

**U** USDAW

# NEW MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT HOME INSURANCE COMPARISON



Usdaw have teamed up with trusted partner UsdawProtect to bring members a brand-new home insurance comparison site.

Rising home insurance premiums mean it's more important than ever to shop around for a good deal. Avoiding auto-renewal and using comparison sites are two of the easiest ways that could help you save money and make sure you find the best policy for you and your home<sup>1</sup>.

Finding the right deal takes just minutes with UsdawProtect to do the hard work for you.



Terms and conditions apply. \*For prize draw rules please visit usdawprotect.com/win150 source: moneysavingexpert.com/insurance/home-insurance/

Usdaw is an Introducer Appointed Representative of UsdawProtect, a trading name of Union Income Benefit Holdings Ltd (UIB) who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority to distribute non-investment insurance products, register number 307575.

This can be checked on the FCA website <a href="https://www.fca.org.uk">www.fca.org.uk</a>

# **OArena**Contents

## **Retail Crime Epidemic**

New stats find alarming 32 per cent increase in shoplifting across England and Wales.

## Member Story - Powerless at Work

Usdaw member talks about the effect prolific shoplifters are having on her work life.

### **Mental Health - Time to Talk**

Why mental health is a trade union issue and resources for members.

## **Know Your Rights - Holidays**

With the holiday season approaching, get informed on your rights to holiday and pay.

## **Know Your Rights - Maternity and Paternity**

Rates will increase in April. Find out how much pay and leave you're entitled to.

## Member Story - Universal Credit

Usdaw member 'Julie' warns about the stresses and pitfalls of the benefits system.

## Register to Vote

In May there will be elections for Councils, Mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners.

# Learning at Work

Usdaw offers a range of learning opportunities to improve skills, knowledge, and careers.

## REGULARS

- News
- Legal Plus
- Pensions
- Equalities
- Health and Safety
- Member Offers and Discounts
- Sign up a colleague
- Photo competition win £50
- Help & Advice



Inflation may be falling but it still remains double the target rate of 2 per cent. Many families are still facing eye-watering price increases on everyday essentials.

people for over two-and-a-half years.

Austerity, which was sold as an economic necessity but was actually a political choice, began under David Cameron's government in 2010 and has been ruthlessly implemented by each successive Conservative prime minister. Billions of pounds worth of cuts have starved our public services, decimated the welfare state with catastrophic consequences and has left us with a stagnant economy and a country in perpetual crisis mode that has seen life expectancy go down and child poverty go up.

After 14 years of Tory rule, the country is fed up with the Conservatives. In two recent by-elections, Labour overturned large Conservative majorities in both Wellingborough and Kingswood. Many commentators believe the writing is on the wall for the Conservatives.

For working people, the sooner we see the back of the Conservatives and their period of chaos, mismanagement and scandal, the better.

Paddy Lillis, General Secretary

Following elections for Usdaw's National Executive Council (NEC), fifteen councillors were elected and will take up their posts following the Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM) in April.

and consists of the president, the general secretary and members elected from each of the union's seven regions, who are elected

The NEC is the governing body of the union

every three years. Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis congratulated the elected councillors and

said: "Their first-hand knowledge of the issues

affecting workers means they will be a strong

voice for our membership, helping Usdaw to shape its policies and campaigns. "I look forward to working with them to tackle the challenges facing Usdaw members, such as the cost of living crisis and the epidemic of retail crime. We will also work towards securing a Labour Government that will work with trade

unions to deliver a better life for our members."

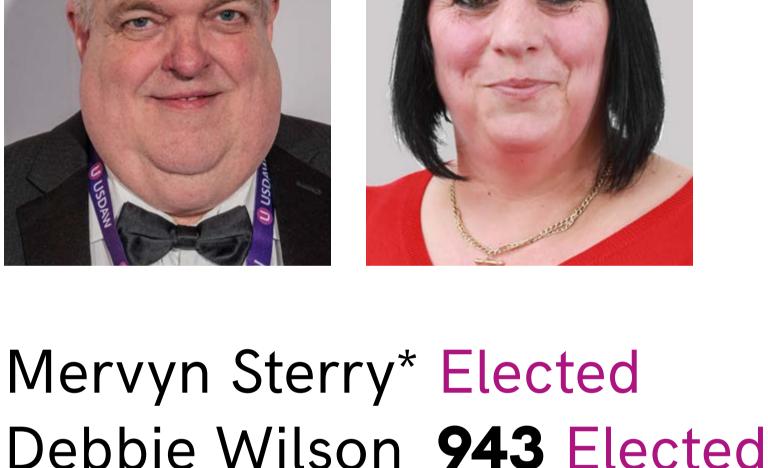
The results of the union's national executive council elections have been received from Civica Election Services and are as follows: South Wales and Western Region



Ryan Aldred 886

Number of eligible voters: 41,964

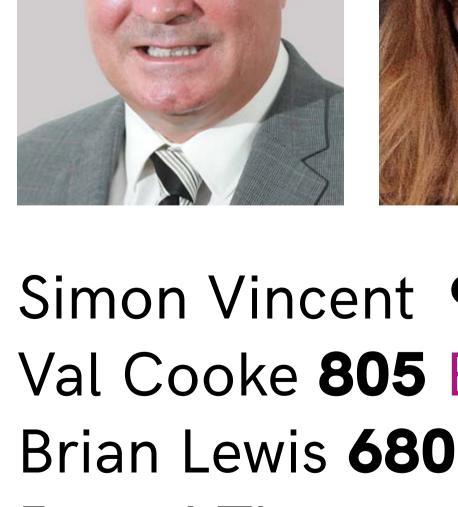
Total number of votes cast: 1,841



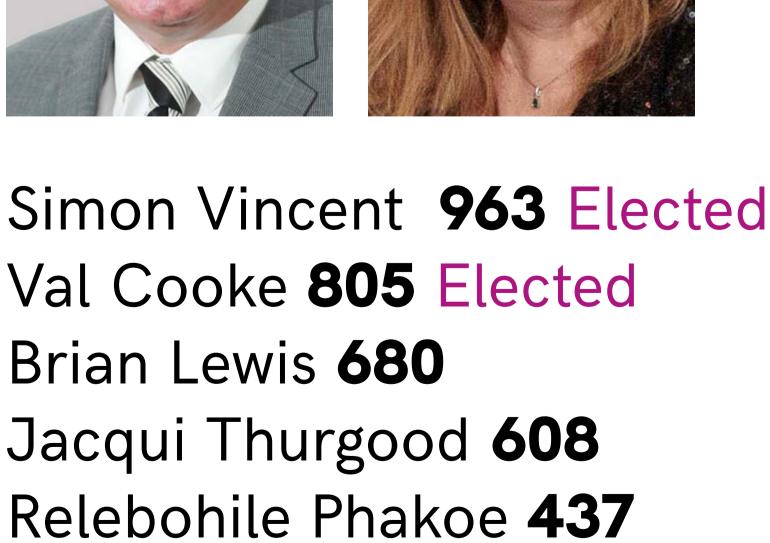
Turnout: 4.4% Number of votes found to be invalid/blank: 12 Total number of valid votes to be counted: 1,829 \*Elected due to branch constraints in align with Rule 9, Section 6, which states: 'No branch of the Union shall be entitled to have more than one of its members serving at any one time on the National Executive Council as an elected member.' Therefore, as Ryan Aldred and Debbie Wilson are both members of Plymouth and District

General Branch, Mervyn Sterry was automatically elected to the first NEC seat.

**Eastern Region** 



Turnout: 4.3%



Number of eligible voters: 48,055

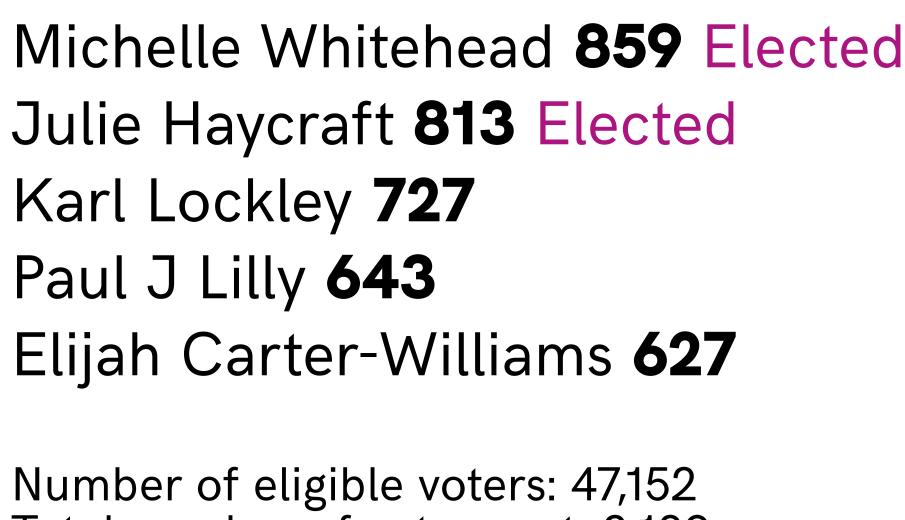
Total number of votes cast: 2,057

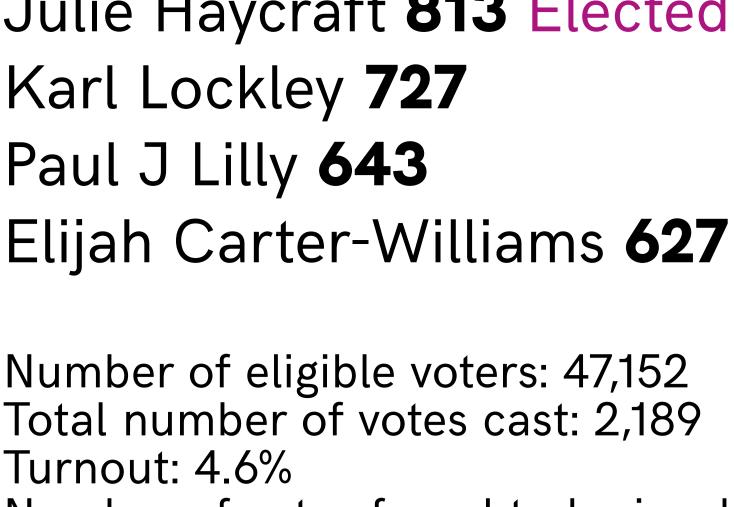
Midlands Region

Number of votes found to be invalid/blank: 4

Total number of valid votes to be counted: 2,053







Jo Crumplin Elected Unopposed

Tracy White Elected Unopposed

# **Scottish Region**

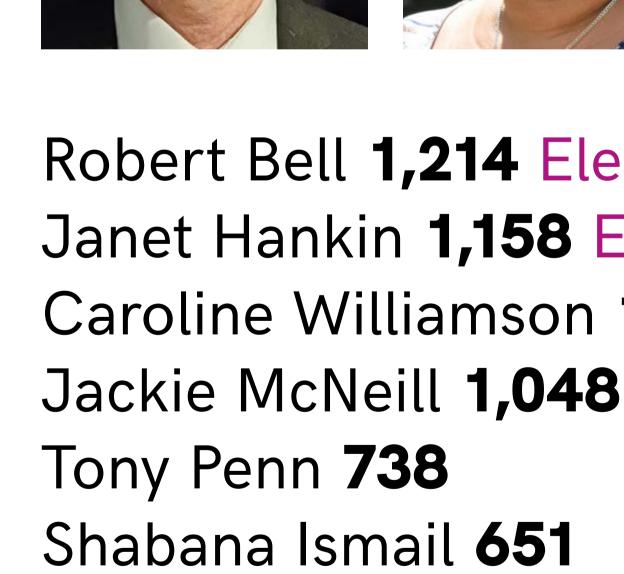


Southern Region



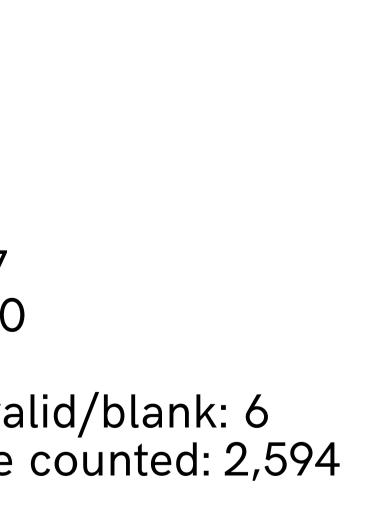
Number of eligible voters: 49,346 Total number of votes cast: 2,052 Turnout: 4.2% Number of votes found to be invalid/blank: 7 Total number of valid votes to be counted: 2,045 North West Region

# Robert Bell 1,214 Elected



Turnout: 3.5%





### specified in subsection 52(2) with regard to the election. The following points should be noted: a) The person appointed under section 51A to carry out the storage and counting of voting papers was Civica Election Services.

CIVICA ELECTION SERVICES

LEGAL STATEMENT

b) The person appointed under section 51A to carry out the distribution of voting papers was Civica Election Services. c) A copy of the register of voters (as at the relevant date) was examined in accordance with section 49(3). The examination took place at our own instance and did not reveal any matter that should be brought to the attention of the trade union. We would draw your attention to sections 52(4), 52(5), and 52(6). Section 52(4) requires that a copy of this report be published and made available to all members of the union within a three month period from today. This does not, however, mean that every member has to be notified individually. Section 52(5) requires that the union will, on request, supply any

member of the union with a copy of the report on payment of a reasonable fee.

As Scrutineers appointed in accordance with Section 49 of the Trade Union and Labour

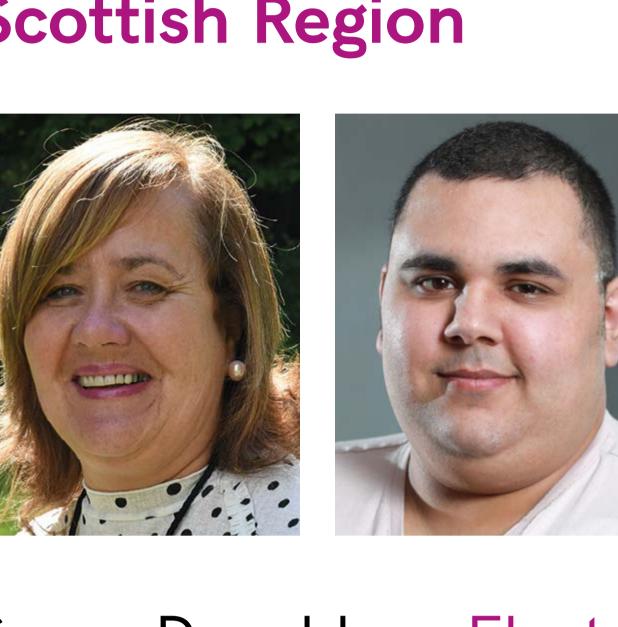
Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (as amended), we are satisfied as to each of the matters

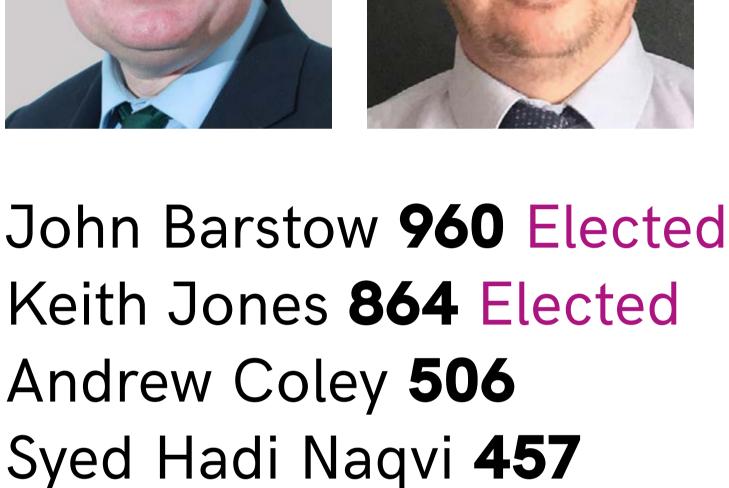
**Alex Lonie, Associate Director** 

**Civica Election Services** 



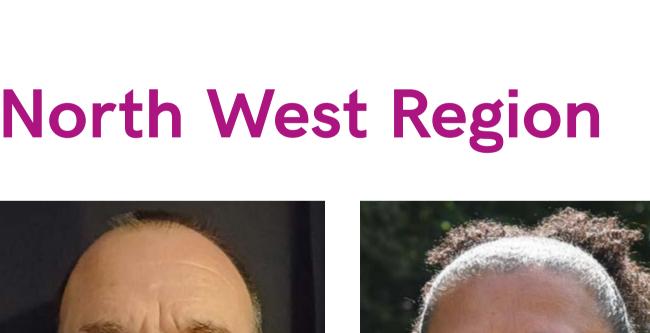


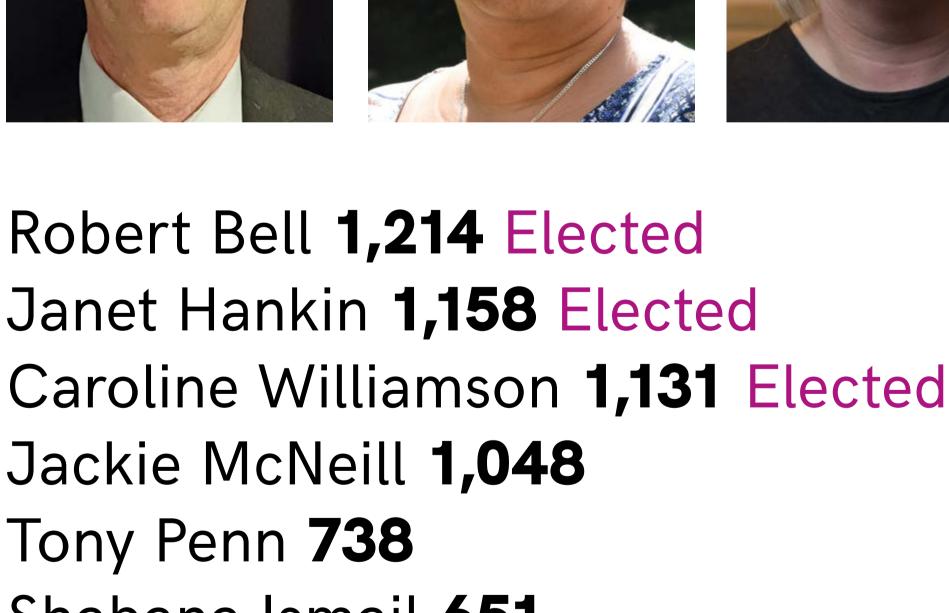


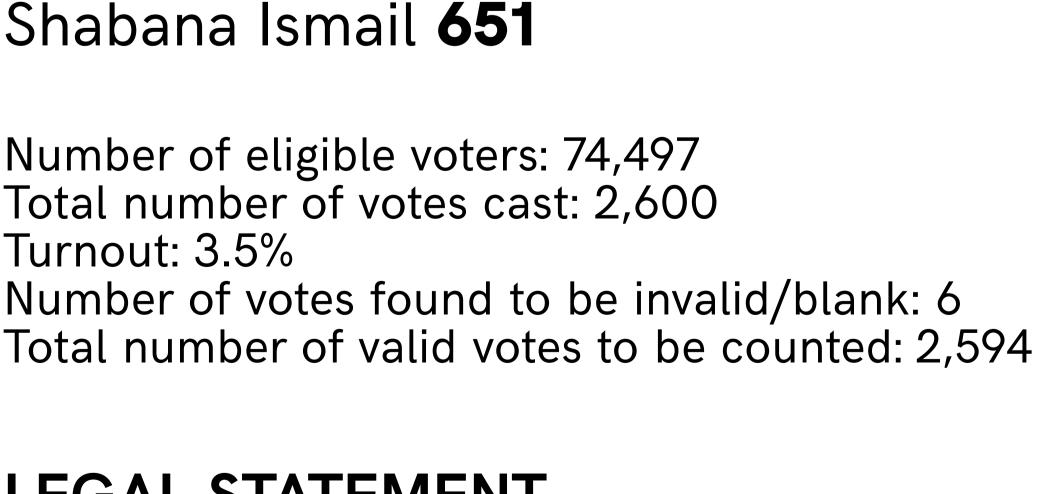


David McCuish 376

Jiri Marek **330** 









are only a sticking plaster as rising prices continue to devalue wages. While any financial help for struggling families is welcome, the heart of the cost of living emergency is a crisis of employment rights that leaves workers particularly vulnerable. Usdaw members need lasting solutions with

The Government's cost of living payments

a new deal for workers. Labour has pledged to deliver the new deal Usdaw has long campaigned for including: 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.



of Workers Act, which created a specific offence of assaulting, threatening or abusing those working in retail. Statistics released this week by the Scottish Government show that in the 11 months to November 2023, there were 2,233 alleged incidents recorded under the Protection of

than 500 convictions under the Protection

figures showing there have been more

The UK Government has repeatedly failed to act in the face of an epidemic of retail crime and rising theft from shops. It is

deeply disappointing that there are no

Workers Act, equivalent to roughly seven a

day.

measures in their legislative programme to tackle high levels of theft from shops and abuse of shopworkers. Labour has promised to plug the gap by seeking to amend the Government's Criminal Justice Bill to strengthen the law to protect shopworkers from violence, threats and abuse. The union will continue to call on

Westminster to support an extension of this

protection for shopworkers to the rest of the

UK by backing Labour's amendment.



Usdaw activists joined forces with sister trade unions to attend the TUC march and

rally in Cheltenham. Thousands of protestors brought parts of Cheltenham to a standstill as they made a case against the Government's minimum service levels legislation, which came into force in July 2023.

regulation, to impose minimum service levels on services within six sectors, including schools, the NHS, fire and rail and transport, that would apply during periods of strike action. A work notice issued by the employer would then name those individuals required to work and the duties to be undertaken.

The legislation allows ministers, by

Those workers deemed to have breached a work notice would lose the legal protection usually given to strikers and could be sacked.

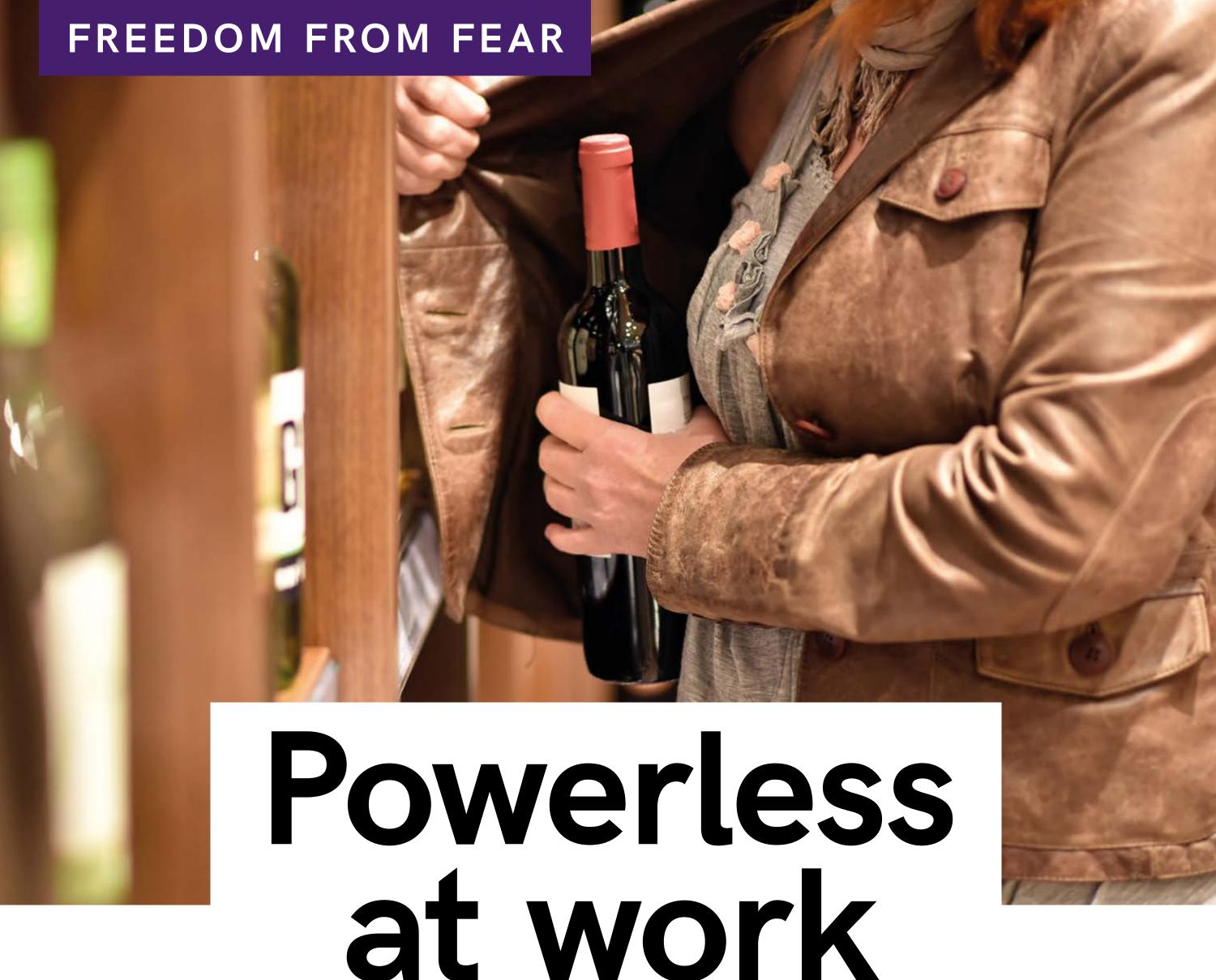
Usdaw will continue to fight for this legislation to be repealed and welcomes a solid commitment from the Labour Party to do just that.



sdaw is deeply concerned by the recorded crime statistics for England and Wales which show that in the 12 months to September 2023, there was a 32 per cent increase in shoplifting.

Interim results from Usdaw's 2023 annual survey of shopworkers found that two-thirds of retail workers suffered abuse from customers, with far too many experiencing threats and violence. Theft from shops and armed robbery were triggers for 60 per cent of these incidents.

The Government has repeatedly failed to act in the face of an epidemic of retail crime and rising theft from shops. In contrast, Labour has promised to plug the gap by seeking to amend the Government's Criminal Justice Bill to strengthen the law to protect shopworkers from violence, threats and abuse. They have also committed to 13,000 more neighbourhood police with guaranteed patrols in town centres, respect orders to ban repeat offenders and ending the £200 threshold for investigating and prosecuting shop theft.



iz (not her real name) works for a well-known retailer in Norwich. She shared her experience of the effect prolific shoplifters are having on her work life and her general wellbeing.

"Shoplifting is so bad in our store that we can't put high value items out on the shelves," said Liz, 56. "We don't have security guards in our store. Instead, we keep items like washing powder behind the counter. Our shelves are almost empty with notes saying, 'due to the high number of thefts, please ask a member of staff if you want this item'. Products like meat, cheese and coffee are now placed in clear Perspex boxes with GPS trackers to try and deter thieves. But nothing we do makes a difference.

he wants and walks past me, laughing...

"We report every incident, which can be five

or six per day." Liz described the reporting

N He comes in, takes what

process as 'laborious' because each incident has to be logged on two separate systems - the security system and the company system - before it can be reported to the police. "The whole thing can take up to an hour," continued Liz. "In that time, you've left your colleagues short staffed, which is never good, especially at night.

"I had a very upsetting incident recently with a shoplifter who comes in regularly

to steal alcohol. On this occasion he was hiding alcohol in his jacket. In line with our company policy, I didn't stop him but stood by the door to let him know I'd seen what he'd done. He barged past me and signalled that he would deal with me later. He was so threatening that I pushed the rapid response button and thankfully the police arrived within five minutes. They caught him and he was taken to court."

Although the court issued the shoplifter with an injunction which prevents him from

coming within 50 yards of Liz for the next six months, it didn't stop him.

"He's been in the shop almost every day since," said Liz. "He comes in, takes what

he wants and walks past me, laughing. It's a horrible feeling knowing that no matter what we do, we can't stop someone like that. It makes me feel unsafe and sick in my stomach that someone can so brazenly disregard a court order with zero

consequences."



ime to Talk Day was held on 1 February. This important event, held every February and organised by the charities Mind and Rethink Mental illness, aims to encourage us to open up and have conversations about mental health. By encouraging each other to talk about our mental health issues, we can create a safe space for people to speak up and get the help they need.

## Mental health is a trade union issue

We want our members to feel able to tell their rep if they're struggling, so that we can support them and help them stay at work. Issues with conduct, attendance or performance often have a mental health issue at their root. Stigma around conversations about mental health can lead to disciplinary procedures that could have been avoided if the member had been supported earlier on.

# Mental health issues are common

Around one in four people will experience a mental health problem during their lives. Despite all the progress made in recent years, some people still don't feel comfortable asking for help. That's why Time to Talk and other mental health campaigns are so important, and why Usdaw reps play a vital role in ensuring members are supported to stay in work.

# Our bitesize online course, Mind Your

Resources for Usdaw members

Head, can help you recognise feelings and reactions in yourself and potentially in others. It aims to help members develop some skills to cope with worries and also highlight other areas of support. You can also find plenty of information on our website.

# Why not campaign in your workplace? Time to Talk Day and other annual

Time to Talk Day and other annual events are really important for raising awareness, but Usdaw reps do brilliant work campaigning on mental health all year round. If you'd like to hold an event in your own workplace, plenty of resources and help are available – check out our website and speak to your Usdaw rep.



Usdaw's 18th annual Organising Awards in Manchester. The event is unique in the trade union movement and helps to properly recognise the outstanding contribution Usdaw reps make in the year. The event took place in Manchester and saw

talented and committed reps from all seven

regions attend a ceremony to celebrate

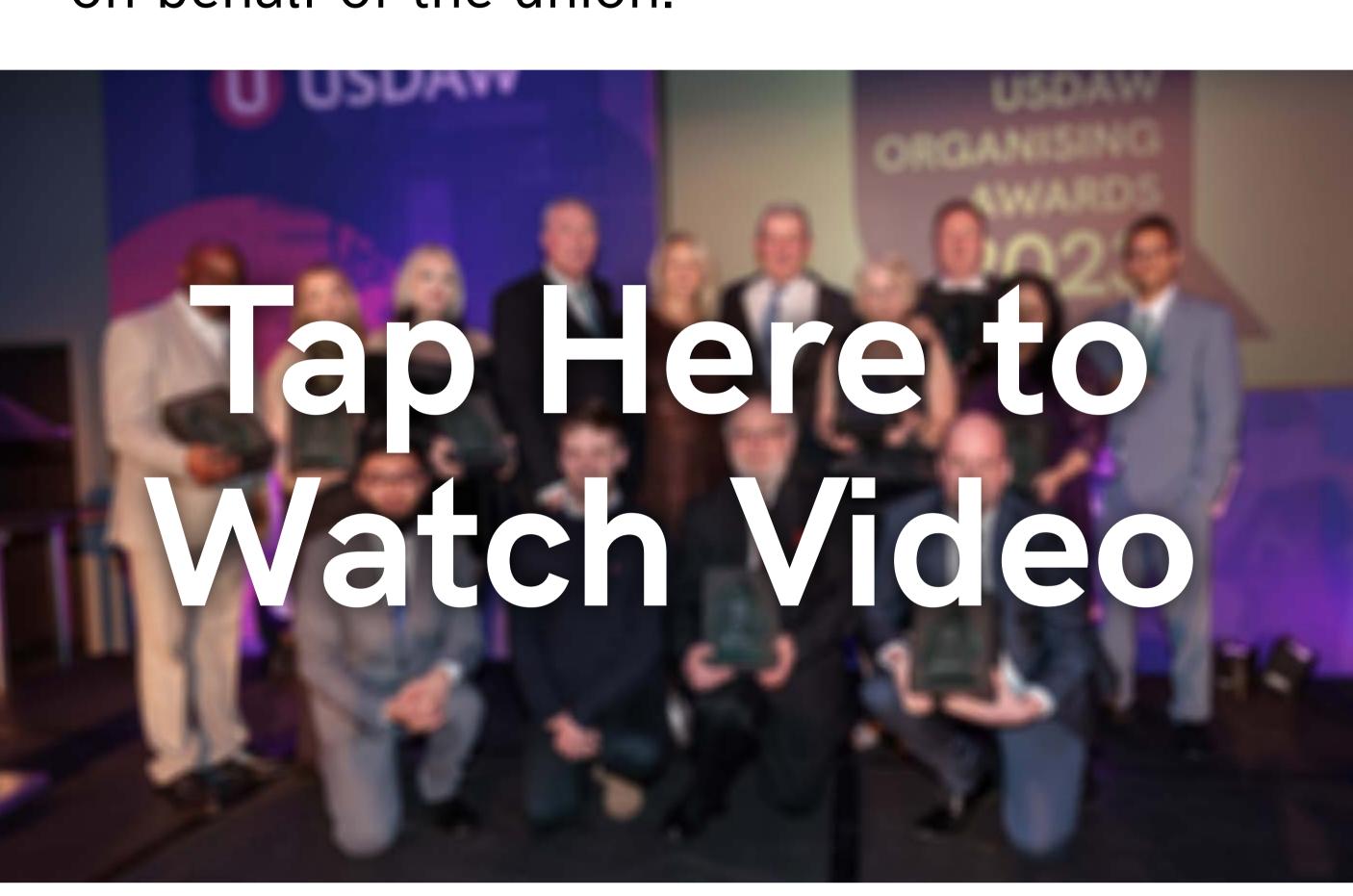
the very best recruiters, organisers and

categories.

ctivists took centre stage at

campaigners in the union. General secretary Paddy Lillis, deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen and president Jane Jones played host and presented national awards to winners in nine

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "This event is all about recognising the hard work that our reps are putting in on a dayto-day basis. Obviously not all of Usdaw's activists are here tonight, so many thanks to the thousands of Usdaw reps who have not won awards but have worked incredibly hard on behalf of the union."



# NW Tesco Retail No.2 K139 "I don't feel like I should be here, I just do

Whitney-Lea Cavell

**Most Promising Activist** 

my job and try my best," said Whitney-Lea. "To receive this recognition is just unreal."

Health and Safety Rep Award Simon Archer Weetabix E107 "This award isn't just for me," said Simon. "There's a team of 30 safety reps back at

Luke Ryan West Norfolk General C063

"Being disabled myself, I'm only too aware of

# the challenges faced by my members," said Luke. "I hope I show others that all barriers

**Equalities Award** 

can be overcome."

Weetabix, it's for all of them."

**Union Learning Rep Award** John Kalombo NW Pladis K066 "I love helping my members access learning opportunities so it's great to be recognised for it," said John. "I'm going to continue

# Peter Currie Sainsbury's Northern F174 "I'm absolutely elated," said Peter. "You don't

North West Regional Young

Campaigns Award

being there for my members."

become a rep to win awards but I'm pleased the union recognises and appreciates the hard work of reps." Team Recruitment and **Organising Award** 

Workers' Committee "We were up against a lot of talented people so we're ecstatic that we won. The training we've received from Usdaw has been fantastic and we wouldn't be here without it."

# Individual Recruitment Award Sandra Birt NW Tesco Retail No.4 K120

"It means the world to me to win this award," said Sandra. "The union wouldn't be anything without its members and it means a lot that I can contribute towards its membership."

# Individual Organising Award

Hadi Naqvi Croydon Metropolitan H017 "It's a privilege to represent my members and I will continue to work hard for them," said Hadi. "I will also do my best to ensure the union goes from strength to strength."

Outstanding Achievement Award Ann Lloyd West Midlands Sainsbury's E041 "I'm thrilled for my region and for my people to win this award," said Ann. "This union is wonderful to work for. I love what I do."



ith the summer holiday season approaching, now's a good time to get informed on your rights to holidays and paid leave. Usdaw works hard to negotiate improved rights for our members where we have agreements with their employer, but underpinning this are the statutory rights that apply to everyone. Let's take a closer look at them...

# How much time can I have?

Everyone at work is entitled to at least 5.6 weeks' paid leave each year. If you work full-time, this is 28 days' leave. For part-time workers, it's 5.6 times your average working week and if your contractual hours or pay vary, your entitlement will be based on your average pay over the previous 52 weeks including compulsory overtime, shift pay and any contractual bonuses.

# Do bank and public holidays count towards my entitlement?

Yes, your employer can choose to include these as part of your statutory minimum.

# When can I take my holiday?

It's good practice to book your holidays as far in advance as possible, to avoid disappointment. Check your employer's policy on when you can book them and how much notice you need to give. If you leave it too late, the company might allocate your holidays for you - or you might end up losing some of them altogether.

# I'm leaving my job but haven't used all my holiday allowance, will I be paid for the days I lose?

Usually yes, although your employment contract may entitle your employer to demand you take any outstanding holidays during your notice period. Check with your Usdaw rep if you're unsure.

Remember that your contract may entitle you to more than the statutory minimums. If you need any specific advice, talk to your Usdaw rep.

WIN £100 of shopping vouchers



**WW.USDAW.ORG.UK/W** 



Sponsored by UsdawProtect www.usdaw.org.uk/usdawprotect Closing Date 5 June 2024. Terms apply.



tatutory rates of maternity, paternity and adoption pay will increase in April to £184.03 per week - an increase of 6.7 per cent. If you're expecting a new arrival, it's important to know your rights around pay and leave so Arena answers your frequently asked questions.

# How much maternity leave can I take?

All women can take up to 52 weeks' maternity leave - the first 26 weeks are referred to as Ordinary Maternity Leave and the following 26 weeks are known as Additional Maternity Leave. You need to let your employer know at least 15 weeks in advance that you're pregnant and when the week of the due date will be. Usdaw's advice is to make this request in writing, and to keep a copy for your own records.

# Fathers – and the partners of the mother of

What about paternity leave?

a new baby - have the right to two weeks of paternity leave, provided they've worked for the same employer for 26 weeks by the time the due date is 15 weeks away. This right also applies to same-sex parents. Am I entitled to Statutory

# Yes, provided you have at least 26 weeks continuous service with your employer by

**Maternity Pay?** 

the 15th week before the baby is due (also known as the qualifying week), and your average pay over the eight weeks prior to the qualifying week exceeds the lower earnings limit for National Insurance Contributions, currently £123. Will I always receive £184.03 a week? Exactly how much you'll be paid - and for

# average pay, and your employer's maternity

how long - depends on your contract, your

leave policy. However, the minimum for those that qualify is 90 per cent of your average earnings for the first six weeks. After this, for up to 33 weeks you'll receive either £184.03 per week or 90 per cent of your average earnings, whichever is lower. Statutory Paternity Pay is also paid at this rate, for up to two weeks. What happens when I come back to work?

# If you take just the Ordinary Maternity Leave,

you're entitled to come back to the same job on the same terms and conditions. If you come back after Additional Maternity Leave and there's some reason why your employer can't take you back in your original job, they must offer you suitable alternative work. If this happens, speak to your Usdaw rep.

More advice on maternity, paternity and carers' rights is available here.

Remember, we can't cover everything here so if you're unsure about your particular situation, talk to your Usdaw rep.



# Punishing the vulnerable rena spoke to Julie (not her real name), a shopworker who was

pushed onto Universal Credit when she separated from her husband. Julie talks about some of the pitfalls of going on to Universal Credit.

Julie, like many women, worked full-time but dropped her hours to 30 after having children. Her husband worked full-time and the tax credit they received as a couple helped them make ends meet.

"In 2018, I separated from my husband which was classed as a change in circumstances and meant I had to move onto Universal Credit," said Julie, 46. "Even though I was already on the system, and they had my documentation, I was treated like a new claimant. The application is a lengthy and extremely stressful process. Once I completed the form, I was invited to a face-to-face meeting and a follow up meeting.

"I found the meetings intimidating and at no point in the process was I warned there's a 5-week waiting period, meaning you get nothing for the first 5 weeks. When it happened, I couldn't get my head around it. The only money I had coming in was my wage which was nowhere near enough. It was awful, we had to cut back on everything. I was even eating the same size portions of food as my kids, who were 7 and 5 at the time, to make it to the end of the month.

because, like a lot of retail workers, I'm on 4-weekly pay." Julie explained that she gets paid 13 times in a year and two payments fall in one assessment period therefore she received nothing during that month. "Again, no-one warned me about this and I

"Later in the year, I was caught out again

had to scramble around trying to find £900 to cover us for the month," continued Julie. "Both my parents died when I was 26 so I don't have a safety net. In the end, I had to borrow money from a friend to pay the rent.

"The process for Universal Credit is unnecessarily complex and poorly explained. I feel like everything about the system is designed to punish rather than support people. Even now, years later I still see

myself at the dining room table trying to fill in the form while dealing with break-up of my marriage. It was one of the loneliest and most stressful times of my life."

More advice on money and benefits is

available here.



hile we don't know the date of the next general election, we do know that on 2 May there will be elections for councils, mayors and police and crime commissioners. This means that across the nation, people who have been let down by the last 14 years of Conservative Government will have the opportunity to make their voices heard.

voice heard

# Register to Vote

To be able to vote, you need to be registered. You can register online by following the link below. It's quick and easy to do, and your vote could make all the difference.

To register to vote click here.

# Register for a Postal Vote

We know that it can be difficult to get out to vote on polling day. Juggling work and family or caring commitments can make it hard to get to the polling station to cast your vote.

following the link below. Anyone can request a postal vote, and it ensures that no matter

polling day.

To register for a postal vote click here.

what else happens, you'll have your say on

You can register for a postal vote by

**Vote Labour** 

These elections decide who is in charge of the local services, including the police, that we all rely on. From tackling crime and anti-social behaviour to schools, roads and libraries, it's only the Labour Party that will bring in the changes that Usdaw members and their families desperately need.

issues that matter most to working people. Labour's New Deal for Workers will make work pay, make work fairer, and strengthen your rights in the workplace. Click here for more information on Labour's

Labour has a real plan to deliver on the

New Deal.

Make sure you can vote for the change that Usdaw members and their families desperately need. Register to vote now, and vote Labour on 2 May.



# Looking after Usdaw members

sdaw rep Phillippa knew who to call after injuring her back at work in 2022. FirstCall solicitors took up her case and secured Phillippa around £8,500 compensation.

Phillippa, 54, was retrieving an item from a walk-in freezer container at her workplace in the North West. What she didn't know was that the door was controlled by an airlock that had been recently activated, meaning it was almost impossible to open.

11 "The FirstCall service was brilliant... It's something I always mention when I'm talking to non-members - join the union and you've got this brilliant legal cover."

freezer, the airlock would kick in without any indication it was active," said Phillippa. "It had been flagged as a hazard multiple times but nothing was done about it. I tried to pull the lever down to open the door and that's when I felt something pop in my back.

"When someone had recently used the

"I was off work for nearly a year and even after an intensive course of physiotherapy, I still need to take painkillers and my mobility is affected. I've come back to work in a different role and the company, to be fair to them, have been supportive and gone along with my needs.

"The FirstCall service was brilliant. The paralegals and the solicitor were really helpful, they always kept me up to date and whenever I contacted them, they came back straightaway with a response. I had a really good experience with them. As a rep, it's something I always mention when I'm talking to non-members - join the union and you've

got this brilliant legal cover."

Find out more about FirstCall Usdaw.







sdaw reps support members with their mental health at work every day of the year.

The cost of living crisis continues to impact on everyone's finances and if your pension is on your mind, we are here to help.

If you are approaching your retirement years and feeling anxious or overwhelmed about the future, remember that Usdaw has a free pension guidance service, and our advisers are only a call away.

We can help you to understand both your state pension and workplace pensions, and we can talk you through your options to help you make an informed decision.

We can also signpost you to other organisations who can help you to make sense of your pension pots, and help you take control and make that first move.

If you are an Usdaw member and have a pension question, call us on 0161 224 2804.

## Puzzled By Pensions?

Did you know there is information about pensions on the Usdaw website?

Whether you are looking to trace a lost pension, wanting to understand your options at retirement, or maybe looking to obtain a forecast of your State Pension, our pension section is here to help.

Find out more here.

If you are an Usdaw rep or member you can access our free guidance service - to ask us a question click here.

# Discounts&Offers

Usdaw members are entitled to great offers and savings from a variety of companies.



**U** USDAW **DENTAL PLAN**  PRIZE FREE DRAW click here

chostone

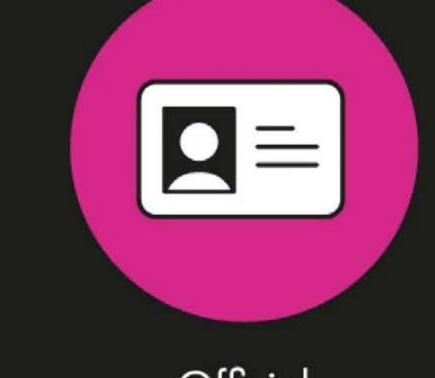
ten Pounds £10



# DISCOUNTS







Official proof-of-age ID



Giveaways, cashback and more...

# BROWSE OFFERS

- Cars & Transport + Holidays
- Health & Beauty
- 6 Insurance
- Leisure & Entertainment **Students**
- Shopping
- £ Money & Advice
- E Legal Advice
- Gas & Electric
- \$\frac{1}{\pi}\$ Special offers

Terms and conditions apply



Spring will soon be here again!
It's traditionally the time for new
beginnings – and it's the perfect time
to give your finances a fresh start too.

Whether you're looking to reduce outstanding debts or start putting aside a bit in savings, The Co-op Credit Union is there to help. Membership of The Co-op Credit Union is a free member benefit for all Usdaw members which gives access to a wide range of services, from simple savings plans to fair and affordable loans.

Plus, you'll get money-saving tips, offers, newsletters and member prize draws to help you make the most of your money.

Find out more and join for free today here. Select 'I'm a member of... Usdaw' on the joining form.



# Union membership is your insurance at work

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

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

Make sure your family, friends and colleagues are also protected at work by encouraging them to join Usdaw.

For more information Click here.



his year on Wednesday 26 June, Usdaw is organising a campaign day called Supporting Parents and Carers 'Spotlight Day'. The union has held a Spotlight Day every year for over fifteen years. Each year the theme of the day changes.

This year the union has decided to focus the campaign day on carers.

We know that large numbers of our members are juggling their jobs with caring for someone and whilst this is often a very rewarding experience it can also be hugely demanding.

There are two million carers in paid work but many are struggling to balance the demands of their job with their caring commitments.

Trying to fit caring and work together can be a real source of stress and worry especially where carers don't feel understood or supported at work.

As well as struggling to get the hours of work to fit around their care commitments or time off work when they need it, caring often comes with additional costs. This can have a significant impact on carers' finances and research shows that many carers experience financial hardship as a direct result of the care they provide.

Usdaw believes it is time that unpaid carers were properly valued and supported.

This is why the theme for our campaign this year is Stand Up for Carers. We want to use the day to raise awareness of carers' rights at work and to campaign for improvements in the support they receive.

Look out for information about this year's

Spotlight Day on Usdaw's website.

Why not take a look at Usdaw's leaflet

Working Carers: Know Your Rights.

To find out about what rights carers have

beyond the workplace visit Carers UK.



id you know Usdaw offers members a range of learning opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge, as well as their career prospects?

While Earning

Subjects range from English, Maths, and IT to sign language and photography. Whether you're stuck in a rut at work or want to improve your math skills, there'll be a course for you.

Arena spoke to Usdaw member and newly elected rep Sharon Crayden about her learning journey. Sharon, who'd been a union member since 2021, decided to say 'yes' when a visiting rep asked if she would consider becoming a rep in her own Tesco store.

school but when I found myself in the classroom after all these years, I realised I loved learning."

"I work part-time, from 5-9pm," said

I'm someone who hated

someone to cover those hours. It wasn't something I had given much thought to, but I ended up agreeing.

"I'm glad I did because I've had such a wonderful experience since. One of the

Sharon, 58. "The rep said she really needed

benefits of being an Usdaw rep is that you get access to a whole range of learning. I've completed the shop stewards training and the health and safety course. Each time the tutor took on board my individual learning needs. He adapted the course to avoid putting me on the spot when it came to role play and was very considerate of my health issues. I'm someone who hated school but when I found myself in the classroom after all these years, I realised I loved learning."

Usdaw reps and members can access a huge range of courses from learning a language to digital skills. There are even bitesize courses that can be completed in just 30 minutes.

"Whenever I get a free moment, you'll see me cracking on with another Usdaw course," said Sharon. "I would highly recommend

giving union learning a go."

Learn more about the Online Learning

Gateway here.

Find further information about becoming an

Usdaw Rep here.



# At my warehouse a forklift ran into some panelling and damaged it. An

**ASBESTOS EXPOSURE** 

they took away the damaged material. I worked in the area after the accident. How can I tell if I was exposed? Asbestos is a serious hazard. Over 4,000 people a year die of asbestos-related cancer. But most of them were exposed to high levels of asbestos for long periods over 20

asbestos removal firm was called in and

years ago. There is no test that can be done at this stage to show how much asbestos you were exposed to or whether it has increased your chance of developing cancer. Talk to your union rep or area organiser and make sure that a written record of the exposure is kept on your personnel record

want to tell your GP about the incident. Although there is nothing the doctor can do about it at this stage, a record on your NHS notes is unlikely to be lost.

and keep a copy for yourself. You may also

# one door and no windows. Stock is often

FIRE SAFETY

stored in the corridor. I'm scared there will be a fire and I'll be trapped. Shouldn't there be a separate fire exit? Not necessarily. Employers do have duties to make sure that their premises are protected against fire and that people can get out

quickly when they have to. It depends on

a number of factors such as distance of

travel to a door out of the building and

I work in a cash office that is at the

end of a narrow corridor with only

the fire resistance of walls and corridors. Your employer should have done a fire risk assessment for the building which should identify evacuation routes, how the alarm is raised and any risks like stock or roll cages blocking corridors that are needed for evacuation. You can see the advice the Government gives to employers on fire safety and risk assessments here. **TOILETS AT WORK** There are 10 of us working in a small warehouse (6 women, 4 men) and there is only one toilet for us to use. Surely

in separate rooms that are lockable. For 10 people there should be a minimum of 2 toilets and 2 wash basins where they are mixed use or women only. For men only, there would need to be 1 toilet and 1 urinal,

as well as a wash basin.

there should be more and separate as well?

toilet and washing facilities. If they are being

shared by men and women, they should be

Your employer has to provide 'adequate'

can be found here. PREGNANCY I am pregnant and I told my boss

This is covered in the Workplace (Health,

Safety and Welfare) Regulation 1992 which

about it 3 weeks ago. I'm finding it difficult to do my usual job which involves a lot of handling, twisting and stretching.

Does my employer have to do a risk

Yes. Once your employer is informed in

assessment for me?

writing that you are pregnant then they are required to complete an individual risk assessment. They need to identify any risks that could affect new or expectant mothers and make any necessary changes to support them, such as standing for long periods,

heavy lifting, etc. If there are any risks that can't be controlled by other means, they should look at finding alternative work. If there is no alternative, your employer should put you on paid leave for as long as is necessary to protect your health and that of your baby.

assessment if your circumstances change as your pregnancy develops. Health and Safety Executive advice is

available here.

Your manager should also review the risk





Workers' Rights
Firstcall Usdaw
Equalities
Pensions
Money & Benefits
Health & Wellbeing
Health & Safety
Legal Help & Advice
Parents & Carers
Retired Members
Road Transport
Contact Us

Taking you direct to what you need to know.



Free Will Writing Service
For Usdaw members and
their partners

Apply online now at www.usdaw.org.uk/BL4form

