades.

The Government believes tax cuts, cutting stamp duty, scrapping a planned rise to corporation tax, reversing national insurance increases, and ending a cap to bankers' bonuses will kickstart the economy. But critics say that the largest tax cuts in 50 years will have to be funded by borrowing and could cost the taxpayer £200bn over the next two years.

There is nothing new about this mini budget, it's the same old Tory policies based on trickle-down economics, which makes those who are already wealthy even wealthier, in the hope that the rest get some of the crumbs.

Even the US president Joe Biden said the policy never works. The markets also showed little confidence in the Government's plan with the pound falling to a record low against the dollar.

Once again, working people have been overlooked. Working people who show up every day and do the jobs that keep the country going, yet wages are failing to keep up with inflation and every day it becomes harder to pay for the basics like food and energy bills.

Let's be clear. It was the



Conservative government that caused the cost of living crisis, after all, they've been in power for 12 years. This budget was an opportunity to show working people what they could do for them. Instead, it was tax breaks for their wealthy mates.

We need a government that will transfer wealth from the richest to the poorest in society, we need a government that will invest in our schools, our NHS and our communities, and we need a government that works with trade unions to deliver a better life for our members.

*Usdaw General Secretary*

*Paddy McGuinness*

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



## HELP AND ADVICE IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH MONEY OR DEBT

The current cost of living crisis has left millions of people struggling to make ends meet as well as pushing many into crippling debt. Money worries can leave people feeling overwhelmed and not knowing

where to turn for help. If you are struggling with your finances, there are a number of organisations that provide specialist advice and support on what benefits you can claim, grants and debt advice.

The logo for Turn2us, featuring the word 'turn' in orange and '2US' in black.

### CHECK WHAT YOU ARE ENTITLED TO

Turn2us is a national poverty charity that offers practical information and support to people facing financial insecurity.

The Turn2us website includes a benefits calculator to find out what welfare benefits and tax credits people could be entitled to; a grants search tool which people can use to learn if they might be eligible for additional financial support from over 1,500 charitable funds, and a range of information and resources to help people who are struggling to get by.

[www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)

### HELPING YOU DEAL WITH YOUR DEBT

StepChange can help get your finances back on track.

StepChange offer free, flexible debt advice that is based on a comprehensive assessment of your situation. We'll then provide practical help and support for however long it's needed.

[www.stepchange.org](http://www.stepchange.org)

The logo for StepChange Debt Charity, with 'Step' in purple and 'Change' in orange, and 'Debt Charity' in purple below.

### OFFERING CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE

We can all face problems that seem complicated or intimidating. We believe no one should have to face these problems without good quality, independent advice.

That's why we're here: to give people the knowledge and the confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are, and whatever their problem.

- 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
- Advice on benefits, money, housing, family, health and more.

Contact via phone/email/live chat at:

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

The logo for Citizens Advice, featuring the words 'citizens advice' in white inside a blue speech bubble.

### SUPPORTING THE CHILDREN OF UK FASHION AND TEXTILE FAMILIES

The Fashion & Textile Children's Trust offers grants to help parents and carers working in the UK fashion and textile industry.

The FTCT can fund items for children in the family, including school uniform, general clothing, bedroom furniture and appliances.

To apply for an FTCT grant, one parent/carer must work OR have recently worked for a UK fashion or textile company. This includes employees of clothes shops, supermarkets with clothing lines, textile companies, logistics for clothing brands, laundries and more.

Find out more at: [ftct.org.uk](http://ftct.org.uk)

The logo for Fashion & Textile Children's Trust, with 'fashion & textile' in blue and 'children's trust' in a darker blue, with small red icons above the letters.

# INSIDE THIS ISSUE



## FREEDOM FROM FEAR

**12** | On the anniversary of the Protection of Shopworkers Bill, we look at what's next.

## ENERGY CRISIS

**16** | As the new price cap looms *Network* looks at some energy saving myths and tips.

## SUMMER SCHOOL1

**18** | Four students talk about their experience of attending Summer School1.

## NEW DEAL

**20** | A closer look at Labour's New Deal for Workers and funding political change.

## PENSIONS

**22** | A round up of pension news including not saving enough and the problem of small pension pots.

## EQUALITIES

**24** | The importance of Black History Month, getting involved in Wear Red Day and celebrating Pride.

## LGBT HEALTH DISCRIMINATION

**32** | Stereotypes of gay men left a member's partner with an undiagnosed, life-threatening condition.

## CERVICAL SCREENING

**34** | Demystifying what happens at a screening to encourage women to attend this life saving check.

## GET ONLINE WEEK

**36** | The importance of digital skills and how to get online with Usdaw.

## REGULARS

**03** FOREWORD

**06** NEWS

**10** CAMPAIGNS UPDATE

**26** ACTIVIST-IN-DEPTH

**28** RECRUITMENT & ORGANISING

**38** HEALTH & SAFETY

**42** MEMBER OFFERS

**46** OVER TO YOU



# IN THE NEWS

Don't forget to email the editor your view [network@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:network@usdaw.org.uk)

## MINI BUDGET: MAX WINS FOR RICH

**U**sdaw brands mini-budget a wasted opportunity to promote growth and productivity by ending low-paid insecure employment by delivering a new deal for workers.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "The chancellor talks about a 'high wage economy' without committing to a much needed and long overdue new deal for workers. At the heart of the cost of living crisis and the Conservative's 12 year failure to deliver economic growth is weak employment rights and one-sided flexibility.

"Workers need the Government to act by implementing their promised employment bill, which could help give workers the protections they deserve and promote the productivity gains that are a crucial ingredient of growth.

"The chancellor is saddling taxpayers with huge debt to give unfunded tax cuts to the rich and big businesses, rather than helping people who, thanks to Conservatives' previous reckless policies cannot afford to put food on



the table and many struggling to pay their bills.

"This trickle down economics has never worked in the past and abandoning the principle of fair redistribution of wealth will be deeply damaging to our members and all workers. Our members needed to hear the Government commit to implementing their promised employment bill, which could help give workers the protections they deserve and need. Regrettably the chancellor showed today that he is out-of-touch with the very real concerns of working people struggling in a cost of living emergency."

### USDRAW'S NEW DEAL FOR WORKERS CALLS FOR:

- 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'.

 @UsdawUnion

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## LIVING WAGE FOUNDATION

# USDAW WELCOMES UPDATING IN LIVING WAGE

The Living Wage Foundation has brought forward its annual uprating from November to September due to the cost of living crisis. It announced a much-needed increase to the Living Wage from £9.90 to £10.90 an hour, the sharpest rise in its 11-year history. The London rate, which reflects the higher cost of living in the capital, will rise from £11.05 to £11.95.

The rise will affect about 400,000 workers however many more could be indirectly affected, since some supermarkets use the living wage as a benchmark.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "The scale of the cost of living emergency for low-paid workers is made absolutely clear when the Living Wage Foundation feels compelled to bring forward their annual uprating and deliver such a significant increase.

"The new Living Wage rates are welcome, which are based on an individual's cost of living and clearly show that the Government's National Living Wage of £9.50 is nothing of the sort.

"Usdaw is campaigning for urgent Government action on the cost of



living emergency and we hope the Government will follow this lead by bringing forward the National Minimum Wage rate increases to October 2022, instead of April 2023. Alongside this, we are seeking talks with all the employers we deal with to secure urgent assistance to tackle the hardship that many of our members are facing."

"Our New Deal for Workers campaign calls for a minimum wage rate of at least £12 per hour immediately, as a step towards £15, for all workers.

"However, improving hourly pay alone is not enough. We need to

look at security of employment, availability of hours and guaranteed contracts, to ensure workers have a weekly income that they can live on.

"At the heart of the cost of living emergency is a crisis of employment rights that leaves workers particularly vulnerable to such economic headwinds.

"That is why Usdaw is campaigning for a New Deal for Workers, to help ensure low-paid workers can get through the cost of living emergency and to give workers the protections they need and deserve for the longer-term."

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

## MEMBERSHIP FOR WEEK ENDED 17 SEPTEMBER 2022

South Wales & Western	42,455
Eastern	51,373
Midlands	47,875
North Eastern	49,704
Scottish	36,753
Southern	50,734
North West	76,987
<b>Total</b>	<b>355,881</b>

## USDAW GENERAL SECRETARY ELECTION

The election for Usdaw's general secretary will shortly be underway.

Nomination forms will be sent out to branches on Monday 3 October and have to be returned by 5pm on Monday 14 November 2022.

Postal ballot papers and election addresses will be sent to all members from Monday 16 January and these have to be returned by Friday 10 February 2023.

Elections will be conducted by Civica Election Services acting

as independent scrutineer and returning officer.

### UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

Any member who has changed address recently should notify the union's records section at head office as soon as possible to ensure they receive their ballot papers.

Email: [records@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:records@usdaw.org.uk)

Phone: 0161 413 0913

Online:

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

**BRANCH OFFICERS COURSE**

**TOP LEVEL TRAINING FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS**



The latest group of newly elected branch officers were invited to Usdaw head office in Salford Quays in August for a five day, tailor-made residential course where students look in detail at every aspect of Usdaw.

The course an essential part of the training on offer for all Usdaw branch officials to provide the skills they need to support members

when they carry out their roles back in their regions.

Understanding how to run a union branch and how it fits into the local, regional and national structures within Usdaw is the focus of the branch officers' course which is held four times a year.

During the course of the week the branch officers were joined by speakers from key head office

departments so they could learn more about the function of the union. The general secretary Paddy Lillis and deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen also joined the group for question and answer sessions.

If you would like to find out more about education and training within visit [www.usdaw.org.uk/education](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/education) or contact your local Usdaw office.

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

Sponsored by Usdaw Health and Dental Plan. [www.usdaw.org.uk/healthplan](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/healthplan) Closing Date 15 November 2022. Terms apply.

## TUC COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS

## ARENA WINS BEST JOURNAL

Usdaw is delighted to announce that it's publication autumn 2021 *Arena* won the best union journal at this year's TUC Communication Awards.

The judges said they were impressed by the "shocking, hard-hitting cover highlighting violence against shopworkers. Inside there is a wide range of issues covered with a human voice, from struggling to pay the bills to mental and emotional wellbeing. Members' stories and the letters page help connect the readership. A worthy winner."

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said, "*Arena* is posted to all Usdaw members four times a year.

It's a valuable resource that informs them of what the union is doing and what services and offers are available to them.

"The magazine covers topical issues and promotes a number of regular features such as health and safety, legal plus services as well as showcasing the incredible work Usdaw members do in their communities.

"I want to congratulate the magazine team at Usdaw and say a big thank you to our fantastic members who trust us with their stories. Without them we wouldn't have a magazine."



## HELP WITH THE RISING COST OF LIVING FROM YOUR CREDIT UNION

With household budgets stretched like never before, the team at the Co-op Credit Union are on a mission to help.

Here are their three top tips which could make a real difference to your finances:

**Check your benefits**

Are you missing out on benefits you could be entitled to claim? Over £16 billion goes unclaimed in the UK each year. Surprisingly, it's most often working people who are missing out.

The credit union's Benefits Calculator is a quick and easy way to check. By entering a few details about your situation, you'll get a free and impartial assessment of all the benefits you are entitled to and how to claim them – it could be well worth a quick look.

Visit: [bit.ly/CCUBenCalc](https://bit.ly/CCUBenCalc)

**Take control of your budget**

Take the guesswork out of budgeting with the credit union's

free OpenMoney app. You can view all of your bank accounts in one place, giving you real time snapshots of where you are up to with your money and tips on how to budget- based on what you're really spending each month.

Visit: [bit.ly/omappcc](https://bit.ly/omappcc)

**Reduce your cost of borrowing & debt repayment**

Beware of overdrafts or 'buy now, pay later' deals - you could end up paying sky-high interest rates. The credit union offers a safer

way to borrow. Interest rates are competitive thanks to being a not-for-profit organisation, there to help, not catch you out.

Plus, if you've got debts to clear, a credit union consolidation loan could help by clearing higher-rate loans or outstanding credit card balances, leaving you with one affordable monthly payment. This could not only reduce your monthly repayments, but also help to clear debts quicker.

Visit: [bit.ly/infoccu](https://bit.ly/infoccu)

Membership of The Co-op Credit Union is free for all Usdaw members and offers a convenient and affordable way to save and borrow, as well as a range of other member benefits and money saving advice & budgeting support.

Find out more and join today at:

[co-operativecreditunion.coop/usdaw](https://co-operativecreditunion.coop/usdaw)

The  
**COOP**  
Credit Union

# CAMPAIGNS

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

## DO THEY KNOW IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME AT ALL?

**T**he run-up to Christmas is busy and stressful for everyone working in retail, and in connected jobs like warehouse and distribution too.

Retail workers have been putting in long, tough shifts to help customers get ready for Christmas, and they barely have the time and energy to make their own preparations.

When Christmas comes, far too often they don't get a decent break, with a late finish on Christmas Eve and then back to work early on Boxing Day morning. This means they spend too little time at Christmas with their loved ones.

The union has been concerned for some time that retail workers are not receiving a sufficient break over the Christmas and New Year period. Usdaw member surveys on Christmas and New Year working received more than 18,000 combined responses, which is an indication of how strongly members feel about this issue. Three-quarters of members told us that they feel they spend too little time at Christmas with their loved ones and that working affects their ability to enjoy Christmas.

As Christmas and New Year fall over weekends this year, Usdaw will be seeking to ensure the longest possible break for retail workers over the Christmas and New Year period and will seek to negotiate the best deal available on paid time off

for shopworkers.

The union will be urging all retailers:

- To close early on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.
- To remain closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.
- To remain closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day and 2nd January in Scotland only.
- And if retailers trade on public/bank holidays, the union will be calling for trading hours to be limited to a maximum of six hours and for any hours worked on these public/bank holidays to receive premium pay.

### What happens when Christmas and New Year fall on weekends?

This year Christmas Day will fall on Sunday 25, Boxing Day on Monday 26 and New Year's Day on Sunday 1 January. This means that the bank holiday for Christmas Day will move from the Sunday to Tuesday 27 of December. And the bank holiday for New Year's Day will move from the Sunday to Monday 2 January.

In Scotland there is an additional bank holiday for New Year which falls on Tuesday 3 January.

In line with ADM policy, the union is proposing Monday 26 December, Tuesday 27 December 2022 and Monday 2 January, (and Tuesday 3 January in Scotland) 2023 as the customary holidays in the retail sector.

### Transport Difficulties

Usdaw believes that transport difficulties, over the Christmas and New Year holiday period, must be taken into account when retailers consider the hours employees are expected to start and finish work. Usdaw urges retailers to support staff who face problems getting to and from work.

### Impact on Warehousing, Distribution and Internet Delivery

Extended retail opening hours over Christmas and New Year has a serious knock-on impact on other sectors, such as distribution and on those working in warehouses and internet delivery operations. The union believes that workers in these roles should have an entitlement to time off on bank holidays, such as Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Working on these bank holidays should be voluntary and attract premium pay.

### Boxing Day

Ninety-seven per cent of members surveyed agree that stores should close on Boxing Day. For the past couple of years, the union has run a public campaign calling for a longer break at Christmas, and this campaign will continue this year. Last year, the campaign experienced some clear successes, with a number of retailers agreeing to close on Boxing Day. The union has once again been engaging early with

# 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](http://www.lrdpublications.org.uk)**

Username: **usdaw**

Password: **Urdaw1891**

employers to discuss Boxing Day closure, to try to build on what was agreed last year.

## **Lobbying the Scottish Government**

The union has also been lobbying the Scottish Government to enact existing legislation to require large retail stores to close on New Year's Day. Last year, the Scottish Government held a public consultation on this. Usdaw responded formally and also encouraged all Scottish members to respond to the consultation, with large numbers doing so. The responses received from the public and shopworkers were unambiguous - they wanted stores to close. Unfortunately, the Scottish Government chose to overlook the clear evidence and side with the small number of employers who came out against closure. The union continues to lobby the Scottish Government to take action and reverse their decision.

## **FAQS**

### **Christmas Day and New Year's Day fall on the weekend this year, what days are the bank holidays?**

This will depend on the arrangements at your employer. Some employers will move the bank holiday to a weekday when it falls on the weekend. However, as retail is a 7-day-a-week operation, many retailers choose to keep the bank holiday on the weekend.

### **Are Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve normal working days?**

These fall on a Saturday this year, and so normal Saturday rules will apply.

### **My store is closed on Christmas Day. Will I have to make up the hours?**

Some employers require staff to make up lost hours, use holiday entitlement or take unpaid leave.

### **Is working on a bank holiday voluntary?**

The position on whether working on a public holiday is voluntary is usually explained in the employment contract, the staff handbook or outlined in agreements between the employer and the union.

### **Does working on a bank holiday attract premium payments?**

There is no automatic right to premium pay if you work on a public/bank holiday. The pay rate for working these days depends on the contract of employment and any union/ company agreements.

### **Am I entitled to a paid day off on a bank holiday?**

There is no automatic legal right to paid time off. You will need to check your terms and conditions of employment to find out what happens at your workplace.



# THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM FROM FEAR

**O**ne year ago, a groundbreaking new law in Scotland was passed to protect retail workers – the Protection of Workers Act. The new law makes it a specific offence to abuse, threaten or assault a retail worker in the course of their job. By the end of March, Police Scotland reported that 1,924 crimes had been recorded under the new law. This change in legislation was a direct result of Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign working with the Scottish Labour Party and other organisations.

New provisions have now been introduced to protect retail workers in England and Wales too. Despite years of opposition from the Government, Usdaw successfully campaigned to ensure legal

measures were put in place. As a result, assaulting those providing a public service will now be classed as a statutory aggravating factor during sentencing.

Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign has kept the issue of violence and abuse towards retail workers at the top of the political agenda and shows how unions can make a difference. However, it's clear that the new legal provisions on their own won't resolve the issue.

The key theme for this year's Respect Week, taking place 14 – 20 November 2022, is 'Report It. Sort It!' The aim is to send a clear message to retailers, politicians and the police about the full extent of violence and abuse towards retail workers. It's vital that all incidents are reported

to the employer so that the laws can be put into action. More information on this year's Respect Week and the Freedom From Campaign can be found at [www.usdaw.org.uk/FFF](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/FFF)

Usdaw has also introduced an Assault at Work Grant, for members who sustain an injury arising from an act of violence whilst in the course of their work. Further information and the qualifying conditions can be found here [www.usdaw.org.uk/cashbenefits](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/cashbenefits)

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF USDAW'S FREEDOM FROM FEAR CAMPAIGN**

### **Parliamentary Petition**

In 2020, Usdaw launched a petition to the Government, seeking a new

at work and ensuring that the campaign to protect shopworkers was top of the agenda.

The debate, and Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign was supported by MPs from all major political parties. Despite overwhelming evidence and support from MPs, the Government's spokesperson declined to offer support for a change in the law to better protect shopworkers.

### House of Commons report

Following Usdaw achieving 100,000 signatures on its petition, the influential Home Affairs Select Committee launched an inquiry into violence and abuse towards retail workers. The inquiry took evidence from major stakeholders across the sector, including Usdaw. On 29 June, the report from this inquiry was published.

The report identifies that violence and abuse towards shopworkers is becoming endemic in British society and the policing response is failing to match the scale of the problem. The Committee therefore called for urgent changes including a new criminal offence to send a powerful and long overdue message that assaults on retail workers will not be tolerated.

### Police and Crime Sentencing Bill

As a direct result of the parliamentary debate triggered by Usdaw's petition and the report published by the Home Affairs

Select Committee, an amendment was tabled for the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

The amendment, which received cross party support, would see new laws passed so that violence and abuse against retail workers would finally become a specific crime in the UK – similar to the new law passed by the Scottish Parliament.

Although the Government refused to accept the amendment, they did take a step in the right direction by making the assault of a public-facing worker a statutory aggravating factor when sentencing. However, that relies on the police responding to incidents, the CPS prosecuting the case and a guilty verdict. Regrettably too many incidents do not get through to sentencing, which is a big part of why nearly two-thirds of shop workers say they are not confident that reporting incidents will make any difference.

### What next?

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

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

law to protect retail workers right across the UK from violence and abuse at work.

The petition was the most successful ever run by the union securing over 100,000 signatures. It showed clear public support for a new law and was backed by major retailers and bodies such as the British Retail Consortium. As it secured over 100,000 signatures the petition triggered a parliamentary debate on the issues behind the Freedom From Fear campaign.

### Parliamentary Debate

In June 2021, the union's petition was debated in Parliament. Ahead of the debate, thousands of members emailed their MPs, sharing their experiences of violence and abuse



Find out how to run a Respect Week campaign on the next page ▶

# RESPECT WEEK INCOMING

Usdaw's annual Respect Week returns this November and reps are encouraged to promote this important campaign in whatever big or small way they can

**T**his year's Respect Week will take place from 14-20 November and Usdaw wants everyone to get involved.

Usdaw has been running its Freedom From Fear campaign since 2002. Unfortunately, as a result of cuts to police funding and delays in the criminal justice system, the trend in retail crime numbers is going the wrong way.

There's been a troubling increase in violence and abuse against retail workers in recent years – with another significant increase in 2020/21 during the Coronavirus crisis. Usdaw's latest survey figures show that 90 per cent of retail workers have been abused in the last 12 months; 64 per cent were threatened with physical violence and 12 per cent have been physically assaulted. However, the official retail crime figures don't always reflect the true picture. This is because not all retail crime is reported.

At the start of the pandemic and at other points since, a lack of stock became a common flashpoint for abuse towards retail workers. It is likely that this will again become a flashpoint in the busy run up to Christmas; that's why it's so important that we get the 'Keep Your Cool' message across to customers.

Following on from last year's success in introducing a new law in Scotland, in June this year Usdaw secured additional protections for retail workers in England and Wales. As a result of these protections, offenders should receive harsher sentences when convicted through the courts.

Whilst these new provisions

are welcome, they rely on cases making it to court and people being prosecuted. Therefore, we need to ensure that all cases of threats, abuse and violence are reported and recorded. For this reason, the theme of this year's Respect Week is 'Report It. Sort It'.

## REPORT IT. SORT IT!

Unreported retail crime means that individuals do not get the justice they deserve following an incident. It also skews the picture of retail crime as a whole, meaning that workplaces may be allocated less security resources than they need, and it may affect how often a particular location is policed.

## Ensure incidents are properly dealt with

More reporting of retail crime will build a truer picture of the scale of this issue and ensure that employers and the police deal with all incidents properly. Furthermore, accurate reporting, which is followed up by the police will ensure the legal provisions act as a deterrent for would-be offenders. This would give our members the proper protection they deserve.

That's why it's so important to deliver a highly visible campaign. A high-profile campaign will also give retail workers the confidence to report all instances of abuse and also educate the public on the need to keep their cool.

## How you can help

Usdaw is asking reps to run a one-day Keep Your Cool campaign in their store, any day between 14-20

November 2022.

The campaign can be anything from a campaign stall, to a few simple conversations with colleagues. Whatever the format of your campaign, there are three simple actions Usdaw is focussing on to enable reps to engage with staff in their store:

- Ask members and non-members to fill in the Freedom From Fear survey.  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/fffsurvey](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/fffsurvey)
- Talk to members and non-members about Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign.
- Encourage all staff in store to report all incidents of threats, abuse and violence.
- Ask any non-members who engage with the campaign to join Usdaw  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/join](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/join)

## Running a campaign stall on the shopfloor

This is a great way to engage with the public and spread the message for people to keep their cool.

The first step is to talk to the store manager about where and when to hold the stall.

Next, order materials in plenty of time to make sure they arrive for the event and organise for people to staff the stall. Don't forget to promote the campaign on the Usdaw noticeboard, if there is one.

## Invite a local Labour politician

Everyone should try to invite their local Labour politicians to take part in the campaign. This helps them to understand the issues at the heart of the campaign and builds the links

# Report It. Sort It!

What to do if an incident occurs:

- Stay calm.
- Move yourself out of harm's way – your safety is the most important thing.
- Report the incident to your manager immediately.
- Report to the police if necessary.
- Talk to your Usdaw rep – if you don't have a rep call Usdaw on **0800 030 80 30**



that make it easier to deliver the improved protection shopworkers need.

To find out who your MPs, MSPs and MSs are visit: [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com) and enter your store's postcode. Your area organiser can provide support when inviting your local Labour politician.

## Talking to Colleagues

While it is fantastic to engage with the public, it is also important that reps get the message across to retail workers, that abuse is not part of the job.

A colleague event can be big or small and could simply involve reps talking to their colleagues.

The first step is to talk to the

store manager about when to hold the event and how best to promote the message. Try and agree a day and time when there will be plenty of colleagues around to talk to about the campaign. Don't forget to promote the campaign stall on the Usdaw noticeboard, if there is one.

## Noticeboard Campaign Display

If reps are not able to commit time to the campaign, but still want to get the message across to members in their store, they can cover their Usdaw noticeboard with campaign information for the duration of Respect Week so members know it is happening.

This is a great way to run a visible campaign if reps are not able to

commit timewise. You can order a Noticeboard Pack for this purpose.

## CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

These can be ordered either by filling out the order form sent to reps or online via:

[www.usdaw.org.uk/order](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/order) no later than 7 October 2022.

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Ushaw officials are on hand to support and guide any reps who haven't organised a campaign before. They can be contacted via their local office on 0800 030 80 30.

# JUST WARM WORDS

As the energy crisis continues to plunge the nation into debt, the Government's solution is short of an answer

**T**he Prime Minister Liz Truss announced that energy prices will be capped at £2,500 in October, almost double the cap set in March.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "After twelve years of Tory austerity policies making people worse off and trashing our public services, the prime minister is now plunging the country into more debt to prop up energy company profits. However, they are still allowing bills to nearly double over the last six months, leaving too many low-paid essential workers, who kept the country going during the pandemic, still struggling to pay their energy bills. Energy company profits should be further taxed to provide more help for workers struggling to make ends meet."

Usdaw reps will be supporting members who will be concerned about the new price cap and what it might mean for their bills. *Network* answers some of the most common questions around energy saving tips and tricks. Some of the information and advice is from an article published on *Money Saving Expert* on 6 September.



### What is the energy price cap?

The energy price cap limits what customers pay for each unit of gas and electricity that they use, plus it sets a maximum daily standing charge (what they pay to have their home connected to the grid). It's based largely on wholesale energy prices (those firms pay) and applies only to providers' standard and default tariffs.

The price cap is not the maximum that anyone can be charged – customers with high energy usage will have higher bills – but rather reflects typical usage levels.

### How can I find out how much it costs to use my oven?

The Citizens Advice Bureau website now has an online calculator that can help you calculate how much it will cost to use your appliances such as ovens, showers, kettles and phones.

Visit [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) search **electrical appliances**

### Is it cheaper to leave the heating on all day or turn it on only when I need it?

According to experts at the Energy Saving Trust, it is best to only have the heating on when you need it. It is a fact that all houses lose energy and therefore if the heating is kept on all day, you are losing energy all day.

### Should I keep the hot boiler on all the time, or turn it on and off as needed?

If you have a gas, oil or LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) central heating system, the experts say it will always be cheaper to set the system timer so the hot water comes on only when required.

However, if you use an electrical immersion heater and have an Economy 7 or 10 tariff (where energy is cheaper at night), it's cheaper to heat your water during the night.

### Do devices on standby, or chargers left in the socket while

### not in use, still use electricity?

British Gas advises people to turn off charges and appliances at the plug when they are not being used as they can use energy when left in a socket. There's some debate on how effective this is as modern devices consume much less power than they used to.

### Do smart meters help save money?

Smart meters simply replace existing gas and electricity meters. They measure usage and automatically send a meter reading to suppliers. They also show you how much energy you are using which could help identify ways of cutting energy costs.

### Is it cheaper to use radiators or electric heaters?

The Energy Trust says electric heaters are one of the most expensive forms of heating. The cheapest way to heat your home is by using an efficient gas central heating system, with a full set of thermostatic radiator valves, a room thermostat and a timer.

### Should I set thermostats on individual radiators, rather than using the main thermostat to control all of them?

Installing thermostatic radiator valves and using them with your thermostat could save you £75 per year according to the Energy Saving Trust. It recommends using the thermostat to control the heat in your main living space and using thermostatic radiator valves to lower the heating in rooms you don't use as often.

### Should I run appliances at night to save money?

It depends on what tariff you are on. If you're on an Economy 7 or 10 tariff, you'll pay less during the night, but a higher rate than average during the day. But if you're on another tariff, it doesn't make any difference.

### If my heating is on, should I keep doors open or closed for each room?

It's better to keep doors closed for rooms that you don't heat, says the Energy Saving Trust.

Radiators, electric panel heaters and convection heaters all work by creating a convection current in a room. Closing doors makes sure this current remains within the designated space and stops cold air entering.

### Are there any schemes or grants that can help with energy debt?

British Gas offers up to £1,500 to anyone in energy debt, not just its customers.

The eligibility criteria are quite strict, but generally you need to be spending more than 10 per cent of your income on energy, have less than £1,000 in savings, have energy debts of at least £250 and have already sought advice on money issues from a charity or money adviser.

[britishgasenergytrust.org.uk](http://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk)

Other suppliers such as EDF, EON, Ovo and Scottish Power also offer help but you have to be a customer.

#### Where to signpost members for further help and support

Home Energy Scotland  
[www.homeenergyscotland.org](http://www.homeenergyscotland.org)

National Energy Action (NEA)  
[www.nea.org.uk/get-help/wash-advice/wash-referral/](http://www.nea.org.uk/get-help/wash-advice/wash-referral/)

Citizens Advice Bureau  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

StepChange  
[www.stepchange.org/setting-expectations](http://www.stepchange.org/setting-expectations)

Turn2us.org.uk  
[www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)



# LEARNING ON LOCATION

**U**sdaw's annual First Series Summer School returned in early September at its new location in the heart of the midlands.

Fifty students made the picturesque Hillscourt their home for the week, set in the beautiful surroundings of the Lickey Hills which are known to have inspired Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings*.

Summer School is one of Usdaw's most popular training courses for members who are keen to play a more active role in the union and has been running for over 50 years. Students get to meet other like-minded members from different companies across the UK and many claim they made friends for life from this unique opportunity.

The course has a broad agenda that looks at the role and function of trade unions, organising in the workplace, presentation skills and

equality. It also gives students the opportunity to learn how the union operates on a local, divisional and national level and the function of Usdaw's Annual Delegate Meeting.

The week is run in a supportive, friendly and informal manner and students work in small groups liaising closely with their tutor.

This year the students also spent a day out in Northfield running a cost of living campaign.

*Network* spoke to a few of the students when they got home...

## **BEN HUGHES SCOTLAND**

The whole experience was fantastic from start to finish. I fully expected it to be challenging but everything's in place for you to succeed thanks to the fantastic tutors. Although the work schedule may seem daunting and scary, it's actually manageable and you get an enormous sense of

pride after completing the course. It's long days but you get out what you put in. As for the building and staff they couldn't have been nicer. It felt very homely and there were lots of nice areas to explore, chill out or socialise in. I've made friends for life, there's already plans to meet up at the ADM. Overall a great week.

## **TEJINDER VILKHOU MIDLANDS**

I found the course thoroughly enjoyable. I met some great people from all walks of life and found a common connection with all of them. The course was very informative. As a new rep, I went to my first ADM in May and Summer School really helped to piece everything together and give me a better understanding of how the union and its procedures and protocols work. The venue



was great and we were all looked after very well. Looking forward to applying for Summer School2.

**NICK MAY**  
**SOUTH WALES AND WESTERN**

It was fantastic. Having spoken to other reps who attended Summer School in previous years, it was everything and more. It was hard work and sometimes very intense but the other reps really made it fun and memorable. I really enjoyed the whole week, especially getting out into the community and campaigning on the cost of living crisis. All the tutors were excellent and I learned a huge amount to take back to the workplace. I would encourage anyone who is thinking about attending next year to do it.

**SANDY MARSHALL**  
**SCOTLAND**

I had spoken to people who had

done the course before and they said you'll love it and you will make friends for life. They were right. The week was fantastic.

I'm a chatterbox, but I've always been anxious about standing and presenting to groups of people. At the beginning of the week this was still the case, but by the end I felt very different. My confidence grew immensely and this will absolutely make me a better rep and has definitely given me a renewed thirst to further learning, bring on Summer School2 .

I had the pleasure of being taught by Warren and Neil and I can't rate them highly enough. They make the job look easy, they were engaging, supportive and encouraging and good laugh the whole week. They have made a huge difference to my personal confidence and I can't thank them enough. I only wish I had managed to do it sooner.

**THINKING ABOUT  
APPLYING FOR  
SUMMER SCHOOL  
2023?**

First series Summer School is open to all members from all sectors across the UK. Accommodation and meals for students are paid for and travel expenses are reimbursed.

Look out for the application forms through your branch in January 2023.

To learn more about Summer School and other training opportunities for members visit: [www.usdaw.org.uk/education](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/education)



# WORKERS NEED A NEW DEAL

**U**sdaw recently launched a new booklet, *Labour's New Deal for Workers*.

The booklet outlines just some of Labour's plans to improve employment rights and other related workplace policies. The plans are the result of the work that Usdaw and other affiliated Unions carried out with the Labour Party making sure that the priorities of Usdaw members are at the heart of Labour policy.

Many of the priorities Usdaw has been campaigning for as part of the New Deal for Workers are included:

- Fundamental employment rights for all from day one.
- A ban on zero-hours contracts.
- A right to a contract that reflects your normal hours of work.
- Increased statutory sick pay and making sure it's paid to all workers, including the self-employed and low-paid.
- An end to the practise of 'fire and rehire'.
- Extending statutory parental

leave, introducing a right to bereavement leave, strengthening protections for pregnant women and reforming the parental leave system.

- Strengthened trade union collective rights.

A New Deal For Workers is one of Usdaw's key campaigns. Under the Conservative Government, 1 in 6 households now live in poverty. Foodbank use by working households has increased, and more and more households are struggling with food and fuel bills. Clearly action is needed.

***Labour's New Deal for Workers*** covers the foundations of the work a Labour government would do to improve the lives of Usdaw members and other working people across the country.

### **Labour Will Make Work Fairer**

Labour believes that as well as paying enough to ensure a decent standard of living, workplaces need to be fair and we need to tackle the

barriers that are faced by workers to close the gender, ethnicity, and disability pay gaps.

### **Labour Will Make Work Pay**

The Cost of Living Crisis is affecting everyone, and a key way to address it is to work to increase wages, support well paid jobs and ensure workers are guaranteed enough hours each week.

Labour will also address wider causes of in work poverty and financial pressures such as making good quality childcare more affordable, and addressing the housing crisis.

### **Labour Will Improve Work Life Balance**

Rights at work aren't just about the workplace, and Labour is committed to supporting genuine flexibility in working hours and patterns that benefit workers as much as employers, and that taking time off for childcare and other commitments is a right.



## Labour Will Support Your Mental Health

So many Usdaw members raise mental health as an issue, and addressing mental health challenges is one of Usdaw's key campaigns.

Mental health is a workplace issue, and Labour is committed to putting mental health on a par with physical health, as well as tackling some of the external causes of anxiety and depression, such as low pay and insecure work.

## Labour Will Strengthen Your Rights

Unionised workplaces who work with employers are more likely to provide decent pay, good training and benefits above the statutory minimum.

Labour will support trade unions by repealing anti-trade union legislation and ensuring union membership, and the representation and support it provides, is more accessible to everyone. If you would like copies of the booklet, please contact: [politics@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:politics@usdaw.org.uk)

## FUNDING POLITICAL CHANGE

Usdaw is involved in politics because it is a crucial part of improving members' lives.

Where industrial organising provides the foundation upon which we negotiate with employers and represent our members' interests in the workplace, it is political organising that provides the foundation upon which we campaign to change the country and represent our members' interests in society. Both are needed to deliver on our campaigns and improve life for Usdaw members.

Like most unions, Usdaw has a political fund that is separate from industrial funds. It is this fund that directly supports the union's political work. We use our Political Fund to run campaigns and lobby politicians and governments across the country – whoever is in power – so that we can make progress on the issues that members care about.

We campaign to raise awareness and also to secure change. Without the Political Fund, we wouldn't be able to deliver on the issues that matter to members. Stronger employment rights, rights for parents and carers, and laws around holiday and Sunday trading hours were all fought for by trade unions.

Usdaw's Political Fund is vital in delivering this work, and to make sure we can continue to make

progress we need all members to contribute.

Unfortunately, when the Conservative Government brought in the Trade Union Act in 2016, it was made harder for unions to campaign on behalf of members and working people. It became more difficult for trade union members to be a part of their union's political fund, which reduced the resources available for campaigns.

If every member contributes to the fund then the union can support all of the political work that's needed to deliver for members and effectively campaign on issues like Freedom From Fear, A New Deal for Workers, and Supporting Parents and Carers.

Some members don't realise that they are not part of the Political Fund and therefore aren't contributing to Usdaw's collective political voice. The more people contributing to the Fund, the bigger it is, and the stronger the union's ability to secure political change.

If you want to check whether you are contributing to the Fund, or decide that you want to be part of it, you can email [records@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:records@usdaw.org.uk)

We've also included a reps' FAQ with this copy of *Network* to help with any questions you may have, or any questions you may get when recruiting new members.





# 12M PEOPLE ARE UNDER SAVING FOR RETIREMENT

**P**ensions minister Guy Opperman informed the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee chair that over a third of the nation's working age population are not saving enough to provide a sufficient level of income in retirement.

The committee is carrying out an inquiry into 'saving for later life', which examines pensions adequacy, including specific focus on the gender pensions gap amongst other issues.

The pensions industry is pressing the Government to implement the recommendations of its 2017 auto-enrolment review, which includes lowering the minimum age for enrolment from 22 to 18.

Mr Opperman has previously said that the auto-enrolment reforms will be implemented by 2025. However, he emphasised that it is an individual savers personal responsibility to save more than the minimum auto-enrolment savings rates (currently 5 per cent or qualifying earnings for employees and 3 per cent for employers).

## SAVING FOR LATER LIFE

He said the Government's commitment to lower the earliest age for auto-enrolment from age 22 to 18 and to remove the lower earnings limit will benefit lower earners and low paid part-time workers, who are predominantly women.

The 'saving for later life' inquiry has received responses from employers, including Tesco, as well as pension schemes such as the Universities Superannuation Scheme. Tesco highlighted the apparent popularity of meetings between its employees aged 50 and above and Pension Wise, and reported that 7,000 employees attended Pension Wise meetings from the start of the initiative in 2018 to spring 2020 and feedback from these meetings had been very positive.

As *Network* went to print, it was announced that Guy Opperman had been relieved of his duties by the new prime minister Liz Truss, after five years in the post.

## TUC ANALYSIS

## THE GENDER PENSIONS GAP

New analysis published by the TUC shows that in two-thirds of industries women have built up workplace pensions worth less than half as much as men. Prospect union said the income gap between men and women in retirement is now 38 per cent. Women are effectively having to wait four and half months each year before they get their pension. And, in many industries women have workplace pensions worth less than a fifth of male colleagues.

**What is the gender pension gap?**

The gender pension gap shows the percentage difference between the pensions of men and women.

**What is the gender pay gap?**

The gender pay gap is the difference in the average hourly wage of men and women across a workforce and currently women earn 15.4 per cent less than men.

**What causes the gender pension gap?**

The main drivers of the gender pension gap are:

- Caring responsibilities - Women are much more likely to take time out of work or reduce their hours of working to look after children which makes it difficult to build up a workplace pension.

- Women still tend to earn less than men therefore less is paid into their pensions.
- A large number of women work part-time therefore they do not always meet the eligibility criteria to be auto enrolled.
- Historical differences in National Insurance have resulted in women receiving lower State Pensions. TUC general secretary, Frances O'Grady said: "Women face a whopping pension gap. And at current rates of progress, it could take more than fifty years to close. Too many women are paying the price in retirement for taking time out of work or cutting back their hours when their children were small."

Usdaw has already called on Government to:

- Reduce the minimum age for workers to be enrolled into a pension scheme from 22 to 18, to encourage early saving.
- Scrap the current earnings threshold of £10,000, to help low-paid, part-time and multiple job workers, who are predominantly women, to get on the first rung of the savings ladder.
- Gradually increase the current minimum contribution rate of 8 per cent (employers currently only have to contribute a minimum of 3 per cent).

## WHY USDAW SUPPORTS AUTO-ENROLMENT

Occupational pensions are set up by employers to provide pension benefits for their employees. Usually both the company and the employee make contributions into the pension scheme. It is the company contribution that

gives occupational pensions the advantage over personal pensions and other ways of saving. It is also the reason why Usdaw believes that occupational pensions are the best way of achieving a decent retirement.

## SMALL PENSION POTS PROBLEM

In October 2022, it will be 10 years since employees were automatically enrolled into workplace pensions. The initiative has been hugely successful in bringing millions more people into pensions saving, including those on low incomes and those who move jobs frequently. However, this has led to millions of small inactive pension pots.

**Inactive pension pots**

By the end of this year, the Association of British Insurers (ABI) estimates there will be more than 11 million small, deferred pension pots and unless action is taken to resolve this problem that figure will likely double in the next decade.

Small pots are an issue for savers and pension providers alike. They make it more likely that people will lose track of their savings and add to the costs incurred by pension providers. It also increases the risk that savers with smaller pots will not achieve the financial returns that could be accrued in larger pots.

A market-wide automatic transfer solution which will make a material difference in reducing the number of deferred small pots currently in existence and prevent the ongoing increase of small pots in the future will ordinarily require the consent of the owner of the pension pot. It is therefore the view of the pensions industry that this will require legislation.



# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month is an opportunity to share, celebrate and understand the impact of black heritage and culture not just in the UK but around the world

**P**eople from African and Caribbean backgrounds have been a fundamental part of British history for centuries. But their contribution to society is often overlooked, ignored or distorted.

Schools have often taught children about the achievements of white figures but overlooked the contributions of civil rights pioneers such as Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks.

There are many examples of the ways in which Black people, their lives and stories are ignored or passed over. Last year nearly 10,000 new children's books were published in the UK, but only 4 per cent of these featured a Black or Asian character.

A character from an ethnic minority background, was the main character in only 1 per cent of these books. This means most of the books Black and Asian children read aren't properly representing their lives and experiences.

Black History Month aims to set the record straight by celebrating the continued achievements and contributions of Black people to the UK and around the world.

But it's also a time for ongoing action to tackle racism at work and in wider society.

Usdaw is proud to celebrate and support Black History Month and will be taking a number of steps to show our support.

## WEAR RED DAY 2022

This annual fundraising day on 21 October, is an opportunity for Usdaw members to wear red to work to show their support for anti-racism.

The event is run by Show Racism the Red Card – the UK's largest anti-racist charity. The charity utilises the high-profile status of football and football players to help tackle racism in society.

Last year, on the 25th anniversary of Wear Red Day, over 250,000 people registered to take part.

Over the last few years Usdaw reps and members have raised hundreds of pounds in support of Show Racism the Red Card.

Members who want to get involved can wear something red to work and donate to Show Racism the Red Card by texting Red to 70470. They can also register their details at

this address to receive a fundraising pack:

[www.theredcard.org/wear-red-day](http://www.theredcard.org/wear-red-day)

## BLACK ACTIVISTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Throughout October and beyond Usdaw will also be taking significant steps to increase its own anti-racist work with the launch of an Usdaw Black Activists Development Programme.

This programme will offer support and skills training to Black members in Usdaw who want to get more active and involved in the Union.

Trade unions have a good record in fighting for greater equality and fairness at work but we need more Black and Asian activists and reps in our movement.

More details about how the Black Activists Development Programme will work and how members can apply will be available very shortly but in the meantime if you would like to find out more please email: [equalitymatters@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:equalitymatters@usdaw.org.uk)

For more equality news visit: [www.usdaw.org.uk/equality](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/equality)



# PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Lots of Usdaw reps and members joined in the festivities at numerous Pride events across the UK this year celebrating gains in LGBT+ equality

**O**n the 1 July 1972, over half a century ago, the first ever official UK Pride rally was held in London. This was a watershed moment, often referred to as the birth of the modern Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) rights movement in the UK.

In the early 1970's LGBT+ people had absolutely no protection from discrimination either at work or in society. This meant that the vast majority of LGBT+ people felt unable to be out about their sexual orientation or gender identity in almost every aspect of their lives. LGBT+ people faced abuse, harassment, violence, arrest and the very real possibility of being sacked from their jobs simply for being themselves.

It took almost another thirty years for the age of consent to be equalised and for legislation to be introduced making it illegal to discriminate against LGB people in the workplace. It took a further five years for similar protections to be extended to trans workers.

Since then, LGBT+ communities have seen lots of positive change and trade unions can be proud of

the part they've played to support LGBT+ workers in their struggle for equality. All of the rights and freedoms LGBT+ workers have achieved have been hard fought for and we must remain vigilant as it doesn't take much for Governments to backtrack on LGBT+ equality.

In recent years global progress towards LGBT+ equality has been patchy – some countries have implemented progressive policies whereas others have become more repressive. The struggle is not over, as the facts below demonstrate:

- 70 countries make same-sex relationships a criminal offence.
- The death penalty for same-sex relationships is either 'allowed', or evidence of its existence occurs, in 11 of these countries.
- In more than half the world, LGBT people are not protected by law from discrimination in the workplace.
- A quarter of the world's population believes that being LGBT should be a crime.

\*Source ILGA World 2020

In the UK we can't afford to be complacent either:

- Over two thirds of LGB people

avoid holding hands in public with a same-sex partner for fear of a negative reaction from others.

- Over two thirds of LGBT+ people have experienced sexual harassment at work
- The majority of LGBT+ people still do not feel comfortable to be completely open with everyone in their workplace about their sexual orientation or gender identity
- Reported homophobic hate crimes have more than doubled over the last five years.

This demonstrates that Pride Parades are as important now as they have ever been. Pride gives LGBT+ people and their allies the opportunity to visibly challenge LGBT+ phobic attitudes and legislation and can be used as a vehicle to press for change. Pride is also about empowerment, giving LGBT+ people the chance to reclaim the public spaces they are all too often denied often in the face of hostility and intimidation.

Udaw activists across the UK have been vocal and visible at Pride events this summer celebrating the gains they have made and protesting against continued inequality.



## ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH ANGELA THOMAS

**A**ngela has been an active member of Usdaw for the past 22 years. She's been a familiar face at ADM, speaking on the rostrum every year for the past 15 years. More recently she's been working closely with her branch and retired members' committee running major Usdaw campaigns, raising the profile of the union and working hard to support members.

### Why did you become a rep?

I started working at a department store in Swansea in 2000 and found the management's attitude towards staff shocking. There was sexual harassment, bullying, all sorts was going on and nothing was being

done. To cut a long story short I encouraged the staff to take a stand. I was disciplined and the situation wasn't handled very well by the rep in place so I decided to become a rep myself and try and improve conditions for my colleagues. It was a struggle but my area organiser and my branch were very supportive and eventually things greatly improved.

My colleagues were relieved that someone was finally standing up for them. That's where my journey started and that's what made me realise that you can help people and make a change, and that's what kept me going all these years. I stopped being a rep when I retired but I remain active in my branch.

### Is your branch active?

I'm proud to be in my branch because it's always been very active. Every couple of months we visit our list of workplaces to recruit but also to see if there are any issues and just let people know who we are and how people can get hold of us if we are needed.

We take part in as many campaigns and events as we can. We ran a Cost of Living campaign day in August in Swansea and we've just been to Cardiff Pride. We've been going there for many years. In 2019 we also represented Usdaw at the first Swansea Pride and we're hoping to build on our presence there in the future. We also always attend ADM.

## Why should Usdaw be at events like Pride?

People have got a certain view about unions. Being at events like Pride shows people exactly what we do and the many issues that we cover. When people see the leaflets that we produce and the vast array of information that's available, not just work related but health, politics, education, the things that affect everyday life, they can't believe that we're a union. It also shows we're inclusive. Everyone is welcome.

## How was the cost of living campaign day?

Cost of living is such a big thing for everyone. The stories we heard from the public were awful. It's so frustrating because you feel it's out of your control. A lot of people were asking what can they do, and it's great to be able to stand up and say well there is something you can do, we need signatures that we can put before parliament. It's just showing people that they have got a voice and how to use it.

## What's it like to speak at ADM?

My first speech was on a bit of a whim. There was a proposition on disabled rights and my daughter is disabled and my mother was disabled so it's something I'm passionate about and I wanted to share my experience. I quickly wrote something and got up and spoke. It was terrifying. The worst part is walking down the aisle and sitting at the front waiting. My stomach still flips when I sit there now. The following year I moved my first proposition and we've put forward a proposition every year since. You're always passionate about your propositions because you know that there's a possibility they can improve

QUITE A FEW OF OUR PROPOSITIONS HAVE BEEN PICKED UP BY MPS, THAT'S WHY I MAKE A POINT OF SPEAKING (AT ADM) EVERY YEAR.



someone's life. Quite a few of our propositions have been picked up by MPs and that's why I make a point of speaking every year.

## You're also politically active?

I'm a Labour chair in my area. I was influenced by wanting to know more about what was happening in my grandchildren's schools. I attended some local meetings got to know my councillors and my MP and just continued to get more involved from there. I'm also part of a group called Safer Swansea. I work with the council and the police helping to make local communities safer. I'm very passionate about that too. My political activism all stems from getting involved with Usdaw and becoming more politically active through my branch.

## Has being active changed you?

Definitely. I haven't always been as confident as this, I used to be very quiet. I'd sit in branch meetings, listen to what was going on and not say a word, but with support and guidance from Anne Meacock I gained the confidence, knowledge and experience I needed to become – I hope – a well respected activist. Anne has been my mentor. She's been with the union 44 years and is very active so she's got a wealth of experience. I feel very lucky that I've had her by my side and continue to have her support.

## Are you a family of trade unionists?

My husband worked in the NHS and was a rep for Unison so my daughters have been influenced by both of us. We've made sure they've always known their rights and supported them at work. One of them is currently thinking about becoming a rep in the NHS and the other works in a private nursery and supports her colleagues with employment advice. As they've got older they've realised how to speak up for themselves and for others and that they don't have to put up with what's not right. They make me very proud.

## What do you like to do in your spare time?

I like to spend time in my garden, it's what de-stresses me. I also enjoy a good book and I'm very involved with my grandchildren – there's another one due at the end of January. We're a very close family. We all live on the same street, so my house is just an extension of their house. I'm very lucky that they're close by.

## What's next for you?

Respect Week is the next big campaign. Abuse is on the increase because of the cost of living crisis and it's going to get worse. Members are going to need us even more than ever, so we need to make sure we are there to support them.

## WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

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

[network@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:network@usdaw.org.uk)

# TOP RECRUITMENT TIPS

Usdaw rep and Organising Awards nominee James Gordon shares his top tips on how he organised his Morrisons store with his colleague Lorna Halkett

**T**he Morrisons Rep Team in Perth has been doing a fantastic job of supporting members through the challenges of covid over the last couple of years. **Network** caught up with Usdaw rep and sales assistant, James Gordon to discuss some of the work he has done with his colleague, Lorna Halkett that led them to being nominated for the Team Recruitment and Organising Award at this year's Organising Awards.

"I became a rep in 2019, said James, 34. "I decided to stand because I used to work in hospitality, and I saw the shocking way we got treated by managers and customers. These were non-unionised workplaces so there was no real mechanism for dealing with grievances and neither was there a way of improving things. That experience stayed with me and prompted me to stand as a rep. I believe that your voice is one of your main tools. If you don't use it, then nothing changes."



## HERE ARE GORDON'S TOP RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISING TIPS:

### Talk about the campaigns

I always set up a table in the canteen to promote the campaigns and leave it there for a week or two.

Mental health is popular campaign in our store and I recently did one around young workers and social media abuse. I had a lot of engagement with members and non-members alike as many of them had experienced online abuse.

For the upcoming Respect Week

in November, I'm planning to set up a campaign table. Freedom From Fear is a big issue with retail workers everywhere because they have all experienced abuse during the course of their work and especially during the pandemic. In the café we can have customers kicking off with us for any number of things including their eggs not being cooked exactly the way they like them!

I will use this opportunity to promote that Usdaw was responsible for bringing in the protection of shopworkers law in Scotland. A big issue is that people don't report the abuse because they think it won't make a difference. This

year I will focus on encouraging my colleagues to report incidents.

### Reach out using surveys

Usdaw surveys are a really good way of starting a conversation with colleagues and learning about the issues that might be bothering them. It also lets them know the wide range of issues that Usdaw is campaigning on.

### Outline reasons to join Usdaw

The Usdaw leaflet 10 Good Reasons to Join Usdaw is a great leaflet to use in inductions. I tell new starters that Usdaw members tend to get better pay and safer workplaces. They also get representation in a disciplinary/

grievance meeting, legal cover and a host of other benefits. The leaflet can be downloaded here [www.usdaw.org.uk/261](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/261)

### Having a say on pay and conditions

At the moment, everyone is worried about the cost of living and how they will survive the next few months. I remind people that pay rises don't just happen. Every pay rise is negotiated by the union with the company. Usdaw members have a say by raising items for the annual pay reviews and voting in pay ballots. To have say on your pay, you have to be an Usdaw member.

### Digital Noticeboard

In our workplace, the Usdaw noticeboard is in the hallway but most people don't stop to look at it because they're too busy looking at their phones. I created a Facebook page and I use that as a digital noticeboard. People find Facebook notifications a lot harder to ignore than a physical noticeboard and I get quite a lot of engagement from my colleagues with people liking and sharing my posts. It's a good way of letting them know I'm around if they need me and to inform them of any upcoming campaigns and events.

### Speak to people individually

I don't leave recruitment just for inductions. I make sure I talk to my colleagues and have a cup of tea with them to see how they're doing. If they're having issues, I tell them the union can help. A lot of people don't know what unions do so I take this opportunity to explain what Usdaw can do for its members.

### Engaging with young workers

A lot of young workers aren't interested in joining unions, mainly because of the cost and the fact they think they won't be staying there that long. I always tell them that young workers are just as vulnerable as any other worker. Sometimes, young people can get stuck with

## THE IMPORTANCE OF RECRUITING MEMBERS

Udaw is made up of members across many workplaces and the union's ability to be influential depends on how many members it has and on how well organised they are.

One of the main reasons why people say they aren't in a union is because they've never been asked, so recruiting new members is a very important part of the role of a rep.

Udaw general secretary Paddy Lillis recently contacted reps thanking them for the work that they do and encouraging them to talk to any colleagues who are not in the union about the benefits of joining.

"Reps play an essential role delivering for our members in the workplace," said Paddy. "The commitment you demonstrate in organising your workplace and advising members is invaluable and makes a real difference to workers' lives.

"As you will know, it is important for Usdaw to maintain a strong membership base. A robust, healthy membership means the union is in a much stronger position to secure better terms and conditions for our members. With greater numbers of members in individual workplaces and across companies nationally, Usdaw's

influence in discussions and negotiations is improved.

"We know times are tough for many people up and down the country, particularly for those working in jobs which are far too often low paid, with insecure hours. It is therefore important that Usdaw reps are there to share with potential members the benefits of joining Usdaw, including the advice, support and representation available should a member have a problem at work. In addition, Usdaw members can count safer workplaces, improved pay and conditions and free legal advice as some of the many reasons they have joined Usdaw.

"The covid crisis made recruitment more difficult over the last couple of years, but now we have the opportunity to rebuild and grow the union.

"Udaw's aim is for all workplaces where we have agreements to be well-organised, with high levels of membership.

"The key to winning for our members is an organised workforce and a network of experienced, well-supported reps. Your role as a workplace rep is a key role in the union and I want you to know that Usdaw is committed to supporting and developing you in your role."

unsociable shifts because there's an assumption that they don't have family commitments, or they will put up with situations simply because they don't know the process and procedures. I tell them this is where the union comes in and how we can support them.

### Get all the training you can

It's important that reps are trained so that they can support their members. I completed my shop stewards training and found it gave

me the knowledge and confidence I needed to help members. The training pushes you to challenge yourself and I ended up doing a presentation in front of a group of people. It was daunting at the time but I'm so glad I did it because it meant I was prepared when I had to do an induction in front of a roomful of people.

Going forwards, I'm planning to do as many training courses as I can to ensure I can fully support my members.

# GETTING SOCIAL

Delving into the world of social media may be a bit daunting, here's a quick guide to get reps started

**O**ver the past 15 years social media has become a hugely popular method of communication for people of all ages.

Users of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are posting and tweeting on a daily basis from their phones, tablets and desktop computers to keep in touch with friends, share their pictures and thoughts and be the first to hear the latest news. Social media can also be a great way for reps to help raise the profile of the union, organise events in the workplace and communicate with other members.

## GETTING STARTED

If you're not signed up to any social media websites and want to get involved then a good way to get started is to speak to your friends and colleagues and find out which social media websites they use.

They can help to sign you up and set you on your way. Most social media websites make it easy for you to sign up with a step-by-step guide to help get you started. Visit the website of your chosen social network to sign up.

### Facebook the basics

Users of Facebook all have their own profile page where they can post a picture and details about themselves.

You can take anything you've seen on the internet and share it with your friends through your Facebook profile page.

If your settings allow, your friends on Facebook can comment on the

things you post to your profile and you can reply to their comments. You, in turn, can comment on anything your friends post to their own profile pages.

### Twitter the basics

Twitter works on the principle of 'Followers'. When you choose to follow another Twitter user, that user's tweets appear on your own Twitter page for you to see.

By choosing to follow people, companies and organisations that you're interested in you're creating your own customised newsfeed on your Twitter page.

As well as posting your own tweets you can comment on, 'favourite' and share the posts of the users you follow which will bring them to the attention of your own followers.

### Instagram the basics

Instagram emphasises the sharing of photos and videos via its mobile app. It works a bit like Twitter and works on the principle of 'Followers'. When you choose to follow another Instagram user, that user's posts appear on your own Instagram feed for you to see. You can take, edit, and publish visual content for both followers and non-followers, as long as your account is public. Users can interact with your content via likes, comments, shares, and saves.

## SOCIAL MEDIA FOR REPS

### Organising a campaign day

Facebook allows you to set up event pages and invite your friends to join.



You could post details about the campaign and ask your friends to share the page with their friends to spread the word. On your campaign day you could post pictures and encourage others to do the same. You can also use Twitter to tweet pictures from your campaign day to your followers or tweet them to @UsdawUnion.

### Recruiting new members

Posting and tweeting about the benefits of being a member of Usdaw is a great way to promote the union.

Encourage your friends to share your tweets, posts and photos from



Usdaw events and get the message out there. The more a post is shared means more people will see it.

### Communicating

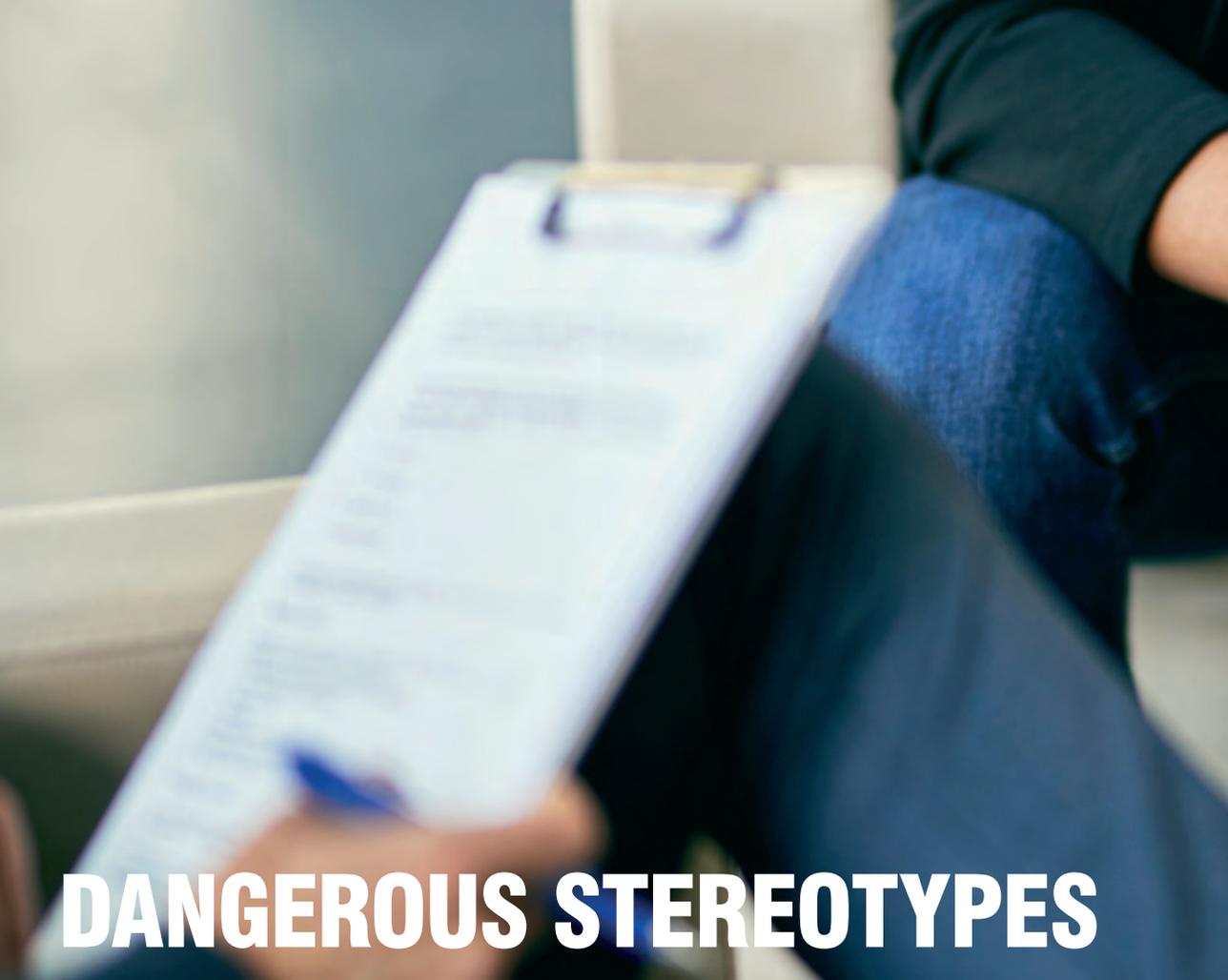
Social media is a great tool for keeping in touch with friends, colleagues and fellow reps. It's also a good agent for group conversations.

You can publicly post about anything you want and start a conversation.

You can also have private one-to-one and group conversations on Twitter and Facebook to keep things confidential, just make sure they're Direct Messages (Twitter).

## TEN THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN USING SOCIAL MEDIA

- Read your company's social media policy and be clear on it and the implications of ignoring it.
- Privacy settings aren't always fully understood or as secure as you might think. There's nothing to stop a friend sharing your comments to their friends who you may not want to see them.
- There's no place in the modern workplace for unacceptable or offensive behaviour wherever it occurs (on the shopfloor or online). Companies have duties under the Equality Act to not discriminate against their staff or customers – you can be dismissed for insulting staff or customers on social media.
- Remember, anyone can be disciplined or sacked for the misuse of social media.
- You can be sacked for lying and revealing your actions on social media eg if you're off sick you shouldn't be posting about being in the pub or going on holiday.
- Don't put anything on social media you wouldn't say to someone's face and never post if you are angry, upset or drunk.
- Don't post offensive material – we all have opinions but if they're racist, sexist or homophobic there are laws against that and rightly so. Be careful and think before you post – so-called 'banter' can be interpreted as offensive.
- It's worth remembering that we're all ambassadors for our company in one way or another. Employers monitor any mention of their company and are alerted immediately to negative comments.
- Companies also trawl social media to 'check out' potential employees' – consider your future employment prospects and the repercussions of your social media profile.
- It's a good communication channel, but think about what you are posting as the evidence is there in writing forever. It's not like a private chat down the pub. So don't criticise your employer, your colleagues or customers as they are likely to see it.



# DANGEROUS STEREOTYPES

**N**etwork speaks to Mark (not his real name) to discuss how stereotypes of gay men impeded his partner getting the correct diagnosis for a life-threatening condition.

“In 2020, during the pandemic, my partner became ill”, said Mark, 42. “It started with an ear infection which led to him becoming very unwell and sleeping all the time. At the time, it was difficult to see a doctor because we had gone into lockdown. When we finally got to see a locum, my partner was told that it could be HIV and that we should both get tested.

“This was hugely distressing for both of us and led to a lot of arguments because we both knew that we didn’t have HIV when we met each other. The only other explanation was that one of us had cheated. The distrust coupled

with the anxiety, coupled with the pandemic meant it was a hugely stressful time for us. Even when the test came back negative there was no respite because the doctor advised us to get tested again. As he put it, ‘it doesn’t always show up on the first test’. The second test also came back negative.

“After the second negative test result, my partner was told that ‘it’s bound to be syphilis’, and my partner was referred for treatment for this, I was also advised to get tested for the disease. We later found out that neither of us had it.

“During this time, my partner was getting worse. He could barely move and was sleeping all the time. He went back to the doctors and was told to ‘man up’. One night, he was so ill that we ended up in Accident and Emergency at 2am with

severe chest pains. Again, nothing happened and we were sent home. Later discovering this was actually due to fluid on his lungs.

## DIAGNOSIS

“We went back to the doctors again. This time, we got a decent doctor who seemed to understand the severity of the situation. She told my partner that he could have cancer. After 4 months of suffering, he was finally referred to the hospital for a CT scan and blood tests. Waiting for the results was excruciating but we were finally called to the hospital on Christmas Eve 2020 and told that my partner had anaplastic large cell lymphoma, which is rare form of blood cancer. He was told that his treatment would start within days. The diagnosis was terrifying for both of us but it was also a relief



to finally know what was wrong. He underwent six months of gruelling chemotherapy and thankfully the cancer is now in remission.

“At every stage we were hindered from getting the correct diagnosis because health professionals made judgements based on our sexuality rather than the facts. They assumed because we were gay that we were likely to HIV or syphilis, both of which are sexually transmitted diseases. Despite being in a long-term, monogamous relationship there was an assumption that we were promiscuous.

“These stereotypes of gay men made it impossible for us to be taken seriously and listened to.

“In May 2022, I went to the doctors for an asthma check-up and the nurse told me that she noticed I had HIV, but I wasn’t

getting any treatment for it. I don’t have HIV. Once again, I was tarred with having HIV because I’m a gay man even though HIV now infects more heterosexual couples than gay or bisexual men. Although LGBT rights have come a long way, these negative stereotypes about gay men still persist and can have life-threatening consequences.

“We’ve got a good case to sue the NHS for a catalogue of failures but we won’t do that because we believe in the NHS and what it stands for.

“That’s why we want to raise awareness and educate people on this issue to make sure people from the LGBT community are treated fairly and without prejudice. I’m also thinking about submitting a proposition to ADM because I don’t want anyone else to go through what we went through.”

## LGBT HEALTH DISCRIMINATION

In recent decades the position of LGBT in the UK has been transformed beyond recognition. There have been significant improvements on every front. Legally, with very few exceptions LGBT people now enjoy the same protection and the same rights as any other citizen, consolidated through the 2010 Equality Act. Despite this, research continues to confirm that a minority of people continue to face discrimination and barriers to accessing treatment.

*LGBT in Britain – Health*, a report by Stonewall based on YouGov research with 5000 LGBT people, investigated peoples’ experiences when accessing healthcare services.

- 13 per cent said they had faced unequal treatment from healthcare professionals because of their sexuality.

- 23 per cent had witnessed discriminatory or negative remarks against LGBT people by healthcare staff.

- 14 per cent had avoided treatment for fear of discrimination relating to their sexuality.

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

Stonewall’s report makes a number of recommendations including: NHS England should run a national campaign to tackle discrimination in healthcare services; encourage staff to report incidences; prominently display bullying and harassment policies, communicating a zero-tolerance approach and publicise clear complaints procedures to encourage people to report.

# GET YOURSELF PAPPED

Cervical screening is an easy, essential exam for women that could help prevent cancer, but so many are reluctant to have it. *Network* looks at why it's important

**A** new survey conducted by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) found that one in three women who are eligible for cervical screening (also known as a smear or pap test), do not take up the offer.

The most common reason for not booking a screening appointment was embarrassment (42 per cent) followed by those who 'kept putting it off' (34 per cent) and 'being worried it would be painful' (28 per cent).

Around 2,700 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer in England each year and approximately 690 women die from the disease – around two deaths every day.

## What is Cervical Cancer?

Cervical screening is a free NHS health test that helps prevent cervical cancer. Virtually all cases of cervical cancer are linked to a virus called high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV).

The HPV is a type of virus that infects the skin and cells lining the inside of the body. For most people, the infection will get better on its own and they will never know they had it. Sometimes, one of the high-risk types of HPV isn't cleared and stays in the body. If this happens, the virus can cause changes to the DNA inside the cells which can make them behave differently. Over time, the affected cells can start to grow out of control, which can lead to cancer.

## What is Cervical Screening?

The cervical screening programme

in the UK aims to pick up early cell changes that are caused by HPV. These can be removed before they have a chance to become cancerous.

## Who is offered screening?

In England, NHS cervical screening is offered to women between the ages of 25 and 49 every three years. For those between the ages of 50 and 64, screening is offered every five years.

## What happens at the screening?

A qualified nurse or doctor will carry out the test. It takes just a few moments. A small instrument is inserted into the vagina to allow the nurse or doctor to view the cervix. Then a smooth wooden or plastic spatula is wiped over the surface of the cervix to pick up a few cells. These are then put on a slide and sent away to a laboratory for examination under a microscope. The test may be uncomfortable, but it is not usually painful.

If you prefer to be examined by a woman, you can make this clear when you make the appointment.

## CERVICAL SCREENING RESULTS

It can take anywhere between two to six weeks to get the test results. The results will fall in one of these three categories but the wording in the results may be slightly different depending on which part of the UK the individual lives:

### ■ No HPV found

Means the individual does not have high risk HPV. So, they will be invited back for cervical screening in three or five years' time

depending on their age and where they live.

### ■ HPV found with no cell changes

Means they have high-risk HPV, but do not have changes to their cervical cells. So, they will be invited for cervical screening sooner to check that the HPV has gone, usually after a year.

### ■ HPV found with cell changes

Means they have high risk HPV and cervical cell changes. They will be invited to go for a colposcopy and further tests.

## What is a colposcopy?

A colposcopy is a test to have a look at the cervix in detail. A colposcope is a large magnifying glass that a doctor or specialist nurse uses to closely look at the skin-like covering of the cervix for changes that may be too small to see with the naked eye. They can take samples (biopsies) of any abnormal areas on the cervix.

## Colposcopy Results

It can take between four to eight weeks to get the results, sometimes even longer.

### Normal Result

Means that the individual does not need any treatment and they are at a low risk of developing cervical cancer. They will be invited in three or five years depending on their age and where they live.

### Abnormal Result

Possible abnormal results include Cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN) or Cervical glandular

intraepithelial neoplasia (CGIN). CIN and CGIN results mean there are cell changes (abnormal cells) on the cervix. These changes are not cancer but, without monitoring or treatment, they may develop into cervical cancer.

## TREATMENT

There are several different types of treatment for abnormal or pre-cancerous cells and include:

**Laser treatment:** If the number of abnormal cells is small, laser treatment will be used to destroy abnormal cells.

**Cryocautery:** Gas is used to freeze and destroy the abnormal cells.

**Cone biopsy:** This involves the surgical removal of a cone-shaped portion of the cervix, under a general anaesthetic.

More advanced stages of cancer involve other forms of treatment. It can mean surgery, chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy. The treatment recommended will depend to some extent on the stage and type of the cancer, the individual's age and general health, as well as on the preference of the consultant and the hospital's facilities.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/cervical-screening](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cervical-screening)

[www.cancerresearchuk.org/cervical](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cervical)

[www.jostrust.org.uk](http://www.jostrust.org.uk)

# Try

# one thing

**G**et Online Week is an annual digital inclusion campaign run by the charity Good Things Foundation. Nearly one in five adults lack the most basic digital skills needed for everyday life and two million households struggle with affordability of internet access. Good Things Foundation want to change that and their long-term strategy is to fix society's digital divide. In the last 14 years, their campaign has helped hundreds of thousands of people to get online for the first time and improve their digital skills.

This year's Get Online Week takes place from 17-23 October 2022 and the theme they've chosen is 'Try one thing'. The charity is encouraging those not confident with the internet to get online and try just one thing, whether it's something basic like sending an email, searching for a website or making a video call to other more challenging tasks such as online shopping, comparing prices of car insurance or even completing an online course.

Digital skills are vital for everyone at work, at home, in their union and in their local community and that's

why Usdaw is supporting Get Online Week.

The union wants to help reps and members improve their digital skills and feel confident about using the internet.

### LEARNING THROUGH USDAW

The education department has developed a number of bitesize online courses, specifically aimed at improving digital skills, that can be accessed from a computer, tablet or mobile and take just 30 minutes to complete.

#### The ABCs of ICT

This bitesize course covers three digital skills topics that will help you get you started on improving your digital skills. Access to services, Banking and Communications.

#### Staying Safe Online

Top tips on how to make a stronger, more memorable password, how to stay safe on social media and safeguarding children online.

#### CV Writing Course

Designed to help you build an

effective CV and teach you basic IT skills such as formatting and styling documents.

#### Using Zoom

This bitesize course is designed to help you understand how to use Zoom. It will cover how to sign up for a Zoom account, Using Zoom, joining a meeting, Scheduling a meeting, Zoom etiquette and other top tips

To access all of Usdaw's bitesize courses visit:

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

#### HOW REPS CAN HELP

Encourage your colleagues to take





# get online week

## ONLINE LEARNING GATEWAY

Alongside Usdaw bitesize courses, members have got exclusive access to many more exciting learning opportunities through the union. To make it even easier to take up the learning opportunities on offer, members have access to the online learning gateway. Through the gateway members can access courses in English, maths, ICT, languages, CV writing and much more.

Usdaw members can access the online learning gateway through the Usdaw website at:

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

### How does it work?

To get started, go to Usdaw's Learning Gateway using the link above and click on the subject you are interested in. Once you click on the subject area you will see a list of learning sites with short descriptions of the courses on offer and whether there is a charge.

Have a look around these sites to see what's best for you. When you find the right course, you can start learning right away.

You can take an online assessment in English, Maths or IT. It's completely confidential and will let you know which level is right for you to study at. For online courses you will need access to a computer or a tablet. Learn at home on your own device or at work, in a library or from a learning centre on any device.

*Image courtesy of Good Things Foundation*

part in Get Online Week and try doing one thing online. Encourage them to do a bitesize course and offer support if they need it. Also, make sure your colleagues know that being a member of Usdaw isn't just about protecting their rights at work. They have exclusive access to a wide variety of online learning opportunities that they can take advantage of from the comfort of their own home.

If you're a rep who is confident with computer skills, then why not think about running a small campaign or a workshop during Get Online Week to help your colleagues get more out of life online

and improve their digital skills. Examples of events that have taken place in previous years are digital photography, access your online payslip/HR systems, CV writing, IT assessments on Skillscheck and setting up online accounts including utilities and banking. Get in touch with your area organiser if this is something you'd like support with.

If you don't feel confident about using Usdaw's Learning Gateway, or you want some support to improve your own digital skills then contact your local office or Usdaw's education and training department. Call **0161 224 2804** or email: [lifelong\\_learning@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:lifelong_learning@usdaw.org.uk)



# HEALTH AND SAFETY REPS: TROUBLESHOOTING

In the fourth of our series of *Network* articles on health and safety rep functions, we focus on how to overcome issues with your employer.

## **What can I do if my employer refuses to give me time off to carry out my functions as a health and safety rep?**

As a union health and safety rep you have legal powers to investigate any potential hazard, to investigate accidents and to inspect the workplace. You are entitled to reasonable time off to carry out these functions. If a manager is refusing your requests for time to carry out your functions as a health and safety rep, you need to consider raising a grievance. You need to make it clear that the grievance is

about their failure to let you carry out your legal functions as a rep and to include specific dates and times when you were refused. If you are considering raising a grievance, it is a good idea to talk to your area organiser first.

Under most Usdaw agreements, once there is a failure to agree at the first stage, the area organiser (or on some sites the branch secretary or convenor) has to be involved. They can take the issue up with more senior management and usually sort any problems at this stage.

## **What can I do if my employer ignores me when I raise an issue or the issue I raise does not get sorted?**

Where there is a significant issue which management are ignoring

or where management have failed to take the action you consider necessary to sort it, you need to consider the most effective way to escalate the issue.

If you need further advice from the union on the issue, contact the health and safety section in the legal department at head office.

It is usually a good idea to get the details of any complaint put in writing at an early stage. Usdaw form HS2 has been designed to help you do this and provides a paper record of the fact that you raised an issue and the response from your employer. Many reps find that the very act of receiving a more formal written notice of an issue is enough to prompt management to take it more seriously.

Some employers may have their



**USDAW**  
HEALTH & SAFETY

## CONTACT

### ■ Health & safety officer

Tony Whelan  
0161 249 2594

### ■ General enquiries

healthandsafety  
@usdaw.org.uk

own hazard reporting system which reps can use to raise their concern. The key point is to have a written record of the issue and the date when it was raised.

Alternatively, if the main means of written communication where you work is through emails, reps should make sure they keep the email chain from when they first raise the issue and including any replies from managers.

If they refuse to give a reply or if the reply is unsatisfactory you need to consider raising a grievance. You can use the information from the HS2 form to help with dates, details of the problem, whom it was reported to, etc. If you are considering raising a grievance it is a good idea to talk to your area organiser or branch secretary first.

The advantage of the grievance procedure is that there are time limits. If management still fail to agree with you at the first stage, under most Usdaw agreements the area organiser (or on some sites the branch secretary or convenor) has to be involved. They can take the issue up with more senior management and usually sort any problems at this stage.

### Contacting the Inspector

Contacting an inspector should be the last resort. It is always best to try to solve problems through the internal procedures first. But if you do think it is necessary to contact an inspector, speak to your area organiser (or if appropriate your branch secretary/convenor) before you take that step.

For the majority of Usdaw reps, who work in shops, warehouses or offices, it is most likely to be the environmental health department of the local authority. Their phone number should be easily found on the local authority website or from a telephone directory. A telephone call from the rep or, preferably, from the area organiser or convenor should be enough to alert them to the problem.

For reps who work in manufacturing, it will be the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) who are the enforcing authority. To make a complaint to the HSE, you need to email your concerns using: [www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/turep1.dotx](mailto:www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/turep1.dotx) to [turepconcerns@hse.gov.uk](mailto:turepconcerns@hse.gov.uk) The form and the email address are solely for use by trade union safety reps. HSE Concerns and Advice team have strict instructions to forward any reports from trade union safety reps to a senior local inspector to investigate.

Reps are not alone when dealing with a difficult employer and can seek support from your branch, divisional office, area organiser and the health and safety section at head office.

## NIGHT SHIFT DISRUPTS BODY CLOCK

In a recent study, scientists have challenged the widespread belief that shift workers adjust to night shifts.

The study found that workers who had been on night shifts for many years still showed negative effects on sleep health. It also highlighted that the more years a worker had been doing night work the more severe the disruption to the worker's internal body clock.

The bodies failure to adapt to night shifts helps explain why previous research has linked disruption to the internal body clock with long term health risks, including the development of cancer and cardiovascular diseases, as well as metabolic and infectious diseases.

Please see the study at: [warwick.ac.uk search night shift](http://warwick.ac.uk/search/night_shift)

## HERMES FATALITY

Hermes (now called Evri) has been fined £850,000 after a man was crushed to death at one of the company's depots.

The night shift worker was being trained in the use of a trailer mover at the time. While walking backward to move a trailer he was crushed between the arm of the moving trailer and a stationary trailer.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Hermes had failed to properly plan and assess the risks of training taking place in their yard.

More details at: <https://press.hse.gov.uk/2022/06/01/>

TUC STUDY OF BLACK WORKERS' EXPERIENCES

# HEALTH AND SAFETY AND RACISM AT WORK

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.

You can view the report on the TUC website: [www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk) search **Health, Safety & Racism in the workplace**

CALL TO MAKE COVID OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE

# JOB PUTS SOME AT HIGH RISK



The TUC believes the government must now act to classify Covid-19 as an occupational disease and support workers suffering Covid ill-health effects as a result of their job.

The TUC report refers to evidence from the Office for National Statistics on Covid deaths which show that certain occupations experienced much higher rates than the general population. They also describe how many other countries have already acted to recognise Covid as an occupational illness for certain key workers.

The TUC notes that the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC)

which recommends prescription of industrial diseases to the Government. They point out that, in a position paper sent to the Minister in March 2021, IIAC concluded that “there is a clear association between several occupations and increased risk of death from COVID-19.”

If there is recognition of Covid-19 as an occupational disease this would formally recognise the higher risk in certain jobs and provide greater support for affected workers.

Please see the TUC report at: [www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk) search **Covid-19 an Occupational Disease**

MANAGING LONG COVID

The Society of Occupational Medicine has issued guidance on the identification and management of long Covid – particularly regarding return to work.

They argue that a Return to Work plan is crucial to help people with health problems achieve a timely return. Building the plan is a collaborative process which requires the involvement of the affected worker but also HR professionals, health professionals and line managers. Each case must be reviewed on an individual basis so that effective support and workplace adjustments can be provided to ensure they remain in the workplace once they return.

The guide also includes case studies showing how long Covid is being managed in different parts of the UK.

Please see the report at: [www.som.org.uk/sites/som.org.uk/files/Long\\_COVID\\_and\\_Return\\_to\\_Work\\_What\\_Works.pdf](http://www.som.org.uk/sites/som.org.uk/files/Long_COVID_and_Return_to_Work_What_Works.pdf)



## HEALTH AND SAFETY REP

### Angelika Zywojnska

**A**ngelika Zywojnska has been a warehouse operative at Morrisons distribution in Sittingbourne for seven years. She became a health and safety rep in 2018.

#### Why did you become a H&S rep?

I wanted to challenge myself and take the opportunity to be there for my colleagues, making sure they felt safe at work. I'm also branch secretary and became a workplace rep in March this year.

#### Are you part of a team of reps?

I am the only qualified health and safety rep in the fresh department but I work with a team of people who help me in the role and who are my eyes and ears around the building. I am currently supporting a new health and safety rep in the ambient department, showing him the ropes and encouraging him to get more involved and not be scared to speak up.

#### What's involved in the role?

There are a lot of tasks, too many to mention, but the main things are investigations, making sure staff use equipment safely and according to training processes, identifying hazards and making sure they are dealt with immediately, attending incidents to ensure the staff member involved is treated fairly and statements and investigations are carried out properly.

#### Have you made any changes to your workplace?

Health and safety reps had a big role to play during the pandemic. It was really important to make sure everything was clean and sanitised after use, we also enforced the wearing of masks and allowed for more space in the canteen. Colleagues needed the peace of mind that we were looking after their health and safety. Hygiene is still key and something that we don't take lightly. We're always in the midst of

making health and safety changes but everything takes time.

#### Is it a difficult role?

Being a health and safety rep isn't for everyone, it is hard work. You have to be determined and not give up. You have to be patient as issues can take a long time to sort and sometimes it feels like you are getting nowhere. There was a moment in the early days when I wanted to give up but I was inexperienced back then. With time I found my way and now I know how to deal with issues effectively. My advice to other reps would be don't give up, don't put yourself down just because management won't listen, there is always someone who is willing to help, you just need to find them.

#### Where do you go for advice?

I'm in a health and safety WhatsApp group with other Morrisons reps where we share advice about issues and possible solutions – this is a really useful resource. I also have a very good relationship with my health and safety manager and there's a lot of people around me who I can chat to and are always there if I need support.

#### Would you recommend being a H&S rep?

Becoming a health and safety rep was the best decision I ever made. I now see things differently and appreciate things more. I've become more confident at challenging management with issues and feeling proud when they take notice and sort it out. If I wasn't health and safety rep I wouldn't be able to stand in front of 100 people and speak up. I know I can make a change and keep people safe at work. To all those who are thinking of becoming a health and safety rep, just do it, don't be scared. There are many positives and you will gain new knowledge and skills. We all need to challenge ourselves every day to be the best version of ourselves.

# 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](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/legal)

## MONEY & FINANCE

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

## HOLIDAYS

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](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/offers)\*

\*Terms and Conditions for individual offers on the website.

# Find out more [www.usdaw.org.uk/offers](http://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 range of savings plans call **0800 526 249** or visit: **[www.shepherdsfriendly.co.uk/usdaw](http://www.shepherdsfriendly.co.uk/usdaw)**

*Please remember, when investing your capital is at risk.*

## HALFORDS DISCOUNT

**Save 10% at Halfords\***

As a valued Usdaw member, you can save 10% in store and online at Halfords\*. Save on the latest driving accessories, bikes and camping supplies from the UK's leading provider of cycling and motoring services.

\*To find out more go to:

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## ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGERS

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As an Usdaw member, you can save up to 17% on state-of-the-art electric vehicle chargers from EV Future Solutions, including a personal, face-to-face survey worth up to £130.

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\*To find out more go to: **[www.usdaw.org.uk/offers](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/offers)**



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\*To find out more go to:

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



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# STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Doug Russell steps down after more than three decades as Usdaw's health and safety officer and two new training officers are appointed in the North-West

## DOUG RUSSELL

**Health and Safety Officer Doug Russell retires after 36 years of service.**

Doug became Usdaw's very first health and safety officer in 1987 and has spent the last three decades developing Usdaw's health and safety agenda with a number of trailblazing projects.

"The health and safety officer's role was completely new at the time and on my first day I sat at an empty desk!" said Doug, 67. "This was brilliant because it meant I could develop Usdaw's health and safety agenda from scratch.

"I worked with the education department to develop the health and safety training for reps. I was also responsible for writing the health safety handbook for reps, the first of its kind in the trade union movement, and we were the first union to develop the HS2 form (that is used to register a hazard), which was then copied by other unions.

"My favourite part of the job has been spending time with the reps. Health and safety reps are passionate and driven by a sense of justice that employers shouldn't be allowed to put their workers in danger, something I admire very much. I also enjoyed training health and safety reps in Thailand for Tesco Lotus and speaking at the Australian Council of Trade Unions in Sydney.

"Once I retire, I'll be kept busy with work that needs doing around the house and in the garden, and I'll be spending more time helping out in our local community. I also want to wish my successor Tony Whelan the best of luck in this role. I'm sure he will make it his own."



Doug Russell



James Entwistle



Neil Dawson

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Doug has been instrumental in ensuring that health and safety became an integral part of our organising agenda and that we had some of the best trained reps in the trade union movement. Doug is a well-known and popular figure amongst the reps and we will all miss his wealth of knowledge and guidance. I wish Doug the best of luck in his retirement."

## JAMES ENTWISTLE

**James Entwistle is the new training officer based at Usdaw's head office in Salford Quays.**

Previously James was a secondary school maths teacher and prior to that he was a Labour Party organiser who worked in Parliament. He continued his union work as a GMB rep for the local authority in Bury when he moved north and started teaching.

"The team at Usdaw has been really welcoming and it was great to start the job by attending Summer School," said James, 32.

"Part of my remit will be to develop Usdaw's online training and digital courses and I'm hoping my maths skills will come in handy with training reps for negotiations.

"When I was a rep the most

rewarding times are when you get a result for a member, even if it's just getting them the advice they need. So, I'm hoping I can make a similar impact here and enjoy watching the reps progress on their union journeys."

## NEIL DAWSON

**Neil Dawson, a former science teacher, will be joining the education team at the Warrington office as their new training officer.**

Neil is no stranger to the trade union movement, previously supporting his teaching colleagues as a union rep for NASUWT.

Neil spent his first week on the job at Usdaw's residential Summer School in Birmingham.

"The feedback was very positive and the reps were really grateful for the support we had given them," said Neil, 39. "It feels like you're having a big impact and that's one of the most rewarding things about teaching. It was also a valuable opportunity to meet the education team and shadow some of the more experienced training officers.

"I'm really enjoying the job so far and I'm looking forward to getting stuck in and supporting the members."



## SUPPORTING MEMBERS WITH MENTAL HEALTH

The updated guide gives an overview of common mental health conditions and the Equality Act

One in four people will experience a mental health issue at some point in their lives. So as a rep, it's highly likely that at some point you'll be called upon to help a member who's struggling with depression, anxiety or stress – particularly if their condition starts to affect their performance at work.

It can be difficult for members to speak up about a mental health problem due to a fear of being judged, so a well-informed rep can make a real difference.

Our newly-updated guide,

Supporting Members with Mental Health Issues, is an invaluable resource for all Usdaw reps. You'll find an overview of the most common mental health conditions, and guidance for talking to members who might be affected by them.

It also contains a guide to mental health and the Equality Act (Disability Discrimination Act in Northern Ireland) and a list of support organisations to help members get more expert help.

Read online at:

[dtp.usdaw.co.uk/401](http://dtp.usdaw.co.uk/401)

For a complete list of Usdaw publications and to order visit:  
[dtp.usdaw.co.uk/PublicationsCatalogue](http://dtp.usdaw.co.uk/PublicationsCatalogue)

## NEW IN!

### Leaflets & Booklets

**Courses for Usdaw Reps** (Leaflet 292)

**Late-Night Working - Preventing Violence to Staff** (Leaflet 294)

**Legal Plus - Looking After You and Your Family** (Leaflet 312)

**Preventing under-aged sales** (Leaflet 351)

**While you're looking after the shop, who's looking after you?** (Leaflet 362)

**FirstCall Usdaw** (Leaflet 378)

**Supporting Members with Mental Health Issues - an advice guide for Usdaw reps** (Leaflet 401)

**Social Media and Mental Health** (Leaflet 425)

**Retail Workers - Abuse is not part of the job** (Leaflet 429)

**Delivery Drivers - Abuse is not Part of the Job** (Leaflet 430)

**Disability - Reasonable Adjustments** (Leaflet 439)

**Talking about Men's Health - Depression** (Leaflet 441)

**Hidden Disabilities - An advice guide for Usdaw Reps** (Leaflet 446)

**Depression** (Women's Health Series: 3)

**Labour's New Deal For Workers Booklet**

### Posters & Flyers

**Mental Health Issues** (Poster R50)

**Together Against Hate** (Poster R65)

**Abuse is not Part of the Job for Retail Workers** (Poster R66)

**Keep Your Cool** (A4 Poster)

**Show Racism the Red Card - Wear Red Day Poster**

**Puzzled By Pensions? - Salary Exchange Explained**

Email your thoughts and pictures to us at: [network@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:network@usdaw.org.uk)

# OVER TO YOU



**P46**

Top: STUC women's weekend

Middle Left: Cost of Living campaign at Tesco Stourbridge

Middle right: The Greater Manchester Association Trades Unions Council (GMATUC) event 'Women: Shaping the Trade Union and Civil Justice Movements'.

Bottom left: Southampton Pride

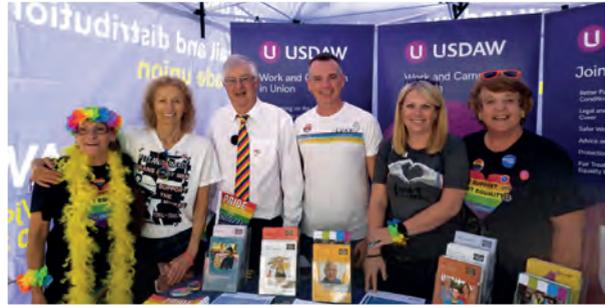
**P47**

Top: Forum meeting before the retirement of, Nigel McMichael Bratt and Alan Humphries, both with long service and fantastic contributions to the Trade Union Movement over many years.

Middle left: Tesco Blackpool Extra Pension Campaign

Middle right: Cardiff Pride

Bottom: Lincoln Pride



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