

NETWORK

The bimonthly magazine for Usdaw activists | www.usdaw.org.uk | July/August 2013

CALLING YOUNG ACTIVISTS



Young reps are making a massive impression in workplaces across the UK



■ **Activist-in-depth** **Maria Barber**

Eastern division active rep talks about her life dealing with members' problems
page 19



■ **Problem solving in the** **distribution sector**

Warehouse and distribution members met up to discuss what's going on in their industry
page 08



■ **Pensions in focus at** **annual conference**

Keeping up with changes in the world of pensions was top of the agenda
page 12



Winning team

General secretary John Hannett's comment



Usdaw had a very successful night at the annual TUC Communications Awards in London earlier this month winning two of the seven national awards open to all unions affiliated to the TUC.

Our booklet *Supporting Families with Disabled Children* won first place in the Best One-Off Publication category and was described as 'well-laid out with an engaging design and user-friendly...and is exactly what unions should be doing for their members'.

Our DVD guide to pensions auto-enrolment won joint first place in the Best E-Communications category for its 'clear, innovative and easily understandable way to explain the complex pension issue'.

Elsewhere our website was highly commended for its 'contemporary look and feel, easy navigation and use of shortcuts and space'.

While *Arena* magazine's feature on payday loans was also commended in the Best Feature category for its 'useful guide offering practical help to members – a myth-busting and engaging piece. News you can use'.

Congratulations to staff in the departments at central office who were involved in putting together all of the materials. Once again placing Usdaw at the forefront of modern communications. Usdaw aims to reach out to all members and reps wherever they work and whoever they work for.

Political debate

Reps will have seen the media coverage, much of it biased, on the links between the trade unions and the Labour Party, so it's important our activists and members know exactly where Usdaw stands.

Let's be absolutely crystal clear from the start – the Labour Party is stronger because of its direct link with millions of working people through their trade union. Usdaw will work with the Labour Party to strengthen that link. As the debate unfolds over the coming months we'll be keeping our members fully informed.

Usdaw
Union of Shop, Distributive
and Allied Workers

“ The Labour Party is stronger because of its direct link with millions of working people through their trade union. Usdaw will work with the Labour Party to strengthen that link ”

USDAW

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FLYING HIGH

RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISING

Usdaw's membership crashed through the 430,000 mark in July for the first time since 1983, with activists, area organisers and Academy organising officers making big inroads across all Usdaw sectors.

Pages 22–25



04 In the news

Usdaw hitched a ride on the TUC's anti-austerity bus in the summer to highlight the Coalition's disastrous policies. The union also held a top-level seminar on its Freedom From Fear campaign.

08 Warehouse and distribution conference

Activists met up for a two-day conference in Warrington in June to discuss all of the pressing issues in the sector, which has been undergoing massive restructuring in the past few years.

10 Equality issues in focus

Usdaw delegates played a prominent role at the three national TUC conferences on disability, black workers and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender to ensure fairness and equality.

12 National pensions conference

Delegates were kept up-to-date with all of the changes in the pensions sector and given expert tutorials on how to understand this vital but complex issue.

15 Getting young members on board

Usdaw has one of the highest number of young workers in union membership in the UK and is keen to harness that talent to train and support the reps of tomorrow.

19 Activist-in-depth

Eastern division's Maria Barber, currently on Academy1, talks to *Network* about her role as a rep and how she has changed since getting involved.

20 First national LGBT conference for Usdaw

Activists from across the divisions descended on Manchester in June for the first national conference for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members.

Regulars

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28 Health and safety Keep informed on all the safety issues

30 Letters What reps are saying about work and life

Usdaw and TUC expose austerity on road trip

CAMPAIGN BUS UNCOVERS TRUTH

Usdaw reps and officials went out of their way to support the TUC's Austerity Uncovered bus that visited communities in towns and cities across England to reveal more about the true impact the Government's economic policy is having upon ordinary people and their families.

At each stop, people were invited to talk about their personal experiences of austerity for possible inclusion in a documentary film the TUC has commissioned about the tour.

They were also encouraged to send messages to the Government about how the combination of spending cuts, changes to benefits and falling wages is affecting them as well as their families and friends.

The campaign bus also visited food banks, centres for the unemployed, charities and voluntary organisations that have had their funding cut, companies where jobs are at risk, colleges where students have lost the educational maintenance allowance, hospitals, and a host of other organisations affected by the cuts. More at:

www.austerityuncovered.org



(1,4 & 6) Activists in Reading
 (2) Usdaw backs the bus during its Manchester stop while
 (7) John Hannett joins TUC leader Frances O'Grady in Liverpool.
 (8) Making a statement in Luton
 (3) Divisional officer Joanne Thomas with reps in Sunderland (5) Reps and officials at Corby.
 More information and pictures at: www.usdaw.org.uk/austerity

REMEMBER: YOUR VOTE WILL COUNT

REPS URGED TO REMIND MEMBERS TO VOTE YES TO RETAIN THE UNION'S POLITICAL FUND

Usdaw's army of active reps have a key role to play in ensuring members vote Yes in the forthcoming Political Fund Ballot.

That's the message from general secretary John Hannett. "We need a Yes vote to ensure we can still campaign on all of the big issues of the day," he said.

"Decisions made on pensions, health and safety, workers' rights, to name just a few, are often taken in

parliament and that's why we have to keep our political voice.

"The Coalition doesn't want us to lobby MPs or run effective campaigns because these expose their unfairness and total disregard for working people.

"Voting Yes will keep us at the forefront of the debate."

Ballot papers will go out from 19 August to all members and should be returned before 9 September. More at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/voteyes



Paypacket pain

Total pay in some parts of the UK has shrunk by more than 10 per cent since the start of the downturn in 2007, analysis by the TUC suggests.

The TUC said north-west and south-west England had seen the sharpest cuts – 10.6 per cent and 10.1 per cent respectively. It blamed wages failing to keep pace with inflation, reduced hours and changes in employment, such as more part-time working.

The TUC said it was making fair pay one of its main campaign issues.

Its analysis of official figures suggested that on the eve of the recession, workers across the UK were earning a total of £690bn. Last year the overall pay packet was £638bn – £52bn (7.5 per cent) lower.

The North West saw the sharpest cut in its overall pay packet between 2007 and 2012 – a fall of 10.6 per cent or £7bn last year. The West Midlands and Scotland saw cuts of 9.7 per cent, it said. Wales saw a reduction of 8.1 per cent, Northern Ireland 4.8 per cent and London 3.9 per cent, the smallest cut.

Knowledge gap

Only seven per cent of the British public are aware that 12,000 or more workers die each year from health problems contracted at work, a survey by YouGov has revealed.

It revealed that 36 per cent thought that fewer than 500 deaths were caused by work-related illness each year, while 50 per cent believed the total was less than 1,000 deaths.

However, it does reveal that 59 per cent of the 2,000 adults surveyed recognise that stress is the most common cause of work-related ill health. According to Health and Safety Executive figures, more than 350,000 new cases of work-related stress arise each year.

Respondents believed the most frequently diagnosed health problems that arose in the workplace were cancer (12 per cent), and musculoskeletal disorders (11 per cent). However, statistics show that musculo-skeletal disorders generated around 141,000 new cases annually, over ten times more than cancer. "There is still a massive 'knowledge gap' on health and safety," said Usdaw's Doug Russell. "So there's still plenty of work to do."

IN BRIEF



Discounter adds more stores in July

Budget chain Poundland is to create 300 jobs with 11 new stores in July, further swelling its 450-strong UK high street presence.

More over-65s have to stay in work

Financial necessity, the rising state pension age and decreasing value of pension annuity rates have seen almost a million Britons working past the age of 65.

Figures from the Office of National Statistics show the number of people working beyond retirement age is now growing at more than 10 per cent and could pass the million mark by August.

Vulnerable at risk from Coalition cuts

Millions of disabled, elderly and mentally ill people face further curbs to their benefits after the next general election, charities have warned.

The warning came after the Chancellor outlined further cuts to the welfare system but charities fear it will remove the 'safety net' for the most vulnerable in society.

Recession still hammering retail

More than 2,000 retail jobs look set to be lost after furniture chain Dwell went into receivership with additional fears over the future of fashion chain Internacionale and toy shop Modelzone. Between them the three firms employ more than 2,000 staff.

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IN BRIEF



■ Could you be an award-winning rep?

The nomination process for the 2013 national organising awards is now underway as Usdaw looks to recognise the fantastic work of its reps.

Activists can nominate themselves or a colleague for one of the eight categories before 27 September. You can download the nomination form at: www.usdaw.org.uk/nominate

■ Prejudice against mental health – study

People with mental health issues are still having to face prejudice in the workplace despite campaigns to raise awareness, a new study by the British Journal of Psychiatry has revealed. It also found the recession had worsened the situation.

■ Tesco in talks with Sports Direct

Tesco could be on the verge of leasing space in some of its biggest stores to discount retailer Sports Direct, according to press reports. The move could see a closer relationship between the two with Mike Ashley's sports chain already a tenant of Tesco at some of his stand-alone stores.

New tribunal fees hit workers' rights

The Coalition's latest attack on workers' rights will come into force on 29 July when tribunal fees are introduced, further restricting employees access to justice.

The full details surrounding the introduction were still unclear as *Network* went to press although general secretary John Hannett was keen to reassure reps and members that Usdaw will ensure its members are fully protected.

"Our members can rest assured that Usdaw will guide

£250

The cost of a Level 2 issue fee

£950

The hearing fee cost

our members through the process should they need to take a case all the way to tribunal. Some members may qualify for 'remission' and may not have to pay all or any of the fees and Usdaw will put in place systems to reflect this.

"The Coalition's chaotic approach to industrial relations is reflected by the lack of clarity on the tribunal fees issue – just another badly thought out policy whose aim is clearly to restrict workers' rights and allow bad employers to flourish.

"As the issue becomes clearer we will be informing our reps and members of exactly how the union is going to deal with the administrative issues around it. Look out for further information from the union over the coming weeks."

Tribunals now busier than ever

There has been a significant increase in the number of claims brought to Employment Tribunals for failure to inform and consult in a redundancy situation, figures released in June have revealed

The Tribunals Service Statistics, which cover the period from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013, also show that Employment Tribunals received a total 191,541 claims during 2012/13, a three per cent

increase on the previous 12 months.

Looking at the figures for other claims, it reveals that the number of claims received for sex discrimination, unfair dismissal and for reasons relating to the Working Time Directive also all increased.

When comparing figures from 2011/2012 with 2012 / 2013, it showed:

■ for failure to inform and consult in a redundancy

situation – an increase from 7,984 to 11,075;

■ under the Working Time Directive – an increase from 94,697 to 99,627; and

■ for sex discrimination – an increase from 10,783 to 18,814. Despite these increases however, age discrimination claims fell by 24 per cent, while Tribunal claims relating to equal pay fell by 18 per cent.

More at: www.gov.uk/

Reps branch out at five-day course

Understanding how the branch system works and how it interacts at divisional and national level was on the agenda for branch secretaries at the tailor-made five-day residential course held in Warrington in June.

The lay officials also heard from the general secretary and the deputy general secretary who took part in a Q&A session.

Activists also met up with a number of central office departmental officials who gave a comprehensive overview of how Usdaw operates.



For more on training opportunities visit: www.usdaw.org.uk/education

CUTTING RISK AT SAFETY SEMINAR

UNITED FRONT ON SAFETY

A comprehensive overview of staff safety was top of the agenda when Usdaw hosted its fourth Freedom from Fear summit in June bringing together employers, trade groups, politicians, the police and union officials to share good practice and identify areas for further work.

General secretary John Hannett said: "While reported incidents have fallen in the last ten years there remains high levels of abuse and problems with under-reporting."

The meeting heard from police and crime commissioner for Greater Manchester Tony Lloyd, and shadow minister for policing David Hanson MP. The meeting also considered the joint guidance from Usdaw and



Safety in mind... (l-r) David Hanson MP, the BRC's Catherine Bowen, John Hannett and health and safety officer Doug Russell

the British Retail Consortium (BRC) and the work the Co-op Group is doing to improve safety and pilot stronger links with the police.

John Hannett added: "A major topic of discussion was the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill. There was strong support for the need to improve on a

clause on 'low value shop-lifting', which would downgrade the seriousness of shop theft and leave vulnerable workers more exposed.

"I was encouraged to see the commitment we all share to make sure that all members in all shops have decent standards of protection."

IN BRIEF

Online threat set to cull UK high street



Increasing numbers of online shoppers could see up to a fifth of high street stores close over the next five years, a new report has warned.

Coupled with rising costs and tighter consumer spending, the Centre For Retail Research says more than 60,000 stores could close. It said the vacancy rate across the UK has almost trebled from 5.4 per cent in 2008 to 14.1 per cent in March this year. It also estimates the number of people ordering food online will rise to 10 per cent by 2018.

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The Co-operative Funeralcare is a trading name of Funeral Services Ltd, part of Co-operative Group Limited.

CONFERENCE CALL FO

The annual warehouse and distribution conference was held in June with more than 30 activists from



Paddy Lillis



Tony Dale

The economic recession, the Coalition's attack on workers' rights and the relentless drive by companies to cut costs has left reps in the warehouse and distribution sector facing a 'toxic mix', deputy general secretary **Paddy Lillis** told conference.

"We have to stand up and be counted. The economy isn't going to get any better any time soon and we know companies are using the recession to attack your terms and conditions," he said.

"All the big companies – Tesco, Sainsbury, the Co-op, Morrisons – whether they work in-house or contract out to third-party operators have been closing and opening depots, restructuring their networks and using more and more agency workers.

"All of this has put our reps and their members – the core workforce – under huge

pressure. It's clear agency workers are being exploited and in turn so is the core workforce and as trade unionists we owe it to ourselves and other workers to make sure no worker is exploited. It's our job to identify and solve these types of problems.

"We know the 'dotcom' sector is having a big impact and this looks likely to increase with more home deliveries and the increase in 'dark' stores (used for picking only). There is an on-going debate about whether these 'stores' should be classed as distribution or retail.

"We are witnessing the shift to more depots being moved to be near rail hubs. And we are all aware of the increasing use of technology to drive productivity and put further pressure on picking rates. We have a big role to play in getting the balance right for all of our members.

"Our reps – people like you – are doing a fantastic job under the most severe of circumstances. I'm proud of the work done by activists to protect our members.

"That's why we launched our new strategy last year to offer more support to our reps, especially new ones, through quicker and better training and a more structured support network via the local area organiser.

"Early indications show that this new approach is working but we still have lots to do. We want our reps to be the best trained, the most motivated and the most supported reps in the trade union movement."

Employment rights under attack

Deputy head of research **Tony Dale** led a workshop session on how the Coalition is cutting workers' rights and what it plans to do in the future. Changes so far include:



FOR ACTIVE REPS

across the divisions meeting up to address all the important issues

- Workers employed after the 6 April 2012 now have to have two years' service before they can appeal to a tribunal for unfair dismissal. Under Labour the qualifying period was one year.
- Workers taking a claim to a tribunal will have to pay a fee after 29 July 2013. Fees vary but start at £390 for a Level 1 Claim to £1,200 for a Level 2 Claim, with appeals costing £1,600.
- The minimum period for consultation with trade unions over large scale redundancies has been cut from 90 to 45 days as of the 6 April 2013.
- The Coalition is aiming to introduce Settlement Agreements which will give employers the opportunity to pay off workers if the

individual gives up their right to go to a tribunal. Such an 'offer' even if it was not accepted could not be used in evidence at a subsequent tribunal.

- The maximum award a tribunal can offer will be capped to a maximum of one year's salary replacing the current maximum pay out of £72,000. Low paid workers will be hardest hit by this change. Discrimination cases will be unaffected by this change.

"The Coalition talks about reducing red tape and bureaucracy but what it really is doing is attacking workers' rights and making it easier for employers to sack people. This won't kick start the economy and it won't create one single job," added Tony.

"Other changes being considered include offering workers shares to give up their employment rights; and reducing the protection offered by the Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment (TUPE) when companies are taken over; stricter rules on strike ballots.

"Some Tories want to withdraw from the EU which will put many more rights at risk on holidays and equal rights for agency and part-time workers."

Delegates' concerns included...

- Increased use of agency workers
- Pressure on picking rates
- Technology/monitoring
- Staff cuts and redundancies
- Health and safety
- Possible Christmas Day working

Nikki Stokes



Warehouse operative Nikki Stokes has seen it all during her 23 years in the sector, 20 of those as a rep initially for Ipswich Co-op then East of England Co-op.

"It's very different now, far more automation, pressure on terms and conditions, and redundancies – the night shift was finished two years ago at our place," she said.

"It's up to us to stand up for our rights and ensure the agreements are followed. We have a team of four reps at our Ipswich site and membership is around 75 per cent.

"I've been to this conference a few times now and it allows me to network with other reps and get vital information and advice from them.

"It's surprising how much you learn just by talking and listening to your colleagues from other companies. All of these little snippets of information all add up and they're very useful. It's a very worthwhile conference."



ACTION STATIONS

Usdaw activists flock to London to fly the union's flag at top TUC equalities conferences



Delegates at the TUC LGBT Conference

Contact equalities ■ 0161 224 2804 ■ equalities@usdaw.org.uk ■ www.usdaw.org.uk/equalities

Active reps took Usdaw's campaign for equality and fairness in the workplace and society to three high profile national TUC conferences held recently in London.

Members from the union's equality forums made a big impression at the **Black Workers, Disabled Workers and LGBT Conferences** helping to cement the union's campaigning work with other unions and beyond.

Not surprisingly organising against the Coalition's cuts to benefits, services and employment rights topped the agenda of all three conferences. At the TUC LGBT event, **Rachel Goodwin**, a rep from Kent, spoke about the closure of a local LGBT youth

service near her home and the impact this has had on the young people who were travelling up to 30 miles to attend the club's social activities and events.

Maureen Williams, a long-serving activist with Usdaw, raised the issue, at the TUC Black Workers Conference, of the need for unions to take positive steps to address the under-involvement of black women. She explained that assumptions about black and, in particular, Asian women are still getting in the way of women becoming more involved in their unions.

Maureen welcomed the action Usdaw is taking to address this. She said: "Little practical things can make a big difference. For example, earlier this year Usdaw

dedicated a two-page feature in arena to four Asian women reps that I know helped to inspire others to get involved. If you look at the union and see yourself represented in it, then you realise you do belong and it helps you to feel more confident about becoming more active."

At the TUC Disabled Workers Conference, **Sarah Langton** an activist from Norwich spoke about the pressures faced by parents of disabled children. She said: "Things are more difficult than ever for parents of disabled children. The cost of living is rising at the same time as parents are being hit with cuts to essential services for disabled children. Money worries and uncertainty over benefits is causing a great deal

of anxiety. My family has been hit by the bedroom tax because I have two boys and three bedrooms. What the Government has failed to understand is that one of my sons is disabled. He has complex neurological problems including behavioural and learning difficulties and he simply cannot share with his older brother.

"I'm delighted Usdaw is taking these issues up on behalf of members. It makes me proud to be a member."

Issues of stress and anxiety were also raised by Usdaw at the TUC LGBT Conference by a proposition on 'Supporting LGBT members with mental health problems'.

Kath Hellewell an activist from the North East explained that: "Research shows that since the onset of the recession there has been a surge in anxiety, stress and depression. Although one in four of us is at risk of developing a mental health problem, LGBT workers are more at risk than the population at large. This isn't because we are LGBT, but because we are more likely to be bullied and harassed both inside and outside of work.

"It's important unions come together and talk about mental health because even now in the 21st century the stigma and shame that surrounds this issue stops people from seeking and receiving help."



Delegates at the TUC Black Workers Conference and the TUC Disabled Workers Conference

ACADEMY CLASS OF 2013

Fifty-five activists are halfway through the busiest six months of their lives with Academy1

Signing up new members and supporting reps in workplaces across the country is the task facing this year's Academy1 intake.

This year has seen more reps than ever enrolled on to the union's unique Academy structure – now in to its eleventh year.

Deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis is delighted with its progress. "Both Academy 1&2 have helped individual reps grow in confidence, acquire new skills and help grow the union.

"The Academies are working on a number of levels; expert training for active reps, more members in

the workplace and more Academy graduates making the step up to the organising staff when vacancies occur.

"I've seen the change in many reps who have come through the Academy and gone back into their workplaces to make an even bigger contribution to the work we all do.

"I'm sure this year's Academy team will make a massive contribution to the union and develop their skills during this hectic six month period.

"I'd recommend the Academy to all of our reps. If you're interested, start thinking now about applying for next year."

F Division



North Eastern division (l-r back row) Richard Hebson, Jackie Gray, Saima Noreen and Kayleigh Soper (l-r front) Sharon Day, Jayne Knight, and Amanda Naylor

H Division



Southern division (l-r) Richard Marson, Jean Gale, Neil Bennett, Chhaya Patel, Rachel Goodwin, James Smith, Maria Hughes, Laurence Fortt and Jackie Dalton

A Division



South Wales and Western division (l-r) Tracy Grubb, Trevor Hunt, Peter Robson, Peter Bond, Ernest Mainza, Margaret Hart and Monish Kelly

C Division



Eastern division (l-r) Sally Payne, Laura Mitchelhill, Jenny Smith, Richard Bates, Jane Pakes, Tony Budden, Maria Barber, Gary Renwick and Eddie Beaufoy

G Division



Scottish division (l-r) Lisa Willis, Don Paterson, Chris Gilmore, Robert Gordon, Barbara Buchanan, Andy Kelly and Heather Kirk

K Division



North West division (l-r standing) Jamie Ettington-Crane, Dianna Sedgwick, Ekuwa Baiden, Sue Morris, Carole Jones, Angela Lonigro, Carrie Manley, Diane Williams and Lee Challenger (l-r kneeling) Stephen McLaughlin, Chris Winwood, Cherise Williams and Lorraine Haves

PENSIONS – GETTING TH

Delegates to the 9th National Pensions Conference heard expert speakers outline the recent develop

The last 12 months have been the most important for workplace pensions in years, pensions officer Debra Blow told delegates to the ninth annual pensions conference.

“For the first time ever UK employers have a duty to start automatically enrolling workers into a pension scheme and make compulsory contributions towards workers’ pension savings.

“Having access to adequate pensions is not just an issue of importance to people who are about to retire – it is an issue which affects all workers – no matter what age you are or where you work. Let’s face it – pensions are deferred pay and while many of our members are in occupational pension schemes many are not. That’s why Auto-Enrolment (AE) is so important.

“AE is capturing many members who never had the opportunity to save before and will give around 10 million workers an automatic right to have access to a workplace pension. It’s not perfect but it’s a very important start.

“The opt-out rate is currently around ten per cent which is far better than anyone could have anticipated. We appreciate the difficulties faced by low paid workers but we believe AE works and offers our members the chance of providing a reasonable pension in retirement.

“However, AE has led to some unwelcome consequences with some companies ‘levelling down’ their pension provision by reducing the contributions they pay to existing schemes. Some final salary schemes have been closed or are under



“ Usdaw remains committed to campaigning for decent occupational pension schemes for all workers ”

threat of closure.

“Nevertheless Usdaw remains committed to campaigning for decent occupational pension schemes for all workers – affordable and with employer contributions – to ensure a decent standard of living in retirement.”

Hilary Salt

Pensions expert Hilary Salt from First Actuarial gave an overview of how the drift away from defined benefit (DB) schemes to defined

contribution (DC) schemes had led to a number of clear and some less obvious disadvantages for the UK’s workforce.

“We know DC schemes put the risks of pension saving onto the individual unlike the DB schemes,” she said. “Employers contributions are usually less generous too but there are other drawbacks to the move to DC schemes.

“For example when an employee retires he/she has to buy an annuity to give them a regular monthly income. However with 97 per cent of people buying a fixed pension, in times of high inflation, the value decreases pretty quickly. There are often no partner benefits or ill-health payments attached either.

“DB schemes allow some member involvement via the trustees, they are also more

efficient for society enabling longer term investment strategies, have lower costs, and usually have an inflationary element built in.

“Pensions are important and good ones help employers attract and retain staff so the last 10 years have been the toughest faced by the industry.

“However, there is some light at the end of the pensions tunnel with the emergence of defined ambition (DA) schemes, which act as a sort of mid-point between DB and DC schemes.”

Gregg McClymont MP

Workers and employers have to address the UK savings gap and Labour’s Auto-Enrolment initiative begins to do just that, shadow pensions minister Gregg McClymont MP told delegates.

THE RIGHT BALANCE

ments in the sector and explain this complex subject clearly and concisely



Debra Blow

Peter Hartt

Hilary Salt

Gregg McClymont MP

“We have to ensure employees are getting a good deal,” he said. “That involves making sure that charges and costs are kept to a minimum and that workers aren’t penalised when moving jobs. Yes it’s a complicated sector but the schemes themselves should be relatively easy to understand for workers.

“Labour wants to see more occupational pension schemes. We also want to see more member-nominated trustees. There should also be a legal obligation on companies to put scheme members’ interests first. “A big factor in pensions is the size of the pot and that’s why it may be beneficial to have two or three

aggregators to pool the resources, keep fees to a minimum, and to insist on quality control of these pension funds.”
 ■ For more from Gregg McClymont on pensions see his Fabian pamphlet: www.fabians.org.uk/publications/pensions-at-work-that-work/

Why are pensions important?

- People are living longer but are saving less for their retirement.
- The State Pension is no longer recognised as providing an adequate income in retirement.
- In 2005 there were four workers supporting every one pensioner, however by 2050, it is anticipated that there will only be two workers supporting each pensioner.

Beware pension liberation

Reps were reminded to warn members of the dangers of so-called pension liberation schemes. This involves transferring your pension, before you reach 55, to another company with the promise of a lump sum. However, such schemes are usually fraudulent and could result in workers seeing very little of their pension fund and being hit by massive tax penalties – something the pension liberation companies fail to mention.

What can reps do?

- Run a Pensions Awareness Day in your workplace.
- You don’t have to be an expert, the pensions section will provide all of the materials you’ll need.
- Encourage members to visit the pensions section of the Usdaw website at: www.usdaw.org.uk/pensions

Expert tuition...

Expert tuition was also on offer on Pension Governance and making defined contribution schemes better from Andy Thompson of First Actuarial. Trustees, and reps interested in becoming a trustee, were also given expert advice by Patrick Kennedy of Gateley’s. Meanwhile, Neil Wesson of Lighthouse Financial Services outlined what his company can offer members as part of the new affinity partner tie up with Usdaw.



From left to right: Patrick Kennedy, Neil Wesson and Andy Thompson



YOUR MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Find out now if your union membership can save you money. For more information visit: www.usdaw.org.uk/offers

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*Our lines are open 8am-8pm weekdays and 9am-12noon Saturdays. Calls may be recorded and/or monitored. Calls from landline phones are free however mobile providers may charge. Britannia is the trading name of the Co-operative Bank plc. Registered office: PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP. Registered in England and Wales No. 990337. YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE

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0800 093 2995

or send a SAE for an application form to:

The Tax Refund Service, Grosvenor House, St Thomas Place,
Stockport, SK1 3TZ

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To enquire online visit:

www.usdawdrive.co.uk

or call

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Complimentary initial financial planning consultation for Usdaw members.

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About to retire? You could get more retirement income by using Lighthouse Financial Advice's annuity service go to www.lighthousefa.co.uk/usdaw

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10 TIPS FOR YOUNG REPS

Usdaw has around 88,000 members aged under 27 and more than 1,100 young reps. You could help Usdaw recruit even more young reps and workers. Take a look at our top ten tips...



1 SPEAK UP

Firstly, it's important to remember that you're not on your own as an Usdaw rep and you don't need to know everything. Usdaw has many reps and area organisers in your division who will support you in your role as a rep. If you have any problems or need advice contact your local Usdaw office and you will be put in touch with a rep near you or an area organiser.

2 GET CONNECTED

Usdaw has a great website with a very informative and up-to-date section for young workers. You can download the latest leaflets, watch video interviews with other young reps, flick through photos from recent events and read all about what other young activists are doing across the country.

All the information you need is in one convenient place. Head to: www.usdaw.org.uk/youth

3 CREATE A LIBRARY

Usdaw produces lots of informative leaflets to help you in your role as rep these can all be ordered or downloaded from the Usdaw website.

In particular, Usdaw has recently produced two fantastic new leaflets for young workers. *Usdaw Supporting Young Workers* (Leaflet 396) is great for recruiting young workers. It outlines your minimum rights and how Usdaw can help you. Likewise *Young Workers Know Your Rights* (Leaflet 397) is a must have, pocket sized, leaflet for all young members. It features potential problems young workers face and explains their rights if these problems escalate. Order copies of both these leaflets from your local Usdaw office or download PDFs from: www.usdaw.org.uk/youth



TRAINING

4 TIME TO TRAIN

Training courses are a fantastic way to learn new skills and make you feel more confident in your role as a rep. Usdaw's education department offers a great range of courses from introductory two/three days to week long summer schools. Training courses are also a great way to meet like-minded reps and develop a network of friends so you can help each other out in the future. To find out about the training courses on offer visit: www.usdaw.org.uk/training

There's no deadline so you can complete it in your own time and at your own pace. For more information and to apply visit: www.usdaw.org.uk/homestudy

6 TAKE NOTICE

Noticeboards are a great way to let your members and potential members know what's going on in your workplace. It's the perfect place to advertise Usdaw's latest leaflets and display posters showing the benefits of being an Usdaw member. You might also want to display the pull-out poster featured in this issue of *Network* as it's been produced with young workers in mind. Union noticeboards are also a good place for letting your members know how they can get in touch with you if they have a problem at work. If you haven't got a union noticeboard speak to your manager and see if you can be allocated some space. For ideas for your noticeboard visit the Usdaw website.

5 LEARN FROM HOME

Try the Usdaw Home Study course. If you're a new rep and haven't already completed the home study then it's thoroughly recommended. It's a good way to find out more about Usdaw and how it works and you'll also gain an accredited qualification in the process.



www.usdaw.org.uk/youth

USDAAW FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AT WORK

Being a member of Usdaw means...

- You will be protected at work.
- You'll have access to all the information you need on your rights at work.
- You'll get free legal advice if you have an accident – wherever that happens.
- You'll also get money off a range of services including theme parks and restaurants.

For more information about your rights at work speak to your Usdaw rep or contact your local Usdaw office on **0845 60 60 640***

Download:

- *Usdaw Supporting Young Workers (Leaflet 396)*
- *Young Workers Know Your Rights (Leaflet 397)*

at: www.usdaw.org.uk/youth

HOW DO I JOIN?

Joining Usdaw is simple. Just speak to your Usdaw rep, contact your local Usdaw office on **0845 60 60 640*** scan the QR code opposite** or visit www.usdaw.org.uk/join



WWW.USDAW.ORG.UK/YOUTH

*calls charged at local rate

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



RESOURCES

9 YOUTH WEEKEND

The Usdaw youth weekend is an annual event that takes place at Usdaw's Warrington Office in November. It's an opportunity to meet up with other young reps from across the country and discuss issues that young members are facing in the workplace.

Young reps who have attended the National Youth Weekend highly recommend it and come back year after year. It's another good networking event and you might even meet friends for life. To hear testimonials and see pictures from previous youth weekends visit:

www.usdaw.org.uk/youth

10 GET INVOLVED

There are lots of different ways to get more involved with Usdaw. You might like to become part of your divisional youth committee and get involved with events across your region and help other young reps. If this interests you then contact your youth co-ordinator. Details can be found opposite and at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/youth

7 GET CAMPAIGNING

Run a campaign day in your workplace. It's a good way to get the attention of non-members and you'll have the opportunity to speak to people you might not usually get the chance to see.

Lots of leaflets are essential for campaigning and always have a supply of membership forms to sign people up.

Ask other reps or members in your workplace to help you out for an hour or so and don't forget to get permission from your manager. For more information about

Usdaw's campaigns and running your own campaign day visit:
www.usdaw.org.uk/campaigns

8 BRANCH MEETINGS

Branch meetings and divisional conferences are useful places to find out about current issues facing members and events happening in your area. They're also a good place to meet other reps who live close by and give you the chance to build up a support network.

To find out when and where these meetings take place contact your local office.

FRIENDS



Divisional Youth Committee Co-ordinators

South Wales and Western Division
Milan Pavlik
Bristol Office
01176 916 061
kegworth@usdaw.org.uk

Eastern Division
Jamie Gull
London Office
0207 323 5550
london@usdaw.org.uk

Midlands Division
Jan Hind
Kegworth Office
02476 741 232
kegworth@usdaw.org.uk

North Eastern Division
Garry Gibson
Leeds Office
0113 232 1320
leeds@usdaw.org.uk

Scottish Division
Stewart Forrest
Glasgow Office
0141 427 6561
glasgow@usdaw.org.uk

Southern Division
Danny Knowles
Andover Office
01264 321 460
andover@usdaw.org.uk

North West Division
Jo-Anne Welbourne
Warrington Office
01925 578 050
warrington@usdaw.org.uk

CALLING YOUNG REPS...

Network would like to hear from young reps about their experiences. What do you enjoy most about being a rep? Would you recommend it? Do you have any tips for new reps? Email now and tell your story
network@usdaw.org.uk

For more information...

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to be taken to the youth website*

www.usdaw.org.uk/youth



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





ACTIVIST IN-DEPTH

Eastern division's **Maria Barber** answers our questions on her experiences as a rep

“Everything happens for a reason so I don't dwell on what could have been, I move forward and make a difference”

FACT FILE & TRIVIA

FAST FACTS

- **Employer** Tesco (retail)
- **Occupation** Customer assistant
- **Age** 37
- **Lives** March, Cambridgeshire
- **Usdaw Activist** Since May 2010
- **Union positions** Health and safety rep, branch secretary, Academy1 organiser and divisional equalities forum member

MY FAVOURITE...

- **Music...** Bon Jovi
- **Book...** Harry Potter series
- **TV...** Game of Thrones
- **The last film I saw...** Iron Man 3
- **I spend my spare time...** taking my two boys out to parks, especially skate parks
- **The best moment of my life so far...** Learning to dive in the red sea
- **If your house is burning down what do you save...** The cat



Network is looking for the next Activist in-Depth, email us if you'd like to tell your story

 network@usdaw.org.uk

Why did you become a rep?

I joined Usdaw at a Tesco induction. Although it was a new store the existing reps were already established from the old store and they were very active and had a great presence. I wanted to get involved because I saw the good that they did and I wanted to support my fellow workers.

Best thing about being a rep?

The great feeling of knowing that you can help people and that they put their trust in you. Even if you're only there to listen to someone's concerns, it all makes a difference. I love recruiting too, talking to people who are unaware of what we do and how we can help.

...and downsides?

That there are still people in various workplaces that don't even know what unions are about, and when I tell them they wish they had known sooner as they needed the support.

Highlight of being a rep so far?

My best moment so far was receiving the letter to say I had been accepted onto Academy1.

Have you been on any union training courses?

I have completed the shop steward and health and safety courses. They gave me the knowledge I needed back in the workplace. I have also attended Summer School 1&2 at Wortley Hall in Sheffield. They improved my confidence to be able to stand up and talk in front of a group of people, and also taught me that everyone's opinion matters.

Has being active changed you as a person?

Confidence hasn't been much of a problem for me, but having the correct knowledge makes a difference. My organisational skills have improved due to juggling being a rep, working and taking care of my two boys.

What did you think of ADM?

ADM was fantastic. I was a first time delegate and it was great to see how our union is run. The fringe meetings at lunchtime were a good source of information. I helped with the equalities stand and spoke to many reps about the equalities forum.

What are important issues for your members at present?

Everyone seems to be suffering financially, the changes to benefits last year means that some members need to have more contracted hours, but companies are wanting to cut hours. Also temporary contracts, people want to know they have a job, not work hard for 12 weeks to be told there's no permanent job at the end of it.

Which news items have caught your attention recently?

Harlow distribution centre, Usdaw are fighting for the members. Also the current discussions surrounding the large amount of tax avoidance by companies that do business in the UK. It's something that should be challenged and I don't feel the current Government are doing enough to tackle the problem.

Any advice for a member thinking about being a rep?

Go for it! There's plenty of training to give you the knowledge you need and there's always other reps to support you as well as your area organiser. It gives you lots of opportunities to learn and grow as an individual.

Is there anything you would change about your life so far?

No, everything happens for a reason so I don't dwell on what could have been, I move forward and make a difference.

What's next for you?

At the moment, completing Academy1 to the best of my ability, then hopefully applying for Academy2 next year.

PRIDE IN ALL MEMBERS

The first national Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) conference was held in Manchester in June



John Hannett

Equality issues are an important part of the union's agenda and LGBT members and reps have a key role to play in promoting it, general secretary John Hannett told delegates.

"I'm delighted to see that so many of you were at this year's ADM, with many of you making speeches from the rostrum – that's really encouraging.

"We want to work with our LGBT reps to ensure they are treated equally – not to seek favours but fairness – both at work and in society. Yes we have come a long way with legislation and examples of good practice in a number of the big companies but there is still some way to go.

"We know we have to

educate those who still think it's acceptable to be homophobic but I want to reassure delegates that you are pushing at an open door when it comes to promoting equality in Usdaw."

Paddy Lillis

Getting more of our LGBT members into the mainstream of what the union does is the most important issue for our equalities agenda, deputy general secretary Paddy Lillis told delegates.

"This national conference is an historic moment but we want to get to a situation where we don't need one," he said. "We want LGBT members and reps to be more visible, more active, and part and parcel of what we do. We want the same for our black and

Paddy Lillis



John Hannett



Jeff Broome



Asian members. We achieved it with our women members who no longer have a separate conference and now make up at least 50 per cent of delegates at most Usdaw events.

"We want an inclusive union just like we want an inclusive society. We've some way to go and people in this room know what discrimination is. You are in the vanguard, brave enough to put your heads above the parapet and committed enough to get involved in the equalities agenda.

"We need more people like you to come forward and I'm sure your involvement and your experience will encourage others to get involved."

Jeff Broome

This conference is all about listening to activists, evaluating how far we've progressed and how far we need to go, president Jeff Broome told delegates.

"Half of the delegates here were at their first Usdaw event, so as a stepping stone to getting more people active that's very promising.

"I understand the nervousness and lack of confidence among first time delegates and that's why these targeted events are so useful. Everyone at the conference can move the union forward and help Usdaw put an end to discrimination against the LGBT community."

In workshop discussions reps came up with the following ideas to promote and raise the profile of LGBT issues....

- Become a rep...get trained...get active...stand for elections....divisional council...executive council...go to ADM
- Contact your divisional equality forum
- Use all union events
- Use social media networks
- Get involved with the LGBT section of the Labour Party
- Join your local Pride event
- Put Usdaw LGBT leaflets on workplace noticeboards
- Liaise/communicate with the arena and Network team

Video

A training DVD on how workplace 'banter' can spill over into offensive and discriminatory abuse was shown and was well received by delegates.

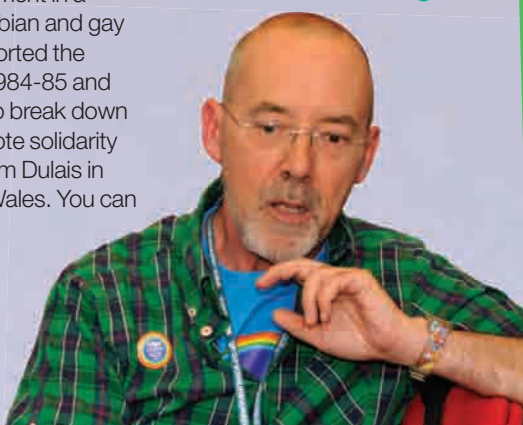
"Offensive 'banter' can be very hurtful and can isolate individuals," said Alberto Ruiz Ruiz. "The DVD was a very interesting exercise and showed scenarios many of us were familiar with."

Equalities officer Ruth Cross added: "This DVD is available in the divisions via the training officers and I'm sure more reps will get to see it."

Mike Jackson

Lifelong gay activist Mike Jackson told the fascinating story of his involvement in a London-based lesbian and gay group which supported the Miners' Strike of 1984-85 and how they helped to break down barriers and promote solidarity with the miners from Dulais in Swansea, South Wales. You can watch the 20 minute video –

All Out! Dancing in Dulais at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHJhbwEcgrA



In conversation with... ...Chris Field

"I've been a rep for five years and became active – the best decision I've ever made – via the lifelong learning agenda. I left school with no qualifications but I have now, and having started as a union learning rep I'm now deputy convenor at my Shop Direct site.

"The best thing about being active is you're always learning something new. It's great to see more members getting active and I hope this weekend inspires

non-active members to get more involved locally and nationally, whether that's in the youth section, politics, equalities, or lifelong learning."



...Graham Newport

"I was politically active in the Gay Liberation Front in the '80s but then took a step back and became active again a few years ago. I've spoken at ADM and have been on Academy1, which was cracking – a fantastic training experience. Membership density at my store went up from 10 to around 80 per cent. I've been out of the closet – and knocked the doors and hinges off – for years!"



...Rachel Goodwin

"Getting involved in the youth section was the stepping stone for me about three years ago and now I'm a branch secretary and on the Southern divisional council.

"I'd recommend getting active, we need more reps to stick up for people, and it's a very worthwhile role. Do a good job and you'll win the trust of your members and the respect of management."

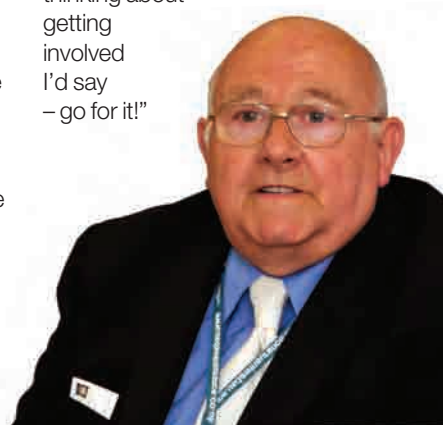


and David Chadwick-Taylor

"I'm an ex-civil servant and when I started in Morrisons the staff were treated very badly. Membership was low and the rep wasn't doing his job so I went to branch meetings made my feelings known – in no uncertain terms – and things improved from there. In our store ten of us 'came out' at the same time!

"I'm now on the executive council for the North Eastern

division so if there are any members out there thinking about getting involved I'd say – go for it!"



TEAMWORK WORKS

Active reps are making sure Usdaw remains the fastest growing union in the UK

The union's team of activists and officials were out in force across the UK for National Membership Week in June signing up thousands of new members.

All occupations and industries were covered including: retail, warehousing, distribution and factories, call centres, home shopping, meat processing, dairy and pharmaceutical. Reps used the union's Freedom From Fear, Pensions and Supporting Parents and Carers campaigns as well as the many leaflets and booklets explaining FirstCall and Legal Plus, members' rights at work, maternity leave and what Usdaw can offer new reps in terms of education and training.

"There's never been a better time to join the union and our results speak for themselves," said general secretary John Hannett.

"We have hundreds of reps and officials working hard recruiting thousands of new members, our membership has increased by more than 20 per cent in the last six years, making Usdaw the fastest growing union in the UK.

"Once again during Membership Week our activists worked together to organise hundreds of events in their workplaces to make June's event another huge success."

More Membership Week pictures can be viewed at:

www.usdaw.org.uk/gallery



1



3



7

8

4

IN NUMBERS

MEMBERSHIP FOR WEEK ENDED: 13 JULY 2013

South Wales & Western.....	51,288
Eastern.....	64,038
Midlands.....	57,734
North Eastern.....	58,699
Scottish.....	45,700
Southern.....	59,347
North West.....	94,842
TOTAL.....	431,648



Location, location, location...

- 1&5: Tesco Ellon, Aberdeen, Scottish division
- 2&4: Morrisons Camden, Eastern division (with Frank Dobson MP)
- 3: Sainsbury Drumchapel, Glasgow, Scottish division
- 6: Ocado Tamworth, Midlands division
- 7&10: Morrisons Waterlooille, Southern division
- 8: Morrisons Scunthorpe, North Eastern division
- 9: Karro Food Group Cookstown, Northern Ireland, North West division

REPS AT THE READY

Hard work, good organisation and commitment is paying off for Usdaw's army of busy reps

Pensions Awareness Day



Pension provider... Sean Gamble (third left) talks to colleagues

Co-operative Food Logistics rep Sean Gamble organised a Pension Awareness Day at the depot in Alfreton in Derbyshire to help his colleagues to understand this complex subject.

"As always the literature on this specialist area produced by Usdaw is fantastic and very easy to follow," said Sean. "Once I'd set everything up there was a steady flow of people throughout the day coming along to ask a variety of questions about pensions and the changes that are happening now and in the future."

"It was great for staff, the company and the union to have this positive communication and to be seen to be working together. We know pensions affect all of our lives. The added bonus for me was when people signed up and joined the union."

"As this site is due for closing I'm hoping to be involved with the inductions at our new site over at Castlewood in South Normanton. I'll make sure I have all the union's leaflets to hand as I believe it's important for all new starters to be aware of their rights. I'll be reminding them of the help available to them as a union member from the minute they start work."

Wiseman's Legal Plus Day

Müller Wiseman Dairies rep Dave Robson organised a Legal Plus awareness day at the Pensilva site in Liskeard in Cornwall with the help of recruitment and development officer Debbie Holland.

"I spoke with Debbie and she advised me to contact Usdaw's legal team and arrange for a local solicitor to come in and attend on the day," said Dave.

"It's quite a small site and most of the staff are drivers who would mainly be out on the road, so the event had to be very well organised in advance to allow staff to have enough time

in the depot to sit down and chat with the solicitor in private.

"The free will writing service went down very well and the staff who had legal queries and spoke to the solicitor were very happy with the help and advice given to them.

"It portrayed the union in a professional way. It went down so well it's an event members have asked me to run again."

Debbie added: "I'm not surprised it went so well. As Dave is one of those reps who attends to every detail. He is very well organised and does a great job for his members."



Sign of the times... Dave Robson (right) recruits a new member at his Legal Plus awareness day

Chelmsford Star Co-op



Star performers ...
Carla Woodley (centre)
with reps Julie Sheffield
(left) and Diana Smith

off over the last three years. It was part of my brief when I was on Academy1 in 2011.

"I then returned to Tesco for a year and was seconded again for stand-down.

"I have a great relationship with all the store managers and training managers and get to cover all inductions where we have an almost 100 per cent sign up record."

In April the Society put pen to paper and signed a Facilities Agreement with Usdaw, it will allow for stand-down facilities and the introduction of lifelong learning.

"It took a while to get the agreement and I was very proud to be part of it working with my area organiser Tracey Low," added Carla.

"I've enjoyed every minute of my time out on stand-down and feel as though I've helped put down solid foundations to build on. There's massive potential for recruitment in the Co-op and I hope whoever succeeds me will have just as much success and enjoyment as I've had."

Stand-down gives you the opportunity to develop good relationships with members while working closely with reps and officials, said Tesco rep Carla Woodley from Essex who has had huge success recruiting and organising in Chelmsford Star Co-op Society.

"The society has around 600 staff working across mid-Essex in food stores, department stores, travel agents, funeralcare as well as property rental," said 47 year-old Carla.

"At the moment we have around 350 members and five reps.

"I've been covering the Society on and

Co-op Fun Day, Kent

After three months with the Academy 25 year-old James Smith is developing into a more organised and confident young rep.

"The Academy has boosted my confidence so much I now feel very comfortable walking into new stores and speaking to managers and staff," said James who works for Invicta Co-op in Kent.

"It's helped me to work in a more orderly way and plan ahead. I'm delighted with how successful I've been in such a short time. I have one store up to 100 per cent membership and two others almost there."

James linked up with Academy1 rep Rachel Goodwin and Paul Jackson from Academy2 as well as experienced rep Sidonie McShane, who also works for Invicta Co-op, to highlight the union at a special Co-op Fun Day in July.



Having fun ... (l-r) Rachel Goodwin, James Smith and Paul Jackson promote the union in Kent

"It was a great success with both Co-op staff and the general public. We even recruited new members on the day and others took information away saying they would think about it

"We set up a stall with everything about Usdaw on it. A lot of people had never even heard of the union before

and were genuinely impressed and interested to hear and read about the range of issues we get involved in.

"I also made some good contacts within the Co-op. All in all it was a different but very rewarding day and to top it all the weather was fantastic and £2,500 was raised for Carers Trust UK."

ALL THE LATEST APPOINTMENTS

The last few months has seen a high number of changes among the union's staff with promotions to follow in the September/October issue. Sadly the union also lost two former area organisers

Head of education and training Trish Deeny will retire at the end of July after 21 years with the union.

Trish initially joined the publicity department in 1992 as editorial and information officer before moving to the North Eastern division as training officer in 1994. She later transferred to the Midlands before returning to central office as senior training officer in 2008. She was appointed head of department in 2010.

Before joining Usdaw Trish had worked as a producer for ITV and had also worked as news editor for the Telegraph & Argus newspaper in Bradford.

"I feel very proud and privileged to have worked for Usdaw," said Trish, 56. "The reps have been fantastic and they have made the job so enjoyable. It's been an absolute pleasure to have met so many talented activists. A big thank you to them and to the many colleagues I've worked alongside.

"Looking ahead, I'd love to use my experience to teach English – hopefully in Spain, we'll see."

Meanwhile, Glasgow's Ian Fraser will call time on his life with Usdaw in July when he retires after 23 years on the organising staff.

Ian joined Usdaw in 1980 and soon became active in his Scotland Gateway branch. He went on to study with the Open University graduating with a BA in Social Sciences in 1988. He was appointed an area organiser in 1990.

"I feel very proud to have worked for Usdaw and the working class movement," said Ian, 55. "Would I do it all again? Absolutely. It's been an



Trish Deeny



Ian Fraser

honour. No regrets at all. The years have flown by.

"A big thank you to my colleagues and reps for their kind words. It's great to see all of the new reps and organisers come on board and I'm sure Usdaw will continue to thrive.

"I'll be taking some time off and intend to see more of my team – Partick Thistle. I'll also be looking to improve my golfing handicap. Looking further ahead I'll consider getting involved in the voluntary sector.

General secretary John Hannett said: "We all wish Trish and Ian all the very best for the future.

"Between them they have given 44 years of loyal and dedicated service and have helped countless members and reps during their time.

"I'm sure they both have a lot to offer in whatever they decide to do after retirement.

"Good luck to both of them and many thanks on behalf of their colleagues in the union."



Peter Chalklin



Angelique Audas

Two new organisers join the Usdaw team

Southern division's Peter Chalklin is keen to put his training and development skills to the test in his new role as an area organiser.

The 43 year-old was appointed in November last year and is based at the Faversham office. He is a lifelong trade unionist having joined the AEEU at 17, later the GMB, and then Usdaw in 2005 when he worked at the Tesco distribution centre in Snodland, Kent.

Peter brings with him a wealth of experience having completed shop stewards, health and safety and lifelong learning training courses, as well as summer school 1 and 2.

He was seconded to the union as a mobile union learning rep in 2010 and a year later was appointed a lifelong learning project worker.

"Developing and seeing reps progress is the best part of the job," said Peter. "I want to see my reps experience the same fantastic journey I've been lucky enough to have and I want to help them reach their own personal goals."

Angelique Audas has swapped her Tesco managerial hat to sit on the opposite side of the negotiating table in her new role with Usdaw.

The 38 year-old was appointed area organiser at the Leeds office in November 2012. After joining Usdaw in 2003 she took on the role of rep when she started work with Tesco as a checkout operator at their store in Withernsea in Yorkshire. She progressed to team leader and later selected for Tesco's trainee management scheme.

"The training and support I had as a rep was excellent and gave me a good grounding and a lot of experience," she said.

"After my basic training I spent six months with Academy1 and six more with Academy2 and then studied for a Diploma in Employment Law at Hull college.

"This combined with my managerial experience with Tesco will give me the insight to guide, support and develop our reps so they too can make a difference."

APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS

...s, appointments and retirements, *Network* reports on the latest movers and shakers with more...s – Fred Coates from the Eastern division and John Blair from the Midlands division died in April

Former deputy divisional officer Sue Merrell became only the fourth female divisional officer when she took up her new job in April.

This latest promotion caps a remarkable journey for Sue who started off as an activist when she worked night-shift at the Sainsbury East Grinstead store in the early '90s.

She was appointed to the organising staff in 1997 and was initially based at the old Croydon office before moving to Morden. She was appointed deputy divisional officer in 2010 and has succeeded Jim Carty to lead the division.

"I was elated to get the job, surprised too," said the 61 year-old. "Looking back to my Sainsbury days if you'd have told me then I'd go on to become divisional officer I'd never have believed it. So I hope other activists can take some inspiration from my story. We have many good, energetic, confident reps out there and to be honest – if I can do it anyone can!"

"I'm looking forward to the challenges, and there are many. Short-term and short-hours contracts are being used more and more so we do have our work cut out. However, I'm confident we can grow the



Sue Merrell

union.

"I'll be keeping in touch with our reps – I think that's very important – through the get-togethers and conferences. Our reps are the key to realising our potential for growth.

"The division is going through a transition phase at the moment. We have a new deputy divisional officer in Sue Prynn and new organisers will be joining the team soon, so it's a busy and exciting time.

"I've had great support from the other divisional officers – a big thank you to them – and many thanks to Jim for all his help over the years. But now it's all about looking ahead and getting on with the job."



Dave Gill

Dave Gill will bring almost 30 years' trade union experience to his new role after he became the latest addition to the team of national officers.

The former North West deputy divisional officer will swap his Warrington base for an office at central office in Manchester although his new job will take him all over the UK.

"I'll be looking after Argos, Poundland, Marks and Spencer, and many other high street retailers as well as the food manufacturing sector, including Karro (formerly Vion), and household names – McVities and Kellogg's," said the 47 year-old.

"I'm looking forward to the new challenge and I'll be working closely with the divisions and reps to build our presence across all companies. I've met up with some of the national reps already and I've set up meetings with the companies to move things forward."

Dave's involvement in Usdaw started at an early age when he worked at the Littlewoods mail order depot in Shaw, Greater Manchester in the mid '80s. He went on to be the site convenor aged just 19 and first hit the national headlines when he won the TUC Young Activist of the Year Award in 1990.

Three years later Dave joined the organising staff and was initially based at Croydon before returning to his native North West first in the old North Western's Liverpool office in 1998 before moving to the Preston office in 2000. He was promoted to deputy divisional officer in 2006.

"I've always enjoyed the recruitment and organising side of the union and I'm a firm believer in making sure we represent the majority of the workforce. I'm sure my experience will help me get to grips with my new role very quickly."

Union mourns two former area organisers



Fred Coates

Lifelong trade unionist Fred Coates, who spent 24 years as an area organiser, died in April, he was 74.

Fred retired from Usdaw in 1998 having spent all of his adult life as a union member and activist firstly with the Postal Workers' Union. He went on to study industrial relations at the

trade union college – Coleg Harlech, Wales in 1971. Two years later he was appointed to the organising staff and was based in Ipswich.

Former area organiser John Blair, who retired from Usdaw in 1990, also died in April he was 75.

John was appointed to the organising staff in 1974,

having been an activist at Nuneaton Co-op.

He looked after members across all sectors and worked out of the Birmingham office.

General secretary John Hannett said: "Both men were loyal servants to the union and our condolences go to the families and friends of Fred and John."



John Blair

YOUR SAFETY AT RISK

Alarm as local councils ordered to stop 'unnecessary' health and safety inspections

News that local authorities are being banned from unnecessary health and safety inspections under a new enforcement code issued by the HSE, has been attacked by union and professional safety bodies.

The announcement by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) means that tens of thousands of businesses, including most shops and offices, will be removed from health and safety inspections which the Government claims are not justified on a risk basis. If low risk businesses believe they are being unreasonably targeted they will be able to complain to an independent panel, which will investigate and issue a public judgement.

The DWP's announcement was condemned as 'inflammatory and misleading' by the Chartered Institute for Environmental Health (CIEH), the



professional body for local authority inspectors. The CIEH also criticised the very restricted list of sectors and activities where the HSE says proactive inspection is still permitted as it ignored many of the more significant risks.

The TUC described the list as totally inadequate and warned that the fact that businesses know they cannot be inspected means that they are more likely

to take risks with members' health and safety.

Health and safety officer Doug Russell said: "In Usdaw's response to the consultation on the code we pointed out that it was entirely misconceived.

"There is no evidence that health and safety inspections impose a burden on business or are unnecessary. In fact inspections had already plummeted from 70,000 per year

in 2010 to 16,000 this year.

"Local authorities enforce health and safety for over 1.7 million workplaces, so the majority are already not being inspected. Evidence from the limited number of inspections that do take place is that most employers find the inspector's advice helpful. Usdaw shares the concern that the list of activities and sectors where inspection is still allowed is far too narrow."

Red Tape

The Hazards Campaign has launched a response to the attacks on the HSE with a new Facebook page called 'We Love Red Tape' with the message that 'the problem at work is not too much red tape, it's too many bloody bandages'. The page lists some of the ways in which HSE could be made stronger and more effective as a genuine enforcement agency. Hazards want people to 'Like' the page and help spread the message. www.facebook.com/votehazards



Asda fined over worker's freezer injury

Asda has been fined more than £50,000 at the Magistrates Court after a worker slipped on an icy floor in a storage freezer, seriously injuring his knee at their Barnsley store in 2011.

The worker needed an operation and was off work for a number of months.

The court heard that employees were left to chip ice off the floor themselves and sweep it away. Asda had also failed to provide adequate protective clothing for their employees who worked in the freezers.

District Judge Foster said that Asda had 'inadequate systems in place' and there were 'unacceptable delays' in identifying problems.

Asda stated that since the accident it had spent £31,000 on repairs to the storage freezer.

Ice in freezers can be a significant slipping hazard. It can be controlled by; regular maintenance of the freezer to make sure that doors close properly and equipment is in order; a regular cleaning programme to remove any build-up of ice that does occur and safety shoes with slip-resistant soles.



Food and Drink Conference reminder

Safety reps from the food and drink industry are being urged to go to this year's annual food and drink manufacturing conference on health and safety, which takes place on 8/9th October at the Belfry Hotel in Oxford.

Organised jointly by the HSE Food and Drink Industry Forum and the Institution for Occupational Safety and Health, the programme will cover a range of topical subjects, including: working at height, Musculo-Skeletal Disorders update and manual handling issues, electrical safety DVD, the physiology of safety and the psychology of mental error and legal developments.

A copy of the flyer for the conference will be circulated to food and drink manufacturing branches when it is available. When branches approach employers about attendance, note that there is a 25 per cent reduction in the cost of the conference for union safety reps.

National Food and Drink Manufacturing Health and Safety Awards

Entries are being sought for the 2013 National Food and Drink Manufacturing Health and Safety Awards. The awards are

sponsored by the IOSH Food and Drink Group and recognise innovative projects that have produced a practical solution to, and made a positive impact on, a health and safety problem at work.

The first prize is a trophy, certificate and cheque for £500 and up to two runners up may receive a trophy, certificate and cheque for £250. Prize winners are entitled to one free place at the Food and Drink Manufacturing conference and the awards are presented at the Conference dinner on 8th October 2013.

If you are interested in entering or getting more information about the awards, please contact:

Julie Littlejohns, IOSH Networks Officer
on 0116 257 3248.



Government undermines HSE independence again

A decision by the Government to impose an 'employee interests' representative on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) board who did not have the support of trade unions has led to serious concerns about the independence of the official safety watchdog.

The Government is legally required to consult with 'bodies representing employee interests' before appointing the three employee board members, who have always been active trade unionists supported by the TUC.

The TUC had nominated Matt Wrack, general secretary of the Fire Brigades

Union, who has a good record on health and safety. Instead the Government hand-picked Jonathan Baume, retired general secretary of the First Division Association, who was not nominated by any trade union.

TUC head of organisation Kevin Rowan said: "The decision not to appoint Matt Wrack shows exactly what the Government wants, which is a compliant board there to administer the organisation and make sure it delivers what the Government wants.

"The losers will not be the TUC, but the credibility of the Government's claim to have an independent HSE and ultimately the workers whose lives and health will be put at risk."

In conversation with safety rep

Dayle Duguid

Dayle Duguid, 25, works for the Co-op in Peterborough. He has been a health and safety rep for two years and is also a shop steward, branch chair and a member of his divisional youth committee.



Why are you a health and safety rep?

I get a good feeling helping people and I'm very passionate about preventing accidents. You hear far too often these days about employers taking short cuts thinking they are saving money.

What advice would you give to someone who's interested in being a rep?

You are not alone and even though you may sometimes have to stand up to different employers and it may seem daunting at times, just think of the lives you could potentially be saving and the accidents you will prevent. Usdaw provides excellent training so you don't have to be an expert when you start out. I'd also advise you to make some space as you're going to need it with all the paperwork and leaflets!

What is a typical day for you as a health and safety rep?

I learn something new every day. I carry out risk assessments and I chase up health and safety issues when necessary. Teaching other people about health and safety in the workplace and the role they can play is a big part of my day, that's half the battle.

What practical measures do you undertake to promote safety?

The main issue I see is PPE (Personal Protection Equipment), it's provided but not being worn and not enforced by management. When I speak to staff I get replies like, 'I look silly', I explain if they had an accident and their employer found out they weren't wearing PPE they might not be covered, they may lose sick pay and could even lose their job.

What has been your proudest moment as a safety rep so far?

The proudest part for me as a young rep is being taken seriously by management, environmental health, and fire officers. Also preventing accidents makes me proud, knowing I'm doing a worthwhile job and helping my colleagues.

For more information about health and safety in the workplace:



visit: www.usdaw.org.uk/healthandsafety
email: healthandsafety@usdaw.org.uk

NORTH WEST DIVISIONAL CONFERENCE REMEMBERS STALWART USDAW REP

Generous activists raise cash in Jayne's memory

North West veteran activist Jayne Rogers was remembered at the recent divisional conference when a cheque was handed over to Jayne's family worth £1,795 for the Trinity Hospice Blackpool, which nursed Jayne up until her death in January this year. Many thanks to the activists who contributed particularly at this year's Irish night at ADM.

MIKE AYLWARD
North West divisional officer

CO-OPERATIVE GROUP

Waste reduction

Congratulations to The Co-operative Group, which claims it's on track to divert all food store waste from landfill by the end of July – five months ahead of schedule – halving its food waste management costs.

The waste reduction will shave thousands of miles of the UK retailer's distribution network by eliminating about 225,000 waste collections from food stores every year.

This latest initiative will divert more than 34,000 metric tons of waste every year. This includes waste food and flowers (64 per cent), which will be sent to an anaerobic digestion facility to generate biogas energy, and customer and general waste (21 per cent), which will go to a refuse-derived fuel facility that shreds and dehydrates solid waste to produce fuel. Dry mixed items (15 per cent), such as empty milk bottles, cans, office paper and till receipts, will go to dedicated materials recycling facilities, which sort and separate materials that can be recycled into new goods.

The Co-op says it has reduced the weight of its own-brand packaging by about 20 per cent since 2009, and has cut the waste it generates by 37 per cent since 2006, saving about 50,000 metric tons a year.

BRIAN LOUGHHEAD
North Eastern division

RAISING AWARENESS IN SAINSBURY

Talking the talk to members

Sainsbury's reps Cath Cleevely and Liz Coates helped me in holding an Usdaw awareness campaign day in our store. We gave away key-rings, stress toys and sweets. We engaged staff by using the 'guess the

age' scratch card (used in the Freedom From Fear campaign) and if they were correct then they had a go in the lucky dip. This worked well and gave us an opportunity to tell them about their rights at work.

The campaign was a success as we recruited new members, informed existing members and gained one new rep.

The photo shows Cath Cleevely talking to an existing member and a non-member, who we subsequently recruited.

KAY TIMBRELL
Organising officer
South Wales and
Western division



WORLD BOOK NIGHT 2013 OPENS A NEW CHAPTER FOR READERS

Treasure Island encourages readers in Ipswich

Another successful year for World Book Night via Usdaw's union learning reps. This has now proved to be a positive way to reach out to non-readers, both on the shop floor and in the community.

This year 20 free books of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* were donated to Taste – Community Café. This local facility is connected to Noah's Ark pre-school and St. John's Church in Ipswich.

This is a great opportunity to get people involved in reading and learning at no cost to the 'giver'. It raises the profile of reading on a mass engagement project which works at ground level to inspire those who don't usually read.

Why not be part of this fantastic event next year? Visit: www.worldbooknight.org

HELEN KING
C54 East Anglia

COMMUNITY ACTION WORKS

Health campaign

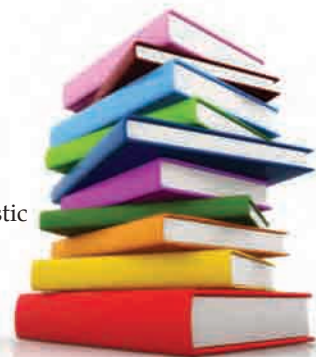
The Norfolk constabulary diversity and equalities unit invited me to an open day at the Queen Elizabeth hospital in Kings Lynn.

I've worked alongside Norfolk Constabulary on many campaigns. This time I focused on health – an appropriate theme for where we were – many doctors and nurses were very interested in the information from Usdaw. I combined this with information about equalities and racism, and used campaign materials about police cuts to show Usdaw supports the police and local communities.

The event raised the profile of Usdaw tremendously and I was even interviewed live by Kings Lynn radio station.

I hope others are encouraged to deliver and participate in their own communities around the country.

BRIAN LEWIS
Eastern division



SEND YOUR LETTERS AND PICTURES TO:

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

✉ network@usdaw.org.uk

CAKES AND CAMPAIGNS IN PHOTO GALLERY . .



Delegates at the national LGBT conference held in June in Manchester, celebrated the occasion with a very attractive cake made by Stuart Bunyan (second left) from the Scottish division. General secretary John Hannett did the honours.



Usdaw activists took part in a rally to campaign against plans to privatise the general hospital of Weston-Super-Mare. (l-r) Usdaw reps Douglas Pearce and Monish Kelly, area organiser Adrian Grabarski and Usdaw rep Nigel Marks. Monish and Douglas are also representing Usdaw on the joint body of trade unions responsible for the campaign.

£50
star letter
winner

TALKING ABOUT TRANSPORT

On the road to ruin

I am a Sata rep and Labour councilor and was interested to read coverage of the transport debate in the last issue of *Network*.

The UK's roads are at breaking point and the future of growth to the economy depends on greatly increased spending on the infrastructure on the road network.

This Coalition government is continually cutting spending on transport and roads despite the fact that investment in the road structure is desperately needed. The cost of insurance claims is crippling local councils, and the damage to vehicles will add to the cost of deliveries that will be passed on to local residents. I urge Usdaw to lobby its MPs to highlight this problem.

We should also be lobbying for a universal young people's travel

pass, and a discount card on public transport for job seekers, school leavers and low wage employees to help stimulate growth.

On road tax – a higher percentage of the tax paid to central government should be ring fenced to road repairs.

We should also be campaigning for better and fairer rail investment in the South West, currently we have the lowest spend per city on transport than any other area of the country, some of the highest water bills, some of the lowest average earnings and some of the highest house prices. How will the South West and our members ever have an equal share of the revenue?

MARK COKER
South Wales and Western division

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND SUICIDE AWARENESS TRAINING

FASA and Tesco host training session

Tesco Newtownbreda held a two-part drugs, alcohol and suicide awareness training session in June with the help of the FASA (Forum for Action on Substance Abuse and Suicide Awareness). The sessions were very well attended and everyone came away well informed. For more information about the subjects you can visit: www.fasaonline.org

NICOLA SCARBOROUGH
Area organiser, North West division



PRIDE EVENT HELD IN OXFORD IN JUNE BRINGS THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Something for everyone as Pride comes to Oxpens field in Oxford

Members of the Southern Division Equalities Forum assisted by Sue Merrell, Sue Prynne, Rachel Goodwin, and Julie Charles, had a great time supporting Oxford Pride in June.

The event held in Oxpens field had a real fun atmosphere and something for everyone, with bouncy castles, a climbing wall for the

kids, a bar for the adults and various singers and entertainers.

The team joined the parade which started at Saxon tower, the oldest building in Oxford, and wound its way through the busy streets before eventually returning to Oxpens field.

The team spent the rest of the day distributing goodies, literature, and

advice to the revellers.

The stall was very popular and that combined with the party atmosphere made the time just fly by, and all too soon it was time to pack up and wend our way home, taking fond memories and looking forward to next year.

SOUTHERN DIVISION EQUALITIES FORUM





Political Fund Ballot
19 August - 9 September 2013

Your union, your voice...

...Usdaw's Political Fund gives us all a voice



Usdaw needs a Political Fund so we can campaign politically to help our members.

Our Political Fund is a vital part of our union. It has funded campaigns to bring important benefits for our members:

- A higher minimum wage.
- Defending Sunday working rights.
- Rights at work.
- Support for victims of crime.
- Freedom From Fear.

For information and to help us win the vote call 0161 249 2452 or email vote.yes@usdaw.org.uk

To join or find out more about Usdaw, call 0845 60 60 640* or visit our website at www.usdaw.org.uk

V o t e Y E S f o r a v o i c e