



Winning The General Election

National Executive
Council Statement
to 2024 ADM



Usdaw For Labour

Usdaw is involved in politics because it is a crucial part of improving members' lives.

The real issues affecting our members' lives are at the core of our activities and campaigns around which we organise.

Industrial organising provides the foundation upon which we negotiate with employers and represent our members' interests in the workplace; political organising provides the foundation upon which we campaign to change the country and represent our members' interests in society. These are two sides of the same coin, used together to improve the lives of Usdaw members.

Usdaw is affiliated to the Labour Party because it is our party and provides us with the only means by which to secure a government on the side of our members, working people, and the most vulnerable in society.

By using our collective strength we can campaign and win, delivering a Labour Government that will deliver for our members.

General Secretary's Foreword



We have known that it's been coming for a while now. This Conservative Government, which ran out of ideas long ago, has limped onwards for far too long, but they can no longer avoid a general election and a chance for us to remove them from government.

It is a chance we must take. We have endured five different Conservative Prime Ministers in 14 years, but as much as they pretend they are different, that they have changed, we know it's not true.

This Government's record is one of failure and incompetence. A record that has made the lives of Usdaw members harder, at work and at home.

The only way to secure real change is to remove this Government and vote for a Labour Government that is on our side, fighting to deliver the policies, pledges and commitments that will make our members' lives better.

This will not come easy, which is why we must each play our part.

Ushaw has a Key Seat Strategy designed to support members to make a difference where it's needed most; the difference between a Labour Government or more of the current failure and incompetence.

This election is our chance, please do not let it pass us by. Be part of Labour's campaign, out on the streets either in your own constituency or as part of Usdaw's Key Seat Campaign Teams across the country.

Together I know we can win, let's prove it.

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Paddy Lillis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paddy Lillis
General Secretary

Section One – Fourteen Years of Failure: The Conservative Record

Since the Conservatives came to power in 2010, life for working people and their families has significantly worsened by almost every measure we have.

The Conservatives have caused unnecessary hardship through their choices. The crisis in our public services, worsening child poverty rates and an unstable economy are all outcomes of their political decisions.

Although there have been attempts made by the current Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, to distance himself from the decisions made by previous Conservative Prime Ministers, the reality is that he was part of previous governments and he is continuing to make the same choices that hurt Usdaw members and their families.

Failing the Country

The 2010 election ended in a hung Parliament. While the majority of people in the UK had voted for political parties that did not support the Conservative's policy platform in the election, they drove forward with a programme of austerity. This reversed the incredible progress across society that had been made in the UK since 1997.

Austerity saw billions of pounds of cuts in public spending, which reduced by £14.3 billion between 2010 and 2013 alone. These were the biggest cuts in spending since the Second World War. Many of these cuts went into reducing public sector staff and reducing local government spending. This meant the closure of essential services people relied on in their communities like Sure Start Centres, libraries, and youth centres.

During this time, the Conservatives failed working people, making their lives harder and their work more insecure. For example, they brought in laws that doubled the amount of time people had to wait until they were protected from unfair dismissal from 12 months to two years, and the Trade Union Act which made it harder for trade unions to support members in the workplace.

Across the country, austerity led to a rise in inequality and worsening finances, which meant more insecure jobs and lower pay.

Failure of Leadership

Since 2016, the UK has faced some of the biggest challenges since the Second World War. Brexit, and the Conservative's inability to get a deal through Parliament, meant that the focus of the Prime Minister was on internal Conservative Party issues rather than the needs of the nation.

The promises made during the Brexit referendum, of increased public spending, greater economic opportunities outside the EU, and even increases to employment and job opportunities, have not been delivered by the Conservative leaders that promised them.

Following the Brexit referendum and David Cameron's resignation in 2016, Theresa May lost the Conservative majority in Parliament after taking the country to a snap General Election in 2017. This led to a confidence vote by Conservative MPs on her ability to lead. As a result of pressure from her own party, May resigned. Boris Johnson won the Conservative leadership contest, becoming the third Conservative Prime Minister since 2010, Johnson called a further General Election in 2019, which was held primarily to gain control of his own MPs.

All of this Conservative infighting took place over just three years, during which time the cost of living continued to rise, the housing crisis deepened and legislation on key issues such as mental health was shelved.

The Covid-19 pandemic was the most serious and unprecedented crisis that has faced the nation in living memory. It was a public health crisis with devastating consequences that are still being felt today. Many Usdaw members were working on the front line as key workers supporting their communities with essential goods throughout the pandemic.

The Government has come under scrutiny for both the decisions they took and for their behaviour during this time. The UK Covid-19 Inquiry has raised some of these again in recent months, such as the then Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, breaking social distancing rules, the then Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister, Dominic Cummings, breaking lockdown restrictions, and parties in Downing Street that ultimately saw the Prime Minister and Chancellor fined by the police for breaching lockdown restrictions.

It is clear that there was a failure of leadership when the country needed it the most.

Deliberate decisions taken by the Government failed to support the nation during the pandemic. These included the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) scandal, which resulted in the Government buying £4 billion of unusable PPE in the first year of the pandemic alone, and the implementation of the Eat Out to Help Out Scheme by then Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, which was not cleared by the Government's scientific advisors.

After the heavy losses for the Conservatives in the 2022 local elections and the mass resignation of 31 Government Ministers, Boris Johnson resigned. This resulted in yet another Conservative leadership contest between Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak. Liz Truss won and her decisions led to nationwide economic instability and increasing tensions in Government.

Economic Failure

Liz Truss put forward a mini-budget which reflected pledges made during her leadership campaign. The budget included £45 billion of unfunded tax cuts, including many tax reforms that would benefit higher earners without addressing the cost of living crisis that the majority of the nation was, and is still, experiencing. There was no independent assessment of the mini-budget from the Office of Budget Responsibility.

In response to the mini-budget, the value of the pound fell significantly, the cost of Government borrowing increased and the unprecedented financial chaos caused concerns about interest rates, pensions, and mortgages. Many banks withdrew mortgage products and house prices began to fall, impacting ordinary people and their families further.

Liz Truss, the fourth Conservative Prime Minister since 2010, lasted 49 days. Her resignation led to her rival in the Conservative leadership contest Rishi Sunak becoming Prime Minister, without a mandate from the country.



Ongoing Failure

In October 2023, Rishi Sunak gave a speech to the Conservative Party Conference where he positioned himself as a candidate for change. He attempted to show that he and the Conservative Party were finally going to deliver the change that the country needs. However, the Conservatives have now been in power for nearly 14 years, and Sunak has held significant roles in Government for the last five years, with direct responsibility for many of its policies.

The Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, has held cabinet positions since 2010, including as Culture Secretary, Foreign Secretary and Health Secretary.

In 2023, Rishi Sunak even appointed the former Prime Minister, David Cameron, as Foreign Secretary. Cameron is no longer an MP, but Sunak awarded a peerage to the House of Lords so that he could take up the role.

Ending the Failure

The reality is that it has been the same people in charge for the last 14 years and their decisions have harmed the economy and made life harder for working people and their families. The cost of living crisis is deepening, and no policy measures that have been announced by the Prime Minister or the Chancellor are expected to improve this.

The only way to end the failure of successive Conservative Governments and deliver a government on the side of Usdaw members and their colleagues, friends and families, is to look to the future and vote for a Labour Government.



Section Two – A Brighter Future: The Labour Promise

The last Labour Government successfully delivered meaningful change for working people. It brought in new laws to prevent discrimination against part-time workers, introduced a National Minimum Wage, gave workers a legal right to be accompanied by a trade union representative in disciplinary and grievance procedures, and enshrined in law regulations for breaks and rest periods.

This is just part of Labour's track record of delivering for working people.

A lot of this is because Labour has listened to the campaigns Usdaw has fought on behalf of members, and worked with us to deliver real solutions. Because of this proven record, we know that the next Labour Government will deliver the changes that Usdaw members need, in both working and home life.

The Future in Work

Crucially for Usdaw members, and for working people across the country, Labour have committed to the introduction of the New Deal for Working People as one of their priorities in government. Through the new deal, a Labour Government will deliver the improvements to working conditions and working life for our members that Usdaw has been calling for.

A Labour Government will make work pay, make it fairer, and strengthen workers' rights. All jobs should pay people enough to allow them to support themselves and their families to have a decent standard of living.

Labour is committed to making sure everyone is treated fairly in the workplace and will give workers' rights from day one on the job. Labour will tackle harassment in the workplace and strengthen protections against redundancy. Labour will tackle the barriers that the workplace and wider society put in the way of women, Black and Minority Ethnic, LGBT+ and disabled workers and take action to close the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps.



Labour knows that unionised workplaces are more likely to provide decent pay, workplace benefits and protection at work. Labour will remove the Conservatives' punitive restrictions on trade union activity such as the Trade Union Act 2016 and make it easier for unions to be recognised to negotiate with employers on behalf of their members. Underpinning workers' rights will be a new single enforcement body with the powers to undertake targeted and proactive enforcement work and bring civil proceedings upholding employment rights.

The next Labour Government will:

- Introduce day one workers' rights to improve the rules on unfair dismissal, sick pay, parental leave, and many other things.
- Make the minimum wage a real living wage and ensure that every adult worker is entitled to it.
- Ban exploitative zero-hours contracts.
- Ensure anyone working regular hours for 12 weeks or more receives a fair contract which reflects these hours.
- End the practice of fire and rehire.
- Make flexible working a day one right allowing everybody the chance to create a better worklife balance.
- Strengthen protections against redundancy.
- Require employers to compensate workers when not enough notice is given for cancelled or changed shifts.
- Take action to close the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps.
- Put mental health on par with physical health in our workplaces.

The Future for Usdaw's Priorities

Labour knows that economic security, stability and growth are crucial for job security, stability and growth and recognise that retail is a key part of the economy. It is committed to ensuring that a growing economy leads to good quality jobs, strong local economies across the whole of the country and support for our high streets.

Our member-led, evidence based campaigns reflect the issues and concerns members have expressed to us about life both at work and at home. Across Usdaw's campaigns, it is evident how a Labour Government will bring in the changes we have been calling for and improve members' lives.

Cost of Living Crisis

Usdaw members have repeatedly raised the pressure of the rising cost of everyday essentials such as food and clothes, piled on top of the sky-high prices of electricity, gas and transport. We are all still feeling the after-effects of the economic chaos the Conservatives created with their mini-budget, which spiked interest rates and made mortgages unaffordable.

As well as the measures in the new deal, a Labour Government will seek to end in-work poverty by tackling the wider financial pressures workers face, including improving transport links, making good quality childcare more affordable and addressing the housing crisis. Labour wants to make Britain a clean energy superpower, creating jobs and delivering energy security, so that Britain is not reliant on other nations for energy and ensuring that Britain is doing its part to address the climate crisis. Labour have also committed to delivering a National Warm Homes Plan, helping people insulate their homes and take other energy saving measures so that energy bills go down.



Freedom From Fear

Usdaw members have raised the issue of the abuse and violence they face in their workplaces time and time again. Usdaw has worked for over 20 years to raise awareness of this through the 'Freedom From Fear' Campaign and the annual Respect for Shopworkers Week.

Labour has committed to a community policing guarantee, which includes scrapping the £200 limit on Crown Court prosecutions for shoplifting, creating a new specific offence of violence against shop workers, rolling out town centre policing plans and putting 13,000 extra police and community support officers back in town centres to crack down on anti-social behaviour.

Supporting Parents and Carers

Usdaw has highlighted the issues that working parents face, both in the flexibility of their working hours and in difficulties finding good quality, affordable, and flexible childcare.

A Labour Government will support families and children, making sure that every child has access to the fundamentals that they need to get on in life. This will include breakfast clubs in every primary school, making good quality childcare more flexible to better support working parents, and making sure that childcare is available and affordable.

The Future With Labour

Given the nature of the issues facing working people, long-term planning is crucial in delivering the change that the nation desperately needs. A Labour Government will end the cycle of short-term policy making that has characterised the last 14 years of the Conservative Government, with a comprehensive and considered plan for government. This plan will be constructed through meaningful engagement with Usdaw and other trade unions so that it has working people at its heart.

After the chaos we have seen under the Conservatives, this careful and long-term approach to policy making, and the inclusion of the voice of working people through trade unions, will be essential to bring about a better future for Usdaw members.

In order to achieve any of this we first need to win the next general election and deliver that Labour Government.

Section Three – Delivering on the Ground: Usdaw’s Key Seat Strategy

Knowing what is at stake during the general election is one thing, but the Union must also make an impact on the ground during the campaign, both individually through our members and collectively as an organisation.

When our members get involved in campaigning, we can make a real difference together. Members all over the country have been supporting Labour in their local communities, going out leafleting, canvassing or helping on phone banks. We need to make sure that we encourage and support our members in doing that. We also need to make sure that our activity and resources are put to the most effective use as part of the overall campaign with Labour and other trade unions. We must be disciplined during the campaign, focussing our work as part of a clear strategy.

The Strategy

Ushaw’s Key Seat Strategy is built around four key principles:

- To deliver frequent campaign activity in each key seat and ensure that activity from Usdaw campaigns provides an opportunity for additional campaigning in the key seats.
- To deliver sustainable campaign activity in each key seat with activity locally organised, realistic expectations on levels of commitment and activity, and activists feeling valued and rewarded.
- To develop local links with candidates, Labour Parties and areas, ensuring that we have the relationships and contact details to organise effective campaigning, and that our activists get to know the local Labour Party members they will be campaigning alongside.
- To develop our members’ skills, knowledge and confidence, with the aim that Usdaw members are able and confident to take part in doorstep campaigning.

The strategy was designed to give members the support needed to be active campaigners and through that, deliver a campaign on the ground across the country that will lead to a Labour Government.



As part of the strategy, Usdaw is supporting the following seats across the country:

A Region

Plymouth Moor View
Filton & Bradley Stoke
Bridgend

C Region

Watford
Norwich North
Harlow

E Region

Gedling
Tamworth
Corby & East Northamptonshire

F Region

Leeds North West
Stockton North
Cramlington & Killingworth

G Region

Aberdeen South
Edinburgh North & Leith
Coatbridge & Bellshill

H Region

Hastings & Rye
Croydon South
Southampton Test

K Region

Warrington South
Stoke Central
Clwyd East
Blackpool South

Head Office

Bolton North East

Getting Involved

No strategy can be successful without people playing their part, and this is where each and every Usdaw member can make a crucial difference.

Modern election campaigns are fought in many ways; on social media, by word of mouth, and on television, but ultimately campaigns are still won on the ground with activists going door-to-door, delivering leaflets, speaking with people and making the case for a Labour Government.

Usdaw's Key Seat Co-ordinators and Regional Political Committees have been building campaign teams in each of the Union's Key Seats and joining with the local candidates and Labour Party in their campaigns.

You can be part of these teams and get the latest updates on activity near you by signing up to Usdaw Political Activist Programme: www.usdaw.org.uk/JoinTheTeam

You can also get involved in the campaign where you live and wider Labour Party activities by joining the Labour Party: join.labour.org.uk (make sure you select the 'reduced' rate as a member of Usdaw)

However else you support the campaign, make sure you are able to vote yourself. You can register to vote by visiting: www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

If you are registered to vote make sure that whatever shifts you are on, whatever caring commitments you have, or whatever the weather is like, you can use your vote by signing up for a postal vote: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/apply-vote-post

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