

NETWORK

THE BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR USDAW ACTIVISTS – MAY/JUNE 2020



A NEW DEAL

£10 Minimum Wage For All Workers Many of the workers that our country relies on are low paid. The money that they earn doesn't reflect the contribution that they make and it isn't enough for a decent standard of living. We need a minimum wage of £10 per hour, not a few years down the line, but now. We also need to get rid of the rip-off youth rates that allow employers to pay young workers as little as £4.55 an hour. Every worker deserves a wage they can live on.

Minimum Contract Of 16 Hours Per Week For Everyone Who Wants It A higher minimum wage can only tackle low pay if workers also get the hours they need to get by. We know that some people will want to work just a few hours a week, and of course they should be able to do that, but for most people, a minimum contract of 16 hours a week will be a step forward.

A 'Normal Hours' Contract Short hours or flexible contracts are very common in retail. Many workers are regularly working far more hours than they are contracted to, but the employer can just reduce them back down to contracted hours whenever they want to. This isn't a fair deal, because the flexibility is all in the employer's favour. If you are regularly working over your contracted hours, we believe they should be guaranteed in your contract. This will help workers to plan their finances and feel more secure.

Better Sick Pay People who are ill shouldn't be worrying about their finances, and they shouldn't be forced into work when they are sick so they can pay their bills. The minimum sick pay that employers have to pay is statutory sick pay – that's just £95.85 per week. It isn't 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 Coronavirus outbreak). If you earn less than £118 per week, you aren't entitled to any statutory sick pay. All of this needs to change. Sick pay needs to be paid from day one, at your normal pay rate, and it should be paid to all workers.

Protection At Work Nobody should go to work in fear, but that's the reality for many retail and delivery workers. Violence and abuse has doubled during the current crisis. It's never acceptable at any time, and that's why we are calling for better legal protection, urgently. We need a new law that makes it a specific offence to assault public-facing workers, with a sentence that fits the crime. The Government needs to show that it takes retail workers' safety seriously.

A Ban On Zero Hours Contracts It is not acceptable for workers to be put on contracts that don't guarantee them any hours at all. There is a real danger that, as the impact of Coronavirus begins to show 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.

A Proper Social Security System The Coronavirus crisis has shown that anybody can find themselves needing help. Lots of workers have had to claim Universal Credit. This system can be really difficult to navigate and after many years of cuts, it does not provide the safety net that families need. People who are struggling simply cannot afford to wait five weeks for their payment. Many 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 isn't 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. It cannot be acceptable that the key workers who are doing so much now don't feel secure in their jobs going forward. We need stronger protections against redundancy and dismissal, from day one of employment. We also need proper consultation about new technology and investment in skills so that workers are able to keep up in a changing workplace.

Fair Treatment And Equality For All Workers Most of the underpaid frontline key workers are women. These essential roles have been undervalued and underpaid for too long. Women workers need equal pay and they need decent pay. School and nursery closures have put extra pressure on women workers who often have had to reduce hours or take unpaid leave to mind the kids. We need new family-friendly rights that give parents and carers real choices to support juggling work and family life.

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 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.

FOR WORKERS



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BIG THANK YOU TO ALL USDRAW REPS

I would like to begin by thanking Usdaw reps for all of their efforts in response to the current crisis. Usdaw reps are doing an absolutely fantastic job of supporting their members during this unbelievably difficult and challenging time. I know it's not easy when you have worries about your own health and the health of loved ones.

One thing the crisis has shown is that millions of low paid workers and undervalued workers have stepped up in the most difficult of circumstances to keep the country going.

Usdaw members have been working under intense pressure and providing a lifeline to our communities.

And once this is over we are determined that things can't go back to the way they were.

This crisis has shown that too many of our key workers are trying to exist on low-pay while facing high levels of abuse. That's why we'll be working towards a new deal for workers. One that ensures workers are paid at least £10 per hour, that there is legislation to protect shopworkers against abuse and that our social security system supports people instead of punishing them.

Usdaw is working hard to keep our members safe as they work through the crisis and support those who are not currently able to work. We have been lobbying the Government and employers and have secured a number



of improvements including bonuses, getting sick pay from day one and improved health and safety provisions.

As more and more workplaces start to reopen, safety will remain our number one priority.

This edition of Network has a six-page health and safety feature on COVID-19 which guides reps through what should be happening in their workplaces.

Despite the recent high-profile case of a Government advisor not following social distancing rules, I would urge all our reps and members to continue following Government advice. I know the lockdown has affected many of us adversely but now is not the time to 'bend' the rules. We need to keep working together to ensure that we come out of this crisis sooner rather than later.

Usdaw General Secretary

Paddy Lillis



www.usdaw.org.uk/recruit

REPS' HANDBOOKS

Legal Plus Reps' Handbook

dtp.usdaw.co.uk/LegalPlusRepsHandbook

Health and Safety Reps' Handbook

dtp.usdaw.co.uk/healthandsafetyrepshb

Union Learning Reps' Handbook

dtp.usdaw.co.uk/ulrhb

Reps' Handbook: Getting started - the role of the rep

dtp.usdaw.co.uk/repshb1

Reps' Handbook: Organising and Recruitment

dtp.usdaw.co.uk/repshb2

Reps' Handbook: Representing Members

dtp.usdaw.co.uk/repshb3

Data Protection: Guide For Reps & Branch Officers

www.usdaw.org.uk/gdprguide



dtp.usdaw.co.uk

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Usdaw
*Union of Shop, Distributive
and Allied Workers*

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USDAW'S PRIORITY IS SAFETY

Usdaw responded to the Prime Minister's statement by urging a safety-first approach to easing lockdown measures. The union cautions non-food retailers not to open until they can guarantee staff and customer safety and urges them to adopt the joint advice agreed with the British Retail Consortium (BRC). Usdaw is calling on businesses to work with trade unions to carry out risk assessments in workplaces before re-opening for business.

The guidance published by BRC and Usdaw, lays out detailed actions businesses can take to operate stores safely once they're allowed to start trading again. This guidance has been based on the hard-won experience of those retailers that have been able to continue trading during the lockdown and discussions with Usdaw.

Reopening stores will involve a huge investment in protections for colleagues and customers. Supermarkets alone have spent around £130m since lockdown on social distancing and hygiene measures, including plastic screens, signage,



floor markings and PPE. All retailers will face these unavoidable costs as lockdown is lifted.

The retail industry is ready to play its part in getting the UK's economy moving again, safely. There is no doubt that the world is going to look different for some time and that shopping, at least for a while, is going to involve social distancing and other 'new normal' measures.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Usdaw's absolute priority is the safety of our members and we have emphasised safety first in all the discussions we've had with the Government. Non-food retail should only start trading again

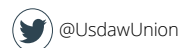
when expert public health advice agrees, but even then, we must have a guarantee that the right policies and practices are in place to make workplaces safe.

"The vast majority of our members are key workers in the food and pharmaceutical supply chain and we have worked with employers to ensure that these essential services have been able to continue safely. As and when other retailers are allowed to open they must do so in a measured and safe way. We cannot afford to cut any corners. The last few weeks have laid bare the terrible damage this virus can wreak.

"Usdaw and the British

Retail Consortium have developed advice and guidance for the non-food retail sector on what effective safe distancing in the shops might look like. We would urge all high street retailers to study the joint advice and open a dialogue with Usdaw and the BRC on putting in place plans for adequate social distancing measures in their stores."

www.usdaw.org.uk/BRCguide



SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

SCRUTINY OF PROTECTION OF WORKERS BILL



Usdaw has welcomed further scrutiny of the Protection of Workers Bill in the Scottish Parliament. The union calls for the Bill to complete Stage 1 and progress to Stage 2 of the legislative process, so that the Parliament can give consideration to amendments.

Promoted by Daniel Johnson MSP (Labour, Edinburgh), the new law would protect retail workers from threats and abuse when enforcing the law on the purchase of age-restricted products.

Usdaw's Scottish divisional officer Stewart Forrest said: "Every minute

of every day another Scottish shopworker is abused, threatened or assaulted; often in the course of them enforcing the law, so they deserve the protection of the law.

"It was clear from today's meeting that there is strong support for the intentions of the Bill, albeit there are questions about the details. So we would welcome the Bill progressing to the next stages of the legislative process when amendments can be fully considered.

"Throughout the Coronavirus outbreak shopworkers have been on the frontline of ensuring that

Scotland remains fed. Despite this key role, we have seen abuse, threats and violence against shop staff double during the Coronavirus emergency.

"However abuse of shopworkers is not a problem confined to these times of crisis and, in our view, the current legal provisions do not sufficiently protect them. The Scottish Government has indicated they too support the intentions of the Bill and will engage in the details of it. We hope that will lead to a change in the law to better protect shopworkers."

LINCOLNSHIRE CO-OP

DISCOUNT REMOVED FROM SICK WORKERS

Usdaw is urging Lincolnshire Co-op to end the removal of staff discount from their employees who are furloughed, self-isolating and vulnerable staff, so that they don't have to survive on statutory sick pay of just £95.85 per week.

Usdaw national officer John Gorle said: "Usdaw is seeking to improve the response of Lincolnshire Co-op Society to the Coronavirus emergency, but regrettably we are coming up against some resistance over a number of issues.

"The Society is engaging in some

pretty mean-spirited measures, such as removing staff discount for those who opt for furlough rather than being redeployed, paying SSP to those who are self-isolating because they live with someone who has symptoms and refusing to pay staff in the vulnerable category unless they have a letter evidencing their condition.

"We are deeply concerned that the Society is putting profits before public health and staff welfare. Staff should not risk the further spread of Covid-19 because they cannot afford

to be off work when they should be. In the midst of a national crisis, we have to be working together to get through it and unfortunately this Co-op society is not being very co-operative.

"Shopworkers are on the frontline of feeding the country, providing an essential service in very difficult circumstances, working long hours in busy stores, facing abuse from customers and of course concerned they may contract Covid-19. So we expect employers to treat our retail heroes with dignity and respect."

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

USDAW MEMBERS FACING HUGE PRESSURES WHICH ARE AFFECTING THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

In May the Mental Health Foundation held a Mental Health Awareness Week. Good mental health is a priority for Usdaw and the union is celebrating the role that workplace reps play in supporting members through the 'It's Good to Talk' campaign.

Udaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "These are worrying and very challenging times and Usdaw is supporting our reps and members to be safe at work. While attention is quite rightly focused on protecting members' physical health, it is vital that we also talk about mental health, which is going to be central to coping with and recovering from the Coronavirus pandemic.

"Udaw's Impact of Coronavirus survey of 7,357 members, primarily essential workers in shops, distribution warehouses, road transport and delivery drivers, shockingly reveals that abuse of shopworkers has doubled during the Coronavirus emergency and 70 per cent are experiencing anxiety, having raised concerns with their employer.

"I have never known a single issue to cause nearly three-quarters of our members to raise concerns with their employer in such a short



space of time. Our survey reveals that increased abuse in shops, higher rates of illness, greater levels of job insecurity and issues with the benefits system are putting immense pressure on many Usdaw members who are key workers.

"Shopworkers and their colleagues in the retail food supply chain are on the frontline of feeding the country during the current crisis. They are providing an essential service in very difficult circumstances, working long hours in busy stores, facing abuse from customers and of course concerned they may contract COVID-19 and pass it on to their family.

"We have long called for respect

for shopworkers, so we very much support the theme of kindness for Mental Health Awareness Week. Studies show that kindness and good mental health are closely linked. Kindness helps reduce our sense of isolation and creates a feeling of belonging, both of which are vital at a time when we are cut off from family members and friends."

Udaw's mental health campaign 'It's Good Talk':

www.usdaw.org.uk/Campaigns/Mental-Health

Udaw's 'Impact of Coronavirus' survey full results:

www.usdaw.org.uk/CoronavirusReport

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Sponsored by Usdaw Health and Dental Plan www.usdaw.org.uk/healthplan Closing date 2 August 2020. Terms apply.

Due to the current situation with Covid 19, the voucher will be despatched as soon as possible after the draw has taken place.

IN BRIEF

HEATHROW

Workers at Heathrow airport have been told they could be dismissed if they do not accept voluntary pay cuts, as most international air traffic has ground to a halt amid the Coronavirus pandemic.

P&O FERRIES

P&O Ferries has announced plans to cut 1,100 jobs after reporting a severe downturn in demand. The cuts, affecting more than a quarter of the group's workforce, came after the firm's owner, had been seeking about £150m in UK Government aid.

RYANAIR

Ryanair is planning to cut 3,000 jobs and reduce staff pay by up to a fifth in response to the Covid-19 crisis, which has grounded flights. The airline said it was cutting 15% of its 20,000-strong workforce as it did not expect passenger numbers or pricing to return to pre-coronavirus levels until summer 2022 at the earliest.

CATH KIDSTON

Fashion retailer Cath Kidston is permanently shutting all 60 of its UK stores leading to hundreds of job losses.

OASIS

Oasis and Warehouse went into administration.

IDAHOTB 2020

TACKLING LGBT HARASSMENT

In May Usdaw celebrated the annual International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOTB), with a call for action to tackle LGBT+ harassment in workplaces and welcomed the theme of 'breaking the silence' for 2020.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Harassment is one of the biggest problems our LGBT+ members face in the workplace.

"The Equality Act makes it clear that harassment, including so called 'jokes', is unlawful. Employers must deal with any incidents quickly and effectively and take reasonable steps to prevent any such incidents from arising in the first place.

"Thousands of LGBT+ workers still don't feel safe enough to be out about their sexual orientation or gender identity at work and some of these workers will be Usdaw members. So we welcome this year's theme of 'breaking the silence', to give LGBT+ people the confidence to speak out against harassment at work.

"Sexual harassment of LGBT+ workers is a trade union issue. Sexual

harassment creates dangerous workplaces that harm everyone. Usdaw believes that everyone has a right to a safe and supportive working environment free from fear of harassment or discrimination.

"Usdaw is taking action to break the silence that surrounds sexual harassment. Prevention is better than taking action after the event.

"Usdaw works with members and reps to raise awareness of what sexual harassment is and how to report it. We also work with employers to negotiate workplace policies and procedures that aim to prevent harassment from arising in the first place and ensure incidents are dealt with fairly, quickly and confidentially.

"We campaign all year round to tackle sexual harassment at work encouraging activists and members to 'call it out'. Today, on IDAHOTB, we put the spotlight on homophobia, transphobia and biphobia, standing together with our LGBT+ colleagues speaking out against harassment at work." www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Equalities

NHS MIGRANT FEE

U-TURN ON FEE FOR CARERS

Usdaw welcomed the Government's U-turn on overseas health and care staff being exempted from the fee levied on migrants to pay for the NHS.

The issue was raised by Labour Leader Keir Starmer who said "We cannot clap our carers one day and then charge them to use our NHS the next."

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "The vast majority of Usdaw members are key workers in the food and pharmaceutical supply chains.

They are on the frontline of keeping our society going during this appalling Coronavirus emergency.

"For those who are migrant workers, we see no justification for them to be surcharged for accessing the NHS when they are working hard, providing essential services and paying their taxes. So as the Government rightly reviews this charge for health and care workers, we urge them to also exempt all the key workers that we clap for every Thursday."

PHARMACISTS DEFENCE ASSOCIATION (PDA)

CALLS FOR SAFE PRACTICES IN PHARMACIES

The Pharmacists' Defence Association (PDA) and Usdaw have written a joint letter to Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, calling on him to facilitate tripartite discussion between Government, community pharmacy employer representatives and the trade unions to agree safe working practices across the sector.

With increasing strains on PPE supplies and especially after the Prime Minister's announcement of changes to the lockdown rules in England, urgent discussions are needed to consider in much more detail the question of how the safety of staff working in community pharmacies can be maintained.

Many community pharmacies have significant challenges with establishing social distancing for safe working in a service that requires most members of the team to be in close proximity to patients. Employees, locums and patients all need to know that the community pharmacy is a safe place.

As is normal with NHS employers



and across many sectors of industry, the legitimate representatives of employers and employees should sit down with Government to agree acceptable arrangements going forward.

Udaw national officer Daniel Adams said: "Udaw's absolute priority is the safety of our members and we have emphasised safety first in the discussions we've had with

the Government across all sectors. So we are keen to work with the PDA to ensure the right policies and practices are in place to make workplaces safe.

"Our members in pharmacies and the pharmaceutical supply chain are key workers providing essential services and must be able to work safely, so we urge the Government to engage with us."

WELL PHARMACY

10 PER CENT BONUS FOR FRONTLINE STAFF

Udaw welcomed Well Pharmacy's decision to pay a 10 per cent premium payment to frontline pharmacy and Home Delivery Driver teams.

Udaw national officer Daniel Adams said: "It's a particularly challenging time for all those working in the pharmacy sector at the moment. The country is reliant on the essential service they provide

and they deserve our support, respect and appreciation more than ever. So, we very much welcome Well's recognition of the work they are doing in difficult times.

"We continue to work with Well to ensure employees' health and wellbeing are protected throughout these unprecedented times. We also reiterate our call on customers

to stay calm and respect all workers who are providing vital support to the public through this crisis."



DICK MCSEPHNEY

USDAW LOSES LIFELONG ACTIVIST

The union was saddened to hear of the death of former executive council member and Usdaw stalwart Dick McSephney who died on 24 December 2019, he was 97.

Dick joined Usdaw in 1976 when he worked as a driver at NFT distribution, and shortly after became senior rep and branch secretary. He went on to found Luton and district federation in 1982 where he became branch chair.

His involvement with the union continued to grow when he became a divisional councillor and then was elected onto Usdaw's executive council in April 1983 where he stood until April 1987.

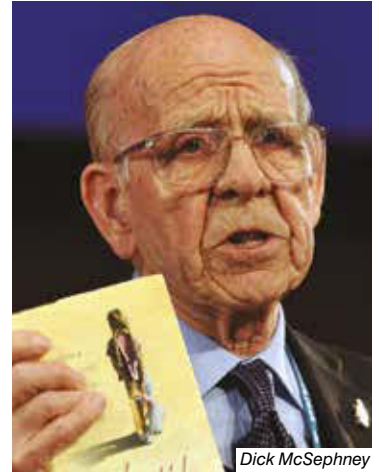
A keen advocate of equality, Dick played a crucial role in setting up the women's committees – known today as the equality forums – in the late 80s. He was also instrumental in establishing the road transport

distress fund which facilitates financial help for members who receive work-related penalties for motoring offences.

Dick remained active in the union, and in particular with the retired members' committee, well into his 90s. He was a regular delegate and speaker at divisional conferences and ADM and also a regular steward at the TUC conference.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis gave this tribute: "Dick was very well known and respected within Usdaw both locally and nationally. He saw the ups and downs of a movement he loved from closed shop, to Thatcher's attacks on trade union rights to the improvements negotiated under a Labour government.

"His dedication never wavered. He was utterly committed to both the trade union and Labour movement



Dick McSephney

and his contributions to Usdaw over the past 40 years cannot be underestimated.

"Our deepest condolences go to his family and friends at this sad time."

ANNE HICKSON

FORMER EC COUNCILLOR ANNE PASSES AWAY

Former executive council member and activist Anne Hickson died on 20 December 2019, aged 75.

Anne joined Usdaw in 1993 while she was working at Great Universal, a mail order company, in the North West. She was an active trade unionist who enthusiastically threw herself into the work of the union. During her career Anne took on almost every union role which included shop steward, health and safety rep and union learning rep. She also sat on Usdaw divisional council and was an executive council member for almost nine years.

These various roles gave Anne a great understanding of not only

members' issues but also an in-depth knowledge of the union, its policies and procedures.

Anne's activism wasn't confined to the trade union movement. She was also a Labour Party activist, a magistrate, an elected member of Bolton Community Health Council and a school governor.

Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Anne was a tireless campaigner who approached any role she took with dedication and enthusiasm. She passionately championed the causes of working-class people and campaigned for improvements that would help her colleagues.



Anne Hickson

"Our deepest condolences go out to her family and friends during this very difficult time."



KEEP FOLLOWING THE GOVERNMENT'S ADVICE

I would like to begin by thanking Usdaw reps for all of their efforts in response to the current crisis. Usdaw reps are doing an absolutely fantastic job of supporting their members in factories, supermarkets, pharmacies, distribution centres and funeral homes during this unbelievably difficult and challenging time. They continue to provide advice and support to their colleagues at the same time as dealing with their own worries and fears about their health and the health of their loved ones.

On 28 May the Government changed its advice to the public in England. I thought it would be useful to give you an overview of what we know so far. Advice is changing every week. For the most up-to-date information please go to www.usdaw.org.uk

WORK

All workers who cannot work from home should travel to work if their workplace is open. Sectors of the economy that are allowed to be open, should be open, for example this includes food production, construction, manufacturing, logistics, distribution and scientific research in laboratories.

NON ESSENTIAL SHOPS

Non essential shops will begin re-opening from 1 June with outdoor retail and car showrooms where social distancing measures are easier.

On 15 June non-essential retail would be allowed to re-open on the condition that the five tests are still being met and shops have been made COVID-secure.

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

The hospitality industry is scheduled to open around 4 July, if conditional targets for reducing infection rates are met. This would include pubs, restaurants, hotels, hairdressers, cinemas and places of worship, which would also have to meet COVID-secure guidelines.

TRAVELLING TO WORK

If possible, people should travel to work by walking, cycling or driving to prevent overcrowding on public transport. Those who do use buses or trains are being told to expect social-distance queuing and to wear face coverings.

THE MESSAGE

Most of our members are already at work and have been throughout this outbreak. But we are very concerned that the change in message from 'Stay at Home' to 'Be Alert' could lead to confusion and a more relaxed approach to social distancing in general.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

To be clear, the importance of social distancing in shops that are open has not changed. We expect employers to carry on implementing social distancing measures and to support staff when they are enforcing them with customers.

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

As always, if reps have concerns about safety at work they need to contact their local official via their local Usdaw office.

SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

Primary schools are re-opening from 1 June for pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 6 (although public schools will remain closed). From 15 June secondary schools will provide face to face contact time for year 10 and 12. There is still uncertainty whether universities will open in September.

FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

From 1 June people in England will be able to meet in groups of six in outdoor spaces provided they maintain social distancing.

PEOPLE WHO ARE SHIELDING

In England, those shielding will be advised that they can go outside once a day, with their household or, if they live alone, to meet one other person at a two-metre distance.

EXERCISE

There is no longer any limit to the amount of exercise you can do outside in England. You can play outdoor sports such as golf or tennis with members of your household or with one other person from another household (while maintaining social distance).

SCOTLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Decisions on easing lockdown in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of each national government. For the most up-to-date guidance please go to www.gov.uk

FURTHER INFORMATION

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

YOU DESERVE A NEW DEAL

Once the pandemic is over it is important the Government and employers recognise the contribution of 'essential workers' in keeping the country going

The Coronavirus emergency has shown that millions of low-paid workers and undervalued workers have stepped up in the most difficult of circumstances to keep the country going.

Workers in retail, manufacturing, distribution and home delivery have been working around the clock, keeping food on our tables and medicines in our cupboards. They have adapted to huge change in an extremely short time, working under intense pressure and providing a lifeline to our communities.

Usdaw is working to keep our members safe as they work through the crisis and support those who are not currently able to work. As the union looks past Coronavirus, it is time for the Government, employers and the public to recognise that these workers have been undervalued for too long. They deserve a new deal.

£10 MINIMUM WAGE FOR ALL WORKERS

Many of the workers that our country relies on are low paid. The money that they earn doesn't reflect the contribution that they make and it isn't enough for a decent standard of living. We need a minimum wage of £10 per hour and an end to rip-off youth rates that allow employers to pay young workers as little as £4.55 an hour.



FAIR TREATMENT AND EQUALITY FOR ALL WORKERS



Most of the underpaid frontline key workers are women. Women workers need equal pay and they need decent pay. We need new family friendly rights that give parents and carers real choices to support juggling work and family life.

A 'NORMAL HOURS' CONTRACT

If employees are regularly working over their contracted hours, then we believe they should be guaranteed in their contract. This will help workers to plan their finances and feel more secure.



A BAN ON ZERO HOURS CONTRACTS

It is not acceptable for workers to be put on contracts that don't guarantee them any hours at all. The Government needs to ban zero hours contracts, once and for all.



BETTER SICK PAY

People who are ill shouldn't be worrying about their finances, and they shouldn't be forced into work when they are sick so they can pay their bills. Sick pay needs to be paid from day one, at your normal pay rate, and it should be paid to all workers.

PROTECTION AT WORK

Violence and abuse has doubled during the current crisis. It's never acceptable and that's why we need 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 Coronavirus crisis has shown that anybody can find themselves needing help. Lots of workers have had to claim universal credit. People who are struggling simply cannot afford to wait five weeks for their payment. Many are being pushed deeper into poverty. We need a fair system that protects families and treats people with dignity.



MINIMUM CONTRACT OF 16 HOURS PER WEEK FOR EVERYONE WHO WANTS IT

A higher minimum wage can only tackle low pay if workers also get the hours they need to get by. We know that some people will want to work just a few hours a week, but for most people, a minimum contract of 16 hours a week will be a step forward.



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. We need stronger trade union rights so that all workers can benefit from a voice at work.



“THERE MUST BE LASTING AND FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES TO THE WAY SOCIETY VIEWS OUR LOWEST PAID WORKERS. WE NEED A NEW DEAL FOR WORKERS: TO ENSURE THAT RETAIL JOBS ARE NO LONGER UNDERPAID AND UNDERVALUED. IT CANNOT BE RIGHT THAT KEY WORKERS IN SUPERMARKETS, WHO ARE KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES FED, ARE THEN VISITING FOODBANKS TO FEED THEIR OWN FAMILIES.”

JOB SECURITY

Many people are facing real worry about their job security in this crisis. For retail workers, this isn't a new worry. We need stronger protections against redundancy and dismissal, from day one of employment. We also need proper consultation about new technology and investment in skills so that workers are able to keep up in a changing workplace.



**GENERAL SECRETARY
PADDY LILLIS**

LABOUR LISTENS TO KEY WORKERS

Workers from different sectors talk about what it's like to be on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 17 April key workers from various sectors took part in an online meeting with the leader of the Labour Party, Keir Starmer and deputy leader Angela Rayner. Both Keir and Angela were keen to hear about the experiences and concerns of workers who had been deemed 'essential workers' during the Covid-19 pandemic. Usdaw members Claire Saunders and Michelle Spur took part to outline the experiences of retail workers during the pandemic.

This article will be also reporting on the experiences of all the key workers who took part in the meeting including a care worker, a paramedic and a bus driver. We believe it is important for our readers to know what is happening across the other sectors that have also been deemed 'essential'.

KEIR STARMER Leader of the Labour Party

Keir Starmer opened the meeting by thanking all the workers for their hard work in keeping the country going. "You are literally putting yourselves on the line, so thank you," said Keir. "Once this is over we cannot go back to the way things were before.

"Often there's a gap between what's actually happening on the ground and what we think is happening on the ground. That's why I am really keen to hear from people who are on the frontline because they are in the best position to tell me about their experiences.

CLAIRE SAUNDERS Usdaw rep and a convenience store manager from Greater London

"Staff are being abused when asking customers to observe social distancing in store and the problem is worse in small shops. We have customers coming in several times a day, bringing family with them to buy non-essential items like a newspaper or lottery ticket. That's going against Government advice and we are having to police the situation because we don't have a security guard.

"Abuse is on the rise during the lockdown. I've been abused by shoplifters because we don't have enough stock they can nick and then sell. We also have problems with drunk customers. Some of the biggest challenges we face are when there's nice weather over the weekend. Everyone's out and people have started drinking early. They come in to buy more booze and become really aggressive. I've been threatened a few times and spat at.

"We also have customers coming in with symptoms because we are unable to stop them from entering the store. Last week we had woman collapse with breathing problems and a high temperature. Although we have screens at the tills and hand sanitisers I don't think that's enough to protect us from people who are showing signs of the virus.

"I'm really lucky because my employer is being very supportive. But despite this tensions are really high at the moment and

colleague anxiety is very high. I have a daughter and every time I go home I'm thinking what germs am I bringing home with me. It's not just me, we're all really concerned about catching the virus and passing it onto our loved ones."

MICHELLE SPUR, Usdaw rep and a supermarket worker from the North East

"We want to continue to be regarded as essential workers after the crisis is over. Things just can't go back to the way they were once this is over. The safety of shopworkers should always be a priority. Most customers are fine, but there are some real horror stories and I'm really





concerned about my members."

NURSING HOME MANAGER

"We look after a lot of vulnerable adults so we are experiencing a host of challenges. We started struggling when there were delays with food deliveries because we're not seen as a priority. Thankfully we had relatives bringing in food that helped us keep going.

"A big issue for us was the lack of testing for residents returning from the hospital. We had no idea if a resident sent to us had COVID-19 or not. On top of this there was no guidance or PPE. The price of hand sanitisers went up by 300 per cent so we were struggling to buy our own supplies. Many of us

are terrified of going in. Every day we are counting how much PPE we have left. We are not getting enough and our orders aren't being fulfilled straightaway which causes us a lot of anxiety. But despite the shortages of PPE we are going in because we love our jobs and we love the people we care for."

CARE WORKER

"I'm a care worker. I work two jobs. One is working with people with learning disabilities and the other is working with elderly residents in a home. I feel like we are at the back of the queue in this crisis. We are being told that we can't use PPE unless someone has Covid-19. But it is impossible to know who's

infected without proper testing. The Government's response to testing has been wholly inadequate.

"We do have some PPE now but the aprons are rubbish and the gloves fall apart. My colleagues are frightened because they are worried about catching the virus and passing it onto their families. The people we care for are also frightened and worried.

"The clapping has been great but we need proper support now. The years of underfunding and low pay in the sector mean that the system is completely fragmented. If we don't do something things will only get worse despite the enormous effort of care workers. I don't want a badge saying CARE. I want the Government

to show all workers on the frontline the respect they deserve.”

PARAMEDIC

“I have been a paramedic for over 11 years. I have dealt with women in labour, people having serious heart attacks and all sorts of serious emergencies but nothing comes close to the strain placed on us by COVID-19. 999 calls have significantly increased. The virus is affecting everyone. We’ve had healthy paramedics fall seriously ill with it. We’ve had staff who’ve lost their lives and others who are critically ill.

“Normally PPE isn’t an issue. It’s single use, disposable and unlimited. We need to keep ourselves safe but the PPE we are being given is not good enough. We should always be levelling up but we are being told to use the lowest amount of PPE possible because of stock levels. We’ve been given aprons but they’re not good enough to make sandwiches with let alone treating patients. I was offended when we were accused of wasting PPE. It was out of date and the quality is terrible. Every patient could potentially have COVID-19. PPE is there not only to

protect us but to prevent us from passing it onto other people.
 “We joined the NHS to save lives not to put our or our families lives at risk. There is a huge disconnect between what the Government are saying and the reality on the ground. We need the Government to publicly disclose what they have and when we can get it.
 “It’s lovely to have so much support from the public, in fact it’s overwhelming. But words from the Government are disingenuous. It would be a lot less patronising to come out and tell us the truth.”



Jack Dromey MP, Claire Saunders and Paddy Lillis at Tacking Retail Crime summit at Westminster in March.

BUS DRIVER

"I've been working in the industry for 32 years and I have never experienced anything like this. We've always been careful to protect our bus drivers. However, this is totally different.

In the beginning we were told to carry on as normal. Two weeks later we got hand sanitisers and gloves but no masks. However, we have only been able to secure enough supplies until June so I don't know what will happen after that.

"There are no hand sanitisers on the buses for customers to use and we are still having to handle cash despite asking for buses to go cashless or ask customers to get advanced tickets. It is almost impossible to socially distance on a bus and we are getting customers coming quite close to us to ask us various questions.

"Many of us only get statutory sick pay which means that colleagues cannot afford to take time off when they are sick. This is really worrying as this puts everyone at risk. My colleagues are very very frightened. Many of my colleagues have underlying health conditions or they have family who are vulnerable and at high risk.

REFUSE WORKER

"The company I work for derecognised our trade union when we raised concerns about safety and welfare.

"We are coming in contact with rubbish and it could be from households where people have the virus. We do have gloves but hand sanitisers, masks and alcohol wipes have not been forthcoming. Also, it is impossible for a team of three or four to socially distance in a vehicle.

"All of us are worried and frightened by the thought of catching the virus and passing it onto our families."

ANGELA RAYNER

Deputy leader of the Labour Party

Angela Rayner closed the session by

USDAW VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINE

As part of Usdaw's survey respondents had the opportunity to feed back their experiences, here are some examples:

"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. My job has become emotionally draining and it is really starting to affect my mental health."

"Some customers have been extremely abusive when they have been asked to pay by card instead of cash."

"Customers are getting worse and are refusing to listen to store staff as this situation continues. They are not adhering to guidance. Whole families are shopping and others are meeting at the store and using it as a place to gather."

"I have taken abuse when having to remove items from the customer because they wish to purchase more than the permitted number of restricted items."

"Customer using verbal abuse towards me, and being racist towards me."

"Constant verbal abuse/swearing. Customers spitting, coughing and sneezing towards us on purpose."

"We had an increase in shoplifters and the security was attacked twice. We have seen incidents of spitting, being coughed on and a refusal by customers to observe social distancing."

"We have been threatened with violence and have had to make police reports about members of the public threatening to "bash our faces in" when we leave the store after our shifts."

saying, "Thank you for contributions. It has been a really powerful session which has outlined how the pandemic has affected you and your families. We also want to thank you on behalf of the Labour Party for the tremendous work you are doing in supporting your communities."

PADDY LILLIS

Ushaw general secretary

Paddy Lillis said: "I am really pleased that Keir Starmer and Angela Rayner held this session as it shows the Labour Party is taking the concerns of all key workers seriously. It is very important for politicians to hear directly from the people who are affected by this pandemic.

"This session has shown that despite workers working in different sectors many of their concerns are exactly the same. It comes as no

surprise that across the sectors one of the biggest issues facing workers is the lack of PPE and the worry of catching the virus and passing it onto their families.

"For Usdaw members it is the amount of abuse they are receiving from customers and the fact that some customers refuse to adhere to Government guidelines around social distancing and non-essential journeys.

"Ushaw will continue to lobby Government for legislation to protect shopworkers and we are urging customers to help retail workers by treating shopworkers with respect, washing hands before shopping, adhering to social distancing, paying by card and shopping alone wherever possible.

"In this time of national emergency we all need to work together."

COVID'S IMPACT ON MEMBERS

Usdaw's survey highlights how a combination of increased violence and worries about money and health are having a devastating effect on members

Usdaw recently ran an online survey on the impact of Coronavirus in the workplace. 7,357 workers took part in the survey. Many of those surveyed work in shops, distribution warehouses, road transport or work as delivery drivers.

The results of this survey provide an in-depth look at what is actually happening to key workers who are ensuring food supplies are maintained at this time of crisis.

Violence and Abuse against Shop Staff

All workers should be able to go to work without having to worry about being abused. However, there has been a long-term trend of increasing abuse, threats and violence against shop staff.

Since the outbreak threats and violence had doubled since 2019. Usdaw received many reports of members being abused whilst carrying out their new responsibilities, as some customers

refuse to follow Government guidelines or act responsibly.

The rise in abuse of shop staff over recent years had already highlighted the need for the Government to create a stand-alone offence of abusing, threatening or assaulting a public-facing worker. Such an offence must include stiff penalties for those who abuse shop staff, something which could be easily understood by shopworkers and the general public.

Sick Pay

Workers in retail are running higher risks of sickness and yet many will only qualify for Statutory Sick Pay of £95.85 per week if they fall ill. This is simply not enough to survive on. And workers earning below £118 per week are currently not entitled to any SSP.

There is a real danger that staff who should be staying at home will continue to work, putting themselves and the public at risk, because they cannot afford to put

food on the table on the basic SSP rate.

Usdaw is calling for Statutory Sick Pay to be paid from day one and reflect average earnings for all workers.

Furlough

One in every ten workers surveyed (12 per cent) have been 'furloughed' or laid off. Many who have been furloughed are facing pay cuts and are only getting 80 per cent of their normal pay. For low-paid workers this is real hardship and leading to stress and anxiety.

For the lowest-paid workers, who typically spend a higher proportion of their income on essentials, a drop in wages of 20 per cent can result in real financial hardship, such as not being able to pay bills or rent. Usdaw firmly believes that employers should ensure that furloughed workers are paid 100 per cent of their wages.

Workers are also concerned about what will happen to their jobs



once the scheme ends and they are worried that they may be made redundant or asked to work fewer hours in future. For this reason, we need decisive intervention from Government to kick-start the economy at the end of the outbreak.

The Impact of Universal Credit

Since the start of the outbreak, over 1.4 million people have applied for universal credit. Those who successfully manage to make a claim have to wait for five weeks to receive their first payment. In addition, 94 per cent of respondents attempting to claim universal credit since the start of the outbreak have had difficulty with the claims process. Issues such as phones being constantly engaged and five-hour waits on hold have led to a significant number of respondents ultimately 'giving up' on their claim. As a result, universal credit is failing to provide a safety net for people in financial difficulty.

Universal credit is completely flawed as a social security system. It needs to be completely overhauled and replaced by a social security system that supports low-paid workers.

The Impact of School Closures

Our survey found that around one in four key workers have been able to use schools or other formal

childcare providers to look after their children while they are at work. For those who were not classified as a key worker, nearly one in ten have had to take unpaid leave to cope with childcare arrangements. It is clear that the costs of school closures has unfairly fallen on the lowest paid. Shockingly, out of almost 1,000 key worker parents, around 13 per cent have been forced to leave children home alone, frequently for entire shifts, whilst they respond to the outbreak.

Worried and Anxious over Risk of Illness

Usdaw's survey shows that an alarming number of members feel that the Coronavirus pandemic has had a negative impact on their mental health. Many respondents commented that they felt increasingly stressed and anxious, and expressed concerns about the long-term impact on their mental health.

The health and wellbeing of workers is paramount. Usdaw will continue to work with employers to make sure there are effective measures in place to protect staff,

Low Pay and Insecure Work

In 2018, Usdaw surveyed over 10,500 low-paid workers across retail and related industries, 55 per cent of respondents earned at

or close to the National Minimum Wage. It also showed that: Three-quarters were having to rely on unsecured borrowing to pay everyday bills; half were having to miss meals in order to pay bills and that 73 per cent had struggled to pay their gas and electricity bills.

Usdaw's evidence shows that insecure, zero and short-hours contracts are prevalent in low-paying jobs.

Our 2018 survey showed that 80 per cent of workers who are contracted to 16 hours or less per week earn £8.50 or under.

This job insecurity leads to significant mental health issues with workers unsure that their income will be able to pay the bills next month and constant fears that shifts can be taken away at a moment's notice.

What has Usdaw done so far?

Usdaw has been working with a range of employers to negotiate agreements that protect the workforce such as social distancing, perspex screens, limiting the number of customers, increased security and bonus payments.

Usdaw, along with other trade unions also lobbied Government for a scheme to protect workers' earnings and to pay sick pay from day one, which the Government took on board.

What Next?

For too long, the essential contribution of workers in retail, distribution, delivery, food manufacturing and the funeral industry has been undervalued and underpaid. This crisis has shown too many key workers are trying to exist on low pay and facing abuse every day. Usdaw wants a new deal for all workers based around £10 per hour minimum wage, a minimum of 16 hours per week for everyone who wants it, legislation to tackle abuse against shopworkers, improved sick pay and a proper social security system. Full details of the New Deal can be found on p14-15 of Network and at www.usdaw.org.uk/newdeal Full details of the Impact of the Coronavirus on the Workforce Survey can be found at dtp.usdaw.co.uk/CoronavirusSurveyResults



BACK TO WORK REPS GUIDE

O On 28 May the Government announced that non-essential shops would begin to re-open from 15 June on the condition that the five tests are still being met and shops have been made COVID-secure.

The majority of Usdaw members work in businesses that are already open such as food retail. Despite the mixed messages coming from the Government it is vitally important that existing social distancing measures continue to be applied rigorously, and that members are supported by their employer in enforcing those measures with customers.

The Government has published guidance for retail shops which are currently open such as food retailers and chemists as well as applying to non-food stores (that currently closed) but will reopen.

The key points from the Government guidance for retail shops are:

- Shops/Branches must carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment and this should be done in consultation with unions or workers.
- **Clinically extremely vulnerable** individuals have been strongly advised not to work outside the home. They will have received a letter telling them they are in this group, or will have been told by their GP.
- **Clinically vulnerable** individuals, who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions) have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing and should be helped to work from home, either in their current role or in an alternative role. If **clinically vulnerable** individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles, enabling them to stay 2 metres away from others.
- Any risk assessments must take into account specific duties to those with protected characteristics, eg pregnant women who are entitled to suspension on full pay if suitable roles cannot be found. Particular attention should also be paid to people who live with **clinically extremely vulnerable** individuals.
- On Social Distancing the objective is “to maintain 2 metres social distancing wherever possible, including while arriving at and departing from work, while in work and when travelling between sites”.
- Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff.
- On PPE, where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so.
- When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not beneficial. The exception is clinical settings.
- Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 other than for clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Risk assessments should reflect the fact that the role of PPE in providing additional protection is extremely limited. However, if a risk assessment does show that PPE is required, then employers must provide this PPE free of charge to workers who need it.
- Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by law, including in the workplace. Employers should support their workers in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one.
- On workforce management, recommendations include shift patterns and working groups, avoiding unnecessary work travel, maintaining social distancing and hygiene practices.
- Emphasis is also placed on communication and training to make sure all workers understand COVID-19 related safety procedures and ongoing engagement with workers (including through trade unions or employee representative groups) to monitor and understand any unforeseen impacts of changes to working events.
- Reference is also made to “Creating social distancing champions to demonstrate social distancing guidelines to customers, if helpful”.

Usdaw has been in discussion with employers at national level on their policies and procedures, which are under constant review. If you have any queries refer to the company's policies and procedures.

However, if reps are concerned that an employer is not fulfilling their legal duty of care to employees, they should contact their Usdaw official.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Guidance for retail shops can be found at:

www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches.

The full Government Guidance on Working Safely in eight industrial sectors is available at:

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

Government advice and guidance is changing on a regular basis. For the most up to date information please go www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Coronavirus-Update



PARENTING DURING THE PANDEMIC

Most Usdaw members are going out to work whilst also looking after children and other family members. This may be particularly challenging where members have children and young people at home who have learning disabilities, autism or other developmental or behavioural disabilities.

Whilst many parents and carers have similar concerns at the moment, parents and carers of people with developmental and behavioural disabilities are also having to deal with cuts to support services, the child or adult they are caring for is experiencing high levels of anxiety due to disruption to normal routines. This can result in challenging behaviours that parents and carers are struggling to manage.

A number of specialist and disabled people's organisations have put together some 'tips' on managing change, exercise, education and coping with

challenging behaviour as well as links to more detailed information which are outlined below. Reps can use this guidance to help signpost parents and carers to organisations and resources that can help.

MANAGING CHANGE

If the child or the person you care for is distressed or upset by the change in their routine it may help to try to remember strategies that you've used in the past when changes were on the horizon such as preparing them for going away on holiday or when they've moved home or school. It can help to emphasise the things in their life that aren't going to change or to be clear that the restrictions in place won't last forever.

A selection of tips for parents from the National Autistic Society:

- If your child's plan and routine has changed, make a new one. Build in points in the day for exercise, eating and fun activities.

- Information is coming in thick and fast. Think about what information you need to share with your child and give them time to process the information. Write down the information so that they can go back and re-read it when they need to.

- If your child is finding communicating difficult now, or more difficult than usual, agree with them how you will communicate eg in writing or at specific times of the day.

www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/preparing-for-change.aspx.

EXERCISE

Exercise is particularly important for children and adults with autism or other developmental disabilities. It can be calming and regular exercise improves both physical and mental health as well as promotes better sleep.

The previous lockdown rules

IF MY CHILD IS STILL GOING TO SCHOOL

■ *Will they attend their usual education setting?*

Not always. If your child needs to go to school but their own school is closed, they will be given a place in another school.

■ *Will they still get all the support their EHC Plan says they should be getting?*


The new Coronavirus Act says that local authorities won't need to meet all the requirements included in your child's EHC Plan during this outbreak. However, it does say that schools and colleges should use 'reasonable endeavours' to make sure your child is supported. You should speak to your child's school if you are concerned that their needs aren't being met.

■ *If changes are made to my child's EHC Plan, will this be permanent?*

No. Any changes to the support outlined in the EHC Plan during this period will be taken as temporary changes only. However, we don't know how long any changes could be in place for. The Coronavirus Act, which makes changes to EHC Plans possible, will be reviewed in September 2020.

The National Autistic Society dedicate a page on their website to the issue of education and school closure at:

[www.autism.org.uk search coronavirus](http://www.autism.org.uk/search/coronavirus)



restricted people to exercising once a day. This has now been lifted and people are now permitted to take unlimited amounts of outdoor exercise. Team sports are allowed with members of the same household.

EDUCATION AND SCHOOL

Schools remain shut across the country. However, many children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plan) and those who are vulnerable and have a social worker are still allowed to go to school. But we know that for many parents of disabled children this puts them in a dilemma.

Should they continue to go into work and send their child to school or should they look after their child themselves at home instead?

The decisions parents and carers make at this time regarding the care of their child or the adult they support should be respected and supported.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Displaying behaviour that challenges is distressing for the person and for anyone else close by. Parents and carers may experience an escalation in challenging behaviour at the moment which might be triggered by a disruption to their usual routine and being stuck at home together for most of the time.

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation has put together an information sheet giving practical advice about how to cope with an increase in challenging behaviour. It includes the following advice:

- Provide choice where possible.
- Praise and reward positive behaviour.
- Keep language simple.
- Use positive language.
- Divert or distract.
- Involve them in everyday activities.
- Use body gestures/signs.
- Give reminders of rules and routines.
- Plan activities.

Try to keep a record of what happened before, during and after the incident. This will help you to work out why it may have happened and give you an idea of the changes you might be able to make to reduce the likelihood of it happening again. You will need to do this more than once so you can build up the picture.

Ask for external help and advice. You could contact your relative's social worker or behaviour support team at the community learning disability team. They may be able to give advice over the phone.

For more information go to www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/information/covid19information

FURTHER INFO

- National Autism Society helpline 0808 800 4104.
- www.usdaw.org.uk/Help-Advice/Equalities/Disability/Autism-and-Learning-Disabilities
- dtp.usdaw.co.uk/D05-AutisticSpectrumConditions-Guide

HAS MY PENSION DEVALUED?

Network looks at how the COVID-19 pandemic may have affected pensions and what you can do

C OVID-19 has had a significant impact on all our daily lives, at work and at home.

The pandemic has undoubtedly affected our finances including pensions. *Network* attempts to address some questions your members may have.

What has happened?

In a workplace pension scheme both the employee's contributions and employer's contributions are invested.

They are invested in a range of assets, these might include stocks and shares (also known as equities), government bonds (gilts) commercial property or foreign currency.

As a direct result of the pandemic, stock markets across the globe have fallen and many other assets have suffered from considerable volatility.

However, pensions should be considered as a long-term investment, there will always be fluctuations in the stock market and periods of high volatility that occur over the short to medium-term.

It is important to understand that big stock market crashes usually recover in the following years.

Have all types of pension schemes been affected?

Defined Benefit (Final salary) Schemes

Members of a Defined Benefit (DB) arrangement, where the pension is directly linked to an individual's pay and how many years they have been in a scheme or perhaps they might

have benefits in a closed DB scheme, it is important to understand that the investment risk is borne by the employer.

It is the employer's responsibility and that of the Trustees, to ensure that all the promises which have been made, continue to be met.

The Pension Regulator introduced a package of measures to help employers through these unprecedented times, whilst protecting members' interests.

Defined Contribution Schemes

Many DB schemes have now closed so an individual who is currently contributing to a workplace arrangement it is more than likely be a member of what is known as a Defined Contribution (DC) scheme.

If an individual is contributing to a DC pension they will have their own pension pot and their contributions will more than likely be invested in line with choices they made when they first joined the scheme.

Many will be invested in what is known as a "default fund" which is offered by pension providers as most people do not feel confident making their own investment decisions. This is where employees leave the investment decisions to the experts.

These pensions will undoubtedly be affected by the current market volatility to some degree.

However, regulators are urging savers to keep calm and not rush to make any decisions about their pension in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



State Pensions

It may be reassuring to know that the State Pension is not affected by fluctuations in the stock market.

Do I need to take any immediate action?

It is important to understand that if an employee is currently paying into a workplace pension and have several years before they're planning to draw on their pension, then there is time for the pot to achieve growth over the long-term and recover from fluctuations in the stock market that occur in the short to medium-term.

If an individual is close to retirement or considering it within the next 5 years, they may have seen their funds 'lifestyled'.

This means as they get closer to their retirement age the pension provider will automatically switch their money into lower risk/lower return investments such as bonds and cash. The idea is to try and



I THINK I'VE BEEN SCAMMED, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- Act immediately.
- Call Usdaw's Pension Section on 0161 224 2804 or by email pensions@usdaw.org.uk
- Contact the workplace pension department or pension company because they may be able to stop a transfer that hasn't taken place yet.
- Call Action Fraud and report it on 03000 123 2040.

ensure there are no nasty surprises as they get closer to retirement such as a sudden drop in the value of their pot.

This doesn't mean their pension investment won't have been affected, but it should be less than if they had remained invested completely in shares.

Not all pension schemes offer automatic lifestyle so it might be worthwhile checking what type of funds the pension is invested in.

For those individuals who chose to invest their retirement savings themselves and find their pension is still invested mostly in shares or they might be closer to their retirement age and looking to retire soon, the important thing is not to panic.

The markets are likely to recover. Depending on when they're planning to retire however, they may have to consider taking a lower income or retiring later.

If in a position to do so they might

want to think about increasing their contributions right now. Every contribution made is boosted by 20 per cent tax relief and the employer may also match any increased regular contribution, please refer to the Usdaw website in the Pension Section for more information www.usdaw.org.uk

What happens to my pension if I have been furloughed?

The Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will meet 80 per cent of usual monthly salary as National Insurance contributions and minimum auto-enrolment employer contributions on this minimum salary.

Employers have had the choice to pay furloughed employees more but this has meant they must also have paid National Insurance and pension contributions on the extra salary.

I've been approached to transfer my pension pot, is this the right thing to do?

Individuals need to be vigilant because COVID-19 has given scammers the perfect opportunity to increase their fraudulent activity.

Pension cold calling was banned in the UK last year so if individuals are approached unexpectedly about their pension they should:

- Reject any unexpected offers made by phone, text or email.
- Check who they are dealing with. Contact the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) at fca.org.uk/scamsmart
- Speak to Usdaw's pension section or speak to an Independent Financial Adviser.

Usdaw Pensions Section
0161 224 2804 or
pensions@usdaw.org.uk



ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH KAY TIMBRELL

Network interviews award-winning rep Kay Timbrell about her many union roles, teaching other reps and working in retail during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Where do you work?

I've worked at Tesco in Stroud for 26 years. I started as a cashier and then 10 years ago I became team support (checkout supervisor) which involves assisting with the smooth running of the checkout department, looking after the staff and customers and ensuring we have an effective and happy team that deliver excellent customer service.

When did you become active?

I've been a member since I joined Tesco, and about 13 years ago I approached the union because I was concerned about the lack of security in store on Saturday evenings. Following the union's advice, I successfully secured security provision, which is still in place now. This small win gave me a sense of satisfaction being able to make an improvement for myself and my colleagues. The union asked if I would like to become a rep and I was happy to do so as I felt our members needed a voice that was prepared to take on any challenge.

Do you work as part of a team of reps?

I am part of a great team of reps in my store. We work extremely well together and support each other and as a result we have a strong union presence in store. We hold regular campaign days, such as Freedom From Fear and Parents and Carers, which are well supported by our colleagues and store management. As a rep, I mainly look after members in my own store but I also support members in other stores from time to time through periods of stand-down.

Do you have any other roles?

I'm also a health and safety rep and I find that role very interesting, so much so that I completed the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) diploma. I'm actively involved with my branch. I have also spent time as a union learning rep and mobile union learning rep, which involved promoting, coordinating and delivering learning opportunities. For the last few years I have been honoured to be a divisional councillor, a role which I particularly enjoy as it allows me to promote members' views. Alongside this, I represent Usdaw on the South West TUC executive committee. This role has been valuable in understanding how other trade unions work and lets me highlight Usdaw members' experiences with a wider audience. I have been invited to speak at events and deliver propositions at conferences.

These are things I never would have dreamed of doing, but with the encouragement of Usdaw I have surprised myself. The last two years I have become active with my local Labour Party.

You've also completed the union's lay tutor programme...

I hadn't really considered teaching, however, I found out about the union's Lay Tutor Programme and I gave the assessment centre a go. I am so proud to have been selected and grateful for the opportunity. I have recently completed the course and have been teaching new reps and health and safety reps. This has opened a whole new world to me and one which I am thoroughly enjoying. Over the years I have completed both Academy programmes and large periods of stand-down so the lay tutor role has given me an opportunity to share my own experiences and pass on my knowledge. I am definitely pursuing this new-found passion and look forward to teaching and inspiring more reps in the future.

How are you coping during the Coronavirus pandemic?

It is a very stressful time to work in retail. My colleagues and I are working in an environment that puts us at risk. This has had a mental health impact on many, including myself. We rely on customers to observe the social distancing measures that are in place, however, there is always a number that ignore the instructions and seeing this on a daily basis and trying to police it is emotionally draining. However, I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to highlight how we are feeling through various media channels thanks to the Usdaw media office. I hope that by telling my story I have been able to voice how so many members feel and get the important messages across.

Congratulations on your award win in January...

If someone told me I would receive the union's National Outstanding Achievement Award I never would have believed it. I couldn't be more humbled by this accolade. Like lots of other reps I have never done any of my union work for reward, I just go out and do the job to the best of my ability. I'd like to thank all of those reps too for their outstanding achievements and accept the award on their behalf. The night was wonderful and one I will remember forever. The award is in a display cabinet, pride of place.

What do you enjoy most about being active?

The thing I enjoy the most about all of my union activity is being part of something that can make a real difference to real people. Helping members in difficult situations, assisting them with health conditions that need employer understanding and potentially keeping them in employment and improving their working lives. Nothing rewards me more than taking something negative and turning it into a positive situation for them. Working together as a body, a union, enables me to do this.

Any highlights?

So many highlights stick in my mind. From my first 'big' case, my first address to a large group, speaking at the Workers' Memorial Day last year for Bristol Trades Council and many more. The biggest highlight, however, is seeing the difference you can make from even the smallest action.

I'm grateful to the union for seeing in me what I couldn't (and sometimes still don't) and pushing me out of my comfort zone into situations that I wouldn't otherwise have tried. I've always done this to help people, to effect change for the better. This is what motivates me to carry on and I think I'll only ever give it up when I'm either too long in the tooth or that passion has gone – I suspect it will be the former.



Kay collecting her Organising Award at the ceremony in January

LEARNING IN LOCKDOWN

The 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.

NEW WAYS OF LEARNING

Improving or gaining new skills has never been more vital for our members, due to the ongoing crisis many workplaces are shut or they have closed their learning centres. However, it is important for reps to let members know that Usdaw has adapted its learning offer by making many of the courses available online.

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. Through the gateway members can access courses in English, maths, ICT, languages, CV writing and much more.

www.usdaw.org.uk/onlinelearninggateway

USDAW BITESIZE COURSES

Ushaw's education department has also developed a number of bitesized online courses. The courses include maths, English, mental health, vulnerable workers, GDPR and pensions.

www.usdaw.org.uk/onlinelearninggateway

MATHS BITESIZE COURSES

Ushaw's Maths Bitesize course will help develop numeracy skills. Register for the course at: www.usdaw.org.uk/mathshomework

ENGLISH BITESIZE COURSES

Learning English helps in the workplace and outside. It also gives people a chance to gain nationally recognised qualifications.

Ushaw's Summer Songbirds and A Play on Words can be accessed via: www.usdaw.org.uk/onlinelearninggateway

NATIONAL NUMERACY CHALLENGE

The National Numeracy Challenge is all about recognising that numbers play a big part in all our lives and helping people sharpen their skills and build their confidence. You can take the National Numeracy Challenge here:

www.nnchallenge.org.uk

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Ushaw has a whole section dedicated to mental health which provides links to courses, learning and support for reps and members. Courses include Mental Health Awareness, Common Health Conditions, and Autism Awareness. www.usdaw.org.uk/Members/Training-Development/Online-Learning-Resources/Health-Wellbeing

USDAW HOME STUDY COURSES

Ushaw's Home Study Courses help members find out more about Ushaw. These booklets are designed

1. Try Usdaw's **Bitesize Maths course** and win a prize

2. Visit **Lea Ga ran cou**

6. Test your English skills with a free **'skills check'**

7. Imp gra spe our **cou** two a d

11. Sign up to Usdaw's **Online Pensions Home Study Course**

12. Fin you **Le Re** WO

to be completed in their own time at home. There are five units: Unity is Strength, Democracy in Ushaw, Collective Bargaining, Pensions and Vulnerable Workers. www.usdaw.org.uk

E-CAREERS

Ushaw has established a partnership with e-careers to offer members an opportunity to access a wide variety of online courses at a reduced rate.

Subjects range from ICT or Health and Safety to Project Management and Accountancy and they cover various levels. Individuals will need to pay for these courses but Ushaw members get a 10 per cent discount. For the latest offer visit: <https://elearning.usdaw.org.uk/>

it Usdaw's
**Learning
Gateway** for a
range of free
courses

3. Download
the **duolingo**
languages
app

4. Check out
Usdaw's
**Mental
Health
course**

5. Visit the
TUC's
**Learning@
Home**
website

improve your
grammar and
spelling with
free **Wranx**
courses – just
5 minutes
a day!

8. Follow
UsdawLearn
on [Twitter](#)
and
[Facebook](#)

9. Check out
Usdaw's
**British Sign
Language**
offer

10. List three
things
you'd **like
to learn**

Find out who
our **Union
Learning
Rep** is at
work

13. Try Usdaw's
**Bitesize
CV Writing
course**

14. Learn how to
host video
conferences
on '**Zoom**'

15. Use your
video
conferencing
expertise to
**organise a
virtual quiz!**

CAN YOU GET A FULL HOUSE?

WWW.USDAW.ORG.UK/BINGOCHALLENGE

WRANX

Wranx is an online training tool that can be accessed on any device, and uses repetition to increase knowledge retention even with as little as two-three minutes of training a day. <https://unionlearn.ulp.wranx.com/>

TUC EDUCATION

TUC Education have a range of different online learning options available for reps and members. www.tuceduction.org.uk

OPEN UNIVERSITY

The Open University (OU) offers all adults, and particularly those who have very few previous academic

qualifications, a unique opportunity to study without leaving home or employment. Usdaw members can get help with studying costs via Usdaw's OU Grant Scheme.

Further details are available direct from the Open University at www.open.ac.uk/union/ Alternatively you could contact Usdaw's education and training department at: education@usdaw.org.uk

REP DEVELOPMENT

Reps have their own development plan with their area organiser. The learning offered here is separate from this development plan but can help improve skills and knowledge in

other areas such as GDPR, courses on mental health and webinars on specific topics which are useful to reps.

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

USDAW LEARN

Usdaw has launched its very own Usdawlearn Twitter and Facebook page. Follow us for the latest Lifelong Learning news. Also keep checking Usdaw's website for courses being offered specifically to Usdaw members.

www.usdaw.org.uk
www.facebook.com/usdawlearn

FINAL CURTAIN CLOSES ON BELOVED LEARNING ZONE

Last year staff at DHL Castleford received the devastating news that their site was to close in June 2020. The news was a major blow to the 200 plus staff at the site. Instead of letting the news defeat them the Usdaw rep team did what they do best. They decided to use their knowledge and experience to help support their colleagues.

Thanks to the great working relationship between Usdaw and the company the Castleford site already boasted a hugely successful Learning Zone which offers a range of courses in English, Maths and IT as well as raising awareness of mental health and wellbeing. Therefore, the reps were well equipped to help their colleagues through this extremely difficult time.

The Usdaw reps' team is a close-knit team who always work together to deal with any challenges at the

site. However, the closure of the site presented a huge new challenge for them because they had to provide advice and support to their colleagues at the same time as they themselves were coming to terms with their own redundancies.

Putting aside their own worries and concerns the reps spoke to their colleagues to get a better understanding of what support they would need. It quickly became apparent that the support would need to focus on helping colleagues find alternative work and CV writing skills.

Using their network of contacts, they managed to organise a Job Fair that included the Job Centre, DHL Resourcing Team and local businesses coming in to talk to staff about vacancies. Through this initiative some colleagues found alternative work.

In addition, the team contacted the Royal Literary Fund (RLF). Sean Dixon, the learning rep coordinator, was the one who first saw the potential of collaboration between Usdaw and the RLF. When Sean found out that the RLF attach writers to universities to help students improve their essay writing skills he approached them to see if it would be possible to attach a writer to workplaces to help with writing minutes, reports and life writing for members.

Usdaw lifelong learning project worker Martyn Warwick worked with the RLF to figure out how both organisations would work together. The discussions resulted in a Reading Group at the Castleford site. The initiative was very well received largely down to the personalities of writers Clare Shaw and Mary Colson and their quirky activities



Sean Dixon and colleagues talk learning at the centre in July 2018

that included writing a grievance on behalf of Snow White.

The relationship went from strength to strength and Usdaw has been working with the RLF for the past 18 months. This strong working relationship meant that when the reps' team approached the RLF to see if they could adapt their Business Writing Workshops to primarily focus on CV content it was readily agreed.

Staff who attended these sessions were given paid time off to attend.

The sessions were going really well until the Coronavirus pandemic hit which meant the site was locked down. Not to be deterred the reps' team worked with Usdaw, DHL Resourcing and the Royal Literary Fund to adapt their material and literature and conducted the workshops online via Zoom.

The ingenuity and working together with the company and other learning partners shows the value of trade union membership. Although in this instance Usdaw

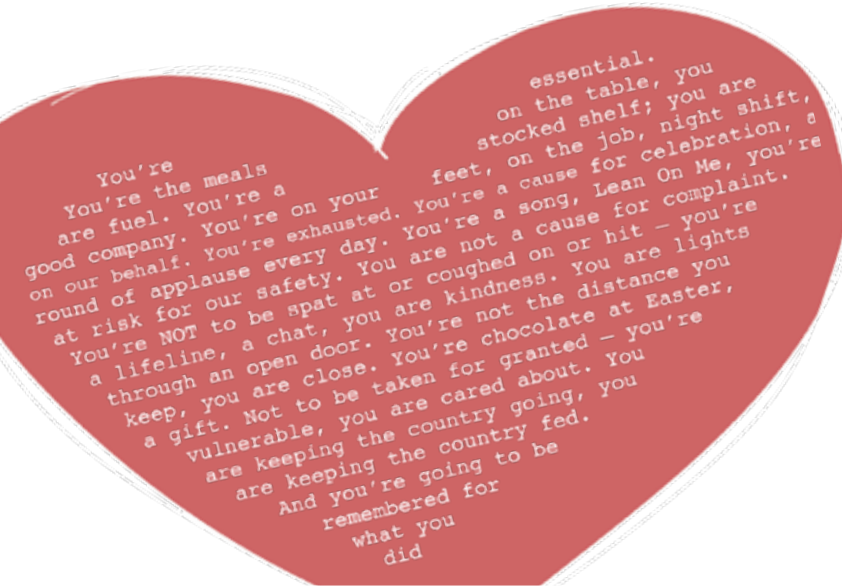
was unable to reverse the business decision to close the site it helped ensure that members were treated with dignity and respect, that they were briefed and consulted properly, that their needs were assessed and they were provided with the skills they would need to look for alternative work. By boosting their confidence and giving them additional skills, the team ensured that Usdaw members were in a strong position in a competitive job market.

ROYAL LITERARY FUND

The Royal Literary Fund (RLF) was set up in 1790 to help published British writers in financial difficulties. It has assisted distinguished writers including Joseph Conrad, DH Lawrence and James Joyce and continues to support writers today.

WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE WAR?

Clare Shaw, a writer from the RLF, wrote a poem called What Did You Do in the War? which thanks retail and distribution workers for the part they played during the Coronavirus crisis. Clare felt compelled to write the piece after listening to the harrowing experiences of retail and distribution workers.



THE ATTENDEES HAD TO SAY...

Sue Laycock: "The Zoom meeting felt comfortable and I got some very useful information and insight into how wording can affect my CV."

David Jenkinson: "I felt the exercises we were doing were little steps towards the bigger picture, it was a great way of getting the message across."

Christine Bishop: "The meeting was great, and I really got a lot out of the session."

Sean Dixon: "I really can't thank Mary and Clare enough. We would be struggling to offer this kind of support at this terrible time without their help. It's been absolutely fantastic working with them and I'm really proud to have been part of this project."

Lifelong learning project worker Martyn Warwick:

"These sessions for the staff have been amazing. By working together with the reps, the business and the RLF we managed to quickly adapt and innovate our learning to ensure we could continue to support members during the extremely difficult time. I also want to thank all the reps at the site for the fantastic work they have done in supporting their colleagues. They will be an asset to any organisation and I wish them the best of luck."

Clare Shaw and Mary Colson from the RLF: "We have loved working with Usdaw. We are driven by the belief that being able to write, whether it's a disciplinary or life writing, is a key skill to have which can give people a sense of empowerment over their own lives."



BACK TO WORK: PROTECTING

As non-retail workplaces begin to open *Network* guides reps through health and safety measures that should be taking place to minimise the risk of COVID-19

Usdaw reps will be crucial in ensuring that workplaces adhere to Government guidelines on protecting workers who are returning to work. Using this guide they can ensure that workplaces are following Government guidance.

This is a fast changing situation. For the most up-to-date information please go to our website www.usdaw.org.uk

Is it true that everyone should be returning to work now?

At the time of writing, the Prime Minister Boris Johnson had announced that people who cannot work from home should be encouraged to go to work. So if you can work from home your employer

should make sure you continue to do so. In England, manufacturing and construction were opened up in May. Non essential shops started re-opening from 1 June with outdoor retail and car showrooms where social distancing measures are easier. From 15 June non-essential retail would be allowed to re-open on the condition that the five tests are still being met and shops have been made COVID-secure. The hospitality industry is scheduled to open around 4 July.

I am concerned about being asked to return to work. What should my employer be doing to keep us safe?

The Government has issued

COVID-19 Secure guidelines which cover different sectors including shops and bank branches; factories and warehouses; offices and contact centres and Vehicles.

In every sector they must:

■ **Make sure that workers who can work from home continue to do so.** For most Usdaw members working from home will not be possible. But where it can be done the employer must continue to make it possible for workers to do so. The employer still has duties for the health and safety of home workers. They must make sure they have the equipment they need to work safely and must keep in touch with home workers to make sure there are no problems.



G MEMBERS

■ Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment, in consultation with workers or trade unions

Employers are reminded that the risk assessment must follow current health and safety and equality laws.

■ Reinforce cleaning processes

Workplaces should be cleaned more frequently, paying close attention to high-contact objects like door handles and keypads. Hand washing facilities or sanitisers should be provided at entry and exit points and readily accessible throughout the workplace.

■ Maintain 2 metres social distancing, wherever possible

Re-design workspaces and work practices to maintain 2 metre distances between people as far as possible. For example, staggering start times, creating one-way walk-

throughs, opening more entrances and exits, or changing seating layouts in break rooms.

■ Where people cannot be 2 metres apart, manage transmission risk

Decide whether it is safe or necessary to continue. Use barriers or screens where possible when workers must work more closely together. Use fixed teams to minimise the number of people in contact with one another. Try to ensure workers are facing away from each other.

The Government guidance reminds employers 'No one is obliged to work in an unsafe environment.'

What should the risk assessment cover?

Under health and safety law there is a hierarchy of control measures

which should be followed.

Eliminate

The first step should be to do what can be done to ELIMINATE the risk. In this case stopping people from bringing the virus into the workplace. This means telling workers who have symptoms or share a household with someone who has symptoms to stay at home, at least until they can get the results of being tested for the virus.

In sites that are not open to the public, visitors should be controlled. Where a contractor, driver or other visitor does have to come on site there should be a screening process to make sure that they are safe to do so.

Contain

The next step is to CONTAIN the risk. Stopping the virus from spreading



THE GOVERNMENT
WANTS MORE PEOPLE
TO WALK OR CYCLE
TO WORK. FOR MANY
WORKERS IT WILL NOT BE
A PRACTICAL OPTION

in the workplace. This involves engineering and administrative controls such as changes to working methods, one-way pedestrian routes, separate entrances and exits, moving chairs and tables in rest areas, staggering start and finish times and rest breaks, enforcing separation in smoking shelters, identifying pinch points on the shop floor, slowing production, relaxing performance targets, wedging doors open to avoid touching handles, using barriers or screens to separate where distance is not possible. The controls will vary from workplace to workplace. But they have been tried and tested in the shops, call-centres, warehouses and factories where members have continued to work and we know they work if they are properly applied. Usdaw believes that one of the key messages that employers must make sure all line managers and supervisors understand is that physical distancing is an important control measure which takes priority even if it means that performance is reduced or productivity targets/pick rates need to be relaxed.

Protect

As a last resort, when the other control measures are not sufficient, employers should look at the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to PROTECT any workers who remain at risk. For some jobs such as two-person tasks that involve face-to-face work or cleaning after a suspected COVID-19 case has been in the building this might mean fluid-resistant face masks, visors and gloves. It may even be necessary on some occasions for workers to wear respirators rather than masks. It is important that employers make it clear when PPE is being provided as a necessary control measure for a specific task and must be worn. If the employer provides gloves and face coverings on a voluntary basis for workers who want to wear them where PPE is not needed there needs to be a clear distinction.

The full Government Guidance on Working Safely in eight industrial sectors is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>
Guidance for retail shops can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>

There's a lot of change going on. How can my employer make sure everyone knows what to do?

Under health and safety law employers must provide workers with information, instruction and training to make sure they know what the risk assessment has said. For workplaces that have been closed time will be needed for induction when workers return. For workplaces that have stayed open, workers will need to be briefed and trained on changes. This may have to be done in small groups to allow for physical distancing.

Employers also have to consult union safety representatives on the training they give to workers. Health and safety reps can use their legal powers to give feedback to employers to make sure the message is getting through and the risk assessment is working.

The Government says avoid public transport. So how am I supposed to get to work?

This has been one of the most controversial aspects. Telling people on the one hand they should start going back to work and on the other that they should avoid public transport has caused a lot of concern. The Government wants more people to walk or cycle to work. While this is worth thinking about if you live close enough to your workplace, for many workers it will not be a practical option. If you do have to use public transport, the advice is to try to avoid travelling at peak times although this may not be an option for many. It may help if your employer gives some

flexibility on travel times (linked to the staggering of start and finish times) so you can travel just outside the busiest times.

Another option, especially for remote workplaces, may be car sharing. The Government now accepts this may be a lower risk than travelling on crowded trains or buses and it may be the only practical choice for workers in remote sites. Advice is to restrict sharing to the same small group as much as possible, to make sure that you don't share if you have symptoms, to keep windows open when possible.

If the employer provides transport to work or between sites then they should make sure there are enough cars or buses to allow for physical distancing even if this means increasing the number of vehicles.

What about people who are not able to return to work?

The Government guidance makes it clear that people who are clinically extremely vulnerable (most of whom should have had letters from their doctors) should remain shielded at home. Others who are clinically vulnerable should be given work that can be done from home where possible. If the latter group do have to come into work they should be offered work which maximises their social distancing and minimises contact with the public.

As for any workplace risk employers must take into account specific duties for those with protected characteristics, for example pregnant women. Particular attention should also be paid to people who live with clinically extremely vulnerable individuals. Usdaw also believes that some flexibility will be needed for workers with childcare responsibilities as long as schools are not back to normal attendance levels.

Any reps who have concerns should contact their area organiser or the health and safety section at central office on 0161 249 2441.

HSE ADVICE TO EMPLOYERS ON FIRST AID AT WORK

LONE WORKER GUIDANCE

HSE guidance has been published for managers when assessing risks for lone working.

Although it was published before the Coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown much of it is still very relevant.

Government Coronavirus guidance has encouraged homeworking. Even when employees are working from home employers still have responsibility for those who are working on their own at home.

Employees can become isolated and this can cause stress and managers should be looking to reduce this by keeping in touch.

In addition Usdaw members still work on their own in shops, petrol filling stations and delivery driving. Customer violence, abuse and not following Coronavirus risk prevention measures can trigger stress.

The guidance covers the risks lone workers and mobile workers face.

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.htm



Employers should keep their first aid needs assessment under review. If the number of First Aiders falls below what they need because First Aiders are off work, they should consider temporary measures to fill the gap eg temporary Appointed Persons.

First Aiders will have had basic hygiene training to protect them from any infection risk. Where possible they should check the injured person for symptoms before commencing treatment. Most first aid is very simple and the steps to take in an emergency can be described or explained to an injured or ill person if they are conscious so they can help themselves. For example, rather than applying a dressing to a wound the First Aider may be able to hand the dressing over and let the person apply it themselves. Consider the provision of

masks and eye protection as well as gloves for First Aiders. If resuscitation is needed, the First Aider should provide compression-only CPR and avoid mouth-to-mouth. If a defibrillator is available it can be used without increasing the risk of infection. If it is necessary to call 999 tell the call-handler if it is suspected that the person may be infected with COVID-19.

If a First Aider has a certificate that expires on or after 16 March 2020 and they cannot access re-training they may qualify for a 3-month extension. To qualify for the extension, they must be able to explain why they haven't been able to re-qualify and demonstrate what steps were taken to access the training, if asked to do so.

www.hse.gov.uk/news/first-aid-certificate-coronavirus.htm

NEW DIRECT CONTACT POINT

HOW TO RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT SAFETY

In the absence of spot checks there may be occasions where a rep does need to contact the enforcing authority because of their concerns about the lack of COVID-19 protection at work.

For Usdaw members in manufacturing where the HSE is the enforcing authority, the TUC has persuaded the HSE to set up a direct contact point for union reps to use. If you are a health and safety rep in a factory and you have concerns about your employer's COVID-19 protection, it is important to raise

the concerns through the workplace procedures and to contact your area organiser if you can. If the employer does not deal with your concerns or you think there is an urgent problem and you need to contact the HSE the TUC has set up an online form that links to a dedicated HSE email box <https://tuccampaigns.typeform.com/to/Ypm6Pq>.

For health and safety reps in shops, warehouses and call centres, if you have concerns about COVID-19 precautions and need to report them, then look up the contact

details for the Environmental Health Department at your Local Authority and contact them direct.

Both HSE and the Local Environmental Health will treat your complaint confidentially if that is what you want. Remember it is better to try to sort out the problem using the procedures and contacting your area organiser if you can. Please contact the health and safety section at central office (0161 249 2441) if you need any advice before contacting the HSE or Local Authority.

GOVERNMENT'S EMPTY PROMISES

DRASTIC CUTS LIMIT CHECKS

On 11 May the Prime Minister Boris Johnson told Parliament that the HSE would be conducting 'spot inspections' to ensure that businesses were keeping workers safe when they return to work.

However, Prospect, the union for HSE inspectors, has pointed out that HSE has suspended site inspections since March in response to COVID-19. Any spot checks will initially be by phone not by a site visit.

An extra £14 million has been given to HSE to allow it to carry out these 'spot checks'. But the extra money follows funding cuts from £239m in 2010 to £135 million last year. Over that period HSE staff have reduced from 3,700 to 2,500

and the number of inspectors in the field has dropped from 1,495 to 978.

Despite the Prime Minister's assurances, the HSE only enforces health and safety for around 50 per cent of workplaces, mainly in the manufacturing industry, health and education.

For the vast majority of Usdaw members in retail and distribution it is not the HSE that enforces health and safety but the Local Authority Environmental Health Department. Following drastic cuts local councils have even less resources to ensure effective spot checks. Many local authorities have less than one full-time Environmental Health Officer available to enforce health and safety on their patch.

CONTACT USDAW HEALTH & SAFETY SECTION

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

COVID RISK ASSESSMENT

The HSE has produced a short guide to help employers with their COVID-19 Secure risk assessment. This guide is intended to complement the Government Working Safely guides which were produced for employers in England when the Government announced the return to work.

It consists of a series of short checklists of some of the things the employer should consider when planning their COVID-19 risk assessment.

HSE Coronavirus guidance: www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/working-safely-guide.pdf

Government Working Safely Guidance for different sectors www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19

MemberOffers

Some of the 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
Fiat
Startrescue
Usdawdrive
Vauxhall Cars

INSURANCE

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

MONEY & FINANCE

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

HEALTH & BEAUTY

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

LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

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

SHOPPING

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

HOLIDAYS

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

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TOTUM Pro/NUS Extra
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Find out more
www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

★SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS★SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS★

**fashion & textile
children's trust.**

Financial grants for children of UK fashion and textile families

Grants for Parents & Carers who have worked for clothing, homeware or fabric companies

The Fashion & Textile Children's Trust (FTCT) gives financial grants to the children of parents and carers who work in the UK fashion and textile industry. Their grants can help ease the financial strain of redundancy, furlough or reduced working hours, by covering the cost of essential items for children in the family. www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

Worried about money? Get free help

Our partner, StepChange Debt Charity, offer expert, free and confidential debt advice and solutions to get you back on track. Tell them about your financial situation and they'll provide you with an action plan tailored to your needs. www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

StepChange
Debt Charity

**HOME
INSURANCE**

Protecting members for over 15 years

We know there has been a huge impact on everyone due to COVID-19, caring for and worrying about loved ones, social distancing and lockdown. It would be very easy not to remember insurance for your home, but please remember we're here to help. Usdaw Insurance provides Home Insurance to Usdaw members and their families – find out more at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

Free £5,000 Accidental Death Cover

Thousands die every year in the UK due to accidents, which is why Usdaw has negotiated £5,000 of FREE Accidental Death Cover for every Usdaw member, aged 18-69 and a UK resident. The cover is free of charge, and lasts 12 months, after which you can renew it again for free. The money can be used for any purpose, such as paying off debts, bills or funeral expenses and can provide financial support to your loved ones at a difficult time. www.usdaw.org.uk/offers*

Usdaw
Protect

*Terms and conditions apply to all benefits. See website for details. Offers subject to change without notice.

A number of Usdaw Discounts and Offers are arranged and managed on behalf of Usdaw by Parliament Hill Ltd. Further benefits are organised directly by Usdaw Membership Services.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS



Sue Prynn

SUE PRYNN

Usdaw's deputy divisional officer in the Southern division Sue Prynn will be retiring in August after 12 years on the union's staff.

Sue started working for Usdaw as an area organiser. She was then promoted to deputy divisional officer in April 2013. Before joining the staff Sue was an active Usdaw rep at CSM Bakery Solutions in Bromborough. She became branch secretary in 2003 and successfully completed the union's Academy programme in 2006.

"As a deputy divisional officer my main role has been to oversee recruitment and organising within the division.

One of my greatest achievements was helping the division grow from 58,000 to 65,000 members in my first five years.

"I have particularly enjoyed watching our reps develop during their time on the Academy, especially when the experience builds their confidence and enthusiasm and they go on to achieve great things within their workplaces and in the wider union.

"I will really miss my colleagues in the division. My partner Danny and I plan to live abroad for at least a year in Malta. We have five children and seven grandchildren between us who I am sure will want to come out and visit."



Kieron Murphy

KIERON MURPHY

Southern division's Kieron Murphy retired at the end of May after 13 years on the union's staff.

Kieron was appointed area organiser in 2007. He joined Usdaw 30 years ago and subsequently became a rep while working at Sainsbury's distribution in Buntingford. He completed the union's Academy during the second year it was running.

"As an area organiser I've been supporting members with concerns and difficulties in the workplace," said Kieron. "I've also been working closely with

the reps, ensuring they had the skills and confidence required to effectively represent their members and grow membership.

"It hasn't been the greatest time to retire due to the Coronavirus pandemic, I haven't had the chance to thank reps and colleagues face-to-face and say goodbye, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all now for the support they gave me and their members. I will miss them, and also my my colleagues at the Morden office.

"As for life after Usdaw, I am lucky enough to sit on the employment tribunal panel and shall be continuing to do this when circumstances allow."

LISA WILLIS

Usdaw's new area organiser in the Scottish division is former activist and Academy graduate Lisa Willis.

Lisa joins Usdaw from Morrissions in Edinburgh where she has worked as a manager for 15 years. She has been actively involved with the union since becoming a rep nine years ago and has completed Academy1 and 2, Summer School and several periods of stand-down.

"Through the union I also developed an interest in politics and joined the divisional political committee where I was elected vice chair. I also completed the Gordon Aikman Labour Leadership Programme and various political TULO courses."

Lisa will be working out of the Glasgow office. "I'm particularly looking forward to meeting all the reps in my area and seeing what's working well in their stores and how we can develop things going forward," said Lisa. "I'm also excited about getting to grips with the sectors I'm unfamiliar with like the call centres, warehouses and pharmaceutical companies and learning how the reps and the union operates in those environments."



Lisa Willis



SUPPORTING MEMBERS WITH DIABETES

A useful resource for reps when it comes to dealing with diabetes and the Equality Act in the workplace

Around 4.7 million people in the UK are affected by diabetes – including around a million people who haven't been diagnosed with the condition. Undiagnosed and improperly controlled diabetes can cause serious long-term health conditions, and leave those affected at risk of falling into a coma – so it's vital that affected members are properly supported at work.

That's why Usdaw's equality section has produced this newly

updated advice guide. Inside, you'll find practical, straightforward information on the symptoms of diabetes and a step-by-step plan to determine whether the member meets the definition of a disabled person under the Equality Act (Disability Discrimination Act in Northern Ireland). You'll also get examples of adjustments that reps have previously negotiated on behalf of their members, to help them stay in work.

Read the guide online at dtp.usdaw.co.uk/449

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

NEW IN!

Leaflets

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

Pregnancy Risk Assessment - Know Your Rights
(Leaflet 342)

Ushaw Supporting Young Workers
(Leaflet 396)

Mental Health Issues - Where to go for help and support at work - an advice guide for Ushaw members
(Leaflet 400)

Supporting Young Workers - Workplace Mental Health
(Leaflet 450)

Working to Improve Maternity and Paternity Rights
(A5 Leaflet)

The Impact of Coronavirus on the Workforce: Survey Results

Factsheets and Posters

Coronavirus - Ushaw is here to support you (A4 Poster)

Injured Whilst Cycling? FirstCall Ushaw (Poster R68)

Wranx Learning

Online courses

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

Pensions home study
www.usdaw.org.uk/pensionshomestudy

Helping With Homework - new bitesize maths course
www.usdaw.org.uk/mathshomework

Summertime Songbirds - English bitesize course
www.usdaw.org.uk/summertime

Vulnerable Workers Home Study
www.usdaw.org.uk/homestudy5

Staying Safe Online course
www.usdaw.org.uk/SafeOnline

Twitter takeover



Scully10

Well done @claireimogen28 currently getting the message across loud & clear on behalf of @UsdawCDivision @UsdawUnion @coopuk #RespectForShopworkers



Michael Roast

Great to hear @claireimogen28 on @talkRADIO today on the @TVkev show representing all shopworkers and @UsdawUnion. So proud to have Claire in my team and well done for speaking so honestly about the challenges retail workers face.



The British Retail Consortium

BRC & @UsdawUnion have been working together to ensure retailers are prepared to ease out of lockdown. @PaddyLillisGS and BRC's Helen Dickinson explain how further collaboration between industry and government will be vital if it is to be a success!

www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2020/05/comment-usdaw-brc-working-together-to-bring-retail-safely-out-of-lockdown/



Ian Byrne MP

When the crisis is over, things can't go back to the way they were. I back @UsdawUnion's call for a #NewDeal4Workers including:
- £10 min wage
- Min contract of 16 hours p/week for all who want it
- Ban zero-hours contracts
- Better sick pay
- A Proper Social Security System



@unionlearn

Jose De Sousa settled in England in 2012 and started work in Tesco Goole. With help of Usdaw's #LifelongLearning, has not only developed his career - but also helps colleagues as a Union Learning Rep. @UsdawUnion @tesconews @TUCYorkHumber



Email your thoughts and pictures to us at: network@usdaw.org.uk

**Martyn Warwick**

Great work from [@WaltonTiger](#) and [@ShareClaw](#) arranging this pilot at [@CastlefordLearn](#) to see how [@UsdawLearn](#) can support these key workers and [@UsdawUnion](#) members remotely with redundancy support. Well done!

Castleford Learning

When #COVID19 and #redundancy rear their ugly heads at our [@UsdawUnion](#) learning centre, [@rflwriters](#) and their #zoom #CV workshops help save the day...

**Afzal Khan MP**

This #MayDay I'd like to thank the millions of low-paid and undervalued workers who have stepped up in the most difficult of circumstances to keep our country going. They deserve a #NewDeal4Workers and a radical overhaul of pay and conditions.

**Jack Dromey MP**

There is no place for abuse, threats or assaults directed towards shopworkers. Shocking to hear from [@UsdawUnion](#) incidents of this kind doubling during the Coronavirus emergency. These key workers deserve our respect and gratitude for the work they do.

or tweet us at: [@usdawunion](#)

**cllrjfhay**

Safeguarding retail workers was the theme of the Zoom call this evening organised by the Coop Party. Good to see Usdaw General Secretary Paddy Lillis and others highlighting the unacceptable abuse of retail staff.

**Claire Saunders**

Very honoured to represent [@coopuk](#) [@UsdawUnion](#) and all shopworkers on this important zoom call.

**Angela Rayner**

I support [@UsdawUnion](#) and its members, it's time for a #NewDeal4Workers If there is one thing that we must take with us after this #coronavirus pandemic is over, it's that we can't go back to the way things were in the world of work.

On #InternationalWorkersDay we celebrate working people. Those who have kept the world moving throughout this crisis. It's high time we recognise their efforts with real pay & conditions for the lowest-paid workers in our society. It's time for a #NewDeal4Workers [@UsdawUnion](#)

**Suzy Lamplugh Trust**

Shocking that abuse, threats and assaults against shopworkers have doubled during the Coronavirus emergency; this is #notpartofthejob #SuzyCharter [@UsdawUnion](#)



**remember
to keep your
data safe**

DATA PROTECTION

You may be a rep or branch official and have been in your role for many years or have just started.

No matter what your role or length of time you have been carrying it out, it is important that you understand the principles of data protection and what you need to do.



www.usdaw.org.uk/gdprguide

**VIEW
DOWNLOAD
ORDER**

