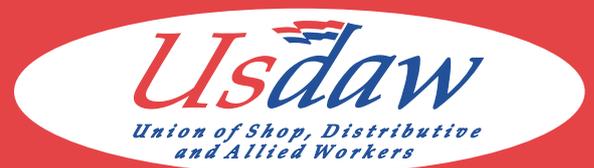


# Usdaw and Labour

Campaigning in Partnership



Executive Council Statement to the  
2000 Annual Delegate Meeting

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# Introduction

Politics affects all of our lives, but it can seem more and more remote.

Everyone knows what they want to change, but it can seem very hard to get anyone to listen, let alone do something about it.

With over 300,000 members, Usdaw is one of the largest trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party.

We have contact with the Party of Government at every level – from Labour Party members in constituencies across the country, to delegates at conferences, to members in councils and in Parliament.

We are involved in politics to help our members achieve the change that they need.

The Labour Government has spent three years working to undo all the harm of 18 years of Tory rule. There's still a long way to go and a lot that we want the Government to do, but we are impressed by progress so far.

To keep in touch with their voters the Government needs to be listening to union members – how they are affected by new legislation, and what they think still needs to be done.

This paper sets out how you can use Usdaw's links with the Labour Party to get involved in politics, to put over your point of view and to help Labour win the next General Election, which we all need to do to make sure that we can achieve the changes we need.

At whatever level you want to get involved, or however much time you are able to put in, this paper sets out what you can do.

To make a difference we need to get involved. Usdaw can offer you support to make sure that you get the most out of what you do.

So get stuck in and enjoy it!

# Section 1: Why we're in Politics

## Our aim

We are involved in politics to advance the interests of Usdaw's members, both in the industrial and the social sphere.

## Our objectives

We are committed through our Political Fund Ballot to support the Labour Party and Usdaw works in the Labour Party to achieve our aims through:

- Identifying issues of concern to Usdaw members and campaigning to effectively address them.
- Encouraging all members to join and become involved in the Labour Party, and to encourage local Labour Parties and elected representatives to support Usdaw's campaigns.
- Encouraging members to stand as elected representatives.

This Statement sets out for all members:

- How we work within the Labour Party and how you can get involved.
- How the Union's own political structures work.
- How the Labour Party has helped our members in the last three years and what our priorities are for the next term of a Labour Government.
- What we can do to help achieve a second full term of a Labour Government for the first time ever.

At the back of this booklet there's a Labour Party membership form if you want to join, or to give to a friend or colleague if they want to join.

There is also a request form for information Factsheets on how to get more involved in the Labour Party.

# Section 2: Working within the Labour Party

There are lots of ways that any Usdaw member can put forward their point of view in the Labour Party. The amount of time that you want to put in and what you do is entirely up to you.

## Joining the Labour Party

The first step is to join the Labour Party and it's not that difficult!

There is a form at the back of this booklet and membership costs just £6 a year for Usdaw members.

### Why join?

Most people join the Labour Party because they believe that it's the Party for working people, so we join to keep it that way.

Sometimes there's an issue that we want Labour to act on – either nationally or locally. If you're in the Labour Party you have the opportunity to raise the issue, gain support and ask your local Labour Party and/or your councillors and MP to help campaign. That's much more effective than acting on your own.

There are lots of issues that Usdaw is campaigning on and the more Labour Party members are raising the issues around the country, the more chance we have of success. (See Section 6 if you'd like to help.)

- There are over 2,000 Labour Party members in Usdaw – that's a lot, but it's much less than most other unions.
- More Labour Party members gives us more political clout and the stronger we are politically, the stronger we are industrially too!

So even if you don't want to get involved at the moment, just by joining the Labour Party you help Usdaw's campaigns.

And if you do want to get active – there's no limit to what you can do – just enjoy it!

### What you can do

Joining the Labour Party enables you to:

- Take part in meetings and social events.
- Put your point of view about Labour Party policy and what should be in the next manifesto at local 'Policy Forums' (see the next section for more details).
- Have a chance to attend Labour Party Conferences, locally, regionally and nationally.
- Have your say in voting for Labour Party candidates locally for councils and Parliament (and the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly if you live there).
- If you feel able, to put yourself forward for selection to become a Labour Party candidate for your local council or other bodies.

Usdaw's Political Officer and the Political Co-ordinators in each Division are there to help you find your feet and get involved in the Labour Party – they're always there for help and advice.



John Prescott MP and Jeff Beresford

## Joining the Labour Party

“I joined the Labour Party because I think the Labour Government have really improved things and I’ve got a lot of faith in them. But there’s still a lot more I want them to do. Being a Labour Party member means I can help push for the issues I believe in such as improving the minimum wage and paying for parental leave, as well as supporting Labour in elections and helping them to win again so they can do everything we need them to!”

Jeff Beresford, Newcastle

## Having your say about Labour Party policy – ‘Policy Forums’

The way that the Labour Party makes policy has changed so that every Party member has the chance to have their say.

### How Labour Party policy is made

Leading up to the manifesto for the next General Election, policy consultation papers have been produced on:

- Welfare
- Health
- Education and Employment
- Industry, Culture and Agriculture
- Europe
- Crime and Justice
- Britain in the World
- Democracy and Citizenship
- Economic Policy
- Environment, Transport and the Regions

Between them, these papers cover all aspects of policy. They are divided into sections which can be discussed in detail.

The Labour Party manifesto for the next election will be based upon the final version of these policy papers. This is produced by:

1. Local Constituency Labour Parties, branches and union branches discuss the consultation papers at ‘Local Policy Forums’ and send their suggestions in (to see how your Union branch can get involved, see the next section).
2. The papers are amended to include good ideas and suggestions.

3. Members of the National Policy Forum – a group of 175 representatives of Constituency Labour Parties, trade unions, socialist societies, councillors and MPs – suggest further amendments to the papers.
4. These amendments are either agreed by the Labour Party and included in the papers, or are voted on by the National Policy Forum. Any amendment which gains over 50% of the votes is automatically included. Amendments which gain at least 25% of the votes are called ‘minority positions’ and are voted on at the Labour Party Conference.
5. The amended policy papers are voted on in full at the Labour Party Conference, together with any ‘minority positions’ from the National Policy Forum. If these get more than 50% of the vote at Conference they are included in the final version of the policy paper.

## Getting involved

All Labour Party members have the opportunity to take part in their Local Policy Forums and to put forward their point of view.

Policy Forums are more informal than ordinary Labour Party meetings. They break into small groups to discuss particular parts of the policy papers so that everyone has the chance to put forward their point of view.

It’s important that union members go along to put forward their point of view to make sure that Labour Party policy is relevant to all the working people who need change, and who the Party needs to vote for them.

## Usdaw’s views

Usdaw has put in detailed responses to all of the policy consultation papers, based on policies passed at ADM and on the views of branches. We have also produced summaries of the main points which the Union would like to see included in submissions from Local Policy Forums.

If you are going along to a Policy Forum and would like a copy, you can order one from the Political Officer on 0161-224 2804.



## Going to a Policy Forum

“I was really impressed at the first Policy Forum I went to. The policy issues that we would be looking at were explained and then we split up into small groups to discuss the parts that we were interested in. Everyone could put their point of view forward, and we had a really good debate and put some useful ideas forward to the consultation. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and I’d recommend to other members to go along. It’s a real chance to discuss constructively what you’d like to see the Government doing and putting your ideas to them directly.”

Jean Hamer, Bolton

## Discussing policy in Usdaw

Many Usdaw branches have held their own 'Policy Forums' to discuss the Labour Party consultation papers. They have found it very useful to be able to have a constructive discussion and put their ideas forward.

The Labour Party has set up 'Commissions' which look at each of the area of policy listed in the previous section on an ongoing basis. So if Union branches or Federation Schools want to discuss a particular policy issue, their ideas can be fed into the policy-making process at any time.

Some suggestions for policy discussions that branches may want to hold would be:

- The provisions of the Employment Relations Act – the Executive Council Statement is useful as a resource material.
- Family-friendly employment – how can we continue to improve it?
- Welfare reform – how can the benefits system be improved?
- How to engage young people in politics – and what reasons we can give them for needing to!

These are just some suggestions, but the possibilities are endless.

Labour Party policy consultation papers will be sent to branches when they are issued, but if you would like to discuss a topic and are looking for resource materials, please contact the Political Officer.

## Discussing policy in Usdaw



“Our Branch had a really good discussion about voting systems. At first when I looked at the consultation paper I thought it was a bit imposing, but when I started to read it I realised that these were things I knew about – after all, we’re all entitled to vote. My Branch were a bit sceptical when I brought the papers along to the meeting, but once we started the discussion people realised that their opinions were just as valid as anyone’s.

Most of us would never go along to a public meeting, or speak up at a Labour Party meeting, so it was great that we had the chance to put our point of view forward through Usdaw, knowing that it would count.”

John Samuels, London

“We used our Divisional Youth Committee meeting to look at the Labour Party Policy Paper on Youth Policy. It was interesting to hear everyone’s views and we put together a lot of ideas which fed into the Union’s response to the consultation, as well as going directly to the Party. Everyone felt it was well worthwhile and we all appreciated the chance to have our say.”

Kate Halley, Glasgow



## Affiliating your Branch to the Labour Party

Usdaw is keen for as many branches as possible to affiliate to local Constituency Labour Parties.

### Why affiliate?

By affiliating to local Labour Parties, Usdaw branches can make our members' views known to the local Party, including Labour councillors and the MP. Branches will receive details of what the local Party is doing – political and social events and campaigns.

We can also:

- Encourage local Parties and politicians to support Usdaw's campaigns.
- Participate in local political campaigns.
- Take part in the ballot to decide whether the Labour MP should automatically stand for Parliament again.
- If there is to be a new candidate, we can make nominations.

So it's obviously very important.

### How to affiliate

By a branch meeting agreeing to do so. A branch can affiliate to any Constituency Labour Party where members of the branch live. Please ring Central Office if you're not sure which Constituencies your Branch is eligible to affiliate to. It is helpful to affiliate to several Constituencies, and many branches do this.

The cost of affiliation is just £6 per year for the minimum affiliation of 100 members.

If you'd like your branch to affiliate to your local Labour Party, there's a form to complete at the back of this booklet and more can be requested from the Stationery Section at Central Office on 0161-224 2804.



### Affiliating to the Labour Party

"In Corby all our Usdaw branches are affiliated to the Labour Party so we can always put our views across. We get a lot of support for our campaigns, both from the Labour Party and from our MP Phil Hope. Phil is even helping us with a recognition campaign!"

Mark Pengelly, Corby

## Appointing branch delegates to Constituency Labour Parties

When a branch has affiliated to a Constituency Labour Party, they are able to appoint delegates to that Party and this makes the affiliation far more effective.

A network of delegates in Labour Parties across the country gives Usdaw a voice and a real 'power base' in the Labour Party.

### Being a delegate

Delegates are able to:

- Receive details and attend the monthly General Committee meeting that runs the Constituency Labour Party. This means that they can raise issues of importance to Usdaw members or speak on resolutions sent from the branch. Most Labour MPs regularly attend these meetings, so it's useful to get feedback and ask questions.
- They are eligible for appointment to any of the officer posts in the Constituency Party.
- Vote in the shortlisting meeting for the Parliamentary candidate if the Labour MP is not standing again (or if it's not a Labour-held seat).

But it's important to remember that you don't **have** to do anything. A branch may want to appoint a delegate so that if they do want to campaign on an issue in the future they have the means to do so.

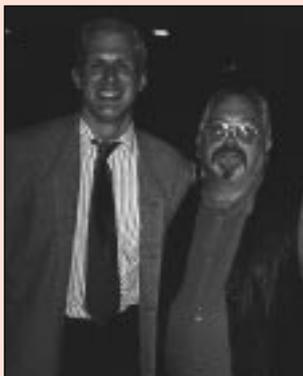
### Appointing a delegate

One delegate can be appointed for every 100 members affiliated, up to a maximum of five, so if a branch wants to appoint more delegates they will need to affiliate more members at £6 per 100.

The qualifications for being a delegate to a Constituency Labour Party are:

- One year's membership of Usdaw.
- Paying the political levy.
- Membership of the Labour Party.
- To live in the Constituency.

If you are interested in becoming a delegate but are not currently a member of the Labour Party, just complete the Labour Party membership form at the back of this booklet to join.



Gordon Marsden MP and Peter Smith

### GC Delegates

"I've found it really useful to be able to go along to my local Labour Party and raise issues that affect Usdaw members. The Labour Party are always very supportive, and our MP, Gordon Marsden, has written to several ministers about Usdaw's campaigns and helped get responses on things like Christmas opening and the campaign to put fire sprinklers in supermarkets.

"It's also good to meet other local trade unionists and Labour Party members who believe in the same things we do."

Peter Smith, Blackpool

## Becoming a Labour representative

Usdaw is keen to encourage any members who are interested in becoming a Labour representative.

There are lots of different roles open to members of the Labour Party. These include:

- School governors.
- Magistrates.
- Local councillors.

For information on applying for any of these roles, please complete the request form at the back of this booklet.

### Training for prospective councillors

The Labour Party offers training and information sessions for those interested in becoming a councillor. If your local Party does not have details your Regional Labour Party office will.

There has been some demand within the Union for training and information for prospective councillors and an information session is available at ADM.

### Usdaw's Parliamentary Panel

For those who have built up experience within the Party, Usdaw has a Parliamentary Panel for those interested in standing for Parliament, either in Westminster, Edinburgh, Cardiff or the European Parliament.

If you are interested in a career in politics, even as a long-term goal, Usdaw's Political Officer will be happy to offer help and advice.



Pat Roberts and Bunty Atkins of South Humberside PT Branch were elected to Immingham Town Council in May 1999

## Becoming a Labour representative

"I've found being a councillor is quite hard work, but it's very interesting and very rewarding. We're in touch with local people and groups all the time and it's great to be able to help them get as much from the council as we can, as well as protecting important services such as the community bus and the local fire station.

"I'd urge other Usdaw members to apply. You can never know all you need to before you start – I've got a long way to go before I'll feel I'm 'fully fledged' – but I'm getting there and it's very interesting learning!"

### Bunty Atkins, Immingham

# Section 3: Usdaw's Political Structures

## Aims

Usdaw's political structures need to enable all of our members to participate and to ensure that our political activity is firmly linked to workplaces and the issues that affect and concern our members.

Usdaw's political structures were put in place in the aftermath of the first Political Fund Ballot in 1985 in order to create:

**'the structure and organisation which will weld together the talents and enthusiasm of all of the Union's active members, to ensure that the Union's political aims are achieved. The job of building up an effective Parliamentary voice, defending politically our industrial interests, giving healthy expression to political debate throughout the Union and above all else, getting our Government back into power, is a task of paramount importance. It is by organising enthusiastic members, particularly at Branch and Divisional level that words will effectively be translated into deeds.'**

## Current position

During the years of Tory Government, all that we could hope to achieve with our political work was to work in elections and to organise for the Political Fund Ballots. We could influence Labour Party policy, but that policy could not be implemented.

The election of the Labour Government gives us the opportunity for effective lobbying and campaigning in order to achieve policies that reflect our members' needs.

Business interests are showing that they have both the desire and the resources to make a big impact with their political lobbying.

Trade unions have some catching up to do, but we have many advantages:

- The advantage of numbers. The Government needs our members' votes and it needs to show that it listens to their concerns.
- The advantage of activists. We can collect evidence on a wide range of issues using our own networks.
- The advantage of our existing political links. Our Labour Party members and activists give us a voice in the Party which we can use to influence MPs, councils and Policy Forums.

We need to make use of these advantages and with the advent of the 'Partnership into Power' structures of policy-making within the Labour Party, there is a need for the Union to be:

- Actively keeping informed of workplace issues that require political action and building evidence from across the Union that enables us to campaign effectively.
- Lobbying Labour representatives, MPs, councils and local parties for action on Usdaw issues.
- Encouraging members to participate in Policy Forums and providing them with information on Usdaw issues.

## Labour Party Liaison Officers

To fulfil these objectives there is a need for a network of politically aware Union members in workplaces throughout the country and in all Usdaw-organised sectors. These members would ensure that real workplace issues inform and are at the heart of our political campaigning work. Their role would be to:

- Feed back information to the National Political Committee on the impact of political issues in the workplace to inform our campaigns and political briefing and lobbying, e.g. implementation problems with the Working Time Directive, the need for a Minimum Wage for under-18s, take-up of Parental Leave, examples of Zero Hours Contracts, Christmas Working.
- Liaise with the local Labour MP – perhaps inviting them to speak on Working Families' Tax Credit and advising them of issues affecting the workplace on an ongoing basis.
- Keeping members informed of political issues.
- Encouraging members to campaign and also to vote, help at election times and to join the Labour Party.
- It would help if Labour Party Liaison Officers were delegates to the local Constituency Labour Party so that they could keep the Party informed of issues affecting Usdaw members locally.

This role can be undertaken by any Union member who is also a member of the Labour Party. It would not require a large burden of work. Some tasks, such as collecting postal votes and organising for elections, could be delegated. Additional delegates to local Labour Parties could be appointed so that meetings did not have to be attended **every** month.

The main requirement would be an awareness of workplace issues and a keenness to be involved in political campaigns.

Labour Party Liaison Officers will obviously require considerable support. The National Political Committee and Divisional Political Committees will provide them with:

- Details of Usdaw campaigns on which evidence and information was required. (But this should not limit members who may feel that a campaign is needed on a certain issue because of experience in their own workplace.)
- Up-to-date briefings on political developments affecting members.
- Campaign materials – draft resolutions and letters to MPs and petition forms where relevant.
- Liaison with key seats to assist at election times.
- Information on postal votes and on successful Labour Party recruitment.
- At least one Divisional Political Workshop each year in order to assess the effectiveness of campaigns and develop an agenda for the coming year.

## Divisional Political Committees

Organisation of this support is required at Divisional level and will continue to be provided by Divisional Political Committees. The constitution of the Committees needs to change slightly to incorporate Labour Party Liaison Officers and representatives of both the Youth Committees and Retired Members' Committees in order that these Committees can liaise with the Political Committees. Other committees may want to join with the Divisional Political Committee to institute a campaign on an area of joint interest.

With the increased role in Union recruitment being played by Deputy Divisional Officers, responsibility for the co-ordination of Divisional Political Committees has been assumed by Divisional Officers.

## Composition of Divisional Political Committees

Present	Proposed
One Divisional Officer/Deputy Divisional Officer as co-ordinator	One Divisional Officer as co-ordinator
One Area Organiser or Divisional Training Officer	One Area Organiser as regional Trade Union Liaison Committee representative (Two if Two Party regions are covered)
One Executive Council member	One Executive Council member
Two Divisional Council members	One Divisional Council members
One Women's Committee member	One Women's Committee member
Four active members (to be appointed with the view of maintaining a balance of age, trade or industry and geography)	Four Labour Party Liaison Officers (to be appointed with the view of maintaining a balance of gender, ethnicity, trade or industry and geography)
Two Parliamentary Panel members	Two MPs' Group members
	One Youth Committee member
	One retired member
<b>Total of 12 members</b>	<b>Total of 14 members</b>

All members of the Divisional Political Committee need to be individual members of the Labour Party. To ensure effective links with a wide range of workplaces all should be in work except for the representative of retired members.

## The role of Divisional Political Committees

The Divisional Political Committee reports directly to the Divisional Council and its role is to:

- Offer support to Labour Party Liaison Officers, for example in Labour Party recruitment work and organising MPs' visits.
- Organise an annual Political Workshop open to all members.
- Offer input to and receive feedback from the Regional Trade Union Liaison Committee. The Area Organiser would normally be the Usdaw representative.
- Liaise with the constituency and MP with whom the Division had a Divisional Constituency Development Plan.
- Co-ordinate support for key seats at General Elections and for Usdaw candidates in local elections.
- Offer support to members wanting to become more involved with the Labour Party.
- Attend Policy Forums and encourage other members to do so.
- Liaise with the Women's, Youth and Retired Members' Divisional Committees, engaging in joint working and campaigns when possible.

The chair of each Divisional Political Committee would continue to sit on the National Political Committee.

## The National Political Committee

The role of the National Political Committee is to plan and co-ordinate Usdaw's political campaigns.

Suggestions for campaigns can be made by individuals, branches or divisions to the National Political Committee who will co-ordinate the work of building the case of evidence required to substantiate campaigns and organising the campaign agenda.

### Members of the National Political Committee

President  
General Secretary  
Deputy General Secretary  
Executive & Administration Officer  
Research Officer  
Political Officer  
One Divisional Officer  
One Representative of the MPs' Group  
Three members of the Executive Council  
The chair of each Divisional Political Committee

Standing invitations are extended to the Rt. Hon. Andrew Smith MP, Chief Secretary of State to the Treasury, and the Union's Education Officer.

### The National Political Conference

The National Political Conference will offer members of the Divisional Political Committees the opportunity for training, networking with members from other divisions, and planning activities for the coming year.

### Conclusion

These developments allow Usdaw's political work to be both member and workplace-centred.

The structure will allow us in time to become the best informed and most effective Union at campaigning on issues that directly affect our members.

# Section 4: Usdaw's Political Campaigning

Usdaw wants to encourage as many members as possible to put forward their point of view about 'political' issues.

Many of us have opinions which we don't think of as 'political', or problems that have 'political' answers, but because we can't or don't go along to our local Labour Party meeting, there doesn't seem to be any way that we can put over our point of view or ask for change.

Whilst Usdaw uses the Annual Delegate Meeting to make formal Union policy on which the Executive Council will lead campaigns, we are a campaigning Union, in regular touch with Usdaw MPs and Government ministers.

If a group of members want the Union to instigate a political campaign, all suggestions on issues that occur between ADMs should be made to the National Political Committee which plans and co-ordinates Usdaw's political campaigning work. We are always informed by ADM policy, but there are often issues that arise that we want to campaign on immediately in order to make a difference.

Last year, with the help of Usdaw members talking to their local Labour Parties we managed to get the Government to agree to ensure fire sprinklers are put in all new large superstores and below are two examples of press coverage we received.

## MP backs sprinkler campaign in store

Trade unionists are pressing for all the Fylde's superstores to be fitted with sprinkler systems to prevent deaths from fires.

Blackpool South MP Gordon Marsden is backing a call by shopworkers' Union Usdaw – the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers – for sprinkler systems in all large stores.

Usdaw delegate Peter Smith told a local Labour Party meeting that the legislation to amend the building regulations would bring Britain into line with countries on the Continent.

### Results

"In Europe, deaths have been dramatically reduced as a result," he said.

Some superstore chains have claimed the sprinkler system could damage stock if it went off accidentally, but Mr Smith said already £1.2bn of stock a year was being damaged by fire.

The 50-year-old Usdaw activist has been appointed as Blackpool South Labour Party's trade union liaison officer – building links between the party and local union branches.

## Fire curb's warm welcome

Swansea shopworkers have welcomed Government plans to introduce tougher fire safety rules in shops.

Existing laws do not compel firms to install sprinkler systems in their stores.

Shopworkers' union Usdaw has been calling for the regulations to be extended to cover shops over 500 square metres.

The Government has now announced plans to extend the law to cover premises of more than

2,000 square metres. Despite the Government not meeting Usdaw's demands, the union's Swansea organiser Nigel Davies said: "This is a step in the right direction.

"But we would like to see it go further.

"I can remember the blaze at a supermarket in Penplas a few years ago.

"That was smaller than 2,000 square metres and the fire spread very quickly because there was no sprinkler system.

"It was lucky there was nobody inside at the time but it had to be demolished and jobs were lost. So it is lives and livelihoods that are at risk."

Local Government and Housing Minister Nick Raynsford announced the new legislation yesterday.

The Government originally wanted to make sprinkler systems mandatory in stores over 4,000 square metres, which would only have covered the largest retail outlets.

## Our current campaigning priorities

The priorities identified for the coming year are:

- Uprating the Minimum Wage and extending the full rate from 18.
- Regulating Zero Hours Contracts.
- Extending Parental Leave to existing parents and campaigning for it to be paid.
- Protect shopworkers in large stores from the possibility of having to work on Christmas Day.
- To extend knowledge about Working Families' Tax Credit and Childcare Tax Credit to all those who could benefit.

These issues are not exclusive and the National Political Committee looks forward to receiving other suggestions from members, although we must always make sure that we are able to give enough time and resources to a campaign to make sure it is effective.

## How you can help

All branches will receive information on how to help each campaign, and some 'campaign packs' have already been issued. The response to the Parental Leave campaign was particularly good, with over 2,000 signatures being collected on the petition.

A programme of work on each campaign is set out below.

Although these are issues on which we feel strongly, we do need to emphasise that we're on the same side as the Government and we do appreciate the measures that have been taken to help working people (these are set out in the next section).

## Campaign on the Minimum Wage

- Collect examples of poorly-paid under-18s, and any examples of employers paying lower rates to 18-21 year olds and send these to the Political Officer.
- Ask your employer what their view is – most employers expected annual uprating when the minimum wage was introduced. Most pay one rate from 18 and would not mind the full rate of the minimum wage applying from 18.
- Write to your MP, telling them of any examples you have found of low payment of young workers and of your employer's view (if it is positive!) Explain that if the minimum wage is not uprated it is in effect being cut in value. Ask them if they agree that it should be uprated as recommended by the Low Pay Commission.
- Raise the issue at your local Labour Party and ask them to include it in their response to the policy consultation papers.
- Write to your local paper. We should show we appreciate the introduction of the minimum wage, but also say that it needs uprating and applying at the full rate from 18, to make sure people continue to benefit.

## Regulating Zero Hours Contracts

This is a hard campaign because to be effective we need to show that Zero Hours Contracts are widespread. It can be hard to find people on them – often there are only one or two in each workplace and they may not even know that they are on a Zero Hours Contract.

- If you know of anyone who is or used to be on a Zero Hours Contract, please send details to the Political Officer who is gathering the evidence together. People don't have to be named if they don't want to.
- Copy your evidence to your local MP and ask whether they agree that Zero Hours Contracts should be regulated. Ask them to copy their reply to the Political Officer.

When the evidence has been amalgamated we will be producing a report into the consequences and effects of Zero Hours Contracts.

## Extending Parental Leave to existing parents

We have already sent a petition and letters to the Government. The TUC is currently seeking Judicial Review of the decision to limit Parental Leave.

This shouldn't stop members from:

- Writing to their MP to ask their view. Again, it's very helpful if they can copy their reply to the Political Officer.
- Raise the issue with their local Labour Party and ask them to raise it in their response to the policy consultation papers.
- Write to the local press – especially if you can demonstrate someone with a new baby who has been able to benefit from the new regulations and compare them to an existing parent who can't.

## 'Protect Christmas Day' Campaign

There is real concern that with increasing competition there will be a move to open larger stores on Christmas Day and there may have to be an element of compulsion to work.

The Government have said that they are not opposed to legislating, but to make a case we need to gather as much information as possible about Christmas opening.

- Please send any examples of local stores opening on Christmas Day to the Political Officer who is collating the evidence.
- Write to your MP setting out your concerns and asking for their view.

## 'Claim It' Campaign on Working Families' Tax Credit

This is a 'good news' campaign. Some members have found that they are up to £80 a week better off when they claim Working Families' Tax Credit. The National Women's Committee have produced some high quality campaign materials which are available from the Stationery Section at Central Office.

Branches are encouraged to:

- Display posters and leaflets on their noticeboard – many who could benefit are part-time workers.
- Hold meetings or Federation Schools to educate members about who can claim and how much better off they'd be.
- Labour MPs will usually be more than happy to visit your workplace to explain about Working Families' Tax Credit. Many employers who would object to an ordinary workplace visit don't mind their staff being told how to claim more money without the employer paying! An informal meeting over a lunch or break period in the canteen or at the end of a major shift is ideal. You may be able to use the opportunity to recruit new members to Usdaw!

These are campaigns that any member can get involved in – the more people participate, the more chance we have of getting some action!

But we need to bear in mind that without the Labour Government we would be in a far worse situation, and we also need our members to help us gain a second term of office for Labour so they can carry on the good work.

The next section sets out what the Government has achieved and part of our campaigning work is to help people remember just how much has been done.

# Section 5: The Achievements of the Labour Government

In the last three years the Labour Government has put in place a radical agenda of change.

It is easy to forget just how much progress has been made since 1997.

In their first term in office, the Labour Government have targeted help to those who need it most:

- Families with children.
- The poorest pensioners.
- The long-term unemployed.
- Areas of high social deprivation.
- The lowest paid employees and those with bad conditions of employment.

This section sets out Labour's achievements in three key areas:

- Fairness at Work.
- Family-friendly policies.
- Helping pensioners.

An awful lot has been achieved that **has** changed many people's lives for the better.

But we know that there is still much to do. We have our own agenda for changes that we'd like to see over the next few years.

But none of those changes will be achieved unless the Labour Party is re-elected at the next General Election which is probably less than 12 months away.

The next section sets out how you can help to win that election.

## Fairness at Work

The last three years has seen a comprehensive change in workplace relations.

After nearly 20 years of attacks on trade unions and employees' rights, we are at last seeing a shift in the balance towards fairness. We wouldn't claim yet that it's a 'level playing field' with employers, but for the first time in this country's history we have a set of basic minimum employment standards:

- A National Minimum Wage which benefited over two million people.
- The right to four weeks' paid holiday.
- The right to a maximum working week and guaranteed rest breaks.
- A statutory right to trade union recognition.

The Government is encouraging employers to take a 'partnership' approach to unions and that is starting to pay off. Usdaw's membership has been rising for two years and now, after years of decline, other unions are also starting to grow.

Only with the continued spread of trade unionism will we begin to achieve a fair balance in the workplace, but both the Employment Relations Act and the Social Chapter have introduced important rights:

- The reduction from two years' to 12 months' employment to claim unfair dismissal.
- The right to accompaniment at a grievance or disciplinary hearing.
- Protection against dismissal in the first eight weeks of a strike.

- The Part-Time Work Directive to give equal rights and benefits to part-time workers.

The Executive Council Statements on *Fairness at Work* and *Part-Time Work – New Regulations* set these measures out in full, together with the improvements that Usdaw would like to see.

The seismic change in the climate of industrial relations in the last three years is undeniable and goes a long way towards eradicating the conditions that had made Britain the ‘sweatshop of Europe’.

## Family-Friendly Policies

The Labour Government is committed to eradicating the poverty that currently affects four million children.

They are also concerned to help millions of working parents achieve a better balance between their work and family life. With the longest working hours in Europe, that usually means helping working parents to spend more time with their children when they need to.

The principal measures introduced have been:

### Financial measures

- Working Families’ Tax Credit guarantees at least £200 per week to families in full-time work.
- The Childcare Tax Credit reimburses up to 70% of childcare charges up to £100 per week for one child and £150 per week for two children.
- The largest ever increase in Child Benefit to £15 per week for the first child and £10 for subsequent children.
- Extension of the Disability Living Allowance to apply to three and four year olds.
- Maternity pay is now available to all those earning over £30 per week. Previously, all those earning under the limit for National Insurance of £64 per week were excluded.
- From April 2001 the Children’s Tax Credit will lower families’ tax bills, being worth over twice as much as the Married Couples’ Allowance.

Taken together, these measures substantially benefit families with children – finally putting an end to the ‘benefits trap’ and making work worthwhile.

### Rights to time off for working parents

- An increase from 14 weeks’ to 18 weeks’ maternity leave, available after one year’s service (reduced from two years).
- 13 weeks’ unpaid Parental Leave for all parents of babies born after 15 December or of disabled children aged up to 18.
- 13 weeks’ unpaid leave for those adopting children.
- The right to reasonable time off work to deal with a family emergency.

These measures should prove of long-term benefit to both parents and children, helping parents stay in work.

## Helping pensioners

Faced with the long-term problem of an ageing population and decreasing workforce, the Government has targeted most help to the poorest pensioners.

Measures include:

- The winter fuel allowance of £100 to every pensioner household.
- A Minimum Income Guarantee to encourage pensioners eligible for Income Support to claim. The level will rise in line with earnings rather than prices, and this year has increased from £75 to £78 for a single person and from £116 to £121 for couples – an increase of 4% and nearly £800 a year higher than under the Tories.
- Free television licences for the over 75's.
- A minimum guarantee on tax which means that those aged 65-74 with an income of £110 per week or less; and those aged 75 or more with an income of £115 per week or less will no longer have to pay any Income Tax. 200,000 pensioners have ceased to pay Income Tax as a result of this and other Government measures.
- The introduction of the 10p starting rate of tax applying to investment income.
- The reduction of VAT on heating from 8% to 5%. The Tories would have increased it to 17.5%.

Although Usdaw are continuing to campaign to redress the devaluation of pensions during the 18 Tory years, these measures combine to make a substantial difference, particularly for the poorest pensioners.

# Section 6: Winning the Next General Election

In order for the Labour Government to continue the good work that they are doing Labour needs to win the next General Election.

And to make change as deep and as lasting as possible we need to make sure that this coming election lays the groundwork for the one after that.

To make sure that we don't get a return to the Tories within five years, we need a substantial Labour majority at this election which will probably be held in Spring 2001.

## The General Election strategy

The results of the European Elections showed that however high Labour is riding in the polls, our supporters need to be motivated and mobilised to vote – otherwise we will lose.

At the last election Labour supporters were very motivated to vote – we all wanted to get rid of the Tories. Now people are less motivated for lots of reasons:

- They perceive that Labour is way ahead in the opinion polls and that the result is a foregone conclusion. The Tories are so weak and divided they don't seem like a threat.
- 18 years of Conservative Government induced cynicism about politics and politicians. The sleaze of the Tories has tarnished everyone.
- Increasing numbers of people feel that their vote can't make a difference.
- There are more calls on people's time and more organisations seeking to influence them.

Labour's strategy is to encourage as many of our voters as possible to vote, regardless of how marginal the seat is.

However, obviously to secure as large a majority as possible and to build the basis of a third term of Labour Government, we need to retain as many of the 146 seats that were won from other parties in the 1997 election. These seats will be where the Party concentrates its resources and effort, particularly the 66 seats that were not key seats and therefore have lots more work to do.

But this strategy gives a key role to trade unions to encourage workplace activists and members in their own workplaces to vote.

The next section concentrates on campaigning in your own workplace which is relevant to all members whilst the one following sets out how Usdaw members can work in key seats, especially those which the Divisional Offices are targeting.

## Campaigning in your own workplace

Campaigning among your colleagues where you work is the easiest and most effective way to help Labour win.

### Employers' attitudes

At the start of the last General Election campaign many employers were wary of allowing workplace campaigning. However, towards the end of the campaign when it was clear that Labour were likely to win, many became noticeably more encouraging. With Labour now in Government, and likely to remain so, employers' attitudes are much more accommodating.

This section sets out the different options available for campaigning which come under four main categories:

- Ensuring supporters are registered to vote.
- Organising postal and proxy votes.
- Meeting the Labour MP or candidate.
- Encouraging supporters to vote.

## Registering to vote

The first task towards encouraging Usdaw members to vote Labour is to make sure that they are all able to vote and that work can start now. People who may not be registered to vote are those who:

- Have just reached 18.
- Move house after September when the council compiles the Electoral Register.

It's just a case of checking with anyone who turns 18 that they're registered to vote, and reminding those who move after September to request a form to register with the local Council.

If you ask the local Council for a few blank forms you could pin them on your noticeboard with a note asking anyone who thinks they may not be registered to vote to fill one in – that way you'll catch people on different shifts.

This is **not** Party political work – it simply ensures that everyone can exercise their right to vote. If a manager queries it, it's always worth pointing out that it can often help companies if all their staff go out and vote – it certainly doesn't come amiss if the company has a planning application in and needs the support of the local councillor!

## Postal and proxy votes

People with a postal or proxy vote are twice as likely to vote as those who don't. The main difficulty in this election will be getting Labour supporters to vote. Therefore, some time spent organising postal or, preferably, proxy votes for Labour supporters well before the election, will considerably lessen the workload on polling day and increase Labour's chance of winning.

In many marginal seats the election may be won or lost on the postal vote. Usdaw activists are best able to identify Labour supporters in their workplace who may need a postal vote and to help them to apply for one.

## What's involved?

The forms look very official but actually simply involve completing:

- Name and address.
- Whether a postal or proxy vote is required.
- The reason for wanting a postal or proxy vote.

They then need to be returned to either the local council or the Labour Party before the deadline of two weeks and one day before the election.

## A postal or a proxy vote?

Postal vote forms arrive around one week before the election. They should therefore not be used by anyone who will not be at home then – for example if they are on holiday for a longer period.

Postal votes can be delivered in person on the day so are ideal for someone who isn't sure whether or not they will be able to vote on the day, but would like to if they can.

Proxy votes are the surest way of ensuring that a vote is made (as long as the proxy is trustworthy!) However, one person can only hold proxy votes for two other people (unless they are family members).

If members need to appoint a reliable proxy, the best way is to contact the Labour MP or Labour candidate's office as they will be organising Labour Party members to hold proxies.

## Who can apply?

**Permanent** postal or proxy votes, valid in every election, can be obtained by:

- People whose jobs take them away from home. For example, drivers and trade union officials. Your employer will need to countersign your form (Form RPF 7).
- People who are unable to vote because of long-term sickness or mobility problems. Ask members to consider whether they know any Labour supporters in this category. Their doctor will need to countersign the form (Form RPF 9B).
- People who have moved home into another constituency and are unable to re-register at their new address (Form RPF 8).

All these forms are available from your local council or from the Labour Party on 08705 900 200.

**Anyone can apply for a postal vote for a single election.** The form is RPF 9A and there is a copy at the back of this booklet. Councils accept photocopies. The reason for applying for a postal vote would be that the applicant 'is unable to attend to vote in person'.

## Returning the forms

All forms should be returned either to your local council or to Labour Party Postal Votes Unit, Millbank Tower, London SW1P 4GT.

## Publicity

Publicising the right to a postal vote is important. If possible, put up a sign on noticeboards encouraging people to apply for a postal or proxy vote and attach copies of the form at the back of this booklet.

But you will also need to ask around and offer encouragement and advice.

## What's the deadline?

The deadline for postal and proxy votes is:

**The Wednesday that falls two weeks and one day before Polling Day**, e.g. if the election is on Thursday, 4 May, the deadline for postal and proxy votes would be Wednesday, 18 April.

**Emergency** postal or proxy votes are also available up to one week before Polling Day for those who are suddenly taken ill or who need to care for someone suddenly taken ill.

## This is not Party political work

Organising members to apply for postal or proxy votes is **not** Party political work. Some companies are keen for as many of their staff as possible to vote. You may like to ask whether they would consider distributing postal vote application forms themselves either to everyone, or to specific groups such as those on early evening shifts or transport workers.

## Meeting the Labour MP or candidate

All the evidence shows that when people get a chance to meet a Labour MP or candidate, they move sharply towards Labour. It also gives members the opportunity to put across their point of view about issues that affect them.

The best way to meet members is for the MP to come to the workplace and this can be organised at any time. A visit well before the election period can be far more useful as more time can be spent and the MP has time to act on suggestions or take up cases.

Again, workplace visits are much more viable now that Labour are in Government. Many firms will invite the MP to visit, as a matter of course, but the MP will always want to meet as many members as possible and Usdaw activists can help them do so.

Activists can organise the following at any time:

- A 'formal' workplace visit where the MP or candidate will meet management, but will also want to meet members and sufficient time should be allowed for this, preferably in the canteen or during a rest break.

- A ‘drop-in visit’ to the canteen, etc. It is often possible to do this with an informal approach where a formal one failed.
- A visit on an issue of particular concern to members. All Labour MPs are keen to explain Working Families’ Tax Credit and many members and their families are potentially able to claim and could well benefit from a meeting. Most useful would be an arrangement either at or near the workplace, either during a lunch break, or covering a shift change so some can come before their shift and others when they finish. You may also be able to use this as an opportunity to recruit new members to Usdaw.
- Invite the MP or candidate to an Usdaw meeting or social event.
- Ask for details of suitable political or social events organised by the local Labour Party that Usdaw members could attend.

It is easier to get MPs into a workplace than candidates, but it never hurts to ask! Where a Labour MP is retiring, they will want to introduce the new Labour candidate to as many people as possible, so always ensure any invitations are extended to both.

Many firms will be keen for the MP to visit and will appreciate your asking, especially if they gain an opportunity for some publicity. As the election draws closer, ministers will be joining MPs when they campaign. Most MPs will want to take a minister to somewhere they know they will get a good reception and will be much keener to go to a workplace they have already visited. This argument may help to convince your manager!

## Encouraging members to vote

### Getting the message across

Given the anti-Government stance of practically all of the press, we do have a job to do to remind members what the Labour Government have achieved and what we still need them to do.

Section 5 listed some of the Government’s achievements that affect our members, and Section 4 listed some of the issues that we still need to work for, but that we will only achieve if Labour is re-elected.

It is also important for people to realise that it is possible for Labour to lose the election if not enough of our supporters vote – just look at what happened in the European Elections.

Methods for getting the message across include:

- Putting up posters where permitted.
- Distributing leaflets either inside or outside the workplace.
- Articles in branch newsletters.

Posters and leaflets will be available, both through the local Labour Party and through Usdaw. For ideas for branch newsletters, refer to the Political Officer at Central Office.

### Encouraging voting on Election Day

We need to make a special effort on Election Day to encourage supporters to vote. At least if they vote before they get home they won’t be called on by local Party activists!

Methods which should all be used include:

- Distributing a last minute leaflet urging supporters to vote.
- Speaking to all supporters to encourage them to vote, preferably on the way home. You may want to recruit a small group to help you do this to ensure that you can speak to people in all different areas and on all shifts.
- Ask supporters when they get home to encourage their family to vote (if they are Labour supporters!)

**Finally:** either join in the Labour Party election night party, or organise your own with other Usdaw members to watch the results come in and celebrate the result in the knowledge you’ve deserved it!

## Helping the Labour Party in marginal seats

It is especially important for Labour to hold onto as many marginal seats as possible. The seats that will be hardest to win are the 146 constituencies that Labour won for the first time in 1997. These are the seats that are vital to hold onto if Labour is to win an overall majority and form the next Government.

Usdaw has a proud tradition of helping the Labour Party in key seats and we have built strong links with particular constituencies and MPs.

Where the Union designates that Usdaw will give particular assistance to the Labour campaign in a certain seat, an Usdaw co-ordinator is appointed and a team of Union members works with the Labour Party in that seat. The work done varies according to what people want to do and what is needed – anything from telephoning voters, to delivering leaflets, to helping on a street stall, to working with a group in the campaign centre.

Anyone can join in – you don't even have to be a member of the Labour Party. Election work tends to be friendly and fun and the excitement builds as the election draws nearer!

The Labour Party will welcome anyone who's prepared to help out in any constituency and there's always a great team spirit. If you want to help, just phone your local Labour office.

Below is a list of the constituencies which Usdaw is prioritising and where Usdaw teams will be helping out. If you'd like to join in, however much time you have, or just see what's involved, then ring your Divisional Office. No experience necessary!

### Usdaw for Labour Key Seats

#### A South Wales & Western

Plymouth Sutton  
Exeter  
Bristol North West  
Cardiff Central  
Llanelli  
Monmouth

#### B North Western

Blackpool North  
Blackpool South  
Chester

#### C Eastern

Harrow East  
Norwich North  
Enfield North

#### D Manchester

Chorley  
Staffordshire Moorlands

#### E Midlands

Corby  
Halesowen  
Northampton North

#### F North Eastern

Tynemouth  
Elmet  
Brigg & Goole

#### G Scottish

Eastwood  
Stirling  
Edinburgh Pentlands

#### H Southern

Crawley  
Portsmouth North  
Croydon North  
Croydon Central

To join the Usdaw for Labour team in any of these constituencies, please ring the appropriate Divisional Office.

# Conclusion

The aim of this Statement is to show Usdaw members how they can get involved in politics, and to give them as much information as possible to equip members to just do it!

But we all know that however much information you read, sometimes you just want to talk things through before you feel able to make a start.

If you would like to discuss how you can get involved in politics, please contact either the Political Officer at Central Office or your Divisional Political Co-ordinator.

Whatever you do **will** make a difference, so keep that in mind and enjoy yourself!

# Appendices

## Labour Party Membership Form

### Join Labour today

I wish to become a member of The Labour Party. Usdaw members paying the political levy can join at special rate of £6 (or £4 for the first year if paying by Direct Debit).



**BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE and / the box where appropriate.**

Surname  Title   
Forename(s)  Male  Female   
Branch/Workplace   
Union Membership No. (See membership card)   
 I have paid the political levy for the last 12 months. (This will be verified by Usdaw Central Office)  
Address   
Town  County   
Postcode (in full)  Date of Birth  Tel No.   
 I enclose a cheque/PO made payable to 'The Labour Party' to the value of £6 for membership of the Party  
 I wish to pay Access/Visa/Amex/Diners Club  
Expiry Date   
 I enclose a donation £    
*I am a member of Usdaw. I am **not** currently a member of The Labour Party and understand that membership of the Party requires that the details given are correct. I accept the rules and constitution of the Party.*  
Signed  Date   
Recruited by: Name   
Ushaw Branch No. (See membership card)

### Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society Branch  
To: The Manager  
Bank or Building Society  
Address  
Postcode

  
Originator's Identification Number  
9 7 1 4 1 0  
Reference Number  
(to be completed by the Labour Party)

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch sort code

**Instruction to your Bank or Building Society.** Please pay the Labour Party Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction, subject to the safeguards assured by The Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with the Labour Party and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature(s)  
Date

**Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account.**

**On completion please send this form to: Usdaw, FREEPOST, Manchester M14 7DJ**  
Published by Usdaw, Oakley, 188 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 6LJ

# Form to affiliate a branch to a Constituency Labour Party

Central Office Form AY

## Application for Constituency Labour Party Affiliation Fees



Please fill in all the white boxes on this form in **BLOCK LETTERS** and send it to:  
Accounts Department, Usdaw, Oakley, 188 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 6LJ.

Branch Name	Branch No.
-------------	------------

Labour Party correspondence should be sent to:

Name of Branch Official \_\_\_\_\_

Position in Branch \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

**1**

Name of GC Delegate \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

**2**

Name of GC Delegate \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Calendar year covered by affiliation fee	<input type="text"/>	Number of members to be affiliated (minimum 100)	<input type="text"/>	Total fee claimed @ 6p per member (minimum £6)	£ <input type="text"/>
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Signed

Please give the following details of the Constituency Labour Party to which the Branch wishes to affiliate.  
Payment will be made direct from Central Office.

Name of Constituency Labour Party

CLP Code  (For Office use only)



# Postal and Proxy Vote Form RPF 9A

<b>Application to vote by post or proxy at a particular election</b>		<b>Office use</b> RPF 9A Const. _____										
Read the notes below before completing <b>both sides</b> of this form in <b>BLOCK LETTERS</b>		Poll district _____ Elect No. _____										
<b>Part 1</b>	<b>About yourself</b>											
<b>Your name</b>	Surname _____ Forenames in full _____											
<b>Present address</b>	Post code _____ Telephone number(s) (if any) _____											
<b>Address on Register</b>	<b>This might not be your present address - see notes below</b> _____ Post code _____											
<b>Which election?</b>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><b>My application is for the -</b></td> <td style="width: 15%;"><b>Parliamentary Election</b></td> <td style="width: 15%;"><b>European Parliamentary Election</b></td> <td style="width: 15%;"><b>Local Government Election</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>Date of Election</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Tick box which applies</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"> _ _ _ _ </td> </tr> </table>		<b>My application is for the -</b>	<b>Parliamentary Election</b>	<b>European Parliamentary Election</b>	<b>Local Government Election</b>	<b>Date of Election</b>	<i>Tick box which applies</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_ _ _ _
<b>My application is for the -</b>	<b>Parliamentary Election</b>	<b>European Parliamentary Election</b>	<b>Local Government Election</b>	<b>Date of Election</b>								
<i>Tick box which applies</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_ _ _ _								
<b>Reason for this application</b>	<b>Important - see notes below</b> Give detailed reasons why you need an absent vote: <i>I cannot reasonably be expected to vote in person at my polling station at that election because -</i> _____ _____											
<b>Your Signature</b> →	I hereby apply for <b>either*</b> a postal <b>or*</b> a proxy vote on the grounds set out above. Date  _ _ _ _  <small>*delete whichever does not apply</small>											
<b>Now complete the other side of this form</b> →												

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**REGISTER OF ELECTORS**  
Representation of the People Acts  
European Parliamentary Elections Act 1978

**About this form**

This form tells me that you want to vote by post, or get someone else to vote on your behalf, at a particular election. It is for people who have a right to vote but who cannot reasonably be expected to vote in person at their polling station on the day of the poll. This form is a legal document and your vote may depend on it. Fill it in carefully using **BLOCK LETTERS** throughout - except for your signature. Each elector must apply on a separate form - so for example a married couple who want to apply need two forms.

**How to fill in this form - Important advice from your Electoral Registration Officer**

**About Part 1**

Fill in your full name and present address in the space provided. The **address on register** is the address for which you are entered in my register of electors. I cannot give you an absent vote unless you are on my register of electors.

If you are living at your present address since before 11th October last year then it is likely that you are registered for your present address. In that case just write *'as above'*.

If you have changed address within the last 16 months, it is possible that you are still registered at your previous address and not at your present address. If you are in any doubt you should check the register and fill in the address given there (copies of the register should be available in your local library, some post offices and council offices).

If you are registered to vote as a service voter, an overseas elector or following a 'patient's declaration', the address you give should be that for which you are registered as an elector. **Contact me or my staff at the Council Offices if you are in doubt about what address to give in part 1.**

Now fill in the details of the election at which you want to vote by post or proxy and give me the reason for your application. Explain where you expect to be on polling day and why you cannot reasonably be expected to vote in person, e.g. *"I shall be away on holiday at... on polling day"* or *"I am recovering from a serious accident/illness and find it difficult to get about"*. If the application is because of illness please state what the illness is.

**There is a separate form RPF9(B) for people who need a postal or proxy vote because of unforeseen health reasons and have missed the normal closing date.**

**Part 2**

**Post or proxy voting?**

Read the notes below before you fill in either the By Post or the By Proxy section

**By Post**

If you choose to vote by post, give here the UK address to which the ballot paper is to be sent, then cross out the By Proxy section below.

**OR**

**By Proxy**

If you choose to vote by proxy give the name and address of your proxy below. You must first make certain that the person is willing, and able to be appointed, to vote on your behalf - please read the notes below

Proxy's full name

Proxy's address

Postcode

Postcode

Proxy's relationship to you (if any)

Either \* I have consulted the person named above and I confirm that he/she is willing and able to be appointed to vote on my behalf

or \* I, the person named above, confirm that I am willing and able to be appointed to vote on behalf of the applicant.

**Your Signature**

Applicant's signature..... Proxy's signature .....

\*delete the statement which does not apply

**Warning**

A fine of up to £5,000 can be incurred by anyone who on this application makes a statement he or she knows to be false.

**About Part 2**

You can choose whether you want to vote by post or get someone else (called a 'proxy') to vote on your behalf. You cannot choose both. If you prefer a postal vote, fill in the address to which I should send your ballot paper. It must be within the U.K. We normally send out postal ballot papers about a week before polling day. So if you are not likely to receive yours around that time at the address you give me, you should consider choosing a proxy.

If you decide to apply to vote by proxy, and you have consulted your proxy and can confirm that he or she is willing and able to be appointed to vote for you, then only you need sign in the space provided. Otherwise, your proxy must also sign his or her name. Not everyone is allowed to act as a proxy. Your proxy must:

- be able to vote in the type of election concerned (he/she need not be currently registered as an elector)

- not have agreed to act as a proxy for more than two electors including yourself. He/she is however allowed to act as proxy for any number of his/her relatives (husband/wife, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild)

Note too that:

- if I grant you a postal vote you are not allowed to vote at the polling station
- if I grant you a vote by proxy you may vote in person, but only if your proxy has not already voted on your behalf or has not applied for a postal vote to vote on your behalf

**How to return the form**

The form should be returned to the Electoral Registration Officer for the area in which you are registered to vote. You must make sure that this application reaches me at the Council Offices\*

by NOON on

NOTE If there is no date given on the form, the closing date is noon, 13 working days before polling day (working days exclude weekends, bank holidays, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day).

\*In Scotland, the form should be sent to the office of the Electoral Registration Officer.

Don't lose your right to vote



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# General Election Volunteer Form

## General Election Volunteer Form



**Join lots of Usdaw members campaigning for a second term of a Labour Government**

Yes I can help the Labour Party by:

- Delivering leaflets
- Arranging for the candidate to visit my workplace
- Arranging postal votes at work
- Phoning voters
- Knocking on doors with the candidate (blitzing)
- Helping with a street stall

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Workplace \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact No. \_\_\_\_\_

*Full training will be given if you are unsure and there will always be a group of you. Choose between campaigning locally or travelling to your local key marginal seat for extra effectiveness against the Tories.*

**Please return to: Ruth Stoney, The Political Officer, Usdaw, 188 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 6LJ or Fax: 0161-257 2566**



# Request list for Factsheets

## Getting Involved in the Labour Party Information and Advice for Usdaw Members



Please tick the boxes if you would like information on any of the following

- Policy Forums – how to help make policy
- Setting up your own Policy Forums
- Becoming an Usdaw delegate to your Constituency Labour Party
- Becoming an officer of the Labour Party
- Becoming a school governor
- Becoming a Labour-nominated Justice of the Peace
- Standing as a local council candidate
- Getting involved in Election Campaigns
- Campaigning for Usdaw policies
- Recruiting Usdaw members to the Labour Party

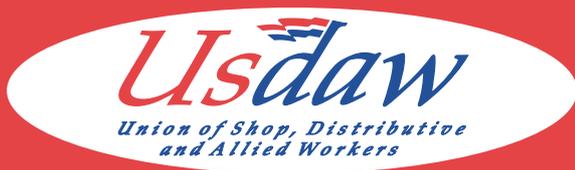
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return to: Ruth Stoney, The Political Officer, Usdaw, 188 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 6LJ**





Usdaw  
Oakley  
188 Wilmslow Road  
Fallowfield  
Manchester  
M14 6LJ