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SUMMER 2017

## ADM

DEBATES &  
DECISIONS

PEOPLE  
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*Legal Plus*

*Members'  
stories*

**VOTE  
LABOUR  
ON JUNE 8**

LOST POLICIES  
AND PENSIONS

*Young workers*

*face housing  
heartache*

**WHY USDAW IS  
BACKING LABOUR**

*General election in view*

*The magazine of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers*



## General Secretary John Hannett Only Labour will deliver for workers

**T**his election is not a re-run of the EU referendum, that argument has been played out and the 52 per cent won, we accept that and move on.

However, the Conservative Party want you to believe June 8 is all about Brexit. Nothing could be further from the truth. This election has been called because of the cynical self-interest of Theresa May and her Party, not for the good of the country. Don't be fooled by the Conservative Party's propaganda.

This election is about who runs the country. It's about your local hospital and schools; it's about job security and workers' rights, it's about your family's future.

Udaw wants a country that is run for the many not the privileged few. We want a strong NHS and a well-funded education system. We want secure, well-paid jobs, not the zero hours jobs in the gig economy we've seen multiply over the last seven years.

We want a responsible business sector that treats its workers with respect and dignity and not the type of system that allows companies like BHS to be ultimately bankrupted with the loss of more than 11,000 jobs – and with the state left to pick up the pieces.

We want investment in local communities. We want more police officers on the beat. We want affordable housing and an end to rip off rents and unfair tenancy agreements. Only the Labour Party is pledging to deliver on these priorities.

Under the Tories we've seen investment slashed, police numbers cut and an explosion in rental costs, which has seen many people locked out of ever owning their own homes. Usdaw members should choose carefully on June 8 – and vote Labour.

John Hannett, General Secretary



# arena

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*The union's parliament in session*

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# Gig economy under fire

## Workers are losing out and firms are cashing in, says damning new report

**Companies in the so-called 'gig' economy like Uber, Hermes, Amazon and Deliveroo, are free-riding on the welfare state, according to a committee of MPs.**

The House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee said these companies' employment practices fail to protect workers from exploitation and poor working conditions. It also leads to substantial tax losses to the public purse and potentially increases the strain on the welfare state.

It said these companies propagate a myth that their workers are self-employed, but this claim frequently fails to stand up in court. However, individuals face huge risks in challenging their employment status.

Frank Field MP, chair of the committee, said: "Companies in the gig economy are free-riding on the welfare state, avoiding

all their responsibilities to profit from this bogus 'self-employed' designation while ordinary tax-payers pick up the tab. "This inquiry has convinced me of the need to offer 'worker' status to the drivers who work with those companies as the default option. This status would be a much fairer."



# Safety cuts mean fewer checks

## A 25 per cent reduction in the number of safety inspectors could be disastrous

**Workers' lives are being placed at risk due to the cut in the number of frontline health and safety inspectors.**

Figures reveal that since 2010 there has been a 25 per cent reduction in the number of Health and Safety Executive (HSE)



inspectors. In 2010, there were 1,311 frontline inspectors but by 31 December 2016 that number had reduced to just 980.

The HSE has been hit hard by the reductions and the organisation will see its funding cut by the end of this parliament to nearly half (a 46 per cent reduction) of what it was in 2010.

A series of safety laws have also been scrapped.

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## Labour's promise

Tom Watson on Labour's offer and the Tory record since 2010

Who will work harder for Usdaw members in parliament – Labour or Conservative MPs – that was the question posed by **deputy Labour leader Tom Watson** at this year's Annual Delegate Meeting.

"Judge the conservatives by their record over the last seven years," he said. "Not their empty promises on those 'just about managing'.

### Tory cuts

"The Tories have plunged low paid families into poverty by slashing tax credits, leaving families with children an average of £2,500 a year worse off.

"They've also cut the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme – reducing the money awarded to workers attacked in the workplace. They've introduced tribunal fees denying working people access to justice.

"Contrast that with Labour's record in Government: The national minimum wage. The introduction of tax credits to support working families on lower incomes. The right to 28

days paid holiday. Improved maternity and paternity leave, rights for carers and rights for agency workers.

### Labour's record

"Labour has consistently fought for safer conditions, higher wages and protections for workers. That's Labour's brand. It's who we are. It's what we do. Don't forget the Tories opposed nearly every one of those advances.

"Who do you think is going to work harder for you? A Labour MP, rooted in your local community, with the interests of working people at their heart – an MP who cares about those on low pay, those juggling jobs, people who are worried about the cost of childcare, about losing their tax credits, about ballooning class sizes at the local school and what might happen if they have to go to the local hospital.

"Or a Tory candidate who

wants to get elected simply to push Theresa May's right wing agenda through?

"A vote for Labour isn't just a vote for a properly funded NHS, decent wages, more affordable housing, and 10,000 more police officers.

"Working people need a Labour government that will raise the minimum wage to £10, ban exploitative zero-hours contracts, and guarantee the right of trade unions like Usdaw to access workplaces and speak to members and potential members.

"Workers need a Labour government that will strengthen protections for women against unfair redundancy during pregnancy and maternity leave, and double paid paternity leave.

"Labour needs the maximum number of MPs in parliament if we're going to stand up for you, stand up for the many, stand up to the few.

"Vote Labour on June 8."





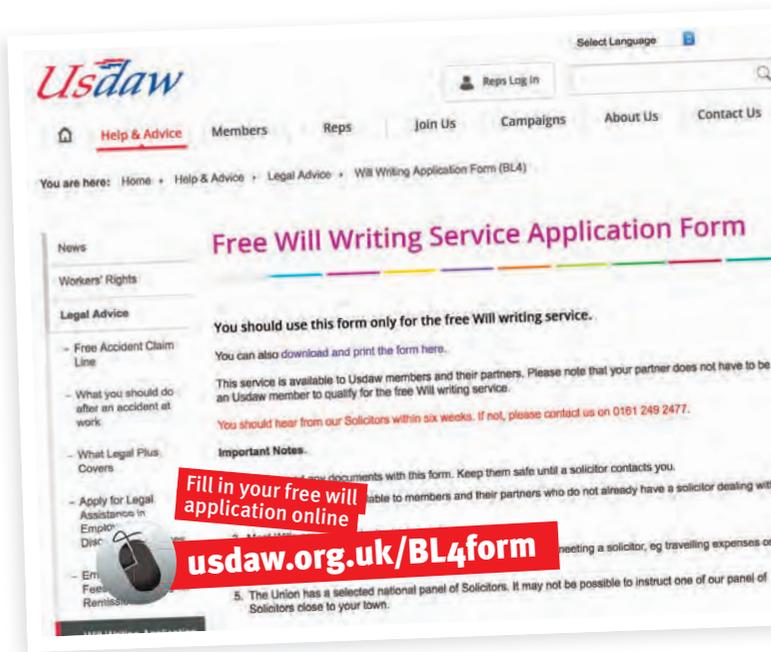
# Get your free will *News*

A new streamlined service is available to members

Usdaw members can now take advantage of the union's free will service online making the process slicker and quicker.

The free will offer is open to members and their partners. A will is an important legal document and avoids any potential problems. It also allows you to dictate what happens to your estate. All members should have a will and with Usdaw's service a skilled professional will be available to give you accurate and informed advice.

Last year more than 3,500 members made an application for a free will.



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**£2,500 a year worse off**

Tory policies have hit the low paid hard

# Wages pressure

## Low paid families face massive cut in income

**Low paid working families could be £2,500 a year worse off because of cuts to child tax credit, freezes in benefit rates and the roll out of Universal Credit, the Institute for Fiscal Studies has revealed.**

It said planned cuts will see the poorest working-age households facing losses of between 4-10 per cent while tax breaks worth £5bn will mostly benefit middle to higher income households.

Meanwhile, British workers will see their disposable income shrink this year as inflation heads towards 3.4 per cent and wages lag behind, the National Institute of Economic and Social research has warned.

Workers face the largest real-terms cut in their take-home pay with rising energy bills and higher council tax adding to their difficulties.

## Work watchdog

**A new agency has been given tough new powers to investigate and enforce all forms of abuse across the entire UK labour market.**

The Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) replaces the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA). Its specialist investigators will look into labour market offences such as failure to pay the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and breaches of the Employment Agency Standards Act.

They will also be tackling extreme forms of worker exploitation such as forced labour and related human trafficking and modern day slavery offences.

Sectors under the spotlight include construction, care homes, warehousing, hospitality, catering, logistics and retail. Work is under way to educate industry representatives about workers' rights, the signals of extreme exploitation and how to spot them.

For more on the work of the GLAA visit:

[www.gla.gov.uk](http://www.gla.gov.uk)



If you have concerns or information about labour abuse call the free and confidential helpline on:

**0800 432 0804**



# Retail flashpoint

Survey shows alarming number of attacks in stores

**Asking young people for ID continues to be a major flashpoint for abuse especially in the convenience sector, a new report has revealed.**

Almost 6,000 shopworkers are subjected to verbal or physical abuse every day when trying to police age-restricted goods, said the joint research

by Usdaw and two retail trade bodies.

Racially motivated attacks were also at an alarming rate with 250 reported every day in the convenience sector.

Calls have been made for more support from the police and for tougher sentences to be imposed on violent offenders.

News



## No to extending Sunday trading in NI

**Paddy Lillis** was scheduled to present evidence to Belfast City Hall to stop any relaxation to Sunday trading hours.

As arena went to press **deputy general secretary**

“Usdaw members gave a resounding ‘no’ to extended Sunday trading, after our survey came out 6:1 against,” said Paddy.

“Our members in large stores remain absolutely

opposed to extended Sunday trading. The main reason is the detrimental effect this would have on their family life.”

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*Nightmare*

*for delivery driver*



# Union's legal lifeline

An Usdaw member, who we'll call Driver X, was out on his rounds late last year when what seemed like a trivial encounter with four boys aged between 10-15 would turn into a five month legal ordeal causing him untold stress, worry and an appearance at Crown Court...

**D**river X takes up the story. "I was delivering groceries in a local neighbourhood when these boys shouted at me I'd left an empty crate at a house. When I went to pick it up they started messing about and wouldn't return the crate and started swearing and shouting abuse at me. I thought this very strange because at first they were very friendly but turned nasty in a flash.

## **Sinister twist**

"I knocked on a couple of doors nearby to find out if the kids lived locally and to let the residents know they were messing about in the street, but no one knew them. So I left the area to carry on with my round."

Three days later events took a sinister twist when the police turned up at Driver X's depot and told him they were investigating a report of an assault on a young boy by a driver matching his description. The boy had told his parents the driver had attacked him with an iron bar.

"I couldn't believe it. I thought it was some sort of elaborate prank at first but when the police showed

me pictures of the supposed injuries to the boy I knew the investigation was for real. However, the pictures showed only minor scratches on the boy's neck so it was clear the injuries couldn't have been inflicted by someone with a metal bar.

"The police said I wasn't under arrest and didn't have to speak to them if I didn't want to, but I gave a full statement there and then. I had nothing to hide. I wouldn't hurt anyone I'm not the type. The police said they'd be in touch."

Driver X was suspended on full pay while his employer investigated the incident and within a month he had returned to work with no action taken against him. In the interim the police had confirmed the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) had decided to go ahead with the case after two of the four boys persisted with their allegations.

"I thought it was all going to be dropped so it was then I spoke to my local rep who advised me to phone Usdaw and ask about legal support. Thankfully the union agreed to back me and fund my case. I can't tell you what a relief that was. Mum and dad had

offered to help me but there was no way they or I could've funded what turned out to be a five-month legal battle."

A magistrates hearing was held in January where Driver X pleaded not guilty, so the case was set down to be heard at the Crown Court. The initial hearing was in February where again a not guilty plea was entered and the trial date was set for late March. The ordeal had left Driver X suffering stress, anxiety, sleep deprivation and weight-loss.

## **Massive reassurance**

"By the time of the full trial I had a barrister and a solicitor in my corner and that was a massive reassurance," said Driver X. "The two boys gave evidence first by video-link. They said I'd argued with another driver on the street on the day in question (which didn't happen). They then said I'd chased them down with a metal bar and hit one of them with it. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I wanted to shout out that it was a load of rubbish – but couldn't obviously.

"Then it was my turn in the dock. This was my first experience of



# Nightmare

the legal system. I was very nervous and was worried the jury might have already made their minds' up and/or wouldn't believe my side of the story.

## In the dock

"It was a scary, horrible experience. My barrister had warned me the prosecution might try and get under my skin or unsettle me, but I stayed calm and didn't lose my temper. I just stood up and told the truth."

The jury retired to consider the evidence and within 15-20 minutes returned with a 'not

guilty' verdict.

"The sheer relief was amazing," added Driver X. "Everything had gone through my mind. What if I'm found guilty? I'd lose my job. I'd have a criminal record. Not any criminal record but one with 'assaulting a child' on – how bad would that've looked and finding another job would've been impossible. It could've destroyed my life."

Why the boys brought the malicious allegation is unknown. Although Driver X bears no grudges or ill-will against them. "I want these lads to be educated and stop hanging round the streets," he said. "I don't know if they thought they could get

compensation or something but whatever their motives they were wrong and I went through hell.

"All of the expense they caused, all the worry, all of that wasted time and the thousands and thousands of pounds the whole legal process cost...and for what?"

"Thank goodness my girlfriend, family, workmates and employer all stood by me. But extra special thanks to Usdaw and its legal service – without it I don't know where I'd be now. The union's support was massively important."

Driver X has continued with his deliveries and does not have to revisit the street where this sorry tale started.

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# Capital voices

Usdaw activists at the TUC's national conferences



**Usdaw activists found themselves on the national stage at the TUC's black workers' and women workers' conferences in London earlier this year.**

The two events focus on the issues faced by the black minority ethnic community and

the specific issues faced by women both at work and in the community.

Top of the agenda was the rise in reported racism attacks since last June's Referendum, the gender pay gap, pregnancy discrimination and violence against women.

## News

### Market leader

Tesco remains the UK's biggest grocer with 27.5 per cent share of the market. Sainsbury's with 16.1, Asda has 15.6, Morrisons 10.4, Aldi 6.9, the Co-op 6.1, Waitrose 5.2, and Lidl on 5 per cent follow.

Meanwhile, department store chain Debenhams has announced potential closures at its store chain and distribution network, while John Lewis could be hit with a £36m bill after it was found to be paying below the national minimum wage, as well as shortfalls in its national insurance and pension contributions.



## Union recognition campaign at M&S continues

Activists and officials kept up the union's campaign in Marks and Spencer when they targeted stores in Portsmouth and Bluewater, Kent.

The union has organised national campaign days throughout the year as it aims to boost membership and put pressure on the company to recognise the union.



More at:

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



## Winning for members

Thousands of Usdaw members use the Legal Plus and FirstCall service every year, *arena* explains why...

**T**he union's Legal Plus and FirstCall Usdaw service recovered more than £19m for members injured or treated unfairly at work or involved in an accident outside of work last year.

The figures also reveal around one in 31 members called the legal department for advice and/or assistance in 2016, that is more than 14,000 enquiries.

General secretary John Hannett hailed the statistics, highlighted in the union's Annual Report, as 'an emphatic indication of just how important this first-class legal offer is to our members'.

Personal injury compensation made up the vast majority of the total, with 133 of the most serious

settled for in excess of £20,000. In addition, more than £2.7m was also recovered for family members who were injured in road traffic accidents.

"I cannot over-estimate the vital role the Legal Plus service plays and the excellent results it delivers year-on-year," added John. "With around 80,000 new members every year signing up to Usdaw, the benefits of this professional service, with no hidden fees or charges, is a message we have to keep repeating.

"It's not only accidents either, inside or outside of the workplace, but representation at tribunals, the free will writing service offer, advice on all employment-related matters, and even legal opinion on issues like neighbour disputes,



Legal Plus days help promote the service to members

matrimonial issues, family law – in fact the whole range of legal matters.

"Members can also get competitive rates on conveyancing when they are buying a house. So all-in-all I'm delighted to report on another great year from our Legal Plus service. However, there are a number of concerns we have looking ahead.

"Firstly, the Government wants to reduce the compensation paid to injured victims in some circumstances.

"This could see our members lose out on, not vast sums of money, but significant amounts which might mean the difference between falling behind on their rent/mortgage payments at a time when they



Susan Langford  
Injured outside of work  
Awarded £3,000

Adrian Caunt  
Injured at work -  
Awarded £3,000

Susan Todd  
Injured outside of work  
Awarded £65,000



## USDAW'S LEGAL PLUS SERVICE IN NUMBERS

are injured and maybe off work and under greater financial pressure.

"Secondly, I'm always alarmed by the number of workers, sometimes our members, who go to a high street or TV advertised solicitor's firm on those 'no win no fee' deals. We have our work cut out to compete with these companies' huge advertising financial muscle. We cannot afford lavish nationwide TV campaigns.

"But what many people don't understand is that these companies will take up to 25 per cent off any successful claim settlement. Not only that,

but workers aren't told they may have to pay up-front for insurance or essential medical reports.

"I challenge anyone to prove these TV advertising companies offer a better deal than our FirstCall Usdaw service, which pays out 100 per cent of any award and doesn't ask for any other payments.

"So I would say to all of our members, choose FirstCall Usdaw for any accident claim – that happens anywhere, anytime, anyplace. You won't be disappointed, but don't take my word for it, read about recent legal cases on pages 16-19 in this issue."

■ £19,248,288 recovered for members in 2016 including...

■ £17,689,647 in compensation for personal injury claims for 2,336 members including...

■ £2,733,621 for 78 family members who were injured in road traffic accidents.

■ 133 accident claims paid out more than £20,000.

### There were:

■ 5,027 new claims in 2016.

■ 14,275 applications for legal assistance equivalent to 1 in 31 members.

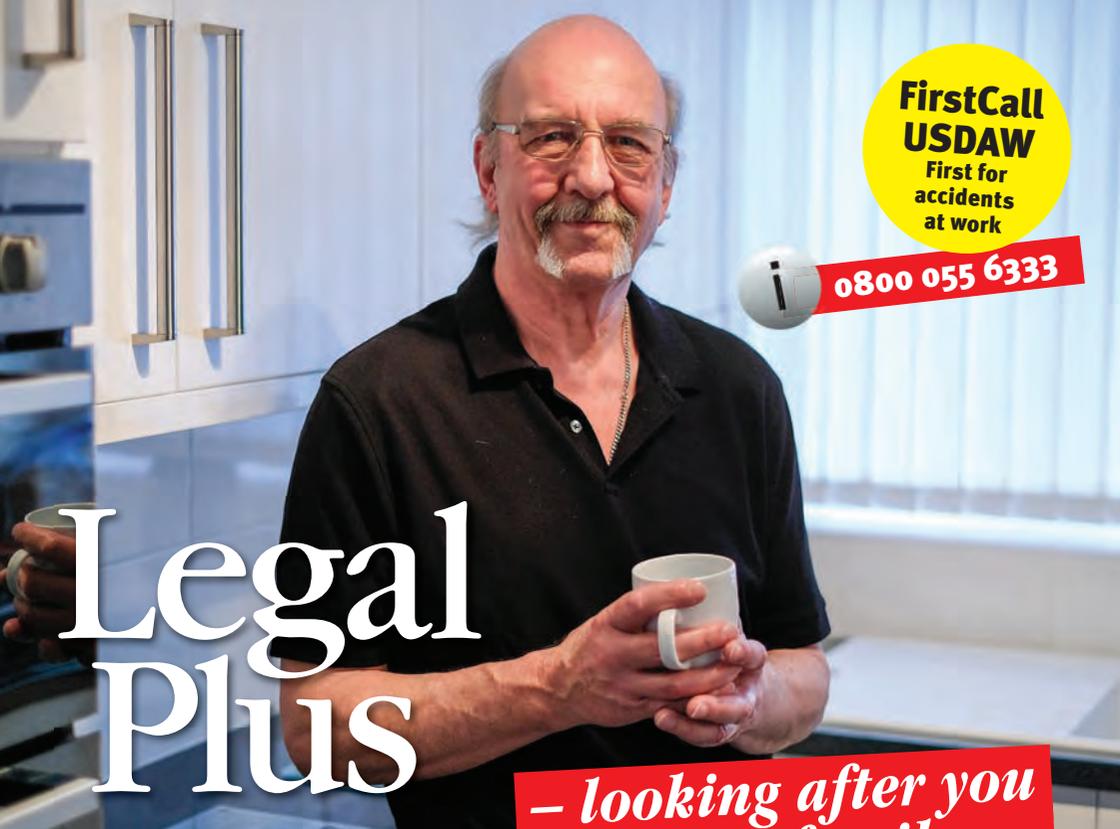
■ 3,640 free will applications.

■ 4,336 applications for non-work related advice.

■ 944 individual employment cases referred to the department with...

■ £1,561,643 recovered for members

■ Reps and officials organised 98 Legal Plus days in workplaces across the UK.



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# Legal Plus

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*FirstCall just in time for Michael*

**Did you know? You have to make a claim within three years if you are injured at work**

Two years elapsed before **Michael Holmes** realised the pain caused by an accident at work was not going to go away so he turned to the union for help.

Thankfully cases brought within a three-year time frame of the injury can still be processed and with FirstCall's support the now retired LGV driver was awarded almost £6,300.

"I was working for Arla Foods in the summer of 2013," said the 65 year-old. "I was climbing into my cab and my hand slipped on the over-polished handles and I fell back jarring my shoulder and falling into the adjacent lorry. I reported it to the transport manger and thought nothing of it at the time and carried on working."

Two days later the injury flared up and the company arranged for Michael to have physio treatment over the next six weeks. Four months later the pain and discomfort persisted and

following x-rays, pain killing injections, more physio and specialist medical treatment over the following 18 months nothing had changed. A colleague suggested he should contact the union.

"I took his advice, even though I didn't know you had three years to make a claim, so that surprised me," said Michael. "I called FirstCall and within a few minutes a solicitor had rang me back and my claim had begun.

"I was sent for a medical assessment. I couldn't move my elbow, and was told I had scar tissue on top of scar tissue.

"My solicitor did a cracking job and took care of everything, I couldn't fault her. I was made an offer, which I was advised to reject and I did, and then the insurance company came back with an improved settlement figure, which I was happy to accept. Everything was finalised in August last year.

"I had 20 years with Usdaw and used the legal service twice and it never let me down. I'd thoroughly recommend it."

## Peter pleasantly surprised by FirstCall

**Did you know?** FirstCall Usdaw can support members of your family who live with you if they have been injured in a road traffic accident

Something for free? There must be a catch! That was Peter Deeley's first impression when he saw FirstCall Usdaw's service to household members living at the same address.

However, despite his scepticism the 63 year-old driver, whose wife Josephine works at Argos in West Bromwich, made the call and reported the road traffic incident he had been caught up in.

"It was August last year," said Peter, who had spent 30 years in the police force. "I was driving around a traffic island when I was hit by a car travelling in the wrong direction, which attempted to drive off but immediately hit another car and came to standstill.

"I rushed over and took the keys out of the offending driver's car, the smell of booze was overpowering. I suppose my training kicked in and of course the adrenalin was pumping too.

"Anyway the police arrived and everything was sorted out. I went to the hospital and had minor side-to-side whiplash injuries. I was off work for about three days. It was then I was flicking through my wife's copy of *arena* and saw the FirstCall advert. My initial reaction was – 'Something suspicious about this. Gotta be a catch'. But to my amazement found out that wasn't the case."

Seven months later Peter received a settlement cheque for £1,250. "I now realise what you see is what you get," he said. "What an excellent service, a genuine offer, no problem and it works absolutely as smooth as anything. I'm not easily impressed but I was with FirstCall. The solicitor kept me up-to-date throughout with regular phone calls. All-in-all a truly hassle-free service.

"As for the drunk driver, he got disqualified for four years, a community service order and had a curfew imposed on him."



## LEGAL ROUND-UP

### Alan Robinson

- Workplace accident
- Injuries: To mouth and face
- Date of accident: May 2014
- Employer: The Co-op Group
- Age: 41
- Lives: Merseyside
- Date settled: January 2017
- Award: £9,546

### Sean Harmer

- Road Traffic Accident
- Injuries: To shoulder and collar bone
- Date of accident: March 2016
- Employer: Wincanton
- Age: 42
- Lives: Leeds
- Date settled: October 2016
- Award: £2,561

### Conrad Thompson

- Road Traffic Accident
- Injuries: To neck, shoulder and back
- Date of accident: April 2016
- Employer: Sainsbury's
- Age: 50
- Lives: London
- Date settled: October 2016
- Award: £2,400



0800 055 6333



### *A family service for Sheila*

#### **Did you know? Firstcall Usdaw covers you for accidents outside of work**

When **Sheila Raper** tripped over a protruding tree stump badly wounding her, one late night in January last year, making a claim was the last thing on her mind.

The 68 year-old was en route to pick her granddaughter up and had parked her car nearby and fell heavily while crossing the grass verge in a badly lit street.

"It really took my breath away," said Sheila, a part-time customer assistant at Tesco in York.

"I was in some real pain, in fact it lasted for four weeks but I went to work the next day and didn't have any time off despite having difficulty breathing. But I was more interested in getting the council to sort the tree stump out so I reported it. I even took a picture, but the council were not interested and didn't do anything.

"So, then I asked the legal department if they could write to the council to get something done and the council didn't reply at first but did cut the stump down to ground level. It was then the union said I should make a claim for my injuries so I did.

"Everything was done over the phone and I had an amazing service. I was made an initial offer but my solicitor pushed for more and

I settled at £3,500, which I was really pleased with. I couldn't fault the legal service.

"I'm an ex-rep so always promote the union and tell my colleagues about my experience. People need the union especially these days and the legal service is such a fantastic benefit, it helps you inside and outside of work."

#### **Essential support for family members too**

Sheila's two sons have also called on the expertise of the legal service and qualified for support through their mother's membership and living at the same address.

"Ten years ago one of my sons was seriously injured when hit by a drunk driver," said Sheila. "Udaw provided a barrister and arranged medical reports, in fact the union couldn't have done any more for him.

"He was finally awarded £80,000 before it went to court. Getting access to that kind of support, during what was a very traumatic time for the family, was invaluable.

"My other son was involved in a road traffic accident last year when a car hit his vehicle. Usdaw looked after him too and he was awarded £3,000.

"It's important to remind members their close family can also use FirstCall Usdaw if they live at the same address. It's a brilliant service. I wouldn't be without it."

## Ex-rep Lynn relies on FirstCall

**Did you know? Firstcall Usdaw can represent you in a road traffic incident even if the driver is uninsured or cannot be traced**

Tesco rep **Lynn Palmer** knew exactly what to do when she was involved in a road traffic accident but it turned out to be less than straight forward.

The 50 year-old, a night shift worker at the Peterborough store, was in stationary traffic when she was hit from behind injuring her neck and shoulder.

"I exchanged phone and registration numbers with the other driver but he said he didn't have his insurance details and he'd get them to me," said Lynn. "But when I rang him later he kept putting me off and this went on for a couple of days. So I reported it to the

police. Turns out he was an uninsured driver."

The accident happened in between Christmas and New Year 2015, just before Lynn was due to visit family in Scotland. On her return she called FirstCall.

"A claim was made on my behalf to the Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB) who deal with this sort of situation. I was sent for a medical and things progressed from there.

"I was offered £3,500 but the solicitor advised me to refuse that. An improved offer came back of £5,800 and I was happy to accept it.

"I had a very good service and I was kept informed of what was going on by telephone.

"I use FirstCall when signing up members, it's a great recruitment tool. I always recommend it to my colleagues. I always encourage them to read the *arena* magazine too because everything they need to know is in there."

## THE MOTOR INSURERS' BUREAU

If you are involved in a road traffic accident either as a driver or a pedestrian and the driver of the other car is uninsured, or leaves the scene and cannot be traced, you can make a claim through the MIB\*.

The MIB will consider claims for vehicle and property damage as well as injury where compensation cannot be claimed from another source such as an insurance company. (It also covers hit-and-run victims).

You should follow the usual recommendations if you have an accident and get details of the driver, the vehicle, phone number(s), email address and photographs if applicable.

You should report the incident to the police and get a crime reference number. (\*In fact even if there is no other vehicle involved, eg, if you skidded or slipped on an oil spillage, a claim could still be made).

The MIB was founded in 1946 to compensate the victims of negligent uninsured and untraced motorists.

It is funded by a levy on insurance companies.

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



# Housing heartache

Six young reps joined activists across the UK at the TUC Young Workers' Conference to have their say on the housing crisis...

**T**he lack of affordable social housing is leaving many young workers with no option but to rent privately, Usdaw activist **Daniel Forrest** told delegates at the two-day event held at Congress House in London.

"There are now more than nine million people in private rented accommodation, a sector characterised by high rents, hidden fees, shot-term tenancies and the constant worry of a potential eviction," said the 25 year-old, who works at Tesco Bank in Glasgow.

"The housing shortage has seen house prices at more than seven times the average income and it is becoming more difficult for young people to save up for a deposit to get a mortgage or to pay one or two months' rent upfront.

"A catastrophic result of the crisis is the rising level of homelessness. Young people are the most likely group to be living in poverty, nearly half of those using accommodation for the homeless are aged 16-24."

Udaw called for the building of over one million new homes, affordable social housing, rent controls, improved security of tenure and an end to the housing benefit rules that discriminate against under-35s.

"I'm very fortunate as I own my own home," said Daniel.

"I inherited some money a few years ago which allowed me to afford a deposit. But I know not everyone has that opportunity.

"I'd like to see more investment and affordable housing in deprived areas."

Activist **Ryan Quick** shares Daniel's concerns. "Housing is a big worry for me," said the 26 year-old, who works at the Westhoughton Sainsbury's store in Lancashire. "I'm currently renting but would love to own my own house. It's not even remotely feasible to save money for a deposit while paying rent."

**Matthew Wright**, who works at Tesco in Rugeley, would also

the difficulties of getting on to the housing ladder. "I still live with my parents but I've been looking for a house with my boyfriend," said the 22 year-old checkout team support worker. "I can't afford to rent or save for a deposit on my wages, so for now we'll have to wait."

It is a slightly different situation for Cardiff's **Bryony Hamblin** who rents her parents' house. "I'm in a fortunate position," said the 24 year-old Tesco worker. "My parents have relocated to London so I live in their house and pay them rent. I have a two year-old son and work part-time. I can't work full-time because I wouldn't be able to afford childcare and pay rent. I'm lucky though, it would be impossible for me if I didn't have the help of my parents."

Fellow mum and customer service representative **Rebecca Barlow** agrees that housing is a big issue for young people today. "I've been privately renting for years," said the 25 year-old from Salisbury.

"But with rent prices and childcare costs rising it makes it impossible for young parents to get on the property ladder.

"Young generations before us have managed it, but my generation don't have the same opportunities. It's very sad."

“It's becoming more difficult for young people to save money

like to own his own house but like Ryan can't afford it.

"I strongly believe that housing is a problem around the UK for young people," said the 23 year-old. "I've looked at both buying and renting, and while mortgage payments would be cheaper, it's raising the money to get that mortgage in the first place. I'd love to own my own home but it won't be any time soon."

**Catherine Bates** from Tesco Aylesbury is also familiar with



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Pictured l-r: Rebecca Barlow, Daniel Forrest, Ryan Quick, Catherine Bates, Matthew Wright and Bryony Hamblin outside the TUC's Congress House in London

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*Usdaw*  
Union of Shop, Distributive  
and Allied Workers





# For wages and rights at work ...



## The Conservative government have:

- Seen average wages fall compared to inflation since 2010, so Britons are worse off.
- Stood by while nearly one million people have to take Zero Hour Contracts.
- Introduced fees of up to £1,200 for taking your employer to court if they treat you illegally or underpay you.
- Nearly halved the budget for workplace Health and Safety inspections and advice since 2010.

## A Labour government will:

- Raise the minimum wage to £10 an hour for over 18 year olds.
- Abolish fees for Employment Tribunals.
- End Zero Hour Contracts and tackle short hours.
- Protect and improve workers' rights.

**Another Conservative government would not guarantee important rights like paid holiday and maternity leave after Brexit**

# Support for Pensioners, Families and Carers ...

## The Conservative government have:

- Frozen tax credits and Child Benefit for five years, cutting families' support by £1,500 a year.
- Introduced Universal Credit which will make 4.2 million families a further £2,000 a year worse off.
- Taken the Living Allowance from half a million disabled people, and cut support for disabled people who can't find a job by £30 a week and for disabled children by £1,500 a year.

## A Labour government will:

- Give free school meals to all primary school children.
- Raise Carers' Allowance by £11 a week.
- Enable women on low incomes whose state pension age has risen to claim Pension Credit up to £155 a week.
- Guarantee increases to state pensions under the 'Triple Lock'.
- Provide 30 hours free childcare from age two, to better support working parents.

**Another Conservative government will not guarantee to raise state pensions by the 'Triple Lock'**

*All policies correct at time of printing (12 May 2017).*

# The services and homes we need ...

## The Conservative government have:

- Left 200,000 patients waiting more than 18 weeks for operations, with NHS targets 'effectively abandoned'.
- Cut funding for social care by a fifth since 2010, which academics say accounts for over 30,000 extra deaths a year of elderly people.
- Frozen school funding for four years. Schools will face cuts of £3 billion a year by 2020, causing rising class sizes.
- Built the lowest number of affordable homes for 24 years while waiting lists are rising.

## A Labour government will:

- Join up health and social care services to give better care for less money and give mental health treatment the same priority as physical health.
- Cap class sizes in schools and end wasteful free schools.
- Build one million new homes in five years, half of which will be affordable homes.
- Introduce new rights, secure tenancies and rent controls for private tenants.

**Another Conservative government will continue to pay huge sums to private companies to run NHS services and schools**

# The Economy ...

## The Conservative government have:

- Cut Corporation Tax from 28% to 17% and Inheritance Tax by nearly £40,000 on homes worth over £650,000.
- Raised VAT to 20%, hitting those on lowest incomes the hardest.
- Tried to raise National Insurance for low and middle-earners who are self-employed.
- Vowed to bring in a hard Brexit even if it damages our rights and economy.

## A Labour government will:

- Pledge not to raise National Insurance or VAT.
- Raise income tax only for the very highest earners.
- Create jobs by investing in infrastructure and supporting small businesses through a National Investment Bank.
- Work for a Brexit that delivers for all our communities, protects workers' rights, and strengthens our economy.

**Another Conservative Government will ditch their 2015 promise not to raise Income Tax, VAT or National Insurance**



# Help make it happen ...

To prevent another five years of an unfair Tory government, Labour needs to win the General Election in June 2017 to bring in the policies that people desperately need. To do that, we need the support and help of as many people as possible. Here's how you can help:

## Use your vote

Make sure you have your say by registering to vote. If you might struggle to make it to the polling station on the day for any reason, you can get a postal vote. It's quick and easy to do both, just go to [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk) or phone your local council.



Just go to: [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)

## Join Usdaw



Usdaw is the trade union for people working in the retail sector. Members get support and advice on issues they face in the workplace and we campaign to make their lives better.

To join, go to: [www.usdaw.org.uk/join](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/join)

For more information about Usdaw and our campaigns, please contact your Usdaw rep or local office.

Telephone: 0800 030 80 30  
Website: [www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk)



#VoteLabour



May 2017

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Three lucky members will win £50 each if they answer correctly the crossword clues below.

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

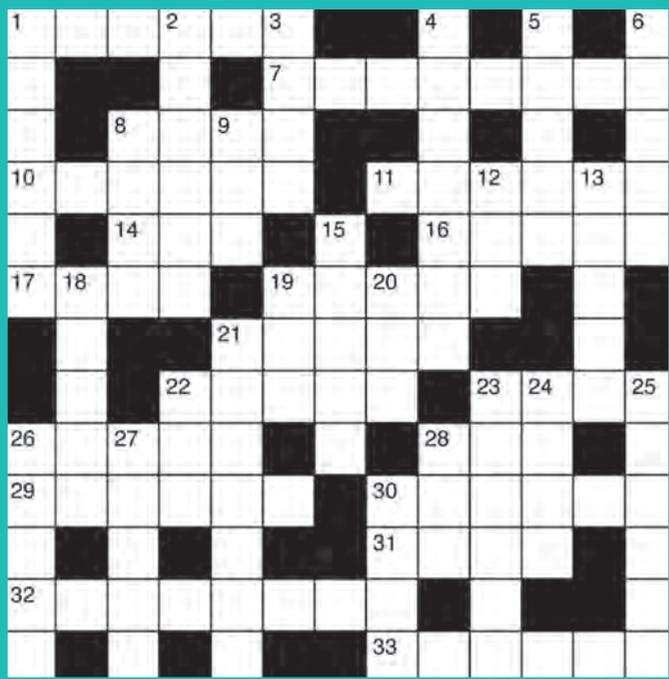
## Word up!

Complete our prize crossword and you could be one of three members to win £50. The first three pulled out of the hat...win!

Send your completed crossword with your details to: **the editor**, Xword Comp, Arena, Usdaw, 188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M14 6LJ.

### arena Spring £50 winners:

**Carol Jones**  
NW Tesco Retail No.2 K139  
**Charmain Hanson**  
Portsmouth & Wight PT H65  
**Dawn Dunn**  
NE Tesco North F101



### ACROSS

1. Run after (6)
7. Uproar (8)
8. Hair-styling device (4)
10. Musical instruments (6)
11. Agricultural implement (6)
14. Help (3)
16. Hoodwinks (5)
17. Notified (4)
19. Italian river (5)
21. Detection system (5)
22. Two-footed animal (5)
23. Shortly (4)
26. Fencing swords (5)
28. Head covering (3)

29. Golf term (6)
30. Comfort (6)
31. Hard work (4)
32. Jewellery item (8)
33. Penetrate (6)

### DOWN

1. Hedge shrub (6)
2. Phlegmatic (6)
3. Recedes (4)
4. Dutch monetary unit (7)
5. Relish (3,2)
6. Walkways (5)
8. Fossil fuel (4)
9. Angry, informally (3)

12. Belonging to us (3)
13. Type of lizard (5)
15. Broaden (5)
18. African mammal (5)
19. Faucet (3)
20. Not good (3)
21. Ludicrous (7)
22. Sleeping place (3)
23. Salty (6)
24. Gemstone (4)
25. Stylus (6)
26. Dark wood (5)
27. Put up (5)
28. Dove's call (3)
30. Pace (4)

# Don't lose track of your old pension policies

Changing jobs can often mean starting up a new workplace pension

but don't forget to inform your scheme provider of your change of details

## Introduction

The average worker will change their job between five to seven times during their working life, according to new statistics.

That could mean many people will be a member of several workplace pension schemes and may also have one or more personal pensions.

It is quite common for people to lose touch over the years with the organisations that have responsibility for the administration of their pension policies. Moving jobs often involves moving house – the most common reason why contact between the two parties is lost.

Many pension providers try to re-establish contact with their members but often mailings are either lost or ignored by individuals.

## Contact the pension provider

Once you know which pension provider your pension was with, then your first step should be to contact them.

**You should provide as many of the following details as possible:**

- Your plan number
- Your date of birth
- Your National Insurance number
- The date your pension was set up

Ask the pension provider to send you an up-to-date statement and request an annual statement for the future.

## Finding a lost pension policy

Pension companies will try to contact customers they have lost contact with. However, if you have moved house and not informed your pension provider or given a forwarding address chances are you will slip off their radar.

If you receive a communication from a pension company you do not recognise and they are asking you to verify your personal details and your current address, you can access a link set up by the Association of British Insurers (ABI), which will verify registered insurance companies that are still responsible for pension policies.

Another complication is that many pension companies have merged or have been taken over by other firms. The link can also be used to search for these 'lost' companies.

You can use the link below to access the company register: [abi.org.uk](http://abi.org.uk) (search '**consolidations**'). If you are a member and unable to access this link for any reason please contact Usdaw's pension department on **0161 224 2804** and they will run a trace for you.



# know your Rights



## Workplace pensions

If you are currently contributing to a workplace pension scheme, you are entitled to an annual pension statement. If you have not received one, it could be that the pension administrators do not have an up-to-date address for you.

Contact your pension department or HR department to check they have your correct details.

If you are trying to trace a previous employer's pension scheme, not all types of pension scheme are legally required to provide you with an annual benefit statement once you have stopped contributing. You can however request an up-to-date statement of your benefits from your previous employer.

## Contact the Pension Tracing Service

If you can't find the contact details of an old employer, or you don't know the provider of an old personal pension – you can contact the Pension Tracing Service.

■ This is a free service which searches a database of more than 200,000 workplace and personal pension schemes to try to find the contact details you need.

■ You can phone the Pension Tracing Service on **0345 6002 537** or you can use the link below to complete an online request form: [www.gov.uk/find-pension-contact-details](http://www.gov.uk/find-pension-contact-details)

## Planning for your retirement

To enable you to plan for your retirement you will need to think about how much income you will get from all of your pensions – current and previous including workplace schemes, personal pension plans and the state pension.

### Follow our five point plan:

- Start by tracking down all of your previous pension benefits.
- Keep all of your pension documents in a safe place for future reference.
- Get an estimate of your state pension and find out when you will start to receive this.
- Beware of cold callers or text messages offering to transfer your pensions. Never sign up to any new scheme there and then. Stop, take advice and do your homework – check the advisers are registered to give advice.

Contact Usdaw's pensions department for any additional help and guidance on any of these points. The union is here to help you understand your pensions and your options.



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

# arena Health

Send your health questions to the  
arena team at: [arena@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:arena@usdaw.org.uk)

If you have any questions for arena's health experts write to:  
**the Editor, arena, Usdaw, 188  
Wilmslow Road, Manchester,  
M14 6LJ** or email:  
**[arena@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:arena@usdaw.org.uk)**

## Trolley hot spot

**Q** I work as a trolley collector. I don't mind the job in the winter because I can cover up when it's wet, but I burn very easily when I am in the sun. We know too much sun is bad for you. With summer coming what can I do?

Exposure to UV from the sun is a major cause of skin cancer. Malignant melanoma rates in the UK have increased alarmingly in the last 25 years, more than for any other major cancer.

More than 1,000 men a year in the UK die from malignant melanoma, a 31 per cent increase in the last decade. Malignant melanoma is the second most common cancer in people aged 20-39. Those most at risk have fair skin that tends to burn, lots of moles or freckles and/or a family or personal history of skin cancer.

Most of the increase is probably due to increased foreign travel and too much sun on holidays, but exposure in this country at work must also be considered a risk.

For members who work outdoors employers should make arrangements to avoid unnecessary exposure to the sun during the hottest part of the day. They should ensure that workers:

- Take shade where possible between 11am and 3pm and spend breaks out of the sun
- Are provided with and wear protective clothing i.e. hats, long sleeves etc
- Are provided with, and wear, effective sunscreen (factor 30+)
- Are aware of the dangers and consequences of exposure to the sun.

## Cage concerns

**Q** I work the night shift in a busy supermarket and it gets really hectic. When we had our training, we were told to move only one roll cage at a time, but the manager tells us we need to pull at least two cages to help speed things up. I think this is wrong, is it?

Yes it is! Under no circumstances should you be pulling or pushing two cages at once. When they are fully loaded, roll cages can carry up to 500kg or even 700kg, and using these cages can lead to manual handling injuries. Cages like these are a major cause of injury and handling two at a time increases the risk.

The HSE has guidance that says you should only pull/push one at a time and many of the major supermarket chains have procedures that say the same. If you are being pressured into breaking the rules talk to your union rep at once.

## Water wanted

**Q** My store manager has just issued a 'no bottled water' policy on checkouts. Myself and colleagues are complaining of headaches due to dehydration as it is not easy to leave the till to get a drink



Water shortage on checkouts

Your health and your safety at work is a vital part of Usdaw's service. For more advice visit:

[www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk)  
and search 'safety'





Working outdoors warning

### from our canteen. What are my rights concerning this?

There is no obvious reason for your manager to bring in a 'no bottled water' policy. But if they don't allow workers to have water at their work station then they must provide water nearby and must allow you to take breaks away from the checkout to get a drink when you need it. If the only source of drinking water is the canteen then that means they have to allow time for a checkout worker to leave their workstation, walk to the canteen, get their drink and return.

Some managers appear to have a mistaken belief that there are some 'health and safety' issues with allowing bottled water at checkouts but it is not at all clear what they could be. If the manager is concerned about spillages then spill-resistant bottles are available.

Under the Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations

your employer has a legal duty to provide a 'readily accessible' supply of drinking water. Keeping hydrated is good for your health and can be more important for all of us in hot weather to replace water lost through sweating.

If the manager continues to refuse to allow bottles on the checkout, talk to your union rep and raise a grievance.

### Allergy issue

**Q I work on the deli but at this time of year I suffer from hay fever and I'm forever sniffing and coughing/spluttering on a bad day. Should I ask to move to another dept or should my manager sort it out? Is it safe to work on the deli with hay fever?**

Unfortunately hay fever is very common and can affect up to one in five people.

Despite its debilitating effects it is specifically excluded from the disability discrimination requirements of the Equalities Act (unless it contributes to other conditions such as asthma). However, even though employers are not required to make reasonable adjustments under equalities legislation there are other considerations for some jobs.

Clearly hay fever is an allergy and is not infectious but working on the deli when you are coughing and sneezing all the time may raise food hygiene concerns. There are likely to be practical difficulties if you need to use tissues all the time and you have to wash your hands every time you have to blow your nose. So although it is safe to work on the deli, it might be more practical for your manager to find you alternative work when your symptoms are bad.

# Parliament in session

Democratic decision making is firmly in the hands of union activists who meet every year to debate all the vital issues

**U**sdaw activists and officials gathered in the Winter Gardens in Blackpool for the **Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM)** to decide the union's policies and priorities for the next 12 months.

Wages, equality, pensions, health and safety, and the NHS were all debated and with the general election having just been called delegates also heard from deputy Labour leader **Tom Watson**.

General secretary **John Hannett** and deputy general secretary **Paddy Lillis** replied to all the debates with president **Jeff Broome** chairing the four-day event. Executive council member **Barbara Wilson** ensured the smooth running of the ADM as the chair of the standing orders committee.

*arena* was there too and reports on a cross-section of the main debates....

## Minimum wage call

With one in every eight UK workers, around 3.8m people, living in poverty the need for a decent minimum

wage is even more important, deputy general secretary **Paddy Lillis** told conference.

Britain's workforce had seen almost a decade of lost earnings and with high rents, higher food prices, in addition to cuts to in-work benefits by the Tories had made matters much worse.

"That's why our national minimum wage campaign and our call for £10 an hour will remain a priority for Usdaw in the coming months and years," he said.

"We must also stop discriminating against under-25 year-olds who face exactly the same bills as anyone over 25. So the Tory policy of their so-called living wage is a sham when they only allow people aged 25 and over to be eligible for it.





## ADM AGREES SUBS RISE

- Delegates voted overwhelmingly to increase the subs by 2p a week meaning **Scale A members will pay £2.36** and **Scale C will pay £1.49** a week from July 3.
- Activists also showed their charitable side by raising **more than £9,000** for UK charities during evening events.



Barbara Wilson



“Through our negotiations with some of the top companies we have eradicated ‘youth’ rates from the pay scales but the national living wage introduces another layer of discrimination. We will continue to argue for the adult rate to be paid at 18 and sooner if possible.”

Paddy was moving the executive council’s statement during the national living wage debate, which also heard **Susannah Roye** (Barnstaple and District) make the case for workers who want more hours.

“Under-employment affects around 3.3m people and is causing huge social problems especially for young workers, women and black and Asian employees,” she said. “Many workers need extra hours just to make ends meet but cost cutting, part-time contracts

and technological change has seen under-employment increase.

“Behind the employment figures there are too many people who are over-qualified working in part-time low paid jobs and this is an issue that has to be addressed.”

### Staff safety at risk

Inadequate security in the convenience sector is at intolerable levels and putting staff at higher risk of attack and abuse, **Maria-Elena Fernandez-Hilario** (Brighton) told conference calling for more guards.

“We have seen a marked rise in shoplifting

and abuse of shopworkers,” she said. “We’ve also seen security contracted out but with this there is no loyalty from the guards as they are moved around from company to company. Thieves also work out when there is no guard on duty.

“We want to see more in-house security in stores with well-trained guards who can act as both a deterrent and to improve staff safety.”

**Paul Ford** (NE Tesco North) backed her call. “When security guards ring in sick or don’t turn up this puts staff in a vulnerable position especially when dealing with anti-social behaviour. Security does make a difference.”



**Sarah Harford** agreed (Newton Abbot). "It's really frightening when late at night you're faced with a group of young men, often drunk, often under 18, and you have to ask for ID. We need better security in-store."

**Edwina Fairbrass** (South West London) told delegates how colleagues of hers had been injured, one was stabbed, when tackling shoplifters. "Companies have a duty of care to staff," she said. "We also have to make sure all incidents of abuse are reported. We also know when stores have in-house security guards, stock-loss falls, absence decreases and staff morale improves."

## Childcare costs

Many low-paid workers are struggling to meet the rising costs of childcare for their children especially in the school holidays, **Lynne Griffin** (Midcounties Co-op) told conference.

"Costs vary from around £20-25 a day," she said. "And while some hours are free, workers' wages have not kept up with the rise in childcare fees. As a union we should be pressing the Government to address this issue so all parents can afford childcare costs."

**Rob Bell** (NW Tesco Retail No.7) seconded the proposition. "The current system is failing some workers," he

said. "Affordable childcare is important to help them develop and all children deserve the best. At present the costs of childcare is ridiculous."

**Samantha Davies** (NW Morrisons Retail No.4) also supported the call. "I earn £61 a day but in the school holidays it costs me £60 a day to put two of my children in the school club," she said. "So I'm earning a pound a day in the summer holidays."

## Invest in NHS

The debate on the health service attracted a number of propositions, from ambulance response times to hospital closures showing once again Usdaw members, some with personal often tragic stories, care passionately about the NHS.

**John Warwick** (Central England Co-operative No.1) called for more government funding for research into brain cancer. "More than 5,000 people die each year from brain tumours and there are more than 10,000 new cases each year," he said. "Only 14 per cent survive for more than ten years and the mortality rate hasn't improved in 30 years."

"This is the biggest killer of children with cancer. We need greater access to the latest drugs and treatment, for too many people these are unavailable."

Hospices should not have to rely on charitable

donations, **Moira Renicks** (Tesco Banking Glasgow) told conference when she moved a proposition calling for more Government funding for the sector.

"Hospices provide vital medical care and support to both patients and families," she said. "But there are not enough places and with running costs of millions per month it should not be left to fund raising to meet the costs. We all probably know someone who has used a hospice, they provide an excellent service and deserve secure funding. Unfortunately my mother had to spend her last days in a hospital."

Another issue close to delegates' hearts was the support for young people with mental health issues. **Tina Martin** (Sainsbury's Yorkshire) made an appeal for targeted funding to be reinstated for under-18 year-olds. "My teenage daughter had serious mental health issues after a sudden family bereavement," she said. "She was helped by CAMHS (Child Adolescent Mental Health Services), which was invaluable, but the current system of non-targeted funding is leaving some of our most vulnerable children without the help they so desperately need."

**Donnamarie Derrick** (North East Kent) also spoke from personal experience when she supported the call. "Mental health does not discriminate," she said. "We were forced to pay for private healthcare after waiting months for treatment for our daughter. Funding is desperately needed."



# Usdaw member



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## SPECIAL OFFERS

# I would walk 900 miles!

Raising money for charity won't come easy for Andy Martin, who has Parkinson's disease, but *arena* readers can help...

**W**hile most Usdaw members are looking forward to their summer holidays at this time of year Andy Martin is busy training for a gruelling 900-mile charity walk from John O'Groats to Land's End.

If that wasn't difficult enough the trek is further complicated by Andy's condition – he has Parkinson's disease – but he is determined not to let that dampen his determination to raise money for his chosen charity Parkinson's UK during the 30 days of September.

"I was diagnosed in 2013," said Andy, 41, who works at the Tesco Lichfield depot as a stock and systems manager. "I'd only heard about Parkinson's because well-known people like Michael J Fox and Muhammad Ali had it. I'd noticed I had a slight shake in my right arm so went to the doctor's. My immediate reaction was – can I still play Rugby? Thankfully the doctor said yes and in fact you're encouraged

to remain as active as possible, which suited me down to the ground.

"I'm a positive person and you have to deal with these things, so I wasn't upset. I also have two young children Sophie, who's five, and Liam seven, who I coach at junior rugby."

Andy continued to play for two local clubs, usually in the pack, and did his first charity walk the following year from London to Brighton. Despite torrential rain, with the help of his colleagues he raised around £500.

### Step by step

Two years later he did the same walk this time with a colleague Peter Borton and walked in blazing sunshine eventually raising £1,800. "We had great support from work colleagues and friends at the rugby clubs and it was around this time the idea of walking the length of the country was mentioned and it reignited something inside





# WHAT IS PARKINSON'S DISEASE

- Parkinson's is a progressive neurological condition.
- Caused by a shortage of a chemical called dopamine because some nerve cells in the brain have died.
- Without dopamine people can find that their movements become slower so it takes longer to do things.
- The loss of nerve cells in the brain causes the symptoms of Parkinson's to appear.
- There is currently no cure for Parkinson's.
- Parkinson's doesn't directly cause people to die, but symptoms do get worse over time.
- One person in every 500 has Parkinson's. That's about 127,000 people in the UK.
- Most people who get Parkinson's are aged 50 or over but younger people can get it too.

## SYMPTOMS

Everyone with Parkinson's has different symptoms.

- The main symptoms of Parkinson's are tremors, rigidity and slowness of movement.
- As well as affecting movement, people with Parkinson's can find that other issues, such as tiredness, pain, depression and constipation, can have an impact on their day-to-day lives.
- Symptoms and the speed at which the condition develops will differ from one person to the next.
- The symptoms can be controlled using a combination of drugs, therapies and occasionally surgery.
- As Parkinson's progresses, an increased amount of care and support may be required, although many people maintain a good quality of life with limited care or treatment.
- Charity Parkinson's UK funds research into finding better treatments and ways to improve the quality of life for people with Parkinson's as well as finding a cure.

For more information on the condition visit:

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

[0808 800 0303](tel:08088000303)

[hello@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:hello@parkinsons.org.uk)





You can find out more,  
donate, and follow the route at:

[joglein30days.co.uk](http://joglein30days.co.uk)

## PARKINSON'S DIAGNOSIS

■ It's not easy to diagnose Parkinson's. There are no laboratory tests so it's important that the diagnosis is made by a specialist.

■ The specialist will examine the person for any physical signs of Parkinson's and take a detailed history of the symptoms they're experiencing.

me, which I'd always wanted to do."

Meanwhile Andy's symptoms continued to develop and the tremors spread to both arms, and his right-hand shakes noticeably, making it difficult to type. "Once you're diagnosed you have to tell the DVLA. I've just been reassessed and have been given three more years on my licence.

### Target £10,000!

"Your balance is also affected and I have noticed I've begun to lean slightly to the left. People react in different ways and at various speeds to Parkinson's and the treatment also varies. It can encourage compulsive behaviour for example, gambling, but that's not happened to me, maybe my compulsion is walking!"

Andy's lone adventure starts on September 1 and is scheduled to end 29 days later. He will average 30 miles a day. Along the way he wants to encourage individuals, local schools, community and faith groups to join him for sections of the walk. "I've already had offers of help from a school in Carlisle and a mosque in Edinburgh and I'd like to get more people involved. Hopefully readers of *arena* can help me out too!

"All money raised will go to Parkinson's UK, my target is £10,000 but I'd love to go beyond that. Most of the planning is done, in terms of overnight stays, which I'm funding myself.

"Tesco has been very accommodating too with my holiday schedules and my workmates continue to give me fantastic support with fund raising."

# Protect Yourself from Pension Scammers!

Are you worried you may have been scammed already? **Act immediately!**

1. Call Usdaw's pension department on **0161 224 2804** or email us at **pensions@usdaw.org.uk**
2. Contact your workplace pension department or pension company – they may still be able to stop a transfer that hasn't taken place yet
3. Call **ActionFraud** and report it on **0300 123 2040**



## GIVE COLD CALLERS THE COLD SHOULDER

■ The Government has recently introduced a **complete ban** on firms ringing people out-of-the-blue (**cold-calling**) about their pension arrangements. However, scammers are likely to ignore this and/or could try and approach you by text or email. Scammers may say they are from a Government approved body like Pension Wise – the new free service offered by the state. **But remember:** This organisation would **NEVER** phone or email you out-of-the-blue to offer you a pension review.

## FINANCIAL ADVISERS

■ Scammers sometimes **pose as financial advisers**. Check if your adviser is registered on the FCA website at: **www.fca.org.uk/register** or contact Usdaw on **0161 224 2804** and we will check for you.

## DEAL SOUNDS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

■ Many **scammers offer unregulated investments** offering 'guaranteed returns' sometimes as much as 8 per cent each year. They are often 'exotic' sounding investments like overseas hotels, vineyards, deforestation, landfill – all of which represent high risk investments.

**Scammers will try and put you under pressure to make snap decisions.**

**Not everyone is out there to rip you off, but if you are thinking about your retirement savings:**

- ◆ Take your time
- ◆ Check you are dealing with a registered adviser
- ◆ Contact Usdaw if you have any worries or concerns



**Usdaw**  
Union of Shop, Distributive  
and Allied Workers

If something sounds **too good to be true...** it often is!  
**Protect your pension with Usdaw**

# A union man through and through

Is veteran activist **Charlie Thomas** the union's longest serving member? *arena* caught up with the 93 year-old to reflect on his remarkable lifetime involvement...

**F**or a man who knew nothing about trade unions and with 'no ambition' **Charles 'Charlie' Thomas** is a living history of both 20th and 21st century trade union involvement.

Charlie's first job was delivering meat from his Co-op bike in the Haywards Heath area of Brighton as a 14 year-old. Little did he know it was the start of a 51-year working career there – impressive in itself – but going to his first union meeting in 1938 would lead to a far longer involvement in the trade union movement.

"I remember I sat at the back of the branch meeting and didn't have a clue what it was all about," said Charlie. "I didn't have any ambition either but before I knew it I was volunteered as a branch official and everything began there!"

Weekly union subs were tuppence a week, which he paid from his 11 shillings weekly wage for a 48-hour week, and

a four pence (4d, in old money) deduction for his state pension.

Four years later Charlie did his own volunteering when he was 18 and enlisted in the RAF during the Second World War, where he trained as a navigator. "I was in the RAF for four years, part of the Mosquito squadron, but by the time I'd finished my training the war was over, so I haven't any tales of heroics I'm afraid."

## Never at home

He returned to the Co-op in 1947 and his union journey resumed and by the mid-50s he set up the Haywards Heath branch where he served as chair and/or secretary for many years. At its peak the branch had around 1,400 members.

Charlie's first Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM) was in 1962 and combined with his divisional and branch activities it would take up a lot of his spare time. "My family would often joke I was never at home on a Sunday because I was on

## FACT FILE

- **Born:** 15 March 1924.
- **Left school** in 1938 and started work at the Co-op as a trainee butcher and joined the Journeyman Butchers' Federation (It would later merge with Usdaw).
- **Established** the Haywards Heath (H2) branch in 1956.
- **Served** on the divisional council from 1972-1985.
- **Part-time convenor** at the Co-op for two days a week from 1979-1989.
- **Retired** from work in 1989 but continued to pay scale A contributions up until 2016.
- **Attended** 40 Annual delegate Meetings between 1962-2003.
- **From 1990** was a member of the British Pensioners Trade Union and Action Association.
- **From 1992** was a member of both the South East Region of the TUC retired members and the Southern divisional retired members' committee.
- **Retired** as financial secretary of Brighton H10 branch in 2016.
- **Was a divisional nomination** for the 2016 Organising Awards in the Outstanding Achievement category.
- **By 2017** Charlie had amassed 78 years of union membership.

union business so often," said Charlie. "I think I was away 26 Sundays out of 52. My wife Daphne never complained though and was very supportive of my union role. At first she didn't come with me to ADM but one year she decided to come along and after that came every year for 20 years, she loved it.

"We were keen dancers in those days and at ADM there'd be a live big band playing in the evenings at the Winter Gardens, so it was perfect for us. The dance floor then was so much bigger too. It was spectacular."

People  
like you

For more information  
on being a rep, visit the  
union's website:

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



Usdaw veteran Charlie Thomas

By the 1960s Charlie had seen his subs increase to two shillings a week and he spoke at ADM on the need to update the benefits side of the union. He remembers the then Labour prime minister Harold Wilson speaking at the conference and waving his famous pipe.

### Labour supporter

“Money was always tight in those days and our branch funds weren’t great. Getting elected to the divisional council allowed me to go to ADM and helped the branch to fund an additional delegate.”

In 1989 Charlie retired at 65 from the Co-op but his union involvement continued as he joined campaigning pensioner groups with both Usdaw and the TUC. Only family circumstances prevented him from adding to his tally of 40 ADMs.

“Daphne was diagnosed with a serious illness in 2003 and I couldn’t and wouldn’t leave her alone. So that year marked the end of our ADM. She sadly died in 2009 and I miss her every day.”

Despite a lifelong commitment to the union movement Charlie never joined

any political party but has always been a Labour supporter. “The first general election I was eligible to vote in was 1945 because you had to be 21 in those days. Unfortunately for me I live in a Tory constituency but that doesn’t stop me voting Labour in the local and national elections.

“I read the *arena* and *Network* magazines and like to keep up with what’s going on in the union. I’m now a Free Life Member.”

It’s been quite a journey since that shy young boy went to his first union meeting in 1938.

# arena Letters

Members can have their say right here

via email or post — but keep it brief!



Nichole Easton



Albert Williams

HAVE  
YOUR  
SAY

Send your thoughts to:  
**The Editor, arena, Usdaw,  
188 Wilmslow Road,  
Manchester, M14 6LJ**  
or email: [arena@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:arena@usdaw.org.uk)

Star Letter wins £50!

## Cash boost for members

Usdaw has had a great response from members studying with the Open University (OU) after *arena* reported on graduate **Nichole Easton** in the spring issue.

Many members, who previously did not know the union provides cash help for OU students, have since claimed the £150 or £75 grant available after they completed either a 60 or 30 point course respectively.

One of the Usdaw supported graduates was **Albert Williams** who now has a BSc (Hons) in Computing and IT. Family and friends gathered at the Barbican Centre, London in March this year to celebrate Rastafarian Albert's six years of hard work while holding down his security job at Tesco Extra in Hazelwick Avenue, London.

His education journey does not stop there as Albert is aiming for an MSc in Technology Management over the next two years. His wife Tempie is also studying with the OU and the two have supported each other on their learning adventure.

You can find out more about the financial help Usdaw offers at: [www.usdaw.org.uk/education](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/education)



Lidl won't talk to Usdaw



Kezia Dugdale

## Snub for Lidl in Scotland

Scottish Labour leader **Kezia Dugdale** MSP turned down the chance to open a new Lidl store in Edinburgh when she found out that the company refuses to recognise trade unions.

In a letter to the company, while welcoming its investment, she wrote:

"I have spoken to Usdaw representatives and I was disappointed to learn that Aldi and Lidl are refusing to recognise their trade union Usdaw. Further, that Lidl refuse to even let representatives of the trade union enter their stores to speak to staff is simply not acceptable. I would encourage you to sit down to meet with Usdaw representatives to better understand and discuss the problems that have been raised by Lidl staff with their trade union.

"Staff working for Lidl have identified to Usdaw that there are a number of problems including bullying by



management, staff not getting the working hours they need at times they can work, problems in booking annual leave and checkout staff being expected to scan customers shopping items at a very high speed.

“Every business will have some issues in the workplace but trade unions can help highlight and resolve these to make for a more productive business that delivers for everyone. In modern workplaces, trade unions should be accepted as partners who have a legitimate role in representing the interests of the employee.

“Large parts of the food retail sector – Tesco, Sainsbury’s, Morrisons, and the Co-op – recognise Usdaw. I am very concerned that Lidl are refusing to recognise trade unions. I want to encourage you to enter discussions with Usdaw and recognise the union within your business.”

## New executive councillor: Jane Jones

**Jane Jones**, checkout team support based in Tesco Mold, is the new executive council member for the North West division following a by-election earlier this year. The full result is shown below:

RESULT		1 TO ELECT
Jane JONES	1,049	<b>ELECTED</b>
Ryan QUICK	760	
Amanda OWENS	742	
Jackie McNEILL	722	
Robert BELL	499	
Stephen McLAUGHLIN	323	
Martin KIRKBY	265	

TURNOUT	
Number of eligible voters	92,735
Total number of votes cast	4,386
Turnout	4.7%
Number of votes found to be invalid	26
Total number of valid votes to be counted	4,360

### Legal Notice

As Scrutineers appointed in accordance with Section 49 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (as amended), we are satisfied as to each of the matters specified in subsection 52(2) with regard to the election. The following points should be noted:

- a) The person appointed under section 51A to carry out the storage and counting of voting papers was Electoral Reform Services Limited.
- b) The person appointed under section 51A to carry out the distribution of voting papers was Electoral Reform Services Limited.
- c) A copy of the register of voters (as at the relevant date) was examined in accordance with section 49(3). The examination took place at our own instance and did not reveal any matter that should be brought to the attention of the trade union.

We would draw your attention to sections 52(4), 52(5), and 52(6). Section 52(4) requires that a copy of this report be published and made available to all members of the union within a three month period. This does not, however, mean that every member has to be notified individually.

Yours sincerely,

**Alex Lonie**, Associate Director and Manager of Trade Union Sector, Electoral Reform Services

## Loyalty awards for long-serving members after they clock up 30 years



Christine Shingler



Julie Mitchell



Ranjan Tailor

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**Usdaw for Labour**

Susan's ready to hit the campaign trail

For more information on the general election, visit the union's website:

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

# All eyes on June 8

**P**olitical activist **Susan Olech** is gearing up for the snap general election this June, when she'll be out canvassing to ensure that Labour hold their seat in her home town of Tooting.

"We've had nearly nine years under the Tories," said the 46 year-old. "Attacks on workers' rights, cuts to in-work benefits and

the housing crisis. We've now got the opportunity to change things so people need to get out there and vote Labour on June 8."

The general assistant became politically active in 2014 at the same time as becoming a union rep at her Sainsbury's store in Merton.

"I joined Usdaw because I believe in the trade union movement and I joined the Labour Party for the same reason. I feel the two go hand in hand.

"I've always had an interest in politics but now I realise how important it is to get involved. It's empowering and has allowed me to meet lots of like-minded people.

"I've also been lucky enough to be selected for Tulo (Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison

Organisation). It's all about getting trade unions active within the Labour Party and training individual members to become more politically aware if they're interested in progressing. It's a massive confidence boost for me to get a second chance at education like this and I can't wait to get started.

"I think members who want to become more involved should start by going to their branch meetings and it will grow from there.

"You'll get the opportunity to go on courses, federation weekends, political weekends and key events like the Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival which give you an insight into what the trade union movement is all about."

Speaking at ADM in April

# Communication

# Your Contacts

From **Aberdeen**  
to **Plymouth**,  
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the UK

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Always speak to your rep first if you need advice or support. If you don't have a rep at your workplace contact your local Usdaw office as shown on the map. Alternatively, you can ring our freephone national helpline **0800 030 80 30** to be connected to your local office.

**The union's head office is:**  
188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M14 6LJ  
**Tel:** 0161 224 2804/249 2400  
**email:** enquiries@usdaw.org.uk, [www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk)

**Know your Branch!** The number of your Usdaw branch is printed on the plastic wrapper of each issue of arena above your name. Some members change branches during the year, so check this to make sure you attend the right branch meeting. You are only entitled to take part in Usdaw elections at meetings of your own branch. If you need further information, contact your local Usdaw office.

Let us know if your  
details change...

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

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# vote



# Labour

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