

NETWORK

The bimonthly magazine for Usdaw activists | www.usdaw.org.uk | November/December 2012



GETTING IT RIGHT



■ Membership Week is just around the corner in 2013

January 21–27 will see the first of two recruitment weeks for Usdaw's reps and officials
page 15



■ Usdaw had a very high profile at the TUC march

Activists descended on London for the TUC's anti-austerity march
page 11



■ Respect Week spreads anti-abuse message

Shoppers were urged to 'Keep Your Cool' during the run up to the festive period this year
page 07



Respect for reps

General secretary John Hannett's comment



I have nothing but praise for our 11,000-strong team of reps who despite all the economic doom and gloom have once again pulled out all the stops to grow the union to its present 423,700 mark.

This is a phenomenal achievement especially when we consider the Coalition's austerity policies continue to heap more and more pressure on hard-working families. The Government's shameless cuts to the scheme to pay compensation to innocent victims of crime shows all too clearly what sort of politicians they are.

Unemployment remains high, utility bills keep rising and the cut backs have seen benefits either frozen or withdrawn. Massive job losses at JJB Sports, Comet, Hall's of Broxburn and many other sites have put job insecurity right back to the top of the agenda.

We have invested heavily in our support for reps and, while the newest initiative is still in its early stages, I believe this is already paying off. We are well on our way to having the best trained reps in the union movement. I said a few years ago – standing still wasn't an option – and because we took the necessary steps to modernise and professionalise how we work, we are now in a strong and confident, but not complacent, position.

Academy

Active reps who want to take the next step in their development should consider applying for our Academy1 next year. You'll find a postcard with details on in this issue. This is an excellent way to further increase your skills and confidence by spending six months secondment with Usdaw, with support from local area organisers and expert training from our education department. It is no surprise that our organising strategy is the envy of other trade unions and our Academy forms an integral part of it. Please take a few minutes to consider whether the Academy1 is for you.

Another tough year with more of the same to come in 2013, but with our organising strategy, our determined and committed reps and officials, we can continue to build for the future. Many thanks to all of our reps and on behalf of the executive council I wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Usdaw
Union of Shop, Distributive
and Allied Workers

“ We are well on our way to having the best trained reps in the trade union movement because we realised 'standing still' wasn't an option for us ”

USDAW

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Usdaw

188 Wilmslow Road
Manchester M14 6LJ

T 0161 224 2804

F 0161 257 2566

E network@usdaw.org.uk

W www.usdaw.org.uk

HEAD OF MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

Mike Glover

EDITOR

Peter Rees-Farrell

REPORTER

Mairead Bradley

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

Sarah Bailey & Paula Barke

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Debra Blow, Tony Larkin, Carl Parker and Doug Russell.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Emma Bailey, Della Batchelor,
Geoff Bennett, Donald Clements,
Cate Gillion, Brian Hallam,
Rezwan Javied, Roger Keyse,
Warren King, Rod Leon,
Phil Mahoney, Richardsons.

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contact your divisional office.
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sustainable forests.

ADVERTISING

Century One Publishing Ltd

T 01727 893 894 F 01727 893 895

E enquiries@centuryonepublishing.ltd.uk

W www.centuryonepublishing.ltd.uk

ADVERTISING MANAGER

David Murray

T 01727 739 182

E d.murray@centuryonepublishing.ltd.uk

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Get recruiting!

MEMBERSHIP WEEK 21-27 JANUARY 2013

Reps will team up with officials next January for the first of two weeks exclusively reserved for recruitment activity. There is a wealth of material for activists to use to promote the week and to maintain Usdaw's place as the fastest growing UK union.

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04 In the news

Retailers continue to feel the pressure with more high street casualties, there's also more bad news for Scotland, and the Government has cut the compensation for crime victims.

08 Summer School2

Experienced reps made the most of their time at the union's popular summer school held in Wortley Hall near Sheffield in September for a week of in-depth training.

10 News from the TUC conference and march

Standing up for workers' rights and on the march in London against the Coalition's austerity policies.

12 National transport conference

Understanding pensions and fighting back against the attack on workers' rights by an out-of-touch Coalition government were both on the agenda in Blackpool.

19 Activist in depth

Activist and branch officer Valerie Forrest on her role as a rep despite being retired from her previous job as a supervisor with the Co-operative.

22 Recruitment & organising

More case studies of how reps from across the UK are signing up new members every day as part of their structured approach to recruitment.

24 National youth weekend

Usdaw has more than 67,000 members and 1,100 reps aged under 27 some of whom met up in Warrington in November to discuss how Usdaw can appeal to more young workers.

26 Labour Party conference

Usdaw was at the forefront of the biggest political gathering in the UK in October as activists, MPs and officials met up in Manchester for the annual showcase event.

Regulars

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IN BRIEF

■ JJB Sports joins list of retail casualties

Around 2,200 workers were made redundant in early October after struggling sportswear retailer JJB Sports collapsed into administration. Administrators KPMG closed 133 stores while the remaining 20 outlets were sold to Mike Ashley's Sports Direct thereby saving 550 jobs, around 167 employees were retained to assist the administrators.

■ Morrisons feels the recessionary heat

Supermarket chain Morrisons, one of the UK's big four grocers, has reported another quarterly drop in sales, citing 'fragile' consumer confidence. Like-for-like sales fell 2.1 per cent in the three months to 28 October. The latest figures showed that Morrisons' UK market share had fallen to 11.5 per cent in the 12 weeks to 28 October, from 12 per cent a year earlier.

■ Mixed fortunes on the UK high street

Discount retailer Primark continues to buck the retail trend with a 15 per cent rise in profits to £356m. Meanwhile under-pressure M&S revealed a ten per cent drop in its profits.

■ Global companies under fire over tax

Amazon, Starbucks and Google have been accused of diverting hundreds of millions of pounds in UK profits to secretive tax havens during a fraught exchange with a committee of MPs.

Getting to grips with pensions

AUTO-ENROLMENT IN VIEW

With effect from 1 October 2012 big employers now have a legal obligation to provide its employees with access to a pension arrangement. Furthermore, employers must automatically put eligible jobholders into the pension scheme and make a contribution on their behalf.

Auto-enrolment is taking place over the next five years between 2012 and 2017. Each employer has a start date by which they must have begun auto-enrolment. The start date is based on how many people they employ with the largest companies first.

We know that Sainsbury's auto-enrolled 52,000 eligible employees on 1 October and the Morrisons new cash balance scheme now has around 11,000 members.

Usdaw supports auto-enrolment and wants to encourage members to save for retirement and think twice before opting out. Communication is vital to the success of auto-enrolment so reps should consider holding a pensions awareness day.

The pensions team at central office can provide reps with the necessary materials and these can be given to members, together with information about



www.usdaw.org.uk/pensions their own employer schemes. Take a look at the new auto-enrolment video on the Usdaw website, which is available to reps as a DVD to show in your workplace.

A pensions awareness day is a great way of promoting how Usdaw can make a difference to its members. For more information call the pensions team on 0161 224 2804.

More job misery for Scotland

Around 150 jobs will be lost after ABP Food Group confirmed plans to close its Freshlink Foods in Shettleston, Glasgow in November.

Plans to close the factory, which is one of the UK's biggest suppliers of frozen sausages, were first announced in June this year,

but ABP has now reaffirmed it will start a phased transfer of production to its Dalepak Foods site in Northallerton, Yorkshire.

Deputy divisional officer Stewart Forrest said: "Our focus will be to put into place the best possible support to help our members find

alternative employment and of course to secure a redundancy package that properly reflects the commitment and contribution our members have made to the success of the company over many years. It's another body blow for the Scottish economy coming so soon after the Hall's closure."

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USDAW LOBBIES MPs TO PROTECT CRIME VICTIMS

INNOCENT WORKERS LET DOWN BY COALITION

While Usdaw left no stone unturned to save the criminal injuries compensation scheme from government attack the Tory-led Coalition used shameless political manoeuvring to push through severe cuts to the scheme.

Ushaw had held a special Westminster event to win support from MPs and to make the case for the retention of the current scheme.

However, while many Labour MPs rallied to the call the Coalition packed the parliamentary committee with its own supporters and forced the

changes through despite last minute attempts in the House by Labour to scupper them.

General secretary John Hannett said: "The Coalition has made the decision to abandon innocent victims of violent crime. The Government's appalling record of making the most vulnerable pay to reduce the deficit has reached a new low.

"I'm convinced the decision to target victims of crime in this way will come back to haunt this out-of-touch Coalition government and every single MP who supported the cuts."



Tough on crime not on victims . . . that was the message union and business leaders and members assaulted at work took to the House of Commons in November to protest against the Coalition's plans to cut compensation to innocent crime victims

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IN BRIEF

■ Retailers closing more stores than ever

New research has revealed that embattled retail chains are closing stores at a rate of more than 30 a day across the UK.

The study found that retailers in the UK closed 32 stores a day in July and August. That figure is up from 20 a day in the first six months of 2012. This is a net reduction of 953 shops in the first half of 2012 compared to 174 shops in the whole of 2011.

The data also revealed that across multiple retailers in 500 town centres, computer game stores, toy shops, clothes shops, gift shops, jewellers, card & poster shops and furniture stores were amongst the hardest hit in the first half of 2012.

In contrast pawnbrokers, discount stores, convenience stores, coffee shops, bookmakers, bureaux de change and charity shops bucked the trend by showing growth during the first half of the year.

Experts blame too many locations with long leases and inflexible terms, entered into when the economy was booming.

■ Comet unlikely to be seen again

More than 6,600 jobs are set to be lost following electrical chain Comet's collapse into administration. The struggling retailer, the 29th to go bust this year, has already closed 40 stores and sacked around 800 staff.

The company had 236 stores and was put into receivership in early November.

ACADEMY1 TEAM



This year's Academy1 reps met up in Manchester for their end of term get-together in November. More than 55 activists made it on to this year's intake and have made a massive contribution to the union's membership growth.

Deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "A big thank you to all of the reps who have done a great job for Usdaw. I'm sure they have developed their skills and confidence even more during their six month secondment. A fanastic team effort."

Branching out to learn more

Understanding how the union operates locally, divisionally and nationally was the focus for recently elected branch officers at the union's tailor-made course this autumn.

Activists from across the UK and from all the union's sectors spent an intense five days looking at the branch structure, how the Annual Delegate Meeting works, and presentations by staff from central office gave them an insight into how the departments fit together.

The residential course offers a thorough examination of every aspect of the union's procedures and helps prepare the lay officers for their roles.

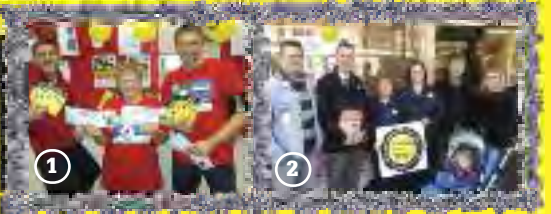
Courses are held throughout the year, subject to demand, and are an essential part of the union's drive to support and develop reps who take on the added responsibility of a branch officer.

More at: www.usdaw.org.uk/training



Courses in October and November saw more than 30 newly elected branch officials attend the five-day residential course held at the national training centre in Warrington, Cheshire

RESPECT!



Reps were on the shopfloor in November to urge customers to Keep Your Cool this Christmas while the campaign to protect crime victims went to Parliament

Usdaw's award winning Freedom From Fear campaign was given new impetus in November following the Coalition's decision to cut compensation to the innocent victims of crime.

Senior union leaders and crime victims lobbied MPs at a special Westminster event while up and down the country reps were spreading the anti-abuse message to members and shoppers. "Members face even more abusive behaviour from a minority of customers during the festive period and it's important we stand up to say – abuse is not part of the job," said general secretary John Hannett.



General secretary John Hannett takes Respect to Westminster



LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION...

- 1 Tesco Distribution Centre, Chesterfield
- 2 Tesco Metro Bedford
- 3 Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh
- 4 With Llyr Huws Gruffydd AM at the Welsh Assembly
- 5 Morrisons Peckham, London SE15
- 6 Tesco Swansea Marina
- 7 Tesco Holywell
- 8 Tesco Extra Gallions Reach, London E6
- 9 Serpentine shopping centre, Peterborough
- 10 Tesco Airdrie



Experienced reps find

Activists had the opportunity to study organising, politics, and women in trade unions d

Summer school2 is for activists who have been on summer school1 and/or have been on Academy1 or the branch officer's course. Reps have a choice of three study groups – The Union and Politics, Organising Women Workers and Unions and Organising. It is an essential part of Usdaw's commitment to supporting and developing reps and making sure Usdaw

activists are the best trained and most highly skilled reps in the UK.

It is a demanding six-day residential course held at the impressive Wortley Hall near Sheffield in September. These courses have often been the springboard for activists to go on to get even more involved in the union and always prove popular with reps. For more information visit:

www.usdaw.org.uk/training



**GRACE TIPTON, CO-OP
NORTH WEST DIVISION**

I loved summer school2 it was brilliant. I was in the women and organising group and we looked at all aspects of work and society including family-friendly policies, tax credits, benefits and their impact on our members. The knowledge that you build up gives you all the confidence you need to talk to members and management alike. By the end of the week we were all part of one big happy family, supporting each other, learning from each other and keen to make a big difference in our workplaces. I'm from a family of trade unionists and I see being a rep as my destiny. I'm particularly interested in the learning agenda and I'm busy with a course on teaching in the lifelong learning sector.



**JACQUI THURGOOD,
TESCO EASTERN DIVISION**

I studied politics for the week and I was pleased I chose it because I felt I didn't know enough, but by the end of the course I had taken on a lot of new information. It certainly made me realise politics is for everybody not just those at the top. It makes you think how everything is connected to politics and decisions made about work, education, the NHS, in fact, everything. I've been a rep for six years now and during my first course I remember thinking 'I'm not sure I can do this' but I stuck at it and now friends and family can't believe the change in me. I'm more confident, certainly more knowledgeable and able to help people – not only within my store – but friends and family too.

**TAHIR MAHMOOD, TESCO
SCOTTISH DIVISION**

Studying politics at summer school2 really opened my eyes to the history of the Labour Party, how local councils operate, and how unions have always been involved in the parliamentary process and politics in general.

It was interesting to find out how the union participates in the Labour Party's structures and how individuals can get involved.

In our group we shared ideas and experiences and it was a great way to learn. We ran a street campaign and that was very interesting, so all week we had a variety of activities to keep us busy.

Wortley Hall is a lovely, peaceful place, ideal for learning. It has great facilities and the grounds are beautiful. I'd certainly recommend summer school2 to other activists.

It's an ideal way for reps to grow in confidence and increase their knowledge.



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...e tune their skills

...uring their six day stint at summer school2 in September, *Network* dropped in....



JOHN MCLEAN, MORRISONS SCOTTISH DIVISION

Summer school2 really builds on the experience of summer school1 and brings together a number of strands making it very informative.

I was in the Unions & Organising group and it was great. The tutor Sandie was very supportive. All the reps bounced ideas off each other and we all came away better informed and more capable of doing a good job in our workplaces.

I wish I had signed up to be a rep years ago because in the last three years I have had some great experiences at summer schools, the Annual Delegate Meeting, doing stand-down and helping to sort out members' problems.

I'm learning every day and it makes life more interesting. I'm also very keen to encourage young members to become reps.



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NEWS IN BRIEF • NEWS IN BRIEF



Lucy Powell



Andy Sawford



Stephen Doughty

■ By-election treble victory for Labour

Manchester elected Lucy Powell holding Manchester Central for Labour taking 11,507 votes – 69 per cent of those cast – and won a majority of 9,936.

Meanwhile, Labour's Andy Sawford won by 7,791 votes to take the seat from the Conservatives in Corby, Northamptonshire. Labour took 17,267 votes. The Conservatives received 9,476, UKIP 5,108 and the Lib Dems 1,770.

Completing the trio of new MPs, Labour's Stephen Doughty held the Cardiff South and Penarth seat with 9,193 votes, a majority of 5,334 over the Conservatives.

■ Usdaw supports new maternity campaign

Ushaw is backing a new campaign launched by Maternity Action called 'Valuing Maternity'.

The campaign website is full of advice and information about rights for pregnant women and new parents, including fathers and partners. Maternity Action is also calling for existing parental rights to be protected and extended. Usdaw wants your help to spread the word.

Visit: www.valuingmaternity.org to find out more about rights at work, share your own experience of pregnancy or new parenthood and sign up for campaign news.

■ Shoppers feeling the pain as sales fall

UK retail sales fell by more than expected in October as shoppers cut back on food and clothing purchases, official data shows. The Office for National Statistics said sales volumes fell 0.8 per cent last month, having risen by 0.5 per cent in September. Food stores reported the biggest monthly decline in sales since November 2011.

Free debt advice has a new name

StepChange Debt Charity is the new name for the **Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS)**. They continue to offer the best in free debt advice and solutions to Usdaw members.

You don't have to face debt problems on your own. With the help of the UK's leading debt charity, you can get your finances back on track.

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Online: www.stepchange.org/usdaw



TUC IN CON

The Coalition's austerity policies are hitting

Families haven't yet experienced the full extent of cuts they'll be hit with by this Government over the next few years, general secretary John Hannett told TUC conference.

"The Coalition's £20 billion programme of cuts to benefits and tax credits isn't driven by the need to improve work incentives and opportunities, or a desire to simplify the system, but by their need to cut the deficit and shrink the state," he said.

"The vicious attack on employment rights, thinly disguised as cutting red tape and reducing the regulatory burden on business is matched only in its savagery by its assault on the welfare state.

"The cuts are targeted at the vulnerable – disabled people and families on low incomes, many thousands of them Usdaw members.

"Osbourne's reckless economic strategy has plunged our economy into the first double dip recession for over thirty years.

"Despite this and against the advice of financial experts from across the political and business spectrum, they continue to forge ahead with their flawed programme of austerity measures.

"They are systematically dismantling this country's system of social security support."



CONFERENCE

of the low paid and vulnerable the most

Thousands of innocent victims will miss out on valuable compensation when the Government radically overhauls the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme slashing the funding for victims of violent crime, deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis warned at the conference.

“The scheme is under threat from a Government that knows the cost of

everything and the value of nothing,” he said.

“These changes are a second attack on innocent victims of crime who have already suffered enough.

“Their own research demonstrates the current compensation scheme is both stable and sustainable. The Government’s projected £50 million savings will have almost no impact on the nation’s finances.

“But the impact on the victims of crime and their families will be devastating – 48 per cent of the victims of serious crime who are currently eligible for compensation would receive nothing.

“And to prove that no one is safe from this uncaring Government, even the dependants of those who have been killed by criminals will see their compensation cut too.”



Usdaw's TUC 2012 delegation

TUC march: A Future That Works



Usdaw activists turned out in force for the TUC's march For A Future That Works held in London in October. The national event saw around 150,000 trade unionists on the march. More pictures at: www.usdaw.org.uk/gallery



Reps keep union in the fast lane

Usdaw has around 20,000 members employed in the transport sector and an energetic well-organised team of reps who are delivering a first-class service

Thanks to the fantastic work of our reps and officials, Usdaw continues to prosper in a hostile environment but faces major challenges ahead as the Coalition aims to attack employment rights, national officer Irene Radigan told the transport conference.

"The Tories are pushing through ideological cuts to workers' rights making it easier to sack workers, which is only going to damage the economy and reduce job security," she said. "It is also likely that employers will continue to try to squeeze current terms and conditions in an effort to reduce costs.

"Over the past twelve months Usdaw has negotiated above average pay settlements on behalf of the membership, and Usdaw members covered by a collective bargaining



agreement have received a pay rise significantly higher than the private sector average.

"Over the last five years, the average Usdaw member has received total pay rises worth around 5 per cent more than the wider economy average. This is a fantastic achievement that clearly demonstrates the value of Usdaw membership.

Irene also highlighted the issue of collective

agreements and the opt-out to the night window restrictions. "In recent years, Usdaw's strategy has been to renew opt-out agreements for a life span of one or two years. This strategy has, in some way, helped us to keep our issues on the bargaining agenda.

"However, a number of employers are now stating that they are finding it difficult to accept long-term contracts. Unable to commit to a five year service agreement without having the certainty of a long term collective opt out. Therefore, we all need to consider whether we should continue with this strategy. I'll be interested to receive members' views on this."

Did You Know? Usdaw's Transport Distress Fund paid out more than £6,500 to help relieve members' financial hardship this year.



Employment rights in focus

Research assistant Chris Morris and training officer Jenni Murray led two sessions to alert delegates to the Coalition's attack on employment rights.

Unfair Dismissal Qualifying Period - Increased from 12 Months to Two Years

The extension of the qualifying period for making an unfair dismissal claim to

two years applies to anyone who started their current employment on or after 6 April 2012.

Any employee working for their current employer before this date will continue to be subject to the 12-month qualifying period.

It has been estimated by the TUC that this change will deny nearly three million workers the right to object to unfair dismissal.

The Coalition

Government's own data shows that young people, ethnic minorities and female part-time workers will be most affected by the removal of unfair dismissal rights from employees with less than two years' service:

- Nearly 60 per cent of employees aged 24 and under have less than two years' service.
- 30 per cent of ethnic minority employees have less than two years' service.

- More than 32 per cent of part-time employees have less than two years' service.
- 500,000 female part-time workers will lose out as a result of the 12-month extension to the qualifying period.

There is no qualifying period for submitting a discrimination claim.

The changes to the unfair dismissal qualifying period could result in an increase in discrimination cases.

Understanding pensions auto-enrolment

Recent changes to the pension system are just as important for transport workers as they are for other Usdaw members, Debra Blow pensions officer told conference.

"It's vital that workers in all sectors understand what auto-enrolment is all about. Many Usdaw members will already be in their employers' schemes, however for those who will be auto-enrolled, we would encourage them to think twice before opting out.

"While auto-enrolment officially kicked off in

October it is unlikely we will see the results of it until early next year. We know the big retailers like Sainsbury's for example, have signed up



52,000 members of staff, so it's already having an impact.

"Usdaw wants to help our members understand the changes and we have an array of booklets and leaflets, and a video on the website, which will do just that.

"Yes pensions are complex but our message is simple – it is far better for our members to be in their company pension scheme, where they benefit from both employer's contributions as well as tax free employee contributions, rather than rely on just the state pension to look after them when they retire."



Irene Radigan led the tributes to veteran transport activist Dennis Noble who attended his last conference. "Dennis served on the national transport committee for many years and has been a fantastic rep," said Irene.



Fees for Employment Tribunals

From the summer of 2013, workers who apply to the employment tribunal will be required to pay a fee ranging from £390 to £1,600.

There are two levels of claim, depending upon the complexity of the case. Level 1 cases are the more straightforward claims relating to unpaid wages, redundancy pay, etc, while Level 2 cases are more

complex claims, such as unfair dismissal, discrimination or equal pay. The claimant will pay an initial fee to lodge a claim (issue fee) and a further fee if the claim proceeds to a hearing (hearing fee).

Reducing Consultation Rights over Collective Redundancies

The Coalition is considering proposals to reduce the period for consultation over collective redundancies.

At present, there is a requirement for consultation to begin at least 90 days before the first redundancy if 100 or more employees are to be made redundant. The Coalition is proposing that this consultation period be reduced to 45 or even 30 days.

The deadline for responses to the Government's proposal was 19 September 2012. Usdaw submitted a detailed submission making the case for keeping 90 days as

'a reduction would limit meaningful consultation'.

Employers when considering redundancies are required to consult about ways to avoid redundancies, reduce the number of employees being made redundant and mitigate the consequences of the dismissals.

Usdaw believes that 90 days is needed for meaningful consultation to take place on plans for 100 or more redundancies.

NEWS...NEWS...

■ Glimmer of hope for 'excluded' workers

The fight to secure justice for former Ethel Austin and Woolworths staff denied compensation when the companies collapsed into administration, has moved another step forward thanks to Usdaw.

Udaw won compensation worth nearly £70 million for 25,000 former employees of both companies, but around 4,200 former employees were denied compensation because they worked in stores with fewer than 20 staff.

The decisions to deny compensation to staff who worked in smaller shops are based on the current interpretation of UK law, but at the time they were greeted with outrage.

Udaw pledged to fight this injustice and in November the Chairman of the Employment Appeal Tribunal granted Usdaw leave to move to a full hearing on the basis that the union did have an arguable case. The full hearing is likely to take place in the spring of next year.

General secretary John Hannett said he was "absolutely delighted" with the decision, adding: "Although there is still some way to go, the fight to correct the clear injustice of denying compensation to staff purely on the basis of the size of shop they worked in has now overcome a major hurdle."

■ Sainsbury's posts positive figures

November saw retail chain Sainsbury's post a 2.5 per cent rise in half-year pre-tax profits to £405m, with its market share growing to 16.7 per cent, the highest in almost a decade.

Your opinions

As part of Usdaw's regular direct communications with reps the latest survey again revealed very positive results

More reps than ever before took part in Usdaw's recent survey with 2,356 replies in total.

John Hannett, general secretary was delighted with the feedback. "These are fantastic survey results and are testament to the work we have put in to ensure that Usdaw reps are the best trained and supported reps in the UK trade union movement," he said.

"As well as telling us where we are doing a good job the surveys also tell us where there is room for improvement.

"The good news is that this year's results show a clear upward trend.

"And we have already been improving our resources and support by starting a new rep induction programme in the middle of 2012 (after the survey was launched) and new procedures are in place to ensure that reps get onto their training courses as quickly as possible.

"A new shop steward's handbook (in three parts) was also introduced as were new rep packs.

"I want to say a big thank you to all those reps who took the time to complete the survey and return it.

"Your views are extremely important and I assure you that we will act on the results to ensure that Usdaw is bigger, better and stronger."

Insights into life as a rep: What you told us...

- 53 per cent of reps say that they attend branch meetings
- 25 per cent attend their divisional conference
- 22 per cent have attended the Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM) in the last two years
- Of those who attend ADM, 93 per cent say that it gives them a clear sense of Usdaw's direction and purpose
- Reps generally feel well informed about campaigns with the top four being Freedom From Fear, Parents

- and Carers, Campaign Against Government Cuts and Legal Plus
- 'Protect Employment Rights' was a clear winner for a new campaign idea



Some of the headline results are:

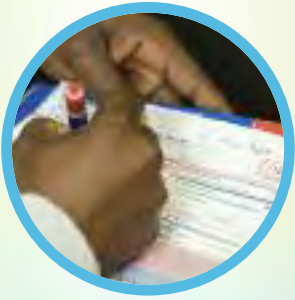
- 94 per cent of reps say they are proud to be an Usdaw rep
- 86 per cent say that Usdaw makes a difference to the working lives of members in their workplace
- 85 per cent say they are able to resolve issues with management
- 84 per cent say they have the resources they need to carry out their role
- 79 per cent say they get the support when they need it from their area organiser

The areas of concern are that only:

- 69 per cent of reps said that they get the training they need when they need it
- 58 per cent of reps said that regular rep team meetings are held in their workplace
- 53 per cent of reps say that they have discussed their development needs with their area organiser in the previous 12-months
- 49 per cent say that their training has been followed up by their area organiser

How you like to communicate

- Traditional methods are still the most popular with contact with area organisers, letters through the post and arena and Network magazines topping the poll
- Of modern communication methods email is the most popular (used by 85 per cent of reps) followed by the internet and text messaging
- There isn't much interest in Facebook as a communication tool and virtually no interest in Twitter



WHO'S NOT IN?

Usdaw is determined to increase its influence by representing more and more workers and Membership Week is a key event

Reps are being urged to start planning their Membership Week recruitment drive now as the union gears up for its first dedicated week in January next year.

The first of two annual recruitment weeks will run from January 21– 27 and will see every area organiser set aside those five days for activities solely designed to maintain Usdaw's position as the fastest growing UK union.

General secretary John Hannett said: "We know we are

stronger and have more influence when we represent the majority of workers and that's what Membership Week is all about.

"It's not just a numbers game. It's about recruiting and organising workers in our sectors so everyone benefits from Usdaw membership both individually and collectively.

"Reps have a vital role to play and will team up with their local area organiser to set up promotional events to target gaps in membership in their stores, factories, warehouses

and offices.

"The Coalition has already started to dismantle workers' rights and has plans to cut or restrict further workers' access to justice so union membership is even more important now.

"Because of the Coalition's austerity policies our members have had to endure the double-dip recession, massive unemployment, high inflation and job insecurity. The more members we have the more influential we can be with not only employers but government as well."



General secretary John Hannett

The one main reason people don't join? They're not asked... Use Network's top tips...

Introduce yourself

This makes for a nice friendly start to any discussion.

Be a good listener

This is the golden rule of 1-2-1. People will not respond to being lectured to or told why they should join the union. Your approach has to take the form of an inclusive discussion.

Ask questions

People invariably respond better to being asked their own views rather than expecting them to listen to your views straight away. You might ask them how long they have been with the company and if there are any issues they think the union should be raising.

Be prepared

Try and anticipate what people might raise with you by finding out about them and what might interest them, in advance. If you are familiar with the reasons why people do and don't join unions and with the type of objections people raise about joining unions, then very few things that people raise will come as a surprise to you.

Make your points

You should know in advance what the key things are that you need to say to people. Make sure that you get them into the discussion.

Use success stories

People will be more convinced by examples of what the union has done for people in real life than by lists of theoretical benefits to join Usdaw.

Use your own experience

Say how you found joining Usdaw to be a positive experience. Remind people that you are still a worker that shares

exactly the same concerns as them, even though you are now a rep.

Take action

If people raise issues with you, give them a clear indication of what you are able to do about it. If possible, tell them when you intend to raise their issues and when you can tell them the outcome.

Be honest

If you are not able to explain what the union can do about issues at the time, say so. Take a note, promise to make some enquiries and then come back to them. You will have to accept criticism of the union and maybe yourself. Nothing or nobody is perfect and people respect you more when you accept justified criticism.

Sign them up

Make sure that you give people a chance to fill in an application form there and then, or make an arrangement to collect the form at a later date.

Make yourself available

Make sure people know where and how they can contact you. Leave details of times when you are available, etc.



Display on your union noticeboard

MEMBERSHIP WEEK

21 - 27 JANUARY 2013



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**to scan the code, download a QR reader app from your app store. A charge may be applied by your network provider.

Usdaw
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

*calls charged at local rates

In conversation...



...with potential members. What they might ask and how you can assure them that Usdaw is the right decision

What can the union do for me?

- Negotiate pay and conditions.
- Represent you at grievance and disciplinarys, with a professional union official when necessary.
- Provide free legal cover.

I can't afford the subscriptions

- Your union subscriptions are less than the cost of a bus ride or a drink in a pub each week.
- You wouldn't drive your car without insurance or leave your house uninsured, so think of union subscriptions as insurance at work.

I'm too young/old to worry about joining the Union

- The union's experience is that young workers are more likely than anyone to have problems at work.
- If management want to make a decision that someone won't like, they are far more likely to single out a recent, young starter than a long-serving, trusted employee.
- If you're due to retire, it's really important to get it right as far as your pension and holiday pay, etc are concerned.
- Don't think you'll have no problems in your last few years at work because there's a good chance you'll need the union.

Unions are for white men – they're not interested in anyone else

- If you look at the union's negotiating agendas you'll see they're packed with claims about childcare and part-time work – issues crucial to women members.
- The union has a specialist equalities team, that works full-time, making sure that the issues affecting all of our members are addressed.
- The union's legal department has won hundreds of sex and race discrimination cases on behalf of members.

Why should I join the Union, I get all the same benefits anyway?

- No you don't! True, you get the same terms and conditions that the union negotiates for its members. But you wouldn't be entitled to union advice or representation and you would have to meet your own legal costs if you had a serious problem or accident at work.
- Anyway, are you happy for your work colleagues to pay their union subscriptions and for you to benefit while paying nothing? And remember, every person who doesn't join, weakens the union and reduces the chances of getting a good deal at work for everyone.

I'm not interested in going on strike

- Going on strike is not what the union is there for. Unions resolve thousands of issues for thousands of workers day in, day out, without going on strike.
- If unions do go on strike, it is over a very serious issue and only after a fully democratic ballot of all the members affected.
- The image of unions as interfering, trouble causing, strike-obsessed organisations is an out-of-date stereotype blown out of all proportion by biased media coverage.
- You can bet the journalists who write that rubbish are in their union in case they have a problem at work!





ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH

North Eastern division's **Valerie Forrest** answers our questions on her experiences as a rep

“Go for it! You will get all the help and training you need and the weekend schools are full of information. You will not regret it.”

Valerie's advice to potential reps

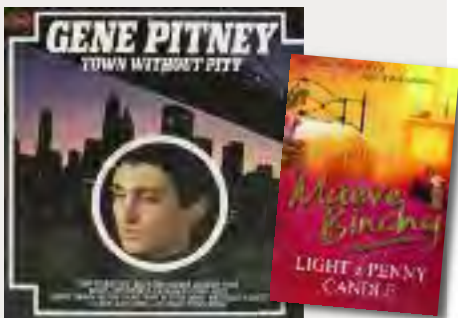
FACT FILE & TRIVIA

FAST FACTS

- **Employer** Retired from Co-op
- **Occupation** Previously a shop supervisor
- **Age** 64
- **Lives** Felling, Tyne & Wear
- **Branch** Tyneside Co-op F70
- **Usdaw Activist** Since 1994
- **Union positions** Branch chair

MY FAVOURITE...

- **Music...** Gene Pitney
- **Book...** Light a Penny Candle by Maeve Binchy
- **TV...** Holby City
- **I spend my spare time...** Looking after my youngest granddaughter during the school holidays. I also make cards and have started making jewellery.



Want to be the next activist in-depth?

 network@usdaw.org.uk

Why did you become an Usdaw rep?

We didn't receive our voting papers so we called for a special meeting, where we discovered that our boss at the time had voted for us all.

I didn't become a shop steward then, but I did become the person that got all the mail. I also went to all the branch meetings.

Kath Kennedy became shop steward, and when she retired I took over.

What's good about being active?

You have so many colleagues to turn to when you need information at central office, the divisional office and branch office. The best moment was when I got a member of staff off a disciplinary for theft and all the staff that were not in the union signed up - result!

..any downsides?

When your member doesn't tell you the whole story. If things don't go the way a member thinks it should, they tell everybody. So when things go OK you have to blow your own trumpet.

Been on any training courses?

Yes. The basic training reps courses. The first was at Newcastle TUC and the second in Sunderland. They gave me so much confidence. I have just come back from a branch officers course in Warrington with teachers Jenni Murray and Mark Bibby. I would recommend the course to everyone. Jenni is so informative. Once again I came away with more confidence.

Valerie and 16 other recently elected officials came together at the Warrington training centre for October's branch officers' course. If you'd like to know more visit: www.usdaw.org.uk/training

Have you changed at all since becoming a rep?

Yes. I am more outspoken because I know what I'm talking about and it's given me the confidence to take on managers.

What's surprised you about being an Usdaw rep?

Knowing more than management.

Have you been to ADM?

This was my seventh year at ADM. I have been a delegate for six and a visitor for one. I would encourage everybody who can to go. The debates can be very interesting.

What issues are important to your members?

Redundancies. The Felling Co-op is closing in January.

What law would you introduce as PM?

That everyone who works gets a decent living wage when they are sick and when they retire.

How would you improve Usdaw?

Get more media coverage and get John Hannett on Question Time.

What's next for you?

To live life to the full and do the things I want to do.



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 www.usdaw.org.uk/offers

Unisaver: The union no longer offers the Unisaver savings product as advertised on the member services pages of previous Networks.

Any members who have taken out a policy with Unisaver will not be affected by this change and existing policies will carry on as normal. If you have any queries please contact **Coventry Assurance Society** on 024 7622 3683.

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Usdaw members can make great savings on the following UK attractions and theme parks: Alton Towers Resort, Chessington World of Adventures Resort, LEGOLAND Discovery Centre Manchester, LEGOLAND Windsor Resort, Madame Tussauds London, SEA LIFE centres & Sanctuaries, the Dungeons, THORPE PARK and Warwick Castle. To find out more or to book call 0871 222 4001 and quote **REWARDS** for your special discount or visit www.usdaw.org.uk/merlin



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*Our lines are open 8am-8pm weekdays and 9am-12noon Saturdays. Calls may be recorded and/or monitored. Calls from landline phones are free however mobile providers may charge. Britannia is the trading name of the Co-operative Bank plc. Registered office: PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP. Registered in England and Wales No. 990937.

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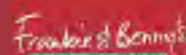
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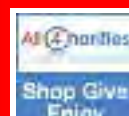


Usdaw members are entitled to 20% off their total food bill when 2 main courses are purchased from the main menu on production of your membership card.

www.frankieandbennys.com

Excludes airport locations. Valid every day except for Mondays from 5pm-11pm and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer including lunch/set menus.

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GARY BOWS OUT

Few union officials can trace their beginnings back to the early '70s but retiring divisional officer Gary Holz can and now he is planning for life after Usdaw

One of the longest serving senior officials – divisional officer Gary Holz – will retire in late December after 42 years of union activism, 37 of those as a member of staff.

Gary, 61, was appointed divisional officer in 1997 having previously served as deputy for four years. He had joined the organising staff in 1975 and was based at the Birmingham office.

His union career began in 1971 when he worked at the Dollond & Aitchison site in the midlands as a maintenance engineer. He was the branch secretary and later the convenor.

Reflecting on a lifetime involvement in Usdaw, he said: "I've been very lucky to have the opportunity to work for the union. Interestingly I'm still dealing with issues like Sunday trading and low pay just like I did back in the early '70s."



"The most important people in Usdaw are the reps and I've had the privilege of seeing many talented activists develop and go on to join the staff as organisers. That's the most pleasing part of the job."

"As an organisation we are far more professional now than we've ever been, we're delivering a better service and offering far more to members."

"Over the years I've been supported by many people and I thank all of my colleagues for that. I also want to remember my mentor the late John Toogood, former divisional officer, who was an inspiration to me."

"I didn't particularly plan my Usdaw career, but I'd do it all again, no hesitation. As for looking ahead, I intend to stay

active in the Labour party and I'll consider new opportunities. I'll also be finding time for my hobbies and watching the Villans at Villa Park."

General secretary John Hannett paid tribute to his long-time friend and colleague. "Gary has done a great job for Usdaw and its reps and members in the Midlands division. Always reliable and committed to the cause, he has brought a professional and measured approach to his leadership of the division."

"I know he is widely respected by reps and staff alike and has made a huge contribution to Usdaw both divisionally and nationally."

"Gary has been an exceptionally loyal senior member of staff and we all wish him the very best for his retirement. I'm sure his contribution to the union and labour movement hasn't finished yet."

Politics beckons for organiser Colin

Southern division area organiser Colin Davies, 56, plans to get involved in politics when he retires in January after 18 years' service with the union.

Colin left his native South Wales when he joined the organising staff at the Andover office in 1994. He looked after retail staff across the Hampshire region including the Isle of Wight.

He had previously worked at Smiths Crisps in Fforestfach, Swansea for ten years, where his union involvement took off first as a shop steward and later as a convenor.

"I've had the opportunity to serve right across the Southern division and see it develop and grow beyond all recognition," he said. "I'm very grateful for the support from the many fine reps I've seen flourish and progress with the union."

"I'll miss working with the activists, the members and also my colleagues and officials within the division. I'll particularly miss the reps on the divisional political committee where I served as the division's political officer."

"But I'm looking forward to a new chapter in local politics and I'm standing as a candidate at the county

elections in May next year.

"I'm also looking forward to spending quality time with my wife Christine and my two sons and two lovely granddaughters."

General secretary John Hannett added: "Good luck to Colin in his political career and many thanks to him for his near 20 years contribution to Usdaw as an organiser."

"He has been a loyal and conscientious official and I'm sure this experience will serve him well in the future."

"On behalf of everyone in the Southern division and at central office we wish Colin a happy and successful retirement."



REPS GET ACTIVE

Usdaw is the fastest growing union in the UK and that's because it has a dedicated team of reps willing to put in the hard-work to make sure their colleagues have the union's protection



Rosaria Sansone

Tesco rep Rosaria Sansone, left, has spent six months working as an Academy Organiser developing her communication skills and knowledge of the union.

"It's been a fantastic experience," said Rosaria who works for Tesco Extra at Gatwick.

IN NUMBERS

MEMBERSHIP FOR WEEK ENDED: 17 NOVEMBER 2012

South Wales & Western.....	50,362
Eastern.....	62,152
Midlands.....	57,112
North Eastern.....	57,378
Scottish.....	45,283
Southern.....	57,721
North West.....	93,694
TOTAL.....	423,702

"I can't believe how much I've changed. I'm more confident and organised and I've enjoyed all the challenges the role has given me – but maybe not the paperwork as I'm Italian and English isn't my first language!

"I've been a member for 18 years and a rep for five. We have a good team of seven reps in my store and we hold monthly meetings with our area organiser. We've worked hard to increase membership to just over 60 per cent.

"I'm hoping my experience with the Academy will help improve on this when I'm back in my store.

"Working with the Academy and organising recruitment activities in different workplaces has given me many opportunities to improve my skills and more importantly help other reps improve theirs.

"It's been a very positive experience. It's good to get feedback from the reps I've worked with who say I've given them more confidence to approach staff and to persuade them to join."



Billy Turton

Awareness days help to profile the union in a very positive way, said academy organiser Billy Turton, centre, after he organised a pension awareness day at the Tesco Extra store in Durham.

"They also raise the profile of the reps and highlight all the benefits of union membership to staff who maybe haven't been interested in finding out

before. Many end up joining.

"I was delighted with how the day went. Four reps from across the shifts were available and we were all kept busy with questions and queries from staff of all ages.

"Most staff join the Tesco pension scheme at 25 so it was very refreshing to see so many youngsters asking for information about pensions and the union, taking

leaflets away and actually wanting to join.

"One young lad said he'd wished he'd joined earlier because it's such a good scheme. Another young woman didn't know anything about Usdaw or pensions and after I chatted with her she joined both.

"And even after the day the reps had people coming to them asking for more information. It went very well."

Raktima Sarkar

Academy Organiser Raktima Sarkar, below, organised a visit to the Tesco Extra store in Cardiff to give members and potential members advice on workers' rights.

"I asked reps in the store and they told me members were concerned because of the current climate and all the changes to employment law and benefits. They didn't know what protection they had from the union and were unsure about their rights at work," said Raktima who works at the Tesco Express in Grangetown, Cardiff.

"I thought it would be a good idea to organise an event around workers rights and speak to members and explain that the union can offer advice and assistance.

"The day went well because we had time to sit down with members and explain how their rep and the union can help them with all kinds of issues no matter what hours they work or which department they work in.

"Lots of people were confused about the changes to state benefits and how it would affect them and their families.

"We also had a lot of interest from younger workers who were unsure how they were protected at work.

"The day went well. We signed up new members and also highlighted the role of their reps who are there to help them."

Liz Moore-Wilson

It's amazing how many members don't know about Legal Plus, said Academy Organiser Liz Moore-Wilson, right, who helped reps organise an event at the Sainsbury's store in Darlington.

"The union puts out lots of literature in the magazines and on the website and reps display information on noticeboards and around their workplaces. But still, members come along on a campaign day and say, I didn't know about the free will writing or I didn't know I could get advice for consumer issues.

"So the awareness days in-store are very important. They give staff the opportunity to speak to a legal professional in private without leaving their workplace.

"And they also encourage new members to join when they hear members say how good the legal cover is and how cheap it is. Thirty new members have joined at the Darlington store over the last month alone.

"Management were really impressed with the day too and have already asked the reps to pencil in another day for next year.



AGE NO BARRIER

The National Youth Weekend has often been the springboard for many young reps to increase their involvement and progress to a lifetime of union activity

What should Usdaw look and feel like to encourage young people to join? – that was the question posed to the activists at this year’s National Youth Weekend.

Held in Warrington, the annual event is now in its 19th year and continues to be popular with up-and-coming activists who get the chance to meet up with like-minded reps to share their experiences and discuss important issues.

The busy weekend saw activists work in groups to create a 60 second film that would encourage young people to join Usdaw. The challenge saw everyone participate and the finished articles were presented on the Sunday to the whole group.

Weekend organiser and deputy head of education Claire Simpson was impressed with the results. “This exercise made everyone think about how Usdaw can appeal to young workers. It was fascinating to see the variety of approaches and it went down well with the reps.”

General secretary John Hannett and deputy Paddy Lillis also met up with the activists for a Q&A session on the Sunday. “Young reps are vital to our organising agenda and to ensure we have the experience to carry on our work in the

future,” said John. “Young reps play a vital role in connecting with their fellow workers and making sure they are recruited and represented.

“Although the youth section ‘ends’ when a member or rep reaches 27, this is just the beginning of what can be a very successful Usdaw involvement. Doors will open for our young reps and I’d encourage more to get involved.”

Get involved!

If you’re aged under 27 and need information, advice or support, or you want to get more involved then visit the youth section on the website or contact your divisional youth committee co-ordinator:

www.usdaw.org.uk/youth

Shane Spitty



Shane Spitty, 24, works at Sainsbury’s in Dorset in the Southern division. He’s been a member for five years and a rep for four.

“I’ve had a great time being a rep so far and the amount of opportunities it’s opened up for me has been phenomenal, particularly educational ones,” said Shane.

“The training has been a real eye-opener. I’ve been taught that you don’t need to know every rule and regulation, you just need to know where you can find the information when you need it.

“I think it’s very important for young workers to be in the union. Even when I look back at my experience,

I’d never had a job before. I didn’t know what to expect and you come from an upbringing where your parents set down rules and your school set down rules, so your employer now becomes your teacher and you take for granted what they say is ‘the law’ and it’s not always the case. This is my first youth weekend and I think that making the video was a great idea.”



Nathan Perlini

Nathan Perlini, 26, from the South Wales and Western division works for Tesco. He's been a member for nine years and a rep for six.

"It's important for young workers to be in the union in this day and age as they're a vulnerable group, and you find that not many know about unions when they start work. It needs to be spoken about on a wider scale to young people, possibly in schools and colleges."



Nathan is the newest member of the National

Youth Committee and has also just completed Academy1.

"The reason I became a rep was to support others in a time of need," he said. "I find it very rewarding making sure that people are protected."

"I've never been to the Youth Weekend before and I've found it very interesting. It's nice to go to a conference with people who are the same age as you. I'd definitely recommend the weekend."

Bethany Stewart

First timer Bethany Stewart, 22, from the Scottish division works for a Tesco Express in Edinburgh, and has only been a rep for eight months.

"I'm quite inexperienced as a rep so it's been useful to get to know everyone and hear their stories," she said. "I've gained some useful knowledge that I'll take back with me to my workplace."



Did you know Usdaw has: 65,000 members aged under 27 (15% of the total membership) and 1,100 reps under the age of 27 (10% of total reps)

**Callum Harrison**

Callum Harrison, 22, is from the North West division and works for Poundland in Greater Manchester. He has been a health and safety rep for five years.

"I'm glad I joined Usdaw," said Callum. "I became a rep to get things done and make a

change in the workplace and I feel I'm doing that. Usdaw officials are fantastic, they give you great support when you need it.

"Every Usdaw course I've been on has been unbelievably good, any help I've needed I've received, anything I didn't

understand has been clarified and the training offers a whole new level of support.

"It's my first time at the youth weekend and it's been great. It was tricky to get the 60 second video completed in time but we managed it and it came out really well."



Usdaw gets active o

Members need the union to have a strong political voice as the Coalition continues to... and elected activists – was very visible and vocal at the Labour Party conference in M

John Hannett's call for a living wage was overwhelmingly supported by delegates at the Labour Party conference.

The leader of the fastest growing UK union also called on the Government to stop punishing working people by cutting their in-work benefits.

He said: "The chancellor just doesn't get it. He's cut taxes for millionaires while cutting in-work benefits for low paid people. He needs to understand the more hard-working people are pushed into poverty, the deeper the recession will be.

"The Coalition's cuts are certainly hurting, but they just aren't working and in fact are making the recession worse.

"More than 450,000 children have been plunged into poverty following the Government's disgraceful decision to cut £80 a week from 200,000 of the UK's poorest families.

"We want a living wage so that pay is more fairly distributed. We want hard-working families,

struggling to get by and often unable to get full-time work, to be helped by in-work benefits.

"We want to send a message of hope for millions of people unable to make ends meet, and by adopting the living wage policy working people can look forward to moving themselves and their families out of poverty.

"There is an alternative to the Coalition's austerity policies and today's decision is an important step in providing hope for the UK."

The composite motion agreed by conference read: We call upon the Labour Party to adopt a policy programme including:

- A re-commitment to the abolition of child poverty within a realistic timeframe.
- Working to the introduction of a living wage to end poverty, ensure adequate living standards and incentivise people to work.
- Those who rely on in-work benefits should be able to keep more of their earnings before benefits are withdrawn.

“ There is an alternative to the Coalition's austerity agenda and this decision is an important step in providing hope for the UK ”



“ A country for all, with everyone playing their part. A Britain we can rebuild together ”

Premier-in-waiting Ed Miliband w

Usdaw congratulated Labour leader Ed Miliband for speaking up for the majority of the UK when he pledged to save the NHS, provide a decent education for all young people and to build a nation where everyone is treated fairly.

General Secretary John Hannett said: "Ed Miliband showed he understands the majority of the British

people who care about the NHS, care about their children's education and employment prospects and care about fairness.

"The leader's pledge to rebuild Britain will certainly strike a chord with our members who are fed up of seeing their bills increase, their tax credits cut and their children unable to find a job.

n the political stage

to attack workers' rights, that's why Usdaw's delegation – made up of senior officials Manchester earlier this year and made a big contribution, *Network* was there too...

Ushaw networks with top MPs

MPS TURN OUT IN FORCE TO SUPPORT USDAW

Top ranking MPs and the occasional celebrity made a point of meeting up with Usdaw's delegation at the Labour Party conference.

Labour leader Ed Miliband, shadow chancellor Ed Balls and shadow deputy prime minister Harriet Harman along with comedian Eddie Izzard joined other back bench MPs to meet and greet the Usdaw activists and officials.

It capped a successful week for Usdaw with delegates making important contributions during debates on workers' rights, low pay and the Coalition's austerity policies.

General secretary John Hannett was keen to promote more involvement in the Labour Party from among Usdaw activists. "The political scene is very important for our members and that's why we need a strong coherent voice in local councils and in Westminster," he said. "Our reps can play a critical role in how the Party develops over the next few years."



Learning crucial for workers



“Affordable learning for those most in need and incentives for employers”

Access to learning and skills is a priority more than ever now with many Usdaw members faced with economic uncertainty, deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis told a UnionLearn fringe meeting.

"We have to break down the barriers to encourage individuals whose previous experiences of education have been poor, persuade employers to invest in a workforce, and address the cost and accessibility of learning for low paid workers," he said.

"Union Learning Reps (ULRs) have proven invaluable. They have the ear as well as the confidence of their work-mates. We now have 853 trained ULRs who are actively supporting our members taking that first

step back into learning. Usdaw now generates and supports almost 10,000 learners a year.

"We need a fair and coherent funding framework which provides affordable learning for those most in need, and one that incentivises those employers who invest in training their staff.

"Ushaw sees learning and skills as a critical part of the employment package, as important to our members as paid holidays and a decent pension. We will continue to keep it high on our bargaining agenda to ensure our members have the skills to stay in employment and that companies have the skilled workforce they need to flourish."

Ushaw conference

"I'm confident Ed's vision, which pledged long-term investment in jobs and growth and a message to the banking system to put its house in order, will win the support of British voters.

"Two years into his leadership Ed has shown that his sense of fairness and justice is a refreshing change to the Coalition's divisive policies."



PREPARE NOW FOR WINTER

Safety reps are being urged to make sure their workplaces are ready for the snow and ice this winter and to make all the necessary preparations to minimise hazards to their members

With a cold winter forecast, snow and ice may cause problems for members across the country. Employers should have plans in place to deal with the problem before it happens. Here are some simple tips for health and safety reps to consider in their workplace.

■ Heating systems should have been serviced before the cold weather hits. Employers have a duty to maintain a reasonable temperature in indoor workplaces at all times. Regulations state that 16°C (or 13°C for physically strenuous work) is normally the minimum requirement. There will

be some indoor workplaces where this cannot be done. In such cases employers should try to minimise the time spent in the cold. They should also take other steps such as providing suitable protective clothing.

■ For outside workers, minimising exposure, protective clothing and access to somewhere warm for rest breaks are required.

■ If the heating breaks down or can't cope in exceptional cold spells, then the employer should have a back-up policy in place. Temporary heating, free hot drinks, relaxing uniform and dress codes, more frequent breaks may all be appropriate depending on

the circumstances.

■ Employers should stock up on salt and grit so that yards, delivery areas, points of access etc. can be kept as clear of ice as possible to ensure the safety of people using them.

■ Gritting paths and pedestrian routes before ice has formed is more effective than gritting after the path is frozen.

■ Employers should try to avoid the build-up of compacted snow and ice on main pedestrian routes.

■ Leaking pipes and spillages should be repaired and cleared to stop ice forming and creating slip hazards.

■ Good lighting in and around the

workplace can also reduce the risk of an accident.

■ Warm clothing is important when working in cold conditions where it is difficult to maintain a reasonable minimum temperature. This should be issued as Personal Protective Equipment if a risk assessment dictates and should not be left to the whim of a manager.

Usdaw reps should regularly inspect the workplace and ensure control measures are implemented to minimise the risk to members during cold periods.

Driving at work

Members who drive lorries or delivery vans can really struggle in winter weather.

■ Employers should provide refresher training on defensive driving in winter.

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

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

■ Close attention should be paid to weather forecasts and road conditions

and practical adjustments to schedules and delivery times should be made.

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

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

■ Uniform jackets, trousers etc. should be suitable for winter conditions. If hi-vis jackets are worn over other clothing they should be big enough to fit over bulkier winter wear.

■ There should be a system to alert the depot if a driver fails to arrive at expected

delivery points and to check that all drivers do return to base.

For all of us, travel to and from work can be a problem when snow and ice is around. People are advised to follow government advice on whether it is safe to travel. If you drive your own car to work there is useful government advice on driving in winter conditions. Check out the Highways Agency advice at www.highways.gov.uk

Basic guarding failures cause machinery accidents

Two recent HSE prosecutions of food manufacturers demonstrate the importance of making sure that dangerous machinery is properly guarded to prevent access.

Malton Foods Ltd, North Yorkshire, were fined £12,000 plus costs after a worker's fingers got caught between a conveyor belt and a powered drum roller. Although his hands were freed in less than a minute, he suffered severe crush injuries

to the end of his left index finger that resulted in long-term nerve damage and limited movement. The ring and middle finger on his right hand were also injured.

Multinational Cargill PLC was fined £35,000 and ordered to pay prosecution costs of £12,484 after the glove on a worker's left hand was drawn into the rollers of a wheat milling machine in their Manchester factory.

The worker suffered significant

injury to his hand and index finger. The HSE found that a lockable plastic guard, which prevented access to the roller was rarely used. Despite a similar injury a year before, the company still expected workers to put their hands under the rollers when they were running.

In both incidents, basic machinery guarding would have prevented access to the danger zone and the injuries could easily have been prevented.

Sign up to learn

Usdaw offers first-class training for members who want to play a more active part in the union. The health and safety reps' follow-on course is a three or five-day course aimed at safety reps who have been on the introductory course with a more in-depth look at issues.



Austerity keeps stress at top of H&S survey

The results of the 10th biennial TUC Safety Reps Survey have been released and stress has once again topped the survey.

The top five most common hazards cited by safety reps are stress, bullying/harassment, overwork, back strains and slips, trips and falls.

The key results of the 2012 survey show:

- Little under half (45 per cent) of reps said that as far as they know, a health and safety inspector has never visited their workplace
- Just 28 per cent said their workplace had been inspected over the last 12

months.

Commenting on the survey, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "Fears about how austerity is affecting people's jobs and their families is having a real impact on the health and well-being of UK workers.

"As the workload rises so do the stress levels of over-worked employees, which leads to a greater risk of bullying and harassment as stressed-out supervisors take out their frustrations on staff.

"Government spending cuts are also having a big effect on the likelihood of workplaces receiving visits from HSE or council safety inspectors.

Hazard	2008	2010	2012
Stress	60%	62%	69%
Bullying/harassment	20%	37%	41%
Overwork	-	29%	33%
Back strains	31%	33%	32%
Slips, trips and falls	33%	32%	32%

"A growing number of employers now seem content to let safety standards slip, so confident are they that an inspector is unlikely to call and hold their workplace safety policies to account.

"Meanwhile the message coming from government is that much of health and safety regulation is needless red tape. But last year 173

workers died at work and thousands more were made ill by their jobs because their employers didn't place a high enough premium on their safety.

"Unions campaigning to improve workplace safety are clearly going to have their work cut out in the coming year."

The full survey report can be found at: www.tuc.org.uk

Law change threatens injury claims

A last minute clause added to the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill could make it more difficult for workers to claim for work-related injuries.

Workers have had an automatic right to compensation if their injury results from a breach of health and safety regulations. The new clause could remove that right.

The Government argues that the change is intended to meet a recommendation of the Lofstedt

review of health and safety. The review had asked whether it was reasonable for employers to have to pay compensation when there is 'strict liability'. For example, where an injury is caused by the unforeseen failure of a piece of equipment, even though the employer had done everything that could be expected of them to maintain the equipment. Some employers' organisations argued it was unfair to expect employers to pay when they were not at fault.

But as the TUC points out, where an employee goes to work and uses work equipment provided to them by their employer, if they are injured because it is faulty – even if the employer was unaware of that – it seems unreasonable to expect that loss to

fall on the injured employee rather than the employer. After all it is the employer who supplied the equipment and controls how it should be used. Regardless of fault it is, therefore, the employer and not the employee who creates the risk.

Most claims are currently brought in respect of both breach of statutory duty and negligence. If the possibility of bringing a claim for breach of statutory duty is removed and only a claim for negligence is available, most claims would continue to be brought in respect of negligence. Some claims will no longer be accepted and this will result in workers, or their dependants losing out on compensation.

There is a real concern among experts and unions that the proposed change in the law will cause more confusion and will send the wrong message to employers about their responsibility for workers' safety.

IN BRIEF

■ Factory inspectors union celebrates success

To celebrate 40 years since the launch of the Robens report – which led to the Health & Safety at Work Act - Prospect union has compiled 40 stories from the HSE's front line inspectors on its 40@40 website. Each story is a personal recollection from an inspector showing the ways in which the law has saved lives and made an impact. <http://library.prospect.org.uk/id/2012/01152>

■ Health and safety enforcement down again

The number of inspections carried out by the HSE and local authorities has fallen again this year. The HSE issued 8,480 enforcement notices, down 23 per cent from the previous year.



STAR LETTER

REP'S PROGRESS

L-earning a living

I am married with two children and work as a bakery assistant at Morrisons Lindsayfield in East Kilbride.

I attended a ten week computer course and went on to do a course in British Sign Language (BSL) which I found very interesting. With most of this being held at work it was convenient and at no cost to those attending. It was also accessible to more people. I have also enjoyed the home study courses.

In June 2011 I attended college for the union learning representative level one course and more recently a few of us completed our BSL1 course which was

great. I have completed an e-learning course and am hoping to do a disability champion at work course next.

Once you start learning you want to do more and it is great for confidence building and wellbeing. I would recommend anyone to try it and hopefully we can get more people interested in trying out new things.

FRAN O'CONNOR
West of Scotland Morrisons G131

£50 UP FOR GRABS!

Write to the editor of Network and you could win £50 if your letter is chosen as the star letter.

This issue's winner is **Fran O'Connor**

MASSIVE TURNOUT FOR FAMOUS EVENT

Usdaw on show at the Durham Miners Gala

Around 100,000 people attended the 128th Durham Miners Gala in the summer, which for the first time in over 23 years saw the current Labour Party leader Ed Miliband attend.

Usdaw were present, for the second year, with North Eastern division showing our support.

The deputy secretary of Durham Miners Gala Association Dave Hopper led the march on behalf of president David Guy who was in hospital.

Dave Hopper asked for the members present to back the leadership and allow Ed to lead the Party. He also spoke of the continuation of the gala, which over time has

grown to incorporate many trade union banners on the march making it the biggest trade union event in the country. He also named several unions including Usdaw.

This year also saw a record number of marching bands playing and about 80 trade union banners.

On a sad note David Guy passed away the following week. He had been president for 27 years – a great servant to the trade union and labour movement.

BARRY WIGGINS
North Eastern divisional council member



EDDIE'S TEDDIES

Make a child smile



Here is Eddie Fairbrass from Tesco Express in Colliers Wood with some of the teddies she had made for the teddies for tragedies charity.

The teddies are sent to areas where disasters have struck to help give traumatised children the help and reassurance they need.

Eddie felt that there must be loads of our members who can knit and with the long winter nights approaching, they might like to have a go at knitting a simple teddy to give some comfort to a child in need.

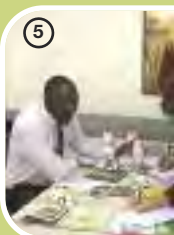
Handy tip: a Primark pillow provides sufficient stuffing for half a dozen teddies!

Please visit their website for more information and patterns.

www.teddiesfortragedies.org.uk

SUE MERRELL
Deputy divisional officer
Southern division

PICTURE ROUND-UP: From Barnsley via Switzerland to the Isle of Wight



1. The hard working night reps at Tesco Extra Bournemouth - (clockwise from top left) Tomas, Przemek, Albert, Linda and Maria. 2. Carrie Fineran and Barry & Lorraine Jolliffe (H065) reps Tayo Ogunmoroti campaigning at Tesco Leigh 6. Rehana Kosar with UNI general secretary Philip Jennings at their headquarter's in Switzerland - on the prize trip she won at January's Org

OBITUARY

Jimmy Cook

It is with great regret that I have to report that Scottish Usdaw veteran and stalwart Jimmy Cook died in September. He was 84.

Jimmy was a member of east of Scotland General branch and joined Usdaw in 1954. He had been active ever since serving as branch chair, secretary on the divisional equalities and political committees, and divisional retired committee.

Jimmy was a huge asset to Usdaw and offered reps young and old the benefit of his experience and knowledge.

He will be sadly missed by all who had the privilege to know him.

PETER DEVINE
Executive councillor
Scottish division

SEND YOUR LETTERS AND PICTURES TO:

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

 network@usdaw.org.uk

OBITUARY

Tribute to Denis Edgar

It is with deep regret and sadness that I have to report the death in October of veteran union man Denis Edgar, he was 75.

Since the early 1990s Denis was very active within the Tesco F101 branch.

He always encouraged others to get involved and was an inspiration to all that knew him.

Denis, while small in stature, had a big personality and would argue forcefully for what he strongly believed in. Proudly working class he would campaign with pride and determination for his beliefs.

He held many positions within Usdaw's retired members section was also a conference regular.

He was such an energetic man age did not deter him from being an active member well into retirement.

Denis will be sadly missed but certainly not forgotten and will always be in our thoughts.

ALLAN KELL, NE Tesco North F101



OBITUARY

Robert Wood

Robert Wood, shop steward for Tesco Fort William, sadly passed away suddenly in September. He was 41.

Robert was a relatively new rep and it is a tragedy he didn't get the chance to realise the undoubted potential he showed so enthusiastically.

Robert's sudden death profoundly affected all of his work colleagues, friends and family.

I would like to take this opportunity to pass on my condolences.

ALAN MCVIE
Area organiser,
Glasgow office

OBITUARY

Eastern division's stalwarts remembered

It is with great sadness that I share the news of the death of two Eastern division stalwarts John Steward 71, and Tom Woodrough 87.

John joined Usdaw in 1966 and was a leading member of the Nestle Rowntree branch in Norwich. He studied at Ruskin College and was a very regular attendee at ADM, right up until recently.

He was a perfect gentleman - a man of few words, but spoke volumes with a great sense of humour.

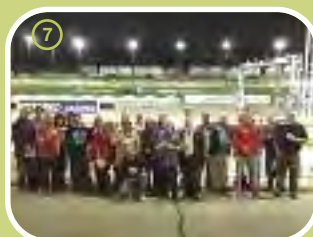
Tom joined Usdaw in 1949 as senior

caretaker at the London office.

In those days there were lots of industrial conferences and meetings held at Dilke House during the week and at weekends and nothing was too much trouble for Tom and his staff.

John and Tom, are a very sad loss to Usdaw and our thoughts and best wishes go to their family and friends at this difficult time.

NORRIE SLATER
Divisional officer, Eastern division

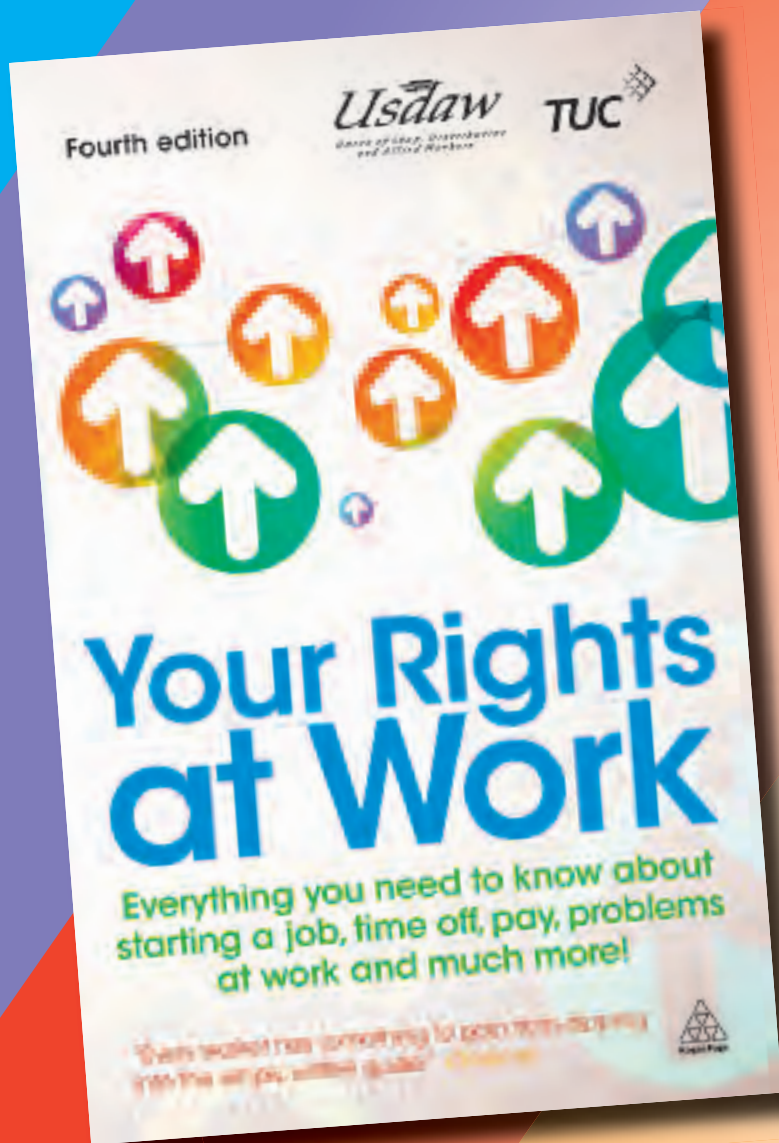


present Usdaw for the first time at the Isle of Wight Garlic Festival. 3. North Eastern division Academy1 campaigning in Barnsley. 4. Flo Nash from Birmingham (E130) 5. Academy organiser organising Awards. 7. Summer School1 on a well deserved evening off at the dog racing. 8. Mandy Sutton from Tesco Dover (H84). 9. Enid Marrable from Tesco Chelmsford (C35).

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