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Q&A

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SPRING 2013

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AWARD WINNERS

Reps in the spotlight



The magazine of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers



General secretary John Hannett Usdaw – always on your side

This year has already seen major developments on the high street with the collapse of Blockbuster, Jessops and HMV, which could see 10,000 jobs disappear.

It's clear we face a tough year ahead with the Coalition determined to make low and middle earners bear the brunt of the austerity measures. Real terms reductions in working tax credits and other benefits will hit our members hard and despite the union waging a high profile campaign against these cuts, the Coalition has just carried on regardless.

“ Usdaw wants to speak up on workplace issues but also on the NHS, schools and housing

Voters won't get the chance to give their verdict on the Coalition until 2015, but I can reassure members that we won't be sitting back waiting for the election. We will continue to campaign at work for fair pay, improved workers' rights, and decent health and safety provision. But our members also need us to speak on wider issues like the impact of the cuts on the NHS, on schools, housing and crime in our communities.

Recognition for reps

The beginning of the year always sees Usdaw hold its annual national Organising Awards evening which celebrates and congratulates our hard-working reps for their vital contribution. It's an indication of just how much Usdaw values its activists. Usdaw wouldn't exist without its reps so it's right that we put them in the spotlight. You don't have to be an expert to be a rep but you do have to believe in fairness, justice and equality.

John Hannett
General Secretary

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arena

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Union of Shop, Distributive
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News Pensions warning shout

Members told beware of pension 'liberation' scam

In recent weeks several members have contacted the pensions section at central office after they were approached, out of the blue, by companies offering to help them transfer an old deferred pension to a different scheme and to take some cash from it now.

Pensions officer Debra Blow said: "These schemes work by the company involved taking control of your entire pension fund and transferring it to a separate scheme of their choosing.

"The company running that scheme then agrees to loan you up to half of the transferred amount as cash, which will need to be repaid in full before you retire.

"Fees are taken from the transfer value before the member receives anything. Usually

the promotional materials for these schemes do not state the exact level of fees or charges, but some reports we have seen say these could be up to 30 per cent of your pension pot.

"These 'transfer' schemes which offer those under age 55 a pension loan should be treated with great caution. They are certainly illegal and might in the worst case be fraud.

"The law allows those over 55 years of age to start taking money from a deferred pension without the need to transfer it to another scheme or with the involvement of a third party."



Contact Usdaw's pension team if you need help on 0161 249 2400 or email:

@ pensions@usdaw.org.uk



Closed

Pressure remains on embattled retailers

No sooner had Comet disappeared from the high street at the end of last year, Jessops, Blockbuster and HMV collapsed into administration in January putting more than 10,000 jobs at risk.

HMV won a partial reprieve as it was bought by restructuring firm Hilco although some stores have already closed.

February also saw the gates finally closed on the Vion-owned Hall's of Broxburn site in Scotland where more than 1,700 jobs were lost.

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ARN 1112

Swift action helps member after smash and grab burglary

Models have been used



"We were so grateful for all the help and advice having found it so traumatic."

One evening, Bill Wright and his wife returned home and had a dreadful shock. Their home had been burgled while they'd been out. The doors had been forced open and their computers taken. As they searched the rest of the house they also realised they'd lost cash and a number of treasured personal items.

After contacting the police, Mr Wright called UIA. He urgently needed to get the locks replaced as well as make a claim for everything that had been lost.

UIA reassured him that he was covered and he should replace the locks straightaway as that would help make his home secure immediately. He then jotted down everything that was missing and put a claim in.

A named contact handled the claim

Mr Wright was impressed with the way his claim was handled. "We were particularly grateful that we had a named contact I could phone or email who responded quickly when needed.

It took us a bit of time to be sure about what had been stolen and our UIA contact kindly phoned as a reminder that we hadn't yet claimed and to check whether we needed any further advice."

A cheque quickly arrived

The detailed claim was then sent in by e-mail on a Monday and they received the cheque covering all they had lost by the end of the week.

Even though the burglary had been such a shock, Mr Wright wanted to add "Thank you doesn't really say enough but we hope the UIA staff know they made our problems so much more manageable..."

UIA prides itself on the way it handles claims and has recently been *recommended by Which?* for its home insurance. What also makes UIA different is that *it is a mutual*, so all profits are reinvested into the company, so they can keep premiums low and service standards high.

A special offer for Usdaw members

UIA has been working closely with Usdaw for years to bring members home insurance that meets their needs. And to help in these difficult times UIA is offering Usdaw members **25% off home insurance** (worth on average £59).

And because many members have a problem paying the premium in one lump sum, with UIA you can spread the cost into monthly payments at **no extra charge** (saving on average £23).

What you should do next

If, like the Wrights, you're looking for home insurance from a company that truly cares for its customers, why not get in touch with UIA today?

Save
25% off*
home
insurance

Call **0800 376 0300*** (quote ref: Arena113)

or visit **usdawinsurance.co.uk/offer**

+ Lines are open 8.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat

Usdaw
Insurance

uia
insurance with principles

*25% off home insurance is subject to our usual acceptance criteria and is only available when the reference **Arena113** is quoted. To be eligible for the offer a quote must be requested before **24.06.13**. Offer only available for new customers. +For quality and protection purposes your call will be recorded. We exchange information with other insurance companies and police to prevent fraud. Usdaw is an Introducer Appointed Representative of UIA (Insurance) Ltd, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Usdaw Insurance is a trading name of UIA (Insurance) Ltd.

More misery looms

Workers face benefits cuts

The Coalition's war on in-work tax credits and benefits mean hard-working members will continue to struggle to make ends meet

The Coalition's cuts to in-work tax credits and other benefits will cost families with two children more than £1,000 in the next three years, figures from Usdaw have shown.

The one per cent cap on increases to tax credits and child benefit announced by the chancellor will take effect in April at a time when inflation is predicted to be between at least 2-3 per cent. This will make a massive difference to families on low and middle incomes.

"These are the cruellest of cuts at a time when families are struggling to make ends meet," said general secretary **John Hannett**. "How can the Coalition justify taking money out of the pockets of families on low incomes who rely on in-work benefits to provide the basic necessities for their children?"

Udaw's calculations show that by 2015-16, single people will lose £280, couples £440, a family with one child will have

lost £784, those with two children will lose £1,091 and families with three children a massive £1,398 as their tax credits and child benefit fail to increase with the cost of living. (See tables opposite).

Families on low and middle incomes have already lost out from previous freezes for three years to Child Benefit and Working Tax Credit.

The Treasury has admitted that a lone parent or a couple with one parent working full-time on the minimum wage would receive £660 less in Working Tax Credit from April 2013 than they would have done if tax credits had continued to rise in line with the Retail Price Index and that a family with two children will have received over £500 less in Child Benefit by April 2014 due to the freeze.



The Duggan family (above) and the Spink family





Speaking out against the cuts

Usdaw's opposition to the changes, outlined in the Coalition's Benefits Uprating Bill, won widespread media coverage in January with members appearing on national TV to highlight the impact these would have on them.

Morrisons warehouse operative **Paul Duggan** was interviewed by GMTV's Lorraine Kelly, he told her: "My pay isn't brilliant. It just about covers our outgoings and like most families at the minute, we need our tax credits to get us through week to week. My partner and I are really worried about the changes and how we will be able to afford to live.

"My family and families like mine are urging the Government not to crucify working families. Right now, it's a big enough struggle. If these plans to cut tax credits over the next couple of years go ahead, then I worry that I will be forced into joining the queue at my

local job centre because I would be better off."

Tesco pharmacy assistant **Michelle Spink** was interviewed by Channel 5 News and said: "I am a working single mum struggling to get by and on the verge of being better off financially if I was unemployed, rather than going out to work every day.

"The Government seems to think that you are fine if you are working but it is a real struggle to make ends meet most months.

"It's quite sad to think that many people like me would have a greater quality of life on unemployment benefits. I thought this government wanted to get people back into work not force them out of it!

"I want my son to grow up believing that hard work pays, but what signal is the Government sending to future generations if their parents are better off being unemployed than going out to work."

People without Children

Year	Loss from Tax Credits	
	Single people	Couples
2013-14	-£55	-£80
2014-15	-£95	-£150
2015-16	-£130	-£210
Total losses	-£280	-£440

How much will you lose in the next three years?

Families with 1 Child

Year	Loss from Tax Credits	Loss from Child Benefit	Total Loss
2013-14	-£115	-£23	-£138
2014-15	-£230	-£39	-£269
2015-16	-£325	-£52	-£377
Total	-£670	-£114	-£784

Families with 2 Children

Year	Loss from Tax Credits	Loss from Child Benefit	Total Loss
2013-14	-£150	-£40	-£190
2014-15	-£310	-£65	-£375
2015-16	-£440	-£86	-£526
Total	-£990	-£191	-£1,091

People
like you

Winner

Usdaw rep Derean Roach played her part in last year's summer Olympics

www.usdaw.org.uk/bearep

Tesco Tech Support Advisor **Derean Roach's** skills as a rep helped her make history when she joined 70,000 volunteers, to help deliver the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games last year.

The volunteers known as the Games Makers, welcomed the world to London and were described by Lord Coe as the 'unsung heroes of communities across the UK and fundamental to the success of the Games'.

"I'm so proud to have been part of the team that helped to make it happen," said the 31 year-old mother of one from Enfield in London. "It was definitely a summer to remember.

"I'll never forget the huge appreciation from

the general public.

"My local borough Enfield also recognised the Games Makers for their contribution and we were guests of honour at a glittering reception at Forty Hall last September."

Derean works at the Ponders End Extra store in Enfield and gave up her own time to volunteer. She joined the union six years ago and became a rep two years later.

"As I rep I give up my

time to help my members and learn more about the union, this gave me the confidence to apply.

"I also work as part of a team. I listen to my members and make decisions and I have to be very organised. Exactly the kind of qualities needed for the role of Games Maker.

"When I found out I'd been selected my line and general manager worked together to sort out my time off. I was able to take some holiday and

change some of my shifts.

"I am grateful I was part of this unforgettable experience and such a unique moment in history.

"Would I do it all again? Oh yes – just point me in the direction of Rio!"

Games Maker...
proud Derean with
her certificate



News Union democracy

Activists from across the UK will decide the important issues for Usdaw in 2013



More than 1,200 activists will gather in Blackpool in April to decide the union's policies and priorities for the next 12 months at the Annual Delegate Meeting.

The four-day event is the union's annual parliament and will see delegates debate wages and conditions at work, disability, health and safety, housing, pensions, transport, welfare, crime and the NHS.

General secretary John Hannett and deputy general

secretary Paddy Lillis will respond to all of the debates while president Jeff Broome will chair the proceedings.

"This is the biggest and most important event in the union's calendar," said John. "Branches dictate the agenda by submitting propositions for discussion and the delegates then debate these and vote on them.

"It's democracy in action and decisions taken during the week will form our policies for the rest

of the year. It's an intense four days with additional fringe meetings held during the afternoon break and early evenings too, so the delegates and visitors have plenty to occupy them.

"It's also a great opportunity for activists to meet old friends and meet up with new ones and make useful contacts with fellow reps from their companies and across our seven divisions."

The main event...
the Annual Delegate Meeting

The **co-operative** funeralcare is pleased to support Usdaw

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- £25 discount on our funeral Pre-Payment Plans
- 10% discount on professional services fees on funeral arrangements

For more information, contact your local The Co-operative Funeralcare (Quote reference – MKT/13/004)

Or visit our website at

www.co-operativefuneralcare.co.uk

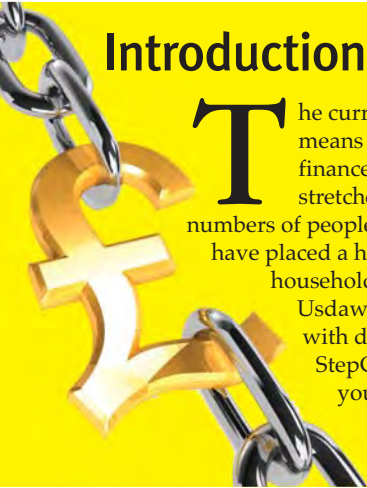
10% discount applies to funeral director professional services fees only (as detailed on price list and estimate form provided at the time of arranging a funeral) and excludes discounts on The Simple Funeral, supplementary services, coffin/casket selection, additional services and payments made on your behalf (e.g. clergy, doctors fees, crematorium/burial charges). The funeral plan offer applies to new cremation and burial plans purchased through a Co-operative Funeralcare home. The offer does not apply to funeral plans paid for by the fixed monthly payment option. Offers cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer and are valid until 30.06.13. All offers are not retrospective. Our business terms and conditions apply. This does not affect your statutory rights.



Putting your house in order

If you are struggling with debt problems you are not alone – but don't ignore them – take advice

Introduction



The current economic climate means that many people's finances are already stretched. For large numbers of people, Christmas will have placed a huge strain on household budgets.

Usdaw has teamed up with debt charity StepChange to help you deal with your financial problems.

Face the facts

Facing up to a debt problem can be extremely difficult to do. If you think you have a debt problem the first step is to do a full review of your household finances and then create a budget, this is the first step to regaining control of your finances. Full details on how to create a budget are available from the StepChange Debt Charity website www.stepchange.org.

Avoid payday loans

For those who are financially vulnerable, payday loans can appear an all too convenient way of accessing short-term credit. Some people will have used payday loans to pay for Christmas, some will be considering using them to help with their bills in January.

Anyone thinking about using a payday loan should consider very carefully whether they absolutely need to, and whether they can genuinely afford to pay the money back. Payday loans are an extremely high-cost form of credit, interest and charges can rack up extremely quickly and too many people fall into a vicious cycle of taking out one payday loan to pay off another. StepChange Debt Charity has seen a dramatic rise in the number

of people seeking the charity's help with five or more loans.

We can be contacted on our Freephone helpline 0800 138 111 (open 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday and 9am to 3pm Saturday) or you can use our online Debt Remedy tool at

www.stepchange.org





know your Rights

Festive financial hangover

The weeks after Christmas can be some of the hardest financially. If you have been pushed further into debt as a result of over-spending or spending on **credit** during the Christmas period, things may be even harder.

The negative impact that Christmas has on people's ability to manage their money and debt is illustrated by the **sharp rise** in the number of calls received by StepChange Debt Charity in January and February.

If you know you are struggling financially it can be tempting to ignore it or try to struggle on in the hope that the situation will get better.

DEBT
Usdaw has teamed up with StepChange to offer members vital advice on debt

Possible debt solutions

Debt management plans

A debt management plan helps manage your debts and pay them off at a more affordable rate by making reduced monthly payments.

Debt relief orders

A debt relief order may be an option if you owe less than £15,000, have a low income and very few assets. We can help you apply.

Equity release

If you're a homeowner and 55 or over, you may be able to release money tied up in your home to pay off your debts - without the need to move.

Bankruptcy advice

Bankruptcy helps rid you of debt that would otherwise take years to clear - but it's a serious step and should never be undertaken lightly.

Individual voluntary agreement

An individual voluntary arrangement is a legal agreement allowing you to repay a reduced amount from any surplus monthly income.

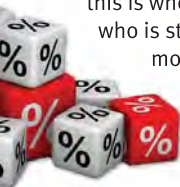
Debt advice

Our expert advice will help you decide which debt solution is right for you - and our advice is completely free.

About us - let StepChange step in to help you

If after fully reviewing your household finances and budget, you still feel unable to cope, do not worry, this is where **StepChange Debt Charity** is here to help. We offer free and impartial advice to anyone who is struggling with a debt problem. We will gather all your financial details, create a sustainable monthly budget and provide you with clear advice on what is the best solution for your situation.

StepChange Debt Charity has over 20 years' experience of helping people with problem debt. With this knowledge and experience, anyone contacting the charity can be sure that they are getting the best possible advice - which is completely free and impartial.



Baby on board? Get ready now!



Mums-to-be need to be fully aware of their rights as they prepare for their new baby to arrive

Diary date

Q I've just found out I'm pregnant. When do I have to tell my employer?

You must tell your employer of your pregnancy no later than the 15th week before the week in which your baby is due. This is the very latest date you should notify them. However if you can it is worth telling your employer as soon as possible as once they know they have to conduct a pregnancy risk assessment. This means they must look at whether or not any aspect of your job or working environment pose a 'risk' to your health and safety and that of your baby. You should put in writing:

- The fact that you are pregnant
- Your baby's due date
- The date you would like your maternity leave to start.

Certificate required

You should also give your employer a copy of your maternity certificate (MATB1) which your GP or midwife will give you when you are about 20 weeks pregnant.



Staying home with baby

Q I've decided not to return to my job after maternity leave. What do I need to do?

You are simply resigning from your job. You should give your employer notice as set out in your contract. You can serve your notice period while on maternity leave. Your employer should send you your P45 and pay you for any holidays that you haven't taken, including holidays you have accrued whilst on maternity leave.

Benefit enquiry

Q I don't qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) as I don't earn enough. Is there anything else I can claim?

To qualify for SMP you do have to be earning above the Lower Earnings Limit (currently £107 rising to £109 from April 2013). However you may be able to claim an alternative benefit called Maternity Allowance from the Department of Work & Pensions instead. The earnings limit for Maternity Allowance is only £30. Maternity Allowance is paid at a flat rate of £135.45 (rising to £136.78) for 39 weeks or 90 per cent of your average earnings which ever is the lowest.

Cash back?

Q Do I have to repay any of my Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) if I decide not to return to work?

No. You don't have to repay your SMP under any circumstances if you choose not to go back to work after maternity leave. If your employer has topped up your SMP with contractual maternity, this part of your pay would only have to be repaid if this had been agreed in advance and your contract makes it clear.

MATERNITY ADVICE

For more information take a look at the maternity info available on the website at:



www.usdaw.org.uk/baby

know your Rights

Can I have my job back please

Q Since I've been on maternity leave there have been some changes at work. My employer says that I can't return to my old job.

If you are returning to work before the end of 26 weeks maternity leave, you have the right to return to the exactly the same job. If you are returning to work after 26 weeks maternity leave you have the right to return to the same job unless this isn't 'reasonably practicable'. You then have the right to return to a similar job on no less favourable terms and conditions.

Baby bump safety concern

Q I'm struggling with certain aspects of my job because of my pregnancy. What can I do?

If you have not already informed your employer of your pregnancy in writing then do this straight away as your employer is then under a legal duty to look carefully at your job duties and other aspects of your role to assess whether your job or your working environment pose any risks. If this assessment shows a risk to your health or that of your baby then your employer must remove that risk or reduce it to a safe level. If this can't be done then you have the right to be offered suitable alternative work. Talk to your manager, your Usdaw rep or your area organiser about any concerns you have straight away.

Time off for dad?

Q I know as I'm expecting I have the right to paid time off for antenatal appointments. Does my partner?

No. At the moment there is no legal right to time off for fathers/partners to attend antenatal classes. However Government has announced that they intend to introduce a right allowing fathers/partners time off to two antenatal appointments. The right to time off will be without pay.

NOTE

This is a brief guide to your statutory rights. Don't forget to check your contract too.

Extra hours but no extra holiday rights

Members missing out on holiday pay, passport problems at work, and complications when maternity leave and holiday entitlement clash

Holiday pay shortfall

Q I am contracted for 18 hours, but I always work more than 30 hours. I have been there for over two years and I've asked for a bigger contract nearly every month. I'm missing out on holiday pay. Is there any way I can change this?

If your contract says you are only contracted for 18 hours it is unlikely that you will be able to demonstrate an entitlement to 30 hours or more unless you can show that your employer had somehow agreed with you that you would be contracted for the extra hours. Although you have in practice been working over 30 hours a week this will not normally be enough to establish that your employer has agreed to provide extra hours, above the 18 in your contract.

Of course, if you are not contracted to work over 18 hours then you can refuse to work the extra hours when asked by your employer. However, you should also bear in mind that there would be no obligation on your employer to offer you extra hours in future.

With regard to your holiday pay, an employer is not obliged to take into account overtime hours you have worked when calculating your holiday pay, unless your contract of employment provides for this. They must take into account your normal working hours, which in your case will be your 18 contracted hours.

Identity at issue

Q Recently all staff have been asked to bring in their passports or work visas or national insurance documents or birth certificates. Please could you tell me if this is a reasonable request from the company? Most employees find this strange after working for the company for many years.

Employers are breaking the law if they employ a person who does not have the right to work in the UK. They can be fined up to £10,000 for each illegal worker or face criminal prosecution. Employers will however have a defence if they can show that they have carried out the appropriate document checks as specified in government guidelines. The request that you provide further copies of these documents is therefore reasonable.

Your employer could also find themselves facing claims of discrimination if they do not treat everyone in the workforce the same. Therefore employers usually request that all employees provide documents to establish their right to work, regardless of their race and background.

“Employers have to check your status”



Your rights at work are covered by your contract and the law. While arena cannot answer individual queries in detail it can give you a brief introduction.

know your Rights

Mum's maternity matters

Q I am currently on maternity leave but I'm not returning to work at the end of it. What happens to the holiday I have accrued during my maternity. Do I lose it as I'm not returning to work, or does my employer have to pay me for it?

The simple answer to this is that you continue to accrue entitlement to statutory minimum annual leave during Ordinary Maternity Leave. So even if you are not returning, you should be able to take the leave entitlement you have accrued. The whole point of the (minimum) statutory leave entitlement is so that workers can have a period of rest, and so this leave cannot normally be replaced by a payment in lieu. But the only circumstances where this can happen is when a worker's employment is terminating. Then you can be paid in lieu of any outstanding holiday entitlement you have accrued whilst on maternity leave.

All your contractual entitlements continue to accrue while you are on Ordinary Maternity Leave and so you should expect to be able to take (or be paid in lieu) for any untaken additional contractual leave you have built up while on maternity leave. This is only a very brief overview of the law and this can be a very complicated area, and the position may also be slightly different if you have taken Additional Maternity Leave. So the best advice is to make your request to your employer for payment for any untaken leave and seek advice as soon as possible from your rep or area organiser if you are not happy with the answer.



**STAY
INFORMED**

There is a wealth of information on the union's website at

www.usdaw.org.uk where you can download leaflets and keep up-to-date with your rights

This is only a brief guide to the law and you should remember individual cases can differ widely both in terms of statutory rights and contractual rights. Please consult your local rep or area organiser and you can find more information on the website.

Feature

Asian women

Reflecting diversity

Asian women have a high presence in Usdaw sectors and the union wants to reflect that in the number of activists it has from this part of the community. **Arena** talked to four active Asian women to find out about their experiences

“I became involved in Usdaw after I had a problem at work with bullying. I didn’t seek any advice and it was only later that I realised how Usdaw could have helped me. It was clear other people were in my position and I thought - I want to be the person who helps them. That was the start.

“Now I get a real buzz out of helping my colleagues and sorting out problems.

“Since becoming a rep I’ve spoken at the Annual Delegate Meeting – in front of nearly 1,500 people – that was amazing. I’ve also played a bigger part in the union’s work beyond my own store.

“I think it is important more Asian women get active as they have lots to offer the union. In addition many Asian women, just like other workers, sometimes don’t realise how much the union can do for them. I’m all in favour of Asian women speaking up for their colleagues.”

“I think it is important more Asian women get active as they have lots to offer the union. In addition many Asian women, just like other workers, sometimes don’t realise how much the union can do for them. I’m all in favour of Asian women speaking up for their colleagues.”



“I’m active because I enjoy helping people. For me it’s a challenge and I like the communications and socialising side of things.

“When I started this job it was all new to me. I’d never worked in retail before. I was approached by the union within six months of starting work. I was aware that there were a lot of new challenges at work.

“I was always interested in studying and learning

and put my name forward and got on a training course. I’ve not looked back since.

“Like my colleagues I think it’s very important for Asian women to be active and visible. It’s important that the Asian community feel they can get involved and that Usdaw actively encourages them to. It’s important to the union to make sure it reflects the diversity of the workforce it aims to represent.”





Su Patel

“Usdaw helped me deal with problems in-store a few years ago and as a result I was motivated to become active.

“I’m all for getting more Asian women involved. It’s very important, because many Asian women live in a society/culture in which they have no voice. Also Asian women can struggle to make themselves heard in workplaces, especially where they are in a minority.

“The union gives us a voice. Getting involved gives you a chance to support one another, to grow in confidence and to learn new skills.”



Rehana Kosar

“There are barriers in the way of Asian women getting involved not just in terms of confidence, but also it is sometimes assumed that you don’t want to because of your cultural or religious beliefs. So you can be overlooked.

“Becoming a rep has given me confidence, skills, knowledge and experience. Role models are important as seeing other Asian women getting involved and becoming reps makes you think ‘I could do that.’

“In my store there were no Asian woman coming forward, and I wanted to get involved to raise interest in the union amongst my colleagues. I’ve had lots of support from Usdaw both locally and nationally.

“I think it’s very important to get Asian women involved because it can help you feel more at ease if you are dealing with someone who comes from a similar background.”



Bharti Dhamecha

Facts & Figures

Zaleem Rabinan

- **Employer:** Tesco
- **Job:** Optician’s assistant
- **Where:** Twickenham
- **Union roles:** Health & safety and learning rep
- **Active since:** 2005

Rehana Kosar

- **Employer:** Tesco
- **Job:** Customer assistant
- **Where:** Bradford
- **Union roles:** Rep, forum rep, health and safety rep, and Usdaw Academy graduate 2011
- **Active since:** 2009

Su Patel

- **Employer:** Sainsbury’s
- **Job:** HR assistant
- **Where:** Richmond, Surrey
- **Union roles:** Rep, branch official, divisional councillor, and member of various committees, Academy graduate
- **Active since:** 2002

Bharti Dhamecha

- **Employer:** Primark
- **Job:** Checkout assistant
- **Where:** Leeds
- **Union roles:** Rep, learning rep, member of equality forum. Winner of national TUC award 2010
- **Active since:** 2006



equalities@usdaw.org.uk



www.usdaw.org.uk

For more information on how you can get involved visit:



Legal

Plus

FirstCall *Usdaw*

0800 055 6333

Legal Help

*– looking after you
and your family*

FirstCall looked after everything for Morrisons general assistant **Jeremy Guyatt** after he injured his knee when he slipped at his Swindon store.

"I was so pleased I was a union member," said Jeremy, 44. "I didn't have to worry about a thing. The union did it all for me, and I was kept up-to-date all the way through with how my claim was going. I kept all of my compensation and all for the price of my weekly subs – great value."

The accident happened in

2008 and was settled last year. A colleague advised Jeremy to ring FirstCall, the union's 24/7 freephone accident helpline. He gave a few details and had a call back within a couple of hours and a union solicitor came out to see him.

"It couldn't have been easier. My solicitor was fantastic, she explained everything to me when she came to see me at home and

TAKING CARE OF YOU

Usdaw recovered **£21,860,204** last year for members injured or treated unfairly at work – proving once again just how valuable and important union membership is.

Personal Injury compensation totalled **£16,440,751** while compensation for individual employment cases topped **£5,418,303** well up on 2011.

There were almost **15,000** new applications for legal assistance in 2012 – that's one in 30 members contacting the legal department for advice or support.

■ If you, or a member of your family have had an accident ring: **FirstCall Usdaw** – the free accident claim line on – **0800 055 6333**

after that I didn't really have to do anything apart from turn up for medical appointments and my operations and physio sessions, she did it all.

"I'd advise everyone to join the union, there are so many benefits, and I can speak from experience. I tell my colleagues to join and if they have a problem don't hesitate to contact the union for advice and support that's what it's there for."

Being married to an Usdaw member helped put Andrew Walsham back on the road to recovery after he was knocked off his motorbike and injured on his way to work in September 2010.

A union appointed solicitor took up his case and he received a cheque for £7,277 when it was settled late last year.

Andrew was covered with Legal Plus because his wife Viki is a member and the scheme provides legal help for family

members, living at the same address, who are injured in a road traffic accident.

“I was in a bad way after the accident,” said Andrew who works at Leeds University Student Medical Practice.

“Leeds General hospital took care of me. I had x-rays, scans and tests. I returned to the hospital the next morning for surgery on my hand and had screws and a plate fitted. I was off work for a week.

“After the accident Viki, who

works for Morrisons, rang the freephone advice line on her FirstCall Usdaw card. We had a call back the same day saying a local solicitor would be taking up my case.

“The solicitors were brilliant and having them on board and dealing with everything took the weight off us. My advice to members and their families is to pick up the phone and ring FirstCall, it takes very little effort to make that call, but it makes all the difference.”

“ FirstCall made all the difference for us, We'd recommend it





First Call *Usdaw*
0800 055 6333



“My union membership proved invaluable”

When warehouse worker Linda Colbert had an accident at work her sister, a union rep with Tesco, advised her to ring FirstCall Usdaw. Within 24 hours of her call Linda had a union solicitor dealing with her claim and 18 months later received £6,200 in compensation.

“It was great advice,” said Linda, 49, from Northampton, “And such a relief having professional people looking after everything for me. My solicitor was brilliant.”

The accident happened in

January 2011 when Linda worked for Wincanton distribution.

“Within 30 minutes of starting my shift I was sat in A&E in agony,” said Linda. “It all happened so quickly. I was bending down in the warehouse putting an order together when a colleague who was walking backwards fell over me. I heard my ankle snap and I knew I’d done something serious.

“The accident was entered in the accident book and I was taken to hospital. An x-ray

confirmed the break. I was off work for 12 weeks.

“Being off work for so long was a real worry. I have two large dogs that needed walking and a horse to look after. But the union helped me organise this too as well as looking after all the legal issues.

“I can’t begin to tell you how much of a relief it was having that kind of support during what was a very stressful time. My union membership proved invaluable.”

Usdaw is a union of many trades as funeral director **Sue Maclean** can testify after Usdaw supported her in a personal injury claim when she injured her back at work. Her case was settled in October last year and she received £8,500 in compensation.

"I was supported from the minute I rang FirstCall, they took a few details and within ten minutes I had a call back from a solicitor, I couldn't believe it." said Sue from Doncaster.

"The accident happened in December 2009. I was moving a coffin on a trolley when the wheel jammed and the coffin

jolted forward and knocked me over and fell on top of me. Colleagues helped me to my feet.

"At the time I worked for Co-op Funeralcare in Scunthorpe. I contacted my area organiser Garry Gibson for some advice and his support was invaluable. As was the service I had from my solicitor who looked after my accident claim.

"I wouldn't be without my union membership. The union is there for you whenever you need it, expert advice and support 24/7. I now run my own business and I tell all my staff to join the union."



“ Within minutes I had a call back from a solicitor

LEGAL ROUND-UP

Wendy Wiseby

- Age: 52
- Employer: M&S
- Injury: Knee
- Date of accident: Oct 2011
- Case settled: Aug 2012
- Award: £1,250
- Quote: "The union took care of everything."

Judith Chappell

- Age: 71
- Employer: Morrisons
- Injury: Facial injury
- Date of accident: Dec 2010
- Case settled: April 2012
- Award: £2,500
- Quote: "I didn't have to do a thing. It was so easy."

Arthur Fellows

- Age: 44
- Employer: Orridge Stocktaking Solutions
- Injury: Loss of tooth
- Date of accident: Mar 2011
- Case settled: May 2012
- Award: £1,500
- Quote: "Everyone needs the union in this day and age."

Esther Vose

- Age: 78
- Employer: Retired
- Injury: Hip
- Date of accident: June 2011
- Case settled: May 2012
- Award: £1,000
- Quote: "I wouldn't be without my membership."



FirstCall *Usdaw*
0800 055 6333



ARENA WINTER '12

■ In the 2012 winter issue of arena (page 18) it was inaccurately stated that **Steven Honey** worked for Wincanton Distribution when in fact he worked for the Co-operative at the time of his



accident. *arena* apologises for the error.

FirstCall helped to take the pain out of the claim for Boots worker Margaret Proctor after she fractured her hand in an accident at work.

It proved to be the 'best call' she ever made as the union solicitor appointed to look after her settled Margaret's case four years later.

"I had a very professional service all the way," said Margaret, 61, from Gainsborough in Lincolnshire. "I was delighted with the support and the amount of

compensation I received.

"I retired two years ago and I still pay my union membership, I wouldn't be without it. It's peace of mind to know there's always someone at the end of the phone who can offer advice and support at a time when you need it most."

The accident happened in 2008 when Margaret opened the gates at the back of the store. A gust of wind caught one of the gates and it swung back trapping her arm against the fence.

"After the accident I was in and out of work due to complications with my injury, including osteoporosis and carpal tunnel syndrome. I felt very pressurised at work and didn't know what to do so I rang FirstCall.

"It's one of the best calls I've ever made. They took care of everything for me and from then on all the stress and worrying disappeared.

"I tell everyone to join. The union is there to help when you need it most."

Take the pain out of personal injury

Legal
Plus

The Union's Free Accident Claim Line for:

- Accidents any time and any place in the UK.
- Road traffic accidents.
- Work related diseases and conditions.
- Injuries caused by violent crime or armed robbery.
- Family members living with you, if they're injured in a road traffic accident.



What Usdaw members have said...



"I was kept informed every step of the way. It was such a comfort to know I didn't have to worry about a thing."

"Usdaw and its solicitors took care of everything and provided real peace of mind for me and my family."



No forms, no fuss, no delay

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0800 055 6333*

*This is **NOT** a general Usdaw helpline. The call centre will only process applications for assistance in accident, disease and injury claims.

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• get help with your CV and job applications
• get help with your interview
• get help with your job search
• get help with your job retention
• get help with your job progression

TESCO

Rob Upton has been to the University of Life and is keen to help his members learn too

Striver



www.usdaw.org.uk/bearep

Energetic **Rob Upton** is using his life experience to help his colleagues learn new skills and reach their full potential.

The 63 year-old Tesco security guard from Merseyside is now a familiar face in stores in his locality where he spends two days a week as a mobile union learning rep.

"I thought I could bring something to the role and help my colleagues conquer their fears of learning," said Rob, who started work at 15 when he joined the army as an apprentice chef. Since then he's worked in a frozen food factory working his way up from an operative to a manager. He also ran his own business.

"I like people and see myself as a team player. I played football

and cricket for the Army and later as a semi-professional.

"I obtained my football coaching qualifications while coaching junior football at Blackburn's Academy and also spent time in Florida. I was also a sports coach for Wirral council.

"I had to stop coaching after a hip operation in 2005.

"I went back to class and gained further

qualifications and worked as an assessor and internal verifier in sport NVQs and apprenticeships," added Rob, who is married with three children.

"Being a mobile learning rep is one of the most rewarding and satisfying jobs I've ever done. I get on well with store managers too, who now see me as the friendly side of the union, and we're working together and we've made some real progress in promoting the apprenticeship scheme.

"I've had some good role models in my life who have supported me, and this encourages me to try and support other people and help them to reach their goals, just as I've been helped along the way."

**Rob with rep
Annette McCarthy**



Recruit a friend

to win £100!

WIN £100!
ENTER
THE DRAW
NOW



Lisa Ramsey and Frances

Five lucky winners

Five lucky members are celebrating after they each won £100 in the Recruit A Friend competition.

- **Nicola Garrett** from Norwich recruited her colleague at East of England Co-op, **Claire Staniland**.
- **Tracey Guttridge** signed-up Asda workmate **Geraldine Naylor** in Rotherham.
- Mitcham's **Lisa Ramsey** recruited her Sainsbury's colleague **Frances Tompsett**.
- **Karen Duncan** signed-up fellow Tesco worker **Lee Duncan** in Elgin, Morayshire.
- **Amanda Anderson** from One Stop in Clifton, Bedfordshire recruited her colleague **Carol Pearce**.

By doing your bit for the recruitment drive you'll be **building the union**, helping your workmates get the many benefits of **Usdaw membership** and potentially putting some much needed cash into your own pocket.

The prize draw is **open to all members**, and all you have to do is **recruit a friend, relative or colleague** using the form opposite and send it in to **Arena, Prize Draw, Usdaw, Freepost NAT19525, Manchester M14 7DJ**. The first five out of the hat will **win £100** (terms and conditions apply).

The weekly rates are **£2.18 for Scale A** (applicable to full-time and part-time workers) and **£1.36 for Scale C** (applicable to part-time workers only)

Closing date is 5 April 2013



**Please complete and return to
Arena Prize Draw, Usdaw, FREEPOST NAT19525, Manchester M14 7DJ**

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Branch No. _____ Memberships No. _____

Please use BLOCK LETTERS and complete this form as fully as possible.

Please tick the appropriate box

Ms Miss Mrs Mr Female Male

Surname _____

Forename _____

Member's Signature _____ Date _____

Full Postal Address _____

Tel. No. (inc. STD) _____ Postcode _____

Email _____ Mobile No. _____

Age _____ Date of Birth _____

Company Name _____

Workplace Address _____

Location Number _____ Employee No. _____

Occupation _____

NOTICE

Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992

Every member of the Union who does not object to contribute to the separate fund for payments in furtherance of political objects within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, will contribute to that fund. Every member of the Union has the right to be exempt from contributing to it. A form of exemption notice may be obtained by or on behalf of any member either by application at, or by post from, the Central Office or any branch office of the Union. Copies may also be obtained on request from the Certification Office for Trade Union's and Employer's Associations. Such form, when filled in, should be handed or sent to the secretary of the branch to which the member belongs. An exemption notice given within one month after the date on which a new member is admitted to the Union will take effect as from the date on which it is given. Should a notice be given AFTER one month from that date it will operate as from the following 1st January.

Recruiter's Name _____

Recruiter's Membership No. _____

Please tick the appropriate box

Have you been a member of Usdaw before? Yes No

Please tick the appropriate box

Have you been a member of any trade union before? Yes No

If so please give details _____

Union _____

Date Joined _____ Date Left _____

Contribution rate per week _____

Please tick the appropriate box

If you do not select a scale of contributions you will automatically be entered as Scale A in order to take advantage of the full range of benefits

Scale A

Full or Part-time workers Amount per week _____

Scale C

Part-time workers only Amount per week _____

I apply to join Usdaw. As a member of Usdaw I undertake to abide by the rules and regulations of the Union and to pay contributions regularly. I hereby authorise my employers for the time being, or their representatives, to deduct from my salary or wages the amount of contributions payable by me under the Union's Rules, as amended from time to time. I also authorise the deduction of any arrears which may accrue during my employment and agree where appropriate that my employers, or their representatives, shall notify the Union of any future changes in my home address to enable the Union to maintain a register of the names and proper addresses of its members. I give my explicit consent to the processing of data under the Data Protection Act 1998 as specified overleaf.

The responsibility for keeping payments up to date rests with the member.



Feature

Cereal members

Reps take the biscuit at world famous site

Usdaw has had members at the enormous Weetabix Burton Latimer site since 1964 and reps there are leading the field on health and safety best practice, *arena* called in. . . .

If you want to find one of the best organised companies in the UK look no further than the Weetabix factories in Burton Latimer and Corby in Northants.

On-site Usdaw reps look after more than 600 members across three locations home to the world-famous brand and its sister products including Alpen and Ready brek.

Convenor **Tony Beeby** leads a team of 29 safety reps and 17 shop stewards and has been instrumental in turning around the union's presence and

influence on site. "Over the last five or six years we've worked closely with the company to improve health and safety across all departments and put in place procedures specifically tailored to reduce risk and cut the number of accidents," he said. "I think it's fair to say there has been a new approach by both sides and it's working."

Professional approach

The company has invested heavily over the years and that's evident from the modern production processes. The

computer controlled state-of-the-art machinery ensures the perfect end product. The wheat

is delivered at one end of the site, cleaned, cooked in steam ovens, crushed into flakes, then



moulded into the biscuit shape and cooked in industrial ovens running the full length of the factory, it's then sealed, packed and palletised and sent to 80 countries worldwide. The clean modern site, with the sweet aroma permeating the locality, has also seen the union/management relationship modernise too.

"We have an honest and professional arrangement with the company," said branch vice chair **Simon Archer**. "We hold regular safety meetings with the reps, and meet with



(l-r) Tony Beeby, Simon Archer and Rob Shrimpton



The highly automated and highly efficient site

management, with the emphasis on prevention. We hold regular safety surveys and everyone is encouraged to flag up potential problems, in other words safety is what everyone does not just reps or managers. This approach is paying off."

The company is a major employer in the area and staff enjoy good rates of pay, shift and overtime premiums, good holidays with additional service-related days, an occupational pension and subsidised canteen, rest rooms, and staff discount.

"We're busy all-year-round with an extra summer rush for Alpen and a winter boost for Ready brek," added branch chair **Rob Shrimpton**. "These days it's a lot less labour intensive than it was but it's certainly safer and we're all committed to improving the site for everyone's benefit. As a union branch we're heavily involved in Usdaw at local and national conferences and we've won two awards in the last two years so we must be doing something right."

DID YOU KNOW?

- Weetabix was originally started by Australian **Bennison Osbourne** in the 1920s with Australia, New Zealand and South Africa the first countries to enjoy it.
- In **1932** a factory was set up in **Burton Latimer** and, with a slight change in the recipe, the modern Weetabix was born. The company was later owned and run by the **George** family.
- In **1936** the **British and African Cereal Company** changed its name to **Weetabix Ltd**.
- The famous Weetabix is manufactured at the **Burton Latimer** site which: produces **70m** biscuits a week.
- It uses **105,000** tonnes of wheat a year.
- Occupies a **75 acre** site.
- Exports to around **80** countries.
- Weetabix employs **2,000** people around the world with manufacturing sites in the **USA, Canada** and **South Africa**.
- Weetabix is the **UK's favourite cereal** accounting for around seven per cent of total cereal sales with annual sales in **2012** worth more than **£101m**. Other brands include **Ready brek, Alpen, Alpen bars, Weetos, Oatibix** and **Oaty bars**.
- Chinese state-owned company **Bright Foods** bought a **60 per cent** stake in the company in **May** last year from private equity group owners **Lion Capital** who bought the company in **2003** from the **George** family.

Feature

Organising awards

Reps are the winners at Oscars night

Usdaw is the fastest growing union in the UK – thanks to its small army of reps and activists who were honoured in January at the glittering annual awards night

Usdaw reps sparked at the glittering annual awards night held at a top hotel in Manchester in January.

More than 800 nominations were submitted with 56 reps going forward to the national event – known as the Usdaw ‘Oscars’.

General secretary John Hannett was master of ceremonies and was joined by deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis, president Jeff Broome and TUC leader Frances O’Grady.

“Usdaw values its reps very highly and the voluntary work they do day-in-day out,” said John Hannett. “The Organising Awards are now in their eighth year and their sole purpose is to show our reps how appreciated and respected they are.

“Usdaw’s phenomenal success is down to our 10,000-strong army of reps and, while

not all can be at the evening, this is all about saying thank you and congratulations to all of our activists.

“Usdaw is the only union to hold such a prestigious event and I want to say to our members who may be thinking about getting more involved – join us – you will get training – you will be supported – and you will be appreciated.”

New TUC general secretary Frances O’Grady congratulated Usdaw on its campaigning successes.

“Unions generally don’t do enough to celebrate the contribution of their reps and families but tonight does just that. Who needs the Oscars when you’ve got nights like these?

“Usdaw is a modern campaigning union and a union that wins.”





National winners celebrate at the glittering event held in Manchester in January

View the awards night picture gallery at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/gallery

WHAT THE NATIONAL WINNERS SAID:

Jim Young won the Health & Safety Award

"It was brilliant just to be there, to win the national award was a bonus. It was an excellent night."

Joint winners of the Union Learning Rep Award were Scotland's William Rankin and the North West's Carl Sutcliffe.

"It was good to meet other reps from across the UK in such lovely surroundings. I'd certainly recommend it to my fellow reps," said William. "It was fantastic to win, a great feeling but completely unexpected," said Carl Sutcliffe.

Pollie Simpson won the Individual Organising Award

"It's such a friendly event I really enjoyed it. Everyone got on really well, the hotel is lovely and all-in-all it's a wonderful night."

Esther Stewart and Bridget Norwood won the Campaigns Award.

"Around 1,700 workers have lost their jobs at our place so it was a very difficult year. We were over the moon to get the recognition from the union, I just wish it had been under different circumstances," said Esther.

Denise McCusker and Ronnie McGrath picked up the Team Recruitment and Organising Award for all their hard work at the Tayto site in Corby.

"The news of the win has gone down really well at the factory," said machine operator Denise. "Loved the night, didn't expect to win, everyone else sounded better than us," said Ronnie.

Liz Gumble won the Individual Recruitment Award.

"I was really pleased because there are so many excellent nominees it made me feel proud to win. It's definitely encouraging my fellow reps to put their name forward for next year."

Unfortunately **Mika Flynn** winner of the Most Promising New Activist Award and winner of the Equalities Award **Gregory Charles** were unable to attend the event.



Organising awards

ROLL OF HONOUR

National winners in red (division in brackets)

Individual Recruitment Award

Mark Kelly (A), **Liz Gumble (C)**, Andrew Farmer (E), Shirley Savage (F), Kerry Gordon (G), Jacqueline Dalton (H), Jacqueline Barrett (K)

Individual Organising Award

Simon Ayres (A), Sally Tilley (C), **Pollie Simpson (E)**, Eamonn Flynn (F), Lesley Douglas (G), Paul Groves (H), Sue Morris (K)

Union Learning Rep Award

Mike Sanders (A), NFT Learning Reps: London Colney (C), Jon-Paul McEwan (E), Jayne Chapman (F), **William Rankin (G)**, John Palmer (H), **Carl Sutcliffe (K)**

Equalities Rep Award

Raktima Bhadra Sarkar (A), Sarah Langton (C), Nash Kumar (E), Kayleigh Soper (F), Stuart Bunyan (G), **Gregory Charles (H)**, North West Divisional Equalities Forum (K)

Most Promising New Activist Award:

David Burtleson (A), **Mika Flynn (C)**, Adam Beddow (E), Reece Goscinski (F), Allan Wilson (G), Jeyda Besim (H), Carrie Manley (K)

Health and Safety Rep Award

Roger Anderson and Wendy Lucas (A), Mark Putman (C), Robert Shrimpton (E), Paul Cope (F), Allison Black (G), Grant Warren (H), **Jim Young (K)**

Campaigns Award

Janette Parker (A), Eastern-Divisional Political Committee (C), Midlands Divisional Equalities Forum (E), Angie Swift (F), **Esther Stewart and Bridget Norwood (G)**, Carrie Fineran, Barry Jolliffe and Lorraine Jolliffe (H), Jane Rogers (K)

Team Recruitment and Organising Award

Greencore Reps Evercreech (A), Ocado Reps Hatfield (C), **Tayto Reps Corby (E)**, Tesco Extra Reps Seacroft (F), Tesco Reps Carluke (G), DHL Reps Dartford (H), Shop Direct Reps Preston (K)



Winning team.... (l-r) Jeff Broome, Paddy Lillis, Esther Stewart, John Hannett and Frances O'Grady





South Wales & Western division



Eastern division



Midlands division



North Eastern division



Scottish division



Southern division



North West division

arena Letters

Members can have their say right

here via email or post – but keep it brief!



Coalition attack line

We would like to draw your readers' attention to a free online resource that was recently launched by the Institute of Employment Rights. The interactive Coalition timeline provides users with a novel way of tracking the ideological moves of the

Government and is particularly useful for trade union members and trade union education officials.

The timeline already includes over 100 stories and is updated every week. Users can receive emailed updates by joining the IER's mailing list – again completely free. We hope Usdaw's members find it helpful in their continued fight against attacks to workers' rights

Visit: <http://www.ier.org.uk/resources/coalition-timeline>
Sarah Glenister,
Institute of Employment Rights

Driving advice

In the winter issue of *arena* (P11) Know Your rights section your advice to a driver who was concerned about dangerously and illegally long shifts was 'not to let it happen on a regular basis'. I was horrified to read this.

The reply should have been 'do not allow these illegal shifts to happen'. It is the driver who will lose his/her licence and job. The law is the law.

Of course the managers must be held responsible too and made aware of the consequences of illegal shifts, which we all know could be severe. But the point must be made, and backed by the union, that no shifts should be worked over hours.

John Brundrett, via email

Support campaign

I would like to see Usdaw support the Give us a Break campaign by the CAB which wants the Government to set up a body to enforce the legal 28 day holiday requirement.

At the moment, because there is no enforcement body, a considerable number of companies ignore the law knowing that many employees are either unaware of their rights or feel too intimidated to take action especially in the current climate.

Jim Smith, Hants, via email

FirstCall – first class!

In March last year I had an accident at work and used FirstCall, Usdaw's free accident claim line. I just wanted to say how impressed I was with the service and to say a big thank you.

My claim has now been settled and I am very pleased with the outcome. I have never used the service before but will highly recommended it to other members.

Thank you Legal Plus and FirstCall Usdaw.

Janina Barlow, Leeds

HAVE
YOUR
SAY

You can have your say on the arena letters page, please keep it brief and no longer than 100 words

£50 for the best letter



No need to bully

Why is it that some store managers prefer to run their 'little empires' by bullying and intimidating staff instead of treating us courteously. In the long run managers will get more out of their staff if they treat us with dignity.

Demoralised and demotivated staff give as little as possible, are more likely to be off sick or move on if they can. I've noticed since the recession hit, rude and aggressive managers seem to be more commonplace, or is it just me? I know the managers themselves are under pressure but bullying isn't the way forward.

Name & address supplied



Grateful member

Just a quick word about T J Hughes and the compensation for members after the company went bust. I want to say a big thank you to national officer John Gorle and your legal team for fighting for us even though most of the membership had been made redundant. Thanks again, Usdaw rocks!

Keith Bower, Merseyside, via email

Don't forget us!

I am a rep at one of the big produce factories. I am aware you run the Freedom From Fear campaign for members who work in shops but what concerns me is so much effort is being put into supermarkets but I am concerned factory

workers like myself are being missed out.

Factory workers face daily challenges as well. Are you aware of the stress we are under? So how about assisting me in creating a leaflet for factory workers and doing a campaign.

As a rep I have had to deal with issues relating to bullying, lack of resources, issues with communication, and reducing staff levels thus putting pressure on existing staff to meet targets, with longer working hours which cause fatigue and more!

A member, via email

Robbie Segal

Would it be possible for you to print this obituary for Robbie Segal who passed away late last year.

She was an executive council member for 12 years and worked hard for the union. She fought strongly for her beliefs like all Usdaw people do. So could you please tell all the other members of our sad loss.

I remember her well and will miss her. She'll be a great loss to us all.

Jean Lineker, Retired member, Northants, Area Tesco E47

Call for more reps

I am proud of being a union member and think there is a

You can write or email your thoughts to; the editor, arena, Usdaw, 188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M14 6LJ or arena@usdaw.org.uk

Send all photos to: pictures@usdaw.org.uk

place for a union now more than ever as companies put the squeeze ever more on the employee.

What I do feel though as an individual member ie not working for a big chain like Morrisons or Sainsbury's, that we do not get the same level of support from our union.

If I have an issue it's usually answered via email or 'not certain how the ground lies with that issue' and so on and so on.

My nearest rep is over 50 miles away. Why are there not more reps in the Scottish Borders and why are shopworkers (part-time workers) still getting a very rough deal from bosses – can no one stand up to them?

Kevin Currie, via email

Norrie Slater

It is with deep regret that arena has to report the death in February of Eastern divisional officer Norrie Slater, he was 54.

Norrie joined the staff in 1993 and went on to

make a huge contribution to Usdaw both divisionally and nationally. A full obituary will appear in the March/April issue of Network.



Robbie Segal

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Please see website or call for full terms and conditions.

Membership Week

Get active and make the union work for you

Activists in supermarkets, factories, offices and warehouses ensured membership was offered to thousands of workers

The first national **Membership Week** of 2013 saw reps and officials combine to take the union's message to shops, factories, warehouses and offices across the UK in late January.

Activists set up stalls, handed out leaflets and talked to potential members about the benefits Usdaw can deliver. The vast array of union merchandise was on show and used to good effect.

More reps required

General secretary John Hannett was keen to emphasise the importance of the week. "We hold two annual Membership Weeks one in January and the other in June when all area organisers team up with as many reps as possible, and spend everyday on recruitment," he said. "Usdaw has to recruit around

70,000 new members every year just to stand still so we never take our eyes off the membership levels. The industries we organise in have traditionally always had a high turnover of staff for all sorts of reasons so it's vital we look to sign up new employees all the time.

"We launched a new initiative last year to provide a better and more comprehensive support system for all of our reps involving training courses, information and back up from the local area organiser.

"So if there are any members out there who want to get more involved in the union, and make a bigger impact in their workplace, then they can contact Usdaw via the website or call one of the numbers on p47 of this issue of *arena*."



www.usdaw.org.uk/bearep



Morrisons, Stockton



Tesco, Ponders End, London





Tesco, Corstorphine, Edinburgh

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"I don't do much reading as dyslexia makes reading difficult for me but the book was easy to follow and held my interest all the way."

"My mum hasn't read a book for years. She says she can't concentrate long enough - I think they are too daunting for her. I lent her a Quick Read and she devoured it. These books have given her back her confidence - it's just astounding!"



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People like you



Skilled

Communicator...
Tracy Cannard at
her Bristol store

How one rep is dividing her time between supporting local charities and learning

Multi-tasker Tracy Cannard is making sure she is not only seen but also heard both in her store and in her local community.

The 54 year-old, who has worked at Sainsbury's Emersons Green in Bristol for 16 years, plays a vital role in co-ordinating community activities with local charities.

"Each Sainsbury's store has a charity of the year and a public relations ambassador like me who will respond to requests from community projects," said Tracy, who is also the store's rep, health and safety and union learning rep as well as secretary of her local union branch.

"My job and my union work link together really well as both roles aim to help and support people.

"Last year we supported a

centre for young people with disabilities and life-limiting illnesses.

"The services of the charity, which also gives parents vital drop-in and day care support, are in more demand than ever before."

“My first conversation with a deaf customer was wonderful

Tracy also realises charity begins closer to home and organised a deaf awareness course for her colleagues in-store.

"I recently completed a British Sign Language course along with eight other colleagues. I thought it

would be a great idea to help staff

understand the problems faced by some customers who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"Once customers know there is a member of staff in the store who can communicate with them they will be encouraged to ask for help and assistance if they

need it, which will make their whole shopping experience so much better.

"Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the course and got a lot out of it. I remember how I felt when I had my first conversation with a deaf customer, it was a lovely moment, one I'll never forget."



www.usdaw.org.uk/bearep

arena Health

Send your health questions to the

arena team at: arena@usdaw.org.uk



Alarm call

Q Our new manager has given mine and other female staff members phone numbers to the alarm monitoring company who occasionally ring in the early hours asking one of us to attend if one of the store's alarms goes off. Am I entitled to refuse to enter the store on my own as I wouldn't feel safe.

Firstly are you a designated contact for out of hours and is this part of your contract? If you

are a designated 'key holder' then the alarm company will need your phone number, but you should also have been trained on the procedure to follow if you are called out. As part of the training it should have been clear that you are not expected to enter the premises on your own or if you have reason to think it is unsafe.

Discuss this with your manager and try to get a procedure in place to deal with all the eventualities that you are likely to face in this situation. You should also consult your Usdaw rep or area organiser.

example when there is reason to believe that serious crime such as theft is going on. Even then, if it is being used by your employer and not by the police, warning signs should be displayed to say that covert monitoring may be taking place.

Has management discussed this with Usdaw reps and consulted the workforce?

Images and information gathered are subject to data protection legislation and further information is available at: www.ico.gov.uk/



Your health and your safety at work is a vital part of Usdaw's service. For more advice visit:

www.usdaw.org.uk/healthandsafety

Camera shy

Q If my company decides to put CCTV in the office at work, due to theft on the premises, do they have to put up signs in the office to make people aware that it's there.

Yes, they have to inform people that CCTV is in operation and if the content is to be used for disciplinary purposes it should be included in written policies and procedures and appropriate training given.

Covert use of CCTV is only permissible where circumstances justify it – for

Medical trust

Q I have recently been off work ill. However when I returned I found out all of the staff knew my personal medical condition, which upset me and made me angry. I thought the company/manager has an obligation to keep this confidential. What should or can I do?

It does sound as though there has been a breach of medical confidentiality and you should get your Usdaw rep involved. It may be difficult to find out who has divulged this information as someone you know and confided in may have inadvertently let it slip and then it's become the subject of gossip. If however you can identify the source was a



Usdaw has its own health and safety section full of useful information, advice and a reps' forum at: www.usdaw.org.uk/forum

If you have any questions for arena's health experts write to: **the editor, arena, Usdaw, 188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M14 6LJ** or email: arena@usdaw.org.uk

manager with responsibility for securing or processing this information then action should be taken.

Line of sight

Q A colleague of mine has recently had to give up his driving licence because of a deteriorating eye condition. He is also a designated forklift truck driver at work, will he have to give this up as well?

The answer is that it is very likely. HSE guidance points out that workers must be capable of operating the lift truck safely and this includes consideration of medical conditions that could affect their ability. The recommended medical standard for vision is basically the same one that is used by DVLA for car drivers, so, if he has lost his licence to drive, it is likely that he is unsuited for lift truck work. However before making a decision a medical assessment should be done. HSE guidance is available in 'Safety in Working with Lift Trucks' www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg6.pdf

Mental health

Q We hear a lot about the stresses of work and life in general but how can you tell if someone is suffering from the much more serious



“Mental health issues are common

condition of depression or has mental health issues?

It can be very difficult. Sometimes physical symptoms such as back pain can be caused by depression.

It can also be difficult to talk to a colleague about mental health issues even when their behaviour suggests they may need help because people are often embarrassed about these things.

However mental illness and depression are common conditions – around 1 in 6 will have a mental health problem at some time in their lives. They

can also affect people's work because of behaviour, absences, etc. And yet they can be treated and workers can be helped.

Usdaw has recently produced a briefing and a guide for union reps to inform them about mental health in the workplace and to give some tips on 'do's and don'ts' when talking about mental health issues with colleagues: www.usdaw.org.uk/mentalhealth

For mental health charities visit:



www.mind.org.uk/
www.sane.org.uk/
www.youngminds.org.uk/

Members tell Labour MPs their priorities

Workers are bearing the brunt of the Coalition's austerity cuts and Usdaw activists want Labour back in power

Usdaw members took the chance to put their ideas to a team of Labour MPs at the national Political Conference held in Manchester in February and short hours contracts, the bedroom tax and cuts in working tax credits were given top priority.

Activists also raised the campaign for the Living Wage, youth unemployment, food banks and pensions with the chair of the Labour Party's policy review Angela Eagle MP, who was keen to encourage union members to get fully involved in the Party's decision making process.

General secretary **John Hannett** said: "We know we have a lot of work to do to win the trust of, what is, a disillusioned voting public. We are passionate about having an industrial and political voice. We know we can't afford to spend another 18 years in the wilderness like we did in the

'80s and '90s.

"It's clear the Coalition won't listen to us, so we have to have Labour saying what it will do, why it is different and why it will make a difference to working people."

Angela Eagle MP said the Party had to be ready for government in 2015. "There is detailed policy to be worked out and that's why it's important Usdaw members feed in their thoughts. These won't be ignored and they could influence policy directly. Yes we do have to rebuild trust and we have to renew our sense of purpose and deal with the horror of this government."

Activists worked with MPs

in six
separate

groups to discuss; family incomes, rights at work, health and safety, public services, pensions and young workers.

There were also workshop sessions on how to discuss individual issues with potential Labour supporters and put the 'personal' back into politics.

Eastern division's **Tania Lambert** does voluntary work for local charities. "We've seen a massive increase in the number

of people
relying





Members put their points across... (below) John Hannett, Joan Samuels, Angela Eagle MP, Luciana Berger MP, Kate Green MP and Paddy Lillis

MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE

- “This Coalition is arrogant, elitist and incompetent with a strategy that isn’t working. The bankers are still getting bonuses...how can that be fair?” **Kate Green MP**
- “More than 250,000 people have accessed emergency food aid that’s for families both in work and out-of-work...the shame of having to ask for food...a basic human necessity...that’s a shocking indictment of 21st century society.” **Luciana Berger MP**
- “Jobs are vital for people like me who are at University, but I’m worried there won’t be jobs for us when we graduate. People are disillusioned and want a government they can rely on.” **Natalie Irwin**
- “Lone working is a real and genuine concern for Usdaw members. The Coalition’s attack on health and safety is taking us back over 100 years. Politics is about working alongside unions like Usdaw, listening and then taking action.” **Rob Fello MP**



www.yourbritain.org.uk

on our food bank,” she said. “It’s disgraceful that this is happening in our society. If things get any worse it could be me relying on a food bank. I’m very fearful.”

Midlands division’s **Joan Samuels** was incensed by the impact the bedroom tax will have on her family. “My daughter will have to uproot her family because the Coalition

want to cut her housing benefit because she has two

children under ten and lives in a three bedroom house. That means changing schools and all the upheaval that brings. This will affect a lot of people.”

Meanwhile Southern division’s **Kevin Brett** urged members to get involved in local campaigns and make a difference. “We stopped building on land near our homes which was designated an area of outstanding beauty. So it can be

done, but you have to put the time and effort in.”

Deputy general secretary **Paddy Lillis** condemned the Coalition for cutting compensation for innocent victims of crime, closing Remploy factories and cutting benefits from disabled children. “This is a despicable Coalition undoing all the good work Labour did when it was in power,” he said.

“The Tories have their money and networks, while we, the Labour movement, have the people. Hardworking people, who have the will to fight for what is right, just and fair. Individually, we will be sidelined but together, we can make a difference.”



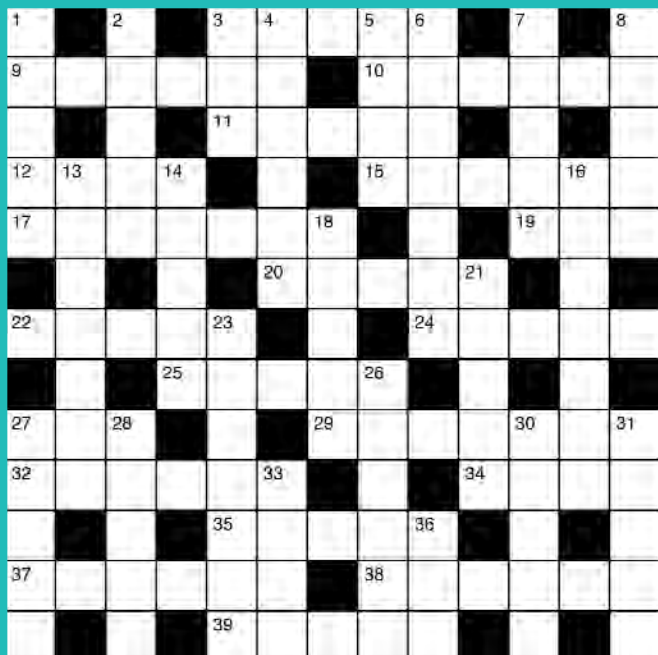
arena Crossword

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(Not open to Usdaw staff)



The winners of the Arena Winter crossword were:

Liz Thorp, NW Co-op Group K115

Luke Harden, Tesco Retail K139

Christine Crockford, East Surrey H32

Have fun

Complete our prize crossword and you could be one of three members to win £50. The first three pulled out of the hat...win!

Send your completed crossword with your details to: the editor, Xword Comp, Arena, Usdaw 188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M14 6LJ.

ACROSS

3. Mournful song (5)
9. American state (6)
10. Attack from hiding (6)
11. Aromatic herb (5)
12. A relatively long time, informally (4)
15. Bursts out (6)
17. Remote (7)
19. To harden (3)
20. Reside (5)
22. Wading bird (5)
24. Single piece of information (5)
25. Cost (5)
27. Meadow (3)
29. Allow (7)
32. Upward slope (6)
34. Undiluted (4)
35. Old Nick? (5)
37. Burrowing rodent (6)
38. Star sign (6)
39. Native American tent (5)

DOWN

1. Wanderer (5)
2. Yields, surrenders (5)
3. Speck (3)
4. Under control (2,4)
5. Match (4)
6. Precious stone (7)
7. Acute contagious viral disease (5)
8. Phantom (5)
13. Laughs nervously (7)
14. Precipitous (5)
16. Mexican spirit (7)
18. Two times (5)
21. Ancient language (5)
23. Passage of goods or people (7)
26. Provoke to fury (6)
27. Big (5)
28. Oak tree fruit (5)
30. Lukewarm (5)
31. Moral principle (5)
33. Story (4)
36. Born as (3)

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E: morden@usdaw.org.uk

Andover
The Priory, 6a Newbury Street,
Hampshire SP10 1DN T: 01264 321460
E: andover@usdaw.org.uk

Your contacts

Always speak to your rep first if you need advice or support.

If you don't have a rep at your workplace contact your local Usdaw office as shown on the map. Alternatively, you can ring our national helpline **0845 6060640*** to be connected to your local office.

*Calls charged at local rate.

The union's head office is:

188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M14 6LJ

Tel: 0161 224 2804/249 2400

email: enquiries@usdaw.org.uk

www.usdaw.org.uk

Let us know if your details change...



www.usdaw.org.uk/update

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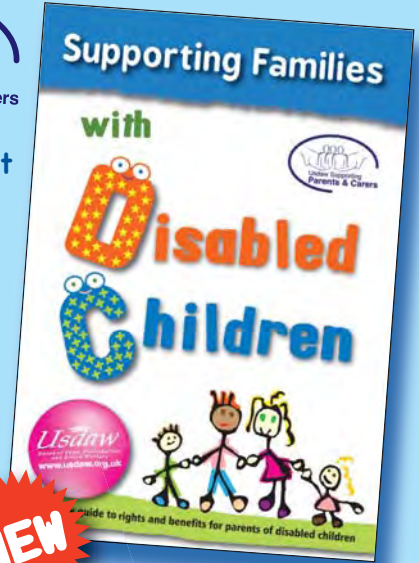
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Supporting Parents and Carers



Supporting Families with Disabled Children (Leaflet 393) is the latest edition to Usdaw's collection of informative publications for parents and carers. It focuses on helping parents of disabled children get the help and support they're entitled to.

Other leaflets available include *Flexible Working (Leaflet 346)*, *Working Carers (Leaflet 343)* and *Time off for Family Emergencies (Leaflet 349)* all of which have been recently updated.



All of the above leaflets can be downloaded at the website address below. Alternatively you can order copies from your local office, contact details on page 47 of Arena.



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