

# NETWORK

The bimonthly magazine for *Usdaw* activists – March/April 2017

TRADE UNION FESTIVALS

ACADEMY 2011 UPDATE



**REPS IN ALL AREAS**

•• RECRUITMENT •• HEALTH AND SAFETY •• EQUALITIES •• NEWS ••

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# Comment

**General secretary John Hannett**

While Sir Philip Green has agreed to pay £363m to save the BHS pension from going into the Pension Protection Fund, the debate about corporate governance, the security of pensions and employers' responsibilities continues.

Usdaw has long argued for decent pension provision, we see it, rightly, as deferred pay. So employers must take their legal obligations to look after the pension pots of their employees seriously.

During the '90s there was an insidious backsliding from some employers, who too often dressed up occupational pensions as a burden on business rather than an integral part of the employment package.

Too many employers neglected their duties, that's why the Labour Government in 2005 introduced the state-backed lifeboat scheme for occupational pensions – the Pension Protection Fund (PPF). Prior to Labour introducing this legislation some companies had gone bust and their pensions schemes collapsed too leaving thousands of workers both penniless and powerless to do anything about it.

However, what we don't want to see are employers, knowing the PPF will step in, casually neglecting their responsibilities to provide a decent and secure pension scheme. Contributions from employers should be at a reasonable level and not just the minimum the law demands.

During the last 20 years the pension industry has been overhauled with auto-enrolment bringing in many employees who might otherwise not have signed up to a pension or been given the chance to join one – that's a positive development, again introduced by Labour.

However, in more recent years many workers have seen their schemes altered often to their disadvantage, workers face having to wait longer for their state pension too. So the debate is far from over and our campaign to ensure decent occupational and state pensions continues.





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**Published by:**  
 USDAW  
**188 Wilmslow Road,  
 Manchester M14 6LJ**  
**T:** 0161 224 2804  
**E:** network@usdaw.org.uk  
**W:** www.usdaw.org.uk

**HEAD OF MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS**  
**Mike Glover**

**EDITOR**  
**Peter Rees-Farrell**

**EDITORIAL ASSISTANT**  
**Paula Barke**

**OTHER CONTRIBUTORS**  
 Jo Bird, Ruth Cross, Tom Foster, and Doug Russell.

**PHOTOGRAPHERS**  
 Della Batchelor  
 Mike Kelly  
 Kevin Line  
 Tom Maddick  
 Kevin Shaw  
 Mike Silve  
 SWNS  
 Mark Thomas

**ADVERTISING**  
 Century One Publishing  
 Alban Row,  
 27-31 Verulam Road  
 St Albans, AL3 4DG

**T:** 01727 893 894  
**F:** 01727 893 895  
**E:** enquiries@centuryonepublishing.uk  
**W:** www.centuryonepublishing.uk

**ADVERTISING MANAGER**  
 Jonathan Knight  
**T:** 01727 739 182  
**E:** jonathan@centuryonepublishing.uk

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**IN BRIEF...****Two area organiser jobs with Usdaw**

Two vacancies for area organisers are now available at the Edinburgh and Bury St Edmunds offices in the Scottish and Eastern divisions respectively.

Successful applicants must hold a current driving licence and will be required to live within a 50-mile radius of their base office.

Area organisers are responsible for providing detailed advice and representation to union members on employment law, health and safety and union agreements. Recruiting new members is an important aspect of the role and the ability to motivate others to do the same is vital.

Prospective applicants should apply for an application form and other job particulars from: The General Secretary, Usdaw, 188 Wimslow Road, Manchester, M14 6LJ. Completed application forms should be returned to the same office by Friday 7 April 2017.

# Labour's setback

**Labour held Stoke Central but lost Copeland in two critical by-elections in February, which general secretary John Hannett described as 'a wake up call for the Party'.**

Labour's Gareth Snell (below) fought off a high profile, but gaff-ridden, campaign by the right wing UK Independence Party (UKIP) and its leader Paul Nuttall.

While in Copeland (Cumbria) Labour's Gillian Troughton lost out to the Conservative candidate Trudy Harrison who increased the Tories share of the vote by more than 8 per cent. She overturned a Labour majority of more than 2,564 to take the seat by 2,147 votes – a

swing of more than 6 per cent.

John Hannett added: "While it was important to see off the threat posed by UKIP, the results raise questions about Labour's electability and the vision it offers to the people of this country.

"The electorate clearly have doubts about Labour's message and direction of travel. All sections of the Party need to listen to those doubts and learn from them.

"Labour needs a clear, credible message that people can believe in and Jeremy Corbyn needs to take responsibility for delivering that sooner rather than later.

"Usdaw members, and working people across the

country, need a credible opposition. One that holds this Conservative Government to account and is ready to replace them at the next general election."

Labour had held both seats since their creation but was forced to defend them when two former frontbenchers, Tristram Hunt and Jamie Reed, resigned as MPs.

The by-election results mean the Government's majority is now 12 – the same as it was immediately after the general election, as the Conservative's new Copeland seat makes up for the one they lost to the Lib Dems in the Richmond Park by-election called after Zac Goldsmith MP resigned.



Picture courtesy of Staffordshire Sentinel News & Media Ltd.

**Stoke-on-Trent result**

(% share of vote)

Gareth Snell	<b>Labour</b>	7,853	(37.1)
Paul Nuttall	<b>UKIP</b>	5,233	(24.7)
Jack Brereton	<b>Conservative</b>	5,154	(24.4)
Zulfiqar Ali	<b>Lib Dems</b>	2,083	(9.8)
	<b>Others</b>	847	(4.1)
		<b>Turnout - 36.7%</b>	

**Copeland result**

(% share of vote)

Trudy Harrison	<b>Conservative</b>	13,748	(44.3)
Gillian Troughton	<b>Labour</b>	11,601	(37.3)
Rebecca Hanson	<b>Lib Dems</b>	2,252	(7.2)
Fiona Mills	<b>UKIP</b>	2,025	(6.5)
	<b>Others</b>	1,442	(4.7)
		<b>Turnout - 51.27%</b>	

## Father of the House Sir Gerald Kaufman MP remembered



Meanwhile Labour face another by-election in the Manchester Gorton constituency after its sitting MP Sir Gerald Kaufman, died in February, he was 86.

Sir Gerald, who was the oldest serving MP and Father of the House of Commons, famously called Labour's 1983 election manifesto 'the longest suicide note in history'.

Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn led tributes to him,

calling him an 'iconic and irascible figure'. While former Labour prime minister Gordon Brown said: "There was no one quite like Gerald Kaufman: a brilliant speaker, a compelling writer, an acerbic wit and a conscientious constituency MP."

Gerald Kaufman became an MP in north-west England in 1970, first for the Manchester Ardwick constituency and then for Manchester Gorton, which

he had served since 1983. Labour's majority at the 2015 election was 24,079.

During his 47-year parliamentary career he was a junior minister between 1974 and 1979, and held a number of senior shadow cabinet posts through the 1980s, before returning to the backbenches in the early 1990s. He was knighted in 2004 for his services to politics.



# GREEN COUGHS UP £363M



General secretary John Hannett led a demonstration in December outside Green's Arcadia HQ in London calling for action on the BHS pension

**Billionaire retailer Sir Philip Green finally bowed to intense pressure from Usdaw, parliament and the public when he delivered on his pledge to 'sort' the BHS pension scandal with a £363m cash settlement.**

The former BHS owner, who took around £580m in dividends while in charge of the retailer, controversially sold the company for £1 in 2015 to former bankrupt Dominic Chappell and his Retail Acquisitions firm.

BHS collapsed last April with the loss of 11,000 jobs and with a pensions deficit of £571m, the biggest retail failure since

Woolworths in 2008.

Green faced legal action from the Pensions Regulator with the state-funded lifeboat scheme the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) ready to step in if a settlement was not reached. The Pensions Regulator estimates that workers will, on average, receive around 88 per cent of the value of their original benefits in a new scheme created by the settlement (compared to the 75-79 per cent they would have received with the PPF).

Labour MP Frank Field who clashed with Green during the lengthy, often bitter, parliamentary inquiry said:

"I very much welcome this out-of-court settlement, which is an important milestone in gaining justice for BHS pensioners and former workers."

General secretary John Hannett accused the BHS owners of 'playing a wild game of monopoly with workers' livelihoods' and added: "It is difficult to understand why this saga has been allowed to continue and why we have had to campaign for so long to get justice for our members. This is welcome but long overdue news."

Questions of corporate governance do persist and criticism of the lawyers and

bankers who took huge fees during the sale to Chappell and the subsequent collapse of the business have evaded any blame for the fiasco.

Frank Field added: "I think there are a lot of other issues, which are not solved by this, which we will obviously looking at and the courts and everyone else will be. It is not justice but it is a milestone."

Green himself expressed his regret for what he called 'this sorry chapter', saying: "I would like to apologise to the BHS pensioners for the year of uncertainty, which was clearly never the intention when the business was sold."

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## OBITUARY

Former head of legal services Anthony 'Tony'



Heywood died in February, he was 88.

Tony joined Usdaw's predecessor union NUDAW in 1944, shortly after leaving school, as an office junior in the post room at central office in Manchester. He later moved to the legal department and would eventually work his way up, after graduating in law, to departmental head in 1966.

He would go on to represent the union across a number of specialised fields with external organisations.

Tony retired in 1991 after 47 years' service with Usdaw although he continued to use his legal skills as a member of the North West Legal Services Committee and on the Solicitors' Complaints Bureau. He was awarded the MBE the following year in the Queen's Birthday Honours list for his services to the legal profession.

General secretary John Hannett paid this tribute: "Tony was well-known and very well-respected both in Usdaw and the wider trade union movement.

"He served this union with distinction for almost half a century and to his credit he continued supporting working people after his retirement by helping them get access to legal services.

"Usdaw has lost a loyal, long-serving and a dedicated union man and our condolences go out to his family and friends at this sad time."

# NMW CHEATS SHAMED

**Workers are being urged to ensure they are being paid at least the national living wage and the national minimum wage (NMW) after new figures revealed thousands of workers were left short-changed in 2015 by employers who failed to pay the legal minimums.**

The Government has named and shamed 359 businesses that underpaid 15,513 workers

Legal minimums	Age	Current rate	From 1 April 2017
National Living Wage	25 & over	£7.20	£7.50
National Minimum Wage	21-24	£6.95	£7.05
National Minimum Wage	18-20	£5.55	£5.60
National Minimum Wage	under 18	£4.00	£4.05
National Minimum Wage	apprentice	£3.40	£3.50

a total of £994,685. Employers in the hairdressing, hospitality and retail sectors were the most prolific offenders.

The largest sum was

recovered from high street department store Debenhams. It had to repay £134,895 to 11,858 workers. More at: [www.gov.uk/checkyourpay](http://www.gov.uk/checkyourpay)

## Argos caught underpaying

**Catalogue retailer Argos is to stump up around £2.4m in back pay to 37,000 current and former store employees after it emerged they had been paid below the statutory National Living Wage rate prior to December 2016.**

The underpayment of approximately £64 per employee was discovered during a routine HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) investigation following

Sainsbury's acquisition of Argos last year. The cause of the shortfall related to the timings of colleague briefings and security searches, which could happen before or after an employee's shift. Argos was fined around £800,000 by HMRC.

Argos announced it was to give most store staff a 2 per cent pay rise, and increase the basic rate of pay for the lowest-paid staff aged over 25 from £7.20 to £7.66 an hour.



## WAGES UNDER PRESSURE DESPITE JOBS GROWTH

**Rising inflation is set to eat further into wages, which will fall in real terms this year, meaning workers' spending power will continue to come under more pressure in 2017, new figures have revealed.**

With inflation expected to hit 3 per cent later this year and average wage growth currently hovering around 2.6 per cent the immediate outlook is bleak.

Other indicators from the Office for National Statistics show:

- Employment climbed to 31.84m to December 2016, equivalent to 74.6 per cent
- Unemployment was steady at 1.6m, that is around 4.8 per cent.
- Female employment hit a new high with more than 70 per cent in work for the first time.



- The number of vacancies held steady at around 750,000 while the number of people claiming out of work benefits fell to 745,000 – a rare occurrence given the claimant count is normally well above the level of vacancies.
- However, using the wider definition of unemployment, which includes some workers who are not eligible for benefits, there are approximately two unemployed workers for every vacancy.

# Express changes

**Usdaw officials are in discussions with Tesco after it announced a major restructuring of its Express convenience division affecting around 1,600 managers.**

A 60-day consultation period began in late February with the emphasis on securing alternative roles for those affected with compensatory lump sums available to individuals who take a new role on lower wages.

The main changes include:

- The roles of the deputy manager and the service and replenishment manager will be removed from the majority of Express stores.
- Team Leaders will be retitled shift leaders, with 3,000 additional shift leader roles being created across stores.
- Tesco will 'dual site' a small

number of stores, with one store manager managing two stores.

National Officer Pauline Foulkes said: "We have been consulted on the company's proposal and are now entering a period of one-to-one meetings with those affected.

"Usdaw reps and area organisers are providing members with the support, advice and representation they need through this process. Our priorities are to avoid redundancies, help find suitable alternative roles for those affected and get the best possible deal for staff."

The changes come on top of a turbulent two-year period for the UK's biggest retailer including changes in its distribution network.



## IN BRIEF...

### Waitrose to close six stores

Upmarket retailer Waitrose could close up to six stores and cut around 500 jobs as it reviews its store portfolio and restructures its management tiers in the next 12 months.

Consultation has already begun at Hertford, Staines, Leek, Huntingdon, Cardiff and Palmers Green (north London), with closures expected by the end of the year.

Last September Waitrose cancelled new store openings and staff have been warned that their annual bonus will decrease significantly after a steep fall in the company's profits.

### Job losses as Budgens collapses

More than 800 jobs will go at Budgens stores after its parent company, Food Retailer operations, went into administration in February.

The firm runs 36 stores, bought from the Co-op in July last year, and while the Budgens brand is owned by the Booker Group, the stores are operated by independent companies as franchises.

National officer John Gorle said: "This is devastating news for the workforce. It was clearly the beginning of the end when a small number of landlords narrowly blocked the rescue deal.

"I am seeking an urgent meeting with the Co-op about possible redeployment opportunities and we will explore all avenues to help members seek alternative employment."

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## MORE JOBS WOE FOR UK

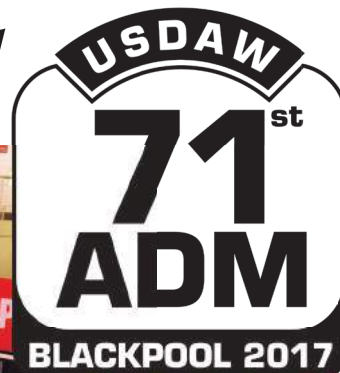
More than 1,400 job losses have been announced at Boots, Greggs and Walkers crisps as the companies look to cut costs and restructure their businesses.

Boots is closing two-thirds of its photo-processing labs employing 400 staff, while automation at Greggs bakeries will see jobs cut, although the company expects to open new stores this year.

The Walkers site in Peterlee, Co. Durham, which employs almost 400 staff and is owned by multi-national PepsiCo, will close.

In a separate announcement unions are worried Ford could also shed more than 1,100 jobs at its Bridgend plant in South Wales over the next five years unless the factory gets new business.

# DELEGATES DECIDE



**More than 1,200 activists and officials will gather in Blackpool in late April for the biggest event in the union's calendar – the Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM) – for four days of debate and decision-making.**

The policy making forum will run from Sunday 30 April until Wednesday 3 May with delegates set to discuss more than 100 propositions currently listed on the Preliminary Agenda Paper.

There will be specific debates on; the economy, the National Living wage, health and safety, pensions, transport, politics, equal rights, education, crime and justice, the NHS and much more.

The ADM will be held in the Winter Gardens, Blackpool, with elected delegates from branches charged with deciding the union's policies and priorities for the

coming year. Branch visitors can watch the proceedings from the balcony areas.

The president Jeff Broome will chair the conference with general secretary John Hannett and deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis replying to all the debates on behalf of the executive council.

There will be a number of guest speakers and two fringe meetings: Politics on the Sunday and Equalities on the Monday – both held during the lunch break in the Winter Gardens complex.

### ***Passionate debates***

Three executive council statements will also be debated, they are: *Campaigning Against Racism and Prejudice*, *the National Living Wage* and *Usdaw and Politics: The Political Campaigning Union*.

John Hannett is looking forward to the

'intense' and 'enjoyable' conference. "Usdaw is one of only a few unions that holds an annual meeting rather than a biennial one," he said. "I know activists appreciate that so it's important we make the most of our four days in Blackpool with passionate debates about the issues that are important to our members.

"I'm always impressed by the number of first-time speakers we get at ADM and when they are joined by our more experienced delegates it makes for a very healthy exchange of ideas. It's hard work, four days of almost 9–5 debates and votes on a wide range of issues, but that's what democracy is all about."

Delegates and visitors also get the chance to relax at a number of social evenings during the ADM with North Eastern, Irish, Welsh and the young workers events and the big end of conference celebration on Tuesday night.

## ***Poundland Agreement***

Meanwhile Usdaw and Poundland have signed an agreement to support the union's Freedom From Fear campaign.

General secretary John Hannett was joined by national officer Dave Gill, company representatives Michelle Burton, HR director, Rashpal Bansal, retail HR director, and Usdaw reps Kelvin Blake, William Keogh, Michele Mellor, and Wendy Williams in Manchester to put pen to paper.

The deal will see the company and Usdaw co-operate on the Freedom From Fear campaign, with every single store supporting the campaign with posters and leaflets.





# First for Poundland



**The first Poundland reps national get-together was held in February in Blackpool with both senior Usdaw officials and company management present during the two-day event.**

The aim was to build on

the national retail partnership agreement with the discount chain and included an up-to-date overview of the workings of the national committees, the national picture, workshops and a presentation on Legal Plus.

Deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis spoke on the union's

organising agenda across the UK. "Usdaw is looking to grow our membership across Poundland," he said.

Poundland's employee relations manager and retail HR director gave an overview of the business and answered questions from the reps.

National officer Dave Gill said: "The feedback from the reps was very encouraging. They felt it was a great opportunity to meet with their colleagues from across the country, giving them the opportunity to network, discuss issues and support and help each other."

*...and Network talked to a cross-section of reps at the event...*

## **Donna Morris**

Experienced rep Donna Morris, 54, who has done both Academies, works at the Taunton store and made the long trip north with two other reps from the area.

"I thought this event was brilliant," she said. "It was particularly useful for the less experienced reps who found out

how the union's structure works in terms of the national set-up so that was really helpful.

"We also had a presentation and a Q&A session with senior Poundland HR managers John Clark and Rashpal Bansal and that was appreciated by the reps who welcomed the chance to speak directly to them.

"It wasn't that long ago I was

the only Poundland rep for miles so it was good to meet up with so many colleagues from across the UK for a very informative couple of days."

## **Kelvin Blake**

Former Academy organiser and long-time Poundland rep Kelvin Blake thought the event showed how much progress is being made by the union in Poundland.

"For me this showed that Usdaw understands it is more than just about the 'Big 4'," said the 53 year-old warehouse supervisor at the Birmingham(2) store.

"Everyone enjoyed it and the reps can see we are moving forward. It brought home to us that we are not 'on our own' in store but part of something much bigger.

"I set up a Facebook page for reps and we now have

more than 30 activists on it, exchanging ideas with more experienced reps helping out our new colleagues with advice and support.

"The get-together was a very worthwhile event."

## **Kathleen Morrison**

Kathleen Morrison, 28, is a relatively new rep at the Belfast store where she works as a sales assistant and is only one of five activists across Northern Ireland.

"This was very interesting, very informative and very helpful for me," she said. "I didn't know about the Facebook page so that was really good to know about, any questions or problems I have I can share with other reps via social media.

"I learnt a lot from both the company speakers and from the union officials especially Paddy Lillis who was very helpful."



(l-r) Kathleen Morrison, Kelvin Blake and Donna Morris

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# In the SPOTLIGHT



**Eastern division's Leanne McGregor answers Network's questions...**

**Why did you become active?**

I had been working for two years before I became a rep. Angie Dewing (my area organiser) came into the store and after having a chat signed me up to be a rep. It is 100 per cent the best thing I've ever done.

**What do you enjoy the most?**

I've been a rep for three years now and can confidently say I have built up the trust and respect of my members in store. They all know they can rely on me.

**Is there a downside?**

I do find it hard to say no, so I find myself taking calls and replying to messages outside of work, but it's hard to switch off.

**Is recruitment easy at your workplace?**

Our membership level is at 70 per cent. When I first became active, we only had 6 per cent, so I feel really proud of what we've achieved over the last couple of years. There are three reps in store and we have meetings with our organiser every 6-8 weeks.

**Has Usdaw made a difference to your workplace?**

The union has one hundred per cent made a difference to my workplace. We have lots of leaflets and information on our noticeboard and union table. I believe Usdaw has brought us more together.

**Have you held any union events?**

Yes, Respect Week and Parent and Carers are both great for members, the literature Usdaw provides is really helpful.

**What did you think of the training courses?**

I have had all my shop steward and health and safety training, and been on the workers' rights course. Last year I was honoured to be offered a place at summer school1. I can't recommend it enough, it is the best course ever, I loved it! It is very intense but I gained so much from it. I've applied for Academy1 this year and if I'm not successful I will apply for summer school2.

**Have you been to ADM?**

Yes and I really enjoyed it. I love the variety of propositions especially when someone speaks on something they are passionate about.

**If you were prime minister, what law would you change?**

I don't agree with the over 25 living wage, I think everyone over the age of 18 should be paid the same rate so I'd change that.

**As a rep, what's been your stand out moment?**

Without a doubt it has to be winning the national Individual Organising award in January. I wasn't expecting it so it was a massive surprise. I just do my job so to be acknowledged that way was a massive honour.

**What's next for you?**

I've recently done some stand down in Primark Ipswich. It was a really good day and we signed up new members and a rep. It was good to see how other stores act towards the union and I look forward to returning there, hopefully soon.

**And finally...** I would Just like to say that becoming a rep with Usdaw has definitely changed me for the better. Credit to my organiser who has been brilliant, always encouraging and supporting me, I can't thank her enough.

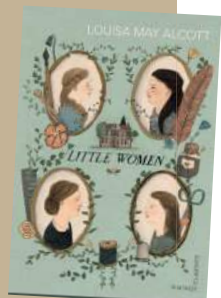
If you want to be the next *activist in-depth* email: [network@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:network@usdaw.org.uk)

## Fact File & trivia

EMPLOYER... *Primark*      AGE... *45*  
 Job... *Sales assistant*  
 LIVES... *Lakesend*  
 JOINED USDAW IN... *2011*  
 BEEN AN ACTIVIST SINCE... *2014*

UNION POSITIONS HELD...  
**Shop steward and health & safety rep**  
 MY FAVOURITE TV...  
**Game of Thrones**

MY FAVOURITE FILM...  
**Jerry McGuire**  
 MY FAVOURITE MUSIC...  
**Robbie Williams**  
 FAVOURITE BOOK...  
**Little Women**  
 BEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE SO FAR...  
**My son and grandsons being born**



# Where are they now?

## Academy 2011 graduates

Seventy activists were selected to the union's Academy1 programme in 2011, six years later *Network* caught up with a cross-section of the reps; seven of whom are now area organisers, two went on to be elected to the union's governing body the executive council, two have since won national awards with Usdaw and one won the prestigious national TUC Gold Badge award...

### Jason Stevens

**Area organiser, Cardiff**

I went on to do Academy2 then became branch chair of Stroud, Cotswold and District A184, completed summer school2 and was elected a divisional councillor.

I learnt a lot about myself on the Academy and grew in knowledge but most importantly confidence.

This was a fantastic opportunity that helped me progress to do the job I do and love now.

I was appointed in 2015. It wasn't until doing the Academy that I really knew what I wanted to do for a career, but that all became clear during the six months, and I'm thankful for that.

### Karen Davies

**Area organiser, Warrington**

I went on to do Academy2 the following year and that was followed by a stint on stand-down. I applied for an organiser's job based at the Andover office in Southern division and was successful. I started in January 2013 and later moved back to the North West division.

### John Todd

**Area organiser, Glasgow**

The training on the Academy is excellent and it taught me a lot. It was great preparation for my current role especially for someone coming from a distribution background like me. I was appointed in 2013 and I'm still learning every single day in what is a very challenging job.

### Kate Cumming

**Area organiser, Aberdeen**

I thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of the Academy as it gave me the opportunity to develop, learn new skills and organise in various workplaces.

I was given lots of support within my division and went on to complete Academy2. It was a life changing experience as it gave me the confidence to apply for my current position and I've been here since 2014.

### Debby Hudson

**Area organiser, Andover**

Academy1 gave me the confidence to talk to all levels of management in all companies and give colleagues the opportunity to be part of the union.

It also opened my eyes to the different agreements separate companies have. It helped me pick up better organising skills, improve my time management as well as communication skills. I was appointed an area organiser in 2013 and haven't looked back.

### James Postings

**Area organiser, Edinburgh**

After Academy1 I completed Academy2 and did several periods of stand-down. I was also a branch secretary. I was appointed in April 2014 to my current role.

### Angelique Audas

**Area organiser, Leeds**

I'd studied for a diploma in employment law before Academy1, and then I did Academy2. I joined the union's staff soon after in 2012.

### Brenda Shaw

**Tesco, North West**

I still work for Tesco and have done lots of stand-down. I also sit on the divisional council, Tesco's divisional committee, I'm an equalities mind champion and I won TUC Women's Gold Badge in 2015. I'm still very active in Usdaw and I'm always fighting for our members.

### Jon McEwan

**KP Snacks, Midlands**

I'm still working at KP Snacks in Ashby and still very active in Usdaw as a rep, learning rep, health and safety rep, branch chairman and a divisional councillor.

I attend ADM and have had several propositions passed, been a divisional winner at the Organising Awards and hope to stand as a Labour party candidate in the county or district elections.

I enjoyed my time on the Academy and





SCOTTISH DIVISION



SOUTHERN DIVISION

have always found what I learnt very useful. It was a challenging time but I'm glad I got through it.

### **Bryan Watt**

#### **Sainsbury's, Eastern**

I went on to complete Academy2 in 2012, and spent the next five years on permanent stand-down with Usdaw based in the London office. I am now back at Sainsbury's and chair of Capital Retail branch C12. I would thoroughly recommend the Academy and I'd like to thank everyone for their support.

### **Ian Frazer**

#### **Morrisons, North West**

I went on to do Academy2 and be a branch secretary. I'm still a rep with Morrisons and I'm now team manager and will sit on wage negotiations for team managers this year.

I found the Academy very rewarding but also very challenging. It helped me develop my confidence to progress into management and the skills I learned around supporting and developing reps has helped me to do the same with my staff. I would recommend everyone to give it a try.

### **Mike Peat**

#### **Sainsbury's, Scottish**

I'm still at Sainsbury's and a union rep and I am on the divisional council.

The Academy was a fantastic opportunity for me, I picked up a lot about recruitment and organising and I also learnt a lot about myself, which gave me the confidence to do things that I had never done before.

Any reps thinking of applying for the Academy should go for it, you won't regret it.

### **Paul Jackson**

#### **Sainsbury's, Southern**

Since 2011 I have been working hard as a union rep on long-term stand-down stints.

The Academy is a fantastic opportunity for any active rep, I learnt a lot. I am now not afraid to stand up on the rostrum at ADM and speak on a proposition.

I'm branch chair of West Kent General H97 and sit on the divisional council. The Academy experience has got me where I am today and I would definitely recommend it to other reps.

### **Anne Will**

#### **Morrisons, Scottish**

The Academy was a fantastic experience for me. I'm still working for Morrisons and a very active union learning rep. I made lots of new friends and my confidence soared as did my abilities to deal with management and issues in my workplace.

I am vice chair of my divisional political committee, on the divisional equalities forum,

a committee member of the West of Scotland federation school and I'm delegate to Paisley South constituency Labour Party on behalf of my branch.

If I'd not been accepted onto Academy1 I don't think I would have had the courage or confidence to do all this.

### **Peter Dillon**

#### **Sainsbury's, North Eastern**

I'm still working in retail and an active rep although I shall be retiring from work in May.

I enjoyed my time on the Academy1, it gave me an insight into what the union's priorities were and gave me the incentive to study Law.

I'm currently studying for a diploma in employment law with the TUC. I am very grateful to the division for giving me the opportunity. It was very enjoyable.

### **Sue Kenny**

#### **Makro, Midlands**

I went on to do Academy2 in 2014 and I'm still working for Makro. I am a much more confident rep, and I am spending a lot of time on stand-down. I also attend the company's national negotiating committee and pay negotiations.

I don't want to lose the skills I've gained from the fantastic training Usdaw's given me.



NORTH EASTERN DIVISION

NORTH WEST DIVISION



**Val Cooke**

**Tesco, Eastern**

I went on to do a diploma in Employment Law and completed Academy2 last year. I am now branch chair of North Herts Tesco Retail C51, I'm on the divisional equalities forum and am heavily involved in politics. I'm chair of my local Constituency Labour Party.

I would absolutely recommend the Academy, it will give you so many skills that are useful in all aspects of life, and I made fantastic friendships.

I'm back at Tesco now, but it's my ambition to be a full time official. I love being an Usdaw rep and winning for members.

**Vanessa Kirk**

**Co-op, Southern**

Since Academy1 I've completed summer school2, Academy2 and have a diploma in mental health awareness.

I have been on long term stand-down doing a lot of recruiting, which I love. Academy1 gave me more confidence to handle problems head on for the members.

I now sit on the union's national negotiating committee for the Co-op and on the divisional equalities forum. I'm also branch secretary for Invicta Co-op H45.

Considering I have dyslexia I have achieved so much with the union's help and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone because without them I wouldn't be doing everything that I am now.

**William Waite**

**Tesco, Eastern**

If you're thinking about doing it but are not sure, just ask anyone who has. It gave me confidence in myself and taught me where

to find the tools I needed to progress in my work with the union and in politics.

I've now been on both summer schools and completed Academy2. I am also a learning rep, a divisional councillor, branch secretary of Tesco South Herts Retail C77 and I sit as a local parish councillor too.

I would recommend the Academy to everyone. It changed my life.

**Tracy McKie Peart**

**ex Tesco, Scottish**

Since 2011 I've completed a BA Hons Degree in Social Inclusion and Social studies and I've almost finished my Masters in Social Studies.

I'm currently working in Children's services with a view to becoming a registered manager in the very near future.

Being a part of the Academy pushed me on to do more and aim higher. My future looks great but it was the Academy and dedication that spurred me on. I now live in Somerset.

**Grace Tipton**

**ex Co-op, North West**

I'm no longer with Usdaw as I moved to Belfast in 2014 and now work for Queens University in the Student Union shop.

I am so thankful for everything that not only the Academy taught me but the training I received from Usdaw as a whole. It gave me a brilliant understanding about workers' rights and helped me become a lot more confident in myself.

I would encourage anyone who is thinking of applying to go for it. It was the best experience of my life.

**Chris Crawley**

**ex Morrisons, North Eastern**

I went on to complete Academy2 but now work as an assistant centre manager for a training and development company looking after the post 16 provision of apprenticeships.

The Academy training really prepared me for my current job and helped me gain confidence as a recruiter and gave me the skills to build relationships with managers and staff.

**...and finally**

**Patrick Gyamfi (Argos, Eastern)** won the Individual Recruitment Award at the 2011 Organising Awards.

**Jayne Knight (Morrisons, North Eastern)** won the Outstanding Achievement Award at the 2016 Organising Awards.

Both **Maureen Bowen (Sainsbury's)** and **Andrea Watts (Morrisons)** went on to be elected to the union's executive council for their Midlands division.

Thirteen of the 70 Academy trainees have since left the union.





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K 19-25 JUNE 2017 ● MEMBERSHIP WEEK 19-25 JUNE 2017 ● MEMBERSHIP WEEK 19-25 JUN

# Campaigns under threat

**New Tory legislation puts extra restrictions on unions' political funds making it harder to campaign on key issues like the national minimum wage, Freedom From Fear, Supporting Parents and Carers and much more, deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis told delegates at the Trade Union Act political training weekend.**

The Trade Union Act means from next March all new members will have to opt-in to the Political Fund – a deliberate move by the Conservatives to starve the unions of campaign resources.

“It’s clear the Tories want to break our political campaigning activity, why? Because it works,” said Paddy. “Just look at our victory on stopping total deregulation of Sunday trading.

“They also want to break our ability to

support the Labour Party, why? Because only the Labour Party delivers for our members. Look at working tax credits, the minimum wage, workers’ rights and that’s just at work.

“In power Labour invested in the NHS and Surestart centres, cut crime and spent more on education for our children and grandchildren – all that is being undone by today’s Conservative Government.

“So we have to prepare ourselves for the challenge we face and meet it head on. Let’s not be ashamed of what the Labour Party has done for us. The Tories think of trade unionists as ‘the enemy within’, yet we are the single biggest voluntary organisation in the UK with 6.5m members.

“Our political fund is essential to the work we do. From the cradle to the grave life is political and decisions taken in parliament control all of our lives either directly or



indirectly. Having a political fund allows us to speak on our members’ behalf on issues inside and outside of work. It is an essential part of what we do – we are ‘the campaigning union’ – but we need our political fund to maintain our ability to argue inside and outside of parliament for our members’ rights.”

## Reps' ideas

### How to sign up new members to the fund:

- Promote campaign successes more in leaflets, *arena/Network*, via social media, and on the noticeboards.
- Explain clearly and concisely how the political fund is used.
- Be positive about our campaigns and their impact inside and outside of work.
- Emphasise political campaigning is primarily about people not party politics.
- Use tailor-made training courses for reps so the message to new members is clear.

### How to increase Usdaw’s political involvement:

- Improve political training and communications to reps.
- Encourage reps to stand as councillors and increase the number of members getting involved in local politics.
- Get involved in local community activities and campaigns eg on hospital or ward closures, crime issues, road and transport developments, and concerns around schools or colleges.
- Join your local trades council and work with other unions in your area.





## The Political Fund

The Trade Union Act (TUA) now requires (from March 2018) new members to opt-in to contributing towards a political fund. Opt-ins (or opt-outs) can be done online, and do not have to be renewed every five years. Unions must also remind members annually about their right to opt-out.

The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act already places responsibilities on unions when they are campaigning or making political donations.

Now the TUA ties unions up in even more red tape and means they will be subject to more scrutiny than any other civil society group.

Unions will be required to report annually to the Certification Officer (CO) about spending from the political fund on:

- Political party donations, including funding for any events or meetings
- Publicity designed to influence people to vote a certain way
- Non-political campaigns
- Donations to charities and campaign groups

Failure to comply could mean unions could face financial penalties imposed by the CO.

## Out of adversity comes opportunity



**The new legislation is a massive challenge for all unions, but sometimes opportunity comes out of bad legislation, general secretary John Hannett told some of the union's top recruiters at the weekend.**

"If we get this right, engage our members and get them to understand just how important politics is to our everyday lives, we can turn this malicious law to our advantage.

"Ever since the trade union movement was formed by brave individuals, anything unions have won, whether on an industrial or political front, had to be argued for and were

always hard fought. Usdaw is in its 126th year and it's clear nothing has changed.

"We take many of the rights we have now for granted but these have always been attacked by successive Tory Governments. Margaret Thatcher in particular in the '80s regularly introduced anti-union legislation and 40 years later we've seen tribunal fees introduced, redundancy rights slashed and workers' rights attacked – it's no coincidence that it's always a Conservative government that attempts to crush the trade unions.

"But we're still here and determined to be around for many years to come, fighting for our members in work and in society and that's why maintaining the political fund is so important for all of us.

"This weekend has been about consulting with our reps, finding out their ideas and preparing our strategy. We have to ensure after March next year new members agree to sign up firstly to the union and then to the political fund – our campaigning work depends on it."



## Trade Union Act

The Trade Union Act became law on 4 May 2016, although many of the rules only came into force from 1 March 2017.

The Act represents the most serious attack on the rights of trade unions and their members in a generation.

It includes serious and unnecessary restrictions on unions and their members, including:

- Arbitrary thresholds in industrial action ballots.
- Complicated new balloting and notice rules designed to make industrial action more difficult for unions to organise.
- New restrictions on pickets.
- New restrictions on union campaigning, with extra duties to report on campaigns and wider causes supported from unions' political funds.
- Wide-ranging powers for the Certification Officer, who regulates unions.
- An expensive levy paid by unions for the costs of being regulated.

From the start, the Government's aim was to further restrict the ability of union members to organise collectively in defence of their jobs and livelihoods. However, unions have vowed to work together to make sure the trade union movement gets stronger, continuing to represent people at work, tackling inequality and campaigning and negotiating for decent pay, safe workplaces and good employment conditions.



**Visit the Usdaw website to find out about:**

- How the Labour Party works
- How to join your divisional campaign team
- Volunteering for Labour
- Young Labour
- Campaign materials
- How to join the Labour Party
- Registering for a postal vote

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

## *Network spoke to activists at the weekend...*

**Kay Timbrell, Tesco checkout team support**



“I’ve been to many union weekends but this was one of the best – lots of like-minded people and everyone participated – and we all came away with an understanding of the issue and what we wanted to achieve.

“It’s all about preparing to engage members in the political fund and getting them to sign up. We have to face up to the fact that not everyone is interested in Party politics, so for me it has to be politics with a small ‘p’.

“We also have to realise that what works in the North or the big cities won’t necessarily work in my part of the country – Stroud, where we have a Tory MP, albeit with a small 1,300 majority. So our approach has to be varied to suit our audiences – one-size doesn’t fit all.

“I enjoyed the workshops and it was interesting to get a perspective from the Scottish delegate in our group and hear what workers in the other sectors, like distribution, had to say.”

**Paul Jackson, Sainsbury’s online shopper**



“This was a very interesting weekend a real eye-opener. I didn’t realise our political fund goes on our campaigns like Freedom From Fear, Supporting Parents and Carers, the National Minimum Wage and our opposition to extending Sunday trading.

“Many people think it all goes directly to the Labour Party but it’s not that straightforward. We need to explain this to our members and possibly put it on the recruitment form.

“I think we need to emphasise just how important our campaigns are and make sure we publicise our successes more. Putting a positive message alongside the political fund is key to ensuring its success.

“It’s clear the reps, as the main recruiters, have a massive role to play when explaining just what the political fund is for and how it is used. When we’re recruiting we don’t mention the political fund unless someone asks, which is rare, but the new legislation will force us to discuss it. So our message has to be a positive one.”

**Michelle Whitehead, post office manager Midcounties Co-op**



“I think this legislation will do us a favour because it will force us to talk to our members about just how important our political activity is and how politics affects all of our lives at work and in society.

“So if we do a good job and confront the issue we could encourage more political engagement and activity. Being a rep is a challenge every day so this is just another to add to our workload, I’m looking forward to meeting it.

“By March next year, if we have all of our materials and script prepared I’m sure we can defeat the real aim of this law which is to weaken both trade unions and the Labour Party.

“Losing this fund will deny us a parliamentary voice on our members’ behalf on things like working tax credits. For me people don’t talk about politics enough, so let’s not shy away from it, let’s make it work for our members.”



**Ryan Quick, Sainsbury’s night shift supervisor**

“This was a very important weekend because our claim to be ‘the campaigning union’ will be under serious threat if we lose the political fund. It’s a direct attack on unions and the wider labour movement.

“From my experience people will usually say ‘I’m not interested in politics’ but once you start talking about everyday issues which are affected by political decisions then members’ ears do prick up.

“I think our focus should be on why we campaign. Issues like improving workers’ rights and support for parents and carers are clearly political but some people don’t get the connection until you point it out. Our Freedom From Fear campaign is not party political but needs parliamentary support to change the law to protect workers more.

“This was a good weekend. We have a variety of opinions in Usdaw, which is a good thing, and there were lots of opinions voiced so it all added up to a healthy debate on the way forward.”

# COURSE SPECIALISTS

Union learning reps (ULRs) in the North West division gathered at the national training centre in Warrington for their annual forum on the challenges and opportunities facing the union's learning agenda.

Guest speaker Tony Saunders from the TUC outlined the important role education holds in the trade union movement while Debbie Gayle from the Workers' Educational Association outlined what her organisation can offer to prospective learners.

Project worker Jonathan Charnock promoted the union's Get Online with Usdaw course while colleague Julia Baldwin led a session on the importance of functional skills in English, maths and IT. "This was a very hands-on intense day full of workshops and speakers who are experts in their fields," said Julia.

"We had 33 reps here on the day from the 175 ULRs we have across the division. They are all working hard to deliver affordable courses despite the many challenges and pressures on funding the lifelong learning agenda faces."

Reps were also briefed by deputy divisional officer Tony Clare on the union's organising agenda and their role in it. "It was fantastic to see so many ULRs at the forum," he said. "Our reps do a terrific job motivating our members into education, often in very challenging circumstances. When it works well we have the power to change members' lives. Throughout history education has been a pillar of the trade union movement and remains so today."



North West union learning reps and officials at the national training centre in Warrington

## Activists make learning work for members

### Christopher Harrison

Christopher Harrison, 57, a price controller at Sainsbury's in Biddulph, Cheshire and now a mobile union learning rep thoroughly enjoyed the day. "It gave us a chance to meet up, swap ideas and get to know each other," he said.

"Many companies now expect their staff to be digitally competent with things like online wage slips and training courses, so it's important we offer these types of courses. Not only is it useful at work to be digitally trained but it can save members money with things like online banking or switching your energy supplier.

"I've also pointed staff in the direction of the Open University and the union's Chance of a Lifetime scheme.

"I link up with in-store reps across a number of companies in my area. I also talk to the managers and publicise the courses available and find out what members want, eg, in my store Spanish is popular so some have signed up to do an evening class at a local college. Sign language is also popular and companies will pay for this as it does aid customer relations, but sometimes meeting

demand is difficult.

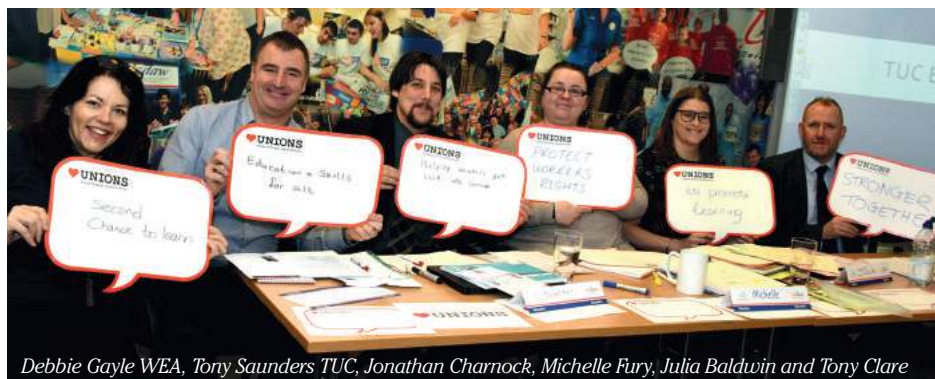
"My main focus is on offering functional skills in English and maths and IT. Being a mobile union learning rep is the best job I've ever done. Learning reps are great recruiters, it's a win-win situation, we're always in touch with the staff."

### Mike Larkin

Mike Larkin, 53, a team leader with Muller Milk and Ingredients in Manchester, was pleased to get the chance to swap problems and solutions with fellow learning reps on the day.

"I picked up a lot of information on other providers and how different companies operate," he said. "We opened our on-site learning centre 14 months ago and members have been doing an NVQ in warehousing and distribution, others have done the team leader course and that's on top of the English and maths courses. Having a learning offer as part of the union's membership is a great boost to what we do as reps.

"Having this kind of divisional forum lets us connect with our colleagues in other companies and sectors and I found it very worthwhile."



Debbie Gayle WEA, Tony Saunders TUC, Jonathan Charnock, Michelle Fury, Julia Baldwin and Tony Clare



Christopher Harrison



Mike Larkin

# Durham Miners Burston Chainmakers Toipuuuure

The trade union movement celebrates its illustrious history at a number of festivals during the year. You won't find much coverage on TV or the national press, but every year thousands of trade unionists gather to celebrate the epic struggles of their predecessors many of whom fought against cruel and harsh working conditions, the threat of imprisonment and in the very early days deportation to Australia. *Network* takes a look at the history of four momentous episodes in the movement's long battle for justice.

## Burston School Strike Rally

Sunday 3  
September 2017

**The Rally attracts a diverse mixture of political and campaigning groups, with education and learning high on the agenda.**

Every major trade union and progressive political party is represented. A wide range of food and drink options are available, with all the money raised going to benefit the local school children.

### History

The Burston Strike School Rally has been held since 1984 and commemorates the longest running strike in British history, lasting from 1914 to 1939.

The dispute began after two teachers were sacked from their Church of England school in Burston, Norfolk, after complaining about the poor conditions for pupils. The two, Annie and Tom Higdon, went on to set up their own school and were supported by the local community and the wider labour movement and carried on

teaching local children until shortly after Tom's death in 1939.

In the early 1980s a museum was built on the site of the school with an annual rally held every year since 1984 on the first Sunday of September.

A film retelling the events of the strike is set to be shot this year with a release date due in 2018.



[www.burstonstrikeschool.co.uk](http://www.burstonstrikeschool.co.uk)  
[burstonstrikeschool1917@gmail.com](mailto:burstonstrikeschool1917@gmail.com)

## The Durham Miners' Gala

Saturday 8 July 2017

**This famous event 'more a fiesta than march' can attract up to 100,000 people and is organised by the Durham Miners' Association.**

The day, the biggest trade union event in Europe, involves a march through the city to the nearby racecourse with banners and colliery bands, street theatre, a fun fair, and stalls offering everything from food and drink to books and crafts. Speakers from the labour and trade union movement address the crowd.

### History

The Gala celebrates the traditions of trade unionism and can be traced back to the strong mining heritage of the North East with the first one being held in 1871.

Only wars and national strikes have interrupted the Gala being held. At its peak it attracted more than 300,000 people. This year will mark the 133rd Durham Miners' Gala.



[www.durhamminers.org](http://www.durhamminers.org)  
[admin@durhamminers.co.uk](mailto:admin@durhamminers.co.uk)

# TUC Women Chainmakers' Festival

## Cradley Heath

Saturday 1 July 2017

**'The biggest annual celebration of women's history in Britain'. A family friendly street festival involving market stalls, fun fair rides, street theatre, music and debate.**

### History

Cradley Heath (near Dudley in the West Midlands) was the centre of chainmaking in England in the late 19th early 20th century. The work, tough and dangerous, was often done by women and was poorly paid for the long hours involved.

In 1909 legislation was introduced, which aimed to increase wages in some of what were then called the 'exploitative trades' although some employers tried to avoid the new law and threatened anyone who complained with the sack.

The National Federation of Women Workers called a strike and at Cradley Heath women

were 'locked out' of work in August 1910. The women were led by trade unionist and suffragette Mary Macarthur and after a bitter 10-week strike won their battle to

win a fair wage. Macarthur said at the time: "Women are unorganised because they are badly paid, and poorly paid because they are unorganised."



[www.wolvstuc.org](http://www.wolvstuc.org)  
[rjohnston@tuc.org.uk](mailto:rjohnston@tuc.org.uk)

# Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival

## 14 -16 July 2017

**A weekend of family entertainment, stalls, political debate, comedy, music and a grand procession through the village.**

### History

The history of the trade union movement can be traced back to the small village of Tolpuddle in west Dorset. It was here in 1834, farm workers formed a friendly society (a forerunner of a trade union) in response to the increasingly harsh conditions they had to endure.

Unions were lawful and growing fast but six leaders of the union were arrested and sentenced to seven years' transportation to Australia for taking an oath of secrecy. They would become known as the Tolpuddle Martyrs.

A massive protest swept across the country. Thousands of people marched through London and many more organised petitions and protest meetings to demand their freedom. The men were later pardoned and returned to the UK. The harrowing tale of the Tolpuddle Martyrs is retold at the local museum.



[www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk](http://www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk)  
[tolpuddle@tuc.org.uk](mailto:tolpuddle@tuc.org.uk)

# NEW FACES NEW JOBS



Tracy Gilbert



Joshua Cooper



Christina Carter



Liam Algor

## **The latest promotions and appointments to the union's staff...**

### **Tracy Gilbert**

The new deputy divisional officer in Scotland is Tracy Gilbert, who succeeds Stewart Forrest now divisional officer.

Tracy joined the organising staff in autumn 2007 and was based at the Edinburgh office. Prior to that she had been a recruitment and development officer with Usdaw since 2000, having spent a year on the TUC's Academy in 1999.

"I loved being an organiser and working with the reps across a number of sites," said the 44 year-old, who will now work out of the Glasgow office. "With 17 years under my belt I've met a lot of reps from all areas of the division.

"I started my new role in early February so at the moment I'm settling in and getting used to the systems and ways of working. There's lots to take in but I'm ready for the many challenges, and building on the good work done by Stewart and supporting him in his new position.

"I'm also looking to build on our organising and recruitment agenda with our team of organisers and our reps. So plenty to get stuck into, I'm looking forward to it."

### **Joshua Cooper**

Former Tesco rep and political activist Joshua Cooper is now the youngest member of the organising staff since taking up his new role at the Waltham Cross office in November last year.

The 24 year-old joined Usdaw in 2010 when

he worked at the Bournemouth store and was later elected as a rep in 2015. He combined this with health and safety responsibilities and a year later also took on the union learning rep's role.

Josh then went on to graduate from the union's Academy1 programme last year and served as secretary of the divisional equalities committee.

"I've always wanted a job that makes a difference to people's lives," said Josh, "and being an organiser allows me to do just that.

"I want to help the union movement to remain strong and be an active force for good in our society."

Josh's political involvement started on his 15th birthday when he joined the Labour Party and three years later he stood as a Labour candidate in council elections in his native Isle of Wight.

### **Christina Carter**

Former Next Distribution senior rep Christina 'Chrissy' Carter has joined the organising team at the Leeds office after nearly 12 years as a union activist.

The 35 year-old has swapped her industrial background to take the union's message across the North Eastern division.

"I was sorry to leave Next," said Chrissy. "I loved looking after and representing the 750 members we had on-site, but this job allows me to do that even more. I'm passionate about looking after our members and I'm delighted to have started in my new role."

Chrissy joined the union in 2004 and was elected rep the following year then safety rep in 2006. She has built up a wealth

of experience representing members at grievances, disciplinaries and dismissal hearings.

She graduated from Academy1 in 2014, went on to Academy2 in 2015 and did six-months of stand-down last year. "It was doing Academy2 which convinced me I could be an area organiser. I never expected to get the job straightaway but that's what happened and I'm loving it."

### **Liam Algor**

New Leeds-based area organiser Liam Algor has packed a lot into his union membership and is now putting that to good use in the North Eastern division.

The 26 year-old, a former security guard at Tesco, took up his new role in January and will be using the skills he picked up during his stints on Academy1 in 2014 and Academy2 the following year.

"I've done everything Usdaw could offer," said Liam. "I also did summer school2, the branch officers' course, and stand-down. I was involved in the divisional political committee and the young workers set-up too as well as the usual rep's courses.

"I always wanted to be an organiser and I'm pleased to say it's going really well. I'm getting around my patch as quickly as possible, meeting the reps and management at the different sites.

"I'm familiar with my area so I've hit the ground running and I've had great support from the divisional office staff and colleagues. I'll be helping the reps get the opportunities I had so we can build the union together. I'm really enjoying it."

# Help for parents and carers

Every year Usdaw organises a campaign day to support members who are parents and carers, called a **Spotlight Day**, writes equalities officer Jo Bird.

This year Spotlight Day is on Wednesday 17 May. Hundreds of reps across the country support Spotlight Day by organising campaign activity in their workplace raising awareness of parents' and carers' rights at work.

The theme for the day, which changes every year, is 'Difficult Balancing Act?' reflecting the fact that in recent years changes to contracts and demands for ever greater flexibility are making it harder for members who are parents and carers. Spotlight Day highlights the difficulties members have balancing work with looking after someone and what the union can do to help.

This year we want to reach out to grandparents as well as to parents and carers. More and more grandparents are trying to balance their own jobs with looking after grandchildren. Grandparents play a vital role providing informal childcare for their grandchildren. Without their support many parents could not go out to work.

Usdaw's own research indicates that this is fast becoming a priority issue for members. Our **Older Workers' Survey** showed:

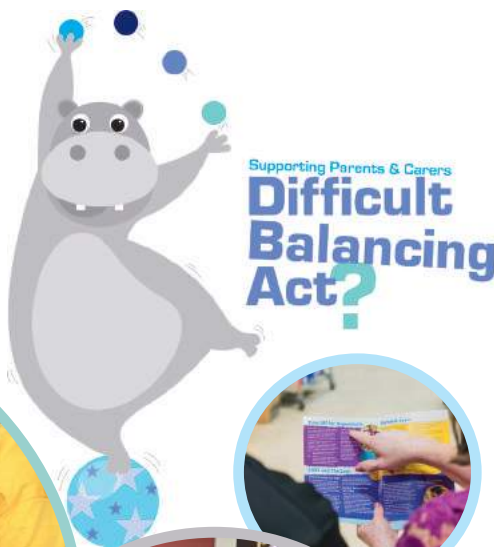
- Over a third of Usdaw members are aged over 50, more than two and half times the number of members aged under 24.
- There are almost twice as many women members aged 50 plus than there are men.

■ Half of men and almost two thirds of women members in this age group are planning to work beyond the state pension age.

■ Three quarters of women compared to less than two thirds of men identify financial reasons as the most influential factor in reaching this decision. Only 5 per cent said that financial considerations had nothing at all to do with their decision.

■ Half of all women and over a quarter of men are looking after grandchildren. What this tells us is that just as parents might need to change their hours of work to enable them to better balance paid work with child care commitments so too do grandparents.

However, members who care for their grandchildren find it difficult to get their caring commitments taken seriously by employers. They have told us that managers and colleagues often overlook their caring role, view it as unimportant or as something that 'doesn't really count' as the caring arrangement is more often than not a voluntary one.



## *Time off for dependants*

In certain circumstances grandparents who are looking after grandchildren may be entitled to unpaid time off to deal with an emergency involving their grandchild where they are the only person who can help at short notice.

## *Rights at work fall short for grandparents*

The rights grandparents have at work to take time off to spend time caring for grandchildren or to rearrange their working schedule to fit around their caring commitments are limited (unless they have been granted 'parental responsibility').

## *The right to request flexible working*

All employees who have worked in the same job for 26 weeks or more can submit a formal request to their employer to ask for a change in their working arrangements. It is important to bear in mind that the law only gives you the right to ask for a change in your working arrangements – you cannot insist. Your employer must seriously consider your request and can only refuse where there are clear business reasons for doing so.

## *New leaflet for grandparents*

A brand new leaflet 'Looking after grandchildren' is being launched on Spotlight Day this year. Look out for it in your Spotlight Day campaign pack, which was sent to all Usdaw activists in early March 2017.

# Team work spells success for union

**January's Membership Week provided the perfect springboard for active reps to take their union message to members on the warehouse, factory and shopfloor...**

## Tesco distribution centre, Livingston

More than 1,000 members are looked after by a hard-working team of reps at the Tesco distribution site in Livingston, Scotland.

The busy 24/7 site supplies stores across Scotland, including the Highlands and Islands, Ireland and the North East of England and has 14 reps providing round-the-clock support to the workforce.

Branch chair Graham Burns, 45, has been a rep for seven of the ten years he has worked at the depot. "Team work is the key to our success," he said.

"We set up a Facebook page, which has been massively popular, and allows us to keep in touch with our members seven days a week.

"When you have a 24/7 workplace it's impossible to get people to the branch meetings, so Facebook works for us. We have reps across all shifts so we cannot always get together and so use emails to swap information and keep in touch.

"Our focus is always on looking after the members and we have around 75 per cent of the total workforce. I do the inductions, usually on a Friday, and sign

up the majority of new starters then. We have about 300 migrant workers in membership, mostly Eastern European, so recruiting from the agency isn't a problem for us. Once all the benefits of union membership are explained most people are persuaded to sign up."

## Poundland distribution centre, Wigan

Stand-down rep James Taylor spent a hugely productive fortnight at the Poundland distribution site in Wigan to coincide with Membership Week and recruited around 130 new members.

The 43 year-old, a delivery driver at Ocado on Merseyside, covered all shifts at the 24/7 depot and used the recent signing of a national agreement between Usdaw and Poundland to help sell the union and its benefits.

"Feedback from the staff and even the agency workers was very positive," said James.

"It's all about getting the message across that it's about working together between staff and management so the company does well and the workforce get better pay deals.

"I had plenty of recruitment packs but they were going so quickly I had to order extra ones. Workers were genuinely interested in what we had to offer and now the union has an agreement to cover the site we can build on that and develop a strong presence here.

"The on-site management were very supportive during the recruitment drive and that helped a lot. It's important to have a good working relationship with management. I have one at my depot with Ocado and we're looking to get a Sata membership take up too.

"That was my second stint at stand-down and I really enjoyed it. I also helped out at the Ocado site in Manchester too and we had additional success there. So it's all good at the moment."



TESCO DC LIVINGSTON



SAINSBURY'S NEWTON ABBOT

## Tesco distribution, Goole

Young union learning rep Jamie Green-Hirst, is one of a team of nearly 20 reps at the Tesco distribution depot in Goole, Humberside, who have more than 800 members on-site.

The 26 year-old warehouse operative also did a stint at stand-down last year visiting both retail stores and distribution centres in Yorkshire. "It was a brilliant experience," he said. "I exceeded my recruitment targets and I'm hopeful the experience will help me take on the additional rep's role at Goole.

"I'm a big believer in the learning agenda and it's very popular here. We have a lot of migrant workers who want to improve their English and we have



View the Recruitment and Organising Gallery on the UsdawUnion Flickr page

### Membership for week ended 25 February 2017

South Wales and Western	50,306
Eastern	64,149
Midlands	56,255
North Eastern	59,217
Scottish	45,255
Southern	62,275
North West	94,153
Total	431,610





POUNDLAND DISTRIBUTION WIGAN



TESCO DISTRIBUTION GOOLE

a course starting in a month or two. We've also had members show interest in learning Spanish and IT is also in the mix of potential courses. We've provided distance learning opportunities too.

"We have a relatively new team of union learning reps so we're trying to re-energise that side of the union's offer. We make sure we publicise the opportunities across the site and most people are aware of how we can help and what we offer.

"With the learning agenda it's all positive and we have a good working relationship with the management team.

"We have reps on all shifts. The depot only closes on a Sunday afternoon so

it's full on for most of the week. I enjoy my role and hopefully I'll be taking on more responsibility in the future."

### Sainsbury's, Newton Abbot

New rep Jeffrey Wickes has swapped the classroom for the checkouts at Sainsbury's in Newton Abbot as he embarks on a new chapter in his working life.

"I'd had enough of teaching in Harlow, Essex, so we relocated down here," said the 58 year-old. "I got a job in the superstore and volunteered to be a rep, and safety rep, last June. I'm loving it.

"I'll be doing my follow-on course in July and might do a stint on stand-down at some point.

"Usdaw is very different from my old union the NUT (National Union of Teachers). With Usdaw it's very hands-on, we never used to see anyone from the NUT, but I see a lot of my local area organiser Li Grant, who helped out on our Membership Week event in-store in January. Organising officer Donna Morris also joined us on the day.

"I've been surprised by just how many benefits come with Usdaw membership, most people don't realise what's on offer so we have to get that message across. Our day in January did raise the union's profile, and we signed up three new members, but we'll have to do more. The other rep in-store is Gillian Williams so between us we'll be looking to do more events in future."

# Morrisons reps make inroads

## Morrisons Camden, London

A trio of three reps are doing their best to increase membership at their Morrisons Camden Store in London.

Linda Ivey, Christine Worley and Amanda Fleming have teamed up to bring awareness of what the union offers to their colleagues, with new rep Linda, 55, able to speak first-hand of the great legal service Usdaw provides.

“I had an accident in 2015 and with the help of FirstCall Usdaw it was settled within 12 months,” she said. “I was really pleased with my settlement and all the hard work put in by my union solicitor.

“Many workers just don’t realise or appreciate what a great support Usdaw is. I’m part-time and still pay the full-time rate because I think it’s such good value. If you had to provide your own solicitor it would cost a fortune so workers who think the subs are too high should think along those lines.

“I became a rep last year, as did Christine, so we’re new, but the training courses have been great – a real eye-opener – and we’re looking forward to more.

“I’m a firm believer in fairness, equality and workers’ rights and that’s what we’re trying to bring to our store. Health and safety is a big issue for us so we’re working on that and generally just trying to speak to as many non-members as possible to spread the word and build the union.”

## Morrisons, Bromsgrove

Three is also the magic number at the Morrisons Bromsgrove store where experienced rep Karen Banner is mentoring new reps Rachel Maese and Russ Jones.

Membership density is at a healthy 60 per cent in-store and the three work hard to keep on top of members’ concerns.

“We deal with everything that crops

up,” said Karen, who works part-time on the checkouts and has been a rep for seven years. “From absence issues to grievances, from inductions to providing information on hours changes. It’s all everyday stuff really. Ours is a pretty good store so we don’t have too many problems.

“We hold a weekly surgery in the canteen so members can let us know if they have any issues and our personnel manager is very helpful with that facility.

“It’s good to have two relatively new reps on board. I do enjoy the rep’s role but my arthritis is slowing me down more and more these days so Rachel and Russ do a lot of the running around. They’re very good.”

Karen is chair for the West Midlands Morrisons No.1 E100 branch, Russ is branch secretary and they look after a membership of around 900 members, which takes in other nearby stores. “There’s been some reorganisation recently but we’re always looking to give our members the best possible representation we can.”

## Morrisons, Wishaw

Building membership when you have a store density of 85 per cent isn’t easy but holding a Legal Plus day at the Morrisons store in Wishaw West Scotland brought in five new members.

Reps Jeanette Fallan and Karen Griffin were joined by solicitor Courtney McQuiston from Thompsons to remind members and potential members of the excellent legal service Usdaw provides.

“The day went very well with 18 members getting advice face-to-face in a private room with Courtney,” said Jeanette. “This gave the union a very positive profile in-store. We had all the leaflets and merchandise and it all looked very professional. Signing up five new recruits was a bonus.”



MORRISONS CAMDEN



MORRISONS WISHAW

Jeanette, who is the fruit and veg counters manager, has built up the membership since becoming a rep in 2010. “I’m a big believer in keeping members regularly up-dated on all the issues and I’m well-known in-store so everyone knows where to find me,” she said.

“It’s all about problem solving. We like to sort things out as quickly and as informally as possible and nine times out of ten that works.

“I’d definitely recommend a Legal Plus day, it’s a great way of reconnecting with the members. We’re



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



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



MORRISONS WOOD GREEN



MORRISONS BROMSGROVE

thinking about running a Supporting Parents and Carers day later this year to keep our campaigns in the spotlight.”

### Morrisons, Wood Green

Stand-down reps Jim Haughey and Simon Howland joined in-store reps Julie Barnett and Iosifina Messinezi to run a Legal Plus day at the Morrisons Wood Green store during January’s Membership Week.

Solicitor Rachel Griffiths from Slater and Gordon was also on hand to give expert advice to members as part of

the promotional day, which brought in new members at the busy London store.

“The event went very well with a number of members getting to speak to Rachel on a one-to-one basis,” said Julie.

“We’ve run similar days in the past and they are popular with members and help attract new members too. We made sure everyone knew in advance about the day and we managed to speak to the staff in the canteen.

“I’m looking to get a new rep on board as Iosifina is on maternity leave

now, although we do have some candidates already lined up.

“We deal with issues when they crop up. It could be anything from pay, breaks, anything really. I have a reasonable working relationship with the management and we usually get things sorted out between us.

“Recruitment can be tough depending on the member’s previous experience with unions. If that was good they tend to sign up, but if it was bad they need more persuading. We always do our best to highlight our success stories in-store so that helps.”

# HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR ALL

The 2017 theme chosen by the International TUC for this year's International Workers' Memorial Day is 'Good health and safety for all workers whoever they are'.

It will focus on inequalities in occupational health and the role unions play in narrowing the inequalities gap.

The message is that health and safety is a right for all workers regardless of their gender, age, race, religion, disability or employment status.

According to the TUC one of the worst examples of inequalities affecting the health and welfare of workers is the absence of employment rights for the workers in the 'gig' economy, which often involves

'bogus' self-employed drivers. But there are other examples of discrimination affecting certain groups of workers even in organised workplaces.

The recent Equalities and Human Rights Commission report highlighted how pregnant women in many workplaces struggle with health issues because risk assessments are not done properly.

Gender discrimination can also be seen in other areas. A recent report showed that, despite some improvement in recent years, an awful lot of protective clothing is not designed to fit women workers and can be uncomfortable or dangerous to use.

Work that is traditionally done by women is often regarded as light work and not as

dangerous or unhealthy as work done by men.

As a result there has been less research on the health or safety risks associated with 'women's work'. But cleaners, checkout staff in stores, catering staff and women workers on production lines all do work which can be physically intensive or involves exposure to serious hazards. Through its *Gender and Occupational Safety and Health* group, the TUC campaigns to get recognition for these issues.

Since the Brexit referendum, there has been a disturbing rise in racist attacks on workers in shops which has had an impact both on their safety and their longer-term health.



## Remember the Dead: Fight for the living

Workers' Memorial Day  
**Friday 28 April 2017**

Friday 28 April is International Workers' Memorial Day (WMD) when the international trade union and labour movement commemorates all those who are killed by workplace accidents and disease with the slogan 'Remember the Dead: Fight for the Living'.

"This year's theme of good health and safety for all workers provides an ideal opportunity to express our strong support for equality at work and our opposition to discrimination of

all types," said safety officer Doug Russell.

Usdaw reps can get involved – either by promoting the day in their own workplace or by attending one of the local events organised around the country by Trades Councils or Hazards campaigners.

- Details of local events are available from the TUC: [www.tuc.org.uk/wmd2017](http://www.tuc.org.uk/wmd2017)
- Follow the global campaign at: <http://28april.org/>
- An Usdaw leaflet and poster for use in

workplaces will be available in March.

- A range of materials including purple knotted ribbons, car stickers, t-shirts and posters can be ordered from Greater Manchester Hazards Centre. Contact [mail@gmhzards.org.uk](mailto:mail@gmhzards.org.uk) for details.
- If any reps want more Usdaw materials please contact the health and safety section at central office. [health&safety@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:health&safety@usdaw.org.uk)

## Massive fine for bakery firm after serious safety failure

Warburtons Bakeries have been fined £2million after a worker broke his back when he fell from the top of a mixer he was cleaning at the Wednesbury bakery.

The HSE investigation found that Warburtons routinely expected their workers to access the top of the mixers to

clean them. The workers were often unbalanced and would brace themselves to stop from falling.

The workers were not adequately supervised and there had been no training on how the mixer needed to be cleaned at height. The company failed to control the risk of falls

from height when carrying out this routine cleaning activity.

The level of the fine imposed is clear evidence that courts are using the new sentencing guidelines to hit big businesses hard where there has been a significant breach of the law.

Falls from height cause one in five fatalities in the food and

drink industry and are also a major cause of serious injury.

The HSE *Recipe for Safety* guidance includes useful advice on the measures employers should take to control the risk. You can find information on this subject and a range of other safety issues at:

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

## Stress under the spotlight with new guide

A new guide designed to help union reps work with employers to find practical solutions to stress at work has been jointly published by the HSE and TUC.

Stress has been identified as one of the two most important issues in the HSE Health and Work Strategy. They say that it accounts for 37 per cent of work-related ill health cases and 45 per cent of days lost to ill health. They also say it can affect workers in all sectors and all sizes of business.

The guide explains how the complex problem can

be broken down into six key areas:

- demands,
- control,
- support,
- relationships,
- role and
- change

For each of these areas the HSE explain what good looks like in a healthy workplace and there are tools on their website which employers can use to measure how well they meet the standards.

TUC leader Frances O'Grady said: "Union representatives have a key role to play in working with

employers to tackle this problem once and for all.

"Stress is preventable if workers have reasonable workloads, supportive managers and a workplace free from violence, bullying and harassment.

"Anyone worried about their workload or being unfairly treated at work should join a union, to get the support they need and their interests represented at work. Trust your union to give this advice."

To get a copy of the HSE/TUC guide visit the TUC website:  
[www.tuc.org.uk/stress](http://www.tuc.org.uk/stress)

## Online training

A self-contained online training module – an eNote – designed to help reps think about the issues around successful organisation for health and safety has been produced by the TUC as part of its programme of new organising materials.

It contains a mixture of easy-to-read text, short videos and quizzes which take about 30 minutes to work through.

Reps who register for it will also be able to access a range of other eNotes, which TUC Education has produced including ones on; fit notes at work, musculoskeletal disorders and mental health in the workplace.

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



## Help for drivers from the DVLA

New guidance to help bus and lorry drivers stay safe and legal on the road has just been published by The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

The guidance covers:

- driver conduct,
- the role of the Traffic Commissioners,
- the Certificate of Professional Competence,

- brief guidance on tachographs,
- vehicle checks and
- driver and medical licensing.

The DVLA says the guidance is timely as the bus and haulage industries are facing challenging times and operating in a difficult economic climate with a shortage of drivers.

Visit: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and **search** Guidance for vocational drivers

## In conversation with... Sammi Harvey



**Customer services assistant Samantha 'Sammi' Harvey, 50, works for East of England Co-op in Ipswich, Network caught up with her in February. Sammi has combined her rep's role with additional safety duties for more than ten years and is one of eight cluster reps, who look after around 140 Co-op stores in the Eastern division. She was also elected secretary of the East of England Co-op branch C73 last September with more than 600 members.**

"I enjoy my safety role. It stretches back to a previous job I had as a safety administrator with a company called Elstrom and I would go out and be involved in safety inspections at various sites.

"So I'm very mindful of hazards and

potential accident risks, and I'm always aware of what's going around me.

"For me safety is about making sure the little things get done as and when they crop up. We've been having a refurb in-store and the oven wasn't in the right place so we had that sorted out. Other things like wet floors, ice, or any slips, trips and falls hazards we keep on top of.

"I think staff and customers are more safety conscious these days. I don't agree with the idea that 'health and safety has gone mad'. You cannot have too much safety, because it's about preventing accidents and keeping staff and customers safe.

"I have a very good working relationship with my manager. I like the process of getting things sorted, solving problems, that's what I enjoy."



# Your Pictures



## TWEET DECK

Some of Network's favourite tweets to @UsdawUnion

@dan\_pentagram

All the stress is worth it being a union rep when someone comes up to thank you for the help and support. #UnionRep #Usdaw

@7PechodMarwol

I #heartunions cos mine fought for me against a bully former employer. I'd have crumbled in my disciplinary without union rep. #usdaw

@TUCLaurieHeseld

#USDAW SE reps buzzing about #heartunions week. Reps like these are the magic dust of the trade union movement.



@midgefrance

Just signed our will great service from @eadsolicitors Liverpool especially Vincent all arranged by @UsdawUnion for free #Usdaw #membership

@Welchieboy94

Now a union rep for @UsdawUnion #motivated



## Wall-to-wall campaign coverage



How good is this – made from Usdaw campaign t-shirts by the chair of the Scottish divisional equalities forum Linda Macfarlane and her mum.

It will be hung up to adorn the divisional office.

Lorraine Barr, area organiser, Glasgow office

## Small shops need our help

So far my visits seem to be very welcome, as in a great number of these smaller outlets there is no Usdaw representative. This I find of great concern.

Eighteen months ago I found staff were somewhat uninterested in joining but after regular visits and a campaign held in November last year, I recruited four members.

For my latest campaign the theme has been the uniform cleaning tax rebate, asking staff if they are claiming this entitlement. I was absolutely amazed how many staff are not aware of this rebate. I met one person who has worked for Tesco for seven years and he had no idea he could claim.

In my opinion these smaller shops do need our help.

**Derrick Frost, retired member, Mid Sussex H23**

*Correction Jan/Feb issue p25: The story and photo titled 'Tesco Extra Dudley' was actually Morrisons Bromsgrove. Our apologies.*



## MARKS & SPENCE



## MARKS & SPENCE



Clockwise from top left: Tesco Doncaster Extra supporting the heart unions week; Tesco Newport give heart unions week the thumbs-up; campaigning for M&S workers in Liverpool; taking the M&S campaign to the streets of Birmingham.



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 get the VIP treatment at the Northern Ireland divisional conference



General secretary John Hannett and deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis congratulated a number of reps, who raised money for Mencap as well as raising the profile of Usdaw during last year's 125 years commemorations. The campaign was very positive during what was a challenging year.

Conference also recognised the hard work of long-standing Tesco National Forum reps Nick Freeman and Roy Johnston. Both have been key players in the division. We all wish them well for the future.

**Nicola Scarborough,**  
area organiser, Belfast office

*Pictured clockwise from left: Edward Greer and Ronnie Mcfall, Tesco Ballymena; Jonathan Kirgan, Tesco Portstewart; Nick Freeman NI Tesco Retail No.2 K153 and Roy Johnston NI Tesco Retail No.3 K226 and Helen McGivern and Barbara McKernan, Tesco Newtonabbey.*



### Activists on branch officers and safety courses at the national training centre



*Clockwise from top left: reps on the branch officers' course in January; North West safety reps advanced course also in January; North West safety reps advanced course in February and activists on the branch officers' course also held during February.*

LGBT

# Are you Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender?

Usdaw is organising a national get-together for its LGBT members in Manchester on 10 and 11 June 2017

This is a chance to find out more about the issues LGBT members face and what support you'd like from Usdaw to tackle harassment, get more involved and organise your workplace.



To put your name forward you can:

- Email [lgbt@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:lgbt@usdaw.org.uk)
- Phone your local Usdaw office on 0845 60 60 640.
- Visit [www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk) and download a nomination form.

Places are limited so don't delay – put your name forward by Friday, 7 April 2017.

