

arena

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MAY 2015

FAIR PAY NOW

*Workers are
£1,600 worse
off since 2010*

**ENERGY COSTS
LABOUR WILL
FREEZE BILLS**

HOUSING CRISIS

*Labour has
pledged to
build more
homes*

**DON'T GAMBLE
WITH YOUR VOTE**

*Workers'
Rights*

**YOUR
CHOICE**

Thursday 7th May 2015



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Labour will deliver for Usdaw members

Usdaw has a proud record of delivering for our members and working with the Labour Party to make the lives of the people in this country better.

The past five years have shown what a Tory Britain looks like. We've seen them target the most vulnerable in our communities – the low paid, the disabled and the unemployed. They have cut important employment rights, and slashed much needed services. Our members have been some of the hardest-hit.

The general election on 7 May is one of the closest fought in decades, and the choice is clear. Five more years of punishing austerity from a Tory Government who care more about their friends in the banks and big business than hardworking families; or a Labour Government committed to fairness and equality at work and in the community and tackling the deficit responsibly.

All Usdaw members have the chance to make a real difference by getting out and campaigning. No action is too big or too small – whether it's chatting to friends and colleagues about the importance of a Labour victory, using social media to spread the message, telephone canvassing for your local Labour candidate, or getting out on the doorstep in your nearest key seat.

If we all contribute what we can to the campaigning effort, I believe we will wake up on 8 May with the Labour Government our members deserve. We are the campaigning union, and I know our members are up to the challenge!

John Hannett, General Secretary



For a selection of clips on all the important political issues



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Labour introduced it and will raise it

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Take the arena test

Think politics doesn't affect you?

Labour and the Tories have very different policies. Tick the boxes that affect you or your family...

1 Cost of Living Do you...

- Pay heating bills?
For a fall in heating costs, see page 10
- Qualify for tax credits or child benefit?
See page 6-7 on the cuts
- Need childcare?
See page 8-9 for more free childcare
- Pay rent?
See page 11



2 Rights at work Do you...

- Need a pay rise?
See page 4 on minimum wage rises
- Worry about attacks on staff?
See page 12-13
- Have agency staff at your workplace?
See page 14 on exploitation
- Worry about zero-hours contracts?
See Rema's story on page 5

3 Public services Have you...

- Ever needed the NHS?
See page 9
- Ever needed the police?
See page 13
- Children at school, college or university?
See page 9



How many boxes did you tick?

More than 6
The Party that runs the next Government will have a massive impact on your life. Check out the policy differences in arena and make sure you vote.

1-5
The result of the election will make some real practical differences for you. Check arena to see how you will be affected and make sure you vote.

0
You are obviously very wealthy, have no need to work or use public services. The Government won't affect you, so you don't need to vote.

If there's a chance you may not get to the polling station on 7th May – get a postal vote! Make sure your application is taken or posted to arrive by 5pm on 21st April. Ring your local council or visit: www.electoralcommission.org.uk to get a form.

No Vote, No Voice!



Anne Meacock (right) and Sarah Taylor in Swansea



Minimum rate

Millions of workers depend on the national minimum wage – Labour has pledged to raise it to £8 an hour

The National Minimum Wage (NMW) was one of the greatest achievements of the last Labour Government, (at the time the Tories opposed it).

However, under the Coalition, rises have not kept pace with the cost of living. While the recession has been a struggle for most, few are harder-hit than those trying to make ends meet on the minimum wage – like Anne an Usdaw member

from Swansea:

“Even though I am getting a little bit older, I’ve still got to keep my hours up because of the cost of living – it’s horrendous. I have only ever really known the minimum wage but everything has gone up, gas, electricity, food, so people like me are in a bad way.”

The Conservatives talked about increasing the NMW to £7 per hour, but while they cut taxes for millionaires, they failed to put

money back in the pockets of working people.

Anne welcomed the news that Labour would raise the NMW to £8, which would be at least 50p more than inflation. “If the NMW goes up to £8 I will drink champagne – I would have to celebrate that!”

Ed Miliband replied: “Britain does need a pay rise and lots of people feel they’re not being properly rewarded. That’s why we’re going to raise the NMW to £8 – and I look forward to having a drink with Anne when we do!”



The scourge of zero-hours

The Tories don't care about unfair contracts

The use of zero-hours contracts has rocketed since the Coalition came to power, and the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics show that the number of these contracts has increased to 1.8 million.

These workers face a real struggle to manage their budgets not knowing what their hours will be from week to week.

One Usdaw member Rema Boumerdassi from Harlesden, used to be on a zero-hours contract. "I've gone from earning maybe £1,500 one month and then back down to £200 the next. It's horrible," she said.

"You get phone calls in the middle of the night asking you to

come in and work at 6am, or asking you to do a night shift for another store for a night shift. It's even harder when you are a single parent like I am organising childcare for these random shifts. It's difficult for my daughter too. She's five and does get upset. You just can't make any plans because it doesn't work like that."

Only Labour is committed to

putting an end to tackling exploitative zero-hours contracts, and has pledged a new law which says that if you do regular hours month after month, you are entitled to a regular contract.



Listen to Rema's story and the difficulties she has faced



Tough call... Rema Boumerdassi has had to endure zero-hours



arena showed Labour leader Ed Miliband the Usdaw members' stories

Ed Miliband responded...

"Workers like Rema don't have any security. You can't build a successful economy like that. Labour will outlaw exploitative zero-hours contracts and bring in a new law that says if you work regular hours, by law, you should have a regular contract."



**YOUR
vote
counts**

**Tory
cuts will cost
working families
with two children
£500 a year
by 2017**

Mark Payne and his family have struggled under the Coalition

**Labour's checklist
for working families**

Raise wages ✓

25 hours a week free childcare ✓

Freeze heating bills ✓

Tackle rising rents ✓

Build social housing ✓

Family income pressure

Working families have been hit hard by the Coalition, Mark Payne tells arena

The past five years under this Government have seen the incomes of many families put under massive pressure.

Wages have stagnated, costs have soared and vital financial support, such as Tax Credits, that many working families rely on have been cut by the Tories.

Udaw members Mark and Agnes both juggle work with looking after their children. Although Mark works full-time they still have to rely on tax credits. Like many working families, they have struggled as the costs of essentials has increased by 28 per cent over the past six years.

Agnes says: "It's come to the stage where at the end of each week, there's not enough there for our tea, we'll just feed the kids and we might not eat."

So Mark and Agnes were devastated to learn that the Tories plan to freeze tax credits and child benefit for at least another two years – costing them £550 a year. Universal Credit will also hit families like Mark's and take a further £650 a year.

Mark said: "We can't afford to lose that as a family. Our heads are only just above water. If the Tories get in again, I just don't know what families like us are going to do. I'd urge all Udaw members – vote Labour, get these Tories out. We can't afford another term with them in power."

Find out what you are entitled to and how much Universal Credit will affect you at...



Interview

Ed Balls MP

arena asked shadow chancellor Ed Balls MP five key questions...

The economy



“The only way the Tory Party can make their sums add up is to raise VAT again”

Q Why are working people struggling to get by?

The Conservatives came into office promising to protect our NHS, make people better off and balance the books. But all those promises have now been broken.

And most people are still not feeling the benefit of the recovery. Wages after inflation are down by £1,600 a year since the last election, while tax and benefit changes since 2010 have cost families on average over £1,100 a year. It's no wonder Usdaw members are finding it tough to get by.

Q Didn't we need to have cuts?

It is important that we balance the books, but the Tories have done this in a reckless way. They have made unfair choices – like giving millionaires a huge tax cut while raising VAT on working families and pensioners.

“Under the Tories, we've had a lot of pain but very little gain”

Q What would another Tory Government do?

The Tories have set out extreme plans for deeper spending cuts in the next three years than the last five years – cuts which go beyond simply balancing the books. People know that the only way the Tories can make their sums add up is by putting our NHS at risk and raising VAT again.

Q What would Labour do differently?

Labour's better plan will put working families first and save our NHS from the Tories with 20,000 more nurses, 8,000 GPs and cancer tests guaranteed in one week, paid for by closing tax loopholes and a mansion tax on properties over £2 million.

Q How will Labour help working people?

We'll raise the minimum wage faster than average earnings and give tax breaks to firms who start paying the living wage. And by raising the bank levy we will also be able to expand free childcare for working parents of three and four year-olds from 15 to 25 hours a week.



For a selection of interviews with activists, shadow ministers and Labour MPs

Spot the difference

There's a world of difference between Labour

Pay



Since the Tory-led Coalition came to power real wages have fallen by £1,600 a year and the minimum wage has lagged behind inflation. Another Tory government would do nothing to help raise pay.

Labour will raise the minimum wage well above inflation to at least £8 an hour and offer employers incentives to pay the Living Wage.



Cost of living

Since the last election, heating bills have risen by an average £300 a year, rents have risen faster than wages and house prices have soared. The Tories' allies in the City and big companies have made a lot of money, but working people have been hit hard by a cost of living crisis.

Labour will freeze fuel bills for 20 months while making the energy market fairer. Labour will also tackle rising housing costs by guaranteeing longer tenancies with stable rents. Labour is committed to build 200,000 new homes a year, with many available for affordable rent.



Working families

Under the Tories, support for working families with children has been cut by £1,100 a year. Their planned cuts to tax credits and child benefit would make families with two children a further £500 a year worse off.

**Policies
matter**

and the Tories



Image © Golden Pixels LLC / Shutterstock

families

Labour will help working parents by increasing free childcare for three and four year-olds from 15 to 25 hours a week, double the length of paternity leave to four weeks and raise paternity pay by £100.



Image © Franck Boston / Shutterstock

Our NHS

The Tories have spent £3 billion on re-organising the NHS and enforcing widespread privatisation, while patients face longer waits in A&E, to get treatment, or even to see a GP.

Labour will make sure the NHS has the time to care – with 20,000 more nurses, 8,000 more GPs and a new right to access talking therapies to help those with mental health difficulties.

Schools

Tory cuts have led to rising class sizes, with 100,000 infant children now in classes over 30. This is set to rise to 450,000 by 2020 under the Tories' plans.

Labour will end the flawed Free Schools programme and instead prioritise new schools where there are shortages of places.



To view special Usdaw videos, Labour MPs, Usdaw members and general secretary John Hannett

Energy price freeze will help workers



Too many people in the UK are having to choose between heating and eating, Labour will change that

Fuel poverty

Around 2.3 million UK households are in fuel poverty and cannot afford to heat their homes properly, says a new survey, that also showed that in 1.1 million of these homes, at least one member of the household is in work.

Energy bills have risen four times as fast as wages since the Coalition came to power. Many members are struggling with costs, and some even have to choose between eating and heating.

Sarah Clegg (above) from Southampton told **arena**: "Even though I'm working full time, I really struggle."

“ Only Labour is promising to keep fuel bills down ”

"Last year things were so bad the people at church helped me because I was at the stage where I had to choose between buying food or putting the heating on.

"Labour is the only Party that is promising to keep our fuel bills down. We need someone in power that cares."

Ed Miliband responded...

"Sarah is absolutely right, Labour is the only Party that is going to stand up to the energy companies. We will freeze energy bills so that they only fall and cannot rise and give regulators the power to cut prices."



To listen to Sarah's story and to hear more from Labour leader Ed Miliband

Image © Andrey_Popov / Shutterstock

[action.labour.org.uk/
page/s/energy-calculator](http://action.labour.org.uk/page/s/energy-calculator)

Labour will tackle the UK's housing crisis

There aren't enough affordable houses in the UK and private rents have gone through the roof, Labour will change that too



Britain is facing a housing crisis with millions of working people priced out of the rental market, and where home ownership is a distant dream.

That is why Labour has pledged to build 200,000 homes a year by 2020, which will create extra jobs and ease the housing crisis.

“The housing crisis is a scandal and tenants do feel vulnerable

Many who can't afford to buy are renting instead, but too many people are struggling with the rising rents and short-term tenancies that mean insecurity and uncertainty.

Udsway member Wendy Subhan from Dagenham, who rents her home on a six-month tenancy said: “The house we were in before was a nightmare. The wind used to whistle through the windows and my son who was only four at the time constantly suffered with chest infections.

“We were really lucky with this house. When we came and viewed this property there were 15 or 20 families outside waiting. But because we're renting I can't tell you if we'll still be here after the summer. You are always on edge.”

Ed Miliband said: “It's a scandal that somebody like Wendy has no security, no sense of whether she is going to be in her home from one month to the next. Or whether the landlords are going to say that they are going to jack up the rents by 10 or 15 per cent. Wendy could be faced with the threat of eviction. That's why Labour will bring in stable three year tenancies with predictable rent, I think that's the least we owe to people like Wendy.”

Housing crisis



Longer-term tenancies ✓

Predictable rent rises ✓

Abolish unfair agents' fees ✓

Build lots of affordable homes ✓

Labour's Ed Miliband has pledged energy freezes and more houses



Wendy Subhan at home in Dagenham

Your safety matters

The Coalition has cut compensation to victims of crime and blocked attempts to impose stiffer sentences on criminals

Workers' Rights



Support Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign

Image © BrAT8z / Shutterstock

Too many Usdaw members and other workers suffer abuse and violence while carrying out their job. So securing stiffer sentences and more convictions for those who assault our members in the workplace has long been a key aim of the union's Freedom From Fear campaign.

But every time Usdaw has worked with the Labour Party to change the law to provide this additional protection for shopworkers, it has been opposed by the Tories and LibDems in Westminster and the SNP in the Scottish parliament.

Barry Filkin, a shopworker in Rochdale, was viciously assaulted and suffered a heart attack while protecting a

colleague from racial abuse. The 43 year-old dad has not been able to work since or enjoy the active life he used to. Barry has spoken about his experience to help Usdaw lobby politicians for a change in the law.

"I was lucky to survive the attack," he said. "I used to enjoy mountain biking and taking the dog for walks in the hills every day, but since the attack and having a heart monitor fitted, now I can just about get to the local

shop and back.

"Changing the law is so important, not just for me, but for any person who works in retail."

Barry Filkin was attacked at work but the Tories don't seem to care

Which Parties support the protection of workers?

Tories	✗
Lib Dems	✗
SNP	✗
Labour	✓

Interview

Yvette Cooper

arena asked shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper MP what Labour would do...

Q How would a Labour Government support frontline staff like shopworkers?

I'm a big supporter of Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign, raising awareness and ways to make people feel safer at work. Labour will ensure staff who work with the public get greater protection from attacks, with tougher penalties for criminals. And we won't follow the crazy Tory plan of cutting 30,000 police in the next five years. That would be disastrous for community policing.

Q What would you do to improve police services?

We need police back on the streets. The Tories are destroying neighbourhood policing, yet we know that having more police officers in our town centres and on our estates means they can prevent crime and keep people safe.

We would abolish police and crime commissioners and stop the subsidy for gun licences so we can protect the frontline, starting with halting Tory plans to cut over 1,000 police officers next year.

Q How would you help victims of crime?

We will put a Victim's Law at the heart of the justice system and look at how we can support victims of crime who now suffer financially due to

“ There are now 16,000 fewer police. The Tories plan to cut another 30,000 officers



Crime and Safety

the cuts to victims' compensation that this Government made.

Domestic violence has been a hidden crime for far too long so we will bring in a new National Refuge Fund to help victims of this abuse.

Q What about concerns on immigration levels?

A Labour Government will reform the immigration system and introduce new rules so the system is fair. Immigration is important but it needs to be controlled and managed.

A Labour Government will bring in stronger border controls with 1,000 more staff, stronger enforcement to stop employers exploiting cheap migrant labour to undercut wages and jobs, new rules to make sure people contribute first and can't claim benefits until they have lived here for two years, and pursue European reform to strengthen transitional controls and change child benefit rules.

We would bring in different controls and targets for different kinds of immigration so we can cut illegal immigration, reduce low skilled migration but still get the top talent and University students who benefit Britain.



For a selection of interviews with Labour MPs and Usdaw activists on the election



Labour will end the Swedish Derogation

No exploitation

No undercutting wages

agency workers

1.2 million
People in the UK are estimated to work for an agency

Image © Seraphim Art / Shutterstock

Fairness now call

Agency workers get a raw deal in UK workplaces – it has to stop says Usdaw

It is estimated that over 1.2 million people in the UK are employed with an agency.

Many of those agencies use a loophole in the law called the Swedish Derogation. This allows companies to avoid treating agency workers the same as permanent colleagues. This means that agency workers are often

on worse terms and conditions than better paid colleagues they are working alongside.

Keve Dolan, an Usdaw rep from the North West, says: "There's a myth about agency workers all being Eastern European, but that isn't the

case. There's plenty of people at our place that for one reason or another be it age, or experience, or circumstances, haven't got that foothold in a workplace and have to use agencies to get a job."

Keve added: "If the Swedish Derogation was ended, it would give those people real jobs and a real future. How can we allow people to be exploited when they're doing the same job? Remember, one day it might be your son or daughter."



Keve Dolan wants to end the exploitation of agency workers

Make
A
Difference

your
vote
counts

get involved

Step 1: Voting

Making sure you are registered to vote and using that vote is crucial to making a difference at this election. You can also sign up for a postal vote if you think that you might have difficulty getting to the polling station on election day.

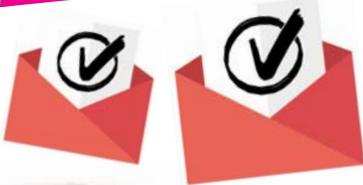
Call the elections office at your local council or go to

www.electoralcommission.org.uk



Step 2: Campaigning

Join the election campaign in your division. Usdaw is supporting Labour candidates in each division. To find out what events and campaign activities are happening in your division, call your local office and ask to speak with the divisional political co-ordinator.



Step 3: Register as an Affiliated Labour Supporter

As an Usdaw member you can register as an Affiliated Labour Supporter by going to support.labour.org.uk.

It's free and means that some of the political levy you already pay to Usdaw will go to help the Labour Party.



Step 4: Join the Labour Party

You can also become a Labour Party member by visiting join.labour.org.uk

Labour members are a vital part of Labour's campaigns and have a direct say in the policies of the Labour Party.

join.labour.org.uk



**A Labour win on 7th May
needs all of us to do our bit**

**USDAW
& LABOUR
NEED
YOU!**



If you can help in any way, please tick one or more of the boxes below and send this form back.

Or go to www.usdaw.org.uk/campaigns/usdaw-for-labour

I would like to:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Join the Labour Party | <input type="checkbox"/> Become an Affiliated Labour Supporter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Join my Divisional Campaign Team | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer to help Labour in my local area |

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