

# NETWORK



THE BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR USDAW ACTIVISTS – SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020

## ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

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# BUILDING A STRONGER UNION

I know our reps and members have been working throughout the pandemic and for many the last few months have been extremely difficult. I want to thank all the reps who have been supporting members throughout this time. You have been the face of the union and have shown members the value of trade union membership.

Since the lockdown in March, Usdaw has been working hard to lobby Government and employers and managed to secure a number of wins for our members including, winning 10 per cent pay bonuses, getting sick pay from day one, enhanced colleague discounts, improvements to furlough pay and negotiating improved health and safety measures.

We have been promoting our campaigns in the press and I'm pleased to say we have had huge levels of engagement on face coverings and our Freedom From Fear campaign. Our reps and officials have been appearing on all the major news channels such as the BBC, Channel 4, ITV and Sky to outline the experience of our members working through the pandemic as well as eloquently making the case for legislation to protect shopworkers.

Despite our best efforts our recruitment work has been massively hampered by COVID-19 which creates a huge organising challenge for us. We aren't in a membership crisis,



but we need a real combined effort from all of us to ensure that everyone in the workplace hears about Usdaw and has the opportunity to join the union.

The challenges ahead are big. The COVID-19 crisis is still very much with us and will be with us for some time. COVID-19 is not just a public health crisis, it is also an economic crisis with experts predicting mass job losses across the economy.

The union will continue to work hard to protect jobs, extend the job retention scheme, invest in green projects to create jobs, give key workers a well-deserved pay rise and to implement a recovery plan for the struggling retail sector.

*Usdaw General Secretary*

*Paddy Lillis*





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*Usdaw*  
Union of Shop, Distributive  
and Allied Workers

Stock image posed by model.

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# IN THE NEWS

Don't forget to email the editor your view [network@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:network@usdaw.org.uk)

## KEY WORKERS DESERVE A PAY RISE

In September it was reported that the Government was looking at shelving the minimum wage increase next April, claiming it was unaffordable.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "The Coronavirus pandemic has clearly demonstrated how reliant the country is on millions of low-paid key workers, providing essential services to help ensure the country is fed, healthy and safe. While they appreciated the Thursday clapping, that does not put food on the table. The recognition they need and deserve is a wage they can live on.

"Usdaw members employed in our supermarkets, distribution warehouses, food processing sites and home delivery operations welcomed the key worker status, but that respect and appreciation must not fade into the background when this national crisis passes. When the Government can afford to give the better-off a discount on eating out, it beggars belief that they would not improve the incomes of those on the breadline.



"There must be lasting and fundamental changes to the way society views our lowest paid workers. We need a new deal for the workers: a minimum wage of at least £10 per hour, an end to insecure employment, respect for shopworkers and action to ensure that retail jobs are no longer underpaid and undervalued.

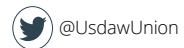
"So our message to the Government and the Low Pay Commission is clear. Do not turn your backs on the people who kept this country going through a national crisis. Show them the respect they deserve, end poverty pay and

ensure the lowest paid workers get a decent pay rise."

Usdaw's New Deal for Workers calls for:

- £10 minimum wage for all workers, ending rip-off youth rates and providing a living wage.
- Minimum contract of 16 hours per week, for everyone who wants it, that reflects normal hours worked and a ban on zero-hour contracts.
- Better sick pay for all workers, from day one, at average earnings.
- Protection at work – respect for shopworkers, abuse is not a part of the job.

- A proper social security system, universal credit does not provide a safety net.
- Job security, with day one employment rights for unfair dismissal and redundancy. Fair treatment and equality for all workers, including equal pay.
- A voice at work, stop rogue employers refusing to engage with trade unions.



## SYSTEM IRRATIONAL AND UNLAWFUL

## UNIVERSAL CREDIT VICTORY FOR WORKERS

Usdaw has welcomed the ruling that assessing universal credit payments on a monthly – rather than four-weekly – basis is ‘irrational and unlawful’.

In a test case brought to the High Court by single mother Sharon Pantellerisco, supported by the campaigning charity Child Poverty Action Group, the court upheld a previous ruling that the DWP’s approach to calculating earnings for claimants who are paid four-weekly is ‘irrational and unlawful’.

Ms Pantellerisco was benefit capped because of the Government’s refusal to acknowledge that her income was four-weekly, rather than monthly, when making her universal credit assessment; resulting in her benefit award being reduced by over £400 per month when compared to someone in identical circumstances who was paid monthly.

The decision means the DWP must now adjust the way the universal credit system assesses earnings to make sure that claimants who are paid four-weekly, are not at risk of having the benefit cap applied to them solely on the basis of their pay frequency and being left out of



pocket as a result.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: “I congratulate Ms Pantellerisco and CPAG for their excellent work in winning this case. But it’s a sad state of affairs when you need a High Court judgment for the Government to take action.

“The vast majority of Usdaw members, like many other low-paid workers, are paid four-weekly, and the universal credit system has not been designed to suit their needs. Usdaw has long campaigned on this issue and this ruling will help to improve the lot for four-weekly-paid

workers up and down the country.

“The universal credit system needs to be scrapped and replaced with a proper social security system as soon as possible. But as an immediate measure the Government must make key changes to support people into employment. This includes calculating and paying benefits on a four-weekly cycle for some, as well as scrapping the five-week wait for payment, and increasing payment levels so that working families claiming universal credit can live in dignity and not in poverty.”

## 950 JOBS TO GO

## M&amp;S MAJOR RESTRUCTURING PROGRAMME

Following speculation in the press about potential job losses, Marks and Spencer has announced that it will be axing 950 roles as part of a major restructuring of its store management and head office operations.

Usdaw national officer Dave Gill said: “It is disappointing that rumours of job losses were leaked

to the press before the company spoke to their staff. This is deeply unsettling for thousands of M&S workers who have been working tirelessly throughout the pandemic.

It is important that staff are treated with dignity and respect by being properly consulted on the future of their jobs represented by an independent trade union.

“We again urge M&S management to abandon their long-held resistance to allowing Usdaw to represent the staff.

“It is simply unjust that the company has made the decision not to engage with a trade union. The staff are telling us they want Usdaw to represent them, it should be their choice.”



**ACCESS TO PAID LEAVE IS VITAL**

# USDAW CALLS FOR PAID TIME OFF FOR CARERS

Usdaw has responded to a Government consultation on a proposed new right for eligible employees to take one week's unpaid leave each year to provide care.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Usdaw represents 400,000 members, the majority of whom are women. We estimate that at least three-quarters of our members are juggling caring responsibilities with work. The most common issues raised by members are the need to take time off to care, changes to working hours and being

caught up in disciplinary procedures for taking time off to care.

"We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation that proposes a new, statutory right to time off to care. This proposed right must have broad reach, be accessible to low-paid workers and available to all working carers regardless of their employment status.

"The proposal is for unpaid time off, but this would put it out of reach of many low-paid workers who simply cannot afford to lose pay. Having access to paid leave is

absolutely vital if low-paid workers are going to be able to make use of both contractual and statutory family-friendly rights.

"The right should be made available to all workers from day one of employment and the definition of 'carer' needs to be broad enough to include the widest possible range of caring relationships.

"We hope the Government considers the evidence we have submitted to ensure that this much-needed right enables all working carers to better balance paid work with their caring responsibilities."

**ADMINISTRATORS FLOUTING LAW**

# MORE JOBS AXED IN DEBENHAMS TURMOIL

Usdaw has called for urgent talks with Debenhams' administrators as 2,500 shop and warehouse jobs are set to be axed. The union is deeply concerned that the necessary consultation processes are not taking place and are preparing a legal challenge on behalf of members affected.

Usdaw national officer Dave Gill said: "This is more devastating news for staff who have been

working under the threat of store closures and job losses for some time, having seen the company go into administration. We have been contacted by members who say they are being made redundant by conference call, with no meaningful consultation or proper notice period, as required by law.

"That is an appalling way to treat staff. Yet again it appears that the taxpayer will have to pick up the

bill for what is owed to sacked staff because administrators are deliberately flouting the law. It's absolutely disgraceful that businesses can get away with this sort of tactic in the 21st century.

"Debenhams staff not only face the trauma of losing their job, but also face being forced to seek justice through a lengthy tribunal process. We will continue to support our members."

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## IN BRIEF

### KICKSTART SCHEME

The Government's new £2 billion Kickstart Scheme will create thousands of new jobs for young people. Under the scheme employers can offer young workers aged 16-24, who are claiming universal credit, a six-month work placement. The Government will pay 100 per cent of the age-relevant national minimum wage, NI and pension contributions for 25 hours a week.

### AMAZON

Online retail giant Amazon has said it will create a further 7,000 UK jobs this year to meet growing demand. Amazon said it had already added 3,000 roles so far in 2020, and so by the end of the year it will have created a total of 10,000 new jobs. This will take its total permanent UK workforce to more than 40,000.

### TESCO

Tesco will create 16,000 new permanent jobs after lockdown led to "exceptional growth" in its online business. The new posts will include 10,000 staff to pick customer orders from shelves and 3,000 delivery drivers.

### EASYJET

EasyJet is planning to make 1,900 UK job cuts, making as many as one in three of its pilots redundant and closing its bases at Stansted, Southend and Newcastle airports.

## OBITUARY

# GEOFF MARTIN UNION OFFICIAL



Usdaw was saddened to hear of the death of former national officer Geoff Martin who died in August aged 80.

Salford born Geoff began his union career soon after leaving school at 15. A couple of years working down the pit were swapped for a job in a local rubber factory where his union activism took off. He took full advantage of TUC and union education and training courses, attending the first TUC school in 1961.

He joined the staff as a collector/canvasser in 1964 and was one of the youngest officials in Usdaw. Initially based in Bradford, he later moved to the Leeds office where he was appointed area organiser in 1968.

He returned to Manchester in 1981 and was promoted to national officer.

Geoff covered all sectors of membership over his tenure. He signed the first Morrisons agreement in the 1970s and was heavily involved in the expansion of the home shopping sector.

As national officer he looked after the manufacturing, pharmaceutical, chemical and food industries, dealing with most of the big multinationals across Europe and worldwide.

Geoff retired from Usdaw in 2003 after nearly 40 years working for the union.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis paid tribute. "Geoff was a well-respected individual who was a great servant and ambassador for Usdaw. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this sad time."

## GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT

# YES TO BUSINESS RATE REFORM

Reform of UK tax law needs to ensure that companies pay their fair share of tax through tackling tax avoidance and the use of offshore havens, with the aim of creating a level playing field between online and high street retailers. There must be funding for local authorities so they can invest in their high streets.

Investment in skills for retail workers

is needed, including union learning and high-quality apprenticeships. This should include an in-depth assessment of emerging trends and potential skills shortages/gaps within the sector.

A new deal for retail, distribution and home delivery workers based around a real living wage and guaranteed hours is a must.

# BUILDING A STRONGER UNION

General secretary Paddy Lillis thanks Usdaw reps for all their hard work and commitment in supporting members through the Coronavirus crisis

Over the last few months I have spoken to a lot of Usdaw members. Listening to them, it is obvious that many have been working flat-out during the pandemic. This crisis has demonstrated what we knew already, that retail workers, drivers and those working in warehouses, distribution centres and in associated industries are the backbone of this country.

Usdaw members have faced very difficult times and I have been very impressed by the resilience, commitment and hard work of our reps in supporting members throughout this time.

If anyone needs evidence of what a trade union can do for its members then all they have to do is look at how Usdaw has responded to the current crisis – both at a national level in lobbying Government, negotiating with employers and in workplaces through the hard work of the local reps and officials advising and representing members.

As lockdown eases we will continue to lobby Government to do all they can to avoid mass job losses, extend the job retention scheme, invest in green projects to create jobs, give key workers a well-deserved pay rise and to implement a recovery plan for the struggling retail sector.

However, as a union we are facing our own difficulties too. Our recruitment efforts have been massively hampered by COVID-19. All of our staff and resources have,

quite rightly, been focused on supporting and advising members at this time of great need. We haven't been able to run our stand-down and Academy programmes, which are so crucial for us in recruiting new members.

The current situation creates a huge organising challenge for us, and I have to report that our membership has fallen below 400,000 for the first time in many years. We aren't in a membership crisis, but we need a real combined effort from all of us to ensure that everyone in the workplace hears about Usdaw and has the opportunity to join the union.

We want to see a strong, vibrant union. We want a union that will continue to campaign on the issues that matter to our members. The challenges ahead are big – the COVID-19 crisis is still very much with us and will be with us for some time. COVID-19 is not just a public health crisis, it is also an economic crisis with job losses across the economy. The union is committed to working hard to protect jobs and get a new deal for workers.

We need a strong union that is growing both in membership numbers and influence in the workplace. We need to have a powerful voice in the workplace and in the debate over public policy. To meet these challenges the union needs your help.

Reps have always been at the very centre of Usdaw's organising efforts. Someone is far more likely to join the

union if a work colleague asks them to join. This is now more important than ever before.

I would ask you to think about what you can do to strengthen the union in your workplace today. Could you talk to some non-members about the benefits of joining the union? Check if any recent new starters have been spoken to about joining?

If you want to find out more about recruitment, you can find resources on our website, including an online bitesize course on recruitment and organising, or contact your area organiser if you need specific advice for your workplace.

I know that you have been supporting and helping members get through the crisis. I would also urge you to approach everyone in your workplace about joining the union. All workers need the protection of the union especially at times of crisis like the one we are currently going through.

I want to thank each and every one of you for everything you are doing. Let's continue to work together to ensure that once we come out of this crisis we don't go back to the way things were.



**Paddy Lillis**  
Usdaw general secretary





# HANDS, FACE SPACE & TRACE

**N**etwork gives reps an update on the COVID-19 guidelines that currently apply in England. However, the advice is changing on a regular basis, so please check the Usdaw website for up-to-date information. Due to the differing guidelines in the devolved nations the website outlines the guidelines for members in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

## MEMBERS IN ENGLAND Staying Safe

In order to help control the virus and protect yourself and others, when you leave home you must:

- Wash your hands regularly.
- Wear a face covering over your nose and mouth in enclosed spaces.
- Stay at least one metre away from people not in your household.
- If you are feeling unwell, get a test and do not leave home for at least 10 days.

## Face coverings

The evidence suggests that face coverings can help us protect each other and reduce the spread of the disease from someone who is suffering from COVID-19, but not

showing symptoms. That is why it is important to wear a face covering on public transport and other indoor public places.

Anyone travelling by bus, train, ferry or plane in England must wear a face covering, unless they are exempt.

Since 24 July, it has been compulsory to wear face coverings in shops, including supermarkets, shopping centres, banks, building societies and post offices. It extends to railway and bus stations as well as airports.

From 8 August face coverings have become mandatory in a greater number of public settings, such as museums, galleries, cinemas and public libraries.

Some people do not have to wear face coverings:

- Children under 11.
- Those unable to put on or wear a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or disability.
- People for whom wearing or removing a face covering will cause severe distress.
- Anyone assisting someone who relies on lip reading to communicate.

For more information on face coverings go to:

[www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Coronavirus-Update/Mandatory-Face-Coverings](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Coronavirus-Update/Mandatory-Face-Coverings)

## Shielding

The guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable is that shielding has been paused and previous shielding advice no longer needs to be followed. You can go to work as long as the workplace is COVID-secure, but should carry on working from home wherever possible.

You can go outside as much as you like, but try and keep your overall social interactions low.

You can visit businesses, such as shops and pubs, while keeping two metres away from others wherever possible or one metre plus other precautions.

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable and live in a local lockdown area, you may receive a letter advising you to start shielding again. You should tell your employer straight away if this applies to you, and refer to your local authority's website for the latest public health information for your area.





Keep up-to-date at:  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/  
Help-Advice/Coronavirus-Update](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Coronavirus-Update)

## Social distancing

As some aspects of lockdown are eased, it is crucial to note that the importance of social distancing has not changed. We expect employers to carry on implementing social distancing measures, and to support our members when they are enforcing those measures with customers.

We will continue to raise this with employers and are also putting out a clear message to the public, that they should keep following social distancing when shopping.

All employers should have carried out a full risk assessment and taken measures to keep staff safe. These measures should be reviewed to make sure that they continue to be properly implemented.

As always, if you are an Usdaw member and have any concerns about your safety at work, please contact your workplace rep or your local Usdaw office.

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

## Self-isolating

You must not leave your home if:

- You have any symptoms of COVID-19 (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss

or change to your sense of smell or taste).

- You've tested positive for COVID-19.
- You live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Someone in your support bubble has symptoms or has tested positive.
- You're told by NHS Test and Trace that you've been in contact with a person with COVID-19.

If any of the above apply to you, do not go to work and inform your employer straight away.

## How long to self-isolate?

If you have symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19, you'll usually need to self-isolate for at least 10 days.

You'll need to self-isolate for 14 days if someone you live with, or someone in your support bubble, has symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19. You will also have to self-isolate for 14 days if you've been told by NHS Test and Trace that you've been in contact with someone who has COVID-19.

You should refer to your own employer's policies and procedures

for more information on what to do, and contact your union rep or local official if you need advice.

## The rule of six

From Monday 14 September new rules came into force which state you must not meet with people from other households socially in groups of more than 6. This will apply indoors and outdoors, including in private homes. This change will simplify and clarify the rules on social gatherings, so they are easier to understand and easier for the police to enforce. There will be a limited number of exemptions. COVID-19 Secure venues, such as places of worship, restaurants and hospitality venues, can still host larger numbers in total but groups of up to 6 must not mix or form larger groups. This rule will not apply to individual households or support bubbles of more than 6 who will still be able to gather together. Education and work settings are unaffected, and organised team sports will still be able to proceed, as will weddings and funerals up to 30. This limit will be enforceable in law.

[www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/  
Coronavirus-Update/](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Coronavirus-Update/)



# ARE FACE MASKS ENOUGH TO PROTECT SHOPWORKERS?

**T**o stop the spread of COVID-19, wearing a face covering is now compulsory for customers who visit shops in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

While Usdaw supports the law and encourages shoppers to cover their faces, the concerns remain that it will be left to the shopworker to police the rule, potentially exposing them to violence and abuse, and that face coverings will be seen as a replacement for social distancing measures that are already in place. *Network* spoke to four reps who work in retail to see what it's been like for them since the new laws came into force.

## **JANETTE PARKER**

*Usdaw rep Janette is a community champion at Tesco in the South Wales and Western division.*

"Since face coverings were made mandatory, customers have forgotten to socially distance which is a problem. We often need to

remind them. They get defensive and point out that others aren't socially distancing either.

"I would say most shoppers are wearing masks but I think this is because pressure has been put on staff to wear them too, so it's seen as enforcing the regulations. Most staff would rather not wear masks, although that may change if there's a local lockdown, however they do understand that it is making customers feel safe and as a result that has increased sales.

"I don't think colleagues feel any safer than they did a few months ago. Social distancing is becoming a bigger problem than the masks and at busy periods this becomes difficult to manage and very stressful.

"I think if retail staff and customers are to feel safe it's vital that shops continue implementing safety measures such as social distancing and limiting the number of customers at any one time."

## **GAIL MURPHY**

*Usdaw rep Gail is a customer team member at Co-op in the North West division.*

"More customers are wearing face coverings now, however, we have a lot of customers who are construction workers and I've noticed that the younger workers don't seem to bother at all. It's scary, especially as we're currently in a local lockdown.

"Staff aren't expected to enforce the law as Co-op policy is to protect us from abuse.

"We had an older gentleman in last week shouting at two young female customers for not wearing masks. When he came to the till he commented that as a loyal, regular customer, he wouldn't be back as we don't challenge those who aren't wearing masks. I explained the company's policy and he said it was wrong.

"I have also noticed that when cleaning the perspex partitions



at the tills, the amount of 'spittle' on the customer side is quite frightening.

"It's difficult to feel safe at work. We are at the mercy of customers who may, or may not, have washed their hands, may, or may not, wear a face covering and who for most, social distancing no longer exists."

### TRACY CANNARD

**Usdaw rep Tracy is a shopworker at Sainsbury's in the South Wales and Western division.**

"We've seen an increase in abuse, mainly from the customers who are getting annoyed by other customers who aren't covering their faces. They're taking it out on us and asking why we're serving those customers. But it's not our job to police, and when you try to politely explain that they don't understand.

"Management are good and continue to take our health and safety seriously. We've still got all the measures in place, like social

distancing, a one-way system, limiting the number of shoppers in store and providing hand sanitiser. I know for a lot of other shops that's not the case.

"I was in isolation during lockdown and when I first came back into work I was very nervous, but now I feel more relaxed. I still won't travel on public transport, I don't feel safe, so I walk. I work in the petrol station and we've been encouraging customers to pay through the night window which has worked well. Sainsbury's really have looked after my welfare.

"I think the problem is government advice, it's confusing and ever-changing and therefore a lot of people don't pay any attention. I think they need to be stricter about face coverings."

### GRAHAM MENZIES

**Usdaw rep Graham is a dotcom driver for Tesco in Scotland.**

"Face coverings are mandatory for shopworkers and customers in Scotland and most people are complying. There is the occasional customer who doesn't, but it's not

down to the staff to question or accost them and potentially open ourselves up to abuse. Colleagues do feel safer wearing masks, but wearing them all day takes some getting used to.

"We still have a two-metres distancing rule, which many customers don't follow, but we are told we can't force them to adhere.

"As drivers our roles have changed too. We don't go into customers' homes unless they are vulnerable, and even then, we wear masks and ask the customer to go into another room. It's also now entirely up to the driver whether they feel safe enough to deliver to flats and communal areas. Many customers are happy to collect their shopping at the main door but there have been a few complaints. Thankfully management has fully backed the drivers.

"We are still concerned about the situation and what will happen if there's a second spike. Our members need more recognition. They've stayed strong and worked through this pandemic continuing to provide a key service for the public."

## USDRAW'S POSITION ON MANDATORY FACE COVERINGS IN SHOPS

Usdaw asks shoppers to follow the law and help protect shopworkers and other customers by wearing a face covering, while following existing social distancing and hygiene procedures.

"We encourage everyone to support shopworkers by wearing a face covering, unless you are covered by an exemption," said Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis. "We've been talking to employers to make sure that they have clear policies and procedures in place.

"We welcome the indication from Government that shopworkers will not be expected to enforce the wearing of face coverings. They are already dealing with more abuse than normal and this could be another flashpoint. There must

also be clarity on age identification procedures under 'Think-25'.

"Although the Government has said that shopworkers are not legally required to wear a face covering, employers might encourage or require staff to wear them in some circumstances. Employers must be aware that staff will need regular breaks when they can take their face covering off and have the opportunity to replace it.

"We also want to make it clear that face coverings are not a replacement for social distancing measures such as screens, distance markers, hygiene measures and limits on customers in stores. We expect employers to keep these in place and support our members in making sure that customers follow the rules."

# FIGHTING TO PROTECT OUR KEY WORKERS FROM FEAR

Usdaw launches petition to tackle the unacceptable increase of abuse, threats and violence experienced by retail workers during the Coronavirus pandemic

Over the past few years there has been an alarming increase in the levels of abuse and violence towards shopworkers. More recently, shocking results from an Usdaw survey carried out at the height of the Coronavirus outbreak reveal just how bad the situation has become following the pandemic.

Since the start of the outbreak, the average retail worker has been assaulted, threatened or abused every 6.5 days, more than double the rate of incidents compared to 2019. Throughout the outbreak, retail workers who have been providing an essential service in very difficult circumstances have been spat at, threatened with infection of Coronavirus and physically assaulted by customers. The evidence is clear. Shopworkers are key workers and the current laws don't protect them.

## FREEDOM FROM FEAR

In 2003, Usdaw introduced its Freedom From Fear campaign in response to members' growing concerns about violence and abuse in retail. Since then the union has worked with the public, employers, the police, politicians and with the Government. The campaign has achieved safety and security improvements in stores as well as highlighting the issues of neighbourhood policing, retail crime and underage sales. The union continues to lobby the Government to improve legislation to protect shopworkers and those working in public-facing roles, including stiffer penalties for those who assault

workers. But the current situation shows that the need for the union's campaign is more pressing than ever.

## PETITION FOR CHANGE

In light of the continued increase in violence and abuse towards shopworkers and the appalling situation they've faced leading up to and throughout the pandemic, Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis has launched a House of Commons petition to lobby the Government to protect retail staff. The union is calling on the Government to create a specific offence of abusing, threatening or assaulting a retail worker with a penalty that acts as a deterrent and makes clear that abuse of retail workers is unacceptable.

The petition gained widespread media attention in national and regional news outlets when it was launched in August with Usdaw officials and reps making over 80 appearances on TV and radio.

It was signed by 10,000 people on day one, and as *Network* went to print the signatures had reached over 63,000. Usdaw is aiming for it to reach at least 100,000 where it will be considered for Parliamentary debate. The UK's largest convenience store retailer Co-op Food, along with the industry's leading trade bodies the British Retail Consortium and the Association of Convenience Stores have given their full backing.

"At a time when we should all be working together to get through this



Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis


crisis, it is a national disgrace that people working to keep food on the shelves for their local communities are being abused and assaulted," said Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis. "Life on the front line of retail is normally pretty tough for many shopworkers and has become much worse during the Coronavirus emergency.

"The safety of our members is absolutely paramount. Our message to the public is there is no excuse for abusing shopworkers.

"There needs to be urgent action to help protect staff. I urge the Government not to dismiss my petition, but listen to the voices of shopworkers and legislate for stiffer penalties for those who assault workers. They have talked about zero-tolerance, but that means very little if it is not backed up by strong actions."

[petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621)





**Usdaw members across the country describe the shocking situation on the frontline in retail at the height of the pandemic.**

- “Customers don’t want to follow the safety precautions leading to some kind of abuse/violence on every shift.”
- “I have been verbally abused and pushed by customers when mentioning limitations or the one-way system.”
- “Abuse is prevalent mostly when asking customers to respect the social distancing and single entry to store.”
- “Regularly have people swearing at us, shouting at us that we are either hiding stock, keeping it for ourselves, how busy the store is. You name it, we have now taken abuse for it.”
- “I have been spat at, pushed and treated as if I wasn’t there. Customers have walked up to me or leaned over me while I am filling shelves.”
- “Nearly every customer is abusive now. It made me have a breakdown and I have been unable to sleep well due to anxiety about coming in to get abuse all day.”
- “I had never cried in work until the first week of the lockdown. I received constant abuse from nearly every customer during one shift when the rules were changed so that we couldn’t accept returns. I finally broke when one woman refused to leave the store and insulted me and berated me for not doing the return. My job has become emotionally draining and it is really starting to affect my mental health.”
- “Constant verbal abuse/swearing. Customers spitting, coughing and sneezing towards us on purpose. Store not reporting antisocial behaviour.”
- “I had items of stock and baskets thrown at me when I made them aware of restrictions. The level of verbal abuse towards staff was something I had never seen in my time in retail.”

# THE RESULTS OF USDAW'S 2019 SURVEY OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE AGAINST SHOP STAFF

Since 2007 Usdaw has surveyed up to 7,000 shopworkers each year to gather first-hand accounts on the extent of violence, threats and abuse against shop staff. The union's Freedom From Fear campaign relies on this vital evidence to drive the campaign forward and reveal the true extent of what life is really like for Usdaw members who work in retail.

In 2019, the union interviewed 6,457 shopworkers, one of the largest responses the survey has ever received.

## VERBAL ABUSE AND THREATS

For the first 10 years of surveying members, results showed that between 50-60 per cent of shopworkers reported at least one instance of verbal abuse in the last 12 months and 30-35 per cent reported at least one incident of a threat in the last year. However, in 2017 there was a disturbing and significant increase in both abuse and threats which continued in 2018 and 2019. Based on the levels of violence and abuse reported in this survey, it is estimated that over 400 shopworkers are being attacked every day.

Shockingly, the latest survey shows that:

- 68 per cent of workers reported they had been verbally abused at least once.
- 43 per cent said they had been threatened with physical violence.

## PHYSICAL ASSAULTS

The results show an increase in the number of physical assaults towards shopworkers.

- More than 1 in 20 shopworkers reported being physically abused during 2019, which is significantly more than the year before.
- One in five of those assaulted reported that the assailant used a knife.

## REPORTING INCIDENTS

Over half of the shopworkers interviewed said that they had never reported an incident to their employer. Where incidents are not even reported to employers, it is highly unlikely that the same incidents are being reported to the police. This is a serious concern. If the police are not aware of the extent of threats and violence faced by shopworkers, they are not going to treat the issue with the seriousness it deserves.

## WHAT WORKERS WANT

The survey asked shopworkers what they would like to see their employer do to improve the situation. The main call was for management to give staff more support and for more uniformed security guarding. The call for a zero-tolerance approach with banning of offenders has increased.

- 53 per cent would like more support from management.
- 16 per cent called for more security staff.
- 16 per cent wanted to ban offenders.
- 5 per cent would like to see more posters.
- 4 per cent want more staff.
- 3 per cent want more breaks/time off to recover.
- 2 per cent want their employer to involve the police.
- 1 per cent would like more training.

## CONTACT WITH THE POLICE

We asked shopworkers when they last saw a patrolling officer in their store, to which over half replied that they had not seen a police officer in the last year and 44 per cent could not recall ever seeing police presence in their store.

## CONCLUSION

The results from Usdaw's 2019 survey show all too clearly that the levels of crime and violence are still on the increase. Crime surveys carried out by the British Retail Consortium and the Association of Convenience Stores also mirror these findings.

A Home Office call for evidence in 2019 was set up in response to continued pressure from retail employers, their trade associations and from Usdaw about the true extent of harm that is being done to retail workers as a result of the levels of abuse and violence that they face. Despite clear evidence from retailers and Usdaw, the Government has refused to accept the need for a specific offence of assaulting a retail worker.

All too often criminals who assault staff are not even sent to court and those who are can receive derisory sentences. In other cases, where the offender isn't even charged, victims are left feeling let down by the justice system. That is why Usdaw is continuing to campaign for better legal protection for shop staff. The union wants to see stiffer penalties for those who assault workers – a simple stand-alone offence that is widely recognised and understood by the public, police, CPS, the judiciary and most importantly criminals.

Usdaw will continue to work with

**HERE ARE SOME  
COMMENTS FROM  
SHOPWORKERS RELATED  
TO PHYSICAL VIOLENCE:**

“HELD AT KNIFEPOINT. TOLD MY THROAT WOULD BE CUT IF I DIDN’T OPEN THE SAFE. I HAD NO ACCESS TO THIS SAFE.”

“GOT THREATENED TO BE STABBED TO DEATH WITH A KNIFE AGAINST MY THROAT.”

“SHOPLIFTER THREATENED TO STAB US BUT MANAGER LET HIM GO, NO POLICE CALLED.”

“I HAD NEVER CRIED IN WORK UNTIL THE FIRST WEEK OF THE LOCKDOWN. I RECEIVED CONSTANT ABUSE FROM NEARLY EVERY CUSTOMER DURING ONE SHIFT.”

employers to make sure they have effective procedures in place to protect staff by doing what they can to prevent incidents and by providing more effective support to workers when they are involved in incidents.

**FREEDOM FROM FEAR SURVEY  
2020**

The experiences and views of retail workers are vitally important to

drive Usdaw’s Freedom From Fear campaign forward, and that’s why it’s essential that members complete this year’s survey of violence and abuse against retail staff.

The results from the survey will be used to support and evidence the Freedom From Fear campaign. This is the union’s chance to share with the Government and employers exactly how difficult life has been for key workers on the front line during

the Coronavirus crisis.

If you work in retail please take five minutes to complete the survey and encourage all of your colleagues to do the same. Your feedback is vital in ensuring our campaigns remain rooted in our members’ experiences.

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

## BEIS SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRY

Since the beginning of the year Usdaw has given written and oral evidence to an inquiry set up by a House of Commons Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) select committee about the impact of Coronavirus on businesses and workers.

The union has made it clear that members have been at the forefront of the nation's response to the outbreak and that the contributions of key workers have been vital in ensuring that the country is able to respond to the issues created through COVID-19. Usdaw called for the Government to agree with employers and trade unions a recovery plan for the high street, which was already struggling before the Coronavirus emergency. This recovery plan must include legislation which makes it an offence to abuse public-facing workers.



## ABUSE IS NOT PART OF THE JOB

# RESPECT WEEK 2020 IS ON

Each year, in the run up to Christmas, the union holds a Respect Week allowing reps and members to play an active role in supporting the Freedom From Fear campaign by running their own campaign events and stalls in their workplaces. The aim of Respect Week is to make sure that the message 'Abuse is not part of the job' is heard loud and clear during the busy Christmas shopping period and that we promote practical ways of tackling the issue.

Respect week may look a little different this year but it's still a really important opportunity to raise awareness about the campaign by chatting to colleagues, family and friends. With the help of members we can lobby the Government for a change in the law.

### THINGS YOU CAN DO....

■ *Encourage colleagues, family and friends to sign the petition.*

Udaw general secretary Paddy Lillis has launched a House of Commons petition to lobby the Government to protect retail staff from violence threats and abuse. The petition calls on the Government to create a specific offence of abusing, threatening or assaulting a retail worker with a penalty that acts as a deterrent and makes clear

that abuse of retail workers is unacceptable. The petition needs to reach 100,000 signatures to be considered for a debate in Parliament. Make sure you promote it in your workplace and on social media. Sign the petition:

[petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621)

■ *Encourage your colleagues to fill out the Freedom From Fear survey.*

It's vitally important that the union hears first-hand about the violence and abuse that shopworkers are facing on a daily basis. This is the evidence the union needs to drive the campaign forward with employers and the Government and lobby for new laws to protect shopworkers.

Complete the survey: [www.usdaw.org.uk/respectsurvey](https://www.usdaw.org.uk/respectsurvey)

■ *Share the message*

Tell people about Freedom From Fear and raise the campaign profile. Put campaign posters and leaflets up on your noticeboard, share the union's messages on social media and speak to your friends, family and colleagues. Publicity will help the union to lobby for change.

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

## FREEDOM FROM FEAR PETITION

# FASTEST GROWING PARLIAMENTARY PETITION

As *Network* went to print, the Freedom From Fear petition had amassed over 60,000 signatures to become one of the fastest growing parliamentary petitions launched by Usdaw.

Discussing the fantastic response

to the petition so far, Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "We are delighted that the petition has already passed the halfway point of triggering a parliamentary debate. It is no surprise, because this is a hugely important issue for our

members. With incidents of abuse doubling during the COVID-19 crisis, they are saying loud and clear that enough is enough.

"I urge the Government to respond positively, listen to the voices of shopworkers."



## ASSAULT ON SHOPWORKERS BILL

# SUPPORT THE PRIVATE BILL

In March, Alex Norris MP launched a Private Members Bill which calls for shopworkers to be protected from rising levels of violence, abuse and assaults. It was heard in Parliament on 16 March and was given wide cross-party support. The Bill is due to have a second reading before 25 September.

"I'm shocked at the level of abuse and violence shopworkers face every day," said Alex, Labour MP for Nottingham North. "I see it in my own constituency, where at my local Co-op a staff member was hit by a glass bottle. My Bill calls for retail workers to be given extra protection for two reasons.

"Firstly, as a point of principle, if we give shopworkers responsibilities to uphold the law on sales of a range of products which Parliament has determined can only be sold to people above a certain age, then shopworkers should be afforded protection in carrying out those public duties.

"Secondly, the Bill appeals for a reset in society. With a very clear message sent that it is not part of the job for shopworkers to suffer abuse and violence and Parliament establishing a new expectation by legislating for what is acceptable and the police given the resources to implement this new legislation."

## SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

# BILL PASSES STAGE ONE

In June, the Scottish Parliament's Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee unanimously passed the Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services) (Scotland) Bill at stage one so that it could move to stage two where it will be debated in detail by the Scottish Parliament.

The Bill, introduced to the Scottish Parliament in October 2019 by Daniel Johnson MSP, aims to give greater protection in law to retail workers in Scotland.

The Bill calls for an Act of the Scottish Parliament to create an offence of assaulting, threatening, abusing, obstructing or hindering retail workers; and to provide for a statutory aggravation of that offence where the retail worker is enforcing a statutory age restriction.

"What this ongoing emergency has clearly shown us all is how much

we depend on the professionalism and hard work of our retail sector," said Daniel, Scottish Labour MSP for Edinburgh Southern. "Retail workers are being asked to handle panic buying and increased customers which has exacerbated the confrontational situations faced by retail workers that led to my introducing the Bill in the first place."

"Their classification as key workers has also meant they are now in effect carrying out a public health function, enforcing social distancing measures in stores, along with the critical role they have in the food supply chain."

Usdaw is calling for MSPs to support the bill and will be encouraging members in Scotland to email their MSPs for their backing ahead of the vote.

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

## SENTENCING COUNCIL CONSULTATION

The Sentencing Council, the body responsible for developing sentencing guidelines and monitoring their use, opened a consultation on the guidelines for an assault offence in April. Usdaw has responded to the consultation asking them to support the inclusion of 'Intention to cause fear of serious harm including disease transmission' as a high culpability factor on the guidelines for an assault offence.

It is being introduced to cover incidents of spitting or coughing but also covers, for example, threats with a used syringe. Usdaw has also requested that it be made clearer that the aggravating factor that should be applied when an offence is committed against those working in the public sector or providing a service to the public covers shopworkers. Additionally, the union has taken the opportunity to point out that the existing law on assault does not adequately cover the longer-term psychological damage that shopworkers can suffer as a result of repeated threats or abuse. The consultation will be reviewed following the deadline in September.

Sentencing  
Council

# THE KEY TO LASTING CHANGE

Usdaw is calling for a new deal for all workers based around a £10 minimum wage, guaranteed hours, better sick pay, job security and a voice at work

**A**t the start of the pandemic, after lobbying from Usdaw, the Government recognised that retail workers were ‘key workers’ as they were instrumental in keeping the food supply chain going.

This crisis has shown that many low-paid workers are key workers carrying out essential work. Too many key workers are trying to exist on low pay, facing abuse every day while trying to carry out their essential role and working under daily pressures that are not good for their mental health.

For too long, the essential contribution of workers in retail, distribution, delivery, food manufacturing and the funeral industry has been undervalued and underpaid.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: “When this crisis is over, we cannot return to the way things were before. The contribution of

key workers cannot fade into the background.

“It is now time for the Government to recognise that these workers have been undervalued for too long. We need a new deal for the workers: a minimum wage of at least £10 per hour, an end to insecure employment, respect for shopworkers and action to ensure that retail jobs are no longer underpaid and undervalued.”

**USDRAW IS CALLING FOR A ‘NEW DEAL’ FOR ALL WORKERS BASED AROUND:**

## £10 Minimum Wage For All Workers

Many of the workers that our country relies on are low paid. The money that they earn does not reflect their contribution and it is not enough for a decent standard of living. Usdaw is calling for a

minimum wage of £10 per hour and the abolition of rip-off youth rates that allow employers to pay young workers as little as £4.55 an hour.

## A Minimum Contract of 16 Hours Per Week

Usdaw is calling for a minimum contract of 16 hours per week, for everyone who wants it.

## A ‘Normal-Hours’ Contract

Many workers are regularly working over their contracted hours, but the employer can just reduce them to their contracted hours whenever they want to. If employees are regularly working over their contracted hours, Usdaw believes they should be guaranteed these hours in their contract.

## A Ban on Zero-Hours Contracts

There is a real danger that, as the impact of COVID-19 begins to show

**A NEW DEAL FOR WORKERS**



**£10**

**MINIMUM WAGE FOR ALL WORKERS**



**PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE**

**PRO SECURITY**

on the economy, more workers will feel forced to take zero-hours contracts as they have no other options. The Government needs to ban zero-hours contracts, once and for all.

### Better Sick Pay

The minimum sick pay that employers have to pay is statutory sick pay – that is just £95.85 per week. It is not normally paid for the first three days of sickness (although it has been paid from day one of sickness as a temporary measure during the COVID-19 outbreak). If an employee earns less than £118 per week, they are not entitled to any statutory sick pay. All of this needs to change. Sick pay needs to be paid from day one, at the employees' normal pay rate, and it should be paid to all workers.

### Protection at Work

Violence and abuse has doubled during the Coronavirus crisis. That's why Usdaw is calling for a new law that makes it a specific offence to assault public facing workers, with a sentence that fits the crime.

### A Proper Social Security System

The COVID-19 crisis has shown that anybody can find themselves

needing help. Lots of workers have had to claim universal credit and have found the system impossible to navigate with a five-week wait before payment. People who are struggling simply cannot wait this long and are being pushed deeper into poverty. We need a fair system that protects families and treats people with dignity.

### Job Security

Many people are facing real worry about their job security in this crisis. For retail workers, this is not a new worry. There has been constant restructuring for a number of years and the threat of job cuts is always just around the corner. We need stronger protections against redundancy and dismissal, from day one of employment.

### Fair Treatment and Equality For All Workers

Most of the underpaid frontline key workers are women. Women workers need equal pay, affordable childcare and family-friendly rights that give parents and carers real choices to support juggling work and family life.

There needs to be more support for BAME workers who have been disproportionately impacted by

the virus and the crisis. The impact of this crisis has shown how BAME workers are more likely to be working on the frontline, in low-paid jobs, at greater risk to the virus and living in worse conditions that will make these health risks worse. This unfair and unequal treatment of BAME workers needs to be tackled.

### A Voice at Work

This crisis has shown that workers need their union more than ever. Usdaw has worked with employers to improve protections for workers, to agree bonus payments to recognise their contribution, and to protect those whose workplaces have had to close. It was the trade union movement negotiating with the Government that produced the Job Retention Scheme which has saved so many jobs. But some employers continue to refuse to listen to trade unions. We need stronger trade union rights so that all workers can benefit from a voice at work.

The campaign for a New Deal for Workers will be one of Usdaw's key priorities. The union will be putting these points forward to the Government and to employers in the coming weeks and months.

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





# RETAIL RECOVERY PLAN

**T**he UK retail sector has been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic on an unprecedented scale. For an industry already facing significant challenges, the long-term impact will be severe.

According to figures from the British Retail Consortium, lockdown is estimated to have cost traditional “bricks and mortar” non-food retailers £1.8 billion a week in lost sales.

While the easing of lockdown measures has encouraged some shoppers back to the high street, the pandemic continues to pose huge challenges to the industry, with ongoing store closures and job losses across the UK.

When the Chancellor Rishi Sunak delivered his summer statement on 8 July 2020, outlining the UK’s economic recovery plan in response to the financial harm done by the virus, there was no mention of the

tens of thousands of retail jobs already lost or the difficulties facing high streets and retailers.

So far, the Government’s response to mitigate the impact of the Coronavirus on the retail sector has taken the form of short-term measures – business rates relief, VAT deferral and the temporary suspension of business evictions – but these interim measures will not sustain the sector for long as liabilities continue to build up.

## RETAIL SECTOR CHALLENGES

It is clear that retail, particularly non-essential retailers, have been significantly impacted by the virus with around 1.6 million retail workers furloughed at the end of May 2020 – more than any other sector. As the job retention scheme is wound down, the stark reality of the job losses within the retail sector will be felt right across the UK economy.

For retailers, a one-off payment in January 2021 (under the new Job Retention bonus), will not incentivise the retention of employees.

The retail sector is a fundamental part of the UK economy and labour market and needs targeted support - Usdaw is urging the Government to work with all key stakeholders to develop an urgent recovery plan for the sector built on the measures outlined in this report.

Ushaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: “We listened carefully to the Chancellor’s statement today and we are truly shocked that he made no mention of the huge challenges the retail industry faces. We recognise the value of a VAT cut for the hospitality sectors, which should have been extended to retail.

“The Government’s response to mitigate the impact of the Coronavirus emergency on the retail industry, in the form of small





business grants, business rates relief and VAT deferral, has helped take some pressure off. However, these interim measures will not sustain the industry for long. We needed to hear today that the Government will adopt an urgent retail recovery plan.

“What the retail sector needs now is a tripartite approach of the Government, unions and employers to develop a much-needed retail recovery plan.

We have long called for an industrial strategy for retail to help a sector that was already struggling before the Coronavirus emergency. Now the situation is much worse.

“The Government has a clear choice. Do they want to see the high street go to the wall, or do they want to help save it? Retail is an important feature of our towns and cities, it employs three million people and we need a stimulus package to save the industry.”

## RETAIL RECOVERY PLAN

Usdaw called for a recovery plan to be developed with trade unions and retail employers and include:

- Fundamental reform of business rates. The Government committed to a review of business rates earlier this year, but assurance is needed that this will not be delayed further.
- An immediate and comprehensive review of rental values and lease arrangements. In the short-term measures are needed to prevent commercial landlords taking legal action for rental defaults during the lockdown period. In the medium term, a rebalancing of the relationship between landlords and tenants is required.
- Reform of UK tax law to ensure that companies pay their fair share of tax through tackling

tax avoidance and the use of offshore havens, with the aim of creating a level playing field between online and high street retailers.

- Funding for local authorities so they can invest in their local economy, transport networks and high streets. We cannot revive our high streets if core services continue to be undermined.
- Investment in skills for retail workers, including through union learning and high-quality apprenticeships. This should include an in-depth assessment of emerging trends and potential skills shortages/gaps within the sector.
- A new deal for retail, distribution and home delivery workers based around a real living wage and guaranteed hours.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS A CLEAR CHOICE. DO THEY WANT TO SEE THE HIGH STREET GO TO THE WALL, OR DO THEY WANT TO HELP SAVE IT?

*Usdaw general secretary  
Paddy Lillis*





# REDUNDANCY RIGHTS

**O**fficial figures released in August confirmed that Britain was in recession for the first time since 2009 and that around 730,000 people lost their job between March and the end of July.

The number of self-employed workers slumped by 238,000, bringing the total number of job losses to nearly one million. There are warnings that more job losses will follow once the job retention scheme winds up at the end of October.

The UK retail sector has been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic on an unprecedented

scale. For an industry already facing significant challenges, the long-term impact will be severe. The retail sector is a fundamental part of the UK economy and labour market and needs targeted support. That's why Usdaw is urging the Government to work with all key stakeholders to develop an urgent recovery plan for the sector that includes a fundamental reform of business rates, a reform of UK tax laws, funding for local authorities to invest in high streets and to give workers a real living wage.

Usdaw works hard to minimise job losses but the reality is that this

is not always possible. Where the union cannot prevent redundancies, it works hard to ensure that members are consulted, treated with dignity and respect and receive the best severance package possible.

During a redundancy situation it is likely that there will be heightened levels of anxiety and uncertainty across the workforce with members increasingly looking to the union to provide support and reassurance. Therefore, it is important reps know the basics of redundancy so that they can best support members through the consultation process.

## ANSWERING THE BIG QUESTIONS ABOUT REDUNDANCY

### When does redundancy occur?

Redundancy occurs when an individual is dismissed because:

- The workplace closes or moves.
- Staff numbers are cut.
- The job no longer exists because of new technology, job re-design or restructuring.

### In a redundancy situation an individual has the right to be:

- Consulted.
- Selected fairly.
- Considered for alternative work.
- Paid redundancy pay; accrued holiday pay, wages, etc.
- Given paid time off to find other work.

Usdaw members are entitled to be accompanied/represented by Usdaw reps during any one-to-one consultation meeting and in any collective consultation discussions.

### The company must consult before making more than 20 employees redundant at a workplace with:

- Usdaw, if they are recognised.
- A staff consultation body (where there is no recognised union).
- The individuals if there is no appropriate body.

### The consultation should cover:

- Ways of avoiding the redundancy situation or dismissals.
- Ways of reducing the number of dismissals involved.
- Mitigating the effects of the dismissals, ie severance packages, support in finding work.

### What is the consultation period?

- Where there are 20–99 potential redundancies the consultation period should be 30 days.
- Where there are 100 or more potential redundancies the consultation period should be 45 days.

### Statutory Redundancy Pay is based on:

- Age.
- Service (service under 18 and over 65 counts).
- Normal weekly wages.

### Entitlement

- Half a week's pay for each complete year of continuous service below the age of 22.
- A full week's pay for each complete year of continuous service between the ages of 22 and 41.
- A week and a half's pay for each complete year of continuous service above the age of 41.

### Service

- Must have a minimum of two years' service.
- A maximum of 20 years' service will be counted.

### Weekly Wages

- Normal contractual weekly wages – gross.
- Capped at £538 per week.
- If no normal wages – average wages.

### If an individual is dismissed for redundancy, their entitlements include the following:

- Statutory redundancy pay.
- Statutory notice pay.
- Accrued holiday pay.
- Wages (including commission, bonus, overtime, etc).
- Statutory sick pay/maternity pay/paternity pay, etc.
- Contractual payments due, eg banked holidays, annualised hours reconciliation, contractual sick pay, contractual maternity/paternity pay, etc.

They may also be entitled to additional payments negotiated by Usdaw as part of the severance terms, such as enhanced redundancy pay, loyalty bonus and notice pay.

For more information about entitlements speak to your area organiser or visit:

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

### When companies go bust

When a company goes bust the technical term is insolvency. This is when an employer cannot meet its financial obligations and has to take formal steps to sort out the financial problems by selling or winding up the business. For insolvent companies the most common practice is the appointment of an administrator to try and sell the business as a going concern.

### When an administrator takes over staff can expect:

- Early redundancies to cut down the wage bill of staff the administrator considers to be non-essential.
- Business as usual for a period while attempts are made to sell the business or parts of it.
- Sale of the business, or part of it, as a going concern with some staff transferring.
- Redundancy for those not transferring with the business.
- The administrator has a duty to consult and follow the procedures. Usdaw has won a number of high-profile legal cases against administrators who refused to consult with Usdaw and won compensation (called a protective award) for members.

### Upskilling

Usdaw has a number of online courses that can help members refresh their skills and update their CVs. These can be found on the Usdaw website and include a CV writing course, CV templates, courses in maths, English and digital skills. Visit Usdaw's Online Learning Gateway: [www.usdaw.org.uk/olg](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/olg)

### UstdawLearn

UstdawLearn has launched its very own Twitter and Facebook pages. Follow them for the latest Lifelong Learning news. Also keep checking Usdaw's website for courses offered exclusively to Usdaw members.

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



## ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH JULIE HAYCRAFT

**U**sdaw rep Julie Haycraft has been an active and valued member of the union in the Midlands division for over eight years. In that time she's become increasingly involved, taking on the roles of rep, health and safety rep, branch secretary, divisional councillor, divisional equalities forum member and federation chair.

### **Where do you work?**

I work in Lincolnshire Co-op's IT department, based at the Pharmacy Warehouse in Lincoln. I joined in 2011 and became a member of Usdaw at the same time. My job role involves writing and

maintaining databases for all areas of the business. I have put in place databases within our funeral division for the administration of funeral plans and flower orders. Our security team uses a database I designed for logging information around violent incidents and other crimes. In particular I created a database that uses Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) to alert filling station pump controllers if the vehicle has previously been involved in 'Drive Off'.

### **When did you become active?**

There was very little union presence in Lincoln Co-op and membership

was low so I became a rep in 2012 to try and change that. I wanted to become part of something that not only offered protection but also gave people an avenue to resolve issues when they didn't feel they could approach the personnel department. I like to solve problems and I'm not afraid to question or challenge. Often colleagues don't realise there is a route for changing what isn't right - I'm happy to facilitate and point them in the right direction.

### **Where has your union journey taken you so far?**

Following my rep training I realised



I'd been bitten by the trade union bug. Suddenly I was capable of helping people get through difficult times at work, facilitating change, bringing people together to resolve issues and it gave me a buzz. To widen my knowledge I attended both Summer Schools and completed Academy 1 and 2. I signed up to the TUC website and completed the Certificate and Diploma in Equalities and more recently the Certificate and Diploma in Employment Law. I wanted to have as much knowledge as possible to give the right advice to my colleagues when they needed it. I also discovered that networking was an important part of learning and through attending various conferences I became interested in the equality forum and the divisional council – both of which I was fortunate enough to be elected to.

### **Tell us about your role with the East Midlands Federation Committee.**

I am very passionate about federation schools as I found them a great introduction to networking and learning within the union. My first fed school was the first time I got up and spoke to a room full of people. The delegation was relatively small and everyone was very friendly which made the experience much less nerve wracking than it could have been. Some would say from this point I never looked back. I became a member of the Federation Committee because I wanted to ensure that such an important part of union learning continued for the benefit of all. Another aspect of the federation school, which I think is what makes them so friendly, is that they are run by reps for reps and members and this is a great formula for sharing information and experiences.

### **You've completed both Academy 1 and 2. How important were these learning experiences for you?**

The Academy played a massive part in my personal development and

also enabled me to put my skills to the test. The practical elements pushed me out of my comfort zone and into environments that I had little knowledge of. I was able to gain an understanding of all of the areas that Usdaw supports such as distribution, manufacturing and retail. I gained so much confidence and discovered I had a lot more patience than I first realised and quickly became adept at coaching and supporting others. Academy taught me to lead. I didn't have to follow and do what everyone else was doing for a change. I was leading from the front and I felt quite humbled that me as the advisee was now becoming the advisor.

### **Why is the union's equality agenda so important to you?**

In 1993 I became subject to inequality in the workplace to the extent of losing my chosen career. To this end I have always been passionate about inclusivity for all, inside and outside of work. As a member of the divisional equality forum I have supported campaigns on many issues. Through my role as a rep I became aware that we had many LGBT colleagues but we didn't really do anything to acknowledge that. People were asking me why Co-op didn't have a presence at Lincoln Pride considering we are one of the biggest employers in the county. I began questioning the relevant people at work and in 2019 I was given the go ahead and a budget to organise some merchandise and a stand. Lincoln Co-op has adopted the phrase #BelongingTogether and often involve the reps in how to facilitate inclusion for all strands under the Equality Act 2010.

### **How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your work and your role as rep?**

At the start of lockdown things went crazy and my phone didn't stop buzzing. My role changed for a few weeks and I went from sitting at a computer to picking medicines

in the warehouse. I even went out delivering goods a couple of times too. The IT side of my role also saw some emergency work as some practices needed putting in place to enable the funeral department to operate paperless and remotely. The personnel department were releasing information as fast as it was changing and members needed advice so naturally as rep I was the first port of call. Thankfully things have calmed down a bit since then.

### **Have you got any good advice for other reps?**

I would say that you should grab every training opportunity that you can, network with others as much as you can, attend conferences where possible and get involved with your branch. Usdaw is such a sociable union and many an experience and advice is shared over a drink. Often you can then draw on the knowledge you gained from that shared experience and put it to good use in your own workplace.

### **What keeps you motivated?**

I get pleasure from helping people. To support someone and give them courage to solve problems, to right a wrong, to improve working conditions, to change attitudes at work, to influence change – these all make me happy and also grateful that I am in a position to have such an impact. Outside of my own workplace I also enjoy the camaraderie between everyone in the union whether that be a fellow rep or an official right up to the general secretary. We as individuals only have a small voice. As a union we have a loud voice that affords change and I want to carry on being a part of that.

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



# RECRUITMENT IS VITAL FOR UNION PROFILE AND INFLUENCE

**U**sdaw's ability to be influential as a union depends on how many members we have and how well-organised they are, therefore having the ability and the tools to successfully recruit is vital. Reps need to talk to workers, listen to what they say and persuade them that being in Usdaw will make a difference for them and everyone in the workplace.

Here are some of the more common responses reps might get when they are trying to recruit members with some guidance on how to respond. This is just a guide. The key is to prepare and be ready for additional questions that potential members might ask. Keep up-to-date with the current state

of play on matters in your company such as pay and give examples of what the union has achieved at your workplace.

To ensure you are up-to-date with all of the latest information visit the union's website and sign up for email newsletters, follow the union on social media and read *Network* and *arena* magazines when they arrive.

## What can Usdaw do for me?

- Negotiate better pay and conditions.
- Look after your health and safety.
- Offer advice, support and ensure you are being treated fairly.
- Represent you at grievance and disciplinarys, with a professional union official when necessary.

- Access to a variety of learning opportunities to learn new skills.
- Free legal and accident cover, where you keep 100 per cent of the compensation.
- Discounts and offers exclusively for Usdaw members.

## I don't need the union, I can look after myself

- If you've got a problem and you raise it with management, what will you do if they won't listen?
- If you were facing dismissal, who would represent you? Would you know your contractual and statutory rights?
- Could you afford a solicitor if you needed to go to court?
- 10,000 Usdaw reps advise and

### Membership for week ended 19 September 2020

South Wales & Western	46,112
Eastern	57,146
Midlands	54,241
North Eastern	56,961
Scottish	40,658
Southern	58,728
North West	84,333
<b>Total</b>	<b>398,179</b>

support you at work and are backed up by highly trained Usdaw officials and specialists in the fields of pensions, health and safety, education, wages and employment law.

### What difference would it make if I joined?

- Reps are building up the strength of the union in the workplace and having more members is the only way the union can become stronger. People joining is the first step to giving the union profile and influence in the workplace.
- Ask what issues people need the union to address and report them to your area organiser so they can take the appropriate action.

### I don't want to go on strike

- Going on strike is not what the union is there for. Unions resolve thousands of issues for workers every day without going on strike. If unions do go on strike, it is over a very serious issue and only after a fully democratic ballot of all the members affected.
- Usdaw has a strong campaigning agenda and lobbies Government about the issues that matter to members like better pay, saving the high street, supporting working parents and ending abuse against shopworkers.

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

- One in three Usdaw members work part-time. Retailers and most companies are dependent on the contribution of their part-time staff, so your job is just as important as the next person's.
- The terms and conditions of most part-time workers have been won by unions negotiating for them.
- Part-time workers get all the same union benefits as full-time workers.
- The union always encourages part-time workers to come forward with issues specific to them that the union can raise.

### 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 professional representation, the consequences could be devastating.
- Usdaw has successfully won millions of pounds of compensation for its members – you can't afford not to join!

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

- No you don't! True, you get the

same terms and conditions that the union negotiates for members. But you wouldn't be entitled to advice or representation and you would have to meet your own legal costs if you had a serious problem.

- In some workplaces members will vote on things like their pay. Non-members don't get a vote.
- Every person who doesn't join, weakens the union and reduces the chances of getting a good deal at work for everyone.

### I'm too young to worry about joining a union

- Young workers are a vital part of the workforce but are often undervalued, underpaid and discriminated against.
- Usdaw's experience is that young workers are more likely than anyone to have problems at work.
- Over recent years Usdaw has helped young workers enforce their rights and negotiated the removal of youth rates in big companies such as Tesco, the Co-operative, Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Shop Direct. Many employers the union deals with now pay the adult rate to all employees, irrespective of age.
- Whether you're planning on making a career in your current workplace or not, you still need to be protected at work.

### I'm too old to join the union

- Age discrimination is a big problem in the workplace. If you are on the receiving end, the union can help and support you.
- If you're due to retire, it's really important to get it right as far as your pension and holiday pay, etc are concerned and the union has a specialist pension team that are on hand to offer expert advice.

**If you feel like you need more advice or support when it comes to recruiting in your workplace contact your area organiser or local Usdaw office.**

# CONGRESS 2020 GOES LIVE

A virtual TUC congress took place to discuss the most pressing issues of the day including the Government's response to the pandemic and protecting jobs

**T**his year's TUC looked very different. Due to COVID-19 the conference was moved online and shortened to two days. Usdaw's general secretary Paddy Lillis and deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen took the virtual rostrum to lobby the Government to work with trade unions for a national recovery, a new deal for workers and for better protection of shopworkers.

## NEW DEAL FOR WORKERS

Usdaw called for a new deal for working people based on a living wage and secure employment.

"Retail has faced many challenges over the last number of years, with the loss of thousands of jobs and big high street retailers like Woolworths, Toys R Us, British Home Stores, Somerfield and many more have gone out of business," said Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis.

"Now further misery has been inflicted on our country, our people and the economy with the COVID-19 lockdown. However, retail workers and those in the supply chain continued to go to work to ensure the country did not suffer from food shortages.

"At the time both the Government and the public recognised that supermarkets, distribution centres, food processing sites and delivery drivers were key workers.

"Well, now the time has come for all key workers to be rewarded. We want a New Deal for Workers. We want a Living Wage. We want guaranteed hours. We want an end to insecure contracts. And we want stronger employment rights at work."

## NATIONAL RECOVERY

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady made the case for Government to work with trade unions to put in place a national recovery plan, something that unions have been calling for since the beginning of lockdown.

Highlighting the joint working between Government, employers and trade unions that brought about the Jobs Retention Scheme, which saved millions of jobs, Frances O'Grady warned of a tsunami of job losses when the scheme ends at the end of October.

"The TUC is right to promote joint working to get the country past the COVID-19 pandemic," said Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis. "We've already seen over 125,000 retail job losses and nearly 14,000 store closures this year and that is before furlough ends. So, we are deeply concerned about the future of the retail industry, which was already struggling before the pandemic.

"What retail needs is a tripartite approach of unions, employers and Government working together to develop a recovery plan. We have long called for an industrial strategy for retail to help a sector that was already struggling before the Coronavirus emergency."

*Details of the recovery plan can be found on p24-25.*

## BETTER PROTECTION OF SHOPWORKERS

Usdaw highlighted the deep concerns it had about increased abuse of shopworkers during the pandemic and called for a change in the law.

"Safe working conditions have

always been a fundamentally important issue for the trade union movement," said Usdaw deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen. "If we did not know already, Coronavirus has clearly shown why health and safety in the workplace is so vitally important.

"Many Usdaw members have worked throughout this crisis. Workers in retail faced unprecedented levels of risk as they went to work to ensure everyone had access to food and the shelves of our supermarkets did not go empty.

"Usdaw's research shows that thousands of retail workers faced abuse. Of even greater concern, we found that verbal abuse of shopworkers doubled during the crisis.

"That's why Usdaw launched a petition calling on the Government to make it a specific offence to abuse, threaten or assault a shopworker. So far, over 60,000 people have signed the online petition. At 100,000 signatures, the Government have to formally consider it for debate in Parliament." [petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621)

## KEIR STARMER

Labour leader Keir Starmer paid tribute to workers and praised trade unions for making the job retention scheme happen. He called on the Government to work with unions and Labour to help keep people in work by targeting support to the sectors that need it.

"This crisis has exposed the total incompetence of this Government," said Keir Starmer. "But it also



exposed something much deeper. The ingrained injustices and inequalities we see all around us.

"Austerity was always a political choice. A bulldozer to the foundations of society. And it left us woefully unprepared for this crisis.

"Congress, we're a great country. We're the sixth richest country in the world. But our economy is one where the workers we applaud are overworked, underpaid and undervalued.

"Where many – especially the self-employed – lack basic rights and security at work. Where millions of people are one missed pay-packet away from hardship. And where too few are able to save for their future and their retirement.

"We've got to change this. After all the sacrifice and the loss, we can't go back to business as usual.

"We are on the precipice of a return to Thatcher-era unemployment. We know only too well the scarring effect mass unemployment will have on communities and families across the country and we can't let it happen again.

"And we can't let the Tories use this crisis as an excuse to weaken workers' rights. Hold back planned rises in the living wage. Or embark on a fresh round of austerity.

"Of course, the furlough scheme can't go on as it is forever. We've never suggested that. But the truth is that the virus is still with us. Infections are rising. Lockdowns are increasing.

"For millions of workers it just isn't possible to get back to work or reopen businesses. That isn't a choice. It's the cold reality of this crisis. So, it makes no sense at all for the Government to pull support away now.

"That's why I'm calling for the Government to work with us to create new, targeted support that can replace the Job Retention Scheme. To develop this through urgent talks with trade unions, businesses and the Labour Party."



*Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis*



*Usdaw deputy general secretary Dave McCrossen*



*Leader of the Labour party Keir Starmer*



*TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady*

# RIGHT HERE WRITE NOW!

Take part in the Write Now initiative and have your experience of living and working through the Coronavirus lockdown archived for future generations

**T**he union's Lifelong Learning campaign was launched in 1998 to provide members with the chance to return to education and improve their skills, knowledge and career prospects. Since that time more than 100,000 members have returned to learning to study basic maths and English, IT, and introductory language classes. Courses in sign language, digital photography and others have proved popular too.

Improving or gaining new skills has never been more vital for Usdaw members, but due to the ongoing crisis many workplaces are shut or they have closed their learning centres. However not to be deterred, union learning reps, project workers and Usdaw's education department have worked together to develop new ways of promoting the learning agenda and ensuring that during this time of uncertainty members can still access the training they need.

Usdaw has teamed up with the Royal Literary Fund (RLF) to take part in their exciting new Write Now project.

The Royal Literary Fund is a national charity; its work includes employing professional writers to teach writing skills in workplace and community settings across the UK.

For the last two years they have been working with Usdaw's Lifelong Learning programme to offer writing skills workshops to Usdaw members.

The Write Now project encourages members to get into writing by

getting them to reflect on their own experiences during the pandemic. The aim is to capture those experiences in a national digital archive – and in print.

A number of sites have signed up to pilot the initiative, including Sainsbury's Argos (Widnes and Acton Gate), Boots (Nottingham), McVities (Stockport) and Tesco Bank (Newcastle).

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the initiative will be delivered remotely, giving those members who want some extra support and motivation the chance to access online writing exercises, workshops and tutorials.

## HOW IT WORKS

In lockdown, as retail, distribution and food production workers you have played a key role in keeping the country running, ensuring there was food on the shelves and that vulnerable people had access to supplies. You have extraordinary stories to tell of living and working through COVID-19.

Write Now wants your stories – in your words – to become part of the national record of the momentous events of 2020. This can be anything from a few lines, to a poem to a short story.

But don't worry, you don't have to do this on your own. Using writing exercises, games and short videos, Write Now will help you come up with ideas and put them down on paper. They will also give members

the chance to discuss their writing in friendly online workshops and tutorials, which will be organised at a national and site level.

If you're interested check out these videos which the RLF have produced as taster sessions:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVh9dY\\_YHQk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVh9dY_YHQk)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfRBNI2w8LA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfRBNI2w8LA)

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY STORY?

With the writers' permission, it may be published in books, newsletters and magazines: some sites are funding anthologies so that every colleague has a printed record of this extraordinary time.

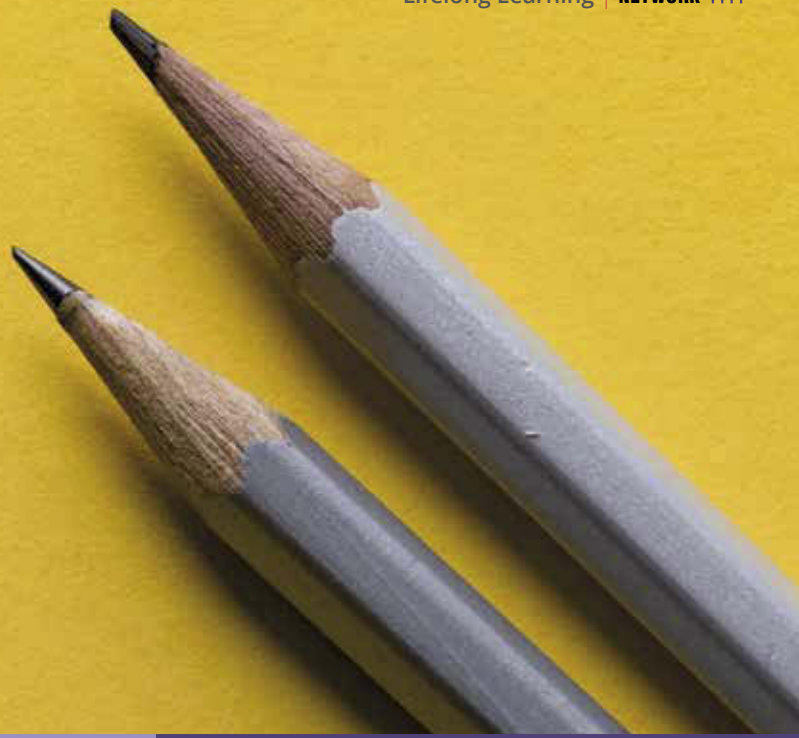
## WHAT NEXT?

The Write Now initiative will be opened to members nationally during Usdaw's "Have a Go Month" which runs throughout September – you can find out details below. And if you want to set up a Write Now project in your site, with free writing skills resources, support and offered to your members, speak to your regional Project Worker.

## ONLINE LEARNING GATEWAY

To make it even easier to take up the learning opportunities on offer, members now have access to the online learning gateway. For more information go to:

[www.usdaw.org.uk/onlinelearninggateway](https://www.usdaw.org.uk/onlinelearninggateway)



## HERE ARE TWO EXAMPLES SUBMITTED THROUGH THE INITIATIVE

Headsets on, hearts a-flutter,  
expectations high, waiting with baited breath.  
Stories told that would leave a tear –  
the hardest heart this would break.

Gratitude and thank yous received a-plenty  
knowing that each person you've helped that shift  
at least will eat for the next few days.  
We are the hidden superheroes in our own little  
way.

We don't wear capes, or even expect praise.  
Call after call, day-after-day can chip away  
at your soul and bring up things you may  
never believe,  
but we sat and we listened and helped the most  
vulnerable.

It helped us feel important for that moment in time  
to hear the voice on the line break and choke back  
tears.  
Professionalism goes out the window, as you break  
with them.  
As the call ends, you've done your best.

Dust yourself down and do it again...

*KERRY Sainsbury's Argos, Widnes*

## The Great Lockdown

I woke up to someone calling my name all sore  
and groggy, where was I? Where am I?

I realised fairly quickly I was in intensive care  
in Stoke hospital wired up like a Christmas  
tree. I had been admitted with a collapsed lung  
and had undergone reconstructive surgery.

When I got discharged I went home and  
straight into isolation. My wife Cheryl was  
frantically trying to place online orders for food  
and basics. We soon discovered toilet rolls  
were like hen's teeth. Luckily, we have a well-  
stocked pantry and freezer.

I was looking forward to resuming a normal  
life but this was not to be as the virus was  
well and truly out of the bottle. All thoughts  
of seeing the grandchildren, family meals and  
normality disappeared. The only time I went  
out was to the doctors to get my dressings  
changed.

I soon found out Zoom was not an ice lolly!  
It was great seeing the kids on Zoom but you  
can't cuddle a computer screen.

As lockdown went on it became normal to  
watch the daily briefing on TV, having someone  
deliver your food and constantly washing  
everything. I now know how the dog feels  
when it sits by the window watching people  
pass.

*TOM Sainsbury's Argos, Acton Gate*



# BACK TO SCHOOL

Network looks at working parents' and carers' rights if COVID-19 forces schools to close again

As the Government urges parents to send their children back to school, many parents are left wondering what their rights are if schools close or their child falls ill and they need to take time off.

## SCHOOL CLOSURES

Disruption to the labour market caused by the impact of COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the day-to-day lives of working parents and carers.

A big challenge for working parents and carers, before as well as during the Coronavirus crisis, has been how to balance paid work with caring responsibilities. These difficulties have intensified since the crisis began.

The fact that schools and nurseries have reopened doesn't mean that these difficulties have come to an end. COVID-19 looks set to cause ongoing disruption to childcare provision, placing significant limits on the opening of schools and nurseries.

As track and trace systems come in, any parent can find themselves required to isolate their entire household as a result of someone presenting with symptoms, coming into contact with Coronavirus or a local lockdown being put in place for up to 14 days. This could lead to many members being faced with significant additional childcare requirements at short notice.

## What are my rights?

As things stand, the law is very limited in terms of the rights it gives to working parents.

Unlike many other European

countries, we expect working parents to manage the difficult juggling act of balancing work and bringing up children with very little support from the State.

There are currently two types of leave available to some (not all) working parents, both of which are unpaid.

Most working parents and carers have a right to emergency dependants leave. This can be taken at any time without needing to give notice.

This is unpaid, and only covers sorting out an immediate problem, but may be helpful when faced with sudden school closures.

To access this right, you have to be an employee (to have a 'contract of employment') although it is available from day one of employment.

For more information read Usdaw's leaflet *Time off for family emergencies* at:

[www.usdaw.org.uk/349](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/349)

Working parents are also entitled to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave for each child in their care. That leave can be taken at any point before each child turns 18.

This leave must usually be taken in blocks of a week, and you can use up to four weeks of it each year.

If your child is disabled, you can also take the leave in shorter blocks if you need to.

If you are taking parental leave of four weeks or less, your employer should hold your original job open for you, or if they can't do that you are entitled to a similar job with at least the same status and conditions.

With unpaid parental leave, your



employer is allowed to insist that you give 21 days' notice of your intention to take this leave.

For more information see Usdaw's Leaflet *Working Parents – Know Your Rights* at:

[www.usdaw.org.uk/381](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/381)

To access parental leave, you have to be an employee (to have a 'contract of employment') and have worked for your current employer for at least 12 months.

These are the legal minimums though. For more details about what your employer provides check your company staff handbook or website. Speak to your Usdaw rep or local office for support and advice.

For more information contact Usdaw's Equalities section [equalitymatters@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:equalitymatters@usdaw.org.uk)





## USDAW'S MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY

Throughout the pandemic Usdaw reps have been supporting members, highlighting the fact that mental health is both a workplace issue and an Usdaw issue and letting members know it's OK to talk about anxiety, depression and other mental health problems.

Usdaw wants to make sure that reps and members are getting the support they need to look after their own mental health during these difficult times. To do this we have launched a survey to find out more about how reps and members feel about the crisis

and if it has affected their mental health. It only takes a couple of minutes to complete and can be filled in online at [www.usdaw.org.uk/mhealth](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/mhealth)

Usdaw has also developed a wide range of campaign materials that reps can use to let members know about their rights where they're experiencing problems at work because of their mental health and signposting them to sources of support where their mental health is affecting their life outside of work.

If you would like to run a

workplace campaign on mental health then why not order a 'It's good to talk' campaign box.

Inside the campaign box you'll find everything you need to know about how to raise the issue of mental health at work in your workplace together with practical information you can give to members. The box contains leaflets, posters, surveys and giveaways.

To order a campaign box contact the Usdaw's Equalities section by emailing [equalitymatters@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:equalitymatters@usdaw.org.uk) or 0161 224 2804

# CLEANING AND HYGIENE FOR COVID-19 SECURITY

**A** key part of an employer's risk assessment for COVID-19 is their arrangement for cleaning and hygiene. It is not enough for the risk assessment to simply state that an enhanced cleaning regime will be used. There needs to be clear guidance on what that cleaning regime involves.

It needs to be clear which staff are responsible for which aspects of the policy. For example, where separate cleaning staff are employed, they may be responsible for deep cleaning of the workplace once a day but also for periodic cleaning of busy areas or frequently touched surfaces but the rest of the workforce may be responsible for cleaning of shared equipment before and after they use it.

If there are no separate cleaners then staff need to be given adequate time and training to be able to carry out cleaning duties in addition to their other duties.

## IDENTIFYING FREQUENTLY TOUCHED SURFACES

Doors, banisters, buttons and anything that is frequently touched, especially if it's touched by lots of people, will need more regular cleaning than normal. Examples of frequently touched objects include:

- Work surfaces like desks, platforms and workstations.
- Handles on doors, windows, rails, dispensers and water coolers.
- Common areas like toilets, reception, changing rooms, corridors and lifts.
- Vehicle handles, steering wheels, seat belts and internal surfaces.
- Control panels for machinery, control pads and switches.
- Computer keyboards, printers, touch screens, monitors and phones.
- Taps, kettles, water heaters, fridges, microwaves and cupboards.
- Shared equipment like tools,

machines, vehicles, pallet trucks and delivery boxes.

- Post and goods coming in or being shipped out.

Put in place measures to clean surfaces and objects after each use where possible, for example phones and conferencing facilities in a meeting room. If it's not practical to clean after each use, for example lift buttons that are used continuously throughout the day, make sure they are cleaned often.

## REDUCING THE NEED FOR CLEANING

Reducing people's contact with surfaces and objects is better than relying on cleaning once contact has taken place. This means limiting movement of people around the workplace or reducing people's contact with surfaces and objects. This might include things like:

- Allocating specific work areas or vehicles to specific people.



- Creating small groups that can work independently on tasks.
- Closing off spare workstations and removing items that don't need to be available for regular use.
- Propping open doors to avoid the need to touch handles (excluding fire doors or other doors that must be kept closed).
- Fitting automatic sensor-operated doors or foot plates to doors so that they can be opened with feet rather than hands.
- Issuing door hooks to workers so they don't have to touch handles.
- Reducing equipment available to reduce the amount that needs to be cleaned.

The HSE provides guidance for employers on cleaning along with other controls for COVID-19 on its website: [www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/cleaning](http://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/cleaning)

## COVID OUTBREAK AT WORK

Official figures show that the

workplace is the second most common site for clusters of COVID-19 outbreaks after care homes. As more people start returning to their workplace after working from home or being on furlough it is likely that these figures will increase. In this article we explain what might happen if there is an outbreak at the site where you work.

### WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

Individual workers who develop the main symptoms of COVID-19 should:

- Self-isolate.
- Anyone who tests positive should also self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms.
- Workers should also self-isolate for 14 days if someone in their household or support bubble develops symptoms or tests positive.
- As should workers who are told to do so by NHS Test and Trace.
- Workers who are fit and able may be asked by their employer to work from home while isolating. If work from home is not an option they should receive Statutory Sick Pay if they qualify or be offered the option of taking annual leave.

### SYMPTOMS AT WORK

If someone already in work reports they are showing any of the symptoms they should:

- Be isolated from other people.
- If they have their own face covering with them or one is available in the workplace they should be asked to cover up if they can.
- Travel home should be arranged, avoiding public transport where possible.
- They should be advised to arrange a test following NHS guidelines.

### CONTACT AND TRACE

A 'contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 anytime from two days before the person was symptomatic up to 10 days from

onset of symptoms.

If contacts are co-workers:

- The person who has developed symptoms may ask their employer to identify and alert those co-workers.
- Workplace contacts are co-workers who have worked more closely than two metres for more than 15 minutes without any barriers or other protection to mitigate the risk.
- If an employer does need to inform co-workers they may have been at risk they should do so but they should seek to maintain medical confidentiality and should not name individuals.
- Contacts do not need to self-isolate unless they are instructed to do so by NHS Test and Trace or by a public health professional but they should be advised to stay alert and watch for symptoms.
- When NHS Test and Trace or public health advise a co-worker they need to self-isolate they will not identify the person who tested positive.

If a workplace has more than one positive case within 14 days they have been advised to contact their local public health protection team. Where there is a workplace cluster of cases the public health team will carry out a risk assessment, advise on further protection such as enhanced hygiene, additional measures to separate staff or even temporary closure of the premises.

While maintaining individual medical confidentiality employers should keep health and safety reps informed if there are several cases at work and the public health protection team are involved. It is likely that the public health team will have questions for other staff or the health and safety enforcement body for the workplace will be involved in investigating the COVID-19 precautions on site.

Further information can be found: [www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-workplace-guidance) [healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk)



A woman in a grey coat and a man in an orange high-visibility vest are standing in a large warehouse aisle. The man is pointing towards a high shelf of stacked cardboard boxes. The woman is holding a clipboard and looking at the man. The warehouse has high ceilings and many rows of shelving units filled with boxes.

# ORGANISING TO TACKLE WORK-RELATED STRESS

## RESOURCES

Usdaw Mental Health campaign

[www.usdaw.org.uk/Campaigns/Mental-Health](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/Campaigns/Mental-Health)

Usdaw Stress Questionnaire

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

HSE Talking Toolkit [www.hse.gov.uk/stress](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress)

## 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](mailto:healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk)



Working during the pandemic has brought considerable change and uncertainty within organisations. It will naturally have led to questions and concerns and this could potentially have increased the likelihood for the onset of work-related stress.

### What is stress?

The HSE define stress as 'the adverse reaction to excessive pressure'. It is important to make a clear distinction between pressure and stress as they are often words that are used interchangeably. Pressure is experienced by people and is helpful as it provides the motivation to perform at our optimum. Stress is the result of too much pressure and is a symptom of being unable to cope. Stress is harmful and can cause a range of physical or mental health problems. According to HSE figures work-related stress accounts for 45 per cent of working days lost due to ill health. They have identified it as one of their three main health priorities.

### Is managing the stress of individuals ok?

Dealing with individual workers who are indicating they are stressed is a start. But even with the better employers, this individualist approach to the problem misses the point. Stress is not the problem of a failing individual unable to cope – it is a collective issue. Stress is a health and safety issue which potentially affects all employees. It is about the structure and organisation of the workplace.

### What can safety representatives do?

The earlier a problem is tackled the less impact it will have. If you think that an employee is having problems, encourage them to talk to someone, whether it's their line manager, GP or their occupational health team. Reps can use the Usdaw 'It's Good to Talk' mental health campaign materials to help them raise awareness in the workplace.

The law requires all employers to

assess the risk of work-related stress and to put steps in place to tackle those risks. Safety representatives can organise around work-related stress as a collective concern. It is good practice to consult management before conducting a stress audit of the workforce. A good employer will show management commitment and buy-in into the process and promote it to the workforce. Measuring if there is stress by conducting a stress audit will highlight if there is a problem in the workplace. This can involve providing members with a copy of the Usdaw stress questionnaire to complete while conducting an inspection. If you need assistance with interpreting these questionnaires and producing a report, please send your completed questionnaires with your membership and contact details to the health and safety section at central office.

Results indicating work-related stress can then be consulted on with the employer. A good employer will see these as a blueprint for action. The employer may well already have a stress policy and risk assessment in place which can provide a road map.

### What can the employer do now to deal with stress?

Representatives could recommend that the employer considers implementing measures to help deal with stress. The HSE have produced a stress talking toolkit. This toolkit is designed to help line managers hold initial conversations with employees in order to prevent work-related stress. The Talking Toolkit should not be the only measure that the organisation introduces. It should form part of a range of measures within a stress strategy.

Organising can be a catalyst for a reduction in the triggers for work-related stress which can make for a healthier and better place to work. They can also be a springboard for improvements in the organisation's safety climate. These improvements and changes will highlight to the workforce the value of being a member of the union.



### NEW TUC GUIDE

Hazards at Work is the definitive guide to health and safety at work for trade union health and safety reps. The 2020 edition is an A4 size, 374-page book which takes account of the latest changes to health and safety law and guidance from the Health and Safety Executive.

As in previous editions, the core of the book is the 40-chapter section on the common hazards and causes of ill-health at work including references to COVID-19, and how to assess and prevent them, with a section on workers in special categories, such as young workers, casual workers, agency workers and disabled workers. The book also contains HSE and other guidance, extensive checklists, case studies and web resources.

Usdaw has secured a bulk purchase discount. Usdaw Health and Safety Reps can order copies from Usdaw stationery department at a reduced price of £14 plus £2 p&p (£16 in total).

The Usdaw order form is available on the website:

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

# 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 Leasing  
Car Maintenance  
Car Parking: Q-Park  
Fiat  
Startrescue  
Usdawdrive  
Vauxhall Cars

## HEALTH & BEAUTY

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

## SHOPPING

Apple  
Crown Decorating Centres  
Discount Card  
Domestic Appliances  
Magazine Subscriptions  
T.M. Lewin  
Usdaw Prepaid Cashback Card  
UsdawRewards Cashback  
Virgin Wines

## INSURANCE

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

## LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

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



Don't forget about the Union's legal services such as free will writing and Legal Plus.

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

## MONEY & FINANCE

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

## HOLIDAYS

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

## MISCELLANEOUS

Funeral Planning  
Gas and Electric  
Mobile Phones  
TOTUM Pro/NUS Extra  
International Student ID

# [www.usdaw.org.uk/offers](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/offers)\*

\*Terms and Conditions for individual offers on the website.

Find out more  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/offers](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/offers)\*

## ★AUTUMN HIGHLIGHTS ★AUTUMN HIGHLIGHTS ★

### **Get discounts on 250 UK brands online and on the high street**

Take advantage of TOTUM Pro, a discount card and app that offers busy workers access to discounts and offers from 250 UK retailers available in store, online and via the TOTUM app. Save money on all the things you love, from dining out and keeping fit to clothes shopping and travel abroad. To find out more go to: [www.usdaw.org.uk/offers](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/offers)\*



### **Time to sort out your finances?**

Lighthouse Financial Advice can guide you through those times in life when you need to address financial issues and can help with all aspects of your financial planning. Call 08000 85 85 90 or email [appointments@lighthousefa.co.uk](mailto:appointments@lighthousefa.co.uk) for your complimentary, no obligation initial consultation or to find out more go to:

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

### **Great savings on a wide range of Apple products**

Save between 2%-10% on Apple products including MacBook Pro, iPad, Apple Watch, AirPods and iPod as well as Apple accessories (inc Beats). There's no need to wait for delivery, instead, you can order online and collect from your nearest Apple store within one hour. To find out more go to: [www.usdaw.org.uk/offers](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/offers)\*



Enter for a chance to win an iPad 32GB\*



### **Enter our Free Prize Draw for a chance to win an iPad 32GB\***

By providing us with your email address and insurance renewal dates, we can let you know more about our range of great value products. Usdaw Insurance provide our members and their families with great value for money Home, Motor, Travel and Pet Insurance.

To enter simply complete the prize draw entry form at:

[www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/usdawipad2020](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/usdawipad2020)

The Prize Draw closes at 23:45 on Saturday 31st October 2020. Good Luck!

\*Terms and conditions apply to all benefits. See website for details. Offers subject to change without notice. Usdaw Discounts & Offers is managed and run on behalf of Usdaw by Parliament Hill Ltd. Further benefits are organised directly by Usdaw Membership Services. Please see website for full details. Apple - annual purchase limits apply. Discounts are subject to availability. For the latest offers visit the Apple EPP store.

# STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS



Wendy Murphy

## WENDY MURPHY

**Usdaw area organiser in the North West division, Wendy Murphy, retired in August after 16 years working for the union out of the Preston office.**

Before joining the union's staff Wendy was an Usdaw rep and health and safety rep at Littlewoods Mail Order in Preston where she worked for 17 years. In 1999 she was elected as full-time convenor and financial secretary with a responsibility for over 1,400 members and 15 reps. She was also elected onto the divisional council in 2002.

"During my time as an area organiser, I have had responsibility for many different companies within the

North West division, but I have been the North West Co-op and Morrison's Sata coordinator for many years," said Wendy who was appointed to the organising staff in 2004.

"I have also been the proud coordinator for the North West Retired Members Committee since 2008. I have loved working with this committee. They have a wealth of experience and many interesting tales to tell which would be lost without having this group represented.

"Some of my proudest moments during my time at Usdaw have been watching the reps that I have nurtured and supported over the years blossom and grow in confidence and become valuable activists."

## HELPING YOU IN YOUR ROLE AS AN USDAW REP

### WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION

#### *Usdaw website and enews*

For everything you need to help you in your role as rep including sections on legal advice, workers' rights, health and safety, news, training opportunities, upcoming events and campaigns. You can also download informative leaflets and posters for your noticeboard and sign up for email updates to hear the latest news from the union.

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

#### *Social media*

As an Usdaw rep we recommend that you follow **UsdawUnion** on **Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Flickr**. It's a great way to keep up to date with news, campaigns, events, rights at work, competitions and offers exclusive to Usdaw members. You can also

share pictures of your campaigns and events with the union through these channels.

#### *Local office*

If you need support or guidance in your role as rep, whether you're not sure how to handle a problem, or you need advice on how to run a campaign, then don't hesitate to contact your local Usdaw office where the union's staff will be happy to help.

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Here at *Network* magazine we love hearing about what reps and members have been up to in and

outside of their workplaces – if you've got pictures to share even better! We want to hear about campaigns and events, wins for your members, your top tips, reps and members who are going the extra mile to support local causes, anything that you think would make a good story and that Usdaw members would like to read about. We're also interested to hear what you think about *Network* and *arena* magazines. Which articles you've particularly enjoyed, or not enjoyed, and what you'd like to see more of. So please get in touch, we look forward to hearing from you. Email [network@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:network@usdaw.org.uk)

WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT WINS FOR YOUR MEMBERS, YOUR TOP TIPS, AND REPS & MEMBERS WHO ARE GOING THE EXTRA MILE





## NEW ONLINE TRAINING: THE ROLE OF THE REP

An essential online course for new reps to help them understand what's involved in the role

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic has forced us all to make big changes to the way we work – and one of them is that we can't currently arrange rep training in the same way. We want to ensure our reps continue to receive all the training they need to effectively support their members, so our education department has been hard at work to expand the union's online learning offer.

This bitesize course – the first in a series of five - is essential for all new reps to help you get to grips with the role. You'll get a

comprehensive overview of the duties of a rep and straightforward information aimed at helping you understand the different terms. And when you've finished the course, you'll be signposted to the next stage of your online training journey.

Sign up for the course at:

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

and be sure to check out [www.usdawlearn.org.uk](http://www.usdawlearn.org.uk) for all the latest online learning opportunities for both reps and members.

## NEW IN!

### Online courses

**CV Writing - IT bitesize course**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/cvwriting](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/cvwriting)

**Getting Started:  
The Role of the Rep**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/gettingstarted](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/gettingstarted)

**Organising and Recruitment  
Part 1**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/RecruitOrg1](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/RecruitOrg1)

**Organising and Recruitment  
Part 2**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/RecruitOrg2](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/RecruitOrg2)

**Pensions Home Study**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/  
pensionshomestudy](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/pensionshomestudy)

**Helping With Homework - new  
bitesize maths course**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/  
mathshomework](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/mathshomework)

**Looking After Your Mental Health**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/  
yourmentalhealth](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/yourmentalhealth)

**Quirks of the English Language -  
English bitesize course**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/quirksenglish](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/quirksenglish)

**Vulnerable Workers Home Study**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/homestudy5](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/homestudy5)

**Staying Safe Online course**  
[www.usdaw.org.uk/SafeOnline](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/SafeOnline)

### Leaflets

**Usdaw Publications Catalogue &  
Form**  
(Leaflet 116)

**Pensions and Redundancy Guide**  
(Leaflet 440)

### Checklists and Forms

**Nomination form for Usdaw  
divisional equalities forums**

**Usdaw COVID-19 Secure Health  
and Safety Rep Checklist:  
Factories & Warehouses**

**Usdaw COVID-19 Secure Health &  
Safety Rep Checklist: Shops**

For a complete list of Usdaw publications and to order visit:  
[dtp.usdaw.co.uk/PublicationsCatalogue](http://dtp.usdaw.co.uk/PublicationsCatalogue)

# Media Monitor



## Phillip Norton

"We're not second class citizens"

Shop workers call for more punishment for those who abuse them as [@UsdawUnion](#) says threats and violence against retail staff have doubled during lockdown. One worker, Janet Haggis, tells me her story on [@looknorthBBC](#)



**BBC NEWS**

**UK shop workers 'in firing line of abusive customers'**

Violence and abuse against shop workers has doubled during the coronavirus pandemic across the UK, according to a union representing retail staff.

The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (Usdaw) says retail workers have been assaulted, threatened or abused at least once a week on average since the start of the outbreak, compared to once a fortnight in 2019.

Its general secretary Paddy Lillis has launched a petition calling on the House of Commons to enact legislation that protects retail workers.

Lillis said: "At a time when we should all be working together to get through this crisis, it is a national disgrace that people working to keep food on the shelves for their local communities are being abused and assaulted."

Usdaw wants to see legislation to make abuse in shops a specific offence

**Mirror**

**What happens if you refuse to wear a face mask - what is the fine and can you be arrested?**

For all but a small group of people, wearing a mask will soon become the norm when they leave the house to go shopping. But what happens if you don't wear one?

By [Oliver Miles](#)

Masks in shops will become the new normal (page 11)

**What do trade unions think?**

Well Usdaw, who represent shop workers, welcomed the charge but warned that without additional guidance it could be confusing and lead to shop workers being abused.

Making the wearing of face masks in shops in England compulsory could "trigger abuse" of staff, unions and businesses have warned.

The union's General Secretary Paddy Lillis said: "It is right to make the wearing of face coverings mandatory in shops, but we must recognise that expert advice says it is an additional protection on top of existing safety measures. There now must be clear and detailed guidance from the Government and we urge them to work with Usdaw and retail employers to draw that up, as we successfully did on joint safety guidance for the operation of both grocery stores and the British Retail Consortium."

Email your thoughts and pictures to us at: [network@usdaw.org.uk](mailto:network@usdaw.org.uk) or tweet us at: [@usdawunion](https://twitter.com/usdawunion)



### Claire Saunders

Great to speak with @IvorBennett @SkyNews about the abuse shop workers face and the importance of @UsdawUnwion petition for stronger penalties for offenders. @coopuk @JoWhitfield\_ @CP\_Whitf @PeterBatt3 @ShadwellMark @MichaelRoast @paulgerrard1971 #Itsnotpartofthejob



### Morning Star

Enforce stiffer penalties for abuse against retail workers, union urges after assaults and threats double [ow.ly/Swd550B3GRd](https://www.ow.ly/Swd550B3GRd) #WorkersRights #Usdaw @UsdawUnion

### M&S: Customers still want high street, says union

Sky News talking to Usdaw national officer Dave Gill



### British Retail Consortium

Retail workers were just some of the heroes that kept the UK going through coronavirus, yet over 400 shopworkers face violence & abuse every day. Please join us & back

@UsdawUnion's petition calling on govt to treat retail crime as a specific offence!  
[petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621)





**#FreedomFromFear**



**Paddy Lillis  
Usdaw General Secretary**

**We are appalled that violence, threats and abuse have doubled during this national emergency. At a time when we should all be working together to get through this crisis, it is a national disgrace that people working to keep food on the shelves for their local communities are being abused and assaulted.**

**This is simply unacceptable and Usdaw is clear that abuse is not part of the job.**

**It's time the Government listened to the voices of shopworkers and legislates for stiffer penalties for those who assault workers. Retail staff have a crucial role in our communities and that role must be valued and respected, they deserve the protection of the law.**



**Protect Retail Workers from Abuse, Threats and Violence**

**SIGN THE PETITION**

**<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621>**