

Lifelong Learning

# Lifelong Learning with Usdaw



# WHAT IS LIFELONG LEARNING?

Every year Usdaw helps more than 15,000 members return to learning and we believe that every workplace should be a place for Lifelong Learning. Lifelong Learning brings together job-related training, career and personal development. It could be learning a new language, brushing up on maths skills, accessing an apprenticeship or taking a university degree. Lifelong Learning improves our quality of life at work, home and in the community. And it can happen in all kinds of ways and all kinds of places — for example a bite-size taster session at work, or an online distance learning course at home or at a local college.

## Learning is union business!

Missed opportunities and lack of skills seriously impact our members' working and personal lives – not going for promotions; not being trained to deal with situations at work; avoiding helping out with kids' homework or not being able to get online to access a whole range of services including claiming benefits.

Members can miss out on learning and training for a variety of reasons:

- Lack of confidence.
- Bad previous experience.
- Lack of time and funding.
- Opportunities for learning and training not given out fairly at work.
- Lack of basic ICT skills or internet access.

When something damages members' employability, job security and quality of life it's clearly union business. Research shows that trade union presence and involvement in the workplace can impact positively on training outcomes and Usdaw is committed to supporting members' Lifelong Learning – to making it more accessible, less expensive and to rebuilding members' confidence.

Learning has become a key part of our terms and conditions of employment and a core part of a modern trade union agenda, just like health and safety. But Usdaw is only able to influence this agenda if employees join the Union and then get involved with learning, whether as a ULR or as a learner.



EVERY YEAR USDAW HELPS MORE THAN 15,000 MEMBERS RETURN TO LEARNING AND USDAW BELIEVES THAT EVERY WORKPLACE SHOULD BE A PLACE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING.

# HOW DOES USDAW SUPPORT MEMBERS' LIFELONG LEARNING?

## Union Learning Representatives (ULRs)

Over 15,000 Usdaw members return to learning each year — this would have been impossible without the hard work and dedication of Usdaw's Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) — members who are elected and trained to support Lifelong Learning and have legal rights to do so.

ULRs work with the employer but focus on members' needs, encouraging members back into learning and are crucial to making learning more accessible and sustainable.

“When people start on a learning journey it's impossible to predict where they'll end up or how long it'll take them to arrive. It's often those who plan on a short, local journey who find themselves still travelling years later, in all sorts of unusual places.”

## Different sectors need different approaches

Usdaw members work in a wide variety of industries, therefore different approaches to Lifelong Learning are required.

For example in large distribution centres Usdaw has set up on-site Learning Centres, often supported by a Joint Learning Fund. They work in partnership with the employer to manage these through a Joint Learning Committee.

In retail or smaller workplaces ULRs run roadshows, and link with colleges to provide learning on-site or at local colleges/community facilities. Often referred to as 'Check Out Learning', Usdaw's award-winning initiative has helped members in more than 300 retail stores back to learning.

**USDRAW'S AWARD-WINNING INITIATIVE HAS HELPED MEMBERS IN MORE THAN 450 RETAIL STORES BACK TO LEARNING.**

## There's lots of learning to choose from

Across the UK we've worked with employers and colleges/learning providers to widen access to all types of learning.

From bite-size tasters in basic computer skills, setting up apprenticeships to helping members get a degree — Usdaw has it all!

You could:

- Brush up on your Maths or English skills.
- Gain a nationally recognised qualification eg NVQ in warehousing.
- Access an apprenticeship programme.
- Build your confidence using computers with 'Get Online with Usdaw.'
- Learn more about mental health or sign language.
- Improve your job ready skills eg CV writing or interview techniques.
- Discover a new language using online learning.
- Develop your qualifications through progression routes to degrees and masters courses.

## Good for the employer, good for the employee

Usdaw's focus is on our members but we aim to work in partnership with employers, preferably building long term, sustainable learning cultures in the workplace. This is made much easier when we can explain how much Lifelong Learning will benefit employers too.

Independent research shows that a learning culture in the workplace offers employers:

- A more motivated workforce, that are more adaptable to change.
- Lower staff turnover and absence.
- More internal progression.

A better skilled workforce can boost an organisation's productivity and profitability, and ensure less conflict arises in the workplace.

“At Next we started out with one Learning Centre and it was so successful the company have rolled it out to other sites. But none of this would have happened without the work of the ULRs.”

USDRAW AIMS TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EMPLOYERS, BUILDING LONG TERM, SUSTAINABLE LEARNING CULTURES IN THE WORKPLACE.

# OVER 15,000 USDAW MEMBERS RETURN TO LEARNING EACH YEAR

## Making it happen in the workplace

If you're interested in Lifelong Learning with Usdaw then you can:

- Visit the Lifelong Learning section of the Usdaw website [www.usdaw.org.uk/lifelonglearning](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/lifelonglearning)
- Use the Lifelong Learning gateway to find out what learning is on offer at [www.usdaw.org.uk/LearningGateway](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/LearningGateway)
- Find out what your employer is doing about learning and whether Usdaw is involved (at your workplace or other sites across the country).
- Talk to your Usdaw rep or Union Learning Rep in your workplace about learning opportunities.

- Ask your shop steward or Area Organiser about becoming a ULR if there aren't any.
- Put Lifelong Learning on the agenda of your next branch meeting.
- Contact Usdaw's Lifelong Learning Project Worker via the divisional office. They can help you introduce, develop or embed Lifelong Learning in the workplace.
- Use national initiatives like 'Adult Learners' Week' or 'World Book Day' or Six Book Challenge to get members' interested.
- Talk to members about what kind of learning they need or would be interested in.

## GET ORGANISED FOR LEARNING

Further details are available direct from your Union Learning Rep or Lifelong Learning Project Worker via your Divisional Office or Usdaw's Education and Training Department:

### South Wales and Western Cardiff Office

Tel: 029 2073 1131  
email: [cardiff@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:cardiff@usdaw.org.uk)

### Eastern Waltham Cross Office

Tel: 01992 709280  
email: [walthamx@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:walthamx@usdaw.org.uk)

### Midlands Redditch Office

Tel: 01527 406290  
email: [redditch@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:redditch@usdaw.org.uk)

### North Eastern Leeds Office

Tel: 0113 232 1320  
email: [leeds@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:leeds@usdaw.org.uk)

### Scottish Glasgow Office

Tel: 0141 427 6561  
email: [glasgow@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:glasgow@usdaw.org.uk)

### Southern Morden Office

Tel: 020 8687 5950  
email: [morden@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:morden@usdaw.org.uk)

### North West Warrington Office

Tel: 01925 578050  
email: [warrington@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:warrington@usdaw.org.uk)

“ DHL Castleford has definitely benefited from the work we do in the Learning Centre, 50% of the workforce are in learning, constantly developing and updating their skills. ”



For further information, contact:

**Education Department**  
Ushaw  
188 Wilmslow Road  
Manchester M14 6LJ

**Call:** 0161 224 2804/249 2400  
**email:** [education@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:education@usdaw.org.uk)  
**Web:** [www.usdaw.org.uk/training](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/training)

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Feb 2019  
LLL RS1 LWU