

NETWORK

THE BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR USDAW ACTIVISTS | NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023



RESPECT WEEK '23

save the date
15 - 21 January



Membership Week

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

www.usdaw.org.uk/mwjan





Network is published bimonthly and distributed to Usdaw activists.



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THE COUNTRY NEEDS A BOLD PLAN OF ACTION

It's fair to say that the past 18 months have been incredibly challenging for our members, and for the union.

As well as all the usual pressures facing workers, we're experiencing huge economic uncertainty. The cost of living crisis is affecting millions of families and low paid workers are bearing the brunt of this. The same workers who kept the economy going during the pandemic are now struggling to make ends meet.

At times of crisis, we need the Government to take control and show leadership. Instead, we have the out-of-control Tories with no plan whatsoever.

I was at the Labour Party conference and I've seen first-hand that we have a government-in-waiting with a bold plan of action on workers' rights, green growth, affordable housing, fixing the NHS and social care, and bringing the country back together after such a long period of division.

We, as a movement, need to be making the case for a Labour landslide. This is why it's so important for reps to keep up the hard work of



recruiting and organising. As trade unionists, we know that there is strength in numbers. With our collective strength we can finally kick out this sleaze-ridden and incompetent Government.

I also want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all reps who continue to do an amazing job for our members, in really difficult circumstances. I wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Paddy Lewis

Usdaw General Secretary

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

Brand new benefits for Usdaw members!



As you know, Usdaw membership comes with access to great offers and savings from a variety of companies. As a trusted service provider, UsdawProtect is now offering three new insurance benefits for your branch members.

- ✓ **Home Insurance Comparison**
- ✓ **Car Insurance Comparison**
- ✓ **Travel Insurance**

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only home
insurance also
available!

UsdawProtect also provides many benefits you may already be aware of, including the Free Accidental Death Cover, shopping discounts, cashback offers and prize draws running throughout the year.

For branch materials such as leaflets, posters and digital advertising please reach out to your regional contact John Eccles:

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UsdawProtect.com



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COST OF LIVING CRISIS CONTINUES

GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS ONLY A STICKING PLASTER



Usdaw has branded the Government's cost of living payments as only a sticking plaster as rising prices continue to devalue wages. Eligible households are set to receive £300 between 31 October and 19 November, which is the second of three payments.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "While any financial help for struggling families is welcome, these one-off payments are only sticking plasters when lasting solutions are needed. At the heart of the cost of living emergency is a crisis of employment rights that leaves workers particularly vulnerable.

"Continual very high price increases, particularly on food items, leave too many workers struggling to make ends meet. Food inflation is nearly double the Government's preferred measure of overall inflation and way ahead of wage increases, so that amounts to a real terms pay cut for too many.

"Recently the real Living Wage rates were increased to £12 per hour and £13.15 in London. They are calculated on the basis on what workers need to cope with the rising cost of living. Meanwhile the Government's so-called 'National Living Wage' remains at £10.42, with ministers hinting it will exceed £11 in April. That

is simply not enough and Usdaw continues to campaign for £12 now as a step towards £15.

"It is now long overdue that the Government allows the Low Pay Commission to take cost of living into account and creates a legally binding genuine living wage for all workers. Alongside this, we need a new deal for

workers to tackle insecure employment.

"Only Labour has pledged to deliver within 100 days of coming into government the new deal Usdaw has long campaigned for. Labour has the policies and ideas that can put the country back on track and deliver the change our members desperately need."

MEMBERSHIP FOR WEEK ENDED 28 OCTOBER 2023

South Wales & Western	43,099
Eastern	51,079
Midlands	48,105
North Eastern	49,900
Scottish	37,269
Southern	50,711
North West	76,660
Total	356,823

NEW IN!

Online Courses

ABCs of ICT – IT bitesize course

www.usdaw.org.uk/ABCsofIT

CV Writing – IT bitesize course

www.usdaw.org.uk/cvwriting

Data Protection Online course

www.usdaw.org.uk/ProtectionOnline

Fit for Maths – Bitesize Maths course

www.usdaw.org.uk/fitformaths

Getting Started: The Role of the Rep

www.usdaw.org.uk/gettingstarted

Home Study 1: Unity is Strength

www.usdaw.org.uk/homestudy

Home Study 2: Democracy in Usdaw

www.usdaw.org.uk/homestudy

Home Study 3: Collective Bargaining Part 1

www.usdaw.org.uk/homestudy

Home Study 3: Collective Bargaining Part 2

www.usdaw.org.uk/homestudy

Maths and Money Matters

www.usdaw.org.uk/mathsmatters

Mind Your Head – Mental Health course

www.usdaw.org.uk/mindyourhead

More Than Words – English course

www.usdaw.org.uk/MoreThanWords

Pensions Home Study

www.usdaw.org.uk/PensionsHomeStudy

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

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 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.org.uk/401

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

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

ALARMING INCREASE IN SHOPLIFTING

Police recorded crime statistics for England and Wales show that in the 12 months to June there was a 25 per cent increase in shoplifting. This continues the trend of persistent quarterly increases after a dramatic decrease during the pandemic.

Usdaw's annual survey of over 7,500 shopworkers found that 34 per cent of incidents of violence, threats and abuse related to shoplifting and armed robbery, which is not only higher than in 2019 but also more than double the 2016 level.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Shoplifting is not a victimless crime, theft from shops has long been a major flashpoint for violence and abuse against

shopworkers.

"Having to deal with repeated and persistent shoplifters can cause issues beyond the theft itself like anxiety, fear and, in some cases, physical harm to retail workers. This 25 per cent increase in shoplifting is further evidence that we are facing an epidemic of retail crime, which is hugely concerning.

"Labour has committed to giving shopworkers 'Freedom From Fear' and delivering on our campaign objectives. The shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper has committed the next Labour Government to: 13,000 more neighbourhood police officers with guaranteed patrols in town centres; Respect Orders to ban repeat offenders from town centres; a

standalone offence for assaulting a worker serving the public and will end the £200 threshold for investigating and prosecuting shop theft.

"Usdaw is urging our members and the wider shopping public to sign a new House of Commons petition that seeks to protect retail workers from violence, threats and abuse by extending the Scottish protection of workers law to the rest of the UK.

"The Government has repeatedly blocked that, so this petition offers them a last chance before the election to take a step in the right direction."

The petition can be signed at <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/647093>



CHRISTMAS ISN'T WORKING

'SUPER SATURDAY' BUSIEST IN RETAIL



Usdaw has called on retail employers to give their staff a decent break over the Christmas and New Year festive season, after research suggests that 23 December is set to be the busiest in-store shopping day of the year and has been dubbed 'Super Saturday'.

Usdaw secured legislation to stop large stores opening on Christmas Day and has been talking to retailers about staying closed on Boxing Day.

Some do not plan to open on 26 December and the union is hoping others will follow suit.

Shops can open for 150 hours a week in the run-up to Christmas and many do. Facing high levels of abuse, threats and violence on a daily basis, the least shopworkers can hope for is a decent break over the festive period.

For those retailers who do open, Usdaw has negotiated a number of

national agreements for shops to be staffed with genuine volunteers only and workplace reps are supporting members to help make sure that happens at store level.

Usdaw is also asking shoppers who shop on Boxing Day to treat the staff with respect and understand they would most likely rather be at home with their families.

www.usdaw.org.uk/Campaigns/Xmas-isn-t-working

A NEW DEAL FOR WORKERS

RISING PRICES DEVALUING WAGES

Usdaw is calling for the Government to address the cost of living crisis after the latest Retail Price Index, RPI, (inflation figure) dipped to 6.1 per cent.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Despite growth in regular pay, low-paid workers feel no better off due to high inflation, high interest rates, rising rents and cost pressures that are significantly over and above the headline rate. In fact, some prices, such as petrol and diesel, are rising steadily again and food inflation, although easing slightly, continues to put huge pressure on

working families.

"Short-term support measures with ongoing cost of living pressures are only sticking plasters and are not enough to help those struggling to make ends meet. Our members need lasting solutions with a new deal for workers, which includes a £12 minimum wage, sick pay, a proper social security system, job security and fair treatment for all workers.

"Only Labour is pledged to deliver the new deal Usdaw has long campaigned for within 100 days of coming into government."

The deal will include:

- Making work pay with a genuine living wage that people can actually live on.
- Banning zero-hours contracts.
- Ending fire and rehire.
- Giving workers basic rights from day one.
- Making work more family friendly.
- Tackling sexual harassment.
- Ensuring that unions can stand up for their members.
- Boosting collective bargaining, to improve workers' pay, terms and conditions

www.usdaw.org.uk

Respect for Shopworkers Week 2023

Respect for Shopworkers Week returned to workplaces in November. All across the country, Usdaw activists held campaign days encouraging the public to treat retail workers with respect and dignity.

"I want to thank everyone who got involved in this year's Respect Week," said Paddy Lillis. "Thanks to your hard work, we held over 1,000 campaign events and got the message out across the media that abuse is not part of the job."

"Our reps and activists have again surpassed all expectations and made the campaign a success."



Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper joins Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis and Tesco Covent Garden colleagues to launch the annual Respect for Shopworkers Week



Primark, Hastings





Scottish Labour Party leader Anas Sarwar joins members at Sainsbury's Darnley, Glasgow

Tesco, Newmarket





Usdaw reps from across the retail sector gathered in Manchester in October for the Retail Trades Conference. The second-largest conference in the union calendar, Retail Trades is an important opportunity for delegates to come together, learn from each other and stay informed of the wider work of the union.

All seven propositions brought before the conference were passed unanimously. The delegates also heard some important updates from the union's national officers, as well as speeches from the general secretary and deputy general secretary.

Paddy Lillis
General secretary

Paddy Lillis gave an update on the union's campaigning work and re-affirmed the union's call for a general election and a Labour

Government.

"We're making the strongest possible case to employers for better pay and conditions and we're campaigning for targeted support for low-income households," said Paddy. "We need a new deal for workers including a real living wage, a normal hours contract, an end to one-sided flexibility, a ban on zero-hours contracts, improved sick pay and a proper social security system. We're also going to continue to campaign on the issues that matter to our members, including Freedom From Fear, technology and automation, and the crisis on the high street.

"There will be a general election next year. Everything we do from the day we're born until the day we die is affected by politics, so we need a government that listens to us. We've got a Tory Government that has run out of steam, run out of ideas and

doesn't care what's going on. The economy is in meltdown, inflation is still high, mortgage and rents are through the roof. Fuel, energy, utilities and food are out of control, and we have nearly four million children going to bed hungry every night in the sixth richest country in the world.

"We urgently need a Labour Government, and we'll do everything in our power to help get one elected. We all need to play our part to change the country for the better. If we want to give our members and their families the opportunity they deserve, then we need a Labour Government."

Dave McCrossen
Deputy general secretary

Dave McCrossen paid tribute to the hard work of Usdaw's lay reps and activists.

"Despite the cost of living crisis,



the Union has had a really good year – and that's down to our reps. We've recruited 8,000 more new members than at this point last year and that increase is reflected in every employer that we deal with. I'm never going to apologise for talking about how much recruitment matters. It's the only way we can continue to grow and continue to have influence and strength when negotiating with the employers. Strength is the only thing employers understand, and our strength comes from the size of our membership.

"Our campaigns help us raise the profile of the organisation, and the representation and advice that you provide on a daily basis makes a really meaningful difference to our members. Our thanks go to the thousands of reps up and down the country. We never forget that you're volunteering your time to help our members."

PROPOSITIONS PASSED AT RETAIL TRADES

Anti-Abuse Signage

A098 Gloucester General

This Retail Trades conference has concerns around the lack of posters describing how 'abuse to shop workers will not be tolerated'. Therefore, conference calls upon all national officers to renegotiate the displaying of signage, looking to increase the size of posters being displayed within stores.

Safety Initiatives

H042 Sussex No.1

Conference calls upon all national officers to ensure that safety initiatives agreed upon at national levels relating to violence and abuse suffered by our retail sector workers are constructively cascaded down to shopfloor level. All to be supported by all local management, consistently applied and NOT at 'individual' management discretion.

Lone Working in the Retail Sector

K215 North West Tesco Retail No.5

This branch calls upon the national Retail Trades conference to prevent lone working in the retail sector. Very often shop workers are exposed to lone working or working with just one other member of staff. This is both dangerous and anti-social.

Self-Scans

K234 NW Argos Sainsbury's Retail No.2

This branch calls upon all national officers who have responsibility for a retail

company to work towards agreeing a company policy that has an upper limit on the number of self-scans that one employee can be responsible for. The stress involved for an employee having responsibility for an unlimited amount of self-scans is not sustainable for the business or the employee.

Think 25

E125 Peterborough Area Tesco

This national Retail Trades conference calls upon the national officers to work with retailers using the 'Think 25' or 'No ID No Sale' scheme to change how the companies manage employees when they have failed a 'Think 25 test purchase' or a 'No ID No Sale'. A colleague with no warnings should not have to be concerned with a final or a second warning, the levels should start as per the disciplinary process.

Child Bereavement Leave

F099 Northern Morrisons

Conference calls upon employers to adopt a child bereavement policy. In many instances, managers are not trained adequately enough to help support in the event of loss of their child.

Gluten Free Food

K033 NW Tesco Retail No.1

Regarding the cost of gluten free foods compared to average food costs. These foods are a necessity, not just a fad, and this branch feels they should be regulated.



A NEW DEAL FOR BRITAIN

Usdaw's delegation of reps and officials attended this year's Labour Party conference in Liverpool in October. The union submitted motions on workers' access to education and skills training, along with addressing the challenges facing retail and high streets.

It was a successful conference for Usdaw with Labour recommitting to a new deal for workers and a pledge to deliver on the aims of Usdaw's long-running Freedom From Fear campaign. Conference also supported Usdaw's calls to address the challenges facing retail and the high street, as well as backing its call for improved access to lifelong learning and training.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Labour leader Keir Starmer clearly demonstrated that he would deliver the change our members so desperately need.

Throughout his keynote speech, Keir Starmer put working people first, understanding their struggles with the cost of living, suppressed pay and insecure work. He understands that we need a new deal for workers on employment rights, excellent public services, community policing to deal with the epidemic of shoplifting and a real living wage.

"We desperately need a Labour Government that will 'level up' and not rely on discredited 'trickle-down' economics. We need a Labour Government that will deliver stability and prosperity for working people everywhere."

ANGELA RAYNER

Usdaw welcomed Labour's deputy leader Angela Rayner recommitting the next Labour Government to delivering a comprehensive new deal for workers within 100 days of coming into power. The new deal will

include:

- Making work pay with a genuine living wage that people can actually live on.
- Banning zero-hours contracts.
- Ending fire and rehire.
- Giving workers basic rights from day one.
- Going further and faster in closing the gender pay gap.
- Making work more family friendly.
- Tackling sexual harassment.
- Ensuring that unions can stand up for their members.
- Boosting collective bargaining, to improve workers' pay, terms and conditions.

YVETTE COOPER

The shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper pledged that the next Labour Government will deliver on the aims of Usdaw's long-running 'Freedom from Fear' campaign, which seeks to prevent



violence, threats and abuse against shopworkers.

Labour will deliver 13,000 more neighbourhood police with guaranteed patrols in town centres; Respect Orders to ban repeat offenders from town centres; a standalone offence for assaulting a public service worker and will end the £200 threshold for investigating and prosecuting shop theft.

LIFELONG LEARNING

Conference backed Usdaw's call for Labour to ensure:

- Support for the further education institutions and training providers that are crucial to the delivery of meaningful and effective lifelong learning for workers.
- Workers have a right to paid time off for lifelong learning and training.
- Reform of the Apprenticeship Levy into a 'Growth and Skills Levy'.
- Workers have a voice in decisions made, locally and nationally, about Labour's skills strategy and how the skills budget is used.

LABOUR WOMEN'S CONFERENCE



Labour women's conference, which included Usdaw delegates, backed Usdaw's call for a better deal for working parents and carers on paid leave.

Usdaw's original motion was composited with sister unions: CWU, FBU, Musicians' Union and ASLEF. The composited motion also called for:

- Legislation for new measures to boost rights for flexible working, bringing in more pay transparency and toughening

employee rights to get information on pay.

- Increased, affordable childcare provision for parents and carers who work non-standard hours including nights and weekends.
- Ensure access to affordable childcare for all, including access to wraparound childcare.
- Introducing concrete measures to ensure that the cost of childcare is reduced.

USDAW AND THE CO-OP

Usdaw joined the leading Labour voices and the Co-op at a fringe meeting organised by Policy Exchange to address shoplifting, violence and abuse, confronting the crime epidemic faced by retailers and shopworkers.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis called for the Government to take retail crime seriously by "creating a specific offence of abusing, threatening or assaulting a retail worker; delivering the resources to enable co-ordination between police forces and retailers; developing a single, national reporting tool so that we can gather accurate data and support retail workers on the front line; providing support to those who have been a victim of abuse or crime at work, and funding recovery programmes which can remove the blight of addiction from our communities."

USDAW AND THE ASSOCIATION OF CONVENIENCE STORES (ACS)

Usdaw joined with the Association of Convenience Stores at a fringe meeting on high streets and highlighted the important role of local shops on high streets and neighbourhood parades.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis called for a "new economic framework to replace a broken business rates system, with a view to levelling the playing field between online and stores, to help drive investment in good quality retail jobs. We need proper funding for local authorities, to make high streets places that people can access and that people want to visit; and we need better pay and secure work for retail workers with a new deal, including firm measures to tackle the growing problem of retail crime."

Find out more about how Usdaw works with the Labour Party at:
www.usdaw.org.uk/labour



PUTTING WORKING PEOPLE FIRST

The Labour Party was founded to represent the interests of working people in this country. Over its history it has fought to improve their lives and also those of their families and many of the most vulnerable groups in our society. The industrial strength of trade unions can deliver for members in the workplace, but we need political strength. The rules governing how trade unions can operate, the fundamental employment rights that workers rely on, and the wider policies affecting people's lives are all decided on by governments.

What has Labour done for us?

Strong Labour Governments, working on behalf of our members and working people across the

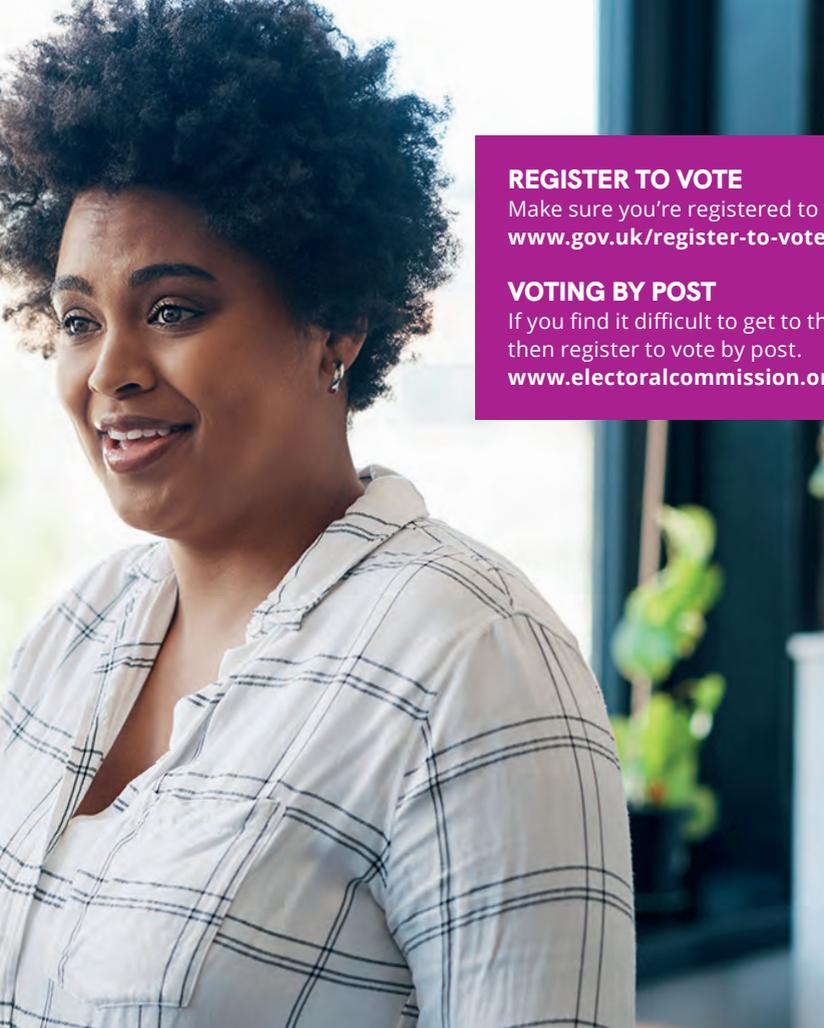
country have a proven track record of delivery. They have achieved fundamental changes that have left a lasting legacy and improved all of our lives. They created the NHS, decriminalised homosexuality and scrapped section 28, ended the death penalty, outlawed racial discrimination, introduced the first ever national minimum wage and equal rights for part-time workers, introduced Sure Start and Winter Fuel Payments, provided trust funds for children, created a devolved Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly, introduced a legal right to paternity leave and a legal right to 24 days' paid holiday, introduced the child tax credit system, and improved workers' rights by establishing a legal right to be accompanied by a trade union representative in disciplinary and

grievance procedures.

What will the next Labour Government do?

Labour's New Deal for Working People will include: banning zero hour contracts, day one rights for unfair dismissal, sick pay, parental leave, the right to flexible working, paid family and carers' leave, increasing statutory pay, extending maternity and paternity leave, fairer redundancy laws, pay for cancelled shifts where not enough notice was given, closing gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps and stronger collective bargaining rights.

Labour will also be focusing on other issues that affect working people including sustainable jobs, creation of green jobs, good quality childcare, affordable housing, reforming social care, providing



REGISTER TO VOTE

Make sure you're registered to vote.

www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

VOTING BY POST

If you find it difficult to get to the polling station on the day, then register to vote by post.

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/postalvote

Work With Labour

There are many opportunities to engage with Labour politicians at local and national levels. Usdaw members and reps will be used to organising Usdaw campaigns. Wherever you can, invite Labour politicians to support your campaigns either in person, through their newsletter, or on social media. Offer the support of your local branch in return and work towards building a link with the Labour Party all year round. This means that our elected representatives keep up-to-date with the issues that matter to Usdaw members, and are better placed to address them when it comes to making policy.

Become a Regional Political Activist

One of the simplest ways to support a Labour Government is to join Usdaw's Political Activists Programme which provides you with the training and development you need to achieve your political ambitions. For more information www.usdaw.org.uk/jointheteam



Wherever possible, Usdaw members are encouraged to join the Labour Party. Becoming a member of the Labour Party helps to ensure Usdaw's priorities are heard by the people who make the decisions about our day-to-day lives. As an Usdaw member, you can join the Labour Party at a discounted rate by selecting the reduced rate: labour.org.uk/join

a world class health service, investment in early years, ending violence against women and girls and making Brexit work.

How do we get a Labour Government?

There are some key actions that Labour supporters, members and activists can take to support a Labour victory.

Vote Labour

It isn't just general elections where we've got an opportunity to show support for Labour. Voting Labour in by-elections, council elections, and mayoral elections in the run up to the 2024 general election gives a good indication of how much support Labour actually has, how strong it is, and where it is.

In October, Labour overturned

huge Conservative majorities to win two by-elections in Mid Bedfordshire and Tamworth. Labour emerged victorious in Mid Beds - Nadine Dorries' former seat - which the Tories have held for more than 90 years and had a majority of more than 24,000. The Conservatives were also defeated in Tamworth, where Labour's Sarah Edwards overturned a majority of more than 19,000.

These results really matter and set the tone for the elections that follow. They show that Labour is engaging with the issues that matter, providing credible solutions to the problems that people face within their day-to-day lives and building public confidence in a Labour Government.

READY FOR A CHALLENGE?

Usdaw's organising Academy provides an intensive six-month training and developmental programme for experienced reps who are keen to learn new skills

The Usdaw organising Academy will be opening its doors in May next year. We're looking for dedicated, committed reps to work full-time for the union – on secondment from their employer – for an intensive six month programme where they will become more confident, effective organisers and recruiters.

Over 850 reps have passed through the Academy since it began and many graduates, further down the line, become area organisers. There is nothing else in the trade union movement quite like it in terms of the time and resources dedicated to training and developing reps.

We are looking for reps who have experience of recruiting and organising and who are keen to learn new skills.

Reps who are selected to take part in the Academy will find themselves in plenty of new situations and will have many challenges to overcome, but they will be supported every step of the way.

As always, demand for places will be high. To be considered, reps need to show a firm commitment to the work of the union and have demonstrated they are capable of organising and recruiting beyond their own workplace. The programme is demanding, but extremely rewarding and reps who

have completed it speak fondly of their time there and often talk about it being a 'great experience', 'the best six months I could possibly have imagined' and 'a life changing six months'.

The application form for the 2024 Organising Academy is available either via email or hard copy. Please contact your regional office or area organiser if you would like an application pack.

Information will soon be available on the Usdaw website:

www.usdaw.org.uk/academy

Please note that the strict deadline for applications to be received at head office is **Friday, 26 January 2024**.

2023 Academy graduates came together in November to celebrate their achievements





WILL YOUR PENSION BE TAXED?

If your total income exceeds your personal allowance of £12,570, you will have to pay tax and HMRC is able to collect the tax that is owed via a PAYE code

From April 2023, the Government awarded state pensions a 10.1 per cent increase known as the triple lock guarantee.

If you retired after 6 April 2016, when the state pension was reformed, the full 'new' rate now stands at £203.85 per week (£10,600 a year), if you retired prior to 6 April 2016 and are in receipt of the 'old' basic state pension, the full rate is £156.20 a week (£8,122 a year).

Everyone is entitled to a personal allowance (unless you are a very high earner) of £12,570 (2023/24), which means that you can earn up to this amount without having to pay any tax.

If you do have income from other sources however, for instance a private or workplace pension or employment, and your total income exceeds your personal allowance,

you will have to pay tax and HMRC is able to collect the tax that is owed from one of these other sources, via a PAYE code.

A problem that could potentially occur going forward, however, is that if you are in receipt of a 'large' state pension - with no other income source - which exceeds your personal allowance, HMRC will not be able to automatically deduct the tax that is due.

The state pension is scheduled to increase again next year by 8.5 per cent (albeit the Government is looking to limit this to around 7.8 per cent and 7.9 per cent).

Whilst this rise will still result in the old and new state pensions being just below the personal allowance threshold, if anyone receives a 'large' state pension (for instance if they have a State Earnings Related Pension (SERPS)

entitlement or State Graduated Pension in addition to the normal rate of state pension), this could push them over the tax threshold which could cause a problem.

The issue here is that if you exceed your personal allowance threshold and HMRC cannot offset your tax against any other source of income, HMRC will write to you after the end of the tax year (after 5 April) and will ask you to pay the tax that is due before 31 January the following year.

For more information please access this link provided by the Low Income Tax reforms Group:- www.litr.org.uk/tax-guides/pensioners

Alternatively The Pension Service (part of the DWP) can help with pensions, benefits and retirement information at www.gov.uk or phone 0800 731 7898.



ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH

GARY HANVIDGE

Usdaw rep and online delivery driver Gary Hanvidge stood to become a shop steward in 2022, and in 2023 he was elected as a union learning rep. Gary, 52, has worked at Sainsbury's for 26 years and recently won the regional union learning rep award.

Why did you stand to become a rep?

I have worked at Sainsbury's for 26 years and realised I knew a lot of the company policies and procedures. I decided to put that knowledge to good use by becoming a rep. Our project worker Caroline Baird approached me and said I would be a perfect fit for the union learning

rep role. The role is less reactive than the shop steward's role and more proactive, which gives you time to plan. It's a great deal of fun and so rewarding.

How did you find Usdaw's training?

I left school with O grade arithmetic and that was it. After school, I went to work and hadn't set foot in a classroom since then. The training Usdaw offers is brilliant. I completed the rep and the union learning rep courses. My favourite part of the training was the role playing. We were put in a variety of scenarios from dealing with someone who doesn't want to join, to a manager

not letting you have time off to do your union duties. The aim was to negotiate your way through the scenarios. It was really good fun and teaches you quite a bit about what you can and can't say. The tutors Craig Millar and Martyn Warwick were also fantastic.

Have you done any stand down?

I've done two weeks of stand down and I loved it. I got to go into the likes of Morrisons, Tesco, IKEA, Primark, Poundland and Greggs. I really enjoyed it because I got to learn about different companies and the issues affecting staff in these workplaces.

Have you set up any training courses?

I use Yammer (Sainsbury's internal social media) to publicise what the union is doing. I get a lot of engagement on this and there was a huge amount of interest when I suggested running a British Sign Language (BSL) course. We had so many people putting themselves forwards that we had to run two courses to accommodate everyone. We even had a couple of people join the union in order to do the course.

Why was there such a huge interest in the BSL course?

We have customers who are deaf, as well as colleagues who know autistic children. For example, one colleague has a little boy who comes in. He's autistic and non-verbal and she wanted to learn BSL to help her communicate with him. She was so excited about doing the course that she googled some basic sign language phrases. You should have seen his beaming smile when she signed 'hello' to him. It was unbelievable. These small actions can have such huge ripples.

You've set up a reading hub in your Darnley store, can you tell us about that

I knew I wanted to set up a reading hub in my store so I went on Facebook to see if there were any local book suppliers that would be willing to donate to the hub. Luckily, I found someone who said I could have as many books as I wanted. Then next step was setting up the bookcase (which was donated by my wife) and then encouraging people to borrow the books.

What prompted you to set up the reading hub?

There were a lot of factors that led me to setting up the reading hub. I have a motto that 'every day is a school day'. I have two autistic children and know the importance of being able to read to them and enjoy a few peaceful moments. Also, my father has dementia and when I read to him, he doesn't ask who I am. Instead, he's transported to a time when his parents read to him or when he used to read to me as a child. These little moments are so important in helping you connect with the people you love.

What has the engagement been like with the reading hub?

It's been very positive. I've got one colleague who borrowed Peppa Pig so that he could read it to his autistic granddaughter. And I had another colleague who was very

complimentary about the whole initiative.

Congratulations on winning the regional union learning rep award, how do you feel?

I only just found out and it's amazing news. I had to sit outside for a few moments because I was so happy. It's the first time in my life that I have won anything. I'm looking forward to attending the national Organising Awards in January.

What have you got planned for the coming few months?

I'm going to be doing a Freedom from Fear campaign during Respect Week and I have invited a Labour MP to attend. The equalities committee is also turning up to help.

In January, I'm doing eight weeks of stand down, which I'm looking forward to. At some point, I would like to do Summer School and apply for the Academy.



Gary in the reading hub at Sainsbury's Darnley

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

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

network@usdaw.org.uk

TAKE THE PAIN OUT OF PERSONAL INJURY CLAIMS

Make sure your members know about FirstCall Usdaw, the union's free accident claim cover where they get to keep 100 per cent of any compensation awarded

Usdaw recently conducted a survey to find out how many members were aware that personal injury cover for them and their families was included in their union membership.

The survey received a staggering 15,000 responses from members and found:

- Thirty two per cent of members didn't know that accident and injury cover was included in their membership.
- Fifty one per cent didn't know that Usdaw covers them for accidents

outside of work.

- Over 500 members didn't make a claim when they had an accident because they didn't know they could make a claim.

WHAT IS FIRSTCALL USDAW?

FirstCall Usdaw is an important part of Usdaw's membership. It's a personal injury claim service for members and their families. It covers Usdaw members for any accident, anywhere in the UK and whilst on a package holiday abroad*. This also includes claims for members

who have been the victim of violent crime. Family members who live with the member are also covered for any non-work related accidents, anywhere in the UK, plus whilst they are on package holidays abroad*

This means no legal costs, no fees, and no deductions from any compensation received.

It is vital that members know the service is available to them. If members go to a private solicitor or the solicitors arranged by their car insurance company, 25 per cent or more of their compensation could



be deducted by those solicitors. With Usdaw they get to keep every penny.

How is the service rated by members?

Over two thirds of members who used the service rated it 5 stars.

What can reps do to spread the word?

Forty per cent of members said they first found out about FirstCall via their rep, so reps are already doing a great job. However, there are a few simple steps reps can take to make sure all Usdaw members are aware of this important benefit.

Talk about FirstCall Usdaw in inductions

When recruiting new members, make sure the induction includes an explanation of the legal services available to members such as free accident cover.

Usdaw's leaflet *10 Good Reasons to*

Join Usdaw outlines the benefits of being an Usdaw member.

www.usdaw.org.uk/261

Make sure the Usdaw noticeboard is up-to-date

Forty per cent of members prefer to hear about Usdaw services through their workplace noticeboard, therefore make sure your noticeboard is up-to-date. Contact the PersonalInjuryTeam@usdaw.org.uk at head office to order a Noticeboard Pack, which contains posters about the important legal services Usdaw provides.

FirstCall Usdaw card

Hand out the FirstCall Usdaw card, like the one shown below, to members. These can be ordered from your local Usdaw office.

Share successes

Almost every edition of *Arena* contains a story about a member who has used the service. You can pin these stories on

your noticeboard or talk about the wins in your workplace. Remember to keep confidentiality where appropriate.

Legal Plus Awareness Days

Hold a Legal Plus Awareness Day to promote the range of legal services available from the union. A stand/table somewhere visible in the workplace with Legal Plus literature and FirstCall Usdaw merchandise is a great way to draw attention and engage with both existing members and potential new members.

www.usdaw.org.uk/LegalPlusDays

HOW TO CONTACT FIRSTCALL USDAW

Members can contact FirstCall Usdaw on **0800 055 6333** to get in touch with one of our expert solicitors. The lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



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



DISABILITY HISTORY MONTH

Disability History Month takes place each year between 16 November and 16 December. This provides an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of people living with a disability, and to raise awareness of the fact disability discrimination is still widespread. The theme this year is 'Disability, Children and Youth'.

One in five people of working age are disabled, 80 per cent of whom have invisible impairments. These numbers applied to Usdaw's membership would equate to more than 50,000 of our members having a hidden disability, and many more will have children or young family members who do.

Reasonable adjustments are key to supporting disabled workers to get on in work, but many employers are unaware of, or ignore, the rights of disabled workers under the Equality Act (Disability Discrimination

Act in Northern Ireland).

The medical model still dominates thinking around disability. This approach holds disabled people responsible for their condition rather than putting the responsibility on society and employers to provide the support and adjustments disabled people need to participate equally.

And for members who are parents or carers of disabled children, employers need to go further to support them too.

It's for these reasons that it's especially important that we continue to recognise Disability History Month and promote our Not All Disability Is Visible campaign.

The Disability History Month website states that the focus on children and youth is around 'the Experience of Disablement amongst children and young people in the past, now and what is needed for

the future'.

The event is grounded in the social model and human rights approach, in opposition to stigma, stereotypes, negative attitudes and socially created barriers.

Every action helps to raise awareness and show solidarity with disabled workers and members with disabled children in your workplace.

If you would like to order Not All Disability Is Visible campaign materials this Disability History Month, or at any other time of year: Call 0161 224 2804 or email equalitymatters@usdaw.org.uk

NOT ALL DISABILITY IS VISIBLE

For more information on this campaign visit: www.usdaw.org.uk/HiddenDisability

WORLD AIDS DAY - 1 DECEMBER 2023

HIV AT WORK

In the UK, more than 105,000 people are living with HIV and an estimated 38 million people live with the virus across the world.

Advances in treatment mean that people with HIV in the UK can expect to live a long and healthy life and society has the tools to stop HIV transmissions for good. But stigma, discrimination and ignorance continue to surround the virus and this has a negative impact on members living and working with HIV.

Because of the stigma surrounding HIV under employment law (specifically the Equality Act or the Disability Discrimination Act in Northern Ireland) HIV is one of only five conditions that is considered a disability from the point of diagnosis. This means that employers who are aware of a worker's HIV positive status must make reasonable adjustments to the workplace environment, to job duties and to policies and procedures to prevent them being disadvantaged at work. People living with HIV are also protected from harassment and victimisation at work, or from being



treated unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of their HIV status.

World AIDS Day exists to shine a light on the real experiences of people living with HIV today, raise awareness and remember those who have lost their lives to the virus. To find out more and to discover how to get involved in supporting World Aids Day visit: worldaidsday.org/join-in

THE CARER'S LEAVE ACT

The Carer's Leave Act will give employees a legal right to a week's unpaid leave to care for someone. The details are yet to be published but here's what we know so far.

The right to take leave will be a day one right, meaning that there is no minimum service requirement, and will be available to employees who need to provide or arrange care for someone with a long-term care need.

Long-term care is likely to be defined as someone who requires care for more than three months, has a disability as defined in the Equality Act or the Disability Discrimination Act (Northern Ireland) or has care needs related to old age.

The Carers Leave Act, which received Royal Assent in May 2023, is expected to come into force next April. Whilst the introduction of a period of leave for carers is to be welcomed, without pay its reach and effectiveness will be limited.

We will continue to inform reps and members of the details as and when they become known.

LAW CHANGE

A STEP FORWARD FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING

The law on flexible working is changing in Spring 2024 enabling employees to make two rather than one request in any 12-month period and requires employers to respond to requests within two months, rather than three months, as is currently the case.

Whilst these changes are a step in the right direction more needs to be done to make the right work for Usdaw members. Not least it remains a right only to ask for changes and as such employers

have a right to turn down requests.

Although the Government has committed to make it a day one right, this is problematic as it assumes that members can freely negotiate flexible working as soon as they step into a job but we know that the majority of Usdaw members feel it is risky to ask for flexible working because they worry they will be perceived as unreliable; this makes it harder to get extra hours or future work.

A TUC and Mother Pukka survey

of working mums found that two in five (42 per cent) would not feel comfortable asking about flexible working in a job interview.

This is why Usdaw is working with the TUC and others to press for changes that require employers to publish possible flexible working options in all job adverts and give successful applicants a day one right to take up those options.

www.tuc.org.uk/news/half-working-mums-dont-get-flexibility-they-ask-tuc-survey



MAPPING THE WORKPLACE

Mapping is a great tool for health and safety reps as it can help you to organise your time more effectively, to identify colleagues who can help and to plan your inspections in the workplace.

Why Health and Safety Mapping Works

It can identify problem areas or jobs which carry higher risk and need more attention from the employer. And, as problems get resolved, it can be a powerful way of measuring success.

How to Start Mapping Your Workplace

The starting point is to draw a rough map of the workplace. In a large workplace, for example, there will

be many different areas including the delivery yard, the warehouse, freezer, various departments on the shop floor, car park, meeting rooms/ staff rest room, etc. The map needs to identify the different areas and to be large enough to write on.

For each area think about the health and safety issues, for example on checkouts that may include manual handling, checkout chairs, staffing levels and breaks, temperature, abuse from customers or other issues.

When you are doing a workplace inspection it can help to remind you of the issues to look out for as you go round. It can also show you what progress you are making on the issues as some get removed and new ones get added.

If there are several reps in a larger

workplace it is a good idea to draw up the workplace map together.

Mapping for Specific Risks

The union has developed some tools that health and safety reps can use to focus on specific risks in their workplace including slips and trips, body mapping and other common health and safety issues such as temperature.

Health and safety mapping resources:

- Usdaw Slips and Trips tool: www.usdaw.org.uk/slipsandtrips
- Usdaw Body Mapping tool: www.usdaw.org.uk/bodymapping
- Hazards: www.hazards.org/organise

USDAW

HEALTH & SAFETY

- Health & safety officer *Tony Whelan* 0161 249 2474
- Health & safety advisor *Charlie Dodd* 0161 249 244
- General enquiries healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk

HAZARD WARNING

DRIVING SAFELY IN WINTER

We are now moving to the colder part of the year and driving can be a problem when snow and ice is around.

Members who drive lorries or delivery vans can really struggle in winter weather.

Here are some useful pointers for drivers' health and safety reps.

- Drivers and managers should check the weather forecast and road conditions, and consider other routes in bad weather.
- Allow extra time for the journey.
- Employers should provide refresher training on defensive driving in winter.
- It should be clear that the final decision to travel or to attempt to deliver at any location lies with the driver. If the weather deteriorates once they have left the depot, or if a delivery location is unsafe, there should be a clear procedure for the driver to follow.
- Pre-shift checks on tyres, windscreen washers, brakes, lights, etc. are even more

important in winter.

- Winter tyres can make a big difference to driving on snow and ice or on wet roads when the temperature is close to freezing.
- Spare warm clothing, a blanket, hot drinks, a torch, a shovel and suitable footwear are all essential survival kit for winter weather.
- Uniform jackets, trousers etc. should be suitable for winter conditions. If hi-vis jackets are worn over other clothing they should be big enough to fit over bulkier winter wear.
- There should be a system to alert the depot if a driver fails to arrive at expected delivery points and to check that all drivers do return to base.

For all of us, travel to and from work can be a problem when snow and ice is around. Members are advised to follow Government advice on whether it is safe to travel at:

[www.gov.uk search driving adverse weather](http://www.gov.uk/search/driving/adverse-weather)
www.usdaw.org.uk

HEALTH AND SAFETY MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Every month, Usdaw's health and safety section produces a newsletter covering a different topic.

The newsletter will be distributed via email to all health and safety reps. To avoid missing out, ensure that your current email address is kept up to date in your personal details.

If there are any topics you would like us to cover, please get in touch with Usdaw's health and safety team.

The newsletters can be accessed at www.usdaw.org.uk/HSNewsletter or by scanning the QR code below.



CHILL FACTOR

HOW COLD IS TOO COLD?

An employer's heating system can fail and with the seasonal drop in temperature, this can cause low temperatures in a workplace.

Employers are required to provide a reasonable temperature in indoor workplaces. The minimum is 16 degrees Celsius (or 13 degrees Celsius if the work involves physical effort).

Employers are also required to ensure that thermometers are provided for workers and health

and safety reps to measure the temperature at various locations around the workplace. Even if they do not provide thermometers on the walls in workrooms it may be possible to use thermometers or temperature probes that are used for food hygiene controls. If your measurements show areas where the temperature is below 16 degrees celsius, your employer must take other steps to protect workers in those areas. Control

measures include restricting the time that workers spend in the cold area, providing warm clothing and additional breaks to warm up with a hot drink.

If you are not satisfied with your employer's response after consultation, then raise a grievance and contact your area organiser for assistance. Usdaw's full guide to working in cold workplaces:

www.usdaw.org.uk/399

MemberOffers

CARS & TRANSPORT

Car Maintenance
Car Parking: Q-Park
Halfords
Motorfinity
Startrescue
Vauxhall Cars

INSURANCE

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

MONEY & FINANCE

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

HEALTH & BEAUTY

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

LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

Beer52
Bookbeat
Brewser Craft Beer
Cinema at home: Chili.com
Cinema Tickets
Discount Card
English Heritage
Go Ape
Golf Membership
Magazine App: Readly
Magazine Subscriptions
National Trust Gift Cards
Online Ticket Store
Theme Parks & Attractions
TodayTix: Theatre Tickets
Virgin Experience Days

HOLIDAYS

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

SHOPPING

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

MISCELLANEOUS

Big Yellow Storage
Child-safe SIM cards
Mobile Phones
TOTUM Pro Card
International Student ID



Don't forget about the Union's free legal services such as free will writing and Legal Plus. www.usdaw.org.uk/legal

www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

*Terms and Conditions for individual offers on the website.

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

CINEMA TICKETS

Guaranteed savings on cinema tickets

Whether you are seeking action, romance, comedy or thriller, you can get the best prices on cinema tickets every time at local and nationwide chains such as ODEON and Vue. Simply buy vouchers through the site (you have to register first – but it is free) and exchange them for tickets at the cinema.

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

THE
CINEMA
SOCIETY.

KITCHEN APPLIANCES

Discounts on appliances with VIP Whirlpool

Take advantage of exclusive members-only pricing with VIP Whirlpool. Choose from over 850 different products including great brands such as KitchenAid, Whirlpool, Hotpoint and Indesit.

All appliances have already been pre-discounted from washing machines, fridge freezers and dishwashers etc. All prices include FREE UK delivery.

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



EXPERIENCE GIFTS

20% discount on Virgin Experience Days

Looking for an inspirational gift idea or a treat for yourself? Then you've come to the right place! Usdaw have teamed up with Virgin Experience Days to offer you a 20% discount on over 3,000 experiences – including special offers! Delivered instantly via e-voucher, or in the stylish gift packing, you'll be sure to make someone's day truly special!

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



LIFESTYLE VOUCHERS

6% Discount at over 190 of the UK's top retailers

Lifestyle vouchers offer the recipients a choice of everyday treats from the high-street, online, leisure and travel sectors – with over 190 of the UK's biggest brand names. Lifestyle vouchers can be redeemed online, in-store or both, dependent on the retailer. This gives you the full flexibility to choose your redemption method while also maximising your savings. Vouchers can be split and spent across multiple big brand names. Lifestyle gives you the most choice of retailers, all in one place.

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

life:style

*Terms and conditions apply to all benefits. See website for details. Offers subject to change without notice and correct at time of print. Virgin Experience Days - discount code cannot be used against their Excluded Range. The Cinema Society - discounts vary between cinema venues. Please check when purchasing vouchers, registration to The Cinema Society required to access discount. If you do find it cheaper, Cinema Society will price match the tickets that you have found. Tickets should be for the same cinema trip (including but not limited to the same; film, screening time, location and ticket type). Usdaw Discounts & Offers is managed and run on behalf of Usdaw by Parliament Hill Ltd. Further benefits are organised directly by Usdaw Membership Services. See website for details. Neither Usdaw nor Parliament Hill are part of the same group as the providers.

OVER TO YOU

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





Mental Health campaign at Tesco Newmarket Road, Cambridge



Mental Health campaign at Tesco Braintree



Mental Health campaign at Tesco Burnley



Mental Health campaign at Tesco Daventry



Show Racism the Red Card at Tesco Dingwall

Saving you money this Christmas

- **Affordable loans:** borrow from £50 to £15,000 at fair & competitive rates for Usdaw members
- **Save with us:** a simple & convenient way to start saving regularly
- **Plus:** free member benefits and cost-of-living support all year round

Take the financial stress out of the festive season and join your credit union. We're here for you - and your members.

Find out more & join for free today at:
co-operativecreditunion.coop/usdaw

Get in touch via the website to request a free poster to spread the word with your Usdaw members & help support their financial wellbeing

Affordable loans

Simple savings

Free tools & support

Scan code
for website

