

NETWORK

THE BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR USDAW ACTIVISTS | MAY/JUNE 2022

BACK TO BLACKPOOL

USDAW'S ANNUAL DELEGATE
MEETING SETS THE AGENDA

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- Learn more about Usdaw.
- Network with other young activists.
- Debate the issues that affect you.
- Take part in Usdaw's Young Workers' Week.



USDAW

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NO RESPITE FROM SPIRALLING COSTS

Ofgem recently announced that the energy price cap is expected to rise by £830 to £2,800 in October. This announcement comes against the backdrop of working people already being battered by soaring inflation and rising food, fuel and energy costs.

Every time you turn on the TV or radio, you hear of working people having to choose between heating and eating, others are going without food to feed their kids, and yet more are turning off fridges, freezers and washing machines to save money. You would not believe that this is 2022 and we are living in one of the richest countries in the world.

Tory MPs have shown just how out of touch they are with working people by going on TV and telling people to work more hours or to buy cheaper brands of food. But let's be clear, this is not a crisis about budgeting, people aren't going hungry because they don't know how to budget their money. Nor is this a crisis that will be fixed by people wearing jumpers to stay warm or by switching to cheaper brands of food, this crisis needs political intervention.

Following the publication of the Sue Gray report, which investigated lockdown-breaking parties in Downing Street and concluded that many of the gatherings breached Covid rules, the Government hastily announced a windfall tax. The



windfall tax barely covers half the increase in energy costs, which have more than doubled in just over six months and totally ignores rocketing fuel and food prices.

This is simply not good enough. We need urgent action from the Government to help low-paid workers through the cost of living crisis. We need a new deal for workers with a minimum wage of at least £12 per hour, and immediate increase to all social security payments by at least the level of inflation to protect the most vulnerable in our society.

Udaw General Secretary

Paddy Lewis

When you have finished with this magazine, give it to a workmate.

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RISING COSTS CAUSING POVERTY

In the midst of spiralling inflation, Ofgem forecast that the energy price cap is likely to rise to £2,800 in October and could raise the typical fuel bill by £800. Working people are already struggling with the cost of living crisis which has seen inflation rise to 11.1 per cent, a 40-year high.

Up until now the Government had ignored repeated calls for more help for the millions of people struggling to make ends meet.

Usdaw's cost of living survey of over 6,500 workers lays bare the scale of the difficulties. Key findings are:

- 82 per cent of working parents feel worse off now than they did last year. More than a quarter of all parents have missed meals in the last year to pay bills.
- Two-thirds are significantly cutting down on heating in order to cope. Shockingly, a quarter will no longer use the heating at all.

Following the publication of the Sue Gray report, which investigated lockdown-breaking parties in Downing Street and



concluded that many of the gatherings breached Covid rules and there was a failure of leadership, the Government announced a windfall tax.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "It has been deeply damaging to our members' health and wellbeing to see the Government spend months denying the need for Labour's windfall tax. Now that they have finally conceded, it is disappointing that the support offered barely covers half the increase in energy costs, which have more than doubled in just over six months.

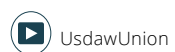
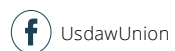
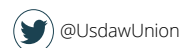
"Today the chancellor has totally ignored

rocketing fuel and food prices, which have driven inflation to its highest rate in 40 years. The Government is clearly out of touch with the real lives of low-paid working people, as they fiddle at the edges instead of bringing forward a comprehensive package of support in an emergency budget.

"Usdaw continues to call for an immediate increase to all social security payments by at least the level of inflation, the grants announced today are simply not enough. Low-income households, pensioners and disabled people deserve better than the derisory 3.1 per cent increase they

received this year.

"There also needs to be lasting and fundamental change to the way society views workers. We need a New Deal for Workers: a minimum wage of at least £12 per hour, an end to insecure employment, along with fundamental reform of Universal Credit to provide proper social security. Going to work should mean a decent standard of living for all workers."



PENSIONS

CLOSE THE GENDER PENSION INCOME GAP

Usdaw is calling for action to address the significant pension income gap between men and women. Studies show that the pension income gap currently stands at 38 per cent, which is twice the current gender pay gap.

Analysis by the TUC showed that in the wholesale and retail sector, women between 45 and 64 have just 19 per cent of the pension wealth of male colleagues.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "The gender pension income gap is nothing short of scandalous. The most obvious reason for this disparity is the unequal division of caring responsibilities. Women are much more likely to take time out of work or reduce their working hours to look after children or provide care for adults and this makes it difficult to build up a workplace pension.

"Women have historically earned less than men, due to the gender

pay gap and because a large number of women work part-time they do not always meet the eligibility criteria to be auto-enrolled into workplace schemes. It's not just workplace pensions that are impacted. There are historical differences in national insurance resulting in women receiving lower state pensions. Usdaw has also been highlighting the errors made by the DWP, resulting in many women receiving underpaid state pensions.

"This unequal treatment is outrageous and we urge the Government to acknowledge this issue and review the auto-enrolment legislation, which will further help women to close the gap. Usdaw is committed to campaigning and supporting our members, along with our workplace reps raising pension awareness and encouraging conversations around money and planning for the future. Our campaigning also seeks to tackle the

deep-rooted inequalities in society."

Usdaw has already called on Government to:

- Reduce the minimum age for workers to be enrolled into a pension scheme from 22 to 18, to encourage early saving for retirement.
- Scrap the current earnings threshold of £10,000, to help low-paid, part-time and multiple job workers, who are predominantly women, to get on the first rung of the savings ladder.
- Gradually increase the current minimum contribution rate of 8 per cent (employers currently only have to contribute a minimum of 3 per cent).
- Support the introduction of state auto-enrolment contribution credits for those who take a career break which could potentially make a significant difference in reducing the pensions gender gap.

ASSAULT AT WORK GRANT

NEW GRANT TO HELP THOSE INJURED AT WORK

Usdaw has introduced an Assault at Work grant, for members who sustain an injury arising from an act of violence whilst in the course of their work. The grant is subject to a number of qualifying conditions including:

- Reporting the incident formally at their place of work;
- Attending their GP or A&E to ensure a proper record is taken;
- Have continuing physical and/or a temporary anxiety condition which lasts at least 6 weeks and which is supported by medical records;

- Reporting the incident to the police and have a crime reference number;
- Registering the incident as a potential claim through FirstCall Usdaw within two years of the date of the incident.

The grant can only be claimed through a personal injury claim. Once the claim is registered and being investigated, Usdaw will identify potential claims and contact

the member.

If reps are aware of any members who may be eligible, they should advise them to register their personal injury claim with: **FirstCall Usdaw on 0800 055 6333.**

All payments of the grant are at the discretion of the union and if any subsequent claim is successful and the member receives compensation for their injuries the grant is repayable by the member.



SAVE OUR SHOPS

LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD WITH ONLINE TAX



In response to a government consultation on the introduction of an online sales tax, Usdaw argued the current business rates system is not fit for purpose as it places bricks and mortar retailers at a significant disadvantage to online retail.

Udaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "The current system, in effect, amounts to nothing more than an unfair 'shops tax' and action has to be taken to level the playing field.

"Cutting the 'shops tax' will help protect shops from closure, encourage growth in high street retail, reinvigorate our struggling town and city centres, allow retailers to innovate and importantly protect and create jobs. That is the best way to tackle the problem of empty shop units.

"The case for introducing an online tax has grown as more UK

retail sales have shifted online. The Coronavirus pandemic accelerated this shift as lockdowns forced closures of non-essential retailers, and record numbers of people began shopping online. Usdaw supported these lockdowns as a public health necessity, but they had the effect of further inflating the artificial competitive advantage held by online retail.

"We recognise the development of a new online sales tax will require careful economic and legal consideration. However, given the strength of the economic case for reform, the introduction of an online sales tax would be a fair and balanced approach to achieving a more level playing field between online and bricks and mortar retail."

Udaw recognises concerns about the potential impact of this on the economy and we believe they can be addressed by:

- Collecting it annually, rather than at the point of purchase, to minimise the risk of costs being passed on to consumers.
- Setting it at a level that minimises impact on growth and investment within retail. A 1 per cent or 2 per cent online sales tax could create a significant and meaningful long term income stream.
- Excluding 'click and collect' and orders made in store but delivered at home. This would mitigate the impact on multi-channel retailing that drives footfall on our high streets.
- Closing any online marketplace loopholes to ensure the levy is not simply passed on to smaller retailers, as part of the wider problem of tackling corporate tax avoidance.
- Considering exemptions for small businesses to mitigate any negative impact.

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WELSH CONGRESS 2022

USDAW PRESIDENT ON COST OF LIVING CRISIS



Jane Jones

Usdaw sent a delegation of reps and officials to attend the Biennial Congress of Wales TUC in Llandudno in May. Moving a proposition on the cost of living, Usdaw president Jane

Jones called for action to tackle the growing cost of living crisis.

“Spiralling household bills are putting many under pressure at a time when real wages are now

lower than in 2008,” said Jane. “The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has found that poverty has risen steeply in recent years, with 23 per cent of Welsh people now in poverty. Increased energy, food and fuel prices, along with the removal of the £20 weekly uplift to Universal Credit, are having a devastating impact on families in Wales.

“We welcome the actions of the Welsh Government to combat the cost of living crisis, including emergency measures to help offset the Universal Credit cut and the £51m household support fund. We call on the Welsh Government to deliver a new deal for workers so that Wales truly becomes a fair work nation.”

TAX CREDITS TO UNIVERSAL CREDIT

CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO VOLUNTARY SWITCH

The Government is re-starting the process of moving tax credit claimants onto Universal Credit, which was paused during the pandemic.

Some people will be automatically migrated over when their circumstances change, but the Government is also encouraging people to voluntarily switch.

Claimants moved onto Universal Credit by the Government, in a process called ‘managed migration’, are entitled to transitional protection, which means their benefits income will not decrease. Whereas if a claimant moves voluntarily and finds they are worse off, there is no way to go back to tax credits and no entitlement to transitional protection.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy

Lillis says: “Many low-paid workers already claim in-work tax credits or Universal Credit. With the cost of living crisis now being felt by millions, lots of people will be checking their entitlement as they struggle to make ends meet.

“The Government is saying that tax credit claimants can be better off on Universal Credit, but we know that is not always the case. Each household’s situation is different and around a third of people will almost certainly be worse off under Universal Credit than on tax credits, possibly more.

“So unless a claimant is absolutely sure they will be better off on Universal Credit, it is likely to be better to stay on tax credits and wait until they are migrated by the Department for Work & Pensions.

“We urge members to ‘look before you leap’ by contacting benefits experts, such as Turn2Us or Citizens Advice, for some professional advice before switching.”

www.turn2us.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP

FOR WEEK ENDED
21 MAY 2022

South Wales	
& Western	42,330
Eastern	51,650
Midlands	48,149
North Eastern	49,878
Scottish	36,796
Southern	51,521
North West	78,610
Total	358,934



ADM SETS THE AGENDA

Paddy Lillis



Dave McCrossen



Jane Jones

Kate McLeod



Delegates gathered in the Winter Gardens in Blackpool for the 75th Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM). ADM is the biggest event in Usdaw's calendar and was the first in-person ADM for three years, with around 1,000 delegates, visitors and officials attending.

General secretary Paddy Lillis, deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen and president Jane Jones hosted ADM, while executive council member Kate McLeod ensured the smooth running of ADM as chair of the standing orders committee.

Delegates took part in debates and voted on propositions to decide the union's policies and priorities for the next 12 months.

Wages, education, crime, housing, health and safety, benefits and the environment were all debated by passionate speakers, many of whom were first time delegates.

Delegates also heard from Rosena Allin-Khan, MP for Tooting and the shadow cabinet minister for mental health, who thanked key workers and outlined what a Labour government could do for them including better mental health provisions, secure jobs, affordable homes, a plan to tackle the cost of living crisis, safe streets and an NHS free at the point of use.

"Our Annual Delegate Meeting is effectively the union's parliament and provides members with the

opportunity to raise their issues of concern and make our policy," said Paddy.

"We had a packed agenda and it is clear that members are very concerned about the cost of living crisis, with RPI at its highest rate in over 30 years, the Government has simply failed to understand the scale of the challenge faced by millions of workers across the country.

"Ushaw members welcomed their key worker status during the pandemic but that appreciation must not now fade into the background.

"We had many lively debates on the core issues affecting the lives of working people."

ECONOMY AND FINANCE DEBATE

COST OF LIVING CRISIS TOPS AGENDA AT ADM

Usdaw delegates debated the cost of living crisis, business rates and credit limits during the Economy and Finance debate.

TROY WIBBERLEY F009

"Where I live, the town centre is a ghost town. Buildings are empty and pubs and restaurants are conspicuously quiet. We cannot depend on big business. We need lower business rates to entice small and medium sized businesses back into our centres."

ANGELA CROFT H065

"People were struggling to pay their rent and bills last year which is only going to get worse this year because of the massive increase in energy costs, food and fuel. Working people shouldn't be facing a choice between eating and heating. This is having a detrimental impact on people's mental health. Workers need help."

GILLIAN TROUGHTON F039

"We don't want to let the Government off the hook. Don't let them tell you that the cost of living crisis has been caused by the war in Ukraine. It hasn't. It's been years in the making. This is a political crisis caused by a Government that cancelled the Universal Credit uplift, got rid of triple lock and raised national insurance, which is hitting the poorest the hardest."

SYED NAQVI H017

"People are struggling to make ends meet and credit can be a lifeline for them. It can get them through a tough patch. But we need to limit how much they can borrow to avoid them getting into debt they can't get out of."

GENERAL SECRETARY'S RESPONSE

"Successive Tory governments have insisted that our welfare system is not worth investing in, they have brutally devalued both the system and those who rely on it and they've tried to make the case that government should not intervene to support those in need. Given the support we saw during the pandemic and the positive impact this had on protecting jobs and livelihoods, it's clear that the Government is able to act but just choosing not to.

"Usdaw is deeply concerned about the Government's lack of meaningful support for those on low incomes. Our cost of living survey found that three-quarters of members have struggled to pay gas and electricity bills, two-thirds are relying on borrowing to pay everyday bills and almost three-quarters believe that financial issues are affecting their mental health.

"The Conservative's self-created cost of living crisis is affecting every part of our daily lives. Let's be clear, the Government could help fund childcare, they could reverse the



Gillian Troughton



Troy Wibberley

National Insurance increase, they could use a windfall tax on energy companies to support those in fuel poverty and they could restore the £20 uplift in Universal Credit. They are making a choice not to implement these policies and a choice not to deliver for working people."

DELEGATES BACK BOXING DAY CLOSING

Usdaw deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen said: "The Christmas build up seems to start earlier every year and it can be an incredibly stressful time. Busy stores, long hours, and unacceptable spikes in abuse from customers all adds up to a workforce that is both physically and emotionally exhausted by the time stores finally close their doors on Christmas Eve.

"Our members deserve time to rest and

recuperate, to spend time with their family and their friends and, importantly, to be able to relax and properly enjoy the festivities. Instead, for many it is a case of getting home late on Christmas Eve. Spending Christmas Day shattered and getting straight back to work on Boxing Day. Every worker should have a day off on Boxing Day and nobody should have to lose pay because their store is closed."

CRIME AND JUSTICE DEBATE

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Delegates took to the rostrum for the Crime and Justice debate, which covered a wide range of important and topical issues such as drink and needle spiking, violence against women and girls, and violence towards retail workers.



Simon Eggleton



Kiran Sheri



Tonia Sams

Delegates spoke eloquently about their personal experiences to vividly paint a picture of the issues.

SIMON EGGLETON C152

Simon read out a statement on behalf of an Usdaw member who put forward the proposition on making spiking a criminal offence.

“My 20-year-old daughter was spiked and ended up in A&E. After carrying out tests they found she had been spiked by GHB, the date rape drug. Following an investigation, the police were unable to find the person responsible and no-one was held accountable. This should be made a crime and young women should be able to go out without the threat of being spiked.”

KIRAN SHERI K021

Kiran moved the proposition on violence against women and girls by rightly acknowledging that the responsibility of ending violence lay with men and that they need to be a part of the conversation. He called for making misogyny a hate crime and immediately ratifying ILO Convention 190. “Violence against women and girls is rooted in structural inequalities and power imbalances between men and women,” said Kiran. “Male violence threatens women in all areas of their lives – in their homes, at work and in public and digital spaces.”

TONIA SAMS F061

Tonia talked about her experience of dealing with shoplifters and the impact this has had on her. “We have a repeat shoplifter who forced me to hand over cigarettes when I was on my own. Afterwards, I was terrified of working on my own.”

GENERAL SECRETARY’S RESPONSE

“Spiking disregards both the consent and the dignity of the person being attacked. It is not currently an offence in the UK. Making spiking a separate offence could go a long way towards validating the experiences of victims. It could encourage more reporting and hopefully more action being taken against perpetrators.

“Violence against women and girls continues to be widespread in our society yet the Government has failed to recognise misogyny as a hate crime and through underfunding the criminal justice system the Government is allowing perpetrators to get away with their horrific crimes.

“We’ve made real progress working with employers to prevent violence against shop workers. But that is no substitute for the protection of the law.

“We continue to call for legislation in England, in Wales and in Northern Ireland, to make it a specific offence to abuse, threaten or assault a retail worker.”

ADM QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Liverpool
2. 3
3. Rabbit
4. Network
5. Printing
6. Frances O’Grady
7. Keir Starmer

Congratulations to Karen Allison from branch C097, who won a £50 Virgin Experience Days voucher in the quiz prize draw. Karen was selected at random from all the correct entries. View the full quiz at www.usdaw.org.uk/admquiz

TOGETHER AGAINST RACISM

BEING AN ALLY TO COLLEAGUES

Usdaw delegates supported the union's National Executive Council statement Together Against Racism.

Addressing conference delegates, deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen said: "We know that during the Covid pandemic, racism had a direct and devastating impact on many of our Black and Asian members, who were five times more likely to be working in jobs where they weren't protected by collective agreements, who didn't have access to company sick pay, adequate PPE or maternity rights and who were far less likely to feel confident about raising issues of concern with their manager. Workplace racism remains a serious issue despite over forty years of legislation aimed at tackling it.

"Usdaw has a strong track record of campaigning against racism in the workplace and we will continue to support efforts to both educate and inspire Usdaw members to become actively anti-racist."

KELVIN BLAKE

Regional Councillor

"I was racially abused in my store. I'm 6'4" but that made me feel small. It's hard to talk about racism because when we do, we are told we have a chip on our shoulders or that we are playing the race card."

SHIRLEY SMITH F102

"I was raised in a mixed race family and saw the impact racism had on me and my brothers. Things haven't changed that much because my granddaughter was recently told to 'go back to Africa'."

SYED NAVQI H017

As a British born Asian, I have experienced racism. And Brexit made it worse. The toxic debate around Brexit emboldened people with racist views."

RAKTIMA SARKAR A051

"A few weeks ago, I was racially abused by a shoplifter. I reported it to the police but they couldn't do anything. My child was born here but he was told to go back to his country."

JUNE NEIZER H086

"My grandson has mixed heritage. He doesn't smoke or drink, yet he is always getting stopped and searched."

DAVID MCCUISH H086

"As trade unionists we need to actively work to be good allies. An injury to one, is an injury to all. We can't let employers divide us. We need to listen to our colleagues and confront racism."



Shirley Smith



Syed Naqvi



June Neizer

MENOPAUSE IS A WORKPLACE ISSUE

Usdaw backed a call for the union to run workplace campaigns to support workers going through the menopause and secure better rights from employers.

Usdaw deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen said: "The menopause is clearly a key workplace issue, it is a health and safety issue and an equalities

issue. The menopause will affect all women at some stage in their lives.

"Given that one-in-three women in the UK are currently going through or have reached the menopause, it is shocking that there is still so much stigma, discrimination and lack of awareness about it. Usdaw

believes it is high time employers and others stopped dismissing the menopause as just a 'women's issue'. The menopause needs to be recognised for what it is, a serious workplace health concern that involves physical and emotional changes that most women find both difficult and exhausting."

WORKPLACE AUTOMATION DEBATE

FUTURE PROOFING WORK

General secretary Paddy Lillis moved the National Executive Council statement on Understanding Technology and Automation: Shaping the Future of Work.

Addressing delegates, who endorsed the document, Paddy said: "Technology in the workplace is not a new thing, but the pace at which it is now being introduced and the impact it is having on our members means that it is now absolutely right to bring this statement to ADM.

"We need a right to collective consultation on the introduction of technology in the workplace. We need a right to retraining, we need significant improvements to redundancy rights, so that making redundancies is no longer the cheap and easy option and we need a right

to equality impact assessments, so that all workers are given the opportunity to adapt to the changing world of work. These rights will not only benefit the workforce, they will also benefit employers and society more generally."

LYNN GOODWIN K234

"One shopworker is expected to keep an eye on eight or more self-service tills. We have to deal with errors and people walking out without paying, which can be a flashpoint for abuse."

PAUL FOOT C045

"Self-service is a nightmare. If people walk off without paying, then I'm the one who gets called in to explain."

RAKTIMA SARKAR A051

"I've had a colleague who missed a test purchase because she was looking after five tills. It's our colleagues who suffer the consequences of this."

BECKY SMITHERS H075

"Working on self-scan is really hard. We have to think of a dozen things such as Think 25, sorting out baskets, dealing with errors, keeping an eye on till rolls, ensuring there are enough bags. And any one of these things can lead us to being abused."

UNION LEARNING FUND CUT CONDEMNED

Usdaw deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen said: "The Union Learning Fund had a fantastic record in supporting some of the most disadvantaged groups back into the classroom and gaining new skills. More than 250,000 union members returned to learning every year, helped by union learning funded projects. While these projects continue to deliver fantastic results in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, it is completely unacceptable that workers in England cannot get access to the skills provisions they so desperately need.

"When the Conservative Government decided to stop funding in England, they did so without consultation and without any serious attempt to explain their rationale. Because of the growth in new technology, nine-in-ten workers will need to be retrained over the next eight years. The trade union movement is perfectly placed to help deliver this training, which will ensure that members are given the right opportunities and support to protect them in the workplace."



Raktima Sarkar



Paul Foot

ORGREAVE

Usdaw backed a call for a public inquiry into the events at Orgreave during the 1984-5 Miners' Strike.

Usdaw deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen said: "This year marks 38 years since the brutal events at Orgreave Coking Plant near Rotherham. Striking miners, who were simply trying to save their jobs and communities, were charged at, bludgeoned by police

in riot gear and truncheons, stampeded with horses and herded by dogs. Many of the miners were left with physical and psychological problems that exist to this day.

"There has been no investigation into the actions of the Police. It is essential that the truth is established and that the police are brought to account. We offer our support for a long-awaited inquiry."

HEALTH AND SAFETY DEBATE

'RED TAPE' SAVES LIVES

Usdaw delegates called for better workplace security, EU safety laws to be retained and pandemic lessons to be learned.

ANDY GILCHRIST E056

"The Tories view health and safety laws as 'red tape' yet millions of people die at work every year. We need to ensure that the Government doesn't weaken legislation as it's amended into UK law."

ZARDA HUSSAIN C021

"I have a member who has to open the store at 6am in an area where there is a lot of anti-social behaviour. There is no security until 2pm and she is always worried that she will be attacked. Does someone need to be injured before companies take action and provide full-time security?"

DIANE WILSON A140

"We all got used to the restrictions which kept us all safe and most people were happy to obey the rules. We need to ensure there is adequate provision placed in all workplaces in the event of future pandemics."

GENERAL SECRETARY'S RESPONSE

"The last two years has shown just

how crucial effective health and safety is to every workplace.

"Many of the important protections which the Conservatives so frequently write off as simply 'red tape', such as the Working Time Directive or access to PPE were previously guaranteed by the EU. However, now that we have left, we need to find alternative ways of protecting the measures which are so important to our members. Usdaw remains committed to defending these protections.

"Trade unions played a crucial role in developing the policy that protected workers during the Coronavirus pandemic such as: Perspex screens, hygiene stations at store entrances, social distancing markers on floors and at tills and limits on the number of customers in stores. It is also vital that these measures were supported with additional security trained staff, ensuring they were followed.

"Throughout the pandemic there has been a disgraceful increase in the level of abuse faced by retail workers and Usdaw is clear that this must be a priority issue for both Government and employers.

"Usdaw is committed to keeping all our members safe, day in day out, while they are carrying out their roles at work."



Zarda Hussain



Diane Wilson

SUBS INCREASE

Delegates voted overwhelmingly to increase membership rates.

This means that from 26 June

Scale A members will pay

£2.60 a week and

Scale C members will pay

£1.76 a week.

LONG COVID ABSENCE POLICIES MUST BE CHANGED

Usdaw deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen said: "Long Covid is a condition that is simply not taken seriously enough. The Office of National Statistics found that 1.3 million people are now living with what is described as long Covid which can include a persistent brain fog, shortness of breath and fatigue, which can make the

simplest of everyday tasks and work more difficult, especially in the sectors our members work in.

"It is not surprising many workers living with long Covid are forced to take time off work. A quarter of UK employers say long Covid is now one of the main causes of long-term sickness absence among their staff, yet we

are now told that we need to live with Covid. But how is this possible if workers living with long Covid are not being supported?

"Usdaw members have every right to expect support from their employer. So, it is not unreasonable to expect that absence policies should be reviewed in line with this."

HOUSING DEBATE

HOUSING NEEDS A COMPLETE SHAKE UP

Usdaw delegates back a plan to tackle the housing crisis that works for working people, members of the armed forces and traveller communities.

DAVINA CAINE A184

“The council wanted to rehouse me 27 miles from my work and hometown. No-one can understand the toll housing insecurity can take on your mental health.”

JUNE WHITELAW G330

“A house now costs eight times the median salary and extortionate rents are contributing to the cost of living crisis. We need to take the power back from developers, we need more social housing.”

SCOTT COCKER F187

“We need the Government to provide funding to ensure all local authorities have space for travellers to use short term when they are passing through.”

FRANK DUNAWAY H067

“Members of the armed forces are sleeping on the streets. They stepped in to help during the pandemic. Where is the duty to look after the people who look after us?”

KIRAN SHERI K021

“Housing is in dire straits. Year after year the situation worsens. Working people are being shut out of the housing market as rents climb and property developers make huge profits. None of this is inevitable yet the Tories are failing to take action. Housing cannot be seen as a commodity or as an investment opportunity. We need safe, affordable housing.”

GENERAL SECRETARY’S RESPONSE

“The UK is in the midst of a housing crisis. According to the housing charity Shelter, over a quarter of a million people are homeless, including 126,000 children and in total, 17.5 million people are impacted by the housing emergency – living in overcrowded, dangerous, unstable or unaffordable housing.

“Government cuts to local funding is stifling the ability of councils to build new homes and fuelling the housing crisis and whilst these decisions are made by the Tories in Westminster, it is working people right across the country who are paying the price.

“Decent housing should never be



June Whitelaw



Scott Cocker

seen as a luxury, only available to the rich, but as a basic right that people from all communities and backgrounds should be able to access.”



Conference's first time speakers

WELFARE AND BENEFITS DEBATE

TORIES FAIL TO DELIVER

Usdaw delegates debate Conservative policies that are contributing to the cost of living crisis and their failure to help working people.

ANITA MARSHALL A014

"My husband, who I was married to for 38 years, passed away last June and I only got three days bereavement leave. No-one should have to beg to get more bereavement leave."

PAT BUTTLE

Regional Councillor

"It's scandalous, that Universal Credit is so low. We have people using food banks who can't afford to use their cooker. Always struggling affects your mental and physical health."

LESLEY JARVIS H017

"I'm nearly 70 and I can't afford to retire. I can't help my family who are

also struggling. The Prime Minister said he can't survive on £79k yet we are expected to survive on £15k."

GENERAL SECRETARY'S RESPONSE

"The Conservative's self-created cost of living crisis is affecting every part of our daily lives. Let's be clear, the Government could help workers through this crisis. They could help fund childcare, which is, all too often, simply unaffordable for our members. They could reverse the National Insurance increase, they could use a windfall tax on energy companies to support those in fuel poverty and they could restore the £20 uplift in Universal Credit and deliver a social security system that provides a genuine safety net for those in need. They are making a choice not to implement these policies and a choice not to deliver for working people."

MINIMUM £12 WAGE BACKED

Delegates voted unanimously for the proposition which called for an increase in the minimum wage to at least £12 per hour to reflect the increased cost of living.

Ushaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Through our Time for Better Pay and our New Deal for Workers campaigns, we have taken £10 per hour into pay negotiations, into Parliament and into meetings with the Low Pay Commission, but more than this, we have won at least £10 an hour in many of our agreements such as Sainsbury's, Argos, Morrisons, Tesco and Asda Northern Ireland. Securing better pay, changing lives, and winning for our members.

"I know there are some workplaces where we haven't

quite yet made it to £10. However, it is entirely right to recognise that times have moved on. Now, with inflation soaring, the cost of everyday items increasing and energy bills skyrocketing, the call of £10 per hour needs to be refreshed.

"So we need to adjust our ask. To once again be bold and set a target that will not only inspire members and reps but will make a real difference to their lives and their standard of living. £12 an hour as a step towards £15 per hour, is a figure we can build a campaign around. A figure we can take into our pay negotiations, take into Parliament and take into our discussions with the Low Pay Commission."

POLITICS DEBATE

Ushaw general secretary Paddy Lillis urged members and reps to fight for a Labour Government as he outlined the union's political strategy.

"Recent events have also clearly demonstrated why politics is important," said Paddy. "We've seen this Government's response to the pandemic, the financial choices they've made to cut benefits, their lack of action on our pitifully low levels of statutory sick pay and now we're seeing their failure to address the cost of living crisis. All of this on top of years of cuts and neglect of the public services we rely on. Every one of these decisions is affected by the politicians we elect.

"This is the same Conservative Party that restricted the ability of trade unions to represent their members, the same Conservative Party that privatised our essential services, so that they put profits before people, the same Conservative Party that took food from the mouths of deprived children during school holidays. We must never forget this.

"So it is not just our goal, but our duty, to remove this Government and replace it with one that will work with us, deliver for our members and improve the lives of working people across this country.

"How are we going to deliver the Labour Government that our members need? We need to encourage more of our members to become activists, directly engaging in politics. We need to deliver a Labour Government that would be on the side of our members and working people across the country."

ROSENA ALLIN-KHAN MP

This year's ADM guest speaker Dr Rosena Allin-Khan, shadow cabinet minister for mental health, thanked Usdaw members for their contribution on the frontline

At this year's ADM, the guest speaker Dr Rosena Allin-Khan, MP for Tooting and the shadow cabinet minister for mental health, addressed conference to thank key workers and outlined what a Labour Government could do for them.

Rosena Allin-Khan said: "I want to start by putting on the record my own thanks for the work of Usdaw and its members during the pandemic. Retail workers, in particular, were on the frontline. It was a moment when the country realised who matters most in our communities and our country. It was a moment when we didn't need management consultants or investment bankers, we needed people who cared for others, who drove lorries and vans, who kept the food stacked on the shelves, and put themselves in harms way to feed the nation. Not just doctors, nurses, porters and cleaners; but posties, bus drivers, and shopworkers.

"I met with Usdaw reps last year to hear about the work you are doing. To stand up to workplace bullies and impossible bosses, to fight for family time and flexible working, for shifts that suit the worker, that pay a fair wage.

"I heard that at the height of the pandemic, over 450 retail workers were assaulted each day. So many of these are older workers, or students, or part-time workers just trying to make ends meet, and assault leaves not just bruises and cuts, but mental health scars too.

"Mental health must be treated with the same seriousness as physical health. That's why the next Labour Government will guarantee mental health treatment within a

month. We will recruit thousands of new mental health staff into our NHS. We will establish mental health hubs in every community. We will put a mental health specialist into every school. As a society we have come a long way on mental health, breaking down the stigma,

A COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS IS HITTING PRETTY MUCH EVERY PURSE AND POCKET IN THE LAND. REAL PAIN; UNLESS YOU'RE A MILLIONAIRE, OR A NON-DOM, OR A CONSERVATIVE CABINET MINISTER

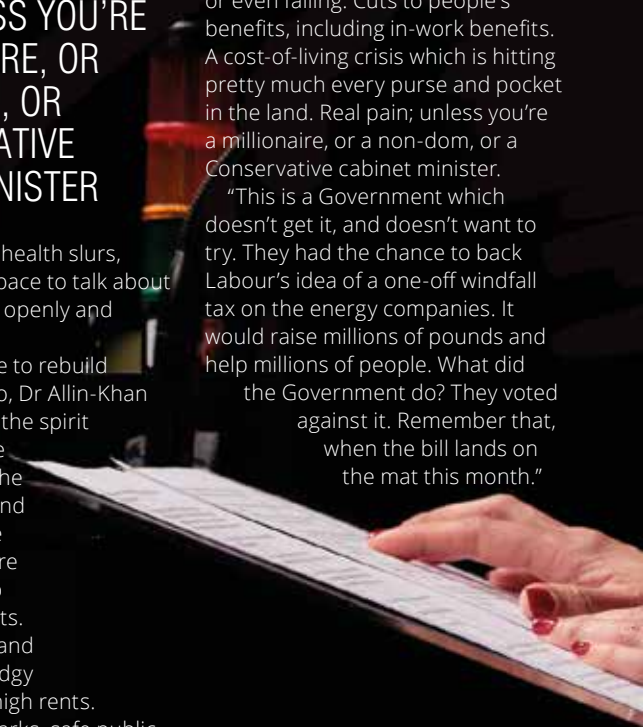
challenging mental health slurs, giving people the space to talk about their mental health openly and honestly."

Invoking the drive to rebuild after World War two, Dr Allin-Khan concluded: "That is the spirit we need now, as we leave the worst of the pandemic behind and face the future. The spirit of 1945. Secure jobs, with an end to zero-hours contracts. Affordable homes, and protection from dodgy landlords and sky-high rents. Safe streets, safe parks, safe public spaces for everyone. A new lease of life for the high street and town

centres. The end of discrimination including racism, misogyny, homophobia, able-ism, ageism, transphobia, Islamophobia and hate in all its forms and an NHS there for all, when we need it, free at the point of use.

"As trade unionists, we have always arrived at the same answer: Where forces threaten to engulf us, we come together and stand firm. Where things look bleak, we seek out the light. 'The past we inherit, the future we build.' I know it is tough out there. Food prices up, gas prices up, petrol prices up, rents up, inflation up; but wages stagnant, or even falling. Cuts to people's benefits, including in-work benefits. A cost-of-living crisis which is hitting pretty much every purse and pocket in the land. Real pain; unless you're a millionaire, or a non-dom, or a Conservative cabinet minister.

"This is a Government which doesn't get it, and doesn't want to try. They had the chance to back Labour's idea of a one-off windfall tax on the energy companies. It would raise millions of pounds and help millions of people. What did the Government do? They voted against it. Remember that, when the bill lands on the mat this month."







**A HIGH
PRICE
TO PAY**

**“I CAN’T AFFORD
TO SHOP IN THE
SUPERMARKET
I WORK FOR”**

The rising cost of fuel, food and energy bills as well as a hike to national insurance have contributed towards inflation reaching a staggering 11.1 per cent in May - a 40-year high. The Office for National Statistics revealed that regular pay excluding bonuses dropped by 2.9 per cent in March. Economists believe that Britain is at risk of falling into a summer recession as soaring inflation curtails consumer spending. This means households will face the biggest squeeze since records began in the 1950s.

To understand how the cost of living is affecting working people, *Network* spoke to two Usdaw members about their experiences. Due to the sensitivities around this topic, we have chosen to keep them anonymous.

Donna, 57, a supermarket worker in the North West, talks about how the cost of living is affecting her. She works full-time and has been renting all her life.

"I've been having a lot of sleepless nights lately. Money has always been a worry but this year everything has gone up, food, petrol, energy, rent and council tax. I live on my own, so there's only one wage to cover all the costs.

"I can't afford to shop in the supermarket I work for and do most of my shopping at Aldi or Lidl. I try to eat healthily but it's getting harder as fresh fruit and vegetables are so expensive. My diet is very basic as I always buy items that are on offer or have been reduced. If I can get reduced vegetables, I make a big pot of soup which can last me a few days. Years ago, I would have egg on toast for breakfast, these days that's an evening meal. I've not had to use a food bank yet but if the Government doesn't step in to help then I might have to.

"I don't use my oven at all and boiling the kettle is quite scary as my smart meter tells me exactly how much money I'm using. I don't put

my heating on and make do with a hot water bottle to keep me warm.

"I do own a car but to be honest I'm not sure how long I will have it. I used to be able to fill it up for £35 but that has doubled. I'm worried about giving up my car because I do a couple of very early shifts and one that finishes at midnight which I would struggle to do because public transport isn't great at those hours. On the other hand, I can't afford to give those shifts up.

"I don't go out anymore. A meal and a couple of drinks is next week's shop. Living alone and not being able to see your friends can be quite isolating.

"It's clear that the Government doesn't understand the lives of working people. The 5p off petrol has not helped at all and the loan for our energy bills is the last thing I need. I have no idea how I would pay that back and it's just another worry.

"I feel very let down by the Government because I've worked all my life, never claimed a single penny and I've got nothing to show for it. Most people my age would be thinking about retirement, but I think I'll have to work until I drop.

"I've spent my life working to pay the bills and, in a few months, I might still be in a position where I won't be able to eat or heat my home. How can this be right in one of the richest countries in the world?"

Allan, 33, works for a supermarket in Scotland. He works full-time and lives in rented accommodation with his partner, who works part-time, and their one-year-old daughter.

"Becoming a parent has made me acutely aware of the cost of living," said Allan. "The cost of baby milk has gone up by £2 and nappies are also very expensive. We try to buy in bulk to ensure we have enough supplies to last us a couple of weeks.

When we do our shop, we shop around for the best deals and go where the offers are to try and keep costs down. Even then, our weekly

"I AM WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE. IF PRICES KEEP RISING THEN THINGS COULD GET EVEN TOUGHER FOR US."

shop has gone from £50 a week to £70 a week.

"My partner is currently working 19.5 hours; she would like to go full-time but the cost of childcare means that this is not an option. If she went full-time, we would have to pay for around 17 hours of childcare which would cost us about £284 a month, she would be working just to pay the childcare fees.

"Even though the cost of living crisis has just started, we are already having to change our behaviours to make sure our pay packets last until the end of the month. We try to avoid using the oven and put on a dressing gown when we get cold but we have a one-year-old so we can't cut back on heat too much.

I've had to cancel our Sky subscription as it was just too expensive. If we want to watch something we use YouTube because it's free. We used to have a takeaway at least once a week but that has become unaffordable and now it's one every second or third week.

"Before, £50 of petrol would fill up my car and that would last me the month, now £50 fills about three-quarters of a tank. I use my car to commute to work and we don't make any unnecessary journeys to avoid having to top up.

"At the moment we are coping but I'm worried about the future. If prices keep rising and the price cap increases in October, then things could get even tougher for us.

I think the Government could do more to support us. It could raise the minimum wage to say £12 per hour, or one that keeps up with inflation as otherwise we are effectively taking a pay cut."

www.usdaw.org.uk

SPEAKING UP ON SPOTLIGHT DAY

Celebrating the everyday work of Usdaw reps to win better rights for parents and carers

Usdaw activists across the country took to their workplaces in May for the union's Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight Day. Reps spoke to members and potential members, highlighting the work Usdaw does for the benefit of members who are balancing paid work with their responsibilities as a parent or carer.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Day in, day out, reps are doing amazing work to support members who need the help of their union. Very often this is about finding hours of work that fit around

family life, or needing time off when someone at home is ill. This support was vital during the pandemic when our members needed time off to cope with school closures or relatives in isolation.

"Statutory Maternity Pay and Paternity Pay are too low, with nine out of ten members taking leave having to cut it short. That's why Usdaw makes improving maternity and paternity pay a high priority.

"Usdaw is working hard to improve the rights that parents and carers rely on, and we're really making a difference."



1

- 1. Morrisons Carlisle
- 2. Tesco Plymouth
- 3. Tesco Widnes
- 4. Tesco Bicester
- 5. Tesco Romford
- 6. Morrisons Falkirk
- 7. Tesco Plymouth
- 8. Boots Industrial Nottingham



2





4



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YOUNG REPS IN CONGRESS

The TUC Young Workers' Conference returned to Congress House in April. Usdaw was represented by a delegation of five young activists from regions across the country who moved propositions calling for measures to improve mental health among young workers, and for action to address the increasing use of workplace technology and automation.

Mental health

Usdaw called on the TUC to campaign for better employment rights for young workers, for employers to assess the impact of their policies on workers' mental health, and for better investment in mental health services including giving young workers training to manage mental health.

Usdaw retail rep Boriana Nacheva moved the motion. "I wanted to speak up because I'm very passionate about mental health," said Boriana. "My workplace takes mental health very seriously and they support staff as much as they can, but there's more that can be done at a national level.

"This was the first conference I've been to and I wasn't used to

public speaking but once I got up, the words came easily and I really enjoyed it. It was great to meet delegates from so many other unions and I was proud that our proposition was selected to be taken to the General Council in September.

"I enjoyed the conference so much that I volunteered as branch delegate for ADM when I got back. It was a really positive experience that has given me a lot more confidence to speak my mind and stick up for our members."

Technology and automation

Usdaw distribution rep Lewis Wheatley moved the motion calling for urgent action to mitigate the negative impacts of technological advances. The motion outlined several measures including the legal right to collective consultation on workplace technology, action to provide young people with skills and training, reform of the apprenticeship levy and strengthened redundancy rights.

"It was going out on stand down that opened my eyes to the impact automation is having in the workplace," said Lewis. "If automation leads to staff cuts, nine

times out of 10, it's young workers who suffer the most and in my view they're treated unfairly. Often it's because they've been working there for a shorter amount of time and they haven't got the experience, or they haven't been trained to do other jobs, so we need action to address this.

"I learned a lot about the trade union movement at the conference. There were delegates from unions I wasn't familiar with and talking to them gave me a lot of new ideas which I'm going to take back to my workplace. It was inspiring to meet so many people all pulling in the same direction to create a brighter future for young workers."

JOIN YOUR REGIONAL YOUNG WORKERS' COMMITTEE

Your regional young workers' committee needs you!

Membership is open to all Usdaw members aged 27 and under. For more information, contact your local office.

www.usdaw.org.uk/youngworkers



ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH BECKY SMITHERS

Network caught up with Becky Smithers, 39, at her first ADM in Blackpool. Becky became a rep during the height of the pandemic in 2020 and has gone on to win the Most Promising New Activist Award just a year later.

Who do you work for and what prompted you to become a rep during the pandemic?

I've worked for Sainsbury's in Winchester for the last five years. I decided to stand because the pandemic was causing so much uncertainty and fear. I thought it was important to have a full

complement of reps to help support my colleagues who were on the frontline.

Did you get much support when you became a rep?

Lockdown meant I wasn't able to access any face-to-face training but my area organiser and my region were brilliant with the support they gave me. They were always there when I needed to run something by them. The very first course I attended was Summer School last September. It was fantastic and I would heartily recommend it to everyone.

What did you like about Summer School?

I finished school at 16 and attempted college but ended up dropping out. I didn't think learning was for me until I got involved in the union. Union learning is so much more supportive. You never feel alone. If you fall behind the tutors and your fellow reps will drop everything to help you out. It's not about coming top of your class, it's about making sure that you all cross the finish line together. Summer School also gave me the opportunity to meet some fantastic reps who I've stayed in touch with. We stay

connected through WhatsApp and use the group to share best practice and our successes.

This is your first ADM, how are you finding it?

It's absolutely amazing. I love the fact that this is an arena where reps like us have the opportunity to decide what we are going to focus on for the coming year. ADM gives every rep a voice and we get to tell the highest body in the union, the national executive, what we want. Thanks to the training I have received from the union, I had the confidence to not only attend ADM but also to get up on the rostrum and contribute to the debate, something I would not have been able to do a year ago. I'll forever be grateful to the union for giving me these fantastic developing opportunities.

You won Most Promising New Activist at this year's Organising Awards; can you tell us about the work you've been doing?

I started by focusing on organising our store through inductions. It was the best way to build membership and thankfully our density has gone

up. Due to people leaving or retiring, my store went from having a team of four reps to just me so I've been trying to encourage some of my colleagues to take up the mantle. I have so far managed to recruit a young rep, a driver rep and a night rep. It was important to me to have a range of reps who specialised in different areas as that meant more shifts and job roles were covered.

How do you know whether a colleague will make a good rep?

I find people who have a strong sense of fair play tend to make good reps. They want people to be treated fairly and want to make the workplace a better place for their colleagues.

You've also been on stand down and are a successful recruiter, what are your top tips?

I always tailor my inductions to my audience. If I have a lot of students in the induction then I will tell them about study leave, if it's parents, I will talk to them about the discounts they can get. It's important to know your stuff because if you don't, then people won't have confidence in

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

If you would like to be our next AID, get in touch and tell us what you've been doing in your workplace.

network@usdaw.org.uk

you. You can't pressure people into joining as that will put them off. If someone doesn't join, I will leave it for a couple of weeks and then go and see them. I will ask them how they are settling in and whether they have any issues. And if they do, I will tell them how the union can help.

You worked in a non-unionised workplace before moving to Sainsbury's, is there a big difference between unionised and non-unionised workplaces?

In non-unionised workplaces they use staff forums to placate employees. Our staff forum was designed to give us the run around which meant nothing ever changed and issues never got resolved. In a unionised workplace, processes are put in place and if they're not followed there is a certain amount of accountability. In a workplace that has a union, any member can walk up to any rep and say they are unhappy and we will do our best to help them. You can't do that in a non-unionised workplace.

How does your family feel about your union work?

They're all really pleased for me. My mum told me to join the union when I first started work at 16. She passed away in 2016 but I know she would be proud. My dad is a typical bloke, he doesn't say anything to me but I know he brags about me to his friends!

What's next for you?

I was lucky enough to get on to Academy1, which will keep me busy up until Christmas. After that I will put myself forward for Summer School 2.



Becky speaking at her first visit to ADM

DISCIPLINARY MEETINGS

Usdaw reps play a vital role in protecting members' interests. Grievance and disciplinary procedures help to protect members' terms and conditions and ensure that managers treat their workers fairly and consistently.

Disciplinary meetings

When dealing with a member's disciplinary case the first thing to find out is whether it is a conduct issue or a capability issue.

Conduct

This refers to an employee's personal behaviour or actions e.g. being late.

Capability

This refers to a person's ability to do their job e.g. meeting targets.

Gross misconduct

This is a single act of misconduct

that is serious enough on its own to justify the employee's immediate dismissal.

Know your agreements, staff handbook and employment contract

To effectively represent your members, you will need to have a good working knowledge of the union agreement, staff handbook and contract of employment.

Timescales and following the procedures

It's your responsibility to ensure managers adhere to timescales and follow their own procedures properly, which should be outlined in the above documents.

Investigation

Management must carry out a full investigation before any disciplinary meeting to establish the facts.

Before the meeting

- Usdaw members have the right to be represented by a rep.
- You are entitled to reasonable paid time off for you and your member to prepare your case.

Fact finding

Ask to see all the evidence against your member from the employer including any witness statements taken by management, even if the statements have been made anonymously. You should also gather your own evidence including speaking to witnesses.

Clearly explaining the consequences

It is important the member understands the possible consequences if the disciplinary meeting goes against them. In serious cases this could include dismissal.



for an adjournment at any time.

Mitigating circumstances

The following should be taken into consideration before deciding a disciplinary penalty:

- The employee's disciplinary and general record.
- Length of service.
- Lack of information or training.
- Unclear rules or no company policy.
- Actions taken in any previous similar case.
- The explanations given by the employee.
- Special factors relating to the employee's health or disability.
- Whether the intended disciplinary action is reasonable under the circumstances.

Always keep a written record

Always keep written notes throughout the meeting. Remember – your area organiser may need to see the notes at a later stage.

GDPR

Under the General Data Protection Regulations, you will need to deal with personal data fairly, securely and confidentially.

After the meeting

The employer will decide whether to impose a disciplinary penalty. This might include:

- A verbal warning.
- A written warning.
- A final written warning.
- Action short of dismissal, for example – demotion or suspension without pay.
- Dismissal.

Instant or summary dismissal

No one should be dismissed for a first offence unless it is considered to be gross misconduct (check

your disciplinary procedures for what your employer describes as gross misconduct). Inform your area organiser straight away if the member is dismissed.

Old warnings

Old warnings that are spent should be disregarded by the employer.

The right to appeal

- An employee has the right to appeal the decision.
- The appeal process should be outlined in the disciplinary procedure.
- There are timescales within the disciplinary appeals procedure. You must stick to these timescales.

Dismissal and employment tribunal

It is important that we notify any member who is dismissed of any right they may have to take the matter to an employment tribunal (we have a legal obligation to do so). Any member who is dismissed should be given the Legal Plus postcard.

Retaining membership for employment tribunal cases

You should ensure that the individual retains their membership as this will ensure they are covered for appeal hearings and potentially employment tribunal cases.

Publicising the outcome

When you have achieved a good outcome for your members, it is important to publicise your successes (always be mindful of data protection and ask permission from the member first). This will raise the profile of the union and will assist in recruiting new members.

www.usdaw.org.uk/refs

During the meeting

- As a rep you have the right to speak in the meeting. You are not a silent witness.
- Make sure the manager assigned to hear the case is impartial and was not previously involved in the case.
- Make sure the outcome of the meeting hasn't already been predetermined.
- Refer to the appropriate agreements and procedures.
- If management refer to a policy or procedure – ask them to show it to you.
- Question management witnesses.
- Put forward any arguments for mitigation.
- If a manager introduces new evidence, you should ask for an adjournment and seek advice from your area organiser straight away.
- The rep (or the member) can call

Help and Support

Remember that Usdaw is here to help you. If you need help or advice, speak to your area organiser.

OCADO REP TEAM DELIVERS GOODS

The Ocado rep team worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to organise their site in Bristol

It was no easy feat to organise a brand-new site from scratch during the pandemic but the Ocado rep team in Bristol took the challenge in their stride. Thanks to their hard work, membership now stands at an impressive 70 per cent. *Network* caught up with Mark White and Emma Woodfine to talk about the work they have been doing.

MARK WHITE

Ocado trainer Mark White, started working for the company in 2015 and became a rep in 2016, and health and safety rep in 2017. Since becoming a rep Mark has overseen membership double from 35 per cent to over 70 per cent.

"When I became a rep, I was really proud to put on the badge. At the time I was the only rep on site. Increasing density seemed like a mammoth task so I started by running a campaign day and letting people know that I was part of the union. I managed to pick up 30 new members.

"As every rep will tell you, recruitment is crucial to having a well organised workplace. The more members you have at your site the easier it is to have your voice heard. The foundation for everything is having a good agreement in place that allows reps to function effectively. Our area organiser has worked hard to build a good working relationship with the company. Ocado managers are very supportive of the union which means they will always invite me into

the inductions. This makes a huge difference because it signals to new starters that it's OK to join the union.

"At inductions, I introduce myself and outline what the benefits of joining the union are, the leaflet 10 Good Reasons to Join is a great tool for this. While respecting confidentiality, I also talk about our successes and the issues I've dealt with and the people I've helped. I find the best way to recruit drivers is to tell them about the Drivers Distress Fund. Once they hear it's only £6, they jump at the chance of joining.

"Organising a workplace is so much more than just recruitment. To have a well organised site you need to be proactive and visible. I walk around the site and talk to people to see how they are getting on. I don't pressure them to join, just make them aware the union is there if they ever need help. Now people know me as 'the bloke from the union' and approach me if they have an issue.

"Having a good team of reps is essential so I'm always on the lookout for people who might make good reps. Reps are ambassadors for the union therefore it's important that the people who we put forward are honest and behave with integrity. Once you have new reps, you have to make sure you support them. Personally, I don't want to see new reps struggling so I do my best to mentor them and show them the ropes.

"The rep team we've got at the moment is brilliant and has worked



Mark and Emma celebrate their regional Team Recruitment

extremely hard to organise our site. We have been persistent and consistent which means that people who wouldn't join previously have been coming up to us asking to join."

EMMA WOODFINE

Emma Woodfine, has worked for Ocado for three years and became a rep at the end of 2020. Emma, a chargehand, has responsibility for the fleet of vans in the yard.

"I was keen to become a rep because Usdaw helped me with a difficult situation I had with a previous employer. At the time, I was working over 60 hours for a value retailer and was treated very poorly. It was Usdaw that came in and helped me. Afterwards, I decided to get out, so I applied to become a



...t and Organising award at Usdaw's Organising Awards in March.

driver for Ocado, and I've not looked back since.

"When the company opened a Customer Fulfilment Centre (CFC) they employed a lot of new staff which meant we had access to this new pool of potential members. We attended every induction we could and managed to get density up to 70 per cent.

"Recruiting at inductions does take a bit of practice so it's always worth shadowing a more experienced rep when you are starting out. I was lucky enough to be coached by fellow rep Mark who was very supportive when I became a rep.

"When I go into an induction, I tell them about what happened at my previous employer and how the

union was instrumental in helping me. My story resonates with people because if it could happen to me, it could happen to them.

"It's important to know what the union offers. With money being so tight at the moment, I outline the discounts and offers. Anything that can help save money will usually get people's interest. I also tell people how the union is involved in pay negotiations which means they have a say in what is important to them.

"Recruitment doesn't end at inductions. I always make sure that I go and speak to my colleagues to see how they are. Being visible means that they will know who to turn to when they have an issue.

"Having a good rep team is also crucial to recruitment. A team that

works together and gets things done is the best advert for the union. To ensure this, we utilise our monthly rep team meetings. This allows us to talk about the issues at our site, problem solve and share best practice. We work hard to ensure that the rep team covers the different job roles as well as the various shifts. So, if you're on nights you will get a rep to come and represent you, even if the meeting is at two in the morning!"

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

If you would like share how you recruit and organise in your workplace, email us:

network@usdaw.org.uk



HOW DO YOU SLEEP AT NIGHT?

Humans spend approximately a third of their lives asleep. Without sleep we cannot function effectively therefore a good night's sleep is essential for good physical and mental health. Yet millions of people around the world struggle to sleep.

Insomnia is a common problem with one in three people saying they can't get a good night's sleep.

Findings from Aviva's Wellbeing Report (2017) found:

- Two thirds (67 per cent) of UK adults suffer from disrupted sleep and nearly a quarter (23 per cent) manage no more than five hours a night.
- Half (48 per cent) of UK adults admit they don't get the right amount of sleep, with women more likely to agree (54 per cent) than men (41 per cent).

WHAT IS INSOMNIA?

People who suffer from insomnia exhibit some of the following:

- Find it difficult to fall asleep.
- Lie awake for long periods at night.
- Wake up several times during the night.
- Wake up early in the morning and are not able to get back to sleep.

SYMPTOMS OF INSOMNIA

Occasional episodes of insomnia may come and go without causing any serious problems but persistent insomnia can have a significant impact on an individual's quality of life.

Poor sleep can lead to fatigue, sleepiness, poor concentration, lapses in memory and irritability. It can lead to relationship problems with family, friends and colleagues.

Sleep and health are strongly related. Poor sleep can increase the risk of having poor health, and poor health can make it harder to sleep. Sleep deprivation can also have a negative effect on mental health.

HOW MUCH SLEEP SHOULD I BE GETTING?

There are no official guidelines but on average an adult should be getting between seven to nine hours a night of good quality sleep.

CAUSES OF INSOMNIA

- Stress related to big life events like redundancy, divorce or a bereavement.
- Coffee, cigarettes, alcohol or drug use.
- Keeping the brain stimulated until late in the evening, such as watching TV, playing video games,

TIPS FOR GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

There are a number of things you can try to help yourself get a good night's sleep:

- Go to sleep at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning.
- Try not to take naps during the day, because they may make you less sleepy at night.
- Don't use phones or other gadgets before bed. Their light can make it harder to fall asleep.
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol late in the day as it can disrupt sleep.
- Get regular exercise but not too close to bedtime, because it may make it hard to fall asleep.
- Don't eat a heavy meal late in the day.
- Make your bedroom comfortable: dark, quiet, and not too warm or too cold.
- Follow a routine to relax before bed. Read a book, listen to music, or take a bath.
- If you can't fall asleep and aren't drowsy, get up and do something calming, like reading until you feel sleepy.
- If you lie awake worrying, make a to-do list before you go to bed. It could help put your worries to one side.

scrolling on the phone.

- Napping late in the day can make it harder to fall asleep at night.
- Diet can play a role, especially eating heavy meals late in the evening.
- Medical conditions such as Alzheimer's, dementia, pregnancy, PMS and menopause.
- Mental health issues like depression or anxiety.
- Medication.
- Pain or discomfort at night.
- Poor sleeping environment such as an uncomfortable bed, or a bedroom that's too bright, noisy, hot or cold.

SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

In recent years, research has found that socioeconomic factors also play a part in whether someone suffers from insomnia. Research done by

Harvard University found that sleep quality varies depending on various factors including household income.

Those on lower incomes tend to work longer hours or work two jobs to make ends meet. They live in poorer neighbourhoods in poor quality housing, with fewer comforts. They also work in inflexible workplaces and tend to use public transport which can make their working day even longer. All these factors can influence the amount of sleep they get.

INSOMNIA AND AGEING

Insomnia becomes more common with age. As you get older, you may experience:

- Changes in sleep patterns. Sleep often becomes less restful as you age, so noise or other changes in your environment are more

likely to wake you. With age, your internal clock often advances, so you get tired earlier in the evening and wake up earlier in the morning. But older people generally still need the same amount of sleep as younger people do.

- Changes in activity. You may be less physically or socially active. A lack of activity can interfere with a good night's sleep. Also, the less active you are, the more likely you may be to take a daily nap, which can interfere with sleep at night.
- Changes in health. Chronic pain from conditions such as arthritis or back problems as well as depression or anxiety can interfere with sleep. Issues that increase the need to urinate during the night - such as prostate or bladder problems - can disrupt sleep. Sleep apnoea and restless legs syndrome become more common with age.
- More medications. Older people typically use more prescription drugs, which increases the chance of insomnia associated with medications.

WHEN TO SEE YOUR GP

Make an appointment to see your GP if you're finding it difficult to get to sleep or stay asleep and it's affecting your daily life - particularly if it has been a problem for a month or more and the above measures have not helped.

TREATMENTS FOR INSOMNIA

Your GP will first try to identify and treat any underlying health condition, such as anxiety. They'll probably also discuss things you can do at home that may help to improve your sleep.

In some cases, a special type of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or prescription sleeping tablets may be recommended.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.nhs.uk/conditions/insomnia

THE ORGANISING CHALLENGE BEGINS

Fifty-six Usdaw reps have taken on the organising challenge after they successfully applied to take part in the 2022 Academy1 programme.

For the next six months the organising officers, as they will be known, will be working full-time for the union, swapping their day jobs for recruiting and organising in all sectors across their region.

Working closely with area organisers and training officers, the reps have already shown a firm commitment to the work of Usdaw and have demonstrated they are capable of organising beyond their own workplace. The reps will receive

on the job training supplemented by four weeks of classroom-based activities.

Deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen wished the reps well on their journey. "More than 700 reps have completed the Academy since it began and many of them have gone on to become area organisers," said Dave. "Academy1 can be challenging but the reps will be supported by our brilliant team of training officers, as well as being mentored by one of our full-time officials.

"Udaw is extremely proud of our Academy programme. There is nothing else quite like it in the trade union movement, and it plays an important part in strengthening our presence in sectors and workplaces across the country.

"I'd like to take this opportunity to wish this year's intake of organising officers the very best of luck. I hope they find their time on Academy1 enjoyable and rewarding."

Think you can rise to the organising challenge?

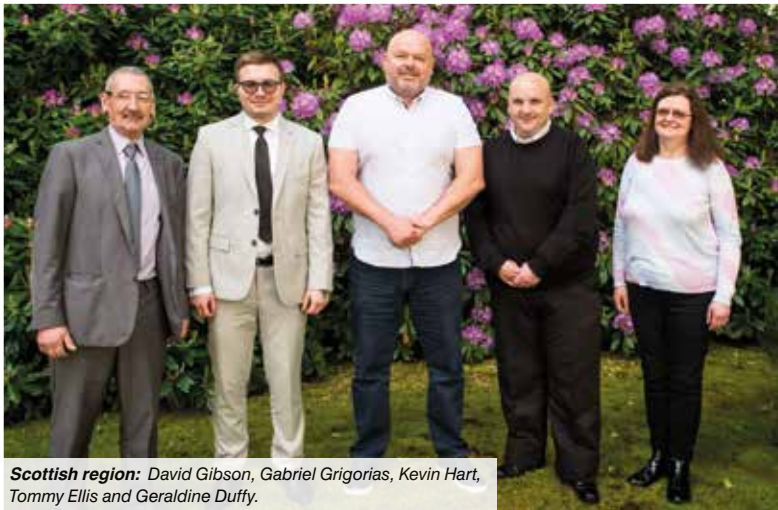
The application process for next year's Academy1 starts in November. Contact your area organiser or local office to find out more.



South Wales and Western region: Mike Cape, Fay Williams, Danny Jovicic, Emma Woodfine, Nick Lock and George



Midlands region: Rosie Harvey-Coggins, Mohammed Gunn, David Ougden, Thomas Berger and Darren Oak



Scottish region: David Gibson, Gabriel Grigoriás, Kevin Hart, Tommy Ellis and Geraldine Duffy.



Southern region: (front row) Ryan Piper, Becky Smith and Bridgette Findlay. (back row) Denise Bartram, Belinda Johnson, Robert Francis, Barry Chalk, Keith Jones and



Whitehead, Fry.



Eastern region: Sue Langworthy (education team), Jason Martin, Phil Waite (deputy regional secretary), Carla Richards, Nigel Scully (regional secretary), April Harris, Malikka Isse, Graham Yallop and Karys Lancaster.



Imam, Jena, Riley.



North Eastern region: (front row) James Towse, Sallyanne Humphreys, Tracy White, Adelle Bohill and Mark Oates. (back row) Lewis Wheatley, Michaela Parsons, Darren Rose, Thomas Carnall, Danny Hook, Alec Davison-Clay and Simon Dixon.



ers, David McCuish, Linda Walliss, Steven, Graham Holness.



North West region: (front row) Karen Whitefield (education team), Viki Miller, Joe Standen, Michelle Fleming, Tina Davies and Jemma Henning. (back row) Mohammed Rashel Ahmed, Nigel Bakewell, Martyn Warwick (education team), Damien Gill and Aaron Thompson.



MENOPAUSE IS A WORKPLACE ISSUE

At Usdaw's Annual Delegate Meeting in May a proposition was carried asking the union to develop campaign materials that will help reps better support members experiencing problems at work because of the menopause.

The menopause marks the time when a woman's periods stop. It usually happens between the ages of 45 and 55. The average age for a woman to reach the menopause in the UK is 52 although women can and do experience the menopause at a much younger age. A woman is said to have reached the menopause once she has not had a period for one year. It is usual for symptoms to begin five years before and to continue for five years after the menopause has been reached although every woman's experience is unique and therefore there is no such thing as a 'typical' menopause.

However, what is certain is that the menopause will affect all women at some stage in their lives. This is

not a niche or minority issue. The number of older women in work is rising all the time – a trend that is set to continue as retirement ages rise and the birth rate falls.

Women make up over half of the UK population. There are over five and a half million women of peri-menopausal and menopausal age in work and over 50,000 Usdaw members are women who fall into this category.

Given the fact that one in three women in the UK is currently going through or has reached the menopause, it is shocking that there is still so much stigma, discrimination and lack of awareness about it.

Usdaw agrees that it is high time employers and others stopped dismissing the menopause as just a 'women's issue' and recognise it for what it is - a serious workplace health concern that involves physical and emotional changes that most women find difficult and exhausting.

A recent Usdaw survey found that 80 per cent of women members are affected by symptoms of their menopause in the course of their day to day work, with one in four experiencing severe symptoms.

Symptoms ranging from hot flushes, lack of sleep, anxiety, poor memory and concentration can be made worse by the working environment. For women in Usdaw their symptoms are compounded by the physically and mentally demanding nature of the jobs they do:

- Late night and early morning working.
- Short notice changes to shifts.
- Lack of rest breaks.
- Lone working.
- Dealing with customers.

These things are difficult to manage at the best of times but they can become overwhelming when experiencing one or more menopausal symptoms.

Many women may not recognise



that it is the menopause causing their symptoms but even where they do, most don't feel able to talk about it or ask for help. If colleagues - and more importantly managers - do not know enough about the menopause, or worse still, make jokes about it, this makes it very hard for women to talk about their symptoms.

When developing campaign materials, the equalities section always begins with the experiences of Usdaw members and the menopause is no different. For some time, the union has made a survey available to reps and members. As well as looking at the survey evidence, we recently brought together a group of women activists to discuss their experience of supporting members working through the menopause. The conversations we had during the discussion day will be used to shape and inform the new campaign materials that should be available in autumn.

LGBT+ WHAT DOES THE PLUS MEAN?

Usdaw is committed to supporting our LGBT members and to tackling the abuse and harassment they so often face. One of the ways in which we do this is to raise awareness of what it means to be LGBT.

Nowadays the LGBT abbreviation is often followed by the + sign.

The + symbol is intended to include people who do not necessarily identify as LGB or T but who nevertheless might experience discrimination or isolation because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

One of these groups of people are those who identify as non-binary.

WHAT IS NON-BINARY?

Non-binary is how some people choose to describe their gender. It means that they don't feel 100 per cent male or female, but somewhere in-between. People who identify as non-binary often express their gender in a way that doesn't fit traditional expectations of what it is to be male or female. Non-binary people may also identify in another way entirely, with no reference to male/female.

Non-binary isn't a single definition - it's an umbrella term that includes a range of gender identities.

Supporting non-binary workers

Research has shown that non-binary people experience high levels of harassment and discrimination. This prevents them from being able to be themselves at work.

For instance, only four per cent of non-binary workers always felt comfortable sharing their non-binary identity at work – compared to over half (52 per cent) who never felt comfortable.

Nine out of 10 non-binary workers worried that if they were

to share their non-binary identity at work it would make their work environment more difficult and over half worry that it would negatively affect their career progression.

Usdaw reps play a crucial role in making sure that workplaces are free from bullying and harassment and enabling everyone to feel able to be themselves at work.

Rights at work

The Equality Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Up until recently it was unclear whether non-binary workers would be covered by the Act as the gender reassignment provisions only cover those who are proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

However, in September 2020 a case was brought by a car plant worker who identified as non-binary. They were subject to insults, abusive jokes and received little, if any, support from management.

The employer argued that the worker didn't fall within the definition of gender reassignment as outlined in the Act. However, the tribunal disagreed, they found that 'gender is a spectrum' and said it was 'beyond any doubt' that the claimant was protected from discrimination by the Equality Act.

This is an important decision establishing that non-binary workers are protected by law from harassment and less favourable treatment at work.



INSPECT YOURSELF

In the second of our series of articles on union health and safety reps functions we focus on workplace inspections and how reps can make them effective.

Why are health and safety rep inspections important?

A key part of the H&S rep's role is to perform workplace inspections so they can discover hazards, check existing hazards are controlled and make workplaces safer. This also means that workers will see an active union rep and gives them the opportunity to raise any concerns.

Do H&S reps have the right to inspect their workplace?

Yes. Under the Safety Representative and Safety Committee (SRSC) Regulations, union health and safety reps are entitled to carry out formal workplace inspections normally at

least once every three months.

They are also entitled to inspect following a significant change at work or after a reportable incident or accident which results in someone being off work for more than three days.

What do I need to do before an inspection?

It is important to set a schedule for inspections in advance. If there is more than one rep where you work, talk to the other reps to develop an inspection plan that ensures that reps are covering all the areas where people work.

Agree the dates with management. In the week before you do an inspection, use the noticeboard and any other communication channels at work to let people know when you will be coming round.

How can I make the best use of the time?

It is a good idea to develop your own inspection checklist. If managers have a checklist or audit form you can use that as a starting point (although you may still want to add other items to your own checklist). Or you could do a quick map of the different areas you inspect and list the things you want to check in each area before you start the inspection.

Talk to workers as you go round. You are there as their representative so it is important to get their views and listen to any health or safety concerns they may have.

MAPPING THE WORKPLACE FOR INSPECTIONS

To plan inspections, workplace mapping is a powerful tool for health and safety reps to help to prioritise where to place your time more



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effectively. It can identify problem areas or jobs which carry higher risk and need more attention from the employer. And, as problems get resolved, it can be a great way of measuring success.

- The starting point is to draw a rough map of the workplace. In a large store for example, there will be many different areas including the delivery yard, the warehouse, freezer, various departments on the shop floor, car park, meeting rooms/staff rest room etc.
- For each area think about the health and safety issues – e.g. on checkouts that may include manual handling, checkout chairs, staffing levels and breaks, temperature, abuse from customers or other issues.
- Also think about the people who work there. Are there any members who show more interest

in health and safety or who have raised issues with you as the rep? It helps to identify who your friends are around the workplace. They may not want to be a rep themselves but they will be supportive and they can tell you if there are any problems.

- Keep the workplace map safe and add to it as you get to know more about the different areas. When you are doing a workplace inspection it can help to remind you of the issues to look out for as you go round and the people to talk to. It can also show you what progress you are making on the issues as some get removed and new ones get added.
- If there are several reps in a larger workplace it is a good idea to draw up the workplace map together – for example at a rep team meeting. Sharing views and experience will give you a better picture of the workplace. It can also help to identify which areas each rep covers and to identify any gaps.

How do I follow up after the inspection?

If you are doing a joint inspection with management, there may be some things that you were able to sort as you go round. However, it is still important to keep a note of what they were. If, for example, it turns out that the blocked fire exit that you got cleared is not a one-off but a regular occurrence, having the evidence is useful.

There may be other things that are more difficult to sort or require more detailed discussion with management. It is a good idea to put any major issues in writing. The Usdaw HS2 form has been developed to help reps to report hazards in writing. It is designed so that the rep can keep a copy themselves and ask the manager to return a copy once they have filled in the box stating what they are doing to deal with the hazard. This means that you have a record of what you

said and what management agreed to do about it. If you are not satisfied with the management response or they fail to do what they said they would, you can use the grievance procedure to get it sorted.

However, if a problem is identified that requires immediate action by the employer, do not rely on just a form; tell them at once verbally, too. The safety rep must then make sure that management acts on the report.

WHY INSPECTIONS AND MAPPING WORKS

Above all, inspections and mapping will only become more than words if there is good safety communication between the rep, the workers they represent and their employer. By listening to workers, the Usdaw health and safety rep can draw on their experience and knowledge to gain insight into risks. Often workers will share information with the rep that they would not share with a manager.

The SRSC Regulations require the employer to provide the rep with facilities and assistance to carry out their inspections and this includes the opportunity for private discussion with the workers they represent.

When the rep has a good safety communication with the employer this will result in action.

That is what puts the work that health and safety reps do at the heart of improving workplace safety and the union's organising agenda.

To get more ideas on health and safety mapping and organising check out the resources on the Hazards Magazine website:

www.hazards.org/organise

If you would like to feature in *Network* magazine, get in touch and tell us what you've been doing in your workplace.
network@usdaw.org.uk

OLDER REFURBED BUILDINGS AT RISK

MPS BACK REMOVAL OF ASBESTOS

A Work and Pensions Select Committee inquiry into asbestos management recommends that the Government implement a 40-year plan for the removal of asbestos from public buildings.

The report explains that the current asbestos regulations say that asbestos that is in good condition, well-protected and unlikely to be disturbed, can be

left in place in buildings. But that requires the owners of the building to have an effective system in place to manage the asbestos containing material and to make sure it remains undisturbed. These buildings will not last forever and a policy of waiting for materials containing asbestos to deteriorate before removing them is not sustainable in the long term.

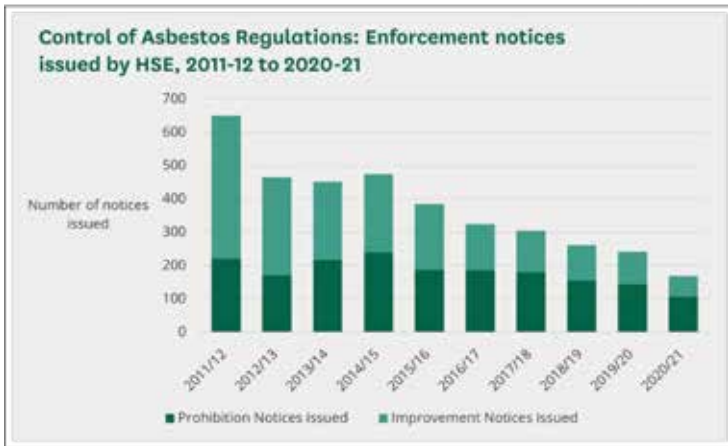
TUC general secretary Frances

O’Grady welcomed the Select Committee recommendation, but added, “a 40-year deadline isn’t ambitious enough: hundreds of thousands of workers risk dangerous exposure in that time. Ministers must commit to removing all asbestos to keep future generations safe.”

If implemented the change in policy would affect public buildings such as schools, hospitals and local authority premises. But it would also raise questions about the continued management of asbestos in privately-owned commercial premises where Usdaw members work. Asbestos can still be found in older buildings that were built before the 1990s. As the larger retailers have moved into opening new convenience stores in old buildings such as converted pubs or offices, the number of Usdaw members who may potentially be exposed to asbestos at work has actually risen in recent years.

For more information:

www.parliament.uk search **asbestos management report**



Source: Work and Pensions Committee analysis of HSE data. Image courtesy of HOC Work and Pensions Committee report

TIME FOR ACTION AND ENFORCEMENT

UK RATIFIES VIOLENCE AT WORK TREATY

Unions have welcomed the Government’s decision to ratify the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention on tackling violence and harassment at work. This requires the Government to ensure that employers put in place measures to combat all forms of violence and harassment at work.

TUC general secretary Frances O’Grady said: “Ratifying the convention is a welcome statement

of intent.

“Unions have campaigned hard for several years to get global protection against workplace violence and harassment, and today’s ratification will help to get other nations signed up too. It now comes down to the action and enforcement that follows.

“Unions, government and industry must now work together on the laws and workplace policies needed to prevent abuse and punish those

responsible.

This should include recognising that not every worker faces the same risks. Insecure workers, frontline staff, women, Black workers and those with other protected characteristics face greater risks that must be addressed.”

For further information:

www.ilo.org search **C190**
www.usdaw.org.uk/
healthandsafety

UPDATED GUIDANCE

WORK AT HEIGHT AND LADDER SAFETY

The Health and Safety Executive has recently refreshed its guidance on work at height and updated guidance produced with the Ladder Association on the safe use of ladders and stepladders.

Work at height is an important issue. It is the main cause of fatal accidents at work, accounting for over a quarter of deaths. Falls from height also cause over 44,000 serious injuries every year. Two thirds of the major injuries result from falls of two metres or less. In all the sectors where Usdaw members work it is a significant risk that needs to be managed.

Since 2005 the Work at Height Regulations have required employers to reduce the risks. They should remove the need for work at height where reasonably practicable. When work at height is necessary they must ensure that it is properly planned and supervised and is carried out by competent people. This includes providing the right equipment to protect workers from falling themselves or from being struck by falling objects.

Where the risk is low and the work is of short duration, ladders, stepladders or even kick-stools may be the right equipment to use. But employers still need to make sure that the right ladders are being



used in a safe way and that ladders, steps or kick-stools are regularly maintained.

Health and safety reps have an important role to play in protecting members from work at height injuries. When doing your workplace inspections keep these important questions in mind:

- Can the work be done differently to remove or reduce the need for work at height?
- If ladders, steps or kick-stools are used for work at height, are they the appropriate equipment to use? For example, kick stools may be convenient and easy to use for handling lighter objects at height, but for the handling of

large, heavy or awkwardly shaped objects a more stable working platform may be needed.

- Where ladders, steps or kick-stools are used are they regularly inspected to make sure they are undamaged and still fit for use?
- Are workers confident in using the equipment provided for working at height?
- Is there evidence that better equipment is needed – for example workers climbing on the racking to reach items or workers having to stretch or over-reach?

To see the HSE guidance including the guidance on safe use of ladders go to:

www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height

HAZARDS CONFERENCE JULY 2022

The annual Hazards Conference, 'It's a Deadly Business but Decent work is Safe and Healthy' is at Keele University on the 29-31st July 2022. This year there is also an online option for those who would rather not attend in person. The fee for full residential in-person delegates is £320. For non-residential in-person delegates or for online delegates the fee is £210.

Hazards Conference is the UK's biggest and best educational and organising event for trade union

safety reps with a mixture of plenary sessions, meetings and workshops. Delegates have the opportunity to share experience with safety reps and activists from other unions and sectors. Any rep who wants to attend the conference should seek funding from their branch and apply using the booking form by the closing date of 6th July 2022 at:

gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Final-booking-form-Hazards-Conference-33rd.pdf

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GOLF

75% Discount on Open Fairways Golf Card.

Usdaw members can enjoy an 18-month subscription to Open Fairways for only £22.50! Usually costs £89, Usdaw members and their family will pay just £22.50 for 12 months (and receive an extra 6 months free!). The Open Fairways card gives golf lovers up to 50% off green fees at over 1000 golf courses in the UK, Ireland and overseas including Fairmont St Andrews, Hever Castle, Sutton Green, Dromoland Castle and Cottrell Park Golf Resort.

To find out more go to: www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

COTTAGE HOLIDAYS

Save up to 10% on cottage and short break holidays in the UK and Europe with CottageStayUK.

They work with over 19,000 cottages and villas in the UK and Europe to give members maximum choice. So whether it's a romantic break or a getaway with your friends, CottageStayUK can help you find the right property for your holiday at a great price.

To find out more go to: www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*



GO APE

10% off Go Ape outdoor experiences and activities.

Go Ape offer outdoor experiences and activities across 35 locations UK wide, including the newest venue in Edinburgh, which opened in Summer 2021.

From zip wires to super-springy trampoline nets in the trees, to off-road Segway and axe throwing! Go Ape has an adventure for everyone to enjoy. If you're looking to get the blood pumping, take on a challenge, try something new or just have fun with all your Tribe, Go Ape is the place to go. Live life more adventurously with a day full of unforgettable action, laughter, and all-round high fives.

To find out more go to: www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

APPLE

Great savings on a wide range of Apple products.

- 10% off AirPods Pro, Beats and Apple accessories (inc NEW AirTags)
- 6% off *Mac
- 2% off *iPhone and Apple Watch

Personalise your device with free engraving on: AirPods, iPod, iPad, Apple Pencil (2nd Generation), AirTag.

To find out more go to: www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*



*Terms and conditions apply to all benefits. See website for details. Offers subject to change without notice and correct at time of print. Apple - annual purchase limits apply. Discounts are subject to availability. For the latest offers visit the Apple EPP store. See website for current discount exclusions. Go Ape - excludes Saturdays, bank holidays, gift vouchers and corporate bookings. Axe Throwing is currently only available at Coventry, Matfen and Bracknell sites. Usdaw Discounts & Offers is managed and run on behalf of Usdaw by Parliament Hill Ltd. Further benefits are organised directly by Usdaw Membership Services. See website for details. Neither Usdaw nor Parliament Hill are part of the same group as the providers.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Area organisers Dennis Nash and Alan McVie look back at their careers as they approach retirement and Usdaw says goodbye to former official Mike Murray

DENNIS NASH

Dennis Nash, area organiser at the Kegworth Office, retires after eight years' service.

Dennis, 65, started his working life when he left school at 15 and went to work for a local butchers. He got his HGV license at 21 and became a lorry driver working for a number of companies including Wincanton, Safeway and Morrisons.

"I got involved in the trade union and labour movement because of my dad," said Dennis. "He remained a committed trade unionist right up until his death in 2020.

"I've loved being an area organiser, it's hard work but it's so rewarding. There is no greater thrill than when you see justice being done. I'm going to miss all my friends and colleagues. My only regret is that Usdaw came nearer the end of my working life rather than at the start.

"I have worked every day since I was 15 so I won't be idle, I'm going to remain active in Usdaw and the Labour Party. I will be marching and attending the trade union festivals. I've also got a couple of holidays lined up in Devon and in Spain so



Dennis Nash

there will be some time to relax."

ALAN MCVIE

Alan McVie, area organiser for the Scottish region, retires after 29 years of service.

Alan, 55, began his Usdaw career when he stood as a rep in Woolworths at the age of 19. The Scottish TUC recognised him as the most outstanding young trade unionist in 1990 and within five short years he was appointed as area organiser for the southern region in 1993.

"The thought of retiring is quite surreal," said Alan. "I've been active within the trade union movement since I got my first summer job. My family, especially my father, was a



Alan McVie

big supporter of the Labour Party so it was automatic that I would join a union as soon as I started working.

"My favourite part of being an area organiser has always been resolving issues for our members. I also loved developing reps and watching them grow and gain confidence. I'm really going to miss the comradery of the reps I have been working with all these years.

"Once I retire, I'm looking forward to playing golf with my wife. We're both big music lovers so we are going to see Roger Waters (who used to be in Pink Floyd) play in Miami. I'm still very passionate about social justice issues so I'll be out there protesting and going on marches."



MICHAEL MURRAY

Usdaw was saddened to hear that former area organiser Michael Murray passed away at the age of 75.

Mike was appointed as area organiser in 1975 and was based at the Manchester office. He had responsibility for the SATA section of membership and the mail order sector. In 1994, Mike transferred to

the Crewe office where he worked until his retirement in 2004.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Mike was an extremely popular organiser with members, reps and colleagues alike. He had a special talent for developing reps and helping them realise their full potential.

"Our condolences go out to his family at this difficult time."



ARE YOU PUZZLED BY YOUR PENSION SCHEME?

Don't be - Usdaw's pensions guide will give you a better understanding of various pension schemes

For a lot of people, their pension is something that can be worried about in the future. But in a climate where many businesses are engaged in a race to the bottom and cutting back their pension provisions wherever they can, it's never been more important to know where you stand when it comes to your retirement plans.

That's where our comprehensive pensions guide comes in. Packed with useful information on all aspects of this complex subject, it should be the first port of call for

any member wanting to increase their understanding of their pension arrangements. You'll find advice and guidance on occupational and state pensions, the laws that govern them and your rights as a member of a pension scheme.

If your members are still puzzled by pensions, you could also hold a Pensions Awareness Day – the pensions section at head office will be happy to help you organise one. Read the guide online at: www.usdaw.org.uk/pensionsguide

For a complete list of Usdaw publications and to order visit: dtp.usdaw.co.uk/PublicationsCatalogue

NEW IN!

Leaflets & Booklets

Workers' rights - a guide for full-time and part-time workers (Leaflet 211)

Don't retire from the Union (Leaflet 269)

Flexible Working (Leaflet 346)

Worried about money? Know Your Rights (Leaflet 385)

Usdaw Supporting Young Workers (Leaflet 396)

Are YOU affected by Male Domestic Violence? (Leaflet 452)

Pensions - Understanding Your State Pension (Leaflet 428)

Key Workers - Was it Worth it? Cost of Living Survey Results 2022

Posters & Postcards

Our policy is to protect your rights at work (Poster R1)

Usdaw's transport section for all professional drivers (Poster R5)

Is It Too Hot Where You Work? (Poster R7)

Mental Health Issues (Poster R50)

Free Will Writing Service for Usdaw Members and their Partners (Poster R60)

Legal Plus Advice to Members (Postcard)

Legal Plus - Getting Advice for Non-Work Related Problems (Poster R61)

Online Bitesize Courses

Mind your Head – Bitesize Mental Health course
www.usdaw.org.uk/mindyourhead

Getting Started: The Role of the Rep
www.usdaw.org.uk/gettingstarted

Fit for Maths – Bitesize Maths course
www.usdaw.org.uk/fitformaths

Email your thoughts and pictures to us at: network@usdaw.org.uk

OVER TO YOU



Top: Keir Starmer and Anas Sarwar at Tesco Edinburgh Leith. Speaking to Usdaw members about the cost of living crisis and how it's affecting them.

Middle left: Usdaw rep Sandrene Wright speaking on the pressures on shopworkers at #IWMD2022 in Manchester.

Middle Right: Usdaw delegation at the Scottish TUC conference.

Bottom left: Usdaw rep Claire Saunders collects her well deserved British Empire Medal (BEM).

Bottom right: Mike Amesbury MP at the Campaigns stand at ADM.

OBITUARY KEVIN SULLIVAN

Kevin worked for Co-op distribution as a driver at the Blenheim depot in Nottingham, moving to the new Castlewood depot in 2012.

During Kevin's 30 years of Usdaw membership he was active as a shop steward, health and safety representative, he was an employee pensions trustee for many years as well as the chair of the branch. He was incredibly proud of the work that he carried and was highly regarded and liked by all those that knew him.

Kevin passed away on St. Patrick's Day, an irony that would not be missed on the proud Irishman that he was and will be remembered as the doting husband, father and grandfather of his loving family.



He will be missed by all those that knew him.

**Ed Leach, area organiser,
Midlands region**



OBITUARY JULIE BANKS

It is with much regret and sadness that we advise of the passing of Julie Banks.

As an Usdaw rep, Julie was involved in many committees and forums both within Tesco's and Usdaw's structures.

To get elected meant that Julie was well known and respected, both regionally and nationally, within Usdaw and held in high regard by her work colleagues, members and fellow reps.

Julie attended many Tesco and Usdaw events and was without doubt a real character whom many, many people will have very fond memories of, along with plenty of stories to tell. She was also a very caring and loyal person too.

For many of us within the Usdaw family, we are privileged to have known and worked with Julie over the many years she was a union rep.

**Gavin Dadley
Midlands Regional Secretary**



*Above:
Celebrating
pride in Bury,
Lancashire.*

*Right:
A great turnout of
Usdaw activists
leafleting and
door knocking in
Tamworth.*



Getting Advice for Non-Work Related Problems

For non-work related problems, complete our online form at www.usdaw.org.uk/BL3

Free Initial Advice Scheme

Usdaw's Legal Plus service doesn't stop when you clock off work. You're entitled to free initial advice about any non-work related legal problem. For example, you may have:

- Bought a car or a washing machine that simply isn't up to standard and the salesperson refuses to do anything about it.
- A dispute with your landlord, the council, or with nuisance neighbours.
- A matrimonial or other family problem at home, or want advice about debts.

If there's more legal work required after you've received our solicitors' advice, they'll offer you special discounted rates.

You should use the scheme only if your problem is NOT connected with work.

If you have a work-related problem then you can apply for full legal assistance from the Union and you should seek help from your Union representative, Branch Secretary, Area Organiser or Usdaw's Legal Department immediately.



Probate

Sorting out probate matters when someone dies can be stressful. Our Usdaw solicitors can provide you with sympathetic and professional advice at discounted rates.

Moving House

Buying a property is a long-term financial commitment and may be one of the most important steps in your life. Usdaw solicitors will deal with all stages of your property transaction professionally and efficiently, at discounted rates for Usdaw members. You'll receive a written quotation at the outset, so you won't have any unwelcome surprises.

If you have a problem and need help and advice or want to join the Union, contact your Union rep or ring the Union Helpline

0800 030 80 30

or visit the Union's website
www.usdaw.org.uk

