

# NETWORK

THE BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR USDAW ACTIVISTS – SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2019



ACTIVE REPS TAKE USDAW'S BIG  
CAMPAIGNS TO THE HIGH STREET

## SUMMER SCHOOL BACK IN SESSION

*Usdaw*

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**Late-Night  
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Sales**

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# A BIG THANK YOU TO USDRAW REPS

**W**elcome to the September/October edition of *Network*. I've now been in post for over a year and what a year it's been. As general secretary I have been re-evaluating everything we do and how we operate to ensure that what we are doing is still relevant and puts the interests of our reps and members first.

I've been talking to reps and members up and down the country. As always, the feedback has been invaluable as it's rooted in our members' day-to-day experiences. This has helped me inform and launch new campaigns and re-energise some well-established ones too. Over the coming months you will see the union continue its focus on low pay, insecure work, mental health and working over Christmas.

It goes without saying that the work of the union is impossible without the contribution of its reps. That's why *Network* highlights and celebrates the great work you do in recruiting new members, organising workplaces,



representing members and inspiring colleagues to take up lifelong learning.

With just over a month until we are due to leave the European Union there is little clarity on the kind of Brexit we will get. Recent events in Parliament have shown the Tories imploding right before our eyes. There is likely to be a general election and we need to be ready. We need to show this cruel and shambolic Government that we have had enough of austerity, divisive politics and the games they're playing with people's livelihoods.

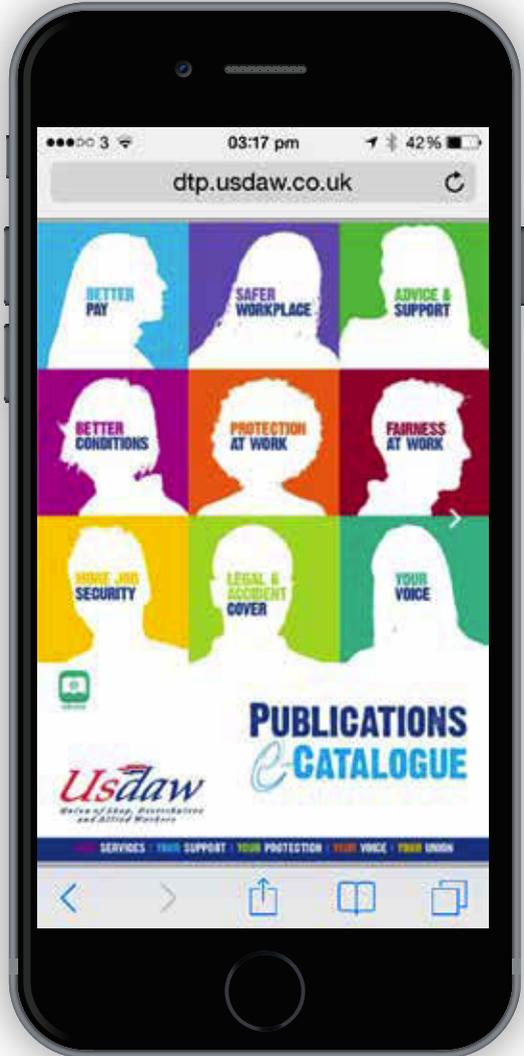
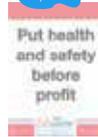
*Usdaw General Secretary*

*Paddy Lewis*



Promoting the union's Save Our Shops campaign at the TUC Congress in Brighton

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# IN THE NEWS

Don't forget to email the editor your view [network@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:network@usdaw.org.uk)

## MARCH FROM PETERLOO TO BOOHOO

**A**ugust marked the 200th anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre, when 60,000 women, children and men gathered at St Peter's Field in Manchester to peacefully campaign for parliamentary representation and were charged by the cavalry, resulting in 18 deaths.

A group of Usdaw members, reps and officials travelled to Manchester for the official commemoration.

Usdaw's North West divisional officer Mike Aylward said: "We remember all those brave people who took a stand against famine and chronic unemployment.

"In the face of the corn laws, which caused dramatic increases in food prices because of tariffs on imports, working people lacked the representation in Parliament to voice their desperation. Two-hundred years later, because of their efforts and sacrifices, working people are now represented in Parliament where their issues and concerns are heard.

"However even when Parliament expresses concerns and makes recommendations to help working people, some businesses feel



Usdaw members parade through Manchester to commemorate the Peterloo Massacre

they can ignore MPs and carry on denying staff an independent trade union voice at work.

"A prime example is Burnley and Manchester based online clothes retailer Boohoo, who claim to speak on behalf of their staff and refuse to recognise Usdaw.

"While Boohoo markets itself as a modern retailer, their attitude towards industrial relations is more 1819 than 2019. The least we expect from an ethical employer is that the staff are able to be

fully represented by an independent trade union, if that is what they want.

"Stopping Usdaw from speaking to Boohoo workers, refusing to meet with us and telling their staff to bin our leaflets is not acceptable or ethical.

"So while we celebrate the achievements of past campaigners and commemorate those who made the ultimate sacrifice at Peterloo, we must never allow standards to slip, hard fought-for gains to be lost and a race to the bottom on workers' rights."



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## 30 YEARS' MEMBERSHIP AWARD

# USDW STALWART REACHES BIG MILESTONE

Former Usdaw president Jeff Broome celebrated 30 years of Usdaw membership in August in a small presentation at Usdaw's central office in Manchester.

Jeff joined Usdaw in 1989 when he started working for the Co-op. In 2006 he was elected as president. He remained a popular figure with members and was subsequently re-elected in 2009, 2012 and 2015.

General secretary Paddy Lillis said: "It's an absolute honour to present this award to Jeff who was a friend and ally throughout his tenure as president. I want to thank Jeff for the big contribution he has made to Usdaw over the years."

Jeff Broome was delighted to receive the award. "It's an honour being part of a movement that tries to improve the lives of working people," said Jeff. "In a rapidly changing world I will continue to do my bit to make sure working people aren't left behind and that they're treated with equality and respect."



*Paddy Lillis presents Jeff with his award*

## LIVING WAGE FOUNDATION

# TACKLING WORK INSECURITY

The Living Wage Foundation has launched a Living Hours campaign to tackle work insecurity.

New research finds that one in six workers are in insecure, low paid work with millions facing cancelled shifts, a lack of stable hours, or short-term contracts.

The Living Hours scheme requires organisations to pay the real Living Wage and commit to provide workers with at least four weeks' notice of shifts, a contract that accurately reflects hours worked, and a contract with a guaranteed minimum of 16 hours per week.

Within the Living Hours report, the organisation praised Usdaw's Time For Better Pay campaign as evidence of best practice in supporting workers who are stuck in insecure work.

Several employers have already signed up to the Living Hours campaign, including Richer Sounds, SSE and Standard Life Aberdeen. The Living Wage Foundation expects more employers to follow suit over the coming months.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Usdaw has been involved in the Living Wage Foundation's



18 month research project and consultation and we are delighted that their conclusions are very similar to Usdaw's. The momentum is building for action to end job insecurity and help working people secure a wage they can live on."

**BUSINESS RATES**

# FIGHTING THE RETAIL CRISIS TOGETHER

Usdaw welcomed a letter to the Chancellor, signed by over 50 retailers calling for the Government to fix the broken business rates system.

The union's own Industrial Strategy for Retail calls for the Government to commit to providing a fair, proportionate and modern business rates system that works for all sectors.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Our high streets are in crisis, with jobs being lost due to shops closing, retailers folding and businesses engaging in significant restructuring to survive.

"We need the Government to address the worries and concerns of shopworkers and our members, so we welcome the focus from retail employers, coordinated by the British Retail Consortium, on the need for fundamental reform of the business rates system, which is clearly not fit for purpose.

"Usdaw wants to see a system



that ensures common principles apply to all businesses whether operating online, from physical premises or with a combination – something that the current system does not deliver on.

"How this is achieved is open to debate but what we are clear on is that any revenues raised through

such a system must be reinvested back into the sector. We believe that the idea of an online transaction tax needs to be given careful consideration as part of a wider review of the tax system."

Read Usdaw's full Industrial Strategy for Retail at:

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

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**SAVE OUR SHOPS**

## EMPOWERING COUNCILS

Labour announced that it would give councils the power to reopen abandoned shops to revive Britain's struggling high streets.

Under Labour's proposals, local authorities will be able to give empty shops to start-ups, co-operative businesses and community projects.

Labour's plans, which would apply to property that has been left vacant for more than 12 months, would rejuvenate Britain's high streets by bringing back into use some of the estimated 29,000 physical retail units which have been abandoned.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Usdaw is promoting an industrial strategy to tackle the retail crisis, but we remain disappointed that the Government still hasn't engaged with us.

"It is crucial that local authorities play a full role in reviving their own high streets, something we are calling for, so we very much welcome Labour's commitment to empower councils.

"The retail industry is experiencing challenging times. That's why we need a Government-led strategy."

## IN BRIEF

### MÜLLER REVIEW

Müller Milk & Ingredients are commencing a review of their operation in Aberdeen which could result in its closure. The company has indicated that a continuing reduction in volume at Aberdeen makes the operation uneconomical.

### STRIKE AGAIN

Usdaw members at Sainsbury's Waltham Point took part in further strike action in August. The dispute has already seen two one day stoppages and relates to changes to the attendance policy which are being unilaterally implemented by the company.

### SAINSBURY'S PAY

Sainsbury's retail staff saw their hourly rate moving to £9.20 per hour up from £8, as part of a wider review and consolidation of terms and conditions.

### WAITROSE

Waitrose has announced plans to close seven of its stores this autumn, putting 677 jobs at risk.

### OCADO NEW JOBS

Ocado has announced plans to create 300 new jobs, through the opening of a new customer services hub in Sunderland. The site is being opened in preparation for its new venture with M&S.

## DATA PROTECTION

# GDPR GUIDANCE FOR REPS

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came in to force in May 2018. The regulations govern the way companies collect, process, store and dispose of personal data.

Usdaw strictly abides by the data principles set out in the regulations by ensuring that it processes data fairly and transparently; for specific and legitimate purposes; only in ways that are adequate and limited to what is needed; accurately; for no longer than necessary and securely.

As an Usdaw activist you will come across some personal data relating to members such as name, address, contact details, information about their pension and employment details relating to grievances or disciplinarys, personal injury claims etc.

#### Data basics

- You must store data on members securely and for no longer than necessary. After this, the data should be destroyed.

#### Branch membership, workplace membership or contact lists

- Make sure you have an up-to-date

list. Shred any old lists and ensure the new list is stored securely either on a password protected computer (where you lock the screen when you are away from it) or in a locked filing cabinet.

#### Disciplinary and grievance hearings, employment tribunal cases, accident at work records, personal injury claims

- All correspondence and notes should be stored securely either on a password protected computer (where you lock the screen when you are away from it) or in a locked filing cabinet. If the matter is not resolved and needs to go to an employment tribunal/personal injury claim then you should store the materials securely until you have passed them on to Usdaw's legal department. After this you should shred any copies you have.

Reps can also access an online course for GDPR which goes into more detail about the regulations themselves. The course can be accessed at:

[usdaw.gdpr](http://usdaw.gdpr)



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# A FORCE FOR CHANGE

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis reviews the union's successes and future priorities

**N**etwork recently spoke to Paddy Lillis about the work Usdaw has been doing to meet some of the challenges its members face, which have been exacerbated by an extremely turbulent political and industrial climate.

## **What is Usdaw doing to alleviate the crisis on the high street?**

"In recent years, hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost in retail, with large and small retailers alike closing their doors. The Government are yet to fully engage with us.

"That's why Usdaw is leading the charge on this. Our Save Our Shops campaign is calling for action to breathe life back into the high street. Usdaw has developed an Industrial Strategy for Retail that asks the Government to invest in our high streets, to tackle high rents and rates, alongside car parking charges.

"We need the Government to engage with us and consider adopting the measures contained in our strategy."

## **Do you think the rise in retail crime is indicative of what is happening in society?**

"Our annual Freedom From Fear survey found that there has been a marked increase in levels of abuse and violence. Our members attribute this to increased levels of aggression and violence in society in general, a lack of respect, a greater sense of entitlement, financial hardship caused by

austerity and police funding cuts.

"Our message is clear, abuse is not a part of the job. We continue to call for stiffer penalties for those who assault shopworkers and the introduction of a simple stand-alone offence that is widely recognised and understood by the public, police, courts and most importantly criminals."

### **What has shocked you most in the last 12 months?**

"Last November a report by a United Nations special rapporteur found that 14 million or a fifth of the UK population live in poverty, with 60 per cent of those in families where someone works. This is an appalling statistic for a country that has the fifth largest economy in the world and backs up our Time For Better Pay survey evidence. Conservative MPs then have the nerve to pose for grinning photos showing their support for food banks. It shows a complete lack of understanding at how their cruel policies have pushed people into poverty.

"Usdaw's Time For Better Pay campaign attempts to address the root causes of in-work poverty by campaigning for a £10 per hour minimum wage and more secure contracts."

### **Usdaw is encouraging its members to be political. Why is this so important?**

"The political decisions that parties, politicians and organisations make, affect every aspect of the daily lives of Usdaw members from rights at work to services provided by local councils, to pensions and funding for schools and the NHS.

"The Conservatives don't have a clue as to how ordinary working people live. That's why we need more people in politics with experience of working on the shopfloor, a distribution centre or a call centre; people who have experience of the difficulties that working people can face.

"Our political activist programme

will provide the encouragement, training and support Usdaw members need to turn into confident and active political campaigners."

### **What successes has Usdaw had in the last 12 months?**

"Our campaigns are making a big splash and getting the attention we need to lobby for real change.

"Our Industrial Strategy for Retail has been picked up by politicians, employers and retail organisations such as the British Retail Consortium and we are working together to put pressure on the Government to do something. Our Freedom From Fear campaign has been instrumental in getting the Government to launch a 'call for evidence'. Once again, we are working together with employers to move this up the Government's agenda. Our Time For Better Pay petition collected over 50,000 signatures and we are pushing for a debate in Parliament. Following Jeremy Corbyn's attendance at this year's ADM The Labour Party has committed to £10 per hour minimum wage for all workers. We are shining a light on employers who claim they are ethical retailers whilst refusing to recognise trade unions. Thanks to our campaign MPs are putting pressure on companies like Boohoo to talk to us."

### **What do you attribute this success to?**

"Our success is largely down to the thousands of fantastic reps we have. They're the ones who are out there on the front line, talking to members, going out on the streets, holding stalls and awareness days. They're the ones getting people to fill in petitions and surveys that are so instrumental in us building a strong evidence-based case for change. And they do all this voluntarily, while holding down a job and juggling their work, union and family commitments. I can't thank them enough for all their dedication and hard work.

### **What are the challenges that lie ahead?**

"Brexit is going to be a huge challenge for the trade union movement. We want to ensure that any deal protects jobs and hard-won employment rights such as paid holiday leave, proper rest breaks and important health and safety protections.

"The Conservative record on employment rights is poor and we will need to remain vigilant that post-Brexit Britain does not spiral downwards into low wages and more insecure employment."

### **What message do you have for your members?**

"Many of us feel bewildered by the world we find ourselves in, globalisation and technological advancements can leave us questioning our place in society. We are in the midst of global crises like climate change, automation, the rise of the far right, fake news and the use of personal data to effect elections. The world can feel like an extremely complicated and scary place.

"I understand that people are frustrated, they don't see life improving for themselves or for their family and friends. But we need to be careful that we don't turn our anger against people the newspapers want us to blame; immigrants, the poor, the disabled. This is a distraction. After all, it wasn't these people who imposed a decade of austerity on the country. It was the Conservatives. They did this because they bailed out the banks and the millionaires who caused the global economic crash. In Iceland they jailed the bankers, here we didn't even conduct a proper investigation.

"The only way we can truly change things is by putting our differences aside, coming together and working collectively. We need people out there to take an interest and get involved. And the best way to do this is through the union."



# FESTIVE REST NOT STRESS

It may feel like Christmas is still a long way off, but we know that employers will already be deciding their opening hours for the festive period. Usdaw wants its members to be able to enjoy a decent break with their family and friends over Christmas and New Year.

Earlier this year, Usdaw's ADM called for all shops to shut at 4pm on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, and to remain closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day, as well as 2 January in Scotland.

Following this, Usdaw is launching a campaign calling for its members to get a decent break over the festive period.

This campaign will involve the union pressing employers about their Christmas trading hours as well as making the public aware of the challenges workers face in getting quality time off.

At the beginning of 2019, Usdaw surveyed members on their experiences of working over last year's festive period. The union received over 18,000 responses to the surveys, and the results clearly show how difficult it is for many members to spend decent time with their friends and family over Christmas and New Year.

## ACCORDING TO THE SURVEY:

- Only 4 per cent of people working on Boxing Day were happy to do so.
- 55 per cent of members reported that their store was either fairly or very quiet on Boxing Day.
- Over a third of members had to work on New Year's Day with some starting as early as 4am.
- Overall, over three quarters of members felt that working over the Christmas period affected

their ability to enjoy Christmas and that they spent too little time with loved ones.

We know that people want to be able to spend both Christmas and Boxing Day with loved ones, recovering from the busy run-up to Christmas. Yet, all too often members are required to work even though stores are generally quiet.

Most members reported that Christmas Day was just a day off, not a holiday, as the pressure to work longer or additional hours in the build up to the festive period left them too exhausted to enjoy Christmas.

Usdaw is already talking to employers around Christmas working arrangements and will be making the case for a longer break. We will be launching our campaign in the run-up to Christmas, so look out for more information.

# MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

Your working life can have a massive impact on your mental health and that's why trade unions are vital in promoting a fair, happy and healthy workplace

**U**sdaw is joining thousands of organisations and individuals across the globe to support World Mental Health Day on 10 October.

The annual event gives us another opportunity to highlight the fact that mental health is a trade union issue. It also gives us the chance to give thanks to the thousands of reps up and down the country who are supporting members with mental health problems in the workplace.

Mental health problems are very common. One in four people will experience stress, depression, anxiety or a less common mental health problem at some time in their lives – that means at least 100,000 Usdaw members will be directly affected by any one of these conditions. Even if we have

not experienced a mental health problem we are likely to know or work with someone who does. Given the scale of this issue and the fact that mental health problems across society are on the rise it is important the union keeps on talking about mental health.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Anyone can experience a mental health problem and there are many reasons why someone might.

"Our focus, as the UK's fifth largest trade union, is on how work affects our members' mental health and on whether members get the right support at work when it does.

"Being able to have a say at work and some control over your working life are proven factors in maintaining good mental health. By

giving members a voice and letting them know they aren't on their own at work, trade unions are vital to promoting good mental health in the workplace."

Andrew Coley, an Usdaw rep in the southern division said: "I wanted to do something in my workplace to let members and non-members know that Usdaw can help where mental health problems might be affecting them at work.

"I displayed the posters and set up a table in the canteen with the union's leaflets. It was a real success."

To find out more about the practical steps you can take to show your support for World Mental Health Day 2019 visit:

[www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Health-Wellbeing/Mental-Health](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Health-Wellbeing/Mental-Health)

## LEARN MORE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Sign up for one of Usdaw's mental health awareness courses available and free to members via the learning gateway at:

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

Click on the Health and Wellbeing section for more details about what's on offer.

The union can help reps access mental health awareness training courses. Speak to your union learning rep (ULR) or if you do not have a ULR, your lifelong learning project worker. You can find out who your project worker is by visiting:

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



# SAVE OUR SHOPS NOW

Usdaw continues to put pressure on the Government to tackle the crisis on the high street by adopting the practical measures outlined in its retail strategy

**U**sdaw's Save Our Shops campaign has been gaining momentum since its launch earlier this year.

On 28 September Usdaw will hold its third national Save Our Shops campaign day which will once again see MPs, Labour Party activists and Usdaw reps and officials join forces in their local town centres to raise awareness about the current crisis on the high street.

As with all of Usdaw's campaigns, grassroots campaigning is combined with lobbying of the people who make the decisions in this country, the MPs. In June, Usdaw held a parliamentary event at Westminster

to launch its Industrial Strategy for Retail. The event was attended by 38 MPs, several major employers and representatives from organisations including the Living Wage Foundation and the Institute for the Future of Work.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis introduced the strategy document and talked through the three strands of the strategy – Economy and Community, People and Productivity and Changing Perceptions.

“Usdaw has a unique insight into the challenges facing the retail sector,” said Paddy. “Our members know first-hand how changes are

impacting on the way they work and the way customers shop. Our high streets are in crisis, with shops closing, retailers folding and businesses engaging in significant restructuring to survive. That impacts communities, shoppers and staff, so Usdaw activists are on the streets engaging the public in the Save Our Shops campaign.

“Usdaw is calling for the Government to consider and adopt the measures contained in our Industrial Strategy for Retail.”

If you are interested in taking part in future Save Our Shops action days contact your local Usdaw office for details.



Paddy Lillis visits reps during a Save Our Shops campaign at Tesco in Cookstown



# WORKERS DESERVE MORE

**U**sdaw has long been committed to tackling the issue of low pay, being a major driving force behind the creation of the National Minimum Wage and has lobbied the Low Pay Commission for significant increases in the National Minimum Wage each year.

The UK is the world's fifth largest economy, but an endemic low pay problem means workers are relying on state in-work benefits and unsecured borrowing to make up the massive shortfall between wages and what is needed for a basic standard of living.

## SURVEY

Usdaw conducted a survey of over 10,500 workers, one of the largest surveys of low-paid workers in recent times. This survey focuses on the issues that workers face as a result of low pay, short-hours contracts and insecure work.

## RESULTS

Of the individuals who completed the survey:

- Over 6,000 earn below £8.50 per

hour and many of these workers are employed in part-time and insecure work.

- Over the last five years 92 per cent have seen no improvement in their financial situation, with the vast majority (63 per cent) feeling worse off.
- Three quarters of workers are relying on loans and borrowing to pay essential bills.
- Two thirds of workers say financial worries are impacting their mental health.

The world of work is changing rapidly. Despite high levels of employment, increasing numbers of workers are trapped in low paid, short-hours, insecure work, unable to make ends meet. The imbalance of power in the labour market needs to be urgently redressed to guarantee workers better pay, meaningful hours, job security, opportunities for progression and a decent standard of living.

Usdaw's Time For Better Pay campaign is calling on the Government to strengthen workers' rights by introducing:

- A minimum wage rate of at least £10 per hour for all workers.
- Minimum contracts of 16 hours per week for everyone who wants one.
- Contracts based on an individual's normal hours of work.
- An end to zero-hours contracts.

Over 50,000 people signed Usdaw's petition to express deep concerns about the pay and rights of a growing number of workers who find themselves in increasingly insecure employment.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "More than 50,000 people have backed our call to end job insecurity and help working people make ends meet. That should make the Government sit up and listen, yet we are still waiting for them to engage with us.

"So, we now think it is time for the issues to be debated in Parliament and we are exploring how we can achieve that.

"We need real and urgent improvements to workers' rights to deliver an economy that works for all working people."

# MemberOffers

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Attractions  
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Card  
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James Villa Holidays  
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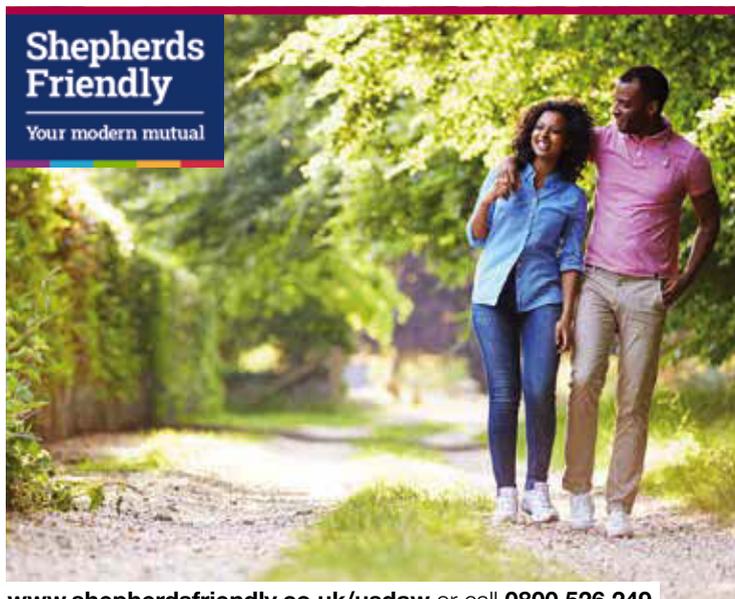
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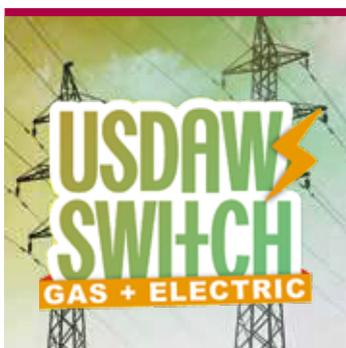
**Open a savings plan and get a shopping voucher worth up to £55.**

Our endorsed savings provider, Shepherds Friendly, is offering Usdaw members an exclusive Love2shop voucher code worth up to £55\* when you open a savings plan with them. Shepherds Friendly is an award-winning savings provider with almost 200 years' experience. They offer savings plans that include an adult ISA for yourself, a Junior ISA for your child and a Young Saver Plan for grandchildren. They have also recently launched a 5 Year Fixed Rate Bond, which is paying a guaranteed rate of 2.75% AER for 5 years (*voucher code excluded from Fixed Rate Bond*). Please remember, when investing, your capital is at risk.

\*Terms and conditions apply.



[www.shepherdsfriendly.co.uk/usdaw](http://www.shepherdsfriendly.co.uk/usdaw) or call 0800 526 249



**Are you and your members fed up with high energy bills?**

Then join the Usdaw Collective Switching Scheme *Ustaw Switch!* It works by getting as many Usdaw members as possible to register their interest in taking part. Energy suppliers compete for your custom by offering bespoke, highly competitive energy tariffs. The more members that register the better the offer will be. If you have never switched energy tariffs before or have not done so in the last 3 years, you could save hundreds of pounds. It's free to register, there is no obligation to switch and you have until 8th October to take part. Let your members know about this great opportunity by directing them to [www.usdaw.org.uk/switch](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/switch)



**Have you registered for your FREE £5,000 Accidental Death Cover?**

Cover is for UK residents aged 18 - 69. 12 months free cover. Renewable. Always FREE. \*\*Register today at [www.UstawProtect.com/free](http://www.UstawProtect.com/free)

\*Terms and conditions apply. A number of Usdaw membership benefits are arranged and managed on behalf of Usdaw by Parliament Hill Ltd. Further benefits are organised directly by Usdaw Membership Services. Please see our website for further details. [www.usdaw.org.uk/offers](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/offers) \*\*The Accidental Death Cover is underwritten by Advent Insurance PCC Ltd - UIB Cell. Usdaw is an Introducer Appointed Representative of UsdawProtect, a trading name of Union Income Benefit Holdings Ltd (UIB) who arrange this insurance.



# Ten minutes with... **CHARLOTTE JOHNSON**

**N**etwork discusses life on the Academy, attending union events and the value of branch meetings with organising officer Charlotte Johnson.

## **Where do you work?**

I work at the Co-op store in Fulford, York as a team leader, but I'm currently on Academy1 with the union which I'm really enjoying. We have about 20 staff working in our Co-op store and my role of team leader generally involves organising the shifts, making sure staff and customers are happy, the store is tidy and all the little jobs are done.

## **Why did you decide to be a rep?**

I'm fairly new to the role having only signed up in May last year. I'm part of a team of cluster reps looking after Co-op stores in the York area. I initially got involved because I wanted to make a difference. I wanted staff members to have someone that they could speak to in confidence, not just in my store but in the other stores too. It's nice to know that they feel comfortable enough to come to me for advice.

## **And you're also an Usdaw health and safety rep?**

Yes, that role fits hand in hand

with the rep role really. I make sure everything meets health and safety standards in all the stores I look after. We've recently started to gather a committee together for the York area so all the health and safety reps will meet regularly from now on which is a good step forward.

## **What made you decide to take on the Organising Academy?**

I was in a branch meeting and my deputy divisional officer suggested it and I thought, what a great opportunity. It's a whole new experience, I haven't done any stand-down, or any major recruiting

apart from in my stores. I've been looking after Morrisons, Tesco, B&M, Poundland, as well as Co-ops. Some weeks are a lot harder than others, particularly with the current industrial climate.

**You attended the Durham Miners' Gala in July. How was it?**

It was my first time there and it was absolutely fantastic, I can't wait for next year. I've never been to an event like that before, it was just such a wonderful atmosphere. People were so happy watching the march, and then there was the music and the banners, it's a magnificent experience.

**Have you been to any other events with the union?**

This summer I attended Pride events in Leeds and York which were again really good days, despite the rain. It's nice to see like-minded people coming together and showing support.

I also went to my first ADM this year as a delegate, an absolutely unique experience, equally terrifying and fantastic. I didn't get up and speak but it's definitely something I would want to do in the future. My branch has lots of ideas for propositions that we want to put forward.

**It sounds like you're heavily involved with your branch too?**

Yes, I think it's really important to be involved in your branch, you find out more about what's going on with the union and there are opportunities to get more involved. As reps, branch meetings allow us to pass on knowledge and encourage others to maybe push a little bit harder and make sure we're getting where we need to be. We do have a good number of members attending our branch meetings, from Co-op stores and funeralcare.

**Are you involved with any other groups outside of work?**

I've recently become a Labour Party member and have been involved with

local canvassing. I was encouraged by seeing their involvement with Usdaw, listening to their speeches and knowing that they want the same things as we do, they want the £10 an hour and they want the rights of the workers to be listened to.

**What's next for you?**

Being on the Academy has definitely inspired me to become more actively involved with the union. I'd

be interested to look at getting more involved with the equality forums or politics.

**Have you got any tips for new Usdaw reps?**

Just be yourself, be honest and be happy, because at the end of the day, members have got to be able to trust you wholeheartedly and you want them to trust the real you.

**ALL ABOUT CHARLOTTE**

**Where do you live?**

I live in York with my husband Steven and two of my four children aged 4 and 7. The other two, aged 23 and 25, live away from home now.

**Any pets?**

A Staffordshire Bull Terrier called Bryn.

**How do you like to spend your spare time?**

We go up to the Highlands a lot to go mountain climbing. I also like reading. I'm currently reading *A Union of Many Trades – The History*

*of Usdaw*. It was recommended by one of my tutors and it's very interesting.

**Favourite food?** Just simply sausage and mash.

**Favourite item of clothing?**

My Foo Fighters hoodie.

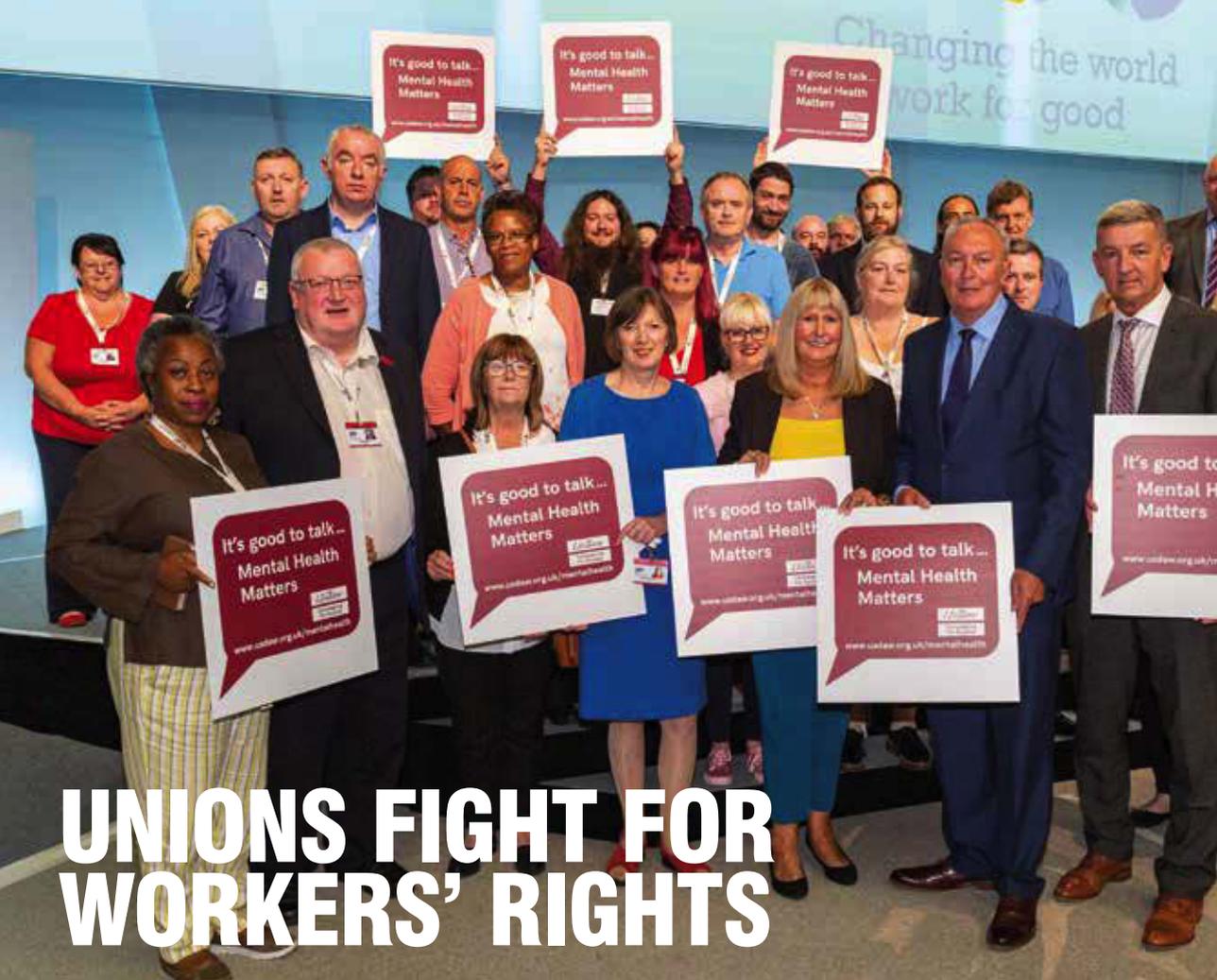
**Last film you saw?** *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*.

**If you could live anywhere for a year, where would it be?**

Definitely the Highlands.



IF YOU WANT TO BE THE NEXT ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH EMAIL: [NETWORK@USDRAW.ORG.UK](mailto:NETWORK@USDRAW.ORG.UK)



# UNIONS FIGHT FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS

The TUC Congress was back for its 151st session in September as unions came together in Brighton to decide the movement's priorities for the coming year

**M**ental health and festive working were among the topics high on Usdaw's agenda as general secretary Paddy Lillis called on congress to back the union's biggest campaigns.

## RETAIL JOBS ARE REAL JOBS

From the supermarket to the postal sorting office, from the football pitch to the theatre, workers across the country are facing a mental health crisis, Paddy Lillis told conference as he led a call to support World Mental Health Day on 10 October.

"Usdaw organises workers in a number of low-paid sectors, where little attention is paid to the

pressures they face and the impact of those pressures on mental health.

"Shopworkers have physically demanding, target driven, people-focused jobs. Modern technology puts them under constant surveillance and threat of performance management.

"They have to deal with rude and abusive customers on a daily basis and a large number are even experiencing sexual harassment.

"These factors are creating a toxic work environment for millions and when you add in the difficulties of balancing work with caring responsibilities, it gets tougher.

"Just as we protect physical health

and safety, we need to mirror this for mental health. When employers fail to make those reasonable adjustments, they need to feel the full weight of the law."

## IT'S NOT FESTIVE

A motion submitted by Usdaw to give retail staff a decent break over Christmas and New Year was backed unanimously by congress.

Last year the union surveyed over 18,000 members on festive working. Two-thirds said they are under pressure to work on Boxing Day and New Year's Day, 80 per cent found it difficult to get an early finish on Christmas Eve and three-quarters



## PETITIONS, DEBATES, AWARDS AND CELEBRATIONS

### SAVE OUR SHOPS

The union continued its commitment to tackle the crisis on the high street by launching a new online petition as part of its Save Our Shops campaign.

Usdaw wants the Government to protect the 4.5 million jobs that rely on the sector.

"Over 74,000 retail workers lost their jobs in 2018 and so far this year, the rate of store closures and job losses has increased dramatically," said Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis. "Usdaw's petition calls for urgent action to save jobs and protect our high streets with a government-led clear and coherent strategy for retail."

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

### FUTURE CHALLENGES

Usdaw joined the debate on the future world of work and identified underemployment and short-hours contracts as key issues to address. "In recent years, weak employment legislation has led to the growth of insecure work," said Usdaw

president Amy Murphy. "Whether it's zero and short-hours contracts, bogus self-employment or the gig economy; working people have paid the price for the lack of robust employment legislation to protect workers. We must ensure that workers are guaranteed secure contracts on the minimum number of hours they want."

### AWARD WINNING USDAW REP

Christina Distefano was celebrating after being presented with this year's TUC Youth Award during conference by TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady. There will be a full interview with Christina in the Winter edition of *arena*.

### USDAW TAKES BEST STAND

The union's exhibition stand was awarded 'best in show' at this year's congress. Designed by Usdaw's team at central office, the stand was themed on the union's flagship Save Our Shops campaign. TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady presented Paddy with the award.

said that working these days meant spending too little time with family.

"Everyone should be entitled to quality time off over the festive period but too often this isn't happening," said Paddy. "We are calling for stores to close early on Christmas and New Year's Eve, and remain closed for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day."

### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The current rules requiring unions to have 10 per cent membership before lodging a claim for statutory recognition makes it far too difficult for working people to get a truly independent voice, said Usdaw deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen. "Over the last 40 years there has been a drop in the number of people covered by collective

bargaining, as a direct result we have seen the growth of in-work poverty.

"We need to see the reach of collective bargaining extended so it covers every worker. We also need to make it far easier for unions to get access to a workforce, so that all workers can hear the case for why it makes sense to join a trade union.

"Usdaw believes the membership thresholds to trigger a ballot on union recognition should be reduced to 2 per cent or 500 members in bigger workplaces, allowing workers a real choice through a ballot on whether a union is to be recognised in their workplace."

### A MANIFESTO FOR WORKERS

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, and Laura Pidcock MP, shared their plans to 'give workers a seat at

the cabinet table' by establishing a Ministry for Employment Rights.

"In our country, workers have been losing out for far too long," said Jeremy. "The next Labour government will bring about the biggest extension of rights for workers that our country has ever seen. We will put the power in the hands of workers – better wages, greater security and more say."

In her address, Laura highlighted Usdaw's survey of over 10,000 workers published as part of its Time For Better Pay campaign. Half of members surveyed had missed meals in order to pay essential bills.

She went on to promise that the next Labour government will "raise the minimum wage for all workers over 16 to £10 an hour by 2020 and eliminate zero-hours contracts."

# **INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY: PEOPLE AND PRODUCTIVITY**



In an attempt to deal with the crisis on the high street, Usdaw launched its Industrial Strategy for Retail at Westminster in June. In a three-part series *Network* is focusing on each strand of the strategy. In this issue *Network* looks at People and Productivity, a core part of the strategy for retail, focusing on improving performance and productivity through decent pay and secure work.

### MINIMUM PAY OF £10 PER HOUR

Following the introduction of the National Living Wage in 2017, there was growing evidence that better pay enhances productivity and improves employee retention and engagement. Therefore, rather than waiting for productivity to push up pay, a simple solution for retailers would be to increase pay to drive real productivity growth.

### TACKLING UNDEREMPLOYMENT

Falling unemployment statistics mask the reality of underemployment for many people working in the retail sector. Usdaw's survey shows 95 per cent of retail workers (who responded) agree that all workers should be given the right to a contract of at least 16 hours per week. One in four members are currently contracted to 16 hours or less.

### A CONTRACT THAT REFLECTS THE ACTUAL HOURS YOU WORK

In addition to the challenge of short hours, there has been a massive increase in the number of individuals working on an insecure basis. For nearly four in 10 workers, at least 20 per cent of their hours are not guaranteed.

In its 2018 report, the Low Pay Commission recommended that workers should have the right to switch to a contract that guarantees their normal working hours. Legislation to this effect was introduced in Ireland this year and the UK should follow suit.

### NEW TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION

Given the number of jobs at risk, Usdaw is concerned at the length of time it has taken the Government to give serious consideration to the impact of automation on the UK labour market. To help mitigate the impact, and to harness the benefits of automation, Usdaw wants to see the introduction of a coherent industrial strategy for retail, sustained investment in skills for workers affected by automation, a legal right to collective consultation on the implementation of new technology in the workplace and a strong focus on industrial relations.

### THE PRODUCTIVITY PUZZLE

The retail sector has delivered above-average productivity growth despite the on-going crisis by making staff work harder without any real improvement in wages.

However, research shows that increasing wages may be the key to stronger growth and in turn, a healthier economy.

### EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PAY AND BENEFITS

Retailers must take into account the fact that there is a growing bank of evidence to support the benefits of increased employee engagement, including better performance and lower employee turnover. The starting point for engagement is a decent standard of living.

### EMPLOYEE VOICE

The Taylor Review, published in 2017, recommends that employees should have a greater voice in the workplace.

We need to ensure that workers, through their representatives where appropriate, are able to determine how their collective voice is heard in the workplace.

### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND STATUTORY RECOGNITION

While Usdaw recognises the

importance of employee voice, it is important for the Government and employers to also acknowledge that trade unions and collective bargaining plays a pivotal role in this. Employee representatives do not have the legal protection and collective strength which union representatives benefit from.

Usdaw believes that the rules around statutory recognition claims should be overhauled to ensure that workers can have their voice heard.

### WORKER DIRECTORS IN THE BOARDROOM

Another solution for delivering a voice for retail staff is the introduction of legislation to ensure that workers have guaranteed seats on the boards of large companies, with the same role as other directors. There is growing research from the HR community that improved worker participation leads to higher investment and lower levels of inequality and poverty.

### COLLECTIVE CONSULTATION FOR ALL WORKERS

Usdaw is calling for a review of the law on redundancy, to remove the loophole which allows large chains to avoid collective consultation over small sites. This would ensure some protections for workers in smaller establishments (less than 20 employees).

Even where employees are covered by collective consultation, Usdaw does not believe 30 or 45 days provides enough time for meaningful consultation. For collective consultation on large scale redundancies to be genuine and meaningful, Usdaw feels that the statutory consultation period needs to return to a minimum requirement of 90 days.

Read the document in full at:  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/  
retailstrategy](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/retailstrategy)

# WORKING WITHOUT FEAR

Respect Week will take place from 11-17 November and Usdaw wants everyone to get involved

**W**ith Usdaw's latest survey results showing that violence, threats and abuse against shopworkers are an increasing problem, it's more important than ever to raise the profile of the union's Freedom From Fear campaign and make sure that members can go to work without worrying about the behaviour of customers.

## What is Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign?

The purpose of the campaign is to make the working environment safer by tackling violence and abuse. The campaign's core message of 'abuse is not part of the job' means that everyone has the right to go to work, carry out their job, and come home without having to face violence, threats or abuse while doing so.

Usdaw has worked with reps and employers to make sure that systems are in place to report and tackle abuse and that companies take the issue of workplace abuse and violence seriously.

## What is Respect Week?

Respect for Shopworkers Week is a key part of the union's Freedom From Fear campaign held annually in the run-up to Christmas. Events are organised to engage with the public around the theme 'Keep Your Cool at Christmas'. Usdaw activists are encouraged to take part in the week by running their own campaigns. This year's Respect Week will take place from 11-17 November.

## Organising a stall

The best way to take part in Respect Week is to hold a stall at the front of your store. This is an excellent way to engage the public with the campaign. If you can't run a stall at the front of your store think about running an event in your canteen or staff room.

The first step is to get permission from your manager. After that you'll need to order materials to make sure they arrive in time for the event and organise people to staff the stall.

Don't forget to promote the campaign on your union noticeboard.

If you haven't done a stall before you might want to contact your area organiser for advice.

## Respect Week 'Lite'

The Respect Week 'Lite' pack helps you to take part in the campaign in a short amount of time. So if you can't run a full stall, but you can spare an hour during Respect Week, the union will send you a pack of materials to enable you to quickly and easily take part. Check your Respect Week campaign pack for more details. If you can take part, even in just a small way, it will really help to raise the profile of the campaign.

## Inviting a local Labour politician

Everyone should try to invite their local Labour politicians to take part in their campaign events. This helps them to understand the issues at the heart of the campaign and



builds the links that make it easier to deliver the improved protection shopworkers need.

To find out who your MP, MSP or AM is visit: [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com) and enter your store's postcode.

## Using the survey

Usdaw's campaigns rely heavily on the evidence and real experiences of our reps and members. The Respect Week campaign pack includes a number of survey forms, the responses to which will shape the future of the campaign. The surveys are also an excellent way to start conversations with colleagues and listen to their issues. Please fill in the surveys with as many members and non-members as possible. The



Reps will have already received a Respect Week pack through the post with more details about running a campaign event. **Please make sure you order your campaign materials by 4 October.**

survey also gives you an opportunity to recruit non-members into the union. The more members we have in your workplace, the easier it will be to tackle the issues of the campaign.

Once completed, surveys and membership forms can be sent to Usdaw Central Office. Just write **FREEPOST USDAW** on the envelope and put it in the post.

### Using the petition

The petition is an excellent way for members of the public to get involved in the campaign.

Having customers signing a petition calling for an end to abuse against shopworkers will hopefully ensure that less abuse takes place in store.

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

### USDAW GENERAL SECRETARY PADDY LILLIS

“From talking to reps and looking at survey results, it is all too clear that abuse against shopworkers is starting to be seen as a normal part of work,” said Paddy. “That’s why it’s so important to deliver a highly visible campaign that can not only give shopworkers the confidence to report all instances of abuse but also educate the public on the need to keep their cool.

“We can only do this with your help. Thank you for supporting this important campaign. Through us all working together we can make this year a huge success.”





# STAND UNITED AGAINST HATE

**H**ate crime is a growing concern with home office statistics demonstrating a steep rise in the number of incidents in the last five years across the UK.

But despite the fact that hate crime is on the increase, there are still very low levels of awareness of what a hate crime is. Usdaw is working to change this.

The union has launched a new initiative called Together Against Hate. The aim is to raise awareness of hate crime, how to report it and the harm it does to members and their families.

A hate crime is when someone commits a crime against you because of your disability, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, religious belief or because someone thinks you have one of these characteristics.

It doesn't always include physical

violence. Someone using offensive language towards you or harassing you because of who you are, or who they think you are, is also a crime. The same goes for someone posting abusive or offensive messages about you online.

By far the most common type of hate crimes across all four parts of the country are those that are motivated by race.

- In England and Wales almost three quarters (74 per cent) of all reported hate crimes are motivated by race. The second most common form of hate crime is homophobic hate crime (crime motivated by someone's sexuality).
- In Scotland race hate crime accounts for well over half (59 per cent) of all reported hate crime.
- In Northern Ireland race hate crimes increased last year and

account for almost half of all recorded hate crime. The second most common form of hate crime is sectarian.

Statistics however can't describe what it is like to actually experience hostility or hatred simply because of who you are.

Those who experience hate crime say it has a devastating effect on their lives making them feel anxious, frightened, depressed and angry. As one Muslim woman explains: "I do feel vulnerable... and it does affect my behaviour. I became more fearful and avoided going to certain places that I feel might be a risk to my safety. And especially within certain times, I would avoid walking within those areas."

Ushaw has launched a section on its website where you will find a range of resources to support reps and members who want to find out



# DEVOTED LEARNING REPS RECOGNISED BY THE TUC

Usdaw's army of learning reps work hard to ensure members have access to learning opportunities to aid personal development and improve their career

**T**wo of Usdaw's hardworking union learning reps (ULRs) were presented with TUC awards in July in recognition of their continued contribution to union learning.

Michelle Whitley, who works at the Argos/Sainsbury's contact centre in Widnes, won the 2019 ULR award for Supporting Older Workers while Sean Dixon, learning coordinator at DHL Castleford, picked up the 2019 ULR award for Supporting Disadvantaged Learners.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady presented the awards to Sean and Michelle at the 13th annual UnionLearn conference in London.

## MICHELLE WHITLEY

In 2018 Michelle got involved with the UnionLearn mid-life career

review initiative doing surveys across the workplace in order to help staff, and particularly older workers, reassess their career options and look at the areas of their skill sets that they needed to develop. Michelle has worked closely with UnionLearn to develop her successful mid-life career review project and utilised the Usdaw supported learning centre on her site to deliver the training identified.

"I initially came into the learning centre as a worker," said Michelle. "I was there for two years and then became a union learning rep. My learning journey went from being a ULR to a coordinator and gaining extra skills as I went along and helping other people to gain skills too.

"There are a lot of people who work here who are older workers, who would love to move around the business, they'd love to do an apprenticeship. We work with the business on functional skills apprenticeships, so we encourage people who haven't been in education for a long time to not be scared of it, and to make that step, and we guide them through the whole process to the point where they get the qualification, and they end up in the perfect role for themselves.

"I'm really made up to win the award and it's on the back of something I really love doing. I've enjoyed every minute of the past eight years, so it's nice for someone to say that I've done well."



Michelle Whitley (centre) with Gordon Marsden MP and Frances O'Grady



Sean Dixon at DHL Castleford

## SEAN DIXON

Sean has led the impressive work of ULRs at DHL Castleford to provide learning opportunities for disadvantaged learners, tackling inequality and creating a culture of inclusion at the site.

His work has included organising focus groups with migrant workers on mental health and wellbeing, supporting older workers and those with learning difficulties by identifying their needs.

The on-site learning centre, which Sean oversees, has a huge resource library where members can pick up materials on a wide range of topics.

"We try and make sure that all learning at the site is inclusive and benefits both workers and the wider community," said Sean. "We've been tackling a whole range of health and wellbeing issues with a massive programme around the agenda, including men's health, women's health, diet and nutrition, alcohol awareness, fitness checks and even working with the Alzheimer's Society to run Dementia Friends workshops.

"It's important to me to make sure colleagues from all backgrounds have access to learning opportunities that will enhance their lives inside and outside of work.

"I'm really happy to have won this award for supporting disadvantaged learners, I think it fully reflects the amount of work that the ULR team have put into this area."

## PROUD UNION

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis is delighted that the work of the union's learning reps has been recognised. "Michelle and Sean are shining examples of the tremendous work all of our union learning reps do to deliver lifelong learning for our members," said Paddy.

"Usdaw's Lifelong Learning campaign aims to provide members, many of whom feel they missed out at school, with the chance to get back to learning to help them with their own personal development and career opportunities.

"Through our Lifelong Learning campaign, we are opening doors for members who want to increase their skills and knowledge and improve their career prospects by offering on-site courses in conjunction with companies, local colleges and other course providers. Crucial to achieving this is the hard work and dedication of ULRs, like Michelle and Sean, who have rightly received the recognition they deserve."

## GET ONLINE WEEK 14-20 OCTOBER 2019

Help your colleagues get more out of life online during this year's national Get Online Week.

Over five million people in the UK have never been online and there are 11.9 million people who don't have the essential digital skills to navigate life and work. This October, Usdaw wants to make sure that all members can take part in the digital world and is encouraging reps to organise digital workshops to support their colleagues.

Workshops could include digital photography, accessing your online payslip/HR systems and setting up online accounts including utilities and banking. Reps are also encouraged to promote Usdaw's Online Learning Gateway where members can access courses in English, maths, ICT, languages, CV writing and much more.

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



The union is encouraging members to get online this October

# REPS ARE PROUD TO SHOWCASE LEGAL PLUS

Reps across the country are organising Legal Plus awareness days to ensure members and potential members know about the union's excellent legal service

Legal Plus awareness days are an excellent opportunity for reps to showcase some of the fantastic legal benefits available exclusively to Usdaw members including FirstCall Usdaw, the union's free accident claim line.

It's a chance to remind members about the service and show non-members another great reason why they should join the union.

Reps can choose to hold a simple Legal Plus awareness day in their workplace where they organise a well-publicised event with a stall, leaflets and freebies and chat to existing and potential members about the service. Additionally, they can request to hold a legal surgery where a local solicitor joins reps for their event to provide legal advice to members.

Reps in Tesco Batley and Tesco Limavady recently held their own Legal Plus awareness days supported by the union's Academy.

## TESCO BATLEY

Ushaw rep Allan Ross, who is currently on the union's Academy1 programme, coordinated a Legal Plus day at Tesco in Batley where the team managed to speak to upwards of 50 staff about the service. He was supported by in-store reps Geraldine Rose and Shaun Pyrah.

"It went really well," said Allan, who works at DHL in Castleford. "We focused on handing out leaflets and speaking to members and non-members about the service. Staff were quite shy and wouldn't come

over to our stall so we made the effort to go and chat to them.

"A lot of existing members didn't know about the free will writing service, and even more surprising they weren't aware they have access to FirstCall Usdaw, so it was a very worthwhile experience.

"We were also joined by mobile union learning rep Heather Challis who used the opportunity to speak to staff about the various learning opportunities available to members.

"The night reps, Russell Sowray and Dianne Reynard, were also happy to get involved and took over the campaign when we left so that the night shift didn't miss out.

"It's a great team of reps at Batley and the perfect place to hold a campaign as it's such a big store with lots of members. The reps are already very active and keen to hold campaign days, they've got a mental health awareness day planned next.

"It was overall just a good opportunity to showcase the brilliant legal service and have a big union presence in the store."

## TESCO LIMAVADY

Ushaw reps Donna Mullan and Nadine McCloskey chose to incorporate a legal surgery into their awareness day and invited a local Usdaw solicitor along to their Tesco store in Limavady. Members had the opportunity to book free 30-minute slots with the solicitor to discuss any legal concerns.

Academy2 organising officer Norma Robinson was on hand to

support the two-day event along with area organiser Raymond Neal.

"Limavady is already a well-organised store with over 80 per cent of staff signed up as members, but it's good to remind them about the offers and benefits they have access to," said Norma, who works at Tesco in Londonderry.

"It was great to have the support of a solicitor too, members took full advantage of the free half-hour appointments and he was kept very busy.

"I've been part of various Usdaw campaign days before but this was actually the first Legal Plus day that I've seen in action. I think it shows another side to the union that people might not necessarily be aware of. It shows that union membership isn't just about dealing with work-related issues. There's so much more on offer for members."

If you're interested in holding a Legal Plus awareness day in your workplace speak to your area organiser or to find out more information visit:

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

### Membership for week ended 14 September 2019

South Wales & Western	47,428
Eastern	59,284
Midlands	55,663
North Eastern	59,291
Scottish	42,354
Southern	61,701
North West	87,647
<b>Total</b>	<b>413,368</b>



Allan Ross (left) with the reps at Tesco Batley



Norma Robinson (right) during the campaign day at Tesco Limavady

# HOW TO BE GOOD AT RECRUITMENT

Usdaw is made up of members across many workplaces and the union's ability to be influential depends on how many members it has and on how well organised they are.

One of the main reasons why people say they aren't in a union is because they've never been asked, so recruiting new members is a very important part of the role of a rep.

"In workplaces where we have high numbers of members, employers have to listen to us," said Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis. "The more people in Usdaw, the stronger we are, it's as simple as that. We must ask ourselves is everyone a member of Usdaw and if not, why not? We have to talk to workers, listen to what they say and persuade them that being in Usdaw will make a difference for them and, importantly, everyone in their workplace. A rep who can confidently promote Usdaw to their colleagues is the very best recruitment tool we have."

## THE VALUE OF INDUCTIONS

People are most likely to join the union when they first start work so inductions are the perfect opportunity to recruit.

### Be prepared

- Ask your manager if there are any new starters and staff inductions planned. Make sure you know all the details including date, time, venue and numbers attending.
- Arrange time off with your manager so you can attend. Your company/Usdaw agreement will tell you how long you have to talk to new starters.

- Collect your materials – you will need union leaflets, recent communications, membership forms and pens. You can get these from your local Usdaw office or order them online at:

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

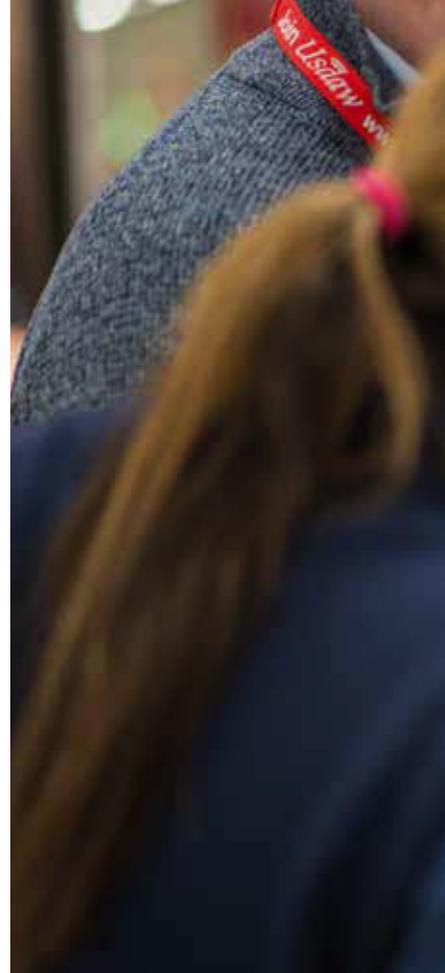
- Shadow an experienced rep or your area organiser if this is your first induction or if you are unsure.

### At the induction

- Be friendly, introduce yourself and give the names and departments of other reps in your workplace.
- Stress the importance that the more Usdaw members in the workplace the stronger the union's influence will be.
- Be clear that there are very good reasons for joining; better terms and conditions, help and support at work, a voice in the workplace, legal advice. Use Usdaw's leaflets and magazines to help you.
- Use success stories. Share what the union has done for others.
- State clearly that the company recommends new starters to join Usdaw – you will find reference to this in your company/Usdaw agreement if this is the case.

### The sign up

- Provide everyone with a membership form and a pen.
- Talk them through the form and explain the cost of joining.
- Talk about the importance of ticking the 'opt-in' notice box for the Political Fund. This is important as this is how the union finances many of its campaigns. Find out more at: **[www.usdaw.org.uk/politicalfund](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/politicalfund)**

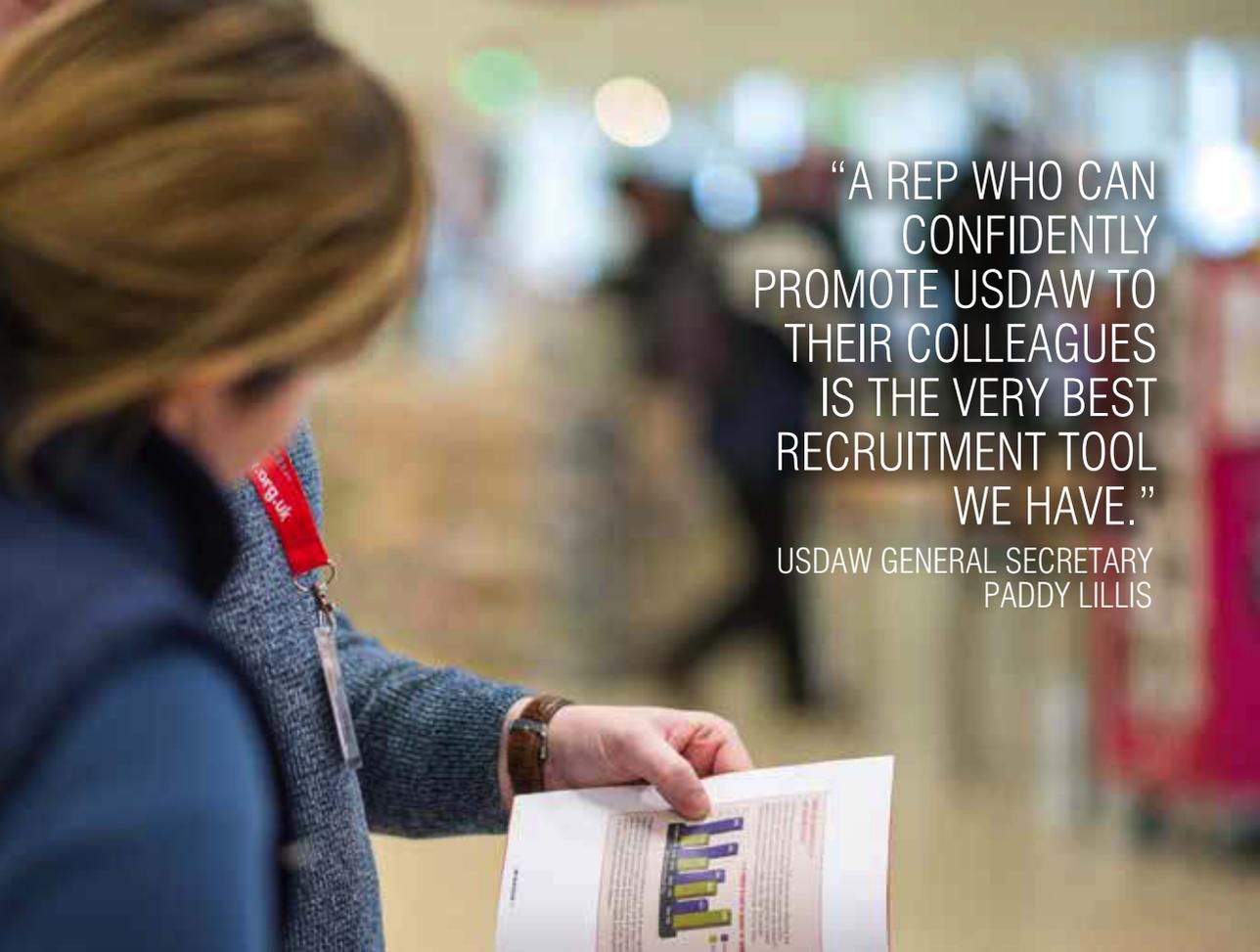


- Return the completed membership forms to your local Usdaw office as soon as possible.
- Make arrangements to see anyone who has not completed their form at a later date.
- Let your area organiser know if you had any problems or anything else you think they can help with.

## RECRUITING 1-2-1

Sometimes workers do not join the union at their induction so we need to speak to them individually. Here are some tips for successful 1-2-1 recruitment:

- *Introduce yourself.* Be friendly and listen. Your colleagues will not respond to being lectured on why they should join the union. Listen to what they have to say.
- *Ask questions.* People respond better to being asked their own views. Ask if they have any issues



“A REP WHO CAN  
CONFIDENTLY  
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IS THE VERY BEST  
RECRUITMENT TOOL  
WE HAVE.”

USDAW GENERAL SECRETARY  
PADDY LILLIS

that the union should raise.

- *Be prepared.* If you are familiar with the reasons why people do or do not join unions then very few reasons will surprise you.
- *Use success stories.* People will be more convinced by examples of what the union has done for others in real life.
- *Use your own experiences.* Tell people that you are a worker and what affects them affects you.
- *Be honest.* If you can't explain what the union can do about issues at the time, say so. Make some enquiries and come back to them.
- *Be available.* Make sure people know where, when and how to contact you.

### RECRUITMENT CHAT

Here are some of the common issues that workers may raise about joining with suggested responses.

### I can't afford to join

No one underestimates money worries but it's a question of priorities – you wouldn't be without house or car insurance, so think of union contributions as your workplace insurance. If you lost your job because you didn't have representation at work, the consequences would be far worse than a burglary or bump in the car.

### I'm part-time, I don't need to join

Part-time workers are generally affected by the same issues as full-time workers, and the terms and conditions for most part-time workers have been won by unions negotiating for them.

### Why should I join? I get all the same benefits anyway

No you don't! You get the same terms and conditions that the

union negotiates for its members. However, you wouldn't get union advice or representation and you would have to meet your own legal costs if you had a serious problem or accident at work.

### I'm too young to join a union

Young workers are more likely than anyone to have problems at work. Over recent years, Usdaw has helped young workers enforce their rights and secured equal rates of pay. Tesco, Co-op, Morrisons and Sainsbury's retail employees are paid adult rates, which are considerably higher than the National Minimum Wage.

The Usdaw website contains materials to help you get organised and start recruiting at work now. Visit [www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk) and start organising today.



# ACADEMY 2013: WHERE ARE T

**F**ifty-one activists successfully completed the union's Academy1 programme in 2013. **Network** caught up with some of the graduates as they look back on their experience...

## **SHIRLEY SAVAGE**

**Area Organiser, Leeds office**

Academy1 was a fantastic journey. I hadn't been in a classroom for many years but the experience gave me confidence and helped me to achieve beyond what I thought I could. It totally changed me as a person and made me believe in myself. It taught me organisational skills and gave me a wider understanding of companies. I've been an area organiser for five years now and I love what I do. I would advise anyone to take on Academy1 and any other training that Usdaw offers. One never stops learning.

## **CHRIS WINWOOD**

**The Co-op, St Helens**

I absolutely loved Academy1. Since then I've completed Academy2, Summer School1 and was elected onto Usdaw's Executive Council. Academy1 taught me how to organise in lots of different workplaces as I was only used to distribution. I made new friends and had great support from my division. I gained new skills and confidence which I take into every meeting and my aim is to see another fellow rep achieve what I have. It has truly been a fantastic experience which I highly recommend.

## **SHARON DAY**

**Tesco, Sheffield**

Following Academy1 I became branch secretary of South Yorkshire Tesco, and continued on long-term stand-down. I'm also on the North Eastern division equalities forum

and feel proud to be part of such a great team.

I loved everything on Academy1 from the training, to developing and supporting other reps. It gave me the confidence to drive around towns and cities, overcome my fear of public speaking and also helped my organisational skills. The support network is amazing. It opened doors for me and enabled me to get more involved with the things I love.

## **ANDREW KELLY**

**Tesco, Rutherglen**

I was elected to my divisional council just as I started Academy1 and I'm also now vice chair of my branch. The training and experience I gained on Academy1 was very worthwhile and has been a big help with recruitment. I also developed an interest for education so I went on to study for a basic teaching qualification which I hope will allow



## HEY NOW?

me to train others in the future. I would recommend for anyone to try it and if they don't get accepted first time keep going, it took me four attempts and it was well worth it.

### **DIANE HOWARD** Tesco, Bidston

I completed Academy2 in 2015 with some fantastic people. The Academy really helped me with my confidence. I completed my own project on hate crime and travelled around the country for Usdaw raising awareness in different companies, the Tesco national forum and at the Usdaw LGBT conference. I won a national organising award in 2015 which I believe I wouldn't have achieved if I hadn't done the Academy – it was the best experience.

### **SALLY PAYNE-GAMBLE** Retail, Slough

Since both Academies I have

continued to support members, reps and organisers in my division. I became a divisional councillor, a federation committee member and branch chair. At work I was promoted to people and culture supervisor and HR business partner. The Academy improved my knowledge and confidence to challenge management when required and as a result that has helped the hundreds of members that I've represented and many great results have been achieved.

### **RACHEL GOODWIN** Whitstable

I'm currently on the Southern divisional council. I ran for executive council but narrowly missed out. I continue to speak on behalf of fellow members and reps to ensure their voices are heard.

The Academy helped me improve my confidence as you deal with different companies and management teams. I liked talking to people and encouraging them to join and also explaining to members why they should remain a member and give them information on the other things they could get involved with. One of my proudest achievements was increasing membership in a Poundland store from one member to almost 100 per cent density.

### **LISA WILLIS** Morrisons, Edinburgh

I went on to do Academy2 and then stand-down. At work I took a step up into a managerial role. I completed the Gordon Aikman Labour Leadership Programme which I really enjoyed. I was elected to the divisional political committee and am now vice chair and have completed the Trade Union Liaison Officer course. I have been an ADM delegate for the past four years and delivered the vote of thanks two years ago. I'm still a very active rep in and out of my workplace. Academy1 was amazing and without it I wouldn't have been able to do many of the things I have done.

### **BARBARA BUCHANAN** Greggs, Cumbernauld

Following Academy1 I did Academy2 and stand-down. I've continued in my role as a union rep at Greggs representing with greater knowledge and skills. My achievements have progressed immensely with such roles as branch secretary, being part of the committee on the national Greggs retail forum and also being involved in the national wage negotiations. My aim is to continue learning new skills thanks to the opportunities provided by Usdaw.

### **ROB HEBSON** Tesco, East Riding

I continue to be an active member of my branch, I've also been elected on to the North Eastern divisional council for a second term as vice chair.

Looking back at Academy1 I made some great friends. I remember the training sessions and all supporting each other. It definitely changed me as a person, knowing how to manage my time productively and to be proactive rather than reactive. I would like to thank Usdaw for one of the best experiences of my life.

### **JENNY SMITH** Tesco, Ipswich

After Academy1 I was elected as a divisional councillor for the Eastern region and since then successfully re-elected. I help out at Ipswich sports for disabled every Tuesday evening with their indoor bowls and also volunteer at a pop-up shop at a local church on Saturday mornings. But the most amazing thing that's happened since the Academy is that I have been elected as Labour councillor for Ipswich Borough Council. This wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't for the support and training from Usdaw.

Look out for more details about the application process for Academy 2020 in the next issue of *Network*.  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/academy](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/academy)



# BACK TO SUMMER SCHOOL

Members and reps boost their confidence, network with other activists and learn more about Usdaw's organising agenda at this year's First Series Summer School

**U**sdaw's annual First Series Summer School took place in September and welcomed fifty new students keen to play a more active role in the union.

The popular week-long residential course has been running for over 50 years at the impressive Wortley Hall, an 18th century workers' stately home set in 26 acres of gardens and woodland in Sheffield.

The course has a broad agenda that looks at the role and function of trade unions, organising in the workplace, presentation skills and equality. It also gives students the chance to learn about how the union operates on a local, divisional and national level and meet other like-minded members from different

companies across the UK.

The week is run in a supportive, friendly and informal manner and students work in small groups liaising closely with their tutor. Students also spend a day out campaigning in a local town and this year they took the union's Save Our Shops campaign to the streets of Barnsley.

Usdaw's head of education and training Claire Simpson told *Network* more about the training course.

"The main purpose of the week is for students to get an understanding of the organising agenda and to give them more knowledge of what the union does, what it can do, and how activists can develop their participation further," said Claire.

"We focus on communication skills in particular, how to talk to people, preparation, how to conduct a meeting and reps practise speaking in front of their group. We also look at how to make the most of the Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM), its procedures, how to write a proposition, speech writing and public speaking. At the end of the week we have our own 'mini ADM'. We also look at practical day-to-day issues like workplace organisation, getting others involved and improving branch communications.

"Experience isn't essential because everyone brings something to the table, we all have life experiences and we can all learn from each other."



This year's group of Summer School 1 students at Wortley Hall

## A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

*Network* spoke to Graham Menzies, one of this year's graduates, to get his thoughts after the course.

"Summer School was a great experience and I would highly recommend it to anyone thinking about applying," said Graham who works at Tesco in Dundee. "The tutors were all excellent. I've previously completed Academy1 but even so I still learned a lot.

"Being away from home for a week was hard to begin with but everyone there was friendly and a lot of fun to be around, I think I have definitely made friends for life! The fact that it was a residential course helped us all to interact with each other and have new experiences. The location helped too as there wasn't much phone signal so social interaction was key and it helped everyone to get to know each other. The night classes were very good too and doing a large street campaign for Save Our Shops in Barnsley was amazing to see and be a part of!"



Students out campaigning to 'Save Our Shops' in Barnsley

## THINKING ABOUT APPLYING FOR SUMMER SCHOOL 2020?

First Series Summer School is predominantly aimed at reps but is open to all members from all sectors across the UK. Accommodation and meals for students are paid for and travel

expenses are reimbursed. Application forms are sent to branches in early January. More information and details of the application process at: [www.usdaw.org.uk/education](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/education)



# FIRE SAFETY AT WORK

A fire in the workplace can have devastating consequences. *Network* guides reps through what they need to do to make sure their workplace is safe

**A** fire at work is a rare event and something that everyone hopes will not happen. However, if it does happen, the consequences can be serious if the proper precautions have not been maintained.

By methodical use of their legal functions, union health and safety reps can help to prevent fire risks and avoid deaths or serious injuries if an emergency does occur.

In this article *Network* answers some of the frequently asked questions about responsibility, procedures and policy when it comes to fire safety.

## Why is fire safety an important issue for safety reps?

Fire is a hazard that can affect any workplace. Fortunately, serious fires are not common but according to

Home Office figures in 2017/18 there were 13,000 fires in non-domestic premises and 14 fatalities as a result.

Employers' duties on fire safety have two main parts. The first is to prevent fire by controlling the risks, the second is to have procedures in place to ensure quick detection of fire and safe evacuation of people when it is needed. Evacuation procedures that get people out quickly and safely are also important for other emergencies such as gas leaks, bomb threats or other terrorist incidents.

Union health and safety reps can use their legal powers to investigate hazards and inspect the workplace to make sure that their employer's policies and procedures are working well. Because fires are rare employers often focus on things

like checking the fire alarm and evacuation procedure and don't pay enough attention to the preventative measures.

## Who is responsible for fire safety in my workplace?

Since the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, fire safety duties lie with the 'responsible person' who is basically the owner or controller of the building. There may be more than one 'responsible person'. For example, in a shop inside a shopping centre, all managers and owners should take responsibility and have a legal duty to co-operate with each other.

The 'responsible person' is required to carry out a risk assessment and to implement measures to prevent or control fire



### For Further Guidance...

Usdaw short guide to fire safety:  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Health-Safety/Health-Safety-A-Z](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Health-Safety/Health-Safety-A-Z)

TUC guide for trade union activists:  
[www.tuc.org.uk/union-reps/health-safety-and-well-being](http://www.tuc.org.uk/union-reps/health-safety-and-well-being)

risks and to protect the safety of all the people on the premises if a fire breaks out.

### What details should a fire risk assessment cover?

The risk assessment should identify the fire hazards and the people at risk (including those at special risk such as people with disabilities or visitors who are not familiar with the building). It should evaluate the risks and control measures. The written record of the assessment should include information on preventive measures and on things like locations of fire exits, fire doors, extinguishers and the evacuation plan.

### What procedures and policies are needed in my workplace?

Fire needs three things to take hold – a source of ignition, fuel to burn and oxygen. So, fire prevention concentrates on the removal of the sources of ignition and the removal of material

that can fuel the fire. This could mean removing or shielding heat sources, maintaining electrical equipment and wiring to prevent overheating and good housekeeping to prevent the build-up of flammable materials or to ensure that they are stored in secure areas with restricted access.

Fire protection measures include systems for early detection and sounding the alarm. Also of vital importance are fire exits and escape routes, fire doors and compartmentalisation to slow the spread of fire and smoke and sprinklers to suppress a fire.

There should be an emergency procedure that spells out how the building will be evacuated safely when the alarm sounds. It should cover people with restricted mobility and members of the public.

The procedure should explain training for workers so that they know how to respond in the event of an emergency and detail things like location of fire extinguishers, who should use them and use of fire drills or other procedures to check that all staff are aware of the procedure.

### How can union health and safety reps help with fire safety?

Employers have a legal duty to consult with union safety reps on their fire risk assessment and on the procedures and measures they introduce including fire safety training. By law, reps also have rights to copies of the fire risk assessment documentation and to carry out regular inspection of the workplace. Reps can use the information in the risk assessment to check on fire safety during these routine inspections.

This could be basic things such as escape routes and exits being unblocked or fire doors being shut. Or on some occasions reps could make fire safety the subject of a more detailed inspection checking that equipment and procedures are up to date and talking to a sample of workers to check that they understand the emergency procedures that are in place.



## UK WORKPLACE FATAL INJURIES

Figures released by the Health and Safety Executive show that 147 workers were fatally injured between April 2018 and March 2019 in the UK.

The results show that the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors are where the risk is greatest, while waste and recycling are the least affected sectors.

HSE chair Martin Temple commented: "These figures are a reminder that despite the UK's world leading position in health and safety, we cannot become complacent as we seek to fulfill our mission in preventing injury, ill health and death at work."

## CONTACT

### Health and safety officer

Doug Russell  
0161 249 2441

### Health and safety assistant

Tony Whelan  
0161 249 2474

### General health and safety enquiries email:

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



## FUNDING CUTS THREAT TO SAFETY

Health and safety, food and environment standards are all under threat according to campaigning group Unchecked UK. They blame the decline of workplace inspections as a result of the massive funding cuts to regulators including the HSE and local authorities.

Unchecked UK founder, Emma Rose explains: "The steep reduction in inspections and monitoring of regulated business in recent years risks undermining the achievement of public policy objectives and the shift towards industry self-reporting leaves the regulatory system vulnerable to abuse." Campaigning group Hazards are among the supporters of Unchecked UK and gave the following statement: "The system intended to protect workers' lives and health is essentially broken, workers are harmed daily, and those most at risk now have no reasonable prospect of enforcement of their basic human right to safe and healthy work."

Visit the Unchecked UK website at:

[www.unchecked.uk](http://www.unchecked.uk)

## EU HEALTH AND SAFETY WEEK

# HSE PUSH WORKPLACE FOCUS ON DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES



Unions and employers are being encouraged to raise awareness about dangerous substances during this year's European Week for Safety and Health at Work in October by arranging workplace activities around the subject.

Exposure to dangerous substances at work is far more common than many people realise. It is not only exposure to hazardous ingredients in manufacturing, cleaning chemicals can cause irritation to the skin and to the lungs. Dangerous by-products such as

diesel engine exhaust fumes can be a hazard in many workplaces.

The Week runs from 21 to 25 October and is promoted by the European Occupational Safety and Health Agency and the HSE. The 23 October is also National Inspection Day and the TUC is calling for health and safety reps to take part and arrange workplace inspections.

Find out more about the EU Health Agency campaign at: [healthy-workplaces.eu/en/about-topic/what-issue](http://healthy-workplaces.eu/en/about-topic/what-issue)

## UNION REPS ON THE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

# WORKERS' VOICE ON BOARD

In September the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) will have two new union-side board members, Claire Sullivan, the director of employment relations at the physios' union CSP and Ged Nicholls, general secretary of Accord.

They join Kevin Rowan, TUC's head

of organisation and services, on the 10-person board responsible for overseeing the work of the HSE.

The introduction of the two new workers' representatives will enhance the workers' voice on the HSE board and goes some way to restoring its tripartite structure.

# I LIKE HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN

*Network* speaks to delivery driver **Danny Waddell**, an award-winning rep who is part of the health and safety committee at his DHL site in Livingston

## Q. WHAT IS YOUR JOB ROLE?

I've been working at DHL now for nearly five years. I'm a delivery driver and also work as an on-site shunter. A shunter is someone who places vehicles on and off loading bays as well as moving vehicles and trailers around the site.

## Q. WHY DID YOU BECOME ACTIVE WITH THE UNION?

I joined the union after a conversation with the rep. He told me all about the union and how important it was to protect my rights at work. Shortly afterwards I was speaking to the on-site health and safety manager and he was explaining what his role entailed. I was intrigued and interested in getting more involved with health and safety so I signed up to be a rep. I enjoy being a part of the health and safety committee and discussing all aspects of the site's safety. I like

having the opportunity to learn new skills, develop in my role and help our members.

## Q. HOW IS YOUR SITE ORGANISED?

There are four reps on site covering different areas including warehouse, transport and clerical. Two of the four reps, including myself, are also health and safety reps. We're all part of the health and safety committee which ensures health and safety standards are met across the site and I've been recently elected as branch officer. The company are very accommodating and supportive and give us the time off we need to carry out our union duties.

## Q. WHAT ARE THE MAIN HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS?

The site runs well and we don't have many health and safety concerns. Occasionally there's the odd matter

regarding loading and deliveries but nothing major. The health and safety committee are always looking to improve the site and we're currently working on the layout of the car park. We're aiming to get the north side of the yard lined so that the vehicles can park at an angle to make it safer.

## Q. HAVE YOU BEEN ON ANY TRAINING RECENTLY?

I attended a mental health first aid course and it was very detailed and eye opening. It taught us how to recognise the signs of common mental health illnesses and effectively guide colleagues toward the right support. We've started putting steps in place to help anyone who needs someone to talk to. We're hoping to help run a similar course in-house to reduce the stigma associated with mental health.

## Q. HOW DO YOU KEEP UP WITH CHANGES IN HEALTH AND SAFETY?

Communication on-site is excellent, we have a good working relationship with management and we all work together for the common goal of the health and safety of colleagues. The health and safety manager shares all documentation through the site's safety management system, he also updates everyone at the committee meeting.

## Q. HAVE YOU GOT ANY ADVICE FOR OTHER HEALTH AND SAFETY REPS?

You should always try and work with the management where safety is involved, offer solutions and be prepared to get involved. I would encourage anyone who has thought about becoming a safety rep to go for it as it can be very rewarding.



Danny received the 2018 Scottish divisional health and safety Organising Award in Manchester earlier this year.



For more detailed information reps should consult Usdaw's **Maternity and Parental Rights Guide**. The booklet covers maternity pay and leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, surrogacy, shared parental leave and much more. [dtp.usdaw.co.uk/matpatrightsguide](http://dtp.usdaw.co.uk/matpatrightsguide)

# FAMILY MATTERS

*Network* guides reps through the complex subject of maternity and paternity rights by answering some of the most frequently asked questions

**W**e know from listening to our members that they have an increasing number of questions about maternity and paternity rights. This FAQ is designed to support reps to answer some of the questions they might be asked by pregnant women, their partners or new parents.

## Do I get paid time off for antenatal appointments?

You have the right to take reasonable paid time off work to attend antenatal appointments. All pregnant women have this right, no matter how many hours you work or however recently you started your job.

## Does my partner have the right to attend antenatal appointments?

Fathers and partners of pregnant women also have the right to unpaid time off work to attend up to two antenatal appointments – the maximum time allowed is 6.5 hours.

## Am I entitled to a risk assessment?

When you become pregnant or are breastfeeding, you must tell your employer so that they can carry out a risk assessment.

## What happens if the risk assessment identifies a risk to me or my baby?

- Your employer must do all that they can to eliminate the risk or reduce it to a safe level.
- If it is reasonable and if it avoids the risk, you have the right to have your working conditions or hours of work temporarily altered.

- If this is not possible, then your employer must offer you suitable alternative work. The work must be on terms and conditions which are no less favourable than your normal conditions of employment.
- If your employer is unable to offer you suitable alternative work, then you have the right to be suspended on full pay for as long as is necessary to avoid the risk.

## Am I entitled to maternity leave?

All women, regardless of their length of service, are entitled to 52 weeks maternity leave – the first 26 weeks of leave is known as Ordinary Maternity Leave and the second 26 weeks leave is known as Additional Maternity Leave.

## Do I qualify for statutory maternity pay?

To qualify you have to meet all of the following criteria:

- You must have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks by the end of the Qualifying Week (the 15th week before the baby is due).
- You need to be employed in your Qualifying Week – even if it is only for one day that week.
- Have average earnings of at least £118 before tax per week in the eight weeks (if paid weekly) or two months (if paid monthly) before the end of the Qualifying Week.

Working out whether someone qualifies for statutory maternity pay can be complicated. Reps can find a calculation guide in Usdaw's Maternity and Parental Rights booklet [dtp.usdaw.co.uk/matpatrightsguide](http://dtp.usdaw.co.uk/matpatrightsguide)

## How much statutory maternity pay do I get?

Only 39 weeks of the 52-week maternity leave period is paid. Statutory maternity pay is paid for six weeks at a rate of 90 per cent of your average earnings, followed by 33 weeks at a flat rate of £148.68 per week (or 90 per cent of average weekly earnings for the full 39 weeks if this is less than £148.68 per week).

## What if I don't qualify for statutory maternity pay?

If you don't qualify for statutory maternity pay you may be entitled to a benefit called maternity allowance.

## What happens if I get ill in the last four weeks of pregnancy?

If you have a pregnancy-related illness in the last four weeks of your pregnancy, your employer can start your statutory maternity pay and maternity leave even if you had planned to leave work later. If your illness is not pregnancy-related you can claim sick pay and start your statutory maternity pay when you had planned.

## How much notice do I need to give to return to work?

Employers will assume you are taking the full 52 weeks entitlement. If you want to return before the end of your 52 weeks entitlement, you must give eight weeks' notice of the date you wish to return.

## Do I have to repay my statutory maternity pay if I don't return to work?

You do not have to repay your statutory maternity pay if you

don't return work. However, if your employer has topped up your statutory maternity pay with contractual pay then you would only have to pay this back if this was specifically outlined in your contract. In these circumstances you would only have to repay the contractual part that is paid on top of statutory maternity pay.

### Do I have the right to go back to the same job after my maternity leave?

- If you are going back to work within the period of Ordinary Maternity Leave ie within 26 weeks of starting your leave, then you have the right to return to exactly the same job as before.
- If you are going back to work during or after Additional Maternity Leave ie between 26-52 weeks, then you have a right to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions. However, if it is not 'reasonably practicable' for your employer to give that job back to you, then you have the right to return to a suitable alternative job that is not substantially less favourable to you. If your employer says you can't have your old job back, get in touch with your union rep, area organiser or the union's legal department as soon as possible for advice.

## PATERNITY LEAVE

### Am I entitled to paternity leave?

Paternity leave is available to fathers and partners (including same sex partners). You will need to satisfy the following conditions in order to qualify for paternity leave:

- Have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing.
- Be either the biological father of the child or the mother's husband, partner or civil partner.
- Have worked continuously for your employer for 26 weeks leading into the 15th week before the baby is due.

### How long is paternity leave?

Paternity leave is two weeks. You can choose to take either one week or two consecutive weeks paternity leave (not odd days).

### When can I take paternity leave?

Paternity leave must be taken within 56 days of the child's birth.

### Do I qualify for statutory paternity pay?

- You have to have worked for

your employer for 26 weeks by the 15th week before the baby is due.

- You have to have average weekly earnings of more than £118 per week (before tax) in the eight weeks (if paid weekly) or two months (if paid monthly) before the 15th week before your baby is due.

### How much statutory paternity pay do I get?

The rate of statutory paternity pay is £148.68 per week or 90 per cent of average weekly earnings if this is less than £148.68.

### How much notice do I need to give for paternity leave?

You need to tell your employer of your intention to take paternity leave by the 15th week before the baby is due.

### How much notice do I need to give for statutory paternity pay?

You must give your employer at least 28 days' notice of the date you want your statutory paternity pay to start. If you can't do this then give as much notice as possible.

## SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

### What is shared parental leave?

Shared parental leave opens up maternity leave to both parents so that they can decide between them how to spend their leave in the first year of the child's birth.

### How does it work?

A woman must still take two weeks maternity leave immediately following the birth. The remaining 50 weeks can be converted into shared parental leave and pay.

### Am I entitled to shared parental leave?

Both partners must meet eligibility criteria.

- As a rule, mothers and primary care givers who qualify for statutory maternity pay or statutory adoption pay will qualify for shared parental leave.
- As a rule, fathers, partners or secondary carers who qualify for statutory paternity pay will qualify for shared parental leave.

### How much shared parental leave will I get?

The amount of shared parental leave available is essentially the amount left over from any maternity leave the mother takes. For example, if the mother takes three months maternity leave and then opts into shared parental leave with her partner. This would leave them with a total of nine months. In total only nine months of leave are paid.



# ASSESSING THE RISKS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Usdaw's risk assessment checklist will guide you on how to identify and mitigate the risks

**E**mployers have a legal duty to protect pregnant women and their baby from any work-related risks. They should already have carried out a general risk assessment and if a member of staff is pregnant, the employer should carry out a risk assessment that is specific to the individual – and if necessary, they should review it as the pregnancy develops.

If you're supporting a member through their pregnancy, our newly-updated risk assessment

checklist is an invaluable resource. Our health and safety team have compiled a guide to the different risks a pregnant member might face at work, based on guidance from the Health and Safety Executive.

Whichever sector you work in and whatever the job role, you'll find useful information to help you keep pregnant members safe in the workplace.

Order your copy from your local office or read online at: [dtp.usdaw.co.uk/342](http://dtp.usdaw.co.uk/342)

For a complete list of Usdaw publications and to order visit: [dtp.usdaw.co.uk/PublicationsCatalogue](http://dtp.usdaw.co.uk/PublicationsCatalogue)

## NEW IN!

### Leaflets

**Legal Plus - Looking After You and Your Family**  
(Leaflet 312)

**Member Offers**  
(Leaflet 398)

**Pensions - Understanding Your State Pension**  
(Leaflet 428)

**Want To Know More?**  
Go to [www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk)  
(Leaflet 390)

**Late-Night Working - Preventing Violence to Staff** (Leaflet 294)

**Preventing under-age sales**  
(Leaflet 351)

**While you're looking after the shop, who's looking after you?**  
(Leaflet 362)

### Posters/Flyers/Factsheets

**Cash Benefits** (Poster R3)

**Abuse is not Part of the Job for Retail Workers** (Poster R66)

**LGBT Survey**

**Pensions - Answering the Doubters**

### Online courses

**CV Writing - IT bitesize course**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/cvwriting](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/cvwriting)

**Mental health course**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/MHcourse](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/MHcourse)

**Pensions home study**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/pensionshomestudy](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/pensionshomestudy)

**Shop 'til you Drop - Maths bitesize course**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/maths](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/maths)

**Summertime Songbirds - English bitesize course**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/summertime](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/summertime)

**Vulnerable Workers Home Study**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/homestudy5](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/homestudy5)

**Staying Safe Online course**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/SafeOnline](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/SafeOnline)

# OVER TO YOU

Email your thoughts and pictures to us at:

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or write to:

**The Editor, Network, Usdaw,  
188 Wilmslow Road,  
Manchester, M14 6LJ**





**Pictured L-R:**  
Learning British Sign Language at Tesco Cookstown; Representing Usdaw at Liverpool Pride.



**Pictured L-R:**  
Hull Pride; Black Pride in London; Tesco Newtownabbey Entry 3 ICT class.



**Pictured L-R:**  
Promoting pensions at Tesco Kidsgrove; Paddy Lillis and reps talk about Save Our Shops at Tesco Dungannon; ICT certificate presentation at Tesco Thornton Heath, Croydon; and Tesco CFC Croydon.



**Pictured L-R:**  
LLL roadshow at Karro Foods in NI; Promoting Freedom From Fear in Tesco Stirling; Membership Week at Sainsbury's Frome and the meeting of West Midlands Unions Together at the Redditch office.

PLEASE DISPLAY THIS POSTER ON YOUR UNION NOTICEBOARD



Santa says  
**KEEP  
YOUR  
COOL**

RESPECT SHOPWORKERS

**#Respect19**



Respect Week  
11-17 Nov 2019

**Did you know that another shopworker is attacked or verbally abused every minute of the working day?**

Source: British Retail Consortium Crime Survey

**0800 030 80 30**

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

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