

**GMB**

**CONGRESS 2022**

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**BARBARA PLANT  
(President)  
(In the Chair)**

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**Held in:**

**Harrogate Convention Centre,  
King's Road, Harrogate HG1 5LA**

**on:**

**Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2022  
Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022  
Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022  
Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2022  
and  
Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022.**

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**PROCEEDINGS  
DAY 3  
(Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022)**

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## THIRD DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2022

### MORNING SESSION

*(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)*

THE PRESIDENT: Delegates, can I ask you to take your seats, please. Can I call Congress to order, please? Take your seats. Good morning, delegates. Welcome back to Congress. I hope you all had an enjoyable evening last night.

Before we start, can I remind you to switch your devices off or make sure they are on silent.

Can I also remind speakers that if you wish to display an image in the hall, including signs, then these should be submitted to the Standing Orders Committee for approval by the relevant Regional Secretary.

We are going to do things a little differently this morning. We will start with a question and answer session on the future of work, featuring employers in the courier and platform economy. The session will be chaired by our National Officer, Mick Rix, and could delegates who submitted a question please be ready.

There will then need to be a short break. We need to put the rostrum back on the stage, but after the break Congress will debate the Special Report on the Future of Work. I will now hand over to Mick.

### **FUTURE OF WORK Q&A SESSION**

MICK RIX: Thank you. Good morning, Congress.

*(Introductory Video played to Congress)*

MICK RIX (National Officer): Good morning, Congress. We thought it would be a really good way to introduce the debate about Making Work Better and The Future World of Work to organise a bit of a panel where different companies can say what they are doing and how they are going to move forward in the future but also to give the opportunity to you as delegates to contribute to that debate as well because it will influence what will be taking place later in Congress.

First of all, can I just say welcome to Leeds. I know you think you are in Harrogate but you are really in Leeds! *(Applause)* To my fellow good comrades from Leeds in Yorkshire, it's good to see you all. *(Cheers)*

I would like to make some brief introductions. It is really important we go through this. We have Paul Bedford from Deliveroo, we have Emma O'Dwyer from Uber, we have Carl Lyon from Evri, which was formerly Hermes, and if you have a missing parcel he said see him afterwards, and we have our very own Hazel Nolan, Northern Regional Secretary.

There are a number of things we want to go through in how we deal with a number of these issues. I think people are seeing that the world of work is rapidly changing, piece-work or piece-rates are becoming more prevalent, there are now millions of people working within the gig or are using platform technology, it is spreading right across a number of areas. This is a huge challenge not only for our union and the trade union Movement but it is a huge challenge for lots of people. I have always made the point that the gig economy does not have to be the Wild West for workers' rights. I do think they can be a force for good and I think the issues in the last year or two in the recognition agreements that we have been dealing with in these three very large companies within their own fields of excellence demonstrate that we can do a number of these issues.

The question to you all, and I will just go round everybody, is basically in perhaps what is considered a precarious, insecure, working environment how do we work together to try and make work more secure for working people and how can they contribute to life, and do the things that we would all expect that work is supposed to be providing for people. Just on that point, if we start with you, Paul, say a few words, introduce yourself, and then just go into the question as well, please.

PAUL BEDFORD: Thank you very much for having me, Congress. My name is Paul, as Mick said, and I work at Deliveroo and have spent the last couple of months getting to know Mick very well as we negotiated our parts of the agreement and became I think one of the newest members of the GMB family. In terms of your question, Mick, how do we address this, I think the simple answer is by doing what we have done and by entering partnerships with unions to support the proposition we offer to riders. We as a platform and as Deliveroo what we have always really cared about is ensuring that riders get flexibility and get security, and there should not be a trade-off between the two, and that the current laws in the UK do not prevent platforms like us offering more benefits and security for riders. You share that agenda so the way I think to improve standards and to raise the bar is by working with unions like the GMB. That is why I am quite proud that we have done that deal and we start it properly in September.

MICK RIX: Thank you, Paul. Carl.

CARL LYON: First and foremost again thanks for inviting us to this Congress. We are delighted to be here and be part of the panel. Just a quick one as an introduction, we are Evri, formerly Hermes, we have been delivering parcels since the 1970s, based out of Yorkshire, that is where we started, and then grew and then obviously with the increase went national and I think you know we are very proud of our relationship with the GMB and how we entered that. I know a lot of it is ground-breaking but I think we may be the first creating that relationship and SE+ model. I think to answer the question we embarked on that journey a couple of years ago and I just reiterate really it is about working with a representational model making sure we get all the feedback from the union and making sure that we continue to strengthen the model in the way we are going. For example, we have just announced that we are providing pensions. We already have the security of the national living wage and lots of other things like holidays. I am sure we will come on to more government legislation and how that will work in the future and we welcome that but, ultimately, I think it is

about making sure we continue on the journey we are on and making sure the GMB, the union, are a big part of that.

MICK RIX: Emma.

EMMA O'DWYER: Thank you, Mick. First of all, I want to ask, did you practise that Leeds joke this morning? (*Laughter*) Thank you for having me. I am really, really proud to be here. It is one year on since we did our agreement with the GMB and I think it just shows the most important thing unions bring is accountability and I think you have brought that to Uber and the conversations that we have with Mick, Ali, and others, have I think provided us with huge opportunities to kind of build on our offer to drivers and bring the benefits and rights to a workforce that has never had them before. I think things like the first pension scheme in the gig economy is really something for you guys to be proud of and has only happened because of the accountability you brought to us. We are very pleased about the partnership we have and the work that we do together and the friendship that Ali and Mick provide helping us navigate through this.

MICK RIX: Thank you. Hazel, what is your perspective?

HAZEL NOLAN: I will probably say nobody but I think the only way that workers get any form of social justice is through organising, collectivising themselves, and I think we have a proud history in the GMB of doing that. Our organisation was ultimately founded by gas workers, who, to a large part of society were invisible but they are the ones who kept the lights on. They are the ones who kept houses warm. They are invisible workers and today we have hundreds of thousands of invisible workers in the gig economy and the answers to them are the same answers that we had for gas workers when we founded our organisation, our job is to collectivise them and technology brings in new opportunities and ways for us to do that. That is something we have to embrace. We are in a changed management business as a union, it is not our job to hold back the tide, no one can do that, it is our job to embrace it, but to make sure it is our workers, our members, that are winning out of that as well.

MICK RIX: There are some really good points there. I think it is always important that when you hear people that may be in the public eye speaking about these things, sometimes I guess what is often overlooked is the people that are in work, and I know many of our members face hard choices, every day of the week they face hard choices. I think it is important now we go to some questions from colleagues and it gives you the opportunity to say what you think and also to ask a very important question that contributes to this fundamental debate that is taking place on the Future World of Work.

I think we have questions from our Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region. If people can come down to the mike stands to ask the question, then we can deal with this. Is it Phil Steer from Yorkshire and North Derbyshire who wants to ask a question? Other delegates who have questions, please could you make your way to the mikes because what we may be able to do is get a little bit more time so we can have some supplementary questions as well. Hiya, Phil. How you doing?

PHIL STEER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Morning, Mick. Thank you. You missed one important thing out first thing this morning when you spoke, “Welcome to God’s country.” (*Laughter*) Workers at Uber and Evri can be subject to arbitrary decisions to remove them from the App or have their rounds removed. This culture of fear and insecurity of work often leaves workers with no source of income sometimes for months on end, or it is the end of their work, how are you going to address this injustice and put in place robust procedures so that workers can get a fair deal and so are less insecure? (*Applause*)

MICK RIX: That is a very good question. I think that question goes to the heart of in-work security. Paul, do you want to touch on that?

PAUL BEDFORD: Yes, I would say two things in response to this, first from a Deliveroo perspective there is never a decision to terminate a contract with a rider made by machine, it is always done by humans, so there is that failsafe process and it will always be a human review, nothing is automated and that is quite important to us in terms of how we handle and work with our riders. Then I think the value for the deal and one of the important parts of the deal from a Deliveroo perspective is getting the GMB’s perspective on how we can improve the proposition for riders. One of the areas we discussed with Mick where we want to get the GMB in to help us immediately when the relationship with Deliveroo starts later on this Autumn is to look at how we off board, which is the sort of terminology within Deliveroo riders, so going through with Mick and team what are the processes, getting the scoot in, and again picking up on Emma’s point the accountability you can bring to us and the support you can give to improve those processes is hugely important. I think one of the early wins in terms of the relationship and how it is then improving the proposition for riders, which is the whole point of it, will be getting your expertise on our processes to make sure they are as robust and as sensible as possible, and that the things that you described, which I think none of us on the panel would want to hear about happening to individuals, that that is not something that can happen on our platform.

MICK RIX: Do you want to answer this question? It was mainly directed at Uber.

EMMA O’DWYER: Definitely, and it is something that you and I talk about a lot, Ali and I talk about a lot, and it goes back to that point of the union is there to provide that accountability and give us the opportunity to look at these things again and I definitely, personally, sometimes am not pleased with the outcomes we see for individuals who go through these processes. I think there is a lot we can do to bring much more empathy to that process. What I would say is in the last nine months GMB has represented more than 300 drivers to us and had their cases personally looked at and reviewed, and that would not have happened before and I think that is a really big win for those drivers.

MIKE RIX: I think the point is what has been mentioned there, there may be injustices take place throughout the world of work. The thing is what we have managed to do is secure representation rights and at least that individual now has a voice and a right to challenge a decision that may be made. There are over 300 drivers that are now driving that probably would not have been doing in the past,

which is creating some form of work security. That was a great question, Phil. Thanks very much and good to see you, mate. (*Applause*)

We have Chris Marsh, from Wales and South West Region, who is going to ask the next question.

THE PRESIDENT: Mick, can I just interrupt a minute. I just had a note saying the sign language interpreters have asked can people asking questions come closer to the mike as the captioners cannot hear very well. If delegates could make sure they are as close to the mike as possible, thank you.

CHRIS MARSH (Wales and South West Region): Good morning. Quite often members who work in insecure workplaces are poorly paid and reluctant to join trade unions because they do not think they will be there for a long period of time. This is true in places like Uber, Amazon, and lots of retail companies. We have all seen in recent weeks the amazing success of US workers unionising in Amazon and Starbucks so I want to know what are we learning about recruiting and retaining members in these industries within the UK.

MIKE RIX: That is a great question. Hazel, do you want to go into that?

HAZEL NOLAN: There were two events that happened in Amazon, there was the one that Chris Smalls led that was successful and there was also the Amazon one, and from an organising perspective it was outside pressure applied with the banners on site and they lost that recognition agreement. The reason it was successful with Chris Smalls' endeavours is because they did the hard work, organising is hard work and there are no shortcuts to organising, they built the relationships on the shop floor and they built them up. We have to do the same thing because ultimately how power works in the workplace has not changed, technology changes but how we organise does not, and the principles of organising are universal, and we have really good organising principles in GMB. GMB@Work is an organising strategy and it is based on five principles, and they apply to every single workplace. We are doing really exciting stuff, actually. We are using technology in some of our traditional areas as well. I know that there have been meetings with boilermakers where we are looking at how we can track them through Apps because they go and they work on various different sites all the time but they need to retain their membership. There is loads of exciting things that we can do, that organising can do, through technology on that because most drivers, a lot of drivers, might work for Deliveroo, they might do a shift for Uber, and they work across all these Apps sometimes simultaneously and it is our job to organise them under the one banner.

MICK RIX: Thank you very much. The next question that we have is from Tam Wilson, Scotland.

TAM WILSON (GMB Scotland): While these partnerships have been heralded as a new way for unions and employers to work together many in the GMB and the wider trade union Movement are sceptical because it means incomes remain uncertain and certain rates non-existent. How can this partnership work if so many in the workforce consider themselves to be in bogus self-employment and view this as an exploitative structure of work at its core? (*Applause*)

MICK RIX: Thanks for that. Emma.

EMMA O'DWYER: Good, thanks for that. It's because of the Leeds joke, isn't it!

MICK RIX: Yes.

EMM O'DWYER: Look, I think it is very easy to kind of sit on the sidelines and say there is no point engaging and what will you achieve, but today 80,000 drivers are workers and they were not workers before, and that is because of the work that the GMB have done. In the last sort of year-and-a-bit since they have become workers because of your activism, they have had a 30% increase in their earnings outside of London and 15% in London, there is £200m they would not have received before in pensions and holiday pay, and I think you cannot really sniff at that and say that seems to be a no-brainer, why not engage, and at the same time you are kind of the first union at the table talking to a company that has had something like in the region of 31 million people work through the App globally in the world, and you are sitting there talking to us and telling us how we can improve, and that gets exported out of the UK. I think we have started to see that in other parts of the company engaging with unions elsewhere, and it is the example that was set here about the importance of engagement.

MICK RIX: That is a good response. Carl, what do you think about this?

CARL LYON: Yes, I think certainly looking back one of the key reasons for trying to make sure that we have a model that actually people working for us can see that they have stability of income, security, etc. and making sure that actually they can see that there is a future and also a future about the rights and conditions that are actually improving. I think what we set out to do, the vision, shall we say, of SE+, and we are not saying that journey is over yet but the vision of what our SE+ model was to give was exactly that. So, putting things in place like national living wage security, the representation model which started off I think every three months and now we meet weekly really to discuss the issues, I used to love those meetings on a Monday night.

MICK RIX: Yes, we did.

CARL LYON: I think also the key thing, really, with having such a vast network is understanding exactly (a) what people want but also (b) what is happening on the ground. Where we have learnt a lot, I think, is we had a bigger disconnect perhaps from what was happening on the ground, making more policies and improvements for our courier network than we thought. Actually, the union representation, it was the great work we put in together did that, but we continue to put those protections in place and I think we continue to move the model on and, like I said, in the absence of any clarity, I suppose, from a policy perspective that is what we intend to do not just the last couple of years but going forward. Another key thing was protection of any negotiation, for example, with our couriers. The other thing is then putting things in place like where our couriers see they have expenses we have upped that limit quite a few times because of issues we face working on a daily basis, and like I said the stringent requirements now on protection of service, protection of the rounds, I am not

saying they are flawless but we will continue to improve that because our couriers mean a lot to us.

MICK RIX: Hazel.

HAZEL NOLAN: The reality is that workers get exploited in every company that we organise in certain ways. Certainly, going back to the gas workers again, we saw 500 get sacked by British Gas for fire and re-hire. The idea it is just the gig economy, that this is some sort of protection is nonsense. It exists across the board in traditional organising sectors as well. What we can do is use our leverage and can use our political powers and political influence to ensure that the wins that we have had by working with Uber are then spread across the board because there are other Apps as well that are used for drivers. Uber has now had to change as a result of working with GMB, which is positive both for them and mainly for us and for our members. We can then ensure that that is across the piece. That is our job to do. Like I said in the last comment, we are trade unionists and our job is to level up, and we will do that, but exploitation happens everywhere and our approach is going to have to be the same in each company. *(Applause)*

MICK RIX: You have a second question. I love it when regions buck the trend. So, you have a second point.

TAM WILSON (Scotland): I do not have a second question.

EMMA O'DWYER: Now you do!

TAM WILSON (Scotland): I can make one up on the fly, if you want.

MICK RIX: That is fine.

TAM WILSON (Scotland): My second question would be where there were workers in Deliveroo, and Uber, and stuff like that, people being indiscriminately let go from their job based on ratings, and I know it was mentioned earlier that this is done by a human and not by a computer, but this is sometimes unverified so I am wondering what is done to make sure that protection is in place for workers who are let go based on reviews and ratings from people who are using the service that are unverified.

MICK RIX: Yes, that is a very good point. Emma, do you want to go through and explain what you guys do at Uber.

EMMA O'DWYER: Yes, absolutely. First of all, I will say we do not let people go from ratings. What we do have to do is consider the complaints that we receive from people and often we are talking about an environment where you put two people in a private vehicle together and there are and have been historically very significant safety risks associated with that. We do have to take the complaints we get from people very seriously, and they are not reviews, they are complaints. We take it really serious and we make sure that we investigate both sides. We always get the driver's point of view and now we work with GMB and they get the support of their representation too to make sure that we are making a fair assessment. It is incredibly rare that you are letting somebody go on the basis of one complaint. There is often a

history or a pattern and I think our failing sometimes is not to be transparent about how all of that works and it is one of the things I have definitely learnt in the last 12 months through talking to Ali and the other driver reps, that drivers do not really understand how it works. We can do a much better job, I think, of explaining how we go about it and then, like I said to the chap who asked the previous question, I think there is a lot we can do to add a bit more empathy to the process and I hope that GMB will continue to work with us on that.

MICK RIX: Yourself, Carl, sometimes there have been accusations about star rating performances and how that leads to insecurity for the couriers. What are you doing to challenge this, potentially, and I think also what the question was generalising is that there are accusations in the media that companies are doing this just arbitrarily, and things like that as well.

CARL LYON: Yes, I think from our perspective we look at it slightly different. What we use customer feedback for on our couriers is actually for a bonus to improve income, etc. over and above what we would classify as the rates of pay. I think any system like that needs to be set up fairly and I think that is why we would never set up a system that would not be part of any union negotiation and a lot of consultation on how we can make it fair. I think there always has to be something where you can challenge the ratings and certainly from our perspective it is not something that we utilise as a performance, an individual performance measure.

MICK RIX: Good point. Thanks for the question, Tam. I think that does go to the heart of some of the issues about people's fears and creates in-work security. The next question is from Mike Tinnian, London Region, a guy that I work with. Morning, Mike.

MIKE TINNIAN (London): You have already answered my question. We do applaud what we have done with Uber, Deliveroo, and Evri, but moving forward is the sectoral collective bargaining for the gig economy and precarious workers the way forward?

MICK RIX: That is a real good question. Paul.

PAUL BEDFORD: Is that for me?

MICK RIX: Yes.

PAUL BEDFORD: I am proud to represent Deliveroo and proud that we have a GMB deal, and from our perspective if that improves and helps bring up standards across the industry, absolutely great. I think that part of the appeal for us is to make sure that we are improving standards and not just borrowing riders to help to set minimum standards that can be across a whole sector, how that is then taken forward and how that applies into cross-sector deals. We have experience of this sort of thing in other markets. In Italy we do have a sectoral deal of a food delivery sector with a union there. Again, that works and that is a sort of good structure and I am sure we can discuss and give tips if that is necessary here, but I think in terms of next steps, how it is taken forward, our priority is to make sure that we make the Deliveroo and

GMB deal good and then I think where that goes next I will push the question back to you.

MICK RIX: Thank you. Carl, what do you think?

CARL LYON: I think that certainly it is not something that I have ever contemplated. I think that certainly synergies is not the way how we develop in our rights, and conditions, etc. etc. so I think there is possibly some collaborative work there. I think in terms of negotiating that probably stays with the individual; each individual company is completely different although probably from the public eye it is similar in terms of their models but they do operate very differently. I think we have to keep that separate for that reason.

MICK RIX: Emma, what is Uber's view on potentially sectoral collective bargaining?

EMMA O'DWYER: I would love a sectoral approach. We talk about this all the time. I think the things you are used to hearing from companies like ours is clarity and certainty. What it all really comes down to is fair competition and what is great news and I am really proud of everything we have done together is that 80,000 drivers now have workers' rights. I think by GMB's estimates there is another 200,000 private hire drivers in the UK who do not and that is an unfair level playing field for the drivers and for us as well. I think there is a really important piece around how do you sustain the gains that you make through the movements, through activism, through businesses thinking on and trying to do the right thing, and it is about bringing up the floor and making sure that everybody is kind of doing the same thing. I think a sectoral approach probably is the key to that and in the right circumstances we have supported sectoral approaches in other countries too. It is not something you have ever seen in the UK, I do not think, so I would be curious if you think it is a viable thing.

MICK RIX: Hazel.

HAZEL NOLAN: We have sectoral bargaining to a certain extent, like where I am from in Ireland, and sectoral bargaining looks different in different countries. In France they have sectoral agreements to cover a wide range of workers but trade union density in France is only 8%, and that alarms me as well. To be honest, I would much rather see rights for workers underpin the legislation and have legislative rights for workers that we can build on and ensure that we have rights through, like I said, organising, building up densities. That is what is important. That is what we do as a union. I think that is a much better way to kind of ensure there is a level playing field rather than necessarily sectoral bargaining which makes me quite nervous with the law in France.

MICK RIX: That was a really good refreshing idea and a challenge to one of the areas that could really advance not only in work security but better benefits for people. The studies are there for everybody to see, collective bargaining on its own actually brings workers out of poverty. Collective sectoral bargaining can actually deliver huge swathes of workers at one go out of poverty as well and it is very interesting that the EU is now looking at this model with the precarious work where it is going to be

envisaged that 18% of people within the EU some time in the future is going to be covered by sectoral collective bargaining as well. We can see the uplifts there. I just want to go to one final question from our colleague, David Flanagan, from North West and Irish Region. Good morning, Dave. (*Applause*)

DAVID FLANAGAN (North West and Irish Region): Morning, Mick.

MICK RIX: Great question. Well done!

DAVID FLANAGAN (North West and Irish Region): Hi, everybody. In light of the changing style of employment contracts now present, such as gig economy workers, what steps are being taken to ensure these members are adequately supported on a day-to-day basis in the absence of a traditional or industrial workplace?

MICK RIX: I think this is a really difficult question to give a one size fits all answer. Hazel, what do you think? I am going to leave it to you on this one.

HAZEL NOLAN: We have organised workers before, remote workers that do not have a traditional workplace either, and like I said thinking of Gas Centrica today, but most of our British Gas workers work in isolation and we still managed to organise them and have 92% union density and get them good terms and conditions. Like I said earlier, we are doing work to organise boilermakers across different platforms and different companies, and track them and track their agreements. Universally, our organising principles remain the same but we have to embrace technology in a new way and in the same way that Covid kind of forced us forward in terms of facing new technology, it has also forced the unions to do the same and I think actually we did a really good job in organising workers in the middle of the pandemic, through Facebook, through Twitter, through Webinar programmes that we used, and we did that quite effectively. We need to build on that and build communities for workers. There is a really good piece of work done by some research in the States that looks at how we can build communities and get people talking together. When we ran an equal pay strike in Glasgow there was a Facebook group that was 100% instrumental in us getting that win. It was a platform for workers to come together and share their stories and share their experiences, and we need to be the vehicle through which they do that, and that is how we will collectivise them. The workforce and those relationships might just be online now instead of in physical factory settings, we do not have that, that is not the way the economy is moving but we can still adapt to it the way we apply our organising.

MICK RIX: I think you can see there is not a one size fits all approach but the unions at the end of the day always have to be relevant and stay in touch with their members. There is lots of ways that you can do that and sometimes it is difficult and we have to face up to those difficulties, but I think we are trying to face those challenges, there are significant challenges, and there are some significant issues that we have to face, but we have learnt to be innovative and what you do not do is not rule out anything. You have to look at every approach to dealing with that. So, likewise in the sense that we are trying to do that as a union with our members and with workers, likewise the companies face the same problems because they have a transient workforce that is all over the place. Naturally, there are different forms of communication that everybody has to achieve.

I think, President, there may be room for one more question. Come on, then.

DAVID MCMULLEN (Southern): I was just wondering where you see your companies in five or ten years, particularly with regards to the relationship between unions and how you see your employees being treated rather than make more profit and things like that.

MICK RIX: So, the global domination of Uber, where do you see yourselves in five years' time.

EMMA O'DWYER: Hopefully, still on top of the world! Maybe the share price will increase. I have to say your partnership has not done much for that yet. I am joking! I am joking!

MICK RIX: You could become a cooperative, could you not, and give some shares to your employees.

EMMA O'DWYER: It is a good idea. I will take it away. (*Applause*)

MICK RIX: They lose the parcels, they did a deal with us and lose the parcels, they lose customers, Deliveroo is next now. It is a very good point. Carl, where do you see the company in five years' time.

CARL LYON: I think obviously the conditions, we are predicting the conditions to be more competitive for numerous reasons. I think from our perspective we want to stay on top of leading the way, I am sure like these guys, in developing industry-leading models. I think our investment will continue, I think working with the GMB will awfully strengthen and strengthen, and we will keep listening to what our couriers want, what the people working for us want, and to continue to improve what they have. I think that ultimately I can see obviously things becoming more digitalized, as mentioned in the previous question or the previous one to that, and we definitely need to innovate. I always remember when we launched our SE+ model there was such confusion over what it was and that was because of the nature of the network and our communication, so we have to invest in the right things as well and recognise actually what our workforce is now and how we can improve things for them.

MICK RIX: Thank you. Paul.

PAUL BEDFORD: I think in five years' time we will be five years into the relationship and as a company we will be 14 years old so I hope immediately that working with the GMB will have helped us understand things and improve the proposition for riders. I would also come to something about respect for riders and what they want and what they do. Quite often in the debate about the gig economy, the gig economy is very big and there are some companies that are not very good at all and they should be tackled, and there are other companies like Deliveroo – I will not name others but clearly there are more than the panel – that care about trying to ensure that the proposition that we give to our self-employed riders is as good as possible and in talking to riders we have developed the proposition for them, it is not

that they are actively choosing and wanting and people kind of assume you could not possibly choose that or want that, why would you, and actually they do want that, they want that flexibility because the ability to log on whenever they want, accept whatever order they want to wherever they want, etc. is the appeal but that does not mean they then cannot get the benefits and security that you would get elsewhere. So, an acknowledgement that it is a choice to be respected and also a choice where we should work to try and improve the security and benefits of an offer and that it is given as much respect as an employee's job because it is different I think would be a really great outcome because again when we talk to riders that is one of the things that matters to them, the respect. They love the work, they want other people to respect that choice and think this is a good way of spending their time, and crucially it is a good way of them choosing how to deploy their labour because at the end of the day that is what the platform provides.

HAZEL NOLAN: On that point, obviously all of our members work in a company or an organisation and we want those organisations or companies to be successful because we want to ensure that we are getting a fair share of that for our members. The idea that you having a high density union is bad for a business or organisation is nonsense. Some of the most successful companies in this country are highly unionised companies and it is about how that can be equitably distributed as well and that is our job to do as a union and that is why I am proud we are actually engaging with some of these companies and we do that and we have unionised them so that we can make sure that we do get that fair share for working people.

MICK RIX: Finally, Emma.

EMMA O'DWYER: So bad jokes about the share prices aside, we are in a kind of different moment now where we are going to have to fight for every driver, we are going to have to make sure the ones that stay with us stick with us and how can we be as sticky as possible. Then we will have to work really hard to get every new driver that we are going to need, and that is going to be the biggest barrier to the kind of growth not expressed for everybody. That is kind of true across the labour market, everything from the great resignations of people retiring early, all of that is kind of creating a set of dynamics that I think is just right for making sure that we bring up the floor and work together to achieve that. I think we are just in a different place at the moment.

MARTIN RIX: Thank you very much. Thank you for your question. It was quite good. Can I just say something a little bit off script. Ali, could you stand up, please? Ali is the Chair of our Reps Network at Uber, he is the guy who is dealing with things. *(Applause)* Ali is really quite a live wire, he is challenging all the time; he challenges me a lot as well and keeps us all on our toes. He is doing an absolutely fantastic job in building up the network. Ali is going to be around for a bit so if delegates get the chance, please go up to him, bother him, and talk to him and just find out what his experiences are.

Just in finishing and summing up, thank you everybody for contributing to this very important debate because we do not often get the opportunity and we have tried to do something innovative today; people see the headlines but now you can meet the

people behind the headlines and you can hold them to account and ask them questions, such as, where do you see the future world of work.

Just on a couple of points because I thought the questions were really quite challenging and really got to the heart of the matter in the challenges that we are all facing up to for the future world of work, here is three companies that we have three recognition agreements with that give collective bargaining for around 200,000 people, that now gives collective bargaining in a sector that we were told years ago we will never break into, that we will never unionise and that we would not be able to work together. We are trying, like we do in every other company, trying to work together to make work better for working people. I go back to that point about members every day facing hard challenges. How do we hardwire in-work security. I know if I did an audience participation issue now and I asked people what is the most important thing for workers in life and most people would say pay and conditions. Actually, if you do not have work security you do not get good pay, you do not get good conditions, so in-work security is the major issue and always has been the major issue, and the good thing about collective bargaining agreements with good unionised recognition agreements, it democratises the workplace, it creates better innovation because the company is talking to the whole of the workforce, not just a single segment of it. It really does create a better style of work, a better style of communication, and more innovation. If companies want to stay at the top they have to continuously innovate. It is like trade unions, if we want to be relevant with members we have to innovate as well.

I would like you all to put your hands together and thank our guests for coming along today. *(Applause)* Thank you, colleagues, for making my job very easy to chair this debate and thank you for your participation. Have a great Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mick, for chairing that session and all the work you do for GMB and for our members. Thank you to Hazel for reminding us about the importance of the GMB@Work principles and thank you Paul, Emma, and Carl, for coming to answer some searching questions. It has been a really interesting discussion to start the Congress morning. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Congress, we will now adjourn for a short break while the set is changed and the rostrum put back, and could delegates please be back in their seats in 10 minutes. Thank you.

*(Short break)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, could I ask delegates to take their seats, please, and while you are doing that I will explain there is a slight technical problem putting the rostrum back, we have lost one of the mikes, so people coming up to make their speeches there will be the one central mike; you will still be heard. Just be aware there is only one central mike. Can I ask Helen from Standing Orders to come up and deliver Standing Orders Report No. 5.

## **STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 5**

HELEN JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee Report): Withdrawn motions – the SOC has been informed that the following motions have been withdrawn:

Motion 220, Repeat Drink and Drug Drivers Banned for Life, from London Region, and

Motion 228, Inequality of Education, from London Region, which was withdrawn from the rostrum yesterday. President, Congress, I move adoption of SOC Report No. 5.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Does anybody wish to speak on any of those SOC recommendations? No? In that case can I put SOC Report No. 5 to the vote, please. All those agreed? Thank you. Anyone against? Standing Orders Report is adopted. Thank you.

*Standing Orders Committee Report No. 5 was **ADOPTED**.*

## **CEC SPECIAL REPORT: THE FUTURE OF WORK**

THE PRESIDENT: We now come on to debate on the Special Report and I will ask Robbie Scott to move the report for the CEC and Rachael Hookway to second it. I will then ask each region whether they wish to speak on the report in alphabetical order, this time starting with Birmingham & West Midlands. Please note that a number of the motions listed in your printed programme have been withdrawn in favour of the report, those are Motions 126, 181, 221, and 239, and thank you to Birmingham and London Regions for agreeing to withdraw those motions. We will now go to Robbie to move.

## **CONGRESS 2022 CEC SPECIAL REPORT ON THE FUTURE OF WORK**

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## List of acronyms used in this report

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television Cameras
DPA	Data Protection Act
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
LGV	Large Goods Vehicle
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONS	Office for National Statistics
WFH	Working from home

## Executive summary

GMB recognises the reality of change, and we should campaign and bargain to enhance (and not replace) our members’ jobs as new technology is introduced (**Introduction**). Predicting the future of work is inherently difficult but some trends can be identified (**The difficulty of predicting the future**).

The economy and many workplaces are undergoing structural changes that have been accelerated by the pandemic. New technology – from artificial intelligence to advanced robotics and new forms of monitoring – are having positive effects on some of our members and negative effects on others. New rights at work are needed to adapt to the changing world of work.

Digitisation is making information more readily available than before to many, but the growing ‘digital divide’ is leaving many workers (and retired workers) behind. Access to employer and Government provided training and non-digital rights of access to services are essential as existing jobs are changed and new industries emerge.

The platform economy – where work is allocated through online programmes – is growing rapidly. GMB is organising and winning recognition for platform workers. Industrial campaigns should be our immediate priority, coupled with new measures to enhance and enforce employment rights in the sector (**How work is changing**).

Existing workers' information rights are under threat, and new statutory rights are needed to protect workers in response to technological change (**policy response**) alongside new workplace consultation rights over technology and data (**industrial response**).

Long-term changes in the UK's population and world trade mean that employment may grow and shrink overall in key public services, while there may be opportunities to reshore manufacturing jobs. These areas should be policy priorities for GMB in the years ahead (**Work and an aging population and International trade**).

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The world of work is changing.
- 1.2 In 2022, as we look to the future, the pandemic and war in Europe overshadow our horizon. These historic events are accompanied by fundamental changes that predated the pandemic. All these trends seem likely to change the profile of employment and many of our members' experience of work.
- 1.3 Many workplaces are fragmented. Inequality has risen and the share of wealth controlled by the top has grown. Our members face forms of automation, the challenges of an aging population, and the consequences of a redrawing of international trade.
- 1.4 No report can claim to know the future, or to describe in detail the changes that will affect each of our members' industries. History is littered with failed predictions about the future of work. We can, however, attempt to plan for the future on the basis of the best available evidence. And many apparently new challenges have been faced before, in different forms.
- 1.5 GMB is not anti-technology. Technological progress can create jobs and improve work. But the risk of displacement is also real. Too often, changes in the workplace are poorly thought through and training is not available. Monitoring and surveillance culture is also becoming more common across the workplaces that we organise.
- 1.6 Our response is grounded in our values of industrial solidarity. We are not hostile to technological progress. The union has always used technology to build our members' power. Nor do we seek to hold back the tide or hold to idealised visions of the past. We must face the world as we find it, not as we might wish it to be.
- 1.7 This Special Report sets out research on the future of work and a policy and industrial response that we believe is fit for raising workers' pay and power in the workplace of today and tomorrow.

## **2. Note on member survey**

- 2.1 This report is informed by a survey of a random sample of working GMB members that was carried out in April 2022. The survey achieved more than 1,500 responses. More details can be found in the appendix to this report.
- 2.2 Quotes from GMB members are reported in the following format:

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*'Communication happens via email and last minute. School's using Google Classroom but does not provide training for new employees and assumes they'd know it.'*

Cover Supervisor

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- 2.3 In a small number of cases, details that could potentially be used to identify respondents have been omitted from quotes or job titles.

### **3. The difficulty of predicting the future**

- 3.1 In many ways, the future of work is already with us. Technology and management approaches in some rapidly growing sectors – such as logistics and warehousing – go on to be adopted in other industries. At the same time, the future of the economy and technological change are notoriously difficult to predict.
- 3.2 In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the socialist William Morris imagined a future in which unwanted work had been all but eliminated. Close to a hundred years ago, the liberal economist John Maynard Keynes predicted that by 2030 machines would have released the material 'bounty of nature' and thought most people would work a 'three hour shift or a fifteen-hour week' not to survive, but to alleviate boredom.<sup>i</sup>
- 3.3 Many more recent predictions have not fared better. Alarming predictions that taxi, private hire, and HGV driving roles were about to be made obsolete by driverless vehicles have not yet been realised.

3.4 We cannot know the future with certainty. Current trends may be overtaken by unforeseen events, or by technological breakthroughs that are difficult to imagine today. This report sets out an assessment of the changing world of work based on the best evidence available today, but its conclusion may need to be revisited at future Congresses.

#### **4. How work is changing**

4.1 The pandemic and the great shortage of labour has significantly accelerated the adoption of new technology and working patterns. Against the backdrop of record vacancy growth, some employers are hastening investment in automation to raise output as an alternative to hiring works.<sup>ii</sup>

### **Predicting the future of work – the union in 1965**

The first Special Report was published by in 1965 on the topic of ‘technological change.’

It was two years after Harold Wilson had famously predicted that a new economic model would be forged in ‘white heat of the technological revolution,’ and the report echoed much of the optimism of the age.

Though disruption could result in ‘severe strains,’ technology – the report argued – promised ‘the elimination of much drudgery and routine from work and safer, healthier and generally more congenial conditions. And it will provide the weapons to conquer poverty anywhere in the world.’ Innovation would ‘ultimately bring us within reach of material abundance.’

What did the union get right and wrong? It correctly predicted that ‘the proportion of workers directly engaged in productive processes would fall further,’ while employment in administration and ‘the service industries will continue to increase, probably at a more rapid rate.’ It also foresaw a fall in average working hours and the rise of the school leaving age.

A prediction that the retirement age would be lowered due to machines eliminating demand for work has aged less well. The report also reflected the assumptions and prejudices of its time. It argued that ‘The sick and partly incapacitated who are compelled to work ... [and] married women for whom the present situation involves a conflict between economic necessity and the rearing of children will be able to stay at home.’

- 4.2 Many of our members had to abruptly adjust to new working patterns, either in the normal workplace or through working at home. More than a third (34 per cent) of GMB members report that new technology that affects their jobs have been introduced during the pandemic.
- 4.3 Some of the services that our members provide shifted partly online – including in schools, social work, and patient care. GMB itself held more meetings, and provided more information, digitally that during any other period in its history.

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*‘The NHS adapted existing technology very fast at the start of the pandemic to allow those of us at risk to work away from acute hospitals.’*

NHS Quality Improvement Manager

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- 4.4 Trends that existed before the pandemic have accelerated. The growth in the warehousing and logistics sector has been rapid by some measures: the number of business premises in the sector has almost doubled over the last decade. But there are only 20 per cent more jobs in the sector over the same time, and average wages remain lower and working hours remain higher than for all jobs.<sup>iii</sup> As this report discusses, GMB is organising and winning advances for our members in these growing sectors.
- 4.5 The pandemic has shown us what can be achieving using technology – but the realities of the loss of face-to-face contact, and the isolation experienced by some people, must be confronted. GMB should embrace new technology – not as a substitute for proven organising techniques, but to provide services that are suitable for adaptation to our members faster and at a greater scale.
- 4.6 In the wider world of work, many employers see investment in technology as a means of boosting productivity and profitability. Technological change can either enhance or replace jobs. This two-sided dynamic is being experienced by our members. While nearly a quarter of members (23 per cent) say that new technology has made their jobs better compared to five years ago, almost one in five (18 per cent) say that they are worried that their job will not be needed five years in the future due to new technology.

The challenge for GMB is to understand these opportunities and threats, and respond in a way that builds our members’ power.

- 4.7 This section of the report describes some of the innovations that are changing the world of work.

## **5. AI**

- 5.1 Computer programmes are increasingly used by employers and governments to interpret work, and to make decisions that affect our members.

- 5.2 The use of AI is growing rapidly. According to a 2018 survey, one in eight HR officers said that their organisation was using ‘artificial intelligence to develop people reports.’<sup>iv</sup> As a 2021 review for the UK Government found, ‘the use of algorithms in recruitment has increased in recent years, in all stages of the recruitment process. Trends suggest these tools will become more widespread.’<sup>v</sup>

### What is Artificial Intelligence? AI explained

The term Artificial Intelligence (AI) can mean a number of things.

Traditionally, a process might be automated through a relatively simple list of instructions. These programmes normally follow a logic that is easy for humans to understand (for example, a programme might tell a computer then ‘if X condition is met then execute Y action’).

Increasingly, employers are investing in a form of AI called **machine learning**. This process involves a computer identifying patterns in huge amounts of data, and then making predictions. While the theories behind machine learning have been known for decades, the massive expansion of data storage and processing power has made it a more viable technique in recent years.

In theory, machine learning can be used to perform tasks as diverse and advanced as driving cranes to diagnosing medical conditions. However, it can be difficult to understand how the computer reached its conclusions, and there are a number of challenges associated with machine learning that GMB members should be aware of.

The term **algorithm** can be used to describe any sequence of instructions that programme a computer.

- 5.3 One major HR provider claims that:

*‘Machine learning powers faster and more streamlined HR functions across the entire employee lifecycle. Sifting through tremendous volumes of data to identify patterns and make predictions about future events, machine learning increases efficiency and eliminates many tasks that were once manual.’<sup>vi</sup>*

- 5.4 AI has also been introduced across public services. AI is used to screen applications across civil service recruitment, and the Cabinet Office’s next head of HR will be

- expected to demonstrate how 'AI and digitalisation can be leveraged for organisational and citizen advantage.'<sup>vii</sup>
- 5.5 One UK police force reportedly uses a computer programme to decide which crimes to investigate – which led to a halving in the number of investigations that were pursued.<sup>viii</sup>
  - 5.6 These models promise employers great things, but they face a profound challenge. Machines trained on databases drawn from a discriminatory society replicate discrimination on an industrial scale. Research suggests that in the UK candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds have to send as much as 60 per cent more applications than white candidates to obtain an interview<sup>ix</sup> - this systematic human discrimination has been replicated by machines.<sup>x</sup>
  - 5.7 Reports of AI with discriminatory traits are widespread. In one high-profile example, an Amazon department in Edinburgh reportedly developed an AI recruitment system that systematically discriminated against women.<sup>xi</sup> The Government's Centre for Data Ethics has warned that disabled workers may also be discriminated against by automated processes.<sup>xii</sup> These biases may be made worse by a lack of diversity in the design workforce: only 24 per cent of AI workers in the UK are women, and more than half of AI firms do not employ any women at all.<sup>xiii</sup>
  - 5.8 Complexity is a further challenge to the use of AI in employment. The machine learning form of AI is often described as a 'black box' – in other words, its inner workings and results cannot be easily understood by humans. It can be hard even for experts to understand how a programme has reached its conclusions. While efforts are being made to develop alternative and 'explainable' alternatives, as one academic has warned: 'interpretable and explainable [algorithms] - that's still quite far off.'<sup>xiv</sup>
  - 5.9 GMB members report too many examples of algorithms and other programmes producing inaccurate results, or of those results being misused by their employers. Only 28 per cent of GMB members are confident that they know how their employer uses their information, and close to one in four (24 per cent) say that automatic processes 'often make errors about my pay, shift allocation, or performance.'

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*'We are constantly told it is accurate, but we repeatedly get emails that have identified 'issues.' If we earn a bonus it can be taken away after that time if we are judged not to have achieved a target. The app is unfit for purpose.'*

Technical Engineer

*'My company go for blood with any misdemeanour and lay it all out like a witch hunt ... I'm just a series of zeros and ones that are pumped into an*

### **AI in the workplace – Information Commissioner's Office guidance**

- Bias and discrimination are a problem in human decision-making, so it is a problem in AI decision making
- It is hard to build fairness into an algorithm
- The advancement of big data and machine learning algorithms is making it harder to detect bias and discrimination
- [Employers] must consider data protection law AND equalities law when developing AI systems
- Using solely automated decisions for private sector hiring purposes is likely to be illegal under the GDPR
- Algorithms and automation can also be used to address the problems of bias and discrimination

*Information Commissioner's Office, Six things to consider when using algorithms for employment decisions, December 2020*

*algorithm and is then interpreted in any way that suits them.'*

Distribution Technician

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- 5.10 There is a real risk that GMB members will be governed at work by forms of AI that reflect wider discrimination, and which are not truly understood by employers. No worker should be subjected to remote and unchallengeable decision-making. Radically improved transparency and accountability rights at work will be essential as the use of AI in employment grows.

## 6. Automation

- 6.1 It has been claimed that the world of work is facing a ‘new wave of automation’<sup>xv</sup> – both before and during the pandemic. Automation is nothing new to the labour movement. Union activists have fought for generations both against the erosion of good work and the benefits that some forms of automation can bring.
- 6.2 Workers can potentially benefit from the automation of repetitive and physically onerous tasks. The significant fall in the workplace fatality rate since the 1980s can, in part, be attributed to the automation of dangerous duties.<sup>xvi</sup> Digital design and testing processes have dramatically reduced the time that it takes to bring some manufacturing products to market. Some GMB members told our 2022 survey that well-designed automation had improved their jobs:

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*‘Technology is very welcome and has improved a lot of processes and made policies and procedures more streamlined.’*

Auditor

*‘Technology has improved my job – quicker completion of referrals.’*

Safeguarding Information Assistant

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- 6.3 At the same time, there can be real and negative consequences of automation. Each period of industrial disruption and job losses caused by increased competition or technological change has had serious and negative economic and social consequences.<sup>xvii</sup> Today, the consequences of internet shopping on the high street can be seen in every town and city. 18 per cent of GMB members report being concerned that their job will not be needed due to new technology in five years’ time.
- 6.4 According to one recent study, exposure to robotics raised the risk of job losses in the UK more than cheap imports from China.<sup>xviii</sup> GMB members have experienced the hard edges of automation, including in retail<sup>xix</sup> where our research suggests that almost 135,000 ‘traditional’ brick-and-mortar retail jobs have been lost since the start of the pandemic.<sup>xx</sup> Our retail members’ jobs have been profoundly affected by the introduction of automated tills, which have displaced some jobs, and also increased the demands on workers. In response, GMB supports (and has called for) fundamental reform to business taxation to create a level playing field between in-store and online retail.

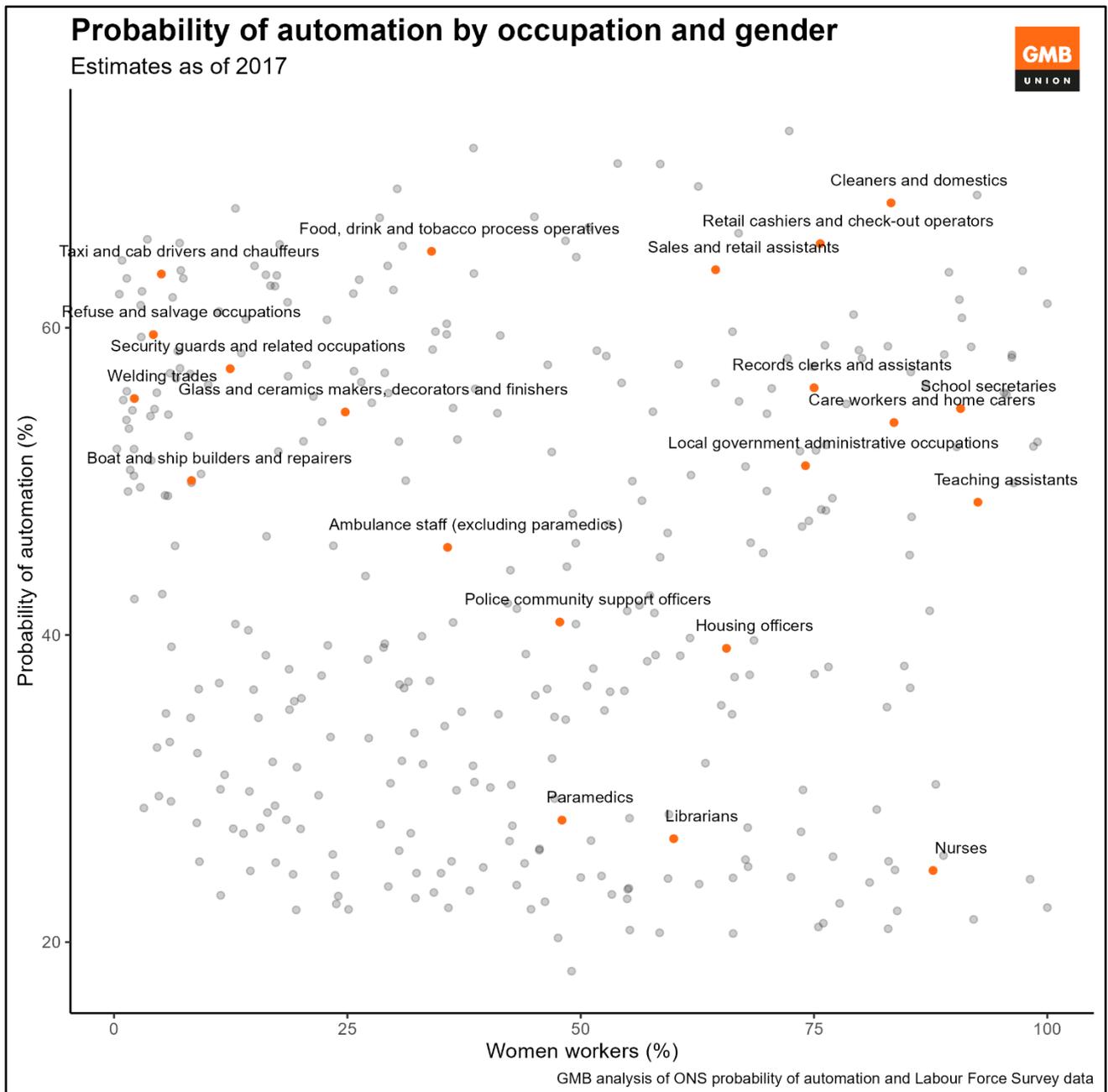
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*‘I run 12 self service machines on my own ... It’s really hard work, draining and most days exhausting. The management team come over and have a word if you have stopped for a second to rest ... It’s an awful lot to do when you’re busy and no one to help you.’*

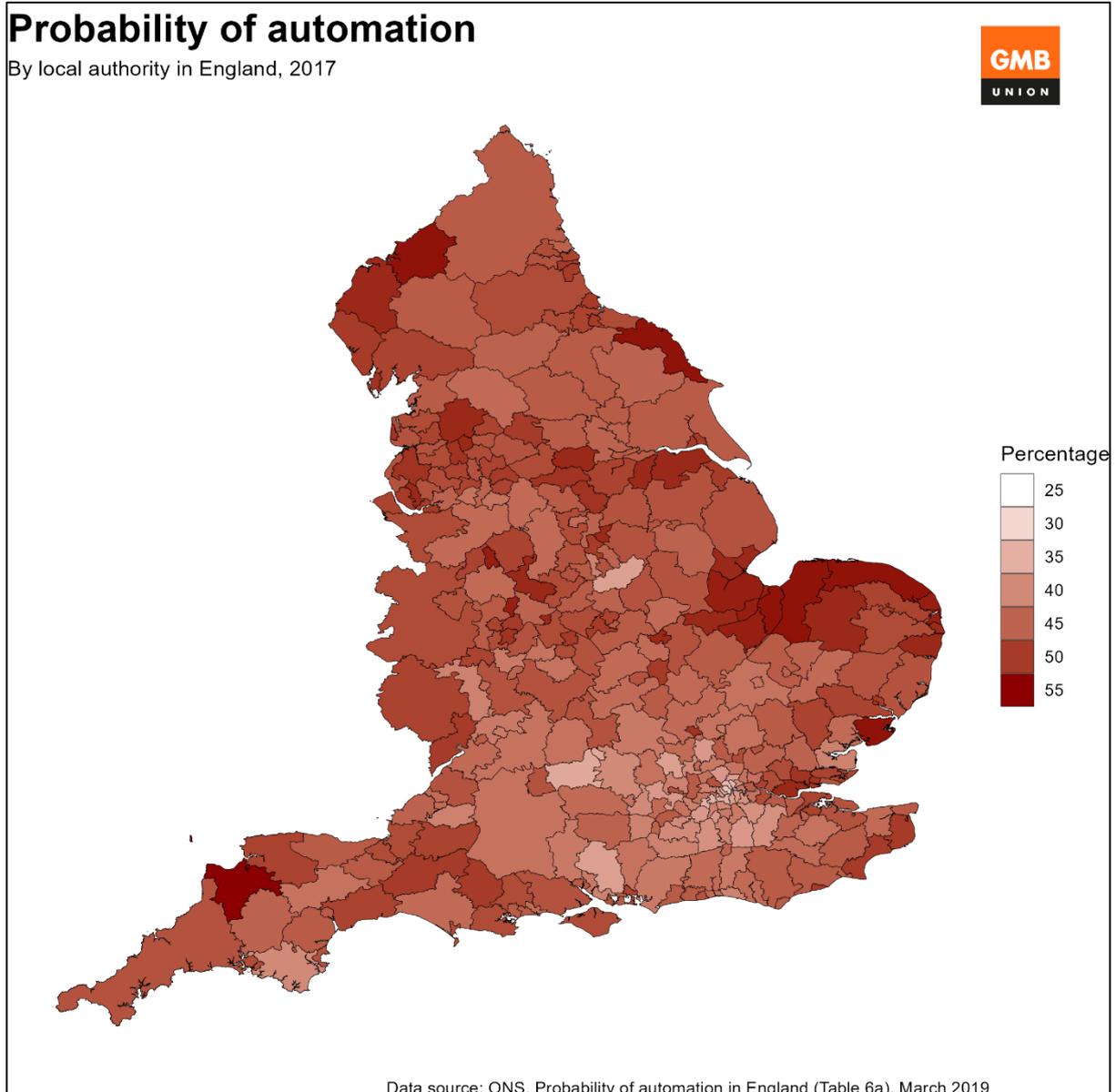
Retail worker

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- 6.5 Assessments of the impact of automation vary but it is clear that some groups of workers are affected differently. While some 'white collar' roles are believed to be at high risk of substitution, lower-paid workers are disproportionately affected. 7 out of 10 workers in occupations at the highest risk of automation are women: a million women were estimated to be at 'high risk' of automation, compared to 437,000 men.<sup>xxi</sup>
- 6.6 A sampling exercise of occupations represented by GMB found that while women were more likely to work in roles that could be partly automated (such as retail and school support staff roles), many roles that are predominately filled by men are also likely to be changed by automation. These roles included reference and salvage occupations, and security roles. It should be noted that the following graphs represent jobs that could be changed by automation and not jobs that will necessarily be automated completely.



6.7 The effects of automation are also not felt evenly across the UK. The ONS estimated that jobs were much more likely to be changed by automation in coastal communities, the South West, Midlands, and North, and in lower-income areas.<sup>xxii</sup> This geographical mix would be consistent with international experience: at China's automated Yangshan Deep Water Port, automation has reportedly reduced the number of workers from 700 to 100.<sup>xxiii</sup>



6.8 It is unclear how many jobs may be completely displaced by automation. One highly publicised 2013 study argued that more than a third - 35 per cent – of jobs in the UK were at a high risk of being automated over the next ten to twenty years.

6.9 In 2016 an OECD report based on different methodology found that that 10 per cent of UK jobs were at high risk of full automation, and that a further 25 per cent of jobs were likely to change as a result of automation. A third of the lowest paid jobs were

assessed to be at risk, compared to none of the highest paid jobs.<sup>xxiv</sup>

- 6.10 There are good reasons to believe that the worst-case scenarios will not be realised. Robots and other forms of automation tend to be highly effective at a limited range of tasks but they are difficult to adapt. Even Amazon – a company that has invested heavily in automation – has described itself as being ‘very far from the fully automated workstation that we would need.’<sup>xxv</sup>
- 6.11 The complete automation of work – and the uncoupling of capital from labour – has not been realised. The American electric car manufacturer Tesla had to reverse plans to eliminate too many workers, blaming ‘excessive automation,’<sup>xxvi</sup> in order to meet production targets. Driverless vehicles remain unsuited to real-world conditions despite billions spent in research and development.<sup>xxvii</sup>
- 6.12 A world without work looks as far away now as it did more than a hundred years ago. But, as academics have warned, if we ‘only keep an eye out for roles that are likely to be taken on in their entirety by machines ... [we] will seriously underestimate the impact of technological progress on the labour market.’<sup>xxviii</sup> Some of those changes will be examined in the next section of the report.

## 7. Monitoring and surveillance

- 7.1 Workplace surveillance refers to ‘management’s ability to monitor, record and track employee performance, behaviours and personal characteristics in real time.’<sup>xxix</sup>
- 7.2 Workplace monitoring or surveillance of some kind is now widespread. Telematics, CCTV, and recordings all collect information on our members. Performance is increasingly tracked through dashboards and metrics that are sometimes hidden from union members. As discussed later in this report, automatically collected information (such as through barcode scanning) has been used by some employers to summarily dismiss workers.
- 7.3 Modern surveillance software can cover the monitoring of emails and files, webcams on work computers, tracking of when and how much a worker is typing, calls made and movements made by the worker (using CCTV and trackable devices).<sup>xxx</sup>

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*‘Cameras [are] focused in cab. Watching you constantly. It really is not a good thing. You cannot fully focus on driving, because you are being watched constantly. It makes me feel like I’m not trusted or untrustworthy.’*  
HGV Driver

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- 7.4 Some GMB members told us that they welcomed forms of recording – such as body cameras, CCTV, or call recording – when those records can be used as objective evidence following a complaint. This was particularly true of our members in sectors such as schools and ambulance services. But for others, trust in technology was undermined when management had misused CCTV, or calls recorded for ‘training and monitoring purposes,’ for performance management and disciplinary reasons. A third

of GMB members (32 per cent) agreed in April 2022 with the statement that ‘surveillance by my employer has a negative impact on my mental health or sense of wellbeing at work.’

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*‘It’s been dreadful. My work phone is closely monitored and assessed for call answering. I feel under stress all the time with call monitoring and have been told off for not answering enough calls. My stress levels are off the scale.’*

Housing Services Assistant

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- 7.5 Surveillance now extends to workers’ own homes: a 2020 YouGov poll found that one in five employers were planning on investing in remote monitoring software targeted at those working from home.<sup>xxxix</sup> 21 per cent of GMB members said that they were subject to screen monitoring software – this rose to 39 per cent of GMB members who now work from home.

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*‘New technology monitors everything we do down to key depressions and all sites [visited] and work [compliance] on our desk/lap tops.’*

Technical Support Officer

*‘Surveillance has vastly increased since wfh.’*

Licensing Officer

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- 7.6 We recognise that surveillance may be experienced differently by workers attending a separate workplace and by those who work from home, and guidance should be prepared for use by both groups of workers.
- 7.7 Surveillance by the employer isn’t new. The American car manufacturer Henry Ford created a special department in the 1910s to act as a ‘secret police’ ensuring that workers lived up to his personal standard outside of the factory – a form of paternalism that was replicated in ‘company towns’ across the UK.
- 7.8 Investigators would probe every aspect of employees’ lives, showing up unannounced at their homes with queries about spending habits, alcohol consumption and marital relationships. Workers falling foul could be blacklisted, have their pay docked or be denied prospects for promotion.<sup>xxxix</sup> In the UK, the blacklisting employers’ group the Economic League (and its successor in the construction sector, the Consulting Association) left a trail of broken lives from the 1920s to the late 2000s.
- 7.9 These forms of surveillance but arose from the same economic motivations and desire for control that drive many employers to carry out monitoring and surveillance of workers today. What has changed is the technology. When the Consulting Association was raided in 2009, employers were still faxing across names to be

checked against a card index system.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

7.10 By contrast, in 2015, Amazon was accused of keeping its workers under surveillance in Germany via the mobile devices that all Amazon warehouse workers carried round with them to scan parcels. The resulting reports included lines such as:

‘ The employee was inactive from 08:15 to 08:17 (2 min). This was seen by ----- (Lead) and ----- (Area Manager). ----- came back from the toilet with ----- (employee). Then she had a conversation with ----- at work station 01-01 in Hall 2. At 08:17 she continued working.’<sup>xxxiv</sup>

7.11 In one fulfilment centre in the United States, similar technology was used by Amazon in firing ‘hundreds’ of employees at a single facility in the United States between August of 2017 and September 2018 for failing to meet productivity quotas, using technology which ‘automatically generates any warnings or terminations regarding quality or productivity without input from supervisors.’<sup>xxxv</sup>

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*‘Scanners recording how much you pick per hour & to the minute how long you have for meal break, if not picking enough or 1 minute late from break you are confronted about it.’*

Warehouse Operative

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7.12 On the basis of continual monitoring and an internal algorithm, Amazon has introduced progressively tougher targets. GMB has argued that the company’s punishing targets are contributing to a poor health and safety record. The union’s Freedom of Information Act research found that more than a thousand serious health and safety incidents were reported to the regulator between 2016/17 and 2020/21, and that ambulance callouts to Amazon sites rose by 56 per cent during the pandemic.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

7.13 Amazon even reportedly developed tools that allowed the employer to keep workers’ closed Facebook groups under surveillance and identify.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Many multinational corporations maintain a ‘Global Security Operations Center’ that monitors risks to the company, including theft, protests, and unionisation.

7.14 Even apparently innocent data collection can be misused by employers. GMB has represented members whose vehicle (telematic) data was cited in disciplinary cases, on the spurious grounds that more efficient driving methods could have been employed. Such abuses of data by employers can make the introduction of the most apparently routine information collection contentious.

7.15 TUC research has found that since the start of the pandemic:<sup>xxxviii</sup>

- 60 per cent of workers believe they have been subject to some form of surveillance and monitoring at their current or most recent job.

- Three in ten workers agree that surveillance has increased since the outbreak of Covid-19.
  - Two of the three sectors with the greatest proportion of workers reporting surveillance are those in which GMB organises members in. The three are: financial services (74 per cent), wholesale and retail (73 per cent), and utilities (73 per cent).
- 7.16 Other recent research, based on workers' experiences during the pandemic, found that 'the use of employee monitoring tends to indirectly reduce the well-being of remote workers by increasing the likelihood of conflict [and] longer hours' but that these effects can be mitigated if workers have 'autonomy ... and input into how monitoring is rolled out and implemented.'<sup>xxxix</sup>
- 7.17 Surveillance at work is not a new problem, but there are now many more methods of gathering information on workers. There are protections in law - under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Information Commissioner's Office's Employment Practices Code - if information is not collected for a clear and advertised purpose, and covert surveillance is only permitted in limited circumstances.<sup>xi</sup>
- 7.18 In practice, these requirements are often disregarded by employers. Greater awareness of the law and stronger enforcement should be part of GMB's response to the rise of surveillance in the workplace.

## **8. Digitisation and platform work**

### Digitisation

- 8.1 Information can be collected, stored, and transmitted faster than ever before. GMB is embracing technology to strengthen our industrial work, including through developing a new series of digital reps' tools for use in bargaining. The union is leading the campaign to organise digital platform workers (see below). But the digitisation of essential goods and services is creating a 'digital divide' and excluding some groups in society.
- 8.2 Many services and sources of information have moved to a 'digital-first' approach. In practice, this often means 'digital-only.' GMB has worked through the TUC to draw attention to the problems of accessing Universal Credit (one in three Citizens' Advice Bureau Universal Credit cases in Scotland are linked to digital access).<sup>xii</sup>
- 8.3 The loss of person-to-person services are compounding the growth in loneliness across society. These problems will only get worse as traditional services – such as libraries and post offices – are closed. Half of the lowest-income households do not have an internet connection. GMB believes that the plan to enforce a switchover from analogue to digital landlines by the end of 2025, which have been condemned by the National Pensioners' Convention, will increase the risk of members being left unable to access essential and emergency services.
- 8.4 The digitisation of services also poses challenges at work. GMB has seen an increase in the number of members who are having to seek adult diagnoses for conditions such

as dyslexia following an employers' decision to implement new processes – support materials and a model agreement are available through the union's *Thinking Differently at Work* campaign.<sup>xlii</sup>

- 8.5 Access to training is a serious problem. GMB members report that they want the opportunity to learn new skills, but only 23 per cent of members say that their employer provides high-quality training when new technology is introduced. Training is often of very poor quality and expected to be completed outside of working hours.

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*'All this new technology has been introduced and no training given, instead there are screeds and screeds of documents to read, whilst trying to do your work at the same time, there is no time laid aside for actual training.'*

Medical Secretary

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- 8.6 GMB believes that there should be a duty on public authorities and large private companies to provide in-person or non-automated telephone alternatives to 'digital-first' services wherever possible, subject to consultation with the union members who deliver those services. Alongside employer-provided training during normal work hours, the Government must provide access to high-quality training, including on occupational and digital skills, through a range of approaches.

### Platform working

- 8.7 GMB is leading the union movement's efforts to organise platform workers and make platform work better through collective agreements. As the 2017 Special Report carried by Congress made clear, our first priority is to secure collective recognition and build workers' organisation in new and emerging sectors.
- 8.8 Although there is not yet a commonly agreed definition of 'platform work,' it is a form of labour that is changing all our lives. For many of our members, work is now found or allocated using a programme (the platform) over the internet. Many familiar services are increasingly performed this way – from hailing private hire and taxis to ordering deliveries.
- 8.9 Poling suggests that as many as 4.4 million people may now be platform workers. The share of the labour force that accessed work in this form at least once a week grew from an estimated 6 per cent in 2016 to 15 per cent in 2021.<sup>xliii</sup> Nearly a third (31 per cent) of GMB members surveyed in April 2022 said that a computer programme or app allocated tasks as part of their job, and 30 per cent said that apps were used to review their performance or calculate their pay.
- 8.10 Many people use platforms to supplement incomes from more traditional employment. For some, this is a consequence of the squeeze in traditional incomes and the devaluation of social security – a 21<sup>st</sup> century equivalent of the home working that supplemented previous generations' main incomes. For others, including thousands of GMB members, platforms are now the main source of work.

- 8.11 It is sometimes asserted that platform working is inherently exploitative. It is true – as Congress stated in 2017 when it carried the Special Report on Insecure Work - that ‘flexibility’ is all too often one-sided. Exploitation can be found in platform work: one example is described below. Many platform workers are classified as self-employed, or ‘limb b’ workers,<sup>1</sup> and do not have recourse to full employment rights.
- 8.12 It is disappointing that, after years of reports and promises of action, the UK Government has continued to delay in bringing forward changes required to end exploitation. Unions should not have to take employers to court to get a determination of whether members are employed, workers or self-employed. An independent body with union representation and teeth to enforce decisions could represent decisive progress. That would help to end exploitation of those workers incorrectly classified.
- 8.13 The pandemic brought into sharp focus the inequalities and lack of rights that self-employed workers have. Yet these workers pay tax and national insurance too. For too long, the union movement has focused on employed workers’ rights without a matching focus on the rights of the self-employed. GMB calls for all workers, irrespective of their employment status, to have the same fundamental rights, benefits, and access to justice to challenge unfair decisions and exploitative treatment. The GiG and Platform economies should not be a Wild West for workers’ rights and exploitation.
- 8.14 Platform working challenges existing concepts of employment relations. A number of employers have been taken to court to establish employment status – including by GMB. At the heart of these cases was a single question: are platform workers classed as self-employed, or are they workers?<sup>xliiv</sup> GMB has supported legislative proposals to provide greater simplicity, but our focus remains on securing effective enforcement of existing laws, securing day one equal rights for all workers, and improving employment standards through collective agreements.<sup>xliv</sup>
- 8.15 In May 2022, GMB Union and Deliveroo signed an historic union recognition deal – the first of its kind in the world - covering the company’s more than 90,000 self-employed riders. Under the Agreement, GMB has rights to collective bargaining on pay and consultation rights on benefits and other issues, including riders’ health, safety and wellbeing.

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<sup>1</sup> Workers are referred to as ‘limb (b)’ workers, in reference to section 230(3)(b) of the Employment Rights Act 1996. ‘Limb (b)’ workers are covered by some employment rights (such as the National Minimum Wage and a right to sick leave). However, workers are not entitled by law to additional rights held by employees, such as the right to Statutory Sick Pay or protection against unfair dismissal.

### **Exploitation in platform working: Amazon Mechanical Turk**

Amazon – one of the world’s most valuable companies – owns its own digital platform. In Amazon Mechanical Turk’s own words, the platform ‘makes it easier for individuals and businesses to outsource their processes and jobs to a distributed workforce who can perform these tasks virtually.’

Typical tasks include processing receipts and describing images. Much of the work is used to train the Artificial Intelligence programmes described earlier in this report.

Amazon describes the people who perform tasks as ‘workers’ – but they have no employment rights. Initial piece rates are extremely low and workers are not paid for time spent searching for work.

One 2017 study of almost 3,000 American Amazon Mechanical Turk workers found that their average hourly earning was just \$2. Only 4 per cent of workers earned more than the federal National Minimum Wage.

- 8.16 While GMB is campaigning to end exploitative contracts, many of our members report that they want to balance employment rights with the ability to structure their own hours and own shift patterns. There is no legitimate defence of bogus self-employment and GMB will always campaign for day one equal rights for all workers, but it must be recognised that expectations of work are changing for many.<sup>xlvi</sup>
- 8.17 Platforms represent a change in the labour market. And the growth in platform working demands an industrial response.
- 8.18 GMB’s long record of campaigning for the rights of platform workers culminated in the signing of the historic Uber recognition agreement in May 2021. Under the agreement, up to 70,000 Uber drivers are now entitled to union representation under an agreement that covers areas including national earnings principles, pensions, health and safety, and support for members who lose access to the Uber app. The recognition agreement in turn built on the ground-breaking 2019 agreement with Evri (formerly Hermes).
- 8.19 GMB is not, and will never be, an uncritical defender of any employer. Our members will always come first. Exploitation can occur via platforms – as it can through all employment relations. But the positive role that GMB and employers that have signed agreements have played in improving working standards must be recognised.

- 8.20 We believe that our response to the growth in platform working should be twofold:
- Through industrial campaigns we must strive to win recognition, and help workers build and organise their union, which in turn will make work better for platform workers.
  - Through our policy and political campaigning we must apply pressure to secure day one worker rights with robust enforcement for all platform workers, so that standards are driven up across the sector.

## 9. The future of work: public policy

- 9.1 Whichever parties are in power, cannot rely on the Government to address the challenges of a changing workplace and make work better. We must always look first to our industrial response. This report has highlighted a number of problems that also require public policy changes, which are outlined in this section.
- 9.2 An immediate problem is an attempt to water down the Data Protection Act. Section 22 of the DPA currently provides workers with a right challenge ‘solely automated individual decision-making, including profiling, with legal or similarly significant effects.’ This provision could be improved (currently even minimal human intervention can remove the requirement). However, instead of strengthening these protections, the Government has suggested that it may remove them completely.<sup>xlvii</sup>
- 9.3 GMB opposes attempts to remove current data access rights. We call instead for a stronger legal framework. Building on the recommendations of the Institute for the Future of Work, GMB supports calls for an Algorithmic Accountability Act. This legislation would require employers to consult impact assessments to be carried out and made available to workers when new digital processes are introduced.<sup>xlviii</sup> We call for the law to be further strengthened so that all workers are entitled to a non-technical explanation of what data is collected from them and how it is used.
- 9.4 Despite the perceived importance of technology for raising productivity, the UK ranks poorly by international standards for investment in research, as measured by the number of patents registered.<sup>xlix</sup> The UK spends just 1.8 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product on research and development, which is significantly below the OECD average of 2.5 per cent.<sup>l</sup> This makes it more less likely that employers will develop systems suitable for UK employment at home. We call for a significant increase in research and development funding across the public and private sectors, tied to good employment standards.
- 9.5 Many of our members’ employment is now platform-based. GMB believes that any new trade union right of access to workplaces must be accompanied by a ‘digital right of access’ for platform employment. Members across different sectors report a growing expectation by employers that they must be contactable by phone and email at all times, including during unsociable hours, and outside of agreed shift patterns. We also support a statutory right to disconnect, and the way that this right would operate for different working patterns should be explored in more detail.
- 9.6 The UK has some of the lowest measured productivity levels in Europe, alongside the longest average working hours.<sup>li</sup> As investment in technology increases, the

productivity benefits should be used to reduce the strains of work. In line with existing GMB policy (Congress 2019, Motion 203 Campaign for a Shorter Working Week), we support a shorter working week with no loss of pay, without expressing our demand as a four-day week (which does not apply to our members who do not work to a 'traditional' nine to five, five day a week pattern).

- 9.7 The pandemic and the Government's 'digital by default' approach to essential public services have exposed a digital divide. Without state action, those who do not have suitable devices, or a quiet space at home, or IT confidence will be left further behind and (in some cases) socially vulnerable. As described above, we support a duty on service providers to alternatives to 'digital-first' or 'digital by default' approaches.
- 9.8 Access to digital skills training will be essential as workers and their representatives encounter ever more complex systems. It is not enough to rely on national curriculums to cover this ground. Introductory and refresher digital skills training should be made available to all adults as part of a wider reform of Further Education and the failing Apprenticeship Levy system, with a focus on improving the accessibility of public services.
- 9.9 Many of our members' employment is now platform-based. GMB believes that any new trade union right of access to workplaces must be accompanied by a 'digital right of access' for platform employment.

## **10. The future of work: An industrial response**

- 10.1 GMB is already organising around new technology. We have developed and signed agreements that include:
- A national agreement with Evri (Hermes<sup>liii</sup>) based on a self-employment plus status that in 2022 led to agreement over pension auto-enrolment and parental leave rights.<sup>liii</sup>
  - An historic agreement with Uber which guarantees drivers minimum pay rates, holiday pay, and a pension plan.<sup>liv</sup>
  - Through our membership of the Welsh Government's Workforce Partnership Council, GMB has helped to develop the Managing the Transition to a Digital Workplace agreement across public services.<sup>lv</sup>
  - An agreement with the Environment Agency over suspension of telematic data collection when a vehicle is in private use.<sup>lvi</sup>
  - At Northumbrian Water, an agreement was reached that gave workers' access to data generated during driving.<sup>lvii</sup>
- 10.2 In order to support industrial activity, GMB will undertake sector and role specific research. The union will also produce guidance on how GMB members can use the existing law to push for Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs), Equality Impact Assessments, and information sharing rights when new technology is being

introduced.

- 10.3 We support – both through our public policy and industrial work – the creation of joint information sharing bodies which should be consulted when new technology is introduced (or familiar technology that could have an effect on deployment), building on the recommendations of the APPG on the Future of Work and the Institute for the Future of Work.

## **11. Work and an aging population**

- 11.1 The UK is expected to undergo a dramatic demographic shift in the years ahead. These trends pose serious questions for workforce planning across the UK, and also for employment in the social care and schools sectors.
- 11.2 The number of people in the UK aged 80 or more is expected to increase by 1.1 million by 2030 compared to 2020 – a rise of 34 per cent. In the very long-term, the number of people aged over eighty is projected to double by 2050. This rise in care needs will place serious, and potentially unsustainable pressure on an underfunded and understaffed social care system.
- 11.3 The care sector was in crisis before the pandemic hit, and pressures have only multiplied since then. The sector carried more than 100,000 vacancies in England alone in 2021. A third of all direct care workers are employed on a zero hours contract, rising to more than half in London. The median hourly rate was £9.01 – just a few pence above the minimum wage – in 2020/21.<sup>lviii</sup> A 2021 GMB survey found that three quarters of care workers said that their mental health had worsened during the pandemic, which was causing additional recruitment and retention strains.<sup>lix</sup>
- 11.4 Employers say that an extra 330,000 workers will be needed by 2030 to meet the anticipated increase in demand for care.<sup>lx</sup> Against the backdrop of a historically extremely tight labour market, this ambition will only be achieved if there is fundamental reform of the care sector. The best way of making work better in care will be through campaigning for career progression, decent terms and conditions, and a real living wage of £15 an hour.
- 11.5 Alongside the forecast growth in older people, the number of younger children is expected to drop significantly. Across the UK, the number of children aged between 5 and 9 is projected to fall by 673,000 by 2030 – or a decline of 16 per cent.<sup>lxi</sup> The decline is already being felt in inner-city areas, and some school leaders and local authorities have warned that jobs could be lost.<sup>lxii</sup>
- 11.6 This trend could have a potentially serious impact on school support staff employment, especially as there are more classroom-based roles in Primary Schools. GMB is clear that support staff, the hidden professionals of the education system, play an invaluable role and that these jobs need to be defended. Councils also face a huge liability if sites are sold and then pupil numbers increase again. Overall trade union density among support staff is slightly below half<sup>lxiii</sup> and understanding which areas are most at risk should be an industrial priority for GMB over the next year.

- 11.7 Some areas of the country face a double workforce pressure of increased care demand and reduced Primary-aged pupil numbers. As a priority over the next year, GMB National Office should work closely with reps and the Regions to better understand the impact of these changes for our members.

## **12. Trade in an uncertain world**

- 12.1 The brutal invasion of Ukraine by the Russian state has changed the industrial outlook in a number of our sectors since the CEC committed to bringing this report to Congress 2022, and the likely course of the world economy.
- 12.2 In at least the short-term, the spike in energy prices is placing our members and much of industry under real financial pressure. The cost of energy rose by more than a fifth in March compared to a year ago. While Russia accounts for just 0.02 per cent of UK exports overall,<sup>lxiv</sup> GMB is working to understand the impact of sanctions and the otherwise sharp reduction of trade in particular sectors. Since February, GMB has worked in active solidarity with Ukrainian trade unions and put pressure on UK bodies to sever their links with companies, such as Gazprom, that fuel Putin's war machine.<sup>lxv</sup>
- 12.3 But even before the invasion of Ukraine, the globalised world economy was splitting into two camps. Successive US governments have applied hard pressure on nations and companies to disentangle their supply chains from China, with implications for GMB organised sectors such as nuclear construction and steel.<sup>lxvi</sup> The globally extended, 'just in time' supply chains that have dominated the world economy are now seen as a liability. Political instability in Europe will likely accelerate these trends.
- 12.4 Events are moving at pace, but at this early stage some conclusions can be drawn. As a defence workers' union, GMB has long argued for an increase in spending in shipbuilding and other sectors: this call must be redoubled at a time when armies are crossing borders and warships are reigning destruction on civilian areas.
- 12.5 A retreat from globalisation should represent a chance to rebuild the essential industries and supply chains that have been undercut by unfair competition and the dumping of artificially subsidised goods, which are a major cause behind the loss of 120,000 UK manufacturing jobs over the last decade.<sup>lxvii</sup>
- 12.6 The 2021 CEC Special Report on Spending and Procurement set out a programme of practical policies for reshoring jobs. This call has been adopted more widely, including in the Labour Party's 'Buy, Make, Sell' agenda. But the Government continues to look to imports first to resolve shortages: Russia and Belarus's steel import quotas are currently being redistributed to other nations.
- 12.7 GMB instead calls for an industrial strategy to rebuild essential industries, and for trade deals to have workers' voices and interests at their heart. This will remain a priority area over the coming years and it may be a topic for future reports to Congress.

## **13. Conclusion and summary**

- 13.1 The world of work is changing. Technological and economic change brings both opportunities and threats that will affect almost all our members in the years ahead.

This report analyses these trends to inform GMB's industrial and policy response. As a result, the union commits to supporting the following positions:

- GMB should continue to use technology to build members' power and investigate growing sectors of the economy.
- Workers should have a statutory right to consultation when employers wish to transfer tasks from workers to automatic processes.
- Business taxation should be reformed to create a level playing field between online and in-store retail.
- Good quality training should always be available, within normal working hours, when new technology is introduced. The Government should provide lifelong access to training, including through remote learning options in consultation with education workers.
- Employers should carry out an Equality Impact Assessment and consult with workers before implementing large-scale automation or unfamiliar technology.
- Employers should also prepare Data Protection Impact Assessments before implementing new algorithms that affect workers.
- GMB should produce guidance on rights under the existing law and regulations, and on monitoring at work (reflecting the different experiences of home and non-home workers).
- All workers should have a right to an accessible explanation of how their data is used, and the basis for any decisions or recommendations that affect their employment that has been made by a machine.
- GMB opposes attempts to abolish workers' rights under the Data Protection Act, and instead calls for legislation to be strengthened and the regulator to be fully funded.
- GMB should campaign to raise awareness of the exclusionary effects of 'digital-only' approaches, and for a right to speak to or meet a person by default.
- We should prioritise the securing collective agreements in the platform economy and other emerging sectors, while calling for an independent body to investigate and make rulings on worker status.
- We support a statutory 'right to disconnect' for workers, with the parameters to be set on a sectoral basis.
- Further research should be carried out on sectors and occupations that may be adversely affected by technological change such as retail, and the effects of an aging population on schools and social care.

- The union should carry out further work on the impact on our sectors of the anticipated retreat from globalisation in its current form. The Government should put in place an industrial strategy to rebuild essential industries, instead of relying on alternative sources of imports when those products could be made in the UK.

## Appendix – GMB members’ survey results

GMB carried out a survey of a random sample of working members across all sectors in April 2022. The survey received 1,620 responses (on a response rate of 3.5 per cent). Further work is being done to analyse the responses to the survey in more detail.

### What is your experience of working from home during the pandemic?

None – I have attended work as normal	76.3%
I worked from home but now I have returned to my normal place of work	12.9%
I mostly work from home	10.9%

### Has your employer introduced new technology that affects your job during the pandemic?

Yes	34.2%
No	53.4%
Not sure	12%

### Does your employer consult you, or GMB, before new technology is introduced?

Yes	14.7%
No	43%
Sometimes	14.1%
Don't know	28.3%

### What of the following parts of your job are decided by or communicated through a computer programme (or an app)? Please select as many as apply

Recording your performance	33.6%
Task allocation	30.7%
Reviewing your performance	30.2%
Calculating your pay	30.1%
Don't know	22%
None of the above	21.7%
Shift allocation	19.2%
Disciplinary or capability	12.7%

### Which of the following technologies are you expected to use or comply with in your job? Please select as many as apply

Driving monitoring and data collection	35%
CCTV	32.2%
Barcode scanning	28.9%
Performance dashboards	23.9%
Screen monitoring software (for computer based jobs)	21%
Recording of calls	18.1%
Assisted lifting devices	14.9%
Automatic tills	6.7%
Wearable tracking devices (such as fitbits)	5.7%
Artificial intelligence decision-making ('algorithms')	3.8%
Speech-to-text software	3.6%
Facial recognition technology	3.4%
Robots	2.9%

*Note: for this group of questions, members were asked to respond to a series of statements on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 represented 'strongly disagree', 5 represented 'neither agree nor disagree,' and 10 represented 'strongly agree')*

**My job has changed during the last five years due to technology**

Mean average score (out of ten)	5.5
Percentage agreeing (six or higher)	44.7%

**Thinking about new technology, I am worried that my job will not be needed in five years' time**

Mean average score (out of ten)	3.1
Percentage agreeing (six or higher)	18.3%

**New technology has made my job better compared to five years ago**

Mean average score (out of ten)	3.9
Percentage agreeing (six or higher)	22.9%

**I find it difficult to get a simple explanation of how decisions are made about my job and performance**

Mean average score (out of ten)	5
Percentage agreeing (six or higher)	36.9%

**Automatic processes often make errors about my pay, shift allocation, or performance**

Mean average score (out of ten)	3.7
Percentage agreeing (six or higher)	23.7%

**I understand how my employer uses the information that it collects about me**

Mean average score (out of ten)	4.1
Percentage agreeing (six or higher)	27.6%

**Surveillance by my employer has a negative impact on my mental health or sense of wellbeing at work**

Mean average score (out of ten)	4.4
Percentage agreeing (six or higher)	32.2%

**My employer makes high-quality training available to me when new technology is introduced**

Mean average score (out of ten)	3.7
Percentage agreeing (six or higher)	22.6%

**I would like to undertake training in new skills**

Mean average score (out of ten)	6
Percentage agreeing (six or higher)	52.8%

ROBBIE SCOTT (CEC): Congress, for many of our members the world of work is changing fast and the pace of change has accelerated during the pandemic. Nearly half our members say that their jobs have been changed by technology in the last five years. A third of GMB members say that their employers have introduced new technology during the pandemic. It is not just technology that is changing the world of work, we live in a time of record job vacancies when demand for labour far outstrips supply. The health and care sector will need hundreds of thousands more workers in the years ahead. Changes in pupil numbers could also pose challenges for our members in schools.

Congress, we live in an age of global instability, including Russia’s brutal and senseless invasion of Ukraine. This instability could affect all our members whose jobs rely on trade. As the report says, these questions are not fundamentally new, automation is one of the oldest challenges that trade unionists have had to face. We are not against new technology but it must be used to make work better. That demands new rights, including a digital right for access for organisers and consultation rights when new technology is introduced. It demands new forms of organising.

As you heard this morning, GMB is fighting, organising, and winning for workers in the platform economy. Some said that recognition cannot be reached with this group of workers but the proof is in our agreements, in the rep structures that we are building, and in the rights won by workers in this quickly growing part of the economy.

Congress, we will face different challenges in the years ahead. Every year employers are outsourcing more decision making to complex computer programmes. These programmes might appear to be scientific but they often are not well understood by employers with disastrous results for workers, and they can replicate prejudices in wider society. Congress, employers must not be allowed to outsource their social responsibilities to machines. Automation is expected to become more commonplace

and some employers see investment in automation as an alternative to raising wages. We must be ready.

Congress, this report does not represent the end of the debate on the future of work and it does not attempt to predict the future in every sector but it does outline important changes that our members are confronting now. It establishes new policies and an organising agenda that will help us meet that challenge and make work better for our members. Congress, I ask that you endorse this report. Thank you.

*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Robbie. Thank you. Rachael Hookway to second, please.

RACHAEL HOOKWAY (CEC): Congress, one in three GMB members report that surveillance at work has negatively affected their mental health. We all remember the black listing scandal, monitoring at work is nothing new, but more data is being collected about us than ever before, from barcode scanners that record the rate at which warehouse workers retrieve items, who are then pushed harder and harder until their health breaks, to software that monitors every website, every click, even the expression on a worker's face. So, always on camera in drivers' cabs, robbing our members of their privacy at every moment in their working day. This is a modern form of Taylorism, the idea that all human activity can be reduced to data. What is the Government's response, they are plotting to take away the rights we already have while the world's richest men dream of factories without workers, of capital without labour.

Congress, there is another version of the future that we must fight for. Technology can be used to create jobs, alleviate mundane processes, relieve the strains of heavy lifting and make critical information available quicker, but workers' voices need to be heard for that to happen. Congress, this report sets out new demands for policies and laws but we cannot depend on politicians. We must educate, agitate, and organise. Congress, this report sets out the GMB agenda for a future that our members can fight for. Please support the report. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Rachael. Can I make a point about some of our CEC members. This is actually their first in-person Congress as well, so well done Robbie and Rachael. *(Applause)*

Can I call regional speakers on the report. This time in alphabetical order, the first speaker is Birmingham and West Midlands, please.

IAN PREECE (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Vice President, Congress, good morning. I am going to be talking about the Special Report on the Future of Work. I am a first-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* No report can claim to know the future but one thing you can count on is the GMB will be there for you. GMB is embracing the future, looking at technologies to make working conditions better. We are living in uncertain times and we are seeing the rise of flexi-hour, zero-hour contracts, and poor working conditions. I speak to you, the people in work, the people looking for work, and young people starting work, you need to know that this is not the norm.

Now more than ever we must safeguard our workers' rights. Let's use technology for the good and help stop the exploitation of the worker. Future technology does not mean future job losses. Let's embrace the future and make work better. I support this report. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ian. London Region.

MARIE McCORMACK (London): Congress, President, we support the Future of Work Report. I was looking through the report and thinking of the quote from William Morris, unwanted work had all been eliminated, and for John Maynard Keynes predicting that by 2030 we would be doing a 3-hour to 15-hour week not to survive but to alleviate boredom; we are far from that. It is clear that all unions will need to quickly adapt to the changes that we expect to see in the workplace and to those we cannot see that are hovering in the shadow. There is a distinct possibility that exploitative practices will exist where companies will use the threat of automation or artificial intelligence or offshoring their jobs to bargain the life out of workers' rights, and we really need to be on the ball there. We now need recognition agreements to include artificial intelligence and automation safeguards which must include sufficient and robust protections against misuse of personal data and machine learning techniques that would render workers redundant. GMB has been working with the TUC on AI manifesto and to maintain an active role within the group that just days ago was engaging with the Institute for the Future of Work. Whilst we know that the world of work is ever evolving, unless we fully understand the dynamics and risks there is a chance of not only failing to support those who will need our help but to those who will need the power and might that only union protection can provide.

So, within the region at Labour Party level a motion is already in place for a policy on taxation for workplaces where personnel have been removed or exist on a much lower scale; without Income Tax and National Insurance infrastructure fails, we need it. It is just not right or reasonable for corporations such as Amazon, and they do a lot for us, I appreciate that, but to offer, for example, contactless supermarkets with no staff and not pay their way to fund our nation, it is just not right. This contactless cashless society also impacts on, for example, G47 security workers, there is less people using cash, therefore there is less ATMs and less need for cash handling workers. There is all those little subtle impacts which we are not of but are causing hardship.

We are living in a time where this Tory Government is demolishing workers' rights and protections. This report highlights that as traditional roles are replaced workers are at greater risk than ever if they are not trained to understand how automation and artificial intelligence will affect them as these devices can work 24/7 and do not require a break. We must protect our members who are affected by these changes which impact on many sectors and we need to be at the vanguard of how the change is implemented. GMB's voice should be the voice of protection. We need to embrace, enhance, and evolve, and to quote Ade McCormack, "creativity is our superpower" and the machines have not got that yet. We support this motion but we need to be obviously mindful of what is ahead and also really to be mindful to protect the jobs, enhance the jobs, save the jobs, but also be creative with the new jobs that are

evolving so that our members do not lose out, and get the required training to actually move with the times too. I support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Marie. Midland & East Coast?

BEN COOK (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, this is an incredibly important document, work is evolving at exponential rates, whether it is through flexible working, insecure work, technology changes, or as we move towards a greener economy, but what I can tell you is that inequality is on the increase. I am seeing disabled members in Asda having to fight for reasonable adjustments, female workers having their basic right to health and safety at work being sacrificed for working practices just solely designed to save money. I just want to finish on this, we need to make sure that the Labour Party put workers' rights at the forefront of their agenda as well: do not just talk about it behind the scenes but in the Commons as well, in public. They need to remember it is our shop workers, our nurses, our engineers, our TAs, our care workers, that go out door knocking in all weathers to get our MPs elected, it is our members that work on the ground to do this. Please support this report. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ben. Northern Region.

PETER KANE (Northern): Northern Region, soon to have a major transfer to North West & Irish Region. Speaking in support of the CEC Special Report: Future of Work. Congress, this is an important report and is vital for the future of our members' lives. We need to support our members in their fight to stop things like fire and re-hire, in their fight for their rights, not to party but to work safely, in good secure employment. We need to lobby for the law to be changed. Congress, in making work better for our members and the hours of working, we have a great opportunity to improve our organisation in workplaces that are under threat by bosses who want to replace good well paid jobs, as the CEC reports says. Congress, we need new rights at work to future proof terms and conditions, and to support our members in fights with employers and to ensure that our organising and campaigning helps to stop those attempts by bosses to dilute terms and conditions that our members have fought hard for. I support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Peter. North West & Irish Region.

NATHANIEL TETTAH (North West and Irish): President, Congress, it is a pleasure to be here and we think the Special Report on The Future of Work is a very comprehensive one. We certainly believe that automation is a massive challenge and under the equality front we want to put it down to the fact that the idea of discriminatory practices when it comes to AI (Artificial Intelligence) is quite challenging, I think, and we have to challenge it. We have to be ahead of it, in that sense, but challenge how, a call for transparency in how that is determined. When it comes to automation and retail work we have to try, we are not Luddites, obviously. We encourage technology, we embrace technology, but we have to protect jobs as well. It is very important we push back against it.

I have heard colleagues speak about trying to lobby the Labour Party to bring about change. I think it is important we do that but I think we lobby all parties in that sense.

We push to try to get our policies through so the idea of our policy response and industrial response is, I think, very, very competent and very robust in that sense. The debates we had this morning were quite interesting but the language that was used here I was quite suspicious of to some extent, the language of partnership, what is that? I think we have to challenge that language as well. I had a conversation with Hazel and it was a very productive one and I said, “We have to challenge that language. I think partnership is all well and good, however we represent the interests of our members and we have to push back against that.”

Work is changing, we know work is changing, and we have to pivot to respond to that. We have to try our best to push back against this narrative that unions are not relevant or unions have to give way, have to be grateful for what is given to them. We have to push back against that. Congress, monitoring surveillance is not a new thing, it has happened over time. Someone spoke of Taylorism; it is happening in a very skilled way now. We have to push back against that as well. How do we do that? We lobby, obviously, the current government or the future government and, hopefully, in the very near future Labour will be in power. We try also to listen to our members as to what is happening in the workplace so we can obviously represent their interests quite properly.

I want to thank you for today’s opportunity but also to say it has been a very, very good Congress, it has been a pleasure to be here, and thank you so much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nathaniel. GMB Scotland.

ALEX LOGAN (GMB Scotland): President, Congress, we have all seen in our workplace how technology can be used to benefit us but, unfortunately, it has not benefited everyone in every case, instead of technology happening for workers for many it has been happening to them. Instead of amount of time being reduced by making matters a lot easier and quicker it is often being used to reduce workforces, with increased expectations on workers’ time and keep a prying eye on us all. It has ushered in a new era of divide and rule with the stopwatch and precarious work.

More and more people are being viewed by employers as expendable, who can be picked up and dropped at a press of a button. We should not try to avoid advances in technology because we can, but as a union and part of the labour Movement we have to ensure whatever changes are made to how we work are used to make work easier, safer, and improve the good services, and members that provide it. It should be used by workers, not against us. It is, therefore, essential that we secure a mandatory consultation with workers and unions, and the introduction of any new technology in the workplace to protect the existing rights, terms, and conditions.

Technology can be used to revolutionise the way we all live and work. It can be used to reduce working time while maintaining wages, reduce demands on our bodies and minds, and reduce accidents and absences, and to build unions in workplaces. Everyone should have a right to disconnect and not be at the beck and call of an employer: it should be eight hours at work, eight hours recreation, eight hours rest. Downtime was hard won and we cannot allow that to go back. Instead, technology can be used to increase the time we spend with our family and friends. Technology has advanced dramatically and legislation has failed to keep up. Our union needs to

face these challenges head-on and lead the fight in protecting and advancing in our workplaces. We support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alex. Southern Region.

JAMIE DENNIS (Southern): Southern Region is pleased to see that the GMB is committed to protecting workers alongside the integration of new technology in the workplace. Colleagues, it is important that we as the elected representatives of our membership continue to hold our employers to account in this ever changing world, ensuring that our members are consulted on changes, have the correct training, and adequate remuneration as their jobs evolve, retaining jobs for members, and improving their terms and conditions.

As regards monitoring at work, whether that be CCTV, location trackers, or the recording of calls with disciplinary action being taken unlawfully against data collected, it falls to us as reps to in turn monitor our employers to ensure that technology is not abused. The commitment from the GMB to provide guidance on rights under the existing law is a very welcome one. Hybrid working and working from home is fast becoming the norm following the pandemic and it is right that we acknowledge this and work with both members and employers to help them strike a reasonable work/life balance, looking at agile working practices that suit the many and varied needs of our membership.

The last point I would like to touch on is the inevitable increase in the demand for energy that comes naturally with the integration of more technology into the workplace, more electric vehicles on the road and an increase in the number of homes around the country. We all know that the price and availability of gas has a direct impact on the cost of living affecting the price of fuel, energy, and food. We need to move away from our reliance on imports of natural gas from overseas, reliant on countries like Qatar, the US, and even Russia, through the back door. We need to look at alternative options for reliable, well regulated, natural gas extraction within our country and more investment in hydrogen power.

Some of you may know that the Government has committed to building new nuclear which is essential for a balanced energy policy, especially given the state of our ageing nuclear fleet. Committed to an increase to our nuclear base load of 24 GW by 2050 we, the GMB, need to commit to ensure the Government stand by this pledge and invest in the construction of large-scale nuclear plants and small modular reactors that we need to increase our base load capacity regardless of who is in power. We need consistency and certainty that these are not short-term projects and we cannot afford the threat to promises and commitments that come with changes in the government. We need to act now to secure our future. Congress, on behalf of Southern Region I urge you to support this Special Report. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jamie. Wales and South West and while you are coming up to the rostrum can I ask the movers and seconders of Motions 131, 132, 133, and 136 to be ready.

JONATHAN STRACHAN-TAYLOR (GMB Wales and South West): President, Congress, first-time delegate and speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, the way when and

how we work has changed from all recognition in recent years and the pandemic has supercharged this trend. The GMB is not anti-technology. We cannot fear the future and try to cling to the past. We cannot switch off the internet and online society. We must respond by making technological change work for our society but at the same time with major changes happening at breakneck speed the changes that happen in the world of work are often poorly thought out displacing our members. This report rightly argues that we need to use the blistering speed of the digital revolution to our advantage. It is an opportunity to enhance our members' rights and experiences in the workplace. We will not be mastered by a machine.

As a union we have held more meetings and provided more information digitally than at any other period since our founding. This was only made possible through new technology like TEAMS and ZOOM. We should use this as a blueprint for how we can grow. We need to equip our activists with the tools to grow the union in their workplace and tackle the issues that matter to them, for example, to negotiate flexible working, hybrid working agreements, and to contribute to recruitment and retention. We also need to ensure that employers provide adequate training for workers of all ages and abilities so people are not left behind as more sectors rush towards Apps and programmes designed to improve productivity and engagement at work. Congress, we need to engage and understand Artificial Intelligence (AI). We need to accept that AI has the ability to improve work by outsourcing the mundane processes to computer programmes but we also need to understand its limitations. The inherent biases that cause so much hate and inequality in our own society can be mirrored in AI's very fabric and an over-reliance on it in workplaces will only increase unless we rein in the sordid desires of greedy employers.

We need to be clear that workers should have a right to know what information is being collected on them and to discuss how it could be used to make the workplace a better, safer place. Software should not be used as some dystopian tool to monitor workers in places like Amazon and drive those deemed as less productive out of the workplace. This report will also give us a firm base to tackle automation displacement. It can be used as a tool to eradicate low quality jobs that pay poorly or dangerous work but automation has seen one of the biggest factors in reducing workplace accidents since the 1980s. We will not let it become a tool to create a new class of poor quality jobs in supermarkets, warehouses, and throughout our public services. We will not accept supermarket self-service attendants having to monitor nine tills at once. That is not an issue with automation; that is an issue with bad management.

Congress, predicting the future is difficult but proposals in this report will give us a firm footing to tackle the issues that the changing workplace throws up. So, let's make this the future we want. Congress, please support this report. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Yorkshire North Derbyshire..

SARAH SHEENAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am speaking on the CEC Special Report: The Future of Work. The world of work is fundamentally changing. There are several external influences on the future of work, some of which I will highlight. They are this Government's unfair taxation for business, the devastating effects of Covid, the enforced switch from analogue to digital in 2025,

which will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable, who may not have the resources to access digital equipment, the Government's severe lack of investment in education and educational resources, the general legislation around surveillance of employees, which only benefits the management and bosses and not the workers, automation which will adversely affect women and the most vulnerable through lack of relevant, accessible, targeted training and where a lack of communication has placed a barrier for many employees.

The GMB has vast experience in negotiating with employers and companies through targeted and effective campaigns that saw an awesome win at Uber, and the continuing campaigns at Amazon, which see our Union standing up to bad practice day in and day out.

The proposals set out in the CEC's Special Report provides a just transition, a logical and unified framework for delivering for our members. Yorkshire & North Derbyshire fully support this Special Report. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sarah. We will now move to the vote on the Special Report. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

*The CEC Special Report: The Future of Work was **ADOPTED**.*

## **INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY**

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to our first set of motions on Industrial and Economic Policy: Commercial Services. We are joined on the platform by Andy Prendergast, the National Secretary for Commercial Services section.

### **COMMERCIAL SERVICES:**

#### **TAXI & PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER WELFARE (GMB ETHICAL CHARTER FOR LICENSING**

##### **MOTION 131**

#### **131. TAXI & PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER WELFARE (GMB ETHICAL CHARTER FOR LICENSING)**

This Congress welcomes, endorses and calls on our great union to build on the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Taxi & Private hire drivers Licensing Charter and campaign for all Councils to endorse and embed such initiatives into their licensing policies. We need our Councils to understand that the welfare of our drivers is just as important as the welfare of any of their workers. They too, as our Uber legal battle proved, are entitled to statutory minimums that the rest of us take for granted; holidays, safe guarded minimum pay levels and the means to consult properly and meaningfully should not be beyond any local authority and they must now look at all of their providers and establish where drivers are and are not classed as 'workers' in the contracted relationship.

In Support:

Our Councils are quick to jump to attention when the government issues fresh 'guidance' around developing licensing policy. They tend to go the extra mile to make life just that little bit more difficult for the taxi and private hire drivers and implement more stringent suitability criteria at every opportunity. Go to any Council website and you will always find out how to

complain about a driver but try getting the same guidance when it comes to a licensed company instructing or employing those drivers and that's where you will get stuck. We need formal frameworks in place at all local authorities where we can look at how licensing is developed, make sure the companies employing the drivers are not getting away with paying them what they are entitled to and where we can hold these taxi companies to account and establish what the contractual relationship is.

## **YORKSHIRE PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS' ASSOCIATION BRANCH Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region**

*(Carried)*

ALLISON MORRELL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 131: Taxi & Private Hire Driver Welfare (GMB Ethical Charter for Licensing). Colleagues, the GMB has a proud history when it comes to standing up for those who face injustice. Make no mistake that injustice, bias and a relentless attack on those who are trying to earn their living in our taxi trade is evident with the recent licensing changes that we have seen imposed throughout the Yorkshire Region and beyond since 2019.

Council licensing officer got together after the Government's new guidelines for codes for taxi licences were updated and decided that licensing policies needed to be uniformed or harmonised and set about coming up with a new sustainable and convictions policy as well as attempting to re-write their existing policies that covered the trade.

The results saw the drivers being subjected to potential bans for driving offences that would attract points and fines for the rest of us. Officers were given the powers to check drivers' spent minor convictions from many years ago and cars being taken off the road for minor scratches and scrapes.

The codes were designed to bring poor licensing authorities into line with those that had strong more robust convictions and suitable policies, and no one could argue that we could argue the dangers of cross-border working. But such policies already exist in the region. Councils could have updated their opportunities and strength in those policies to consult properly with drivers and take a deep look at the companies who operate in the industry, but sadly that was not the case.

As the motion says, you can go to any local authority website and try and find out how you can complain about a driver. You will get the information quickly. However, try to do likewise with regard to making a complaint against an operator and you will find you will be there all day. Councils need to work with drivers and their trade unions when it comes to developing the policies and the impact on their livelihoods. Our motion and charter calls for no more than that they need to measure the operators, to ensure that our councils and their residents are there to be protected and the welfare of the drivers is important as well. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Allison. I call the seconder.

MATTHEW THOMAS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress and President, I am seconding Motion 131: GMB Ethical Charter for Taxi Licensing. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

Congress, up and down the country we are consulted by local authorities on changes that affect their workforces. Local authorities have responsibility for the licensing of taxi drivers and, despite the GMB being the union of choice for many taxi drivers, we are nowhere near the table when it comes to discussions that will affect our members.

The adoption of the Taxi & Private Hire Drivers' Licensing Charter that has been developed by Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region would ensure that when changes are suggested that will impact the taxi drivers we represent, their voices shall be heard. The charter calls for consultation with the unions and associations that are properly constituted and demands training for all drivers and their employers on issues that matter, such as the basics around licensing laws, conflict resolution, how to deal with challenging behaviour and matters that affect customers' and driver safety.

We have no quarrel with any authority that wants to make the services as safe as possible for passengers, but the safety of the drivers must be a paramount concern as well. Driver welfare should be at the heart of all of our decision-making. We need to be utilising our links in towns and city halls across the country to ensure that issues like this are high on our agenda. The GMB has long campaigned for improvements to terms and conditions for drivers. As the motion says, these workers will provide an invaluable service. Their welfare should not be an after-thought. Congress, please support the motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Matthew. Perfect timing there. We now move to Motion 132.

## **GMB UBER AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS SUPPORT MOTION 132**

### **132. GMB UBER AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS SUPPORT**

This Congress agrees GMB have had great success in fighting for and securing employment rights for Uber drivers. Our reps within Uber have been very busy organising and recruiting drivers and building a firm base of solidarity amongst the drivers, Southampton City Council are forcing Uber and other private hire drivers to keep signage on their car which limits the drivers' earnings.

Uber and other private hire drivers are being forced to carry sign stickers on their cars stating the name of the licence operator which means drivers are limited to driving just for the one operator which in turn limits the drivers' earnings.

Congress should oppose the mandatory application of door signage to private hire and app provided hire vehicles that can cause a restraint of trade for our members working across geographical areas (council boundaries), which can lead to danger for the vehicle user or and/or fare.

The practice of enforcing signage on private hire vehicles has been used by some authorities with no evidence of it having any H&S advantages. Signs can be made by any individual wishing to apply them to a vehicle to carry out a crime or cause harm to a member of the public requiring such hire services.

We consider that the one easily identifiable aspect of a vehicle is the registration detail which is given to the hirer by the despatcher and is not easily open to abuse or corruption.

We ask Congress to support the motion to remove this dangerous and restraining practice of enforcing the use of sticker signs by local councils.

### **S37 SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH** **Southern Region**

*(Carried)*

DAVID McMULLEN (Southern): I am David McMullen, Southern Region, and probably I am a last-time speaker and last-time delegate, as I am privileged to start an officer role in Southern Region next week. *(Applause and cheers)*

Congress, I am proposing Motion 132: GMB Uber and Private Hire Drivers Support, and calling on Congress to continue the battle for employment rights for Uber and other private hire drivers. I make particular reference here to Southampton, where we have already made much progress in organising and recruiting amongst Uber and other private hire drivers. Their struggle continues, however, as the last Tory-run Southampton City Council introduced a door-sticker signage policy, which forces drivers to keep the names of the licence operator on the doors of the private hire vehicles. Drivers, rightly, point out that this limits their employment and earnings rights as it means they have to state the name of their licence operator – ie Uber – which means that drivers are limited to driving for just one operator. This prevents them from working for multiple operators, which in the gig economy is, sadly, a necessary practice and the only way to earn enough to live on in an industry that was particularly hard hit by the knock-on effect of the pandemic.

Drivers suggested that a second sign could be added, one with private hire details, thus allowing private hire drivers to work for multiple operators. This was rejected by Southampton City Council. This action by the Tory Southampton City Council is a restraint of trade for our members. We are now working with the new Labour leadership in Southampton to reverse this policy. An attempt has been made to suggest that the door-sticker signage policy is for health and safety reasons. There is no evidence that this is the case as door-sticker signs could easily be made by anyone wishing to apply them to a vehicle to carry out crime or to cause harm to members of the public requiring a hire service.

A safer method of protecting the hirer is whereby the easily identifiable aspect of a vehicle – the registration detail – is given to the hirer by the despatcher. We ask Congress to support the motion to remove this practice of enforcing the use of door-sticker signage, including just one operator name for private hire vehicles by local councils. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Congratulations on your new job and all the best in your new role. Secunder?

SYED RAZA (Southern): President and Congress, I second Motion 132. Congress, the issue is the requirement by the Southampton City Council for private hire drivers to have a sticker on their doors, including the name of the licence operator. David has already explained that this restricts drivers from working for more than one operator. The problem is that the council is using bogus arguments claiming that this is a health and safety matter. This is an evidence-free opinion from the council. Every car has a registration number which can be easily tracked. We must listen to the drivers. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Syed. I call the mover of Motion 133.

**THE IMPACT OF LONDON'S CONGESTION CHARGE ON TRANSPORT FOR LONDON'S PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS  
MOTION 133**

**133. THE IMPACT OF LONDON'S CONGESTION CHARGE ON TRANSPORT FOR LONDON'S PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS**

This Congress we request that conference ask London's Labour Mayor Sadiq Khan and Greater London Authority (GLA) Members to have a full tabled democratic debate and vote on the removal of London's congestion charge on London's private hire trade an added cost(tax) of up to £105 per week.

Many are leaving the trade leading to a potential shortage of drivers and equally could damage the safety of the travelling public, especially the vulnerable and lone women.

We ask that conference back this motion at a time when licensing costs and high costs of fuel are rising above inflation when in real term drivers take-home pay and standards of living have dropped dramatically especially throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, which affects their rights of family life and driver wellbeing in enforced longer working hours.

**PLAISTOW BRANCH  
London Region**

*(Carried)*

CATHERINE HANLON (London): Madam President and Congress, I am moving Motion 133: The impact of London's Congestion Charge on Transport for London's private hire drivers.

We request that conference asks London's Mayor Sadiq Khan and the GLA Members to have a full tabled democratic debate and vote in favour of the removal of London's congestion charge on London's private hire trade an added cost(tax) of up to £105 per week.

Many are leaving the trade leading to a potential shortage of drivers and equally damaging the safety of the travelling public, especially the vulnerable and lone women.

The latest figures appear to suggest that 46% of private hire drivers have left the trade in the last few years. Yes, we know that Covid hasn't helped. After a consultation, private hire vehicles that entered the Congestion Charge zone had their exemptions

removed in June 2020 as London's City Hall that too many vehicles entered the zone, which has led to the increase of vehicle emissions.

We ask that Congress backs this motion at a time when licensing costs and high costs of fuel are rising. Drivers' take-home pay and standards of living have dropped dramatically which affects the rights of family life, wellbeing and are forced to work longer hours.

Congress, you know yourself that the cost of maintaining and running a vehicle has increased, let alone a compliant vehicle that drivers have. I ask Congress is it right that the majority of private hire drivers have to pay a daily congestion charge of £15? Think about it for a second. That is an extra £105 per week just to go to work and feed your family. Please support this motion. *(Applause)* I was asked if I was going to get up here and sing. I've only got a few words: "GMB. You're simply the best!" *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Catherine. Secunder?

MIKE TINNION (London): Congress and President, I second Motion 133: The Impact of London's Congestion Charge on Transport for London's Private Hire Drivers.

Before I go into that, let me thank Ida Clemo and Chris Bargery from the London Region office because they have helped me so much in doing these speeches. They have been fantastic. *(Applause)*

Let's me honest in what we are talking about here. The congestion charge is nothing but a tax; nothing more, nothing less. It is a tax on working men and women who drive private hire vehicles in London.

Florence Eshalomi, the MP for Vauxhall, when she was a London Assembly member and on the Transport Committee, said to the G56 Professional Drivers' Branch: "Transport for London's own figures show that the congestion charge would only reduce traffic by 1%, while affecting 100% of London's lowest-paid workers". One in every three private hire drivers do not renew their TfL licence, the majority stating that the expenses incurred as part of their working day just made the job unviable. But standing in the wings, as always, are thousands of other potential drivers who believe that London's streets are paved with gold. Congress, we must negotiate the removal of this tax with TfL to allow our members to earn a decent living wage. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mike. I call the mover of Motion 136.

### **MORE TRUCK STOPS NEEDED URGENTLY**

#### **MOTION 136**

#### **136. MORE TRUCK STOPS NEEDED URGENTLY!**

This Congress calls on the GMB to lobby this Government to push ahead with its intentions to provide more and better facilities for lorry drivers to stop overnight or in their down time.

Last year apparently the Government undertook a survey on facilities for HGV and long-distance drivers. This survey identified that the current available facilities are not keeping up with demand. Many of these facilities were at best basic leading to many of these Lorries being parked overnight on laybys, under and over bridges etc.

These new facilities should have security, CCTV, safe lit areas to park, toilets, showers and food available, bearing in mind some of these drivers are spending up to nine months of a year living in their cab.

## **HAVERING BRANCH**

### **London Region**

*(Carried)*

MARTIN FOSTER (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 136 – More Truck Stops. Our professional HGV drivers have first-hand experience that UK truck stops are getting worse, not better. As a lorry driver, whether you are male or female, and if you are lucky enough to find a space, what sort of facilities would you find? Showers and toilets? Maybe. But would you want to use them? A good range of quality, healthy food at reasonable prices? I don't think so. Good rest areas? Maybe. Affordable overnight parking? No. The reality is that most truck stops are at best basic. This just isn't good enough.

What happens if you don't find a space? It is pot luck if you can find somewhere else, say, on an industrial estate that has no restrictions or, maybe, a layby.

Colleagues, with local councils putting more restrictions on laybys, this only adds to more stress and pressure on the driver. Imagine trying to find somewhere to park an articulated lorry with a combined length of over 50 ft, having done 13 hours on duty with only two hours left before you reach your daily maximum. Then, if you are lucky enough to find a layby to park in, you are into the unknown. Will it be quiet? Is it well lit? Are there any facilities? Is it in a safe area?

Colleagues, most workers in the UK can come home at the end of the day and enjoy time with their families, but for our professional lorry drivers they must settle for their 8 by 6 bijou gaff where their only comforts might be the use of a fridge, a microwave and, maybe, a TV. Would you expect any other professional worker to accept these conditions after a 15-hour shift? Colleagues, this is the stark reality of what lorry drivers face daily.

The £32.5 million funding announced last October to improve showers, toilet facilities and security is welcome, but much more investment is needed, especially when the Department of Transport identified a shortfall of 3,700 lorry spaces in 2018, some four years ago. Colleagues, we urgently need better facilities, and we call upon the Government to consult hauliers, local authorities and the logistics industry to upgrade current truck stops and identify new sites. Lorry drivers give up and sacrifice so much by working away from home, away from their families and friends and living in their cabs for up to nine months a year.

Colleagues, if the Government do not take steps now to massively improve these facilities, then the future of the supply chain looks very bleak. Please support this motion and let's lobby the Government. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martin. Secunder?

MIKE TINNION (London): I second Motion 136 on more truck stops.

Congress and Madam President, recent road haulage figures show a key reason why lorry drivers don't stay in the sector is a lack of high-quality rest facilities. If the industry is to become more diverse and inclusive, then improvements must be made and made immediately. To attract more men and women into the industry will be no easy feat. A lack of diversity is holding back an expansion in the workforce. At present, women make up as little as 1% and the proportion of under-25 year-olds is under 3% in the entire workforce. These figures will never change unless things dramatically improve with dignity and respect at its core.

Congress, what we are talking about today isn't new. The road haulage sector has been asking for improvements for decades, but little has changed. The Government blame the companies and the companies feel hard done by. But it is the drivers who are hard done by by both the companies and the Government. To park on a motorway service station will cost up to £40 a night, if you can find a space. How many times have you driven down a busy A-road at night and every layby is full of parked-up lorries with no washing facilities, no security and no food options at hand? How can we expect the next generation of drivers, be they male or female, to live this life? Change must happen and it must happen now. We need this sector to survive as well the supply chain, or the supply chain will be seriously impacted. There needs to be a minimum standard of facilities, including clean showers, toilets, healthy food options and services for female drivers.

Congress, I've driven everything. I had a bad experience in a Sherman tank once, but that's another story. However, I've never driven a lorry. I do have family members who would rather drive in Europe and across the Continent because their facilities and treatment of drivers is far better than our own. I support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mike. Does anyone wish to speak in opposition to these motions? *(No response)* No. The CEC is supporting all of those motions, so I can move straight to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are all carried.

*Motion 131 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 132 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 133 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 136 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: We will now debate Motion 134, from North West & Irish Region, and Motion 135 from London Region. I call the mover of Motion 134.

## **SECURITY FOR PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY DRIVERS**

### **MOTION 134**

#### **134. SECURITY FOR PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY DRIVERS**

This Congress is concerned at the continuing attacks on Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers across the country. No driver should be placed at significant risk when carrying out their daily work.

Furthermore, drivers are reporting increased stress and anxiety caused by passengers unhappy with the fare structures and charging introduced by some on-line operators. Passengers are taking their frustrations out on drivers and in some instances making false allegations against them. This is resulting in lost earnings and higher levels of illness/stress with drivers.

We urge the GMB to campaign for local licensing authorities to introduce a mandatory requirement for the introduction of CCTV systems in all PH and Hackney carriage vehicles. This will enable drivers to have some protection and evidence when confronted with unreasonable and or violent passengers.

We also seek the introduction of protective screens in Private Hire and Hackney carriage vehicles as an additional safety measure for all drivers. While temporary screens have been installed by some as a Covid response we believe longer term the protective screens should be permanent.

We urge the GMB to work closely with Licencing Authorities, Police and, where required, National Government to ensure a secure and safe environment for all drivers and the securing of grants to help Drivers and operators to invest in systems to keep drivers safe.

#### **Q22 MANCHESTER CENRAL BRANCH**

##### **North West & Irish Region**

*(Carried)*

KEVIN FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): President and Congress, I move Motion 134 on Security for Private Hire and Hackney Drivers. Sadly, we recently saw the tragic loss of an Uber driver in Greater Manchester. Ali Askar, aged 39, was 0000assaulted and murdered by two passengers who had a disagreement about eating a burger in the back of his taxi; killed while at work doing what he loved, his family left devastated. They expected him home after the shift. His last period was in hospital with severe head injuries from which he died. May he rest in peace.

In some areas, drivers regularly run the gauntlet of bricks and other missiles thrown at their vehicles. We've even seen some deliberately targeted drivers because they are foreign drivers, as they call them, they are from another country and motivated by racism. There is no question about that.

Some drivers face the problem of surcharging where the passengers get irate because they have been charged extra for the journey. They don't see the operator remote from them. The see the driver and sometimes take their anger and frustration out on the drivers themselves.

GMB, I am proud to say, in the section which I am proud to belong to, has fought hard for many many drivers on the platform economies and, particularly, these organisations like Uber to ensure that they get a fair hearing when the platform is turned off and they are denied the ability to earn a living. Often it is resting on the fact that it is an argument between a passenger and a driver, for which there are no witnesses. Yet, the Uber and others can turn the app off and stop them earning immediately, with little or no evidence. I have argued strongly that there needs to be a fair and just process for dealing with that, but part of the problem is often the evidence that is not available when they are dealing with that question. Well done, because there are many many drivers who I know of – at least a hundred odd – who have been returned back to the app quickly, but not quick enough when you are not earning your income, I can add that. It is important.

So having CCTV in vehicles is a must. It is an essential. What is the price of a CCTV system to the life of a driver? What is the price of a CCTV system for a driver left traumatised or damaged for life because of the situation they find themselves in? Conference, CCTV equipment needs to be there for the drivers. It needs to be installed and it needs to be standard fittings for the drivers so even vexatious cases can be challenged with the evidence used. I am pleased to say that the case I mentioned at the beginning it was CCTV footage that brought the two thugs to justice for which they will serve a long sentence. Let's make CCTV and driver safety paramount. *(Applause)* Thank you, Congress.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Secunder?

NATHANIEL TETTAH (North West and Irish): Vice President and Congress, I am seconding Motion 134, following Kevin Flanagan. This is quite an emotive topic, as you heard. It is one where we are asking that CCTV should be provided, with screen protections as well, to protect operators. We are trying to appeal to local authority licensing panels, for example, to look at this matter. I appeal to you guys to back this motion.

Killed while doing what he loved! Targeted because they are from another country. I once was an immigrant or I am, to some extent, an immigrant. If I am lone working and I am exposed to this condition and I die in such a way, what a tragedy! We are asking that CCTV should be installed. It is there to protect the drivers from possible harm and, obviously, to stop these vexatious claims from coming forward. If the likes of Uber, as exemplified, are ripping drivers off in relation to their incomes, and certainly making them unemployed, we can argue that case. Of course, if the matter goes to licensing panels, we can sit and look at the evidence in front of us. So backing this motion is, I think, very important. We are sat here and listening to all of these motions, but I think this motion here needs backing. We are asking for your support. Thank you, Conference.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nathaniel. I call the mover of Motion 135.

## **DRIVER SAFETY**

### **MOTION 135**

#### **135. DRIVER SAFETY**

This Congress must hear in the press that a Taxi, Hackney Carriage or a Private Hire Driver, is assaulted somewhere in the United Kingdom, every day of the week.

We must raise a campaign, along the lines of our current branch campaign “No excuse for abuse” and also involve National Police Services, Government, both nationally and locally, to collate a list of offenders that have assaulted drivers and or withheld driver payments, in the past. Allowing drivers to work without fear of danger or lack of payment.

## **GMB PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH**

### **London Region**

*(Referred)*

MIKE TINNION (London): Congress and Vice President, I move Motion 135 on Driver Safety. I am proud to follow Motions 131, 132, 133 and 134 by Bro Flanagan. It was absolutely fantastic.

Congress, when I started looking into the background of this motion, I kept finding a disturbing trend, that every year for 30 years a taxi driver or a private hire driver had been killed at work. Thousands have been attacked and robbed. There is an element amongst our passengers who attack drivers or make off without paying week in and week out. This is where CCTV is a priority.

The use of apps in order to hire a private hire vehicle or to hail a taxi are massively on the increase. These recidivists, which is my word of the day, could and should be red-flagged as in other industries, such as the Ambulance Service. We, as a branch understand that it will be more difficult for taxis but, Congress, something must be done. Local authorities must be reminded that they have a duty of care not only to the travelling public but to their drivers, who they issue licences to. With guidance from our Union, local authorities can create policies that allow local app companies to follow. Companies licensed within these local authorities must be made to put drivers before profit, to protect our members from attack by reporting each incident to the police and local authorities to create a database of offenders, which will help to keep our members safe at work, with a yearly review. There is no excuse for abuse. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mike. Secunder. *(The Motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Does anyone wish to speak against the motions? *(No response)* In that case, I call Carol Robertson to respond for the CEC.

CAROL ROBERTSON (CEC): Vice President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Motions 134 and 135. The CEC is supporting Motion 134 with qualifications. The Union is currently surveying our Uber driver members on the proposition of CCTV or dash-cam technology being mandatory as a condition of use by Uber on the platform.

Our first qualification is that there is an issue with the cost for installing CCTV technology, and the stringent requirements of the GDPR to ensure there is no misuse. However, these are not insurmountable problems.

The issue of dash-cam technology use may be a technical solution that is cheaper and may better assist the interests or promotion for platform taxi and private hire services.

The CEC's second qualification regards the issue of protective screens in vehicles. While we agree with the sentiments in the motion, in practice this may have a serious effect on the vehicles that can be used by drivers, which could be a major cost implication. This issue needs further research.

The CEC is asking for Motion 135 to be referred. The CEC is sympathetic to the aims of this motion. We are asking that this motion be referred so that further considerations can be made to the practicability of compiling a list of these customers. The GMB has also drawn attention to an effective red-flag system, such as the Ambulance Service. We would need to investigate whether examples of good-quality approaches to barring violent or non-paying people that could be adopted. Who would hold this list also needs to be thought about and how customers might find themselves on the list will also need to be considered.

Therefore, the CEC is asking for Motion 134 to be supported with the qualifications set out, and for Motion 135 to be referred for the reasons set out. Thank you.  
*(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Carol. Does North West & Irish agree to accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Does London Region agree to refer the motion? *(Agreed)* We will take a vote now on Motion 134. All those who agree, please show? Any against. That is carried.

*Motion 134 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 135 was REFERRED.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 137.

## **INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: MANUFACTURING**

### **MANUFACTURING, COVID-19 AND SKILLS-GAP**

#### **MOTION 137**

#### **137. MANUFACTURING, COVID-19 AND SKILLS-GAP**

This Congress calls on the CEC to lobby the Government and the Labour Party to deal with this Skill Shortages as a matter of urgency.

While the manufacturing sector was not one of the most affected sectors during the Covid-19 pandemic, it did struggle. During the first few months of the 2019 pandemic, many workers had been told to stay at home to limit the spread of the virus and that was a major disruption for this sector as goods could no longer be produced.

But this was not the only struggle the manufacturing sector had to face during the Covid-19 pandemic. Chain supply, delivery delays up to six weeks or more, increased costs caused by

the fact that most manufacturers had to seek alternatives to raw materials and supplies, loss of contractors and of course the uncertainty of what was to come.

At the end of 2020, Brexit took place and manufacturers started to struggle due to skills shortages as well as the pandemic and chain disruption. A report from 2021 found that 85% of the manufacturing sector is affected by the skill shortage making the sector in need to adapt their recruitment strategies.

Many of our members could feel the backlash of all the struggles in the manufacturing sector and fear for what is yet to come in the coming months. The GMB's aim is always to protect the interests of its members so it is now more important than ever to show the importance of Trade Unions.

## **P42 PRESTON BRANCH** **North West & Irish Region**

*(Carried)*

KAMRAN ALI (North West and Irish): I move Motion 137. Congress, while the manufacturing sector was not one of the most affected sectors during the Covid-19 pandemic, it did struggle. During the first few months of the 2020 pandemic, many workers were told to stay at home to limit the spread of the virus, which was a major disruption for this sector as goods could no longer be produced. The Covid-19 pandemic was a catalyst for change in customer preferences and buying behaviours, which came with its own set of challenges. Some manufacturers were more advanced and ready to adapt quickly, others painfully noticed the challenges of a weak and more digital commerce infrastructure. But that was not the only struggle that the manufacturing sector had to face. During the Covid-19 pandemic, chain supply problems and delivery delays of up to six weeks or more caused most manufacturers had to seek alternatives to raw materials and suppliers, the loss of contractors and, of course, the uncertainty of what was to come.

As we discussed, many of the root causes, such as skilled labour shortages, have been years in the making, but the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated some of the problems while alleviating others. Companies have been forced to consider new strategies to stay afloat, painful as it may seem, to survive within the industry.

At the end of 2020 Brexit took place and manufacturers started to struggle due to skill shortages. As well as the pandemic and supply chain disruption, a report from 2021 found that 85% of the manufacturing sector is affected by the skill shortage, making the sector in need to adapt their recruitment strategies. Many of our members could feel the backlash of all the struggles in the manufacturing sector and fear what is next to come in the next couple of months.

The aim of the GMB was always to protect the interests of its members so it is now more important than ever to show the importance of the trade unions. Please support.  
*(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder. *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* I call Motion 138.

## **INVESTING IN NEW ENERGY AND BRITISH WORKERS MOTION 138**

### **138. INVESTING IN NEW ENERGY AND BRITISH WORKERS**

This Congress recognises the need for new energy, the phasing out of North Sea oil and gas will see jobs disappear due to climate change. This government must not lose the opportunity to invest and retain our members in green energy that this country needs. We have all been told we need new central heating systems. This government must invest in new factories to manufacture these new central heating systems, not buy them from the likes of China. We can retrain our members to produce them and install and maintain them.

Congress calls on GMB union to press this government to invest in British workers.

### **STOCKTON NO 3 ENG BRANCH Northern Region**

*(Carried)*

DAVID RIDDLE (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 138 – Investing in New Energy and the British Workforce. This Tory Government have failed to invest in new energy. It is an abysmal failure. They have failed to think and plan for the medium and the long term, and they have made the cost-of-living crisis even worse.

Congress, let me say that we fully support long-standing GMB policy, and that we must not discriminate against workers wherever they are from. We should agitate and organise all workers into membership and make work better for them. Congress, we can't invest in new energy if we fail to invest in jobs and energy. This Tory Government would rather let skills die than invest over the long term. If we are going to ensure that good, well-paid jobs are maintained, we must build and invest in our energy supply. It is the only way we are going to protect this nation and help our hardworking members long term. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder.

PETER KANE (Northern): Still Northern Region. Transfer going ahead, subject to a medical. *(Chuckling)* I am seconding the principle of Motion 138. Because we are not self-sufficient in energy generation and because we rely on imported energy, I don't agree that we have no use for fossil fuels. The GMB and the Labour Party have a balanced energy policy based on coal and gas, along with renewables and nuclear.

Yesterday, Rachel Reeves set out the policy on nuclear. There are coal boats from Poland and Australia landing in the Port of Tyne. We are taking coals to Newcastle. I remember long and hard campaigning with people in this room for carbon capture and storage. After all, we are a gas union. It is both feasible, achievable and financially viable, and I believe it should be part of our policy. However, it would take a lot of investment and I don't see this Government or private companies making that investment. I believe that the energy industry should be taken back into public ownership. We will then be self-sufficient in energy. Think of how many hill-skilled and well-paid jobs in manufacturing that that could be created. However, we need steel. If we are going to build new reactors and wind turbines, we need steel.

This week Northern TUC is holding a meeting in Newcastle to oppose a coking coalmine in Whitehaven, West Cumbria. They are meeting in Newcastle, not in Whitehaven or West Cumbria. That is because the majority of people in Whitehaven and West Cumbria want the mine because we are Cumbrians, not Dumbrians. How stupid not to want something that will create two or three hundred high-skilled, hi-tech and well-paid jobs! I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 140

**ENCOURAGE LOW CARBON UK MANUFACTURING BY REVITALIZING THE GMB 'MAKING IT' CAMPAIGN**

**MOTION 140**

**140. ENCOURAGE LOW CARBON UK MANUFACTURING BY REVITALIZING THE GMB 'MAKING IT' CAMPAIGN**

This Congress urges GMB to revitalize the 'Making It' campaign launched in 2018 to encourage retention and to ensure a future for manufacturing and services in this country.

This would not only have obvious employment and economic benefits but could also ensure that the products are made and transported with the lowest carbon footprint possible.

We call for GMB to campaign for incentives to be offered for the start-up of new manufacturing businesses as well as incentivizing the lowest possible carbon footprint in the manufacturing and transportation processes of the products.

**BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH**

**London Region**

*(Carried)*

ADRIAN STOHR (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 140 on encouraging low carbon UK manufacturing by revitalizing the GMB 'Making It' campaign. Congress, the GMB's 'Making It' campaign was launched in 2018. At the time it was a useful document to encourage a future for UK manufacturing. We are asking for a new version as much has changed since 2018. We need to highlight the importance of environmentally-sound manufacturing as well as public and private services provision to our country. This is not only because of the obvious economic and environmental benefits, but also to make us more resilient to world events, such as pandemics, war and fuel-supply problems.

It is also essential for the future of our children that goods and services used in the UK are as carbon neutral as possible, and for this to be achieved as soon as possible.

The Government's industrial strategy launched last March says that UK manufacturing is responsible for one-eighth of our greenhouse gas emissions. UK service providers and manufacturers could be incentivised to make genuine reductions along with the benefit of having shorter distances for transport and delivery. Congress, UK businesses could be proud to show the world the way forward. We need to emphasise and reward innovative ideas. The place to start would be the energy suppliers with all the power supplied to be carbon neutral. Could not the roofs

of many more factories and offices be fitted with solar panels? Where there is room in business yards, maybe wind turbines could be erected. Also many commercial premises are poorly insulated and are losing waste heat, which needs to be rectified.

Other ideas which manufacturers and service providers could address include the monitoring and reduction of energy and water use. They could review the share logistics to maximise transport efficiency. They could be economical with raw materials and review their use to ensure that there are no alternatives available with a lower carbon footprint. All forms of waste should be reduced to the minimum, with scrap metals and packaging being recycled in this country. Waste heat should be eliminated or re-used as far as possible. Also companies should review the way they store electronic data. If stored on their servers, it often has a higher carbon footprint than if stored in the Cloud.

Congress, GMB needs to be shouting from the front of rebuilding our economy. We understand that a relaunch of the 'Making It' Campaign will now involve other sectors and we ask for a future-proof campaign for manufacturing and services to publicise the urgent need to increase business resilience and decarbonisation as well as looking at the organisational opportunities. We have a great organisation. We've got GMB. Let's unite, Congress. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Adrian. Secunder.

MARC SCHEIMANN (London): Good morning, Vice President and Congress. I know. I'm a second-time speaker. I must be an old hand at this business now, mustn't I? *(Applause)* We need to produce goods for the future industries in this country and not just bolt together other people's goods. We need to make sure that they are secure jobs with the GMB looking after those members. I look forward to the idea of workplace meetings out in the North Sea when they are going to visit the people working on wind turbines. That'll be an interesting move. If anyone is interested in green levies – we have heard a lot about cancelling green levies at this current time – we need to consider that the only thing that needs to be cancelled is when wind turbines are created offshore, the Government auctions off the site to the highest bidder. That's why the price of eco-electricity doesn't come down because they have paid a maximum price for it to the British Government. That is the only unfair tax that we need to get rid of. We need to make sure that the jobs are created, used and done in Britain. I look forward to seconding this motion. Thank you, Brothers and Sisters. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Marc. I call the mover of Motion 141.

**STEEL FABRICATION JOBS REQUIRED TO MANUFACTURE 8,000  
GIANT OFFSHORE WIND TURBINES FOR NET ZERO  
MOTION 141**

**141. STEEL FABRICATION JOBS REQUIRED TO MANUFACTURE 8,000 GIANT  
OFFSHORE WIND TURBINES FOR NET ZERO**

This Congress notes that for the Climate Change Committee target for wind energy for net zero requires 8,000 giant offshore wind turbines to be manufactured and installed in the UK over the years to 2050.

Congress notes that in May 2021 GMB Scotland, using the practical experience of members in the sector, identified that up to 30,000 new jobs are required in the UK steel fabrication sector to build the at least 300 giant offshore wind turbines each year, every year to meet this 8,000 target. These are the direct and indirect jobs building towers and foundations only. The jobs producing blades, turbines, nacelles and generators would be additional to this number. The delivery of these jobs to coastal communities across the UK is pivotal to the credibility and success of the UK Government's "levelling up agenda. This jobs target is a policy which the Labour Party leadership should endorse and adopt.

Congress concurs with the view of GMB Scotland members in the offshore wind industry supply chain of how far the UK lags way behind other countries in terms of technology and investment in facilities. The current capacity to undertake this work in the UK is woefully inadequate and will not be realised without collaboration between Governments and the private sector.

Congress notes that replacement of nearly all the current power stations and scaling up of electricity capacity is going to be hugely expensive. The costs of an additional 100GW of wind power alone will be not far short of £250 billion, if costs are comparable with capacity in the pipeline and turbines duties are similar. These huge sums will have to be paid from household energy bills and taxation.

Congress considers that the quid pro quo for collectively having to pay the huge costs of achieving net zero carbon emissions - and we do have to pay - is to level up economic activity in the steel fabrication green energy supply chain with well paid, skilled jobs located in forgotten coastal and industrial communities that badly need this boost.

Congress considers that the current commitment by the renewable operators on local content is totally inadequate. It does not apply to turbines being installed before 2030. The 60 % includes work over the lifetime of the project and it is voluntary. It should apply immediately for all new projects, it should cover manufacturing and installation. It should be mandatory for the payment of subsidies.

The vision is bold but absolutely achievable: 30,000 green jobs in steel fabrication supporting the next generation of offshore wind developments in UK waters, requiring 20 million tonnes of British steel, generating 100GW of clean power for British homes, backed up by reliable nuclear power, and helping the country achieve it's 2050 "net zero" targets.

Congress calls on the UK Government to establish a Renewables Development Authority which will have responsibility for procuring private sector capacity to build new yards, and work with training bodies to develop the necessary skills base in our local economies.

Without this targeted Government action, including linking the payment of subsidies to renewable operators to using a UK supply chain, the manufacture of the lion's share of steel fabrication work for the UK's offshore wind future will continue to be delivered across Asia, as evidenced by the experience over the last decade of offshore wind manufacture in Scotland.

The areas with existing steel fabrication skills and / or access to the sea that a new Renewables Development Authority should evaluate and consider for the new yards include: Clydeside, Western Isles, Dundee, Fife, Tyneside, Wearside, Teesside, Humberside, King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Felixstowe, Harwich, Medway, Portsmouth, Southampton,

Weymouth, Plymouth, Falmouth, Appledore, Avonside, Milford Haven, Pembroke, Anglesey, Merseyside, Barrow, and Belfast. This list is not exclusive or complete.

## **WHITTINGTON SERVICES BRANCH**

### **London Region**

*(Carried)*

PAUL BLOCK (London): Congress, I move Motion 141 on Steel Fabrication Jobs. Congress, the Climate Change Committee has set a target for wind-generated electricity capacity of 100 gigawatts to achieve net zero by 2050, which the UK Government is working towards. This will require up to 8,000 giant offshore wind turbines with a capacity of 12.5 megawatts or more each, and some of these turbines are now being installed in UK waters. The towers and foundations for the 8,000 will require no less than 20 million tonnes of steel over the next 30 years. GMB Scotland members in wind-steel fabrication calculate that no less than 30,000 steel-fabrication jobs are required each year, every year, for the next 30 years to produce this vast amount of steel. These jobs will be a huge opportunity to create new, highly-skilled, well-paid jobs in areas of the country that badly need these jobs. However, in spite of all the promises, the vast majority of the 30,000 steel-fabrication jobs will be based across Asia.

The renewable operators in the UK waters are currently awarding the steel fabrication contracts to Asian yards. It is not surprising to hear that the UK Government is complicit in this offshoring of jobs.

Congress, GMB and the rest of the labour Movement should not accept this situation. Offshore wind farms are only economically viable for operators with guaranteed agreements, which require subsidies plus expensive back-up generating capacity for the one-day in six on average where there is no wind. If the renewables operators were using their own money, then maybe they could get away with it, but they are not. The money is coming from household energy bills and taxpayers. This is a clear case of whoever pays the paper is calling the tune. We need new legislation linking the payment of subsidies to the use of a local supply chain for steel fabrication for the towers and foundations. However, the yards and the skills do not exist and will have to be brought onstream.

At the heart of the motion is the call for the UK Government to establish a Renewables Development Authority. This organisation will be responsible for procuring private sector capacity to build new yards, and work with training bodies to develop the necessary skills base in our local economies and link the payment of subsidies to operators using this capacity. We already have an example of a UK supply chain for nuclear power stations, so we know this can be done. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Secunder.

BRENDAN DUFFIELD (London): I am seconding Motion 141. The vision being put to Congress is bold but absolutely achievable: 30,000 green jobs in steel fabrication supporting the next generation of offshore wind developments in the UK's

waters. This requires 20 million tonnes of British steel generating 100 GW of clean power for British homes, backed up by reliable nuclear power, thereby helping the country to achieve its 2050 net zero targets.

What we need is a national-led high-profile campaign for GMB regions and branches to gather support, with the help from across the grassroots of the labour Movement in areas suitable for new yards. We need concerted local campaigns involving local councillors and other elected representatives, education bodies and employers to get these jobs based in the UK.

As well as the jobs, which we are badly needed, is the issue of energy security. As is happening for the Royal Navy, we need UK-based facilities to build and maintain our electricity capacity, including wind turbines. The war in the Ukraine has exposed the folly of relying on necessary overseas' supplies in sector like electricity, which is vital to our security and prosperity.

As well as presenting the current Parliament for action on this matter, GMB should seek manifesto commitments from the Labour Party for a Renewables Development Authority and to link subsidies to using a UK supply chain in next-generation elections. I urge Congress to support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brendan. Does anyone wish to oppose any of these motions? (*No response*) In that case, I will now call Mike Carr to respond on behalf of the CEC.

MIKE CARR (CEC): Vice President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Motions 138 and 140.

The CEC is supporting Motion 138 with the qualification that calling on the Government to invest in British workers should not be interpreted as a call for such investment to apply exclusively to British citizens. This would be against long-standing GMB policy to not discriminate against workers in the UK on grounds of country of birth. GMB does, however, support ways to promote the delivery of jobs within UK industries that do not violate this principle. These are set out in the CEC's Special Report on Procurement and Spending agreed at Congress in 2021.

The CEC is supporting Motion 140 with a qualification. The motion calls for the GMB to support subsidising new businesses and minimising carbon footprints in manufacturing and transportation. These are measures that GMB already supports as set out by the CEC's Special Report on Energy and the Environment, agreed at Congress in 2021. The CEC's qualification is that while the 'Making It' campaign was focused on raising awareness of UK manufacturing capacity, the motion involves members across GMB Manufacturing and Commercial Services memberships. Therefore, any campaign should reflect the wider membership base.

In summary, the CEC is asking Congress to support Motions 138 and 140 with the qualifications set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mike. Colleagues, the CEC is supporting Motions 137 and 141. Does the Northern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*)

Does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) That means all four motions are being supported. All those in favour, please show? Any against? They have carried.

*Motion 137 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 138 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 140 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 141 was CARRIED.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call the mover of Motion 176.

## **INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PROCUREMENT SUPPLY CHAINS**

### **MOTION 176**

#### **176. SUPPLY CHAINS**

This Congress notes the problems over the last year with supply chains. Congress recognises that this has been across the world. However, Congress also notes that in the UK there is a culture of not sourcing supplies and goods and services locally, yet policy makers make great play at reducing the UK's carbon footprint and the importance of the environment. Congress believes there is an inbuilt hypocrisy to policy in this area. Congress believes that if the UK is to be serious in terms of supply chain security, it must emphasise the local supply of goods and services. Congress believes that this a win on many levels for the UK, not just in reducing the carbon footprint, but in jobs and income for GMB members, their families and communities. Congress calls for the GMB to lobby policy makers in Westminster and for any progress to be reported back to Congress before the next general election.

### **SOUTH TYNE AND WEAR GENERAL BRANCH**

#### **Northern Region**

*(Carried)*

RICHARD SPEAKMAN (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 176 – Supply Chains.

This is my first speech to you in person since 2018, so I will make it short and concise. This motion recognises the problems that have happened worldwide with supply chains, but this Government has shot itself in the foot by sourcing goods anywhere and everywhere. Congress to comply with their own standards on carbon reduction, this Government must start looking at UK companies which can supply the necessary goods and infrastructure. Let me give you an example. During the pandemic, a well-known firm making waterproof coats based in South Shields started making PPE and sending it to the local hospitals, saving time and reducing the carbon footprint on the articles.

If this Government is serious about the security of the supply chain, I am happy to note that they have stopped ordering PPE from China over slavery issues. Also, the new underwater cable from Morocco to the United Kingdom, supplying solar power to the south-west, is to be made with British steel. I would hope that this is the start of a local supply chain for wind turbines and, possibly, the new Royal Navy supply ships. It all helps in reducing our carbon footprint and retains UK jobs.

Lastly, for all you meat-eating delegates, why is this Government signing trade deals with Australia and New Zealand and not protecting our farming supplies of beef, lamb, pork and milk? Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT (took the Chair): Thank you, Richard. Is there a seconder? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you.

Let me say that we are not taking Motions 125, 128 and 129 until this afternoon. Apologies to those speakers who thought they were going to be able to relax over lunchtime. We will take those motions this afternoon.

I call the mover of Motion 177.

## **DEFENCE PROCUREMENT MOTION 177**

### **177. DEFENCE PROCUREMENT**

This Congress notes the way this Conservative Government has failed miserably to give a jobs guarantee in procuring vital parts of our defence infrastructure. Congress believes that once again, the rhetoric of this Government is different from the delivery. Congress believes that the only way that we can have a sound defence industry, is for procurement and supply to be onshore as opposed to the appalling spectacle, of UK taxpayers' money being spent on procuring hardware and software from abroad. Congress believes that as a matter of urgency the Government needs to signal a change in policy, and we ask that a campaign be adopted to challenge the Labour Party to adopt this policy position as part of its manifesto for Government

### **BRITISH ROPES IND BRANCH Northern Region**

*(Carried)*

ANDREW BLUNT (Northern): Congress, I am from Northern Region, but very soon to be with our brothers and sisters from Yorkshire & Humber *(Cheers and Applause)* in the new North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region under the leadership of another amazing female regional secretary in Hazel Nolan. *(Applause)* I am moving Motion 177: Defence Procurement.

Congress, this Tory Government talks the talk on defence but certainly doesn't walk the walk. We have well-paid unionised jobs across the GMB, both directly employed and in the supply chains. Just visit Barrow to see the impact that employment at BAE has made to the area. Furthermore, the supply chains from Barrow go right across the UK as reports have shown. The Tories have no interest in keeping work in the UK or as part of currently long-term contracts. It takes just under 10 years to build a submarine like those at Barrow. Decisions on the new class of submarines are welcome, but the manufacture is offshore and out of reach of our members. The knock-on effect is that good, well-paid, unionised jobs come under threat. Our members' income and the future of their families is put under threat. Generations of skills, income and prosperity are lost to local communities in the process.

The practicalities of ensuring that defence work is awarded to the UK yards should and must be urgently addressed. If this Government are not willing to act, then we need Labour to signal in its next manifesto that it will adopt this policy. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andrew. Is there a seconder? (*The motion was formally seconded from the floor*) Does anyone wish to oppose any of those motions? (*No response*) In that case, I ask Brian Farr to respond for the CEC.

BRIAN FARR (CEC): President, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Motion 177. Procurement powers must be used to build and sustain a strong domestic and foreign defence manufacturing capability. The GMB has long campaigned, including our “Turning the Tide” campaign on shipbuilding and procurement. Motion 177 highlights the issue of software and hardware procurement that had not previously been raised at Congress.

The CEC’s qualification is that we wish to maintain the following policies: the principles set out in the CEC’s Special Report on Procurement and Spending, agreed in Congress in 2021. This is as follows. The GMB believes that as much defence spending as possible should be retained in the UK, particularly where the UK is not part of an international supply chain. Also there should be a guarantee that the Royal Navy and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary orders will be and should be placed in the UK. In addition, GMB members work in mature international supply chains. In the aerospace sector it would not be practical to onshore that production and the current long-term contracts without incurring job losses.

Therefore, the CEC is asking for Motion 177 to be supported with the qualification set out. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Brian, before you leave the stage, a little bird told me it’s your birthday today. So happy birthday. (*Applause and delegates sing “Happy Birthday”*)

Congress, the CEC is supporting Motion 176. Northern Region, do you accept the CEC qualification on Motion 177? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour of Motions 176 and 177, please show? Thank you. Anyone against? Those motions are both carried.

*Motion 176 was **CARRIED.***

*Motion 177 was **CARRIED.***

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. That concludes this morning’s session, but I have one more speaker to address Congress before we break. I know, again, that Malcolm wants to introduce him.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, President. Congress, it gives me great pleasure to invite Paul Pickering from Birmingham & West Midlands Region to speak to Congress. Paul is a branch secretary for the Newcastle-Under-Lyme Council branch and will be talking about his experience of mental health and how he became a trade unionist.

PAUL PICKERING (Birmingham & West Midlands): President and Congress, even though this is not a motion, I'm a first-time delegate and first-time speaker.  
*(Applause)*

Firstly, I am Paul Pickering, a GMB senior rep and branch secretary of Branch 45 for Newcastle-Under-Lyme for the council. Secondly, I was invited to speak following a visit to our GMB offices in Stoke, followed by a meeting at Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council depot to meet our members. Our Union's President, Barbara Plant, the new General Secretary, Gary Smith, our Deputy President, Malcolm Sage and our Regional Secretary, Martin Allen.

I am going to give you a bit of background knowledge about myself. Where do I start? I was born in 1979, the year Margaret Thatcher was elected. We all know what she did to trade unions; the attack on the steel industry, the closing of pits and the breaking up of communities, the privatisation of services, gas, water and so on, and compulsory competitive tendering to mention but a few. My dad worked for the same local authority in the same department as a manager as me as a senior trade union rep. I believe the two jobs were hard to juggle, but he managed it well and is still also branch secretary for Apex 60. This is where my journey of life began.

Growing up was hard. I was brought up on a council estate and I went to a Catholic school for my education, where I never did exceptionally well. That was only because I was a talker and never paid much attention to my teachers' knowledge. I wish I had, though. I was bullied at school and on the council estate but I never understood why. I do now. My first account of trade unionism was aged nine. My dad said he needed to see a man about a dog. I got all excited and said, "Can I come?" There was no dog there. My dad went to meet a member. His name was Alan and he had an industrial injury at work. He had been hit with a digger bucket and sustained injuries that stopped him from ever working again. My dad was telling him what to do next and how he could support him, which he did, and Alan received substantial damages. That was a taster of what was to come for me at a later date.

I will now fast forward. I have suffered with mental health problems from my teens onwards. I recognised I had a problem and had to sort it out before it was too late. I had CBT therapy. A lovely lady helped me to understand my issues/faults. She diagnosed me with Incurse Fault Syndrome, which I had never heard of before. When she explained all, I took her advice on board, and if it were not for this lady's advice I may have never been a trade union rep or here to tell my story.

After I regained my confidence and learning about my own disability, the council organised a mental health well-being session and talked about mental health at the leisure centre, whereby I gave a speech in front of 50 strangers about my own mental health journey. That enabled others to understand that they are not alone. I was extremely nervous and anxious, but I did it to help others understand their own demons so they may not be afraid to talk. Talking really does help. Now the council has its own Mental Health Wellbeing Group, which I support, Chair.

I never needed a union, even though I was just a member at the time because I worked alongside my dad. He was the manager of grounds maintenance, street cleansing, refuse collection, which covered the majority area of operational services. He

protected all of those members and others who were not in the union, so they got a greater understanding of what the Movement did in the hope that they may join the union one day.

I became a rep in 2016 because my dad had retired and was no longer there to support or protect the workers. That's when I had the pleasure of meeting Colin Griffiths. Colin actually signed me up for my induction in becoming a rep. On that date, Colin said to me that the university of life is key. He explained it to me. That got me thinking and I use that thought process even to this day. Thanks, Colin.

So my dad retired and Colin helped him in the process because it was not that straight forward. This meant that I was the new kid on the block. My first encounter with HR was a lovely lady named Nicola. My dad had many dealings with her from operational to trade union. So father like son, I went all out. Nicola said, "Don't come in here trying to be like your dad, a Jack Russell". I explained that I was no ankle nipper but I was a pit bull. Once I bite, I don't let go. *(Applause)*

That was the start of my union life. I am a fighter for better terms and conditions, for fairness and equality across the board. As trade unionists we fight for workers and try to get management/bosses to understand our issues without dispute and work with them the best we can. That does not always work but we do our best. I believe that the best way to organise is to communicate through our workforces. We had a ballot over pay in 2021 along with others. I invited our full-time officer, Wendy Greavenson, to witness my approach and how I go about organising in the workplace, for which we got more than a 90% turnout. *(Applause)*

I contacted the numbers of the members I had on my phone and, if I didn't have their number, I would ask someone who would inform people to tell them that they had a vote. On the day, I even did proxy votes for them, witnessed by the full-time officer, even recruiting on the days of ballot. People who know me know I try to recruit at every opportunity new workers when passing someone who I have never seen before. I say "Hello. I've not seen you before. What do you do? Are you in the trade union? If not, I'll explain all the benefits of the union". After all, it's my job to recruit. But more importantly, our membership must be retained. I even try recruiting workers who don't work for us.

Another achievement for the GMB was that we got the council to sign up to the "Dying To Work" Charter, which was signed in 2021 by the GMB, Unison, the TUC and Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council. *(Applause)* In 2018 the Council came to discuss a very important terms and conditions: our redundancy package, which we have a 2.33 multiplier on top of the statutory redundancy. It is one of the best in the country, which the GMB representative, my dad, negotiated. The employer wanted to take the multiplier away so we fought them off with the threat of industrial action, our last ever resort, and they backed off.

I am, effectively, the only GMB rep covering issues raised by my own branch with over 120 members, thus covering the needs of Apex 60 which, more or less, has the same membership as my own. We lost our long-standing rep, Ann-Marie Ruscoe, from Apex. She found a new job but she was an absolute credit to the GMB and we

worked like a dream team. I have managed to recruit Vanessa Renshaw as a representative.

Lastly, one of the biggest issues across the country for local government workers is pay. I believe refuse collectors, street clean operatives, bereavement services, leisure services and officers across all sections of local government have been hit the most because of the lack of reasonable pay awards under the Tory rule. We have suffered 10 years or more of austerity over pay and enough is enough! We have experienced from 1% to no increase, to 1.75%. Our pay has gone down by at least 20% over the last 10 years. We have to remember that food, energy bills, taxis and National Insurance are all going up. How do they expect us to survive? It is an absolute added to injury that frontline workers have been treated like this, especially working through the Covid-19 pandemic, putting themselves and their loved ones at risk.

The Government know that we are weak in this area. What do we do about it? I am a very, very active rep. I live, sleep and breath trade unions and politics. I believe we need to regroup, to organise our reps and local government to do what we need to do, which is to achieve better pay. Maybe reps could do what I did around organising the ballot approach. It did not put me out and I enjoyed getting the views of the workers on pay, which I found extremely rewarding. Overall, nationally, it was a very disappointing final turnout on the ballot.

I will finish by saying that trade unionism starts from the ground up. Members, reps, full-time officers, regional secretaries and many more proved to Gary, our General Secretary, the big boss, the boss of the third-biggest union in the UK, and our National President, of course, are all fighting for fairness.

On a last note, I look to be a Benjamin from the novel *Animal Farm*. I will leave you with this quote, Congress: “Only Benjamin professed to remember every detail of his long life and to note that things never had been or much worse with hunger, hardship and disappointment”. We said that that is the unalterable law of life. Thank you Congress for listening. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you so much, Paul. I know that that took a lot of courage and well done. I hope you can understand why we were so keen to get those people to the rostrum to tell you their inspirational stories. Thank you for this morning’s session. It is now finished. Please enjoy the exhibition and the fringe events and be back in the hall at 2 o’clock. Thank you.

*Congress adjourned for lunch.*

#### AFTERNOON SESSION

Conference re-assembled at 2.00 pm

THE PRESIDENT: Delegates, it is 2 o’clock and we have a lot of business to get through this afternoon. Thank you. I hope you all had a good lunch time and enjoyed the fringes, if you went to them. Just to let you know, the emergency motion on airports will be taken tomorrow after the Cost-of-Living Statement.

## **GRENFELL REMEMBRANCE**

THE PRESIDENT: We are now going to go on to Grenfell Remembrance. We are going to start our session this afternoon with a moment of remembrance for those who lost their lives in the Grenfell Tower Fire.

Today marks the fifth anniversary of the disaster, a disaster made through negligence and cutting corners, which meant that 72 people lost their lives. The community around Grenfell Tower still have lots of unanswered questions about why they were living in such unsafe conditions. There are many others across the country who remain unclear as to how safe the cladding is on their buildings.

Congress, you will see that you have a small poster with a green heart at your tables. I would like to thank London Region for providing those for us. To show our respect for those who lost their lives, and solidarity for those who are still campaigning for justice we shall have a minute's silence and then we will hold up the posters for photos. Colleagues, would you please stand for a minute's silence, or if you are unable to, then please observe.

*(Congress stood in silent tribute)*

Thank you, Congress. Now with your small posters, again if you are able to, please could you turn to face the back of the hall and hold them up so that we can take some photographs to show our solidarity and respect. Thank you, Congress. *(Applause)*

## **REGIONAL SUCCESS VIDEOS**

THE PRESIDENT: Before we move onto motions for debate, we have Regional Success videos from Southern Region, Wales & South West Region and Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region. *(Videos played)* I think those videos were absolutely brilliant to watch and they are only snippets of what has been going on in each of the regions. Well done to all the regions for all your campaigns, fights and all the successes and wins that you have had. Just keep on doing what you do best: fighting to make work better. *(Applause)*

We now move on to the motions: 125, 128 and 129 on Industrial and Economic Policy: Procurement. You also have Motion 124 on your printed programme, but this motion was ruled out of order for debate when you carried the Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1. I call the mover of Motion 125.

## **INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY: PROCUREMENT CONTRACT 6/FIRE AND REHIRE MOTION 125**

### **125. CONTRACT 6/FIRE AND REHIRE**

This Congress is aware of the insidious use of Fire & Rehire tactics used by large employers. It was brought to the fore by the British Gas Strike; however, you were warned.

Asda conducted exactly this exercise long before British Gas and it was largely ignored, shamefully so. The result was Contract 6 (known as Asda Contract) which has been even further watered down since its introduction.

Employees now have contracted hours and nothing more.

Your rota'd days can be changed, your department, even the times you work. Changes are looked at on a quarterly/monthly basis and implemented. How can anyone be expected to work around that? It is a glorified zero hours in effect.

Congress calls on the GMB to work with all Unions, TUC affiliated or not, to work jointly to eradicate these types of treatment from all workplaces.

**A56 ASDA BRANCH**  
**North West & Irish Region**

*(Carried)*

PATRICK TIMSON (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 125 – Contract 6/Fire and Rehire. I am a second-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

Working people are living through an unprecedented series of crises. It is shameful. Some of our employers have sought to exploit this situation through the Dickensian practice of fire and rehire. Disputes at British Gas, British Airways and elsewhere have highlighted the desire that many bosses have to drastically alter the voluntary nature of our employment laws. Slashing pay, often irrespective of profit margins, and enforcing flexibility, often irrespective of care commitments, work-life balance and anti-social hours.

Today my employer, Asda, makes pretensions towards being a caring employer with a social conscience, bragging about dropping and locking prices for cash-strapped consumers. Well, Congress, who can forget when it was us, their hardworking employees who they dropped, all for an inferior contract designed to eradicate regular shift patterns and create an on-call culture for some of Britain's most poorly-paid workers?

It is not just the private sector. Staff working for public bodies, such as councils, universities and the NHS, have been subjected to these attacks. Let's be clear. Fire and rehire is a choice. It is used as a decision, taken by bosses, who choose to see their own workforce as a problem to be overcome, not human beings with a collective voice. No number of Government frameworks or Select Committee hearings are going to end this race to the bottom.

This motion seeks to reaffirm that nothing is off the table in combatting these employment practices. Through workplace organising and real-world political action, we can consign fire and rehire to history where it belongs.

Last year more than three-quarters of the public wanted fire and rehire to be outlawed. We are told that there is a cross-party consensus that fire and rehire should not be used as a negotiating process. Why, then, have the Government failed to address this in successive Queen's Speeches? After all, what does their levelling-up agenda mean if they continue to allow employers to level down? The truth is that for millions of working people facing a cost-of-living crisis, fire and rehire means ever-increasing

uncertainty and poorer pay. It makes a mockery of the caring society that so many of our key workers personified throughout the pandemic. Please support this motion.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Patrick. Secunder?

MICHAEL TURNBULL (North West & Irish): Congress, I second Motion 125, Contract 6/Fire and Rehire. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker.  
*(Applause)*

President and Congress, as retail workers we pride ourselves on service to the customer. Loyalty and hard work are the cornerstones that keep our customers coming back. I am proud to say that this was exemplified by my colleagues at Asda during the pandemic as they risked their own health to keep this country fed. Unfortunately, this loyalty wasn't shared. Only months previously Asda had issued thousands of us with dismissal notices. The Your-Choice contract, which had offered a higher rate of pay in exchange for greater flexibility, had been a case of "Sign or be fired".

As the pandemic unfolded and with moral at an all-time low, Asda utilised this flexibility clause as an alternative to proper business planning. Despite reassurances that personal circumstances would be considered and that changes would be infrequent, we have seen thousands of colleagues undergo enforced changes. 6 am starts have become 6 pm starts for some. Others have faced numerous changes in the space of just a few months. The inability to plan more than four weeks in advance has forced many of our longer-standing employees to leave the company. Clearly, there is no more loyal an act that an employer can make than to fire and rehire its workforce. Congress, we deserve better. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Michael. I call the mover of Motion 128.

## **WATER INDUSTRIES ATTACKS ON MEMBERS TERMS AND CONDITIONS MOTION 128**

### **128. WATER INDUSTRIES ATTACKS ON MEMBERS TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

This Congress, in the past 2 years many of the UK Water companies have chosen to reduce terms and conditions for loyal members of staff. In some cases, causing members to remortgage and run up huge debts, just to make ends meet. Congress will be aware this is an ongoing serious issue. Thames Water are rewarding members who worked through the COVID pandemic by trying to cut shift pay and standby pay and trying to get employees to work weekends and bank holidays at a reduced rate of pay.

We call upon Congress to start a campaign for all water workers/members to have recognition for the valuable work they carry out 365 days a year, 24-7.

## **THAMES GENERAL BRANCH London Region**

*(Carried)*

CLIFFORD RONEY (London): Congress, I am moving Motion 128: Water Industries Attacks on Members Terms and Conditions. In my 43-year association with Thames Water, this has been the worst attack on our members' terms and conditions. Many of our members stand to lose a considerable amount of their salaries. This is after our loyal members worked through the biggest emergency this country has had since the Second World War. We must fight for our members. During the Covid lockdown our members, who were frontline staff, kept the water running in the capital, obviously, London. How have they been repaid? I'll tell you how they've been repaid! By the systematic destruction of their terms and conditions, which I must add are agreements that include overtime rates, protections of earnings and the loss of weekends, which will now become part of the normal working week. We must fight for our members. *(Applause)* Thank you.

A massive loss of wages will result in our long-suffering members losing their family homes, running up massive debts and just think of the stress and strain that this will put on our members' mental health at a time when all the working class people are struggling to make ends meet. We must fight for our members!

As usual, I have a slightly unscripted part to every speech I have made on this platform over many years. That starts by me thanking everybody who actually works within the water industry; all the stewards and the National Water Forum, which is chaired at the moment by Gary Carter, for their fantastic support and help across the country during what has been a terrible two years for all of us in this country. Thank you very much to all of them. It really means a lot to me, personally.

As one of the oldest branches in the GMB, we cannot allow our members to be treated in this way, to line the pockets of the fat-cat owners and to pay the dividends to shareholders. Boris Johnson's attack on the trade unions will only strengthen our resolve. *(Applause)* Boris, this Union has survived two world wars, countless recessions and, for God's sake, we survived Margaret Thatcher! We will never stop supporting and fighting for our loyal members. Please get behind this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Clifford. Secunder, please.

ALAN LAW (London): Congress, I am seconding Motion 128. In actual fact, Anglian Water has been cutting terms and conditions for quite a few years now. Every time OFWAT has a final determination, things become more stressful for employees. This is felt throughout all the water companies. It is essential that we, the GMB, get a delegation together with OFWAT and try to protect employees from all water companies. When the final determination is in sight, it is always the employee numbers that fall, terms and conditions are lost but never the dividends of shareholders. It is now time to bring back the tap.

When I look back and think what we have lost through the greediness of companies, I am quite shocked. Final salary pensions have gone; most overtime rates gone; good working relationships with the companies have gone, but most of all with having to work on a Saturday as a normal working day, family life has gone. It will never be the same.

By 2040 all water companies will no longer get away with polluting streams and rivers. A massive amount of investment must be done by the water companies. Hence another drought on the numbers of people within the water companies.

Congress, we need to campaign with our GMB MPs with the next determination that comes around. Pressure must be put on all water companies. Employees should not suffer. It's the shareholders who need to take the hit in their pockets, and not deplete the terms and conditions of the workers any more. Time and time again, terms and conditions fall away as millions go into shareholders' accounts. This cannot carry on. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. I call the mover of Motion 129.

**THOUSANDS OF SECURITY OFFICERS SUFFERING POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD) WITHIN THE SECURITY INDUSTRY  
MOTION 129**

**129. THOUSANDS OF SECURITY OFFICERS SUFFERING POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD) WITHIN THE SECURITY INDUSTRY**

This Congress notes research led by Dr Risto Talas and Professor Mark Button, professor of criminology in the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Portsmouth produced in 2020 and October 2021.

Professor Button said: "With almost 40 per cent of those surveyed exhibiting symptoms of PTSD, it leaves a very clear message that the issue of mental health is not currently being taken seriously by security managers."

"There is an emerging picture of a failure by the Security Industry and Security Industry Authority to address these issues."

The private Security Industry has transformed in the last 50 years from a small niche sector to a huge global industry. In the UK alone, there are more than 350,000 licensed Security Guards, with many others working in the sectors that don't need a license.

Security Guards tackle various roles, from patrolling public streets and protecting pubs and clubs to guarding sensitive sites like government buildings, courts, and airports.

Researchers claimed security staff were often physically challenged, leading to anything from verbal abuse to violent assault. In extreme cases, security operatives have been killed in the course of their duties.

Prof Button said: 'The research has revealed a worrying lack of support provided by the security companies.

Congress the world of work within the Security Industry creates people suffering from PTSD and increasing workplace stress. We call on the GMB Union to call on the Government to introduce a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder at Work Act which specifies the approach and methods expected of all employers in managing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder at work.

**GMB (LONDON) SECURITY BRANCH  
London Region**

*(Carried)*

MICHAEL HUSBANDS (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 129: Security Officers suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Security officers play an important role in providing safety and protection in many aspects of an individual's daily life. They patrol public streets, shopping malls, retail stores and transport hubs. They police night-time and entertainment venues, guard important and sensitive infrastructure, such as Government buildings, courts, social security offices and air and seaports. They also transport valuables and prisoners.

Contact with the general public is a key factor in most of the roles. Research has found that this has often produced conflict leading to many challenges. This could be anything from verbal abuse to violent assaults. In extreme cases, security operatives have been killed in the course of their duties. Security professionals working as security officers and door supervisors have suffered both verbal and physical attacks in a variety of workplaces, ranging from night clubs to retail stores and job centres. These attacks have left many security operatives suffering from poor mental health and wellbeing. Unfortunately, in about 40% of cases, security operatives have been diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder.

There is an emerging picture of the failure of the security industry and security industry authorities to address these issues. PTSD can be linked to anger and anxiety. So it is a very dangerous issue for security professionals to develop PTSD. Hence, the need for even more support. To combat violence and abuse is exactly what we need security for. So the danger to the mental health of security professionals is a much bigger problem than personal.

Congress, the world of work with insecurity creates poor PTSD, and increasing workplace stress. We call on the GMB Union to call on the Government to introduce a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder at Work Act which specifies the approach and methods expected of all employers in managing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder at work. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael. Secunder?

LORNA GAYLE (London): Congress, I second Motion 129. As a security guard at Heathrow, I was asked to go to a funeral parlour to body-search a stranger's human remains before the body was flown out. I became stressed and nervous, agitated, to the point where I refused. I stood my ground and the matter was closed.

Working with high-value items from around the world, including paintings and diamonds from South Africa on their way to Christie's or other parts of the country, carries a high risk of you being watched, followed or even attacked. Standing at Wimbledon for 12 hours a day, body searching sometimes or five to six days a week, guarding of aircraft for 12 hours in remote areas, with little or no toilet facilities, without an official break for five to six hours, never mind the weather, but working under these conditions will certainly have an impact both physically and mentally.

According to the Office of National Statistics, occupational injuries and illnesses, exposure to harmful substances, violent attacks, assault, long-term health issues, heart diseases, lung diseases and exposure to external environments would certainly cause pain, suffering, lifestyle changes and, in many cases, fatalities.

Worldwide, 2.78 million die each year. This would suggest that security personnel need additional support dealing with day-to-day or long-term stress. Congress, the message is clear what we need to do. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lorna. Does anyone wish to oppose any of these motions? *(No response)* In that case, I will invite John Warcup to respond for the CEC.

JOHN WARCUP (CEC): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Motion 129. The CEC is fully supporting the intention of Motion 129 subject to two qualifications. Firstly, rather than call a piece of primary legislation in the PTSD at Work Act, we would rather incorporate this into the proposed Mental Health at Work Act. This would be to ensure that action is taken at the earliest possible opportunity. Secondly, the CEC wishes to clarify that the proposed legislation and campaigning on this issue must extend beyond the security sector to all parts of the UK economy. Therefore, the CEC is asking for Motion 129 to be supported with the qualifications set out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, the CEC is supporting Motions 125 and 128. London Region, do you accept the qualification on Motion 129? *(Agreed)* Then I will put all those to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are all carried.

*Motion 125 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 128 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 129 was CARRIED.*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: ENERGY & UTILITIES**

THE PRESIDENT: We now come on to debate of motions under Social Policy: Energy & Utilities. Can I start by calling on the mover and seconder for Composite 16 to come to the front.

### **BATTLE OVER RAW SEWAGE DUMPING IN UK WATERWAYS COMPOSITE 16**

#### **C16. Battle over Raw Sewage Dumping in UK Waterways**

Covering Motions 254 and 255

254. BATTLE OVER RAW SEWAGE - SOUTHERN REGION

255. SEWAGE DUMPING IN UK WATERWAYS - SOUTHERN REGION

This Congress agrees to support the battle over raw sewage being released into our water ways by privately owned water companies. Pollution of the countries rivers and coastline is a national embarrassment, and our children and grandchildren will be surprised that we allowed this situation to go on for so long. The government allows water companies to release raw sewage into our rivers and seas after certain weather events, such as prolonged periods of heavy rain.

Environment Agency figures show that Water Companies discharged raw sewage into rivers in England alone 400,000 times last year, with untreated effluent including human waste, wet wipes, and condoms, were released into water ways for more than 3 million hours in 2020. The Environment Bill which was passed in January 2020 has no lawful requirement for water companies to comply to standards which were previously set with agreement from British governments by the EU: Boris Johnson's government promised the Brexiteers and the people of Britain that living standards and environmental protections will not be affected after leaving the EU:

This Congress is horrified at the Government decision in October 2021 to vote down the amendment to the Environment Act proposed by the House of Lords. This amendment would have given far stricter punishments and guidance to Water companies which pollute our rivers and waterways with raw sewage, and who in 2020 dumped sewage into our rivers for over 3 million hours.

If we do not hold the government to account now there is a real risk of the UK returning to the 1970's version of ourselves as the dirty man of Europe.

This Congress believes it is our duty to actively campaign on this issue until the government make it a legal requirement for UK water companies to treat raw sewage prior to it being released into our water ways, protecting wildlife, the environment, and peoples enjoyment of water whether it be in our rivers or sea.

We call on the GMB to lobby the Government and Labour to seek a fresh debate on this issue which the explicit aim of making the penalties for dumping sewage in our rivers far more punitive. This should ensure that companies take real and meaningful measures to clean up our country and stop the destruction of our river ecosystems both for us, and for the precious wildlife that inhabit them.

We also call on GMB to make every effort to meet personally with George Eustace MP, Secretary of State for the Environment, to lobby him personally about this issue.

**Moving Region: SOUTHERN**

**Seconding Region: SOUTHERN**

*(Carried)*

JULIET PARSONS (Southern): Congress and President, I move Composite 16: Sewage Dumping in UK Waterways. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

President and Congress, our rivers and waterways are seriously polluted, polluted by untreated human waste. Our rivers are becoming open sewers. Unless the Government applies some urgency to their plans to stop this, we are literally up "shit" creek without a paddle. *(Laughter)* Millions of litres of untreated human waste are pumped into our rivers by water companies every single year. The water industry is allowed to do this but in very rare circumstances; for example, during periods of heavy rain to reduce pressure on the system and prevent sewage backing up into our homes. But it seems that many water companies are flouting these regulations and routinely dumping untreated sewage into our rivers.

Last year alone more than 400,000 discharges of raw sewage occurred in our waterways. In the same year, Southern Water were fined a record £90 million for dumping 20 billion litres of sewage into our waterways. This presents a serious risk to our health and to the wider environment. This time last year I had first-hand experience of observing the horrendous consequences of river pollution. I spent the

day canoeing with friends on the River Wye. A few miles into our journey we were overwhelmed by the smell of sewage. We were also aware how eerily quiet the river was, almost completely silent of any wildlife. During our trip we saw very little wildlife; no fish, no birds, no insects. It was empty of wildlife.

The River Wye is one of the largest rivers in the UK and is an area of Outstanding Beauty. It is also covered by every conservation law in the UK. So why are we still dumping? We are, however, seeing more outrage by the public taking to social media to campaign and raise awareness of what is happening. It is building momentum, so watch this space.

The Government need to take immediate action to create a pathway out of this pollution. We have had decades to put this right. Thirty years ago we knew that the population would be increasing year-on-year, which means more poo! More poo in the system! We also knew that climate change was going to bring us more rain, so more poo and more rain putting pressure on our sewage system.

Congress, we need to protect our rivers. Our rivers should be places where people and wildlife can thrive. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Juliet. Secunder?

CONSTANT SERUGO (Southern): Congress, I second Composite 16, Motion 255. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

President and Congress, as my colleague, Juliet, has already described, sewage waste in our waterways remains a really serious pollution problem for our country. Although recent figures from Thames Water show an 8% drop in water pollution in the Thames Water region, there needs to be a consistent improvement nationally. We need tougher penalties against repeating polluting companies if we are to motivate them to tackle this issue head on.

Data monitoring and data transparency across all of our water companies is essential. We also need to make sure that our Government reverses the legal changes that have made it legal and cheap for companies simply to dump raw sewage into our beautiful rivers.

Activists such as Extinction Rebellion, River Action and the large boating communities, who live and work in and on our rivers, have been organising, demonstrating and protesting across the country about this critical issue. This motion looks to add the GMB's name to that list of organisations fighting for our quality of life and the quality of our environment. We need to save all of our waterways from becoming no-go areas for us, our children and for our precious wildlife. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Constant. I call the mover of Composite 9.

## **NUCLEAR SECTOR & SIZEWELL C NEW NUCLEAR POWER STATION COMPOSITE 9**

### **C9. Nuclear Sector & Sizewell C New Nuclear Power Station**

Covering Motions 127 and 257

127. SIZEWELL C NEW NUCLEAR POWER STATION - LONDON REGION

257. NUCLEAR SECTOR - NORTHERN REGION

This Congress welcomes progress towards commissioning a new 3.2GW nuclear power station in Sizewell in Suffolk. This will generate much needed base load electricity for a zero-carbon emissions electricity future as well as sustaining and creating tens of thousands of well-paid jobs in the UK.

Congress believes that without this support, the UK's energy needs will be placed in greater danger and the advantages of UK sourcing and supply of energy, lost for generations.

Only those deliberately refusing to accept the facts about the intermittent nature of renewable energy sources and the absolute requirement for a reliable plan to deal with this can see that there is no alternative to new nuclear power stations.

It is an indisputable fact that on one day out of every six on average there is little or no wind.

On January 24 2022- one of the coldest days in winter- for example, the output from the 24GW of installed wind turbine capacity was 0.58GW or just 2% of its nameplate electricity capacity.

By definition, there is no solar power at night. Neither is there any economically viable storage capacity for renewable energy sources.

International interconnectors are advocated as viable alternative energy sources to new nuclear power station. This is based on the hope that there will be spare renewable electricity capacity somewhere in Europe that can be imported to the UK on days like January 24 2022.

However, the low wind in the UK on that day was mirrored in the low wind right across the continent from the Iberian Peninsula to Russia.

Put simply, on the basis of current technology, there is no zero-carbon reliable alternative energy sources for electricity to nuclear power stations. It is not anti-wind to make this point. Instead, it is reality. No responsible UK government with an inescapable duty to keep the lights on can ignore the vital fact. So as well as targets for offshore wind turbines capacity, a new target for nuclear power is also required for a reliable and affordable net zero future.

Congress consider that the UK Government should set a target that up to 40GW of installed and expanded electricity capacity should be nuclear by 2050. This will entail further Sizewell sized power stations. It will also require the development of a new generation of smaller modular reactors. It is essential that there is a UK supply chain for these new smaller modular reactors and the export potential for these reactors should be fully pursued.

This Congress calls for the Government and Opposition to unequivocally and publicly announce support for new nuclear build, developed within the UK, with UK hardware and software and UK supply of labour. Congress calls for the CEC to monitor the position so that GMB members can see if politicians at Westminster match actions to rhetoric.

**Moving Region: LONDON**

**Seconding Region: NORTHERN**

*(Carried)*

PAUL BLOCK (London): I am moving Composite 9 on Sizewell C. Since this motion was submitted, the outlook for energy security has fundamentally changed, in part due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the ballooning costs of oil and gas.

Energy security has become the no. 1 priority, as it always should be. In April 2022, as part of its new Energy Security Strategy, the Government announced plans to boost

nuclear supply to 24 GWs by 2050. Ministers are now pledging to build eight new nuclear power stations by the end of 2030 and deliver 25% of Britain's energy from nuclear power.

Congress should welcome these plans, which are in line with this motion. It is not yet clear what the ultimate size of the expanded electricity sector will be after natural gas is eventually phased out for home heating and electric vehicles, replacing fossil-fuel engines for transport. It all depends on what role hydrogen ultimately plays in the net-zero economy of the future. There are many scenarios and hydrogen production itself will require electricity capacity. The Government is at least expecting electricity capacity to double. Other experts say that capacity could even treble up to 180 GWs.

It is in this latter scenario that the 40 GWs target set out in the motion is envisaged. We don't yet know where the net-zero energy mix will settle. What we do know is that nuclear energy has to be a fundamental part of the mix. This motion is in line with the independent work from the respected bodies like the UN, the International Energy Agency, the OECD, the Energy Systems Catapult, the National Grid and the UK Climate Change Committee.

A UN report says that nuclear is the lowest carbon technology, with the lowest land use and the lowest use of scarce minerals and metals.

An International Energy Agency report labels nuclear power as the backbone in a clean energy system. The UK Climate Change Committee's Sixth Carbon Budget has nuclear power as an integral part of net zero. So, too, in our National Grid Future Energy scenarios, nuclear power is an integral part of net zero.

The 25% target for nuclear power announced in the Government's Energy Security Strategy in April is a most welcome deployment. It now has to be followed up with a concrete timetable for each of the other six possible sites for nuclear power stations. Progress has been painfully slow. However, it is now also very important to get the TUC and the Labour Party fully on board with this target. Everything about our energy systems is now a matter of public policy and depends ultimately on the electorate and on votes in the House of Commons. On this front, there really is no room for complacency. This spring, a GMB supported motion, like this one, in favour of nuclear power, could not be progressed at the Scottish TUC due to the opposition from several affiliated unions. In addition, the Scottish Government and the Scottish National Party is rigidly opposed to nuclear power stations in Scotland. If the next election was to result in a 'hung' Parliament, an incoming minority Labour government could face severe pressures from the Scottish National Party MPs to drop any commitments on nuclear power in return for support. This is something that is possible. It has to be resisted. As the motion makes clear, there are no other reliable net zero alternative energy sources. New nuclear is needed to keep the lights on. It is also a source of tens of thousands of well-paid jobs right across the country, as well as on the Hinkley site and, in future, at Sizewell. Please support this composite.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

ANDREW BLUNT (Northern): Congress, I am seconding Composite 9 on nuclear.

Congress, in supporting the composite it is crucial that the UK gets on with building nuclear power stations. Decades have been wasted in not dealing with the energy needs of our people. Just look at the Ukraine situation and the coming back after Covid to see the pressures that this Tory Government could and should have seen coming.

In the north-east and west Cumbria there is the infrastructure to develop reactors in both Sellafield and Hartlepool. Both have physical connections to the National Grid and the skills needed in our members in the nuclear industry. The UK is perfectly located to deal with the energy needs, and nuclear has a major say in that mix. It will bring well-paid unionised jobs and economic benefits to regions along with providing vital supply-chain work.

In seconding the composite, we accept totally that we must not discriminate in who gets the work, and we must ensure that the UK meets its international obligations. Congress, the time is long overdue for action on our energy solutions. We call for Westminster to get on and do it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andrew. I call the mover of Composite 17.

## **HYDROGEN, THE GAS INDUSTRY AND CLIMATE CHANGE COMPOSITE 17**

### **C17. Hydrogen, the Gas Industry and Climate Change**

Covering Motions 262 and 273

262. HYDROGEN AND THE GAS INDUSTRY - NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION

273. HYDROGEN AND CLIMATE CHANGE - NORTHERN REGION

This Congress calls for GMB and the government to actively support the gas industry, by supporting and investing in the development of green Hydrogen, and to support the search for better more efficient ways of using gas in domestic and commercial situations. This will benefit both thousands of GMB members and UK energy customers.

Colleagues, it is important to remember that the origins of GMB are in the gas industry, and GMB is still very well represented with members throughout the industry. The GMB needs to continue full support of our member's future in the gas industry.

Conference, in previous motions we have spoken about the need to rescind the government decision not to install gas into new build domestic properties after 2025. Now we need to go much further. We need to actively support the gas industry along with industrial and domestic consumers of energy in all our 4 nations.

Clearly there are climate change issues, and the UK needs to promote zero and low carbon energy options, however it is our belief that the gas industry should be a part of the changes and not a victim of the changes.

Congress believes that a successful domestic hydrogen industry would help secure the nation's energy supplies, cut carbon emissions, and create thousands of good jobs. Around the world, scientific study, design of industrial plant and indeed testing is already underway on the production of "green hydrogen".

However, despite promises from successive Conservative governments, nowhere near enough investment or research is going on in the UK.

This Congress notes that the gas grid will have the capacity to blend 20 per cent of the fuel into the regular gas grid from next year. The introduction of Hydrogen into the existing gas network

is a viable proposition. It will give the UK a responsible way to reduce emissions from gas appliances without changes to the existing gas network (which is world renowned) and without major changes to most existing gas appliances.

Conference, our members have proven themselves adaptable to new challenges, the underground network has evolved through lead pipes steel pipes and now plastic. Our meters have changed, no longer is it "sixpence for the meter" now they are modern smart meters that can monitor usage. Appliances have advanced from ovens & fires burning dangerous Towns Gas to safe, high efficiency condensing boilers. Our members have adapted in the past and will adapt to new types of gas in the future.

Congress notes that the UK renewables sector continues to send valuable fabrication and manufacturing work overseas and believes that hydrogen production offers a brighter future where green jobs can finally start delivering for workers here at home.

Our country should be leading in this new investment, driving high quality sustainable jobs that members would be proud to do in towns and cities across all our regions and right around the UK.

Getting this correct could lead to greater energy security and, importantly, less dependence on foreign sources of power. Potentially we could become self-sufficient again and even begin to export the technology and any excess capacity produced.

It follows on, that linking green hydrogen with upgrading the existing North Sea storage capacity would give the country resilience to fluctuating energy costs because of the capacity to store hydrogen when it was cheap to produce at night and through the summer month's ready to be employed when needed most, and to balance peaks and troughs in demand. Using renewable electricity to produce hydrogen is like producing a battery. The stored energy can be used later, and it doesn't use any of the expensive and difficult to source, precious metals, to do this either, as with a conventional battery.

Green hydrogen has many benefits and is a long-term solution to climate change. Utilizing the current gas networks to distribute this green energy to industry and domestic properties would bring resilience of supply.

Hydrogen could be used off grid too, and in remote properties would help with resilience, because hydrogen cells could be fuelled from existing tank fed systems to make electricity as well as heat.

Industrially it can be used in similar ways to the current gas, meaning upgrading rather than investing in new plant to do the same job. It could also be transforming for transport systems. Win! Win! Win!

Conference, hydrogen is not a fossil fuel it will assist the countries drive towards a carbon neutral future, bring security of energy and a reliability of supply to the UK.

This is a reliable clean cost-effective fuel that will secure our member's jobs, our country's energy needs and provided an affordable fuel for our country.

Congress believes that the Government needs to get its act together and establish a national plan to support UK hydrogen.

Congress calls on the CEC to campaign for the domestic delivery of UK jobs in this sector, calls on the Labour Party to support such a move, and for progress on this motion's adoption to be reported back to Congress 2023.

**Moving Region: NORTH WEST & IRISH**

**Seconding Region: NORTHERN**

*(Carried)*

ANTHONY ROBERT HORROCKS (North West & Irish): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President, this Congress calls for

GMB and the Government to actively support the gas industry, by supporting and investing in the development of green hydrogen, and to support the search for better more efficient ways of using gas in domestic and commercial situations. This will benefit both thousands of GMB members and UK energy customers.

Colleagues, it is important to remember that the origins of the GMB are in the gas industry, and the GMB is very well represented with members throughout the industry. The GMB needs to continue full support of our members' future in the gas industry.

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Congress believes that a successful domestic hydrogen industry would help secure the nation's energy supplies, cut carbon emissions and create thousands of good jobs. Around the world, scientific study, the design of industrial plant and indeed testing is already underway on the production of green hydrogen.

However, despite successive promises by successive Conservative governments, nowhere near enough investment or research is going ahead in the UK.

This Congress notes that the gas grid has the capacity to blend 20 per cent of the fuel into the regular gas grid from next year. The introduction of Hydrogen into the existing gas network is a viable proposition. It will give the UK a responsible way to reduce emissions from gas appliances without changes to the existing gas network (which is world renowned) and without major changes to most existing gas appliances.

Congress, our members have proven themselves adaptable to new challenges, the underground network has evolved through lead pipes, steel pipes and now plastic. Our meters have changed. No longer is it "sixpence for the meter". Now they have modern smart meters that can monitor usage. Appliances have advanced from ovens and fires burning dangerous town gas to safe, high efficiency condensing boilers. Our members have adapted in the past and we will adapt to new types of gas in the future.

Congress notes that the UK renewable sector continues to send valuable fabrication and manufacturing work overseas and believes that hydrogen production offers a brighter future where green jobs can finally start delivering for workers here at home.

Our country should be leading in this new investment, driving high quality sustainable jobs that members would be proud to do in towns and cities across all our regions and right around the UK. Getting this correct could lead to greater energy security and, importantly, less dependence on foreign sources of power. Potentially, we could

become self-sufficient again and even begin to export the technology and any excess capacity produced.

It follows on that linking green hydrogen with upgrading the existing North Sea storage capacity would give the country resilience to fluctuating energy costs because of the capacity to store hydrogen when it was cheap to produce at night and through the summer months ready to be employed when needed most.

THE PRESIDENT: Tony, can you move the motion?

ANTHONY ROBERT HORROCKS: Yes. Please pass the motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Secunder?

JOANNE WEAR (Northern): Because I'm from the lovely Lake District, soon to be North West & Irish. *(Cheers and applause)* I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I second Composite 17. Because Tony went on, this is really short. Congress, this Union was built on the gas industry. Gas and hydrogen are essential parts of our approaches to tackling climate change. Congress, we had an industrial visit in the North East a few months ago to a hydrogen village. It was an eye-opener. Re-working skills and utilising existing kit can help safeguard high-quality, well-paid jobs.

The Government needs to get its act together and provide licences and support to the energy sector. It will keep good jobs and bring high-quality green energy responses along with a mix of energy sources to tackle climate change. Congress, I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: thank you, Joanne. I call the mover of Motion 266.

## **STORM ARWEN**

### **MOTION 266**

#### **266. STORM ARWEN**

This Congress notes that our members worked tirelessly to restore electricity during Storm Arwen. Congress notes that feedback the GMB received indicated response times, were impacted to some degree by resource constraints for operational staff and by lack of appropriate support to enable non-operational staff to address the very significant increase in customer contacts.

Congress believes that this reinforces our longstanding concerns about the need to improve workforce resilience, including increased investment in the multi-skilled workforce that is required, to respond effectively to the challenges of climate change and to achieve net zero.

Congress calls on Ofgem to scrutinise what it is that Companies did during this extremely difficult time, so that they do not place the bottom line ahead of basic service to the public and support to the workforce. Congress calls for a full inquiry in Parliament to learn the lessons for future emergencies.

Congress calls on this to be monitored by the CEC going forward, for progress on the delivery of this motion.

**GAS SERVICE NORTH BRANCH**  
**Northern Region**

*(Carried)*

NEIL COLLINSON (Northern): President, I am moving Motion 266 – Storm Arwen.

Congress, top management of companies during Storm Arwen with the problems in the winter months proved just how much out of touch these top managers are. It also showed how toothless the regulator, OFGEM, is. We need OFGEM themselves to be held to account. We believe that there should be a full inquiry into the response of Storm Arwen. Congress, when our members work tirelessly over long hours to put things right, and we applaud what they did (*Applause*) the companies, however, have been found wanting. That is why Parliament should ensure that lessons are learnt, future problems are avoided such as areas cut off. Congress, this is yet another example of how the energy market works for the cartels and against the interests of our members and the wider public. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Neil. Secunder?

PETER KANE (Northern): Congress, I am seconding Motion 266 – Storm Arwen. In supporting this motion it needs to be said that as a regular OFGEM is completely useless. It needs to be gotten rid of. Our members worked tirelessly to keep things open during Storm Arwen, but our members and communities were badly let down by the bosses of those companies. It comes of putting profit before jobs and investment. As a country, we would be in a better place and in a better shape to deal with the consequences of these storms. A Parliamentary inquiry and action is essential. Anything less and lessons won't be learnt. Please support. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Peter. Are there any delegates wishing to speak in opposition to these motions? (*No response*) Then I ask Dave Flanagan from the CEC to respond.

DAVE FLANAGAN (CEC): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Composite 9, Composite 17 and Motion 266.

The CEC is supporting Composite 9 with a qualification. The CEC's qualification is that the composite calls for how the new nuclear fleet should be built, which can be interpreted as calling for New Nuclear to be exclusively developed within the UK using only UK hardware and software. This is a call for what is known as "local contents requirements" and could risk the UK breaking international trade rules. These rules also determine the livelihoods of our members in the exporting industries.

Secondly, the motions call for using UK supply of labour. If interpreted exclusively, it would violate principles of non-discrimination against migrant workers or non-UK bidders. It is important that we are mindful of how our calls could be interpreted.

GMB can campaign to change the rules around local content requirements, and the CEC Special Report on Procurement and Spending 2021 makes the case for such reforms.

Similarly, the CEC is supporting Composite 17 with the qualification that a campaign for the domestic delivery of UK jobs in the hydrogen sector should not be interpreted as a campaign for exclusively using UK labour.

As set out in the Special Report on Procurement and Spending, GMB does support ways to promote the delivery of jobs within UK industries that do not violate principles of non-discrimination.

The CEC is supporting Motion 266 with a qualification that the Government may be better placed than OFGEM to scrutinise what energy companies did during Storm Arwen. In GMB's long-standing view, OFGEM is a flawed regulator and should be replaced, with its regulatory functions to be taken over by the Government. It is also GMB policy to support a Government-led inquiry into the corporate behaviour of the Big Six energy companies.

Therefore, the CEC is asking for Composite 9, Composite 17 and Motion 266 to be supported with the qualifications set out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Does London Region accept the qualification for Composite 9? *(Agreed)* Does Northern Region accept the qualification for Composite 9? *(Agreed)* Does North West & Irish Region accept the qualification for Composite 17? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Northern Region accept the qualification for Composite 17? *(Agreed)* In that case, I can put Composite 16, Composite 9, Composite 17 and Motion 266 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Thank you. Anyone against? They are all carried.

*Composite 16 was CARRIED.*

*Composite 9 was CARRIED.*

*Composite 17 was CARRIED.*

*Motion 266 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: I call the mover of Motion 271. We are now on to Social Policy: Climate Change.

## **SOCIAL POLICY: CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **GLASGOW CLEANSING WORKERS**

#### **MOTION 271**

#### **271. GLASGOW CLEANSING WORKERS**

This Congress applauds the historic stand taken by GMB cleansing workers in Glasgow who took strike action during COP26. Congress thanks the climate activists who joined picket lines and calls on the GMB to build on these links by:

- campaigning for climate justice, a Green New Deal and a Just Transition;
- encouraging the climate justice movement to support workers taking industrial action;
- and

- encouraging workplaces to develop their own decarbonisation plans for their workplace.

## **GLASGOW GENERAL APEX BRANCH GMB Scotland**

*(Carried)*

TAM WILSON (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am a first-time delegate, moving Motion 271: Glasgow Cleansing Workers. *(Applause)*

Congress, they said that November 2021 was going to be historic for Glasgow. They said it was going to be the beginning of something substantial and long-lasting, which would have an impact for years to come, and it was, just not in the way they imagined. It was not the dignitaries and delegates who descended on Glasgow for the COP26 Climate Conference, making their bold claims with their watered-down pledges who had this effect. It was the Glasgow cleansing workers who took their historic stance against COSLA and Glasgow City Council. While the delegates were treated to a tailored and embellished version of the city with their integrated transport, that the working class people of Glasgow have been crying out for for years, the Glasgow cleansing workers were out on picket lines, organising in their communities and building links with climate groups, the strikers and tenants' organisations. These are some of the council's lowest paid workers who have been under-valued, exploited and ignored for far too long.

Scotland's biggest city has deep and chronic problems and is blighted by low pay and discrimination, with its budget being hammered by years of cuts. The local SNP administration had the opportunity to exercise their claims of being a party that acts in the interests of the working class. Not for the first time did they fail. Instead of recognising the chronic low pay the workers of Glasgow had to deal with, they derided the workers of Glasgow. They called this a political stunt and said it was a party-political, orchestrated attempt to talk down Scotland. They patronise the working class for knowing our worth and dismissed the efforts we make to fight for dignity and respect at work. The climate activists and community groups in Glasgow did not buy the line of the City Council. They stood alongside the striking workers of Glasgow in recognising that the changes we need to see in society won't be made by politicians in fancy conference centres. They are made on the streets, on the picket lines and in our workplaces.

For many of the young climate activists, engagement with industrial action was vital in raising their class consciousness. We must seize the momentum and build upon the links that have been formed between climate groups and striking workers in our nations and regions. The only way that we will achieve climate justice is by moving on from considering the worker and the climate movement as separate movements or movements in opposition. Real climate justice campaigning that challenges the multiple crisis that we face in society will be worker led or it will fail. We know that climate change will affect everyone but we also know that it will not affect us all equally. Unless we fight to challenge, it will be, and already is, the working class across the world who pay the real price for lack of action. We must accelerate our actions as a trade union Movement in our efforts to achieve a just transition. The

term “just transition” was coined by the trade union Movement. We cannot allow this to be re-appropriated by those who seek to preserve the system of exploitation which exists today. We need to be bold in our demands for a sustainable system that is not to the detriment of workers. We must recognise that climate change is a workplace issue and hold the companies in which we have members to account for their lack of action. We must make bold demands of our Government at the local, national and international level. Climate change is the biggest issue of our lifetime and the only way it can be tackled is by a robust, organised and fighting working class. I move this motion and encourage you to support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Tam. Secunder?

CHRIS MITCHELL (GMB Scotland): Congress, I second Motion 271: Glasgow Cleansing Workers. I’m a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

Thank you for your kind support and solidarity that you have shown to members both during and at times of strike last November. We succeeded in securing not only an improved pay offer but also improvements to our depots, training and development programmes and created more than 150 new permanent jobs for the City. It was a campaign won only through tremendous organisation and campaigning over a 10-year period. It emboldened the confidence and the capacity of our members who tackled the challenges in front of them. The eyes of the world were on Glasgow. Hundreds of climate campaigners joined us on the picket lines to fight for a clean, green, sustainable future for us all. They understood the importance of our struggle and the work we do for the future of the planet. But there must be necessary infrastructure and jobs in place to make this sustainable. It is the same story everywhere.

Whether it is a climate crisis or a cost-of-living crisis, you cannot cut your way out of any crisis. We have shown that by organising and campaigning together, standing shoulder to shoulder, we are able to overcome the challenges that we all face. The fight is not over in Scotland or anywhere because we are balloting again for strike action on this year’s derisory, shocking and shameful pay offer. We face the biggest cost-of-living crisis in a generation. Energy prices continue to sky-rocket and the Scottish Government has just announced a four-year public pay freeze. We must face these challenges head on. We must campaign for investment and infrastructure and jobs to defeat both the climate crisis and the cost-of-living crisis. One way of doing this is to campaign for proper recycling facilities. Jobs must be improved in public transport. I repeat, travel costs should be free for all low-paid public sector workers. We must stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity camaraderie and we will win our disputes for a greener and cleaner planet for us all.

Again, I ask you to make as much noise as possible to show your camaraderie and solidarity to the workers who are currently on strike. In Scotland, again, they have offered us 2%. It is shameful and shocking! Brothers and Sisters, let’s fight!! *(Applause)* Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Chris. You are the infamous Chris Mitchell who I have been watching on Twitter and listening to. Well done. I call the mover of Motion 272. Follow that, please.

## **MAKING CLIMATE CHANGE A PRIORITY AS POLICY MOTION 272**

### **272. MAKING CLIMATE CHANGE A PRIORITY AS POLICY**

This Congress acknowledges that climate change and global warming is one of the biggest challenges facing humanity this century. The risks posed from these have the potential to be catastrophic to all.

Congress is aware that the causes of climate change and global warming is caused through various methods, but key is our reliance on fossil fuels to power our homes, vehicles, and workplaces. Congress also notes that many of our members, who we strive to serve best, will be living with the effects of decisions and indecisions that are made today with regard to global warming, as will their children and great grandchildren and so on. It is simply not enough anymore that we are ensuring workplaces and conditions that our members work under are the best they can be, if in 30 years' time there is no longer a world left to enjoy where drought, flooding and severe fires are commonplace for too many.

Congress should know that the 2018 UN report notes that national efforts to limit the increase in global temperatures to 1.5°C by the end of this century will not be met<sup>(1)</sup>. Congress should also know that following COP26 in Glasgow last year, touted to be a turning point in the battle against climate change, failed to yield the results needed to evade catastrophe and as noted by the BBC that 'current pledges, if met, will only limit global warming to about 2.4°C'<sup>(2)</sup>.

Congress should also be aware that many of our members will not be able to afford improvements to their homes and vehicles to allow them to become more energy efficient or carbon neutral themselves. This governments Green Homes Grants was a failure, and even if all of the applications at the time had been processed it would have only meant that less than 10% of home upgrades planned would have been undertaken. The scheme in itself meant that those who had money would have benefited, whilst those without would not have been able to meaningfully access the scheme (3). It is simply not good enough that because of the high costs of living in this country that so many missed out on making their home more energy efficient because they were unable to access the scheme due to lack of savings, income and the unreasonably short time frame this scheme operated over.

We call on Congress to adopt as policy workplace changes to make them 'greener' and this becomes a subject for collective bargaining and a priority, that GMB becomes a model for this policy by becoming carbon neutral by 2030. We ask Congress to support a working group made up with lay members and officers to help support this and seek to be carbon negative by 2050. As part of this policy the political arm of GMB should be putting more pressure on political parties and their MP's, to do more on climate change and take real action instead of just talking about it, such as providing a meaningful scheme for homes to be insulated, have meaningful access to renewable energy sources, have meaningful ways of heating homes without heating the planet. This is not to negate from fighting for better pay and conditions for our members, and it is because of the big tax dodging corporations, and this governments decisions such as the pay freeze on public sector workers and the failure to pursue those who avoid paying their fair share of tax, that has caused this quagmire.

(1) <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change>

(2) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-56901261>

(3)<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/sep/08/audit-office-blames-uk-government-for-botched-15bn-green-homes-scheme>

**CUMBRIA PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH**  
**Northern Region**

*(Lost)*

JAMES KEITH (Northern): President and Congress, I am from Northern Region, soon to be in North West & Irish. *(Applause)* I move Motion 272: Making Climate Change a Priority as Policy. I am a first-time speaker and a first-time delegate. *(Applause)*

As a trade union there are some things we do really well: fighting for safer and healthier workplaces, better terms and conditions and pay. It is good that we do this. It's that good because we've been doing it since 1889. But one thing it seems that we are not doing enough about is climate change. Never mind thinking that we have time to sort this out, it has already started changing the world that we all live on.

Some of you close to me near the stage can probably see how old I am. For those of you a bit further out, I'm 29. Yes, I had a hard paper round. For the last few years I have been wondering why I have been doing something, which seems very normal, such as paying into a pension. For 10 years I have paid into a pension now. But, in reality, what is the point? To retire to a world that is completely ruined, one that is wrecked by more and more extreme weather, food shortages and just generally broken. I do not see the point in it. Congress, the house is on fire and we are sat inside watching television.

The motion I am moving calls for GMB to become carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon negative by 2050. We need to be setting the example that we want to see in our members' workplaces. It also calls for green changes to be made, an item for collective bargaining in workplaces, for political pressure to be used to get all homes properly insulated and meaningful access to renewable energy sources for everyone.

If it wasn't for the abject failures of this Tory Government, this country would already be well on its way to getting this sorted by now. The big companies that dodge paying their taxes are also responsible for this mess, as all the tax they should have paid could have gone into starting to resolve this situation, amongst many others, sooner rather than later.

While I am speaking at this rostrum, here's one for you, Boris, and your mates. Everything you touch turns to shit! *(Applause)*

Congress, I need to point out that the CEC sought withdrawal of this motion. We at Northern said no. They will have their reasons. I'll be surprised if they can get them in before that dreaded red light, a bit like I am going to do. However, I must implore you to support this motion. As a Union, we need to be doing more. We can do more. We do do more!

Last year at COP26 the BBC reported that current pledges, if met, will only limit global warming to about 2.4 degrees. The UN has even said in a report that national efforts to limit the rise in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees will not be met. Clearly, someone has to step up and start pushing and campaigning for change. GMB is the campaigning union.

More than that, there is someone who does not have a say in this or even know what the world has in store for them yet. I am talking about the best thing that happened to me two years ago. I am talking about my daughter. What world am I leaving behind in fighting for her? It's the world that she is going to have to grow up and live in. That is why I say to everyone here today: you might already be a parent, an expecting parent, aunt, uncle or grandparent. What world do you want for your loved ones?

I say to this Congress that it is high time we started taking climate change seriously. Let's have a comprehensive policy we can organise on. Let's have green reps in workplaces. Let's give ourselves the training tools we need to have an impact on our workplaces and communities on climate change. Congress, thank you. I move.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the seconder.

LESLIE TIMBEY (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 272: Making Climate Change a Priority as a Policy. This motion is calling for the GMB to have a clear policy on climate change. Climate change is the biggest issue facing the world, and the GMB should have a clear policy. We, the GMB, should be leading on these issues around climate change. This motion is asking Congress to support a working party to be set-up of lay members and officers and to have a clear policy on the effect of climate change.

Congress, let us make decisions that can affect climate change. It is no good burying our heads in the sand. If we do not act now, there will be no further for the planet due to climate change. My colleague, James, has already stated that the CEC seek withdrawal on this motion. The Northern Region will not withdraw this motion. Congress, we, the GMB Union, has the opportunity to create this policy to shape the future. Please support this motion and save our planet from the effects of climate change. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Les. I call the mover of Motion 274.

## **MEETING THE COSTS AND THE PACE OF CHANGES FOR NET ZERO MOTION 274**

### **274. MEETING THE COSTS AND THE PACE OF CHANGES FOR NET ZERO**

This Congress notes that the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) estimates the overall costs to the economy of achieving net zero carbon emissions in the UK to be £1,400 billion over the next 30 years.

The OBR figure of £1,400 billion is an estimate based on a range of scenarios from the Climate Change Committee and the Bank of England. This amounts to £46.7 billion each year every year for 30 years. The real costs could be higher or lower as there are so many unknowns.

Congress notes that achieving net zero will on average cost more than £50,000 for every family in the UK or more than £32 each week every week for the next 30 years.

Congress considers that costs at this level are way beyond the means of families on average incomes or below.

As these costs are phased in there must be cuts in employment taxes to offset the resultant increases in green levies, indirect taxes and charges for carbon and for meeting additional running costs of carbon replacement technology for all workers on average incomes or below. For these workers higher carbon taxes, levies and charges must lead to lower employment taxes.

For those wholly dependent on benefits there has to be equivalent changes to enable them to pay the additional costs.

Congress notes that it is not yet known how much of £1,400 billion will be incurred during the 30-year period. In the light of the huge costs involved it is essential that Government and Parliament determine a pace for changes in the UK are economically and technically sensible and that the logic behind the changes are fully set out for the electorate.

UK emissions are a tiny fraction of the total global emissions that have to be phased out. Claims that the UK has a responsibility to meet the net zero target earlier than 2050 in order to show leadership to other much larger nations should be rejected. Instead, the UK has to be in the forefront of solving, alongside and jointly with other nations, what is a global problem.

The UK should lead in promoting collaboration in research across nations into technologies such as carbon capture, hydrogen-based fuels and battery storage and the options for new nuclear power stations.

There will be a lot of very expensive pathfinding to be done to solve all the technical, engineering and financing issues in removing carbon emissions from electricity, industry, transport, households and agriculture fully at scale across the world. The scale of what has to be done is huge.

Congress calls for this pathfinding at scale to be done where possible in the countries with the highest GDP per capita. On GDP per capita UK is ranked 37th in the world. Responsibility for pathfinding should be shared between these countries including the UK.

The nations at the top of GDP per capita league should be the test beds used to demonstrate at scale the technical, engineering and financial issues and costs for the whole world. The UK should be fully involved and invested in all the technical, engineering and financial issues involved and do its fair share of this work.

Congress considers that until much more pathfinding has been done on the technical, engineering and financial alternatives to using natural gas boilers for home heating the UK Government should not make any decisions to phase out natural gas. This is all the more important as the EU is defining natural gas as a green energy source in the run up to 2050 for the 27 EU nations.

Congress considers that when it comes to Government and Parliament introducing changes across the whole country that UK should be in the main pack with the rest of the pathfinders.

The UK should make changes when it is known that there are demonstrated technical and financial solutions that safeguard our heavy industries, aviation and living standards and that a UK supply chain has been set up to support the changes across the country. Payment of subsidies to operators should be linked to the use of a UK supply chain.

## **ENERGY CENTRAL BRANCH**

### **London Region**

*(Carried)*

PAUL BLOCK (London): President and Congress, I am moving Motion 274: Meeting the Costs and the pace of changes for Net Zero.

The Office for Budget Responsibility has estimated an eye-watering figure of £1,400 billion to achieve carbon net zero. This is to be paid over 30 years leading up to 2050 at the rate of £46.7 billion a year. This is only an estimate and there are so many variables that it could conceivably be a lot more or a lot less depending on how things develop and how seriously worldwide decision are taken.

Technological developments will be needed and no doubt the UK's role in this will be a key one as I have great faith in our scientists, engineers and other innovators to work to try and solve this problem. The truth is that it is becoming increasingly obvious that it is not just about money. Some people have just made that point. The future of the planet, as we know it, depends on the course of action that we take. The costs, however, are important as they equate to £50,000 for every family in the UK, or over £32 per week for the next 30 years. This is if the costs are shared equally.

However, is it not about time that the rich paid their fair share instead of squirrelling their money away offshore in tax havens. We will, obviously, all have to pay more taxes to fund this, but this sort of funding is so large that it may be both easier and fairer to raise the capital through general taxation.

Another point of view could be that these problems have been caused by burning excessive fossil fuels. So perhaps the companies who have produced these could be held accountable for part of the charges. UK emissions make up a small amount of the worldwide problem. As such, it is unreasonable to expect the UK to hit carbon zero before other countries and continents around the world. Having said that, we should, of course, be using all of the UK's academic institutions – scientific, engineering, research and development etc – to develop techniques along with other technologically advanced nations to address this crisis.

The UK GDP per capital is ranked 37<sup>th</sup> in the world. Therefore, the responsibility for solving this problem will need to be shared, with a bias towards the richest countries, those doing a greater proportion of the work.

The need for new nuclear power stations, more renewable energy as well as new fuels like hydrogen being developed for use in the gas network and possibly as a fuel for vehicles, will be essential. The electricity industry is very unlikely to be carbon zero without nuclear power stations. Transport is still an area of concern and hydrogen can be used to power larger vehicles that may not be suitable for electrification.

Households, no doubt, will be asked to change certain things, be encouraged to use renewable energy sources, such as solar and so on. The agricultural industries will have to adopt new innovation as well. The task ahead is immense and will need a great level of co-operation worldwide. I am optimistic that this is achievable, but only if pressure is brought to bear on governments to put these key issues firmly on the agenda.

Until much more research has been done on how the carbon reduction is to be achieved, including technical, engineering and financial alternatives to using natural gas boilers for domestic heating, the UK Government should not make any decisions to phase out natural base. Please note that the EU is defining natural gas as a green energy source leading up to 2050 for the whole of the EU. I ask Congress to support this motion and that the GMB lobby the Government on the points made and insists that there needs to be a clear Government policy outlining a way forward as we aim to achieve carbon net zero by 2050. Thanks for listening, Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. I call the movers and seconders for Motion 281, 190, 191 and 193 to be ready. Is there a seconder for Motion 274? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you. Are there any delegates wishing to speak in opposition to any of those motions? *(No response)* In that case, can I ask Cath Pinder of the CEC to respond?

CATH PINDER (CEC): President, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Motions 271, 272 and 274.

The CEC is supporting Motion 271 with qualifications. Firstly, some industries that our members work in will always be difficult to decarbonise. Any decarbonisation plan must be subject to full and genuine consultation with the workers who are most affected by industrial change. Secondly, our support for a new green deal and a just transition are subject to our policy conditions set out in the Special Report on Energy and the Environment, agreed at Congress 2021.

The CEC is asking for Motion 272 to be withdrawn. This motion calls for a carbon neutral by 2030 policy to be a bargaining demand across GMB organised workplaces. This is against Congress policy, which does not seek to bind the hands of our negotiators over the detail of negotiations in their workplaces.

Carbon-reduction targets, whether they are carbon neutrality or GMB's policy of net zero by 2050 are all overall targets. It is the balance of emissions across the UK that counts. There are paths for all GMB workplaces to help meet these targets. However, the workplace policies to get them there are up to our members and negotiators in those workplaces to determine. Some industries will always be difficult to decarbonise. Enforcing an overall 2030 target in those industries, which this motion calls for, will put our members at risk of job losses from a poorly-timed transition.

The CEC wishes to support Motion 274 with qualifications. Firstly, the motion calls for cuts in employment taxes for all workers below average income to offset increases in environmental subsidies. It is unclear how this reconciles with GMB policy for

these subsidies to be funded out of general taxation, which employment taxes are considered part of.

The motion also calls on the UK Government to rule out any decision to phase out natural gas until more has been done on the viability of alternatives for home heating. The CEC wishes to qualify that we should not close the door on GMB's campaigning work on hydrogen, biogas and synthetic natural gas investment. GMB supports the gradual blending of these gases into the grid which can be viable using existing infrastructure and appliances.

Thirdly, GDP per capita should not be the sole measure for deciding which countries should lead research and development. Many nations and territories with higher GDP per capita are small tax havens that do not have a gas grid.

Finally, the motion states: "Payment of subsidies to operators should be linked to the use of a UK supply chain". Such requirements are currently, in almost all cases, blocked by the UK's international trade obligations. However, GMB is campaigning to change those rules.

Therefore, the CEC is asking for Motion 271 to be supported with the qualification set out; for Motion 272 to be withdrawn, for the reasons set out, and for Motion 274 to be supported with the qualifications set out. If Motion 272 is not withdrawn, then the CEC asks Congress to oppose this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cath. Does GMB Scotland accept the qualification for Motion 271? *(Agreed)* Does London Region accept the qualification for Motion 274? Thank you. I will put those two motions to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Any against? They are carried.

*Motion 271 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 274 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: Does Northern Region agree to withdraw Motion 272? *(Declined)* Then the CEC is asking Congress to oppose this motion.

JAMES KEITH (Northern): Do I have the right of reply?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not to the CEC because you were given the CEC's stance. No, you have no right to reply to the CEC. I will take the vote for Motion 272. All those in favour, please show? All those against, please show? That is lost. Thank you.

*Motion 272 was **LOST**.*

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Social Policy debate on transport. I call the mover of Motion 281.

## **ELECTRIC CHARGING POINTS**

### **MOTION 281**

#### **281. ELECTRIC CHARGING POINTS**

This Congress notes that the lack of charging points across the country, is preventing the Taxi, Hackney Carriage and Private Hire industries, from moving forward with purchasing newer, cleaner vehicles.

Local Authorities aren't doing enough to provide plentiful, affordable charging points. Authorities like Transport for London, have banned Taxi Drivers from purchasing petrol or diesel vehicles, insisting that from 2018, all new vehicles must be zero emissions capable. Eventually becoming completing electric, sometime in the near future.

We call on the GMB Union, on a National basis to put pressure on all local authorities across the country to install more electric vehicle charging points and to implement, an at cost fee for drivers charging their vehicles.

### **GMB PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH**

#### **London Region**

*(Carried)*

MIKE TINNION (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 281 on electrical charging points. I swear this is my last one.

Congress, way back in 2018 TfL – Transport for London – said that all new taxis and private hire vehicles must be zero emissions capable. What will happen in London will eventually happen across the country. As of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020, the UK had about 40,000 charging points, London having just about 7,000, and only 400 to 500 of those were rapid chargers, which can charge your vehicle from completely flat to 80% in 20 to 40 minutes.

There are 350,000 taxis and private hire drivers nationally, 120,000 of them in London alone, all of whom will eventually be zero emissions capable. At present our drivers are struggling to find charging points right across the capital, vying for position with cars, vans and taxis.

As diesel and petrol cars come to the end of their lives and more electric vehicles replace them, the situation across the country will become worse. Congress, we must put pressure on local authorities to provide more charging points, especially rapid-charging points. We need a sustainable roll-out of electrical charging points, which must be made with a clear guarantee for the installation, maintenance and infrastructure of workers, giving them a future in the industry and a profitable future for our taxi and private hire members as well as our courier members. Thank you.

*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRENDAN DUFFIELD (London): Congress, I am seconding Motion 281. When the branch drafted this motion last year, we knew that the Government needed to do more. In March a new target was given to increase the number of charging points,

more than 10 times, so 300,000 to 2030. Although more public charge points are being installed, this is not being done fast enough.

The mover has told you that the lack of charging points is preventing professional drivers from updating their cars by 2030. Slower consumers are switching to electric cars, and this is outpacing the installation of public charging points, but we know that electric cars are more expensive than the petrol and diesel, so many will keep their older and more polluting cars for longer.

On top of this, we are also facing a major cost-of-living crunch as drivers can't afford to switch cars. If you speak to many drivers, they all say the same thing. They are worried about the range, the charging infrastructure and the price of electric cars. So the UK charging network needs to grow massively. Lastly, figures show that this has stalled and also created a north/south divide as London and the South-East have better access.

There is also another divide because if you don't have access to driveways for home charging you will have to pay more to use street charging, as you pay 20% VAT. For home charging, they are only 5% VAT. We need employers and local authorities to work together, so please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Do any delegates wish to speak in opposition to this motion? *(No response)* In that case, I ask Shailesh Gagliani to speak for the CEC.

SHAILESH GAGLIANI (CEC): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Motion 281. The CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification that national and local authorities back the rolling out of electric charging points, but they must be linked to good employment standards. This includes a clear requirement that companies which are hostile to unions will not be awarded contracts. Therefore, the CEC is asking Congress to support Motion 281 with the qualification set out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shailesh. Does London Region accept the qualification on Motion 281? *(Agreed)* Thank you. I will put that motion to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 281 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Political: General. Could we have the mover of Motion 190, please.

**POLITICAL: GENERAL**  
**PROHIBITION OF NON-COMPETE CLAUSES**  
**MOTION 190**

**190. PROHIBITION OF NON-COMPETE CLAUSES**

Congress notes that the Government issued a consultation on non-compete clauses last year and are considering their response which is expected this year.

That the Government asked for views on prohibiting non-compete clauses or mandating appropriate compensation in the circumstances where they remain legal.

That non-compete clauses are common in personal services businesses and impact our members; this is not just used for senior directors or board members.

Congress believes that non-compete clauses are contrary to human rights.

Congress resolves to campaign for their abolition when the Government brings its recommendations to Parliament.

Congress instructs the CEC and the political department to liaise with Parliamentary Labour Party GMB Group, and the Labour shadow front bench to plan and execute a campaign in Parliament to end these oppressive laws and for the next Labour Government to adopt appropriate reforms.

## **LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH**

### **London Region**

*(Referred)*

DAVY LEVY (London, London Central General): President, I move Motion 190: Prohibition of Non-Compete Clauses. Non-compete clauses are clauses in contracts which prohibit someone from competing with an employer for a period and within a geography after they leave. The terms of these clauses are often open to legal review and it is not legal for them to be so extensive as to stop someone earning a living.

Many assume that it is an issue that only impacts highly-paid business leaders or sales persons. The idea is to ensure that strategies are not copied and, in the case of sales persons, that they don't take their address books with them. But I have seen numerous cases in my branch where branch members are impacted by these clauses, in health clubs and in the beauty industry. Management seeks to impose these clauses even when the departure is involuntary. In the health clubs, I have seen worldwide bans sought.

The Government is consulting whether it should prohibit these clauses or create an enhanced duty to compensate. That consultation is now closed. In many economies where innovation is considered important, these clause are banned. I wrote this because of the number of personal cases coming from the health clubs and beauty industry. It is a common practice and it is wrong.

Our branch has a number of lawyers and I consulted one of the top practitioners in this area, and we came to the conclusion that if we argue for compensation for non-compete clauses the wages of our members are so low that employers will just pay it in order to keep the rest of the workforce locked in and enclose their joint customers. Enhanced competition legalises these bans; prohibition criminalises them. Furthermore, we could not think of a definition of a threshold where prohibition of non-compete clauses would occur and where enhanced competition would be paid.

The disgrace here is that, although the debate is in the workplace, the customer is forgotten, and in the case of our members there should be no question that it is the

right of the customer to follow such personal-service providers as they choose. All managements do in these circumstances is provide a room.

The CEC will ask you to refer this motion as they have not mind on the Government's proposed options, but only prohibition works for our members. Given the choice between a refer, with which we agree, and having the CEC oppose us, we agree to the reference to the CEC. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Secunder?

DAVE KENT (London): President and Congress, I am Dave Kent, London Region, seconding Motion 190: Prohibition of Non-Compete Clauses.

Comrades, the mover of the motion spoke about a Government consultation on this issue. That consultation closed in February of last year, and there is no sign that the Government has any interest in publishing the results. No doubt this delay is to protect the Tories' friends in business. No doubt the Government has no interest in the difficulties faced by a manicurist or a hair dresser or an ordinary worker who cannot work for weeks, or even months, because of a non-compete clause in their contract.

The CEC wishes the region to agree to reference back on the ground that we should wait for the results of the Government consultation. We do not believe that the results will ever appear. We urge the CEC to reconsider this objection.

The other reason the CEC has given for requesting the reference back is that an outright ban on non-compete clauses might be difficult to achieve, particularly for executive high earners. We don't think we need to consider such people when setting GMB policy. So, again, we urge the CEC to reconsider this second objection. I section Motion 190. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. I call the mover of Motion 191.

**SUPPORT FOR THE NORTHERN MAYOR'S FAIR & GOOD WORK CHARTER  
MOTION 191**

**191. SUPPORT FOR THE NORTHERN MAYOR'S FAIR & GOOD WORK CHARTER**

This Congress welcomes, endorses and calls on all local authorities and regions to develop and support the initiatives and principles that have been launched by our Northern metro mayors, Tracy Brabin, Andy Burnham and Steve Rotherham through their 'fair and good work' charters.

**In Support:**

Fair pay and secure work should be the minimum any employee in our country should expect and the West Yorkshire Fair Work Charter is built around Opportunity, Security, Wellbeing, Employees having a voice and Fulfilment. It sets out to enshrine some very basic principles like having contracted hours, fair pay and at least a hope of career progression that many of us take for granted but far too many do not have. We all know that in order to 'level up' in the north we cannot wait for the Government to show us how that is done and these charters call on

employers to support a basic set of principles and standards to do exactly that; level up, not race to the bottom.

**KIRKLEES BRANCH**  
**Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region**

*(Carried)*

AAFAQ BUTT (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Vice President, I move Motion 191 on the Mayor's Fair Work Charter.

Congress, making work pay must be the vision for a vibrant and prosperous economy where every working person can contribute to the success of local economies and be rewarded fairly. A fair working charter should sit alongside existing local industrial strategies to build a more productive economy with inclusive growth.

According to the Institute for Public Policy Research, one in six working households are living in poverty. Our towns and cities are home to some outstanding businesses, and sectors that are investing and growing are providing high-skilled and high-quality employment opportunities, despite Government austerity cuts. But, paradoxically, UK productivity lags behind that of members of the G7 and other similar sized economies.

The Fair Working Charter will cover issues such as fair pay, promoting good job prospects, skills and training opportunities, promote healthy workplaces and give workers a sense of belonging and value. A specific focus must include a commitment to payment of a real living wage, job security and, of course, Union recognition. So no more low-paid teaching assistants, like my sister, who is made to do more and more with the very little that she is paid. Equality, diversity and inclusion must be a thread that permeates everything around work. A fundamental principle of the Fair Working Charter is that it will respect all characteristics protected under the Equality Act of 2010.

By signing up to the charter, employers will be making a clear commitment to good employment practices that will tackle glaring disparities standing in the way of levelling up the north. The only other thing standing in the way of levelling up is the Tory Michael Gove.

The benefits of fair working charters are progressive workplace policies which improve productivity and innovation, promoting greater workplace democracy, employee voice and commitment, better employee development and life-long learning and good industrial relations in different workplaces. Given the cost-of-living crisis and the rapidly rising costs, a reduction in benefit payments, low pay and high taxation, the charter will set the standards we expect for good work in our towns and cities, reducing in-work poverty, boosting health and well-being and promoting greater economic inclusion for disadvantaged groups and communities.

Throughout this Congress, we have heard of low-paid workers, but it would be fair to mention the fantastic care workers who have borne the brunt of the ridiculous terms on which they work.

Congress, the Fair Work Charter will address this issue by reconfiguring procurement processes so care workers can be rightly rewarded for the work that they do.

Finally, Labour mayors are Labour in power, but in particular the amazing Tracey Brabin are committed to making work pay. Let's support them on getting this motion passed here at our Congress, to really unleash the potential of working people. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder? A

JAMES WILTON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Seconding. Vice-President and Congress, the Fair and Good Work Charter is the response needed after the pandemic. It started a genuine conversation about how we learn from the past two years. If it is strongly supported and upheld within workplaces and backed by trade unions regionally, it will create legislation that working people in our region have been asking for decades, that being legislation that sets the definitions of a happy workplace, stronger workers' rights and better pay being the key definitions. It is crucial that we are supporting this motion and I understand the qualifications that the CEC has made. Without devolution to councils, it is hard to implement all aspects of the Charter. However, the Charter is only the start. Until there is a Labour government we must support our own levelling-up agenda. The Tories' depiction of levelling up is repulsive and, obviously, has no mention of trade unions.

The Charter supports and strengthens the unions in the workplaces across our region. This must be our response to levelling up. We must be a part of it. It has to take up the dead air that levelling up has created. Not only will this Charter help members of GMB and increase membership, it will help the students I work with at East SILC John Jamieson School. Currently in special education we are experiencing a staffing crisis because of the way the Tories have treated teaching staff and care staff before, during and after the pandemic. The pay does not reflect the hard graft that teaching and care staff put in. We have a Government agenda that creates a poor culture within management. This all creates poor working environments in special education. That has created poor working environments in SEND. This Charter can improve the situation. If a school is happily staffed, in turn the students at E SILC will be happy. As a workplace rep for GMB, these are the two things I will always strive for to support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, James. I call the mover of Motion 193.

## **GMB LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILLORS MOTION 193**

### **193. GMB LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILLORS**

This Congress calls on all GMB sponsored or supported Councillors to unequivocally support GMB members in Councils, Contracted Services, Schools and Academies. Congress notes that obtaining support from the GMB in political circles, is based on those seeking our support, signing up to the implementation of GMB policies and that includes in Public Services. Congress calls for progress on delivering this motion being reported on an on-going basis to the CEC.

**NEWCASTLE CITY LA BRANCH**  
**Northern Region**

*(Carried)*

NIGEL COOK (Northern): Congress, it gives me great pleasure as a GMB member, delegate and Labour councillor to move Motion 193. This motion calls on all GMB sponsored or supported Councillors to unequivocally support GMB members in councils, contracted services, schools and academies.

The motion asks Congress to note that obtaining support from the GMB in political circles is based on those seeking our support, signing up to the implementation of GMB policies and that includes, Congress, policies relating to our public services.

As a trade union, we are rightly proud that so many of our members choose to stand as Labour councillors. When I became a councillor in 2011, I was proud to have the backing of the GMB. I was also acutely aware that unlike my day job in the NHS, where I sit as a GMB workplace rep on the staff side side of the table, I was now sitting as a councillor and, more latterly, as a cabinet member on the opposite side of the table. Whilst on occasion this juxtaposition can present a challenge or two, I have never, never, for one minute divorced my responsibilities as a councillor from my GMB values, principles and beating heart. *(Applause)*

Thank you, Congress. As a Middlesborough Football Club supporter, I am not used to hearing that applause. Thank you very much.

Congress, the very reason we encourage GMB members to seek public office is because we have a reasonable expectation that if elected they will take their GMB principles and values with them into the council chamber. This was the rationale, was it not, that led to the GMB and other trade unions creating the Labour Party at the beginning of the last century? The reason we did that is because we wanted to see our people elected to office so that they could represent the views and values of our members when formulating and determining policy that may impact on our members, their families and communities.

Congress, I ask you to support this motion, and in doing so request that progress on delivering the motion is reported to the CEC on an on-going basis. Thank you.  
*(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nigel. Secunder?

RICHARD SPEAKMAN (Northern): I will be quick! This motion calls on all GMB councillors to support the policies of the union. These policies cover schools, academies, council services, and contractors. This should apply to all those who seek our financial support. As someone who has stood to be a local councillor three times and failed three times, I would hope all GMB sponsored councillors support the union's policies. Anyone not doing so should have their money withdrawn. Congress, I do have a confession to make. No, I am not a Boris Johnson fan club member but as a school governor I have been involved in making teaching and

support staff redundant, just the once and with a heavy heart due to government spending cuts. I apologise to all those who were affected. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Richard. Anyone want to speak to oppose? No? Then I call on Sandra Daniell, as a CEC speaker.

SANDRA DANIELL (CEC): Vice President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Motions 190, 191 and 193.

The CEC is asking for Motion 190 to be referred, following subsequent explanation received from the branch Motion 190 asks for an outright ban on non-compete clauses in contracts. However, the CEC would like to research further how we might want to taper the thresholds for these clauses. We also wish to see what the findings are from the Government's consultation on the issues which closed in February 2021. An outright ban might be difficult to achieve if it encompassed all workers, particularly those in executive or high-earning positions who might possess sensitive commercial knowledge. More research into what the best policy would be for ordinary workers is needed in this case for it to be deliverable.

The CEC is supporting Motion 191 with qualification. This is, first of all, to note that other mayors also have similar charters or schemes to be initiatives launched by the metro mayors such as the London Mayor and the good work standards. Secondly, without proper powers the levers to raise employment rights and standards still lie in central government and these remain voluntary schemes that individual employers apply to. GMB believes that the best way to level up workers' rights and standards remains good trade union organisation.

The CEC is supporting Motion 193 with qualification. First of all, implementing GMB policy in this area is currently barred by primary legislation. For example, there is currently no legal route to return an academy to local authority oversight. This is a problem that must be tackled in parliament and where relevant devolved parliament. The CEC also wishes to qualify that any support for councillors is a decision that needs to be assessed and made locally.

Therefore, the CEC is asking for Motion 190 to be referred for the reasons set out, and for Motions 191 and 193 to be supported with the qualifications set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sandra. The mover and seconder of Motion 190 have agreed to referral. Will the mover and seconders of Motion 191 in Yorkshire agree to the qualification? (*Agreed*) And 193, for Northern, agree to the qualification? (*Agreed*) I will put those two to the vote. All those in favour. Anyone Against? They are carried.

*Motion 190 was **REFERRED**.*

*Motion 191 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 193 was **CARRIED**.*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call upon Helen Johnson to move Report No.6 of the SOC, please.

### **STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 6.**

HELEN JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Thank you, Vice President. I was still writing it then! Withdrawn Motions – the SOC has been notified by Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region that the following motions have been withdrawn by the region:

Motion 28 – Suspension in the Cuts in Revenue to Branches

Motion 30 – GMB Branch Tax

Motion 31 – Reduction in Commission paid to Branches

Motion 38 – Maintain 10% Commission Rule 34 Payments to Branches.

Emergency Motions – the SOC has accepted an Emergency Motion as being in order for debate. This will be Emergency Motion 2, entitled Oppose Refugee Deportation to Rwanda, from London Region. The time and date of the hearing of this motion will be determined later.

Finally, bucket collections – the amount collected for the Motor Neurone Disease Charity today was £497.93. (*Applause*)

Vice President, Congress, I formally move adoption of SOC Report No.6.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Congress agrees the report? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

*Standing Orders Committee Report No. 6 was **ADOPTED**.*

### **POLITICAL: BREXIT**

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on Motions 194, 195, and 197, with 194 to the rostrum, please.

### **EUROPE AND THE FUTURE TRADE AND CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT MOTION 194**

#### **194. EUROPE AND THE FUTURE TRADE AND CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT**

This Congress notes that Brexit is not a one-off event but an ongoing process, and how it unfolds will determine all of our futures. The people who led the Leave campaign are now running the country, and theirs is an agenda of economic deregulation, racist scapegoating and border-building.

Congress notes the Future Trade and Co-operation agreement with European Union and notes the many disadvantages to external and internal UK Trade caused by the Tory Government's hard Brexit.

We anticipate the review conference in 2024 and call on the Government to consider the following changes to current policy in the short term:

1. To agree a pan-European visa scheme for creative workers, such as actors and musicians

2. To rejoin Erasmus+, the EU's student academic exchange scheme, to allow our members and their children access to European Universities and allow European students access to UK Universities, ensuring that the community of peoples continues
3. To rejoin Horizon Europe, the EU R&D programme to minimise the disruption to our industrial innovation
4. To negotiate, a common reciprocal voting rights agreement to permit EU Citizens in the UK and British Citizens in the EU voting rights.
5. To negotiate changes to Northern Ireland Protocol that eases intra-UK trade, complies with the Good Friday Agreement and maintains the Common Travel Area.

Congress instructs the CEC and the political department to liaise with the Parliamentary Labour Party GMB Group, and the Labour shadow front bench to plan and execute a campaign in Parliament to further these aims and for the next Labour Government to adopt appropriate reforms

## **LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH**

### **London Region**

*(Carried)*

DAVE LEVY (London): Vice President, Congress, it is five years since the Referendum, two-and-a-half years since the General Election that confirmed Brexit, and we need to start telling ourselves, our members, and our neighbours, the truth: Brexit is an economic and social disaster. The economy has one of the slowest recoveries from the pandemic, foreign inward investments on which our economic future is based has declined, queues and delays in Dover and other ports, the developing maritime routes between Eire and Continental Europe and the decline in trade balances of our export trade and even imports with and from the EU all require remediation. To these problems we can add the contribution that the national labour shortage makes to inflation shown in such industries as the plutocrats essential services, such as sandwich bars and cafes, and fast food shops, and restaurants, who cannot find staff and yet our own essential services, the NHS, public personal transport, and security and cleaning, illustrate graphically to us by the pandemic are underfunded, understaffed, and failing.

This motion makes five small proposals for changes in the withdrawal and future trade agreements which will make life better for people of the UK be they British citizens or migrants from and to the EU. We call for an EU visa for those who are creative supporting our brothers and sisters in Equity, and the Musicians Union, who have already made this call; to re-enter Erasmus, the education exchange programme, to allow our members and their children to study in Europe and with Europeans, this has already been offered by the EU; to re-enter Horizon Europe, the EU R&D programme, this has also already been offered by the EU; to harmonise the right to vote with the 24-member states of the EU that we do not have agreements with by allowing Britons and Europeans to vote where they live; to negotiate with the EU to tune the Northern Ireland protocol to mitigate the stupidity of the customs barrier in the Irish Sea. This proposal and policy is to commit the GMB to seek and to reduce trade friction between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The CEC were concerned about the words we used in this motion on the Northern Ireland protocol. We believe that the caveats in the motion that any changes to the Northern Ireland protocol are negotiated with the EU and thus with Eire are designed to ease intra-UK trade, comply with the Good Friday Agreement, and maintain the common travel area, are sufficient safeguards that the GMB is not trapped into supporting Tory or DUP ultra stupidity which is rearing its head on this issue again.

These proposals were drawn up five-and-a-half months ago and opinions may well have moved on since then, even one Tory MP has suggested the UK rejoin the Single Market which would also solve the trade friction issues with Northern Ireland and Continental Europe in fact. While passing this motion we need to be ready to consider rejoining the Single Market. These proposals address in a limited way freedom of movement to work and learn, improving inward investment, political rights, and trade friction with the EU. They are small steps, they would make a difference and confront the problems with the Tories desire for a Singapore or a Zurich-on-Thames, with zero workers' rights, their desire to stoke up racist tension in order to underpin their hostile environment, the trade proposals might even reduce the problems of the lorry park and the problems in Kent, and possibly in other areas. I am less familiar with the ports of the east coast. I am aware of the fact that significant trade goes through the east coast. These proposals, no matter our positions in 2016, we should be able to unite upon. The CEC will offer support with qualification. The region will accept the qualification. I ask you to support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Secunder?

JOANNE RUST (London): Vice President, Congress, I volunteered, stupidly, to second this motion on Saturday and since then I have rewritten this speech three times. There is just too much to say in only two minutes. Whether you voted to leave the European Union or not, no one voted for this type of Tory Brexit. Oven-ready deal – *rubbish!* It is a dog's dinner. (*Applause*) Our Brexit losses are 178 times bigger than our Brexit gains. It is thankful that this Government is even going to manage to hit its own target of having 80% of all UK trade covered by a free trade agreement. Well, unless Nania or LaLa Land comes forward with an offer.

Yesterday the Government set out its plans to break international law, to end the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, and probably end peace there, and begin a trade war with the EU. This Tory hard right Brexit is a disaster. The five points in this motion are simple but vital to put into action if we do not want the situation to get even worse than it already is. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Joanne. Motion 195?

## **MAINTAINING STANDARDS FOR H&S AND WORKERS' RIGHTS FOR UK WORKERS**

### **MOTION 195**

#### **195. MAINTAINING STANDARDS FOR H&S AND WORKERS' RIGHTS FOR UK WORKERS**

We call on the government to ensure workers' health and safety, and other social rights - like maternity and paternity leave, paid overtime and holiday pay - are not degraded as a result of Brexit; that the UK does not fall behind European standards and wages; and that there are greater protections for platform workers in the ever-expanding gig economy and other forms of

precarious employment. It is working class and lower-income families, already struggling with the cost of living crisis, that will be most impacted by any diminution in protections, and must be protected.

## **B59 BRUSSELS BRANCH** **Southern Region**

*(Carried)*

SHAMIK DAS (Southern): Congress, we are meeting here this week in Harrogate first time in person for three years and how things have changed. We are now meeting against a backdrop of massive chaos and crisis, airports, fuel surcharges, energy prices through the roof, hunger, delays everywhere in the Health Service, lives have been ruined, and just as during the pandemic it has been our members on the front line dealing with all this and, Congress, things could be about to get a whole lot worse as the Tory Brexit train we are all being held hostage on crashes towards reality. Last week the economic disaster was laid bare. The UK economy, £31bn smaller than had we remained. Zero projected growth for next year – only Russia will do worse in 2020 – and nearly every UK region's economy has gone down since we left the EU. The West Midlands, for example, has shrunk 10%. Brexit will do twice as much damage to our economy as Covid. Just let that sink in for a second.

On to this week and what has been going on with the protocol as the previous speakers have mentioned is just going to make things worse and threatens to rip up the entire agreement putting everything at risk, even the limited protections that it contained. Nothing will be safe. The working time directive, the legal right to rest breaks at work, inclusion of overtime and holiday pay, health and safety regulations, laws protecting temporary, part-time, and fixed time workers, laws protecting pregnant workers and guaranteeing parental leave, all these were underpinned by EU law and they are now at risk from this Tory Government. Congress, you must fight to ensure we keep these rights and we must also push to match any upcoming legislation from the EU that protects working people. For example, the work/life balance directive, which will bring in the right to guarantee carers' leave, extend the right to request flexible working, and enhance parental leave, the transparent and predictable working conditions directive, which makes sure platform workers in the gig economy have greater rights, as was discussed this morning. The directive on the right to disconnect which will ensure workers are able to switch off, again another topic discussed in the Future of Work Report today, and the directive on adequate minimum wages which will ensure regs take account of the cost of living and gives trade unions greater collective bargaining rights. Congress, please support our motion and protect workers' rights. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shamik. Secunder?

ROB BOWLES (Southern): Vice President, Congress, good afternoon. This is my first time at Congress, first-time speaking. *(Applause)* Thank you very much. I would like to read you a few statistics to support the need for this motion and for these I am jumping back in time a bit before we had even left the EU. So, bear with me. On average British workers work more hours per week, more days per year, and more years before they retire, after which they receive lower levels of pension than

almost all of their European counterparts. In comparison to other European workers they generally would have received less education and training and because of a lack of employer investment their productivity would be lower. They get fewer paid holidays than almost all of the European comparators, Working Time Directive notwithstanding. Their pay is so low in some cases and in a great proportion they are in-work poverty. In Britain, unlike in the rest of the European countries, there is no ministry for labour, there is no labour inspectorate, and there is a negligible complement of health and safety inspectors. A study in 2015 with focus on labour exploitation found that in the UK the labour inspectorate figures came in at the bottom when pitched against similar EU nations. UK had just 0.9 inspectors per 100,000 workers as compared to 4.6 in Ireland, 5.1 in the Netherlands, 12.5 in Belgium, and 18.9 in France.

You can see improvements can and should be made to workers' rights here in the UK and we must continue to fight for them. At a bare minimum we must not allow this or any government to walk back from the rights that we have now. As a union we are all about supporting our communities and colleagues so I would ask everyone here today to support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rob. The mover of 197, and could I have the movers of 203, 204, 206, 210, and 211 to the front, please?

## **ANOTHER EUROPE IS POSSIBLE MOTION 197**

### **197. ANOTHER EUROPE IS POSSIBLE**

Brexit is not a one-off event but an ongoing process, and how it unfolds will determine all of our futures. The people who led the Leave campaign are now running the country, and theirs is an agenda of economic deregulation, racist scapegoating and border-building.

Another Europe was formed in February 2016 as an independent, left wing pro-Remain voice in the referendum campaign. Now, it fights for an alternative to Tory Brexit – and for a different future. The values that drove it to campaign against Brexit in the first place continue to inspire us: we are for solidarity between people and across borders and for a society run in the interests of people and the planet.

It campaigns for a close, progressive relationship between the UK and EU, it continues to work with allies across the continent to transform and democratise the European institutions. It seeks to build a Europe that has social and environmental justice at its heart, and which is a welcome place for migrants – and its vision of solidarity does not stop at the continent's borders.

It is a pluralist and cross-party campaign, bringing together a coalition that includes progressives from all parties and none. It is a campaigning organisation that actively pursues its goals.

It aims to build solidarity by mobilising campaigns and initiatives to fight back against the policies of the nationalist right and the political content of Brexit, especially on workers' rights, migrants' rights and the environment.

It also aims to break the silence on the issue of Brexit, cutting through the unwillingness of many politicians to talk about the subject and shining a spotlight on what is happening to our

rights, freedoms and livelihoods. It looks to define what an alternative to Tory Brexit might look like and to build a majority for it.

Congress agrees to affiliate to Another Europe.

## **LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH**

### **London Region**

*(Referred)*

DAVID LEVY (London): Vice President, Congress, apologises for three within 15 minutes but I did not set the timetable. I also need to state in moving this speech that I am a member of the National Committee of *Another Europe is Possible*. Brexit is not a one-off event, it is an ongoing process and as it unfolds will determine all our futures. People who led the Leave Campaign are now running the country and theirs is an agenda of economic deregulation, racist scape building, scapegoating, and border building. *Another Europe* was formed in February 2016 as an independent left-wing pro Remain voice in the referendum campaign. Now it fights for an alternative to Tory Brexit, for a different future, and the values that drove it to campaign against Brexit in the first place continue to inspire it. It stands for solidarity between people across borders and for a society run in the interests of people and the planet. Campaigns for a close progressive relationship between the UK and the EU continue to work with allies across the Continent to transform and democratise the European institutions. It seeks to build a Europe with social environmental justice at its heart and which is a welcome place for migrants. It is a pluralist and cross-party campaign bringing together a coalition and includes progressives from all parties and none. Its campaigning organisation that actively pursues its goals, aims to build solidarity by mobilising campaigns and initiatives to fight back against the policies of the nationalist right and the principal content of Brexit, especially on workers' rights, migrants' rights, and the environment.

Since this is an affiliation we have, of course, been requested to refer this and the region will agree to that reference but I ask you to support this motion so that we can continue to make the United Kingdom a better place and build a closer relationship again with the European Union. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Seconder?

UNMESH DESAI (London): Congress, yes, another Europe is possible. What would it look like and what is the alternative to a Tory Brexit is what this motion is all about. Respecting the result of the 2016 Referendum does not mean that we do not have a debate about many aspects of Brexit not working. A think tank for trade in Europe has found that trade barriers as a result of Brexit have caused a 6% increase in food prices in the UK and in March 2022 the office of budget responsibility found that exports and imports have fallen by 13% and 12%, respectively, since 2019. It found the UK trade recovery has been slow relative to advancing economies and Brexit may have been a factor.

Since Congress began the Government has published its plan for development of the Northern Ireland protocol, risking a trade war that threatens our members' jobs in

manufacturing, logistics, and transport. Of course, we respect the referendum outcome but not the reckless acts of this Government. The rise of Brexit has cost the chemical industry alone £1bn a year. We need a new relationship, Congress, with Europe that upholds and extends workers' rights, protects the rights of EU citizens, and refuses to participate in the European programmes for no better reason than Tory ideological hostility, and ends the threat to our members' jobs. Our position has to be one that rejects the policies of a xenophobic nationalist right and looks at working with allies across the Continent to pursue common goals of economic, social, and environmental justice, international solidarity across Europe and, indeed, beyond this boundary. Thank you, Congress. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Unmesh. Does anyone want to speak against?

ANDY NEWMAN (Southern): Speaking against Motion 197, which is calling to affiliate to *Another Europe is Possible*. Let's not be sold a pig-in-a-poke here. *Another Europe is Possible* is an organisation that supports remain with many leading members who wish to rejoin the European Union. Now, let's be clear, for many of our members at a time when they are facing a cost-of-living crisis and we are fighting bosses left, right, and centre, this is revisiting an argument that they are absolutely fed up with and taken a position that half of our members will find offensive.

I was lucky enough and privileged to be the Chair of the Brexit Working Party for GMB when I was on the CEC and we had a fantastic Brexit in terms of how we handled it as a union, an example, I think, to society and the labour Movement. We fought for remain. We, unfortunately, did not get the result we wanted but then we formed a committee, which respected both the remain and the leave points of view. Full disclosure, I campaigned for remain but changed my mind in that process and came to think that leaving the EU was the right thing to do; but what was great about the GMB is that we recognised our members were on both sides of that debate and we held an expert committee with well-informed lay members, with our research officers, with our political officers, we called in researchers from outside, and because of that we were listened to as experts by a number of societies. It was due to the GMB that we opposed the Labour Party taking the suicidal position at its conference to promote rejoin. *Another Europe is Possible* made a massive mistake that shows how divisive they are when leading members of their organisation called the Assistant General Secretary of another union a racist for opposing Brexit.

Comrades, let's unite, let's concentrate on what unites us, let's not pick up an old argument of remain and leave, let's stand together, fight those rogue bosses, and fight for higher living standards for our members right now. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does the mover of 197 want the right to reply?

DAVID LEVY (London): Two minutes! Exercising right of reply on Motion 197. That was sort of highly interesting. One fact, AEP is not campaigning to rejoin. It is campaigning for a progressive close relationship between the United Kingdom and the EU precisely for the reasons that Andy outlined. Politics in this country have moved but the state of the economy, the exposure of Tory lies, and leaver lies, has changed the politics in this country. The real problem with Andy's argument is that it is not for that issue. Nearly everything we do today in terms of political and

economics, and debate about these things, is affected by that decision for Brexit. People have changed. This organisation is one of the few that is actually campaigning for that closer progressive relationship. I would ask you to support the CEC position, which is to refer this on the basis that it is an affiliation and due diligence needs to be done. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. I now call on Cath Pinder on behalf of the CEC.

CATH PINDER (CEC): Vice President,, President, Congress, Cath Pinder speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Motions 194, 195, and 197. The CEC is supporting Motion 194 with qualifications. The first is to note for the record further to the motion statement that ministers are border building, the GMB does not support a no borders position. This is set out by Motion 170 agreed at Congress 2021. The CEC is not opposed to the call for a pan-European visa scheme for creative workers. However, we would generally look to support the lead sector unions such as BECTU, Equity, and the Musicians Union in this area. The motion also calls for changes to the Northern Ireland Protocol. Our qualification is that any new position on the Protocol would have to be adopted in close consultation with North West and Irish Region. We can look into this matter over the coming year.

The CEC is also supporting Motion 195 with a qualification. Much of the calls made in the motion are set out in existing GMB policy. However, the call for government policy to promote wage parity is a welcome addition. The CEC's qualification is that government policy should not inhibit negotiated collective bargaining arrangements.

The CEC is asking for Motion 197 to be referred to the CEC Finance and General Purposes Committee. This is so that the CEC can assess whether the organisation, *Another Europe is Possible*, is compatible with the policy and aims of GMB. This is in line with longstanding practice for all requests for financial donations or affiliations.

Therefore, the CEC is asking for Congress to support Motions 194 and 195, with the qualifications set out, and for Motion 197 to be referred for the reason set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cath. The mover of 197 has already agreed to refer back so I will ask does London Region accept qualification to 194? (*Agreed*) Does Southern Region accept the qualification to 195? (*Agreed*) I will put 194 and 195 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Any against? They are carried.

*Motion 194 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 195 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 197 was **REFERRED**.*

## **POLITICAL: THE LABOUR PARTY**

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can I ask for the mover of Motion 203 to come to the rostrum, please.

## **CAMPAIGNING FOR A LABOUR GOVERNMENT MOTION 203**

### **203. CAMPAIGNING FOR A LABOUR GOVERNMENT**

This Congress, each and every GMB member will benefit from day one of a Labour Government through repeal of anti TU legislation, the enhancement of workers' rights and trade unions having an equal seat at the table.

Whilst appreciating that not all our GMB members are Labour Party members or opt into the political levy we must all appreciate the devastating impact on workers over the last couple of years inflicted by this Tory administration.

Congress calls upon the CEC to enhance our affiliation to the Labour Party and ensure that what matters most to the GMB is front and centre of Labour Party Policy. We further call for all our GMB backed elected politicians to sign up to a policy document produced by the GMB of our must have policies in the next manifesto.

### **GMB ORGANISING BRANCH Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region**

*(Referred)*

AAFAQ BUTT (Yorkshire and North Derbyshire): Congress, I stand before you as a Labour councillor for Heckmondwike, proudly backed by my union, the GMB. I look back at how it all started with the political journey when in the early 2000s I came back from work to find that the BNP had ousted two of our Labour councillors to take their second seat in our ward. Our working class town with an industrial centre at its heart at one time, famous for its carpets and moulding industry, and being so small that everybody knew each other, became a sad shell of what it was. I joined the Labour campaign to get them out and once again bring back Labour councillors after giving the racists a royally good kicking out. *(Applause)*

My experience went further and I started to campaign in local and national elections, locally and further afield, seeing that there were so many opportunities for revitalisation and giving our town a boost I decided to stand for election in my home town, and my candidacy was backed by the GMB and I retained the seat with an increased majority.

Being the son of a union member since the 1960s my relationship with the GMB predates my politics and I have shown my commitment to my union by getting involved in various campaigns, such as the junior doctor picket, work of taxi drivers, representing workers, and acting as an interpreter to make sure no one misses out on justice at work because they cannot speak English. I forged a partnership and worked with Lou from Equalities on a hate crimes toolkit, and now we are about to embark on a project looking at menopause at work and domiciliary care at Kirklees Council.

The GMB have helped me by enrolling me onto the future candidates programmes and training on public speaking and speech writing – they did not actually write this one – all of which have helped me in dispensing my duties as a Labour councillor but we must understand that union support is not an inalienable right. It has to mean something. It is essential that Labour politicians that are backed or expecting union

backing commit to helping the union in its endeavours. The relationship cannot be one of take and take. It has to be reciprocal. We heard from Rachel Reeves yesterday about her pledges for a Labour government in office. One of her commitments is to establish workers' rights from day one. one of the key components of fair working conditions. This is the kind of thing that we should be expecting as a norm.

During these turbulent financial times when union funds are under pressure, we need to be seeing tangible benefits of backing and giving financial help to candidates and be absolutely clear that they must actively support our campaigns. As we say in Yorkshire, "You can't have owt for nowt." That translates into, "You can't have something for nothing." (*Laughter/Applause*)

Finally, Congress, it is well known that the Labour Party is the vehicle by which unions can push their wishes and aspirations to make it through to the legislature, but we need to realise that without the unions, such as the GMB, the Labour Party becomes an empty vessel. The GMB have supported me in every step of my political journey and so it is natural that I can use my position to make sure that I campaign on GMB issues.

Finally, when Labour wins, we all win, but without us Labour does not win. We must make sure that we back and support those candidates that will back and support us. Congress, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Seconder?

JAMES WILTON (Yorkshire and North Derbyshire): Vice President, Congress, if you know me and as my officer knows I have had some criticisms of the way Labour has handled communications under its new leadership, which is similar to the CEC's response to this motion, "further clarity needed". I think criticising anything you strongly believe in, in my case the labour Movement, is a reasonable thing to do. However, also remembering why we are passionately fighting for something we believe in is just as important.

The labour Movement encompasses so many different elements from activism in grassroots movements to political representation in the House of Commons. The Labour Party is a clear channel from shop floor to parliament. Evidence of this is me literally here at Congress speaking on this motion; also GMB candidates such as Angela Rayner, who passionately represents carers in parliament as she used to work in the care sector herself. For somebody like me, who is a teaching assistant and wants to do his best to uplift all of his students and teaching assistants, brothers and sisters, to the best of his abilities, I cannot deny how inspirational people like Angela are. Nonetheless, this is a two-way street and in order for the labour Movement to be effective it requires Labour and GMB to work together. It requires our GMB-backed politicians to be listened to by the Labour leadership. It requires cooperation from the NEC to prioritise not just GMB but all our sister trade union policies.

The clue is in the name, the Labour Party. It is named after all of us here and it would not even exist if it was not for Keir Hardie, a proud Scottish trade unionist who politically organised the unions to form what is now Labour. If Labour are not putting trade union policy at the forefront of forming a manifesto or its

communications, does it have the right to call itself the Labour Party. We have seen time and time again when trade unions and Labour are working together inevitably working people across the country get the representation they need through all channels of the labour Movement as we are all interconnected. Thank you. Congress.  
*(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, James. The mover of 204?

## **LABOUR PARTY LEADERSHIP ELECTION RULES – MP NOMINATIONS MOTION 204**

### **204. LABOUR PARTY LEADERSHIP ELECTION RULES –MP NOMINATIONS**

This Congress notes its disappointment with the change to the threshold of Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) MP nominations required for candidates to appear on Labour Party leadership ballots - increasing from 10% to 20% following a vote at the 2021 Labour Party Conference.

This Congress acknowledges that changing the rules in this way will result in fewer candidates reaching the ballot. This serves only to restrict the choice of members when voting for a future leader of the Labour Party.

Therefore, this Congress commits to support a reduction of the threshold from 20% to 10% of MP nominations, which will increase party democracy and ensure members can choose from a more representative group of candidates.

## **MILTON KEYNES CITY BRANCH London Region**

*(Referred)*

ALLAN THOMPSON (London): There was much speculation and very legitimate concern last year ahead of the Labour Conference, a new leadership desperate to forge a new path and present Labour as a changed party. In this vein conference passed a package of rules that focused on getting the Labour election ready. This included an increase to the proportion of MP nominations that candidates needed to secure in order to get on the ballot in a leadership election, from 10% to 20% of MPs.

I understand if you might be a touch apathetic about this. It does not at first appear to be a significant change but any change that will result in fewer candidates appearing on the ballot is by consequence restricting our members' choices. More concerning is the impact that this could have on the ability of members from already underrepresented backgrounds to make the ballot. We exist to break down these barriers, not to build them, and yet we have seen the party prioritise what it thinks will make a good leader and what it perceives is necessary to win elections over the principles that should define our Movement.

The CEC has asked us to refer this motion, in part because we have yet to see this new rule in practice. We have not had a leadership election since it was agreed. We can apply the rule to retrospective elections, though, and if this rule had been in place for the 2020 leadership election then the candidates that you would have had to choose from would have been Keir Starmer and Keir Starmer.

I do not want Congress to think that this motion intends to repeat the same debate about leadership that we have had so many of in recent years. This issue is about more than any individual leader, it is a motion that seeks to increase the democracy in our party. We will be agreeing to refer back, I accept that it was perhaps too specific on what it was asking for in the motion, nevertheless, I am asking the CEC to support the principle of this motion by exercising our union's influence to ensure that all such constitutional barriers, old and new, are removed. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Allan. Secunder?

DAVE KENT (London): Comrades, the mover of the motion has spoken about the reasons why the CEC has requested reference back. Maybe a threshold of 10% is not the right one as the motion calls for; maybe it should be 5%, maybe it should be 2%, maybe just one nomination from one MP should be sufficient to get on to the ballot paper. I do not know.

We believe that the GMB should be campaigning for the widest possible democracy on this matter and we urge the CEC to consider this in depth and not just consider whether or not 10% is the correct threshold. I second motion 204. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Congress, Motion 204 has agreed the reference back. Does 203 agree from Yorkshire? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much.

*Motion 203 was REFERRED.*

*Motion 204 was REFERRED.*

## **POLITICAL: CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES**

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now move on to Motion 206.

### **FAIR VOTING**

#### **MOTION 206**

#### **206. FAIR VOTING**

UK democracy is in turmoil. Successive Tory governments have decimated public services and created a hostile environment for workers. In 19 of the last 20 general elections, parties to the left of the Conservatives won the popular vote yet the Tories have governed for almost two-thirds of that time. We recognise that things must change within the UK and that we must commit to doing everything we can to ensure Labour is in government after the next election.

The voting system in the U.K. has given the Tory Party large parliamentary majorities enabling them to decimate workers rights, underfund our public services and destroy our communities.

Last year - both before and after the Labour Party conference - more affiliated trade unions passed policy in favour of Proportional Representation. There is significant support for electoral reform and proportional representation (PR) within GMB, with many having strong feelings that are not aligned with current union policy. It is essential that we ensure there is space for debate on the subject to allow the union to form an up to date and considered stance on an issue which is very significant in the union movement right now.

Congress resolves:

- GMB should consult the membership through branch meetings, presenting the arguments in a document and maybe video for and against electoral reform - including evidence about outcomes for workers and trade unions. This consultation needs to be guided and must include the option to attend branch, regional and other meetings. These meetings must have the ability to state the views of the meeting to allow a consensus to be drawn.
- That as a result of this exercise the CEC shall present a special paper reflecting all views from the consultation allowing the next Congress and its delegates to determine the policy of the Union going forward.
- Until this consultation has concluded, GMB should abstain from either voting for or against Proportional Representation.

## **LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH**

### **London Region**

*(Lost)*

DAVID LEVY (London): Moving Motion 206 without the Region's support. This motion calls for a whole union debate and the establishment of a mandate involving the whole membership on the issue of fair voting systems. UK democracy is in turmoil, successive Tory governments have decimated public services, and created a hostile environment for workers.

In 19 of the last 20 general elections parties to the left of the Conservatives won the popular vote yet the Tories have governed for almost two-thirds of that time. The voting system in the UK has given the Tory Party large parliamentary majorities enabling them to decimate workers' rights, underfund our public services, destroy our communities, treat the Treasury as a personal piggybank, pay billions to their donors, and open the floodgates to the most corrupt prime minister ever, protected by the doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty and a majority in the House of Commons elected by first past the post on 44% of the vote. That is the inconvenient truth behind first past the post, 44% support 100% of the power.

This was illustrated at our regional delegation meeting, in fact, it was a very close debate and it was a very close vote, in fact it is a reinforcement of the argument that split votes deliver 100% of the power as the rest of my region will be voting against this motion. There is crumbling support for first past the post except in the Tory Party where they have just abolished the supplementary vote for mayors and crime commissioners.

The UK, apart from the US and Canada, are the only OECD countries to use first past the post. The only other group supporting first past the post are Labour's nomenclature elbowing their way into pole position for the next round of parliamentary selections. In the UK we use PR to elect the Scottish Assembly, the Welsh Senedd, and the GLA in London, but first past the post delivers a corrupt and degraded parliament, as we can see, a parliament that designs debate to compromise and work best with the basic law which constrains them. Ours has none.

The CEC ask you to oppose this because they think it will reduce the chances of the Tories losing. I do not agree and neither will the SPD in Germany who have been in government since 1991, nor the New Zealand Labour Party who have been in government since 2017. They argue that PR systems mean we will lose MPs' electoral accountability and the bad MPs can be removed today. In terms of account of MPs it does not seem that way to me from where I am sitting. Ask Labour members in Vauxhall, Bassetlaw, Rochdale, Bermondsey, and Birkenhead. I could list the seats of the 15 MPs that resigned from the PLP in the 2017 parliament. MPs are not accountable to their voters once they have a party label and neither are they accountable to their parties.

Some argue that PR will allow the far right to enter parliament. I have some bad news for you, they have taken over the Tory Party and they are already there. You will be told with PR we will not get a Labour government again but we need to tell ourselves some truths again, Labour is not very good at winning elections. The transparency of any programme to be pursued will be weakened by the fact that under first past the post the coalition is informed before the election and the coalition presents itself to the electorate, and it wins or it loses. With the PR system the coalition is created after the election with a mandate from the people as to what they want to do. We have a "members first" slogan.

This motion asks the CEC to behave in this way and to consult the membership so we can all be confident the Congress mandate is made to meet the voice of our members. You may find the platform reminding us again that we are without region support and I say it was a close vote and this is politics. There is no special wisdom in any one region, except possibly Scotland and Wales who have a greater experience of PR, and you are not mandated. You can make up your own minds as to whether you wish to support this or not. We are only asking for members to be properly consulted. I ask you to support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Is there a seconder for that motion? Yes.

ALLAN THOMPSON (London): Speaking without the support of my region. Electoral reform is long overdue and the need to replace the current first past the post system with a system of proportional representation is something my branch feels strongly about. That is why we submitted our own motion on electoral reform. However, we recognise that what we were asking for was immediate action outside of properly informed debate, without adequate allocation of time, which is very often limited at Congress, so we agreed to withdraw it in support of this one.

What this motion asks for is simply the GMB to create the right space for that debate, to provide materials and resources to help inform that debate, to survey branches for their views, and finally to report back to a future Congress where a firmer position can be taken. In voting to support this motion you will not be committing GMB to a strict policy position, you will not be saying that you agree with or against the need for electoral reform, there is no specific demand for that in this motion. I urge you to consider that when the CEC responds.

Comrades, motions on this issue are becoming a regular feature at Congress and this will continue for as long as we reject the need for a wider consultation. Let's vote to support this motion so that a fuller debate can be had and, if nothing else, surely I can tempt you with the promise of being able to take a position in this vote that is both against the CEC and the London Region so, hopefully, I will get your support on that. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: The mover of Motion 210, please?

## **CHANGING ELECTORAL SYSTEMS**

### **MOTION 210**

#### **210. CHANGING ELECTORAL SYSTEMS**

This Congress considers that the UK electorate are very unlikely to vote Yes in a referendum to change the tried and trusted electoral system in the UK for electing Members of Parliament and local Councillors.

The current preoccupation with changing the electoral system in parts of the Labour Movement is deflecting from the pressing need for the Labour Party to build an electoral coalition of voters across the country to win elections nationally and locally. This has been done before and can be done again if there is an acceptance that it is essential for the Labour Party to be the "broad church" it needs to be to win majority support from the electorate. This means listening to the concerns of the electorate not lecturing them on the right ways to think about issues of concern to them.

It is entirely understandable why smaller parties and the micro parties would favour electoral reform to help parties with little widespread support. It is less understandable why a Party like the Labour Party would favour a system that promotes rival parties into elected office at its expense.

In Ireland for example under proportional representation the Irish Labour Party vote has severely declined. Instead, there are now at least five or six "left" parties splitting the vote. This is exactly what would happen in the UK to the Labour Party if the electorate voted for changes in the electoral system.

Congress considers that GMB as a founding member of the Labour Party should oppose any changes that weaken the party for the benefit of other parties that GMB does not support. Congress calls on the CEC to actively vote against all attempts to change the Labour Party policy to support proportional representation. We would never see a majority Labour Party Government again if this change comes about.

## **EALING BRANCH**

### **London Region**

(*Carried*)

ABDI DUALE (London): Compromise, that is what our current voting system enables. An MP is elected to represent an area, they often fight on their local record, and local residents can build a personal relationship with their representative in parliament.

The current preoccupation with changing the electoral system in parts of the labour Movement is deflecting from the pressing need for the Labour Party to build an electoral coalition of voters across the country. That is what the left has failed to do since 2010, convince voters that our vision for the country is the most compelling. Boris Johnson did not win the last election because the system enabled him. He won because we could not convince the 14 million voters that voted for him that we were good enough to run the country. That is the honest truth.

The motion before this mentioned that 19 out of the 20 last elections were won by parties on the left. Respectfully, give me a break. There is nothing left-wing about the Scottish Nationalist Party, and there is certainly nothing left-wing about the Tory enabling Liberal Democrats. (*Applause*) In Ireland, for example, under proportional representation the Irish Labour Party vote has severely declined, in fact, there are now five to six left parties splitting the vote. This is exactly what will happen in the UK and to the Labour Party and, more importantly, for a union like the GMB, one of the founding members of the Labour Party, it would severely diminish our influence over the party.

The successful route to electing a Labour left-wing government is not by changing how we run elections, it is by listening to voters and workers that have abandoned the left over successive elections, and inspiring them to come home and to come home to Labour. We have won before and we can do it again. Congress, let's kick the Tories out. I move this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Abdi. Seconder? Formally. Thank you. Mover of Motion 211?

### **REMOVE THE REFERENCE “HONOURABLE” IN RELATION TO MPs MOTION 211**

#### **211. REMOVE THE REFERENCE ‘HONOURABLE’ IN RELATION TO MPS**

This Congress calls on the CEC to start a campaign to remove the archaic addressing of MPs as ‘honourable’. This has no relevance in today’s society.

### **B16 BLACKBURN & EAST LANCS BRANCH North West & Irish Region**

*(Carried)*

PAUL TURNER (North West and Irish): I am a proud GMB member and a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) This motion calls for the GMB to actively campaign to remove the archaic address of “honourable” this and “honourable” that that is heard within parliament. Although this is not the most important topic we will cover this week, it still needs addressing. We are the most class-ridden society in the Western World. This country is run by the elite for the elite. They are never to be blamed for anything, they lie when found out, and we can take “partygate” for example. In the next breath they refer to each other as “right honourable” and “honourable”.

Well, Congress, enough is enough. These individuals are elected MPs and nothing more. I therefore ask for you to support this motion and get rid of this ridiculous address. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder, please? Formally. Thank you. Are there any delegates wishing to speak in opposition to any of these motions? No? Sorry, 203? We voted on 203. They referred back. Sorry, the region referred back. We are talking about Motion 206, Motion 210, and Motion 211. Are there any speakers who wish to speak in opposition to any of those motions? No? Then can I ask Gordon Richardson of the CEC to respond, please.

GORDON RICHARDSON (CEC): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Motions 206 and 210. The CEC is asking for Motion 206 to be withdrawn as GMB policy is in favour of first past the post voting system as opposed to proportional representation. As Allan and David have already iterated, they are speaking without the support of their own region. This position was upheld in the debate on Motion 116, which was lost at Congress in 2021.

A fully proportional system diminishes the direct accountability that MPs have under the current system. If an MP is failing in their job they can currently be removed but this is not possible in such a system. A hybrid system in which some members are directly elected and others are elected through proportional representation would create a two-tier system in the House of Commons. In this system some MPs would have direct accountability of a set of constitutions, but the others no direct accountability.

The preferential system of voting which maintains a direct constitutional link but which eliminates the need to tactical voting was defeated by 68% to 32% in a referendum in 2011. The CEC believes that priority now for the GMB should be how we defeat a UK government that is not in our interests under first past the post.

Motion 210 gives a useful clarification on GMB's policy in favour of the first past the post voting system as opposed to proportional representation. The CEC is supporting Motion 210 with the qualification that priority now should be defeating the UK government, which is never ever going to give members the opportunity to vote in a referendum on the electoral system. Therefore, the CEC is asking Motion 206 to be withdrawn for the reason set out, and Motion 210 to be supported with a qualification set out. If Motion 206 is not withdrawn, the CEC ask Congress to oppose the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. The CEC is supporting Motion 211. Does London Region accept the qualification for Motion 210? (*Agreed*) Yes. I will put those two to the vote. All those in favour please show. Thank you. Any against? That is carried.

*Motion 211 was **CARRIED***  
*Motion 210 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: I will ask, does London Region agree to withdraw Motion 206? No? That is fine. The CEC is asking Congress to oppose this motion because it has not been withdrawn. All those in favour please show. All those against? That is lost.

*Motion 206 was **LOST**.*

THE PRESIDENT: Before I go onto the last set of motions, Composite Motion 14, Motion 218, Motion 219, if those speakers could be ready, can I just let Congress know you heard from Helen Johnson earlier that Emergency Motion 2, Oppose Refugee Deportation to Rwanda submitted by London Region has been accepted for debate and this will be schedule for debate at the end of tomorrow morning's session. *(Applause)*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: JUSTICE**

THE PRESIDENT: We now come on to Motions under Social Policy. There are three regions involved in Composite 14. Following the SOC Report No. 1, this Composite will be moved by North West and Irish Region, seconded by GMB Scotland, and Southern Region will also be able to speak in the debate.

### **CAMMELL LAIRD 1984 COMPOSITE MOTION 14**

#### **C14. Cammell Laird 1984**

Covering Motions 215, 216 and 217

215. CAMMELL LAIRD - SOUTHERN REGION

216. CAMMELL LAIRD - GMB SCOTLAND

217. CAMMELL LAIRD 1984 - NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION

This Congress notes:

- In 1984 37 Cammell Laird shipyard workers – members of a predecessor union of the GMB – who were on strike and staging an occupation against job losses were tried and convicted of contempt of court in absentia, and imprisoned in Walton Prison for four weeks in solitary confinement. The 37 workers also lost their redundancy and pension rights and were blacklisted.

- With the support of the GMB, surviving members of the Cammell Laird 37 continue to campaign for their convictions to be quashed.

- The government continues to refuse to release all papers relevant to the jailing of the 37, and also continues to refuse to hold a public inquiry into the jailing of the 37.

Congress believes:

- Taking strike action and staging workplace occupations against job losses are legitimate tactics of working-class struggle and should never be criminalised.

- The arrests and convictions of the Cammell Laird 37 were politically motivated, especially given the broader context of the Miners' Strike which was underway at the time.

- The use of the law against the Cammell Laird 37 was not a one-off incident but part of a pattern of using the law – especially the post-1979 anti-union laws – to undermine effective working-class struggle.

- Just as the convictions of the Shrewsbury 24 have been quashed, so too the convictions of the Cammell Laird 37 should likewise be quashed.

Congress therefore calls for:

- The release of all papers relating to the imprisonment of the Cammell Laird 37.

- The establishment of a public inquiry into the imprisonment of the Cammell Laird 37.

- The quashing of the convictions of the Cammell Laird 37.
- The Central Executive Council to ensure that the campaigning for justice for the Cammell Laird 37 is adequately resourced.

This Congress calls on the GMB to immediately go for a judicial review of the Cammell Laird 1984 strike.

On the 23.03.21, the Shrewsbury Pickets were successful in their judicial review, and good luck to them, but there are at least three fundamental differences between their case and ours for a stronger case, which are:

1. They were tried in Court – we weren't!
2. We were picketing our place of work – they weren't!
3. We went to the European Court of Appeal with our petition on 01.12.2014 and won. They ruled that the British Government should apologise immediately and look to reimburse us for the loss of redundancy pay and pension rights.

That was over seven years ago, and nothing has been done Nationally. Don't keep telling us, "It's existing policy" do something.

**Moving Region: GMB SCOTLAND**

**Seconding Region: NORTH WEST & IRISH**

**Other Region: SOUTHERN**

*(Carried)*

EDWARD MARNELL (North West and Irish): Chair, Congress, moving Composite 14 again. This Congress calls on the GMB to immediately go for a judicial review of the Cammell Laird 1984 strike. On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 the Shrewsbury Pickets were successful in their judicial review, and good luck to them. There are at least three fundamental differences between their case and ours for a stronger case, which are: One, they were tried in court, we were not. Two, we were picketing our place of work, they were not. Three, we went to the European Court of Appeal with our petition on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014, and won; they have not.

They ruled that the British government should apologise immediately and look to reimburse us for the loss of redundancy pay and pension rights. I have the exact document here if anyone wants to read it for verification. That was over seven years ago and, to be honest with you, nothing has been done nationally since. The CEC say it is a matter of finance, but it was not a matter of finance when the preceding General Secretary left with a big bung. Ours is only a little bung.

Congress, you might have thought what was I was saying was a bit nasty but we are looking at 38 years since this happened and we are looking at 12 years when I was on the CEC and at virtually every meeting and every meeting of the Political European and International I asked for one of our sponsored MPs to put forward a motion at Prime Minister's Question Time, 12 years I was trying, and it did not happen. I was told at one time, "It's a lottery." I said, "Well, stuff the box," but it still never happened.

Congress, I urge you to support this composite motion and move forward for the sake of not only those who are still fighting but those who are deceased. I move.

*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ed. GMB Scotland.

HAILEY MAXWELL (GMB Scotland): GMB Scotland support this motion to exonerate the 37 Cammell Laird Shipyard Workers, not only would this serve as a mark of justice for the past but to signify resistance for the present and the future. The imprisonment of the Cammell Laird 37 took place during an era of focused violence against working class organisations through arrest, intimidation, strike breaking, blacklisting, and despicable police surveillance.

Political policing of industrial action is a concern today. Last year police unlawfully arrested a trade union official and a lawyer at the University of London Medical School and just last month four trade union officials were arrested during industrial action, including three of our own GMB officials, during the Biffa cleansing dispute. The Cammell Laird 37 were arrested and imprisoned as category one prisoners for trying to protect their jobs. When the company, Cammell Laird, killed a worker through negligent Health and Safety practices in 2000 they received a monetary fine. The Home Secretary's Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill in combination with anti-trade union laws, legitimised and legalised the policing of those taking part in industrial action and their supporters.

Congress, support the motion to quash the convictions of the Cammell Laird 37, to release the information relating to their arrest, and campaign for a public inquiry to send a message that we will allow no comrades to be prosecuted and penalised for defending their livelihoods through industrial action, and that the arrest and sacrifices our union members have made on behalf of our members will not be forgotten. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Hailey. Southern as well to speak.

MURRAY ROBINSON (Southern): First-time delegate. (*Applause*) Speaking in support of Composite 14. The history of work in this country is littered with injustice and scandal. This can be seen with the abhorrent imprisonment of the 37 brave workers at Cammell Laird. The law and the criminal justice system should act in the interests of the population and not be used against trade union members fighting for their basic rights.

Cammell Laird is an appalling example of how the interests of the employers and the political interests of an anti-union government can be imposed by the criminal justice system. GMB must continue to challenge this misuse of power. We must never forget the brave Cammell Laird workers penalised for defending their right to work. They lost their liberty as well as their redundancy and pension rights. We must continue to fight for justice for all of them. GMB members can be reassured that our union will never forget this injustice and will continue to campaign for the conviction to be quashed and for a full independent judicial review. Congress, I support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Murray. Mover of Motion 218, please.

**HUMAN RIGHTS ACT  
MOTION 218  
218. HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

This Congress notes the founding statement of “Protect Human Rights and Judicial Review” at <https://humanrightsact.org.uk/>

While every system could be improved and protecting rights and freedoms for all is a balancing act, our Human Rights Act is a proportionate and well-drafted protection for the fundamental liberties and responsibilities of everyone in this country.

The Act guarantees the rights to free speech and expression, to life, to liberty, to security, to privacy, to assembly, and to freedom of religion or belief. It prohibits torture and guarantees fair trials and the rule of law.

Judicial review is an indispensable mechanism for individuals to assert those rights and freedoms against the power of the state.

Congress resolves to sign this statement as a supporting organisation and instructs the CEC to sign the document.

## **LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH**

### **London Region**

*(Referred)*

ZAHIDA ABBAS-NOORI (London): President, Congress, this is a response to the Tory Party’s long-term aim to weaken workers’ and citizen’s rights and our ability to enforce them in the courts. It is important that the Government has actually gone to the point of issuing a consultation proposing multiple ways in which the Labour’s Human Rights Act would be weakened that Congress made a statement. Human rights in the UK were defended by two laws which were implemented by two treaties, the European Human Rights Act implementing the Lisbon Treaty and the Human Rights Act implementing the European Convention on Human Rights. Congress, Brexit has removed our access to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the EU courts which could issue binding rulings, which the Tories have not after the European Convention on Human Rights, such a shame. Congress, London Region made a submission to the consultation concentrating on defending employment rights and equality of the position taken by the public service. Most of the UK’s limited number of adverse rulings have been related to the MOD issues, either court or prisons, which is odd since the MOD hold the compliance duty on the EC, and the EC Human Rights Act is all we have left now. Congress, we have a strong policy. Let’s tell the world by endorsing this statement. The CEC has asked us to refer to allow them to make due diligence, and we agree. Congress, I strongly believe as a GMB activist for over 30 years the GMB always stands for fairness, justice, and for the workers and human rights. I ask you to support these principles. Congress I move.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Zahida. A seconder?

GEORGE EKONTANG (London): First-time delegate. *(Applause)* While I agree with my comrade on all what she said, the human right is a fundamental right to every individual in the world and in every place, not just in the workplace but in their personal life. The Tory Government in its wisdom is abusing and reducing human

rights in this country through the policies they are implementing but not just that they are using it around the world to bolster that negligence in the campaign for Brexit. So in supporting this motion I ask Congress to take cognisance of that. I support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, George. The mover of Motion 219, please.

## **CAMPAIGN TO RESTORE LEGAL AID**

### **MOTION 219**

#### **219. CAMPAIGN TO RESTORE LEGAL AID**

This Congress notes the persistent restriction of legal aid over the last twenty years, reducing eligibility, and costs such that people are denied access to legal representation and lawyers cannot afford to represent prospective clients.

Congress notes that this will deny many of our members the right to justice and many of our lawyer members a living.

Congress believes that access to justice is a fundamental human right.

Congress instructs the CEC to work with other organisations to create an effective campaign to restore Legal Aid to ensure everyone has access to justice to pursue their rights against employers, councils and the Government.

Congress instructs the CEC to approach the Law Centre Network to develop a joint action plan and to report on progress at our next Congress.

Congress instructs the CEC and the political department to liaise with the Parliamentary Labour Party GMB Group, and the Labour shadow front bench to plan and execute a campaign in Parliament to further these aims and for the next Labour Government to adopt appropriate reforms.

## **LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH**

### **London Region**

(*Referred*)

DAVID LEVY (London): While we have policy on the restoration of Legal Aid, little seems to be done. It is an essential human right and impacts on our members in terms of access to justice and in the case of our many lawyer members, members of our branch, the ability to make a living, and also impacts the members I represent working for the Legal Aid Agency.

One of the things we need to consider is criminal defence lawyers are not well paid since the vast majority of their income comes from Legal Aid, which is capped, and not capped at a particularly high fee rate either. I suggest you have a look at *The Secret Barrister* book. The right to defence, free if necessary, is a human right enshrined in Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Without Legal Aid this becomes unavailable. The Tories have restricted the nature of cases for which Legal Aid is available and reduced the rates at which it is paid, which is one of the reasons why the Bar Association is organising action.

I am pleased the CEC is sympathetic to our motion and actually the Bar Association is probably the central organisation around which campaigning work involving pseudo industrial action – I am not quite sure of the regulatory position they are in as to whether we should call it industrial action or not – they are on various forms of disruptive action to bring home to the Government that the cuts in Legal Aid are damaging people’s human rights, damaging access to justice.

We did not select the Law Centre Network out of a hat. It is a joint association of law centres which are at the sharp end of the cuts and the impact they have on people, providing where possible free services to defend people when needed and assert their rights when needed. I also believe they have an appetite to do something. The campaign requires broad support of citizens, lawyers, and judges, but judges alone will not make a difference. Again, as I say, I congratulate the Bar Association in its campaign to rectify this wrong.

Of course, the CEC has asked for referral since we propose working with another organisation. I hope next year they will consider support with qualification in these circumstances to allow Congress to determine direction and policy and for the due diligence to follow the Congress mandate.

Given the choice between referral and opposition, we will accept referral and hope the CEC will do better on action referred motions than they did last year, where 79% have not been reported upon. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Secunder?

VAUGHAN THOMAS (London): President, Congress, I am a welfare rights case worker and my job was funded by Legal Aid until our lords and masters in Westminster decided to abolish Legal Aid for welfare benefits. I was made redundant then along with six other welfare rights workers.

I did see a small article in a newspaper some time before that, that the Tory Coalition Government was considering this but representation before a court and a tribunal is a fundamental right, like the NHS, you just would not get rid of it, would you, really? People I represent at tribunals often have mental health problems, learning difficulties, but the right, of course, extends to everyone. The Tory LibDem Coalition wanted to cut welfare so I suppose it was to be expected people like me would be taken out and shot, metaphorically speaking. Welfare rights workers were at the top of the Government’s list along with badgers to be culled.

Congress, the collective benefit gains of all my clients in one year was about £380,000 and I was just one of seven welfare rights workers. It justified my job. This money was not paid into PEPs, ISAs, offshore bank accounts, it was spent in local retail outlets, a win-win for those in poverty and local communities.

These Legal Aid cuts stand in stark contrast to the new court for oligarchs to argue over their ill-gotten gains siphoned off from ordinary working people wherever they are in the world. Congress, a right to representation is still a legal right and we need Legal Aid reinstated. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Are there any delegates wishing to speak in opposition to any of these motions? No? Can I ask John Dolan to respond on behalf of the CEC.

JOHN DOLAN (CEC): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Composite 14 and Motions 218 and 219. The CEC is asking for these motions to be referred. Composite 14, the CEC continues to support the Cammell Laird 37 campaign, Fight for Justice and Truth, and an apology from the Government with compensation for the brutal and inhumane treatment workers faced taking strike action in 1984. In recent years the GMB action has secured support for the campaign in Labour Party election manifestos and questions in parliament. The GMB has demanded that the Government commits to a proper inquiry and publishes what information it holds or has access to for all. The composite proposes further areas of action for the union to explore. Therefore, the CEC is asking for this to be referred so that we can consider these requests further, particularly for the judicial review in light of the Shrewsbury 24 campaign's recent success. This will need discussions with the campaign and North West and Irish Region, and will need to be guided by the legal advice and assessment of resources we have available.

Congress, Motion 218, the CEC is asking Motion 218 to be referred to ensure that other values truly align with the Human Rights Act before becoming signatories and whether doing so comes with any further commitments.

The CEC wishes to refer Motion 219 on the point of approaching the Law Centre Network regarding a campaign to restore Legal Aid. Congress 2021 agreed to organise members to join the judiciary as part of this campaign and a GMB branch for judges has been established. Therefore, the CEC would wish to consult with those members about the Law Centre Network involvement.

Therefore, the CEC is asking for Composite 14, Motion 218, and Motion 219, to be referred. Congress, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: (*Off-mike comments*) Not to the CEC Statement, Ed, because you have already had the CEC – No, you have already had the CEC – Sorry? But you don't get the right of reply to a CEC Statement. Sorry. Does North West & Irish Region agree to refer Composite 14? (*Not agreed*) You understand that means we have to oppose the composite. (*Off-mike comments*)

Can I just ask again, knowing that we are going to oppose, the CEC will have to oppose it, does North West & Irish Region agree to refer Composite 14? (*Not agreed*) No. Okay, that is fine. Does GMB Scotland agree to refer Composite 14? I have to ask each region that has put in to this composite, and therefore each region does have a say as to what – if one region opposes it, then it will be opposed. If one region does not agree to refer it will be opposed. I am still asking the other regions. Does GMB Scotland agree to refer? (*Not agreed*) Does Southern Region agree to refer? (*Not agreed*) Let me do the other two. Does London Region agree to refer Motion 218? (*Agreed*) Yes. Does London Region agree to refer Motion 219? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Therefore we do not take a vote on those. Because the regions are not agreeing to refer back, I do have to take a vote on Composite 14. The CEC is asking you to

oppose. All those in favour of Composite 14 please show. All those against? That is carried. (*Cheers/Applause*) And that is democracy!

*Motion 218 was REFERRED*

*Motion 219 was REFERRED*

*Composite Motion 14 was CARRIED.*

## **TYEHIMBA NOSAKHERE, GMB NATIONAL RACE ORGANISER, ADDRESS TO CONGRESS**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, you heard earlier this week that the appointment of a National Race Organiser fulfils a key recommendation of the Dr. Elizabeth Henry Report and represents an important moment for the resourcing of equalities campaigning at GMB. Ty Nosakhere has now been appointed to that role. Ty has made an invaluable contribution through his region, Midland and East Coast, and nationally as a member of the Taskforce. Congress, I cannot tell you how delighted I am to introduce Ty to say a few words, and the key note there is “few words”! Ty. (*Applause*)

TY NOSAKHERE: Thank you. President, Congress, Ty Nosakhere, National Race Organiser. (*Applause*) I thought that this day would never come and it came and now I have to try and find some words to describe how I feel and what we should do.

Let me just say this first. It is a massive, massive accomplishment for me personally to be able to stand here in front of you as a black person that has strived to ensure that this union is the best that it can be. In everything that we do I have strived to ensure that I have made GMB proud and to be trusted with this position, to be trusted to make the change that we need to make to ensure that we continue to be the best and that we improve and be better is a massive and huge honour for me personally. But I did not get here on my own. I did not. There are people here who know that without them I would not be here. You know. And if I had more than two minutes I would be able to thank you all for supporting me over many years.

For those members who know how much they have supported me, those members of the CEC, those members of the Taskforce, those members of the National Race Network who have tirelessly listened to my moans and my groans, and to some of my advice as well over the years, I cannot thank you enough for supporting me and continuing to support me in this role. (*Applause*)

Brothers and sisters of colour, I see you, I hear you, and I feel you. Know this, I will always see you, hear you, and feel you. To my white officers, members, and activists, I see you, I hear you, and I feel you too. Yes. (*Applause*)

We must and we will progress the advancement of our black, Asian, and minority ethnic members as members, activists, representatives, and staff, in this organisation. We will. Yes. (*Applause*)

But we do nothing if we do not do something for everyone, for everybody, by strengthening and enhancing those black, Asian, and minority ethnic representatives and members who are already making a difference, already making a difference, who

are brave enough, courageous enough to bring that fight in workplaces to the actual employer. Those people are already making a difference and need to be acknowledged, need to be valued, and need to be respected, and helped and supported in making that difference, and we will do that for you because it is important that we do that and we do it now.

In doing so we have to ensure that our white counterparts are able with confidence to challenge racism wherever they see it. (*Applause*) No employer, no employer, no employer, will divide us on race. No employer. When we stand together, when we stand as strong as we can be because our black, Asian, and minority ethnic members are recognised, valued, supported, and respected, when we stand with our white family we know that we are unbeatable. We know that the employer cannot benefit from any division. We know that the colour they see is black and orange, the colour of unity, the colour of progression, the colour of hope - (*Applause*) - that unites us all. And we know that we can talk, we know this and we must continue to talk, and we must continue to have safe spaces to talk, but we must act, and with the blessing that I have been given in terms of this position we will turn our pain into progression, we will move forward so that we are an unstoppable force within the workplace, we will make the changes that are necessary so that they can see through our campaigns on the issues that matter, on the issues that make a difference, on the issues that bring back pride, that bring back dignity to the workplace so that every individual feels that they are valued, so that the colour of your skin is not a barrier to progress, the colour of your skin does not make your pain less, that the colour of your skin is something that you take with you with a pride that you can hold your head up and stand with all our GMB members and feel the power of collective force. It only happens when we work together, only when we work together.

So, I say to you this, as much as I have arrived the work begins now. I need you, black, Asian, minority ethnic workers, I need you to help me make that difference. My white colleagues, those of you from the Midlands & East Coast Region who have made me what I am today in terms of a trade unionist because I knew nothing, 23 years ago when I came I knew nothing, and in fact everything that I know in terms of trade unionism I learned in that position as a Regional Officer, but my white colleagues I need you to be able to be brave enough, to be courageous enough, to accept when you do not know, to accept when you are not confident enough, so that we, those of us with limited experience can help you to be able to be as strong as you can be because there should be no weakness when we face the employer, we just need that collective strength, the collective respect, the collective dignity which makes us a force that is unstoppable in the workplace.

You know I could talk for hours. They won't let me. Let me finish with this. This has been a challenging year for me. Some of you will know I lost my dear mother this year. My mother, a strong, powerful, black woman, she taught me many, many things, but the one thing that I want to share with you today that she taught me that is important for all of you, she taught me to be proud of my blackness. She taught me to love myself. But she taught me to do that without hating any other colour and without hating anybody else. (*Applause*)

If we all can do that, if we all can do that we have a bright future, it is black and orange. Thank you. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Follow that, General Secretary. (*Applause*)

## **THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we now move on to the General Secretary's Report. It gives me great pleasure to call on our General Secretary and Treasurer, Gary Smith, to move the General Secretary's Report and address Congress. (*Applause*)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Congress, President, Vice President, I have to compose myself after that. Gary Smith, GMB General Secretary and Treasurer, moving the General Secretary's Report, and I thank you very much for your contributions this week and for your welcome and, Ty, absolutely incredible, what a moment for us as a union.

Congress, it remains the honour of my life to stand here today as your GMB General Secretary. The 16-year old gas apprentice who joined GMB on his first day at work would never have imagined that one day I would be here leading our beloved union and working with such talented committed people to make work better for our half a million members. Congress, it is funny and is really strange being here because as a young militant activist in this union they were always trying to throw me out of the organisation and we have gone from exit door, I guess, to leader's office, and that really has been some journey.

Now, you meet a lot of new people when you get elected into this job. The day I was elected I went for a few drams just supporting Brendan and the team and the Scottish manufacturing industry and whiskey, and the phone rings off the hook right from the get-go, folk you have never heard of all of a sudden want to be your friend and they want to be our friend in the GMB. I am not naïve, and I know what matters, and I will never ever forget where I came from and my GMB family. (*Applause*)

Eddie, let me say to you about Cammell Laird, and all those victimised workers, you have my absolute commitment that I will do everything in my power as General Secretary to support you and the rest of the members at Cammell Laird. (*Applause*)

I want to mention a true and dear friend to me and so many of us in this room, a friend who is no longer with us. Since we last met we lost Cathy Murphy, a CEC member, CEC stalwart, a fantastic and proud rep in Asda stores and the first woman to win the Eleanor Marx Award. Congress, I miss Cathy, I miss her so much, and I wish she was here with us today. (*Applause*)

It is an incredible privilege to have so many friends in this room, comrades I worked with and campaigned and organised alongside for most of my adult life. Congress, the last couple of years have been really tough. We faced difficult external and internal challenges as human beings and GMB people. Now we are back together, it is great to see everyone making the most of this opportunity to meet, debate, argue, but most of all do what we can to build a union that is truly befitting of our members.

This week we are renewing our bonds of solidarity, recommitting to seizing a moment to reenergise our fight for the rewards our members so richly deserve. Nobody will

do this for us. There will be no political saviours. It is up to us, Congress, to make work better. *(Applause)*

Congress, I do want to pay a huge tribute to our wonderful National President, Barbara Plant. Barbara, you are the shining light of all that is good about this union, fairness, justice, and decency, and I absolutely commend you. *(Applause)*

A huge thank you, of course, to our rock, the Vice President, Malcolm. You are always so dependable, comrade, and you are a huge support to me personally. *(Applause)* I look forward to working with you, I really look forward to working with you for years to come.

Above all, I want to say a huge thank you to each and every one of you in this hall today for everything you do, day in, day out, on behalf of this union. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Now, the last time we came to Harrogate for our Congress was 1934. I feel quite passionate about this. Will Thorne, it was his last Congress. Many of you know Will was gas worker. It is his history and the principles that he stood for, his values, and his commitment, which will never ever be forgotten in this union. He alone with so many others represented the very best of our past and the values and achievements is what continues to inspire us today. The drive for better was a consistent theme for our early pioneers. Refusing to take no for an answer, demanding the best for our members, destroying barriers that held back working class people, and it is this same relentless spirit which is as relevant today as in the childhood of our great union.

It is this that has motivated us as we faced into the difficult challenges of our recent past because the last few years have been tough. With bad behaviour, poor practices and cultures, a disregard for our members' money, our union has been through a dark and difficult period, but we have not hidden from those failures, we have tackled them head-on, together we are unapologetically honest about what needs to be done to get better.

This has already delivered some landmark results for us as an organisation: a ground-breaking sexual harassment policy, new policies and procedures on declarations of interest, on conflicts of interest, and on credit card spending. We have and are facing honestly into anti-Semitism and racism in our own union. I am so proud that 20 plus years after the Henry Report we have appointed this wonderful man, Ty, as our new first National Race Officer. *(Applause)*

Of course, I am joined on the platform as well with my other dear comrades, Rhea, who along with Megan, is working on and leading our ground-breaking Women's Campaign Unit. *(Applause)*

Our union is in a much better place now but the reality is and the truth is that we need to remain vigilant and it is the appetite for better that will ensure we never again return to those bad times. It also drives our desire for a transformed world of work where our members are rewarded for their true value and I just wish the ambition was served by our government and so many at the top of the nation's businesses, but no,

their response to the events of the last couple of years show that once again it is up to us to get the justice our members deserve.

The pandemic was a watershed moment for the way we work, the pain and suffering, the heart-breaking loss, the loneliness and isolation, so many people suffered so much, and it was also a time of incredible heroism, where everyday acts of courage lifted the nation because like millions of others GMB members everywhere kept going into work again and again, often at real personal risk, they did that so food could be supplied, the shelves could be stocked, the old and vulnerable were cared for, and that the lights were kept on. Every Thursday across the nation people came out in the streets and the applause rang out for those super heroes, our super heroes who did not wear a cape, the heroes who saved the day for us. Congress, they should be rewarded with a new settlement. No longer should they be treated as second class employees without decent pay, without proper pensions, and security at work, it really was time for a better and fairer deal, but any promise about a new deal has been broken. The Prime Minister who clapped for the cameras now tells us that working people have to practice wage restraint. The bosses who put the rainbows on their company logos now say no to proper pay for the workers. Our country was promised better but we in truth are being offered worse.

Congress, our members, we, us, together have been utterly betrayed by this Tory government. (*Applause*) It is no wonder the people are angry and they are turning their anger into action. I have been so inspired by some of those clips. What you see is in the four corners of the UK, and in Ireland, our members coming together, our members saying enough is enough, we want justice, we want respect, we want better, and together we are going to get it. (*Applause*)

Everywhere you look our union is campaigning: refuse workers are balloting and striking to get the pay they deserve, in Birmingham, in Manchester, in Sheffield, and many more places, our members have stood up and asserted their power. I want to pay particular tribute to our members in Biffa, working for Biffa in Wealden Council down in the south coast, I used to work down there myself as a young officer. Those low paid workers at Biffa served their community with pride and honour during the pandemic doing jobs that you cannot do on Zoom, collecting bins, they were in work day in, day out, and the reward, poverty pay. After six, seven, or is it eight weeks, of strike action my message to them is absolutely clear, your solidarity, your commitment, is an inspiration and this union has been and will be with you all the way. (*Applause*)

Congress, actually, as I was coming on I just got the incredible news that we have won the dispute and our members today have voted to accept up to 26% extra per hour. (*Applause*) Where is Nicky Palermo? Is she here? Come up here. I am sorry, Congress, I know it is late but this is special. Nicky is a delegate in Southern Region, she is a teaching assistant in schools and convenor for East Sussex, and every morning she has been on the picket line with the Biffa workers before she went to her own day job. I just want to pay tribute to you, Nicky, and say thank you so much. Thank you. (*Applause*)

This is what our Congress is about. This is what our union is about, the ordinary men and women who make this union. In Birmingham, the battle to make work better is

raging, Birmingham Council is another in a long shameful line of local authorities who fail to meet their obligations on equal pay. It is staggering, and it is disgusting, that 50 years on since the Equal Pay Act women are still being paid less than men. Working with our new Women's Campaign Unit, the region is taking the fight to the council and I know they have been inspired in Birmingham by the fight that is being put up by their sisters and brothers in Glasgow, and in Birmingham we are seeing real progress and we are getting non-union members joining the union as we take on the fight for equal pay. The fight for equal pay is not just a fight for women, it is a fight for all of us and in Birmingham it is a fight that we are winning. *(Applause)*

Congress, let this ring out to every employer we deal with, and every council in this country, whatever political shade they happen to be, if you do not pay our members properly, if they do not have pay justice, GMB is coming for you. *(Applause)*

It is an absolutely intolerable fact that low paid jobs in our country are dominated by women. So when we fight for better pay it can often deliver huge benefits for our women members. You know, when mostly male GMB refuse and street cleaning members went on strike in Brighton recently, I used to look after them many years ago, I think of them always very fondly, but they were in dispute just last year and the improvements that they achieved for grade one and grade two workers made a massive difference to the lowest paid across the whole council, many of them of the lowest paid were women workers. Our collective action lifted everyone up, women and men.

In Asda, our fantastic campaign for retail staff pushed the new bosses of that company into historic concessions on pay. Congress, I would say this to you, to all our members and reps in Asda, you stuck with us and I am delighted that we are now delivering with you the types of pay and conditions you deserve. *(Applause)*

Panasonic in Cardiff, GMB stood strong, took landmark industrial action, and the company was forced to concede 5.5% and a £300 bonus. To my comrades in Wales and South West, Ruth, what a team you have, you are fantastic and we absolutely salute the wonderful work that you are doing. *(Applause)*

In Derby, GMB members at Synergy Laundry Services, they took successful action, they fought back and they campaigned against the emerging enemy of working people everywhere, fire and re-hire. Many of our members in Synergy do not have English as their first language and we as a union did do what we do best, we organised, campaigned, we fought, and our members at Synergy have won. That was an astonishing victory and it is a victory that makes work better. *(Applause)*

Of course, it would be remiss of me not to talk about those on this platform. I mentioned my comrades in Scotland. The iconic Glasgow women strike of 2018, we want to see more of them by the way, all across this country, but that dispute shook the council and the Scottish government and it forced them to confront years of pay discrimination. Once again, Shona and the team have been fighting and leading the way to force politicians in Glasgow to face up to their equal pay responsibilities. Now across Scotland we are keeping up the pressure by balloting for strike action from all our local government members and I salute you, each and every one of you for the action we may have to take.

It will be, I think, for those of you who know him, Chris Mitchell and “Fudgy the Rat”, against the Scottish government. I will tell you what, I know where our money is on! (*Applause*)

The same story of our members making work better is happening everywhere, countless campaigns are under way and there is a vibrancy and vigour coming into our union now but, Congress, we have to go further. The times we live in demand more from us and the cost-of-living crisis means, which is a catastrophe as we know and have heard so much about this week for our members, it is going to force us to look and focus, and evaluate, every penny we spend in the same way our members are having to do. We need to show and demonstrate that this union is the heart of our members’ working lives, campaigning on issues that matter to them, or we risk becoming vulnerable to the Netflix effect where subscriptions are cancelled in order to meet bills for heating and eating. We need to demonstrate that the relationship between our members and their union is much more than a transactional one. We are not about and never have been about just providing a service for money paid. We are a 500,000 strong family with enduring emotional bonds of belonging, loyalty, care, and commitment. We cannot and we must not take our family for granted. We need to show our members through constant campaigning and activity that we understand their struggles, and together we can make lives better.

Congress, it is our duty to demonstrate in the clearest possible terms that we understand the financial pain that our members are suffering by making membership as affordable as we possibly can. As prices go up everywhere our members are struggling and suffering to meet the basic necessities of life. GMB London this week revealed that one-in-three teaching assistants are now using food banks in the capital. Our members need our help, Congress, and this means taking the right decisions on items like advance commissions because that is what enables our union to be the financial helping hand our members need in their time of need. That is what being on the side of workers and members means. It is about delivering an affordable union membership. That is what better looks like for us as a union. (*Applause*)

As you walk around Congress you see stories of incredible GMB people who over time made work better for their fellow workers. They are our history and their struggles achieve so much and laid the foundations for what we have in this union today, they are the best of us and they inspire our future, and it now falls on us, every one in this union, every one who cares about our GMB family to summon the same strength and commitment to write the next glorious chapter in our great union’s story.

Congress, let’s remember this as we go through this week, the GMB members who were on the front line every single day in this pandemic when many of them were forced to wear bin-bags to try and protect themselves and the people they cared for. Let that sink in: bin-bags for protection against Covid; in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and in one of the richest countries in the world, bin-bags, a perfect symbol of this Government’s incompetence. Now, of course, we know after all the months, all the cover-ups, all the hiding of facts, all the misleading of Parliament, we know what the Tories were up to, Boris Johnson, breaking the law with his mates, partying the night away because they think it is one rule for them and one rule for the rest of us.

I said during the election we are not a political party and we are never going to be obsessed by internal Labour Party politics, but I do recognise, Congress, that we have an enduring relationship with the Labour Party. Let me say this. It is not my job to mark Keir Starmer's report card but Labour can and must be bolder and a symbolic and powerful start would be to committing to paying care workers £15 an hour.

*(Applause)* Right now many care workers are getting pennies above the minimum wage and the Tories would keep it that way, and Labour has a chance to show it really does want to create and build a new normal. So, come on, Keir, show the public you want better too and back the *Fight for Fifteen* and give care workers the pay that they deserve. *(Applause)* The £15 just has to be one part of the new settlement, a new settlement that puts trade unions at the heart of a better future and central to this is the right to organise because we know collective bargaining is the surest way to shift the dial for working people.

Congress, it is said in politics that power is never given, it must be taken, and the proud history of GMB shows that time and time again a better world at work must be fought for. The heroes of our great union are guiding lights, they are the best of our past and their battles show that progress has never been given to us on a plate and it never will. We have to fight every day, we have to campaign, we have to organise every inch of the way for justice at work and that is where we come alive in the burning heat of struggle. *(Applause)*

Congress, let's resolve to channel the same energy and commitment into our search for better, a better union that always puts our members first, a better union that is on the front foot in workplaces everywhere, a better union that fight by fight, win by win, builds a better and fairer world. Congress, that is the opportunity we have. No one will do it for us. It is in our hands. It is up to us. We are GMB. When we come together nothing can stop us. Congress, let's seize the moment. Let's make work better. Thank you. I move. *(Standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. What a way to end the day with two rousing speeches, first Ty and then Gary. What a way to end. We have gone slightly over time but obviously that was well worth it. I now do have to move to a vote on the General Secretary's Report to Congress. If anybody has questions on the General Secretary's Report, please can they be submitted in writing by the regional delegation leads, via the Congress Office email address, and then this will ensure a full reply can be given.

Let me take the vote on the General Secretary's Report to Congress. All those in favour please show. Thank you. Anyone against? Thank you.

*The General Secretary's Report to Congress was ADOPTED.*

THE PRESIDENT: That concludes our third day of business. Have a really good evening and I look forward to seeing you back here for a prompt 9.30 start tomorrow morning. Thank you.

*Congress adjourned.*

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