

NETWORK



The bimonthly magazine for Usdaw activists | www.usdaw.org.uk | March/April 2012



SPOTLIGHT ON BUDGET CUTS

Many families face severe reductions in their household income as cuts to Working Tax Credits are set to bite

■ Activist in depth

South Wales and Western division's Kay Timbrell talks about her role as a rep
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■ Political Conference

Activists are being urged to get involved in local and national politics to oppose Government cuts
pages 24 – 25



■ Membership Week

The second recruitment drive will be held in June – reps should prepare now
pages 15 – 18



Cruel credit cuts

General secretary John Hannett's comment



Usdaw has teamed up with some of the UK's leading charities and the Citizens' Advice Bureau to protest against the forthcoming cuts in working families tax credits. These have to be some of the most ill-thought out and downright cruel cuts since the benefit cuts during the depression of the 1930s. The change, due in April, will remove working tax credit from up to 212,000 couples working between 16 and 24 hours, leave many of those affected worse off in work than on benefits and put 424,000 adults and 470,000 children at risk of falling into poverty. This is because the Tory-led Coalition has told couples with children they now have to work at least 24 hours, up from the previous 16, to qualify for working tax credit. We all know there are very few extra hours to be had in Usdaw sectors. It makes no sense at a time of nearly three million unemployed, hours cuts by the employers and economic stagnation. Our members are telling us loud and clear their hours are being cut that's why we are urging employers to review their policies on hours. We have wasted no time in highlighting these cuts to our members and we have also written to the prime minister urging him to postpone these changes. Reps can do their bit by lobbying their local MP to put pressure on the Government to make it think again and to stop penalising hard-working families.

John McGarry

One of the most important roles in the running of Usdaw is the executive and administrative officer and I want to pay tribute to my colleague and friend John McGarry who retired in March.

John served Usdaw for 38 years, very few people do that, starting at central office as a clerical worker and rising through the ranks to play a pivotal part, especially in how Usdaw has modernised itself over the last eight years. I cannot overestimate how important this process has been and because of it Usdaw finds itself in a strong and confident place. John has also been a pillar of strength for me and without his support, usually behind the scenes, I know my role would have been so much harder. I want to thank John on behalf of everyone at central office, the executive council, the organising staff and all the reps and members he has looked after over his illustrious career. John was never one who sought the limelight but his dedication and commitment to Usdaw has been total and we all wish him a happy and healthy retirement – he deserves it.

Usdaw
Union of Shop, Distributive
and Allied Workers

“Reps can do their bit by lobbying their MP to put pressure on the Government to make it think again and to stop penalising hard-working families”

USDAW

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Network is published
bimonthly and distributed to
Usdaw activists.

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For circulation enquiries contact your
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PRINTED BY: Buxton Press



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IN BRIEF

■ Usdaw slams Tory deregulation plans

Plans to introduce emergency legislation to force through an eight week suspension of Sunday trading laws this summer have been slammed by Usdaw.

General secretary John Hannett, said: "Our members are vehemently opposed to any further deregulation of Sunday trading hours and the Government's own consultation on this just last year showed that there is no widespread support from either retailers or the general public for change.

"Deregulation would do little to stimulate growth or create jobs, but would have a very detrimental impact on the lives of millions of shopworkers and their families. Any change would fly totally in the face of the Government's commitment to be family-friendly.

"To suggest that the current legislation, which allows shops to open for 150 hours a week, means Britain is 'closed for business' is frankly ridiculous. With ministerial aides apparently briefing the announcement out as a prelude to permanent change, and with the total number of tourists actually expected to be down this summer, there is understandable suspicion that the Government is trying to use the London Olympics as cover for its wider deregulation agenda.

"We intend to lobby culture secretary Jeremy Hunt to make it clear our members are entitled to expect some respect from the Government and for their views to be heard and taken into account before any decisions of this importance are made."

New executive set for April takeover

A newly elected EC will take up their three year term after ADM

Jeff Broome can look forward to another three years in office after he won his third presidential election victory in a row.

The sitting candidate secured 20,677 votes to his challenger Anne Hickson's 10,996.

The ballot for the executive council (EC) elections saw seven new members elected. In the North

West Danielle McCusker will be the first EC member from Northern Ireland to serve on the union's governing body. Other new members, who will take up their position after April's Annual Delegate Meeting, are; Linda Craven, John Barstow, Amy Murphy, Peter Devine, Maureen Bowen and David Chadwick Taylor.



President
Jeff Broome will take up his third term as president after ADM 2012

North West (K)



Danielle McCusker



Linda Craven



Jan Jervis

Southern (H)



John Barstow



Amy Murphy

Scottish (G)



Peter Devine



Susan Coutts

North Eastern (F)



David Chadwick Taylor



Pat Fitzgerald

Midlands (E)



Maureen Bowen



Barbara McAllister

Eastern (C)



Simon Vincent



Barbara Woolford

South Wales and Western (A)



Barbara Wilson



Dennis Stinchcombe

PENSION ISSUES IN THE NEWS AT BIG COMPANIES

USDAW CONSULTS AT TESCO

Proposed pension changes at Tesco will see members' future pensions linked to the Consumer Price Index instead of the Retail Price Index.

It will also see an increase to the age from which members can draw their full, unreduced pension.

The proposed changes are intended to help make sure that the Tesco Pension Scheme is financially sustainable while remaining open to new and existing employees.

Usdaw is consulting with Tesco over the proposals and any members who have questions should contact the union's pensions section at central office.

Scheme closures at Argos and B&Q

The decline of final salary pension schemes continue with members at Argos and B&Q the latest to be affected by scheme closures. Both companies are to replace their final salary schemes with defined contribution type schemes, where each employee pays into their own individual pension pot and gets a contribution from the firm too.

State pension increase

Due to high inflation in September last year, there will be a 5.2 per cent increase to the state pension from 6 April 2012. The full basic state pension will increase by £5.30 a week from £102.15 to £107.45. The married couple's combined state pension will increase to £171.85 a week.

Unilever workers set to decide their next move

Usdaw members at Unilever's sites in Leeds and Port Sunlight on the Wirral are currently being consulted on the next steps to be taken in their dispute



over the company's plan to close its final salary pension scheme and replace it with a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) scheme.

Following a second round of 24 hour strikes that hit all of Unilever's UK sites in January, the company agreed to talks at the conciliation service ACAS,

where a number of important changes to the CARE scheme rules were achieved.

However, Unilever maintained its position that the final salary scheme was

unsustainable. The company's improved offer was subsequently rejected by a margin of 2-1 by Usdaw members at Leeds and Port Sunlight.

As *Network* went to press members at both sites are being balloted on Usdaw's next move.

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OBITUARIES

**Former Carlisle area
organiser Ron Barrett**

Ron Barrett who spent 41 years on the union's staff died in January, he was 93. Ron first joined as a clerk in the Sheffield office in 1934 and rejoined the union after the war. He spent 34 years at the Carlisle office as an area organiser and was a well known figure in the local community serving as both a magistrate and a Labour councillor. He retired from the union in 1982.

**Former Liverpool area
organiser Arthur Duff**

Lifelong union activist Arthur Duff died in January, he was 89. Arthur joined the organising staff in 1968 and was based in his native Liverpool having been a rep in the wholesale meat trade for the previous 20 years. He retired from the union in 1987 but remained active within his local community. He also served on the industrial tribunal panel.

**Tribute to Usdaw's
two loyal servants**

General secretary John Hannett paid tribute to both men. "Ron and Arthur gave the best part of their lives to the union and wider labour movement to help members improve their lives. "Their loyalty and hard-work served the union and their communities very well. "We send our deepest condolences to their friends and families."

Tesco in 20,000 new jobs pledge

WELCOME IN-STORE BOOST

Tesco aims to create 20,000 new jobs in the UK over the next two years through significant investment in customer service, refreshing existing stores and opening new ones.

It also said it would invest significantly in additional staff hours and training and will improve stores to enhance the overall shopping experience.

The company said it also intends to expand its apprenticeship programme to provide 10,000 apprenticeships, with a

significant proportion going to new starters.

General secretary John Hannett said: "This is a very welcome and significant investment by Tesco and an urgently needed jobs boost for the UK economy as a whole and young people in particular. It's also good news for existing staff who have been under increasing daily pressure because of the squeeze on staffing levels and hours."

"For most businesses, staffing is a major part of their operating costs and can be viewed as an easy target to save money. However,



customer service is vital and if staff numbers are cut, then in such a competitive sector, shoppers will simply take their custom elsewhere.

"We have been raising our members' concerns about the pressure on staffing levels in the sector for some time now."

Labour leader drops in on Co-op reps

SCOTS REPS GET VIP VISIT

Reps and officials at the Co-operative distribution centre at Newhouse in Scotland played host to Labour leader Ed Miliband earlier this year. The leader of the opposition chatted with activists and held a question and answer session with workers. "This proved Scotland is important to the Labour Party," said divisional officer Lawrence Wason.



Ed Miliband with the team of reps and officials at the Newhouse Co-operative distribution centre in Lanarkshire

Work schemes not the answer

Usdaw is in talks with a number of major companies to examine their continuing participation in the Coalition's Work Programme.

The union, which has long-standing policy that opposes work experience schemes that involve people working for benefits or without pay, has been in discussions with a number of companies it has agreements with since autumn last year.

General secretary John

Hannett said: "Usdaw is not opposed to schemes that genuinely aim to give young people appropriate work experience or help long-term unemployed people get back into work, but schemes should be voluntary, participants should receive the rate for the job and there needs to be transparent checks and balances in place.

"It is becoming increasingly apparent that the Work Programme is failing to meet

any of these objectives.

"A number of companies have already confirmed to us that they will not participate in any part of the Work Programme while others have said they will not participate in any scheme that is not entirely voluntary.

"The unemployment crisis is never going to be solved by forcing people to work for nothing. What the country needs is a proper strategy for jobs and growth."

PEACOCKS SAVED FROM OBLIVION

MORE HIGH STREET GLOOM

Fashion retailer Peacocks has been bought out of administration by Edinburgh Woollen Mill, which has acquired 338 stores, 57 concessions, 3 distribution centres and the head office.

Although the deal will mean around 6,000 jobs are saved, 3,100 workers will be made redundant as the administrators announced plans to close 224 Peacocks stores immediately.

Around 250 Peacocks head office staff were previously made redundant when the company entered administration on 19 January 2012.

John Gorle, Usdaw National Officer said: "While this is a great relief for those workers whose jobs have been saved, it is absolutely catastrophic news for the 3,100 people now facing the dole queue and this remains one of the worst redundancy situations of recent years.

"Ushaw will be seeking a meeting with Edinburgh Woollen Mill as soon as possible to discuss its plans for the business."

Peacocks, with 611 stores and 49 concessions across Britain, had employed 9,100 people. But it went into administration having failed to restructure a key £240m part of its total £750m debt.



Those stores closing include more than 160 in England, 30 in Scotland, 20 in Northern Ireland and 11 in Wales.

■ Bonmarché, a division of Peacocks, was sold to a private equity company just prior to the parent company entering administration. Around 130 of the 230 stores are set to close.

Active reps get expert training

Sixteen branch officers took the chance to get five days training at the residential course specially devised for branch chairs and secretaries.

The tailor-made course looks at how the union operates locally, divisionally and nationally and informs reps how they can get the most out of the departments at central office.

The course is held at the national training centre in Warrington with accommodation provided by the union at a nearby hotel.



Branch officers at the tailor-made course in February

Strike suspended at Primark NI

Ushaw suspended strike action at Primark's eight stores in Northern Ireland after the company agreed to a pay increase.

If accepted, the hourly rate of pay for shop floor workers will rise from the current £6.84 an hour to £7.14 an hour from April this year. The offer involves a one per cent increase from 1 January 2012 followed by a further

increase of 1.88 per cent from April 2012. In addition, and also from this April, the current Christmas bonus of one week's pay will instead be incorporated into the basic hourly rate.

Members had voted in favour of taking strike action in March in protest at Primark's decision to impose a two year pay freeze on staff. The union is currently balloting members.



IN BRIEF

2012 Forthcoming events for your diary

April

22–25 April
Annual Delegate Meeting

28 April
Workers' Memorial Day
TUC Day of Action on Health & Safety

May

12–18 May
Adult Learners Week

June

09–10 June
Southern Divisional Conference

18–24 June
Membership Week

23–24 June
North West Divisional Conference

July

12 July
National Pensions Conference

13–15 July
Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival

September

01–08 September
First Series Summer School

10–13 September
TUC Conference

15–22 September
Second Series Summer School

30 September –
04 October
Labour Party Annual Conference

October
13–14 October
Retail Trades Conference

November

03–04 November
National Youth Weekend
www.usdaw.org.uk/events

Marge Carey MBE

The general secretary pays tribute to one of the most high profile and groundbreaking officials

I want to pay tribute to our former president, divisional officer and a close friend Marge Carey, who sadly died in January after a two year battle with motor neurone disease. She was 73.

Marge was an unwavering and doughty fighter for workers' rights who never lost touch with her members on the shop floor and was an inspiration for many women members in both Usdaw and the wider labour movement.

Marge was born in Middlesbrough and her family moved to Liverpool soon after. She became an Usdaw member in 1972 when she started work at Vernons Pools. Marge soon became a union rep and her talent, drive and determination to represent her fellow workers led to her promotion to Usdaw's organising staff in 1978.

In 1990, Marge was appointed divisional officer for the North West, only the second woman to hold such a senior position in the union. It was during this time she returned to her Pools

beginnings, leading the union's fight against the introduction of the national lottery. That campaign was unsuccessful but her warnings of thousands of job losses in the industry came true with the workforces at both Vernons and Littlewoods devastated in the lottery's very first year.

Marge became the second woman to be elected president of Usdaw in 1997 and she was re-elected in 2000 and 2003 before stepping down in 2006. During her nine year stint, Marge chaired the union's annual delegate meeting, her friendly yet authoritative style

winning her many admirers. Marge also sat on the TUC General Council from 1998 to 2006. Marge's dedication and hard work was recognised in the 1998 New Year's Honour List when she was awarded the MBE for her services to industrial relations.

Marge never lost sight of her roots, always put her members first and she was instrumental in helping develop hundreds of Usdaw reps, activists and officials. She remained a fighter and advocate for working people throughout her retirement and even during her rapidly advancing illness, just last

year helped to raise more than £2,000 for the Merseyside Branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association

Marge may have been small in stature but she made a big impression on both Usdaw and the labour movement and she will be missed by the many hundreds of people whose lives she touched.

Marge is survived by her son Vic and daughter Jackie.

John Hannett
General secretary

Marge Carey (l-r) with the then prime minister Tony Blair; receiving gifts on her retirement as president from Paddy Lillis and John Hannett in 2006; and presiding at one of her nine ADMs



Usdaw mourns sad loss of Belfast's Bob Gourley



One of the most popular and influential trade unionists in Northern Ireland Bob Gourley died in January, he was 68.

The former area organiser was based in the Belfast office for all of his 23 years' service with Usdaw after his appointment in 1982. He retired in 2005.

Bob was a lifelong trade unionist having spent 24 years as an activist and

convenor with the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers before he joined Usdaw.

He also played a major role in the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in Northern Ireland and was a strong supporter of the peace process.

Deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis a close friend of Bob paid this tribute. "Northern Ireland and Usdaw have lost a great man. Bob was very well respected by

both communities because he worked tirelessly for the union, for the wider movement and, most importantly, for the peace process. He was my mentor when I was an activist and I know he encouraged many others like me. I was proud to call him my friend.

"Our deepest condolences go out to his daughter Linda, son Robert and everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him."

JOHN GIVES UP CENTRAL ROLE

Lifelong Usdaw man John McGarry, former executive and administration officer, has called time on his 38 years with Usdaw after he retired in March.

John spent seven years as one of the four central officials based at the union's head office in Manchester, before that he was the divisional officer in the then newly formed North West division taking on that role in 2001.

Prior to that he was divisional officer in the old Manchester division from 1992, where he had been deputy divisional officer since 1986. He had spent the six previous years as an area organiser at the Sheffield office after he joined the organising staff in 1980.

John, 55, began his career with the union in 1974 firstly as a clerk in the stationery department then later moving to the legal department. He won an

Usdaw scholarship to Ruskin College, Oxford, from 1978-1980, where he was awarded the Labour Studies Diploma.

"Thirty eight years with Usdaw is a long time," he said. "I look back with pride that in the different roles I have carried out I may have made some difference for our members, reps and staff.

"I leave the organisation in a strong position to manage the challenges which always face us, and hopefully have mentored and coached close friends and colleagues who will carry my mantle forward.

"In the footsteps of one of my great heroes I could retire to a small farm on the Sussex Downs and take up the hobby of beekeeping! Who knows?"

Taking up John's mantle is former deputy head of legal Brendan Duggan.

Brendan, 44, joined the staff in 1996 as a legal assistant and qualified as a solicitor in 2003. He was promoted to deputy head of the

legal department in 2005. Brendan had graduated in Law from Manchester Metropolitan University in 1990. "First of all I'd like to say a big thank you to John for all the good work he's done and also for all the help he's given me prior to his retirement," he said.

"I'm looking forward to building on John's achievements and working with the other central officials, staff, reps and members to take the union forward in what are very challenging times."

General secretary John Hannett added: "John has been a fantastic servant to Usdaw at all levels in the organisation and he takes all of our best wishes with him. His professionalism has helped Usdaw to grow massively over the years not only in numbers but how it manages and conducts itself. He's had a remarkable career. Good luck to him."

Executive and administration officers, left, Brendan Duggan with John McGarry

Roy takes final bow



South Wales and Western division's Roy Hewings retired in March after 27 years as an area organiser.

Roy, 61, was appointed to the organising staff in 1985 and was based at the Exeter office before transferring to Plymouth in 2004.

Before joining the staff Roy, an engineer by trade, had been a member since 1976 and soon became an activist while working as a driver with Home Delivery Services. He was also active in the local Labour Party.

"I would do it all over again," said Roy. "Maybe a little differently, but it's been very rewarding, at times frustrating, but overall very interesting for me.

"I've worked across all sectors and the best part of the job for me has been seeing members and reps develop in terms of confidence and stature. It's all about winning for members and there's no better feeling.

"I've a lot to occupy me in retirement especially some DIY and travel. I'm looking forward to it."

General secretary John Hannett said: "Many thanks to Roy for his loyal and conscientious service. I know he'll be missed in the division by both reps and members. We wish him all the best for a long, healthy and happy retirement."

HELPING HAND FOR MEMBERS

Chancellor George Osborne ignored the plight of hard-working families and instead cut the tax rate for people earning more than £150,000 a year in his March Budget.

The announcement coincided with Usdaw's Supporting Parents & Carers Spotlight Day that focused on the cuts to Working Tax Credits, which means working couples will have to increase their hours from 16 to 24 to qualify. Failure to do so will cost some families as much as £3,870.

General secretary John Hannett said: "Our members are at the sharp end of the Coalition's cuts and are really feeling their household budgets squeezed to breaking point.

"The chancellor offered no help to the hard-pressed workers as he refused to withdraw the attack on families' tax credits in particular his tax credits bombshell of £3,870.

"Contrast his approach to that of our reps who were out on Spotlight Day raising awareness of the forthcoming cuts and helping our members cope with reductions in their working hours. We continue to press employers to think seriously about staffing levels, hours allocation and shift patterns.

"Working parents and carers need all the help they can get to juggle work and their family responsibilities. I'm convinced the information we have put out will go a long way to putting members in the picture.

"The Budget proves our campaign must continue until we get justice for hard-working parents and carers."

■ For more pictures visit:
<http://www.usdaw.org.uk/spc2012>



1



5



2

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION...

- 1 Tesco Spytty Extra, Newport
- 2 Sainsbury's Alperton, Wembley
- 3 Whitgift shopping centre, Croydon
- 4 Tesco Yardley Extra, Birmingham
- 5 Tesco Extra, Coulby Newham, Middlesbrough
- 6 Warrington town centre
- 7 Tesco, Dunfermline
- 8 Tesco, Enniskillen
- 9 Usdaw members and general secretary John Hannett met with MPs at Westminster to publicise the Coalition's tax credits bombshell of £3,870

“ Working parents and carers need all the help they can get to juggle work and family life ”



9



9



4



7



3



6



8

MEMBER SERVICES



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Terms and conditions: 10% discount applies to Funeral Director professional services fees only (as detailed on the price list and estimate form provided at the time of arranging a funeral) and excludes discounts on supplementary services, coffin/casket selection, additional services and payments made on your behalf (e.g. clergy, doctors fees, crematorium/burial charges). 10% discount is not applicable on funeral plans. Both offers cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Offers valid to Usdaw members and their families until 31 December 2012. All offers are not retrospective. Our business terms and conditions apply. This does not affect your statutory rights.

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TAX REFUND SERVICE

Over **94,000 members** have used this service and so far received tax refunds in excess of **£3.2million**. Refunds average **£160.51** each!

To find out if you are due a refund, go to www.taxrebates.com/ref/usdaw, call the application information line **0845 058 2288** or send a SAE for an application form to: The Tax Refund Co. 43-47 Middle Hillgate, Stockport, SK1 3DG.



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Risk free, hassle free car purchasing for Usdaw members and their families.

- Massive choice
- Save ££££s
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Part exchange welcome
Finance available 

To enquire online visit: www.usdawdrive.co.uk or call **0845 122 6916**

FREE DEBT ADVICE

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

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

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

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



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Apply online: www.britanniarescue.com/usdaw

Lines open Mon-Fri 8am-8pm, Sat-Sun 8am-5pm calls may be recorded. Britannia Rescue is a registered trademark and is a trading style of the Liverpool Victoria Group of companies. 21017636 12/10



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Discounted rates on Gym Membership exclusive to Usdaw Members

Visit the following Usdaw websites for more information:

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LA Fitness: www.usdaw.org.uk/lafitness
Nuffield Health: www.usdaw.org.uk/nuffield



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For more information go to www.all4charities.co.uk

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ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH

South Wales and Western division's **Kay Timbrell** answers our questions on her experiences as a rep



“ I have achieved much more than I believed I was capable of ”

FACT FILE & TRIVIA

FAST FACTS

- **Age** 43
- **Employer** Tesco, Stroud
- **Occupation** Checkout team leader
- **Lives** Kings Stanley, near Stroud in Gloucestershire
- **Union positions** Shop steward, health and safety rep, branch secretary and stand-down rep
- **Branch** Stroud and Cotswold District A184
- **Usdaw Activist** Since 2007

MY FAVOURITE...

- **Music...** The Script and Snow Patrol
- **Book...** Anything written by Katie Fforde
- **TV programme...** Currently enjoying White Chapel and previously Spooks, both starring Rupert Penry-Jones!



TRIVIA

- **The best moment of my life...** Apart from my children – a hot air balloon ride across the desert in Arizona to see the sunrise.
- **In my spare time...** I like walking my chocolate labrador George in the beautiful Cotswold countryside.

Want to be the next activist in-depth?

✉ network@usdaw.org.uk

Why did you become an Usdaw rep?

As a member, with the help of Usdaw, I sorted out an issue with lack of security in the workplace. After being able to achieve this I felt encouraged to become a rep and continue to help others.

What's the best thing about being a rep?

Being able to support our members in difficult situations. I am most happy when a member says thank you and I feel valued – this does happen occasionally!

...and the worst?

If you are passionate about the role, as I am, you quite often give up the spare time you have.

Have you changed since becoming active?

I'm definitely more confident. When I first started I was reluctant to speak up in case I'd get it wrong. Now, with training and doing 'on the job' experience, I am more assertive and feel much more affective for the members.

What's surprised you about being a rep?

How much I personally would get out of it, ie the satisfaction of being able to help. I have achieved much more than I believed I was capable of.

What training courses have you been on?

I have attended both summer schools, the branch officers and many other Usdaw courses. Without these I would not have gained the knowledge and confidence - absolutely invaluable.

Have you been to ADM?

Yes, both as a visitor and as delegate, and couldn't have enjoyed the experience more. Fantastic to see the wheels in motion.

Is recruitment easy at your workplace?

Recruitment isn't too bad actually. I think this is due to rep pro-activity. If you are seen to be achieving, then non-members want a part of that.

What are the most important issues for your members?

In the current climate, it's the basic fear of losing their job. Moving hours around the business is another worry.

How would you improve Usdaw?

Extra support for reps, particularly new recruits, although this is currently being addressed.

If you were Prime Minister, what law would you introduce?

I'd improve the provision of mental health care and support in secondary schools. This area of education deals with a lot of cases of depression, stress and anxiety.

Look back over your life, are there any regrets?

I wouldn't change anything as all of life is an experience, good or bad. It's one long learning curve and develops us into who we are today.

What's next for you?

I am hoping to do Academy1 this year or next. In the meantime I will continue enjoying my present role but would like to progress further.

MATERNITY RIGHTS

Usdaw is challenging Government threats to weaken maternity rights legislation and reduce the amount of leave. Meanwhile Usdaw has teamed up to help charity ACLT find vital donors

Usdaw is working with other unions, the TUC and parents' rights charities to defend maternity rights, *writes equalities officer Ruth Cross.*

Under new government proposals, maternity leave could be reduced to 18 weeks. After this time, women would have the right to return to work and transfer the rest of their time off work to the father.

At present all women have the right to 52 weeks maternity leave although only 39 weeks of this is paid. Currently women can choose to transfer some of their maternity leave to the father, but only after they have been off work for 26 weeks after the birth of their baby. If the mother stops her maternity leave and transfers some of it to the father, this is then called additional paternity leave. Usdaw is very concerned at the proposal to cut maternity leave down to 18 weeks.

We believe women should have a minimum of 26 weeks leave after the birth of their baby. This should be for the exclusive use by the mother. The World Health Organisation and

the Government's own department of health guidelines recommend that babies should be exclusively breastfed for the first 26 weeks. We are concerned that women will come under pressure to go back to work after 18 weeks. This will come to be seen as the normal amount of time a woman should have off work.

Giving men the right to take more leave will not lead to them taking this up. Research shows that there is very low take up of leave by dads when it is either unpaid or paid at very low rates.



IN BRIEF

Cuts at equality office

The Government funded Equality and Human Rights Commission, whose role is to promote and enforce equality rights, is having its funding drastically cut.

There are plans to halve its workforce and to close down the Commission's helpline and regional offices. The helpline gives advice on discrimination to over 50,000 callers a year. Unions and the TUC are protesting about the cuts.

Pride of Usdaw

Usdaw continues to support local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (lgbt) Pride festivals. Members of our divisional equality forums are reaching out to lgbt workers, explaining the benefits of being in Usdaw. If you would like to get involved contact your local office. Look out for Usdaw at your local Pride event!

Contact equalities

- 0161 224 2804
- equalities@usdaw.org.uk
- www.usdaw.org.uk/equalities

Reps urged to back charity's call for donors

Usdaw wants to encourage more black and Asian members to donate bone marrow.

There is a desperate shortage of donors from these communities. Bone marrow contains racially specific characteristics so it's vitally important that black and Asian donors come forward.

Currently less than three per cent of donors on the bone marrow registers are

black or Asian.

Bone marrow transplantation is a life saving procedure for many blood cancers. It can also cure people who have inherited sickle cell disease. But black and Asian people currently have a much lower chance of finding a donor than a white patient. Around eight out of ten white patients find a donor compared to less than one in ten for black people.

The charity ACLT aims to

encourage more black and Asian people to think about registering to become a potential bone marrow donor. It will provide all of the relevant information to potential donors.

The charity is keen to stress that bone marrow donation saves lives. ACLT was set up by the parents of Daniel De-Gale who had leukaemia. Their son's only hope of survival was to receive a bone marrow transplant. A compatible

donor could only be found from the black or mixed race population. Daniel was lucky enough to find a donor which saved his life. His parents were told there was a 1 in 250,000 chance of having found a compatible donor.

Black and Asian people can make a huge difference to the lives of patients needing bone marrow.

To find out more contact ACLT on 020 8240 4480 or visit: www.aclt.org

TOP TEN TIPS TO GROW THE UNION

Step 1

Put together a team of reps and helpers

Remember the value of teamwork. If you can set up a team of reps it spreads the workload, encourages unity and provides mutual support.

If you're a lone rep ask your organiser for contacts at other sites from within your company and build up a network of contacts.

Step 2

Know your facilities

What facilities will management allow? What is in your agreement?

Will you be allowed to recruit and organise in work time? Will you be given an area where staff will come to you or do you have to go to them?

Step 3

Find the non-members

Know who it is you have to recruit before you begin. Use Usdaw membership lists, personnel records, etc, if you can get hold of them.

Step 4

Gather intelligence

Identify departments where major pockets of non-members are. Find out the reasons for this. Are there some issues that they are particularly unhappy about? Have they just never been asked to join?

Step 5

Prepare recruitment packs

Have ready made up packs to give to non-members. These could include an application form, recruitment leaflets and any special interest information. Try and tailor these recruitment packs to cover the issues you know to be important to your target groups.

Step 6

Make an approach

Make sure all non-members are approached to join and that equal attention is given to every non-member.

Step 7

Keep members on-board

This will give the union a profile in the workplace and it will be a chance for people to raise issues. Make sure you allow enough time and resources to listen to existing members along the way

Step 8

Don't forget organisation

This isn't just an exercise in recruitment. If it is seen as simply an attempt to get numbers into the union, people will not warm to it. You have to be seen to be tuned into and dealing with the issues in the workplace as you talk to members and non-members.

Step 9

Evaluation

Get your team together for a full report back and collate your findings— who joined? who didn't join? why?

Step 10

Plan your next move

Using the information gathered and your evaluation, formulate a plan to re-visit any department where you were less successful. Remember! The union runs plenty of training courses where these techniques can be practised and refined. Make sure all your reps and helpers go on training courses.



Twenty reasons to join the fastest growing UK union

- 1 Better pay and conditions
- 2 Help and support with problems at work
- 3 Protection from unfair treatment
- 4 Feeling that you are not on your own
- 5 Free legal cover
- 6 Grievance and disciplinary representation
- 7 Health and safety backing
- 8 Pensions advice
- 9 Training, education and lifelong learning
- 10 Professional representation, if and when necessary
- 11 Support from your fellow members
- 12 Promote equal opportunities
- 13 Improve job security
- 14 Protection from bullying and harassment
- 15 Protection from sex or race discrimination
- 16 Representation over contract changes
- 17 Promotion and career development
- 18 Have a say in running of business
- 19 Make work more interesting
- 20 Believe in trade unions

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18 - 24 JUNE 2012



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Usdaw
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

YOUR SERVICES | YOUR SUPPORT | YOUR PROTECTION | YOUR VOICE | YOUR UNION

BUILD ON SUCCESS

More members mean more influence, a stronger union and more respect for you and your team of reps. More importantly an organised workplace brings many benefits for everyone

Membership – what’s in it for workers and reps?

Better terms and conditions

Unionised workplaces have better terms and conditions than non-unionised. That’s a fact.

Management respect

Reps that truly speak on behalf of their members cannot be ignored by management. The higher the proportion of employees who are members of the union, the greater the credibility of the rep.

Management support

Management actively supports good reps in well-organised workplaces because they recognise the value they bring. This does not mean that there will not be disagreements but it does mean there will be a professional working relationship.

Less aggravation

In a well-organised workplace, problems are nipped in the bud and when issues do reach grievance or disciplinary stage, they are handled effectively.

A happy workplace

Everyone is happier when staff and management work effectively together. Reps in an organised workplace have a vital role to play in this.

A reputation for achievement

If the union is organised and managing problems smoothly this frees up time to get into more positive, rewarding issues. Instead of being bogged down with arguments, the rep can, for example, be helping to develop careers, via lifelong learning, and improve the quality of working life.

Being part of a successful team

Achieving an organised workplace is no easy task. If you are part of the team of reps that achieve this you can take great pride in it.

Personal development

The many skills reps practice in organising the workplace have a much wider potential. Successful reps often go on to use those skills in many other areas of their work and personal lives.

Respect!

Reps that have developed an organised workplace deserve respect from their workmates because they have made it a better place to work.



What does a well-organised workplace look like? How many can you tick?

- High level of membership.
- Members have confidence in grievance and disciplinary procedures.
- Reps have professional relationship with management.
- Members know who their reps are.
- Members know what issues the union is pursuing.
- Reps have ongoing recruitment plan.
- Reps always have a slot at staff inductions.
- Management keep reps and members informed of what’s going on in the business.
- Reps have good facilities from management for carrying out union business.
- Reps know where non-members are and why they are not in the union.
- All reps and activists have been on union training courses.
- Members strongly recommend non-members to join.
- Reps are involved in many positive things, not just problems.
- Area organiser is rarely needed for recruitment and representation.
- Area organiser works with reps to plan and manage union activity.

Auto-enrolment in pensions is coming

NEW PENSION SET UP DUE

If you are not in a company pension scheme then chances are that you will be enrolled into one soon as a result of new legislation, writes pensions officer Nick Walker.

When is it happening?

Auto-enrolment kicks off in October 2012 with the biggest employers starting first. That means that Usdaw members at the Co-op, Morrisons, Sainsbury's and Tesco will be among the first workers to go into the new system.

Who pays?

Between 2012 and 2017 all employers must start automatically entering qualifying workers into a pension scheme – this is called auto-enrolment.

Qualifying workers will be entitled to compulsory minimum pension contributions from their employer for the first time.

Workers who are between 22 and state pension age and have earnings of more than around £8,000 a year will qualify for auto-enrolment.

If you want to opt out of auto-enrolment you will have to apply but Usdaw is encouraging members to think seriously before they decide to opt out.



What are you entitled to?

A total minimum pension contribution of eight per cent of your wages with at least three per cent contributed by your employer.

The new minimum pension contributions will be phased in over six years between 2012 and 2018 but most of the companies where Usdaw members work already offer a scheme that is better than the new minimum.

Also, employee contributions receive tax relief from the Government which means that every £1 you pay into your pension only costs you 80 pence.

Why Usdaw is backing auto-enrolment

Fourteen million workers have no access to a pension scheme at work – that's half the UK's workforce.

We know that saving for a pension can be an added

financial burden for Usdaw members but with compulsory employer contributions and Government tax relief, auto-enrolment will help millions more workers to save for a pension.

Our state pension has become less and less generous over the years and the Government is raising the state pension age higher and higher. With state pensions and state retirement benefits, somebody else decides how much you get and when you get it. You're better off saving for a pension in your own right and that's why Usdaw is backing auto-enrolment.

For more information

Usdaw members can contact the pensions team by calling 0161 224 2804 or email: pensions@usdaw.org.uk

■ You can also sign up for the pensions home study course. Visit: www.usdaw.org.uk

IN BRIEF

■ Sweet compensation for factory workers

Usdaw has secured more than £200,000 compensation for 103 former employees of iconic Scottish sweet manufacturer McCowan's who were made redundant when the company folded in October last year.

New McCowan's Ltd went into administration on 16 September 2011 and production at its factory in Stenhousemuir was immediately stopped and all workers sent home.

Despite efforts to find a buyer, administrators Grant Thornton confirmed on 4 October 2011 that the company had ceased trading and that the factory, which had been producing sweets since the 1920s, was to remain closed.

Usdaw made a claim on behalf of its members for a Protective Award as McCowan's had clearly failed in its legal obligation to consult with the union before making its members redundant.

The Employment Tribunal in Glasgow agreed and awarded McCowan's staff compensation of 60 days' pay. General secretary John Hannett said: "Unfortunately, the majority of our members at McCowan's have still to find new jobs so they'll really welcome this compensation."

■ New rate for National Minimum Wage agreed

The Government has accepted the Low Pay Commission's recommendations for this year's National Minimum Wage (NMW) rates.

From 1 October 2012 the adult rate will increase by 11p to £6.19 an hour, the rate for 18-20 year olds will remain at £4.98 an hour, for 16-17 year olds it will remain at £3.68 an hour. The rate for apprentices will increase by 5p to £2.65 an hour.

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HOW YOU CAN TACKLE

Too many Usdaw members are being bullied or harassed at work, there is no excuse for it and rep

A bully is a person who deliberately intimidates or persecutes someone they work with.

The HSE says that while there is no legal definition, bullying can take many forms and can involve:

- Ignoring or excluding someone
- Spreading malicious rumours or gossip
- Humiliating someone in public
- Giving someone unachievable or meaningless tasks
- Constantly undervaluing someone's work performance

It says that bullies are often, but not always, more senior than the person they are bullying and that they may target groups as well as individuals.

The independent Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's (Acas) definition of bullying is often used in employment tribunal cases: 'Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, involving an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.' This definition concentrates on how bullies abuse their power relationship.

How common is bullying at work?

Bullying affects thousands of working people, as the following statistics show:

- A recent survey by Unison found that more than one third of UK workers had been bullied at work within the last six months – this is double the figure from a survey carried out 12 years earlier.
- Research by the TUC has shown that 47 per cent of UK employees

have witnessed bullying at work.

- The same survey estimated that workplace bullying contributes to the loss of 18 million working days every year.
- Bullying is a daily reality and a serious issue for many Usdaw members. It can take many forms, and is often, but not always, carried out by people in a position of power such as supervisors and managers.

What should I do first?

- Whatever steps you decide to take, you have the right to work in a safe environment. This includes not being harassed or bullied by anyone. You should not have to suffer in silence.
- Confronting a bully yourself is not easy. It's probably only effective in its early stages. Often, the bully is a manager, so you need to get good, confidential advice on what to do.
- Talk to your union rep in confidence. Your rep will be able to advise you, know the right procedures, and help you deal with it, formally or informally.
- Keep a record or diary. Record the date/time/place of important incidents, abuse, accusations, changes to your job or any unpleasant comments etc.

What should I do next?

- Try talking to the bully. But if you decide to do so, then first of all go over what you want to say with your rep who will talk you through what you need to do. Take your rep with you if possible/appropriate.
- Have a clear idea of what you would expect to happen. Then, tell the bully how you find their behaviour unacceptable. Describe its affect on you. Make a note of this meeting, who said what and the outcome. If this informal approach doesn't work, there are other formal options to use later.
- Make a formal complaint. Be well prepared. Familiarise yourself with your employer's procedures. Get a copy of your job description if you believe your harassment includes changes to your main responsibilities.
- Use your right to be accompanied at any meeting. Take your rep with you in any grievance hearing. This includes meetings with management on bullying.

Where can I get more information?

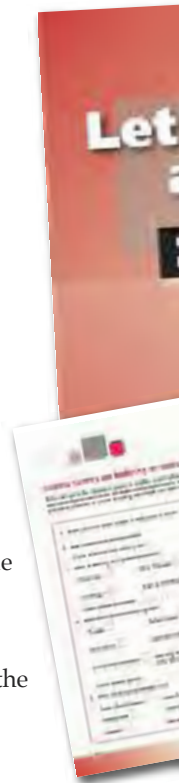
- Get a copy of your employer's bullying and harassment or grievance procedure (if they have one) – it may be in the staff handbook.
- Usdaw also publishes *Let's Put A Stop To Bullying At Work* (leaflet no.314). The TUC handbook, *Keeping well at work*, also gives examples of how people coped with bullying.

Bullying: At a glance

- Try and deal with it early
- Speak to your rep
- Keep a diary of events about what was said/done etc
- Register your complaint, informally at first
- If this doesn't work raise a formal grievance
- If this doesn't work appeal and/or move to the next stage of grievance
- Inform your local official

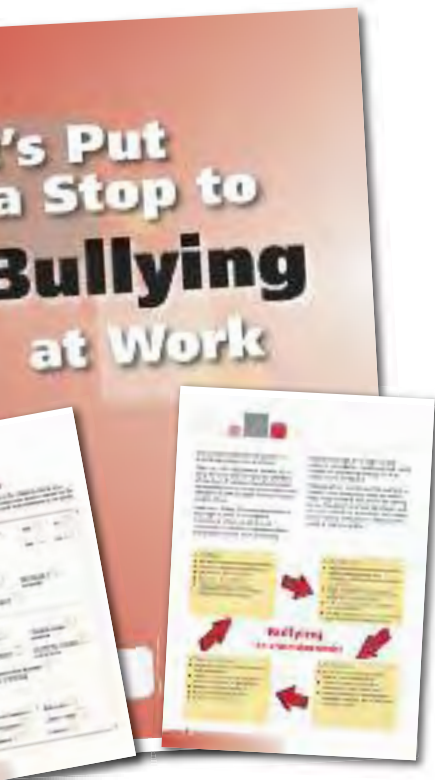
The central messages of Usdaw's campaign against bullying at work are:

- **You do not** have to put up with it
- Your employer **has a duty** to protect you
- There can **never be any excuse** for bullying at work in any form



STOP BULLYING AT WORK

Employers should do all they can to help, advise and support any member who is being unfairly treated



'Let's put a stop to bullying at work' (leaflet 314) has been produced to help Usdaw reps who want to raise the issue of workplace bullying with their employer. It also contains information for Usdaw members who are being bullied at work and sets out what can be done to deal with the problem.

What should my employer be doing?

Employers have a clear legal duty to tackle workplace bullying, harassment and intimidation, whether by supervisors, managers, fellow workers, or the public.

The HSE says that employers should:

- Devise and implement a

bullying and harassment policy.

- Promote a culture where bullying and harassment is not tolerated.
- Be aware of the organisational factors that are associated with bullying, and take steps to address them.

What are my legal rights on bullying?

There is no specific 'anti-bullying' law in the UK. But other parts of the law can usually provide protection and your employer can usually be held legally responsible for the ill effects of bullying that you may suffer.

If you decide to take legal action against your employer,

the options include:

- Using employment protection legislation to claim unfair constructive dismissal, or
- Discrimination on the basis of gender, race, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief, gender identity or age.
- A personal injury claim.

What if I walk out because I can't stand it?

- If you have resigned, either formally or informally, because you can no longer stand the bullying or harassment, you can make a claim for unfair 'constructive' dismissal.
- Your claim is made under employment protection legislation, and must be

submitted to an employment tribunal within three months of the day you last worked.

- Constructive dismissal cases can be hard to win, so this should be a last resort. Of course some situations are so bad that walking out is the only possible course

of action, but if at all possible you should take expert advice before doing so, and make sure you exhaust any internal procedures.

- Keep in touch with your rep and local area organiser who will advise you accordingly.

If I claim constructive dismissal, what do I have to prove?

- In constructive dismissal cases, a bullied employee argues that he or

she was forced to quit because of the employer's intolerable conduct.

- Constructive dismissal can be difficult to prove. You should be very careful

about resigning if you want to be able to claim unfair dismissal afterwards.

- The key legal test is whether the employer's failure to take action involved a serious or fundamental breach of contract.



THE ROLE OF THE REP

Representing members at a disciplinary hearing can be a regular part of the job so reps need to be up to speed on what they should do, *Network* gives an overview of this complex issue*

All reps should make themselves familiar with the company's disciplinary procedure. This is usually detailed in the company handbook and forms part of your contract of employment. Reps should insist all staff have a copy of or access to the company's procedure.

The emphasis now is on resolving issues in the workplace whenever possible and avoiding the need to go to a tribunal. Internal procedures should be exhausted wherever possible as both employer and employee could be penalised later at tribunal if they are not.

Being the subject of disciplinary action is obviously very stressful and reps should aim to provide all

necessary support to their members to ensure they are treated fairly and equitably.

Most disciplinary rules and procedures distinguish between ordinary misconduct, which usually results in a warning, and gross misconduct, which more often results in dismissal (dismissal without notice). It is important employees know the difference between these two sorts of unacceptable conduct.

There is no legal definition of what amounts to gross misconduct, although acts of dishonesty will almost certainly be regarded as such, depending on the seriousness of the act. However, the following examples (not an exhaustive list) have been cited by Acas as

potentially constituting gross misconduct:

- Theft or fraud
- Physical violence or bullying
- Deliberate and serious damage to property
- Accessing inappropriate internet sites or breaking the computer/IT policy
- Refusing to carry out reasonable instructions
- Unlawful discrimination/harassment
- Bringing the company into serious disrepute
- Incapability at work brought on by alcohol or drug abuse
- Causing loss, injury or damage through serious negligence
- Failure to follow health and safety procedure

THE EMPLOYER HAS TO INVESTIGATE . . . SO SHOULD THE REP

Many disciplinary procedures have informal and formal stages and employers should be encouraged to deal with cases of minor misconduct or unsatisfactory performance at that level. Reps should note that there is no right to be accompanied to an informal disciplinary meeting.

Most procedures begin with a verbal warning, moving through to written warnings, a final written warning and dismissal or some other serious penalty like suspension or downgrading/demotion. It is not always necessary for an employer to go through each stage of the procedure – the seriousness of the offence will usually determine which stage of the procedure applies.

When an employee is faced with disciplinary action the employer must carry out an investigation before any disciplinary action is taken. Failing to do so can make any resulting dismissal unfair.

The investigation has three purposes:

- To allow the employer to establish the facts
- To give the employee the opportunity to put forward an explanation and
- To make the employer aware of any mitigating circumstances

Reps should conduct their own investigation and should:

- Speak at length to the member and get all relevant information
- Speak to witnesses if applicable
- Speak to the management about the case to glean any further facts
- Consider if there are any mitigating circumstances
- Has the member acted out of character and if so why?



PREPARATION

Once the employer has concluded the investigation and decides to proceed with a disciplinary hearing this should be communicated to the employee giving sufficient detail of the allegation to enable the employee and rep to adequately prepare for the meeting.

- This should also include any evidence that will be used at the hearing.
- Reps should help the member check if the written allegation matches the original investigation; has the employee been given all the evidence, eg witness statements, and cctv, emails if appropriate.
- The employee also needs to be informed of their right to be accompanied and where and when the meeting will be held. The right to be accompanied applies to any meeting at which disciplinary sanctions may result.

TIMING IS VITAL . . .

The timing of stages in a disciplinary hearing can be important for a number of reasons.

- A requirement not to delay proceedings will avoid the stressful situation where an employee has an unresolved allegation hanging over him/her for a lengthy period.
 - Where delays occur, witnesses' recollections risk deteriorating and could make them more vulnerable to being inappropriately persuaded that something did or did not occur.
- For everyone's sake the hearing needs to be held without unreasonable delay while still allowing the member and rep sufficient preparation time.

SEEK ADVICE

- If you think the hearing could end in dismissal contact your area organiser before the hearing



BEFORE THE HEARING: ALWAYS DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Before the hearing the employee with the help of their rep should in moderate terms (without unjustifiably criticising anyone or appearing to be ranting) set out as many of their points in defence and mitigation as they can in writing

- At the hearing the employer should explain the charge and then allow the employee and/or their rep a reasonable opportunity to respond.

The rep can address the hearing and confer with the member during the hearing. The rep can also:

- Put forward the member's case
- Suggest an adjournment
- Sum up the member's defence and respond on the member's behalf to any view expressed at the hearing.

However, the rep cannot answer questions on behalf of the member where questions are directed at the

employee. They cannot address the hearing if the member does not want them to, or prevent the employer from explaining their case, nor can they prevent any other person at the hearing from making a contribution.

- Remember, members and reps are protected by law from victimisation arising from using or acting as a rep.

AFTER THE HEARING: CONSIDER THE RIGHT TO APPEAL . . .

After the hearing the employer must decide whether to take any action and should consider:

- All of the evidence
- The employee's previous disciplinary record and length of service
- The employee's explanation and any mitigating circumstances
- Action taken against other employees in similar circumstances – a disciplinary policy should be fairly and consistently applied

The decision should then be communicated to the employee in writing and should outline;

- The nature of the misconduct and the change in behaviour required
- The consequences of a failure to change their behaviour
- How long the charge will be held on record and
- The right to appeal the decision

All disciplinary procedures should give employees the right to appeal, failure to do so could see the employer penalised at tribunal.

- The appeal should be heard by a manager not involved in the original hearing and should be held within a reasonable timeframe.
- An appeal could be launched on the grounds of new evidence coming to light or a procedural flaw in the original hearing or if the employee considers the earlier decision unfair.

For further information visit:
www.usdaw.org.uk
www.lrd.org.uk
www.acas.org.uk

* Taken from: Labour Research Department *Disciplinary & grievance procedures – a guide for union reps*

REPS URGED TO TA

The national political conference saw the launch of Usdaw's Labour Supporters Network w

Usdaw needs a strong industrial and political voice, general secretary **John Hannett** told conference.

"Why? Because our members are facing redundancy, cuts in hours and job insecurity after the Tory-led Coalition began to implement its disastrous policies in 2010," he said.

"While I understand why members may have lost faith and been turned off by politics and politicians, I know that the vast majority of Labour MPs are as determined as we are to get Labour back into power and stop the Coalition's attacks on workers' rights, the NHS, education, pensions and help for the low paid.

"That's why we're launching our **Labour Supporters Network** to bring together reps and members who may

not consider themselves political, but who have important ideas on what sort of society we want to live in.

"Our members' voices, their opinions and their beliefs can help shape the next Labour Party manifesto and it's important we harness that to argue for a fairer and more just society."

Usdaw is the best advert for trade unionism in the UK, **Liam Byrne** MP, and chair of Labour's Policy Review, told delegates.

"That's why Labour and the trade unions should remain united," he said. "We want this Coalition to be a one term government but as the Opposition we can't afford to gaze inward at ourselves, like many previous Labour Oppositions have. We have to look outward and that's



Pictured l-r: general secretary John Hannett, deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis and Liam Byrne MP

why we are holding lots of events to listen to ordinary people, like Usdaw members, to provide a different kind of economy that doesn't make the low-paid pay for the mistakes of the bankers who caused the recession.

"Ordinary people can do extraordinary things but they need a Labour Government to help them."

Sign up now!

What does being a member of the Labour Supporters Network involve?

- Getting active with Usdaw campaigns or
- Getting involved in the campaigns either by: lobbying your MP by email, or signing a petition and getting your members to sign up too, or
- Making sure your members are registered to vote and encouraging them to use it both locally and nationally
- You will receive regular updates and information on what's happening
- You decide how much you do

What has the Tory-led Coalition ever done for you or your family?

Health & Safety

The Coalition was quick to announce cuts to funding for enforcement of health and safety.

- ✗ A 35 per cent cut in the budget of the HSE and 28 per cent cuts for local authorities (who inspect 90 per cent of Usdaw-organised workplaces) is already affecting their activity:
- ✗ HSE have been told to cut unannounced workplace inspections by a third.
- ✗ They have closed their telephone infoline and accident reporting call centre.
- ✗ Successful campaigns on major risks such as asbestos have been cut.

- ✗ The Government has called on local authorities to reduce their inspections by 65,000 per year.
- ✗ Money paid to the innocent victims of violent crime via the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority face a sharp reduction in compensation as part of a 'radical shakeup'. More than 17,000 violent crime victims per year, including those who suffer broken hands, need knee surgery or dislocate a jaw, are to be excluded entirely from the criminal injuries compensation scheme under the proposals.



TAKE UP CHALLENGE

which aims to highlight and fight the consequences of this Government's disastrous

Benefits

The Tory-led Coalition has admitted that their policies will increase child poverty. It is easy to see why. Tax credits, child benefit and childcare support are all being cut or frozen, costing each family with children hundreds of pounds each year. This is on top of cuts to baby benefits and housing benefit.

- ✗ Cuts to tax credits will become even more severe in 2012 and 2013 with some families losing up to £800 more in 2013.
- ✗ Couples will need to work longer hours from 2012, at least 24 hours between them to qualify for Working Tax Credits, rather than 16 hours as at present. This change will apply even if the couple are unable to find extra working hours or one partner cannot work because they are a carer. These families will lose up to £4,000 a year.
- ✗ Unemployment has risen to 2.64 million people, the highest level since 1994, when the Tories were last in power.
- ✗ The VAT increase from 17.5 per cent to 20 per cent in January 2011, is costing the average household £307 a year and £450 for families with children.

Workers' rights

All Tory-led Governments have attacked workers' rights – this Coalition is no different.

It will increase the qualifying period for unfair dismissal from one year to two years before workers can make a claim for unfair dismissal from April 2012. This will exclude employees with between one and two years' service from being able to make a claim.

- ✗ Fees of between £150 and £1,750 will have to be paid by applicants to employment

tribunals, excluding many who cannot afford to pay up front at a time of financial hardship.

- ✗ It is also looking at reducing the current 90-day collective redundancies consultation period to 60, 45 or even 30 days.
- ✗ It wants to simplify the rules when employees are transferred to a new company, but these give protection to staff to help them keep their terms and conditions when businesses are bought or taken over.

Pensions

The Coalition has brought forward the raising of the State Pension Age (SPA):

- ✗ In 2018 women's SPA will increase to 65, two years earlier than the Coalition promised.
- ✗ In 2020 the SPA for both men and women will be raised to 66 with 5.1 million people affected by 2025.

- ✗ In 2026 the SPA will increase to 67 for everyone.

The Government have also announced that it will bring forward proposals to increase the SPA further. Usdaw members will be greatly disadvantaged because most cannot afford to retire until they receive a state pension.

Young People

Young people have been particularly hard hit by the Coalition.

- ✗ Over one million 16-24 year olds are out of work, more than one in five.
- ✗ Long-term youth unemployment has increased by 93 per cent since January 2011.
- ✗ Abolition of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs). EMAs gave between £10 and £30 a week to 600,000 16 and 17 year-olds each year from households with income

of less than £30,800, to help them to stay on in full-time education,

- ✗ Trebling of university tuition fees up to £9,000 a year. The dramatic increase in tuition fees for new students from 2012 means students will be faced with debts of around £50,000 after a three-year course. This will put many young people off going to university, especially those from lower income families who cannot receive parental support.

Contact the politics section on: 0161 249 2452



getinvolved@usdaw.org.uk



www.usdaw.org.uk/usdaw4labour



THAT WAS THEN

Twenty-eight activists made it on to the 2006 Organising Academy, then in its fourth year, for an intense six months secondment with the union. Six years on seven are now on the unions' staff, and 12 are still activists. Network caught up with the class of 2006 to find out what they thought and, more importantly, what happened next.

Sue Prynne
Area organiser,
Faversham office

"The Academy definitely gave me the confidence to progress with the union when I returned to my workplace in the Wirral," said the former Bakemark worker. Two years later I was appointed an area organiser in the Southern division.

Suzie Green
Area organiser,
Plymouth office

"When I returned to work at Tesco in Plymouth I applied for a job at the Andover office in 2007 and was successful. I transferred to the Plymouth office last year."

Maryann Matthews
Area organiser,
Kegworth office

"I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for the Academy," said the former Co-op worker. "On my return I went out on stand-down and then joined Academy2."

"Before getting my current job in 2010 I worked as a lifelong learning project worker for the union."

Adam Skwierawski
Area organiser,
Bury St Edmunds office

The youngest member of the group, who was 23 at the time, said: "It was an incredible experience for me."

"I was working for Grampian Country Food Group at Elmswell, in Suffolk to help fund my studies."

"I became a rep but I was made redundant before my six months on the Academy was up."

"Luckily a vacancy arose at the Bury St Edmunds office and I got the job."

Nicola Scarborough
Area organiser,
Belfast office

"The Academy was both challenging and rewarding. "I had three months stand-down before returning to my job at the Co-op, and a year later I was appointed in 2008, initially at the Warrington office then I later transferred to Belfast."

Mick Soper
Area organiser,
Leeds office

"Coming from an industrial background it gave me a greater insight and understanding of retail and the issues."

"I enjoyed helping reps develop and organise their workplaces. That's why I wanted to work for the union."

Sandie Rowlands
Training officer,
Scottish division

"The Academy really is 'the chance of a lifetime'."

"With the help of Usdaw's tutors and many others I've continuously developed and now I'm working for the union hoping to give something back."

Susan Coutts
Executive councillor,
Scottish division

"I returned to work and used the opportunity to apply my new skills. We now have a team of reps in every position and hold regular team meetings," said the Tesco rep.

"I was also elected onto the Executive Council in 2009 and have just been re-elected for a further three years."

John Barstow
Executive councillor,
Southern division

"I'm also a union learning rep now and I've been promoting and arranging courses for members. I've also negotiated a discount scheme for Usdaw members in our local shops."

"And I've just been elected on to the executive council," said John who works for Sainsbury's in Pullborough, West Sussex.

Angie Gallagher
Tesco rep, Halifax

"The Academy was the start of a major change in my life. "After my six months I returned to work a very well-organised, capable and confident person. I also decided to get involved with my local Labour Party."

"And I've now been selected to stand as Labour candidate in my ward for three years running. And I'm very proud to say that during this time we've tripled the Labour membership."

Edie Hebditch
Tesco rep, Poole, Dorset

"After a great experience I went back to my store a completely different person, more confident and with more understanding of the union."

"I went out on stand-down a better rep than I was before the Academy. I was pleased to find out earlier this year I'd been selected for Academy2."

Ian Scott
Tesco rep, Dundee

"The Academy changed my perspective," said Ian, a baker. "Visiting different workplaces and dealing with different managers made me see things from both sides."

"I was lucky enough to be selected for Academy2 and I'm enjoying my role as a stand-down rep and divisional councillor."

Martin Ward
Wincanton rep, Gloucestershire

"If you want to make a difference the Academy's for you," said Martin a warehouse worker. "It was a tremendous experience for me moving out of my comfort zone and recruiting in retail."

Raymond Neal
Tesco rep, Newtonabbey, NI

"The Academy was a real eye opener for me. "Having to use my initiative and plan and organize my

**Academy
2006
in Numbers**

7
work
for Usdaw

12
are still
activists

1
works for
another union

5
are still
members

3
have left
the union



visits helped develop me far more than I ever thought possible.

"I haven't looked back."

Alexandra Gounelas
Activist, London

"I'd certainly recommend it, you learn so much," said the former Tesco worker. "I moved divisions and jobs and now work for Runners Need, in London. I'm still active and try to attend as many branch meetings as I can."

Sharon Davies
Former JD Williams rep,
Manchester

"The Academy gave me many things. It improved my confidence and

communication and organising skills.

"I'm working as a Care Plan Manager for the elderly now and everything I learned through Usdaw helps me every single day. I'm still a member."

Ian Campbell
Former Somerfield rep,
Glasgow

"I learned so much and met some great people. I would really have liked to have gone further with the union but soon after the Academy I was made redundant.

"I was fortunate to find a job at a care home. They do have a union but I've not seen a rep in five years!"

Tom Moran
Former Exel rep, Preston

"I went back to my workplace a much improved rep and was selected for Academy2 in 2009.

"Unfortunately when I returned to work I was made redundant. I now work for a non-unionised company but I'm still a member of Usdaw paying by direct debit and have already signed up some of my colleagues."

Alan Perry
GMB official

Former Asda worker from Northern Ireland is now a full-time official with the GMB.

"I wouldn't be where I am now if it hadn't been for the

ACADEMY
CLASS OF
2006

excellent training and development I had with Usdaw."

■ At the time of going to press *Network* was unable to contact reps Tony Hocking, Wendy Subhan, and Mary Gibson, and members Charlie Curley, David Cook, Christopher Timms, Ray Clarke, and Laura Segal. Richard Carey has left the union.

Workers' Memorial Day

Make Saturday 28 April 2012 – Workers' Memorial Day – a day of action to defend health and safety – that's the call from the TUC this year. *Network* takes a look at what you can do

Workers' Memorial Day is the day when the international labour movement remembers those who have been killed or injured in workplace accidents and those who have died from occupational diseases.

The Government believes that health and safety is a burden on business. Its actions are putting the health and safety of workers under threat by trying to slash the laws that protect you; cutting enforcement and inspection and making it harder to win compensation for injuries.

Why health and safety matters to every member

The Government says that work is good for you and health and safety laws are not needed for 'low risk' workplace such as shops and offices where the majority of Usdaw members work.

Work can be good for your health, but only where the risks are properly managed. Work does kill or injure many people and it does cause life-long illness for others. It simply isn't true that it's only people who work in 'dangerous' industries who are at risk.

Thousands of people die each year from work-related accidents and diseases in the UK. A staggering 1.9 million suffer ill health caused or made worse by work. The commonest problems are stress-related illness and muscular problems such as

backache or RSI.

The truth is that there are health and safety issues that need to be managed, even in 'low risk' sectors. The law is needed to protect the health, safety and welfare of members who work in shops, offices and call-centres as well as those who work in factories.

Attack on regulations and enforcement

The Government is obsessed with removing regulations. Every review it has commissioned has concluded that the law is sound. Yet they remain committed to cutting the number of regulations. Recent examples include the change to accident reporting rules and relaxing health and safety standards for young people on apprenticeships.

The Health and Safety

Executive (HSE) will have its budget cut by 35 per cent over the next three years. The reduction is already leading to cuts in services. In March 2010, the HSE was told to stop 'proactive' inspections in all but a few very high hazard industries. Most workplaces will now only get a visit from an inspector if there is a report of an injury or a complaint that the HSE considers is serious enough to be investigated.

Local authorities enforce health and safety in shops, offices and warehouses. Like the HSE, they had already been forced to cut inspections in previous years as a result of financial restrictions.

They too have been told to cut even further, with 65,000 fewer inspections in England and Wales over the next year.



Guidance on prevention of occupational cancer

The TUC has produced a guide for union reps on work-related cancer.

According to HSE figures there are currently around 13,500 new cases of work-related cancer and over 8,000 deaths every year.

The TUC believes this is a serious under-estimate. The

TUC estimates the true figure could be closer to 20,000 cases a year.

Prevention is difficult because the link is not always clear. It is usually difficult to say that any individual case of cancer was caused by workplace risks and it can often take decades before a

cancer risk is detected.

However the TUC argues that more can be done to prevent future cases by preventing or reducing exposure to known or suspect cancer-agents.

Exposure to asbestos is the largest work-related cancer risk and can affect Usdaw

members who work in buildings where asbestos materials are present.

Other possible risks include shiftwork, diesel fumes, mineral oils and wood dust.

The TUC guide can be found at:

www.tuc.org.uk/extras/occupationalcancer.pdf

Government set to cut compensation to workers

If you are injured at work and your employer is at fault you can claim compensation.

Usdaw helps members with claims and makes sure that they get the full amount with no deductions.

The Government is introducing changes that mean

workers will have to pay some of the legal costs out of their damages even when they win their claim.

At the same time, it is proposing to restrict payments from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority so that most members who are injured

in assaults will no longer be entitled to an award under the scheme.

It is also trying to make it easier for employers to dismiss workers and to make it harder and more expensive to take an employer to an employment tribunal.

What can you do for Workers' Memorial Day?

- Give out or display copies of the Usdaw Workers' Memorial Day leaflet to members at work on the day. If you can, organise a display in the canteen to raise awareness.
- Wear a purple 'forget me knot' ribbon. The purple, knotted ribbon has been adopted as a symbol of Workers' Memorial Day.

Ribbons can be bought from Greater Manchester Hazards Centre, Tel: 0161 636 7557 email: mail@gmhazards.org.uk www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/wmd/ribbonsorderform.pdf

Greater Manchester Hazards Centre can also supply posters and car stickers.

- Find out if there are any events in your area. Contact your local trades council or log on to the TUC Workers' Memorial Day web page for details of events. www.tuc.org.uk/wmd
- Contact your local MP to tell them why the Government is wrong. If you don't know who your MP is, visit: www.theyworkforyou.com

Contact your local politicians and council now

- Contact your local councillor to find out what your local authority is doing to enforce health and safety law. Health and safety in shops, offices and warehouses is covered by local authority inspectors and local authorities are facing massive cuts.
- Elected councillors will try to protect things that people raise with them most often, such as education or housing. Safety doesn't have the same high profile.
- Local Authority resources for health and safety enforcement are being lost. We need Usdaw members to tell councillors that health and safety is an important issue for them.
- You can find contact details for your local councillor on your council website or in local newspapers and libraries.
- Ask your councillor: What is the council is doing to meet its duty to enforce health and safety? How many inspectors does it have? Is it running any inspection campaigns – e.g. on violence to staff? Do the inspectors contact union safety reps when they do inspections?
- You can order copies of the Usdaw Workers' Memorial Day leaflet and the TUC 'Defend Health and Safety' poster from the health and safety section at central office.

IN BRIEF

■ Sign the dangerous dogs petition

The joint campaign by trade unions and animal welfare organisations to improve the law on dangerous dogs is making progress. In February the Welsh Government made a commitment to plug the gaps in existing laws, including the fact that currently the law does not protect workers who are attacked while delivering to private premises. However, the Government still seems to be stalling on new legislation. Usdaw also backs the campaign as it has members at risk – e.g. home delivery drivers. There is still time to sign the online petition to persuade Westminster to respond. Visit: <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/22631>

■ David Cameron attacks health and safety

Prime minister David Cameron has come under fire after he said he is 'waging war against the excessive health and safety culture that has become an albatross around the neck of businesses' and aims to help businesses 'cope with the health and safety monster' by cutting regulations and enforcement. The TUC said Cameron 'was clearly out of touch with the realities of working life'.

In conversation with safety rep: Barry Dickinson

Employer: Tesco Southend Extra
Age: 67
Job: General assistant full-time
Union: H&S rep, store forum rep, store directors forum rep, ULR
Joined Usdaw: in 2005
Rep since: 2009
Training: I've been on three health and safety training courses

“ I look after around 550 staff with fellow rep Alan Mann and a typical week can include problems around the heating, hot water and other general issues.

We have a good rapport and a close working relationship with management.

We also hold regular inspections and because we are well-organised and work together we can nip any problem in the bud on a daily basis.

You can't beat a common

sense and co-operative approach to problem solving from both sides

If there is an accident we follow it through, ensure the member gets legal help, and ensure the right measures are taken to rectify problems

We hold fire drills periodically. The store is 18 years so you get the usual wear and tear issues but there are no major problems and there aren't many things we can't sort out.”



Barry – the Eastern division's nominee for health and safety rep – at the Organising Awards in January

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:

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

✉ network@usdaw.org.uk



LEVEL BEST

Earn and learn

Congratulations to Wilma Gardiner (pictured) from Ballyclare Asda who has completed her Level 1 ICT.

She thoroughly enjoyed her course at Ballyclare Grammar School and wants to continue to complete her Level 2.

Usdaw NIULF linked up with the school last year to use their facilities such as the computer suite, along with the North Regional College who provided the tutor to teach the ICT class.

LORNA YOUNG
Lifelong Learning
project manager



STAR LETTER

STAND-DOWN SATISFACTION

Recruitment drive

I would like to tell you about my experiences while on stand-down activity within the North West division.

It was such a good experience I feel I want to share this with the wider Usdaw membership and I would recommend that all Usdaw reps consider getting involved with growing the union in this way.

I understand that Usdaw is a recruiting union, where we have to recruit many members to standstill and even more to grow the membership.

With this in mind, and with the help of my area organiser Paul McKenna, we set about organising a plan so I could run mini campaigns in a number of Tesco stores in the Manchester area.

At first this seemed like a daunting task not only to identify where the non-members were, but also to approach and speak to them about Usdaw.

Once I got started, and with Paul's help at the early stages of the stand down, we

set to work and started approaching the non-members.

Once we started to engage with the small numbers of non-members within each store, we quickly learned that two of the main reasons that they had not yet taken up membership of Usdaw was that firstly, they hadn't been asked, and secondly, they needed a good explanation of what we can do as a union. The vast majority of them then took up membership.

I found the overall experience interesting and fulfilling and it left me with an overwhelming feeling of achievement and satisfaction, so much so that I aim to apply for the Academy.

I am keen to share this experience with all the members and reps of Usdaw in the hope that more people engage in this fulfilling activity.

LORNA LOTOCKYJ
NW Tesco Retail No.7 K227

£50 UP FOR GRABS!

Write to the editor of Network and you could win £50 if your letter is chosen as the star letter. This issue's winner is **Lorna Lotockyj**

New Chairman Eric steps up to head forum

Eric Soutar, Branch secretary of Strathclyde Multiple tailoring G110 has been elected chairman of the Scottish Pensioners Forum (SPF).

This is the most prestigious position in the Scottish retired peoples organisations. That Eric now occupies this leading position, is a tribute to Usdaw's contribution to the retired peoples movement and to Eric's ability and proficiency.

The SPF has its own public service pensions

campaign in line with the STUCs. Eric as a private trades man all his working life, knows the immense value of the public services to all citizens irrespective of whether they are employed in public or private sectors. He will use his long experience to promote this campaign of unity and solidarity.

JIMMY COOK
Retired members committee Scotland

Members celebrate thirty years of their commitment to Usdaw



1. Kay Wride and Elizabeth Burton of Carmarthen A60 celebrate 30 years with Usdaw. Jean Stiles has also been awarded her 30 year membership but was unable to attend the meeting. 2. Here are staff and reps from Tesco Irlam being presented with a nomination certificate for the Organising Awards Recruitment and Organising category from area organiser Declan Byrne. Also celebrated were reps' Kate Hill (third left) and Doris Haves (third right) 30 years Usdaw membership. 3. Branch secretary of Exeter General A87 Paula Colbourne presents John Broom with his 30 years membership award. 4. Nailsworth Co-op store manager Robert Martin (centre) receives his 30 years membership award from rep Susan Butler and area organiser Paul Adams.



ORGANISED

Extra credit



Tesco Yate used to be a superstore but nine months ago it was pulled down to make it into an Extra. The staff were in a small temporary store for six months and all the inductions were covered, but after three months of opening, we asked the reps to do a mop up recruitment campaign.

Deb Williams was stood down for two weeks in January and Maree Sawyer supported her during the second week. They had mapped the store and were working all shifts for these weeks, ending up with 80 new members.

This is a fantastic effort on behalf of the team at Yate.

ADRIAN COLLINS
Area organiser, Bristol office

BLOG ON

Open for business

After discussions with my employer and Usdaw, I have been appointed the union learning rep co-ordinator at KP snacks and now work in the learning centre every Monday.

I have already held two open days with our learning provider and lifelong learning project worker Neil Chapman and have set up a website/blog that I will be updating every Monday with photos from open days and certificate presentations.

The website is -
www.kpsnackslz.blogspot.com

JON MCEWAN
Ashby (United Biscuits) E53



LEARNING VERVE

Here are (pictured l-r) William Waite, Laura Pearce, union learning rep Vale Cooke and area organiser Paul Curry all from the Eastern division at a recent ULR day that was held in Tesco Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire



OFFICIALLY GREAT

Pat celebrates half an Usdaw century

Congratulations to Pat McCormick, who has celebrated his 50 years of Usdaw membership. Pat's certificate was presented to him at a lunch with Scottish

divisional officer Lawrence Wason as well as Pat's wife, Mae.

Pat came from the Co-op in Greenock to start work with Usdaw as an area organiser and progressed to Scottish divisional officer. He retired from Usdaw in 1998.

Pat's 50 years of Usdaw membership is a fantastic achievement. Many congratulations from the Scottish division.

LORRAINE BARR
Area organiser, Glasgow office



COMMUNICATION REWARD

Signing up for learning to help their customers



Congratulations to Staff from Tesco's Lincoln 2, Market Rasen and Horncastle stores who have completed a deaf awareness course. The ten week course was run though Usdaw's lifelong learning work in conjunction with South Nottingham college.

Twelve members of staff have learnt basic sign language and now will be able to communicate with our deaf customers.

Everyone really enjoyed the course and would highly recommend it. Huge thanks go to Andy Rowe for making the course so much fun and inspiring us to carry on learning.

We are hoping to run a follow on BSL level one course in early summer.

POLLIE SIMPSON
Union learning rep

MAKE SURE YOU'RE READY FOR...

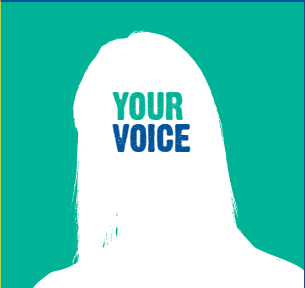
MEMBERSHIP WEEK

MONDAY 18 - SUNDAY 24 JUNE 2012

Have you got everything that you need for membership week? Be prepared and start planning now!

To find out more about how you can get involved contact your Area Organiser or local office.

You can also download the latest recruitment materials when you visit www.usdaw.org.uk/membershipweek



Scan the code with your smartphone to find out more information about how you can get involved in membership week*

www.usdaw.org.uk/membershipweek

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

PUB NWK 0312