

# NETWORK



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2015

The bimonthly magazine for Usdaw Activists

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LATEST NEWS

RECRUITMENT

SATA CONFERENCE

## *Reps are the stars at Awards Night*



... BLACK MEMBERS' WEEKEND ... SOCIAL MEDIA ... HEALTH & SAFETY ...



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# Comment

## General secretary John Hannett

Everyone has seen the headlines about the UK's biggest retailers cutting jobs, closing stores and restructuring their staffing schedules. The last 12 months have probably been the toughest for many years. The challenges for Usdaw are clear.

Our negotiating officials have been meeting with senior retail management and have made it clear that no retailer can succeed without a well rewarded, well-respected and highly motivated team of staff.

Usdaw members are on the frontline and they know when a store is working, when customers are coming through the doors and what they are saying – particularly their frustration by poor service levels because of employee cut backs leaving too few staff to take deliveries, fill shelves and staff the tills.

Retail companies would be well-advised to listen more closely to our members and what Usdaw is saying on their behalf. We understand the pressures faced in retail by the growth of the internet, a shift to more localised shopping and away from large out-of-town stores, and the growth of the no-frills low-priced hard-discounters.

We also know staff strongly object to a 'take-it-or-leave-it' approach to hours changes, low wage increases, staff shortages, or an aggressive managerial style in attempting to introduce any other changes.

Change in most jobs is inevitable but failure to take the workforce with them will see companies continue to dig themselves deeper and deeper into trouble. A demoralised workforce will not result in a successful company. For far too long companies think cutting staff numbers or hours will increase profits – this is as misguided now as it always has been. It's clearly a false economy.

Usdaw will continue to represent our members as the retail upheaval unfolds. Our national officials will be making the case on a UK-wide basis but our reps will also be making sure members are treated fairly, fully consulted, and given every opportunity to continue with their employment in their stores or locality. These are tough times, but by standing together we will do everything we can to protect our members in what will be challenging months ahead.

**10****08****19**

**Watch**  
**John on the pressures facing retail members**



**Usdaw**  
FOR THE RETAILERS AND THEIR WORKERS

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MEMBERS FEEL LET DOWN  
AND WORRIED BY THE PROPOSALS

## 'No way to treat staff'

Tesco's recovery plan has left staff feeling worried and unclear about their future, says Usdaw after the embattled retailer announced plans to close its staff pension scheme, shut 43 unprofitable stores, cancel moves to open 49 new stores and close its head office in Cheshunt.

General Secretary John Hannett said: "Everyone is aware of the difficulties faced by Tesco and we are just as keen to ensure that the company is able to turn the business around and improve its performance.

"However, members feel completely let down by the nature of the turnaround proposals, the absence of detailed information and the

manner in which they found out.

"The company has not declared which shops they intend to close, leaving staff in all 3,000 plus stores worrying and speculating on which stores are closing.

"Announcing the intention to close the defined benefit pension scheme has left staff extremely concerned about their future retirement income.

"Tesco also announced its intention to restructure its management teams. The lack of detail has left thousands of staff feeling insecure and uncertain about what this means for them.

"This is no way to treat staff, whose hard work and commitment has helped the

business over the years and through one of Tesco's most difficult periods.

"Usdaw's priorities now are to ensure: Tesco confirm the 43 stores announced for closure as soon as possible. Provide some additional details to help answer questions raised in relation to the store management structures. Good pension provision for all Tesco staff, and to do everything possible to keep staff employed in the business and job losses to a minimum.

"We will enter into full and meaningful consultation and negotiations on the company's turnaround proposals over the coming weeks and months and will keep our reps and members fully updated."

## Few new jobs are full-time



Just one in every 40 of the net jobs added to the economy between 2008 and 2014 has been a full-time employee job.

Over the same period, 24 in every 40 net jobs added have been self-employed, and 26 in every 40 have been part-time.

Despite recent economic growth the number of part-time employees who say they want full-time hours is still twice what it was before the recession at 1.3 million people.

The TUC believes that the rise in self-employment is at least in part a result of people who are unable to find employee jobs being forced into false self-employment – an exploitation of workers used by some companies to evade taxes and avoid respecting employment rights and entitlements such as holiday pay, sick pay and pensions.

The TUC's analysis shows that the share of full-time employee jobs was 64 per cent in 2008 and fell to 62 per cent in 2014. This is equivalent to a shortfall of 669,000 full-time employees.

## Morrisons to close stores

Morrisons has announced its intention to close 10 stores after disappointing Christmas trading figures and amid continuing pressure from the hard discounters.

The news follows plans by the company to reorganise the supervisory roles across its stores.

General secretary John Hannett said: "This is devastating news for the staff in the 10 stores that Morrisons intends to close.

"We will now enter into full and meaningful consultation meetings on these proposals, where we will look closely at the company's business case.

"Our priority is to maximise employment within Morrison's, seek redeployment opportunities for members whose shop is closed and minimise compulsory redundancies.

"We will support, advise and represent our members throughout this period of

uncertainty. As the consultations unfold and further details emerge we will keep our reps and members fully informed."



STORE CLOSURES WILL BE DEVASTATING SAYS USDRAW

### Grocery Market Share

#### Percentage at January 2015:

Tesco	29.1
Sainsbury's	16.9
Asda	16.8
Morrisons	11.3
Co-op	5.9
Waitrose	5.1
Aldi	4.8
Lidl	3.5



# Holiday ruling in focus

Usdaw has welcomed the recent court rulings that say workers are entitled to holiday pay based on their 'normal' pay – including overtime and premium payments – and not just basic contractual pay.

Usdaw has always believed workers should get their normal week's pay when on holiday and should not face a financial disincentive when taking holidays.

However, the ruling has thrown up a number of complex issues but Usdaw is determined to ensure that its members receive the correct level of holiday pay.

The impact of the ruling on members will vary between companies. For example Usdaw already has agreements with some employers where holiday pay is based on

average pay/P60 earnings.

Where this is not the case, and in businesses where Usdaw is recognised, the union is in discussion with employers over holiday pay calculations.

In companies where Usdaw is not formally recognised, the union can advise members on individual claims and make representations to employers to bring their holiday pay calculations in-line with the recent decisions as soon as possible.

It is important to note the judgements only cover the first four weeks' leave, which is in line with the provisions of the Working Time Directive set by the European Union. The decisions do not cover the additional 1.6 weeks granted through the UK regulations, or any additional contractual



holiday entitlement.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) looked at whether claims for underpayment of holiday pay should be backdated. Unfortunately, the EAT decision has placed strict limits on the ability to make backdated claims.

These restrictions mean that

the majority of members will not have potential claims for substantial backpay.

However, if a member believes they may have a potential claim for significant backpay they must register the claim and get advice from the union as quickly as possible.

*More information at:* [www.usdaw.org.uk/holidaypay](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/holidaypay)

## Plague of zero-hours

The increased use of zero-hours contracts and agency workers by employers is preventing young people from obtaining permanent jobs, according to new analysis by the TUC.

The TUC says that 81 per cent of temporary agency workers aged 20-24, and 64 per cent of those aged 25-29, say they are in temporary work because they cannot find a permanent job.

Similarly, 50 per cent of zero-hours contract workers aged 20-24 and 58 per cent of those aged 25-29 say they are only doing temporary work because they cannot find a permanent job.

## Workers want more hours

Under-employment is still far above pre-recession levels according to new figures – a clear sign that the UK isn't creating enough of the right kind of jobs, says the TUC.

"There is a big shortfall in the supply of full-time employee jobs, and that's making it harder for families to earn enough for a decent standard of living," said TUC leader Frances O'Grady.

"It makes no sense that so many people want more work, while others complain of being overworked and want fewer hours. The Government should strengthen flexible working rights, which could help solve both problems."

## Wage slump to continue

Wage growth since 2008 has been so slow that it would take 12 years to recover to pre-recession real earnings, says the TUC.

"It's good to see an increase in real wages after so many years of falling living standards, but it would take another 12 years for people's pay to be worth what it was before the recession. And with the recovery looking as if it is already running out of steam, we cannot even be confident of that.

"We are very concerned about the quality of many of the new jobs, with many people not earning enough to pay much tax, if any."

## Make sure you can vote!

The general election will be held on May 7 this year. To be eligible to vote you must be on the electoral register (a government record of voters). If you have not voted before or this is your first time you can check your details and/or register by visiting:

[www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

You can register online (have your national insurance number handy) or you can also download the form, fill it in and return it to your local council. Remember you must be on the electoral register to be eligible to vote. If you want to get more involved contact the politics office at central office email: [politics@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:politics@usdaw.org.uk)



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# Mums still face bias



Despite 40 years of legal protection for pregnant women they still face ill-treatment at work with the sacking, bullying and sidelining of expectant mothers commonplace, says a report published by the TUC, suggesting that the attitudes of many employers are still stuck in the 1970s.

*The Pregnancy Test: Ending Discrimination at Work for New Mothers* says that although the law is on the side of pregnant women, many feel shunned as soon as they share their

impending baby news with colleagues. Poor employer attitudes towards mums-to-be can be seen from the rise in the number of cases taken to employment tribunal, says the report.

During the recession, tribunal complaints involving pregnant women went up by a fifth, and in the five years from 2008 to 2013, more than 9,000 women took their employers to a tribunal.

*The Pregnancy Test* believes these figures are merely the tip

of the pregnancy discrimination iceberg. Few mums with newborns have the stamina to embark on a lengthy legal battle, and the sheer expense of taking a case – £1,200 since tribunal fees were introduced in July 2013 – is enough to put many women off, especially those on statutory maternity pay of just £138 a week, says the TUC.

*The Pregnancy Test: Ending Discrimination at Work for New Mothers* is available from the TUC. [www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)

## Unions look to reach out

Young workers (under 30) are less likely to be union members than their older colleagues (over 50) while at the other end of the age spectrum the reverse is the case, according to a new report.

However, more unions than ever before are taking positive action to recruit young workers, to give them a stronger voice in the union and to develop the future generation of activists.

Three in five unions are now gathering information on the age of their membership, compared to one in two at the time of the last audit in 2011. Half of unions are also monitoring the age profile of their reps, officers, conference delegates and national executive.

This means more unions are aware of the extent and nature of the under-representation of young workers – a good base to start planning action.

## Young priced out of rental market



Young people across the UK face unaffordable housing costs, insecurity of tenure and exploitation by private landlords, says a new survey by the TUC.

Of those respondents renting and in work, the average rent-to-salary ratio (the proportion of a person's pay taken up by their rent) is 41 per cent, which for single earner households is well above the 33 per cent household income threshold for affordable housing recommended by Shelter.

The high cost of housing has forced many respondents to live with their parents or in a relative or friend's home. Of those living in another person's home, 44 per cent said they would like to rent but could not afford to.

Alex Hilton, Director of Generation Rent, said: "Each week, the average young worker hands over two days of their wages to their landlord, leaving them with very little. Politicians must end this ballooning exploitation or face the anger of a generation."

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# Join the TUC's fight for fair pay in 2015

## The TUC's general secretary Frances O'Grady explains why fair pay is so important

We cannot talk about a real economic recovery until the majority get to share in it. This is why fair pay and living standards must be high on the political agenda as we approach the general election.

The Government's failure to meet their own target to reduce the deficit has nothing to do with any lack of enthusiasm for cutting spending as many Usdaw members will know all too well.

The problem is that the Government has raised much less tax than it expected. New jobs have tended to be low paid and insecure, and even those with better conditions have had a pay cut as prices have gone up more than

wages month after month.

The chancellor says we are on a road to recovery but try telling that to the millions of workers who are often forced to choose between eating and heating their homes.

People like Val Cooke – an Usdaw member who works in a supermarket on the outskirts of London.

Val and her partner Paul, 42, are both employed full-time but struggle to get by because of low pay. Val told *The Mirror* in October:

"Winter is hell. When it gets cold I live like an elderly person and heat one room. I go to bed with as many blankets and hot drinks as I can to heat up and wait until next pay day to turn the heating back on. Sometimes I stay longer in the work canteen after a shift because at least it's warm.

"We have pre-paid gas and

electricity which is more expensive in the long-run. But I didn't have the £125-a-month the energy firms wanted as a direct debit. We've ran out of our emergency credits fund twice before. How can all of this be possible in a household of two full-time earners? We are the working poor."

Val's story is becoming depressingly familiar in low-paid Britain. More people grow up in poverty in working households than in households where no-one works.

Far from making work pay, this Government is presiding over the worst squeeze on wages since Queen Victoria sat on the throne – a cost of living crisis so bad that working people are being forced to use



food banks and pay day lenders to get by.

Three million families in the UK are in problem debt and millions more are having to use their credit cards to get them through the month.

With better wages we will be more able to build a sustainable recovery that works for the many and not just the few.



**FAIR PAY  
FORTNIGHT**

*Usdaw members made a big contribution during the Britain Needs A Pay Rise march in October and we need your help again.*

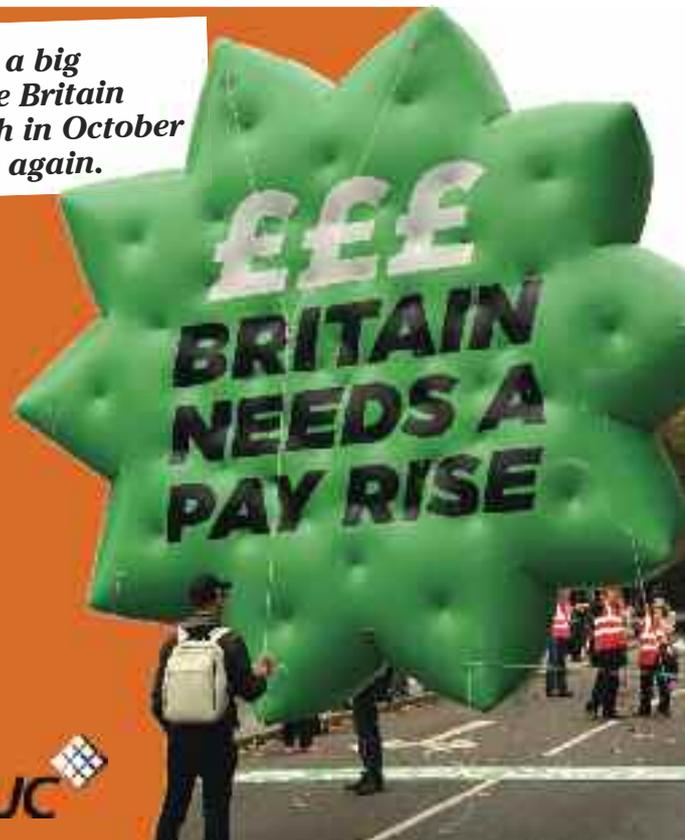
The TUC is organising a fortnight of regional events between 16 February and 1 March 2015 to raise awareness about the need for fair pay and better living standards.

Fair Pay Fortnight 2015 is the chance for you to get involved again. We want you to:

- Organise workplace activities,
- Write blogs,
- Tweet and
- Share your thoughts and stories on why we need fair pay and good jobs.

We want to hear about the difference unions can make. Help us make fair pay an issue that politicians, employers and journalists cannot ignore!

To find out more about activities being organised and how you can get involved in the campaign visit: [fairpayfortnight.org](http://fairpayfortnight.org)



# Organising migrant workers across the UK

***The Black Members' Weekend brings together activists from across the UK to discuss all of the important workplace issues. This year migrant workers were in the spotlight.***

Migrant workers should not be allowed to be exploited and used as cheap labour, that was the message from the delegates at the annual Black Members' Weekend held late last year.

Activists from the Asian and black communities met up in Manchester to discuss how Usdaw could reach out to migrant workers, dispel the myths about them and plan how to attract these workers into union membership.

The popular event was once again over-subscribed with a third of delegates attending their first union activity outside of their workplace. Workshops were led by the activists themselves and supported by equalities officers Ruth Cross, Jo Bird, training officer Jenni Murray and area organiser Ku Baiden.

Delegates also heard from general secretary John Hannett and deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis on how the union is facing up to the challenges of encouraging more black and Asian activists to get involved and dealing with the impact of racism in the workplace.

"We've made progress over the last few years," said John. "But we have much more to do in terms of engaging with members from all

backgrounds and ensuring black and Asian members are represented at all levels in the union.

"We know discrimination blights the lives of millions of workers. To make matters worse immigration is frequently and irresponsibly used by politicians to generate votes and whip up tension and division. We have to face that head-on."

Paddy Lillis added: "This weekend is very important, but what's more important is what happens when delegates get back to their workplaces. It's the work you do to encourage more involvement from your black and Asian colleagues that is the true measure of the success of this get-together."

Delegates also heard from two support groups who work with migrant workers and counter the negative media coverage that often distorts the truth about the impact migrant workers have on the local economy.

Representatives from Manchester-based Migrants Supporting Migrants and the TUC's Migration Messaging initiative gave presentations and led discussions on the importance of understanding why workers from abroad come to the UK and the role unions have in supporting them.

TUC equality policy officer Wilf Sullivan looked ahead to the general election in May. "We have seen UKIP attempt to dress racism up in a cloak of respectability but we need to see through this," he said.

"The need for unions to stand together to fight racism has never

been more important. Unions are well placed to tell the truth about migration, to give migrant workers a voice and to set the record straight about what immigration brings to the country. We have to hear the real life stories of migrant workers – struggling to make ends meet just like us – and how they are being used to keep wages down. Real life stories tell us far more than statistics."

Equalities officer Jo Bird added: "There is a lot of misinformation out there about migrant workers. We also know the most hostile areas of anti-immigration sentiment are in places where there is least immigration. The truth is hard to find.

"Delegates agreed that politicians and the media have a hugely responsible role in framing the debate in an honest, straight-forward and responsible way. Unfortunately far too many are over keen to whip up racism and hostility to migrant workers. This breeds division and when workers are divided we are defeated. The Tories and UKIP are no friends of the trade unions and the values of equality, fairness and justice we hold dear."

Delegates went on to discuss how migrant workers are portrayed in the press and to debunk the many myths surrounding the issues of migrant workers and immigration. Activists looked at the impact of migrant workers in their workplaces, what the union can do and the difficulties faced by migrant workers in terms of language barriers, health and safety, racism and employer support.



www.usdaw.  
org.uk/  
equalities





### **Susanah Roye**

“ It was a very interesting and thought provoking weekend. It was good to meet people from different backgrounds and workplaces.

I also enjoyed taking part in the activities and the discussions. And finding out about some of the problems migrants face.

I've been a rep for just over a year and I'm also a health and safety rep. There are four other reps in my store and we all work well together.

My union roles are very important to me and I find my union work very rewarding. I love helping people and making sure their voices are heard.

I really think this weekend is a good idea and I'll be promoting it back in my store.

---

**Susanah works part-time for Tesco in Barnstaple, North Devon.**



### **Michael Anderson**

“ This was my first Black Members' Weekend. Although I've been a rep for eight years I've missed out on the opportunity to come along in the past.

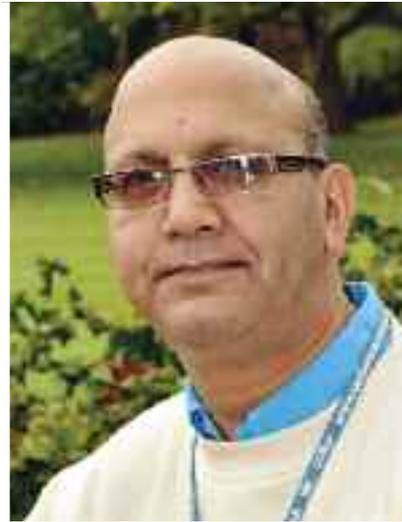
Having experienced it I'd definitely recommend the weekend. It made me feel part of the wider black workers' community in Usdaw.

I enjoyed the speakers especially John Hannett, Paddy Lillis and Wilf Sullivan from the TUC.

The theme of migrant workers was very informative. It was interesting to look at the concerns and problems these workers experience. We also looked at the myths the media put out, as well as the difficulties trade unions have trying to organise these groups of workers.

---

**Michael works as a Tesco Dotcom driver in Dundee.**



### **Bal Sampla**

“ The workshops were good for getting your opinions across in a healthy democratic way.

There were disagreements at times but everyone respected each other's views.

Overall, the main theme 'Reaching out to Migrant workers' was well presented and thoroughly researched and exploded the myths and stereotypes the right wing media present in the papers.

The normal myths concerning social benefits, social housing, education, NHS and crime were discussed and analysed. The positive contribution migrants from Eastern Europe actually make was also highlighted.

I thoroughly enjoyed it.

---

**Bal works for Tesco Dotcom in Aylesford, Kent.**



**Watch John Hannett on the equality agenda**



THE WINNERS 2014

# Award winning reps

**Ten years on since the Awards Night was launched Usdaw continues to produce highly motivated, well-trained and dedicated reps.**

The union's executive council had the unenviable task of picking eight national winners from the wealth of divisional nominees – almost 700 were received.

The quality was so high in three categories the judges could not separate the candidates and opted to elect joint winners.

Activists, their guests, and senior officials gathered for the glittering event held at the Radisson Blu hotel at Manchester airport in January and as general secretary **John Hannett** said 'the room was full of winners'.

"This night is about celebrating the

hard-work of all of our activists," he said. "Of course not every one of our 11,000 reps can be here but they are nevertheless represented by their colleagues who have won their divisional nominations – a great achievement in itself.

"It's right that Usdaw acknowledges its activists who always have been and always will be the life-blood of the union. Our success is built upon their dedication.

"As a former rep myself, and **Paddy Lillis** the deputy general secretary is the same, we know all about the pressures faced by our reps and I'm delighted to acknowledge their many achievements tonight.

"So this is a special night and one which our activists deserve.

"We know we have our work cut out in 2015, but when I see the standard of all the nominees I also

know Usdaw is capable of withstanding all of the challenges we face this year.

"I'd also like to say a big thank you to the partners of our reps who play an important role in supporting our activists."

**"Our activists always have been and always will be the life-blood of this union. Our success is built on their dedication"**

John and Paddy were joined by president **Jeff Broome** to present the awards. "I'm proud to say I've been to every Awards Night since it started," he said. "Our reps are amazing and that's why Usdaw will go from strength to strength."



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**SOUTH WALES & WESTERN DIVISION**

**STANDING (from left):** Jason Stevens, Bill Evans, Terry Cummings, Elaine Arberry, Maureen Dawe, Mike Walker (deputy divisional officer), Steve Kingwell, **SEATED (from left):** Paul Geisel, Bryony Hamblin, Nick Ireland (divisional officer), Barbara Wilson (executive councillor) Paul Weimers and Sophia Williams.



**EASTERN DIVISION**

**STANDING (from left):** David Hammond, Bryan Watt, Dave McCrossen (divisional officer) Simon Vincent (executive councillor), Gary Renwick, Eamonn Abbott **SEATED (from left):** Steve Roach, John Bond, Chrstine Henry (deputy divisional officer), Laura Pearce, Barbara Woolford (executive councillor) and Freddy West.



**MIDLANDS DIVISION**

**STANDING (from left):** Gavin Dadley (divisional officer), Julie Smith, Robert Ingleby, Tracey Shenton, **SEATED (from left):** Maureen Bowen (executive councillor), Terry Byrne, Sue Ewer, Paul Timmins, Simon Archer and Gareth Davies (deputy divisional officer).

# Roll of honour

**All the divisional nominations with the national winners in bold (divisions in brackets)**

## Individual Organising

**Jason Stevens (A)**  
**Gary Renwick (C)**  
 Tony Beeby (E)  
 Lee-Ann Moir (F)  
 Richard Gray (G)  
 Paul Jackson (H)  
 Brenda Shaw (K)

## Individual Recruitment

Maureen Dawe (A)  
 Bryan Watt (C)  
 Terry Byrne (E)  
 Chrissy Carter (F)  
**Jim McFadyen(G)**  
 Lawrence Miller (H)  
 Bev Jamieson (K)

## Health and Safety Rep

Elaine Arberry (A)  
 Freddy West (C)  
 Simon Archer (E)  
 Trish Beadle (F)  
 Michael Anderson (G)  
 Ricky Pound (H)  
**Janise Corfield (K)**

## Equalities Rep

Steve Kingwell (A)  
 Sue Perridge (C)  
**Robert Ingleby (E)**  
 Barry Caldicott (F)  
 Maria King (G)  
 Southern Divisional Equalities Forum (H)  
 Diane Howard (K)

## Most Promising New Activist

Bryony Hamblin(A)  
 Steve Roach (C)  
 Sue Ewer (E)  
**James Dietsch (F)**  
**Edwina Gover (G)**  
 Antoine Brown (H)  
**Sam Gooding (K)**

## Union Learning Rep

Sophia Williams (A)  
 Laura Pearce (C)  
 Julie Smith (E)  
 Joanthan Charnock (F)  
 Stephen McKean (G)  
**Barbara Elkington (H)**  
 Lynda Carter (K)

## Campaigns

Swansea General A196 Branch (A)  
 Elizabeth Charles (C)  
 Mark Halfpenny (E)  
 Sarah Van Der Merwe (F)  
 Mark Payne (G)  
 Shirley Dunaway (H)  
**Maura Brady (K)**

## Team Recruitment and Organising

Tesco reps, Cardiff (A)  
 DHL/NISA reps, Harlow (C)  
**Morrisons reps, Skegness (E)**  
 Morrisons reps, Parkgate, Rotherham (F)  
**Sainsbury's reps, Kingsgate, East Kilbride (G)**  
 Tesco distribution reps, Reading (H)  
 Expert Logistics reps, Crewe (K)



**NORTH EASTERN DIVISION**  
*STANDING (from left): Jonathan Charnock, Cathy Godfrey (deputy divisional officer), David Chadwick Taylor (executive councillor), Angela Partington, Joanne Thomas (divisional officer), Pat Fitzgerald (executive councillor), Stephen Morris, Jamie Finch, SEATED (from left): Trish Beadle, James Dietsch, Barry Caldicott, Sarah Van Der Merwe, Chrissy Carter and Lee-Ann Moir.*

**SCOTTISH DIVISION**  
*STANDING (from left): Richard Gray, Isabel Fyfe, Allison Black, Lawrence Wason (divisional officer), Sandra McDonach, Stewart Forrest (deputy divisional officer), Peter Devine (executive councillor), SEATED (from left): Jim McFadyen, Edwina Gover, Stephen McKean, Maria King, Michael Anderson and Mark Payne.*

# Activists show they are – simply the best!

## **The North West and Scottish divisions came out tops at the 2014 Awards Night with winners in three of the eight categories.**

Activists were ‘shocked’, ‘surprised’ and ‘amazed’ when their names were called out for one of the eight national awards.

For the first time in the ceremony’s ten years there were three winners in the Most Promising New Activist Award with Tesco’s **James Dietsch**, Greggs’ **Edwina Gover** and Primark’s **Sam Gooding** sharing the honours.

Edwina had to overcome a personal tragedy to focus on her union work and it helped her pull through a very traumatic time.

“It’s difficult at work, people are under pressure, but I kept at it and it worked. All of my hard work has paid off. I’m very proud, it’s like being at the Oscars!” she said.

Primark’s Sam Gooding was ‘absolutely made-up’ when he found out he had won – only 18 months since becoming a rep.

“I was very impressed with the evening, a little bit daunting at first

but as the night progressed it got better and better,” he said.

“I was proud just to get the divisional nomination but to win the national award when there were so many strong candidates is unbelievable.”

It was an ‘absolutely fantastic night’ for James Dietsch. “I was in shock. A great venue and a great evening.”

Tesco’s **Janise Corfield** won the Health and Safety Rep Award after she notched up a number of safety improvements at her workplace.

The long serving rep sees safety as everyone’s duty. “I was gobsmacked to win,” she said. “Safety is part and parcel of what I do and if I see anything wrong I step in.

“It’s a marvellous night and I turned up to just support others, winning the national award was completely unexpected.

“It’s tough in the stores at the moment but we as reps have to keep going, keep the faith and speak up for our members who are being hit hard. I love being a rep.”

## **Appreciated**

Morrisons **Robert Ingleby** could not believe his name was announced as the winner of the Equalities Award.

The goods inward/picker has made significant inroads at his distribution site despite the many difficulties. “I work closely with Andrea Watts who is a great role model and together we promote equality for LGBT members,” he said. “It’s very tough. Changing attitudes isn’t easy but we try and be as supportive as we can. We have a really strong team on-site.

“It’s great to see the reps appreciated.”

## **A fantastic night**

Wincanton’s **Barbara Elkington** won the Union Learning Rep Award. “I was completely shocked and, looking at the other candidates and how much they have achieved, I didn’t expect to win at all,” she said. “We’ve still a lot of work to do on-site but when courses are arranged they are very popular.”

Tesco’s **Jason Stevens** and Makro’s **Gary Renwick** shared the Individual Organising Award.

“I couldn’t believe I’d won, there were lots of strong candidates up for it. My heart was pounding when my name was announced,” said Jason, who has been instrumental in building membership from 50 to 84 per cent in his Tetbury store.



More pictures on the [UdawUnion flickr page](#)



**SOUTHERN DIVISION**

**STANDING (from left):** Chris Broadhurst, Shirley Dunaway, Isaac Gidudu, Paul Jackson, Lawrence Miller, Barbara Elkington, Paul Roderick, John Barstow (executive councillor), **SEATED (from left):** Su Patel, Amy Murphy (executive councillor), Sue Merrell (divisional officer), Sue Pryn (deputy divisional officer), Ricky Pound and Antoine Brown.



**NORTH WEST DIVISION**

**STANDING (from left):** Lynda Carter, Danielle McCusker (executive councillor), Sam Gooding, Tony Clare (deputy divisional officer), Mike Aylward (divisional officer), Amanda Bailey-Coll (deputy divisional officer), Linda Craven (executive councillor), **SEATED (from left):** Jackie McNeill, Brenda Shaw, Rachel Moore, Bev Jamieson, Janise Corfield and Diane Howard.

“It’s a great honour to win. I’ve spent a lot of time out of the store on Academy and stand-down and love being a rep and representing members. The award reflects the team’s progress in-store.”

It was second time lucky for Gary who was nominated for the Most Promising New Activist category at the Organising Awards in 2011 and has since completed both Academies. “It was completely unexpected to win,” he said.

“Although I don’t see it as an individual award but for all the reps who’ve helped me over the last few years. I want to be part of Usdaw’s journey and build it to be the biggest and best in the UK.

“This is a fantastic night.”

The Individual Recruitment Award was won by Tesco night-shift rep **Jim McFadyen** a lifelong union man. “This is a fabulous night and it’s great to see reps get the recognition they deserve,” he said. “It’s also very useful to meet other reps, share experiences and find out what’s going on elsewhere.

“Being a rep gives you a greater insight in to what’s going on both at work and beyond. I find it very interesting. We have more than 80 per cent membership density and have never fallen below this level. We have nine reps in total and we have everything covered.”

### Very proud

Morrisons reps from Skegness **Tracey Shenton** and **Paul Timmins** shared the Team Recruitment and Organising Award with Sainsbury’s

reps **Allison Black** and **Sandra McDonach** from Kingsgate, East Kilbride.

“Total disbelief to hear we’d won,” said Paul. “We were delighted to get the divisional award, to win the national award was a complete shock.”

Tracey agreed. “We’re very proud to win. We’ve increased membership, been on training courses and made steady progress. We have a good relationship with management, we work together to get things sorted out. We enjoy it.”

Allison Black was on her second visit to the awards night having been nominated for the health and safety award in 2012. “We feel fantastic, very proud. We do a lot of work in a tough environment,” said Allison.

“The hotel is great. It’s actually been more enjoyable this time round.”

Winner of the Campaigns Award was Northern Ireland Sainsbury’s rep **Maura Brady** who was unable to attend. Maura has run a number of successful campaign days in her store and built membership to more than 85 per cent density.

Divisional council chair Jackie McNeill accepted the award on Maura’s behalf.

It was also a night to remember for South Wales and Western’s **Bryony Hamblin** who won a special spa break in the raffle.



Watch Interviews from the Awards on the UsdawUnion YouTube channel

Pictured from top: John Hannett, Paddy Lillis, Jeff Broome, Bryony Hamblin



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If you want to be kept up-to-date with news from Usdaw and improve your communications as a rep, now's the time to sign up to **Twitter** and start following **@UzdawUnion**



Social media can be confusing and daunting to members who don't really use it, but now you can follow Network's guide to get started and it will show you what a great asset Twitter can be for reps...

## What is Twitter?

Twitter is an online social networking service that started in 2006. It enables users to send and read short messages (no longer than 140 characters, a character is a letter/ number or keyboard symbol etc) called tweets. It allows you to share what you're up to, what's on your mind, pictures and videos to the people that are interested – your followers.

Apart from Tweeting, you can also Follow people. If you're familiar with Facebook this is similar to adding a friend but your friend doesn't have to add you back before you can see their profile.

Most people use Twitter for following others rather than posting their own tweets. Think of it as your own customised news feed. You can follow friends, celebrities, news channels, restaurants, companies that you're interested in etc. The people who you follow will then post tweets that will appear in your news feed. It's a great way to get all the information that you want in one place.

## How do I sign up?

To create a Twitter account visit [twitter.com/signup](https://twitter.com/signup) on your smartphone, tablet or desktop computer and follow the instructions. You will need to create a memorable username that will appear on your profile and any tweets you post. It will appear with the @ symbol in front of it eg @UzdawUnion.

Once you've set up your account you need to decide who to follow. Think of famous people who interest you, your favourite restaurants, football team, politicians, newspapers, charities and most importantly don't forget to follow your union @UzdawUnion. To find people to follow just use the search box on the Twitter homepage and then click the follow button on the profiles you want to follow.

If you have a smartphone or tablet with internet access you can download a Twitter App to access your account on the move.

## Getting active

Twitter is a great way of raising the profile of the union and recruiting new members. It can also help you in your role as a union rep:

-  Tell your colleagues that you're on Twitter. Help them to set up accounts and ask them to follow you. They can use Twitter as another way of keeping in touch with you. They can also private message you through Twitter if they want to keep matters confidential.
-  Encourage your colleagues to follow the @UzdawUnion account to keep up to date with union news.
-  Tweet out news and information that you think will be of interest and useful to your colleagues.
-  Retweet tweets that you like from @UzdawUnion to help raise the profile of the union.
-  Twitter can also be a great recruitment tool. Use it to tell your followers about the many benefits of being a member of Usdaw.
-  Tweet pictures and updates when you have a campaign day or you're involved in a union activity. Include #Uzdaw in your tweet and Network will be able to see it too.

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**Tweet**

A posting made on Twitter. It can't be any longer than 140 characters.

**Following/Followers**

Following someone means you will see their tweets in your news feed. Your followers are the people following you and they will see any tweets that you post in their news feed.

**Retweet (RT)**

On Twitter this is the equivalent of forwarding an email or a text message. If you like a tweet that you see in your feed then you can retweet it and it will appear in the feeds of the users that follow you.

**Favourite**

If you like a tweet that you read or you want to save it for later then you can 'favourite' it. The owner of the tweet will see that you have 'favourited' their tweet. All the tweets that you have 'favourited' will be stored in a list in your account.

**Hashtag (#)**

The hashtag symbol is used to highlight keywords, topics or events in a tweet. For example #Usdaw or #Pensions.

Using the symbol at the beginning of a word or phrase turns it into a link. You can then click on that link to see tweets from other people that include that word or phrase. It's a great search tool if you're looking for something specific.

**Direct message (DM)**

This is a private message that you can send to anyone who follows you. You can't send a private message to someone you are following unless they are following you. The message can't be any longer than 140 characters.

**BE CAREFUL!**

Remember that the content posted on social media channels, such as Twitter, is usually public. So be mindful when expressing an opinion – don't libel anyone or any company and don't post anything that could be construed as bullying or harassment. You should refer to your social media policy at work for further information.

As an Usdaw rep we highly recommend that you follow the union's Twitter account [@UsdawUnion](#). Here's what you can expect to see from us:

- 1 Up-to-the minute news that could affect you
- 2 Details of upcoming campaigns, events and conferences
- 3 Your rights at work
- 4 Notifications of new and updated leaflets
- 5 Tips to help you in your role as a rep
- 6 Live feeds and pictures from campaigns and events
- 7 Advice for members
- 8 Your chance to be part of union discussions
- 9 Take part in competitions exclusive to Twitter follows
- 10 Information on special offers for members

**Did you know that Usdaw is on Facebook?**

Usdaw set up a Freedom From Fear campaign page during Respect for Shopworkers Week last year. If you're on Facebook you can 'Like' the page at: [www.facebook.com/usdawfff](http://www.facebook.com/usdawfff)

Usdaw can also be found on:

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# In the spotlight Barbara Elkington



**Southern division's Barbara Elkington talks to Network about her experiences as a rep...**

**I became active because**

I wanted to support members in their meetings and make sure the process was followed correctly. I also wanted to encourage people to learn.

I was a rep at a previous job and had experience of speaking up for and representing members.

We have nine reps on site so we all get involved. All the shifts are covered too.

**The best thing** about being active in Usdaw is meeting a vast array of different people, sharing experiences and finding out how they solve their problems. It's always good to collectively make improvements on site.

**The downside** would be staying positive when things don't go your way or the way the member was hoping they would.

**What advice would you give to other budding reps?** Enjoy it and get as much training as possible.

**Since I became an activist** I am definitely more knowledgeable. The

more experience you build up also attracts more questions from members and you find yourself dealing with lots of issues. If I don't know the answer I tell the member I'll get back to them, go away and research it, and then tell the member – you can't know everything!

**You are a Union Learning Rep too, why?** Our site is 25 years old and the learning agenda had fallen away so I was invited to get involved by my area organiser so I did.

**How is it going?** We've made some progress but there's still lots to do. There's plenty of enthusiasm for it in the warehouse but getting courses, providers and tutors isn't always easy. It can be very frustrating. However, I get eight hours a week to carry out my ULR role so that's great. We have a learning room with six computers. There's a big demand for ESOL courses.

**What are the biggest issues for your members?** Wages, job security and shift patterns.

**Recruitment at our site** is pretty much boxed off, we're almost 90 per cent Usdaw and 10 per cent Unite. Those who don't want to join aren't going to change now.

**Have you been to the ADM?** Yes, about four times and I enjoyed it very much. I've been both a delegate and a visitor. I've never made a speech though!

**Has anything surprised you since you became a rep?** I was impressed with the agreement we have with Wincanton, it's very good.

**If I was prime minister** I would introduce a law to give workers more protection.

**What news item has caught your attention recently?** The attacks in Paris by extremists.

**Looking back would you change anything?** No, life experiences make you who you are.

**What's next...** Getting a deeper understanding of computers...and living life as best I can.

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## Fact file & trivia

EMPLOYER *Wincanton*

OCCUPATION *Warehouse Operative* AGE 46

LIVES *Halling, Rochester*

JOINED USDAW: 2001

USDAW ACTIVIST SINCE: 2004

UNION POSITIONS HELD: *Shop steward and union learning rep*

I SPEND MY SPARE TIME: *on the allotment*



MY FAVOURITE...

TV.. *Big Bang Theory*

BOOK.. *Martina Cole collection*

MUSIC.. *Nirvana*

# Latest appointments

## Three 'new' appointments and a retirement...

### Susan Bickers

Susan Bickers is the new deputy head of the administrative services department and brings with her 18 years' experience of working in various roles for the organisation.

Susan, 52, joined the staff in 1996 when she was appointed as a shorthand/audio typist at the former Manchester divisional office.

In 1998 she moved across the city to the union's central office as a computer support assistant. She returned to a secretarial role in 2007 and two years later was appointed supervisor in the filing department.

In 2010 she was seconded to the union's project on supporting vulnerable workers as a project manager.

"I feel privileged to be given this opportunity," said Susan. "I'm looking forward to the new challenges, particularly the introduction of new ideas and technology which can help improve the efficiencies of systems and processes and deliver a much improved service to the members and reps."

"My development with Usdaw has given me an all-round appreciation of its objectives and I'm looking forward to helping to support and drive those forward."

"I'm fortunate to have joined a well-established supportive team who have successfully delivered some of the core work of the union year on year and are totally committed to supporting Usdaw and its members."

### David Williams

David Williams has swapped working in politics to working with the press after he was appointed to media officer following the early retirement of colleague Gary Arthurs.

The former political officer, 48, joined the media team permanently in August 2014 having held the role on a temporary basis for the previous 12 months.

David's first role with Usdaw was in 2000 when he was appointed research assistant in the politics office. In 2006 he shared the role of political officer with Ruth George until 2013.

David has been an active trade



SUSAN BICKERS



DAVID WILLIAMS



GARY ARTHURS



KATE CUMMING

unionist since he started work at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars when he left school. He also spent time as a London bus driver.

He has always been an active Labour Party member and worked as an assistant to Gwyneth Dunwoody MP in Crewe and Nantwich, and Helen Jones MP in Warrington for 10 years.

He went on to contest the Crewe and Nantwich seat for Labour in the 2010 general election.

"I'm experienced in using the media for political campaigning," he said. "I'm now looking forward to supporting our negotiating officers to get a better deal for our members."

### Gary Arthurs

Meanwhile, former media officer Gary Arthurs, 51, was forced to retire on ill-health grounds in November 2013 after almost seven years service with the union.

Gary was appointed research assistant in 2007 and was promoted to media officer in 2010. Prior to this he had worked for the Labour Party as a regional organiser for many years.

General secretary John Hannett said: "It was a pity Gary had to retire but he does so with the best wishes of everyone at central office. He did a very good job for Usdaw and the labour movement."

### Kate Cumming

Former Morrisons activist Kate Cumming joined the team at the Aberdeen office last April and is enjoying her new role as an area organiser.

"I've been in the job for almost a year now and I'm loving the challenges of my new position. No two days are the same," said Kate, 59, who worked as an admin manager before her appointment.

She brings with her a wealth of experience and is well-known in both her native Scottish division and nationally.

She served as a shop steward, health and safety rep, branch chair and union learning rep and was a regular delegate at the ADM. She has completed Academies 1&2 and was also a member of both the National Sata and the Morrisons Sata committees

"I've had so many opportunities for personal development through Usdaw's education and training department as well as the support and encouragement of my colleagues in the Scottish division," she added.

"And now I'm enjoying working with and supporting my own team of reps and encouraging them to develop their full potential. "I'm confident that together we can continue to develop the reps and build and retain membership within Scotland."

# MANAGERS MEET UP



MAIN PICTURE: SATA DELEGATES  
FROM TOP LEFT: PADDY LILLIS, DAVID JOHNSON AND TRACEY HOWTON



Watch  
John Hannett  
on Sata

## ***The cost of living crisis and the issues around mental health topped the agenda at the biennial Supervisory Administrative and Technical Association (Sata) conference held in November.***

Reps from across the UK met up in Warrington for a busy weekend of presentations, workshops and questions and answer sessions with deputy general secretary **Paddy Lillis**, national officer **David Johnson** and training officer **Tracey Howton**.

Opening the conference David Johnson said: "We know our Sata members are under huge pressure from job restructures, staff shortages and redundancies as all the big companies look to cut costs. Supervisory and junior management roles are being targeted, increasing not only job insecurity but also stress and anxiety among the workforce.

"All credit to our reps who are doing an excellent job under extremely difficult circumstances."

These sentiments were echoed by Paddy Lillis. "Despite some of the toughest conditions Sata membership has held up at around the 11,000 mark," he said. "That reflects our national membership which has done well to stand still this year.

However, we have ongoing major recruitment campaigns in the 'Big 4' planned for next year and the union will also target companies including Argos, B&M Bargains, Dunnes Stores and others. I'm confident we can continue to grow the union.

"Next year is also a vital year politically that's why Usdaw will be campaigning on the Cost of Living Crisis. We've seen average wages fall by £50 a week, energy bills rocket and workers' rights attacked.

"We can expect more of the same from the Tories if they get back in, that's why it's important we are at the forefront of the campaign for change. That includes pressing for improvements not only on wages and working conditions but housing, energy bills, transport and pensions. Working people have paid the price for the bankers' recession and May 2015 is our chance to reverse that."

In a special session delegates worked through a number of real-life scenarios to establish whether the Equality Act could be used to defend members with mental health issues.

Tracey Howton led the workshop debates and circulated helpful guidance contained in a government document published by the Office for Disability Issues (available at: [www.odi.gov.uk/equalityact](http://www.odi.gov.uk/equalityact)).



"Since the recession the incidents of depression/anxiety has seen a four fold increase in reports of people seeking help," she said. "This is also reflected in our membership. Reps have seen a rise in demand for help and that's tough for them to deal with. That's why the union has published some excellent advice for reps to help them – not to become experts on mental health – on how to use the Equality Act to represent members. Reps can also point our members in the right direction for additional help and support.

"We also know mental health is the single biggest cause of ill health – bigger than cancer or heart problems – with 12m people each year going to their GP. This is not just a UK phenomenon but is being reflected across Europe and the globe too."

Delegates also viewed an excellent video on mental health by the World Health Organisation (WHO) entitled Black Dog.



Watch  
WHO Black  
Dog video

# Active reps make all the difference

**While Usdaw is focused on the 'Big 4' retailers other companies are not outside of its reach or influence**

## Co-op Head Office Manchester

**Elaine Marson** signed off from Academy1 in fine style when she joined forces with reps at the Co-op Group's Head Office in Manchester in September and helped to recruit more than 20 new members.

"The site has a well established and well organised team of five reps and I enjoyed working with them on this project," said the 48 year-old, who works at the Tesco Extra store in Handforth, Wilmslow in Cheshire.

"We worked with **Harry Hudson** and **Pauline Franey-Bardsley** on the day, **Steve Ratcliff**, **Denise Butler** and **Tara Deane** make up the rest of the team.

"We also had the experience of area organiser **Clare Hanson** and deputy divisional officer **Tony Clare** with us.

"The Academy is one of the best things I've ever done, it's been a great learning curve.

"I've been a rep for seven years and it was just the challenge I needed.

"It's hard work but the Academy has been a great experience. I've really progressed.

"I just wanted to get more involved so after the Academy finished I took on the role of Union Learning Rep, again I think it will stretch me and improve my skills."

## Dunnes Stores Northern Ireland

A new recruitment and awareness campaign at Dunnes stores across Northern Ireland is breaking new ground.

Last year reps and officials visited 23 of the 34 stores that fall into Usdaw's remit in Northern Ireland to raise the profile of the union.

"We've visited all 23 stores on a number of occasions to ensure staff are aware of their right to join a trade union and to let them know that Usdaw is the union to join," said area

organiser **Raymond Neil** who was joined by colleagues **Michala Lafferty**, and **Nicola Scarborough**, Academy organisers **Tony Doonan** and **Liam English** and rep and executive councillor **Danielle McCusker**.

"Many staff filled in postcards asking for more details and information about the union.

"Other unions had also been campaigning but feedback was positive and the staff we spoke to said if they joined it would be Usdaw.

"We've also had a number of off-site meetings and a number of staff joined up.

"Some of the issues raised by staff include low hour contracts, differentials in rates of pay and their general need for advice and guidance on all work-related matters.

"It's an exciting campaign and a great experience for all us reps and officials alike. We're looking forward to making new inroads this year."

## Next Distribution Campaign Day

Academy organiser **Bex Wesley's** skills were put to the test during a Freedom From Fear event last November at the Next depot in Redhouse in Doncaster.

"My training with the Academy gave me the confidence to help fellow rep **Vaughan Mitchell** organise this campaign," said 43 year-old Bex, who has been a rep for two years.

"I learned so much during the six months about the union and the sites I visited. No two companies are the same.

"I also learned an awful lot about myself. I handled new tasks really well and I'm much better organised now."

Colleague **Vaughan Mitchell**, 46, who has also been a rep for two years, added: "Highlighting the campaign helped us understand what shopworkers are faced with on a daily basis.

"Although as warehouse workers we don't have these problems we are all shoppers and should understand and support our members and the issues they have to deal with when



NEXT DISTRIBUTION DONCASTER



CO-OP HQ MANCHESTER

they are trying to do their job.

"Dealing with underage sales and having to 'guess' a customer's age, we all said we'd find that really difficult to do. We're more than happy to support our retail members."

## Sainsbury's Grantham Campaign Day

Dedicated rep **Sharon Hawkins** spent her day off running a Freedom From Fear stall to inform shoppers of the campaign and its aims during Respect Week last November.



www.usdaw.org.uk



Watch John Hannett on recruitment



SAINSBURY'S LOCAL  
GRANTHAM



DUNNES  
NORTHERN IRELAND

“Our customers were genuinely shocked that we had a campaign in the first place,” said Sharon, 50, who works for Sainsbury’s Local in Grantham in Lincolnshire.

“They were surprised with the statistics and the kind of abuse staff face on a daily basis when they are just trying to do their job.

“We made a big impression last year when we ran this campaign in store and I walked around the shopfloor handing out leaflets and chatting to staff.

“This year I was delighted my manager agreed that we could set up a stall outside. This way we really captured the customers’ attention on their way in to the store and we were able to get across all the important messages of the campaign.

“Underage sales for example. Customers didn’t realise how asking for proof of age can be a trigger for abuse, intimidation and even violence.

“They also don’t appreciate that when we are rushed off our feet how

little time we have for the customers especially at the busiest times of the year.

“I feel like the day was a huge success and customers went home better informed and wearing our sticker in support of shopworkers.

“I was very grateful for the help from my area organiser Maryann Matthews who is trying to arrange for me to go out on stand-down next. I’m looking forward to that – my next challenge!”

# Campaigns tap in to members

**Whenever reps organise campaign days – Respect Week, Pensions, Legal Plus/FirstCall, Supporting Parents and Carers – members are sure to follow as Network found out...**

## **Tesco Portadown, Campaign Day**

**Nick Freeman** and **Ann Thorpe** recruited new members and put on a great display during their Respect Week event in the Tesco store in Portadown, Northern Ireland last November.

“One of our security team and one of our contract cleaners joined on the day and our two contract security guards took membership forms away with them,” said Nick, 49, who has been a rep at the store for eight years.

“When we told them of the campaign and its aims they didn’t have to think twice about signing up. We were delighted.

“Having an event like this during Respect Week really helps to highlight the problems shopworkers have and even more so in the run up to Christmas.

“It also shows off the hard work the union is putting in to make workplaces safer for our members.

“We put out a range of materials in the staff canteen and we also had a display at our customer service desk on the shopfloor.

“Over the two days 75 surveys were carried out and we handed out scratch cards and pledge cards to customers to engage and inform them of our campaign.”

Ann, 53, who has been a rep for 12 years added: “Staff and customers alike were surprised at the high level of verbal abuse reported and also at the amount of incidents that are not reported.

“It was a very successful event and we’re confident that it raised the profile of the campaign and the union with colleagues and importantly our customers too. These days provide a real lift and a buzz in-store.”

## **Morrisons Willenhall Legal Plus Day**

Experienced rep **Michelle Whitehead** and area organiser Sarah Hughes from the Midlands division took new rep **Rita Mathews** under their wing when they ran a Legal Plus Day at the Morrisons store in Willenhall last October.

“It was a great experience,” said Rita, 56, who signed up for the rep’s role last August.

“It was a first for me as a new rep and the first time we’d had a union event in store too.

“Staff were keen on the day and thought it was a great facility to have the solicitor available in their workplace.

“The free will writing service and the personal injury advice were very popular and lots of them have asked about us running similar events in the future.

“To begin with I was an onlooker learning from Michelle and Sarah, but it wasn’t long before I found my feet and I was involved and chatting to staff.

“I surprised myself.”

Academy graduate Michelle Whitehead, 41, said: “I completely understand and remember what it’s like being a new rep like Rita. But when you’re involved with the union you’re learning all the time.

“I’d been a rep for almost two years when I signed up for the Academy.

“It took me out of my comfort zone and that was the push I needed.

“I know Rita will be the same, the more challenges she takes on the more she’ll develop.”

## **Palmer & Harvey Campaign Day**

Six months with Academy1 proved to be the perfect environment to inspire warehouse worker **Chris Winwood** to get more involved.

“The Academy certainly lived up to my expectations,” said the 31 year-old rep, who works at the Co-op Group’s Lea Green Warehouse in Warrington.



TESCO  
PORTADOWN



MORRISONS  
WILLENHALL

“Before the Academy I’d been a rep for three years, I enjoyed my role and wanted to test myself.

“I was working with reps from distribution sites including Bargain Booze, Expert Logistics and Iceland DHL in Warrington.

“When my six months were up I was asked to work with Academy2.

“I was delighted to have the opportunity to continue focusing on many of the organising projects I’d been involved with on Academy1.

“And since then I’ve been out on stand-down doing inductions and one-to-one recruitment.

“Overall I’m very pleased with the progress at every site and with the companies who were very welcoming.

“Last November I worked with the reps at the Palmer and Harvey site in Haydock, Merseyside, and organised



www.usdaw.org.uk



network@usdaw.org.uk



PALMER HARVEY  
WARRINGTON



TESCO  
TETBURY

a very successful Legal Plus Day.  
 “On the day ten members had their wills arranged for free and 15 members had private appointments set up with the solicitors.  
 “We also signed up four new members which was a great result.”

**Tesco Tetbury, Campaign Day**

Reps at the Tesco store in Tetbury, Gloucestershire ran a successful Legal Plus Day in November.  
 “It went really well, our aim was to inform members and that’s exactly what we achieved,” said 31 year-old **Jason Stevens**.  
 “The solicitor was kept busy with members keen to speak to him on a range of issues from accidents at work, writing their wills as well as a range of personal legal issues.  
 “And we had good feedback from

the staff some who weren’t aware of Legal Plus before the day, they were very impressed.”  
**Penny Smith**, 64, **Sam Wilkins**, 35 and 41 year-old **Michelle Toop**, make up the rest of the team in-store.  
 “We’re a well-organised team of reps and try to keep members fully informed. Everyone knows who their rep is and how to get hold of them.  
 “We also have a good working relationship with the management team who often come to us for

advice and support.  
 “We never miss an induction and while some people don’t sign up we’ll never give up on them. Holding events like this in-store will help remind them of what they’re missing and the great value for money Usdaw membership offers.”

*Running a campaign day?*  
 Let the Network team know at:  
[network@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:network@usdaw.org.uk)

# Tough times – but we are up to the challenge

**General secretary John Hannett talks to Network about 2014 and what's in store this year, especially the forthcoming general election – one of the most closely fought in decades**

## How do you reflect on 2014?

It's been a tough year with redundancies, changes in working patterns and company restructures all adding to the pressures on our members and reps.

All of the 'Big 4' retailers have had to respond to the economic downturn, and shifts in consumer habits – more internet shopping, a marked shift to the convenience stores and the hard-discounters – and this in turn has put pressure on the transport and distribution chains.

No one has avoided the upheaval of the last five years. So clearly reps have had their work cut out representing members and credit to our activists who have done a fantastic job.

Outside of work it's been another very difficult year with inflation outstripping wage increases yet again. This continual fall in real wages combined with the cost of living crisis have hammered our members.

The Coalition has also worsened the situation by cutting and/or freezing in-work benefits, continuing with the bedroom tax, maintaining VAT at 20 per cent but still finding the

time and political will to give a tax cut to millionaires.

## How has Usdaw fared during 2014?

We're still financially sound and with a strong infrastructure which will allow us to meet head-on all of the challenges to come.

However, we have seen slower membership growth in 2014, not altogether surprising given the turmoil in the economy and the sectors Usdaw organises in.

Membership has grown marginally from 433,400 in 2013 to 434,600 by the end of last year – in itself a remarkable achievement and again down to the hard work of reps, officials and staff sticking to our organising agenda and our one team approach.

## What were the highlights of 2014?

Our campaign days are going from strength to strength and really pushing the union's offer on its Legal Plus and FirstCall service, our Pensions awareness, Supporting Parents and Carers, Checkout Learning and Respect Week campaigns.

When you combine this with our Respect Week and Membership Weeks these events give a real lift to the union and create a massive buzz in the workplace.

I was also delighted to join hundreds of members and reps at the TUC's *Britain Needs A Pay Rise*

march in October. Almost 100,000 trade unionists turned out to deliver this crucial message and reflected the desire to redress the economic balance towards working people.

## How is Usdaw responding to the challenges faced by members?

By continuing to invest in our reps and our staff.

Our Reps Development Programme has reduced the number of reps who stop being active early on in their involvement and we have increased the intake of activists on both our Academy programmes.

We also have more area organisers in place than at any other time in the union's recent history.

I have maintained for many years our reps are the best trained and best resourced activists in the trade union movement and I'm confident that is still the case.

We've also invested heavily in our communications strategy with a newly launched website (incidentally, just under 7,000 people joined Usdaw via the website last year), a presence on Facebook and a Twitter feed which has more than 3,000 followers.

Alongside our award-winning arena and other publications we will continue to use every communications channel at our disposal.

This multi-channel approach will ensure Usdaw has both a professional image and widespread appeal.

We launched our helpline last year



Follow  
@UsdawUnion  
on Twitter



and began significant investment in updating our membership records system that should be fully operational this year.

### *What's on Usdaw's agenda for 2015?*

Doing what we do best – representing and organising our existing members and recruiting new ones.

But the thing about this union is that the members and reps decide our policies and priorities at the Annual Delegate Meeting and at the various trade and divisional conferences we hold throughout the year. Usdaw is probably the most democratic union in the UK.

We'll continue to press for greater protection for retail staff assaulted at work and stiffer sentences for violent customers – even though the Tory-led Coalition has blocked all attempts to change the law.

We'll also resist any attempt by the Tories to totally deregulate Sunday trading – I'm sure if they get back in this will be on their agenda.

### *That brings us nicely to the general election on May 7. How important is it?*

I can't overemphasise its importance, our members' livelihoods depend on a Labour victory – even though I know not all Usdaw members are Labour voters.

We can only judge the Coalition on its record, what it did, not what it said it was going to do or will do as pre-election promises are made in the run-up to May.

Let's have a close look at the Coalition's record: cuts to in-work benefits, a continual fall in average wages leaving the average worker hundreds of pounds a year worse off, cuts in employment rights, the

introduction of tribunal fees, mass youth unemployment, massive underemployment, 20 per cent VAT, soaring energy bills, the bedroom tax, tuition fees rocketed, and cuts to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.

The Coalition has also spent a fortune trying to prevent workers made redundant and employed in small stores from receiving the same amount of compensation as their colleagues employed in bigger stores.

I can't see anything in the Conservatives or LibDems for working people, nor for people who have a strong sense of justice, fairness and believe in equality – these are our people.

So yes Usdaw will be supporting Labour, but we're a critical friend of Labour. We didn't agree with everything they did when in government but we know they did far more for our members than the Coalition has done since 2010.

This will be one of the most closely fought elections in modern history. Every vote will count so it's important all Usdaw members are registered and eligible to vote. You can do so at: [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

### *What appeals to you about Labour?*

Trade unions formed the Labour Party more than a hundred years ago with the express wish to improve the terms and conditions for working people.

It's easy to forget what a long and difficult struggle it has been to get us to where we are now in terms of pay, holidays, health and safety, housing, the NHS, education, pensions and much more. The Tories have started to dismantle a lot of these gains.

We know the Labour Party is committed to freezing energy bills,



JOHN HANNETT AT THE TUC'S  
BRITAIN NEEDS A PAY RISE RALLY

building more houses, increasing the national minimum wage, investing in the NHS, cracking down on tax avoidance and offering hope to young people on affordable rents and reduced tuition fees.

We'll be hearing more from Labour in the run up to the election but it's clear to me they are the Party most in tune with working people.

### *A final word...*

Many thanks to all of our reps, members, staff and officials for their hard work and dedication.

I'm confident if we all work together we can continue to be one of the best and most professional trade unions in the UK.



[www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)



# Take care driving in winter weather

*Driving as part of your job becomes much more difficult when snow and ice is around. Members who drive lorries or delivery vans can really struggle in winter weather.*

Here are some useful pointers for drivers, their health and safety reps and their employers.

- Drivers and managers should check the weather forecast and road conditions to consider other routes in bad weather and allow extra time for the journey.
- There should be a system to alert the depot if a driver fails to arrive at expected delivery points and to check that all drivers do return to base.
- Employers should provide refresher training on defensive driving in winter.
- Uniform jackets, trousers etc. should be suitable for winter conditions. If hi-vis jackets are worn over other clothing they should be big enough to fit over bulkier winter wear.

## Your guide to work wear

*When is a uniform protective clothing? Enquires from reps show that there can sometimes be confusion between what is a uniform (shirts, ties, jackets and so on) and protective clothing which is required by the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Regulations (safety footwear, gloves etc.). Network takes a look...*

### Uniforms

Your employer may (within limits) be able to specify how you dress at work. Your contract, and documents such as a staff handbook, may state that you need to dress in a certain way, or wear a uniform. Particularly where members work with the public, your contract might state that you need to dress 'smartly' and to wear 'sensible' shoes rather than specifying any particular garments or styles. Workers will normally still be expected to pay for their own clothes.

Uniforms are usually provided free of charge as they are part of the 'corporate image' and carry a company logo.

There is no legal obligation on the employer to provide uniforms. Although it may be a contractual requirement there is no legal duty on individuals to wear general uniforms.



### Protective Clothing

Protective clothing is an altogether different story.

For food workers, protective clothing is provided to protect the product from contamination (overalls, hair nets, hats, etc). Food hygiene rules require employers to provide this hygiene protection and individual workers to use it properly.

Clothing provided to protect the wearer against some identified risk to their own health or safety is personal protective equipment under the PPE Regulations.

PPE should only be issued as a last resort when all other ways of controlling a risk have been explored. Once the risk assessment has identified what is needed the employer must provide that equipment to the employee free of charge and must replace any worn or damaged PPE as and when needed, also free of charge.



■ It should be clear that the final decision to travel or to attempt to deliver at any location lies with the driver. If the weather deteriorates once they have left the depot or if a delivery location is unsafe, there should be a clear procedure for the driver to follow.

■ Pre-shift checks on tyres, windscreen washers, brakes, lights, etc. are even more important in winter.

■ Winter tyres can make a big difference to driving on snow and ice or on wet roads when the temperature is close to freezing.

■ Spare warm clothing, a blanket, hot drinks, a torch, a shovel and suitable footwear are all essential survival kit for winter weather.

For all of us, travel to and from work can be a problem when snow and ice is around. Members are advised to follow Government advice on whether it is safe to travel at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and search winter driving.

# Q&A with.. Elaine Arberry

*A trained butcher who works in an abattoir in Bristol for Tulip and has been a rep for three years...*



### **Q What prompted you to get involved?**

I wanted to make sure the site was as safe as possible and being a rep is central to that.

### **Q What's it like working in an abattoir?**

It's tough. There's a lot of machinery and sharp knives involved so it's a potentially very dangerous place to work.

### **Q What sort of injuries do you see?**

Usually cuts and slips, trips and falls. It's all about making sure you have safe systems of work that's the key to minimising injuries or accidents.

### **Q Do you enjoy your work as a safety rep?**

Yes, I've worked hard to improve things on-site. It's also very rewarding when a member thanks you for making those improvements – especially when the member has been here for 20 years.

### **Q Has being a safety rep helped you?**

Yes I've grown into the role and my self-confidence has helped me not only at work but outside of work too.

I've done the introductory training course and I'm looking to do additional courses this year.

I've a lot more to give to the

role and I'll be working on that during the year.

### **Q What advice would you give to a fellow rep?**

Believe in yourself. Usdaw's training and support will give you confidence. Don't be intimidated by management and enjoy the role.

### **Q What progress have you made on-site?**

It's a safer place to work now than it was four years ago so that gives me and my fellow rep some satisfaction. But you can always improve things and that's what we keep trying to do.

The employer has a duty to ensure that any PPE is worn by the person it is provided for and is suitable for them to wear.

If the PPE needs to be kept in the workplace the employer must provide a means of storage including facilities to dry clothing used to protect from wet work.

The individual worker has a legal duty to wear PPE, to take reasonable care of it and get it replaced when it becomes unfit for purpose.

Depending on the risk, PPE for many Usdaw members includes safety footwear, thermal clothing for cold work, hi-vis jackets for work around vehicles, waterproofs for outdoor work, etc. Although protective clothing may look like the general uniform with the company logo, the difference is that there are legal requirements to provide protective clothing and to wear it.



## Safety Footwear

In retail safety footwear can cause confusion. For most shopworkers there is unlikely to be a specific risk which requires them to wear safety shoes. The uniform/dress code may require them to wear sensible shoes or specify the colour of shoe to wear, but the workers will be expected to provide their own.

For a few jobs (e.g. backdoor staff who receive deliveries, bakeries, home delivery drivers) there may be more significant risks of slipping or of foot injuries. The employer's risk assessment should identify these jobs and the type of safety footwear needed. Employers must provide protective footwear for

workers who carry out these jobs and members should not work in those areas unless they are wearing the footwear provided.

Where a worker has to wear safety shoes they must be suitable for the wearer to use. If the standard issue shoes are not suitable – e.g. if the worker has an unusually broad foot or a medical condition which affects what they can wear – the employer must make special arrangements. Usually safety footwear suppliers can provide a range of alternatives to meet most needs.



[healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk)

**If reps or officials need further advice contact the health and safety section at central office.**

# Obituaries

## Tributes paid to former staff members

Former senior training officer Terry Hopkins died in late December, he was 80.

Terry worked his way up through the ranks of Usdaw having started his activism in 1969 when he worked for Lewis's. Three years later he won a union scholarship to study at Ruskin College, Oxford and then went to Salford University where he graduated with an honours degree in Politics and History.

He joined the union's education department in 1976 as a divisional training officer and five years later was promoted to deputy head of the department, a position he would hold until he retired in 1995.

General secretary John Hannett paid this tribute: "Terry was a very popular man both with his colleagues and especially with the many reps, thousands in fact, who had the benefit of being taught by him

over many years.

"The job seemed a perfect fit for Terry who excelled at it, and he played a pivotal role in transforming the range and influence of the education and training Usdaw offered its reps. He was a great servant to Usdaw, loyal, reliable, dedicated and utterly committed.

"Our deepest condolences go out to his family and friends."



Usdaw was saddened to hear of the death of former area organiser and Labour Party man Ken Hazeldine who died in November last year aged 91.

Based in the Midlands division at the Leicester office Ken joined the organising staff in 1959, having originally joined the union in 1942 in his native Stockport in Greater Manchester.

His activism both industrially and politically served him well in his 28 years' service with the union.

He looked after all trades within Usdaw and looked after the 3,500 strong Leicester Area Co-op branch for 12 years.

Ken also spent time as a parish councillor and did serve on Leicester Council for a number of years.

He retired from Usdaw in 1988.

General secretary John Hannett paid this tribute: "Ken was a popular man in the

division and served the membership very well for nearly three decades.

"He was a Labour and union man through-and-through and superbly combined both passions. Ken was a great servant to the union and his commitment to the labour movement was second-to-none.

"Our condolences go out to his family and friends."



### Dennis Hart – Southern division

**Tributes have been paid to two executive councillors who died in November last year.**

Southern division's Dennis Hart, 54, was described by general secretary John Hannett as 'a loyal and committed member of Usdaw' and as 'selfless and public spirited' by his brother Clive.

Dennis served for seven years on the executive from 2005-2012 and also held other positions within the union over a long period of trade union and political activism that began in 1988. He served as a Labour councillor for the Nethercourt ward in Ramsgate, Kent, from 1999-2007.

One of Dennis' major roles was as chair of standing orders at the 2010 ADM. John Hannett added: "I held Dennis in high regard, trustworthy, exceptionally hard-

working and always determined to represent his Usdaw members or his local constituents.

"We were very saddened to hear the news and our deepest condolences go out to his family and friends."



### Jimmy Burke – Scottish division

Scottish division's James 'Jimmy' Burke, 73, served on the executive council from 1987-2000 capping a long involvement in Usdaw since he joined in 1973. Jimmy's activism also saw him serve both as a divisional councillor as well as a member of his division's political committee.

A Glaswegian, Jimmy was well-known and well-respected in Usdaw – a reputation built up over more than 30 years. He was the convenor at the famous biscuit manufacturer Gray Dunn in the city.

Divisional officer Lawrence Wason paid this tribute: "Jimmy made a great contribution over many years to the trade union and labour movement at local, divisional and national level.

"A quietly effective activist he was a real asset to Usdaw. He worked tirelessly to represent members during difficult times at the factory.

"Our deepest condolences go out to his family and friends."





# Your letters

## New Scottish Labour leaders

Congratulations to Jim Murphy and Kezia Dugdale (below) on their election to leader and deputy leader of Scottish Labour. It is now time for the Party and unions to get behind the new leadership team and focus on the very real challenges that face our members and all working people. We look forward to working with Jim and Kezia to persuade the Scottish people that only Labour can form an alternative government, end the cost of living crisis and stop the Conservative attacks on workers' rights.

**Lawrence Wason**  
Scottish divisional officer



## Rosaria wins divisional award

Frank Soan was the sixth Usdaw member in Sainsbury's and the first ever shop steward. He was a driving force in getting recognition with the company and put his job on the line on more than one occasion for his members. When he died, we created this award in his memory and every year, at our winter conference, it is awarded to an individual or a team of reps who have gone the extra mile both in recruitment and organising.

The winner this year is Rosaria Sansone from H39 branch.

**Sue Merrell**  
Southern divisional officer



Branch Officers' course Nov 2014



Celebrating safety

*Celebrating 500 RIDDOR free days! A thank you must be given to our health and safety reps Gary, Alena, Cameron, Sharon, Martin and Simon. They do a fantastic job in maintaining a safe working environment for all of us at LSC - Walgreens Boots Alliance, Nottingham (Boots Logistics E190).*

## New agreements signed in Eastern and Southern divisions



*Eastern divisional officer Dave McCrossen sealed a new and improved deal at the Booker site in Hatfield, Hertfordshire last year. "This is a great step forward for Usdaw and will see reps get better facilities and strengthen our ties with the company to introduce new ways of working."*



*Southern divisional officer Sue Merrell joined the team of reps and management at the Tesco distribution centre in Reading last year to agree a new deal. "Delighted to have sorted this out and this will be a massive help for the reps on-site to take the union forward."*

# Your new website is here for 2015!

New **responsive** web design  
for easy navigation and browsing on mobile devices



## Join online

making it easier than ever to join online

### Help & Advice

on workers' rights, health and safety, pensions and legal matters

### Reps' area

containing all the tools to help you in your role as a rep

### Members' area

with up-to-date news and events, discounts and offers and more

### Campaigns area

detailing active Union campaigns and how you can get involved

### Improved navigation

making it easier to find what you need when you need it

### Multi-language support

with google translate

visit the new site at

# www.usdaw.org.uk



**Feedback** welcome  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/feedback](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/feedback)