

NETWORK

THE BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR USDAW ACTIVISTS – MARCH/APRIL 2021

ABUSE SURVEY'S SHOCK FINDINGS

**“SINCE THE PANDEMIC,
I’VE SUFFERED ABUSE
NEARLY EVERY DAY”**

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CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE IN 2021

Usdaw members have been on the frontline of the pandemic since the start and the union's work has been dominated by trying to support them through this crisis. As well as supporting members Usdaw has been campaigning hard on a number of issues; with two big wins in recent months.

In January, we had a great result for our members in Scotland, as MSPs voted through ground-breaking legislation to give shopworkers the protection of the law that they deserve.

Following on from this, Usdaw's Justice for Injured Workers campaign succeeded in keeping the small claims limit for employer's liability and public liability claims at £1,000. Thereby ensuring that thousands of workers can continue to seek justice with proper representation.

This year Usdaw will continue to work hard to ensure it improves the working lives of its members. Our campaigning work will include the New Deal for Workers campaign which calls for decent pay and conditions for every worker including a minimum wage of at least £10 per hour, an end to insecure employment, respect for shopworkers and action to ensure that retail jobs are no longer underpaid and undervalued.

Our Retail Recovery Plan, calls on the Government to implement a plan to save the retail sector and



the Freedom From Fear campaign calls for legislation to protect shopworkers to be implemented in the rest of the UK.

We will also continue to urge the Government to prioritise retail workers for vaccinations and we will fight the Government tooth and nail if they try to erode employment rights following the end of the pandemic.

I want to thank our reps for the amazing work they do day in and day out. Without them supporting and representing members, raising awareness about campaigns, filling in surveys and signing petitions it would be impossible for us to do the work we do.

Usdaw General Secretary

Paddy Bellis

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PANDEMIC EXPOSES INEQUALITIES

Usdaw continues the campaign for equality through the pandemic.

Usdaw marked International Women's Day by pledging to continue to campaign for equality and to keep women's equality high on the union's negotiating, organising and political agendas. Prior to the pandemic inequality in the UK was worsening. During the crisis Usdaw has campaigned to tackle inequality with its New Deal for Workers campaign.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "On International Women's Day we celebrate women's contribution to society, family life and workplaces. We also continue our campaigning for more to be done to better support women by tackling discrimination and promoting equality.

"The coronavirus pandemic has dramatically exposed the structural inequalities in our society. Where there is poverty, prejudice, and discrimination, the virus has left a trail of broken lives in its wake and we will not rest until those divides have been closed.



"Key workers delivering essential services have kept the country going through the crisis; the majority are women and too often underpaid and undervalued.

"Women workers have been particularly hard hit due in part to the fact that inequality between women and men at work was already steadily and at times sharply increasing. Women were disproportionately more likely to be in low-paid and insecure employment. At the start of 2020 women were, and still are, the majority of low-paid workers making up nearly seven out of 10 of all low-

wage earners. Over half of all zero-hours workers were women and nearly six out of 10 were self-employed workers.

"Poverty in the UK at the point at which the crisis struck was highly feminised and women continue to be the majority of people living in poverty; female-headed households are more likely to be poor and prior to Covid-19 women were more likely to struggle with debt and bills. On average, women carried out 60 per cent more unpaid work than men, women in the UK earn less and own less and women are more likely to

experience domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

"Today, women are more likely than men to be members of a trade union and strong workplace organisation is crucial to defend and further women's rights at work. One of the most effective ways to deliver better pay, decent work and fairness for women at work is for employers to recognise and work with trade unions."

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NO GO FOR SHOPWORKERS

AMAZON GO MAKES ITS DEBUT IN LONDON

Amazon has opened its first checkout free convenience store in London which offers shoppers an automated shopping experience. Instead of paying at staffed or self-service checkouts, AI-powered sensors track the items taken from shelves and placed in the basket. Once customers exit the store, they pay on their card via the Amazon Go app.

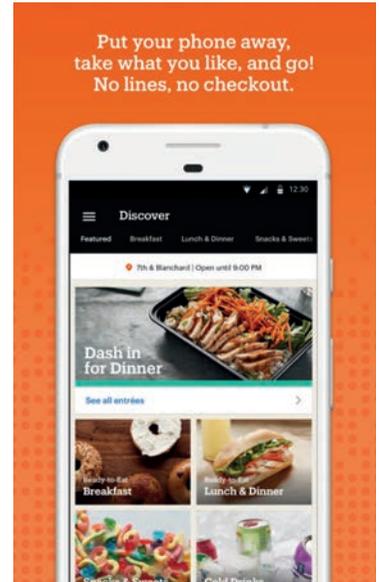
Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Shopworkers provide the customer service that many shoppers really value and retailers need to understand the importance of that to the success of their business.

"In the current crisis retail workers have rightly been applauded as key workers and now Amazon's strategy

is to cut the number of retail jobs in stores through the launch of shops with no checkouts. Retail workers deserve better.

"We also have real concerns about theft from stores, disputes over technology errors and customer confusion on how systems work. There is also the question of Covid security and how necessary safety measures like hand hygiene, social distancing and face coverings are enforced.

"All too often retailers are dazzled by new technology, chasing solutions to problems that don't exist. Usdaw believes that employers should invest in staff as well as machines. Well-paid shopworkers, in secure jobs, who are valued and respected are what is best for business."



A GUIDE TO ADM 2021

USDW ADM 2021 GOES DIGITAL

This year's Annual Delegate Meeting will be an online two-day event held on Sunday 25 and Monday 26 April 2021. The event will be video-streamed to delegates with a secure online voting system, operated by an independent external organisation,

running concurrently with conference proceedings.

Usdaw has produced a guide to the virtual conference called *Members' Guide to the Annual Delegate Meeting - A Special Guide to the 2021 Virtual Conference*.

The guide describes the main purpose of ADM, how it is organised and how it carries out its business. It covers propositions and amendments, Standing Orders Committee, debates and voting procedures. The guide has particular emphasis on how the 2021 online ADM will operate.

It is written for all Usdaw members, but particularly for those attending their first ADM.

All this year's delegates will receive a copy in April before ADM.

SARWAR LABOUR WIN

Usdaw has congratulated Anas Sarwar on being elected the new Leader of the Scottish Labour Party.

Usdaw divisional officer for Scotland Stewart Forrest said: "Usdaw nominated Anas Sarwar for leader because we believe he is the right person to rebuild Scottish Labour and then rebuild Scotland.

"Usdaw members, their families and working people across Scotland need a strong Labour Party in the Scottish Parliament and across the country, speaking out for them on their issues. With the election coming in May, it is crucial that Scottish Labour comes together behind the new leader and puts forward a positive message to the country."



NON-ESSENTIAL RETAIL COULD OPEN FROM 12 APRIL

REOPENING OF SHOPS MUST BE DONE SAFELY

Usdaw calls on customers to follow the rules and for retail staff to be prioritised for vaccination.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "The reopening of non-essential stores offers a lifeline for many retailers. That is good news in terms of helping to safeguard jobs, but the virus is still out there. It is essential that the tests set out by the Government before reopening are followed, so that shops only reopen when the data suggests that it will be safe.

"When they do reopen, we expect employers to maintain necessary safety measures, including two metre distancing, and call on customers to follow the rules and respect staff. Regrettably, throughout this appalling pandemic, incidents of abuse towards shopworkers doubled. It should never be just a part of the job and shopworkers must be respected.

"Retail staff are working with the public every day and are not only facing increased abuse, but also a higher chance of catching Covid-19. The Office for National Statistics demonstrated that many key workers, who are providing essential services during the pandemic, have an elevated Covid-19 related death rate. It is clear that close proximity



to the public and other workers, as well as an indoor working environment, are key factors in the spread of coronavirus infection.

"Usdaw has consistently campaigned for vulnerable occupations to be prioritised in the second phase of the vaccine rollout, reflecting the risks they face. They have worked throughout the pandemic to keep the country supplied with essentials and deserved to be prioritised. Therefore, it is deeply disappointing that they were not prioritised

in phase two of the vaccine roll out. We will continue to urge the Government to reconsider the decision.

"In the meantime, we are continuing to work with employers to ensure that staff are working in the safest conditions possible.

"We are also urging customers to follow the necessary safety measures like social distancing, wearing a face covering and only shopping for essential items to help make shops safer and limit the spread of Covid-19."

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Due to the current situation with Covid 19, the voucher will be despatched as soon as possible after the draw has taken place.

IN BRIEF

B&M

B&M announced it is set to open a new store at Colton Retail Park in Leeds creating more than 70 jobs for local people.

BOOHOO

The online retailer Boohoo has acquired Debenhams in a £55m deal that will result in the department store disappearing from the high street, with the likely loss of up to 12,000 jobs.

ASOS

Thousands of jobs remain at risk after the online fashion retailer Asos struck a £295m deal to buy four brands from failed retail group Arcadia. About 300 people currently employed will transfer to Asos, but a question mark hangs over thousands more jobs.

JOHN LEWIS

John Lewis is considering closing some department stores, which would result in many job losses.

WH SMITH

WH Smith is set to close 25 high street stores, affecting nearly 200 jobs, after the pandemic pushed the retailer £280 million into the red.

PAPERCHASE

Stationery chain Paperchase is on the brink of administration after it was forced to close over Christmas. The company has 127 stores and about 1,500 employees.

OBITUARY KEITH BARROWCLIFFE

A FOND TRIBUTE TO KEITH

The union was saddened to hear of the death of Usdaw member and lifelong activist Keith Barrowcliffe who died in January. He was 87.

Keith was a popular and well-respected figure across the North West division and the wider union where he was very actively involved with his branch and the union's retired members' committee. He had recently proudly celebrated an impressive 70 years of Usdaw membership.

Born in Droylsden, Tameside in 1933, Keith first became interested in politics and the trade union movement at the age of 10. He was heavily influenced by his dad who was a shop steward for English Steel in Openshaw and the pair would go to political meetings together to listen to socialist speakers in Belle Vue.

Keith joined Usdaw in 1949 after starting work as a trainee butcher for the Co-operative in 1948. He took a break from work in 1950 to complete two years' national service in the catering corp where he was stationed

at Blandford in Dorset.

From the age of 15, Keith attended all the union meetings and activities for young members around the country. He also became the youngest president of Gorton trades council.

In his retirement, Keith continued to play a very active role within the union as branch chair and a member of the North West divisional retired members' committee, assisting in campaigning work and promoting the union, particularly among retail workers. He always attended divisional conferences and was a regular at the union's annual delegate meeting.

Outside of work, Keith was voluntarily involved with many organisations. He was the secretary of Abbey Hey Working Men's Club for over 20 years and a qualified lecturer and executive member of the CIU (Club & Institute Union) for over 20 years advising on licensing and law, betting and gaming. Keith served as Justice of the Peace for over 25 years

before retiring at the age of 70. He was also a qualified snooker referee and examiner and refereed at the first World Snooker Championships at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield in 1977.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis paid tribute: "Keith gave a lifetime of commitment to Usdaw and the wider trade union movement, and even after retiring was keen to play a crucial role supporting members and helping to build the union. He was a great servant and ambassador for Usdaw and we are so very grateful for his lifelong contribution.

"Our sincere condolences go to Keith's family and friends."



Keith and Paddy Lillis



TWELVE MONTHS LIKE NO OTHER

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis looks at the past year and sets the priorities for this year

Last year and the start of this year have been like no other for Usdaw and its members. The union's entire membership has been impacted by Covid-19, and the pandemic has dominated the union's work throughout the year.

In the face of extreme pressure, Usdaw members have kept the supply chain moving, the shelves stacked and essentials delivered to the vulnerable. When others stayed safe at home, they worked tirelessly in extremely difficult conditions. We must also recognise the work of our members in funeral services, whose compassion and care has been extraordinary, in the most unimaginably difficult circumstances.

The union has been focused throughout the year on supporting all of its members through the crisis. When the Covid-19 pandemic took hold in March 2020, food retail members were desperately worried for their safety at work and experiencing huge pressure as panic-buying erupted. Members in non-food retail were extremely concerned too, as their workplaces closed and they worried about pay and job security.

Key Workers

The union immediately lobbied for retail supply chain and funeral workers to be given priority for key worker places in schools, and pushed employers to support members who were shielding, vulnerable or pregnant, and to top up furlough pay where workplaces were closed. Union officials and reps called for urgent safety measures in workplaces that remained open.

New Deal for Workers

The union made a renewed call for decent pay and conditions for every worker, with our New Deal for Workers campaign. Following representations from the union, many members received bonuses to recognise their contribution during the crisis. However, we have been clear that permanent improvements

to pay and conditions are needed for workers across the sectors where we organise. The campaign calls for a range of measures, including a minimum wage of £10 per hour, secure hours, increased sick pay and job security.

Retail Recovery Plan

The pandemic has heightened the crisis facing the retail sector. At least 180,000 jobs were confirmed as lost during 2020, and, with the collapse of Debenhams and Arcadia, a further 25,000 jobs were under threat by the end of the year. The union has been making the case for an urgent recovery plan for the retail sector, including action to level the playing field between online and bricks and mortar retail.

Freedom From Fear

The Freedom From Fear campaign has, sadly, been more relevant than ever this year. Almost 90 per cent of shopworkers experienced verbal abuse at work and one in 10 was physically attacked. Social distancing measures became the most common flashpoint for abuse, and there were appalling cases of shopworkers being coughed on and spat at. There has been strong public support for our campaign, and Usdaw reps helped to deliver more than 100,000 signatures on our Parliamentary petition, which calls for assault or abuse of a shopworker to be made a specific offence with appropriate penalties. The UK Government responded to our petition with little more than sympathy and objected to the Alex Norris 'protection of shopworkers' bill.

However, in January, we had a great result for our members in Scotland, as MSPs voted through groundbreaking legislation to give shopworkers the protection of the law that they deserve. Usdaw campaigned for many years to secure these legal protections.

In addition, Crimestoppers Scotland launched a joint campaign

to raise awareness and stop abuse of shopworkers. Usdaw is looking forward to working with Crimestoppers Scotland, the Scottish Government, police and retailers to promote that message.

Union Learning Fund

At a time when retraining and upskilling is of the utmost importance the Government announced that all ULF funding will be withdrawn from the end of March 2021 in England. Around 200,000 workers are supported each year into learning or training with union support through the ULF. Despite writing to the chancellor, and reps and members putting up a fight, the Government announced it would go ahead with this change.

Usdaw will continue to urge the Government to rethink their decision to scrap union learning.

Protecting Employment Rights

At the start of the year rumours emerged in the Financial Times that the Government had been secretly drawing up plans to water down more of our members' workplace rights such as rest breaks and paid holiday entitlements. After initially denying the rumours, the Business Secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng confirmed that the rumours were true, and the Government are in fact reviewing workplace protections.

Losing these hard-won rights would lower living standards further after a decade of stagnating pay and growing insecurity, causing working people to further tighten their belts and hold back any economic recovery. Millions of workers are already working crushingly long hours and further removing rights to rest, limits on working hours or disregarding workers' time spent on-call endangers not only them, but also puts public safety at risk – no one wants their loved ones to receive care from a chronically overworked nurse or be driven home by an exhausted bus driver.

We believe this pandemic should

be a turning point where working people should have their rights at work strengthened, not threatened. The whole of the labour movement will fight tooth and nail to protect and extend our rights.

Vaccination for Key Workers

Usdaw has consistently campaigned for shopworkers to be prioritised for vaccination, however the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has rejected prioritisation by occupation. The Office for National Statistics evidence on Covid-19 death rates by occupation, showed that many key workers are at a higher risk.

We strongly urge the Government to reconsider the decision. In the meantime, we are working with employers to revisit risk assessments and ensure that all safety precautions are adhered to. We also call on the public to follow the necessary safety measures in stores, like wearing a face covering, observing social distancing, shopping alone where possible and respecting shopworkers.

Importance of unions

The crisis has demonstrated just how important it is that every worker has the support of their union. The hard work and commitment of Usdaw reps during the year has been absolutely outstanding. Despite facing huge pressures and worries of their own, reps continued to advise members in the workplace, to implement safety measures and speak up when improvements were needed.

As we look back, we also remember those who we have tragically lost to this dreadful virus, including some of our own members and reps, and one of our officials, Bipin Pitrola. They, and their contribution to our union, will not be forgotten.

In their memory, the union will work harder than ever in the year ahead, to give every member a voice and improve their working lives.

CAMPAIGNS

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

ABUSE OF WORKERS HITS HEADLINES

Over the past few years the union has seen an alarming increase in the levels of abuse and violence towards shopworkers. More recently, shocking results from an Usdaw survey carried out at the height of the coronavirus pandemic reveal just how bad the situation has become.

Throughout the pandemic, retail workers have been spat at, threatened with being infected with coronavirus and physically assaulted by customers while they have been providing an essential service in very difficult circumstances.

Results from Usdaw's 2020 survey of 2,729 shopworkers across the UK found that 79 per cent said abuse was worse during the pandemic.

The survey found that:

- 88 per cent experienced verbal abuse.
- 60 per cent were threatened by a customer.
- 9 per cent were assaulted.

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

In 2003, Usdaw introduced its Freedom From Fear campaign in response to concerns about violence

79% OF RESPONDENTS
Say abuse has worsened during the pandemic



and abuse in retail. Since then the union has worked with the public, employers, the police, politicians and the Government to achieve safety and security improvements in stores and raise the issues of neighbourhood policing, retail crime and underage sales.

Usdaw continues to lobby the Government to improve legislation to protect shopworkers and those working in public-facing roles, including stiffer penalties for those who assault workers, but the current situation shows the need for the campaign is more pressing than ever.

PETITION FOR CHANGE

In light of the continued increase in violence and abuse towards shopworkers and the appalling situation they've faced leading up to and throughout the pandemic, Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis launched a House of Commons petition to lobby the Government to protect retail staff.

The union is calling on the Government to create a specific offence of abusing, threatening or assaulting a retail worker with a penalty that acts as a deterrent and makes clear that abuse of retail workers is unacceptable.

The petition gained widespread media attention in national and regional news outlets when it was launched in August with Usdaw officials, reps and members making over 80 appearances on TV and radio. The petition secured over 100,000 signatures, enough to trigger a debate in Parliament.

In response to the protect shopworkers petition, the influential House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee launched an inquiry into the issue the day after the petition secured over 100,000 signatures.

VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINE

Some of the comments from shopworkers responding to last year's annual survey

"Asked a customer to join the back of a queue, got verbal abuse. She then returned to the store with a knife and said she was going to cut me up."

"Physically pushed, shoved, trolley rammed during panic buying."

"Trying to belittle and humiliate you. Undermining what you are saying about the rules."

"Being screamed at when telling customers we don't have an item in stock."

"I had members of the public cough on me as I was stacking shelves."

"People pulling your mask off for being a sheep."

"My car was keyed by a customer who was barred from the shop."

"Since the pandemic I've had abuse nearly every day, even coughed on twice."

The full report can be downloaded from:
www.usdaw.org.uk/FFFReport2020

SUCCESS IN SCOTLAND

In January, the Scottish Parliament unanimously voted for a ground-breaking new law to protect shopworkers. Usdaw campaigned for many years to secure these legal protections.

In addition, Crimestoppers Scotland launched a joint campaign to raise awareness and stop abuse of shopworkers. The key message is to 'speak up 100 per cent anonymously about attacks on shopworkers'. This joint venture is crucial to the new law having the desired impact by making sure criminals understand that assaulting and abusing shopworkers is totally unacceptable.

In February, 66 senior retail leaders wrote to the Prime Minister urging the UK Government to create a new statutory offence of

assaulting, threatening, or abusing a retail worker.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Our latest survey results clearly show the scale of the appalling violence, threats and abuse faced by shopworkers and demonstrate the need for a 'protection of shopworkers' law. It has been a terrible year for our members, with almost 90 per cent of shopworkers suffering abuse, two-thirds threatened and nearly one in ten assaulted. We are saying loud and clear that enough is enough, abuse should never be part of the job.

"The UK Government has persistently opposed new legislation, offering little more than sympathy and objecting to the Alex Norris protection of shopworkers bill in the House of Commons. However,

we had a great result for our members in Scotland, as MSPs voted through ground-breaking legislation to give shopworkers the protection they deserve. We are now looking for MPs to support key workers across the retail sector and help turn around the UK Government's opposition.

SAVE THE DATE
RESPECT WEEK
WILL START ON
15 NOV 2021



RETAILERS LEFT HIGH AND DRY

The UK retail sector has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic on an unprecedented scale. For an industry already facing significant challenges the long-term impact will be severe.

Physical non-food retailers were among the hardest hit and have been struggling under the pressure of lockdowns and public health restrictions, costing stores billions in lost sales.

The mass job losses announced throughout last year highlight the severity of the crisis facing the retail sector, with at least 180,000 jobs confirmed as lost during 2020, with a staggering 16,000 store closures.

High street names to collapse into

administration, resulting in thousands of job losses, include Edinburgh Woollen Mill (which also trades as Peacocks and Jaeger), Bonmarché, Aldo, Warehouse/Oasis, Laura Ashley and Cath Kidston.

At the end of last year household names including Topshop, Miss Selfridge and Dorothy Perkins collapsed into administration, putting 13,000 jobs at risk. As a result the following day, the potential rescue bid for Debenhams fell through, putting a further 12,000 jobs at risk. While rescue deals were brokered for the stable brands owned by Arcadia and Debenhams, in both cases, there was zero interest from buyers to take on any of their physical stores – resulting

in an estimated 25,000 job losses.

The crisis in retail has been further exacerbated by the rapid shift to online shopping, which has grown by 46 per cent over the last 10 months. The longer-term challenges facing the sector combined with the impact of the pandemic has and will continue to be catastrophic for the high street.

When shops are allowed to reopen, retailers will face further challenges and there are big questions about how many high street retailers will survive the coming months.

IMPACT OF JOB LOSSES

Beyond the impact on business the pandemic is taking a heavy toll on retail workers – whether they work



in food retail or on the high street, retail workers are facing extremely challenging times.

In particular, there are serious concerns about the impact the pandemic is having on women. In the case of high street retail, a large proportion of workers are women. For example, in Arcadia and Debenhams women made up 80 per cent of the staff. This means of the 25,000 jobs lost between the two retailers, an estimated 20,000 belonged to women. It is not just women who are bearing the brunt of job losses; young and Black, Asian and minority-ethnic (BAME) and other vulnerable groups are significantly impacted.

RETAIL RECOVERY PLAN

Usdaw's retail recovery plan calls for the following immediate measures:

- Extend the current business rates holiday to at least the end of the year and fundamentally reform this outdated and imbalanced commercial property tax.
- An online sales levy set at 1 per cent, to raise around £1.5bn that could fund a cut in business rates of around 20 per cent.
- Extend the moratorium on shop evictions for rent arrears and find a wider solution around unpaid rents, with contributions from retailers, landlords and Government.

Usdaw's full retail recovery plan:
www.usdaw.org.uk/retailrecovery

THE BUDGET

When the chancellor Rishi Sunak delivered his Budget on 3 March 2021, outlining the UK's economic recovery plan to protect jobs and livelihoods, there was no sustained support for those retail businesses most impacted by the pandemic. The announcement of two additional costs from July 2021 onwards (capped partial business rates relief and employer contributions to the Job Retention Scheme) at a time when stores have not yet even reopened could become the overheads that push many non-food retailers to scale back, cut jobs or collapse completely.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "The short-term sticking plasters that the chancellor announced in the Budget go nowhere near far enough. They don't tackle the fundamental issues that the retail industry already faced before the pandemic, let alone give retailers a fighting chance of mounting a recovery.

"Extending furlough by six months, short-term business rates reductions and one-off grants do not allow retailers the opportunity

to plan their recovery out of the pandemic and secure jobs. Huge issues like expensive rents and rates, along with unfair taxation continue not to be addressed by the Government.

"Demanding that businesses make a 10 per cent contribution to the Jobs Retention Scheme in July and then 20 per cent in August is a big cost for non-essential retailers at a time when, even on the most optimistic estimates, many will have only recently reopened and have major losses to recoup. It will encourage staff lay-offs. Also expecting retail to start paying a third of business rates at the start of July will be a big ask, so soon after reopening. The announcement of these two additional costs to retailers could be the burdens that push many out of business or to cut jobs.

"The coronavirus pandemic has pushed many retailers and retail workers to breaking point, so we need immediate Government action that needs to be equally significant"

www.usdaw.org.uk/retailrecovery

A NEW DEAL FOR WORKERS

ALL WORKERS DESERVE AT LEAST £10 PER HOUR

During the pandemic, millions of workers stepped up, in the most difficult of circumstances, to keep the country going. Workers in retail, manufacturing, distribution, home delivery and funeral services have been working around the clock, keeping food on our tables, medicines in our cupboards and providing a lifeline to local communities.

As the National Living Wage is uplifted in April it is worth remembering that the increase of 19p from £8.72 to £8.91 an hour doesn't meet the union's call for £10 per hour, the real living wage rate of £9.50 or even the Government's previously projected rate of £9.21.

The National Living Wage was first introduced in April 2016 and created an additional tier to the National Minimum Wage. It initially applied only to those over the age of 25.

This year it will be legally extended to 23 and 24-year-olds. Anyone under the age of 23 will receive

the National Minimum Wage which is paid at a lower rate. Usdaw has campaigned that the National Living Wage should apply to all workers – regardless of their age.

VALUE OF RETAIL JOBS

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Millions of low-paid workers have provided essential services to help ensure the country is fed, healthy and safe through the lockdown and will continue to do so.

"Usdaw members employed in our supermarkets, distribution warehouses, food processing sites and home delivery operations welcomed the key worker status, but that respect and appreciation must not fade into the background when this national crisis passes.

"There needs to be lasting and fundamental changes to the way society views our lowest paid workers.

"We need a new deal for the workers: a minimum wage of at

least £10 per hour, an end to insecure employment, respect for shopworkers and action to ensure that retail jobs are no longer underpaid and undervalued.

"Going to work should mean a decent standard of living for all workers, not least young workers. They are more likely to be paid less than older colleagues, even when doing the same job.

"They also often work hours that are not guaranteed in their contract, so they really need fairer and better pay alongside protection against insecure work. Although reducing the age that National Living wage is paid from 25 to 23 years old is a step in the right direction, it needs to go much further.

"Usdaw has campaigned for years to abolish youth rates. We continue to campaign for a national minimum wage of at least £10 per hour for all ages and call on the Government to tackle insecure employment contracts."

Usdaw

**A NEW
DEAL
FOR WORKERS**

- £10 minimum wage
- Minimum 16 hours contracts
- Right to 'normal hours' contract
- Ban zero hours contracts
- Better sick pay
- Protection from Violence and Abuse
- Proper Social Security System
- Job Security
- Fair treatment and equality for all
- Stronger Union Rights

#NewDeal4Workers

WORKERS EXEMPT FROM REFORMS

EMPLOYEES INJURED AT WORK PROTECTED

Usdaw welcomed the Government confirming that the small claims limit for employer's liability and public liability claims will not be increased and will remain at £1,000.

The Civil Liability Act 2018 reformed whiplash claims and the Government had also proposed changing the rules for employer liability personal injury cases, by doubling the threshold for the small claims court.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "We welcome the Government listening to the views of the broad coalition that had come together to urge them to step back from their proposed changes.

"Employees injured at work need legal representation to help ensure that those responsible are held to account and that health and safety standards in the workplace are maintained. The original proposals would have moved a significant number of these cases into the small claims court where legal costs

cannot be recovered, forcing injured employees to represent themselves in a complex legal process without adequate advice and support.

"It is absolutely the right decision to exempt workers from the reforms, so that they can continue to seek justice with proper representation."



FUNDAMENTAL REFORM NEEDED

UNIVERSAL CREDIT MUST BE OVERHAULED

Usdaw's Cost of Living survey found that 57 per cent of workers on universal credit were struggling to pay their gas and electric bills and 80 per cent said they were worried or very worried if the Government removed the £20 weekly uplift. The cut could affect six million families costing them £1,040 a year and push 200,000 children into poverty.

Usdaw has been urging the chancellor to recommit to the £20 uplift and in the longer term and engage with trade unions and charities to fix the ongoing structural issues with universal credit.

The universal credit system has been plagued with issues and

continues to be a failing project. The five-week wait period is not only unnecessary but is sending people into debt from which they struggle to recover.

Last year, the Trussell Trust found that universal credit had led to a four-fold increase in the use of food banks where it is rolled out. The National Housing Federation has shown that universal credit has caused three times as many people to get behind with their rent.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "It is unacceptable that nearly six in 10 workers on universal credit are struggling to heat their homes.

"Usdaw has consistently called

for the rollout of universal credit to be halted, to allow a full review and overhaul of how the Government supports the incomes of working people who are already struggling to make ends meet. We need a proper social security system that supports families, particularly during this appalling pandemic.

"Low-paid workers also needed more reassurance and support. The extension of the universal credit £20 uplift is the least the chancellor could do, but it should have been done sooner, made permanent and extended to all in-work benefits.

"Usdaw will continue to urge the Government to tackle the structural issues with universal credit."

My Body

My toes... are the bane of my life, I could live without them but my body can't as I will fall flat on my face...

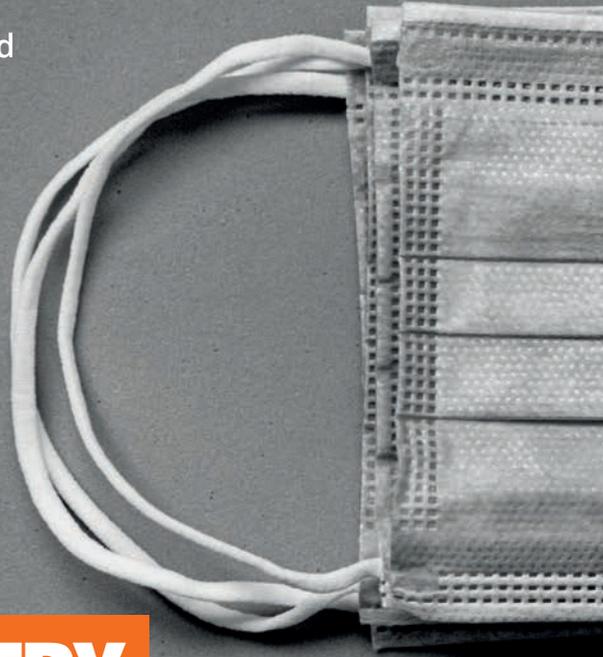
My knees... they are just there...

My belly... my favourite place, but my goodness it's been through the wars...

My chest... constantly pounding, full of love and anxiety...

My head... always over-thinking from trying to please everyone...

■ by Caroline Baird, Community Champion, Tesco Rutherglen



PANDEMIC POETRY

Last year Usdaw teamed up with the Royal Literary Fund (RLF) to take part in their exciting new Write Now project. The RLF is a national charity. Its work includes employing professional writers to teach writing skills in different workplace and community settings. For the last two years they have been working with Usdaw's Lifelong Learning programme to offer writing skills workshops to Usdaw members.

The Write Now project encourages members to get into writing by asking them to reflect on their own experiences during the pandemic and capturing them through words.

The aim is to create an anthology of writings to digitally archive and print.

A number of sites have signed up to pilot the initiative including Argos (Widnes and Acton Gate), Boots (Nottingham), McVities (Stockport) and Tesco Bank (Newcastle).

How it works

Ushaw members have been on the frontline of the pandemic. Since March last year shopworkers, drivers, members in distribution, manufacturing and funeral services continued to work tirelessly to ensure that shelves remained stocked, medicine was available, and deliveries were made.

Ushaw members have extraordinary stories to tell of living and working through Covid-19. Write Now wants your stories – in your words – to become part of the national record of the momentous events of 2020. And Usdaw wants your stories too! But don't worry – you don't have to do this on your own. Using writing exercises, games and short films, Write Now will help members come up with ideas and put them down on paper. These can be anything from a few lines, to a poem, to a short story.

If you're interested check out these videos which RLF have produced as taster sessions:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfRBNI2w8LA
www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVh9dY_YHQk

What will happen to my story?

With the writer's permission, it may be published in books, newsletters and magazines; some sites are funding anthologies so that every colleague has a printed record of this extraordinary time.

The response so far

The response has been fantastic so far with hundreds of members taking part.

Members across the country have submitted sad, funny and poignant short stories and poems about their experiences. You can read a few opposite.



Where can I read the rest of these stories and poems?

Usdaw has collated the contributions and has turned them into an eBook that you can access through the Usdaw website.

<https://dtp.usdaw.co.uk/writenow/>

Can I still take part?

Yes. You can take part in a number of ways:

- Do the video workshops at: www.usdaw.org.uk/Members/Training-Development/Online-Learning-Resources/What-is-the-RLF
- Join in one of the monthly RLF webinars: www.usdaw.org.uk/Members/Training-Development/Online-Learning-Resources/Webinars
- You can join one of the local sessions that the RLF are running in the divisions by speaking to your Usdaw project worker.

Instructions for Surviving a Pandemic

Shop online.

Say hello to everyone you meet

on your walk. Take time for yourself.

Build a fairy garden with your daughter,
let your imagination run wild.

Learn about the development of language
from hieroglyphics to emojis.

Do aerobics on Zoom –

keep all the women in your gym motivated.

Watch lightning storms.

Practice the piano every day,

even if it's out of tune.

■ *by Argos Sainsbury's Widnes and Acton Gate colleagues*

My Life

Yesterday I went for my first Covid jab,

I wasn't frightened,

I didn't have to queue,

and it didn't hurt.

All the while wearing my face mask.

Walking home I suddenly realised,

I felt a little bit lighter.

This made me smile both inside and out.

Nobody really knew because

all the while I was wearing my face mask.

■ *by Sue Sowe, Mobile Learning Representative, North West*

How to Survive a Pandemic

Dance daily to Stevie Wonder,

take bubble baths, drink lots of red wine.

Live every day as if it's your last.

Speak to friends when you need their support.

Go running in the hills.

Make sure your family are safe,

Watch Walthamstow FC in the Essex League,

play scrabble,

spend time with your husband.

Take yourself away from it all.

Draw more pictures,

go for walks in the woods,

watch Netflix. Pray, eat cheese,

embrace the workouts.

Stay alive until you see your family again.

■ *by all attendees at a Unionlearn event, 12 October 2020*

LESSONS IN LIFE

Network speaks to the graduates from Academy1 in 2015 to find out what they've been up to since then

Forty-eight activists successfully completed Academy1 in 2015, with two graduates also joining the union's organising staff. *Network* spoke to some of the reps to find out what they've been up to in the last six years.

KEITH LEWIS

Area organiser, Andover

Following Academy1 I briefly returned to Tesco for Christmas. In 2016 I successfully applied for Academy2 but never took my place as in the interim I was appointed as area organiser in the Andover office and started the role in April 2016.

The Academy experience certainly gave me the confidence and self-belief to become a full-time Usdaw official and I thoroughly enjoyed the six months opportunity it gave me to meet our members and reps and promote Usdaw in workplaces other than my own. The whole experience was certainly life changing.

MARTYN HALL

Area organiser, Cardiff

Since completing Academy1 in 2015, I went on to become branch secretary for A108 Llanelli, and, completed Academy2 and summer school 2 in 2017.

The Academy has provided me with invaluable experience in different workplaces identifying the subtle and not so subtle differences between companies, who have many similar issues.

I later became an area organiser at the Cardiff office, overseeing

branches in the Swansea, Maesteg, Neath and Port Talbot area. At the beginning of this year I recently became the divisional equalities forum co-ordinator, a role which I look forward to being able to promote equalities on behalf of our members.

CAROLINE WILLIAMSON

St. Helens

I can honestly say Academy1 was an amazing experience and I couldn't wait to apply for Academy2, which I did straight away and was lucky enough to be accepted. The training was a lot harder, but my tutor was great and always there if I was struggling.

After the Academies I was keen to get more involved. I was lucky enough to be elected to standing orders at ADM and my divisional council. Also, I am still an active divisional councillor for the North West.

Over the last year Covid-19 has had a massive impact on everyone. I transferred to a store closer to home due to travel restrictions and had to say goodbye to colleagues I had worked with for seven years. It was hard but I was supported by all the skills I've learned through the union.

TRISH BALDWIN

Hull

I am still a union rep at Tesco. I was also a union learning rep and in 2018 won the Unionlearn ULR of the Year Award for supporting learners with



ACADEMY1 2015 STATS:

- 48 completed
- 27 still members
- 18 still active
- 2 now area organisers

digital needs.

Taking part in Academy1 was absolutely amazing and I would recommend it to anyone thinking about doing it. It is a great confidence builder but also gives you an insight into other workplaces and other retail companies. In my experience there was absolutely no downside to it.

PAUL HUISH

Barton-upon-Humber

Since the Academy I have moved to a new Tesco store and I'm now a manager. I have taken my knowledge and training with me and put it to good use. I am now a Sata rep and still very active representing Tesco managers. I have also found a passion for helping staff with long term mental health issues.

In 2017 I took on the role of chair of my branch and I've also since become active in my Constituency Labour Party.

Both academies gave me the skills



and confidence to get up and speak at the last two ADMs, something I would never have done before.

JANET HAGGIS
Grimsby

I have been very busy since Academy1. I completed Academy2 and lots of periods of stand-down. I'm also now a mobile union learning rep and a lay tutor. I served three years on the equalities forum and I'm a branch secretary.

I still work for Tesco and have been back in store for most of the pandemic. I've recently been campaigning for the EC elections and have also appeared several times on TV and radio to speak about the union's Freedom From Fear campaign and the abuse of shopworkers.

EDNA YOUNG
Watford

I am still a rep and active in the union. I still work for Argos but have

changed roles from team leader to customer services manager to trading support manager.

A lot has happened to me in my personal life and work life since the Academy and my confidence has grown from strength to strength. I have made presentations at church and at work to big and small groups and I feel that being on the Academy played a big part in me being able to do this. The Academy has had a positive impact in my life as it helped me to find the strength to face good and bad challenges. I must add that my driving skills grew tremendously thanks to the Academy as I drove around the M25 roundabouts visiting stores.

TONY HAVILL
Southampton

I cannot believe it has been five years since the Academy. I am still a rep and really enjoy it. I went on to complete Academy2, which I also really enjoyed. I was inspired by the

training officers who were running the programme, and felt I would like to give something back to the trade union movement for the education I received, not only on the Academy but for all my time as a rep.

I decided to study for a teaching degree and I now work part-time as an associate tutor in the Trade Union Studies department at City College Southampton, delivering TUC courses for various unions. I praise the Academy when I am delivering Usdaw courses as I believe the quality of the programme is just brilliant. I will always be very grateful for the opportunity I had to attend. My dream would be to return as a training officer one day on an Academy course.

The union's Academy programme is currently on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic. Reps will be informed when there's an update.

ELECTIONS 2021: EARLY VOTING IS KEY

On 6 May, there will be elections taking place in England, Wales and Scotland. There are elections at almost every level of government, including Councils, London Assembly, elected Mayors, Police and Crime Commissioners, and Scottish and Welsh Parliamentary elections. Some of these were due to take place in 2020, but had to be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

This means that, if you live in England, Wales or Scotland, you will likely have more than one election to cast a ballot in. With so many

taking place at the same time, this is the biggest set of elections outside of a UK general election. It's really important that Usdaw members are able to take part, but for members it isn't always as simple as turning up to vote before the polls close.

Members have told the union that on election day they can find it difficult to get to the polling station to vote in person for a number of reasons. These can include work commitments, childcare arrangements, or sudden changes in plans which mean that getting to the polling station isn't possible, despite

best intentions.

On top of this, there are those members who have been shielding or are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable who might be concerned about how voting in person in a pandemic will work, or how it could affect them. We haven't faced an election during a time like this, and there is a real concern that people could stay away from casting a vote in person because they are worried about the impact of Covid-19.

These elections are important and no one should lose their vote or feel like they can't use it.

EARLY OR POSTAL VOTES

For these reasons, it's a good idea to sign up for a postal vote to vote early, vote safely, and vote from home. You may see this called Early Voting. It's the same as a postal vote, and it means that you can fill in your ballot and post it in before the deadline, and at a time that suits you.

It's helpful to know:

- Anyone on the electoral roll can request a postal vote.
- You can request a postal vote without a special reason.

But:

- *You must sign up by 5pm on Tuesday 20 April in England and Wales, and Tuesday 06 April in Scotland.*
- Your postal vote needs to be with your local authority by 10pm on polling day to be counted.

By signing up for a postal vote you can make sure you have your say in the 2021 elections. To check you're registered and find out about voting by post go to: www.yourvotematters.co.uk

GET INVOLVED

TO BE A PART OF THE POLITICAL WORK OF THE UNION AND HELP ELECTED LABOUR REPRESENTATIVES TO DELIVER ON THE ISSUES THAT MATTER FOR USDW MEMBERS VISIT: WWW.USDW.ORG.UK/POLITICS

USDAW'S NEW PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Following the union's all-member ballot in February, executive council member Jane Jones was elected as Usdaw's new president. Jane will take over from current Usdaw president Amy Murphy

in April, who has stepped down after serving one term. She will head up the union's governing body for the next three years and will be joined by 15 executive council members.



President Jane Jones

South Wales and Western division



Tracy Cannard

Barbara Wilson

North Eastern division



Joanne Crumplin

Mike Dixon

North West division



Robert Bell

Eastern division



Valerie Cooke

Simon Vincent

Scottish division



Susan Donaldson

Robert Killin

North West division



Andy Firman

Midlands division



Karl Lockley

Kate MacLeod

Southern division



John Barstow

Keith Jones

North West division



Michael Murray



DRIVING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

Usdaw members across the transport industry have continued to work extraordinarily hard during the Covid-19 pandemic. The logistics sector has been relied upon to maintain the supply network of essential goods during the crisis. People working in the industry are identified as key workers given the importance of keeping the nation going with the delivery of food and medicine. As many high street stores closed and customers switched to shopping online, delivery drivers have stepped up to the enormous pressure of home deliveries.

Network answers some of the frequently asked questions from drivers.

What should my employer be doing to keep me safe?

Employers have a legal duty of care to their workforce, and all workplaces which are operational

should be making adjustments to ensure that workers are safe. Your employer must have completed a risk assessment to look at the additional risks presented as a result of coronavirus. Following the risk assessment, your employer should be putting measures in place to ensure the safety of members. How this works will vary considerably between workplaces, but some examples of measures that might be taken are listed below:

- Restrict drivers entering transport offices.
- Drivers to remain in cabs while unloading.
- Identify and regularly clean key touch points eg door handles, keypads.
- Take extra care wiping down vehicles before and after use.
- Clear provisions for workers to keep at least two metres apart at all times, in line with Government guidance.

- Additional sinks, provision of hand sanitiser and cleaning equipment for all workstations.
- Thorough and regular cleaning of roll cages, VDUs and other equipment.
- Increased hours for cleaning staff.
- Staggered shift start times, with agreement, to reduce congestion.
- Staggered break times along with extra break rooms with adequate rest facilities and additional smoking areas to ensure social distancing.

Can we have a two-person operation?

Government guidance around safe working practices says that employers should find alternative solutions to two-person operations where possible. The guidance recommends only one person should travel in a vehicle and vehicles should not be shared. Suggested ways to manage



two-person operations include, suspending heavy-duty deliveries or using two vehicles.

Where these solutions are not possible, the guidance looks at:

- Fixed pairing of two people.
- Opening windows to increase ventilation and sitting side-by-side instead of face-to-face.

Usdaw maintains that unless vehicles are large enough to allow adequate social distancing, sharing of vehicles should cease and alternative measures should be followed as set out above. If you are concerned about being asked to share a vehicle, please contact your local Usdaw official.

How do I stay safe while making deliveries?

Drivers across the sector have to make deliveries to a range of different locations which can present a number of hazards. Employers must be doing all they can to ensure

your safety when making these deliveries and should be briefing you on any additional measures. There are also a number of steps you can take on a daily basis:

- Avoid all handshakes or physical contact with anyone while on your delivery routes.
- Before getting back into your vehicle after carrying out your delivery, sanitise your hands thoroughly and sanitize your hands regularly throughout the day.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes.
- Use antibacterial wipes to wipe down your door handles, dashboard, steering wheel and gear stick on a regular basis.

Can I use welfare facilities at depots?

Drivers are entitled to use welfare facilities, such as hand washing and toilet facilities at any site they visit to deliver haulage. Although sites will have stringent social distancing measures in place, this should not prevent drivers from using welfare facilities on site.

I was abused by a customer, what should I do?

Unfortunately, Usdaw has seen incidents of work-related violence and abuse increase during the pandemic. Abuse is not part of the job and drivers have a right to work without fear of abuse or violence. If you are harassed or abused, then you should report it to your employer to ensure they can take the appropriate action.

What is Usdaw doing about violence against retail workers?

Usdaw has been campaigning on this issue for a number of years through its Freedom From Fear campaign. In light of the continued increase in violence and abuse towards retail workers and the appalling situation they've faced leading up to and throughout the pandemic, Usdaw general secretary

Paddy Lillis launched a House of Commons petition to lobby the Government to protect retail staff. The petition gathered over 100,000 signatures and will now trigger a debate in Parliament.

In addition, Usdaw succeeded in winning protection for Scottish shopworkers in a new ground-breaking law that would tackle growing violence, threats and abuse against retail staff. Unfortunately, the UK Government objected to a similar bill, therefore Usdaw will continue to work hard to turn around the UK Government's opposition.

You can help us make a strong evidence-based case to the Government by filling in Usdaw's Freedom From Fear survey.

www.usdaw.org.uk/Campaigns/Freedom-From-Fear/Survey

I've received a penalty for a traffic offence, can the union help me with this?

As a member of Usdaw, you can join the Road Transport Distress Fund for £6 per year. The fund covers members who receive work-related penalties for motoring offences.

After 13 weeks' membership of the Distress Fund, you are entitled to up to three claims per year.

Please note membership of the fund is not included in your Usdaw membership; you must fill in a separate application form to join the fund. If you would like to join the Distress Fund, please contact research.enquiries@usdaw.org.uk

Where can I get more information about road transport laws and regulations?

Usdaw has compiled a Drivers' Handbook which provides detailed information and advice for drivers. You can download a PDF version from the Usdaw website here:

www.usdaw.org.uk/drivershandbook

STAY CONNECTED

Follow UsdawUnion on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH MICHELLE HARGREAVES

Full-time convenor Michelle talks to *Network* about protecting the safety of her colleagues during the coronavirus pandemic.

Where do you work?

I've worked at Next Distribution in Bradford for 25 years. I've been the full-time convenor there for the past three years looking after 650 members on site with the help of a team of ten reps. We're not quite at full capacity for reps yet but elections are in September so hopefully we'll get a few more then.

Why did you become a rep?

I became a rep in 2004 because I wanted to be a voice for those who

struggle to speak up and make sure my colleagues were being treated fairly. In my job role I've always been part of the company health and safety team so it made sense to become a health and safety rep in 2005 and put my experience to good use. In my role as convenor I work in partnership with the company board for the welfare of the staff.

How did you get involved with lifelong learning?

In 2013 Next signed a learning agreement with Usdaw and I became a learning rep to try and get learning up and running across the company. After the team had established a pilot scheme at Bradford, we went

to other sites to help with their schemes. Now each Next warehouse has a successful learning centre with active reps. Collectively we've helped lots of members who've missed out on education for various reasons. They've taken on learning opportunities through the union, studied new skills and even gained qualifications.

The last year has been very difficult for lifelong learning. We've tried to promote online courses but a lot of members don't have access to a computer and the ones we provide on site currently aren't available. We're hoping to get together with the reps from the other sites soon and discuss how we can adapt.

How has your workplace adapted to cope with the pandemic?

The warehouse closed on 26 March for two weeks and during that time I was part of the team that worked with the company and prepared the warehouse for the safe return of the staff. We implemented one-way systems, put screens around each department, put every workstation in a pod and also introduced pods in the canteen. I also risk-assessed every job to ensure that the new measures were satisfactory. From arriving on site to leaving, ensuring safety measures were in place. Staff have their temperature checked and have access to multiple hand sanitising stations. We have a ‘clean as you go’ policy so everyone must clean their workstation at the beginning and end of their shift. We also have a team of hygiene cleaners who come in at 2am to deep clean. Additionally, the company has implemented staggered shift times to avoid congestion. The amount of money that Next has put in to protect their staff has been phenomenal. They really have gone above and beyond.

Did the changes make working processes slower?

It has been slower because we’ve had to adapt the way we work and change a lot of the working practices. Next recently released their trading statement and the company has exceeded what they were expected to do in the year, given the circumstances, that’s all down to the staff on site who are working their socks off and complying to the new rules. It has been difficult but we have come together as a team to make it work.

Do you have a good relationship with management?

On site the senior management are really good and we work well together. It’s about developing a relationship of trust and the managers getting to know the reps and understanding that we want to

work with them not against them. It’s about doing the right thing and ensuring that the policies that we’ve got in place are being followed and are consistent. It’s easier to work together and better for everyone.

Has your role changed?

Health and safety is a bigger part of my role now. The way that we represent members has changed as well, with meetings taking place on Zoom. However, it can be quite difficult to deal with mental health issues on Zoom because the member requires that extra level of support and reassurance. As a result, I’ve divided my office and installed a screen so that I can safely have two people in there.

Do you feel like staff have needed more support over the past year?

Yes, because we have quite a lot of people that live alone and their mental health has suffered. We’ve also got members who are frightened to come to work because they’ve got children at home and they don’t want to put them at risk. It’s been a challenge. It’s been difficult at times when some members feel like we’re not doing enough but they don’t see the amount of work that goes on behind

the scenes and how things would be if the union wasn’t there putting forward the concerns of members.

Currently what are the main concerns of your members?

Is Covid-19 airborne? Am I going to catch it in work and take it home? What’s happening to the parcels before they come in? More recently they’re worried that there’s too many people on site. We’ve done the risk assessments and we know the correct capacity in all parts of the building. I know that we are as Covid-safe as we can be. We’re constantly monitoring the situation and adapting to Government guidance.

Has the past year been difficult?

It’s been one of the hardest years I’ve endured as a rep, but that’s mainly because of the extra work. I’ve had to put more in and that inevitably impacts on your home life. It has become easier because everything is now in place. Initially there were so many frightened staff looking to me for guidance and I don’t think they ever realised that I was frightened too. It’s been a packed year which has mainly focused on ensuring that the right things are in place and that everyone is safe.



Michelle out recruiting during Membership Week in 2019

REPRESENTING YOUR MEMBERS

A rep's guide on how to access legal assistance for members with unresolved workplace disputes

The union's aim is to try and resolve most employment disputes through workplace procedures, but unfortunately that's not always possible, and in some cases, further advice and representation may be needed.

When this happens, it can be a distressing experience for the member and it is part of a rep's role to support them and advise them on how to access legal assistance from the union.

The following toolkit outlines how reps can help members apply for legal assistance in employment or discrimination cases and signposts where reps can access more information.

Reps should know that they are not on their own. Help, advice and support is always on hand from their area organiser, local office and the union's legal department should they need it. The Legal Plus Reps' Handbook is also a useful resource.

dtp.usdaw.co.uk/legalplusrepshandbook

WHAT REPS SHOULD DO

- Get a supply of Advice Cards from your area organiser or your local Usdaw office. More details about the Advice Card follow.
- Discuss the Member Pack process at your reps' meetings and ensure that you all have an updated Legal Plus Reps' Handbook and Advice Card supply.

- Give members a copy of the Advice Card when you represent them at a hearing under the disciplinary and grievance procedures if the matter is not resolved.
- Give members the Advice Card if they ask you how to apply for assistance from Usdaw in a tribunal claim.
- Help a member complete the Member Pack if they have difficulty with the form.
- Tell your area organiser if you think a member wants to make a tribunal claim.

THE ADVICE CARD

The Advice Card is a simple postcard that tells the member about tribunal time limits, how to get a Members' Pack and how to apply to Usdaw for help with a tribunal claim.

The card will make your job as a rep easier and ensure that the members are given the right advice at the right time.

It should be given to the members you represent at disciplinary and grievance hearings where the member's problem is not resolved, or they remain unhappy with the outcome, and where internal proceedings drag on and the tribunal time limits are coming up.

The Advice Card is also available to download as a PDF at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/PcardLPAdvice2mem

Membership for week ended 20 March 2021

South Wales & Western	45,508
Eastern	56,323
Midlands	53,073
North Eastern	56,369
Scottish	40,690
Southern	57,561
North West	84,228
Total	393,752

If a member requires legal assistance from the union in an employment case they must:

- Seek advice from their area organiser as soon as possible.
- Complete the Member Pack – they may need your help with this..
- Contact Acas within the time limits to obtain an Early Conciliation Certificate.
- Remember they are personally responsible for lodging the ET1 (the Employment Tribunal Claim Form) to protect their position under the time limits even if there is an ongoing appeal or investigation.

Make sure that your member keeps a close watch on the tribunal time limits. The tribunal has very strict time limits and if your member intends to go to tribunal they must submit their Tribunal Claim Form (ET1) within three months less one day of the date of dismissal or the date of the event which is the subject of their grievance.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Legal Plus Reps' Handbook

The Legal Plus Reps' Handbook explains in detail how reps can help members apply for advice and assistance in employment cases.

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

Webinar

There is a useful webinar on the Usdaw website that will guide reps through the Member Pack application process.

[www.usdaw.org.uk/Reps/
Representing-Members/
Legal-Advice](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/Reps/Representing-Members/Legal-Advice)

Contact

Usdaw's legal department on:
Phone **0161 224 2804** or email
enquiries@usdaw.org.uk

Your member must be very careful if the grievance procedure takes a long time or if the appeal stages drag on. They must not let the time limit run out because they are waiting until the end of the procedural stages.

Before an ET1 will be accepted by the tribunal:

■ The member must contact Acas (either online at www.acas.org.uk or by telephoning 0300 123 1100) to obtain an Early Conciliation Certificate reference number which must be quoted on the ET1. It is important that you give your member the Advice Card well before the expiry of the time limits.

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

- The rep gives the member the Advice Card.
- The member contacts their local Usdaw office for a Member Pack.
- Usdaw Office sends the member

the Member Pack.

- Member completes pack and sends it with key documents to their area organiser at their Usdaw local office. The member may need support from the rep to complete the pack and source key documents.
- Area organiser checks the pack and sends it to Usdaw's legal department.
- The legal department assess the case and informs the member whether Usdaw can support the case and who will represent the member.
- The union's aim is to tell members within 20 days of receipt of the Members' Pack at the local office whether Usdaw will represent them. Until the Member Pack process has been completed and the legal department has confirmed that assistance is granted the member has personal responsibility for their case and must ensure that a claim is made

to tribunal within the time limits.

- Once assistance is granted the Usdaw case representative will contact the member and help them through the case.

SUPPORTING REPS

The union's aim is to resolve employment problems through the procedures and reps do a fantastic job of finding effective solutions to issues.

At a tribunal there is no room for compromise, at a trial someone wins and someone loses and the risks of losing at tribunal are high. The tribunal has really only one answer to fixing a problem – compensation and money awards are also pretty low.

Under the procedures reps have opportunities of finding a way through the problems and coming up with creative solutions.

Always speak to your area organiser if you need support or assistance.



GDPR: KNOW THE RULES

Usdaw has produced a booklet on data protection that provides Usdaw reps and branch officers with guidance on how to deal with members' data

The General Data Protection Regulation (Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018) governs the way organisations deal with personal data. If an organisation, or people who work on behalf of an organisation, break the rules in the GDPR (DPA 2018) they can be subject to legal penalties and the organisation's reputation could be badly damaged.

DATA PROCESSING PRINCIPLES

Usdaw strictly abides by the data processing principles set out in the GDPR (DPA 2018).

This means that Usdaw will process data:

- Lawfully, fairly and transparently.
- For specific and legitimate purposes.
- Only in ways that are adequate, relevant and limited to what it needs.

- Accurately.
- For no longer than necessary.
- Securely.

WHAT IS PERSONAL DATA?

Personal data for members can include:

- Names and addresses.
- Telephone numbers.
- Whether they pay their Usdaw contribution by check-off or direct debit.
- Employment details (where they work, their job, their pay and bonuses, their hours worked, etc).
- Equal opportunities information (age, gender, ethnic origin, etc.)
- Details about their work pension.
- Details relating to grievances or disciplinary proceedings.
- Details concerning accidents at work.
- Personal injury claims, employment tribunal cases, or

other legal matters.

- What union education and training courses they have been on.

STORING INFORMATION

Start to think now about where and how you store information about your members.

- How secure is your computer and is it left switched on for others to see?
- Is it password-protected?
- Can the union-related information on your computer be accessed by other people including members of your own family?
- Do you have a secure, specific file where you can store Usdaw-related information and which cannot be accessed by other users of the computer?
- Do you have somewhere, either at home or in work, where paper



documents can be securely stored?

- Do you have secure storage facilities available in the union agreement with the company?
- Can you lock your briefcase, filing cabinet or storage boxes?
- Do you leave paperwork about members on your desk where they can be accessed by third parties?

HOW LONG CAN I KEEP INFORMATION OR DATA?

The GDPR (DPA 2018) requires that personal data is not retained for any longer than is necessary. This means that once you no longer have a need to keep the data then that data should be destroyed. You should only keep data if it is likely that it will be necessary for you to use this information in the future.

PERSONAL DATA BREACH

There is a personal data breach if a member's personal data is:

- Lost.
- Destroyed accidentally. (This does

not mean where you deliberately shred personal data).

- Altered without the authority of the member.
- Disclosed to a third party without the authority of the member.
- Accessed by a third party without the authority of the member.

If you think there has been a personal data breach, you should:

- Inform the union's data protection officer immediately.
- Inform your area organiser.

AVOIDING A BREACH

- Ensure data is stored securely.
- Ensure its not held for longer than necessary.
- Be vigilant when emailing or sharing data online.

DESTROYING DATA AND DOCUMENTS

There are recommended ways to safely destroy member data and information you have:

- Shred it; this is the best way using

a cross cutter.

- If you are going to an Usdaw office for a meeting or a training course take any documents that need destroying and give to the Usdaw staff.
- Give any documents that need destroying to your area organiser who will ensure they are destroyed securely.
- Any information/data that is no longer required that is stored on a USB stick/CD/DVD or any other storage device should be given to your area organiser.

For further and more detailed guidance please see *Data Protection: A guide for Usdaw reps and branch officers*.

Email the data protection officer at:

DPO@usdaw.org.uk



LGBT+ AND COVID

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on LGBT+ workers' lives dominated the agenda at this year's TUC LGBT+ Conference. For the first time the conference took place entirely online and while Usdaw delegates missed getting together in person they made sure that the issues that matter most to Usdaw's LGBT+ members were raised and debated.

Usdaw's motion to conference highlighted the fact that while we know that Covid-19 is having a devastating effect on the daily lives of everyone, our understanding of the particular impact on LGBT+ workers has been hampered by the very patchy information that is available.

This can, in part, be explained by the absence of routine sexual orientation and trans status monitoring by the Government and many service providers. Monitoring is still far from consistent although it is improving, for example, for the first time, the UK's national census includes questions about sexual orientation and gender identity.

The information gaps and the absence of routine monitoring can lead to the unhelpful assumption that the pandemic has had no impact on the LGBT+ community. We, however, know that this is untrue. The pandemic has had multiple negative impacts on the LGBT+ community and LGBT+ workers.

Julie Haycraft, an Usdaw rep living in the Midlands, spoke in the debate to raise the impact the crisis is having on LGBT+ members' mental health. She pointed out that the pandemic is a mental health emergency as well as a physical health crisis and that while any one of us can experience a mental health problem, LGBT+ people may be particularly affected. This is because of their experience of stigma, prejudice and discrimination.

Julie spoke about the increase in LGBT+ phobic abuse and harassment since the start of the crisis and the impact this is having on mental health.

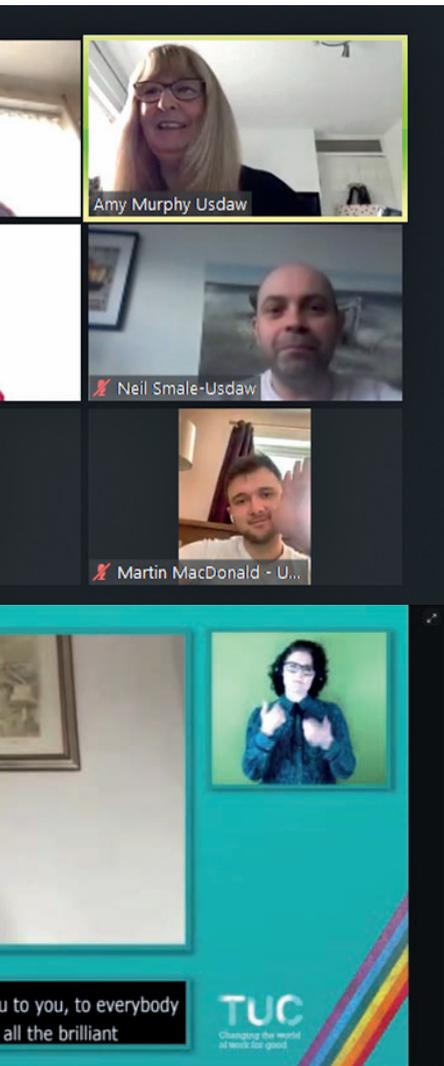
Even before the crisis began, it is well documented that many



LGBT+ members already felt they had to hide their sexuality or trans status in the workplace because of unaccepting and hostile attitudes but even more LGBT+ workers feel they have to do this now.

Just one of the ways this has been highlighted is by the increase in the number of reports Galop, the LGBT+ anti-violence charity, has received about hate crime and hate speech during the pandemic.

Galop evidence echoed LGBT+ members' reports. It found that the violence and abuse was often perpetrated by people who blame the LGBT+ community for the



coronavirus pandemic.

The pandemic has also physically removed LGBT+ workers from wider LGBT+ support groups, limiting their ability to seek help. For many, their own homes have been unsafe with LGBT+ workers being forced to stay in hostile environments with unsupportive family, or in abusive relationships.

With Government restrictions due to the pandemic likely to continue, Usdaw's motion made clear that the specific effects of the pandemic on LGBT+ people must be recognised by the Government, and more importantly, addressed.

LONG COVID AND THE EQUALITY ACT

For some people, Covid-19 can cause symptoms that last weeks or months after the infection has gone. This is sometimes called post-Covid-19 syndrome or long Covid.

ABOUT LONG COVID

How long it takes to recover is different for everybody.

Many people feel better in a few days or weeks and most will make a full recovery within 12 weeks. But for some people, symptoms can last much longer.

Members with long Covid may need the support of their union. They may have poor attendance or performance and this may lead to them being disciplined.

RIGHTS AT WORK

Managers sometimes do not realise that members with long Covid may have rights under the Equality Act or Disability Discrimination in Northern Ireland (DDA).

Not all members with long Covid will be covered by the disability provisions of the Equality Act or the DDA.

If you can show that the member meets this definition, you will have a much stronger case in arguing that their employer should support them.

When deciding if a member is covered, ask five questions:

Does the member have a physical or mental impairment?

Long Covid is a physical impairment and may well be a mental impairment too so members with long Covid would normally meet this part of the definition.

Is it more than a trivial condition?

Most but not all members with long Covid will probably find that

it does have a significant impact on their life. You have to show that the impact on the member's life is more than minor.

Has the condition lasted or is it likely to last for more than a year?

This might be a stumbling block for many members with long Covid as it might not be known how long the symptoms are likely to last and will differ from one person to the next. The member does not have to be constantly suffering as conditions with symptoms that come and go can be counted. You might want to suggest that the member try to get some medical evidence saying that their symptoms have lasted or are likely to last for more than 12 months.

What would happen if they stopped taking their medication?

Employers sometimes argue that the member is not disabled because their condition is controlled by medication. However, they must be assessed as if they were not taking their medication.

Does the condition affect their everyday life?

If you can show that the member's long Covid has a substantial effect on how they carry out normal day to day life then they may be covered.

If you can show that the member meets the above criteria, then they will be entitled to the protection of the Equality Act/DDA and have the right to reasonable adjustments.

Further information

Visit the Usdaw website and download the leaflet *Supporting Disabled Members*

www.usdaw.org.uk/383

LET'S TALK ABOUT PENSIONS

The Pension Awareness campaign aims to encourage reps and members to start talking about pensions. A better understanding of pensions means individuals can make informed decisions about their future and retirement.

Usdaw knows that lots of people tune out when it comes to pensions because they seem so complicated. Many believe pensions are something to think about tomorrow and not today and some tell the union that they simply cannot afford to pay into a pension scheme. Usdaw believes that the more we can get members talking about this important issue, the better they will understand pensions. There are some common misconceptions about pensions, and the union needs reps to help engage with members to dismiss these myths.

Pension Awareness

The union's Pension Awareness campaign remains one of Usdaw's core campaigns simply because pensions affect everyone. We will all need an income when we stop

working, so the more we understand about this the better it will be.

The union wants to encourage reps to consider carrying out a Pension Awareness campaign in their workplace. It doesn't need to be daunting and reps will be supported with the Reps' Pension Toolkit which includes everything reps need to run a campaign.

The toolkit will help you to:

- Fully understand how the pension section can support you and your colleagues.
- Find out more about your employer's pension scheme.
- Carry out surveys in your workplace to help find out about people's attitudes to pensions.
- Direct members to the Usdaw pension section on more complex issues.
- Help your colleagues to find out how much their State Pension will be.
- Encourage members to sign up to Usdaw's online Pension Home Study course.
- Stop colleagues from being scammed.

- Direct members to Usdaw's chosen advisers should anyone need independent financial advice.
- Refresh your union noticeboard on a regular basis.

Usdaw can also supply reps with:

- Posters to advertise their campaign and advice on how to approach their employer to request information about their workplace pension scheme.
- Specific fact sheets for some company schemes which reps can request ahead of the event or download directly from the Usdaw website.
- Surveys to help 'break the ice' with colleagues and potential new members.
- A selection of multiple-choice quizzes and even a pension crossword puzzle to make things more relaxed and fun.

PAD in a bag campaign for 2021

Due to Covid-19 restrictions Usdaw has devised the *PAD in a bag* initiative. It's simple. Usdaw will provide reps with a goodie bag

SENIOR WOMEN COULD BE OWED THOUSANDS OF POUNDS – CHECK IF YOU ARE ONE OF THEM

Until April 1977 married women could opt to pay a lower rate of National Insurance (NI) contributions (known as the 'small stamp').

As a consequence, they gave up the right to claim a full State Pension in their own right.

Many married women who paid small stamp are however still entitled to a Basic State Pension, at

60 per cent of the full rate, because of their husband's NI record.

This issue potentially affects women born before 6 April 1953 – particularly widows, married or divorced women and those aged over 80.

Usdaw does not have access to your State Pension records so if you want to check if you are owed any

money contact: Pension Service on **0800 731 0469** (option 4, then option 2).

You may have a partner, friend, sister, auntie, mother or grandmother who is affected – so please pass this on.

Contact us on:

**0161 224 2804 or
pensions@usdaw.org.uk**

that they can hand out. If anyone has a question you can't answer – simply signpost them to the pension section.

Noticeboard

Usdaw has a selection of pensions leaflets and posters that reps can use to keep their noticeboard updated.

www.usdaw.org.uk/Pensions

Pensions Home Study

The Pensions Home Study is an online course that both reps and members can access via the Usdaw website. The course consists of four short modules which individuals can pick and choose between depending on what they are interested in.

www.usdaw.org.uk/PensionsHomeStudy

Website

Throughout Covid-19, the union has been providing pensions information on the Usdaw website to help reps keep up to date on how coronavirus is affecting savings and other topical issues. Reps can visit the website to see if there is anything they can download which might be of help or interest to them and their colleagues.

www.usdaw.org.uk/Pensions

Social Media

Reps and members can add some links from the Usdaw website on anything they think might be of interest to their colleagues. Or follow UsdawUnion on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Get in touch

If you need any advice, support or have ideas for future articles on pensions, please email Usdaw's pension section at: pensions@usdaw.org.uk or phone 0161 224 2804.



LOCKED IN WITH ANXIETY

The pandemic has wreaked havoc across the world and has left millions of people struggling with anxiety as they try to cope with new challenges

It's been over a year since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic which threw millions of people into incredibly difficult and challenging situations. People have had to deal with three national lockdowns, working while home schooling, working on the frontline, job losses, getting ill with the virus or worrying about friends and family who are ill with the virus, dealing with the grief of losing loved ones and being separated from the very people who would normally provide support and comfort, family and friends.

The continual uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus is also making people anxious as no-one knows how long it will last, or what will happen next. It's easy for all these worries to spiral out of control and leave people feeling extremely anxious.

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, that can be mild or severe. It's the body's natural response to stress. Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life such as feeling worried and anxious about sitting an exam, going to a job interview or having a medical test.

This type of anxiety is unpleasant, but it is a feeling that comes and goes and does not interfere with everyday life.

General Anxiety Disorder

Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) causes an individual to feel anxious

about a wide range of situations and issues, rather than one specific event. People with GAD feel anxious most days and as soon as one anxious thought is resolved they will start getting anxious about something else. The anxiety can be intense and sometimes debilitating. If left untreated, the anxiety will keep getting worse.

Anxiety disorders are the most common form of emotional disorder and can affect anyone at any age. It is estimated that GAD affects up to 5 per cent of the UK population and is common in people from the ages of 35 to 59.

What are the symptoms of anxiety?

GAD can cause both psychological (mental) and physical symptoms. These vary from person to person but can include increased heart rate, rapid breathing, dizziness, heart palpitations, dry mouth, shaking, chills, sweating, nausea, stomach aches, restlessness, trouble concentrating and difficulty falling asleep.

What causes GAD?

The exact cause of GAD is not fully understood, although it's likely that a combination of several factors plays a role. Research has suggested that these may include overactivity in areas of the brain involved in emotions and behaviour, an imbalance of the brain chemicals serotonin and noradrenaline, genes and a history of stressful or traumatic experiences, such

as domestic violence, child abuse or bullying. Sometimes people can develop GAD for no apparent reason.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP?

You should visit your doctor if:

- You feel as though you're worrying so much that it's interfering with your daily life (including hygiene, school or work, and your social life).
- Your feelings of anxiety are very strong or last for a long time.



- Your anxiety, fear, or worry is distressing to you and hard for you to control.
- You feel depressed, are using alcohol or drugs to cope, or have other mental health concerns besides anxiety.

Diagnosis

Once you've been diagnosed with anxiety, your doctor will recommend the best treatment, which could be medication, therapy or a combination of both.

SELF-HELP

For people with mild anxiety the following may help to cope with the symptoms.

Talk to someone

If you are feeling helpless and anxious right now, remember that many others feel the same way. Having a chat with a family member or a friend may help. If you don't feel like you can talk to someone you

know you can call the Samaritans on: **116123** or email them at: jo@samaritans.org

Write down how you feel

If you are finding it difficult to communicate how you feel you might want to write down how you feel. Writing down your thoughts and feelings is a healthy way of expressing them and helps you better understand how you are feeling. Seeing them written down in black and white can also put your fears and concerns into perspective which will allow you to gain some control of how you are feeling.

Look after yourself

This can be extremely difficult during times of stress and sometimes it is easier to go for a short-term fix like unhealthy snacks or rely on alcohol to get you through the bad moments.

The NHS website has a number of

resources that outline how exercise, a healthy diet and a good night's sleep can help reduce anxiety. www.nhs.uk/live-well

Breathing exercises

Breathing exercises can lower stress in the body and help you relax. This is because when you breathe deeply, it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. The brain then sends this message to your body. The symptoms of anxiety such as increased heart rate, fast breathing, and high blood pressure, all decrease as you breathe deeply to relax.

www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help

Audio Guides and Apps

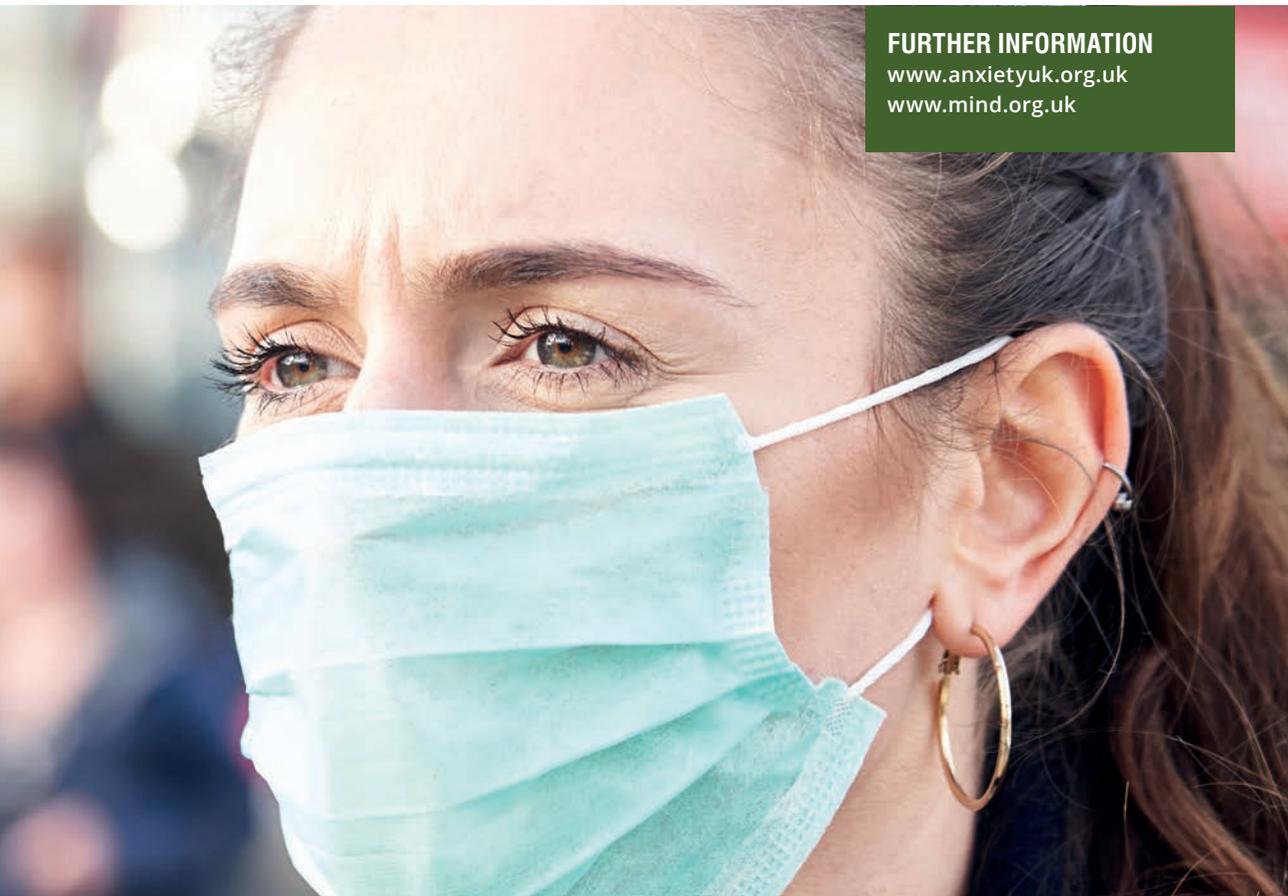
The NHS website has a number of mental wellbeing audio guides and a library of relaxation and mindfulness apps.

www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health/

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

www.mind.org.uk



REMEMBER THE DEAD FIGHT FOR THE LIVING

Encourage your fellow reps and members to observe International Workers' Memorial Day this April 28

International Workers' Memorial Day (IWMD) is when the international labour movement remembers those who have been killed or injured in workplace accidents and those who have died from occupational diseases.

The event started in Canada and the US in 1986 and has been supported by Usdaw since 1995.

Since then, it has been taken up by the TUC and is supported by the Health and Safety Executive and the British Government.

This year the theme for IWMD, chosen by the International TUC, is 'Health and Safety is a fundamental workers' right'. That theme is more relevant than ever in a year when millions across the globe have died from the coronavirus pandemic.

Here in the UK we know 10,000 workers have died from Covid-19 and many others have developed serious health problems as a result of infection. We also know from Government statistics that workers on the frontline in direct contact with the public, and workers in crowded factories in food manufacturing are more at risk.

Usdaw members who work in food manufacturing, distribution and retail have been exposed to the risk as they continue to provide an essential service to the public.

Retail members have had the additional burden from the sharply increased levels of violence

and abuse associated with the introduction of Covid-19 controls into shops.

The Covid-19 crisis has shone a light on the importance of the trade union demand for health and safety rights for all workers. It also shows that health and safety is a central organising issue for the union.

Usdaw's campaigning to protect members in the pandemic has touched on wider campaigns that predate it, including Freedom From Fear, Mental Health at Work and the New Deal for Workers campaigns.

UNION ORGANISATION PROTECTS WORKERS

A key message for IWMD is that union workplaces are safer and healthier workplaces.

■ Organise

Unions must recruit health and safety reps and provide them with the tools they need to carry out their roles.

■ Inspect

Health and safety reps need to use their legal functions to inspect the workplace, investigate incidents and consult with the workers they represent.

■ Protect

Unions must use their bargaining strength at work to make sure that health and safety policies are working properly. Unions can also use their wider political campaigns to make sure that workers are



INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY

heard and the law does recognise their universal right to safe and healthy work.

WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY?

■ Display the poster on your union noticeboard

Usdaw has produced a poster for reps to use in the workplace on IWMD. Download and print the poster then place it on your union noticeboard:

www.usdaw.org.uk/wmd

Normally the union would also produce leaflets that reps could give out to their fellow workers but for obvious reasons this year that is not an option.



DAY 2021: **WEDNESDAY 28 APRIL** | **#IWMD21** | **WWW.28APRIL.ORG**

■ ***Wear a purple forget me knot ribbon***

Ribbons can be bought from Greater Manchester Hazards Centre, Windrush Millennium Centre, 70 Alexandra Road, Manchester M16 7WD. Phone **0161 636 7557** or email janet@gmhazards.org.uk Greater Manchester Hazards Centre can also supply posters and car stickers. These can be ordered online at: www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/workers-memorial-day

■ ***Find out if there are any ceremonies or events in your area***

Even if some Covid-19 restrictions are lifted in line with the Government's proposed roadmap, any physical ceremonies for IWMD

will still be limited in number. However, local trades councils or hazards centres will still be organising virtual events. Log on to the TUC Workers' Memorial Day web page for details of events: www.megaphone.org.uk/calendars/workers-memorial-day-2021

■ ***Keep track of international developments***

IWMD is the biggest event in the international trade union movement calendar, Usdaw encourages reps and members to acknowledge the day and get involved if they can. For more information go to www.28april.org (an initiative of ITUC and Hazards magazine).

Health & Safety

DISINFECTANT CONTROL

The Safer Disinfectant Network (SDN) is calling on the Government to do more to control 'cowboy' suppliers who make misleading and unsubstantiated claims about their products during the pandemic.

The SDN is a collaboration between disinfectant producers and infection control experts. They argue that disinfection and cleaning do play an important part in Covid-19 protection and wider infection control in all workplaces, however, they believe stricter regulation of disinfectant products is needed with better training so that workers can use them safely and effectively. Visit: saferdisinfectantnetwork.com

CONTACT

Health and safety officer

Doug Russell
0161 249 2441

Health and safety assistant

Tony Whelan
0161 249 2474

General health and safety enquiries email:

healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk

AWARD-WINNING HAZARDS FOUNDER

Hilda Palmer from the national Hazards Campaign and Greater Manchester Hazards Centre has been awarded the Most Influential Individual in Health and Safety 2020 award by the Safety and Health Practitioner magazine (SHP).

Hilda was co-founder of the national Hazards Campaign over 30 years ago and is also a facilitator of the advocacy group Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK). On being informed of the recognition, she said: "Over 33 years I have met, spoken to and worked with thousands of people and many of them have inspired and influenced me. I am not fond of individual awards as we all stand on the shoulders of giants and achieve things by working together."

She also paid tribute to "the heroes of workplaces – union safety reps, who make workplaces twice as safe and who are working overtime now to try to make workplaces Covid-secure."

For more information on this story visit: www.shponline.co.uk and search Hilda Palmer

CALL FOR BETTER PROTECTION AGAINST COVID-19

LACK OF ENFORCEMENT ACTION CAUSES CONCERN FOR HSE



Prospect, the HSE inspectors trade union, has issued a statement calling for changes to enforcement of health and safety laws to provide better protection against Covid-19 in work.

The statement followed recent press coverage of the growing concern about the absence of enforcement activity from health and safety regulators.

In December 2020 Hazards magazine highlighted the problem, and more recently Andy McDonald MP, shadow employment minister, raised concerns about the decision by HSE to classify Covid-19 as a 'significant' workplace hazard rather than a 'serious' hazard.

Public Health England figures show over 3,500 workplace outbreaks and HSE has recorded over 100,000 complaints through the pandemic. Yet HSE has issued only 192 Improvement Notices. There have been no Prohibition Notices and no prosecutions of employers.

According to TUC health and safety policy officer Shelly Asquith, "Over 10,000 workers have died from Covid, and many others have long-Covid, with long-term health problems. It's the most serious workplace safety hazard in a generation."

The statement from Prospect confirms that the decision to give

Covid-19 the lower 'significant' rating does limit inspectors' options because of the way the HSE Enforcement Management Model works. On those rare occasions where it would be justified, it makes it more difficult for the inspector to use a Prohibition Notice. They conclude that the risks associated with Covid should be recategorised from 'significant' to 'serious' to allow inspectors to use enforcement to bring an activity to an immediate stop.

Prospect also draws attention to funding cuts that have restricted their ability to inspect as there are now more MPs in Westminster than frontline HSE inspectors. The £14 million given to HSE during the pandemic is described as a 'sticking plaster' spent on hiring private contractors to do tick-box inspections.

Prospect is also critical of the Government's failure to deal with the risk from aerosol transmission of the virus and call for ventilation to be put on an equal footing with other Covid-19 controls.

Hazards magazine article: www.hazards.org/coronavirus/abdication.htm

Prospect statement: prospect.org.uk/news/health-and-safety-in-first-half-of-2021/

WHAT DO THE NEW SHIELDING RULES MEAN?

NEW RISK ASSESSMENT INCREASES NUMBER OF EXTREMELY VULNERABLE

In February, the list of people who are considered clinically extremely vulnerable with significant risk of serious illness or death from coronavirus infection was changed.

Up until then most people on the list had a clearly identified health condition which put them at higher risk – for example, people with transplants, certain cancers or respiratory disease such as COPD. These categories are still used but now an additional 1.7 million people have been added to the list.

The new additions were identified by an algorithm called the Covid-19 Population Risk Assessment which takes account of other factors in addition to health problems such as age, sex, ethnicity and body mass index. GPs can add other people to the risk based on the algorithm if, in their clinical judgement, the person should be shielding.

People who should be shielding will get a formal letter from a doctor confirming they are on the Shielding Patient List. People on the list are given access to help with online shopping and other support to ensure they can isolate at home.



They are strongly advised that they should not attend work. If they can work from home, they should do so, and their employer should help to make this possible. If they can't work from home their employer should consider putting them on furlough (the furlough scheme has been extended to the end of September). If shielding is not an option, they may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay.

The formal shielding letter is evidence for their employer that

they have been advised not to attend work and they do not need a separate fit note from their GP.

Updated Government advice can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19

TUC BLOG CELEBRATES ACTIVISTS

DEDICATED SAFETY REPS ARE SAVING LIVES

In a recent blog, TUC health and safety officer Shelly Asquith asks union safety reps to share any actions, large or small, where they've stepped in to help keep workers safe during the Covid crisis.

According to her blog, "From winning sick pay to improving PPE, unions have fought to reduce the risk of workers being exposed to

coronavirus, with our health and safety reps leading the fight."

She shares several examples from reps from different unions, including Usdaw, showing how they have helped to support the risk assessment process, protected vulnerable workers and secured long-term benefits for members.

"Reps have gone above and

beyond to improve workplace safety, dedicating hundreds of thousands of hours to their roles," said Shelly. "Their collective effort is a testimony to the movement and demonstrates the benefits of being in a union."

Read Shelly Asquith's blog here: www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/union-safety-reps-are-saving-lives-pandemic

MemberOffers

Some offers are temporarily unavailable due to the coronavirus pandemic but remind your members to keep checking the website for regular updates.

CARS & TRANSPORT

Car Hire
Car Leasing
Car Maintenance
Car Parking: Q-Park
Fiat
Startrescue
Vauxhall Cars

INSURANCE

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

MONEY & FINANCE

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

HEALTH & BEAUTY

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

LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

Beer52
Cinema at home: Chili.com
Cinema at home: Rakuten TV
Cinema Tickets
Discount Card
English Heritage
Go Ape
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STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tony Dale looks back at his career as he approaches retirement and his successor Joanne Cairns talks about the upcoming challenges facing members



Tony Dale

TONY DALE

Tony Dale, head of Usdaw's research department retired in March after nearly 22 years of service.

Tony joined the union's staff in 1999 as a research assistant working with national officers on many of the union's biggest agreements including the Co-op, Morrisons and Sainsbury's. He was promoted to team leader of the newly created Tesco support team in 2005 and then moved up to deputy head of the research department in 2007.

Prior to Usdaw, Tony worked for Manchester City Council for 14 years where he was an active member of Unison.

"The last year, with the Covid crisis, has been one of the most challenging years for the trade union movement," said Tony. "In very difficult circumstances, Usdaw has fought effectively for a fair deal and safe working conditions for all members. I am proud to have been part of these efforts and the campaigns for a new deal for workers and a strategy to save jobs

in the retail sector.

"I've had the opportunity to work alongside some really great people in the research department who have worked very hard to support officials, reps and members. Across the union, I have always been impressed by the commitment of staff, officials and reps and their efforts to win for members.

"I've been advised by many people not to make any big plans until we get out of lockdown and I've followed that advice. However, I do intend to spend more time over in Ireland seeing family and catching up with old friends

"Over the years I think Usdaw has got better and better. The union has never lost sight of the importance of delivering for members. It's been an honour to work for Usdaw."

JOANNE CAIRNS

Tony is succeeded by former deputy head of the research department Joanne Cairns.

Joanne started working at Usdaw in 2005 having previously worked for Tesco on their graduate training programme. Her first role was as a research assistant supporting members in the home shopping sector and then the Co-op sector. In 2013 she was appointed senior researcher before becoming deputy head in 2018.

"Since becoming deputy head of research I've been involved in lots of campaigning work including the development of the Time for Better Pay campaign, which formed the basis for a lot of the work we're doing now in the New Deal for Workers campaign," said Joanne.

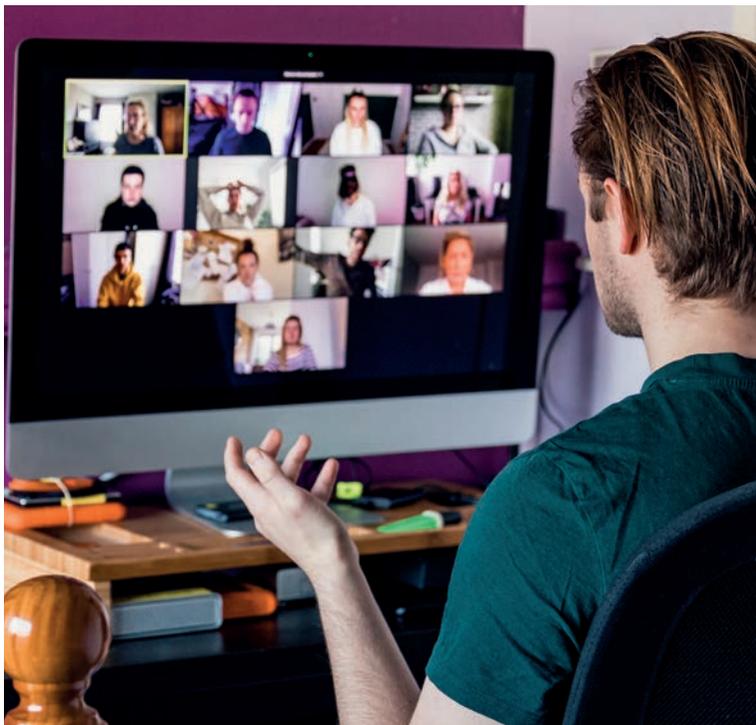
"I've also been closely involved in

the union's political work, including representing Usdaw on Labour's NEC, where we are working to rebuild the Party with the aim of getting into Government to enact the change that working people need.

"It's going to be a challenge to step into Tony's shoes because he has done a brilliant job, but I'm looking forward to getting started. It's an important time as Usdaw members are now finally being recognised for the essential work that they do but they are also facing massive challenges including the economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis, the ongoing threat to employment rights and the horrific levels of abuse that shopworkers have been subjected to in recent times. The union has such a vital role to play in tackling all of these issues and in the research department we will be focusing on supporting members, reps and officials through these difficult times."



Joanne Cairns



COMPLETE GUIDE TO ZOOM BITESIZE COURSE

An essential guide to help you set up meetings as well as tips to ensure everything runs smoothly

Over the last year, video conferencing has been vitally important to many aspects of our lives. From keeping in touch with friends and family, to carrying out important union business – we've all had to get used to communicating digitally.

If you're struggling to get to grips with the different software available, you're not alone. That's why our education department have produced this online bitesize

guide to using the popular Zoom software. The course is a complete guide to getting set up on Zoom, from creating your account to joining and hosting meetings, and includes our top tips to ensure your calls run smoothly. Whether you prefer to use your phone, tablet or PC, this course will help you gain confidence and have you Zooming like a pro.

Register for the course at:
www.usdaw.org.uk/zoom

For a complete list of Usdaw publications and to order visit:
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(Lft 431)

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Mind your Head – Bitesize Mental Health course
www.usdaw.org.uk/mindyourhead

CV Writing - IT bitesize course
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Health and Safety Reps Handbook Part 1
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Health and Safety Reps' Handbook Part 2
www.usdaw.org.uk/HSReps2

Health and Safety Reps' Handbook Part 3
www.usdaw.org.uk/HSReps3

The Impact of Covid-19 on Domestic Violence
www.usdaw.org.uk/CovidandDV

Looking After Your Mental Health
www.usdaw.org.uk/yourmentalhealth

Staying Safe Online
www.usdaw.org.uk/SafeOnline

Union Learning Rep' Handbook Part 1: Lifelong Learning and Usdaw
www.usdaw.org.uk/ULRHB1

Union Learning Rep' Handbook Part 2: The Role of the ULR
www.usdaw.org.uk/ULRHB2

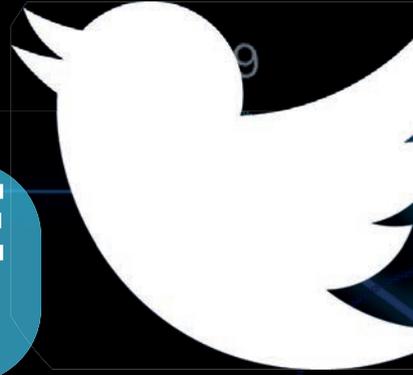
Union Learning Rep' Handbook Part 3: The Online Learning Gateway
www.usdaw.org.uk/ULRHB3



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QUICK START GUIDE FOR TWITTER

CREATE AN ACCOUNT

- Go to the Twitter homepage: <http://twitter.com/signup>
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- Click **Sign up for Twitter**.
- On the next page you can select a username (this will be your Twitter name). Type your own or choose one that Twitter has automatically suggested.
- Check your name, email address, password and username.
- Click Sign up and then Twitter will guide you through some steps to help get you started.
- Don't forget to follow @UsdawUnion to keep up to date with the latest news, events and workers' rights.

TWITTER JARGON BUSTER



The @ symbol is used to communicate with other Twitter users. For example, if you wanted to contact Usdaw or reply to one of Usdaw's tweets you would have to include @UsdawUnion in your message. This way Usdaw will see your tweet.



Hashtags (#) are a huge part of Twitter. They help to organise tweets into categories. For example, if you type #Usdaw in the Twitter search bar you'll be able to see all the tweets where #Usdaw has been mentioned.



A RT (or retweet) is the equivalent of forwarding an email or a text, if you like it, you might decide to share it with your followers.

For more information on using Twitter visit their help centre:
<https://support.twitter.com/categories/281>



RECENT TWEETS

Paddy Lillis

Really important that we keep the issue of violence, threats and abuse of key retail workers in the public eye. Big thanks to [@ITVWales](#) for their coverage and to Jane and Tracey for sharing their stories.

ITV Wales News

Shoved, coughed at and spat on: Shopworkers in Wales speak of abuse from customers bit.ly/3vgLms8

Shoved, coughed at and spat on: Shopworkers in Wales speak of abuse from customers

WALLES | CORONAVIRUS | Thursday 11 March 2021, 4:57pm



replying to [@ITVWales](#)

Working on the frontline during this pandemic I've seen the very worst behaviour from some members of the public. A lack of empathy and respect for fellow people which had been shocking and genuinely eye opening.

replying to [@ITVWales](#)

It's disgusting the way some of them have been treated. They have kept us going, same as all the other essential services. Thank you for looking out for all of us... even the idiots who have treated you poorly. I applauded all of you.

Claire Saunders

Representing [@UsdawUnion](#) today on [@5News](#) why frontline retail workers should be prioritised in the next vaccine rollout
[@PaddyLillisGS](#) [@UsdawSthEssex](#) [@UsdawCDivision](#)



Robert Donnelly

Key Worker Jackie McKenzie speaking at the [@TheTUC](#) Rally For A Workers' Budget on behalf of [@UsdawUnion](#) [@UsdawScotland](#). Well done Jackie



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- If you're struggling to pay your rent, want to end your tenancy or are worried about being evicted.
- If you have no money for food.
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Citizens advice can advise you on benefits, money, housing, family, health and more.

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- Support while you deal with your money worries, for as long as you need their help.

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