

NETWORK

THE BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR USDAW ACTIVISTS – JULY/AUGUST 2021

USDAW REPS GO THE
EXTRA MILE DURING THE
THE PANDEMIC

**I LOVE BEING A REP
AND HELPING PEOPLE**

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USDAW ORGANISING 2021 AWARDS

Usdaw is looking for its best activists to nominate themselves or a colleague for this year's prestigious Organising Awards.

The Usdaw Organising Awards recognises and celebrates the hard work of Usdaw reps nationwide and is a unique event in the trade union movement. Any Usdaw member can make a nomination in each category. Nominations must be received at your local Usdaw office by Friday 24 September.

There are nine award categories:

- Individual organising
- Individual recruitment
- Campaigns
- Health and safety rep
- Union learning rep
- Equalities rep
- Most promising new activist
- Outstanding achievement
- Team recruitment and organising

For more information about the different categories and to download the nomination form visit the Usdaw website or contact your area organiser.

www.usdaw.org.uk/nominate





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WORKPLACE SAFETY IS OUR PRIORITY

On 19 July the Government ended mandatory safety measures in England despite concerns from medical professionals, workers and employers.

As a union the health and safety of our members is of upmost importance therefore, we will continue to work with employers to ensure that they promote existing safety measures in stores as well as asking the public to wear face coverings and to observe social distancing.

Also high on our agenda is our Freedom From Fear campaign. From 24 August 2021, a ground-breaking new law will come into effect in Scotland which makes it a specific offence to abuse, threaten or assault a retail worker. The UK Government has rejected a similar law for the rest of the country therefore we will continue our campaign by raising awareness and garnering further cross-party support.

Although many recruitment activities were halted or looked very different during the height of the pandemic, as restrictions ease, the union will once again look towards recruitment.

It is vital that we maintain our membership levels so that we can continue to be a strong and influential voice for our members.

As the country returns to some kind of normality Usdaw has started planning a number of activities for the coming months including Summer School1, a virtual



Retail Trades Conference, Young Workers' Weekend, a Respect Shopworkers Week and the Organising Awards. However, because of the times we live in they are all subject to Government guidance.

The last few months has also seen Usdaw finalise its move to its new headquarters in Salford Quays. Although many of us have fond memories of the old building in Fallowfield, in recent years it had become apparent that we had outgrown the building and we needed a space that could accommodate the union for decades to come. I look forward to hosting our reps there for meetings and conferences.

Usdaw General Secretary

Paddy Lillis

usdaw.org.uk/homestudy

Usdaw's Home Study course consists of several online modules which members can complete in their own time at home.

It's not about tests or lots of writing - but aims to help members find out more about Usdaw.

HOME STUDY COURSE

Unit 1: Unity is Strength

Unit 2: Democracy in Usdaw

Unit 3: Collective Bargaining

Unit 4: Pensions

Unit 5: Vulnerable Workers

**Get started now at:
usdaw.org.uk/homestudy**

usdaw.org.uk/homestudy  **USDAW**

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SAFETY MEASURES KEPT BY STORES

Usdaw has welcomed early indications that retailers are keeping important safety measures to help reduce the spread of Covid-19, despite the Government lifting the rules in England on 19 July.

The union is calling for the whole retail industry to follow these leads, to avoid customer confusion, and for the shopping public to abide by the rules and respect shopworkers.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "It is deeply disappointing that the Government has ploughed on with ending mandatory safety measures within shops on 19 July, despite concerns from shopworkers.

"Usdaw successfully lobbied for the mandatory wearing of face coverings in shops in Scotland and Wales and urges retailers to promote face coverings, hand hygiene and social distancing in their stores in England. Therefore, we welcome the early responses from the retail industry and we hope all stores will continue to put staff and customer safety first.

"The Government's guidance provides no



assurances for staff or employers, it is a real mess. Protection for retail workers through customers wearing face coverings and maintaining social distancing should be backed up by the law and not left to individual choice.

"Without clear direction from the Government, we continue to ask employers to think about their duty of care to staff and promote existing safety measures to the shopping public. We also ask customers to show their support and respect for shopworkers by continuing to wear face coverings, observe hand hygiene and maintain social distancing.


"Retail staff already

face unacceptable levels of abuse and making Covid safety measures guidance only, instead of having the force of law behind them, could put more shopworkers at risk. We need more retailers to keep their covid safety measures in place to avoid confusion and send a clear message to shoppers.

"The Government should not be weakening safety measures in shops at the same time as opening up other venues. There is no reason why face coverings and maintain social distancing in busy public areas like shops cannot continue and it should be backed up by the law.

"Wearing a face covering in crowded public areas like shops is not merely a personal choice, it is an important measure to help protect workers who have no option but to interact with large numbers of people as a part of their job. We are asking the public to show their support for shopworkers by continuing to wear face coverings when they shop.

"These key workers must be valued, respected and protected."

 @UsdawUnion

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STAY COOL AS TEMPERATURES RISE

PROTECTION FROM THE HOT WEATHER NEEDED



Usdaw is calling for a legal maximum workplace temperature to protect workers' health and safety.

In July the Met Office issued a new amber weather warning for extreme heat. Extreme temperatures, both very hot and very cold, are a familiar problem for workers. While there is a legally enforceable minimum workplace temperature, there is not a corresponding maximum enforceable temperature.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "As temperatures peak this week and in the midst of the first ever amber weather warning from the Met Office for extreme heat, we want workers to know that employers are expected to take reasonable steps to deal with

uncomfortably high temperatures.

"Outdoor workers need sun and heat protection, some sort of shade if possible, suitable clothing, sunscreen of factor 30 or above, water to prevent dehydration and frequent breaks. Indoor workers need cool drinks, more frequent breaks, relaxed dress code, along with opportunities to remove and replace face coverings.

"Usdaw wants to see a legal maximum working temperature introduced of 30°C – or 27°C for those doing strenuous work – with employers obliged to adopt cooling measures when the workplace temperature hits 24°C.

"Experts say the comfort zone is normally in the region of 16°C

to 24°C. As the temperature rises above this zone, heat exhaustion starts. People start to suffer loss of concentration, there are increases in accidents and loss of productivity. Symptoms include irritability, dizziness, headaches, nausea and fainting.

Usdaw produces a helpful advice leaflet on this issue - Keep Your Cool Tackling Heat Stress at Work.

Usdaw is promoting a TUC petition calling for a maximum working temperature:

www.megaphone.org.uk/petitions/we-need-a-maximum-working-temperature

More information on this and other health and safety matters can be found at www.usdaw.org.uk

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MEMBERS WELCOME MPS' SUPPORT

FIRE AND REHIRE STRIKE AT PHARMA FIRM



Usdaw members at BCM Fareva, the Nottingham based manufacturer of consumer pharma and beauty products for leading brands including Boots, took part in a 24-hour stoppage on Thursday 22 July 2021. They received messages of support from local MPs Lilian Greenwood and Alex Norris.

The action was backed by almost

90 per cent of Usdaw members at the site after BCM Fareva proposed slashing members' terms and conditions, including sick pay and redundancy payment provisions, while threatening to 'fire and rehire' staff if agreement cannot be reached on the proposed changes.

Daniel Adams - Usdaw National Officer said: "Fire and rehire has

been condemned by politicians from across the political divide. Even the current Prime Minister has said that it is 'unacceptable as a negotiating tactic'. So we very much welcome the messages of support from local Labour MPs and urge the company to withdraw their threat to fire and rehire."

www.usdaw.org.uk/news

CO-OP TAKE THE LEAD IN SUPPORTING STAFF

PAID LEAVE FOR PARENTS AFTER PREGNANCY LOSS

The Co-operative Group is offering paid leave and time off for medical appointments as part of measures to help staff suffering from a pregnancy loss. The union is asking the Government to follow this welcome lead and extend support to all working parents.

The new policy has been created in partnership with the Miscarriage Association and Usdaw. It supports both parents and includes flexible paid leave, a guide for managers to help offer support, time off for medical appointments and emergency leave for workers if a member of their family suffers a pregnancy loss.

Usdaw National Officer John Gorle said: "Losing a baby is very distressing for both parents and we welcome the Co-op taking a lead in offering enhanced support for staff going through this. We know that conversations with an employer on such personal issues can be difficult and we'd urge our members to speak to the union, particularly their workplace rep, to ensure they are fully supported."

"In the case of a still birth maternity leave and pay applies, however there are no statutory rights for those who suffer a miscarriage. So businesses like the Co-op who do the right thing

and make special leave provisions are welcome, but the Government should ensure that paid leave rights are available to all workers, regardless of their employer.

"We also need to see reform of Statutory Sick Pay, which many mothers rely on when suffering a loss in pregnancy. We have long called for significant improvements in SSP, which plunges many workers into poverty. Low-paid workers should be helped to take the necessary time-off by ensuring there is no loss of income."

More Usdaw news stories can be found at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/news

IN BRIEF

BRITISH RETAIL CONSORTIUM

Recent figures from the British Retail Consortium show that one in 7 stores is sitting empty across the UK at the end of March 2021. Furthermore, with around 530,000 retail workers still on furlough there are growing concerns that there will be more job losses and store closures in the coming months.

SHOPPING CENTRES

Up to 70 out of 700 shopping centres across the UK could be forced to close as the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic continue to manifest in the retail sector. At least 30 shopping centres in the UK are now at least half empty including five with more than 80 per cent of their shops vacant following months of lockdowns.

GAP

Following a strategic review of its European business, Gap has confirmed it plans to close all its 81 stores in the UK and Ireland and go online-only. The company has seen a rapid uptake of internet shopping for its clothes in the UK since the pandemic-enforced lockdowns.

JOHN LEWIS AND WAITROSE

Plans to cut 1,000 jobs as part of a shake-up of store management follow the closure of eight John Lewis shops earlier this year.

CELEBRATING AMAZING ACTIVISTS

NOMINATE AN OUTSTANDING REP



Download a nomination form at: www.usdaw.org.uk/nominate

Nominations for Usdaw's 2021 Organising Awards are taking place with the deadline for receipt of nominations on Friday 24 September 2021.

There are nine different awards which will be presented at a special awards ceremony on Saturday 15 January 2022.

Any Usdaw member can make one nomination in each category:

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

All reps should have received a nomination form in July. However, you can request extra forms from your local Usdaw office or download from the Usdaw website.

The nomination forms need to be returned to your regional secretary by Friday 24 September 2021.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "I have always recognised Usdaw has fantastic reps doing amazing things in their workplaces all over the country. The pandemic has shone a light on the key role our members play in the economy and our reps have selflessly battled to support members,

their families and the union during these unprecedented times.

"Unfortunately due to the pandemic we had to cancel last year's Organising Awards but I hope we can hold this important event in the union's calendar again in January 2022. Therefore, we are now seeking nominations that will recognise outstanding achievement during 2020 and 2021. This event is unique in the trade union movement and it helps to properly recognise the hard work put in by our army of reps nationwide.

"There is always a very high standard of nominations recognising the work of our newest reps, the tireless work of our health and safety reps, members working hard on the equalities agenda and lifelong learning and some exceptionally high quality, innovative work in organising, recruiting and campaigning across the seven regions.

"So I would encourage every union rep to look around and think about which category you could make a nomination for that recognises the work you and your colleagues do on behalf of Usdaw members.

"The Organising Awards ceremony will be in Manchester on Saturday 15 January 2022.

"We are asking for your help in making sure we have another exceptionally high-quality group of nominations."

SUMMER SCHOOL RETURNS

Usdaw is encouraging reps to put themselves forward for this year's Summer School which focuses on helping them become more active and informed

As the country returns to some kind of normality, Usdaw has started planning its calendar of events. The first major event to be held in person will see the return of First Series Summer School.

This will take place on 5-10 September (these dates are subject to Government guidance).

Summer School will take place at Wortley Hall, a stately home nestled in Sheffield's surrounding countryside.

Although nominations have closed for this year's Summer School and successful candidates notified, we are encouraging you to think about applying for Summer School 2022.

Who can apply?

Usdaw's First Series Summer School has been designed for members who have already shown some commitment to the union and are keen to play a more active part in union affairs in the future.

Nominees need not be union representatives but priority will be given to nominations from those members who have already

taken advantage of the union's educational activities, particularly the Home Study Course, or who can demonstrate a degree of commitment to the union.

Members attending will join a small work group of approximately 14 members, each with its own tutor. Everyone will be encouraged to participate fully in the activities.

Aims

The basic aim of the school is to develop the ability to play an active and informed part in increasing trade union organisation and involvement at the workplace and at the branch. This is achieved by helping members to:

- Develop their understanding of union aims, objectives and policies.
- Develop their understanding of the challenges facing trade unions.
- Develop their self-confidence.
- Improve their organising and communication skills.

Please note that consideration cannot be given to nominees who

will be less than 18 years of age or to members who have attended this school on a previous occasion.

Costs

The union will pay board and accommodation fees and members awarded a place will be entitled to claim travelling fares and any appropriate allowances.

How to apply for 2022

Each branch can nominate up to two members for each Summer School. Successful nominees will be selected by the national executive council from the shortlists submitted by each regional council. Please contact your branch secretary if you wish to be nominated for 2022 or speak to your area organiser if you would like to know more.

This year's event

Arrangements for this event will be confirmed in due course and will follow the Government's coronavirus guidelines.

www.usdaw.org.uk/summerschool



Wortley Hall 2019



BECOME A TESCO REP AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Union rep elections will be taking place across Tesco in September/October of this year, and Usdaw, along with Tesco, want to encourage members to stand for election/re-election. All Usdaw reps in stores and CFCs (except health and safety reps and ULRs) will be up for election.

With the launch of the new Sata agreement, there will also be elections taking place for Sata reps in all areas of the business. We'd encourage all salaried members to consider stepping up and taking on a rep role.

As well as new reps coming forward, we hope that existing reps will stand again to carry on the great work that you do supporting our members every day.

Usdaw reps

Usdaw already has lots of dedicated and talented reps across Tesco stores – nearly 4,000 in total. We know that they find the role incredibly rewarding and hope that existing reps will stand again to continue the hard work they do on behalf of members.

There are still stores, particularly in the convenience format, that don't have a rep, or where we need more reps – so please think about putting your name forward.

Maybe you are the person in store that everyone comes to for advice?

In which case, you're already doing the role unofficially, so why not get the extra support that we could give you as a rep. Or maybe, you see things done wrong but aren't sure how to challenge this – as a rep you would receive expert training to help you resolve issues in the workplace.

Sata reps

Sata reps from across the business have been in discussions with Tesco to update and improve the recognition agreement covering salaried staff in all areas of Tesco, up to and including Work Level 3, and the agreement was signed off in January.

Existing Usdaw reps and members who are team or line managers now come under the updated Sata agreement. Your experience of being a member/rep won't change, but the new agreement gives the union and salaried staff their own salaried forum and much improved facilities to consult, negotiate, communicate and engage with the business on matters that are important to you.

These elections are a great opportunity for you to get involved and to contribute in making the most of our agreement. Sata reps will play a central role in the new Salaried Forum, meeting senior business leaders and representing the views and interests of salaried colleagues across the business.

Come Forward! Speak-up and make a difference!

Whether you are hourly paid, or salaried, Usdaw/Sata is the recognised trade union for Tesco staff.

Tesco encourages membership of the union and positively supports members becoming union reps, because they recognise the positive impacts of reps in the workplace.

Usdaw/Sata will be there every step of the way, with expert training, support from your area organiser, and access to our legal, H&S, pensions and Equalities experts, as well as the union's dedicated Tesco support team!

Look out for the election materials in September, but if you have any questions on either set of elections in the meantime, contact your local Usdaw office on **0800 030 80 30**.

Remember, you can make a real difference, and we encourage you to stand for election.

ELECTION TIMETABLE

Communication period:

6-19 September

Nomination period:

20 September – 3 October

Ballot period:

4 – 17 October

REDUCTION OF SAFETY AMID RISE IN INFECTIONS

Despite rising infections of the Delta variant, the Government ends mandatory safety measures in England and puts the onus on employers to manage the risk

From 19 July the Government removed all legal restrictions to manage Covid-19. Despite the lifting of legal restrictions, the Government has clarified that all businesses should follow the principles set out in the working safely guidance.

www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19

Managing Risk after 19 July

Employers must by law protect workers and others from risks to their health and safety. This includes risks from Covid-19. As such, the guidance from Government sets out several key priority actions.

The first is to complete a health and safety risk assessment that includes the risk from Covid-19. The working safely guidance clearly states that the risk assessment must be done in consultation with unions or workers. This consultation should include:

- Risks arising from the work/ workplace.
- Proposals to manage and/or control these risks.
- The best ways to provide information and training.

Social Distancing

While from 19 July there are no longer legal requirements to socially distance, the union would still expect employers to maintain social distancing measures in stores, such as physical distancing markers/ screens at tills and counters.

The guidance states that

businesses must still mitigate the risk by reducing the number of people workers come into contact with. Measures to help reduce contact between people, 'particularly between customers and workers' should be considered, such as:

- Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others).
- Screens or barriers to separate people from each other, or using back-to-back or side-to-side working, instead of face-to-face (screens are only likely to be beneficial if placed between people who will come into close proximity with each other).

Face Coverings

From 19 July there is no longer a legal requirement for staff and customers to wear face coverings in retail or close contact services settings. However, the Government still 'expects and recommends that people (workers or customers) continue to wear a face covering in crowded, enclosed spaces'.

In light of this, Usdaw would expect employers to encourage, for example through signage, the use of face coverings where they have previously been legally required, such as retail stores. However, if customers are going to be challenged over not wearing a mask, we would expect this to be covered by trained security staff. We are

concerned that having to challenge customers, without the back-up of the law, could add to already rising levels of abuse in stores during the pandemic.

Other Mitigations

The Government guidance outlines several other mitigations that could help to manage the risk in workplaces of Covid-19. Usdaw would expect employers to put these mitigations in place including the following measures:

- Cleaning surfaces that people touch regularly.
- Advising customers and workers to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser frequently.
- Identifying poorly ventilated areas in the venue (such as changing rooms in retail stores) and taking steps to improve air flow.
- Ensuring that staff and customers who are unwell do not attend the workplace or venue.

Self Isolation

In July, the Government announced a new scheme to allow some 'critical workers' to attend work with daily testing, when they have been a close contact of someone who tests positive for Covid-19. The Government has still not published the full details of the scheme. Where any employers are looking to take part in the scheme Usdaw will work hard to protect the health and well being of our members.

www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Coronavirus-Update

Self isolation from 16 August

From 16 August, people who have been fully vaccinated (who have received their second dose of the vaccine at least two weeks ago) will be exempt from the legal requirement to self-isolate if they are a contact of a positive case. They will instead be advised to take a PCR test as soon as possible.

People who are under 18 will also be exempt from self-isolation from 16 August if they are a contact of a positive case. They will also be advised whether a PCR test needs to be taken.

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable

Individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable are no longer advised to shield. However, they should continue to follow the guidance for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

The Government is advising that clinically extremely vulnerable people continue to take extra precautions to protect themselves. This includes practical steps such as avoiding people who are unvaccinated, meeting outdoors and asking family and friends to take lateral flow tests.

The guidance from the Government states that businesses should give extra consideration to people at higher risk and to workers facing mental and physical health difficulties.

www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Pregnant Employees

Employers have particular responsibilities towards workers who are new mothers or pregnant women. Further guidance can be found on the Government website or by contacting Usdaw's equalities section equalitymatters@usdaw.org.uk

www.gov.uk/coronavirus

NI, Wales and Scotland

Separate guidance is in place and can be accessed via the links below:

- www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19
- www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19
- gov.wales/coronavirus



CAMPAIGNS

Keeping you up-to-date on Usdaw's priorities

TACKLING THE ESCALATING VIOLENCE

The last 18 months have been extremely challenging for Usdaw members and reps.

Despite the heroic efforts of retail workers and delivery drivers during the pandemic, the crisis resulted in a significant and disturbing increase in abuse, threats and violence towards retail workers.

Last year, the union surveyed over 2,700 retail workers on their experiences of threats, abuse and violence during 2020. This survey showed that almost 9 in 10 retail workers were verbally abused during the crisis. 60 per cent reported threats of physical violence and 9 per cent said they had been physically assaulted.

Abuse should never be part of the job. It is unacceptable that nearly 1 in 10 retail workers were physically assaulted simply as a result of going to work.

In response to this alarming trend

Usdaw has stepped up its Freedom From Fear message, and as a result of our members' excellent campaign work we have achieved some significant achievements in the last 12 months.

New law protecting shopworkers in Scotland

From 24 August 2021, a ground-breaking new law will come into effect in Scotland. From this point, across Scotland, it will become a specific offence to abuse, threaten or assault a retail worker, sending a clear message that abuse is not part of the job.

This legislation, which was passed in January this year, came about as a result of significant campaigning by Usdaw and the Scottish Labour Party. As a result of our Freedom From Fear campaign, the legislation was supported right across the sector and by all political parties in the

Scottish Parliament.

Ahead of the new law coming into effect, Usdaw is now working with employers to highlight the new provisions and encourage retail workers to report all crimes committed under the new law. For the law to be effective, it is essential that members record and report all instances of threats, abuse and violence.

Parliamentary petition

In 2020, Usdaw launched a petition to the Government, seeking a new law to protect retail workers right across the UK from violence and abuse at work.

The petition was the most successful ever run by the union; securing over 100,000 signatures. The petition showed clear public support for a new law and was also backed by major retailers and bodies such as the British Retail Consortium.



As it secured over 100,000 signatures the petition triggered a parliamentary debate on the issues behind the Freedom From Fear campaign.

Parliamentary debate

In June this year the union's petition was debated in Parliament. Ahead of the debate, thousands of members emailed their MPs, sharing their experiences of violence and abuse at work and ensuring that the campaign to protect shopworkers was top of the agenda.

The debate and Usdaw's Freedom From Fear campaign was supported by MPs from all major political parties.

On the same day as the debate, Parliament's influential Home Affairs Committee published the findings of their own survey highlighting the scale of the problems faced by retail workers. This survey, which received over 12,000 responses, many from Usdaw members, found that only 12 per cent of incidents reported to the police led to an arrest. Furthermore, only one in five shopworkers who reported incidents of abuse or violence were satisfied with how the police or their employer responded.

Ultimately, the Government's response to the debate was disappointing. Despite overwhelming evidence and support from MPs, the Government's spokesperson

declined to offer support for a change in the law to better protect shopworkers.

However, the positive debate helped to build momentum and raise awareness of the issues Usdaw members are facing.

House of Commons report

Following Usdaw achieving 100,000 signatures on its petition, the influential Home Affairs Select Committee launched an inquiry into violence and abuse towards retail workers. The report identifies that violence and abuse towards shop workers is becoming endemic in British society and the policing response is failing to match the scale of the problem. The Committee therefore called for urgent changes including:

- A new criminal offence to send a powerful message that assaults on retail workers will not be tolerated.
- The expansion of neighbourhood policing teams.
- Proper recording of violence against shopworkers.
- Police to provide local leadership in giving greater priority to retail crime.
- An Employers Charter setting out how they should support and protect staff.
- Safer Streets Fund resources to support measures on high streets

and in retail settings.

Usdaw fully supports these proposals.

Police and Crime Sentencing Bill

As direct result of the parliamentary debate triggered by Usdaw's petition and the report published by the Home Affairs Select Committee, an amendment was tabled for the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill which was in the committee stage at Parliament.

The amendment to the bill would see new laws passed so that violence and abuse against retail workers would finally become a specific crime in the UK – similar to the new law passed by the Scottish Parliament.

Unfortunately, MPs voted down a protection of shopworkers law.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "MPs had the opportunity to back a new law to protect shopworkers. We are deeply disappointed that they let that opportunity pass them by at a time when our members are facing unprecedented levels of violence, threats and abuse."

"However the Minister promised that they would bring forward an amendment in the House of Lords and we urge the Government to keep to their word and ensure that the measure they bring forward will be substantial and deliver much needed protections."

What next?

Usdaw's campaign has ensured that the issue of violence and abuse towards retail workers remains at the top of the political agenda. Our extensive research, and the incredible efforts of our reps in delivering this campaign in workplaces and communities across the country, has shown that the Government needs to take urgent action.

This campaign goes right to the heart of why workers need

unions – because it can never be acceptable to tolerate this. Abuse is not part of the job.

The support from Usdaw members for this campaign is what has always driven it forward. The Union remains committed to delivering the campaign through our annual respect week and other initiatives. We will continue to fight for the safety of our members.

'HELP US SORT IT. REPORT IT!'

The union is planning campaign activity across the UK during the week commencing 23 August. Reps in retail should have already been contacted about this to see what activity can be run in their store. If you have not yet got anything planned, please contact your area organiser.

23-29 AUGUST 2021

SCOTTISH NEW YEAR'S DAY STORE CLOSURE

HOLYROOD FINALLY READY TO LISTEN TO WORKERS



IF EVERY REP ENCOURAGES JUST 10 MEMBERS TO COMPLETE THE CONSULTATION, THAT WILL BE THOUSANDS OF RESPONSES. THE LOUDER WE SHOUT, THE MORE LIKELY THEY ARE TO LISTEN.

Usdaw has been campaigning for 14 years for large retail stores in Scotland to close on New Year's Day. Hogmanay and New Year is a special holiday, but this is not reflected in the experience of many retail workers, with three-quarters saying they spend too little time with friends and family.

Scottish ministers have the power to prohibit large retail stores from opening on New Year's Day. They have chosen not to implement this, preventing our members from having a decent break over the Christmas period.

With your help in signing the petition last year, we have managed to persuade the Scottish Government to launch a consultation on closing large stores on New Year's Day.

This is a really big step, but there is still work to do to persuade the Scottish Government to act, so we need all of our members in Scotland to respond to the consultation.

We know that this is an issue that is important to our members. Our survey results couldn't be clearer:

- 99 per cent of members agree that large stores in Scotland should close on New Year's Day.
- 72 per cent said that they or their colleagues come under pressure

to work on New Year's Day or 2 January.

- 48 per cent of members said that working on New Year's Day was not voluntary in their store.
- 76 per cent said that working over New Year affected their ability to enjoy the holiday.
- 74 per cent said they spend too little time with their loved ones over New Year.
- 47 per cent were unable to spend time with family who live further away during the period.

There's no surprise that Usdaw members feel this way. As key workers delivering the essential service of keeping the nation fed, shopworkers deserve a decent break over the festive period. They have worked long hours in difficult circumstances throughout the pandemic, faced unprecedented levels of abuse and worried every working day about catching the virus and taking it home to their families

However this is not just a campaign for the pandemic, Usdaw members have for many years demanded a proper break after the extremely busy and stressful shopping period in the run-up to Christmas. Workers throughout Scotland get to enjoy a day off, yet our members have to go into work,

even though stores are generally very quiet on the day..

CONSULTATION LAUNCHED

With the launch of the consultation, the Scottish Government has finally agreed to listen to the opinions of those most affected by stores trading on New Year's Day – shop workers. That's why it's really important that as many Usdaw members as possible respond to the consultation, so that the Scottish Government hears loud and clear that stores should close on New Year's Day to give shop workers a well-earned break.

If you are an active rep, speak to your members about this campaign, and encourage them to take just a couple of minutes to respond to the consultation.

If every rep encourages just 10 members to complete the consultation, that will be thousands of responses.

This really is a case of, the louder we shout, the more likely they are to listen. The consultation can be found here: <https://consult.gov.scot/economic-development/new-year-s-day-trading-for-large-retailers/> or by searching online for 'new year's day trading for large retailers'.

SAVE OUR SHOPS

URGENT RECOVERY PLAN FOR HIGH STREET



The PM's so-called 'levelling up' falls way short of the much needed and long overdue industrial strategy for retail to help save our shops.

The Government's high street strategy, which was launched as part of the Prime Minister's 'levelling up' speech in July, doesn't deliver the industrial strategy that the union was campaigning for before the pandemic or the now much needed recovery plan to help save our shops.

This comes against the backdrop of the Government's decision to reduce business rates relief.

In April last year, the Government paused business rates for hard-hit retail, leisure and hospitality firms, with almost 400,000 benefitting from the tax break over the past 15 months. However, the holiday came to an end in June, in its current form, reducing to a 66 per cent discount for companies with a £2 million cap on the support they can receive. This reduced package is due to continue until April 2022.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said "We fear that the

Government is merely managing the decline of high streets instead of fundamentally reforming the retail industry, by tackling the structural issues that leave 'bricks and mortar' retailers at a competitive disadvantage to online. We of course welcome investment in high streets, but it is not enough on its own.

"Usdaw is deeply concerned that the end of full business rates relief in June will lead to additional cost pressures that could push many non-food retailers to scale back, cut jobs or collapse completely. This also coincides with reductions in furlough support.

"With over 180,000 jobs lost across the industry last year and 200,000 predicted for this year, we needed to hear from the Government immediate action to reduce rents and rates for high street retailers, alongside levelling the playing field with an online sales tax. The coronavirus pandemic has pushed many retailers and retail workers to breaking point, so we needed government action to be equally significant.

"Retailers need urgent measures

to deal with the immediate crisis and a longer term strategy to deal with some of the more fundamental structural issues facing the industry. Usdaw is calling for the Government to adopt an urgent recovery plan for the retail sector."

Usdaw has called on the Government to immediately:

- Extend the business rates holiday at 100 per cent until the end of the financial year, as has already happened in the devolved nations.
- Fundamentally reform business rates. Despite the recent interim report, following last year's call for evidence, the Government is yet to take the clear and decisive action that retailers need to reform/reduce this outdated and imbalanced commercial property tax. The call for some form of online sales tax is getting stronger, particularly in light of the rapid growth in online shopping. A levy set at 1 per cent of online sales would raise around £1.5bn. This could fund a cut in business rates of around 20 per cent.

More information at:
www.usdaw.org.uk/sos



CONFERENCES CATCH UP

Usdaw delegates call for greater support for parents and carers and to highlight the job inequality young workers experienced during the coronavirus crisis

Usdaw delegates attended two virtual conferences to call for family-friendly employment rights as well as calling for a scheme to support young workers who are on low pay and experiencing job insecurity.

LABOUR WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 2021

An Usdaw delegation attended this year's online Labour Women's Conference in June. The delegation called for greater support for working parents and carers including paid carers and parental leave, improved sick pay and maternity pay, along with stronger protections for pregnant workers

and working parents.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Research over the past year consistently shows that women have been disproportionately affected by the social and economic impacts of Covid-19. Those with caring responsibilities are one of the groups of women that have been particularly badly affected as the pandemic has imposed new and additional unpaid care and childcare responsibilities.

"Even before the onset of the coronavirus crisis, reconciling paid work with unpaid care placed women under significant pressure. Since then women's attachment to the labour market, already

precarious, has become even more destabilised as discrimination, redundancies and the intensification of unpaid care responsibilities threaten their employment, financial security and mental health.

"The Government's response to the pandemic has not only failed to protect the needs of women, particularly those combining paid work with unpaid care, but has further entrenched women's inequality, and put women's continued economic participation at grave risk. We are calling on the Labour Party, working with trade unions, to bring forward more effective family-friendly employment rights."



Usdaw's call for a better deal for women workers includes:

- Introducing a statutory, day one right to ten days paid carers' and parental leave.
- Ending the qualifying periods for basic rights such as sick pay and parental leave and improving access to and increasing rates of statutory parental payments such as maternity pay.
- Strengthening protection against redundancy and health and safety rights for pregnant women and new mothers.

STUC YOUTH CONFERENCE

An Usdaw delegation attended this year's Scottish Trades Union Congress Youth Conference in June, where they highlighted how the coronavirus crisis has had a devastating impact on the Scottish

economy resulting in thousands of workers facing redundancy.

Usdaw regional secretary for Scotland Tracy Gilbert said: "Young workers in Scotland have been disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 crisis and are more likely to work in sectors, such as retail, hospitality and leisure, which have been most affected by the pandemic.

"Recent research by IPPR Scotland suggests that youth unemployment could peak with over 100,000 young people facing unemployment by the end of the year – over one in three of Scotland's young workers. It is clear that employers find it too cheap and too easy to make young workers redundant.

"In Scotland the Government has launched the Youth Guarantee Scheme to support young people into education and work following the effects of the coronavirus crisis. While this is a welcome step in the right direction the provisions do not go far enough to support young workers, whose experience of the job market has long been characterised by low pay and job insecurity. Work experience is not enough – we need jobs."

Usdaw is calling on the STUC to campaign for:

- Employment rights to start from day one of employment.
- Stronger redundancy rights, including increases to statutory redundancy pay, a levelling up so that young workers have the same entitlement as older workers and qualification for redundancy pay from day one.
- A jobs guarantee element to the Youth Guarantee Scheme to ensure that young workers are able to quickly access high quality employment.
- Employers to be under legal duty to assess the impact their policies, practices and procedures (including working conditions) have on workers' mental health and act upon the findings.

LABOUR WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Each year the conference brings together hundreds of Labour women, politicians and activists from across the country.

The conference enables Labour women to better participate in policy making and offers the opportunity to share ideas with delegates from across the UK.

Due to Covid-19 the decision was taken to have an online conference to ensure that women had the chance to participate in a conference especially following the cancellation of the conference in 2020.

The weekend included speeches from senior politicians, policy debates, and a range of workshops and training.

STUC YOUTH CONFERENCE

The STUC Youth Committee is made up of young workers under 27 years of age from across Scotland and campaigns on a range of issues including climate change, fair work for young people, housing and poverty. It represents young workers' views and opinions to a number of bodies including Government and ensures a young workers voice is heard at the STUC General Council. STUC affiliates are encouraged to send delegates to the Youth Conference and nominate young members to the STUC Youth Committee. Affiliates nominating delegates are also able to submit motions for debate and consideration by the conference.



LIFELONG LEARNING IS FOR REPS TOO!

Rep development is really important to Usdaw that's why the union has expanded its learning with the 'New skills Academy' to provide a range of online accredited Continuing Personal Development (CPD) modules for reps through their Staff Skills Training programme (SST). (Reps who sign up also get access to the XO student discount card which provides discounts on a whole range of offers.) Courses are completely free to reps and include a range of subject areas such as:

- Computing/Technology
- Health & Safety
- Health & Wellbeing
- Human Resources (HR)
- Medical & Mental Health

The most popular CPD certificated courses for our reps include:

- Staying Safe Online
- How to Write Better Emails
- Equality & Diversity
- IT Certification Level 2
- Basic Maths Certificate
- Mental Health Awareness Certificate.

xostudentdiscounts.co.uk/signup

Member Quotes

Tracy White, Tesco York

"The SST CPD courses have been very useful during the pandemic as they helped me with some mental health issues I was having. Working through the mental health courses highlighted what I need to focus on to get my head in the right direction. The computer course was very helpful in gaining extra knowledge and sign language has been a good distraction as well as helping me build on the skills I was learning before the pandemic. I would highly recommend reps take a look."

Gavin Watson

Co-op Birtley DC ULR coordinator

"I found the agenda setting certification quite easy to navigate

through and was easy to follow. The course guided you through the different aspects of an agenda by means of a video which is accompanied by written dialogue underneath. The videos were noticeably clear and concise which helps you to absorb the information easily. There is a quick test at the end of the module to make sure that you have taken the info in. Once completed you can download your printable certificate of completion. I'd rate the course 10/10."

Michelle Whitley, Argos Widnes

I have really enjoyed the course on Assertiveness Skills. It has shown me a lot of best practice in all areas of both my role as a rep and also within my life outside of work".

Go to the Rep Development section on the learning gateway for a full course list www.usdaw.org.uk/learninggateway and contact the Lifelong Learning team to enrol: LifelongLearning@usdaw.org.uk

There is a limited number of places available per year, so make sure you don't miss out. Once you've signed up for a course however you can access as many modules as you like.

Members too can benefit from Usdaw's New Skills Academy offer with a massive discount of 74 per cent on every course by using the Usdaw code. For further information go to the learning gateway page of the website: www.usdaw.org.uk/learninggateway



REPS DEVELOP A LEARNING CURVE

For a number of years now Usdaw reps have benefitted from the union's partnership with the 'Learning Curve Group' which provides fully funded Level 2 qualifications for all our reps and members. Reps in particular have found the 40+ courses on offer, have helped develop them as a rep and an individual, the most popular courses being:

- Digital Skills
 - Climate Change & Environmental Awareness
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Equality & Diversity
 - LGBT Inclusion in the Workplace
 - Mental Health Awareness
 - Mental Health First Aid and Advocacy
 - Information Advice and Guidance
 - Team Leading
 - Workplace Violence & Harassment
- A range of health-related qualifications are also available

including Cancer Support, Diabetes, Common Health Conditions and Nutrition and Health.

www.learningcurvegroup.co.uk/landing/usdawcourses

'SKILLS NETWORK' - A NEW ONLINE LEARNING OFFER FOR REPS AND MEMBERS

Usdaw have gone in to partnership with a new learning provider 'Skills Network' to deliver free online Level 1 English, maths and ICT courses and qualifications.

Level 1 English and maths are a mandatory requirement for accessing any Level 2 apprenticeship, as well as being an important foundation for developing a range of other skills, but up until now, members have struggled to find suitable online, flexible provision.

The new offer will be available to members and reps from 12 July but there are a limited number of free places so make sure you sign up ASAP.

TAKE A BITESIZE CHUNK OF LEARNING WITH LITMOS

Usdaw's partnership with Litmos specialises in offering online bitesize courses for reps and members. These vary in length, from a few minutes, to a few hours.

Some short courses are organised in to themed pathways which include such topics as:

- Coaching & Mentoring
- Reducing Stress
- Workplace Hygiene
- Equality & Diversity
- Excel
- First Aid
- Mental Health
- Handling Conflict
- Cyber Security
- Microsoft Office
- Redundancy Support
- Rep Skill
- Workplace Discrimination & Harassment

www.usdaw.org.uk/Members/Training-Development/Online-Learning-Resources/eCareers

NEW LEARNING CENTRE AT TESCO GOOLE DC

The hard work of Usdaw learning reps pays off with a brand new learning centre opening its doors

Lifelong learning has been taking place at Tesco Goole for over a decade but it's since 2017 that the site really took off.

After launching a successful learning programme with Profound training (and then learning curve group) the site offered a rolling programme of maths and English classes with over 50 colleagues enrolled at any one time, attending classes depending on what shift they were on, both English and non-English staff took up the offer and at one stage there were 11 different nationalities taking part.

Prior to lockdown Usdaw secured funding to create an Usdaw learning centre within the warehouse and it was agreed the union could create two large rooms facing directly onto the canteen in a prime location.

GREAT RECEPTION TO CENTRE

Martyn Warwick, regional lifelong learning project worker said: "The hard work and patience of the Usdaw union learning reps (ULRs) over the last 5 years is really going to pay off with the new dedicated Usdaw learning centre at Goole. The space will have two rooms, one focused on IT delivery while the second will be a more relaxed information/learning space where learners can pick up resources, use the book library or take part in classes."

Union learning coordinator Keith Springate said "After a long wait the learning centre is finally in place. It's looking great, and there's a

new found enthusiasm from the ULR team for the learning projects ahead.

"The new room has been received well by the ULRs and other reps on site. The space's primary function is for the members to access learning, but it is a great promotional tool to use at inductions for new starters, a resource centre for leaflets and advice and an additional room to hold meetings if it's not in use. Located just at the end of the canteen it's a visible example of the Usdaw/Tesco partnership in action and a clear benefit of joining the union."

Sean Dixon, an experienced ULR coordinator who has been supporting the Goole site said: "The site and the offer will be greatly improved with the new centre, not only will it provide storage for equipment and resources, but it will also allow colleagues to complete courses in a space dedicated to learning. It will also be a place where you can discreetly pick up Usdaw resources as well as information around mental health and general wellbeing."

Tesco managers throughout the DC are also enthused by the new learning suite, the site has always been supportive of the whole lifelong learning project and recently they featured the Usdaw learning offer and centre as part of the site's promotional recruitment video, demonstrating the importance of the learning agenda as a key benefit of working at the site.



The new Usdaw learning centre at Tesco Goole DC will offer IT based learning and a more relaxed space where learners can pick up resources, use the book library or take part in classes.



ENGLISH AND MATHS

Recent months saw yet more success in English and maths for staff at the Tesco Goole Distribution Centre when more than 30 members of staff received their English and maths certificates. They are the latest beneficiaries of a lifelong learning partnership at the site that has seen over 140 people take part in English and maths courses.

Usdaw union learning rep Keith Springate said: "Usdaw and Tesco have been working together with Profound Services for a while now. We have a team of ULRs who promote the courses and help to set them up. Profound's tutors do the rest, and they have an excellent record of success."

Profound's operations manager Barry Nelson said: "We are proud to be involved with this project. For a lot of these workers, English is a second language so to have 142 completions is really fantastic and shows the commitment of the students. It's also been a success story for Profound and a privilege to work with a union management partnership."

STUDENTS WERE FULL OF PRAISE ...

Andy Rowley

ULR Andy Rowley was one of those who took the class. "I took the English course to see how it worked and to gain a better qualification than I received at school. The course was fun and interesting, I learnt new skills and understood the work better. I progressed to the next level of English and passed both levels. I also learnt maths with great success. I recommend everyone to take up the learning challenge."

Marian Viscol

Marian Viscol said: "I took this course help me speak and write better English. Our teacher Joanne was great and was always ready to help when we needed her. I'm grateful to everyone involved; Usdaw, Tesco and Profound Group for this fantastic opportunity to improve my English."

Katazyina Stanislawa Wegrzn

Katazyina Stanislawa Wegrzn said: "I took the English course because I wanted to feel more comfortable while speaking with my workmates. I was surprised how quickly I stopped being stressed and joined conversations with everyone around me. I improved my English and built self-confidence, so I've achieved two goals at once."

RECRUITMENT IS BACK ON!

The last year has shown that unions are absolutely vital in making sure workers' voices are heard

The coronavirus crisis has brought about many challenges across the union. Despite the difficulties we have all faced, Usdaw reps have gone above and beyond call of the duty, organising workplaces, representing members and ensuring safe working practices.

Although many recruitment activities were halted or looked very different during the height of the pandemic, as restrictions ease, the union is once again looking towards recruitment.

It's more important than ever that reps continue to recruit new members so that they have access to the benefits of Usdaw membership.

The main reason why people say they aren't in a union is because they've never been asked, therefore we are asking reps to focus, not only on new starters, but also non-members in their workplaces.

It is vital that we maintain our membership levels so that we can continue to be a strong and influential voice for our members.

In this article *Network* is providing reps with a short refresher to recruiting.

THE VALUE OF INDUCTIONS

Many Usdaw agreements give reps time off to recruit at inductions. However, due to the pandemic, changes to the process may have been agreed. Speak to your manager/area organiser to clarify the process if you are unsure.

At the time of writing, it was

unclear which restrictions, if any, would remain in place however Usdaw would always encourage all reps to put their safety first and abide by any guidelines around face masks, handwashing and social distancing.

RECRUITING AT INDUCTIONS OR 1-2-1

Be friendly and introduce yourself. Give the names and departments of any other reps in your workplace. Stress the importance that the more Usdaw members in the workplace the stronger the union's influence will be.

REASONS TO JOIN USDAW

Better pay, safer workplaces, advice and support, legal and accident cover and member offers and discounts are all good reasons to join.

Use success stories. Have you secured flexible working for a colleague? Did a member win an accident injury claim using Usdaw's legal service? Have you won a grievance? Do you save money using the cinema discount? Give real life examples so that new starters get a clear idea of what the union can do.

COVID-19 WINS

Behind the scenes Usdaw lobbied the Government and employers to ensure that the needs of Usdaw members were taken into consideration when policy decisions to deal with the pandemic were made, including winning 10 per



cent pay bonuses, getting sick pay from day one, enhanced colleague discounts, furlough for workers unable to work and improved health and safety measures with enhanced social distancing, plastic screens and limiting the number of customers in stores.

If you were involved in any improvements or health and safety measures, then tell non-members what you achieved for all your colleagues in the store.

RECRUITMENT CHAT

Here are some of the issues that workers may raise when they are asked to join the union, with some suggested responses.

I can't afford to join

No one underestimates money worries but it's a question of priorities – you wouldn't drive your car without insurance or leave your house uninsured, so



think of union contributions as your workplace insurance. If you lost your job because you didn't have representation at work, the consequences would be far worse than a burglary or bump in the car.

I'm part-time and don't work enough hours to join the union.

One in three Usdaw members work part-time. Part-time workers get all the same benefits as full-time workers. The terms and conditions of most part-time workers have been won by unions negotiating for them – the issues that affect full-time workers also affect part-timers.

Why should I join the union, I get all the same benefits anyway?

No you don't! You get the same terms and conditions that the union negotiates for its members. However, you wouldn't get union advice or representation and you would have to meet your own legal

costs if you had a very serious problem or accident at work.

JOINING ONLINE

Employees at Tesco, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Argos, the Co-op and many other employers are now able to join online through the Usdaw website and have their monthly contributions deducted from their wages rather than having to complete a direct debit form. For reps, this makes recruiting members at these workplaces easier and quicker than ever before and eliminates the use of paper forms which is an added bonus during the coronavirus pandemic.

The form can be accessed at: www.usdaw.org.uk/joinnow

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Usdaw website has information to help you get organised, recruit new members and win in your workplace. www.usdaw.org.uk

STAND DOWN

Are you someone who loves recruiting and is good at it? Would you like to do more of it and meet people in different companies? If you are, stand down could be for you.

Udaw is always looking for talented reps to become part of its stand down network. The union has negotiated agreements with a number of companies that allow reps to spend time working for the union (exact details will depend on each agreement).

Stand down reps spend time visiting different companies to talk to potential members about the benefits of joining Usdaw. Stand down reps who have done well have then gone on to successfully complete the Usdaw academies.

For more information on how to become more active in Usdaw, speak to your area organiser.



ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH KISHAN KAUR

Usdaw health and safety rep and learning rep Kishan Kaur talks to Network about what life's been like for shopworkers during the last 12 months.

Where do you work?

I've worked as a general assistant at Tesco Extra in Bristol for about 27 years. We have roughly 400 people working at the store and currently I'm the only rep.

Why did you become a rep?

About 15 years ago the previous rep left and nominated me. She nominated me because I was always going to her with queries on behalf of members and trying to help them with their problems. When I first took on the role I was apprehensive

and anxious as I thought it would be quite confrontational, but I soon realised that Usdaw worked in partnership with Tesco so that actually it was more about liaising and working with managers than arguing.

You're the only rep in a very large store, how has it been over the last 12 months?

At the start of the pandemic it was chaotic. There were so many mixed messages coming from the Government that it was difficult for anyone to know what they should or shouldn't be doing. Thankfully, things settled down when we had some official guidance, which meant I could work with the managers to ensure all the safety measures

were put in place. Luckily, Tesco issued guidance to all the stores, so we knew what we needed to do. We quickly implemented hand sanitisers, one-way systems and limited customers in store.

The hardest thing was having to deal with customers. It was difficult trying to get them to adhere to the rules. If you asked someone to cover their nose when wearing a mask they would deliberately not do it. Some of them wouldn't abide by the one-way system and some got very angry when they saw other people not wearing masks.

It was a challenging time for me and my colleagues as we were all worried about our own health and the health of our families. I actually got Covid, along with my son and

husband, and it was so horrendous that I thought I was dying but thankfully I did recover (we all did). It wasn't until I got it, I realised how terrifying it was.

What kind of issues have you had to deal with?

The biggest thing I've dealt with is trying to manage the anxieties of my colleagues. Understandably many of them were worried and scared. I think for many, not being able to see their friends and families took a huge toll on their mental health. What we've all gone through is not normal so I think post-covid we will see a massive rise in mental health problems.

On the flip side, I've had less grievances, disciplinarys and sickness meetings to deal with. I think the pandemic made all the managers hyper-focussed on getting through the crisis and other issues didn't seem that big compared to what was happening at the time.

How did you cope through it all?

My upbringing has made me strong and resilient and thanks to this I was able to get through the worst of it.

A couple of people also helped me get through the last year. The first was my area organiser Milan Pavlik who is just fantastic. He was always there when I needed to speak to him and advise me on issues that I wasn't sure about. The second was Phil Birkett, he's a stand down rep and comes into my store quite often. Whenever I approached him Phil was ready to help.

What's been the toughest thing you've had to deal with?

One of the toughest things I dealt with was supporting my friend,

colleague and fellow rep Miranda Francis through her illness. Miranda was someone I had worked with for about 15 years and over the years we had become pretty close. In August 2019 Miranda got, what she thought was a chest infection, despite me badgering her to go to the doctor she wouldn't. Finally, when she was very poorly she went to see her GP. She was prescribed antibiotics but they didn't work so she was sent for further tests, which revealed that she had terminal lung cancer.

It was absolutely awful. Although Miranda was 72 she was one of those people you thought would live forever and that nothing would stop her. She was a lovely, bubbly character with an infectious laugh. She was down-to-earth, funny and would do anything for anyone. But the cancer stopped her in her tracks.

Miranda agreed to trial a new type of surgery because she felt she had nothing to lose. She had no family and asked me to go to London with her for this treatment. I didn't hesitate, I took a week off work and went with her. She was so touched, that despite not being family and having a family of my own, I would do this. And I am so glad I did. Despite the treatment we had

a lovely week together where we talked and laughed.

Unfortunately, the treatment didn't work and she died in April 2020. It took 14 months from when she was diagnosed to her passing away. A part of me regrets that she didn't go to the doctor sooner but I know I can't dwell on this. I just have to remember what a fantastic person she was and I'm grateful I got to spend some time with her before she passed away. We all miss her, customers and colleagues alike. Miranda was a very stubborn person and always sat on till 14 so we all think of her when we walk past her till.

What do you like about being a rep?

I love being a rep. I love helping people. Every time I help someone with a work issue or even a personal issue I feel like I have done something worthwhile that day. To be a good rep you have to be very open-minded, non-judgemental and you have to consider all sides of the argument. My father always told me that I would make a good lawyer. I didn't have the opportunity to pursue a career in law so being rep and representing members is the closest thing.

Have you got an experience or advice that would inspire other reps? *Network* would love to hear about your union journey. Email: network@usdaw.org.uk



Kishan at her store in Bristol

YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK

Network has produced this handy guide for reps outlining workers' rights.

This article will outline the basic contractual rights. Please note that many workers will also have contractual rights in addition to these statutory rights. These contractual rights may be better than the state minimums and provide better cover because of the agreements Usdaw has negotiated with employers.

Therefore, reps should always check employment contracts or staff handbooks for rights specific to their workplaces.

WORKING TIME, BREAKS AND HOLIDAYS

Most people have the following statutory minimum rights to time-off, rest breaks and paid holiday:

- 5.6 weeks' paid holiday a year (28 days for someone working a five day week).
- Part-time workers are entitled to the same level of holiday pro-rata (so 5.6 x normal working week).
- A 20-minute break when the working day is more than six hours.
- A rest period of 11 hours between working days.
- A ceiling of an average of eight hours' night work in every 24 hours.
- Free health assessment for night workers.
- A rest period of 24 hours in a seven-day period.
- A ceiling of 48 hours on the maximum average working week.

In many workplaces Usdaw will have negotiated better rights than the statutory minimum therefore always check employment contracts or staff handbooks for rights specific to individual workplaces.

Special rules apply to road transport. Please refer to Usdaw's drivers' handbook.

www.usdaw.org.uk/drivershandbook

PAID HOLIDAYS

- Everyone at work is entitled to at least 5.6 weeks paid leave each year.
- Full-time employees receive 28 days leave.
- Part-time employees will receive 5.6 x how many days worked a week.
- If contractual hours or pay varies, weekly holiday pay is the average weekly pay over the previous 12 weeks, including compulsory overtime, shift pay and contractual bonuses. Agency workers are also entitled to paid leave.
- Employers can choose to include bank and public holidays as part of the statutory minimum holiday entitlement.
- New starters are entitled to paid leave from day one, although employers can make employees build it up by allowing one twelfth of the total due at the start of each month.

When can you take your holiday?

Employees do not have the legal right to choose when they take their holidays. However most companies do have holiday policies that are a bit more flexible. Check the agreement/staff handbook for the holiday process in individual workplaces.

Leaving a job

Employees should receive holiday pay for any unused statutory holiday. If they have taken too much holiday, they will have to pay back their holiday pay.

In many workplaces Usdaw will have negotiated better rights than the statutory minimum therefore always check employment contracts or staff handbooks for rights specific to individual workplaces.

MAXIMUM 48-HOUR WEEK

The average working week should be 48 hours or less. Working time includes: training, travelling as part of work and being 'on call'. The average is normally worked out over 17 weeks however there are some exceptions where the average is worked out over 26 weeks.

Opting out

Employees can work more than 48 hours a week by signing an agreement to opt out. However, the employer cannot force employees to opt out if they do not want to. It is unlawful for them to dismiss employees or treat them less favourably for refusing to sign an opt out.

An opt out can be cancelled at any time, with an agreed notice period of up to three months. If no notice period has been agreed, then the employee will need to give a minimum of seven days' notice to cancel an opt out.

NIGHT WORKERS

Night workers also have limits on their hours as well as free medical checks.

Limits on night working

Employees should work no more than an average of eight hours in every 24.

The average nightly working time is calculated over 17 weeks. It includes overtime where it is part of the normal hours of work.

Health checks for night workers

An employer should provide a free medical check before an employee starts working nights, and on a regular basis at least once a year. Where possible, they should allow an employee to switch to day shifts on medical advice.

PART-TIME WORKERS

The part-time workers' regulations prohibit discrimination against part-time workers.

Part-time workers must be treated no less favourably (on a pro-rata basis) than full-time workers in all matters including:

- Rates of pay.
- Overtime.
- Contractual sick pay.
- Contractual maternity pay.
- Company pensions.
- Access to training.
- Holidays and parental leave.
- Redundancy.

WORKERS UNDER 18

There are more stringent rules for young workers:

- A maximum working week of 40 hours (with no opt out).
- A maximum working day of eight hours.
- A ban on night working (working no later than midnight and starting no earlier than 4am).
- A rest period of 12 hours between working days.
- Two days weekly rest.
- A 30-minute daily rest if working more than four and a half hours.

Study time

Udaw has negotiated time off for study leave with many employers therefore it is worth checking the staff handbook. Even if there is no specific scheme in place reps should speak to the manager to see what can be agreed.

SUNDAY WORKING RIGHTS

All UK shopworkers have the right to opt out of Sunday working, unless they only work on Sundays.

How to opt out of Sunday shopwork

Any employee can opt out of Sunday working, for any reason, as long as they give their employer a signed and dated written notice saying that they no longer wish to work on Sunday. The employee must give three months' notice in order to opt out unless Usdaw has negotiated a shorter notice period.

If the employee chooses to opt out of Sunday working the employer cannot:

- Dismiss the employee for refusing to do shopwork on Sundays.
- Select the employee for redundancy for refusing to do shopwork on Sundays.
- Make them suffer any other detriment for refusing to do shopwork on Sundays, for example denial of overtime, promotion or training opportunities.

Alternative hours

If an employee opts out of Sunday working, the employer is under no obligation to provide alternative hours of work on different days. Opting out may therefore result in a decrease in weekly wage.

Protected shopworkers

Employees who have been continuously employed as shopworkers in England or Wales by their current employer since before 26 August 1994 (or in Scotland since 6 April 2004), are automatically 'protected' from being required to work Sundays.

They can refuse to do Sunday work whatever their contract says and whether or not they have done Sunday work in the past. In addition, they cannot be dismissed, disciplined or treated less favourably because they refuse to work on Sunday.

Opting back in

An employee can opt back into Sunday working but the employer is under no obligation to give the employee Sunday work.

CHANGES TO CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Every worker has the right to have their main contract terms written down in a statement of terms and conditions within two months of starting work.

Terms and conditions can be changed with agreement from the employee. Change cannot be forced upon the employee.

Changes which have not been agreed by the employee which result in a cut in pay may mean an unlawful deduction from wages. Changes in hours or shift patterns which are particularly hard for women with families to manage may be indirect sex discrimination.

If an employer tries to force new terms onto an employee, then the rep must take immediate steps to protect the employee by lodging a grievance with the employer. They can also contact their area organiser for further support.

MATERNITY LEAVE

All women are entitled to Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML) of 26 weeks and Additional Maternity Leave (AML) of 26 weeks. It does not matter how many hours the employee works or the length of service they have.

To take advantage of OML and AML, the employee must notify their employer no later than the end of the 15th week before the week your baby is due that they are pregnant, when the expected week of childbirth will be and when they intend to start their maternity leave. Additional maternity leave begins when ordinary maternity leave ends, and it runs for a further 26 weeks (giving 52 weeks' maternity leave altogether).

An employee can return to work before the end of AML but must give eight weeks' notice.

Right to return after maternity leave

If an employee takes only 26 weeks' maternity leave, then she is entitled to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions.

If she returns after taking AML and there is some reason why it is not reasonably practical for her employer to take her back in her original job, she is entitled to be offered suitable alternative work.

Statutory Maternity Pay

An employee is entitled to a maximum 39 weeks' Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) if:

- She has worked for her employer for a continuous period of at least 26 weeks ending with the qualifying week – that is the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth.
- Her average pay in the eight weeks up to and including the qualifying week has been not less than the lower earnings limit for National Insurance Contributions, which is £120 from April 2021.
- She has properly notified her employer of the start date of her maternity leave with medical evidence of pregnancy (for example, a medical certificate).

If she qualifies then the first six weeks of SMP are paid at 90 per cent of her average weekly earnings; the remaining weeks are paid at 90 per cent of her average weekly earnings or the 'standard rate' currently £151.97 per week, whichever is lower.

PATERNITY LEAVE

Fathers or the partner of the mother of a new baby who has worked for the same employer for 26 weeks (by the 15th week before the baby is due) has the right to two weeks' paternity leave. This is also available to same sex parents.

Statutory Paternity Pay

Ordinary Statutory Paternity Pay is paid for two weeks at a flat rate of £151.97

If the father/partner earns less than the flat rate, they will be paid 90 per cent of their average earnings instead.

To qualify they must have worked for the same employer for 26 weeks by the 15th week before the baby is due (or if adopting by the week they are matched with the child); and have average earnings of £120 before tax. A guide to workers' rights can be found at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/211

THE RIGHT TO FLEXIBLE WORKING

All employees can apply to their employer to work flexibly. Employers have a duty to consider an application seriously.



PROSTATE CANCER DO YOU KNOW THE SIGNS?

When you're worried about your health talking to your doctor may feel tough but if you've spotted something unusual get it checked out as it could save your life

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK. Over 47,000 men were diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2018, making it the most commonly diagnosed cancer.

However, the pandemic has made it more difficult for men to approach their GPs over the last year. The latest data shows that since March 2020, urgent referrals by GPs in England have dropped by over 52,000. Some regions have been affected more than others, with the Northeast, Midlands and London seeing a greater drop in referrals compared to other parts of the country.

Prostate Cancer Facts and Figures

- More than 47,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer every year – that's 129 men every day.
- Every 45 minutes one man dies from prostate cancer – that's more than 11,500 men every year.
- 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime.
- Around 400,000 men are living with and after prostate cancer.

What is Prostate Cancer?

The prostate is a small gland in the pelvis, found only in men. About the size of a satsuma, it's located between the penis and the bladder, and surrounds the urethra.

Prostate cancer can develop when cells in the prostate start to grow in an uncontrolled way.

Some prostate cancer grows too slowly to cause any problems or affect how long a person will live. Because of this, many men with prostate cancer will never need any treatment.

But some prostate cancer grows quickly and is more likely to spread. This is more likely to cause problems and needs treatment to stop it spreading.

Who is at Risk?

- The chances of developing prostate cancer increase with age. Most cases develop in men aged 50 or older.
- For reasons not yet understood, prostate cancer is more common in men of African-Caribbean or African descent, and less common in Asian men.
- Men whose father or brother were affected by prostate cancer are at slightly increased risk themselves.
- Recent research also suggests that obesity increases the risk of prostate cancer.

Symptoms of Prostate Cancer

Symptoms of prostate cancer do not usually appear until the prostate is large enough to affect the tube that carries urine from the bladder out of the penis (urethra).

When this happens, the individual may notice things like:

- An increased need to pee.
- Straining while peeing.
- A feeling that the bladder has not fully emptied.

These symptoms do not

necessarily mean it is prostate cancer, some men's prostates get larger as they get older because of a non-cancerous condition called prostate enlargement.

Dying of Embarrassment

Studies show that men are reluctant to see their GP because they are embarrassed or ashamed of having their prostate examined. However, these symptoms should not be ignored, and the individual should see their GP as soon as possible. Failure to get checked out or a delay can be fatal.

Diagnosis

There is no single, definitive test for prostate cancer. The GP is likely to ask for a urine sample to check for infection, take a blood test and perform a rectal examination. The GP will also take into consideration, age, family history and ethnic group. If the individual is at risk, then he will be referred to hospital to discuss the options of further tests.

Further tests could include an MRI scan and later a biopsy.

Emotional Impact of a Diagnosis

Being diagnosed with prostate cancer can lead to the individual feeling a whole range of emotions including shock, fear, anger, stress, denial, mood swings, anxiety and feeling alone. These are all very normal ways to feel and may get better or worse in time.

If this is the case then it is useful to speak to the nurse, doctor, GP or

Further Information

■ www.nhs.uk/conditions/prostate-cancer/

■ www.prostatecanceruk.org
Prostate Cancer UK provides information on risk, symptoms, diagnosis, support groups, an online community and specialist nurses to talk through your concerns and answer questions.



someone in the medical team. They can listen to concerns and put the individual in touch with other people who can help.

Some men find it helpful to talk to other men with prostate cancer at a local support group or through an internet chat room.

Prostate Cancer UK provide a safe

space for men to talk, connect with others and ask questions.

Treatment

For many men treatment is not immediately necessary. If the cancer is at an early stage and not causing symptoms, the doctor may suggest either 'watchful waiting' or 'active

surveillance'. The best option will depend on age and overall health.

Some cases of prostate cancer can be cured if treated in the early stages.

Treatments include surgically removing the prostate and radiotherapy either on its own or alongside hormone therapy.



MATERNITY LEAVE AND YOUR PENSION

When preparing for the arrival of a baby it can be easy for a pregnant colleague to forget about her pension. *Network* guides reps through what happens to a woman's pension when she goes on maternity leave. The information below only applies to defined contribution (DC) arrangements. If reps have queries on any other pension scheme, they should contact Usdaw's pension section.

What happens to my pension when I go on maternity leave?

If your employer has automatically enrolled you into a workplace pension scheme they will be required to continue contributing to your pension scheme at the same level and on the same amount of pay that you were receiving prior to your maternity leave. However, your contributions will be based upon

your actual earnings during your maternity leave.

If your employer is due to automatically enrol you while you are on maternity leave, they will decide if you are eligible, based on your pay before you went on maternity leave. If you are automatically enrolled your contributions will be based on your pre-maternity pay.

If you take unpaid leave

If you decide to take a period of unpaid leave after your paid maternity leave, you do not need to continue contributing during the period of unpaid leave, but you can if you wish to do so. Your employer does not have to make any contributions on your behalf (unless your contract of employment states otherwise).

If you return to work

When you return to work you (and your employer) may be able to

pay extra contributions to make up for any period of unpaid leave depending on the scheme's rules.

If you go back to work part-time on a lower salary, this will mean that your pension will build more slowly so you may want to consider paying additional contributions. Most pension schemes will let you pay in more than the standard contribution amount.

If you do not return to work

If you decide not to return to work the money paid into your pension will remain invested with your pension provider until you decide to have the pension paid to you. Currently the earliest age at which you can do so is at age 55.

Maternity Leave and the State Pension

Your State Pension is based on your National Insurance (NI) record. Your National Insurance record is made



up of the number of years you have paid National Insurance for and/or how many years of National Insurance credit you have. Maternity pay is subject to National Insurance deductions. If your maternity pay is £184 per week or more, you will continue to pay National Insurance which will count toward your State Pension.

If you earn between £120 and £184 per week you will build up National Insurance credits but you will not have to pay National Insurance contributions. The full new State Pension is £179.60 a week; you need at least 35 years of qualifying National Insurance contributions or credits to qualify for the full amount.

Check your NI record

You can check your National Insurance record online at: www.gov.uk/check-national-insurance-record

For more information contact **0161 224 2804** or email us at: pensions@usdaw.org.uk

PENSION NEWS

SLOW DOWN OF AUTO-ENROLMENT PARTICIPATION

In April 2020 nearly eight out of ten UK employees (78 per cent) had a workplace pension compared with less than five out of ten in 2012 when Automatic Enrolment was introduced; however, 2020 was the first year to see unchanged levels of participation since the scheme was introduced.

DEFINED CONTRIBUTION (DC) SCHEMES TO SEND SIMPLER STATEMENTS

Under new regulations, the Government will require pension schemes to issue their members two-page documents highlighting in simple terms key information including the size of the saver's workplace pension pot and a forecast for their retirement.

The Government wants to encourage savers to build up their pension pots by ensuring they can easily see vital information about their finances in a simple format. The proposed changes set to come into effect in April 2022.

PENSIONS REGULATOR PUBLISHES ITS LATEST PLAN

The plan prioritises implementing the Pension Schemes Act, combatting scams and developing a framework for measuring value for money as it continues to respond to economic uncertainty following the Covid-19 pandemic.

AEGON REPORT LOOKS AT CAUSES OF POOR FEMALE FINANCIAL WELLBEING

In the average household women are more likely to take responsibility for short-term money matters like groceries, home help costs and short-term saving goals – by contrast men are more likely to be responsible for long-term financial plans

This focus on short-term finances means many women simply don't find the time to build a clear picture of their future self or a financial plan to achieve their long-term goals which hampers their financial wellbeing. Most women have to get to 55 before they close the gap on men and have a clear idea about what they want from the future

£1.8M LOST TO FRAUD

Action Fraud is warning savers to remain vigilant and protect their pensions, as figures from the national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime reveal £1.8 million has already been lost to pension fraud this year.

To protect yourself from scams, reject unexpected pension opportunities, such as free pension reviews or investment opportunities involving your pension, research who you're dealing with before changing your pension arrangements and don't be rushed into making a decision.

If you think you've been a victim of pension fraud, contact your pension provider immediately and report it to:

Action Fraud
actionfraud.police.uk
or by calling **0300 123 2040**.

MULTI-JOBBERS SHORT-CHANGED £76M A YEAR

Workers on the lowest salaries with more than one job are losing out on £76m a year in employer pension contributions due to an 'unfair' system, according to a study from Scottish Widows.

PENSION QUARTERLY BRIEFINGS

Information on a few significant events in the pension world can now be found on the Usdaw website at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/pensions

GREATER RISK OF BEING LOW PAID IF YOU'RE BLACK

Usdaw research finds that Black members are more likely to be in jobs and sectors that are less well organised, on insecure contracts and low paid

Usdaw Black members have been meeting with the Low Pay Commission (LPC), the body that sets the level of the National Minimum Wage each year, to share their experiences of living and working on low pay. The commission wanted to meet with Usdaw Black members to understand more about why it is that Black workers are more likely to be in low paid and insecure work.

Usdaw's own research shows that a much higher proportion of Black members are working in jobs and sectors where the union is less well organised including the fast food sector, cleaning and security roles. One in five Black members are working in these roles compared to just 1.5 per cent of white members. This means Black members are at much greater risk of being low paid, being on temporary and insecure contracts and to be unable to benefit from the improved terms and conditions negotiated by Usdaw.

Usdaw had already sent written evidence to the LPC, making a strong case for the National Minimum Wage to be set at a minimum of £10 per hour for all workers, thereby ending the appalling practice of employers paying youth rates. Usdaw also made the case for a minimum contract of 16 hours per week, for everyone who wants it, that reflects normal hours worked.

Commissioners asked how easy it would be to move to a different job in the local area and to therefore escape from low paid work. The unanimous view of members

was that this was not a realistic solution to the problem of low pay. Very often the jobs on offer were less secure and worse paid than the ones members currently had because they were in sectors where the union wasn't organised. Trade unions are vital in negotiating decent and stable work and studies show that whilst stronger unions help to promote the stability and security of employment, the weakening of unions in many European countries in recent decades has been damaging to the situation of lower paid workers.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Events like this

really bring home to the Low Pay Commission the realities of living and working on low pay. Reports and statistics are a powerful tool but when commissioners hear from our members you can see the impact that has on them. One member earning below £10 an hour spoke about a recent pay award that had been entirely swallowed up by an increase in his gas bill. It's this kind of personal testimony that makes such a strong impact.

"The role of the Low Pay Commission is therefore crucial in ensuring we value the work done by Usdaw members and other low paid key workers throughout the crisis."

AMONGST THE ISSUES OF CONCERN RAISED BY OUR MEMBERS WITH THE LPC WERE:

Low Hours Contracts

Commission heard first-hand what it's like to try and live and work on a contract which only guarantees around 12 hours work a week.

Sick Pay

Members had used up their contractual sick pay entitlement earlier in the Covid crisis and were now having to try and live on SSP if they needed time off work.

Short Notice Changes to Hours

One member, a single parent, said she used to get 4 weeks' notice of any changes to her hours but "that's gone during the pandemic".

Universal Credit

Members spoke about the impact of working extra hours on their universal credit entitlement; any additional pay they get from working over and above their contracted hours is clawed back so there is little point in working these hours.

Childcare Costs

The impact of childcare costs on the ability of low paid workers to work more hours and so boost their pay was raised. Members told the Commission that the high costs of childcare was a significant factor in their ability to work more hours even if they were offered them.



**USDAW MEMBERS
SPEAK OUT:**

Lebo Phakoe a retail worker from the London area told the commission:

“We are overworked and underpaid. The last year has been chaos.”

Raktima Sarkar from Cardiff used to work full-time and told commissioners: **“I cut my hours back after I had my son. No way can we afford childcare. Our workload has increased massively over the last year and we are all struggling.”**

Kelvin Blake from the Midlands told commissioners **“Even if we manage to get out of low paid work, someone else has to do it and what about them? What are we doing for them?”**



SORTING THE PHYSICAL ACHES AND PAINS AT WORK

Musculoskeletal disorders caused by manual handling pose a serious risk

While concerns about Covid-19 have been the understandable focus of everyone's attention over the last 16 months, other occupational health and safety issues have continued to cause serious ill health and injury. That is why we have focussed on significant hazards such as stress and slips and trips in recent issues of *Network*. In this edition we focus on musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) which include back pain, neck pain and upper or lower limb disorders. Along with work-related stress and lung disease, MSDs are a top priority for the HSE's Work and Health Strategy.

Why are MSDs a priority?

In 2019/20 musculoskeletal disorders accounted for 30 per cent of all work-related ill health cases and 27 per cent of all working days lost due to work-related ill health. There are MSD risks in all workplaces where Usdaw members work.

What are the risks?

Some risks are caused by manual handling – eg heavy weights, repetitive lifting, stretching or twisting. Others result from workplace design and environment – eg awkward postures, carrying loads up or down stairs, working around

obstacles, working in cold draughts. And others arise from psychological pressures – e.g. working to tight deadlines or targets, machine-paced work, high volumes of work.

Manual handling

One of the main causes of injury and long-term ill health, it is a major issue for Usdaw members because of the industries they work in. Under the manual handling operations regulations employers have legal duties to:

IDENTIFY manual handling tasks that cause injury.

AVOID those tasks where reasonably possible by changing the way the job is done.

ASSESS the risk from tasks that can't be avoided.

REDUCE the risk from these tasks to the lowest reasonably practicable level.

MANAGE these risks to make sure the control measures are working.

Health and safety reps can use their legal functions to help this process. When it comes to identifying tasks that can cause injury the most important evidence comes from listening to the workers who do the job. They know better than anyone what parts of the job are physically demanding. By talking to the workers they represent and drawing on their own experience, reps can identify the risks. A more methodical approach that reps can use is body mapping. This is a simple way of collecting evidence from a group of workers by asking them to mark on a chart which bits of their body hurt when working. Usdaw has guidance for reps on how to use body mapping and the health and safety section at head office can provide charts or survey forms that reps can use.

Assessing the risks

To help employers assess the remaining risks, the HSE has devised a range of tools - the MAC tool for

lifting and handling of general loads, the RAPP tool for assessing the risks when pushing and pulling loads and the ART tool for assessing the risk from rapidly repetitive work. These are all available to download from the HSE website, which also gives advice on how they can be used.

The TUC provides a useful link to the basic guidance and tools the HSE has developed to help reps work with their employers to tackle the risks.

Signposting HSE Material for health and safety reps:

www.tuc.org.uk and search **MSD_2018_Signposting.pdf**

Recently, the HSE has developed an online version of the MAC tool. The online tool is free to use for risk assessing individual tasks. If you use it to do a risk assessment you can email the finished result to yourself so that you have a copy to keep. This could be a useful tool for reps to use if they are arguing with the employer about the risk associated with a specific manual handling task. Online versions of the RAPP tool for jobs that involve pushing and pulling of loads such as trolleys or roll cages and the ART tool for repetitive tasks will also soon be available.

If reps want to try out the online MAC tool they can access it at: **books.hse.gov.uk/MSD-Assessment-Tool**

Managing the risk

Managing means keeping the risk under review to make sure that the risk assessment is still relevant and to check that the control measures are working. Reps can use their regular workplace inspections to check that the manual handling risks are under control. This is the stage where manual handling training may be appropriate. But the HSE has made it clear that any training that is provided needs to be specific to the job and designed to ensure that workers understand the risk and the safe systems of work they should follow. Generic, off-the-shelf manual handling training is not a substitute

for doing risk assessments and reducing the risk.

Other causes of MSDs

While manual handling is the main cause of MSDs, there can be other factors at work. Awkward postures, working around obstacles, working in cold draughts and working to tight deadlines or targets, machine-paced work or high volumes of work can all cause problems if there is not enough time for rest and recovery.

For workers who use computers the display screen equipment regulations can help when it comes to managing bad work-station design. The HSE offers useful guidance on its website that reps can use:

www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse

For all the other issues employers still have a duty to make work as safe and healthy as possible. So if there are issues with overwork or environmental factors such as cold draughts that add to the risk of MSDs they still have to tackle them.

Any reps who need further advice or assistance on MSDs where they work should contact Usdaw's health and safety section.

CONTACT

- **Health and safety officer**
Doug Russell
0161 249 2441
- **Health and safety assistant**
Tony Whelan
0161 249 2474
- **General health and safety enquiries email:**
healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk



H&S DUTY TO HOMEWORKERS



RESULTS OF TUC SAFETY REPS SURVEY

The TUC have published their 13th biennial survey of safety representatives. The 2020/21 questionnaire this year had additional questions specifically related to the pandemic and they revealed that many reps said employers were failing to follow covid-secure rules. More than 2,100 reps from several different unions responded to the survey.

Safety representatives were asked to identify the main hazards of concern to workers at their workplace excluding covid, and to identify the top five of their concerns in order of importance. Stress was their top concern at 70 per cent. The other main hazards of concern were bullying/harassment, overwork, harassment, violence and abuse and slips, trips, and falls. Please refer to the TUC Rep survey by visiting: [www.tuc.org.uk search safety reps survey](http://www.tuc.org.uk/search/safety_reps_survey)



One of the longer term changes arising from the pandemic is the growth of hybrid working – where office workers may end up working from home for long periods. It is already happening for some Usdaw members who work in call centres. The HSE say whether working from home or in the workplace homeworkers should be afforded the same health and safety responsibilities as any other workers. This means employers should conduct a homeworking risk assessment and inform employees of their significant findings.

There are a number of factors that employers will need to consider if home working is becoming a permanent way of working. Employers should consider if employees have a suitable home environment to work from home – is there the physical space to set up a workstation, is there a good broadband connection, what work equipment do they need, can workers get privacy when home working and are there other pressures such as carer responsibilities or relationship problems or even domestic violence issues.

Display screen equipment regulations (DSE) will apply to homeworkers.

This means that an assessment of the workstation should be completed. Employers need to provide payment

for eyesight testing and suitable equipment such as an office chair, separate keyboard and stand for the laptop. If a worker requires specialised DSE equipment employers should meet those needs where possible.

Homeworkers should also have an accident reporting mechanism in place. So workers can report - aches, pains or discomfort related to their DSE arrangements and adverse effects of working in isolation.

The key message is that Usdaw reps can still represent members and consult the employer regarding homeworker's health, safety and welfare concerns. Where home working is introduced we need to make sure that reps have ways of keeping in touch with members.

There is a legal duty on employers under the safety representatives and safety committees regulations to provide health and safety reps with facilities to allow private discussion with the workers they represent.

But reps may also need to build their own networks using WhatsApp or online meeting platforms such as Zoom or Teams to keep in touch with members.

HSE GUIDES AND CHECKLISTS

Display screen equipment (DSE) workstation checklist:

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.pdf

BACK TO WORK SUPPORT NEEDED

MORE LONG-COVID SERVICES ESSENTIAL

Poor access to occupational health services in Britain's workplaces is exacerbating problems faced by workers with long covid, according to the Society of Occupational Medicine (SOM).

The occupational doctors' organisation says at least two million people in the UK have experienced ongoing debilitating symptoms following Covid-19 infection, but only half the UK workforce can access occupational health support to enable their return to work.

SOM points to TUC research suggesting 5 per cent of people with long covid have already been forced out of their jobs, and warns a 'significantly larger percentage remain at risk without adequate understanding and support for this new syndrome.'

Professor Ewan Macdonald, chair of the SOM long covid multidisciplinary group, said: "Many people with long covid have not been in hospital, have not had their health problems properly assessed, and generally neither have they had appropriate rehabilitation – they



often have not been understood by their doctors and they have struggled to get advice."

Heading a series of recommendations, SOM says 'the NHS needs to support long covid patients return to work with access to occupational health, as occurs in

Finland.'

SOM report: www.som.org.uk/urgent-need-occupational-health-people-long-covid

TUC report on the effects of long-Covid on workers: [www.tuc.org.uk search long covid](http://www.tuc.org.uk/search%20long%20covid)
www.usdaw.org.uk

KEEPING BRITAIN WORKING... BUT NOT SAFE

ZERO CONVICTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS BREACHING CORONAVIRUS SAFETY RULES

The Labour Party has condemned the 'outrageous decision' following a review by the HSE not to re-classify Covid-19 from 'significant' to a 'serious workplace risk'. This comes after rising cases and deaths in people of working age. Official statistics also show there were 3,872 workplace outbreaks, yet not a single employer has faced prosecution for breaching safety

regulations over Covid-19.

Shadow secretary Andy McDonald said "the decision shows that the Government is putting working people and the wider public at risk. With rising case numbers of the Delta variant, this decision is deeply irresponsible and shows that the government is failing to keep working people safe."

Hazards magazine is strongly

critical of the HSE's defence of its 'significant' consequence descriptor for work-related Covid-19. They said 'the HSE wasn't keeping Britain safe. It was keeping Britain working.'

www.labour.org.uk/press
www.hazards.org/infections/Rubbed-Out-Executive-Summary.pdf

healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk

MemberOffers

Some offers are temporarily unavailable due to the coronavirus pandemic but remind your members to keep checking the website for regular updates.

CARS & TRANSPORT

Car Hire
Car Maintenance
Car Parking: Q-Park
Fiat
Startrescue
Vauxhall Cars

INSURANCE

Accident Protection Cover
Car/Home/Travel Insurance
Gadget Insurance
Life Insurance
Pet Insurance
50+ Personal Accident Cover
Free £5,000 Accidental Death Cover

MONEY & FINANCE

Debt Advice
Financial Advice
Mortgage Advice
Pensions Advice
Pensions Annuity Service
Shepherds Friendly Savings
The Co-op Credit Union

HEALTH & BEAUTY

Comfort Insoles
Gym Membership
My Active Discounts
Usdaw Health Plan
Usdaw Dental Plan
Vision Express

LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

Beer52
Cinema at home: Chili.com
Cinema Tickets
Discount Card
English Heritage
Go Ape
Golf Membership
Magazine App: Readly
Magazine Subscriptions
National Trust Gift Cards
Online Ticket Store
SAA Art Membership
Theme Parks & Attractions
Virgin Experience Days

HOLIDAYS

Airport Parking, Lounges & Hotels
Away Resorts
Cottage Breaks
James Villa Holidays
Lost Luggage Protection
Parkdean Resorts
Pontins
Wightlink Ferries

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Charles Tyrwhitt
Crown Decorating Centres
Dell
Discount Card
Domestic Appliances
Gift Card Savings
Magazine Subscriptions
Usdaw Prepaid Cashback Card
UsdawRewards Cashback
Virgin Wines

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Gas and Electric
Mobile Phones
TOTUM Pro Card
International Student ID



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www.usdaw.org.uk/legal

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Beat Energy Price Rises

Since launching Usdaw Collective Energy Switch in 2018, Usdaw members have **saved over £130,000** by grouping together to get a better deal on their gas and electricity. It's quick and easy with no obligation to switch. See if you can save money by joining the next auction – just in time for winter!

How it works: Register your interest for free before 12th October 2021. Our partner iChoosr holds an auction where energy suppliers compete for your custom. You will receive a personal offer detailing your potential savings. Decide – stick or switch. If you switch our partner iChoosr takes care of the entire process. To find out more go to: www.usdaw.org.uk/switch*



HGV RULE CHANGE RISK

The Government's relaxation of lorry driver hours risks fatigue, accidents and fatalities.

Following an announcement by the Department of Transport Usdaw urges the Government not to compromise safety on roads by extending heavy goods vehicle drivers' hours.

What are the changes?

On the 7 July the Government announced a temporary relaxation of the retained EU drivers' rules. This relaxation initially applies from 12 July 2021 to 8 August 2021, however the Government has already launched a consultation to extend this to 3 October 2021.

Why are they making the changes?

The Government says the changes will attempt to reduce the current pressure on local and national supply chains, which are being caused by the national shortage of HGV Drivers. Estimates suggest that there is now a shortage of more than 100,000 drivers in the UK.

Significant disruption is being caused across a range of sectors, with gaps appearing on food shelves and building projects having to be delayed.

The crisis is expected to deepen in the coming months as the economy reopens.

How can companies relax the rules?

Companies can temporarily relax the drivers' hours rules in one of two ways:

- The daily driving limit can be increased from 9 hours to ten hours, with two 11 hours shifts permitted twice a week.
- The requirement to take a regular weekly rest period of 45 hours in a two-week period can be replaced with an alternative pattern of weekly rest periods, and an increase to the fortnightly driving limit from 90 hours to 99 hours. This enables two consecutive reduced weekly rest periods to be taken.

Notification to relax the rules

Employers making use of the relaxed rules need to notify the Department for Transport, and failure to do so may lead to follow up investigatory action. Drivers must note on the back of their tachograph charts or printouts the reasons why they are exceeding the normally permitted limits.

Safety Concerns

The changes have been met with widespread concern over driver safety.

The changes to drivers' working hours are dangerous and increase the chances of road accidents.

The relaxation brings with it a real risk that health and safety will be compromised, with potentially disastrous results for both HGV drivers and other road users. Drivers operating under the original rules, which were put in place for safety reasons, were often already facing fatigue and working long hours.

Udaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Relaxing drivers' hours rules does not address the wide range of causes of the current shortage of drivers. These include lockdowns having halted the training and testing of new drivers, the ageing workforce, changes to the IR35 tax rules, Brexit, and also drivers seeking other careers due to poor pay and working conditions.

"Instead of worsening drivers' working conditions, the Government should be making the industry more attractive by improving employment rights and ensuring higher pay for workers.

"Udaw believes that the health and safety of drivers must always come first. Drivers should only work longer hours where they feel they are able to do so safely and should not be forced to work longer hours than they are comfortable with. Any practical implementation of the temporary relaxation should be through agreement between employers and Usdaw reps"



LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

When you're looking after everyone else it can be easy to forget that you also need support

Usdaw reps have done an amazing job looking after our members during the exceptionally difficult time since the coronavirus pandemic began last year. Now we want to support our reps to take the time to look after their own mental health.

Our mental health bitesize course will help you learn more about the common mental health conditions. You'll learn how to spot the signs of stress, get advice on starting a conversation and find

guidance on seeking additional help. The course can also be used to assist you in supporting members – but the advice it contains applies to everyone. And like all our bitesize courses, it can be taken anytime, anywhere, using your phone, tablet or computer.

Register for the bitesize course and check out the vast array of resources available via the website.

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

For a complete list of Usdaw publications and to order visit:
dtp.usdaw.co.uk/PublicationsCatalogue

NEW IN!

Leaflets

Join Usdaw Today
(Lft 261)

Working Carers Know Your Rights
(Lft 343)

Working Parents Know Your Rights
(Lft 381)

Workers' rights - a guide for full-time and part-time workers
(Lft 211)

Online Courses

Fit for Maths – Bitesize Maths course
www.usdaw.org.uk/fitformaths

Maths and Money Matters – Maths Bitesize Course
www.usdaw.org.uk/mathsmatters

Mental Health Course
www.usdaw.org.uk/MHcourse

More than Words – English Bitesize course
www.usdaw.org.uk/morethanwords

A Play on Words – English Bitesize course
www.usdaw.org.uk/English

Shop 'til you drop – Bitesize Maths course
www.usdaw.org.uk/maths

Summertime Song Birds
Bitesize English course

ABCs of ICT – IT bitesize course
www.usdaw.org.uk/ABCsofIT

Health and Safety during Covid-19
www.usdaw.org.uk/Covid19course

Mind your Head – Bitesize Mental Health course
www.usdaw.org.uk/mindyourhead

CV Writing – IT bitesize course
www.usdaw.org.uk/cvwriting

ACTIVE & INFORMED

AS AN USDAW ACTIVIST THERE'S A LOT TO DO AND A LOT TO REMEMBER, BUT DON'T WORRY THERE IS ALWAYS HELP AT HAND VIA YOUR AREA ORGANISER, THE USDAW WEBSITE OR OUR HANDY ACTIVE & INFORMED PAGE

ARENA

Arena magazine is posted out to every member. Make sure you have a few spare copies to show potential members or for the noticeboard – you can download copies from Usdaw's website: www.usdaw.org.uk/arena

TRAINING

Reps in workplaces where Usdaw is recognised by the employer have rights to time off for training. It is vital that all new reps attend Usdaw training courses. Union training can give you the knowledge, skills and confidence to better support your members. Usdaw courses are friendly and informal and there are no exams. They are a great way to develop your reps' network as you will meet reps from different workplaces from up and down the country. You can share knowledge, experiences and develop your own support network. You will receive information on training courses from your area organiser. Usdaw courses run in your region.

DATA PROTECTION

As a rep you will regularly come across personal data and information about your members. Data Protection is therefore an important aspect of the rep's role and you will need to deal with personal data fairly, securely and confidentially. The union has produced a booklet and an online short course that provides guidance for you to follow. For more details go to:

www.usdaw.org.uk/gdprguide

NOTICEBOARD

This should be changed and updated regularly. You should also display the names and contact details of all the reps in your workplace on your noticeboard so members know where to find you. Don't forget to promote Usdaw's success stories on your noticeboard.

CAMPAIGNS

Usdaw prides itself on being the campaigning union. Our successful campaigns include; Freedom From Fear, Parents and Carers, Time For Better Pay and Save Our Shops – these are down to the hard work of reps who continue to stand up for members wherever they work, whatever they do. Campaigns are a great way of getting members involved. Contact your area organiser if you are interested in running a campaign in your workplace.

LEAFLETS & FLYERS

Usdaw produces lots of different leaflets, posters and merchandise. Make sure you order leaflets or materials specific to your workplace or company and leave them on canteen tables, noticeboards or in staff rooms.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

You can contact us regarding any workplace experiences, success stories, organising initiatives or campaigns you have been involved in. Please keep us up-to-date, you can do this either by email, telephone or through your area organiser.

WWW.USDAW.ORG.UK

The internet is a great way of getting information to and for your members. Visit the Usdaw website where you will find leaflets, communications, campaigns and lots of useful information about the union.

EMAIL

You can sign up to receive regular news and campaign alerts by email from Usdaw's website.

Share your success stories at: network@usdaw.org.uk or tweet us at



@usdawunion

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A South Wales and Western Region

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Plymouth 01752 765930

C Eastern Region

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London 020 7323 5550
Waltham Cross 01992 709280

E Midlands Region

Redditch 01527 406290
Kegworth 01509 686900

F North Eastern Region

Leeds 0113 232 1320
Newcastle 0191 296 5333

G Scottish Region

Edinburgh 0131 556 5242
Aberdeen 01224 652820
Glasgow 0141 427 6561

H Southern Region

Faversham 01795 532637
Andover 01264 321460
Morden 020 8687 5950

K North West Region

Preston 01772 704003
Belfast 028 9066 3773
Warrington 01925 578050



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

View and download the reps handbooks
and courses to keep yourself fully
up-to-date.

www.usdaw.org.uk/RepsHandbook



Campaigning
For Equality

LGBT

Supporting LGBT Workers and Tackling LGBT Harassment



To find out more about Usdaw's equalities work
visit www.usdaw.org.uk/equalities

To join Usdaw visit www.usdaw.org.uk/join
or call 0800 030 80 30

for your
noticeboard