

# NETWORK



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2015

The bimonthly magazine for Usdaw Activists

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



SUMMER SCHOOL

ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH

PENSIONS CONFERENCE

## Standing up for respect at work

••• RETAIL TRADES CONFERENCE ••• NEWS ••• TRANSPORT CONFERENCE •••



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# Comment

General secretary John Hannett

Usdaw's determination and expertise in presenting evidence-based arguments to government have played a major part in stopping massive cuts in tax credits for millions of working families.

We have also managed to persuade MPs from nearly all political parties to listen to our reasoned argument on the damage extending Sunday trading could do to both shopworkers' families and those workers in the transport and distribution sectors. At present moves to devolve power to local councils on Sunday trading have stalled and we are working hard to have these plans abandoned altogether.

Both of these campaigns show the importance of being able to lobby parliament and run campaigns with a political dimension. However, the Government want to deny unions the ability to do this as part of their Trade Union Bill, which if passed will stop us having funds to spend on political campaigns.

So, while we can celebrate our successes this year our fight is far from over and Usdaw is committed to doing all we can to oppose this vindictive Bill.

Looking back on 2015 Usdaw has maintained its position as a strong, financially sound, campaigning union. Thanks to our reps and officials membership has held steady despite massive upheaval across a number of sectors and companies.

There are many challenges ahead but we are ready to protect our members' interests at work and in society. We continue to invest in our reps, to ensure we deliver our services in the best possible way and we are determined to increase our influence in companies across all of our sectors.

On behalf of the executive council can I wish you and your family all the very best for the festive season and the New Year.



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Union of Shop, Distribution  
and Allied Workers

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USDRAW'S DELEGATION AT THE 2015 TUC

# Speaking up at the TUC

**Usdaw's delegation at this year's TUC were vocal on a range of issues including discrimination, housing, flexibility and the EU.**

## John Hannett on flexibility

Usdaw members are operating in a seven-day environment, with an increased flexibility that often is one way only, general secretary John Hannett told delegates.

"While zero-hour contracts grab the headlines there is a wider, less publicised casualisation of employment, with the prolific use of agency workers on an increased basis, and not just for seasonal demands and temporary contracts," he said.

"In fact, we are seeing a gradual going back to labour being turned on and off at the will of the employer. One in five workers say they want to work more hours than they can currently get. Short-hour working is becoming the norm with these workers struggling to get a mortgage or rental agreement and arranging child care is impossible.

"But people are so desperate for work that they will take any hours that are on offer and dare

not speak out because sometimes the worst employers will get rid of them.

"The Government have shown no commitment to tackling under-employment or in-work poverty and have ignored the unions' calls for improved workers' rights."

## Paddy Lillis on discrimination

Despite years of legislation and strong employment and equality rights, discrimination against pregnant women and new mothers remains stubbornly persistent, deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis told congress.

"Maternity and paternity rights have always mattered to Usdaw," he said. "We represent almost a quarter-of-a-million women members, and so it is essential that we give a strong voice to their concerns.

"Almost a quarter of women members are experiencing difficulties in accessing their right to paid time off for appointments, and three-quarters are struggling to get a timely and suitable risk assessment. We must stand firm against any future attempts to erode women's rights and continue to press employers for improvements."

## John Hannett on the EU

The European Union (EU) through its regulations and directives has assisted workers to get more rights at work, general secretary John Hannett told delegates.

"EU directives have helped strengthen workers' rights to paid holidays, given part-time workers rights to equal treatment, and health and safety safeguards around working time are in place because of the Working Time Directive.

"David Cameron's renegotiation strategy is a thinly veiled attack on workers' rights, we know he wants to take away many of the hard won rights that we have won and have protected over many years.

"We need to offer an alternative to the Tories and UKIP's negative portrayal of Europe. We need to make the positive case for a people's Europe, a European Union that will look at strengthening and not watering down employment rights.

"Remember the EU is also the UK's biggest trading partner with more than four million jobs in the UK rely directly or indirectly depending on trade with the rest of the EU.

"The European Union is not

perfect. There is much room for improvement but now is not the time for the politics of national isolation or to turn our back on Europe."

## Jeff Broome on the housing crisis

The UK is currently suffering from a serious shortage of affordable houses to buy and an even greater shortage of good-quality social housing at affordable rents, president Jeff Broome told conference.

"Because of the chronic social housing shortage, more and more people are being pushed into over-priced private rented accommodation provided by greedy landlords making huge profits from housing people in cramped and poor-quality accommodation," he said.

"We need to build more houses, we need better protection for renters and let us demand good-quality affordable housing for all. We must keep lobbying the politicians and keep supporting those charities that do so much.

"We need to do everything we can to get more affordable houses built in the UK."

■ Reps interested in standing for next year's delegation should contact their branch secretary now for more information.



# Academy celebration

It was smiles all round as this year's Academy1 trainees met up in Manchester to mark the end of their six-months' secondment with the union.

Deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis, and other senior officials, joined the team to thank them for their hard work, dedication and resilience in what has been one of the toughest years on record in the sectors organised by Usdaw.

"These reps have done a fantastic job despite a very difficult environment," said Paddy. "We've seen job losses, closures, and reorganisations but the team battled on."

"And we can see what a great job they've done, our membership has held up, we have more new reps and the Academy trainees themselves are now highly skilled, more experienced and professional ambassadors for the union."

"Congratulations and many thanks to all of them. I'm sure they will return to work more motivated and determined to build the union both in numbers and influence."



- Academy trainees spend six months secondment with the union recruiting and organising in a variety of workplaces.
- They are given additional training as part of their secondment and are mentored in their respective divisions by an area organiser.
- The union pays the wages and expenses of the Academy trainees who return to their workplace after six months.

## Fancy a challenge?

Active reps who are interested in signing up for next year's Academy1 intake should apply now.

Application forms are available either by email: [academy@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:academy@usdaw.org.uk) or by calling: **0161 224 2804**.

You will also find more

information on the website at: [www.usdaw.org.uk/academy](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/academy) where you can listen to former Academy trainees detail their experiences.

The deadline for completed applications to be returned is **29 January 2016**. The Academy runs from May until October. **It could change your life!**

## Arcadia and Tesco tie up

Arcadia brands Dorothy Perkins and Burton will open in five Tesco Extra stores across the UK, while Evans will have concessions in four as the UK's biggest retailer aims to improve sales at its under-pressure 'Big Box' stores.

The fashion specialists will be joined by Claire's Accessories, Pavers and Sock Shop, which have also taken space in various Tesco stores.

## Aldi campaign gets national TV coverage

Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme highlighted the union's campaign to get recognition in hard discounter Aldi.

Deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis was interviewed during the documentary: "Aldi workers have significant grievances which are largely left unresolved, leading to low morale and a high turnover of staff," he said.

"It would be very short-

sighted of the company to dismiss the worrying feedback we have had from their employees.

"Usdaw has approached the company on a number of occasions but Aldi has resisted our approaches. They also instructed store managers to remove Usdaw recruiters from stores to prevent them talking to shopfloor staff. We're building membership at Aldi and our campaign goes on."



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# Usdaw at Labour conference



USDAW'S LABOUR DELEGATION 2015

## **Usdaw played a prominent role at the Labour Party conference in Brighton**

### **John Hannett on workers' rights**

Since the election the Tories have done nothing but hammer working people – despite claiming to be the Party of the workers, general secretary John Hannett told the conference.

He highlighted the cuts to tax credits, the Trade Union Bill and Cameron's broken promise on Sunday trading. "This is his answer to growing the economy!" said John.

"All of the evidence shows that extended Sunday trading will shut small stores, cut jobs and will have a devastating impact on the three million staff in retail and their families. The Government's plans will tear families apart.

"We need every Labour MP, every peer, every CLP and every council to reject George Osborne's false claims and David Cameron's broken promises. And join our campaign and vote against longer Sunday opening.

"Otherwise Sunday will just be another day but not just

affecting retail workers and their families but delivery drivers, warehouse workers, cleaners, bus drivers, the list goes on.

"Sunday is precious to our members and their families, don't let the Tories take it away."

### **Paddy Lillis chair of Labour's NEC**

Deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis is also chair of Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) – the influential governing body of the Labour Party that oversees the overall direction of the Party and the policy-making process.

The NEC is also responsible for upholding the rules and oversees Labour's selection processes.

All members of the NEC are also members of the National Policy Forum – the body that helps develop Party policy through a rolling programme of debate and consultation.

"This is a great honour for me and Usdaw," said Paddy.

"I'll be working hard over the next year to make sure we offer an alternative to the Tories' tax credits cuts, their austerity agenda and to halt their attack on workers' and trade union rights."

### **Corbyn's first leadership speech**

New Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn pledged to lead the fight against the Tories' plans to cut tax credits, when he made his first speech to the Party conference since being elected leader.

He referred to Cameron's pre-election promise not to cut tax credits. "It was shocking," he said. "I want to rid Britain of injustice, to make it fairer, more decent, more equal.

"We want straight talking, honest politics.

"The Government want us to believe there is no alternative to cutting jobs, slashing public services and vandalising the NHS."

He also said Labour would support the trade unions in their fight against the Trade Union Bill calling it 'a fundamental attack on human rights and in breach of both the ILO and the European Convention on Human Rights'.

He said the Tory economic failure was based on house price inflation, asset inflation, and more private debt. "It's unbalanced, unsustainable and dangerous."

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



John Hannett spoke on Sunday trading



Paddy Lillis Labour's new NEC chair



Rachel Goodwin spoke on housing



Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn



Shadow chancellor John McDonnell



# HISTORY MAKERS

Usdaw will celebrate its 125th anniversary next year and the union will be running a number of events to mark the occasion.

The union can trace its history back to 1891 when the National Union of Shop Assistants was formed coincidentally at the same time as the Manchester and District Co-operative Employees' Association was established.

Both independent organisations would go through a number of mergers to become the National

Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks (NAUSAWC) and the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers (NUDAW) respectively. The two agreed to merge after the Second World War and by 1947 this new amalgamation became Usdaw as we know it today.

"This is a landmark event for the union," said general secretary John Hannett. "One hundred and twenty five years of striving to improve the terms and conditions of our members.



We'll be celebrating this anniversary with various events throughout the divisions next year, so look out for details on the website and in our publications."

A weekend workshop for black and Asian members and activists proved a huge success in Eastern division in the summer. Increasing involvement, challenging stereotypes and raising awareness formed part of a busy weekend – described as 'informative and amazing' by Tesco's Patricia Alexander.



## IN BRIEF...

### Facebook under fire over tax

Social network giant Facebook paid just £4,327 in corporation tax in 2014. Its UK accounts show the firm made a pre-tax loss of £28.48 million last year. The company claimed it was 'compliant with UK tax law'. However, John Christensen, director of campaign group the Tax Justice Network, said: "It's very likely they're using all the usual techniques to shift profits around."

### Unemployment down to 1.75m

The number of unemployed people under the Labour Force Survey count fell by 103,000 to 1.75 million in the three months to September. The unemployment rate was down to 5.3 per cent, the lowest jobless rate since the second quarter of 2008, according to the Office for National Statistics.

### Sainsbury's in profits fall

Sainsbury's has reported a fall in underlying pre-tax profits for the 28 weeks to 26 September of 17.9 per cent to £308m. This figure was its lowest first-half profit since 2010, and down from £375m last year.

### Discounters on target to grow

Discounter Aldi has filed 93 planning applications and its rival Lidl has lodged 78 while Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrisons have filed just 29 applications between them, according to new research. Meanwhile, Aldi and Lidl have claimed 10 per cent of the grocery market for the first time.

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## Membership Weeks 2016

Activists and reps are being urged to get involved in January's Membership Week as the union looks to boost both its profile and influence in shops, factories, warehouses, offices and call centres across the UK.

Two special recruitment weeks will be held, the first from 18-24 January and again from 20-26 June next year.

Reps can order a wide range of recruitment merchandise via their local office or the website. General secretary John Hannett said: "Our reps have made us the fastest growing union in the UK for the last 20 years and it's important we maintain our strength.

"Our influence in the workplace depends on how many workers we represent so it's vital we sign up as many people as possible."



## IN BRIEF...

### Wage figures still lag behind 2008

Average weekly pay is still more than 7 per cent lower than it was in 2008, after taking into account inflation, new figures show.

This is despite some of the biggest increases in pay for more than a decade with average weekly earnings up 1.9 per cent after adjusting for inflation. However, the Government's planned tax credit cuts will hit the poorest even further.

### Bullying bill tops £18bn a year

Conciliation service ACAS is urging business to take action against workplace bullying as new figures showed it costs the UK economy £18bn a year. ACAS said it took more than 20,000 calls a year with some callers contemplating suicide because the bullying was so bad. More at: [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

### ASDA sales fall amid price war

Sales at ASDA have fallen again as it responds to the challenge of the hard-discounters. It also predicted profits could fall by more than 10 per cent next year.

### Grocery market share in numbers

Retailers' grocery market share stacks up as follows at November 2015:

Tesco	27.9%
Sainsbury	16.6%
ASDA	16.6%
Morrisons	10.8%
Co-operative	6.3%
Aldi	5.6%
Waitrose	5.2%
Lidl	4.4%
Iceland	1.9%
Others	2.8%

# TAX CREDITS U-TURN

Chancellor George Osborne bowed to pressure from Usdaw and the wider trade union and labour movement in November when he announced he would not introduce massive cuts to the tax credit system.

The chancellor had said in his post-election Budget he would cut billions from the tax credit system leaving working families facing a cut of thousands of pounds in their household income in April 2016.

However, following a public backlash, including some MPs from within his own Party, Osborne announced his humiliating climbdown as part of his Autumn Statement. The chancellor claimed an improved economic outlook including

increased tax revenue allowed the reversal.

Meanwhile, think tank the Resolution Foundation, warned that the same kind of families still stand to lose out in the longer term.

It calculated that once the welfare cuts work their way through, working households on Universal Credit, the replacement for tax credits will lose an average of £1,200 in 2020, rising to £1,300 for those with children. For some families, the loss will be more than £3,000.

Udaw rep Mark Payne said: "Yes we're very pleased the chancellor has listened to Usdaw and families like us who stood to lose thousands of



pounds a year if the cuts went through next April.

"But we know the Tories and they'll be back. Universal Credit is down the line and that will penalise people struggling to make ends meet so it's not all over yet."

## Tesco and Co-op pension changes explained

A quick guide is now available on the Usdaw website for members affected by the changes to the Tesco and Co-op pension schemes.

The ten most frequently asked questions are answered in a quick and easy fashion.

Reps can find out more at: [www.usdaw.org.uk/pensions](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/pensions) or by calling the pensions section at central office.



## Safety training first for NW reps

Deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis dropped in on a group of activists who were on a health and safety course at the national training centre (at the same time as the branch officers' course opposite).

Safety reps from the North West division looked at all aspects of the safety agenda during the three-day course including understanding the role, an introduction to the law and legal framework, problem-solving, and member engagement.







# Sunday campaign lift

Usdaw's fight to stop the Government allowing councils to deregulate Sunday trading continues to gather support from across the political and industrial spectrum.

Parliamentary attempts to introduce legislation have stalled as the Tory Party faces opposition both inside and outside its ranks.

However, general secretary John Hannett refuses to be complacent. "Our campaign goes on until the Government abandons its plans altogether," he said.

"I think it became clear through the consultation process that there is no appetite for changes on Sunday trading from shopworkers, retailers,



shopworkers, MPs and wider society.

"Shopworkers already work long hours at weekends, with over half working every Saturday and three quarters having to work some Sundays. The shorter hours of Sunday opening give many families the only guaranteed time they can spend together on a Sunday evening.

"Any change would also have a big impact on workers in transport and distribution.

"The current system provides a reasonable balance between those who wish to see more opportunities to shop in large stores on a Sunday, and those who would like to see further restrictions. So I hope this matter can now be considered settled."

## Respect Week sees activists in the picture

An extensive range of pictures of members and reps taking part in the annual Respect Week in November is now available to view online.

The Week, part of the award-winning Freedom From Fear campaign, calls on customers to 'keep their cool' during the festive shopping frenzy.

For more visit:

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



## Branch officers in residence

New branch officials from across the union's seven divisions met up at the national training centre in Warrington in November for their bespoke training course.

The lay reps looked at all aspects of running a branch and how it fits in with the union's divisional and national structures. The six-day residential course is a must for all new branch officers. More at:

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



## IN BRIEF...

### Morrisons' pay deal voted in

Members at Morrisons have voted overwhelmingly for a substantial pay increase following a ballot. The rise will see hourly rates rise from £6.83 to £8.20 from March next year. Almost 75 per cent of those taking part voted in favour of the offer.

### Deaths at work figures revealed

The number of workers fatally injured at work in 2014/15 stood at 142, according to recent figures released by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). This corresponds to a rate of approximately one death for every 200,000 workers and 9 per cent lower than the average for the past five years (156).

Over the last two decades there has been a downward trend in the rate of fatal injury although since 2008/09 the trend is less clear.

More at:

[www.hse.gov.uk/statistics](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics)

### Demand for foodbanks grow

The number of people relying on foodbanks is at a 'worrying level', according to the Trussell Trust one of the biggest suppliers.

### Amazon looks to grocery sector

Online retailer Amazon will offer customers the chance to have their groceries delivered as it expands its offer to more than 4,000 branded lines of food, drink and other products. More news at: [www.usdaw.org.uk/news](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/news)

# Hungry for knowledge

**Reps from across the UK signed up for the popular eight-day residential courses held at the impressive former stately home Wortley Hall, Sheffield, Network called in...**

## Summer school1

### Janet Nicholson

Janet has been a rep for 18 months and works as a general assistant in Sainsbury's Brixton Hill.

"When I arrived I saw piles and piles of paperwork and I thought 'this is going to be a long week'," said the 45 year-old. "But after that first day everything just started to flow.

"I haven't done many courses as a rep so this has given me that understanding of what the union is all about. It's fun, educational and it opens your mind.

"This will definitely help me as a rep in the future."

### Vaughn Spencer

Vaughn works at the Co-op in Lancaster and has been a rep since November 2012.

"I think summer school would be good for anyone wanting to learn more," said the 48 year-old. "It's very rewarding.

"One of the best things is meeting people from other walks of life outside of your own environment. Our group has gone from a group to a family, we do everything together.

"It's very fulfilling to know you're not alone and you've got that camaraderie and support if needed."

### Jayne Brailsford

Jayne, a rep at Tesco Beeston Extra, couldn't wait to get started when she arrived at Wortley Hall.

"The whole of this week has been preparing us to do a mock ADM," said the 45 year-old. "So we've learned how to write propositions, make speeches, presentations... we've covered it all.

"Summer school has made me see the bigger picture and realise that I can make a difference and do something useful. I'd definitely recommend it.

"Wortley Hall is beautiful and the gardens are gorgeous."

### Ann Monk

Ann works at Tesco Express Great Baddow and has been a rep for seven years. She started the week feeling 'fearful' but that quickly subsided.

"I've met lots of people and hopefully made some new friends," said the 54 year-old.

"It's very intense, you can be working late in the evening, but you don't mind, you want to do a good job.

"This week will definitely help me to do a better job in my role as a rep.

"I'd definitely encourage other reps to come here, it is hard work but you gain so much from it."

## Summer school2

### Nejmeddine (Nej) Darej

Nej is originally from Tunisia. He came to the UK in 2008 and began working for Tesco in Bristol. He completed Academy1 in 2014 and has been a rep for seven years.

"I was in the politics group," said Nej, 34. "We focused on the Labour Party and how it fits with the union's campaigns.

"Our group works very well together. It's nice to have a mixture of reps that bring different experiences.

"I would highly recommend

summer school. I think it's a good start, especially if you're thinking about doing the Academy."

### Lesley Davey

Lesley has been a rep for 10 years at Tesco Hornchurch. She completed summer school1 in 2013. "I've changed a lot since then, I'm far more confident," said Lesley, 61.

"You can't beat Usdaw's training. The tutors break all the information down so it's easier to understand.

"Highlights have been meeting new people and going out canvassing on the Sunday trading campaign.

"It's very well organised and everyone looks after everyone here, there's always someone about.

"Apply! Whatever your age."

### Barry Cuff

Barry is a distribution worker at Sainsbury's in Amblecote. He's been a rep for five years and he completed summer school1 last year.

"I was in the organising and trade unions group," said the 47 year-old. "We looked at Usdaw's role in the international trade union movement.

"Our group gets on really well. We've all got similar problems within our workplaces so we can discuss them here and help each other out.

"I've really enjoyed it, it's good fun. It was great to see familiar faces from other events too."

### Laura Andrews

Laura, 33, is a shop steward, union learning rep and health and safety rep back at her Tesco store in Irlam.

"I'm in the health and safety group, we've gone through everything from COSHH, bullying and harassment at work and victimisation to PPE," she said. "Our tutor really knows his stuff.

"These events inspire you to get more involved. It makes you think about the bigger picture."



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



[training@usdaw.union.org.uk](mailto:training@usdaw.union.org.uk)



#Usdaw Training

Below from left: Janet Nicholson, Vaughn Spencer, Jayne Brailsford, Ann Monk, Nej Darej, Lesley Davey, Barry Cuff and Laura Andrews





SUMMER SCHOOL1 CLASS OF 2015



SUMMER SCHOOL2 CLASS OF 2015

## What is summer school?

Summer school1 is open to all reps and focuses on the role of the rep and how the union operates on a local, divisional and national level. It is also an opportunity for reps to improve their presentation abilities, self-confidence and organising and communication skills.

Summer school2 is only available to experienced reps who have attended the first series summer school or completed the Academy1 programme. Reps can choose to study one of four subjects for the course of the week including women and organising, trade unions and organising, politics and organising and health and safety and organising.

Both summer schools involve running a campaign day in a nearby town.

## How do I apply?

If you would like to find out more about summer school and how to apply then visit the Usdaw website: [www.usdaw.org.uk/summerschool](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/summerschool)



YouTube  
UsdawUnion

To watch the full interviews with our summer school reps visit: [www.youtube.com/usdawunion](http://www.youtube.com/usdawunion)



# Reps tackle pensio

***This informative one-day event is a great way for reps to learn more and equip them with the knowledge they need to support their members***

## **Debra Blow Pensions officer**

Pensions are not just an important issue to people who are about to retire, they are an issue that affects all workers, no matter what age or what sector they work in, pensions officer Debra Blow told the delegates.

More than seventy union activists joined pension experts at the national training centre in Warrington in October for the annual conference – a key event in the union's calendar.

"You can't ignore pensions – they're making national headline news most days – and rightly so," said Debra.

"Usdaw believes contributing to a good company pension scheme is still the best way to save for retirement and we believe that auto-enrolment works, so it's more important than ever that we support any reforms that make it easier for all our members to save for a pension.

"Following the introduction of auto-enrolment in October 2012, millions more people now have the opportunity to save for their

retirement. First indications are showing that auto-enrolment is a success. Smaller and medium sized companies will go through the process over the next couple of years.

"2017 and 2018 will see pension contributions increase from 2 to 8 per cent of pay and it is essential that we

**"You can't ignore pensions – they're making national headline news most days – and rightly so."**

prepare members for this. Usdaw is continuing to back auto-enrolment but a great deal of work remains. We are working with the TUC to see how the current system can be improved.

"Earlier this year we saw new pension freedoms introduced, allowing you to access your defined contribution pension pot at the point of retirement in one lump sum. While this sounds like a wonderful idea it's a risky move needing serious consideration. If people don't receive the right level of advice when, or just before, they retire the consequences could be devastating."

## ***The state pension and tax explained***

Delegates also heard from **Sheena**

**Taylor**, partner support manager at the department of work and pensions, who gave an introduction to the state pension reforms due to take place in 2016.

"The state pension will change for people who reach state pension age on or after the 6 April 2016," she said. "The new state pension will be easier to understand, meaning people will be able to know from a much younger age how much they're likely to get.

"Everyone is living longer. A man reaching state pension age today can expect 22 years in retirement and a woman can expect 26 years in retirement.

"One in three babies born in 2013 are expected to live until they reach 100 so the state pension system needs to be fair and sustainable across all generations."

For more information and to get a calculation of your state pension visit:

**[www.gov.uk/state-pension](http://www.gov.uk/state-pension)**

Pensions expert **Catherine Lockyer** from First Actuarial explained the link between pensions and tax.

"We all know we need a pension and we all know we pay tax, but it's complicated," she said. "When you pay into an occupational pension for every £80 you pay in the Government adds £20, so it makes sense. We have to ensure workers are aware of this."



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



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# n awareness



SHEENA TAYLOR



CATHERINE LOCKYER



DEBRA BLOW

## Beware: Scammers at work warning

Debra Blow, pensions officer, reminded conference to beware of pension scams.

“Pension scammers will contact you out of the blue,” she said.

“They may say that they are contacting you on behalf of the government, that they’re doing some surveys, they want to do a review for you. The popular one is where they text you ‘we can unlock money from your pension scheme, we can give you guaranteed returns of 8 per cent etc’ – if it sounds too good to be true – it is!”

“They will tell you that they can give you a cashback from your pension at any age but what they don’t tell you is, if you take money from your pension fund before you are 55, the tax office will catch up with you and will charge you 55 per cent of your fund value.

“Once you have transferred your pension pot to one of these fraudsters it’s gone, and you will not see the money again. Make no mistake, this is organised crime.”

If you are approached by an advisor to transfer your pension pot and you have concerns, contact the Usdaw pensions section on 0161 224 2804 or email your enquiry to: [pensions@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:pensions@usdaw.org.uk)

happening,” said the 58 year-old Sainsbury’s rep.

“Pensions link everyone, members and non-members. I like to update my members about what’s going on now and what’s planned for the future.

“I’m a union learning rep and I’m hoping to link pensions with lifelong learning so that we can help people understand pensions.

“I’d like to incorporate pensions awareness into checkout learning days and the managers are really keen

on this. We all agree, it’s vitally important to know what’s going on.

“The workshop with Debra was very useful, I came away feeling confident and informed. I’ve got several pensions awareness days lined up and I’m looking forward to them.

“I’d definitely recommend attending the pensions conference, you learn a lot, you’re with like-minded people, you can network and you can share experiences, there are a lot of positives.”



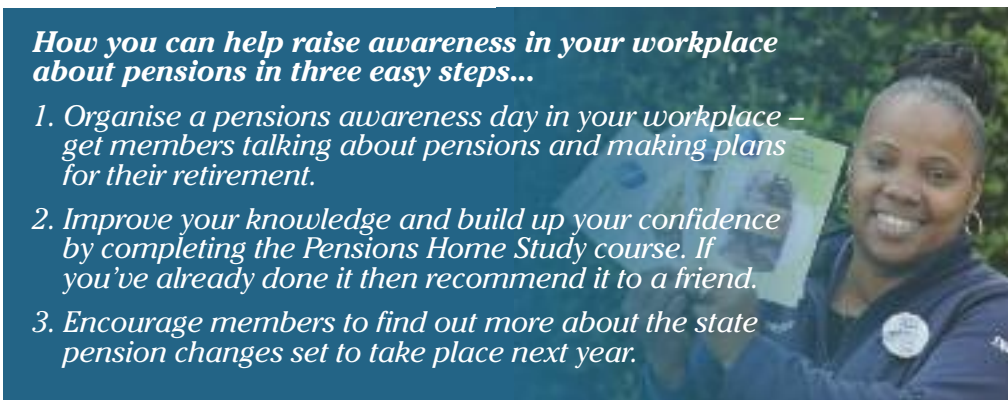
## Trevor Howson

Activist Trevor Howson from West Sussex was at his first pensions conference and ‘thoroughly enjoyed it’.

“I think it’s vitally important that we know what’s

### How you can help raise awareness in your workplace about pensions in three easy steps...

1. Organise a pensions awareness day in your workplace – get members talking about pensions and making plans for their retirement.
2. Improve your knowledge and build up your confidence by completing the Pensions Home Study course. If you’ve already done it then recommend it to a friend.
3. Encourage members to find out more about the state pension changes set to take place next year.



The **HOOK** and  
the **HUSTLE**



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

# Europe and safety in focus

**The Transport conference saw robust debates on the EU referendum, health and safety, and the Government's Trade Union Bill, Network listened in...**

## EU Workshop

David Cameron doesn't want to renegotiate the UK's membership of the EU to improve workers' rights, TUC European officer **Elena Crasta** told delegates as part of a workshop on the forthcoming EU referendum.

"In fact if the prime minister gets his way all safeguards will go not only for workers but for consumers and for the environment," she said.

"What is under threat is the principle of 'equal pay for work of equal value', improvements on safety, working hours, holidays and much more. We will see a race to the bottom with greater flexibility imposed, less job security and lower wages. We don't want the UK to be the sweatshop of Europe.

"We know the Tories want more deregulation, they opposed the EU's Social Chapter, so it would be naïve to think Cameron wants to replace rights delivered by the EU with the UK's own version."

The issues of migrant workers and their exploitation, (especially widespread use of the Swedish Derogation, a legal loophole which allows the exploitation of agency workers), the downward pressure on wages and terms and conditions, housing shortages, jobs, and the lack of knowledge about how the EU works were all discussed.

Responding to the debate Elena said: "Why isn't the spotlight on employers exploiting these migrant workers? Or the companies shifting production and/or avoiding taxes? That's where it should be, we should not allow the media or politicians to pit worker against worker. The enforcement regime in the UK is not good enough with little or no investigation of these exploitative practices.

"Let's not divide ourselves, let's vote to stay in the EU and rebuild and improve it, and remind people of all political persuasions of the many improvements that have come from our membership of the EU."

In a show of hands the majority of delegates said they would vote to stay in the EU if the referendum was held tomorrow.

## Health & Safety workshop

Health and safety provision has gone backwards in the last five years because of government cuts, Usdaw's health and safety officer **Doug Russell** told delegates.

Drivers are at particular risk from diesel exhaust fumes, long working hours and fatigue, shift patterns and awkward delivery destinations.

"Violence, aggression and abuse towards drivers continues to be an issue," he said. "Unfortunately the police no longer have the resources to run the TruckPol initiative, which monitored attacks or crimes in the industry.

"Elsewhere delivery drivers face dangers from dog attacks, abusive



CONFERENCE DELEGATES

customers and other road users. It's important companies provide training on all of these issues, conflict-management, defensive-driving techniques and how to anticipate potentially dangerous dogs."

The workshops discussed the problems drivers have with inaccessible shops, angry neighbours, road rage, customer complaints, unreasonable delivery requests, body-cameras, cab surveillance/tracking and other devices.



A range of leaflets aimed at professional drivers are available to view and download at: [www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk)



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



[network@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:network@usdaw.org.uk)



IRENE RADIGAN



ELENA CRASTA



DOUG RUSSELL



CHRIS MORRIS



# THE TRADE UNION BILL

The Tory Government's proposed Trade Union Bill represents a clear attack on trade unions and is no more than a thinly veiled attempt to reduce the political effectiveness of trade unions, research assistant **Chris Morris** told delegates as part of the workshop session on the Bill.

Chris explained if the Trade Union Bill becomes law it will:

- Mean industrial action will only be lawful if there is a minimum of 50 per cent turnout among those who are entitled to vote. (The rules for workers in 'important public services' will be different).
- Mean any industrial action must be taken within four months of the ballot, after this period a re-ballot has to be run.
- Introduce additional burdensome regulation, including a picket supervisor, and unions must give employers 14 days notice prior to any action taking.
- Make significant changes to the union's political fund with members required to opt-in. Members who don't opt-in would need to be offered a reduced rate of membership, excluding the political levy, a potential bureaucratic nightmare for the

union. A member would only be able to opt-in for a maximum of five years, meaning that every five years, Usdaw would need to allocate significant resources to collecting signatures, updating membership records and storing 'opt-in' forms.

- Make it much harder for Usdaw to partake in political activity that in the past has seen big victories like the National Minimum Wage, paid maternity leave, paternity and adoption leave and paid holidays.

## What you can do:

- Write to your MP. You can find out who your MP is by visiting: [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com) which will also provide a link to send them an email. A personalised letter will have the most impact but if you would like some inspiration, a model letter can be found at: [bit.ly/PRSlettertoMP](http://bit.ly/PRSlettertoMP)
- You can also use social media to raise awareness, sharing links and following Usdaw, the TUC and the Going to Work campaign on Facebook and Twitter to get up-to-date information. [www.tuc.org.uk/tubillresources](http://www.tuc.org.uk/tubillresources)



*Two delegates told Network of their experiences of the potential danger to workers in the industry.*

**John Stirrat** was delivering to a pharmacy in Edinburgh when he had a knife put to his throat. "I didn't put up any resistance that was part of our training," he said. "At the time it didn't bother me, but later that day when it sunk in, I was violently sick and had about a week off. It played on my mind for about six months after."

LGV driver **Alan Smith** also followed his training when a car tried to run him off the motorway when he was carrying high value electrical goods on the M25. "It was early in the morning, dark, and I saw this car behind me with its lights on, then suddenly its lights went off and it pulled right in front of me and onto the hard-shoulder," he said. "I knew what was going on, and even though it happened again I didn't stop. Colleagues of mine had been hijacked before so I was determined it wasn't going to happen to me. My advice is don't stop."



ALAN SMITH



JOHN STIRRAT



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# In the spotlight Mark Fisher



**Midlands division's Mark Fisher talks to Network about his experiences as a rep...**

**What prompted you to become a rep?**

I saw things at work I didn't like and I thought were wrong or unfair so I wanted to change that and help people understand the law and get better protection. I'm pleased I put myself forward.

**How does the team of reps operate at your workplace?**

We have five reps in all. The site is 24/7. We have regular meetings with management, once a month as part of the Joint Consultative Committee. We meet with the Unite union too. We also have regular health and safety meetings. We get respect from the management team and we have a good working relationship between us.

**What training have you done?**

Introductory and follow-on shop steward's courses and health and safety too including the IOSH qualification.

**What are the big issues for your members?**

Driver fatigue, pay, shift patterns and keeping on top of all the safety issues. It's a tough industry with long hours and not a lot

of rest, but I'm pleased I retrained as a driver, I paid for it myself. Now, drivers can pretty much get a job easily because of the shortage of LGV drivers, it's a secure occupation.

**You went to your first transport conference in November, how was it?**

I enjoyed it. It was good to hear how the union is battling for us on the national and international stage. It was useful too for finding out who we can contact if we have any issues we need help with.

**What news item has caught your attention recently?**

Migrant workers. We have some Poles, Russians and Ukrainians at our workplace. I don't have a problem with them, they are hard working and pay their taxes.

**How would you vote in the in/out EU referendum?**

I would vote to stay in. For me it's all about workers' rights, David Cameron doesn't want us to have any. The European Union has helped us but we have to get the message across to the general public who often don't see the bigger picture or understand what it's all about. We have to remind voters the EU is fighting our corner so the vote goes our way.

**Would you encourage young workers to join the industry?**

It seems like the younger generation are more attracted by IT jobs and I can't blame them. It's less stressful and less tough and there is little respect for drivers. Many people forget if we didn't have lorries the country would come to a standstill.

**If you could introduce one law, what would it be?**

To make sure all workers and unions are protected against any government attack like the Trade Union Bill.

**What would you say to someone thinking about being a rep?**

It's hard work but it's rewarding.

**What's next for you?**

I'll be keeping a close eye on the news so I can keep our members informed of all the important issues affecting their work and home life.

**We are looking for the next volunteer for our activist in-depth series, email Network to tell your story**



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usdaw.org.uk

## Fact file & trivia

**EMPLOYER** *Co-op Retail Logistics*

**OCCUPATION** *LGV driver*

**AGE** 53

**LIVES** *Alfreton, Derbyshire*

**PREVIOUS JOBS:** *Miner, lifeguard*

**UNION POSITIONS:** *Rep and health and safety rep*

**JOINED USDAW:** 2011

**USDW ACTIVIST**

**SINCE:** 2011

**BRANCH:** *East Midlands CRL Distribution E2*

**I SPEND MY SPARE TIME:** *Riding my motorcycle*

**THE LAST FILM I SAW WAS...** *American Sniper*

**FAVOURITE TV PROGRAMME...** *I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here*

**FAVOURITE HOLIDAY DESTINATION...**

*Turkey*



# VETERANS MOURNED



**ALAN HILTON**



**BRIAN PORTER**



**MARGRETTA ROGERS**

**Usdaw has sadly lost four stalwarts who between them served on the union's staff for more than 130 years, Network pays its respects...**

## **Alan Hilton Central official**

Former central treasurer and executive officer Alan Hilton died in October, he was 94.

Alan joined the union's predecessor union the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers (NUDAW) in 1938 as a junior accounts clerk and would work his way up the ranks to hold one of the key central official positions from 1972 until his retirement in 1986.

In between he had served in the Second World War in the RAF and on his return to central office went on to hold a number of senior positions before his promotion to central treasurer.

In 1976 he took on additional responsibilities and became executive officer, and worked closely with the general secretary. His almost unrivalled experience of the union meant he was ideally placed to play a leading role in the union's developments over almost five decades.

Alan was credited as being 'a shrewd financial operator' and played a critical role in ensuring the union's finances were expertly managed on his watch.

## **Brian Porter Deputy divisional officer**

Midlands division's deputy divisional officer Brian Porter died in September, he was 81.

Brian joined the staff in the old Nottingham office as a clerical worker then office supervisor before being appointed area organiser in 1968 initially at the Leicester office.

He was promoted to deputy divisional officer returning to Nottingham in 1976 and held this post until his retirement in 1994, clocking up almost 40 years on the union's staff.

Brian also served as a JP for 20 years and was an active member of the officials association for more than 15 years.

He went on to do voluntary work in retirement and was a keen Europhile, travelling frequently to France with his family.

## **Margretta 'Gretta' Rogers Area organiser**

South Wales and Western official Margretta 'Gretta' Rogers died in October, she was 93.

Gretta was appointed to the union's staff as a collector-cannasser in 1964 and was the first woman official in Wales at the time.

She was appointed an area organiser in 1965 and was

initially based at the Swansea office but later moved to Cardiff. She had previously joined Usdaw in 1959 when she worked at the CWS bakery in Port Talbot, South Wales.

Gretta represented members across a number of sectors and was a trail-blazer for the involvement of women in the union.

Many women in the division were inspired by Gretta's example and would follow in her footsteps as active members, activists and officials.

A strong, forthright woman she overcame the sexist attitudes of the times and went on to build a reputation as a hard-working, conscientious and committed official.

She was a well-respected figure among members, reps, colleagues and the wider labour and trade union movement.

She remained active in her local community, Labour politics and the union after her retirement in 1985 and went on to reach the 50 year membership mark in 2009.

## **Graham Gardner Area organiser**

South Wales and Western area organiser Graham Gardner died in August, he was 83.

Graham began his union career with the NUM and went to the trade union Coleg Harlech, Wales, to study industrial

relations before joining Usdaw in 1970.

He was based at the Portsmouth office, then moved to Faversham before returning to his native South Wales in 1973 at the Cardiff office. He had responsibility for members across Gwent and the Nestle and Schulman Plastics sites in the division.

He retired from the union in 1993 after 23 years' service.

## **General secretary John Hannett paid this tribute:**

"It's impossible to do justice to Alan, Brian, Gretta and Graham in just a few words, their devotion and commitment to the cause of Usdaw, and the wider trade union and labour movement was immense.

"Not only were they great ambassadors for the union they also made important contributions to their local communities.

"We have lost four remarkable veterans who helped build the union over four decades and we are grateful to them for their massive contribution.

"Many members, reps and officials will remember their unstinting contribution.

"The four were very well-respected individuals who made a lasting mark on the union.

"They will be deeply missed and on behalf of the executive council, our condolences go to their family and friends."

# David lifts anchor

**National officer David Johnson, 61, will set sail on his retirement at the end of the year after a 40-year association with Usdaw, 30 of those as an official.**

Originally from Doncaster, David joined the union in 1975 when he started working for the CWS in Worksop, Nottinghamshire. Four years later he was an active rep, branch secretary, and involved in his local Labour Party and trades council.

In 1985 he was appointed to the organising staff at the Bristol office where he would be based before taking up his promotion in December 2008 at central office.

"It was a baptism of fire in 2008," said David. "The economy had just crashed and the recession was starting and there were widespread redundancies

and closures in the home shopping sector and thousands of jobs were lost.

"It was a devastating time for our members and reps, but credit to our activists they dealt with it with great resolve and showed superb skills."

He has also looked after Sata, contact centres, the pharmaceuticals and chemicals industries, the dairy sector and some transport and distribution companies during his seven-year stint as a national officer.

"I've no regrets at all," added David. "I've been very lucky to have had this job, well, it's a vocation really. I've met some great reps and colleagues.

"I've enjoyed the many challenges and hopefully made a difference for our membership over the years."

David now plans to spend more time with his family at their home in Clevedon, Somerset, especially his



three grandchildren – twin boys aged two, and the latest arrival a new granddaughter. He will also plan his trip to navigate his small yacht single-handedly around the UK in 2017 as he indulges in his passion for sailing. "It's a great stress-buster," said David. "I took it up about 25 years ago and I love it. It sounds glamorous but it isn't. So if

everything goes to plan I'm hoping to set sail the year after next."

*General secretary John Hannett said: "David and Debbie take our best wishes and thanks with them into their well-earned retirements. They have both showed great loyalty, dedication and commitment to Usdaw. Good luck to both of them."*



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## Debbie looks to the future



**Recruitment and development officer Debbie Holland retired in November after more than 15 years on the union's staff.**

The former Tesco shop steward, branch secretary and divisional councillor was appointed in 2001 and was based at the Plymouth office. She had previously spent a year's secondment with the TUC's Organising Academy, at the time a groundbreaking initiative.

"I've worked with some fantastic people, hundreds of reps and officials who are so dedicated to their roles," said Debbie, 55.

"I've been a trade union member for 37 years. My inspiration was my grandmother who joined the Labour Party in 1928 at the age of 20. She was a staunch trade

unionist and a shop steward in a large factory and was a force to be reckoned with and a great advocate for women.

"I've enjoyed every minute with Usdaw and can't thank everyone enough. I've enjoyed being a part of Usdaw.

"But it's time to move on. I was one of the first recruitment and development officers and now I'm the last, the role finishes with me.

"I'm looking forward to spending time with my new husband and grandchildren and I'll be doing some volunteer work with young people.

"I'd like to give a big thank you to everyone in the division, past and present, especially the clerical staff – the union's unsung heroes."



*Apologies to new area organiser and former Sainsbury's rep Sunny Makh, some of whose details were incorrect in the last issue.*

# Activists build membership...

**Usdaw reps are using campaign days to promote the union and recruit new members...**

## Berendsen Laundry

It was a clean sweep for reps at the Berendsen Laundry in Chorley who signed up ten new members during their Membership Week event.

Laundry operative **Karen Fowley** and supervisor **Marc Cragg** have been reps for 18 months at the Lancashire site that provides services for hotels, hospitals and workwear across the UK.

"Marc and I became reps at the same time, we work well together and are continually looking at ways to raise the union's profile," said Karen.

"We have a learning centre which is proving very popular with everyone especially our Eastern European members who are able to work on their English language skills.

"Membership Week went well, it was good to have the time to chat to staff in a more relaxed way and it also gave them the opportunity to ask questions.

"We were keen to highlight the many benefits especially Legal Plus and the free will-writing service which I've just completed myself. Staff were surprised it was free, it's a fantastic benefit.

"We were also pleased to have the chance to speak to our drivers who are under-represented in our overall membership and we are now hoping to build on this.

"As for Marc and myself, we're learning all the time, the help and support from our area organiser has been brilliant and this event helped to boost our confidence and belief in ourselves.

"We're thinking of holding a Legal Plus Day next, we think this will be a massive hit and a great recruitment activity."

## Sainsbury's, St Clares, Twickenham

Reps at the Sainsbury's St Clares store in Twickenham invited affinity

partner Usdaw Protect to their Membership Week event.

"With membership at the store at just over 40 per cent we wanted to take the opportunity to highlight the benefits of joining and to remind existing members that they are entitled to great offers and savings from a variety of companies," said experienced rep **Philipine Akaba**, 53, who was on stand-down from the Tooting store.

She was joined by Academy organiser **Elaine Humphreys** who is a rep at the Morrisons store in Reigate in Surrey and area organiser Bryan Kee.

"Many existing members didn't know about Usdaw Protect and were impressed with the cover. Once they sign up they are entitled to free life cover and accidental death cover for 12 months. This went down really well," said Elaine, 52, who has been a rep for six years and has just finished six months' secondment with the Academy.

"The day was a huge success both with members and staff who were thinking about joining, and four new members signed up there and then," said area organiser Bryan Kee.

"Unfortunately the St Clares store rep Timothy Dark wasn't available as he was on holiday but he was grateful to have the support of experienced reps like Philipine and Elaine who were kept busy all day answering questions and giving advice, it worked really well."

## Morrisons, Weymouth, Dorset

Lone Morrisons rep **Matthew Kelly** is working hard to raise the union's profile and membership levels at his store in Weymouth.

"I recruited 15 new members during a Legal Plus Day in the store in September and I was delighted," said Matthew, 27, who has been an in-store rep for 18 months.

"Before moving to Dorset I was a rep at the Newquay store in Cornwall for three years so I had no hesitation taking on the role in my new store.



KAREN FOWLEY AND MARC CRAGG BERENDSEN LAUNDRY



JUSTIN SMITH WITH THE TEAM AT SAINSBURY'S BATH DURING RESPECT WEEK

"I became a rep because I'm interested in learning and I like taking on new challenges. Five years on I'm still learning and enjoying the role and my new store is definitely a challenge!

"From speaking to my colleagues they didn't know very much about the union or who their rep was and even less about how to join. So I have my work cut out.

"I went on stand-down earlier in the year and spent time talking about the benefits of joining and answered questions about the union and I recruited 25 new members.

"And in September I worked with my area organiser James Lees and organised a Legal Plus Day in-store.



View the Recruitment and Organising gallery on the UsdawUnion Flickr page



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MEMBERSHIP WEEK AT SAINSBURY'S ST CLARES IN TWICKENHAM



MATTHEW KELLY AT MORRISONS IN WEYMOUTH

As well as the new members who signed up I also have two members who are interested in becoming reps.

"I'm thoroughly enjoying my role and the challenges, and I'm learning all the time."

### Justin Smith Academy organiser

When Co-op distribution driver Justin Smith didn't make the Academy two years ago he worked with his area organiser to improve his skills and confidence.

He applied again in 2015 after attending a two-day session at the union's development centre and his application was successful.

He was busy during Respect Week

at the Sainsbury's store in Bath in November.

"I haven't looked back. My role is to organise and recruit members, help existing reps and find new ones," said Justin, 49, from Bristol.

"My six-month secondment has flown by with only three weeks left. I found I still had places and members to visit.

"I've enjoyed visiting different stores and sites, being my own boss and planning my days.

"I've had ongoing training from Usdaw and great support from area organisers Milan Pavlik and Adrian Grabarski.

"The whole experience has built up my confidence and given me a

greater understanding of how the union works.

"There's plenty of variety to test your skills too. I've run campaigns in different workplaces; a lifelong learning campaign at Next Distribution centre offering English and maths and IT skills as well as language and photography courses.

"I ran a recruitment campaign for the drivers and warehouse staff at Ocado and I joined the team at the Sainsbury's store in Bath in November for Respect Week.

"Completing the Academy has given me the desire and the appetite to get more involved and I'm now thinking about summer school and Academy2 next year."



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

# ...and Tesco reps are out in force

**Tesco reps across the country are proving that every little helps when it comes to recruiting, campaigning and organising...**

## Tesco, Tiverton Devon

Membership Week presented the perfect opportunity for young rep **Louise Dunn** to get involved with her first union event at her Tiverton store in Devon.

"I've been a rep for three months and had lots of support from the rest of the team," said 21 year-old dotcom driver Louise, who is one of four reps at the store. **Bernard Beard, Susan Beedell, Patricia Moore** and Louise's mum **Janet Dunn** make up the rest of the team.

"I've completed the first stage of my shop steward's training, which I found very helpful and I'm also involved with our divisional young workers' committee.

"The training has helped me settle into my role and I'm really enjoying being an active union member, it's an important position. I hope this comes across to colleagues when I'm chatting to them, especially younger workers like myself.

"Membership Week gave us time to interact with members and non-members.

"We're a very supportive team and we also had stand-down rep **Trevor Hunt** and area organiser Li Grant on hand.

"We signed up five new members and we're hoping to build on this and hold other union days and continue to highlight the union and the benefits of joining."

## Tesco Extra, Loughborough

A team of top reps at the Loughborough store are hoping to recruit 100 new members by the end of the year.

And they are well on target to reach their goal having signed up 97 new members since the turn of the year,

17 of them were signed up during their membership event in September.

"We're delighted our colleagues are realising they are better off in the union and signing up to join," said general assistant **Claire Poole**, 43, who has been a rep for nine years.

"We have a dedicated team of reps who take their roles seriously and who are always available and work really hard to cover all of the shifts.

"The team is made up of **Satish Chhabra, Carl Starbuck**, my husband **Jon Poole** and brand new reps **Susan Wallis, Kerry Elson** and **Georgina Watkins**."

Supporting the reps in their recruitment drive is Academy organiser **Shelley Middleton** who has been working closely with them over the last six months. She said: "I'm very proud of this team of reps and I've enjoyed working with them, they are always coming up with new ideas to engage the membership.

"Their latest success is Checkout Learning with maths and IT courses, which started in October. I'm sure this will encourage even more new members to sign up."

## Tesco Dalkeith, Edinburgh

It was the late, late shift for Academy organiser **Edwina Gover** and new store rep **Christina McCaw** who organised a Legal Plus event for nightshift workers and signed up new members at the Dalkeith store in Edinburgh.

"Edwina, who was on secondment to the Academy for six months from Greggs Bakeries, worked closely with me to organise the event," said Christina, 55, a rep for six months.

"I really benefitted from her experience and knowledge and I also had the full support of my area organiser Susan Coutts.

"We decided to target our night shift workers as they often miss out on union events as they are held during the day and they can't always attend because of their shift patterns or caring/parental responsibilities.



LEGAL PLUS DAY AT TESCO DISTRIBUTION GOOLE



THE TEAM AT TESCO EXTRA IN LOUGHBOROUGH

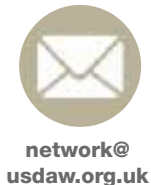
"I surprised myself at how comfortable I was speaking to members and advising them about how to use the legal services and explaining to non-members why it was a good idea to join and then seeing them sign up.

"The feedback from members was really positive and that made it all worthwhile. The solicitor was excellent and he was kept very busy.

"All in all it was a real success and definitely something to build on, colleagues are already asking me to organise another one."

## Tesco distribution centre, Goole

The Legal Plus campaign has proved to







*CHRISTINA McCAW AND EDWINA GOVER  
AT TESCO DALKEITH EDINBURGH*



*YOUNG REP LOUISE DUNN DURING  
MEMBERSHIP WEEK AT TESCO TIVERTON*

be a valuable recruitment tool in hundreds of workplaces across the UK.

The reps at the distribution centre in Goole are the latest team to benefit after inviting their local Usdaw panel solicitor into their workplace.

“We work well together as a team,” said rep **Simon Cooke**, 31.

“Membership is fairly good at just under 80 per cent, but we think if staff were really aware of the full benefits of Usdaw membership more would sign up.

“We want members to get the best out of their membership so it’s our job to inform them of the benefits and offers and discounts for themselves and their family.

“A Legal Plus event gave us the

opportunity to spend valuable one-to-one time with colleagues and also to showcase one of the real plusses of joining.

“Staff were really impressed with the free will-writing facility, it saved some people well over £150.”

Area organiser Angelique Audas said: “I’m really impressed with the team at the Goole site, they are very keen to do their best for their members.

“The nightshift reps staffed the stall for this event which shows their commitment to their role. They stayed on and ran the event after a nightshift even though it meant disrupting their sleep pattern. That’s great dedication to the cause.”

## *In numbers...*

*Membership for week ended:  
21 November 2015*

<i>South Wales &amp; Western</i>	<i>51,585</i>
<i>Eastern</i>	<i>66,930</i>
<i>Midlands</i>	<i>57,515</i>
<i>North Eastern</i>	<i>61,261</i>
<i>Scottish</i>	<i>46,538</i>
<i>Southern</i>	<i>62,061</i>
<i>North West</i>	<i>96,508</i>
<i>Total:</i>	<i>442,398</i>



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and  
Organising  
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# Trade Union Bill tops agenda at conference

**Don't believe Conservative claims that they are the Party of the workers, deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis told delegates to the union's second biggest conference.**

"David Cameron has wasted no time in attacking trade unions, cutting tax credits and trying to introduce total deregulation on a Sunday by the back door," he said.

He warned conference that the Trade Union Bill would scupper Usdaw's ability to run campaigns with a political dimension; Osborne's Budget would see millions of workers worse off because of the cuts to tax credits, despite an uplift in his so-called 'living wage'; and plans to devolve decision making on Sunday trading to local councils and mayors risked chaos with more workers being pressured to work unsocial hours.

"The tax credits will see some of our members lose thousands of pounds a year," he said.

"With one third of retail workers being aged under 25,

they could miss out on next April's hourly rate of £7.20 because it only applies to over 25s. We have worked hard over the years to get 'youth' rates abolished and then the chancellor does this!"

Paddy outlined the union's investment in reps' training and how this had paid off in terms of fewer reps leaving early in their union involvement. It also had seen the union's membership hold its own in very tough conditions.

"Companies such as Aldi, Lidl, John Lewis, B&Q and Marks and Spencer won't recognise us but we won't be deterred. We also have enormous scope to grow in the Big 4 (Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons and the Co-op).

"Our reps are the key to our success and this conference gives you a great chance to have your say."

## John Hannett

The union will continue to innovate despite the toughest of times and the many challenges facing it, general secretary John Hannett told conference.

"The Tories think the only thing unions do is go on

strike," he said. "They have no idea of what we do, how we operate and the great job our reps do as problem-solvers not problem-causers – our reps put fires out they don't light them.

**"The Tories think the only thing unions do is go on strike."**

"Many Conservative MPs have a very stereotypical idea of trade unionists. I know, I met a few at a fringe meeting at their conference and they have no idea about, for example, how important tax credit cuts are to our members. That's a challenge we have to face head-on."

However, despite a Tory win at the general election John said Usdaw was well-placed to continue to be the fastest growing union in the UK.

"Our Academies, our reps doing stand-down and workplace activists are doing a fantastic job," he said. "We will also continue to challenge the Government on pay rates, trading hours, employment rights and on cuts to tax credits."



JOHN HANNETT



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## On the agenda...Sundays and Fridays

Sunday trading deregulation, Christmas trading hours and black Friday chaos all came under the conference spotlight.

Conference agreed reps and members can help stop Tory plans to devolve Sunday trading laws to local councils by:

- Writing or contacting their MP or local councillors.
- Write to their local newspaper outlining the union's objections.
- Remind other workers that more Sunday opening will impact on sectors like transport, food manufacturing and distribution.

Christmas trading hours should allow shopworkers:

- As big a break as possible to allow a decent work/life balance.
- Access to public transport. This should be taken into consideration when planning opening hours (particularly late night openings).
- Adequate staffing to ensure health and safety is not compromised.

Delegates also agreed companies should do more to protect staff and customers from the over-hyped frenzy of black Friday after last year saw assaults, criminal damage and chaotic scenes at some stores.

*Delegates  
debate  
propositions*



PADDY LILLIS



**Kay Timbrell**



Tesco's policy on staff using personal mobile technology needs to be reviewed and clarified so staff are supplied with the equipment rather than be tempted to use their own, **Kay Timbrell** (South Wales and Western division) told conference.

"There is a danger workers could damage say, their own phone or tablet while helping the customer but Tesco would not be liable to repair it," she said.

**Liz Skelding**



National officers should lobby companies not to take any notice of so-called 'customer service' websites that often lead to disciplinary action for our members, **Liz Skelding** told delegates.

"These websites are used by some customers just to get free vouchers," she said. "They are often vexatious too and can lead to staff being disciplined. These websites should not be used as a basis for any action against staff."

**Amy Murphy** (Southern), **Val Cooke** (Eastern) and **Graham Brooks** (North West) supported the proposition.

**Roy Walters**



Workers admitted to hospital at short notice should not be caught up in Tesco's attendance policy, **Roy Walters** (Southern) told conference.

"Sudden hospital attendance should be classed as 'mitigating,'" he said. "But some staff have been given verbal or written warnings after being rushed into hospital. We need a more common-sense approach not the inconsistent one we have now."

**Allan Kell**



Extended Sunday trading hours will have a dramatic effect on family life, **Allan Kell** (North Eastern) warned conference.

"We have to oppose more Sunday trading," he said. "We don't need it, there's no extra business, staffing levels are over-stretched, and workers are stressed out. What about family life? You can't put a price on that! We have to lobby MPs and local councillors to stop it."

**Pauline Markham** (North Eastern), **John Barstow** (Southern), **Graham Brooks** (North West), **Olwen Jones** (South Wales and Western) and **Karen Newall** (Eastern) all agreed.

**Joan Samuels**



Midlands division's **Joan Samuels** spoke for many shopworkers when she called on union negotiators to press companies to ensure reasonable temperatures during the winter months. "This is an issue every winter and often managers in the office are not aware of how cold it can get on the shopfloor," she said.

**Wendy Miller** (Scottish), **Lynn Goodwin** (North West) and **Val Cooke** (Eastern) all backed the call.

**Andy Kelly**



Petrol Filling Stations' opening hours should mirror the main stores trading pattern, **Andy Kelly** (Scottish) told conference.

"If the store is closed and the petrol station open this leaves staff vulnerable," he said. "Contacting the duty manager can be difficult. We have to protect these workers and not treat them like second-class citizens."

**Delegates supported all the propositions including one calling for visual display units and point of sale/checkouts to be included in the Health and Safety Act.**



# Trade Union Bill to hit health and safety

**The role and effectiveness of health and safety reps will be severely jeopardised by the Government's Trade Union Bill, the TUC has warned.**

The Bill will restrict the ability of union health and safety reps to do their work by telling employers in the public sector that they must cut back on the time that reps are given to undertake inspections, meet with employers, and help protect everyone in the workplace.

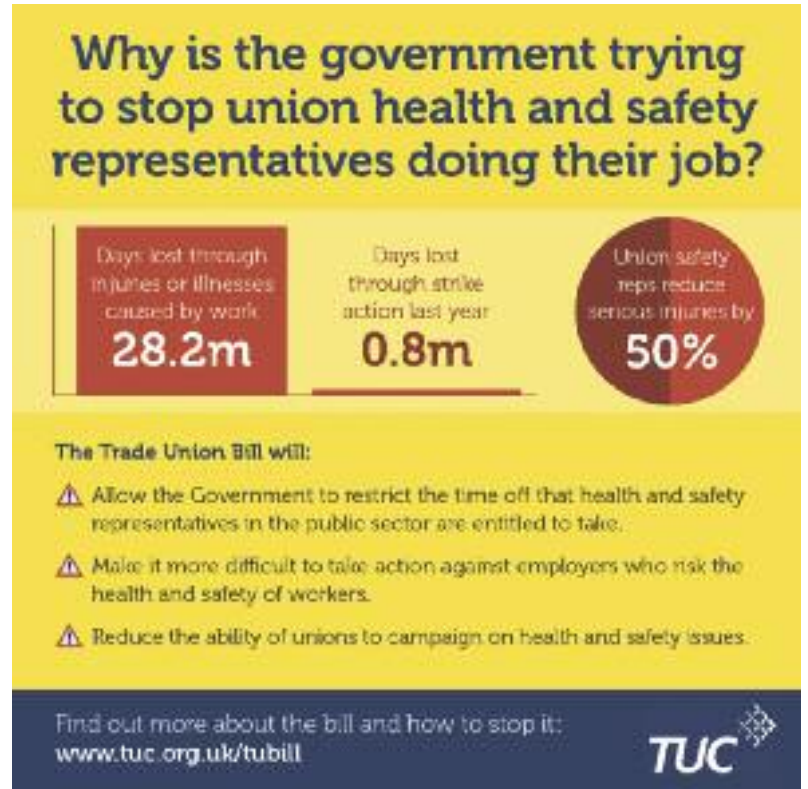
"While 800,000 days were lost through strike action last year, there are 28.2 million days lost every year through injuries that are caused by work," said the TUC. "The Government is ignoring the real problem at work is safety not strikes.

"In fact health and safety representatives halve the number of serious injuries in the workplace. It is therefore mindboggling that the Government is trying to restrict the ability of union health and safety representatives to do their work."

You can download the TUC's infographic at: [www.tuc.org.uk/government-threat-safety-reps](http://www.tuc.org.uk/government-threat-safety-reps)

## Safety risk posed by agency strike busters

Meanwhile, the TUC has warned it has 'very serious safety concerns' over the Government's plans in the Trade Union Bill to allow firms to use agency



workers to replace striking employees.

This would allow 'inexperienced replacement workers to be brought in to the workplace with no knowledge of any of the safety risks'.

Head of safety at the TUC Hugh Robertson said: "In normal circumstances, when new workers start, they are working alongside the existing workers and there will usually always be people there who know the basic safety procedures.

"On the other hand, take a group of people from an agency, put them into a workplace at a few days' notice, and you have an accident waiting to happen and the effects could be catastrophic."

In one incident in the United States strike breaking workers caused a series of explosions and toxic gas releases and ended up with enforcement authorities taking action, which led to a six figure fine for the company.



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## Asbestos removal top priority says TUC

**Around 5,000 people each year die of asbestos exposure and eradicating it from all commercial, public and rented domestic properties has to be a priority, say the TUC.**

It has also accused the Government of being complacent about the risk to workers and the public.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "The effects of

exposure to asbestos at work continue to cause thousands of deaths every year. Yet asbestos is still with us in around half a million workplaces and public buildings across the UK. As a result, more than 15 years after the use of asbestos was banned, hundreds of thousands of workers are still put at risk of exposure every day."

Welcoming the report, TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson said: "We

are calling for new legislation requiring all employers to address the issue by, first of all doing a full survey of asbestos no later than 2022, and then ensuring the removal of all asbestos by 2035."

More at: [www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/asbestos\\_eradication.pdf](http://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/asbestos_eradication.pdf)





## EU safety regulations help protect workers says report

**Claims that safety regulations introduced by the EU are a burden on business and are overly-bureaucratic have been blown out of the water, a new report has shown.**

Researchers spoke to inspectors, employers and workers in all 27 EU countries to assess the impact of the 24 health and safety directives. It concluded:

- The regulations have been transposed into national states with very few problems.
- There is little evidence of a 'bureaucratic burden'.
- Employee representation has had a noticeable influence especially on risk assessments.

■ Enforcement and inspection has improved.

The majority of government and employer representatives on the Advisory Committee on Safety at Work agreed that the report was positive and that more enforcement and inspection was needed.

According to Hugh Robertson, head of health and safety at the TUC, who sits on the Advisory Committee: "The overall report is a strong weapon that demolishes all the Government's rhetoric about European health and safety regulation being a 'burden'. We should use it."

More at: [strongerunions.org/2015/10/12/new-research-says-eu-regulation-working/](http://strongerunions.org/2015/10/12/new-research-says-eu-regulation-working/)



## Runaway hazard warning

**Failure to apply the cab handbrake or the trailer parking brake when coupling or uncoupling lorries are the main reasons of vehicle runaway accidents, the latest research has shown.**

Runaways occur when either the tractor unit or the trailer rolls away unexpectedly. They cause a number of deaths every year when the driver or a bystander is crushed.

A number of organisational and physical factors were also identified which help to explain why some drivers make this error.

Solutions such as provision of easily accessible controls, interlocks or cab alarms, improved supervision and better training would help to reduce the risk.

More from the HSE website at: [www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr1069.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr1069.htm)



## In conversation with...

**Lauren Elliott (K145 NI Asda, North Western division) who joined Usdaw in 2007 and became active in 2010. She is a rep, health and safety rep and branch chair and was recently at the branch officers' course held in Warrington in November.**

“ I work for Asda in the Bangor store Northern Ireland as a checkout host. I'm responsible for managing queues, colleague breaks and assisting customers within the store.

I've always had an interest in health and safety so jumped at the chance to become a rep. It seemed a natural progression for me to develop skills and knowledge within the area.

I currently have around 170 members. I'm lucky to be supported by a great union team made up of shop steward Alex Browne and newly appointed rep Jon Robinson and of course our full time official Michala Lafferty. We have monthly meetings but often find ourselves on overlapping shifts, which is great for a quick update.

Health and safety can seem daunting at first, as each site can have its own specific issues. Ultimately though it is rewarding when you get positive feedback from members.

I've attended the Usdaw safety course with training officer Mark Bibby. I highly recommend it and can definitely say I came away with great resources and a renewed drive and interest in health and safety issues.

As a part-time worker the best resource I have to keep health and safety at the top of the agenda is the Usdaw noticeboard in my workplace. Updating it regularly and leaving relevant literature in the canteen is a simple but effective way to communicate with our members.

Being visible carrying out duties and speaking up on safety concerns is the best way for any rep to build up the trust and confidence of the membership. Not only do they see the positive results from us, but on many occasions it gives them the courage to challenge practices themselves.

”



# Your Letters &

## tweet deck

Our favourite tweets to @UsdawUnion...

**@James\_Dietsch** Great to see the Usdaw Crew and Paddy on C4 dispatches..Hopefully get some more members signed up!

**@gabundy** Today I'm having my 'induction' to become @UsdawUnion rep for my store. Hoping to get deeply involved with Union outside work too.

**@philwaite68** DHL notice board Harlow organising for @UsdawUnion members



**@houseflyuk** Used my @UsdawUnion members card to get a 20% discount at Frankie and Benny's... Happy days! #nom #saving

**@val\_cooke** We @UsdawUnion @unionstogether March against the Trade Union Bill and #KeepSundaySpecial pic.twitter.com/sIDEh6POg



## Half a century for loyal George Dear



In September George Dear was presented with his 50 year Usdaw membership award.

George started work at Tesco's in 1954. His first job was a van boy unloading lorries when they reached the stores. There weren't many stores in those days and even fewer trucks. George remembers that at the time Tesco had two artics and four rigid lorries for the whole of Tesco's stores.

In 1960 George was called up for National Service and was put into the transport core where he

learned to drive everything including HGVs. He served in Tripoli and Northern Ireland.

He returned to Tesco in 1962 as a picker and loader. After a few months he was moved to the transport department as a HGV driver. He became driver shop steward in 1963.

George moved with Tesco's when the Cheshunt warehouse shut in 1985 to Welham Green Depot Hatfield and became a safety rep. He was out on the road doing deliveries until recently. He still gets to visit the stores in lorries as a safety rep when there are problems with deliveries.

He is also Tesco's longest serving employee with 61 years under his belt! George still works three days a week and has no intention of retiring.

**Bob Livings, branch chair, C14 Welham Green Tesco Dist.**

## Legal Plus event



A Legal Plus day at Tesco Gallions Reach made staff aware of the benefits of being in the union, not just for work but for home life too. It also made non-members aware of the benefits too. Gallions Reach reps: Sajid Sharif, Gabriela Preutesei, Paul Nottage, Lee Yeates, Brian Wellard, and Kobina Mensa-Yawson.

**Sajid Sharif  
C26 East London Retail**

## At your service



At our Legal Plus campaign day at Morrisons, Bangor the staff all thought it was great. They said they didn't realise there was so much they get with Legal Plus not just for them but for their family as well.

**Diane Howard  
Academy2 organiser NW division**

## Food bank help

Tony Budden and I recently helped out at Tesco Lowestoft (2) with the food bank collection. Supplies are extremely low so the staff were really pleased to see Usdaw helping out and it made us proud to be part of Usdaw. We gained some new members too.

**Maria Barber,  
C43 Fenland Tesco**

## Aldi and Lidl campaign continues...



...in the North Eastern division...



...Midlands division and Southern division...



...and the Scottish division



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# Pics

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.

## Reps and members in the picture

### More members



Membership Week earlier this year at Sainsbury's Dorridge. Pictured are organising officer Cheryl Wilson, Sophie Costain and Chloe Kent. We have recruited 18 new members over a three week period proving this a successful campaign within this store so far.

**Sarah Hughes, area organiser, Midlands division**

### Support network



Great support at Tesco Bidston Moss for Parents and Carers Spotlight day in June, raising awareness and spreading the campaign message!

**Michelle Owens, area organiser, North West division**

### Retirement for Liz

Usdaw rep Liz Reid has worked at Tesco Hemel Hempstead for 21 years. Liz retired from Tesco in August to move to Norfolk. I'd like to thank Liz for

supporting members within her store over the years. She will be greatly missed. Liz has promised to stay active within her new area of Norfolk and has already met with organiser Angie Dewing! All the best to Liz.

**Andy Hearn, area organiser, Eastern division**

### Tom Watson visit



Tom Watson, deputy Labour leader, pictured with rep Mohammed Yasin and area organiser Darren Matthews at the West Midlands Labour HQ.

**Mohammed Yasin, E38 Birmingham Area Tesco**

### Martin Kemp

We would like to place on record our thanks and appreciation to Martin Kemp, JD Williams Logistics, who retired earlier this year.

Martin had been a full-time senior rep at the Shaw site for five years and has been at the forefront of supporting our members and reps throughout this time.

He will be greatly missed. We'd like to wish him all the very best.

**Daniel Adams, area organiser, NW Division and the reps from K85 NW JD Williams Logistics<sup>2</sup>**

### Tesco Trowbridge campaign day



Supporting Parents and Carers event at Tesco Trowbridge. Pictured from left: reps Asma Laughton and Linda Connor

### Legal Plus day at Morrisons Lacey



Paul Huish, Academy1 organiser and rep Kris Bates held a Legal Plus day at Morrisons in Lacey. They were joined by Slater & Gordon solicitors who offered legal advice to members and Paul and Kris signed up four new members.

### Summer school1: high street campaign



Summer school1 reps take to the streets of Barnsley to interview locals about Freedom From Fear. Pictures by Brian Loughhead

## Members across the country celebrate 30 years of Usdaw membership...



ANN HOUSE



PAMELA MURRAY



EDWARD MCGHEE



IAN LITTLE



JAN ROCHELLE



KATHLEEN YOUNG



MICHAEL CAVALLI



CHRISTINA GREGORY

New

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