Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight Day

Celebrating Different Minds

25 June 2025

Supporting Reps

Are you new to campaigning?
Not sure what Spotlight Day is all about?
Wondering how to get involved?
Read on...

This year, on Wednesday 25 June, Usdaw is organising a campaign day to highlight the issues facing neurodivergent members at work and raising awareness of the support available to parents and carers who have neurodivergent family members.

The campaign day is called a 'Spotlight Day' and it happens once a year. Each year, the theme of the day changes.

The campaign day this year has the theme 'Celebrating Different Minds'.

The aims of the day are to raise awareness of neurodiversity and the support neurodivergent members and those who are parenting neurodivergent children, or caring for neurodivergent adults, can expect to receive at work. The campaign also signposts members to organisations that specialise in advising neurodivergent people and their families about the support they are entitled to outside of the workplace.

Every year, hundreds of reps get involved on Spotlight Day. If you are new to organising campaigning activity, you might be wondering what steps you can take to get involved on Spotlight Day.

You can choose to do as much or as little as you like.

First of all, talk to your site manager or shop personnel manager to agree how the Spotlight Day campaign could be run in your workplace.

Running A Campaign Stand

- You could set up a campaign stand in the canteen, a staff area or on the shop floor. You'll need to agree the location with your manager. If you come up against any problems, get in touch with your Area Organiser.
- Try and agree a time when there will be plenty of your colleagues around for you to talk to about the campaign. If your site or store functions on a 24-hour basis, you might want to approach other reps (if you have them) or members to ask for help to staff the campaign stand at key times during the day and night.
- Tick the box on the order form telling us that you are organising a stand and we will send you everything you need, including leaflets, posters and free 'giveaways' like sweets and keyrings.
- Talk to members and non-members about the campaign. Take a look at the reps briefing and the key messages in this campaign pack for some ideas about how you might start the conversation.
- Ask colleagues to fill in the enclosed survey. This raises awareness of the Union's campaign. Hand out the leaflets too. You can get extra copies of the survey from the Union's website: **www.usdaw.org.uk/spcsurveypdf** Return the survey to the freepost address listed on it. Alternatively, point members in the direction of the online survey that can be found here: **www.usdaw.org.uk/spcsurvey**
- Ask colleagues to fill out the 'pledge card' (which looks like a postcard). Cut the pledge card in two. Give one section back to the member / non-member who has pledged their support for the campaign and return the signed section to Usdaw.
- You can get free extra copies of all the campaign materials by using the enclosed order form or visiting Usdaw's website: **www.usdaw.org.uk/spcorder**

Theming Your Noticeboard

If you are not able to commit time to the campaign, or you work in a small store but still want to get the message across to members in your workplace, you can use the union noticeboard in your workplace to display campaign materials.

This is a great way to run a visible campaign if you are not able to commit time-wise.

If you think this may be the best option for you, please tick the enclosed order form for a 'Noticeboard Pack' and we will send you a pack of materials to enable you to quickly and easily take part.

Scan the code to visit the campaign area on the Usdaw website:
www.usdaw.org.uk/spc

Campaign briefing overleaf...

USDAW EQUALITIES

Campaign Briefing

At least one in five people in the UK are thought to be neurodivergent.

Neurodiversity is the term that is commonly used to describe the differences in how people's brains behave and process information. It refers to the fact that we all think, learn and act differently and have different strengths and challenges.

It can be helpful to think of neurodiversity in the same way as we think about physical differences between people. Some people are taller than others, or stronger. Just as we recognise and accept that we are all physically different, the same is true of our brains.

These differences are something to be celebrated, which is why the theme of this year's Supporting Parents and Carers Spotlight Day is 'Celebrating Different Minds'.

Usdaw is using the day this year to celebrate neurodiversity. Without it, the world would be a poorer place as we'd miss out on all the different observations, insights, interpretations and discoveries made by neurodivergent minds.

What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodivergent describes someone whose brain works differently to what is considered by society as more typical (neurotypical).

Some well-known types of neurodivergence are:

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
- Autism.
- Dyslexia.
- Dyspraxia.

Other types of neurodivergence include:

- Dyscalculia – a specific and persistent difficulty in understanding numbers.
- Tourette's syndrome.

Neurodiversity is not an illness, and not every neurodivergent person will see themselves as, or be considered, disabled. However, being neurodivergent will often amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act in Northern Ireland. This matters because these laws give disabled workers important rights and protections at work.

For example:

- The right not to be discriminated against because of a disability.
- The right to reasonable adjustments at work to things like job duties, the workplace environment or working hours.

Raising Awareness and Starting Workplace Conversations About Neurodiversity

A lack of awareness and understanding of neurodiversity, leads to neurodivergent members, and parents and carers of neurodivergent children and adults, being excluded from, and treated less favourably in, the workplace.

For instance, recent research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has found that:

- One in five neurodivergent workers (20%) have experienced harassment or discrimination at work because of their neurodivergence.
- Just under a third of neurodivergent workers (31%) hadn't told their line manager or HR department about their neurodivergence. Of this group, over a third (37%) said it was because they were worried about people making assumptions based on stereotypes, and one in three said they feel that stigma gets in the way of their seeking support.

Stereotypes, negative assumptions and stigma combine to prevent neurodivergent workers from talking about their neurodivergence in the workplace; whilst no one has to tell their employer or their Union rep about their neurodivergence, talking about it is the first step in getting the support and adjustments a member might need at work.

The same survey also found that:

- Only 37% of neurodivergent workers surveyed feel their company provides meaningful support to neurodivergent individuals.
- A third (33%) say their experience at work, in relation to their neurodivergence, has had a negative impact on their mental wellbeing.
- Neurodivergent employees are more likely to always or often feel exhausted (45% vs 30%), feel under excessive pressure (35% vs 29%) and be lonelier at work (23% vs 17%), than neurotypical employees.

Tackling stigma and raising awareness are crucial to removing the barriers neurodivergent members come up against in the workplace, addressing the discrimination they can face and improving their physical and mental health.

We also know that Usdaw members who are parents and carers supporting neurodivergent children and young adults experience problems at work. They may need support themselves; help to access social security benefits and health and social services, and, of course, help at work to enable them to balance their paid work with their care commitments.

Spotlight Day this year aims to improve the support neurodivergent members, members who are parenting neurodivergent children, and members who are supporting or caring for neurodivergent adults receive at work.

Where members are experiencing problems outside of work, like accessing services, we can help by signposting them to outside, independent organisations.

Included in this campaign pack, you will find everything you need to know about how to get involved in this year's Spotlight Day.

By getting involved on Spotlight Day, you can help reach out to members in your workplace and show that Usdaw can help and is not just there for when things go wrong at work.

USDAW EQUALITIES

#EveryMindMatters