

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

arena

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Winter 2020

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GENERAL SECRETARY PADDY LILLIS

Christmas in a time of pandemic

At the time of writing, a second wave of Coronavirus infections were gathering pace across Europe. In the UK, as infections and hospital admissions started increasing the Government brought in further restrictions in an attempt to control the virus and prevent a second national lockdown.

I recognise that this means Christmas will probably look very different for all of us. Most work parties and New Year Eve's celebrations have already been cancelled as employers and cities try to comply with the ever-changing legislation. The Rule of Six, social distancing and whether or not we can see our family and friends will make it a challenging festive period for all.

There's no doubt that the challenges ahead are big. The COVID-19 crisis is still very much with us and will be with us for some time. However, we can all play a part in helping each other to get through this crisis by working together to stop the spread of the virus and looking after one another. I wish you and your family a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Paddy Lillis, General Secretary



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Save Union Learning

200,000 WORKERS

will miss out on vital training

if union learning is cut

**SAVE
UNION
LEARNING**



Help us stop the Government from scrapping the Union Learning Fund

In October the Government announced it will withdraw all funding for the Union Learning Fund (ULF) from the end of March 2021 in England.

The Union Learning Fund is a £12 million Government investment in adult learners, which helps a quarter of a million British workers every year, to improve their skills and employability. It gives people a second chance to get back into learning – often people who haven't done any learning since

they left school.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis wrote to the secretary of state for education urging the Government to reconsider its decision to withdraw all funding for the Union Learning Fund.

“Learning and re-skilling will be at the heart of helping the country recover from the economic impact of this appalling pandemic,” said Paddy. “With new technology already changing the world of work, which has been

accelerated by the COVID-19 crisis, this was always going to be a high priority.

“Usdaw members in particular will be adversely affected by this decision, given more than 17,500 each year access learning and skills with the help of ULF. Last year, 45 per cent of those benefitting had no previous qualifications and 62 per cent did not have a level 2 qualification. Without the fund hundreds of thousands of union members will miss out on essential skills and training.

“I urge the Government to reconsider and ask Usdaw members to help us reverse the decision by signing the TUC petition.”

Case study

Usdaw member **Jodie works** at Tesco and began her learning journey in 2017 when she took part in the National Numeracy Challenge so that she could help her children with their homework. After completing a number of courses, including passing level 2 apprenticeship in IT, she is now enrolled onto the Tesco Retail Apprenticeship course.

Sign the TUC petition here:

<https://bit.ly/35baxjw>

Asda bought by EC Group

Working together to secure retail jobs

As the trade union for Asda workers in Northern Ireland, Usdaw welcomed the news that Asda was bought by EC Group.

Usdaw area organiser Kieran Smyth said: "Securing the future of the company under new owners is welcome news for

Asda workers in Northern Ireland, after years of uncertainty. This has been a worrying time for our members, particularly after the merger with Sainsbury's was blocked by the Competition and Markets Authority last year.

"Our initial contact with the

company has been positive. We look forward to working with the new owners to grow the business and secure the jobs of our members."



Unanimous support for Ne'er Day closing

Usdaw urges Scottish Government to open a consultation into closing



The full survey results can be viewed at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/NYDSurvey

Usdaw has welcomed the unanimous decision to back a petition to end New Year's Day trading in large stores in Scotland.

Usdaw launched a petition last year calling on the Scottish Government to launch a consultation on implementing legislation already in place to ban most large shops from opening on New Year's Day. The Christmas Day and New Year's Day Trading (Scotland) Act 2007 prohibits trading in

most large shops on Christmas Day and gave powers to the Scottish Government to stop the opening of those shops on New Year's Day as well, which has never been enacted.

Usdaw's Scottish deputy divisional officer Tracy Gilbert said: "We thank the petitions committee for their unanimous support and decision to progress our petition.

"The strength of feeling among our members is clearly demonstrated by our

survey and over 3,000 of them writing to their MSPs asking for support.

"Retail staff work incredibly hard all year round, but it is particularly busy and stressful throughout December. So, they deserve to be able to spend time with family and friends.

"Hogmanay and New Year is a special holiday, but this is not reflected in the experience of many retail workers.

"On behalf of Scotland's retail workers, we are urging the Scottish Government to open that consultation and for MSPs to listen to shopworkers' concerns about their work and life balance.

"After everything Scottish shopworkers have been through this year, as key workers on the frontline of delivering essential services, they deserve a decent break over New Year."

Abuse & Threats & Violence

not part of the job

SIGN NOW

#FreedomFromFear



Help to protect retail workers from abuse

Make a difference - sign the petition to trigger a parliamentary debate

Usdaw's survey to protect retail workers from abuse became the fastest growing petition on the parliamentary website when it was launched by Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis in July. The petition now has over 68,000 signatures. Despite this, the Government offered sympathy but no action.

The petition is backed by the UK's largest convenience store retailer Co-op Food, along with the industry's leading trade bodies the British Retail Consortium and the Association of

Convenience Stores.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "We are deeply disappointed by the Government's response to the petition. This is a hugely important issue for our members and their local communities, with incidents of abuse doubling during the COVID-19 crisis. Shopworkers are saying loud and clear that enough is enough, abuse should never be just a part of the job.

"We will continue to campaign for the 100,000

signatures needed to trigger a parliamentary debate and we hope that, as the Government has failed to listen, MPs will hear the voices of shopworkers, their constituents and employers and back legislating for stiffer penalties for those who assault workers. Retail staff play a crucial role in our communities and that role must be valued and respected, they deserve the protection of the law."

Please sign the petition here:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621>

Scottish Government tightens COVID-19 restrictions

Play your part by following five rules

Scotland has returned to two metre physical distancing and reintroduced safety measures put in place earlier in the pandemic.

Usdaw is reminding customers of the five simple steps to encourage considerate shopping, that were agreed with the Scottish Retail Consortium (SRC) and the Scottish Government, urging the public to play their part in creating a safe and enjoyable retail environment for other customers and retail staff:

1. Queue considerately.
2. Maintain social distancing.
3. Follow instructions inside and outside shops.
4. Follow all necessary hygiene measures.
5. Be respectful to shop staff.

Usdaw's Scottish deputy divisional officer Tracy Gilbert said: "Unfortunately the early part of the COVID-19 crisis saw instances of abuse towards shopworkers double. We are absolutely clear that 'abuse is not part of the job'.

"With infections rising we understand why the Scottish Government wants to return to the original safety guidance for shops, that we



developed with the SRC, to provide staff and customers with a safer shopping experience. Customers need to play their part and be patient, observe

social distancing and show respect to shopworkers. Retail staff are key workers delivering essential services and that role must be valued and respected."

Union Elections

The elections for Usdaw's president and executive council (the union's ruling body) are now underway.

Nomination forms were sent to branches in early October and returned by 23 November 2020.

Postal ballot papers and election addresses will be sent to all members from 18 January 2021 to be returned by 12 February 2021.

These elections will be conducted by the independent Civica Election Services (formley Electrol Reform Services).

UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

Any member who has changed address recently should notify the union's records section at central office as soon as possible to ensure they receive their ballot papers.

email: records@usdaw.org.uk

phone: 0161 224 2804

online: www.usdaw.org.uk/update

Advertorial

Can you cover the cost of Christmas this year?



Take control of your finances this Christmas with The Co-op Credit Union

Christmas is looming large and this year the urge to splurge will be hard to resist after a year of hardship and isolation from friends and family.

In a YouGov survey commissioned by the national debt charity Money Advice Trust in 2017, 55 per cent of respondents said that they had not saved up to cover the costs of Christmas. The same poll found that 7.9 million people expected to fall behind with their bills in January as a result.

Not everyone has the luxury of being able to

access the cash to pay for the festivities up front. But with things more uncertain than ever out there, it's important not to pay over the odds for credit and to borrow from someone you can trust.

That's where The Co-op Credit Union comes in. We are a lender that's on your side because we're owned by the people that use our services. We go out of our way to keep our interest rates as low as we can while doing everything we can to say "yes" to as many people as possible.

And we'll

lend you as little as 50 quid if that's all you need.

What's more, we ask all our borrowers to start saving, even just as little as a tenner each month, so that next year you might not need to borrow at all.

The Co-op Credit Union is an affinity partner of Usdaw and all Usdaw members are eligible to join and apply for a loan.

For more information visit:

www.co-operativecreditunion.coop

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Quirks of the English Language

The English language is extremely complex. As it's evolved, it's borrowed words from dozens of other languages and has developed into a web of different spellings, pronunciation and nuances – it's no wonder so many of us get confused sometimes.

That's why our education team has produced this online bitesize course. Available to all Usdaw members,

the course is packed with useful, straightforward advice to help you get to grips with some of the trickier rules of English.

You can take the course as many times as you like, on your smartphone, tablet or computer – it's never been easier to get back into learning.

Sign up for the Quirks of English course at www.usdaw.org.uk/quirksenglish and check out our full range of online bitesize learning at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/bitesize

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Puzzled By Pensions - Guide to Auto-Enrolment

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www.usdaw.org.uk/QuirksOfEnglish

Usdaw general secretary
Paddy Lillis

COVID-19 Update



Like for most organisations across the world, the Coronavirus crisis has been extremely challenging for Usdaw. However, the union has adapted to the situation and staff have been working hard to ensure that Usdaw members continue to receive the advice and support they need to get through this crisis.

Behind the scenes the union has been lobbying Government and employers to ensure that the needs of Usdaw members are taken into consideration. As a result, the union has managed to secure a number of wins for members including: winning 10 per cent pay bonuses, sick pay from day one, enhanced colleague discounts, closure of non-essential online operations, improvements to furlough pay and negotiating improved health and safety measures.

On 12 October the prime minister Boris Johnson introduced a three tiered system of local COVID-19 alert levels in England. He confirmed the levels will be set at medium, high and very high.

The guidance issued by Government is changing on a regular basis. Please visit the Usdaw website for the most up to date information: www.usdaw.org.uk/coronavirus

Three Tiered System: Medium alert

The medium alert level – which will cover most of the country – will consist of the current

national measures, which came into force on 25 September. This includes the Rule of Six, and the closure of hospitality at 10pm.

Three Tiered System: High alert

The high alert level will reflect many current local interventions, but there will now be consistency across the country.

This primarily aims to reduce household to household transmission by preventing all mixing between households or support bubbles indoors. The Rule of Six will apply in outdoor spaces, including private gardens.

Most areas which are already subject to local restrictions will automatically move into the high alert level.

Three Tiered System: Very High alert

In the very high alert areas, the Government will set a baseline of prohibiting social mixing indoors and in private gardens, with the Rule of Six allowed in open public spaces like parks and beaches.

Pubs and bars must close, and can only remain open where they operate as if they were a restaurant – which means serving substantial meals, like a main lunchtime or evening meal. They may only serve alcohol as part of such a meal. People will be advised not to travel in and out of these areas.

Review

These measures will be kept under constant review, including a four-week clause for interventions in Very High alert areas.

Postcode Checker

You can check which alert level applies in your area by going to:

www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-local-restrictions

How does the Covid-19 three tier alert system in England work?

MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH*
Follow the rule of six if meeting indoors or outdoors	No household mixing indoors	No household mixing indoors or outdoors in hospitality venues or private gardens
Pubs and restaurants to shut at 10pm	Rule of six will apply outdoors	Rule of six applies in outdoor public spaces like parks
	Pubs and restaurants to shut at 10pm	Pubs and bars not serving meals will be closed
		Guidance against travelling in and out of the area

*Extra restrictions may be agreed locally

Graphic courtesy of BBC News

Face Coverings



Mandatory masks

It is now mandatory for all shopworkers across the UK to wear a face covering to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Usdaw welcomes this law as the union supports any measures to help keep members safe at work. At the same time, this must not replace existing social distancing and hygiene measures, which are still the most effective ways to stop the spread of the virus.

Why do I need to wear a face covering?

There is significant scientific evidence to suggest that wearing a face covering reduces the spread of COVID-19. The virus is thought to occur through respiratory droplets that are released into the air when people speak, sneeze or cough. Another person inhaling these droplets could easily contract Coronavirus. Wearing a face covering correctly creates a

physical barrier that catches the droplets and stops them from spreading.

What defines a face covering?

According to the gov.uk website, a face covering should safely cover your nose and mouth. You can buy reusable or single-use face coverings. You may also use a scarf, bandana, religious garment or hand-made cloth covering but these must securely fit round the side of the face. Your employer may have specific guidance on face coverings acceptable in your workplace.

Where do I have to wear a face covering?

You are required to cover your face in any part of your store where there are customers, and other indoor settings depending on the workplace environment. Members should follow guidance from their employer.

Are you exempt?

When can I remove the face covering?

You may need to remove your face covering to help customers and provide information, particularly to those with a hearing impairment. You should also be given frequent breaks where you can take off your face covering and replace it with a fresh one.

Can I wear a face visor/shield?

The UK Government has said that face visors/shields are not an acceptable alternative to a face covering as it does not sufficiently stop the spread of droplets. A face visor/shield can be worn as additional protection but not on its own.

I work behind a Perspex screen, do I have to wear a mask?

You are not required to wear a face covering if you work behind a Perspex screen, unless you are working with another person and you are unable to socially distance. Rules may differ across workplaces so check your company policy.

What if I don't comply with the rules?

If you're a shopworker and choose not to wear a face covering at work then you are breaking the law unless you are exempt. The police can enforce the rules and issue fines starting at £200, doubling for each offence.

What are the exemptions?

If you have a health condition where you cannot put on, wear, or remove a face covering because of any physical or mental illness or impairment or disability without severe distress then you are exempt.

Do I need to provide proof of an exemption?

It is not necessary in law to provide proof of an exemption, but some people may feel more comfortable showing something that shows they do not have to wear a face covering. This could be in the form of an exemption card, badge or even a homemade sign. The **gov.uk** website has a template available to download.

Do I still need to socially distance?

Government guidance remains that social distancing, regular handwashing for 20 seconds and frequently cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces are the most effective ways that you can protect yourself and others from COVID-19. Therefore face coverings must not be used as an alternative to those measures.

Should customers wear face coverings?

All customers in the UK are required by law to wear a face covering in shops and supermarkets unless they are exempt. Wearing a face covering is the responsibility of the individual. Enforcement is the responsibility of the police and not the shopworker.

For more information about face coverings and protecting each other from Coronavirus visit:

[gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

Specific guidance regarding face coverings exists in different parts of the UK so it is important for members to visit the **gov.uk** website and familiarise themselves with the rules where they live and work. If you have any concerns about wearing a mask, or need clarification on the rules in your workplace, then speak to your manager in the first instance. Following that please contact your Usdaw rep or local Usdaw office for advice.



Co-op manager David found an inventive way to keep his local open in lockdown

Entertainer deals decks of community spirit

Rugby fanatic and comedian **David Appleton** spent lockdown ensuring that his local community remained positive and stayed in touch by offering them the pub experience – but online!

David is the store manager at Co-op Food in Heatley Mere, Warrington and has worked for the company for 33 years.

He initially started out as a butcher on the old Co-op Youth Training Scheme.

He went on to become fresh food manager and then eventually store manager. A couple of years ago he took on the extra role of Co-op Member Pioneer.

Community support

“Co-op Member Pioneers have a responsibility to enhance local communities, where the stores trade, by connecting people and supporting local causes,” said David, 50, who has also just celebrated 30 years of Usdaw membership.

“Anyone can do the role as long as they have a genuine desire to make a difference.

“I’ve been involved with the community and local charities for many years. I’m treasurer and representative of a community group called Warrington 6 which aims to improve the area and the opportunities for those who live there, so being a Member Pioneer seemed like a natural step for me.

“Being able to support local projects, with the backing of the Co-op, is great. It’s also an opportunity to build contacts and connect people who want to see their local community thrive and give them the support they need to get their ideas off the ground.

“Throughout lockdown our focus has been to assist the local food banks and COVID-19 support groups. I even held bingo nights over Zoom to raise money. It’s a very satisfying job that I get a lot of pride and pleasure from doing.”

The virtual pub

When his local was forced to close due to lockdown David wanted to make sure his neighbours didn’t miss out. A regular himself, he often organised comedy, bingo and quiz nights at the pub before the pandemic.

“I wanted to do something to keep people together and lift their spirits, but also for myself because I like entertaining,” said David. “I knew that most of the pub regulars were on Facebook so I thought it was the ideal time to create a page – a place where we could all come together, have a chat and a laugh, solve people’s problems and have some fun.

“We held virtual play your cards right, comedy nights and quiz nights and the pub DJ even gave sets from his bedroom. There was something going on every night that people could tune into.

“The response from the regulars was fantastic. We had 350 people signed up to the page and upwards of 30 people would watch

the videos and join in.

“We kept it going when the pub reopened, particularly for the regulars who were shielding. I imagine we’ll probably increase activity again if Government restrictions are tightened.”

Proud key worker

Alongside his charity and community work David has continued to work full time in his Co-op store throughout lockdown.

“I class myself lucky that I’ve been able to go out to work, for financial reasons obviously, but it’s also that sense of normality.

“It was really strange times, nothing on the shelves and trying to keep things aside for the regular vulnerable customers. It was fantastic

to see all the staff pull together and the company were really supportive and clear about the guidance. It’s all very well the

Government saying ‘this is what’s happening’ but you need it breaking down – how it affects us, and what support we can get.

“What’s more is that retail workers and the road transport industry have finally been recognised as key workers. It makes you feel proud and motivated that you are being acknowledged for your contribution and you’re not just another face working in a shop. My wife and son also work for the Co-op, and my daughter was working for McColl’s during the pandemic, so we’re a really proud household this year.”

“I wanted to do something to keep people together and lift their spirits.”

Visit the Usdaw website for COVID-19 updates

www.usdaw.org.uk



A right to Freedom From Fear

*Usdaw steps up its campaign as violence
and abuse in retail reaches breaking point*



Sign the petition:

petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621

Freedom From Fear Campaign

In 2003, Usdaw launched its Freedom From Fear campaign in response to members' concerns about violence and abuse in retail. Since then the union has worked with the public, employers, the police, politicians and the Government to achieve security improvements in stores as well as highlighting the issues of neighbourhood policing, retail crime and underage sales.

Over the past few years there has been an alarming increase in violence towards shopworkers, and shocking results from an Usdaw survey carried out at the height of the Coronavirus pandemic reveal that the situation has reached breaking point. Since the start of the outbreak, the average retail worker has been assaulted, threatened or abused every 6.5 days – more than double the rate of incidents compared to 2019. Retail workers who have been providing an essential service in very difficult circumstances have been spat at, threatened with infection and physically assaulted by customers.

Petition for change

In August Usdaw launched a House of Commons petition to lobby the Government to protect retail staff. The union is calling on the Government to create a specific offence of

abusing, threatening or assaulting a retail worker with a penalty that acts as a deterrent and makes clear that abuse of retail workers is unacceptable.

The petition gained widespread media attention in national and regional news outlets when it was launched with Usdaw officials and reps making over 80 appearances on TV and radio.

It was signed by 10,000 people on day one and had reached over 33,000 signatures just two days later. As *arena* went to print the petition had amassed over 68,000 signatures. At 100,000 signatures it will be considered for a Parliamentary debate. “In September, the Government issued an extremely disappointing response to our petition,” said Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis. “Instead of promising to take action, they merely offered sympathy and claimed that the current legal protections for retail workers are sufficient.

“At a time when we should all be working together to get through this crisis, it is a national disgrace that people working to keep food on the shelves for their local communities are being abused and assaulted.

“There needs to be urgent action to help protect staff. I urge the Government to listen to the voices of shopworkers and legislate for stiffer penalties for those who assault workers.”

Life on the frontline

Usdaw members across the country describe the shocking situation on the frontline in retail at the height of the pandemic.

- ◆ “Customers don't want to follow the safety precautions leading to some kind of abuse/violence on every shift.”
- ◆ “Abuse is prevalent mostly when asking customers to respect the social distancing and single entry to store.”
- ◆ “Regularly have people swearing at us, shouting at us that we are either hiding stock, keeping it for ourselves, how busy the store is.”

◆ “I have been spat at, pushed and treated as if I wasn't there. Customers have walked up to me or leaned over me while I am filling shelves.”

◆ “I had never cried in work until the first week of the lockdown. I received constant abuse from nearly every customer during one shift when the rules were changed so that we couldn't accept returns. I finally broke when one woman refused to leave the store and insulted me and berated me for not doing the return. My job has become emotionally draining and it is really starting to affect my mental health.”



Freedom From Fear Campaign



Since 2007 Usdaw has surveyed up to 7,000 shopworkers each year to gather first-hand accounts on the extent of violence, threats and abuse in retail. In 2019, the union interviewed 6,457 shopworkers, one of the largest responses the survey has ever received. Here are some of the main findings.

Verbal abuse and threats

Based on the levels of violence and abuse reported in this survey, it is estimated that over 400 shopworkers are being attacked every day. Shockingly, the latest survey shows that:

- ◆ 68 per cent of workers reported they had been verbally abused at least once.
- ◆ 43 per cent said they had been threatened with physical violence.

Physical assaults

The results show an increase in the number of physical assaults towards shopworkers:

- ◆ More than one in 20 shopworkers reported being physically abused during 2019.
- ◆ One in five of those assaulted reported that the assailant used a knife.

Reporting incidents

Over half of the shopworkers interviewed said that they had never reported an incident to their employer. If this is the case it is highly likely that the same incidents are not being reported to the police. This is a serious concern. If the police are not aware of the extent of threats and violence faced by shopworkers, they are not going to treat the issue with the seriousness it deserves.

What workers want

The survey asked shopworkers what they would like to see their employer do to improve the situation.

- ◆ 53 per cent would like more support from management.

Respect Week 2020

Every November the union holds a Respect Week allowing reps and members to play an active role in supporting the Freedom From Fear campaign. The aim of Respect Week is to make sure that the message 'Abuse is not part of the job' is heard loud and clear during the busy Christmas shopping period and that we promote practical ways of tackling the issue.

Things you can do...

◆ **Encourage colleagues, family and friends to sign the petition.** Usdaw's petition to lobby the Government to make it a specific offence to abuse, threaten or assault a retail worker needs to reach 100,000 signatures to be considered for a debate in Parliament. Promote the petition in your workplace and on social media. Sign the petition: petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621

◆ **Encourage your colleagues to fill out the Freedom From Fear survey.** It's vitally important that the union hears first-hand about the violence and abuse that shopworkers are facing on a daily basis. Complete the survey: www.usdaw.org.uk/respectsurvey

◆ **Share the message.** Tell people about Freedom From Fear and raise the campaign profile. Share the union's messages on social media and speak to your friends, family and colleagues. Publicity will help the union to lobby for change. www.usdaw.org.uk/freedomfromfear

Sign Usdaw's petition for urgent government action. petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621

- ◆ 16 per cent called for more security staff.
- ◆ 16 per cent wanted to ban offenders.
- ◆ 15 per cent said they would like more staff, more breaks/time off to recover and for their employer to involve the police.

Conclusion

It is clear that levels of crime and violence are still on the increase. All too often criminals who assault staff are not even sent to court and those who are can receive derisory sentences. Victims are left feeling let down by the justice system.

Usdaw will continue to campaign for better legal protection for shopworkers. The union wants to see stiffer penalties for those who assault workers – a simple stand-alone offence that is widely recognised and understood by the public, police, CPS, the judiciary and most importantly criminals.

Freedom From Fear Survey 2020

The experiences and views of retail workers are vitally important to support Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign. If you work in retail please complete the survey and encourage all of your colleagues to do the same.

For more information visit www.usdaw.org.uk/respectsurvey



Usdaw rep Claire Saunders
outside her Co-op store in
Romford, Essex.

Freedom From Fear Campaign

Make change happen

Usdaw rep Claire Saunders is a keen advocate of Usdaw's campaign after suffering violence and abuse first-hand

Claire Saunders is a manager in a Co-op convenience store in Romford, Essex. She has worked for the company for four years and has been an Usdaw rep for just over a year. Since becoming a rep she has thrown herself into Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign.

The reality

"I've been really passionate about the Freedom From Fear campaign ever since I moved stores," said Claire. "In my old store there was

shoplifting and abuse but it was at a level that felt 'manageable'. It was only when I moved to my current store that I realised how bad it could be. We had shoplifters coming in when we were doing the refit and it just got worse after we opened. I was shocked as I had never seen that level of abuse before.

"Parts of Romford are quite deprived so we get a lot of shoplifters. Most of them are stealing items to sell on so that they can feed their drug habit. They can get really abusive and violent as they are desperate and have nothing to lose. I've been assaulted and threatened with syringes.

"Despite the Co-op being brilliant at investing in colleague safety and supporting staff, I know that when I go into work there will be an incident. More recently, face masks have become the trigger for violence and abuse. Sadly, you become immune and it becomes a normal part of your day. Mentally it can really affect you. I know I take the job home with me as I'm always worrying about my staff.

"After witnessing the problems in my store, I realised I had to do something. I wanted to make a difference because I've seen first-hand what abuse and violence can do to people. People leave their jobs because of it, others suffer from anxiety and depression and some never feel safe at work – that can't be right. That's why I got involved with Usdaw's

Freedom From Fear campaign.

"Usdaw gave me the training I needed to become a rep which gave me the confidence to raise

and tackle these issues. This in turn gave me the confidence to promote the campaign on the radio, give interviews to the press and even do a live interview with BBC Breakfast!

Sharing the message

"I think one of my proudest moments was to share my experience with the Leader of the Labour Party, Sir Keir Starmer. I felt privileged to be given that opportunity because it is important for 'normal' people like me to give a realistic view of what is happening on the ground.

"When I left school at 16, I never imagined that I would go to Parliament or be interviewed by the BBC. Sometimes in life you unexpectedly find what you're good at. I've always been a talker but becoming a rep and working with Co-op's press team means I can now put that to good use by raising awareness and campaigning to make life better for my colleagues. Who knows, one day I might even go into politics."

"I've seen first-hand what abuse and violence can do to people."

For more information about your statutory rights download a copy of *Workers' Rights* – A guide for full-time and part-time workers from the Usdaw website:

www.usdaw.org.uk/211



Know your employment rights

Everyone is entitled to basic statutory rights

Protection from discrimination/harassment

The Equality Act, which came into force in England, Scotland and Wales on 1 October 2010, stops people being unfairly treated on the grounds of: age, sex, disability, gender reassignment (members changing sex), race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

The Act also protects you from being unfairly treated because you associate with a person who fits into one of those groups, or someone thinks you fall into one of those groups. Similar protection exists in Northern Ireland.

Time-off for holidays and breaks

Most people have the following minimum rights to time-off, rest breaks and paid holiday:

- ◆ 5.6 weeks' paid holiday a year (28 days for

someone working a five-day week). Part-time workers are entitled to the same level pro-rata (so 5.6 x your normal working week).

- ◆ A 20 minute break when the working day is more than six hours.
- ◆ A rest period of 11 hours between working days.
- ◆ A ceiling of an average of eight hours' night work in every 24 hours.
- ◆ Free health assessment for night workers. A rest period of 24 hours once every seven days.
- ◆ A ceiling of 48 hours on the maximum average working week.

Udaw collective agreements and your contract may give you better rights to holidays and breaks.

Time-off for family emergencies

Every employee has the right to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with an

Every worker is entitled to basic statutory rights from the first day that they start work. These rights are the minimum guaranteed rights under the law. Employees will also have contractual rights which may be better than the state minimums and provide better cover because of the agreements Usdaw has negotiated with employers.

Know Your Rights

unexpected emergency involving a dependant. You are protected by law from dismissal or victimisation for using this right. Dependants include close relatives, your partner, another relative who lives in your household or someone else who 'reasonably relies on you for assistance'. For more information download Usdaw's leaflet *Time Off for Family Emergencies* at www.usdaw.org.uk/349

Maternity and Parental rights

Statutory rights include maternity leave and time-off for antenatal visits. However, the rules are complex and it is important that you follow them correctly. Any Usdaw member who becomes pregnant should obtain a copy of *Maternity and Parental Rights – An advice booklet for Usdaw Members*. It is available to download at www.usdaw.org.uk/baby

Dismissal because of pregnancy

You cannot be dismissed or made redundant because of pregnancy or maternity leave, or unlawfully denied the right to return. If this happens you may claim unfair dismissal, sex discrimination or breach of specific maternity rights. If you are made redundant during maternity leave, you should have first refusal of any vacancy.

Sunday working rights

All shopworkers have the right:

- ◆ To opt out of Sunday working unless they only work Sundays.

- ◆ Not to be dismissed for refusing to do shop work on Sundays.
 - ◆ Not to be selected for redundancy for refusing to do shop work on Sundays.
 - ◆ Not suffer any other detriment for refusing to do shop work on Sundays, eg denial of overtime.
- You must give your employer three months' notice in order to 'opt out'.

The National Minimum Wage (NMW)

Usdaw was one of the main unions that campaigned for the introduction of the NMW. It was introduced by the Labour Government in 1999 and provides a legal safety net for the vast majority of UK workers. The National Living Wage (NLW) was introduced in April 2016, and created an additional tier to the NMW and legally applies only to those over the age of 25.

As of 1 April 2020 the NLW and NMW hourly rates are:

- ◆ £8.72 (aged 25 and over)
- ◆ £8.20 (aged 21-24)
- ◆ £6.45 (aged 18-20)
- ◆ £4.55 (aged 16-17)

Trade union rights

Everyone has the right to:

- ◆ Join a trade union.
- ◆ Take union advice.
- ◆ Participate in trade union activity.
- ◆ Be accompanied by a union rep.

Union support

Whatever your hours and wherever you work, Usdaw will voice your concerns and stand up for your rights. If you need help at work contact your rep or your local Usdaw office (contact details on page 47).

Give us a break at Christmas

Usdaw wants shopworkers to be able to enjoy a decent break over the festive period and negotiates with employers to get the longest possible break for shopworkers and other workers over Christmas.

Usdaw believes all shops should shut at 4pm on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve and remain closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. The union is also urging retailers to close on New Year's Day and 2 January in Scotland (the Scottish campaign is covered in more detail in the news on page seven).

If retailers trade on public/bank holidays the union will be calling for trading hours to be limited to a maximum of six hours and for any hours worked on these public/bank holidays to receive premium pay.

Q Will shops be closed on Christmas Day?

The Christmas Day (Trading) Act prevents shops, except for small convenience stores, from trading on 25 December. Usdaw urges retailers not to open any stores on Christmas Day. Check your trading hours to see if your store is open.

Q My store is closed on Christmas Day. Will I have to make up the hours?

Some employers require staff to make up lost hours, use holiday entitlement or take unpaid leave for the hours when stores are closed. Usdaw is urging employers to pay staff their normal wages for any contracted hours when stores are closed over Christmas and New Year.

Q Is working on a public holiday voluntary?

For some workers, working on a designated public holiday is voluntary. For others, working on some or all public holidays is part of the contract. The position on whether working on a public holiday is voluntary is usually explained in your contract, the staff handbook or outlined in agreements between the employer and the trade union. Usdaw believes any stores opening on a bank holiday over the festive period should be staffed by volunteers.



Christmas is Not Working

Q Does working on a public holiday attract premium payments?

There is no automatic right to enhanced pay if you work on a public/bank holiday. The rate for these days depends on your contract of employment and any union/company agreements. You can usually find details in your staff handbook or in other communications to staff.

Q Am I entitled to a paid day off on a public holiday?

There is no automatic legal right to paid time off on a public holiday. Your position in relation to working/time off on a public holiday will depend on your terms and conditions of employment.

Q Are Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve normal working days?

As Christmas Eve 2020 and New Year's Eve 2020 fall on a Thursday, these days are normal working days. Nonetheless, Usdaw is lobbying for a closing time of 4pm, to ensure workers have a decent break.

Q Every Christmas the business puts pressure on staff to work extra hours, often at short notice. Do I have to do it?

Unless your contract states otherwise, working additional hours is voluntary and the decision should be agreed mutually between you and your manager.

Usdaw's Christmas Is Not Working campaign is calling on retailers to put their hardworking staff first, and keep shops shut on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day (and 2 January in Scotland).

More than three-quarters of workers surveyed by Usdaw said that working over the Christmas period means that they spend too little time at Christmas with their loved ones.

Most retail workers are put under pressure to work on Boxing Day, and this even happens in workplaces where it's supposed to be 'voluntary' – that's why 97 per cent of retail workers think that shops should shut on Boxing Day.

Shopworkers need a decent break over the festive period. This year has been an extremely difficult year for retail and distribution workers, who have had to work in extremely challenging conditions to keep the country going. Poundland has agreed that they will close on Boxing Day and New Year's Day this year, as a thank you for their hard-working staff and Usdaw is urging all retailers to make sure that their staff get a decent break over Christmas.

www.usdaw.org.uk/XmasIsNotWorking



Calling Usdaw's retired members

*"We cannot always build the future for our youth,
but we can build our youth for the future."*

(Franklin D Roosevelt)

Usdaw is very proud of its senior members, they are active and passionate about campaigning for pensioners' rights and social justice and they have a wealth of experience to share with our younger members.

They are involved in campaigning to improve the state pension, saving the free TV licence for over 75s, supporting our members in retail and distribution by urging Government to save our shops on the high street and influencing Government to support our key workers by giving them a new deal.

Just because you are retiring from work doesn't mean you have to retire from the union. You can keep your union membership and play a vital role in your branch's recruitment and campaigning activities.

Usdaw welcomes retired members who want to get involved and support both the political and campaigning work that we do.

Every division has a consultative committee for retired members of the union. They are nominated by branches and serve for a term of three years. If you would like to get involved with your local branch, put yourself forward for one of the divisional committees, or if you'd simply like to learn more:

**Call your Usdaw office: 0800 030 80 30
or visit the website: www.usdaw.org.uk**

**Alternatively
call the pensions section: 0161 413 0920
or email: pensions@usdaw.org.uk**

Retired Members' Newsletter

Did you know the pension section also create a Retired Members' Newsletter?

There are four newsletters a year, which contain lots of articles and information on topics which are important to our older members.

The newsletter is available to read online, or



SCAM ALERT!

if you do not have access to the internet please contact us on **0161 413 0920** and we can post a copy to your home address.

Online resources

There is now a section of the Usdaw website dedicated to the union's retired members.

There is lots of useful information available, which is all relevant and important to our senior members including:

- ◆ Usdaw publications specifically aimed at retired members.
- ◆ Relevant news articles, updates and information.
- ◆ Information about organisations working on key issues such as loneliness, health care and pensioner benefits.
- ◆ A copy of our quarterly Retired Members' Newsletter.

The webpage will be updated regularly so keep checking www.usdaw.org.uk/retired

The NHS Test and Trace service seeks to identify those who have symptoms of COVID-19, provide them with a test and notify anyone who may have been in contact with them. The service then aims to notify relevant people that they must self-isolate at home to stop the spread of the virus. However, it seems scammers are already seeking to exploit the system to gain people's personal details.

The NHS Test and Trace service will NEVER:

- ◆ Ask for bank details or payments.
- ◆ Ask for details of any of your other accounts, such as social media.
- ◆ Ask you to set up a password or PIN number over the phone.
- ◆ Ask you to call a premium rate number, such as those starting with 09 or 087.
- ◆ Ask you to download software onto your PC or device.
- ◆ Ask you to access any website that isn't GOV or NHS.

If NHS Test and Trace calls you it will be from their only telephone number: **0300 0135 000**. The only website to visit to use the service is: contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk

Learning at home

Online learning for lockdown



The union's lifelong learning campaign was launched in 1998 to provide members with the chance to return to education and improve their skills, knowledge and career prospects.

Since that time more than 100,000 members have returned to learning to study basic maths and English, IT, and introductory language classes. Courses in sign language, digital photography and others have proved popular too.

Improving or gaining new skills has never been more vital for members, but due to the ongoing crisis many workplaces are shut or they have closed their learning centres. However not to be deterred, union learning reps, project workers and Usdaw's education department have worked together to develop new ways of promoting the learning agenda and ensuring that during

this time of uncertainty members can still access the training they need.

Online Learning Gateway

To make it even easier to take up the learning opportunities on offer, members now have access to the online learning gateway.

Through the gateway 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)

"Improving or gaining new skills has never been more vital for members."

Ushaw Mind Your Head Bitesize Course

Looking after our mental health and maintaining positive mental health is important at any time, but in the midst of this current crisis it's now even more important. This course helps you think about how the crisis is affecting your mental health, why looking after your mental health is important

Campaigning for Mental Health

Mental health is a trade union issue and this year has been incredibly challenging. Usdaw recognises that the Coronavirus crisis poses a risk not only to physical health and wellbeing, but also to mental health.

Ushaw's 'Impact of Coronavirus' survey of 7,357 members, primarily essential workers, found that 70 per cent are experiencing anxiety and raised concerns with their employer.

In the current crisis Usdaw members are under pressure like never before. They experience anxiety about exposure to the virus and social distancing in workplaces, increased customer abuse, isolation from friends and family, stress and worry about the future, about job security and family income. Usdaw members are coping with these concerns on a daily basis.

Ushaw reps do a great job of raising

awareness to tackle the stigma that surrounds mental health. Stigma gets in the way of members talking to the union at an early stage and this can lead to them getting caught up in disciplinary procedures that could and should have been avoided.

Ushaw's 'It's good to talk' campaign provides the union's workplace reps with advice and resources to support members experiencing a common mental health problem such as depression or anxiety.

Ushaw has been raising awareness of mental health for a number of years and proudly supports World Mental Health Day, which is an important annual event highlighting how common mental health problems are across the globe as well as supporting the work of mental health organisations.

For more information and full survey results:

www.usdaw.org.uk/MentalHealth

www.usdaw.org.uk/CoronavirusReport

and easy steps to improve your mental health.
www.usdaw.org.uk/MentalHealth

Ushaw Bitesize Courses

Ushaw's education department has developed a range of bitesize courses. They can be accessed from a computer, tablet or mobile and take just 20 minutes to complete. The courses include *Quirks of the English Language* and *Mind Your Head*. Other courses focus on vulnerable workers and pensions.

Webinars

There are free webinar sessions for members on a range of subjects such as Harmful Gambling, Cyber-security and Mental Health.
www.usdaw.org.uk/Campaigns/Lifelong-Learning/Have-A-Go

Write Now Project

Retail, distribution and food production workers have played a key role in keeping the country running. They have extraordinary

stories to tell of living and working through COVID-19.

Write Now wants your stories – in your words – to become part of the national record of the momentous events of 2020. But don't worry, you don't have to do this on your own. *Write Now* will help you come up with ideas and put them down on paper. If you're interested check out these taster sessions which the Royal Literacy Fund has produced:

- ◆ [youtube.com/watch?v=yVh9dY_YHQk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVh9dY_YHQk)
- ◆ [youtube.com/watch?v=MfRBNI2w8LA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfRBNI2w8LA)

Ushaw Learn

Ushaw has launched its very own Lifelong Learning Twitter and Facebook pages. Follow [@UsdawLearn](https://twitter.com/UsdawLearn) for the latest news.

Stay up to date:

www.facebook.com/usdawlearn

www.twitter.com/usdawlearn

www.usdaw.org.uk

TUC and Labour Party

Virtual debate

The annual TUC Congress and Labour Party Conference were a little different this year with both events opting to go digital for the first time in their history as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The TUC held a two-day virtual conference while the Labour Party hosted a four-day online event called Connected aimed at engaging the public through a series of online speeches, videos and discussions. Usdaw was actively involved in both events, taking part in key discussions around a recovery plan for the retail sector and protecting shopworkers.

TUC Congress

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady took to the virtual rostrum and made the case for the Government to work with trade unions for a national recovery plan. Frances warned of a "tsunami of job losses" when the Government's job retention scheme ends in October.

Udaw's general secretary Paddy Lillis agreed that joint working is required to get the country past the COVID-19 pandemic. "We've already seen over 125,000 retail job losses and nearly 14,000 store closures this year," said Paddy. "We are deeply concerned about the future of the retail industry, which was already struggling before the pandemic.

"What retail needs is a tripartite approach of unions, employers and government working together to develop a recovery plan.

"We want a New Deal for Workers. We want



Above: Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis
Below: TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady and Usdaw deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen



a Living Wage. We want guaranteed hours. We want an end to insecure contracts. And we want stronger employment rights at work."

Udaw deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen called for a change in the law and better protection of shopworkers.

"Safe working conditions have always been a fundamentally important issue for the trade union movement," said Dave. "If we did not know already, Coronavirus has clearly shown why health and safety in the workplace is so vitally important.

"Many Usdaw members have worked throughout this crisis. Workers in retail faced unprecedented levels of risk as they went to work to ensure everyone had access to food and the shelves of our supermarkets did not go empty.

"Udaw's research shows that thousands of retail workers faced abuse. Of even greater concern, we found that verbal abuse of shopworkers doubled during the crisis.

"That's why Usdaw launched a petition calling on the Government to make it

TUC

Changing the world
of work for good



Labour priorities

National Minimum Wage

Deputy leader of the Labour Party Angela Raynor hailed the efforts of millions of low-paid key workers who kept the country safe, fed and connected, and went on to commit the Party to fighting any attempt to freeze minimum wage rates.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis agreed. "Angela rightly talked about every worker being paid the real living wage, because applause does not pay the rent or put food on the table of key workers," said Paddy. "We very much welcome her commitment to fighting any attempt to freeze minimum wage rates."

Flexible Working

Usdaw equalities officer Ruth Cross made the case for Government to deliver on its commitment to making flexible work the default. "It has to be a day one right for all workers and we need an appeal process that allows workers to scrutinise and challenge the reasons given for rejecting a request," said Ruth.

Retail Recovery Plan

Usdaw head of research Tony Dale called for "an online sales tax to help rebuild the retail industry and level the playing field between the high street and online retailers, along with a new deal for workers on pay and job security."

a specific offence to abuse, threaten or assault a shopworker. So far, over 67,000 people have signed the online petition. At 100,000 signatures, the Government have to formally consider it for debate in Parliament. Please sign the petition."

SIGN THE PETITION:

petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621

The Labour Party – Connected

In his first party conference speech as leader of the Labour Party Sir Keir Starmer criticised Boris Johnson's handling of the pandemic and said he was not up to the job of prime minister. Keir admitted Labour had to work hard to win back voters' trust. "The trust of the British people will only be won by a party that can provide security and opportunity at work; end the structural flaws in our economy that means

Labour leader
Sir Keir Starmer



that working people have barely had a pay rise in a decade; that fixes the housing crisis so that young people finally have the prospect of owning their own home; that understands the need for an economy that's healing the climate crisis not contributing to it; that guarantees the security and integrity of this nation; that gives our young people the start in life they deserve; that gives older people the dignity that they've earned and that cherishes our diversity and takes pride in a society where everyone belongs."

LEGAL PLUS

"It took them 90 minutes to pull me out of the window."

Image credit: Getty Images Chahobala

Peter kept 100 per cent of his compensation thanks to FirstCall Usdaw

*Udaw member **Peter Blood** is lucky to be alive after a road accident left him with severe injuries and facing a long road to recovery. But thanks to the union and FirstCall Usdaw, the union's free accident claim line, he was able to get the support he needed.*

The accident happened in July 2016. Peter, a former Tesco driver, was travelling between deliveries when a courier van failed to stop at a side junction and collided with Peter's vehicle pushing him off the road.

"I remember being in shock, I couldn't believe what had happened," said Peter, 73, who is now retired. "I think I must have briefly lost consciousness because the next thing I remember was blue flashing lights and feeling extreme pain in my leg.

"The police, the fire brigade and the ambulance service all showed up and it took

them 90 minutes to pull me out of the window of my wrecked cab because I was in so much pain. The driver of the other vehicle was actually airlifted to hospital – he had hit his head on the windscreen because he wasn't wearing a seat belt."

Severe injuries

Peter was taken to Scunthorpe hospital where he was diagnosed with multiple injuries including a broken leg and a smashed kneecap. He endured a seven-hour surgery the following day where doctors inserted a titanium rod in

his leg and repaired his knee with wires and glue. Five weeks later he was sent home in a wheelchair to recover.

“Unfortunately I was unable to return to work as my employer couldn’t find an alternative job for me due to my injuries,” said Peter. “I had intended on retiring when I was 75 so this really was a disappointment.”

Support from the union

“For the next few months I was back and forth to assessments and physiotherapy. My leg took a long time to heal, which the doctors put down to my age, but eventually I was able to move on to crutches.

“I had a setback in 2017 when I developed an infection in my knee. I had to go back into hospital for more surgery and doctors said that I could’ve lost my leg. That really was a wake-up call. I’m pleased to say I’ve now almost made a complete recovery.

“The service from Usdaw and the solicitors throughout the case was brilliant. I contacted my local Usdaw office in September 2016 soon after I left hospital. They took a few notes and a solicitor phoned me back straight away. My local rep was a great support too, she was always there to talk to, and equally, the Kegworth office was very helpful.

“The other driver admitted liability and was charged, but not convicted, of driving without due care and attention. Apparently, he’d experienced a ‘medical episode’ just before the collision.

“We eventually settled on an amount of compensation and the money was in my bank account within the week. I was amazed to find out that if I had used a high street solicitor they would’ve taken 25 per cent of that money.

“I’ve been a member of trade unions for over 50 years. You speak to most people about unions and they automatically think of strikes and confrontations with management. But unions are so much more than that. It’s about having someone in your corner and being there for you when you need it most. I’m so grateful for my Usdaw membership.”

WHAT IS FIRSTCALL USDAW?

A free legal service exclusively for Usdaw members. If you’ve had an accident that wasn’t your fault contact FirstCall Usdaw.

What does FirstCall Usdaw cover?

- ◆ Any accident, anywhere in the UK – including road traffic accidents, work-related conditions or diseases, slipping and tripping, and injuries caused by violent crime or armed robbery (CICA claims).
- ◆ Accidents/injuries to members, and their children under the age of 18, while outside the UK on a package holiday.*
- ◆ Family members living with you are also fully covered if they’re injured in a road traffic accident.

How do I make a claim?

Call free on 0800 055 6333. You will be asked to provide some personal details and information about your claim. Have a pen and paper ready for your case number. Don’t worry, there are no complicated forms to fill in.

How do I qualify?

The accident must not predate your membership and you must be a fully paid-up member. You must also be making a claim within three years of the accident (two years if it is a criminal injury claim).

What legal fees do I need to pay?

There are no legal costs (the only exception is if you have knowingly made a fraudulent claim). If the claim is successful you will keep 100 per cent of your compensation, unlike many private solicitors who can deduct up to 25 per cent to cover the legal costs.

*Package holiday claims means accidents, injuries or other personal injury claims covered under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992.

Members are advised to take out adequate holiday insurance at the time of booking their holiday. Usdaw Legal Plus does not cover members for any personal liability that might arise from their actions; cancelled flights or accommodation; lost baggage; or up-front medical expenses.

Please note: Usdaw Legal Plus is not an insurance policy. The Personal Injury cover does not replace the need to obtain specialist holiday insurance, car insurance and home insurance.

For more information visit

www.usdaw.org.uk/legalplus

MemberOffers

Some offers are temporarily unavailable due to the Coronavirus pandemic but keep checking the website for regular updates.

CARS & TRANSPORT

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

HEALTH & BEAUTY

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

INSURANCE

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

LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

Beer52
Cinema at Home: Chili.com
Cinema Tickets
Cinema at Home: Rakuten TV
Discount Card
English Heritage
Go Ape
Golf Membership
Magazine App: Readly
Magazine Subscriptions
National Trust Gift Cards
Online Ticket Store
Theme Parks &
Attractions
Virgin Experience Days

HOLIDAYS

Airport Parking, Lounges &
Hotels
Away Resorts
Cottage Breaks
DFDS Ferry Crossing
Forest Holidays
James Villa Holidays
Lost Luggage Protection
Parkdean Resorts
Pontins
Wightlink Ferries

MONEY & FINANCE

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

SHOPPING

Apple
Crown Decorating Centres
Discount Card
Domestic Appliances
Gift Card Savings
Magazine Subscriptions
T.M. Lewin
Usdaw Prepaid Cashback
Card
UsdawRewards Cashback
Virgin Wines

MISCELLANEOUS

Funeral Planning
Gas and Electric
Mobile Phones
TOTUM Pro/NUS Extra
International Student ID Card

Don't forget about the
Union's free legal services
such as free will writing and
Legal Plus

www.usdaw.org.uk/legal



Find out more www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

*Terms and conditions for individual offers on the website.

WINTER OFFERS ★ WINTER OFFERS ★ WINTER OFFERS ★ WINTER OFFERS

SHOP AND SAVE

Buy a range of Gift Cards and eGifts at discounted rates through SVM

Whether you are looking to save on your supermarket shop, updating your wardrobe, dining out or on home and DIY – you will find savings available through the SVM platform. Visit Usdaw Discounts & Offers now to create an account with SVM and start saving today. Go to: www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*



CRAFT BEER CLUB



Beer52 is a monthly beer club which sees them selecting the best, most niche beers from around the world, which are then delivered right to your door. Your special free case will include eight delicious craft beers from Beer52's ever-changing monthly themes (think Norwegian, Estonian or even exclusive beers from Kentucky!). Also included is an issue of Ferment magazine, which will feature exclusive interviews and insightful articles. You'll also find a tasty snack for you to enjoy with your drink and your mag. To receive your free first box, you'll just have to pay £5.95 postage!* Go to: www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

12 MONTHS FREE COVER

Free £5,000 Accidental Death Cover

Thousands die every year in the UK due to accidents, which is why Usdaw has negotiated £5,000 of FREE Accidental Death Cover for every Usdaw member, aged 18-69 and a UK resident. The cover is free of charge, and lasts 12 months, after which you can renew it again for free. The money can be used for any purpose, such as paying off debts, bills or funeral expenses and can provide financial support to your loved ones at a difficult time.

Go to: www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*



*Terms and conditions apply to all benefits. See website for details. Offers subject to change without notice. Beer52 - full terms at www.beer52.com/terms. Usdaw Discounts & Offers is managed and run on behalf of Usdaw by Parliament Hill Ltd. Further benefits are organised directly by Usdaw Membership Services. Please see website for full details.

Flu, cold or COVID-19?

Q In the winter months there are loads of people in the office where I work who come in with runny noses, coughing and sneezing. How will we know if someone has just got a cold or if it is COVID-19?

Winter is the time of year when colds and flu can spread rapidly through many workplaces. Some of the symptoms of colds and flu will be very similar to COVID-19 symptoms. This winter, more than ever, it will be important to try to prevent the spread of all respiratory infections at work.

A common cold

It will often be obvious when someone just has a common cold. Symptoms of a runny nose, sneezing with an occasional cough, maybe a sore throat but no sign of any fever are common. However, it is still important that people use tissues to trap coughs and sneezes, dispose of the used tissues responsibly and wash their hands regularly to avoid spreading any germs or viruses that they may be carrying.

If someone is sneezing and spluttering, they should take a couple of days off work until they feel better.

Taking a cold into the workplace risks spreading the virus. Others may have more serious symptoms and will need time off to recover.

The Flu

Fever, aches and pains in the joints and a chesty cough may be symptoms of the flu. Flu can cause serious illness and kills thousands of people every winter.

A bad flu outbreak on top of a surge of COVID-19 will put a massive strain on the NHS. There is also limited evidence to suggest that someone who catches both flu and COVID-19

"It will be important to try to prevent the spread of all respiratory infections."

at the same time could be in serious trouble. So, it is important to try to avoid the spread of flu.

That is why the Government has intensified the flu vaccination campaign this winter. It also means you should take these symptoms seriously. You should self-isolate and ask for a test for COVID-19. If the test is negative and it becomes clear you have flu instead you should still stay off work until you feel better. This can usually take about a week.

COVID-19

If you develop a fever or a persistent cough, things could be more serious.

The key symptoms for COVID-19 are a fever, a persistent dry cough and shortness of breath, and loss of taste or sense of smell. Anyone with any of these symptoms should self-isolate immediately and order a test as quickly as they can. The test needs to be done within five days of the onset of symptoms and you need to self-isolate for 10 days. Others who share your household or support bubble should also self-isolate for 14 days and should order a test if they also develop any of the symptoms.

If you are in any doubt about your symptoms or you are not clear what to do next then contact NHS 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk/covid-19/

The good news is that the rules we need to follow for COVID-19 – self-isolating when you have symptoms, keeping physically distanced from others, catching coughs and sneezes with a tissue, regularly washing your hands and using a face covering in crowded areas – will also help to restrict the spread of other viruses that can cause colds and flu.

For more information visit: gov.uk/coronavirus

**SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO
ARENA'S HEALTH EXPERTS:**

The Editor, arena, Usdaw,
188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester,
M14 6LJ or email:
arena@usdaw.org.uk

For further information
on COVID-19 at work go to
www.usdaw.org.uk/coronavirus

Shopfloor flood

Q In a recent heavy downpour, the main shop was flooded with a couple of inches of water. The manager has told us to come in and clean up the mess. Can they order us to do this?

It will depend on the scale of the problem and whether the instruction to clean up is 'reasonable'. If there is serious contamination or a really major clean-up operation is needed, then specialist cleaners may be required. If any electrics have been in contact with the flood water, it should be checked by a competent electrician before workers move back into the area.

If you are expected to clean, your manager needs to make sure you have appropriate protective equipment – boots, overalls, gloves and possibly masks or face protection if there is a risk of splashing. Workers should be advised to cover any cuts with waterproof plasters and should have access to water to wash their hands when they've finished. The TUC produced a useful guide on cleaning after

flooding in 2016 www.tuc.org.uk/workplace-issues/health-and-safety/health-and-safety-flooded-areas

Water worries

Q The water supply to our store went off for several hours because of a problem with the main supply. They closed the customer café and eventually shut the store to customers, but we were expected to carry on working. Is this legal?

Strictly speaking, your employer has a duty to provide toilets, washing facilities and an adequate supply of drinking water at all times. However, when something happens beyond their control, they may need to make temporary arrangements until the normal supply can be resumed.

Closing the customer café and any fresh produce counters is sensible because there are no facilities for workers to wash their hands. But it is important that your employer also makes temporary arrangements to protect staff. For example, supplying bottled water for drinking and supplying packaged foods for the staff

canteen. Management should keep workers informed about what is going on and how long they are likely to have to put up with the disruption. Ironically some COVID-19 precautions might actually help – for example widespread availability of sanitisers and restricted canteen services. But also, not having access to water for handwashing is clearly a concern and some of the usual responses to such an emergency, eg arranging with a neighbouring business to house their toilets as a temporary measure, may be more problematic because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Provided they do take the necessary emergency measures to cope with a temporary break in the supply, it will usually be acceptable for people to carry on working. However, if the disruption lasts for more than a few hours they may need to consider closing up and sending people home.

Sewerage leak

Q We have a sewerage problem from time to time when the drains get blocked and there is an overflow. The smell is awful and can be smelt in the store. Can this affect the staff and make them ill?

While blocked drains can smell bad there is little danger unless



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arena@usdaw.org.uk

you come into direct contact with the sewerage and the dirty water that backs up. The smell can be nauseating but there is no danger of infection from the smell alone.

Management should get professional help to clear the drains, ventilate the area and get the mess cleaned up as quickly as possible. Larger areas of contamination may need specialist cleaners. If staff are expected to clean up smaller spillages themselves, they should be provided with the appropriate protective clothing (gloves, overalls, boots, etc.) and training on cleaning methods and disposal of waste to avoid contact with the contamination.

Temperature check

Q Our depot is massive, at one end of the site it's really cold but at the other it gets even colder when the factory doors are opened.

Should we have thermometers at both ends of the depot?

Should the employer do something about the excessive cold from doors opening?

According to the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 your employer has a duty to maintain a reasonable temperature in indoor workplaces and 'a sufficient number of

thermometers' must be provided to let workers measure the temperature. Normally the minimum reasonable temperature should be 16 degrees Celsius (or 13 degrees where work is physically strenuous).

Clearly the temperature inside a freezer needs to be kept low so a reasonable temperature cannot be achieved there. Instead your employer should take other measures to limit exposure time and provide suitable protective clothing.

In other areas of the warehouse there should be thermometers to allow people to measure the temperature at the locations where they work. This does not mean there have to be loads of wall-mounted thermometers everywhere, but it does mean there should be some way to measure the temperature.

For example, if the safety rep has use of a portable digital thermometer, they can measure the temperature at various times and locations to produce a temperature map of the workplace. If it shows there are some areas that are too cold especially when the doors open to the warehouse when people are working there, the problems can then be raised with management.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 does complicate matters as good ventilation is essential to stop the build-up of the virus in enclosed workplaces. This may mean that doors need to be kept open in some workplaces to allow fresh air to circulate even if the temperature is lower than would normally be considered reasonable. Workers may need extra clothing to compensate for the reduced temperatures.



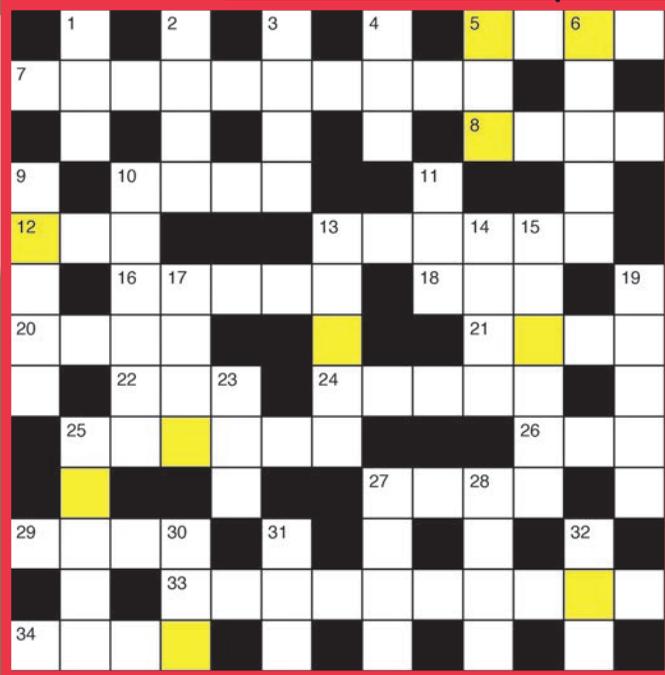
*For further information
on health and safety go
to www.hse.gov.uk*

arena crossword

Correctly complete the grid and you could win a £50 shopping voucher!

Closing date 18 January 2021

(Not open to Usdaw staff)



Win! £50

Word up!

Complete our prize crossword to spell out the hidden word in the yellow squares and you could be one of three members to win a £50 shopping voucher. The first three pulled out of the hat...win!

Email your answer along with your name and address to:

arena@usdaw.org.uk

Please put 'xword' in the subject box.

www.usdaw.org.uk/xword

Solutions available from 19 January 2021.

ACROSS

- 5. Merge (4)
- 7. Fastening for clothes (4,3,3)
- 8. Shed tears (4)
- 10. Insect (4)
- 12. Meadow (3)
- 13. Red wine (6)
- 16. Fish (5)
- 18. Russian space station (3)
- 20. Sifted husks of corn (4)
- 21. Roman gown (4)
- 22. Intestine (3)
- 24. Cold dish (5)
- 25. Withstand (6)

- 26. Tree (3)

- 27. Snake sound (4)
- 29. Be aware of (4)
- 33. Large apes (5-5)
- 34. Quick kiss (4)

DOWN

- 1. Female deer (3)
- 2. Related by blood (4)
- 3. Single entity (4)
- 4. Hawaiian garland (3)
- 5. Hardly any (3)
- 6. Precipitation (5)
- 9. Sphere (5)

- 10. Mechanic's workplace (6)
- 11. Fruit preserve (3)
- 13. Storage box (5)
- 14. Girl's name (4)
- 15. Wears away (6)
- 17. Burden (4)
- 19. Hot molten rock (5)
- 23. Gratuity (3)
- 25. Scope (5)
- 27. Gargantuan (4)
- 28. Satisfy fully (4)
- 30. Chinese cooking pot (3)
- 31. Weir (3)
- 32. Wildebeest (3)

arena letters

**HAVE YOUR SAY –
SEND YOUR THOUGHTS TO:**
The Editor, arena, Usdaw,
188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester,
M14 6LJ or email:
arena@usdaw.org.uk

Stamp of approval



Midcounties Co-op staff at Fordhouses Post Office in Wolverhampton would like to give a thumbs up to Usdaw for the recent campaign to protect retail workers from abuse and threats.



Colleagues at Tesco Hereford1 gave Donald retirement and 50 years of service (and almost as many as an Usdaw member).



Usdaw member Michelle Whitehead tells BBC Breakfast about how the abuse of shopworkers has got worse since the pandemic.



TUC Library looks back to 1926 when Ellen Wilkinson represented Usdaw at TUC Congress and attended the women's TUC.



Usdaw rep Kay Timbrell highlights how working in a supermarket during Covid-19 has impacted on her mental health in The Mirror.

Sign up a friend and you could win £250 of shopping vouchers!

Don't let your colleagues miss out on **Usdaw membership** – including **free legal help, representation and advice at work and member offers...** **sign them up now using the form opposite...**



david/ via Getty Images

TWO **RECRUITERS** WILL WIN SHOPPING VOUCHERS WORTH **£250** EACH IF THEY ARE THE **FIRST** TO BE PULLED OUT OF THE HAT!

USE THIS FORM TO SIGN UP A FRIEND AND ENTER THE PRIZE DRAW

Your chance to win!

You could **win £250** of shopping vouchers in this issue's prize draw. All you have to do is sign up a colleague or friend to Usdaw using the form opposite, and send it to **ARENA PRIZE DRAW**, Usdaw, 188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M14 6LJ.

The weekly rates (applicable from 1 July 2019) are **£2.48 for Scale A** (applicable to full-time and part-time workers) and **£1.61 for Scale C** (applicable to part-time workers only)

Four prize draws a year

You can also enter online:

www.usdaw.org.uk/recruitafriend

I apply to join Usdaw. As a member of Usdaw I undertake to abide by the Rules and regulations of the Union and to pay contributions regularly. The home address I give is the address that Usdaw will use for balloting purposes.



Use **BLOCK LETTERS** and complete this form as fully as possible.

Please tick the appropriate box

Ms Miss Mrs Mr Mx Other _____ Female Male

Surname _____

Forename _____

Full Postal Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel. No. (inc. STD) _____ Mobile No. _____

Email _____

Date of Birth

D	D	M	M	Y	Y
---	---	---	---	---	---

 Age _____

Company Name _____ Occupation _____

Workplace Address _____

Postcode _____

Location Number _____ Employee No. _____

Have you been a member of Usdaw before? Yes No

Choose your membership rate. If you do not select a scale of contributions you will automatically be entered as Scale A in order to take advantage of the full range of benefits. For details of current membership rates and cash benefits visit www.usdaw.org.uk

The responsibility for keeping payments up-to-date rests with the member.

Please tick the appropriate box **Scale A** Full or Part-time workers **Scale C** Part-time workers only

Opt-in Notice I agree to contribute to the Union's political fund at the rate set out from time to time in the Rule Book, and I understand that this agreement constitutes an opt-in notice for the purposes of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 as amended and the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. Every member may opt to contribute to a separate fund for the furtherance of the Union's political objects under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (as amended) or, as appropriate, the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 by ticking this opt-in notice. A member who chooses not to contribute shall not, by that reason, be excluded from any benefits of the Union or be placed in any respect either directly or indirectly under a disability or at a disadvantage as compared with other members of the Union (except in relation to the control of the fund).

For Members Paying by Payroll

I hereby authorise my employers for the time being, or their representatives, to deduct from my salary or wages the amount of contributions payable by me under the Union's Rules, as amended from time to time. I also authorise the deduction of any arrears which may accrue during my employment. I consent to the Union sharing my personal data with my employers, or their representatives in order to process my deduction contributions. I also authorise my employers, or their representatives, to share my information with Usdaw in order to process and maintain my Union membership and where appropriate that my employers, or their representatives, shall notify the Union of any future changes in my home address to enable the Union to maintain a register of the names and proper addresses of its members.

Privacy Notice

As a member of the Union, Usdaw will process your personal data as part of its legitimate activities in providing trade union services and benefits in accordance with the Union's Objects stated in the Rule Book and to perform its obligations to you under statute or contract. This involves processing of personal and sensitive personal data under the current data protection legislation. We will store your personal data only for the period necessary under law to enable us to fulfil our legal obligations. You have the right to request access to your personal data, and its rectification, erasure, restriction on processing, and portability. You have the right to withdraw consent for sharing of your personal data and to complain to the Information Commissioner. Usdaw and its Data Protection Officer may be contacted at 188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M14 6LJ.

Member's Signature _____ Date _____

Recruiter's Name _____

Recruiter's Membership No. _____

A brief guide to Usdaw

Usdaw is the UK's fifth biggest trade union with almost 400,000 members. Most Usdaw members work in the retail sector, but the union also has members in other trades such as transport, distribution, food manufacturing and chemicals.

Usdaw helps people at work by negotiating better pay and conditions. Being a member of the union also gives you the opportunity to have a say in issues that affect your working life. The more Usdaw members there are in the workplace, the stronger the union's voice when talking to your employer.



Usdaw membership includes...

Representation in meetings

There are over 9,000 Usdaw reps in workplaces across the country. If you have a problem at work, or need advice on an issue, Usdaw reps are on hand to advise and represent you in grievance, disciplinary and sickness meetings. The union can also provide specialist advice on pensions, health and safety and legal queries.

Free accident cover

Workplaces with unions have far fewer accidents. With 4,000 health and safety reps, Usdaw makes sure that your safety at work is taken seriously. If you do have an accident, your membership gives you free accident cover. If your claim is successful, you keep 100 per cent of your compensation. If you have an accident please contact our free claim line FirstCall Usdaw on **0800 055 6333**.

Member offers and discounts

Usdaw partners with a number of organisations to give members deals and discounts on everything from cinema tickets to home, car and travel insurance and great discounts at high street shops and restaurants. For further information please see the member offers pages within the magazine or go to www.usdaw.org.uk/offers



Where to find information

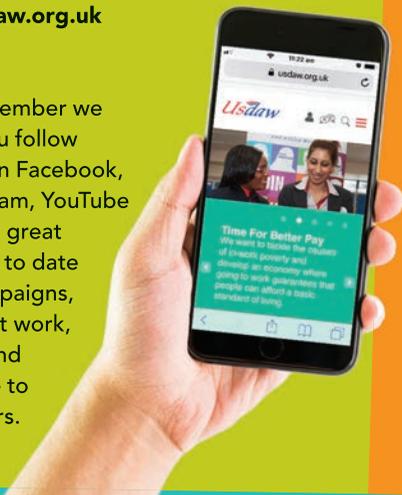
Usdaw website and enews

For everything you need including sections on legal advice, workers' rights, health and safety, news, training opportunities, upcoming events and campaigns. You can also download informative leaflets and posters, and sign up for email updates.

Visit www.usdaw.org.uk

Social media

As an Usdaw member we recommend you follow **UsdawUnion** on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Flickr. It's a great way to keep up to date with news, campaigns, events, rights at work, competitions and offers exclusive to Usdaw members.



Branch meetings

The best way for members to get involved and stay informed is to attend their branch meetings. These are regular union meetings run by reps and are a good way of finding out what is happening in your workplace, your division and the wider union. Your branch number is printed on the wrapper of each issue of *arena* and will start with a letter from A to K. To find out where and when your branch meeting is held, speak to your union rep or call your local office.

Become a rep

Usdaw is always looking for members to volunteer as reps. Becoming a rep gives members invaluable opportunities to develop personally and professionally. For further information visit www.usdaw.org.uk/bearep

Want to get more involved?

How to contact the union

Usdaw divisions and offices

Usdaw divides the UK into seven geographical divisions. If you have a problem at work always contact your Usdaw rep in the first instance (details can be found on your union noticeboard) or contact your local Usdaw office:

www.usdaw.org.uk/contact

Update your details:
www.usdaw.org.uk/update



A South Wales and Western Division

Bristol 0117 931 9730
Cardiff 029 2073 1131
Plymouth 01752 765930

B Eastern Division

Bury St Edmunds 01284 775700
London 020 7323 5550
Waltham Cross 01992 709280

C Midlands Division

Redditch 01527 406290
Kegworth 01509 686900

D North Eastern Division

Leeds 0113 232 1320
Newcastle 0191 296 5333

E Scottish Division

Edinburgh 0131 556 5242
Aberdeen 01224 652820
Glasgow 0141 427 6561

F Southern Division

Faversham 01795 532637
Andover 01264 321460
Morden 020 8687 5950

G North West Division

Preston 01772 704003
Belfast 028 9066 3773
Warrington 01925 578050

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of our customers
are satisfied*

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or visit **usdawinsurance.co.uk/arena420**

* Research carried out by UIA (Insurance) Ltd, July 2020 * Lines are open 8.30am-8pm Mon-Fri. † Trustpilot rating correct as at 25th August 2020.

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