

# NETWORK



The bimonthly magazine for activists – July/August 2016

**TESCO REP ELECTIONS**

**MEMBERSHIP WEEK**



## ANNIVERSARY TOUR

••• PENSIONS ••• WAREHOUSE & DISTRIBUTION ••• LGBT WEEKEND •••

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# Comment

**General secretary John Hannett**

The EU Referendum didn't go the way Usdaw wanted, but we have to live with the decision, accept the democratic outcome and look to ensure our members aren't disadvantaged by the consequences.

The political fallout was immediate; the prime minister announced his intention to stand down and a leadership challenge to Labour's Jeremy Corbyn followed.

These are turbulent times. Since 2010 our members have been at the sharp end of the austerity policies of first the Coalition and again from the Tory Government last year.

It's clear we need a united opposition in parliament to help protect workers from the anti-trade union policies of the Conservatives. Labour has to sort itself out and quickly. Its fire should be aimed at the MPs on the opposite benches. There could be a snap election this autumn and we all know what happens to a disunited party at general elections – it loses and heavily.

## A special anniversary year for Usdaw

As activists will know 2016 is the union's 125th birthday and while workers and unions have made massive progress in that time, it's clear the need for organisations like Usdaw is as important today as it was in 1891.

Issues of low pay, under-employment, workers' rights, access to justice, health and safety, equality and fairness are still at the top of our agenda as we look to improve the living standards of our members. We can only do that with a dedicated team of activists who are willing to stand up for their rights at work and represent their members on a daily basis.

It's a tough job, a challenging role but winning for members is what we are all about and I know, as a former rep myself, winning for members (even those small victories) is very important. Whatever the political turmoil going on around us, we carry on with our work as determined as ever.



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## IN BRIEF...

### Ex-Morrisons stores go bust after a year

Convenience store chain My Local went into administration in June, with more than 1,000 jobs likely to be lost. Ninety-three of the retailer's 125 stores were closed, with the rest remaining open while buyers are sought. The chain employed 1,658 people. It was sold to Greybull Capital last year by supermarket Morrisons, which has said it would offer jobs to ex-My Local staff where possible.

### Brexit vote sees fall in confidence

Consumer confidence has seen its sharpest drop in 21 years after the UK voted to leave the EU, a report claims. The survey of 2,000 people taken after the result showed the confidence index fell by eight points to minus nine, a drop not seen since December 1994. Less confident consumers tend to curb their spending, which accounts for about two-thirds of the UK economy.

### Under fire Sports Direct in profits fall

Profits have fallen sharply at Sports Direct because of negative publicity about its working conditions and tough trading conditions. The company posted an 8.4 per cent drop in underlying annual profits in early July to £275.2m. The retailer was harshly criticised for the way it treated its staff, including paying salaries below the minimum wage.

# LEAVE VOTE EDG

In one of the biggest ever jolts to the UK political system 52 per cent of voters opted to leave the EU and trigger a sequence of unprecedented events.

Within hours of the result prime minister David Cameron announced his resignation and simultaneously fired the starting gun in the race to succeed him. Leadership contender Boris Johnson surprisingly quit the race almost before it started after Brexit colleague and Tory MP Michael Gove condemned Johnson's candidacy.

Meanwhile, 172 Labour MPs passed a motion of no confidence in their leader Jeremy Corbyn, who has refused to budge and instead called for unity in the Party.

Key Brexit campaigner and UKIP leader Nigel Farage also announced his resignation just 11 days after the Referendum vote.

The pound's value fell heavily in the aftermath of the result although it did recover slightly as the financial markets reacted to the surprise result.

The Referendum campaign was one of the most bitter and hostile political episodes in UK history with the Tory Party split right down the middle. The vote also revealed a country deeply divided with traditional voting allegiances no indicator of how someone would vote.

Overall the Leave campaign came top in nine of the UK's nations and regions, with the Remain campaign coming top in just three. The West Midlands had the highest vote share for Leave, with Scotland highest for Remain.

The turnout was high at 72 per cent, with more people turning out to vote than in last year's general election. More than 30 million people voted.

General secretary John Hannett said: "We must respect the outcome and work hard to get the best deal for the UK. There should be no dilution of workers' rights and we need to secure the best trade deal possible to help safeguard jobs and make our economy prosper. These are uncertain times.

"The result clearly demonstrates that the country is deeply divided and we must work together to heal the rift to overcome the uncertainties we now face."

Following the EU referendum, the UK economy now faces significant economic, political and social uncertainty. While the medium and long-term impact may not become apparent for a number of years, there are a number of things we know already. So what does the Brexit vote mean?

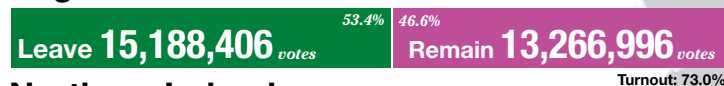
### What was the result?

In a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the European Union, 52 per cent of people voted to leave and 48 per cent of people voted to remain. As such, there is a democratic mandate for the UK Government to negotiate an exit from the European Union.

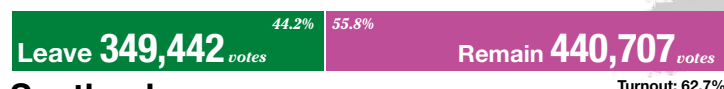
### Have we now left?

No. The referendum result gives the UK Government a mandate to negotiate our exit from the European Union. We will remain a member until such an exit is negotiated and agreed. The UK Government has to invoke Article 50 to start the negotiations for an exit.

## England



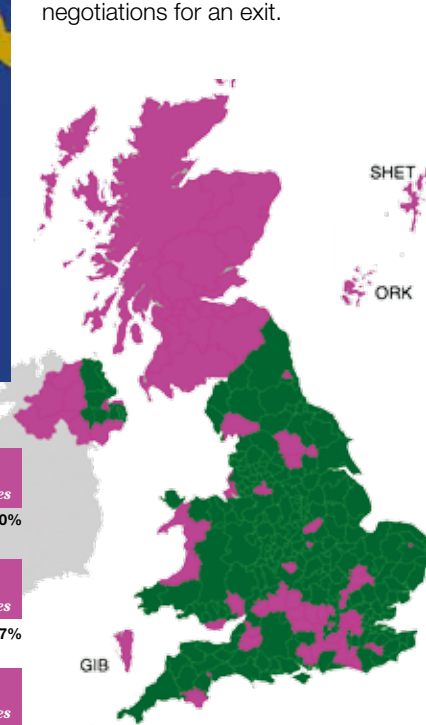
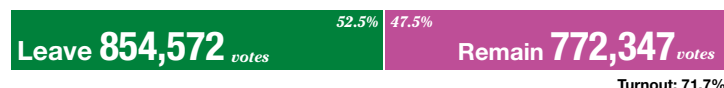
## Northern Ireland



## Scotland



## Wales



Key: ■ Majority leave ■ Majority remain



# ES UK OUT OF EU

## What happens next?

In the near-future, the UK will be expected to formally advise the European Council of its desire to leave. This formal notification would trigger the procedure, known as Article 50, for a country to leave the European Union. Under Article 50, there would be a period of two-years for the UK to negotiate its withdrawal.

If at the end of the two-year period an agreed settlement has not been reached, the UK will have to apply for an extension to the negotiating period. Such an extension could be vetoed by any other Member State, putting an end to all current trade deals enjoyed by the UK, removing the protection of EU law and ending the right for UK citizens to live, work or travel freely around Europe. As such, there will be an incredible level of uncertainty throughout the negotiation period.

## What will be the implications of leaving the EU?

Unfortunately, there is still no clear plan on how the UK Government, or those who led the Leave campaign, hope to negotiate our way out of the EU. Furthermore, no detail has been provided over what the Government's priorities will be as part of any renegotiations. As such, at this time, we cannot detail the eventual implications of an exit.

In the interim, it is clear that the current situation has created significant uncertainty for businesses and there are anecdotal reports of companies suspending all recruitment and investment decisions. Usdaw is keen to work with employers to address immediate concerns following the vote to leave and will be doing all we can to protect jobs, hours and pay.

## Are jobs at risk as a result of the vote?

Evidence states that more

than four million jobs are reliant on trading with the EU. Our membership of the Free Trade Area accounts for 45 per cent of UK exports and allows access to 508 million consumers. The effect on economic performance, trade and jobs will be determined through the type of access we maintain with the EU.

## What will happen to employment rights that are protected through EU legislation?

There are a considerable amount of employment rights that are now at risk as a result of the vote. Rights that the trade union movement has spent many years campaigning for, such as the Working Time Directive, TUPE provisions and protection against discrimination for part-time workers are all underwritten by the EU. If these rights aren't protected as part of the exit negotiations, it will be up to the Conservative Government to decide which rights to keep, which to water down and which to remove. Previously, we have seen Conservative governments opt to cut substantial levels of employment protection.

It is important to ensure these rights are given as much protection as possible throughout the negotiation process. Usdaw, through the TUC, will be campaigning to ensure that working people do not end up paying the costs of Brexit.

## Will prices increase as a result of Brexit?

We have already seen the value of the pound drop significantly since the result of the referendum was announced. This will have a direct impact on the cost of imported goods and services. However, it is impossible to predict how much of the impact will be passed on to consumers. If the UK were to leave the Free-Trade Area, it is likely that this would lead

to further increases in prices though it is not yet clear if this will happen.

## What will happen to EU nationals currently living and working in the UK?

This will depend on the eventual exit deal negotiated, currently there appears to be little political desire to require this group of workers to either apply for a visa or return to their country of origin.

There are approximately two million UK nationals living in other member states across the EU. So the Government will need to come to some agreement to allow these UK nationals to continue working abroad and for existing EU nationals working in the UK to continue working and living here. Although it is difficult to predict the outcome of the negotiations it is likely that a reciprocal arrangement will be found where both sets of migrant workers will be treated equally and allowed to continue to work where they currently live.

## Has there been an increase in racist attitudes following the vote?

There have been reports of an increase in racist incidents, although it is difficult to attribute this solely to the outcome of the referendum.

Usdaw is clear that there is no room for racism in a modern society. Migrant workers make a valuable contribution to our economy, culture and wider society. They, like everyone, must be treated with respect and allowed to go about their lives free from fear of abuse.

If you experience or witness any racist behaviour, please inform your line manager and area organiser to ensure this is dealt with quickly and effectively. New materials and resources to help address any issues of racism in the workplace are available from central office.

## LATEST...

### Nominations for 2016 Awards



Usdaw is looking for its best activists to nominate themselves or a colleague for this year's prestigious Usdaw Organising Awards. Now in its 12th year the national event looks to celebrate the outstanding achievements of reps across nine categories as follows:

- Most Promising New Activist
- Health and Safety Rep
- Union Learning Rep
- Individual Organising Award
- Individual Recruitment Award
- Team Recruitment and Organising Award
- Outstanding Achievement Award
- Campaigns Award
- Equalities Award

Nomination forms have been sent out to branch secretaries and should be returned to your divisional officer by Friday 23 September.

Extra forms are available from: [www.usdaw.org.uk/nominate](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/nominate)

Each division will nominate its candidates for the nine categories to go forward to the national event.

The annual Awards Night ceremony will be held on Saturday 14 January 2017 when the national winners will be revealed.





## IN BRIEF...

### Change law to protect pensions

The Pensions Regulator should get new powers to block company deals so pensioners would be better protected, the former head of the Pension Protection Fund Lady Barbara Judge said in the wake of the collapse of BHS.

She claimed the BHS scenario has highlighted the serious problems and risks to pensions when a company is sold. "The regulator should have the right to approve or disapprove any corporate transaction that might disadvantage pensioners," she said.

"If they had had the power, we would not be in this situation with BHS."

# Retail jobs shift



**Store jobs will be created and head office roles will be lost as Sainsbury's moves ahead with the integration of its recently acquired Argos business it bought for £1.4bn.**

The retailer said it expects around 1,000 new shopfloor staff while around 600 clerical and back office will go once the merger is complete.

Reports also suggest more than 200 Argos stores will close although some staff will have the opportunity to move to a nearby Sainsbury's store if applicable.

Meanwhile, Sainsbury's is to close its 16 Netto stores after abandoning a joint venture with Danish retailer Dansk Supermarket Group putting around 400 jobs at risk.

The stores are expected to close by August, although Sainsbury's said it hopes to re-deploy staff where possible.

Sainsbury's said the trial was ended because Netto needed rapid expansion and investment while Sainsbury's was keen to press ahead with its integration of the Argos chain.

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

## Branch officers stay the course



Understanding how to run a union branch and how it fits into the local, divisional and national structures was the focus of the branch officers' course held in June at the national training centre in Warrington.

Newly elected lay officers spent five days at the tailor-made residential course where

they looked in detail at every aspect of Usdaw.

Speakers from central office departments also gave talks on how their departments operate and both general secretary John Hannett and deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis held question and answer sessions with the activists.

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# THE FALL OF BHS



## Parliamentary investigations into the collapse of BHS continue after former owner Sir Philip Green appeared before the work and pensions committee in June.

In a sometimes fractious exchange Green said that he would “give assurance to the 20,000 pensioners that I am here to sort (the pension deficit) in the correct way”. The deficit is reported to be around £571m and is being assessed by the state-backed Pension Protection Fund.

Green sold BHS to former bankrupt Dominic Chappell of Retail Acquisitions for £1 last

year. Chair of the committee Frank Field MP described Chappell as a ‘Walter Mitty’ character.

In 2000 Green bought BHS for £200m and at the time the pension scheme was in surplus. In the following eight years the company made £498m profit. In the following six years it made losses of £416m.

Green and other investors collected more than £580m in dividends, rent and interest payments from BHS during his 15 years in charge of the retailer. His Monaco-based wife Lady Green has also given written evidence to the enquiry outlining the 11 companies controlled by family members, all based off-shore in Jersey and the British Virgin Islands. Described by Field as a ‘complex web’.

An interim report is expected before parliament breaks for the summer.

General Secretary John Hannett said: “We welcome the commitment from Sir Phillip to

‘sort out’ the pension and await to see the detail of what he is proposing.

“However around 11,000 staff still face redundancy and once again serious questions need to be asked about corporate governance in the UK.

“We are urging the administrators to redouble their efforts to find a buyer, it’s the very least that the long-serving and loyal BHS staff deserve. In the meantime we continue to provide the support and advice our members in BHS require at this very difficult time.”



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Academy2 2016

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John Hannett talks Academy

## NEWS...

### Pensions earnings threshold unfair

As many as 4.6 million workers are excluded from workplace pensions because they earn less than £10,000 and therefore miss out on the employer contributions received by higher paid colleagues.

The TUC report *Unfinished Business: Building a fresh consensus on workplace pensions*, finds from analysis of official data that 4.6 million UK workers earn less than £10,000 – the trigger for automatic enrolment.

Workers whose earnings from multiple jobs total more than £10,000 also miss out.

TUC general secretary Frances O’Grady said: “Automatic enrolment has been a great success, giving six million more people access to a workplace pension.

“But millions of workers are still missing out. We need to remove the barrier of the earnings trigger so that the millions of workers in part-time work, including those holding down multiple jobs, are automatically enrolled onto workplace pensions too.

“Too many people are only receiving the legal minimum pension contributions. We need a clear plan to increase the money going into pensions to give workers a good chance of a decent retirement.”

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# BE LOUD AND PROUD!

*The LGBT Get-together, now in its fourth year, brings together activists from around the country for a weekend of workshops, guest speakers and debates in Manchester in a safe, friendly and comfortable environment.*

This year's theme is harassment, or the fear of it, and the damage it has on the life and prospects of so many LGBT people, equalities officer Jo Bird told conference as she opened the weekend.

"Harassment is unlawful but you're only protected by the law if you possess, or are perceived to have, one of nine protected characteristics – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion

and belief or sex and sexual orientation.

"Such conduct can violate a person's dignity or intimidate them. It can also create a hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

"Usdaw is here to support all of our members who encounter such harassment at work."

## Come together

Don't stay silent about inequality and injustice – that was the message from guest speaker, and co-founder of UK Black Pride, Phyll Opoku-Gyimah (pictured above).

"It's a time for people to come together and look at how we celebrate the black community and how we tackle racism, homophobia and sexism in our communities," she said.

"Be loud and be proud. It's



**"If we don't speak out we risk losing the success we've had and the great strides in equality we have made."**

important to take personal responsibility, it's vital to have your say, and that's what I do.

"If we don't speak out we risk losing the success we've had and the great strides in equality we have made.

"We've got to remember that our difference becomes the diversity and the fabric of society, making it impossible for people to ignore us, that is where real change comes from."

Phyll finished her speech by explaining to delegates why she believed it was important that unions make space for different groups to discuss their own concerns.

"We are not all the same and we should never be afraid of saying so," she said. "Our differences don't divide us they make us stronger."

For more information visit: [www.ukblackpride.org.uk](http://www.ukblackpride.org.uk)



Usdaw LGBT activists James Sayer, Carrie-Ann Morgan, Janine Cocker and Samuel Rees

## James Sayer

New activist James works in Tesco, Colchester and has been a member for nine years.

"I became a rep in November and so far so good," said the 26 year-old. "I've been gradually expanding my knowledge. I started with divisional and branch activities and this is my first national event.

"I applied to attend because I thought it would be interesting

to learn more about the equalities side of the union and the weekend has more than exceeded my expectations, there's a lot more going on than I imagined.

"These events are great for meeting like-minded people who live in different parts of the country and finding out the sorts of issues they're dealing with.

"I'm really lucky where I work as there's no divide between the

managers and the reps, we work together so it's generally quite a good atmosphere.

"Being a member of Usdaw has had a positive impact on my life and changed the way I behave for the better. It's also surprised me, I didn't know there were events like the LGBT get-together until I went to a branch meeting. There's so much you can get involved with."

## Carrie-Ann Morgan

Carrie-Ann, who was at her first LGBT get-together, has been a member for five years and a rep for three.

"I decided to come to see what it's all about and to learn more about Usdaw," said the 28 year-old. "The workshops have been really good and it's a great environment for networking and meeting new friends."

Carrie is one of two reps,





YouTube [UsdawUnion](#)  
John Hannett talks LGBT



*Invited speaker and Usdaw activist Diane Howard urged reps to report any hate crimes, which are offences motivated by racial, sexual, or other prejudices, typically involving violence. "LGBT hate crimes usually go unreported because people are scared of the consequences or don't want to be identified," she said. "But we must hold those responsible to account." Diane, who sits on the North West Divisional Equalities Forum, added: "Bullying can turn into hate crime. Especially if it's not stopped at an early age such as at school."*

looking after 110 members, in her Morrisons store in Llanelli.

"I became a rep because I believe everyone should be aware of their rights," she added. "I feel very well supported in my role as rep, especially by my area organiser and local office and I have a really good relationship with management at Morrisons, which helps a lot.

"I'd definitely recommend being a rep. I haven't looked back – I love it.

"I plan to stay in touch with the people I've met this weekend and I'll definitely come back next year if I can. I think it's great to come here and connect with like-minded reps."

### Janine Cocker

Ex-retail worker Janine is passionate about Usdaw and has been a member for 18 years.

"I took voluntary redundancy from Tesco last year but I'm still very involved with the union and go to all my branch meetings," said Janine, 56.

"Everything that I get from this weekend, I'll feed back to my old colleagues and give out the literature.

"I do still get asked questions and I give people as much information as I can and if I don't know the answer I'll find out from my branch colleagues."

Janine, from Leeds, has been a rep for 10 years. "My late brother inspired me to become a rep, he was in the miners' union and an honest working man. He believed everyone should be treated fairly, so I took on the role in his memory and I do feel I've made a difference.

"This was my second LGBT get-together and it's absolutely

amazing for me to see how happy everyone is. Even though they've gone through lots of difficult experiences, they've remained positive."

### Samuel Rees

Co-op worker Samuel, 24, is passionate about protecting workers' rights.

"I'm a relatively new rep, I've only been doing the job for six months," he said. "The union is quite new in the shop because it's not long been opened. So there's just me and five members, but hopefully I can change that. I want my colleagues to realise that Usdaw is like insurance – I always say you insure your car so why not your job?

"I'd definitely encourage people to become a rep, it's about standing up for people who perhaps don't feel like they

can defend themselves and don't feel that they have a voice. I think anybody who wants to do that should!"

Samuel lives just outside Newport in South Wales and this was his first national Usdaw event. "I saw it on the website and I thought 'I've got to go to that'. It seemed like a perfect fit for me and I thought it would be really great to come and talk to more experienced reps who may have some good advice," he said.

"It's been really informative and good fun and I was actually quite sad to go home. I've already added lots of friends on Facebook.

"This weekend has made me want to go back and get involved in the events going on in my area, especially in terms of equality. I'd also like to get more politically involved."

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



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# In the SPOTLIGHT



## Southern division's Robin Vaughan-Lyons answers our questions...

### Why did you become active?

I had experienced bullying and I didn't want other people to feel the same way. The key is to have the knowledge and confidence to tackle it. I've definitely got the confidence and I'm learning all the time.

### What's surprised you about being a rep?

The quality and quantity of training and the conferences have been a huge surprise to me. Even at my age I still enjoy learning. Meeting colleagues from other companies is great too. We learn off each other and I have made some really good friends.

### What's been your best moment?

The best moment I've had as a rep was helping resolve issues at work that were upsetting a colleague. To see her happy in her work now after my intervention, makes the role worthwhile.

### ...and worst?

That was having an argument with a manager, but the problem got resolved and our professional working relationship is much better for it.

### Have you been on any courses?

The best thing about being an Usdaw rep is the training, no question. I've already been on lots of training courses and conferences. I have learnt so much. Being both a union and health and safety rep I have the best of both worlds training wise. Knowledge is power. It's very important when representing members to know what you're talking about. It's also good to be able to help your store be safe and legally compliant.

### Have you changed since becoming a rep?

I have always been quite confident but I am definitely a lot more so since becoming an activist. It's back to the training really. It's easier to be confident if you know what you are talking about. I am a lot more organised, and to be honest, a lot calmer too.

### Is recruitment easy in your workplace?

Recruitment within Sainsbury's is very hard. There doesn't seem to be any logical reason for this.

### What one change to Usdaw do you think would help it improve?

I would like to see some 'softer' literature. Many people I speak to are reluctant to join because they perceive unions to be all about

arguing and striking. I help my members on a wide range of topics. Knowing local politicians is quite often very useful.

### Which news item has caught your attention recently

That would be the EU referendum. I did a business course at university many years ago and was educated then on the benefits of being in the EU. Obviously I've learnt a lot more since, especially around rights at work.

### What law would you introduce if you were prime minister

I would ban the live export of animals. It happens out of the local port of Ramsgate. I hate the cruelty of it.

### What would you say to an Usdaw member thinking about becoming a rep?

If I met anyone thinking about being a rep I would strongly urge them to go for it. I have never regretted my decision to become one. I'm trying to persuade someone to become a rep at the moment. Currently I'm the only rep for nearly 400 staff.

And finally... Usdaw and its members have been a great support. I'm hoping to be more active with the union in general and more high profile in the LGBT sector.

## Fact File & trivia

EMPLOYER... *Sainsbury's Ramsgate*

JOB... *Customer services*

AGE... *52*

LIVES... *Margate, Kent*

JOINED USDAW IN... *2015*  
BEEN AN ACTIVIST SINCE... *2015*  
UNION POSITIONS HELD...

*health and safety rep and shop steward.*

I SPEND MY SPARE TIME...  
*renovating my house, looking after my animals (five dogs, a cat, a fish and birds). I also volunteer as a community champion for the over 50s and support a local food bank and advice centre.*

MY FAVOURITE BOOK...  
*A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens.*

MY FAVOURITE TV PROGRAMME IS... *The Good Life, probably because of all the animals.*

BEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE SO FAR... *when I was chairman of Margate town team and we won £100,000 from the Government to help regenerate our high street.*

# YOUR FUTURE IN FOCUS



**Pensions remain high on the industrial and political agenda as members faced another year of upheaval in the sector, pensions officer Debra Blow told delegates at the union's 12th national pensions conference.**

"We have seen good defined benefit schemes closed and replaced in many cases by defined contribution schemes which are usually not as generous and carry more risks for individuals," she said.

"Auto-enrolment has been a success. It has captured people who otherwise would not be saving towards a pension and the opt-out rate is low. That's not to say there is still not work to be done in this area, especially in terms of increasing employers' contributions.

"Meanwhile, there have been big changes to the state pension which will see many people worse off in the future.

"We've also seen the Government introduce freedoms for people to access their defined contribution pensions from 55. Only time will tell if this decision

was 'genius' or 'madness'.

"So with all this going on it's vital that workers of all ages understand the importance of saving towards their retirement. We want all workers to have access to good occupational pension schemes.

"We also understand that many workers can't afford to set aside money for pensions and we have to address that issue.

"I want to urge our reps to hold pension awareness days at their shops, factories, warehouses and offices to help Usdaw inform its members on pensions."

## Young delegate on her 'journey'

Tesco worker Hazel Brown, 27, was one of the youngest reps at the conference and she is keen to build up her knowledge on pensions.

"When the recent changes came in at our company our members had a lot of questions and I realised I needed to know more about this subject," she

said. "This conference is the start of my pensions journey. I've really enjoyed it, there's a wide range of information to take in on occupational schemes and the state pension.

"I realise we all need to know more. It's so important it should be taught in schools.

"When I get back to work I'll

be recommending to the team of in-store reps that we hold a pensions awareness day to spread the word and give out as much information as we can. There are many young workers in our store so it's important we help them understand the importance of pensions as soon as possible."



## Political solution essential – MP

**The pensions market must be made to work in favour of working people, Angela Rayner MP and shadow work and pensions minister told conference.**

"Yes there is too much jargon, charges are too high and there is not enough legal protection for your hard-earned cash," she

said. "This Tory Government do not understand the difficulties faced by low paid workers, or the impact of the health inequalities in our society.

"Their state pension changes will see everyone aged under 43 worse off, having to pay more to get less.

"At the next election the Labour Party has to be bold on pensions, to make the sector work for the majority not the minority, and to offer the

electorate a comprehensive package.

"We have to bring the sector up-to-date with the modern world and cater for part-time workers, casual workers and the variation in life expectancy we see throughout the UK.

"I want to see better pensions, well-protected, with no excessive fees or charges.

"If you've worked all your life you do not deserve to be ripped off when you retire."



## Workshop looks at state pension

Changes to the state pension was the subject of one of two workshops held during the conference. Pensions assistant Neil Ashworth outlined the main points and took questions from delegates.

“The new regulations mean you have to have 35 years of national insurance contributions to get the full flat rate state pension currently set at £155.65,” he said. “Anything less than this and your pension will be reduced. It will also be less if you have been contracted out of the state earnings related pension scheme (also known as SERPS) as part of an occupational scheme.

“The state pension is currently protected by what is called the ‘triple lock’, which means that the pension will increase annually by at least 2.5 per cent, or average earnings or the consumer price index if these are higher.

“Members can get a forecast from the Government via its website and can get more detail from Usdaw’s site about all of the changes to the state pension.”

Meanwhile, what happens to a pension scheme when a company goes bust was the theme of pensions officer Debra Blow’s workshop – a topical issue given the recent collapse of BHS.

“The Pension Protection Fund (PPF), introduced by the last Labour Government, is key here,” she said.

“If a company, with a defined benefit pension, goes bust, with no chance of it being rescued, the scheme goes into an assessment period when all the liabilities are assessed by the PPF. This can take up to two years.

“Depending on the individuals’ circumstances, they can receive anything from between 90-100 per cent of the value of their pension entitlement from the PPF, which is funded by levies paid by other pension schemes.

“The situation in BHS is still



ongoing, as there has been some discussion whether former owner Philip Green will inject money into the scheme to avoid the PPF having to rescue it. It’s a very worrying time for those employees. As soon as we can offer more information we will.”



## Independent financial advice key

**The new pension freedoms, introduced by the Government last year, offer Usdaw members a big opportunity to get things right and a big opportunity to get things wrong, Mark Beddow of Lighthouse Financial Advice\* told delegates.**

“Every member should take professional financial advice,” he said as he gave a whistle-stop tour of the new pension changes.

“We know, on average, a man will live 19 years after his 65th birthday while a woman

is expected to live a further 21 years, so making the right choices are essential.

“Pension jargon can be confusing especially when for example, we talk about enhanced annuities, flexible access drawdown, uncrystallised funds pension lump sum, tax free lump sums and other pension terms.”

Mark explained the various options now on offer for members aged 55 and over who have access to their defined contribution scheme.

“Members have to decide what

they want their pension to look like, what it can deliver and these choices will be different for each of us.

“Retirement is potentially the longest holiday we’ll ever have, but if you run out of money it’s not much of a holiday is it?”

“We have to understand the tax implications of how we access and use our pension pots, what are the best options for each individual and that’s why independent financial advice is essential.”



(\*Lighthouse Financial Advice, an affinity partner of Usdaw, is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority).

**IN BRIEF...**

**Marks and Spencer staff urged to sign up**



General secretary John Hannett has made a direct appeal to workers at Marks and Spencer to join Usdaw so they can have an independent and meaningful voice when discussing changes at their workplaces.

M&S have upset staff after it announced changes to premiums and the pension scheme.

“Staff in the North West division in particular have signed up to Usdaw and I’m keen to see this repeated across the UK,” he said. “We can only influence company decisions if we have a strong membership in the stores, so I would appeal to M&S staff to join us and take our fight for recognition forward.”

**Digital retailer expands jobs count in Britain**

Amazon says it is creating 1,000 permanent new jobs across the UK, on top of 2,500 new posts it announced earlier this year. The new jobs will mainly be spread across London, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Manchester and Leicestershire. The newly created jobs will bring the total number of full-time permanent UK employees at Amazon to more than 15,500 by the end of this year.

**TUC Know Your Rights book now available**

Reps can now order the latest edition of the excellent *Your Rights At Work* guide book published jointly by the TUC and Usdaw. More details at: [www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk)

# Elections for safety and

**Elections for health and safety reps in all Tesco stores and customer fulfilment centres will be held in September and October 2016.**

Usdaw wants to encourage more members to come forward and join other union health and safety reps as part of their team.

The key elements of the role are to:

- Advise and represent members in health and safety matters.
- Participate in the Forum process.
- Review, investigate and inspect health and safety issues.
- Recruit and organise members.
- The Partnership Agreement positively recognises the role of the health and safety rep.

General secretary John Hannett said:

“Being a rep is a great opportunity not only to help improve your workplace and the working lives of your colleagues, it can also help your self-development. Many of our reps discover that they have skills they didn’t know they had. With the knowledge, experience and confidence gained as a rep, many go on to further study, apply for promotion, or try out new and different things.”

**Did you know?**

- Safety reps are entitled to a reasonable amount of paid time off to carry out their duties and attend the appropriate training.
- The training is designed to give reps good grounding in what they need to know and what their legal rights are as a rep.
- Being a rep will also help develop and enhance your knowledge and skills so that you will be confident in your role.
- As a rep you won’t be alone. If you work in a large store there are likely to be other Usdaw reps that you can turn to for advice and support.
- In addition, the area organiser, the union’s health and safety section, the education department, and the Tesco support team, are only a phone call or email away.



**....Look out for the nomination poster**



# learning reps in Tesco

**For the first time, Usdaw Union Learning Reps (ULRs) are being included in the three-yearly rep election cycle, within Tesco Stores and customer fulfilment centres.**

The relatively new role of ULR is now included in the Partnership Agreement giving them the same entitlements as any other union rep including paid time off for training and to carry out their duties.

The role is extremely rewarding and every year Usdaw ULRs help over 10,000 members access some form of learning – from English and maths to digital skills and British Sign language.

## Who can become a ULR?

Currently ULRs can only be elected in nominated Checkout Learning stores. If your store has an elected ULR, or has previously been involved in the Checkout Learning campaign, then chances are yours is a Checkout Learning Store.

ULRs don't need any experience the most important quality is to be interested and enthusiastic about learning and willing to help people get access to the learning they want.

General secretary John Hannett said: "The Checkout Learning campaign is a key priority for Usdaw and its members and the role of our ULRs is crucial to its success.

"While it's a challenging role, it also provides lots of satisfaction and it's a real opportunity for our members to learn new skills and achieve their potential."

If your store is not currently involved in Checkout Learning but would like to be, contact your local office or visit Usdaw's Learning Gateway on the union's website:  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/lll](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/lll)

## Tell me more about the role of a ULR?

A ULR's main duties include:

- Giving members information about learning opportunities.
- Promoting, arranging and supporting learning – organising promotional events and courses.
- Identifying what members want to learn by talking to staff, filling in questionnaires or surveys.
- Consulting with management about learning – discussing how campaigns will be organised and learning delivered.
- Working as part of the wider rep team to raise the profile of Usdaw and strengthen the union in-store.



## OBITUARY

**Area organiser  
George Brown**



Former North Eastern division area organiser George Brown died in July, he was 89.

George first joined Usdaw when he worked for Barnsley Co-op in the dairy office. He went on to become a director of the society in later years.

He joined Usdaw's clerical staff at the old Barnsley office in 1958, moving to the Leeds office as supervisor in 1971.

George was appointed to the organising staff in 1976 and served until his retirement in 1989.

He was a lifelong trade unionist and Labour Party member. He also served as a JP from 1970.

General secretary John Hannett paid this tribute: "George loyally served the union for more than 30 years and was dedicated to the labour movement. His commitment and experience was a great asset to the division.

"Our condolences go to his family and friends at this very sad time."

## Conference call for retail and transport reps

Activists are reminded that the national Retail Trades Conference will be held over the weekend of October 15-16 while the national Transport Conference will be held over the weekend of October 29-30.

**s from the start of September 2016...**



# UNITY IS STRENGTH



Tesco Brixton



Morrisons Diss



Tesco Extra Cardiff



Tesco Catterick





**MEMBERSHIP WEEK**



*Tesco Extra South Mansfield*



*Morrisons Failsworth*



Activists worked hard to sign up new recruits, run campaigns, and promote the union to existing members during the latest and busy Membership Week in June.

The Week coincided with the Usdaw bus, which was touring the UK as part of the union's 125th anniversary celebrations.

Workers' rights, pensions, health and safety, the Legal Plus and FirstCall Usdaw services were all used to publicise the many benefits of Usdaw membership.



*Tesco Dumfries*



**YouTube UsdawUnion**  
**John Hannett talks**  
**Membership Week**



# BUILDING THE UNION



**Usdaw is the biggest union in the warehouse and distribution sector but pressures on the industry are making it tougher and tougher to recruit and organise, deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis (above) told conference.**

“While the sector pays above the so-called national living wage introduced by chancellor Osborne companies are not putting any extra cash into the wages pot and are looking to cut premiums, narrow differentials and not replace

staff who leave,” he said.

“Even though the Government has reduced corporation tax, and has recently announced another reduction, employers are still refusing to invest in their workforce.

“Usdaw’s policy is clear, we believe an hourly rate of £10 should be the norm and would mean fewer employees relying on in-work benefits to top up their income. Osborne wanted to slash working tax credits when he announced his £7.20 hourly rate for 25 year-olds

and above but a concerted campaign by Usdaw and other unions, Labour MPs, and the House of Lords defeated the Government. However, this is not the end of the road as we know once Universal Credit is rolled out an average family could lose up to £1,600 a year.

“What’s clear to me is that we have to redouble our efforts in the sector to strengthen our membership density, and increase the number of reps to ensure our influence and bargaining capabilities are as powerful as they can be.”

## Michael Abak



Nightshift rep Michael Abak works at the Tesco site in Dagenham, Essex, and is a passionate believer in standing up for fairness, equality and improving workers’ rights.

Originally from Nigeria, Michael had previously worked in Spain but is now enjoying his role as a rep, which he took up three years ago.

“If you can be instrumental in making a change for someone or making the workplace better that’s what’s important to me,” he said. “I like to speak up for people. I’m not afraid to tell the

truth, to listen to my colleagues and to take up any issues we have with the management team here.

“It’s no good sitting down just moaning you have to do something about it. You can’t wish away any problems that’s why we have to fight for the workers, ensure fairness and ensure problems are sorted out.

“We have a wide mix of people on site and company policy is inclusive and any problems are dealt with. Yes we disagree but for me fairness should always win the day.”

## TRADE UNION ACT IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Government’s Trade Union Act is a vicious, vindictive and unnecessary attack on the labour movement, Paddy Lillis told delegates as he introduced a workshop on the legislation, which was introduced earlier this year.

“You can trace Tory attacks on the trade unions going back many years but this Act is particularly malicious as it comes at a time when days lost to industrial action are at an all-time low,” he said.

“Even before the Act the legal restrictions on UK trade unions were among the most wide-ranging in Europe. Now we have further hurdles to jump in terms of a minimum 50 per cent threshold for strike votes and more red tape.

“Perhaps the most vindictive aspect is the Tory Party’s attempt to scupper our ability to have a political fund and run campaigns like Freedom From Fear, Save Our Sundays and Supporting Parents and Carers, which all have a political angle to them. New members will have to opt-in to the fund but it’s clear what the Tory intention is and that is to weaken trade unions campaigning ability and potentially bankrupt the Labour Party.

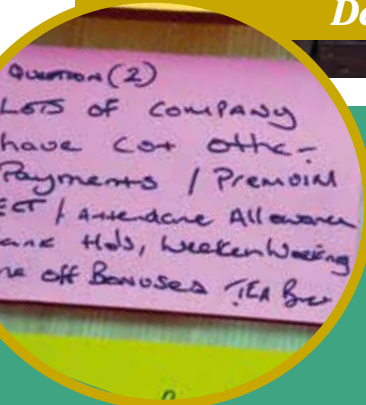
“It’s no surprise that within weeks of winning a small parliamentary majority last year the Conservatives introduced these hostile measures. Yes we won some concessions but the Act still poses a huge threat to all trade unions.

“We have to devise a strategy to overcome this Act and continue with our campaigns so that our members’ standard of living is protected.”





**Delegates and officials**



**“Ushaw’s policy is clear, we believe an hourly rate of £10 should be the norm and would mean fewer employees relying on in-work benefits to top up their income.”**  
**Paddy Lillis**

**UNDERSTANDING THE EU DECISION**

Conference held an open debate on why the UK voted to leave the EU in the June Referendum.

Paddy Lillis said he was eager to understand the decision from the members’ and reps’ perspective. “I believe we should’ve stayed but the vote went against and we have to accept that,” he said.

“For me it was about jobs and wages but for many it was about immigration. I don’t accept that foreigners were coming over here ‘taking our jobs’ but I do believe the right-wing press scapegoated immigrant workers.

“What’s more I believe companies are guilty of exploiting these workers and using them as cheap labour while the Government did nothing to close loopholes in the law.

“As a labour movement we have to do a lot of soul searching and ask ourselves why we lost so many regions to the Leave campaign and why so many of the old industrial heartlands did the same.”

Comments from the floor underlined how important, and toxic, the issue of immigration was among workers in the sector with many voting on that as the main issue. Other points made included:

- Even where regions had seen a lot of EU money used to regenerate areas this did not convince people to vote Remain.
- Many used the Referendum as a protest vote against the establishment and out-of-touch politicians.
- In economically deprived areas voters thought they had gained nothing from 40 years of EU membership.
- Project Fear didn’t work and the Labour Party leadership misread the people.
- The Remain campaign should have been more positive.
- Many people had made their minds up even before the campaign had started because they had been drip fed anti-EU stories for decades.

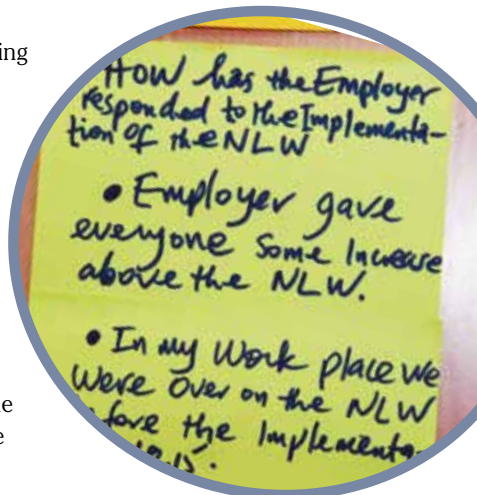
**In conversation with Mark Ellis**

Warehouseman and processor Mark Ellis was at his third trade conference and has worked in the sector since leaving school 39 years ago. He has been a rep for 20 years.

The 55 year-old works for Blakemores (formerly Cappers) at their distribution centre in Talbot Green, Llantrisant, South Wales, which supplies Spar convenience stores across the area.

“We have around 250 staff and 170 members on-site, working either a 6-2 or 2-10 shift and a permanent night shift,” he said. “The big issues at our place are wage differentials being eroded, productivity bonuses, and pressure on picking rates, so things are getting tougher, I’ve seen that over many years. It has worsened particularly

since 2008. “I enjoy the conference. It’s a chance to network, listen to other reps and pick up lots of information and advice from your colleagues. It was a disappointing turnout but maybe that’s because of the holiday season, or the football. There’s usually more here.”





# Latest appointments...

**A new deputy head of legal services and two new area organisers have joined the Usdaw team...**

## Steve Mitchell

The new deputy head of legal services Steve Mitchell is a life-long trade unionist who brings years of experience in representing union members with personal injury claims to his new role.

In the past the 49 year-old has worked for a number of legal companies who worked closely

with trade unions to represent their members often with complex industrial disease and personal injury cases.

"I qualified as a solicitor in 1991," he said. "And it was the prospect of working with a trade union that I went in to law in the first place. So I'm delighted to have joined Usdaw. It's the sort of job I've always wanted."

Originally from St Helens, Merseyside, Steve now lives in Middlewich, Cheshire. He graduated from the University of Leicester in 1988 and completed his legal training at Chester

Law School. He served as a Labour councillor for four years in Middlewich and has been a Labour Party member for a number of years.

"It's great to be back with the trade union movement. I'm very appreciative of the welcome I've had from my colleagues, it has been exceptional. I went to the ADM this year and that brought home to me just how right this move is for me.

"I'm looking forward to working with colleagues and officials at central office and throughout the divisions too."



STEVE MITCHELL



KEITH LEWIS

## Keith Lewis

Keith Lewis has been appointed area organiser at the Andover office in the Southern division.

The 49 year-old swapped divisions and his customer assistant's role with Tesco in Launceston in Cornwall to take up his new role with the union in April.

Keith brings with him a wealth of experience having previously been a shop steward, health and safety rep, stand-down rep and branch secretary. He also sat on the South Wales and Western divisional

equalities forum and was branch chair of his local Labour Party.

"I was working with Academy2 when I found out I'd been successful. I was delighted," said Keith.

"My role with the union over the last five years and especially my development over the last couple of years have been extremely valuable in terms of my progress.

"I completed Academy1 in 2015 and was part of our division's team recruitment and organising nomination

representing the Tesco reps and East Cornwall branch at the Organising Awards in January.

"I've been in my new role a few months now and I'm thoroughly enjoying it.

"My aim is to put our reps and members at the forefront of everything I do as they are the union.

"It's a challenging job. From my own time as a rep I know how important a supportive and proactive area organiser can be and I want to do my best to be that person for my reps and members."

## Aidan McCarthy

Former HGV driver Aidan McCarthy was appointed the new area organiser at the Leeds Office in July.

The 57 year-old joined the team in the North Eastern division after five years as an activist at the Wincanton Sainsbury's site in Sherburn-in-Elmet, North Yorkshire, where he was the driving force behind a successful team of reps at the site.

"I'm both delighted and

privileged with my appointment. I've come a long way with the union in a short time," said Aidan.

"I started working for Wincanton in 2008 when the site first opened and wasn't too happy with how things were done so I stood for transport shop steward in 2011.

"Less than a year later I was asked to become site convenor looking after the warehouse staff as well as transport.

"I'm proud to have been a

part of such a fantastic and committed team of reps who improved pay and conditions and built membership up to 85 per cent.

"I'm hoping as a union official I can use my experience and encourage new activists to get involved.

"It's been a fascinating journey but it's certainly paid off for me.

"I'd advise every rep to take all the training you can, especially the extensive Academy programme."



AIDAN MCCARTHY



# NO ROOM FOR RACISM

**Following the result of the EU Referendum on June 24 police forces across England and Wales recorded 3,076 hate crimes and incidents – up 42 per cent on the same period in the previous year.**

While the rise in racist incidents has been widely reported in the media, the union has also received a small number of reports of incidents from reps and members seeking Usdaw's support to challenge this abuse.

## Dignity

General secretary John Hannett was keen to re-emphasise the union's stand on this issue. "Racism, in any form, is unacceptable," he said.

"Usdaw has always taken a zero tolerance approach to racism, from supporting the anti-apartheid movement, involvement in the Stephen Lawrence family campaign and the subsequent wide reaching review of workplace practices, to representing individual members in the workplace.

"The union wants to make the message clear to members and reps that Usdaw and the trade union movement remain resolutely opposed to all forms of racism and harassment, and we will offer our full support to members challenging any racist incidents in their workplace.

"As working people, our movement is founded on the principle that everyone should be treated fairly and with dignity and respect. Trade unions were formed to oppose the unfair and degrading treatment of working people and this principle is as relevant today as it ever was.

"It is absolutely right that our

commitment to promote equality and oppose discrimination is enshrined in our rule book. Not only does racism damage people's lives, relationships and our communities, it also undermines everything we stand for."

## Respect

John Hannett added: "It is important that we stand together to tackle the rise in racism. Usdaw is aware that the overwhelming majority of reps and members are respectful and considerate of others and do all they can to ensure workplaces are safe and welcoming for all workers.

"This has been borne out by the immediate and positive response from Usdaw reps to challenging incidents in their workplaces. There has been unprecedented demand for the union's 'No Room for Racism' materials launched shortly after the Referendum result."

## Support

"Reps are holding 'No Room for Racism' campaigns in workplaces, and discussing the issue at branch meetings

and rep team meetings up and down the country.

This visible display of our collective 'zero tolerance' approach demonstrates that Usdaw organised workplaces are racist free zones and reps and members will not accept racism, and will challenge it. I want to congratulate reps for the excellent work they are doing to support members at what is a very difficult time for many."

**Examples reported to Usdaw so far include:**

**Racist GRAFFITI in a distribution centre, telling migrant workers to 'GO HOME'**

**A BLACK member being told by a CUSTOMER to go back to her own country**

**Social MEDIA being used to make OFFENSIVE and intimidating COMMENTS about migrant workers**

**A member subjected to racist ABUSE as she was TRAVELLING home on public transport**

## USDW'S POLICY

- If a member is abused or harassed the union is there to support them.
- If a rep witnesses unacceptable behaviour they must raise this in the workplace with the relevant manager.
- If a member experiences abuse from a customer the union will work together with the company to ensure an appropriate response.

If you would like to hold a 'No Room for Racism' campaign in your workplace and want to order campaign materials, please contact the equalities section by emailing:

**equalitymatters@usdaw.org.uk**



# PRESSURE IS ON PAY

**The impact of the so-called national living wage and the EU Referendum dominated the agenda of the Food Manufacturing conference held in Warrington over the weekend of June 18-19.**

The biennial event brought delegates from across the divisions and from a number of well-known companies including Kelloggs, Weetabix, 2Sisters, KP Foods, Walkers and others. They were joined by deputy general

secretary Paddy Lillis, president Jeff Broome and executive council member, and chair of the conference, Kevin Dolan.

Paddy Lillis led the debate on the national living wage – a measure introduced by chancellor George Osborne in his last Budget – and implemented in April this year setting the legal minimum at £7.20 an hour for workers aged 25 and over.

“Don’t mistake this for the ‘official’ Living Wage Campaign,” said Paddy. “This is an independent body who base their hourly rates on the amount needed to have a reasonable standard of living and they say the hourly rate should

be £9.40 in London and £8.25 for the rest of the UK. Unlike George Osborne they do not discriminate against under 25-year-olds.

“Some companies in the sector like Unilever and Nestle are accredited Living Wage employers but let’s not forget it’s about take home pay not just the hourly rate.

“We know around 57,000 jobs in the food manufacturing sector are paid at the national minimum wage rate and by 2020 this is set to rise to 125,000 workers.

“Since the introduction of Osborne’s living wage we have seen many employers look to cut their wage costs by slashing premiums on shift

work and weekend working. It has changed the landscape of collective bargaining for many in this sector.

“Usdaw policy is to aim for £10 an hour, so workers don’t have to rely on in-work benefits. But it’s clear we have to redouble our recruitment and organising drive in the sector. Only a well-organised and united workforce can protect our members from the many pressures they face.”

■ Conference held a minute’s silence in remembrance of former Labour MP Jo Cox who was killed in her Batley and Spen constituency on June 16. She was 42 and leaves a husband and two children.



## *Main issues in the food manufacturing sector identified by the delegates were:*

- Consolidation/reduction of premiums/shift allowances
- Health and safety
- Pay differentials eroded
- Under 25-year-olds penalised/paid less
- Companies marginalising/picking off some sections/departments of the workforce
- Over-use and exploitation of agency workers, which impacts on the core workforce
- Changes, often at short-notice, to shift systems



*Conference delegates 2016*



YouTube [UsdawUnion](#)  
John Hannett talks  
food manufacturing



## *It's a tough industry – James*

James Young, 40, works at Welcome Foods (part of the multi-national Bakkavor group) in Sutton In Ashfield where he has worked for seven years combining his factory floor work with his role in new product development.

The company employs around 375 employees who



make cook-in sauces, salad dressings, mayonnaise and other food products. This was James' second trade conference and he sees it as an important part of the union.

"Many people don't realise Usdaw has a big presence in the food manufacturing sector, we're not just the retail union," he said. "It's a tough, competitive industry. Margins are tight and contracts with big retailers can be won and lost.

"I'd recommend this conference to other reps at food manufacturing companies. We all share similar issues on shift patterns, getting the work/life balance right, health and safety and breaks. So it's important we get together to discuss all of these."

## *Unified action call – Dougie*

Dougie Main, 24, a master butcher, works at AK Stoddart at Broxburn near Edinburgh, on the trimming line.

"We supply cuts of meat for the wholesale market at the moment, although we may be moving in to supplying the retail sector soon too," he said. "It's a tough, messy, cold working environment, low paid and insecure. I used to work at Halls at Broxburn but that closed last year with around 700 job losses.

"We have around 200 on-site, 70 per cent are contracted the other 30 agency workers. Pretty much all of the core staff are union members but it's difficult to sign up the agency workers who frequently come and go and whose first language isn't English.

"The main issues for us are; automation, casualisation, safety, shift allowances and other premium

rates which are under pressure.

"I love being a rep, you get a lot of flak but it's worth it for those wins you make and helping your fellow workers. Conferences like this can help us deliver a unified response to the pressures faced by the workforce so we can push for improvements.

"I'm on the Scottish division's young workers' committee and I'm keen to get more involved."



## *Work/life balance vital – Jane*

Jane Campbell, 47, one of two women at the conference, works at Morrisons Seafood International at one of their Grimsby sites.

She packs fish at the end of the production line and has worked there since the factory opened four years ago.

"We have around 500 core staff and 200 agency workers," she said. "It's a 24/7 operation with time allotted for hygiene on a regular basis. We all wear our personal protective equipment, white overalls, hair-nets, ear defenders, the lot.

"It can be physically demanding lifting crates of fish all day long so it's a tough job that many people don't get to see or understand.

"I've been a rep for 18 months and enjoy it. Before I became active I was an unofficial spokesperson for my colleagues at work so it seemed appropriate to step up.

"This is my first conference and while some it has been over my head, I've learnt a lot and it's helped me realise just how much

there is to the union, what it does and how much it's involved in. It's been an eye-opener.

"One of the main issues at work for us is getting the work/life balance right and managing the shift system to suit everyone. It's difficult for working parents especially with weekend working more common since the company expanded.

"Pay and the narrowing of differentials is also a concern. I think it would be a good idea if the manufacturing side of the company had its own separate pay negotiations outside of the retail side of the business."



## *Stand up and be counted*

Chair Kevin Dolan, who works for biscuit manufacturer McVities in Manchester, encouraged delegates to publicise their on-site successes to members and potential members.

"Our reps are doing a great job," he said. "But we have to shout from the rooftops about what a good job we do. We need to tell

everyone what we do, how we do it and when we win, whether these are small or big victories, it's important to publicise them. That can be done by using noticeboards, newsletters or by word-of-mouth.

"I know we work in a tough industry, and we can't win every battle, but we have to stand up and be counted."

A workshop on the EU Referendum was also held coincidentally just five days before the 23 June vote. While the 18 delegates were split 13:5 in favour of Remain when asked how they thought the vote would go a majority expected a Leave victory. They were proved right.

# Campaigns deliver member boost for hard working ac

***The Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight Day played a key part in recruitment drives across the UK on May 18...***

## **Sainsbury's Barnwood**

Sainsbury's rep Emma Bodman is keen to support her members in her store even though her own job is in jeopardy. "It's been a difficult year for me," said Emma, 41, a store trainer who has worked at the Barnwood store in Gloucester for nine years.

"My role is being made redundant in September and I'm not sure what the future holds, but looking after my members has kept me going and will always be a priority.

"I completed Academy1 two years ago and my experience as a rep has helped me during this time. I must mention the support and backing from the union and my area organiser – that has been fabulous.

"I always try to find examples to highlight the positives of union membership to colleagues and my own situation has been a good example of where the union will give you full backing and ensure you are treated correctly and fairly.

"It's important for reps to use every opportunity to inform staff of their rights.

"I organised a Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight Day in May to raise awareness of rights for carers.

"We set up a stall in the foyer at the front of the store. It was a big success both with staff and customers.

"I didn't realise there were so many staff in my store who were carers and dealing with a range of different circumstances, so they were keen to find out more.

"And many of our customers were surprised to learn that staff juggled their jobs along with their caring responsibilities.

"More importantly, the event got staff talking and asking questions about their own situations and how the union could help them.

"It also raised awareness of the union and a few people asked for more information and how to join."

## **Tesco Extra Salford**

New reps Ashley Banner and Kelly Lightfoot joined forces to run their first store campaign on the Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight Day in May at the Tesco Extra store in Salford, Greater Manchester.

"We both signed up as reps in November last year and it's the first time we've been involved in a union event," said Ashley, 26.

"We've learned a lot from our experienced team of reps here about the benefits of being well organised. The preparation we put in beforehand paid off and everything ran really smoothly.

"We were both nervous to begin with but once you get into full flow you surprise yourself with just how much you know and your confidence grows by the second.

"I can't wait to work with our team of reps on another union event, and I'd like to get onto more training courses." Fellow rep Kelly, 37, agreed.

"It's been great working with the other reps who have more experience than us," she said. "Our membership density is at 81 per cent; and that's down to the

hard work of our reps.

"Working on a national campaign made me realise how involved the union gets in issues that really do affect everyday working people.

"It was great to see the look on the faces of the people I spoke to who didn't consider themselves to be carers just because they look after their loved ones. We reminded them they had a right to make requests for time off to look after them.

"Being part of a successful and well motivated team is a great feeling for new reps like myself and Ashley. I know we'll both enjoy being reps."

## **Tesco Cannon Park Coventry**

A Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight Day was a huge success at the Tesco Cannon Park store in Coventry where Stevie Adams and his team held their first in-store campaign.

Stevie, 41, has been a rep for 16 years and is one of a team of five reps looking after members at the West Midlands store.

The rest of the team is made up of 30 year-old night rep Paul Holland and day reps Laura Williams, 27 and Marie New, 51. Alana Stead, 49 and Fiona Kerr, 56 also take on the extra role of union learning reps.

"Membership is good considering we have a lot of students who work here during term time but then return home and work in their local store during the holidays," said Stevie, who is also a health and safety rep.

"We were pleased with the feedback, it was very positive.

"Most people said that after chatting to the reps and reading the leaflets the day was a real eye-opener as they hadn't realised that as carers they do have rights.

"And neither did they know about the union's continuous campaigning to press the Government and employers to



View the Recruitment and Organising Gallery on the [UdawUnion Flickr page](#)

### **Membership for week ended 09 July 2016**

South Wales and Western	50,911
Eastern	64,828
Midlands	56,152
North Eastern	59,457
Scottish	45,386
Southern	61,994
North West	93,915
Total	432,643



# ership activists

do more to support working carers.

“We enjoyed planning our first awareness day, everyone was keen to have a role and get involved.

“We all agreed it is definitely the first of many and we’re already planning our next one.”

## Ikea Tottenham

The Supporting Parents and Carers campaign helped deliver 12 new members and a new rep during Spotlight Day at the Tottenham Ikea store in London in May.

In-store reps were joined by experienced Academy2 rep Val Cooke as well as members of the southern divisional equalities committee.

“We all thoroughly enjoyed it because staff responded well and were keen to find out more,” said 28 year-old Izzy Johnson, who has been a rep for three years.

“We spent the day chatting to staff from across all the departments, finding out about their caring roles and informing them of their rights as working carers.

“Most people I spoke to, who had some caring responsibilities were surprised to find out they could request time-off to care.

“They said they just got on with it, doing the best they could and hadn’t realised they were entitled by law to ask for flexible working or adjustments to their hours if needed.

“It was great having Val Cooke involved, her advice and support was invaluable. She has a lot of experience of organising and running union events and awareness days. I learned a lot.

“The session also gave us the opportunity to speak to members who were interested in finding out about union benefits both for themselves and their families. We also spoke to non-members about how they could join the union and explained what they were missing out on.”



SAINSBURY'S BARNWOOD



TESCO SALFORD



IKEA TOTTENHAM



TESCO CANNON PARK, COVENTRY



# Teamwork pays dividends

## Tesco Bellshill

Freedom From Fear was the theme during Membership Week at the Bellshill Tesco store, Lanarkshire in Scotland.

“This is a very important topic for members in this store, as it is for all of our members in retail, who have experienced verbal and threats of physical abuse from customers,” said 27 year-old Academy1 organiser Geraldine Downs.

“I also wanted to run this particular campaign to show support for lone rep Suzanne Darroch who has enough on her plate looking after 180 members.

“We also aimed to inform members of how successful the campaign has been to date and that these issues are taken very seriously.

“Many members were keen to share their own experiences with me and were delighted to find out that the union was fully behind them in understanding that abuse is not part of the job.

“It was a very positive first visit to this store and hopefully I can arrange more union days working with Suzanne and maybe sign up a new rep or two.

“As for myself I’ve been a rep for 18 months and I’m also part of our divisional young workers committee. I’m really enjoying it.

“Working with the Academy has been brilliant, a challenge, but I’m learning every day.

“It’s a great opportunity for me to progress. I’m looking forward to returning to the Bellshill store in the future and raise the union’s profile even more.”

## Tesco Brixton

An experienced team of reps joined forces to run a two-day learning event at the Tesco store in Brixton, South West London during Membership Week.

“The team were keen to build on the success of learning in this store and encourage more staff to sign up for learning and skills development courses,” said Academy1 organiser Mitzi, 43, who has been a rep for two years at the Sainsbury’s store in Colliers Wood, London.

Mitzi was joined by fellow Academy organiser William Akadi, store rep John Aggrey, area organiser Bryan Kee and union learning rep Chhaya Patel.

“The feedback was really good both from staff who had already completed courses and from new learners looking to enrol on courses like ITC, sign language as well as career based courses.

“And we signed up a few new members too.

“John is the only rep in the store and it was important for us to get behind him and show the union in a really positive way and hopefully other reps will sign up.”

Fellow Academy1 organiser William Akadi enjoyed the day. “I was impressed with the store’s managers who got involved and showed their support for workplace learning and the union’s Checkout Learning campaign,” said the 53 year-old, who has been a rep at the Tesco Brooklands Extra store in Weybridge in Surrey for just over two years.

“I’m always keen to see more young people join the union and understand what we can do for them.

“I think learning is a good way to engage with our young workers in the store, so I’m hoping our presence might have a lasting impact on them and they will want to find out more and hopefully join.”

## Tesco Extra Norwich

Elle Jacob’s first in-store union campaign day was a recipe for success as the canteen worker signed up five new members and raised the union’s profile with many more staff showing



TESCO BRIXTON



TESCO AXMINSTER

an interest in joining.

“I was very pleased with how the day went, I was obviously a bit nervous to begin with but soon settled into it,” said 50 year-old Elle who works for Tesco Extra in Norwich.

“I organised a Legal Plus Day in the staff canteen as I’d read about how successful and relevant they have proved to be when other reps have run them in their workplaces.

“Overall it was a good day, we had our own solicitor in and 15 members signed up for the free will signings and five new members joined and brought membership up to over 66 per cent.

“Plus a few drivers signed up to the drivers distress fund.

“I’ve been a rep for seven years, it’s been good for me, I’ve changed a lot.

“I’ve gained confidence and knowledge and I enjoy being there to help, advise and support my members.

“The support and training I’ve had from the union has been superb and



Email the Network team: [network@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:network@usdaw.org.uk)



Visit the Usdaw website at: [www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk)





TESCO BELLSHILL



TESCO EXTRA NORWICH

it's helped me to feel more comfortable in my role.

"Along with all my reps training which is brilliant, I've also completed the union's own Home Study courses which were excellent.

"I'd recommend the course to every rep as you learn so much about the structure of the union and you also end up with a nationally accredited qualification at the end of it too.

"I'm one of seven reps who all understand our role in supporting our members and keeping them informed of the benefits of joining the union.

"Workplace union awareness days help us to show what the union can do for members. We're already planning our next event."

### Tesco Axminster

Mental Health Awareness was the theme for a union day at the Tesco store in Axminster in Devon during Membership Week.

"Days like this are important to members as they let them know that the union supports them in all kinds of problems, including health and welfare," said store rep Karen Creaser, who was joined by Donna Morris and Robert Buckley, who are both on the union's Academy programme.

"It went really well. We have 70 per cent membership and we had their backing as well as customers and our store manager who was fully on-board too.

"Many colleagues said it was good that the union are highlighting mental health issues and how it can affect people.

"And they were pleased they can get advice and support in confidence from their union rep, especially when dealing with managers and having to explain the issues, having their rep with them is a real support."

Karen has been a rep for seven years. She moved to the Devon store

from the North West 18 months ago where she worked at the Tesco store in Rossendale, Lancashire.

"I love my role as a rep so it was second nature to me to take on the role in my new store.

"I've completed Academy1 and was selected for Academy2 but had to step down because of my move down South.

"I was keen to get involved and we ran a successful Freedom From Fear day last November and again signed up new members."

"The feedback has been very positive," said Academy2 rep Donna Morris. "It helped people to open up and talk about the issues around mental health."

"There was lots of interest from the general public too who were keen to ask questions and take away our union literature," said Rob Buckley from Academy1. "The event certainly got the message across."

# Asbestos – still a killer

**Asbestos is the biggest cause of workplace deaths with around 5,000 people likely to die prematurely as a result of asbestos exposure, three times the number of road accident deaths, this year alone.**

Most of those who die do so as a result of mesothelioma, a cancer that can be caused by very low levels of exposure. Tragically it is always fatal.

demolition are most at risk, but others are exposed simply by working in a building with asbestos. An analysis of mesothelioma deaths shows that they are far more common amongst occupations such as carpenters, plumbers and electricians, but also occur amongst other workers who are likely to be affected through exposure in their workplace. This includes shopworkers, health-care workers,

use was at its peak. Therefore, there is considerable doubt that most of the asbestos that is to be found in buildings is going to lie undisturbed for the next 20 years, let alone the next hundred.

The TUC, along with construction unions, asbestos victim support groups and the all-party parliamentary group on occupational safety and health, believe that the Government should pass legislation requiring all employers to have a programme to safely remove and dispose of all asbestos. The TUC has also produced a useful guide for safety reps who work in buildings where asbestos is likely to be found.

**asbestos**  
 Remove this killer dust  
 Make all workplaces asbestos-free

Most people who are dying today were exposed to asbestos decades ago, so asbestos is often seen as a problem of the past as its importation and use have been banned since 1999. But that is not the case. The dangers of asbestos are still with us. Asbestos-containing materials can be found in around half a million non-domestic premises (and probably around a million domestic ones).

This means that people are still being exposed to asbestos. Workers in maintenance, refurbishment or

teachers and finance workers.

Currently the law says it is alright to leave asbestos in place as long as it is properly managed and not disturbed. However, the TUC argues that it is extremely unlikely that asbestos is never going to be disturbed if it is left in place for decades. There can be few cupboards, boilers, wall panels and pipes that have had no work done on them since the 1970s, when asbestos



[strongerunions.org/2016/05/23/asbestos-time-to-get-rid-of-it/](http://strongerunions.org/2016/05/23/asbestos-time-to-get-rid-of-it/)

## Union warns about cuts to fire services

**The public and workers will be put at risk by planned government reforms to fire and rescue services in England, public-sector union UNISON has warned.**

MPs are currently considering a Police and Crime Bill, which would give Police and Crime Commissioners responsibility for fire and rescue services, among other measures. Former home secretary Theresa May has said that the Government's plans also include a 1.6 per cent cut in funds for fire and rescue services this year, with more to come every year to 2020 and a new statutory

duty on police, fire and ambulance services to collaborate whenever it is in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness.

Public sector union UNISON has condemned the plan. "Fire and rescue services have already had six years of harsh spending cuts, which have led to job losses, fewer open fire stations and higher response times across the country, putting the public at risk," said a spokeswoman. She added that UNISON welcomes more collaboration between the emergency services, "but not at the expense of fire and support staff, who will hit by these reforms and further cuts."





# Hot house

**The UK had some record temperatures this summer and there may be more on the way, but as temperatures rise members are often left feeling hot and bothered.**

Employers do have a duty to maintain a 'reasonable' temperature under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations. Minimum reasonable temperatures are defined in the law but there is no maximum at present.

Usdaw, the TUC and other trade unions are still pushing the Government to introduce a legal maximum temperature of around 27 Celsius.

Excessive temperatures can lead to sweating, irritability, nausea, headaches, dizziness, fainting, muscle cramps, extra strain on the heart and ultimately heat stroke.

Members who work in food manufacturing or in kitchens

or bakeries will be more at risk than others. Where work in unreasonably high temperatures cannot be avoided, employers must take other steps to protect workers – eg minimising the time spent in hottest areas, frequent breaks, access to cold drinks, and providing lightweight protective equipment.

But even in shops and offices it can get seriously uncomfortable when temperatures rise above 25 degrees.

Some of the things that can relieve the effects of high temperatures include air conditioning, ventilation, cooling fans, removal or isolation of heat sources, frequent rest breaks, supply of cold drinks, job rotation, relaxation of dress codes etc. We know that employers can't control the weather, but they can take steps to make it more bearable when things get too hot.

Where heat stress is a serious issue, the HSE does give some guidance

[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg451.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg451.pdf)

Usdaw's leaflet 'Keep Your Cool' provides some basic advice for health and safety reps to use

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

## Know all the Hazards at Work

The definitive guide to all things health and safety is now available to reps.

Hazards at Work is jointly published by Usdaw and the TUC and comes highly recommended by safety experts.

The 368-page 2016 edition is packed with

information on the law, HSE guidelines, codes of practice, useful tips, checklists and case studies.

It also has special categories on young, casual, agency, and disabled workers.

The book, available to Usdaw reps at the discount price of £16,

also details the most common hazards, assessment procedures and prevention methods.



**More information from Doug Russell, health and safety officer at central office.**  
email: [health&safety@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:health&safety@usdaw.org.uk)

## In conversation with... Susan Jackson



**Susan Jackson works on the clothing section in her Tesco store in Irvine. She was the division's national health and safety nominee at the national awards night this year and has been a safety rep since 2012.**

### Why did you become a safety rep?

I felt there were issues in the store that needed addressing and I wanted to help resolve them. I aim to achieve a safe working environment and want colleagues to feel comfortable about approaching me.

### Are you part of a safety team?

Yes. Our union team work closely together. We have regular meetings and although I am the only safety rep, the rest of team deal with and bring issues to me as well. We have four shop stewards a union learning rep and I double-up as a learning rep too. Our membership at the last count was about 72 per cent but that has increased recently. It is so important to have a good reps' team. Everybody working together makes the job so much easier. We have a brilliant team in our store, which makes a huge difference to us all.

### Some people say 'health and safety has gone mad', do you agree?

No, I don't, but sometimes common sense helps. Employers in general should be more safety conscious. It's more than the money that matters.

### How do you ensure a safe workplace?

I do walk-arounds in the store usually monthly and check equipment, fittings and doors etc. I speak to members while I'm walking about all the time and ask if they have any issues. It's important people speak up.

### Would you encourage other members to be safety reps?

Yes. This role is important but you have to persevere. Not everybody is willing to help so you have to learn not be put off by 'negativity'.



# Your Letters & Pi

## TWEET DECK

Some of Network's favourite tweets to @UsdawUnion

**@AbuTSB**  
Setting up for the @UsdawUnion Legal Plus campaign today in @bedfordextra. Thank you Paul Walker A/O for the support

**@millard1973**  
@Usdawunion national political meeting. Great work taking place in Usdaw

**@TonyNeedham**  
Another great Southern Division conference this weekend. Great stuff.

## Rainbow challenge



**Phil Green (NW DHL Stoke K183)** is changing the colour of his beard each month in aid of Macmillan cancer. To donate visit: [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Phillip-Green](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Phillip-Green)

## Diane educates about hate crime

At the recent TUC Womens' Conference I met Diane Howard (branch secretary K219). She asked me if she could attend our branch meeting to make a presentation about hate crime.

The branch agreed and Diane made her presentation. It was excellent! Two DVDs and a talk covered from the Holocaust to present day, including discrimination, homophobia, race, religion and disability.

It was interesting, moving,

informative and there had been a lot of work put into it.

Diane had done it in her own time and is speaking at meetings on her nights off.

Apart from deserving some recognition, I think it would make a fabulous article in *arena* and bring more awareness of the many forms of discrimination.

**Pat Gibbons**  
K33 NW Tesco Retail No.1



## Rep reflects on three great years

I wish to thank everyone for their support over last three years. I became an Usdaw rep because at the time there were no reps in my workplace, and I wanted to help make a difference and be someone my work colleagues could come to for help and advice.

In the three years I was a rep I increased the membership in my store, attended branch meetings and conferences and emailed my local MP on matters that concerned my members from extended Sunday trading to the Trade Union Bill.

I supported my colleagues by talking to management on their

behalf about work and health and safety matters. We also held Legal Plus campaign days.

I also had a regular monthly column in the store newsletter and won an individual recruitment award.

It's been the best three years of my life and I was disappointed I wasn't re-elected, but I still intend to recruit new members and help with campaigns. I may no longer be a rep but I'm still going to be active and hopefully I will have the support in two years time when I stand again.

**Jeff Lazenby**  
Northern Morrisons F99

## Speaker's corner



I was invited to be a guest speaker at the May Day Rally in Chatham, Kent. The rally was organised by the Medway Trades Union Council, held at the Bandstand at the Victoria Gardens, Chatham, Kent.

This was the first May Day Rally run for 30 years, it was well attended. We marched to Rochester where the Sweeps Festival was held.

I addressed the audience speaking about the attacks in the Tory Trade Union Bill, the BHS situation, the junior doctors' strikes and the Sunday trading issues.

**Alan Higgins**  
Southern Faversham Sata H108

**£2,308**



## Young workers raise the bar for Mencap at conference

I wanted to say a big thank you to everyone for their generosity and help with the charity work undertaken by the National Young Workers' Committee at ADM this year.

We managed to raise a total of £2,213.67 by holding collections on the Young Workers' stall and

at the Young Workers' Disco and holding a raffle.

In particular I would like to thank Callum Harrison for his excellent work during the week. Callum set up a photo booth on our stall and managed to photograph over 500 people during the week and raised over

£500. We are really grateful to everyone for donating and to Usdaw for matching the amount raised resulting in over £4,400 going to support people with learning disabilities, their families and carers.

**Dean Wilson, National Young Workers' Committee**

SEE YOUR PICS at

[www.facebook.com/mozzeyphotography/](http://www.facebook.com/mozzeyphotography/)





# ictures

A dedicated space to share your news, views and achievements. Let us know what you have been up to and you could win £50! Please send letters/emails and photos to either of the addresses given above. We reserve the right to edit all letters published.

## Certified brilliant and loyal!



Clockwise from top left: Nicola McCarty, Lorraine Bonfield-Haywood, Majella Coffey, Sharon Wilkins, Andy Carrick, Susan Gant and Lisa Brakenbury.

## Taking notice at Mold Tesco store



The team at Tesco Mold (K139) are excellent reps and always support Usdaw and myself keeping our members

up-to-date on all our campaigns and offers.  
**Annette Bott**  
Area organiser, Warrington

## Learning benefits summed up



ESSENTIAL SKILLS MATHS, TESCO ANTRIM

## Your Spotlight Day snaps



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: TESCO BIDSTON MOSS, TESCO BROADSTAIRS, BOOTS NOTTINGHAM, TESCO AYLSHAM, TESCO COLERAINE, TESCO BALLYMENA, LANGLEY SHOPPING CENTRE AND CRAWLEY DOTCOM.





# Usdaw cares about Carers

See more Spotlight Day pictures at:  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/gallery](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/gallery)



**GLOUCESTER**  
South Wales and Western division



**WIDNES**  
North West division



**BIRMINGHAM**  
Midlands division



**LONDON**  
Eastern division



**YORK**  
North Eastern division



**CROYDON**  
Southern division



**GALASHIELS**  
Scottish division