



Recruitment...

The Things They Say

A Guide for Usdaw Reps



These notes aim to help you answer some of the more common responses you get when you are trying to recruit. They give you some information and ideas to draw on when asking people to join Usdaw.

Remember this is just a guide:

- Be ready for additional questions; your first reply may not sweep them off their feet!
- Keep up-to-date with the current state of play on matters such as pay.
- Include part-time workers in all your recruiting efforts.
- Give examples of what the Union has achieved at your workplace.

What Can Usdaw do for Me?

- Negotiate pay and conditions.
- Represent you at grievance and disciplinarys, with a professional Union official when necessary.
- A free legal service from the day you join.
- FirstCall Usdaw – the free Accident Claim Line – **0800 055 6333**.
- What could an individual do for themselves if, for instance, they faced a disciplinary hearing where they thought they might be sacked?

I Can Look After Myself and Don't Need the Union

- You've got a problem. You raise it with management but they won't listen and tell you to go away. What would you do next?
- If you were facing the sack, who would represent you?

- Would you know your contractual and statutory rights?
- Could you afford a solicitor if you needed to go to court?
- Strength of character and personality count for very little when you're faced with the power of management's resources and you stand on your own, without Union backing.

I Don't Hear Or See Much of the Union

- That's exactly why people should join.
- Reps are trying to build up the strength of the Union in the workplace.
- That is the only way the Union can become stronger.
- People joining is the first step to giving the Union profile and influence in the workplace.

I Never See my Union Official Why Should I Join?

- A well-organised workplace doesn't receive daily visits from officials.
- The strength of the Union is determined by the number of members and reps at a workplace.
- Union officials do come in when a grievance or a disciplinary reaches their stage in the procedure.
- Union officials are in regular contact with reps to plan Union activity at each workplace.
- Ask what issues people would like the Union to deal with in the workplace and report them to the Area Organiser so that they can take the appropriate action.

I'm Not Interested in Going on Strike

- Going on strike is not what the Union is there for.
- Unions resolve thousands of issues for thousands of workers day in, day out, without going on strike.
- If Unions do go on strike, it is over a very serious issue and only after a fully democratic ballot of all the members affected.
- The image of unions as interfering, trouble-causing, strike-obsessed organisations is a stereotype blown out of all proportion by hysterical media coverage.
- You can bet the journalists who write that rubbish are in their union in case they have a problem at work!

I'm Part-Time and Don't Work Enough Hours to Join the Union

- One in three Usdaw members work part-time.
- Most retailers and many other companies are dependent on the contribution of their part-time staff, so your job is just as important as the next person's.
- Over the years, Usdaw has achieved equality of terms and conditions with full-timers for part-time workers.
- Although the law has caught up in recent years, by guaranteeing certain employment and contractual rights to part-timers, the terms and conditions of most part-timers have been won by unions negotiating them.
- Part-time workers can get all the same benefits from the Union as full-time workers.

- The Union always encourages part-time workers to come forward with issues specific to them that the Union can raise.
- Can part-time workers afford to be left alone and isolated to face a problem at work any more than full-time workers can?

I Can't Afford the Subscriptions

- No-one underestimates money worries but it's a question of priorities.
- Your Union subscriptions are less than the cost of a bus ride or a drink in a pub each week.
- You wouldn't drive your car without insurance or leave your house uninsured, so think of Union subscriptions as insurance at work.
- If you lost your job because you didn't have professional representation at work, the consequences would be far worse than a burglary or a bump in the car.
- You can't afford not to join!

Why Should I Join the Union, I Get the Same Benefits Anyway?

- No you don't! True, you get the same terms and conditions that the Union negotiates for its members.
- But you wouldn't be entitled to Union advice or representation and you would have to meet your own legal costs if you had a very serious problem or accident at work.
- Anyway, are you happy for your work colleagues to pay their Union subscriptions and for you to benefit while paying nothing?
- And remember, every person who doesn't join weakens the Union and reduces the chances of getting a good deal at work for everyone.

Unions Are for White Men – They’re Not Interested in Anyone Else

- Nothing could be more outdated and further from the truth!
- Two-thirds of the Union’s members are women and more and more Black people are joining.
- If you look at the Union’s negotiating agendas you’ll see they’re packed with claims about childcare and part-time work – issues crucial to women members.
- The Union has a specialist Equalities Officer, who works full-time, making sure that the issues affecting all of our members are addressed.
- The Union’s Legal Department has won hundreds of sex and race discrimination cases on behalf of members.
- For all of our members the Union has plenty to offer!

I’m Too Young to Worry About Joining the Union

- The Union’s experience is that young workers are more likely than anyone to have problems at work.
- If management want to make a decision that someone won’t like, they are far more likely to single out a recent, young starter than a long-serving, trusted employee.

- If you have, for example, a disciplinary problem and you don’t get it properly sorted out, then it will probably haunt you well into your working life.
- Don’t get off on the wrong foot, join the Union!

Why Bother At my Age – I’m Too Old

- Older workers are one group who definitely need the Union.
- Age discrimination is a big problem and if you are on the receiving end, you’ll want the Union to sort it out for you.
- If you’re due to retire, it’s really important to get it right as far as your pension and holiday pay, etc are concerned.
- Don’t think you’ll have no problems in your last few years at work because there’s a good chance you’ll need the Union.

I Vote Tory, Why Should I Join a Union?

- People’s political views don’t stop them joining a union.
- You don’t vote for a politician every day but you do go to work every day and you need a union.
- As an employee you are concerned about decisions that are taken at the workplace that affect your job, pay, hours, etc.
- As an employee you may need advice and assistance at work.
- You may need legal advice from people who have a lot of experience in employment law.
- You have the same interests and concerns at work as any other employee so you need a Union.

