

# NETWORK

The bimonthly magazine for Usdaw activists | [www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk) | September/October 2012

## TEAMWORK IN ACTION

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NETWORK



Active reps across the UK are going the extra mile for their members

### ■ National recognition for health & safety rep Peter

Tesco rep Peter Ammundsen was the toast of the TUC at this year's conference page 07



### ■ Activist in depth from North Eastern division

Dotcom driver David Raine answers our questions about life on the road and as a rep page 19



### ■ Lifelong learning takes hold at the Co-op, Andover

Reps have delivered a new learning centre for members at the new distribution centre page 14



# Campaigns work

General secretary John Hannett's comment



Usdaw's campaigning work has paid off again after the Government's last minute decision to rethink proposed cuts to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. The revised Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme (CICS), which would have slashed or axed altogether the compensation paid to almost 90 per cent of innocent victims of violent crime, was due to be approved by a Parliamentary committee in mid-September. But in a shock move, new justice minister Helen Grant withdrew the revised scheme from consideration before a vote could be taken, as it became increasingly clear that MPs from all sides of the House were not prepared to support the changes. In a powerful speech, shadow minister and Labour MP Rob Ffello, a member of Usdaw's Parliamentary Panel, demolished the Government's case for the proposed cuts. His fears and concerns, supported by Usdaw, were echoed by MPs from all parties. As you know Usdaw has been campaigning hard against the cuts to the CICS and I was delighted and extremely encouraged by this latest U-turn.

## Parliamentary voice

It's clear to every right-thinking citizen that the Government has done the decent thing for innocent victims of violent crime and decided to reconsider these unfair and unnecessary cuts.

The withdrawal of the revised scheme from consideration is an extremely encouraging sign and we hope the Government will now drop the proposed cuts in their entirety. I've also written to the justice secretary Chris Grayling seeking clarification that the Government will not proceed with cuts to the CICS by 30 September as was originally proposed. Usdaw has a great deal of experience supporting members who have suffered a violent assault, but as a result we know only too well how victims are affected and how important the CICS is to help them recover and get back on their feet.

We will continue to try and protect the scheme and will be working with other interested unions and Labour MPs to get our message across. Once again this has shown the importance of having a voice in Parliament and how effective political lobbying and campaigning can be. I want to thank all of our reps who have contacted their MPs on this important issue and I hope, like me, you will take encouragement from this latest development.

“It's clear to every right-thinking citizen that the Government has done the decent thing for innocent victims of violent crime”

## USDAW

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# Campaigners

## RECRUITMENT & ORGANISING WORKS

Reps are using awareness days on pensions, Legal Plus, Supporting Parents & Carers, Freedom From Fear and equality to promote the union and raise its profile in stores, high streets and depots across the UK – and it's paying off as membership continues to climb beyond 421,000.

**Pages 22-25.**

### 04 In the news

All the latest developments including Usdaw's involvement in the Preston Guild, the fight for food manufacturing jobs in Scotland and Government attacks on employment rights.

### 08 Summer School

More than 70 new activists spent a productive week at the union's popular summer school<sup>1</sup> at Wortley Hall, near Sheffield, in September for a week of intense training.

### 11 Frances O'Grady – the new TUC leader

*Network* talks to the first woman in the organisation's history to be elected leader of the TUC – Frances O'Grady.

### 12 National pensions conference

Expert speakers joined reps and officials for this annual event which looked at the forthcoming legislation on Auto-enrolment and other important pensions issues.

### 15 Respect Week November 5–9

Activists can use the special pull-out Respect Week poster to highlight the latest drive to prevent abuse in the workplace – all part of the union's award-winning Freedom From Fear campaign.

### 19 Activist-in-depth

North Eastern division's Dave Raine answers *Network's* questions on his life as a rep and dot.com driver for Tesco in and around Northumberland.

### 21 Tax credits in focus

How to deal with tax credits over-payments. Take a look at Usdaw's top ten tips on how to deal with this common problem and discover the best way to sort it out.

### 26 Could you be an MP?

There aren't enough 'ordinary' workers in Parliament and Usdaw wants to see more of its members represented in the House of Commons. Reps should think seriously about joining the political elite.

## Regulars

**10 Member services** Find out if Usdaw can save you money

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**28 Health and safety** All the latest issues in focus

**30 Letters** What's happening in your division

## IN BRIEF

### JJB Sports in desperate bid to sell

Around 4,000 jobs are under threat at struggling JJB Sports after the sportswear chain put itself up for sale in late August. The move came after it failed to raise new funds to help revamp its stores. Rival Sports Direct could bid for the Wigan-based retailer which has 180 stores and debts and outstanding loans of about £36m.

### Store overwhelmed by job seekers

More than 2,000 people in Stockport, Greater Manchester, applied for just 15 vacancies at a local furniture store in August. Retailer DFS received a total of 2,168 applications – the equivalent of 144 people chasing each job.

### Discounter Aldi to create 3,000 new jobs

German retailer Aldi will create 3,000 new jobs over the next year as its popularity with cash-strapped UK shoppers shows no sign of slowing down. The discounter has more than 400 UK stores and reported a sales increase of 26 per cent in the second quarter of 2012.

### Usdaw urges Xmas trading restraint

Shops should give retail staff a decent break over Christmas and close early on December 24 & 31, argues Usdaw. Stores should also close on Boxing Day and New Year's Day but if firms do decide to open they should be staffed by volunteers and paid premium rates.

# More workers under-employed

## FULL-TIME JOBS NEEDED

A million more workers are under-employed now than on the eve of the recession in early 2008, says a TUC analysis of official figures.

The number of under-employed workers – those doing part-time jobs because they can't find full-time ones or wanting more hours in their current jobs – has increased by 42 per cent over the last four years to reach 3.3 million.

More than one in ten workers across the UK are under-employed, though the likelihood of being affected varies considerably.

Women are more likely to be under-employed than men, with around one in eight employed women wanting more hours.

Under-employment is most common in low-skilled jobs, where around one in five workers are not getting enough hours.

People working in sales and customer services are also increasingly likely to be under-employed. These jobs also have the highest rates of unemployment.

Young people are almost twice as likely to be under-employed as any other age group with around one in five young people affected. Combined with high rates of joblessness, this shows how desperate the UK's youth jobs crisis is.



## YOU HAVE A CASE, BUT DO YOU HAVE THE CASH?

**WHAT PRICE JUSTICE?** The government thinks it knows. £1,200 if you claim for wrongful dismissal. It's the same for race discrimination. Even what the government calls a "simple claim", such as not being paid what you'd earned, could set you back £400.

Experts object, but ministers are still planning fees for most employment tribunal cases.

They see nothing unfair in this. Nothing wrong that someone who has not been paid the minimum wage could have to fork out more than a week's pay to claim it back.

And nothing wrong in making the costs system ever more complex.

Not only is the government chipping away at everyone's rights at work, ministers are making it impossibly expensive for many to enforce rights that they would not dare to attack outwardly, such as the minimum wage.

It's one employment law for the rich, another for the rest of us.



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## Pensioners in poverty

Disability and poor health are preventing nearly 500,000 people approaching retirement from working, and this will only increase as the state pension age (SPA) starts to rise, says a TUC analysis of official labour market data.

The TUC research finds that the employment rates for those approaching the current SPA are low, with just 54 per cent of men aged 60-64 and 62 per cent of women aged 56-60 in work.

Ministers seem to think that putting up the state pension age will automatically increase working lives, yet the TUC argues that many older people are unfit or will find it hard to find work and so will end up in a new limbo zone - too young for a pension, and too old to work. By raising the state pension age and ignoring persistent health inequalities, the Coalition risks overseeing a dramatic rise in pensioner poverty.

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# USDAW ON SHOW AT THE FAMOUS PRESTON GUILD

## CARNIVAL PROCESSION

Men, women, children and even animals jumped on the Usdaw bandwagon at the Preston Guild – held once every 20 years – as activists and officials raised the union's profile at the famous Lancashire event. A giant inflatable octopus – this year's symbol for the Supporting Parents & Carers campaign – led the union's float as flag waving reps took the union's campaigning message to the tens of thousands of onlookers. Area organiser Wendy Murphy said: "A great day and a fantastic turnout from our North West reps – it was a huge success."



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

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## IN BRIEF

### 2012 Forthcoming events for your diary

#### October

06–07 October  
North Eastern Divisional Conference

06–08 October  
Black Members' Weekend

07 October  
Sata Conference

13–14 October  
Retail Trades Conference

20 October  
TUC March For A Future That Works.

27–28 October  
Scottish Divisional Conference

#### November

03–04 November  
National Youth Weekend

05–09 November  
Respect Week

10–11 November  
Eastern Divisional Conference

#### December

01–02 December  
Southern Divisional Conference

01–02 December  
North West Divisional Conference

### 2013

#### January

19 January  
Organising Awards Ceremony

21–27 January  
Membership Week

#### April

ADM 2013  
April 28 - May 1

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

# Employers' group snubs extra hours

## NO SUPPORT FROM BRC

Usdaw has welcomed the decision of the influential employers' group the British Retail Consortium (BRC) not to lobby for a permanent deregulation of Sunday trading hours.

According to *Retail Week*, the BRC has said it will not lobby for further deregulation and observed momentum amongst retailers for a permanent change has begun to 'wane'.

The news came on September 11, the day the temporary suspension of

Sunday trading legislation for the Olympic and Paralympic Games ended.

General Secretary John Hannett said: "Our members remain vehemently opposed to any further extension of Sunday trading hours and they will warmly welcome the decision of the BRC not to lobby for change.

"The Government's belief that the Olympic and Paralympic Games would give a huge boost to the high street was always fanciful and the figures confirmed this, although they will not have come as a surprise to anyone who works

in the retail sector.

"Usdaw agrees with the BRC that the only thing extended Sunday opening hours does guarantee for retailers is increased costs.

"We expect the Government to abide by the commitment it gave to ourselves, retailers and indeed Parliament that they would not use the temporary suspension as a Trojan horse for permanent change.

"We hope the Coalition will now bring to an end the unnecessary and unhelpful period of speculation around extending Sunday trading hours."

## On course

Reps who are elected or appointed to one of the branch officer roles – chair, secretary, vice-chair, or vice-secretary, can sign up to the popular branch officer's course.

This week long training event shows lay officials how to run all aspects of the branch and explains how it interacts with the division and central office.

The week offers comprehensive training in a relaxed and informal manner. Accommodation is provided at a nearby hotel. More at: [www.usdaw.org.uk/training](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/training)



Fifteen recently elected branch officials made it to the national training centre in Warrington in August for the tailor-made five-day course which looks at all aspects of how the union operates

## Barry Allen – head of publicity

Usdaw was saddened to hear of the death in August of the former head of its publicity department Barry Allen, he was 71.

Barry had joined Usdaw in 1994 from the *Stoke Evening Sentinel* where he had been features editor. Prior to that he had worked in the newspaper industry all his life and had worked his way up from the local press to the nationals working at *The Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Express* and later the *Daily Star*.

He had also been a union rep and had spent time as a Father of the Chapel for the National Union of Journalists.

A Mancunian, Barry retired from Usdaw in 2002 and settled in Banbury with his partner.

General secretary John Hannett said: "Barry was a real character and we were deeply saddened to learn of his sudden death. Our condolences go out to his family and friends at this very sad time."



# PETER WINS TUC NATIONAL PRIZE

## TUC AWARD FOR TOP REP

Usdaw's Peter Ammundsen won the TUC's prestigious national health and safety award at this year's Congress in Brighton.

The Tesco night-shift worker from Allerton, Liverpool, was left 'gob-smacked' when he was informed. "I never imagined I could win," said the 57-year-old customer assistant.

"This is great news for me, the union, the store and the company and shows

that the partnership does work."

Peter scooped the award for his in-store work to promote good safety practice and make important changes to previous working practices. "Members were pulling heavy cages, sometimes two at a time, which was dangerous.

"Generally, I have worked with the management team to introduce best practice and keep on top of any emerging safety issues. It's about problem-solving."



Congratulations...Peter Ammundsen, centre, with John Hannett and Paddy Lillis

## Workers £7,000 worse off says TUC

The falling share of economic output going towards the wages of ordinary workers has left average earners £7,000 a year worse off, according to a TUC report *The Great Wages Grab* published in September.

Speaking at his final

Congress, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "Despite the crash, the economy has almost doubled in size over the last 30 years. But most people at work have been cheated out of their fair share of that growth.

"Since the start of the 1980s, the share of the economy going to wages has shrunk. And those with the highest salaries have done better than the rest. The result is that workers now get a smaller section of a smaller pie."

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## IN BRIEF

### ■ No Olympic 2012 boost for retailers

The London 2012 Olympics left retailers disappointed after data from the British Retail Consortium showed that August was the weakest month for sales growth so far this year.

The findings contrast with the predictions of many retailers and experts who had expected the Games to bolster spending.

### ■ Number of closed shops at ten year high

The proportion of shops lying empty increased in every region in Britain bar London between January and June, according to the latest figures.

An average of 14.6 per cent of shops now remain empty across Britain, caused in part by a dramatic fall in consumer spending, which is now back at 2002 levels. Higher online sales and retail space expansion are also factors.

### ■ Super-rich tax dodgers exposed

With tax avoidance by companies and the super-rich costing the public purse an estimated £25 billion a year, the TUC has published **Kerching!** – a spoof celebrity-gossip style magazine – to embarrass the Government into acting against the celebrity tax dodgers who are only paying a fraction of the tax they should be.

**Kerching! A Celebrity Guide to Tax Dodging** can be found at:

<http://bit.ly/Qg7aeT>

The research was undertaken by independent tax specialist Richard Murphy.



# Summer school sees

One of the key events in the union's education and training calendar, summer school, h

**T**he biggest summer school in the union's history was held in early September when 64 activists spent an intensive seven days at the impressive Wortley Hall, near Sheffield.

Reps from across the UK, from different companies and a variety of jobs increased their knowledge, boosted their confidence, improved their skills and made friends for life.

Divided into four groups the reps were guided through a range of topics including; presentation skills, understanding the branch system, the annual delegate meeting, organising, campaigns, and equalities.

Both the general and deputy general secretary John Hannett and Paddy Lillis take time out to go to the school to hold a question and answer session. In addition a campaign day is held on one of the afternoons in nearby Barnsley.

Evening activities are also provided and included the

Banner Theatre, guest speakers, a quiz and other social events.

## **Teamwork**

Deputy head of education and training Claire Simpson said: "This is a key event in the union's training calendar. It's hard work but conducted in a very relaxing and supportive way.

"It's all about teamwork and bringing out the best in our reps. Wortley Hall is a beautiful place and we've been holding the schools here for a few years now. It's very popular.

"Summer school1 is aimed at reps who have been on the introductory courses and want to learn more about the union and increase their knowledge and skills.

"The atmosphere is positive and everyone is encouraged to participate, learn from each other, and enjoy the week. The time flies by and I'd encourage any new rep to think about putting their name forward for next year."

You can find more at:

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

**The class of summer school1 2012**



## **FRANK NANA BAYIN ABBAN**

For Morrison's rep Frank Nana Bayin Abban, from North London, understanding how the branch works and the rules and procedures of the annual delegate meeting were the highlight of the week. "It really does help explain how everything works," he said.

"Everyone makes a contribution, it's very friendly and it's a great springboard for reps to think about going on the Academy.

The school helps with

presentation skills, representing members at meetings and it will help me do a better job at my store.

"I'd certainly recommend it to other reps."

## **NANCY STEWART**

Scotland's Nancy Stewart found the school very rewarding even though the hard work involved was very challenging.

"I'd recommend it to all activists, you have to experience it," said the Morrisons' rep.

"It was very informative and opened my eyes. It helped me appreciate just how much there is to the union, not only grievances and disciplinaries, but the organisation in general.

"We had a theatre group come in and do a show on industrial and political campaigns over the years – that was very interesting.

"Before I arrived I'd never have thought I could stand up in class and deliver a speech but I did and that was great.

"I've also met some lovely people."

## **SAM GILLIVER- COOPER**

Experienced rep Sam Gilliver-Cooper already has her sights on summer school2 having enjoyed summer school1 so much. "I've had a fantastic time," said the clerk who works for DHL in Castleford, North Yorkshire.

"I've learnt something every day, tricks of the trade if you like and it's been very effective.

"There's a really good balance to the school, it's varied, never boring and reps and tutors help each other so



# Active reps step up

Helps reps improve their communication skills, confidence and increase their knowledge



## Wortley Hall

“A lovely place, and very relaxing. The accommodation was great, food fantastic and the staff were brilliant.”

“My type of place. Full of history, lots of character, and beautiful gardens – looked great in the sunshine!”

Pictured below (l-r) Frank Nana Bayin Abban, Nancy Stewart, Sam Gilliver-Cooper, and Callum Harrison

everyone gets as much support as they need.

“I was probably one of the more experienced reps this year but that didn’t matter because everyone learns from each other. As for next year’s summer school, I’ll be there in a flash.”

### CALLUM HARRISON

Young activist Callum Harrison thought the school was ‘an all-round massive confidence booster’.

“I couldn’t have wanted for a better group of people,”

said the Poundland rep from Manchester. “Everybody mixed in, supported each other and, as we all know it can be lonely being a rep, this week provided me with a



great bunch of like-minded people.

“The campaign day in Barnsley was the highlight for me. I’d never done anything like it before and it went really



well. I’d have been happy to do even more of that.

“It was a great experience for me and I wouldn’t change anything about it. The tutors were great and I learnt a lot.”



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## FREE DEBT ADVICE

Usdaw and Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS) are to continue their successful service providing debt advice and solutions for all Usdaw members.

CCCS provides free and immediate telephone debt advice to individuals and families in times of financial distress. In addition to its unique online counselling service, Debt Remedy, CCCS offers a free telephone counselling service available Monday to Friday.

If you are an individual struggling to repay your debts use the CCCS Debt Remedy online assessment of your financial circumstances: <http://www.cccs.co.uk/usdaw>

Telephone debt counselling  
Freephone 0800 980 8271  
Mon to Fri 8:00am-8:00pm

## PARK RESORTS



Save up to an extra 10% on UK family holidays with Park Resorts!

39 Holiday Parks all in fantastic seaside locations

Call 0843 309 2230 or go to [www.park-resorts.com/Usdaw](http://www.park-resorts.com/Usdaw) and quote Usdaw

Calls cost 5p per minute plus network extras. Full terms and conditions apply - call or go online for details.

## FRANKIE & BENNY'S

Enjoy 20% off your food bill!



Usdaw members are entitled to 20% off their total food bill when 2 main courses are purchased from the main menu on production of your membership card.

[www.frankieandbennys.com](http://www.frankieandbennys.com)

Excludes airport locations. Valid every day except for Mondays from 5pm-11pm and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer including lunch/set menus.

## ALL FOR CHARITIES



Shop at your favourite listed retailers via All4charities and earn 100% of all commissions for your chosen charity. If you are an online shopper, then you could really help to raise much needed funds by registering with and shopping through [All4charities.co.uk](http://All4charities.co.uk)

For more information go to [www.all4charities.co.uk](http://www.all4charities.co.uk)

It is free to register and will not cost you a penny more than the advertised price of the item that you are buying. The charity you nominate will earn 100% commission from all the retail sites when you shop through All4charities.co.uk



# NEW TUC LEADER

Frances O'Grady is the first woman to lead the TUC and has trade unionism in her blood, here she talks to *Network* on her new role, her aims and the challenges ahead

## Will outsiders notice there is a woman leader at the TUC?

I think they already have – and some of them are confused! Having a woman head the TUC doesn't match the media macho stereotype of trade unionism – even though our membership has been 50/50 men and women for some time. There's still a way to go but we're doing a lot better than UK boardrooms and parliament.

## Many (most) workers are not in a union, with the majority employed in smaller companies what can the unions offer them?

A lot of small companies I speak to want to do the right thing but don't have an army of personnel officers to help them. Our first job is to stick up for workers but we also have to show decent employers that we are the answer to shared problems – from our expertise on good employment practice to learning and skills opportunities that boost workplace performance.

## The unions' image in most of the print media is (still) usually a negative one, can this be changed?

Unions have got a fantastic story to tell and the best way to get the message across is to showcase our success in winning a better life for working people. I've found that the more we show our human side and talk about real people in real companies, the harder it is for them to attack us. And while of course parts of the media are hostile to us, there are lots of journalists out there who are good trade unionists too.

## How can the unions counter the Coalition's attack on employment rights?

I'd encourage everybody to get a hold of a copy of the TUC's campaign pack – available at:

[stopemploymentwrongs.org](http://stopemploymentwrongs.org) - on the Government's attack on employment rights. Lobby your MP, write to your local newspaper and make sure that your friends and family all know about what's coming. These attacks are already unpopular with the public and politicians need to know they will pay a heavy price.

## Agency workers are being used more and more by employers...are the Agency Workers Regulations too little too late?

Winning equal treatment for agency workers was a massive victory for union campaigning. The better working conditions and pay that hundreds of thousands of agency workers should now receive is good in terms of fairness and will benefit the economy as a whole. But some bad employers have been exploiting a loophole in the law which stops workers employed directly by the agency from claiming equal pay. I'm determined to get that put right."

## How should unions appeal to the new generation of workers unfamiliar with unions, their values and their history?

First of all we have to get out there, ask them to join and tune in to their concerns. Young people are more likely to be on low pay and temporary contracts. Thousands are on apprenticeships and want to get on at work. They need the support of a union. We need to be more imaginative about how we appeal to a new generation.

## How can the low paid be protected and employers forced to pay better wages?

We need a government that is willing to see strong unions and collective bargaining as a key part of the solution to the national crisis of falling living standards and growing pay

inequality. Other countries ensure that union negotiated agreements cover whole industries and everyone who works in them, so why can't we?

In the meantime, I intend to turn the pressure up by co-ordinating a nationwide campaign for a living wage. It's now clear that falling real wages were a key driver of the financial crash, as ordinary families got into more debt just to make ends meet, adding to the credit bubble. For the future we need a very different pay settlement.

## How can the TUC harness the anger felt by UK workers?

There is real anger and frustration in workplaces and communities across the country. Our job is to turn that sentiment into action that presses for a better economic future. Last year the TUC and unions led the biggest demonstration in our history and on October 20th we want to see another great show of strength.

We are winning the argument against this government's self defeating austerity policies. But 80 per cent of cuts are yet to come, so this will be a long struggle.

We still have a battle to fight against apathy and fear. It's plain to see that government has got it badly wrong.

There is a better way and we owe it to ourselves and the next generation to stand up for it.

## Usdaw delegates recently called for 'pay day loan' companies charging APRs in excess of 4,000 per cent to be banned. Do you agree?

I do – one hundred per cent. Well done to Usdaw for leading this campaign and the whole of the TUC backs you.



“ We need to be more imaginative about how we appeal to a new generation ”

## In Labour's 13 years, what do you consider its three main achievements and three things it could have done better?

The National Minimum Wage – vociferously opposed by business groups and the Conservative Party when introduced but now too popular to get rid of – public investment in the NHS, schools and Sure Start, and low unemployment. I need to add a fourth too; the peace process in Northern Ireland – a huge achievement that future generations should never forget.

New Labour's biggest mistake was to fall prey to the dangerous charms of the City of London and President Bush.

## Can Labour win the next general election and what policies should it emphasise?

Ed Miliband can win the next election. He understands the need to tackle the root causes of the crash, lift living standards and isn't afraid to speak up against powerful vested interests.

Now we need to see Labour shape practical policies to build a fairer economy that works for ordinary working people, with stronger unions at its heart.

# Annual conference

Usdaw has put pensions high on the agenda for many years and with new legislation

**U**sdaw reps have a crucial role to play in keeping members informed about changes to pensions and the importance of joining occupational schemes, pensions officer Nick Walker told delegates.

"You don't have to be a



pensions expert to hold an awareness day or to circulate the union's extensive range of leaflets and booklets on the subject," he said.

"We also have a dedicated area on our website, with fact sheets and information on many company schemes available just a click away.

"More than 6,000 members have signed up to our pension home study course so far and more and more reps are holding awareness days in their workplace. As a union we're doing all we can to keep members informed."

## New rules – good news for workers

**G**uest speaker Nigel Stanley urged 'pensions anoraks to hold their heads

high' because the forthcoming Auto-enrolment scheme was on a par with the national minimum wage in terms of providing an important safety net for workers.

"Union reps should be proud," said the head of communications and campaigns at the TUC. "Because, as employers retreat from good schemes and many low paid employees are not in a pension, we can now see a broad political consensus has developed around the importance of pension provision.

"Just like the minimum wage employers were originally against the idea but not now. This is a great start and it's vital employees are encouraged not to opt-out."

Nigel, a member of the Government's National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) outlined his hope that this

scheme will offer long term investment and the chance of a decent retirement income especially for people working in physically demanding jobs, who often struggled to work beyond 60.

"This scheme, while not perfect, originally started with the Labour Government and is a triumph for workers that Usdaw represents. While the big employers already have their own schemes NEST offers a regulated scheme for smaller employers.

"For too long the pensions industry and employers have catered for only full-time permanent staff. They just didn't seem to get the 'real world' of part-time and/or temporary work.

"Unions have to be vigilant to make sure employers don't try to 'level down' existing pension schemes to meet with the Government's minimum requirements.

However Auto-enrolment will capture many staff who may otherwise have not 'opted in' and it will help decent employers avoid being undercut by rogue firms."



“ You don't have to be an expert to hold an awareness day in your workplace or to circulate our extensive range of leaflets ”





# puts pensions first

in the pipeline it's vital both reps and members understand this very important issue

## Co-op Group plans for change

**T**he Co-op Group could see up to 50,000 employees Auto-enrolled when the scheme begins in October, Gary Dewin director of the Co-op Group pensions, told conference.

"The Co-op will not encourage employees to opt-out but we will have to wait and see what the opt-out rate will be once employees see their January/February pay slips," he said.

"Because of acquisitions the Group had been reorganising its ten pension schemes since 2009 which were worth around £7.5bn.

"The rise in pensions costs has been massive and is now £175m and a pension pot deficit of £1bn.

"Around 30,000 employees won't qualify because of the earnings threshold and while the Co-op was keen to



consult with employees the overall response was disappointing – especially among those who were affected most."

## Could you be a pension scheme trustee? Find out more . . .

Part of Usdaw's Pension Awareness campaign is to encourage more reps and activists to think about becoming Member Nominated Trustees (MNTs).

Certain types of schemes require a board of trustees which must include MNTs.

Trustees are responsible for

ensuring that the scheme is run properly and decisions must be made in the best interests of the scheme and its beneficiaries.

Usdaw needs reps to become more involved to ensure that schemes are run properly and fairly.

You are not expected to be a

pensions expert; you will be given support from the scheme's professional advisers, your fellow Trustees and Usdaw.

For more information contact Usdaw's pensions section and ask for a copy of the *Guide to Being a Pension Scheme Trustee*.

## New pensions officer now in place



Debra Blow has been appointed as the new pensions officer following Nick Walker's promotion to central treasurer.

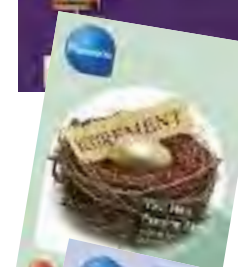
Debra brings with her a wealth of experience in the life and pensions industry. She previously worked for KPMG where she spent the last six years in the pensions consultancy department.

Prior to that she worked in pensions administration, having responsibility for numerous final salary

schemes, and she had also spent ten years as an independent financial advisor.

"I'm delighted to be on board," she said. "I'm looking forward to building on the fantastic achievements of my predecessor – Nick Walker – and the pensions team.

"This year will be very challenging particularly with the onset of Auto-enrolment. Raising awareness is absolutely key and I look forward to working with and supporting reps in the future."



Usdaw has produced comprehensive information on the forthcoming Auto-enrolment legislation which comes in from October this year. You can download the booklets and leaflets at:

[www.usdaw.org.uk/pensions](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/pensions) or order copies from the stationery department at central office

# Reps do the maths

A new initiative aims to encourage members to get involved in maths courses to improve their skills while warehouse workers at the Co-op have a new centre

**T**wenty-two Usdaw union learning reps attended the first maths forum in July at the Warrington Training Centre.

The session was organised to help kick start the union's maths campaign to help make the subject more relevant to members' everyday lives.

Lifelong learning project manager Ann Murphy said: "Maths is a key skill for both work and life. We aim to take away the fear factor and give our members the chance to improve their skills."

Tutors from Unionlearn and Tameside and Bury College were on hand to demonstrate the practical uses of maths.

"You use these skills in so many different parts of your life, so we need to link learning to every-day things like managing your money," said North East Mobile Union

Learning Rep (MULR) Tracy White.

Reps added their ideas on how to make the campaign successful and how the new role of Usdaw maths champion could help. "We were all excited about this and are looking forward to making it work," said MULR Rose Latham, who works at Tesco Extra in Accrington.

The campaign will start off in the North West with some pilots to test out the maths champion role, try out different publicity approaches and develop some learning materials.

"We aim to get 1,000 people to take up maths and work towards a national qualification" says Ann. "It's an ambitious target but I am sure we can achieve it. Members, their families and employers will all benefit from this initiative."



Number crunchers....reps at the Warrington training centre



## Learning distributors at the Co-op

**U**sdaw has signed a learning agreement with the Co-op at their new state-of-the-art regional distribution centre in Andover, Hampshire which opened last year.

With the agreement comes a new learning centre where workers at the site will have the opportunity to improve their skills through a range of courses provided by local Sparsholt College.

"The new learning centre was part of the negotiations from the closure of the Fareham site last year," said Usdaw's learning project worker for the Southern division Peter Chalklin. "The day was to celebrate the opening and also the signing

of the agreement.

"The event was a huge success and the centre has already had more than a hundred workers from a variety of departments interested in signing up for courses both in the centre and online."





2006



2007



2008



# WEEK OF ACTION



Usdaw's award-winning Freedom From Fear campaign seeks to prevent violence, threats and abuse against shopworkers.



General secretary  
John Hannett

This year we are organising a **Respect for Shopworkers Week** to highlight these important issues and also call for a change in the law to give shopworkers better protection from assault.

Usdaw understands that the threat of verbal abuse and physical attack is a year round worry. However, many of our members tell us that the number of abusive incidents increases dramatically during the festive period.

As the shops become busier, customers become more stressed and sometimes things can boil over. That's why our campaign once again asks shoppers to: **Keep Your Cool – Respect Shopworkers.**

We are calling for a change in the law to give shopworkers better protection from assault. Research published by the British Retail Consortium indicates that in the last 12 months, incidents of violence and verbal assault against retail staff has increased by 83 per cent.

The law currently gives extra protection to emergency workers who are the victims of physical attack and the alarming increase in similar crimes against shopworkers has led Usdaw to

call for the introduction of a Protection of Workers Bill, which would give all public facing workers similar protection. We need to get as many politicians as possible to join our campaign and to sign up to **Back the Bill.**

This campaign has been hugely successful for a number of years now and it's important as many reps as possible get involved this year by helping to deliver a high profile event in your workplace.

## You can help by:

- Giving one hour to use our Respect Week 'Lite' campaign pack in your workplace. AND/OR
- Organising a stall during Respect Week 5-9 November 2012, perhaps involving the media and your local Labour politician, and order campaign materials either via the website or using the order form sent to every retail rep as part of the Respect Week mailing.
- Write to your MP/MSP at House of Commons, London,

SW1A 0AA and/or Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP.

- Or telephone them on 020 7219 3000 and 0131 348 5000 for Scotland.
- To find out who your MP and MSPs are, go online at: [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com) and enter your store's postcode.

Providing a service to the public is a vital part of every shopworker's job. It isn't right that some members of the public think it is acceptable to assault a shopworker, simply for doing their job.

Research carried out by the British Retail Consortium highlighted that in the last year incidents of violence and verbal assault against retail staff increased by 83 per cent on the previous 12 months.

While our campaign places this issue firmly in the public spotlight, only a change in the law can provide greater protection for shopworkers.



## What The Bill Would Do

The Protection of Workers Bill seeks to create a specific offence relating to assault on people whose work brings them into face-to-face contact with members of the public.

For those found guilty it could mean:

- Up to 12 months in jail.
- £10,000 fine.

## What We Are Doing

Usdaw are using a postcard campaign during Respect for Shopworkers Week to encourage MPs from all parties to support the Bill. We are also calling on the Government to back the Bill.

Usdaw believes that it is time that the law protected shopworkers whose job requires them to have face-to-face contact with the public in the same way as other public facing workers are protected.

The time has come to ensure that the law better protects shopworkers from violence, abuse and threats for simply doing their job.

Please display this poster on your Union noticeboard



**Did you know that a shopworker is attacked or verbally abused every minute of the working day?** Source: British Retail Consortium Crime Survey

**Usdaw is supporting the Protection of Workers Bill that aims to provide stiffer sentences for people found guilty of assaulting shopworkers.**

**Please ask your Rep for a postcard to send to your MP, calling them to 'Back The Bill' and lobby the Government for support.**



Scan here\*

to view the latest news and resources from our Freedom From Fear Campaign.



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

\*to scan the code, download a QR reader app from your app store. A charge may be applied by your network provider.



**Usdaw**  
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

**www.usdaw.org.uk**

**Tel: 0845 60 60 640\*\***

\*\*calls charged at local rate



**2009**



**2010**



**2011**



# Over to you!

## Campaign success

Since the campaign was launched in 2002 there have been significant breakthroughs and overall the campaign has succeeded in raising the profile of the issue and has forced employers, Government, police and others to take action.

- All of the major retailers, that we have agreements with, support the Freedom From Fear Campaign, as do the British Retail Consortium (BRC) and the Association of Convenience Stores.
- Most of them now display signs in public areas asking customers to respect staff and have reviewed security measures and staff training on violence and abuse.
- Some have run joint campaigns with the union to communicate the Freedom From Fear message to all their employees.
- Employers have attended a high-level summit meeting called by Usdaw. The meeting

was also attended by a home office minister and by representatives from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), police and local authorities.

- The BRC has formed its own working party on violence to staff to spread the audit process to other retailers and to promote good practice.
- Local Authorities and police are developing retail crime initiatives with Usdaw's support and advice. Schemes involve police crime prevention officers and council environmental health officers working together to persuade retailers to improve safety standards in stores.
- The HSE, with guidance from Usdaw, has put a violence toolkit on its website for retail and licensed premises: [www.hse.gov.uk/violence/toolkit](http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/toolkit)



## Campaign materials

There's a range of quality merchandise and information leaflets reps can use to get the message across including:

- Back The Bill Postcard
- Back The Bill A4 Poster
- Top 10 Tips for a Safer Workplace Card
- Sheets of Freedom From Fear Stickers (12 per sheet)
- Freedom From Fear Button Badges
- Freedom From Fear Balloons
- Freedom From Fear Carrier Bags
- Freedom From Fear T-shirts (All XL)
- Santa Hats
- Stressball Snowmen

Use the order form in your rep's pack or contact the stationery department at central office.

### Leaflets

(To view the leaflets before ordering them, please visit:

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

- Abuse is not part of the job (Leaflet 296)
- Don't be a Victim of Violent Crime (Leaflet 313)
- Preventing under-age sales (Leaflet 351)
- Late-Night Working (Leaflet 294)
- Preventing Violence to Retail Staff – An Usdaw Guide

If you're planning an event at your workplace let the *Network* team know, email: [network@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:network@usdaw.org.uk)



You can also order your materials online at: [www.usdaw.org.uk/order](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/order)





# ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH

North East division's **Dave Raine** answers our questions on his experiences as a rep

“ I love my job as a driver, to many of my customers I'm Dave, not just the Tesco man ”

## FACT FILE & TRIVIA

### FAST FACTS

- **Employer** Tesco
- **Occupation** Dot.com driver
- **Age** 49
- **Lives** Allendale, Northumberland
- **Previous jobs** Police officer
- **Family** Married with two children
- **Branch** NE Cumbrian Tesco F39
- **Usdaw Activist** Since 2011
- **Union positions** Rep, health and safety rep and branch secretary

### MY FAVOURITE...

- **Music...** Led Zeppelin
- **Book...** Anything by Terry Pratchett
- **TV...** Live with Jools Holland
- **I spend my spare time...**  
Enjoying good food and wine and walking my dog... usually to a pub!



Want to be the next activist in-depth?

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

### Why did you become an Usdaw rep?

Because I like to see everyone treated fairly.

### What's it like being active?

It's hard to say what one thing I most enjoy about being a rep, it's a whole package but mostly it's about helping people get a fair deal and being treated in the same way.

Sometimes management have to be reminded that the partnership agreement is just that, a partnership. If staff are treated with respect then management get respect back. It has to be earned, respect doesn't come with the title and the suit.

### Been on any training courses?

I've done all of my basic rep's training and part one of the health and safety rep's course, and the workers rights course all at North Shields with Lisa Grainge, she's a great tutor, a very relaxed learning environment so you don't realise how much you take in. Also the branch officers course at Warrington with Jenni Murray, brilliant course-brilliant tutor, but what is it with those two, always bare foot?!

### Have you changed at all since becoming a rep?

Yes, because of the training and support I get from Usdaw. Together with my experience of over 13 years as a copper means I do not suffer fools gladly and I will give my opinion freely, which is not always popular!

### Have you been to ADM?

This year was my first visit and I really enjoyed it. It was very informative and great socially.

### Is recruitment easy in your workplace?

Yes, we have 300 staff and over 80 per cent are members, but we are constantly vigilant and our aim is 100 per cent.

### What issues are important to your members?

Changes in contracted hours.

### What's surprised you about being an Usdaw rep?

The amount of support from central and regional offices and the fantastic educational courses.

### Does being a driver and out and about make it harder?

We have a good network of reps at Hexham so there is always someone for members to speak to. If they want me specifically I am always around at lunchtime in the canteen or they can leave a message with another rep. There's never been a problem.

### Do you enjoy your job?

I love my job as a driver, we have fabulous countryside to drive around, every customer is pleased to see me, their dogs greet me as a friend (always got doggy biscuits in my pocket) and as I've been doing it for over 3 years I've seen bumps grow into toddlers, it's a very rewarding job and to many of my customers I'm Dave, not just the Tesco man.

### Does the traffic ever get you down?

We're very lucky up here in that traffic is not a problem, sometimes you can have half an hour drive between deliveries and hardly see another car. It can be interesting in the winter as we get proper snow up here! But most customers are aware of the conditions and will often meet us in the tractor, shopping goes in the bucket on the front! Then they can pull the van out of the 6ft drift with the tractor.

### How would you improve Usdaw?

Raise our profile in the media.

### What's next for you?

To carry on regardless!



# JOHN'S FINAL BOW

Usdaw saw the end of an era when former central treasurer John Youd retired in July

Central treasurer John Youd, one of the four central officials, retired in July after 26 years' as holder of one of the union's highest positions.

John joined the staff in 1986, aged 33, from accountancy firm KMG Thomson McLintock where as part of his job he had worked on the union's accounts as an audit senior.

Manchester born and bred, and a keen United fan, John was a behind-the-scenes regular at the Annual Delegate Meeting and the TUC and Labour Party conferences.

General secretary John Hannett paid tribute to his long-serving colleague. "John's excellent stewardship of the union's finances over many years ensured we remained a financially strong independent union, while many others were forced to merge from a position of weakness.

"He never sought the limelight and was happy to go about his business with a quiet determination. He leaves the organisation in a good place and he deserves



maximum credit for that. I'm delighted to be able to place on record Usdaw's thanks to John for his long, conscientious and loyal service.

"We wish him all the very best for his retirement."

“John's excellent stewardship of Usdaw's finances ensured we remained a strong union”

## From pensions to central treasurer

Succeeding John Youd into the central treasurer's hot seat is Usdaw's former pensions officer Nick Walker who, like John, was aged 33 on appointment.

Nick joined the union's staff in 2008 from KPMG where he worked providing consultancy services to pension fund trustees, and has overseen a massive transformation in the union's pension service to members.

His expertise will be useful as part of his new duties Nick will also be responsible for the union's own pension scheme.

"I'm looking forward to helping the union meet some of the big challenges ahead," he said. "Big issues like the introduction of fees for employment tribunals and the changes to personal injury costs.

"It's well known that my predecessor, John Youd,

was responsible for keeping the finances of the union in very good shape and that puts us in the best possible place to meet those challenges.

"I'll be doing my best to carry on John's good work and I'm confident that we can keep up our record of being the fastest growing union in the TUC and continue delivering excellent results for our members."



## Darren moves up after promotion

Solicitor Darren Miller is the new deputy head of the legal department following Brendan Duggan's promotion to executive and administration officer.

Darren joined Usdaw in 2003 as a legal assistant on the employment team at central office. He qualified as a solicitor in 2007.

Prior to joining Usdaw Darren worked in the personal

injury department as a paralegal for a Manchester-based solicitors' firm. He had previously graduated from Newcastle University with an honours degree in law and went on to receive a commendation on the legal practice course at Manchester Metropolitan University.

"The legal department has seen both the head and deputy head of department move on in recent months," said the 38

year-old. "I worked closely with both Brendan and Kate and I'm sure the legal team will continue to build on their hard work.

"We have a very talented and committed legal team and we're ready to rise to the many challenges our members face from the Coalition. We're determined to ensure that the excellent Legal Plus service that we offer continues to go from strength to strength."



# Top ten tax credit tips

Tax Credit overpayments can happen, take *Network's* advice on how to avoid the hassle



## 1. Avoid overpayment

To try to avoid an overpayment arising in the first place, as soon as you receive your 'award notice', the letter from Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) telling you about your award, check that you agree that the information they have used is correct.

## 2. Understand it

If you don't understand any part of the award notice then ring the Tax Credit Helpline on 0345 300 3900 (textphone: 0345 300 3909) as soon as you can and ask them to explain it to you.

## 3. Correct mistakes

If you think they've made a mistake in calculating your entitlement (e.g. they've got your working hours or household income wrong), contact them within 30 days

and tell them about it. Make a note of the date you received the award notice, the date you contacted them to tell them about the mistake and the name of the person you spoke to.

## 4. No repayment

If you tell them about a mistake and they fail to correct it then they should not ask you to pay back any overpaid tax credit that builds up after that date.

## 5. Update your details

If your circumstances change in any way (if you are no longer a single person or you stop caring for a child for example) it's best to contact the helpline as soon as you can and within 30 days. If your income changes it's a good idea to let them know as soon as you can, even though technically an increase in household income of up to £10,000 can be ignored (from April 2013 this goes down to £5,000).

It's best to tell them about changes in writing and keep a copy of the letter.

## 6. Appeal the decision

If you don't agree that you should pay back the

overpayment, ask them to look at their decision again. To do this, fill in form TC846 'Tax credits overpayment' available online at:

[www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/tc846.pdf](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/tc846.pdf)

or by phoning the Helpline on 0345 300 3900 (textphone: 0345 300 3909)

## 7. Put on hold

They should stop recovering the overpayment while they are reviewing their decision, until they make a new decision.

## 8. Seek advice

If, after asking them to look at their decision again, HMRC still decide that they want the money back, you might want to consider speaking to the Citizens Advice Bureau to consider your options. Visit: [citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk) to find the nearest office.

## 9. Write off debt

HMRC does have the discretion not to recover overpayments and there are many situations where recovery of an overpayment is not appropriate – if for example, they failed to act when you notified them of a

change of circumstances, or the overpayment was a result of a mistake that they made (known as 'official error').

## 10. Payment help

Even if you have to repay an overpayment, if the repayments are causing financial hardship (if you find for example that you can't pay for essentials like mortgage repayments, gas or electricity) then phone the 'Payment Helpline' on 0845 302 1429 and ask them to reduce the amount you have to repay. In some exceptional circumstances, they can agree to cancel an overpayment altogether.





# USE AWARENESS DAY

Reps are using tailor-made awareness days to inform members and attract new recruits, Network



## Public support campaign to protect members at work

**A**cademy organisers from the Midlands division joined forces with local reps and MPs to raise awareness of the impact of police cuts on shopworkers and the local community to shoppers in Worcester town centre.

"Once we explained the petition against the cuts in police numbers local shoppers were very supportive of our

campaign. We collected lots of signatures," said Academy organiser Carol Entwisle.

"We spoke to some of the stall holders and small businesses around the high street and they said they felt the police were already stretched too thinly and they rarely saw a police officer 'on the beat' these days.

"They said abuse to shopworkers was on the increase and felt they could do

little about it.

"The general public seemed unaware that shopworkers even had a problem. One couple said they were appalled to think shoppers abused staff for no other reason than frustration with queuing and products not being available on shelves.

"We also enlisted the support of Simon Murphy the Labour candidate for West Mercia police and crime

commissioner, and Roger Jenkins Secretary of Worcester Constituency Labour Party.

"It was our first campaign and it went very well. We were pleased the public took such great interest in us and what we had to say about the issues surrounding the Freedom From Fear campaign."

Other Academy organisers involved were: Kate Macleod, Susan Stoddart, Joshua Halliwell and Simon Eggleton.



Carol Entwisle (above foreground) with the Midlands Academy team and active reps



## Cashing in with Usdaw

Legal team... (l-r) Julie Roberts, Penny Smith, Jason Stevens and Ruth Smith



**R**eps at Morrisons in Up Hatherley in Cheltenham set up a very successful Legal Plus awareness day and helped one lucky member recover £3,000 from the tax office.

"The event was fantastic," said Ruth Smith who has been a rep for five years. "It did exactly what it set out to do and that was raise awareness of the benefits of joining the union and as a result six new people signed up on the day and I'm still getting a trickle of forms in."

"We weren't surprised at

how popular the day would be as we held one last year and it was excellent."

Ruth organised the day, which also ran through the night shift, along with fellow rep Celia Fletcher and the help of Academy Organiser Penny Smith.

"We had solicitor Julie Roberts come along from Thompson and Banks and she was kept very busy throughout. The Free Will Writing service proved very popular and the lady with the tax problem was over the moon with her legal advice – and the money of course."

# USDAW ACTIVISTS TO RAISE PROFILE

Network talks to busy activists blazing a trail on racism, pensions, Legal Plus and Freedom From Fear



## Community rallies round to back anti-racism message

**A**ctivists, shoppers, the police, a Premiership footballer and local politicians all united to promote an anti-racism message at the Morrisons Riverside store in Norwich last month.

The event was co-ordinated by night-shift worker and rep Brian Lewis who also used the Freedom From Fear campaign to boost the union's profile.

"It was a wonderful day," said Brian, 52. "We really did get the message across to shoppers and the general public. We used the union's campaign leaflets and materials and the 'Show Racism The Red Card' slogan. They worked really well."

Brian spent four months planning the event, enlisting

store reps and union officials to help out on the day, many in fancy dress



to give the day a carnival feel. Norwich Mayor Ralph Gayton supported the day along with footballer Russell Martin from local club Norwich City.

The event was also supported by Norwich City

Council and Labour's Norwich South Parliamentary candidate Clive Lewis who said: "Brian's commitment to this has been inspirational."

Brian added: "The support from Morrisons

and Usdaw has been great.

"But the icing on the cake for me has been the support of my home football club Norwich City. For them to get behind this has been a dream come true."



Brian Lewis (left) brought together the whole community to combat racism

## Pensions

## Planning for the future pays dividends in Wembley

**A**cademy2 Organiser Jerry Hearn teamed up with Sainsbury's rep Elizabeth Charles to run a successful Pension Awareness Day in her

store at Alperton, Wembley in July.

"It went very well," said experienced rep Jerry, who graduated from Academy1 in 2011. "There was genuine interest from staff who asked

a variety of questions – and we signed up seven new members.

"Elizabeth did a fantastic job liaising with management, as well as organising the event. The canteen was

decked out with campaign material and the leaflets with pension information were very popular.

"Staff of all ages dropped in for advice. Even the 15/16 year-olds on work experience, who said they knew nothing about pensions, but understood it was something important they should find out about, took away a booklet."



(far left) Jerry Hearn and Elizabeth Charles (right)



Tell *Network* about a recruitment/pension/Legal Plus awareness day you intend to organise. email: [network@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:network@usdaw.org.uk)



# ON THE FRONTLINE

Network caught up with reps at one of the stores with the highest percentage of members in the UK,



Sophie (black t-shirt) with the Usdaw team, outside the Ystradgynlais store in Wales

**A**cademy organiser Sophie Williams joined the team of reps at the Tesco store in Ystradgynlais in Swansea to organise a union surgery in August to raise awareness of the many benefits of union membership.

"We had a very positive response from management who agreed we could set up a stall in the staff canteen and we were given time to speak to workers on the shopfloor too," said Sophie, who works for Tesco in nearby Neath.

"We handed out lots of leaflets and took time to chat with staff. This encouraged people to stop and ask about some of the services and benefits available that they hadn't previously been aware of.

"We had queries and questions about tax credits, the free will writing service, lifelong learning and how it works, the online home study course, legal plus assistance for members and their families – the list goes on.

"The in-store reps have everything really well-organised. We also signed up seven new members bringing total membership at the store to an excellent 97 per cent."

## IN NUMBERS

**MEMBERSHIP FOR WEEK ENDED:  
15 SEPTEMBER 2012**

South Wales & Western .....	50,036
Eastern .....	61,615
Midlands .....	57,045
North Eastern .....	57,155
Scottish .....	45,225
Southern .....	57,306
North West .....	93,225

**TOTAL .....** 421,607

# WITH ACTIVE REPS

it also heard from busy reps from the Co-op and saw the Southern division's Academy1 in action



## Awareness day at the Co-op puts members in picture

**E**xplaining the new Auto-enrolment changes to pension law set to come into force in October gave Co-operative reps Viv Kite and Paul Groves an ideal reason to hold an awareness day at the Nevill Road store in Hove, East Sussex in August.

"After attending the union's pension course earlier in the year, I spoke to members in my Peacehaven store about

saving for their retirement," said Viv.

"I told them about Auto-enrolment and explained it was due to be phased in over the next five years with the largest employers, such as the Co-operative, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Morrisons, leading the way.

"I then spoke with my fellow rep Paul Groves from nearby Nevill Road store about organising a Pension awareness day so that staff from both stores would

be fully informed about the changes. We spoke to his manager who agreed we could set up a stall at his store.

"The day went really well. We were asked lots of questions and we gave out our union leaflets. We're hoping that we encouraged lots of members to stay opted into the pension scheme and made them more aware of how important their pensions are in the future."



Viv (left) uses one of the union's booklets to inform members



## Academy organisers on campaign trail

**S**outhern division's new Academy1 recruits took a break from their training in June to organise a Supporting Parents & Carers campaign event in Crawley in West Sussex.

"The weather wasn't great but this didn't deter us," said Simon Palmer, 26, who works for Tesco in Portsmouth. "We were all determined to make people more aware of the union and its campaign on encouraging workers to claim in-work benefits and how to deal with cuts in hours. It was a great day.

"We had some good responses. We gave away goodie bags and people signed our pledge cards. We had some great feedback from people of all ages, both shopworkers and shoppers, who were really interested in

the campaign leaflets giving information and advice.

"I applied for the Academy because I wanted to gain more experience and build my confidence to deal with different scenarios and try to encourage more young people to join and get involved with the union. This kind of activity was exactly what I needed."



Simon (top left) gets hands-on in Crawley, during the street campaign



# Could you be a Member

Usdaw believes there aren't enough 'ordinary' working class people in the House of Commons and want

**P**arliaments and Assemblies are at their best when they reflect the people they serve, which is why it is so important that candidates are drawn from all walks of life.

There is a real concern about how many MPs come from similar professions and backgrounds with very few entering parliament from 'ordinary' sectors like retailing, distribution and manufacturing.

Labour is currently going through the process of selecting its candidates for the next general election. Usdaw is setting up its own parliamentary panel and providing mentoring courses to support Usdaw members who are thinking of becoming MPs. Eight active members went to a Trade Unions and Labour Organisation (TULO) summer school in early September.

If you would like to find out more about Usdaw's parliamentary panel, please contact the politics office on 0161 249 2452 to have an initial discussion about what is involved in the process and if you wish to take your application further.

If you decide it is for you, then you will be asked to submit your CV and attend an interview process.

You would be expected to

be an active General Committee delegate who uses the principles of community organising to help bring other Usdaw members into the Party by getting them politically active.

## TULO Summer School

TULO is an umbrella group that promotes the interests of all the trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party. Usdaw is the fourth largest affiliate and an active member of TULO.

TULO organised a summer school in Brighton to bring together activists from across the unions and give them a taste of what being a parliamentary candidate is all about. Usdaw sent eight active reps.

The core objectives of the summer school were to:

- Encourage reps to put themselves forward for selection.
- Equip reps with a good knowledge of the selection process and give them the skills to get selected.
- Allow potential candidates to network and build supportive links.
- Training on delivering selection speeches and answering questions.
- Assistance with writing leaflets, direct mail letters and speeches.
- Printing and the cost of mailing all Labour Party members in the Constituency Labour Party.
- Reasonable travel expenses to meetings and events which you need to attend for the selection.

### Activities included:

- Frank discussions about the role of an MP.
- Mapping the skills and experiences of reps against what is needed to be an MP.
- Confidence building.
- A guide to the selection process and how to build an effective campaign.
- Communication skills and developing a unique message.
- Advice on writing a CV and campaign literature.

## Support from Usdaw

Simply trying to be selected as a Parliamentary candidate can be expensive and time-consuming. Because Usdaw is keen to get more working trade unionists from our sectors into parliament we are prepared to provide good support for members of our parliamentary panel, including:

**Usdaw members who have been elected and are making a difference include:**

**Rt Hon. Andrew Smith MP** was a manager in a Co-op store before he entered Parliament. A tireless campaigner in his constituency, Andrew is a former cabinet minister and chair of the Usdaw group of MPs.

**Mary Fee MSP** is a former Tesco



**John Hannett says**

“ This is not about getting Usdaw members into parliament for the sake of it; it is about finding talented people in our ranks who could be parliamentary candidates and giving them support and encouragement.

I know that many of our reps who do a great job in the workplace could step up to be a Labour candidate. I can assure any aspiring parliamentarians out there that Usdaw is here to support them.



# er of Parliament?

nts to encourage reps to get involved in both the local and national political scene



checkout operator who was elected to the Scottish parliament in 2011 as one of Labour's representatives for the West of Scotland.

Mary was very active in Usdaw as a rep, divisional councillor, stalwart of the divisional political committee and a member of the executive council.

## Byron Taylor - TULO

“The TULO summer school was a good opportunity for experienced union reps who hadn't really thought about being an MP to get a taste of what it is all about. There were 42 activists from

eight unions. The reps' experience level varied greatly, but overall everyone left feeling as though they had developed skills and a greater understanding of how to stand for selection as a parliamentary candidate. We hope to run this type of event in the future and will concentrate more on public

speaking training and more detailed information on Labour's selection processes for other elected bodies.” You can find more at: <http://www.unions.together.org.uk/>



## Reps on TULO training course



**Anas Ghaffar** is a rep from Slough and an Usdaw delegate to his local constituency Labour Party. “Previously I hadn't thought about being an MP but the summer school made me realise that one day I could achieve that aim. That is a long way off and I want to learn much more about politics. Then I'll be looking to stand as a council candidate.”

**Tracey Himlin** is a union learning rep from York. She has been a Labour parish

councillor for two years in a staunchly Tory village. “I really enjoy my campaigning work as a councillor and I had thought about standing for parliament, but I'll do it my way in small steps. Family commitments come first though then I may have a go at standing for the borough council to unseat a sitting Tory.”

**Andrea Watts** is a rep in the Midlands. “It was good to hear from the two Labour MPs – who said that if they can be

MPs, then anyone can! I was elected as a councillor two years ago, so I'm getting to know the role. I would love to stand for parliament against our local Tory MP. I'm considering the commitment it would involve, but it's definitely a possibility.”

Contact the politics section on:

 0161 249 2452

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

 [www.usdaw.org.uk/usdaw4labour](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/usdaw4labour)



Ed Miliband says

“Sometimes people look at parliament and they don't see people like themselves in there. Not many MPs can genuinely claim to have had real jobs outside politics. Very few can say they've worked in retail, distribution or transport. So I am delighted that Usdaw has given its reps a taste of what it needs to be a parliamentary candidate and the confidence to try to get selected. We must do more to increase the number of working people in parliament.”





# Coalition targets safety

The Government is using cuts to safety regulations as a cover to ease the 'burden' on business but unions agree these misguided political beliefs are risking the lives of workers

The ideological onslaught against health and safety regulation has continued over the last few months.

HSE recently consulted on plans to remove 14 sets of regulations. Most of them are obsolete or have been overtaken by more recent regulations, so it is difficult to see how any 'burden' on business is being improved. Health and safety

campaigners raised concerns about the plan to remove regulations on registering tower cranes and on wearing hard hats on construction sites.

Following concerns from the TUC about the loss of the Approved Code of Practice attached to the obsolete regulations, the plan to remove the Docks Regulations has been put on hold.

There has also been an initial consultation on the review of all

Approved Codes of Practice (ACoPs). Proposals to update and consolidate some existing ACoPs have been broadly welcomed by health and safety professionals and by unions. However the timetable for the whole exercise is very tight. The TUC has expressed concern that it does not allow enough time for consultation on the detail of changes.

Concern has also been expressed about the decision to

remove the ACoPs to the Management Regulations altogether and to replace it with guidance. The Chartered Institute for Environmental Health has raised concerns about changes to the ACoPs on legionella. And the proposal that all ACoPs should be restricted to a maximum length of 32 pages has been widely condemned as impractical.

[www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd241.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd241.htm)

## ACCIDENT REPORTS

Further proposed changes to the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) are controversial. The changes would remove the requirement both to report all but a few occupational diseases and the dangerous occurrences in most high-risk sectors. The justification for the changes is that under-reporting is a serious issue but one expert described this as equivalent to removing speed limits because many drivers fail to comply with them.

[www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd243.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd243.htm)



## FEWER INSPECTIONS

The Business Innovation & Skills (BIS) department has announced plans to introduce a statutory code preventing inspectors from doing routine inspections on low risk premises. According to BIS, 'Shops, offices, pubs and clubs will no longer face burdensome health and safety inspections'. The reality is that most such premises have not been subject to regular routine inspections for some time. However, research shows that the vast majority of the few premises that do get inspected find the inspectors visit is useful and the advice they receive is helpful, leaving many people puzzled by the term 'burdensome' inspections.

## Protesters slam Coalition's plans

Safety campaigners recently protested outside the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in Westminster against the plans to scrap 14 sets of regulations on safety at work.

Families Against Corporate Killing (FACK), Battersea Crane Disaster Action Group and Construction Safety Campaign led the protest, pointing out that deaths at work increased by 16 per cent in the first year of the current government yet despite this, and two reviews that say there is no excessive health and safety legislation, the Government are pressing ahead with cuts in regulations.

Linzi Herbertson of FACK

whose husband was killed when he fell from incorrectly erected scaffolding, said: "We set up FACK in 2006 to campaign for improvements in the inadequate system of enforcement, regulation and punishment of safety criminals that killed the people we love. But now this government wants to slash to pieces even that inadequate safety net, based on the lies that it's a 'burden on business' and it is over enforced. We are here to say no one we loved was killed due to too much regulation or enforcement but the complete lack of either, and the real burden is on us."

[www.hazards.org/votetodie/youliewedie.htm](http://www.hazards.org/votetodie/youliewedie.htm)

## Companies to pay inspection fees

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) will begin recovering costs for any action it takes when it finds a 'material breach' of the law from 1st October 2012.

The scheme is called Fee for Intervention (FFI) and is to be used to recover costs from those who break health and safety laws. This will recompense the HSE for the time and effort it spends helping to put matters right such as investigating and issuing formal advice or enforcement notices.

Critics have raised concerns about ways in which the scheme may alter the relationship between the HSE and the businesses it regulates. Some employers may be more

reluctant to ask the HSE for advice or to report an incident in case it triggers a visit. Others have raised concerns that inspectors may be set targets in order to raise funding.

The scheme will only apply to sectors inspected by the HSE.

Businesses regulated by local authority inspectors (i.e. the majority of workplaces where Usdaw members work) will not be covered. Local authorities will not be able to recover their costs.





# The European Safety Week

called 'low risk' workplaces and it promotes the valuable role that workplace health and safety reps play in ensuring effective employee engagement.

European Week provides a great opportunity for safety reps to get the message across to managers and to fellow workers about the benefits of working together to prevent risks.

■ Wednesday of European week (24 October) is designated by the TUC as National Inspection Day and health and safety reps in all unions and all workplaces are urged to arrange one of their workplace inspections on or near that date.

■ Reps can use one of the Usdaw tools such as the Slips and Trips Risk Mapping Tool, the Stress questionnaire or the Rep's Survey Tool on Violence to target their inspection on one of the key issues in their workplace. All the tools

encourage reps to speak to workers to get their ideas about how the workplace can be made safer.

■ The union provides a range of posters and leaflets that reps can use on the union notice board during European Week to tell workers what Usdaw health and safety reps can do for them.

Any reps who want advice or assistance with running a health and safety campaign in their workplace during European Week or reps who want some of the EU-OSHA materials such as posters and leaflets should contact the health and safety section in Central Office.

You can see more about the campaign on the website [www.healthy-workplaces.eu/en/](http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu/en/)

As the UK focal point for the campaign the HSE also has some advice on how to get involved at:

[www.hse.gov.uk/campaigns/european/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/campaigns/european/index.htm)

The week beginning 22 October is European Health and Safety Week, when the European Agency on Safety and Health (EU-OSHA) encourages everyone to get involved in activities to raise awareness of their current campaign.

The campaign's theme this year is 'Working together for risk prevention'. It highlights the importance of strong leadership on health and safety and effective worker involvement. It is a welcome theme when the UK Government is set on portraying a negative image of health and safety. It promotes the message that responsible employers need to manage the risks – even in so-

## Many workers paying for own protective clothing

A recent TUC survey has found that more than 1 in 5 workers are forced to pay for their own personal protective equipment (PPE) despite this being against the law.

Where a risk assessment identifies the need for PPE, employers have to provide it free of charge to employees, and ensure it is kept in good working order and repair.

Some employers are seeking to cut costs by forcing workers to purchase their own PPE or pay for replacement PPE. This is illegal and has serious safety implications.

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "The fact

that so many employers are flouting the law is an absolute scandal, far too many workers are being forced to provide their own safety protection – whether footwear, boiler suits, overalls or gloves – and this abuse is widespread across a wide range of industries ranging from construction to catering.

"Even when equipment is provided it is often expected that the worker cleans it or replaces it if damaged.

With the Government's cutback of proactive inspections in the workplace this abuse can only grow."

[www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/tuc-21280-f0.pdf](http://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/tuc-21280-f0.pdf)



## IN BRIEF

### ■ Call for increased inspections after deaths

Two outbreaks of legionnaires disease in Edinburgh and in Stoke have raised concerns at the lack of inspections being carried out by the HSE and local authorities.

Since 2009 HSE figures show a 44 per cent fall in legionella inspections from 833 down to 464 in 2011.

More recently research by Environmental Health News found that nearly half of English local authorities responsible for cooling towers have not carried out any proactive legionella risk inspections within the past five years.

In the Edinburgh outbreak, possibly linked to cooling towers, over 100 people were infected and three people died. In Stoke two people died and 21 were infected.

The source in Stoke was traced to a hot-tub in a store. Experts have pointed out that regular inspection should be seen as a basic public health matter and raised concerns that cuts to HSE and local authority inspections to remove 'burdens' on business could increase risks of other outbreaks.

### ■ Lucky escape after cheese factory explosion

Dairy company First Milk has been fined £20,000 following an explosion at their creamery in Aspatria, Cumbria.

The explosion happened in the boiler house. Thankfully no one was injured.

HSE investigations found a blocked vent on the heater and that engineers had been manually controlling the steam supply valve due to a broken automatic valve.

The tank vent pipe became blocked, which prevented the water from escaping when it became too hot. Pressure inside the tank continued to rise and the temperature of the water in the tank reached 150°C before the explosion.



**SEND YOUR LETTERS AND PICTURES TO:**

Network Editor, Usdaw,  
188 Wilmslow Road,  
Manchester M14 6LJ

✉ network@usdaw.org.uk



**OBITUARY**

**Tribute to rep**

Michael McGinley, our long-term rep for Phoenix in East Kilbride and joint negotiating committee member, unfortunately died suddenly and unexpectedly in August.

As a rep, Michael brought professionalism, dedication and commitment in representing his members and over the years he built up a fantastic rapport with Phoenix management.

I can honestly say I feel privileged to have spent time with Michael.

On behalf of everyone in the division our deepest condolences go out to his family and friends who have had to endure such a sad loss.

**ALAN MCVIE**  
Area organiser  
Glasgow office

**STAR LETTER**

**AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH**

**No rest for Stuart**

I am a rep at Tesco in Snodland, Kent and will be doing a charity hike to Everest for Cancer Research in March 2013.

It's a 19 day trip and it will take 11 days to hike to Everest base camp, 5,550m above sea level, which is at the base of the Khumbu Icefall.

The opportunity came up to take part in this challenge to raise money for Tesco's charity of the year, Cancer Research.

I'm sure you have all had contact with cancer in some sort of way, it could be a family member a friend or even a work mate. It's an illness that affects everyone in some way. My mum had breast cancer over a year ago and last month my auntie was diagnosed with breast cancer too.

It's the donations that fund research into the ways to treat and hopefully one day find a cure for all forms of cancer.

I have never done anything like this but

I have always wanted to do something challenging so its great to get the chance to make a difference.

If you would like more information on my challenge or would like to give a donation please visit:

[www.justgiving.com/stuart-Biggar1](http://www.justgiving.com/stuart-Biggar1)

Thank you.

**STUART BIGGAR**  
North West Kent Industrial H44



**£50**  
from Network will be donated to Stuart's chosen charity as his letter is this issue's winner

**RETIREMENT**

**Colleagues give loyal Diane a lovely send-off**

It was our great pleasure to award Diane McCulloch (pictured left) with her Usdaw free lifetime membership at her retirement party in July.

Diane had worked for JD Williams for 43 years and, with almost 40 years' union membership, was our longest standing union member in the company.

Usdaw joined Diane and her colleagues to present her



with gifts in recognition of her service, both from the business and union.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her support and again wish Diane a long, healthy and happy retirement.

**LINDA CRAVEN**  
Branch secretary  
NW JD Williams K200

**PICTURE ROUND-UP: Members' achievements and celebrations from across the network**



**30**  
YEARS OF USDAW  
MEMBERSHIP



**50**  
YEARS OF USDAW  
MEMBERSHIP



**20**  
YEARS OF USDAW  
MEMBERSHIP

1. Paul Weimers and Anne Meacock (Swansea General A196) 2. Pearl Beeson (South Herts Holding C057) 3. Sainsbury's Newport pension campaign day 4. Arthur Wylie (Aberdeen G2)

IN MEMORIAM

Remembering two Southern division organisers

Southern Division is extremely proud to share with you their memorial to Mark Bevis and Mick Greene and would like to

thank the South East London H086 branch for their most generous donation which funded the purchase of the bench.

Mark and Mick were both area organisers and were both sadly taken from us aged 39 and 49 respectively. Mark worked from the Morden then the Faversham office and Mick worked from the Andover then Morden office.

Mark and Mick are still sadly missed by comrades and members. May their spirit and guidance always be with us.

**SUE MERRELL**  
Deputy divisional officer  
Southern division



TOLPUDDLE GET-TOGETHER

North South unite

The Manchester Federation attended this year's Tolpuddle Martyrs' festival. We had an excellent time camping for the weekend. It was a fantastic experience for us all and the Southern Division did us proud.

I would like to thank all their representatives for making us feel part of it, with a special thanks to Peter Hartt for organising the weekend.

In the photo (l-r) Peter Wolfe, Nicola Robinson, Peter Hartt, Gavin Walker and Brenda Bell.

**BRENDA BELL**  
NW Tesco Retail No.7



LABOUR OF LOVE

Political partnership celebrate 20 years

David Hanson, Usdaw Labour MP celebrated his 20th anniversary as an MP representing the Deyln Constituency.

Usdaw sent a delegation along in July to help him

celebrate. The evening was fantastic and helped raise the Usdaw profile and plan for future events with David Hanson's support.

Thank you to all that attended and to all the

work you continue to do as reps.

**AMANDA BAILEY COLL**  
Area organiser  
North West division



cross the UK



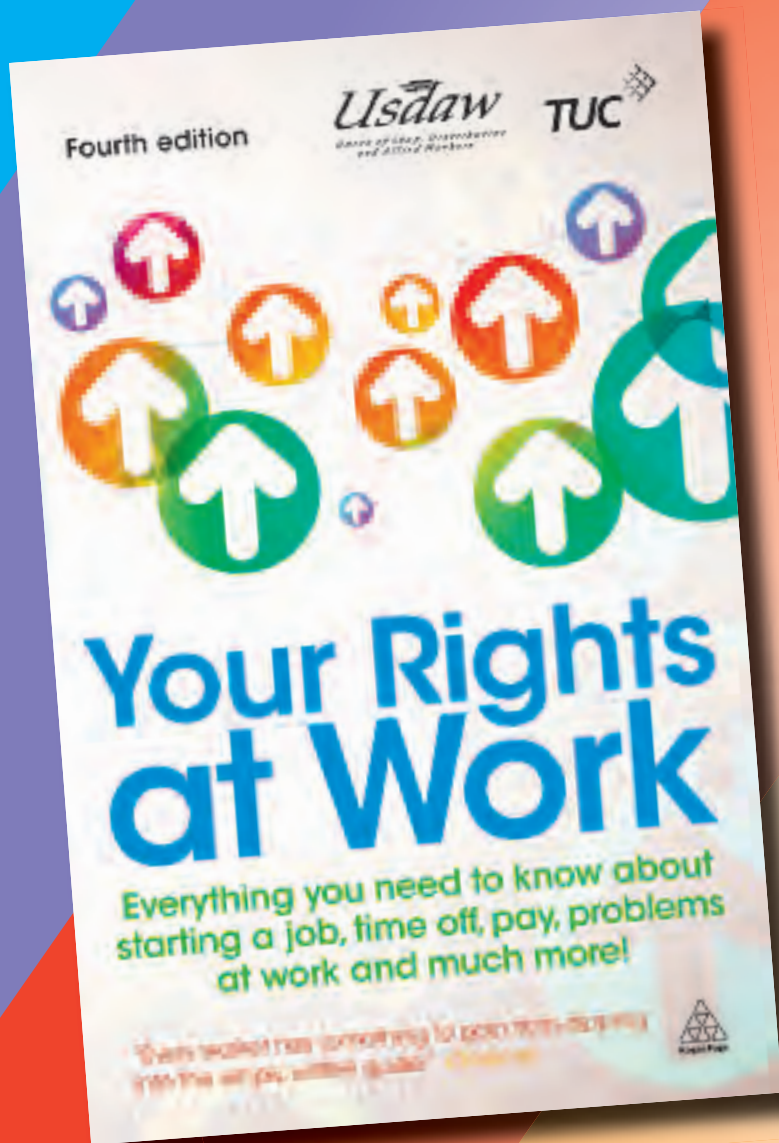
5. Barry Wiggins at the Durham Miners' Gala (South Yorkshire Tesco F187) 6, 7 & 8 South Wales and Western division and Southern division at the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival, Dorset



You can't be without...

# Your Rights at Work

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**Your Rights at Work** is a comprehensive, jargon-free guide to your legal rights and your employer's responsibilities.

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- ◆ Parental leave and maternity rights
- ◆ Discrimination and bullying
- ◆ Health and safety
- ◆ Dismissal and redundancy
- ◆ Pay and holiday rights
- ◆ Enforcing your rights

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*The Observer*



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