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# Usdaw For Labour

National Executive  
Council Statement  
to 2023 ADM



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

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

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

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

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

# General Secretary's Foreword



The chaos caused by the Conservative Government in recent times has shown exactly why we need to come together to vote them out.

As we get closer to the next general election, it's important that we all have a clear idea of exactly what is at stake; what we are fighting for when we are campaigning for a Labour Government.

Sometimes it is all too easy to take our rights and the services we rely on for granted and forget that each and every one of them was campaigned for, fought for, and ultimately delivered through our political successes.

It is worth us taking the time to remind ourselves of these achievements delivered through political action, and what our lives would look like without them.

More importantly, we need to look to the future. Usdaw can and will campaign for our members, defending your interests and negotiating and campaigning for you, but all of us working together with our political allies in the Labour Party can do so much more than that. We can secure real and meaningful change that will improve the lives of Usdaw members, their families and working people right across the length and breadth of our country.

Labour have committed to delivering the New Deal for Working People within the first 100 days of a Labour Government. Together, we can commit to doing everything we can to make that Labour Government a reality.

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

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**Paddy Lillis**  
General Secretary

# Section One – What Has Labour Done for Us?

The Labour Party was founded to represent the interests of working people in this country. Over its history it has fought to improve their lives and also those of their families and many of the most vulnerable groups in our society.

As trade unionists Labour is on our side, but to deliver for our members and others, Labour needs to be in Government. The industrial strength of trade unions can deliver for members in the workplace, but we need political strength. The rules governing how trade unions can operate, the fundamental employment rights that workers rely on, and the wider policies affecting people's lives are all decided on by Governments.

Strong Labour Governments, working to deliver for our members and working people across the country have a proven track record of delivery. They have achieved fundamental changes that have left a lasting legacy and improved all of our lives.

Labour's first Government took office in 1924. As a minority Government in a hung Parliament, the Labour Government under Ramsay MacDonald had to fight to pass legislation. Despite this, it secured crucial new measures on housing which saw a massive increase in the amount of decent, affordable housing available for working class people.

The Attlee Government came to power in 1945 in the wake of the Second World War on the back of a promise to deliver a prosperous peace. The landmark achievement of this Government was the creation of the National Health Service which made free universal healthcare available for the first time.

The Wilson and Callaghan Governments of the 60s and 70s marked a new era of equality. Homosexuality was decriminalised, racial discrimination outlawed, and the Equal Pay Act prohibited less favourable treatment between men and women in terms of pay and conditions at work.

After 18 years of opposition for Labour, the Blair Government came to power in 1997 with a lot of work to do. Under the Labour Governments led by Tony Blair and then Gordon Brown, the country saw sweeping changes designed to make the lives of working people better, including the introduction of the first ever National Minimum Wage, Working Tax Credits, and a record level of investment in essential public services like schools, hospitals and the police.





Labour's record in Government is something that all of us in the Trade Union and Labour Movement can be proud of:

- **Massive expansion of council housing, pensions and the welfare system during the early years of the twentieth century** providing comfort and security to millions of working class people.
- **Introduction of the NHS following the Second World War** which, for the first time provided everyone with access to free healthcare.
- **Equal Pay Act of 1970 made it illegal to discriminate** on the basis of sex in the workplace for the first time. This was a revolutionary step forward providing significant new legal protections for women across the country.
- **Decriminalised homosexuality**, beginning the process of ending discrimination towards LGBT+ people.
- **Reformed the justice system** by ending the inhumane death penalty.
- **Introduced the first legislation to tackle racial discrimination**, the Race Relations Act 1965.
- **Hugely increased access to higher education** through the establishment of the Open University.

- **Introduced the first ever National Minimum Wage** which provided an immediate pay increase for around 1.2 million people and pushed wages up for all.
- **Brought in legislation** to prevent part-time workers from being treated less favourably than their full-time colleagues.
- **Provided meaningful support for working parents** through free nursery places for every three and four-year old.
- **Took a long-term approach to encouraging savings** by providing over six million child trust funds ensuring that many children who would not otherwise have any savings at all had access to savings when they turned 18.
- **Introduced the Sure Start system** to provide as many children and working parents as possible with the best start in life through 2,200 Sure Start Children's Centres.
- **Tackled the terrible impact of fuel poverty on older people** by introducing a winter fuel payment of £200 for pensioners and up to £300 for over 80s.
- **Moved power and decision making closer to the people affected by those decisions** through the creation of a devolved Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.
- **Secured peace for people in Northern Ireland** and paved the way for the return of devolved Government through the Good Friday Agreement.





- **Introduced a legal right to paternity leave for the first time** giving new dads two weeks leave to spend with their new child.
- **Introduction of a legal right to 24 days' paid holiday for all full-time workers** (and the equivalent for all part-time workers).
- **Introduced the child tax credit system**, putting more money in the pockets of parents.
- **Continued to work to tackle discrimination in the country** by equalising the age of consent; scrapping Section 28, a legal restriction on being able to talk about LGBT+ issues in public settings; and introduced Civil Partnerships, giving same sex relationships legal recognition for the first time.
- **Brought in the Decent Homes Standard** which led to over one million social homes being brought up to a good standard of repair and comfort.
- **Improved workers' rights**, including establishing for the first time a legal right to be accompanied by a trade union representative in disciplinary and grievance procedures.

It is clear that Labour in Government can make a real difference to the lives of people right across our country. Working with the Labour Party, trade unions like Usdaw identify the key issues affecting members, their families and other working people and help to develop ideas and policies to improve matters. But to put these into action we need a Labour Government.

# Section Two – What Will the Next Labour Government Do ?

Labour has a proud track record of delivering for Usdaw members and other working people when in power, but the world doesn't stand still. It's important to look at how the world has changed since the last Labour Government and plan what we want to achieve together in the future.

This is especially important after 12 years of Conservative Government which has seen workplace rights eroded, the welfare system undermined, austerity imposed on vital public services and economic chaos and mismanagement.

Ushaw has been working closely with other trade unions and the Labour Party to make sure there are plans in place to improve workers' rights, public services, and the economic situation as quickly as possible after we secure a Labour Government.

Over the course of 2021, affiliated trade unions including Usdaw worked with Labour to develop a Green Paper on Employment Rights. The Green Paper will serve as the foundation of the next Labour Government's critical action to improve workers' conditions.

Key parts of this New Deal for Working People include:

- **Zero-hours contracts will be banned.** Labour will also ensure anyone working regular hours for 12 weeks or more receives a fair contract which reflects these hours.
- **Day one rights on the job will be introduced** to improve workers' rights around unfair dismissal, sick pay, parental leave, and many other things.







- **The right to flexible working will be made available to all workers from day one** to allow everybody the chance to create a better work-life balance, with employers being required to support this as far as is reasonable.
- **Paid family and carers' leave** will ensure workers won't lose out on pay if they need to take time off to respond to a family emergency.
- **Fairer redundancy laws** will prevent workers from being dismissed for failing to agree to a worse contract.
- **Employers will be required to tackle harassment in the workplace**, including sexual, racial, and LGBT+ harassment, and harassment from third parties.
- **Employers would be required to pay workers in full** when not enough notice is given for cancelled or changed shifts, which cause worry and stress for many in insecure work.
- **Labour will act to close gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps.**
- **Raise awareness of neurodiversity** in the workplace and across wider society.
- **Work to increase wages for all workers.**
- **Seek to end in-work poverty** by tackling the wider financial pressures workers face, including improving transport links, making good quality childcare more affordable, and addressing the housing crisis.
- **Increase Statutory Sick Pay** and make it available to ALL workers – including those on low wages who under the current rules are not eligible.
- **Encourage stronger collective bargaining rights** (where trade unions negotiate with employers on behalf of their members) to tackle issues such as job insecurity, discrimination, and low pay.
- **Introduce sector-wide Fair Pay Agreements** to create better pay and working conditions for all workers in an entire sector.



- **Statutory maternity and paternity leave will be extended**, and protections for women returning to work from maternity leave strengthened. Labour will also review the failed shared parental leave system and make taking shared leave a better and more practical option.
- **The ability of workers to respond to family emergencies will be strengthened** through paid family and carers' leave, the right to have flexible working and greater ability for workers to enforce these rights.
- **Put mental health on par with physical health in our workplaces.** This will reduce the stigma around mental health and make it easier to access support.
- **Review provisions for stress, mental health**, and the impact of emerging health issues such as long Covid.
- **Robust trade union laws** to make it easier for workers to be represented by a union and to strengthen workers' rights.
- **Improved rights to join a union** - Labour will require employers to inform all employees on a regular basis of their right to join a union, and for trade unions to be able to organise, meet and represent their members and potential members.
- **One legal category of worker** (unless you're genuinely self-employed) with the same rights and protections across the board, so no one loses out.
- **A fair Employment Tribunals process** by extending the time to bring a claim, as well as tougher penalties for those employers who break the law.
- **A Single Enforcement Body to inspect workplaces**, investigate anonymous reports from workers, and bring prosecutions and civil proceedings on behalf of workers relating to health and safety, minimum wage, exploitation and discrimination.

Details of the new deal are available in the Usdaw produced booklet, *Labour's New Deal for Workers*.

Following on from the New Deal for Working People, the affiliated unions worked with Labour over the course of 2022 to expand that work. Key policies and principles were agreed in a wider range of areas affecting the lives of working people, including:

- **Bringing sustainable jobs to all parts of the country**, creating new green jobs and decarbonising existing ones through a Climate Investment Pledge.
- **The implementation of the New Deal for Working People** within the first 100 days of a Labour Government.
- **A 10 year plan of reform to social care** that will act as a roadmap to a world-class National Care Service.
- **Investment in early years to reduce childcare costs and extending statutory maternity leave.**
- **Make ending violence against women and girls a key mission in Government.**
- **Action to make Brexit work** by striking trade deals and building partnerships that deliver jobs and opportunity at home.

The New Deal for Working People would be in place within the first 100 days of the next Labour Government and Labour would continue to work with trade unions to make our members' lives better.

This is what Usdaw members and other working people across our country stand to gain under a Labour Government. This is what is at stake, and this is what we are fighting for.



# Section Three – How Do We Get a Labour Government?

Knowing that a Labour Government will make a real difference to our lives is one thing, but Labour winning the next election is another. Whether the next general election happens next month or next year, there are some key actions that we can take as Labour supporters, members and activists to support a Labour victory.

## Register to Vote and for a Postal Vote

The first step is to make sure you are registered on the electoral roll, and will therefore receive a polling card for every election you're able to vote in. Even if you've registered previously, it's worth checking that you and every eligible adult in your property are registered. While in many elections the voting age is 18, in some it's 16. Local guidance for checking who is registered is available by checking the website detailed at the end of this statement.

We all lead busy lives and like most people, Usdaw members have reported that they can find it difficult to get to the polling station in person on election day due to other commitments. A simple way to make sure your vote is cast is to register to vote by post. It's safe and secure, and anybody who is eligible to vote is entitled to a postal vote. If you are keen to vote in person, make sure you have a plan for polling day, taking into account how you'll get there and what time.







## Vote Labour

It isn't just general elections where we've got an opportunity to show support for Labour. Voting Labour in by-elections, council elections, and mayoral elections in the run up to the 2024 General Election gives a good indication of how much support Labour actually has, how strong it is, and where it is.

These results really matter and set the tone for the elections that follow. Historically, there have been massive impacts from by-elections. The 1997 Wirral South by-election lost the Conservatives their parliamentary majority in the run up to the Labour landslide later that year.

We've seen some fantastic by-election results for Labour in the last year too. Chester, a seat that in the 2015 General Election was the most marginal in the country with a majority of 93, now has a Labour majority of nearly 11,000. This was the worst by-election result for the Conservatives in over a decade.

These results show that Labour are engaging with the issues that matter, providing credible solutions to the problems that people face within their day-to-day lives and building public confidence in a Labour Government.



## Talk About Labour

We're in no doubt that a Labour Government will be transformative for working people and their families. The best advocates for Labour are the people whose lives will be improved by a Labour Government. Although not everyone will be comfortable talking about politics, many of our family and friends are more open to these discussions than we might think.

The fact is that politics affects us all, and nobody has been immune from the disastrous decisions and behaviour of the Conservatives since 2010. People in all walks of life have suffered due to austerity and cuts to our public services, the handling of the pandemic, the crashing of the economy and deepening of the energy crisis.

If you want some help getting a conversation started about some of these issues, and how Labour want to change things, the Politics Team at Head Office have resources you can use to familiarise yourself with Labour's plans, details of which can be found at the end of this statement.

## Work With Labour

There are many opportunities to engage with Labour politicians at local and national levels. Usdaw members and reps will be used to organising Usdaw campaigns, possibly in your store or with a street stall. Some reps will already have experience of organising an MP visit to your store around Freedom From Fear and Respect Week. The principle is the same for the Labour Party where you are.

The Labour Party where you live will have campaigning sessions, leaflet rounds, and street stalls, and having the connection to you as an Usdaw member can help shape the focus of the campaigns. For example, the cost of living is heavily affecting people in our communities, and just as this is a key focus for the Union, local Labour campaigns often reflect this.

Wherever you can, invite Labour politicians to support your campaigns either in person, through their newsletter, or on social media. Offer the support of your local branch in return and work towards building a link with the Labour Party all year round. This means that our elected representatives keep up-to-date with the issues that matter to Usdaw members, and are better placed to address them when it comes to making policy.

## Become a Regional Political Activist

There's more information about this in the next section, but one of the simplest ways to support a Labour Government is to join our Political Activists Programme. Usdaw members can access a programme of development and training to help them achieve their political ambitions, whether that's standing for election or learning more about how the Labour Party works in your area. You can campaign with like-minded people from the Union, support Labour candidates and help build the foundations of the next Labour Government.

Details of the programme and how to join are in the next section.

## Join the Labour Party

Wherever possible, Usdaw members are encouraged to join the Labour Party. This is one of the most effective ways to keep a strong link between the Labour Party and the Union, for the benefit of both. Becoming a member of the Labour Party helps to ensure Usdaw's priorities are heard by the people who make the decisions about our day-to-day lives. Labour Party membership through your Union also entitles you to a say in the workings of your local party, from what campaigns they focus on to the selection of politicians. You can even become an Usdaw delegate to your Constituency Labour Party and stand for officer roles in your ward or constituency. You can join the Labour Party at a discounted rate as an Usdaw member online. A link to the Labour Party website has been provided at the end of this statement.

# Section Four – Usdaw’s Political Activists Programme

## What is the Programme?

Our Political Activists Programme was launched at ADM in 2019. The aim is to increase political engagement amongst Usdaw members, developing our capacity to engage in political and campaign activity across the UK.

As the programme is specifically tailored for Usdaw members, we're able to use the campaigning and organisational tools we have both within the regions and through our Politics Team at Head Office, to offer support and development to any member who wants to become more politically active.

What this means for each member is different. While we want to support as many members as we can to stand for election, this does not mean that every activist has to. There is plenty of support for Usdaw members who want to know more about politics, or who just enjoy campaigning with like-minded people. The programme does not require any other roles within the Union to be held, and for many of our activists becoming a member of the programme is the first step on a journey with the Union too.

Activists who join receive communications from their Regional Political Co-ordinators and Regional Secretaries about political campaigning and activity in their local area, and activists are encouraged to participate. This can be anything from leafleting, to door knocking, to holding Usdaw campaign days and street stalls. It could even be standing for election as a councillor or for a parliamentary seat.

The programme allows members within the regions to come together and support Labour campaigns in the area where they live, and on the issues that matter to them. Because our activists are working together, they're able to support each other and build networks as well as campaigning.

This is crucial when it comes to raising the profile of our campaigns and delivering for members, as it keeps a vital link on the ground between Usdaw and the Labour Party. The campaigning programme allows opportunities for politicians to come and see for themselves the experience of Usdaw members, and the reality of their day-to-day experiences.



## Aimed at Usdaw Members

Ushaw members often work in the heart of their local communities, meeting people from all walks of life and supporting them to meet their needs. Our members see the impact of political decisions on the people around them, from customers having to put shopping back if they can't quite afford it, to colleagues not being able to get a bus back home at the end of a shift.

If there's something affecting us, we all need somebody who can fight our corner for us, who can make sure we know our rights, and that we get treated fairly. When things go wrong at work, or they need a bit of extra support, Ushaw members can turn to each other in the Union. The Union also works to make things better in the longer-term through our campaigns on our key issues in the workplace, which also help us to engage with the workers we represent. Outside of work, we all need our local political representatives to engage with us and help us too.

Being a local councillor is a lot like being a Union rep. It might not seem like it at first, but there are many similarities in the skills you need to do both roles. Both take someone who can listen to people in times of crisis, engage with people about the things that matter to them, and take action on the issues that are affecting their community. Both can mean offering support to people trying to navigate a difficult problem, or being on the side of someone who is facing a daunting challenge. Both can be a lot of hard work, but both are incredibly rewarding.





## Why We Need the Programme

The world of politics can seem completely removed from our everyday lives, in part because when we look at some of the out of touch people who are making decisions about us it can feel as though they don't understand what it's really like for working people. We have multi-millionaires making decisions about a working family's household budget, taking decisions about state schools never having attended one themselves or sending their children to one, and making decisions about the NHS who have only ever had private healthcare.

It's important that politicians understand the real impact of the decisions they're taking on people's everyday lives. Usdaw members who have entered politics bring lived experience to the decisions they make, which means they make decisions based on their genuine understanding of how policies will affect people.

However, it can be very daunting to take the first steps, and many members who want to get more involved in politics, and even want to stand for office, may not know where to start. The Political Activists Programme is a way to support and develop our members on their political journey, giving them the tools and opportunities they need to become active and stand for election.

## Signing Up

As part of the programme, political activists are asked to sign up to a database which is used to contact members about campaign activity, including national campaign days and local political campaigning. Usdaw members who've signed up to the programme have been campaigning in elections local to them, attending training and workshops, and making links with their local Labour teams to prepare for the next elections.

Signing up to the programme does not mean you'll need to attend every event, but it gives you the option and the opportunity to get more involved. If you're interested in finding out more, you can visit the Usdaw website at the link provided at the end of this statement to join the programme.

## Useful Contacts

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## Useful Links

### Join the Labour Party

[join.labour.org.uk](http://join.labour.org.uk)  
(make sure you select the 'reduced' rate as a member of Usdaw)

### Join the Political Activists Programme

[www.usdaw.org.uk/jointheteam](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/jointheteam)

### Register to vote

[www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

### Sign up for a postal vote

[www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/apply-vote-post](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/apply-vote-post)

# USDAW

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Stock photography, posed by models

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UsdawUnion

