

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, 12th June 2022
Monday, 13th June 2022
Tuesday, 14th June 2022
Wednesday, 15th June 2022
and
Thursday, 16th June 2022.**

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**PROCEEDINGS
DAY 2
(Monday, 13th June 2022)**

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SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY, 13TH JUNE 2022

MORNING SESSION

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Delegates, can I call Congress to order, please. Take your seats. Thank you. I hope you all enjoyed yourselves last night wherever you spent the evening. It was lovely to see so many of you at the President and Vice President Welcome Event. As I said yesterday, Congress is a special time, it is a time for friendship, and Malcolm and I were delighted to see so many people, so many smiling and happy faces, so thank you. I have to thank the GMB staff for organising that event. *(Applause)* If I start naming names I know I will leave somebody out, but they put a lot of work into that, and also the venue staff at the bar and on security.

Now it is time for business and joining us this morning on the top table is Megan Fisher and Rhea Wolfson, who head up the Women's Campaign Unit at National Office, and we will later be joined by Rachel Harrison, the National Officer for the Public Services Section. This afternoon we will be joined after lunch by Rachel Reeves, MP and Shadow Chancellor, for a talk and a Q&A session. That is not one to miss.

Also, apparently, it is the birthday of Phil, of T5, so a very happy birthday today, and I am sure Congress wishes you one as well. I hope you get to enjoy yourself today. I know there are some delegates whose birthday it is throughout the week so thank you for spending your birthday with us and I hope it makes it a memorable one for you.

Congress, just to let you know we may be in a position to bring motions forward into this session from the afternoon but I will advise you in good time if we do; just be aware that if you are on the agenda in the afternoon you might want to make sure that you are prepared.

Congress, it is my pleasure to announce that selected by North West & Irish Region the recipients of the Congress 2022 Local Gift of £2,000 are:

The Lilac Centre, Whiston & St. Helen's Hospitals and
Widnes Moorfield Amateur Rugby League Club.

This is in memory of Terry Mellor, a Senior Organiser in the region, who very sadly passed away in November 2021.

A presentation will be made in the Region for the charities following Congress this year. There is not a cheque presented at Congress, but National Office and the other regions will send their contributions to North West & Irish Region for presentation to be made by them, as I say, a total of £2,000. *(Applause)*

CEC SPECIAL REPORT: WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN UNIT

Our first item is the CEC Special Report, Women's Campaign Unit, and can I ask that all delegates (because we will have the report and then will ask regions) who will be speaking on behalf of their region please make yourself ready. I shall be calling regions up in the reverse alphabetical order this time so, Yorkshire, it is your turn to go first, and please all make sure delegates are ready for the next item of business, too. Our CEC members will be moving and seconding the report, so can I ask Amanda Burley to move the report, please.

CONGRESS 2022 CEC SPECIAL REPORT ON THE WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN UNIT

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Report Summary

- GMB is committing to a renewed focus on making work better for women
- The Women's Campaign Unit has been established to spearhead campaigning over Equal Pay and working conditions for women
- Women's work is made better through focused collective campaigning in the workplace
- Positive change has always been made by the campaigns of women trade unionists
- Our Equal Pay campaigns seek to rectify historic injustices and providing long lasting institutional knowledge on the law and how we campaign
- The negative health conditions and injuries that women sustain at work are under reported and under compensated
- The Care Sector is a prime example of where women hold the majority of roles yet remains a poorly paid and undervalued workforce. Improving pay in the sector is a central priority for GMB.

Policy Commitments

- Building institutional knowledge of Equal Pay campaigns through the Women's Campaign Unit and our GMB activists
- Organising claims based on improving the long-term health of women in the workplace
- Build up our own research through member engagement on the conditions of workplaces which affect the health of women
- Health and safety training which includes specific training on IIRB to increase awareness of the benefit.
- Campaign for reform through Department of Work and Pensions (Scotland as an example of reform through SEIAC Bill).
- Adopting £15 per hour as the minimum demand for the Care Sector

Introduction

The work of the GMB Women's Campaign Unit will form a core part of the union's industrial work over the coming years. While it might be obvious to many, the CEC believes it is important that we set out why it is necessary for GMB to have dedicated resources to improve the working conditions of women.

GMB and the CEC recognise that;

- women are underpaid
- the work that women occupy in the majority is undervalued
- opportunities for women in the workplace can be held back because of poor policies
- women continue to carry out the majority of domestic duties in households and childcare
- the jobs that women occupy are normally the most at risk and insecure
- we must take an intersectional approach to our campaigning, and that equality is at the core of our work

- through dedicated organising and campaigning, women have secured historic and far-reaching changes to working conditions affecting legislative changes and new employment law

This report will highlight key figures around the gender pay gap and the problems with reporting in general, as well as other important facts about the state of the pay and working conditions of women.

GMB has, within our history, the foundations of the women's trade union movement. Without trade union organised women workers, there would be no Equal Pay Act. This report will explore the history of women campaigning for pay and conditions with a focus on the Matchstick Girls' Strike of 1888, the Chainmakers' Strike of 1910, the Grunwick Dispute of 1976, and the landmark Equal Pay case that GMWU (GMB) member Julie Hayward won against Cammell Laird in 1988.

With our renewed focus on equal pay, GMB has started making new history with GMB organising the largest equal pay strike in UK history (Glasgow 2018). The report will detail a range of recent and ongoing equal pay campaigns, including Glasgow.

The Women's Campaign Unit will be essential in developing the organising strategies around Equal Pay campaigns and improving the work of women.

We also have a responsibility to improve the conditions for women to work in industries which remain dominated by men.

GMB has been working within sectors such as engineering and construction to make its associated industries more accessible and sustainable for women to work in.

This report will also explore the underreporting of industrial injuries that women suffer from.

There is much work to be done on researching and recognising that injuries can be developed over time in workplaces that might not be as obviously hazardous, but do have detrimental effects on health.

Finally, this report will make the case for at least a £15 per hour wage for workers in the care sector. Following the campaign started by GMB Scotland in 2021 we will make the case to expand the campaign throughout the UK. The work of our members in the care sector is chronically undervalued, and we must be committed to making work better for the people who care for the most vulnerable in our society.

All the examples that this report will explore will show how GMB is approaching our responsibility for improving the work of women. The Women's Campaign Unit will draw on everything in this report, and no doubt more, in order drive the agenda.

Building on our history

The Matchstick Girls' Strike 1888

Women (and young girls) workers in the Bryant and May matchstick factory went out on strike in 1888. They suffered appalling working conditions; long hours, with little pay, and handling the incredibly dangerous white phosphorous which caused 'phossy jaw' – a type of bone cancer. Awareness and campaigning on the poor conditions was aided by the writings of Annie Besant through her publication, *The Link*. Bryant and May tried to force the workers to denounce the writings of Besant, and it was at this point the strike began. On the 5th July 1888, and after a sacking, 1400 matchstick women and girls went out on strike.

*"Well, it just went like tinder, one girl began, and the rest said, 'yes', so out we all went."*ⁱⁱ

After the walk out, and with facilitation of the London Trades Council, the Strike Committee were successful in having all their demands met by Bryant and May Directors. The Union of Women Match Makers was then founded and the first 468 members enrolled in August.

This strike holds so much importance to our union, as it is widely attributed to inspiring the actions of the Dockers' Strike not long after, and thus the founding our union. GMB has continued to honour the legacy of the women – these empowering women – with our affiliation to the Matchgirls Memorial, for which our President is a patron.

Mary Macarthur and the Chainmakers' Strike

On the 1st January 1921, the National Federation of Women Workers (NFWW) amalgamated with the National Union of General Workers, the day of Mary Macarthur's passing. Mary Macarthur's restless organising machinery saw the National Federation of Women Workers grow from 358,000 to 1,960,000 between 1914 and 1918, with average wages for women increasing by 50% in the same period.ⁱⁱⁱ

One of the defining campaigns of the NFWW was the Chainmakers Strike of 1910.

Cradley Heath in the Black Country became the epicentre of a women's movement that would set the course of history. In the 19th Century the Black Country was the heartland of the manufacturing of chains, with men working in factories producing heavy chains, and women forging smaller and lighter chains out of their homes.

Despite making the same product, and before the strike in 1910, women were paid one fifth of the average male wage.

These women were working in their back yards with makeshift furnaces, switching between wielding heavy hot metal, childcare and running a household. This was atomised and isolated work, of unorganised labour.

Despite the conditions that would naturally put barriers in place to organise, Macarthur and the NFWW were able to mobilise women workers to strike successfully for equal pay. In this time NFWW membership in Cradley Heath grew from 400 to 1,700.

The Grunwick Dispute

The Grunwick Strike of 1976 is an important dispute within GMB history, and the for the history of UK worker struggles. The workers, mostly South Asian women, faced poor treatment from their management at the Grunwick photo processing plant and worked in poor conditions, often being forced to work long hours at little notice.

The 1970s remained a time where work for black and Asian workers had little access to well paid, and unionised work. Many of these workers faced discrimination within the trade union movement, as well as from employers.

Yet, at Grunwick, 137 workers led by Jayaben Desai had the courage to join APEX (which amalgamated with GMB in 1989) and go out on strike. The dispute eventually garnered support from sister trade unions, such as the Union of Postal Workers who cut off services to and from the plant, and 20,000 people joined a march in support of the strikers.

This dispute showed not only the tenacity of the striking workers, but the solidarity and community they built in support of them.

Hayward v Cammell Laird 1988

GMB and its predecessor unions were at the forefront of the fight for equal pay legislation. The first equal pay claim was won by a GMWU member, Valerie Perry, in 1976.^{iv} And twelve years later, it was a GMBATU (GMB) member who fought the first successful equal pay for equal value claim under the amended Equal Pay Act.

Julie Hayward was a cook in the canteen at Cammell Laird shipyard in the North West, and argued that her work was of equal value to her male craft worker colleagues.

Ultimately this case was litigated through employment tribunal, and ACAS appointed investigators who conducted what many workers have experienced – a job evaluation. What was significant was the precedent it set for equal pay for equal value.

This case also highlighted an issue with the disparities between collective agreements for different workers within the same employer. While the craft workers (thermal insulators, joiners, painters) at Cammell Laird were covered by one agreement, workers like Julie Hayward were

on another which bargained for separate terms and conditions. In this case both sets of workers were in the same union.

It's essential that we are conscious of how our collective agreements might have disparities which are detrimental to the pay and conditions of women.

Engineering & Construction

With the example of *Hayward v Cammell Laird* in mind, it must be recognised that work has been ongoing to improve the conditions of work where women are employed in traditionally male roles. In the Engineering and Construction sector, we have been engaging with employers and developed a more diverse workforce on major infrastructure projects such as Hinkley Point C in Somerset and High Speed Rail 2.

While women can make up numbers in cleaning, catering, clerical and other white collar work in these particular industries, there are very few in well paid and importantly unionised jobs in the blue collar or industrial roles.

GMB recognises that there are significant barriers for women being able to enter this work, starting from a skills and experience gap at interview stage, to poor policies around maternity and flexible working, health and safety, and culture.

That culture also extends to our own internal representative structures, where we need to ensure that women are involved in GMB, and that our shop steward networks are inclusive.

Key figures; women's work today

The historical achievements have got us far, but the figures below show us what the present-day concerns are for women.

- Progress in eliminating the gender pay gap is slow, and the full-time pay gap actually rose slightly in 2021 (from 7 per cent to 7.9 per cent).
- Older women workers are significantly more likely to be underpaid compared to men, with the full-time gender pay gap standing at 12 per cent for women aged 40 or over.^v
- Women still earn 41 per cent less on average over a lifetime, according to the latest estimate.
- Gender pay gaps can present a misleading picture for individual employers. Submissions are not robustly checked and many are 'improbable,' and outsourcing excludes many low-paid women from the figures. Some employers have even reportedly set up new legal entities to disguise their pay gap figures.^{vi}
- Public sector workers are much more likely to be female - two thirds (64 per cent) of public sector workers are women.^{vii} Women are much more likely to have been affected by the public sector pay freezes and caps imposed since 2010.
- Women are also much more likely to work in undervalued and low wage occupations. Nine out of ten teaching assistants and eight out of ten care workers and home carers are women, according to official statistics.^{viii}
- Women have also been disproportionately affected by cuts to public service, the benefits freeze, and changes to the child benefit element under Universal Credit. The Women's Budget Group has said that 'aggressive and continuous period of austerity ... has been felt disproportionately by women, single-parents and low-income families more broadly.'^{ix}

- Three quarters of workers in roles most exposed to the risk of Covid-19 infection are women.^x
- Women were more likely to be furloughed with a loss of pay in 2021 (reversing the position in 2020).^{xi}
- Women are more likely to be employed on a zero hours contract (3.8 per cent of women workers compared to 2.6 per cent of men workers).^{xii}
- 7 out of 10 workers in occupations at the highest risk of automation are women.^{xiii}

Major recent and current GMB campaigns on Equal Pay

The following examples are campaigns that GMB members have been running across local councils and in ASDA. They offer us insight into the strategies our members have deployed, and the barriers they have faced in campaigning on Equal Pay.

Glasgow City Council developed their own pay and grading structure in 2007 called the Workforce Pay & Benefits Review (WPBR) which was underpinned by the WPBR job evaluation scheme. WPBR was found to be discriminatory and it was revealed that male dominated jobs were receiving more favourable terms and conditions such as inflated job evaluation scores, discriminatory payment protection practises and access to bonuses and additional payments schemes women were barred from. October 2018 saw the largest equal pay strike in UK history as thousands of low paid women took to the streets of Glasgow which ultimately resulted in the interim payments made in 2019. At the time of writing, GMB members remain in dispute while discrimination is ongoing in Glasgow City Council who have failed to implement an equality proof job evaluation scheme and pay and grading system.

Dundee City Council – In 2020, documents were uncovered detailing a very substantial and lucrative bonus scheme for ‘Craft Operatives’ in Dundee City Council. ‘Craft Operatives’ include jobs such as Bricklayers, Lift Engineers, Painters, Labourer and more. These male-dominated job roles have been awarded unjustified bonuses for years which female dominated jobs such as catering assistants, cleaners and care workers have not had access to. GMB Scotland launched the ‘Dundee Pay Justice’ Campaign in February 2021 seeking equal pay for members in Dundee City Council and for members in associated employers, Tayside Contracts and Leisure and Culture Dundee.

Birmingham City Council – In May 2021, GMB and other unions signed a ‘Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Birmingham City Council which was aimed at providing settlement payments for members with potential eligibility for ‘third generation’ equal pay claims. It later came to light that Birmingham City Council had misled the unions and had conceded that their Job Evaluation Schemes could not be relied on, and that male dominated Fleet and Waste job roles had likely been treated more favourably than female dominated job roles in the Council. In November 2021, GMB launched a pay justice campaign for Birmingham City Council members to challenge the settlement payments as we believe members claims are worth much more than the councils offer. To date, thousands of GMB members for submitted for equal pay claims and have joined the campaign for pay justice in Birmingham.

ASDA Equal Pay is a classic case of women’s work being undervalued with distribution being paid higher and with more favourable terms and conditions. Retail is traditionally seen as women’s work and not the ‘breadwinner’ income for households which holds no bearing on modern society. Access to stores over the years to organise has been much more restrictive than in distribution, and an inferior partnership agreement denying proper pay negotiations has meant that the wages of women have not kept up with the parts of the company with men in the

majority. This is the biggest equal pay case in the private sector. The private sector generally has a poor reputation for maintaining Job Evaluation schemes which are transparent throughout or having schemes exist at all. GMB has found that there is a distinct lack of gender neutral / equality proof Job Evaluation schemes in the private sector.

Organising for Equal Pay

Equal pay in GMB, and more widely in society, is a long and complex story. Throughout our history and as demonstrated in the 2009 CEC Special Report on Equal Pay, GMB have long campaigned for pay justice for women.

However, there have been times in the past where our actions have failed our members, and in this case, women, on low pay. These are workers who depend on GMB to help them fight against injustices as any great trade union should. Where we can't change the past, we can shape what we do now and in the future on Equal Pay.

In the years since 2009, we have organised a historical equal pay strike in Glasgow and have recovered millions in compensation for our members. We have also brought thousands of claims for retail workers in ASDA. One thing we must continue to do is holding employers to account over equal pay and recognise that equal pay is a journey not just one event or series of historical events.

As demonstrated in recent months and years, the fight for equal pay is not over and by some accounts may take another 200 years at the rate we are going⁶. A key element of pay justice and equal pay is the ongoing education and upskilling of our Organisers, Reps, and members as well as the industrial campaigning we must do to continually ensure that pay structures and job evaluation (JE) schemes remain fit for purpose.

It is now widely recognised that the pool of job evaluation experts with equal pay experience in the UK is diminishing¹. Within trade unions, Organisers and Reps with extensive equal pay experience are also retiring and with that much of their expertise is being lost.

A core feature of the Women's Campaign Unit is to bring together the experiences of Reps and Organisers and to prepare for future equal pay campaigns by not only developing training and resources but also to take on the fight where we find equal pay issues right now.

Rebuilding the core systemic knowledge and experiences of equal pay in GMB is key feature of future-proofing the union and our people for these challenges. It is important to note that not only do we need to rebuild knowledge but so be sure that our campaigns on equal pay are industrial at their heart, build the union and win for members.

How are we going to rebuild knowledge and experiences on equal pay?

Having easily accessible training for Organisers, Reps and members on what is equal pay is a sensible starting point for ensuring a baseline of knowledge within the union. Building on that baseline of knowledge, we start to look at some of the 'risky practices' that employers do which could indicate a potential equal pay issue⁴.

Risky practices can occur in any employer, public or private, and are warning signs that we should be looking further into the job evaluation and pay and grading systems. These include things such as a lack of transparency in either or both the job evaluation scheme and scores and the pay and grade system, bonuses that are unexplained or unjustified, job evaluation schemes and scores that haven't been updated in a long time, indefinite pay protection policies and many more⁴.

Another part of rebuilding our knowledge and experiences is looking critically at how we process equal pay claims internally and bringing our systems into the 21st century. The Women's Campaign Unit in GMB Scotland have developed an electronic system of take and processing equal pay claims, called a case management system (CMS) which has since been rolled out in other Regions. Continuing to build our expertise in taking on claims and processing

them rather than paying high solicitors' fees will need to be a feature of our equal pay campaigning in the future.

Equal pay law:

Litigation on equal pay in the UK is a long and costly process. Most equal pay claims take years, even decades, to work their way through the court systems and come with a high price tag. We know this all too well in GMB with high solicitor's fees and as demonstrated in the above campaigns, years of waiting for members.

While the union can and should do as much as possible to mitigate these challenges in the current climate as was reference with the case management system, we can also campaign for improvements in equal pay law that would allow faster and more affordable resolutions to equal pay claims.

In many cases, it is too expensive for individuals to pursue an equal pay claim on their own. Trade unions provide support to collective groups of women on pay justice but there is also a barrier to trade unions in supporting individuals on equal pay which we must address.

Changes in Equal Pay law could make fighting for equal pay more accessible for women across the UK. The Equality Act 2010 states that 'equal work' counts as 'work of equal value', 'work rated as equivalent' or 'like work'².

We face challenges in employers where the workforce is predominately women because there is a lack of male comparators. Low pay in these sectors is more likely a reflection of societies attitude towards women's work generally and sexist assumptions about the value of women's work¹.

The use of 'proxy' comparators in equal pay cases is one option to explore. That would mean that one group of female workers could compare themselves to a group of male workers in another similar larger workplace with a different employer. This legislation already exists in Canada where a recent ruling established that not only could the female group compare to a male group from another employer, but they also had to maintain pay equity and not let discrimination creep back in over time³.

Closing any loopholes or potential loopholes in equal pay law such as using fully funded arm's length organisations (ALEOs) to mitigate the risk of an equal pay claim should be seen as bad practice and discouraged by government but even further closing that loophole to allow workers to achieve pay justice would be a step in the right direction.

Public Sector Equality Duty:

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) contained within the Equality Act (2010) puts the onus on public bodies to ensure that they have due regard to the need to work to provide equal opportunities for all, eliminate unlawful discrimination, and foster good relationships between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it⁷. What is missing in much of how the PSED exists in the UK is the element of accountability.

In Scotland, the Equality and Human Rights Commission published a series of reports tracking Scottish Public Bodies compared to their duties under The Equality Act 2010 (specific duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012⁸. This requires public bodies to report on information related to the PSED such as equality outcomes and publishing statements on equal pay⁸.

In Wales, duties are set out under The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 which includes equality impact assessments (EIA), Strategic Equality Plans, pay differences, reporting arrangements and more. Crucially the duties in Wales also require the public sector to act upon gender pay differences⁸. The Welsh Government publishes annual reports on progress of outcomes in the Programme of Government and its statutory duties under the Equality Act (2010).

In Northern Ireland, the public sector equality duty lies in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998⁸ which places public bodies and higher education institutes (HEI) under obligation to

promote equality of opportunity between men and women, people of different religious beliefs, racial groups, ages, disability status and more⁹.

The PSED is not a solution to equal pay nor is it, in its current form, an effective tool for holding public sector bodies to account in most of the UK in most cases. While employers can be challenged under the PSED in the courts, the duty requires public authorities to think about how their decisions and policies impact those with protected characteristics, rather than forcing them to act and resolve issues of discrimination.

Funding:

The systematic underfunding of local government and therefore putting pressure on wage bills has ensured the underfunding of single status which has in turn created a huge barrier to low paid women in local government achieving pay justice (as described in more detail in the 2019 CEC Special Report on Local Government and Austerity). We must be clear that equal pay must be properly funded by central government for local authorities and the fat cats in business must foot the bill in the private sector. Without the proper resources, we leave the door open for cutting corners and potentially creating problems later on costing more money and importantly wasting time for those at the sharp end of the discrimination.

We know that women have been hit the hardest by austerity and with public sector workers more than 70% women, a public sector pay freeze is a pay freeze for women¹⁰.

Equal Pay in the private sector:

Much of the work done on equal pay has been in the public sector. The less talked about but likely most unequal areas of work are in the private sector. The landmark case in ASDA is a testament to equal pay in the private sector but we are really only scratching the surface. It is much less common to find analytical job evaluation schemes (or any JE scheme) and equality proof pay and grading systems in the private sector. It's likely a huge number of private sector employers display many if not all of the 'risky practices' we previously mentioned. In the private sector, it's common place to for companies to have a culture where discussing wages is 'not allowed' or frowned upon which clear leads to issues around pay transparency. Another common practice is advertising jobs without wage information so candidates are forced to negotiate wages once offered the job likely creating an unfair and unequal pay system from day 1⁶.

Often companies of more than 250 employees, which is the threshold for gender pay reporting requirements, are happy to claim they have no equal pay issues without any real evidence to back that claim up¹¹. At times they may boast about how many women are in the boardroom (still probably not a majority of the room) but what is overlooked is the value placed on women's predominately done by women which account for the other part of the Gender Pay Gap.

By increasing our knowledge and confidence around equal pay in the private and public sector, GMB can campaign and win for women members no matter where they work.

Women's Health and Safety: Industrial Injuries and Benefits

The CEC recognises more must be done to better understand the nature of women's work. Where it happens, how it can go wrong and why risk factors are often being ignored. When women are hurt by their employers' negligence, that often goes unchallenged either because of the complexity of the work, the unseen nature of the work or the lack of recognition of the risks involved.

The small number of claims made by women for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) does not mean that occupations women hold is not harmful or dangerous over time. It is more of an indication that there is less of an understanding of the hazards that women face throughout their working lives.

Statistics show that the percentage of women claiming IIDB is a tiny fraction of the total claimed. Startlingly in the quarter to December 2019 out of 2,430 cases, 2,300 (95%) were male and 140 (5%) were female. Looking at those statistics, we have to ask whether these are truly representative of the real numbers of long-term injuries women are developing from work. We know that women make up a substantial part of the economy in the care sector, cleaning, and factories yet the system of industrial benefits does not accurately reflect this. In the context of the IIDB and the role of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council there is a considerable gap in recognising the industrial injuries women sustain.

Caring responsibilities outside of work, or crucially poor Occupational Sick Pay policies (and in many cases a combination of both), can impact on recovery time from illness. Therefore, women can take longer to recover or develop complications. This impacts on job security and earning capacity and can lead to development of chronic illness and potentially early retirement.

Underinvestment by employers in women's health and safety has a significant and negative impact on the economy at large and money saved by an inability to claim IIDB, only puts a burden on other social security benefits and has other socio-economic effects which cost more long term.

Organising women workers and building power to challenge the health inequalities of women's work is core to the Women's Campaign Unit.

Background to The Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB)

- The Industrial Injuries Scheme is a no-fault scheme paid by the Department for Work and Pensions which is in place to support people who are disabled because of an accident at work or have one of a number of prescribed diseases which was caused by their work.
- The IIDB was introduced in 1948 with a focus on male dominated workforces especially agriculture and heavy industry.
- The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC) is the body that makes recommendations on which prescribed diseases the scheme covers
- The IIAC is made up of 23 people including academic experts, legal experts and 3 trade union representatives.
- The IIAC relies on research and representations brought to them and cannot initiate its own research into industrial injuries and diseases.

The scheme itself does not specifically exclude women but it is clear from the absence of cases that representations and evidence are not being brought forward to the IIAC to broaden the list of proscribed injuries and diseases.

Women make up a large part of the workforce in the care and domestic sectors and jobs involving repetitive work. Women in these parts of the economy suffer from musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) and yet the rates of benefits do not reflect this.

The fact is the settings in which long term damage is done to women workers is likely very relevant to their continued exclusion from the male dominated IIDB. On average, women are less likely to be injured in factories or ship yards, but in classrooms, care homes, individuals' homes and on the street.

Women's work is often perceived as unskilled or low value, and female dominated workplaces for example in the care sector, are not considered places where industrial injuries and diseases happen. This is a fundamental flaw which is reflected in the industrial injuries scheme.

Many factors contribute to the fact that only 5% of cases were brought by women. Publicity and knowledge of how to access the benefit play a role in these gendered outcomes but there are also three main reasons why when women apply for the benefit, they are unsuccessful.

1. They do not meet the threshold of 14% disablement set out in the scheme. Often people need to link multiple conditions to meet this threshold.
2. There is no clear linkage to work, meaning the evidence is not strong enough to link the disablement to industrial exposure. The onus is on women to prove that the injury or illness is work related and is not a result of other means such as domestic or caring responsibilities.
3. Evidence of diagnosis is required and therefore a misdiagnosis from a medical professional can delay or prevent women from bringing a claim in the first place. Delays in diagnosis not only delay a woman's ability to access the benefit but can also lead to the condition become so bad that they can no longer do the job and are forced to retire early or change jobs which we often see in the care sector.

This is not simply an issue of creating a new list of prescribed diseases, there must be work done to understand the context in which injury, illness and disease happens initially, and how it goes on to cause long term harm.

GMB should commit the following to policy:

- Organising claims based on improving the long-term health of women in the workplace
- Build up our own research through member engagement on the conditions of workplaces which affect the health of women
- Health and safety training which includes specific training on IIDB to increase awareness of the benefit.
- Campaign for reform through Department of Work and Pensions (Scotland as an example of reform through SEIAC Bill).

It is clear that more gender focused analysis, proactive identification of emerging issues and research and greater knowledge of how women's health is affected in the workplace is required. It is also clear that in order for change to happen, women workers must be continually involved in the shaping of the benefit and this must be a priority going forward.

Fight for £15 in Care

GMB proudly represents tens of thousands of members in the Adult Social Care sector.

It is well established that women occupy the majority of roles within the social care sector.

- In England it is estimated that there are 1.56 million jobs in adult social care, where women occupy 84% of the roles within the sector, and the average median pay for a care worker is £9.01^{xiv}
- In Scotland there are an estimated 148,000 workers in the sector where the average annual earnings stand at £18,400^{xv}
- In Wales 47,000 work in social care, where women occupy 83% of the workforce^{xvi}
- In Northern Ireland there has been recognition that pay needs to be improved in the sector in order to meet the demands of the demographic changes in the coming years – with pay at the centre^{xvii}

This is a sector that has seen care homes be run and ransacked by some of the most unscrupulous employers and private equity firms, with little regard for the service users let

alone the workers. With poor wages and terms and conditions, it is truly one of the most undervalued services in our economy. The cost of living crisis that we are experiencing, and have experienced through dogmatic austerity measures have pushed people to the brink. In previous years the CEC has dedicated special reports to Congress on the Care sector, namely our 2016 Special Report on Social Care and our 2017 We Care CEC Statement. Since then, important research outside of Congress has been conducted on the sector. GMB Scotland published extensive research into the state of the nation's social care sector, including surveys and interviews with workers directly. The GMB Scotland *Show You Care Report* is formulated key industrial bargaining demands for our members. ^{xviii}

As a result of this research, in October 2021 GMB Scotland launched the Fight for £15 in the care sector, a bold demand from the workforce to employers.

This is a demand that should be made across the UK and throughout GMB.

What has been argued by GMB Scotland and is true for the rest of the UK, is that the COVID-19 pandemic tore apart any illusion that wages in the sector had any adequacy. On top of that, the woeful terms and conditions around sick pay forced workers to continue to care for the service users at the most dangerous and critical time.

A survey of care workers conducted by GMB in the autumn of 2020 and early part of 2021 revealed how mental health was drastically affected;

- 75% of care workers say that their work during the Covid-19 pandemic as had serious negative impact on their mental health
- Women respondents report worse mental health scores than men
- Disabled care workers consistently report worse mental health scores than care workers who are not disabled
- Respondents who are only entitles to Statutory Sick Pay (£95.85 per week) report worse scores on each measure than those who are paid a higher employer sick pay rate

Our care workers rightfully have pointed out the hypocrisy of our governments who jumped on the bandwagon to clap for our carers yet fell silent when they were asked to put their hands in their pockets.

As part of recommendations from this special report, it is proposed that;

- A £15 per hour wage would bring the workforce of the sector to an annual wage in line with the UK national average, close to £30,000 per annum. We must adopt this policy throughout the UK in the care sector.
- For Regions to coordinate as best possible, efforts to lobby national, devolved and Local governments to recognise £15 per hour as the minimum for the sector.
- As part of our ongoing focus on improving the work of care workers, the CEC is committed to presenting a report to Congress 2023 on the sector, including testimony and research gathered from our care worker members directly.

Final Summary

This report has drawn out significant issues that women face at work.

History has shown us that progress is made from the struggles of women trade unionists.

GMB's Women's Campaign Unit has set out to make work better for our women members across the union. As has been made clear in this report, the work women do in our society is often undervalued, underpaid and under recognised.

At its core, the Women's Campaign Unit seeks to collectively build power in workplaces by organising women to fight discrimination and deliver pay justice.

As our movement grows, so does the pressure on bad employers and there will be no where for them to hide.

There are many fronts to fight for the value of women's work so we must be strategic. The industrial campaigns of the Women's Campaign Unit focus on making work better for women by delivering membership growth, pay and value for GMB members.

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AMANDA BURLEY (CEC): President, Congress, it is not new that we campaign to make work better for women. However, we are placing a renewed focus on the work of women with the formation of the Women's Campaign Unit. We as a union are determined to improve the work and the lives of women. This report sets out our intentions to make work better for women now into the future and rectify historic pay injustices, and for every campaign we take on we will build on our expertise for the next one. We know that we do not get anything in this life without determined, credible, and focused campaigning. We need this more than ever.

We have been suffering from a cost-of-living crisis long before now where over a decade of Tory austerity has suffocated wages, especially those of women. Many of our women members have borne the brunt of the continuing crises. Our school staff members and local government members have been used as a political football in the crisis and made an unfair example of by successive Tory regimes. Our Asda members who have been refused full bargaining rights by successive owners, are now demanding equal pay after decades of poor wages and working conditions. Our care workers, workers like me and my colleagues, who went to work every day throughout the worst of the pandemic with absolutely no measures to keep them safe nor the residents they deeply care for. You could not have failed to have been moved by my sister, Sal Young, yesterday who passionately spoke about what it is like on the front line. I thank Sal for speaking out. (*Applause*)

It is in our caring schools that we are seeing some bite-back. Our sisters in Glasgow have taken the campaign for equal pay and they are winning. (*Applause*) Our sisters in Birmingham are also taking on the City Council on equal pay. They know what they are worth and so do we. (*Applause*)

Congress, this report boldly calls for care workers to be paid what they are worth, our *Fight for Fifteen* for the care sector starts now. (*Applause*) For too long those who have cared for us and our loved ones have gone without the pay and the respect they deserve. As a care worker I know this pandemic has ripped through homes, devastating families, and those we care for, especially for me and my colleagues. Enough is enough. This is why the work of the Women's Campaign Unit is vital to making work better for women. Congress, this report should be regarded as a marker for where we are and what we want to achieve. We are here to make work better. Please support this report. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Amanda. The CEC seconder?

SAMANTA ZUBRUTE (CEC): Good morning, President, Congress. Women in Glasgow and Birmingham have made history over equal pay. GMB has a rich heritage in industrial struggles where women have stood for decent treatment and equal pay, from the Match Girls' Strike in 1888 to Marie Macarthur and the Chainsmokers' Strike, to the Grunwick Dispute, the Equal Pay Act, and the biggest equal pay strike in a generation. Last year the union took the historic decision to establish the National Women's Campaign Unit. The unit is focusing on the pay and the health of women and the conditions they work in. It is 52 years after the Equal Pay Act was passed and women still earn 40% less over their lifetime compared to men. Already the unit is working with GMB's regions to identify injustices around equal pay. It is organising and addressing those injustices and building the strength of our union. As you will have read in the report, industrial injustices suffered by women are significantly underreported. The health of women is overlooked and we do not always occupy the industries that are deemed to be as dangerous and hazardous as our male colleagues. We must organise our under-pay and health of our members.

Congress, these principles should be implemented at National Office and across our union. Please support the work of the Women's Campaign Unit and endorse this report. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Samanta. Can I now call speakers from Yorkshire, and then it will be Wales & South West next. Is there a speaker from Yorkshire?

GEMMA WILLIAMSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, first-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, speaking in support of this CEC Report into the Women's Campaign Unit. Our union has a proud history of fighting for justice, equality, and fairness in the workplace. Over the years we have won many battles and have improved working lives, with improvements to the terms and conditions of our members. We are all too aware of how unscrupulous managers and companies can be and do take advantage of unorganised and desperate workforces to ensure their dodgy business practices remain unchallenged. Women make up half of the membership of the GMB and they often work in part-time and in unrecognised or difficult organised workplaces. The high turnover of staff in these areas is due to low pay or poor conditions. This has meant that traditionally it has been difficult for a TU to organise. This further exacerbates the issue as we all know that for change to occur we need to organise collectively and mobilise.

While GMB can look back at the historic campaigns, such as the Grunwick Strike, there is a need for clear and well-organised structures that will ensure present and future issues that affect women in the workplace can be dealt with effectively. The creation of the GMB Women's Taskforce is welcomed and needed in development. If we as an organisation can clearly highlight the issues that are affecting women and take these discussions into the workplace, we can and will mobilise a huge group of society that has often been overlooked in the trade union Movement.

The Women's Taskforce aim collectively so that members can campaign themselves to achieve the improvements they want and deserve. By developing this Taskforce and empowering members the organisations themselves will ensure that women are no longer undervalued, underpaid, and under-resourced. Congress, I urge you to support the CEC Report on the Women's Taskforce. Let's unleash the power of women. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Brilliant, Gemma. Well done. Wales & South West.

CAROL ESTEBANEZ (GMB Wales & South West): President, Congress, this report gives the clear and much needed influence on the importance of the necessity for the GMB to have dedicated resources to improve the working conditions of women. We need to work on behalf of our members to campaign for transforming change so that the UK and our nations are free from gender discrimination. We should unite the voices of our members to make a bigger impact on women's rights. It is important that our women members in employment are protected from harm across all working sectors in the UK. Employers must recognise the vital need to protect all women throughout their workplaces, including pregnant, BAME, and disabled women workers.

Equal pay for women has been campaigned on for years without success until recently. The report mentions the success we have achieved with the Dundee and Glasgow City Council Equal Pay Campaign, the ASDA Campaign, and the current Birmingham City Council Campaign.

Colleagues, this report shows that progress is made from the struggles of women trade unions, this is us. Moving forward, with well planned and resourced industrial campaigns is essential. This report shows that the Women's Campaign Units were set out to make work better for our women across the union and put a stop to women being undervalued in the workplace. Inspiring women in construction and engineering provides us with a framework to spearhead change, building on progress through the Women's Unit gives assurance to our members and their employers that we are serious about breaking down the biases.

While this report sets out plans we look forward to working in collaboration with the Women's Campaign Unit to face up to the everyday challenges and come up with solutions that will attract development and retain more women in construction. Thank you for this amazing report, colleagues. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Carol. Southern Region?

MARTHA DE BRUXELLES (Southern): Good morning, Madam President, General Secretary. We appreciate and value the work that was done behind this report. We certainly looked through it and understand the work that is done across the years and across the sectors, through the years for the GMB. The report has highlighted significant issues that women face in the workplace and ones where it is decided to make a change. For me one thing that was missing from that report was, as the Chair of the Regional Equalities Forum, I find there was no mention at all of the intersectionality. For me I could not read anything that we had done in the Southern Region. It is important because equalities should be all across the sectors.

This report promises a lot and we hope that a lot is going to be delivered. I urge all of you, male and female, and those who recognise themselves in whatever gender, to read it, to understand it, to try and work through everything that we are trying to achieve. In order for us to move forward we have to move together as a unit. It is important that we bring together brothers and sisters to make this report valuable. We have achieved a lot through the years and we will continue to achieve a lot but we have to work together and we have to embrace everyone regardless of the gender they ascribe to themselves. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Martha. Scotland?

SHONA THOMSON (GMB Scotland): Morning, comrades. Personally, the Women's Campaign Unit is something that has been much overdue and much needed within our union and we were quite proud to first pilot it in Scotland and the work of the unit and all those involved has spearheaded the empowerment of women within our union, within our organisation, and especially within predominantly female workplaces. The unit's establishment and focus has been invaluable, as I say again in organising the workforces, workforces that were too long underpaid and overlooked.

The Glasgow Women's historic Equal Pay Strike showed what can be achieved by a predominantly female workforce and as the Glasgow Branch Secretary for Public Sector workers in Glasgow I have seen firsthand the strength and resolve of our GMB members fighting for equal pay. Earlier this year, again because the equal pay is not finalised, it is not resolved in Glasgow, again we had to go out and ballot, and we did, we came back successful again in the very high 90s, we were ready to strike, but in negotiations they came back to us and said they would talk with us and give us an interim payment again. We suspended the strike but on the back of that and with the talks and the negotiations, we actually managed to get the strike mandate extended for nine months. So, even though we set to suspend things, there are other things we can get put in place there to strengthen that. If they do not come across with what we asked, our demands for suspending that strike action, we are just going to go back out and strike.

Again, a strike office in Charing Cross has been overrun with women coming in wanting to make placards, wanting to go on strike. They have not relented in pursuing what they are owed. They have without doubt been supported by the dedicated energies of the Women's Campaign Unit and we have achieved quite a lot in Scotland. As my comrade said earlier on, they are in Dundee as well. All I can just say is even though there is a fight for a minimum of £15 an hour for social care

workers, we officially adopted that in Scotland as well and now it is rolled out across all the regions.

I will just speak a bit on social care because that is the thing that is dear to my heart, maybe I will be more comfortable if I speak about it, but for far too long the care workers have just been treated as second-class citizens in this country, and I mean right across the whole country, private carers, and everything. They know their worth. Anyway, both of these workforces are just two examples of the support that the women are willing to give. They would just like equal pay and empowering women is a process, it is not an event; it will require the continued time and energy and resources that the union has to tackle it, and we have to be strong, we have to empower our female workforces. Another thing I must say is ----

THE PRESIDENT: Shona.

SHONA THOMSON (GMB Scotland): Yes. The support of all our male colleagues within the organisations, within our union, within our family, is also overwhelming and we cannot achieve these things without the support of them. So, Congress, I support the report. Thanks. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Shona. I indulged you there. I let you go over but I could not stop you, not having led the women of Glasgow out on strike. Our solidarity to them as well. Brilliant. (*Applause*) Thank you. North West & Irish Region.

JO PITCHFORD (North West and Irish): Congress, history has shown to us that when we work together we can effect positive change. Even though we are now in the 21st century, historic injustices, including the gender pay gap, unequal pay, negative health impacts, and in many places women being undervalued in the workplace, still remain. There is still so much to change and by having the dedicated resource of the Women's Campaign Unit to focus, coordinate, and organise women to campaign, this will bring together, as it does now, best practice from across our regions. absolute respect to the work of the women of Scotland, and women throughout the country, who are campaigning and effecting this change today. The campaigns including the "*Fight for Fifteen*" in care, organising for equal pay across the country will improve the lives of so many members. Please read the report, embrace it, support it, and let's move forward together. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jo. Northern Region? Northern Region? North West and Irish Region just spoke. Now it is Northern Region. Is there a speaker? No? Okay, Midland & East Coast.

TONI YEL (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, we would like to thank the CEC for the Special Report. The policy commitments that are detailed within the report are welcomed and we look forward to the education and training for reps and members for pay justice and equal pay. This cannot come soon enough. A key area noted in the report is how the GMB will organise women workers and build power to challenge the health inequalities of women's work. In June 2022, a shocking report was published by the Marmot Review into health inequalities in England. It stated that women's life expectancy has declined for the first time in a century. The review

highlights the social determinatives of health, detail inequalities arise from a complex interaction of many factors but they do include employment and income.

The contribution of women in our economy and society is undervalued, particularly in paid work. We have to continue to make a stand and cannot let another century pass us by where we have even more damaging statistics for women. Women's ill health is the product of social status we occupy in society and the position in social hierarchy. The Marmot Review confirmed there are no biological reasons for women's declining life expectancy and worsening health.

We support and look forward to being involved in the Campaign Unit's work and I feel truly empowered by reading the report to give us the foundation of making change happen. The coming years are going to define the GMB and it is vital that we put our union on an organising and campaigning footing. This report marks the important steps in this ensuring that we utilise new communications and build winning campaigns. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Toni. London Region?

TARANJIT CHANA (London): We are pleased to see this dedicated GMB unit tackling pay inequality as women are undervalued in the workplace. The gender pay gap is not closing fast enough and men continue to be paid more on average than women in many workplaces. Too many women are still not paid on equal terms with men doing equal work. The report is to launch this unit who will now be adopting a culture where women are empowered and inclusivity involved. We welcome the toolkits with practical help on building a campaign and developing organising strategies around equal pay and how to negotiate improvements for women. Today more than ever we need to be clear on how we gather data on equal pay, how we recruit and how to submit a solid equal pay claim using a tested case management system. We welcome accessible training being offered across regional structures and recognising equal pay and how to take steps to tackle this. We know that the Women's Campaign Unit will provide support to activists on how to negotiate with their employers around specific workplaces and adjustments to existing policies, such as pay, recruitment, family leave, flexible working, and so on, as well as why it is important to carry out pay audits.

The Women's Campaign Unit progresses the principle that GMB makes work better for women in society and in the workplace through organising and GMB five principles, building a collective power in the workplace against injustice and discrimination towards growth and for value for our members. Reference to the Grunwick dispute in the report is much welcomed, black immigrant women of South Asian heritage fighting for the rights, pay, and conditions, for all workers. The region has already identified a number of equal pay campaigns and we look forward to working to make work better for all our members using the knowledge gained from the work of the Women's Campaign Unit to adopt an equal pay methodology across all regions. Please support this report. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Taranjit. Birmingham?

JANICE WADRUP (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, I currently work for Birmingham City Council, and we have identified that there is a further equal pay claim. We have already had two successful pay claims on equal pay and it is still ongoing and the problem is not being solved. We have identified that through engagement with our members as a result of the equal pay that there are also more equal pay claims that will be coming across the whole of Birmingham City Council. We have also noticed that in other areas this is probably going to go viral because as a result of that we are also getting contacts from other members from other areas saying, “We have seen your campaign, we are not being paid enough.” It has also identified that there is inequality in payments, for example, in schools where you have teaching assistants and some of the teaching assistants are being paid at level 1 or 2, but then you find out they are carrying out SEN work, which is not part of their job description, so this is having a knock-on effect all across the piece.

By organising, campaigning, and recruiting, we are engaging more with our members and we are also increasing our membership. We are also increasing reps, and we are also getting a lot more contact with reps. People are really interested because they want to know why women are paid less than their counterparts. It is an ongoing campaign and we are aiming to win, and with the help of Leigh Day solicitors we are really making inroads, and the Women’s Campaign Unit has really helped us in our quest to get the pay claim in situ and we are hoping not to go as far as we want to go, we are talking to the City Council, the City Council actually lied to the GMB. Initially, they lied to the GMB so as a result of lying to the GMB and trying to pay our members off with a one-off measly payment, we have identified that there is definitely an equal pay claim. So, it is an ongoing situation and, as I said, we do aim to win and in solidarity with our colleagues and our comrades in this room we will do it and, hopefully, do it for everybody working across the country. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. That is an appropriate end to that part of the debate, and we are in solidarity with Birmingham in that equal pay fight. Thank you to all those speakers in the debate. I now put that to the vote. All those in favour of the Special Report of the Women’s Campaign Unit please show. Thank you. Anyone against? Great. Thank you.

*CEC Report: Women’s Campaign Unit was **ADOPTED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: Is there a Standing Orders Report? Is Helen there? Yes. Thank you. I apologise I did not take you before. We now have a Standing Orders Committee Report.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 3

HELEN JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, good morning. Withdrawn Motions – the SOC has been informed that the following motion has been withdrawn and this is why I needed to get up here because it is the next one:

Composite 13 GMB Campaign Fight for Fifteen in Social Care and Home Care Workers, in the name of GMB Scotland and Northern Region.

Also on the subject of Emergency Motions, the SOC has accepted an Emergency Motion as being in order for debate. This will be Emergency Motion 1, Terminal Chaos, standing in the name of London Region. The motion will be heard later in the week at a time and day yet to be advised.

President, Congress, I formally move adoption of the SOC Report No. 3. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Is there anyone who wants to speak against the SOC recommendations? No? In that case I will put that to the vote, SOC Report No.3, all those in favour please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you, Helen.

*Standing Orders Committee Report No. 3 was **ADOPTED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: As Helen said, the next item has just been withdrawn so that moves on to Composite 11, Motion 164, 165, and 166, so could I call those people down the front, please. Then after that we will be going to Motion 222, 223, and 224, so just be aware of the order.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES

GMB ETHICAL HOME CARE COMMISSIONING CHARTER COMPOSITE MOTION 11

C11. GMB Ethical Home Care Commissioning Charter

Covering Motions:

161. END TASK & TIME IN HOME CARE (GMB ETHICAL HOME CARE COMMISSIONING CHARTER) - YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION

162. ETHICAL CARE COMMISSIONING CHARTER - YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION

163. VALUE HOME CARERS AND PAY THEM PROPERLY (GMB ETHICAL H

This Congress calls on Local authorities and NHS Trusts across the Country to support our campaign to end the great Council/NHS Con that is 'task and time home care' and adopt and endorse the GMB Ethical Home Care Commissioning Charter, 2022.

This Congress notes that, whenever local authorities carry out commissioning of domiciliary care, no Equality Impact Assessments are done. This is the only commissioning carried out by public bodies that does not require an Equality Impact Assessment. Considering that the vast majority of domiciliary care workers are women, this is morally, if not legally, discriminatory. This needs to be rectified.

The majority of people will need to call on the Care industry, either for themselves or their loved ones. All too often, those working in domiciliary care are on minimum wage, have no sick pay scheme and have to provide their own transport, with no recompense. When using Care providers, we expect a high quality of service, we should also expect care workers to be treated with respect and valued by their employers.

This Congress calls on Local authorities and NHS Trusts across the Country to value our carers and pay them properly. All Councils and the NHS have a job evaluated pay rate for carers that is set and should be reviewed through their internal JE systems. Very few, if any, include that rate when they design their Care Commissioning frameworks that dictate pay rates for thousands of their care providers/employers and hundreds of thousands of carers (mainly women).

The charter calls for an end to minute and hours measurement in the delivery of care and the end of the abuse and discrimination that is embedded in our local authorities because of 'Time and Task'.

In Support:

No other publicly funded service is measured and contracted by the minute, no one would dream of stopping the pay of other workers when they are travelling to, or preparing for the next job and we must ask why they do so in home care?

We all know the answer, they do so because they can and the detrimental impact falls on the 96% female workforce that deliver these services. Congress, Governments need to provide more resources for care but we cannot ignore the fact that it is local authorities, and yes, including Labour, and the NHS that determine what price they pay for care and how it is commissioned

GMB calls on local authorities and NHS trusts to endorse and support our Ethical Home Care Commissioning Charter and value carers by making their own pay rates (Council Green Book and/or Agenda for Change) the benchmark and our fight for £15, if not already achieved in those rates, the goal.

Congress calls for the immediate use of Equality Impact Assessments whenever domiciliary care is being commissioned. Congress also calls on the GMB to campaign for an Ethical Care Commissioning Charter, so we know our loved ones are receiving good quality care and their carers are working with decent terms and conditions.

Moving Region: YORKSHIRE & N DERBYSHIRE

Seconding Region: YORKSHIRE & N DERBYSHIRE

(Carried)

MARTIN SINCLAIR (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Good morning, President, Congress. Colleagues, these motions have been put together because they cover the same thing, the need to value our domiciliary care workers. This is for those of you who may not be aware has been the direction of travel in our local councils and NHS funded care sector for the past 20 years. An initiative started by Labour for the right reasons, helping to keep vulnerable people at home rather than in care homes, but accelerated by the Tories for the wrong reason, austerity.

Let us understand, though, this is not simply a call to our Movement, councillors, and MPs to recognise, it is a demand to make sure we are making this campaign as broad, resourced, and focused on the real issues that carers face as possible. It is no use councillors talking about the admiration they have for the heroic work the homecare workers do and at the same time they accept contracting processes, such as commissioning, in their town halls that show these workers are only paid for the actual time they are on the job.

It is no use, either, government ministers responding to the growing demand of the public to address the care crisis that sees staff turnover running at 45% in the UK with further cuts to council funding and mythical White Papers. We cannot wait for politicians to come up with answers either. We do not have time to wait for Labour to develop policy that will bring all care into a council employment framework, or for the Tories to finally increase local authority budgets. We have to do something now for those 750,000 carers and where we have councils engaged with us around our plan, the GMB Ethical Care Commissioning Charter, and no matter what difficult box politicians stick this in we have to address the main problem that holds back pay and

terms and conditions in homecare now. That problem right here today is the way the work is commissioned.

Colleagues, no matter what level of resources are there, we cannot have a situation where we pay an army of publicly-funded care workers, mainly women, as has been outlined before, by the minute. We do not accept this anywhere else and it has to stop. Value them, pay them properly, and by the hour. Congress, please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sinclair. A seconder?

ANDREW GIBSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, we are right to call for £15 an hour for care workers. In fact, it should be more, much more, and here is the thing, if we as a nation resourced care work properly in accordance with the principles set out in the Ethical Care Commissioning Charter, it would be. All councils and NHS value all jobs that are carried out within their score. We call this job evaluation rates of pay, in our councils the Green Book, or in JNC rates. It is the same in the NHS, their job evaluation rates are their agenda for change. Carers employed by the NHS and councils also have public sector pension schemes and negotiated holidays and sick pay, all far more generous than anything a carer is likely to get in the private sector, and all are paid by the hour or shift.

Congress, it begs the question, why therefore do councils or NHS calculate contracted out care services and minimum wage with very little value given to any other element of the care worker terms and conditions. Why do travel, training, and other associated employment costs boil down to pennies and why is the care work itself measured and paid by the minute. We know the answer and our charter identifies the divisions this is causing in the care crisis. Councils need to adopt, endorse, and embed into the way they commission care. If they value our care workers who deliver it, then they will pay them properly. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Andy. It is lovely to see so many first-time speakers. Well done. Can we have mover and seconder for Motion 164, please?

PERSON-CENTRED, LEGAL RATIO OF CARERS TO SERVICE USERS
MOTION 164

164. PERSON-CENTRED, LEGAL RATIO OF CARERS TO SERVICE USERS

This Congress notes that the C40 Branch is a branch specifically for care staff. A continuous problem with our members is staffing in care. We want the GMB to fight for a legal, case by case, person-centred ratio of carers to service users, based solely on the safety requirements of the service user and the safety of the carers. Not the profit of care companies

C40 CARE SECTOR BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

ZOE SMITH (Birmingham & West Midland): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Thank you. At the moment, there is no current ratio for the legal amount

of carers that you need within a care setting, despite the amount of evidence which lives within that setting. In the last 14 years that I have been in care the majority of care homes that I have represented in or worked in have always had four day staff and three night staff. A lot of long-term sickness is due to back pain and stress, which carers have. This can be directly linked to the fact that they are currently working understaffed. It is not safe in any way to be having this amount of staff to however many residents. One of the biggest examples of this was a three-storey care home within the Midlands, which not too long ago ended up with a resident falling out of bed and he actually died from injuries as a result of that. When it was investigated on that shift there was one nurse and two care workers. The three staff were meant to keep safe a three-storey care home with more than 80 residents living in there.

We constantly hear about person-centred care when we are working in care. However, if anybody phones in sick there is usually not enough staff to come in and cover the sickness. I have worked in care where we have been told that there are only two of us. So, as long as we complete our shift, and provide continence care, that is all we can do. That is not person-centred care in any way and it is not safe. It is like a conveyor belt of giving people the basic care they need to stay alive.

We would like Congress, please, to support us to fight for a legal person-centred ratio which will empower care workers to be able to report dangerous staffing with the knowledge that there will actually be effective results from reporting this and we would like to stop private care companies being able to profit from repeatedly putting residents and care workers in danger from a neglectful staffing situation. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Zoe. A seconder, please?

YVONNE THOMAS (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, as my colleague has already pointed out so well, levels in the care sector are reaching crisis levels. As a care worker I have seen firsthand the problems, stress, and difficulties, caused by lack of staff on shifts. At the moment, I am working two people's jobs. This motion is not only about creation and retention of jobs, it is about the safety and health of care workers and service users alike. It is about what is right and what is fair. Congress, please support this motion. Please support care workers. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Yvonne. The mover and seconder for Motion 165, please?

INDEPENDENT HEALTH AND CARE STAFF COMMISSION MOTION 165

165. INDEPENDENT HEALTH AND CARE STAFF COMMISSION

This Congress recognises that the most important resource that the NHS has got is its body of properly educated and trained staff.

Congress 2016 agreed a CEC Special Report on the Care Sector and asked for an Independent Training Commission, but we need to go further. Congress calls for an Independent Health and Care Staff Commission to be set up to cover the health and care sectors in four nations as current measures are not adequate.

This Commission should have a statutory responsibility, in close consultation with all stakeholders, to forecast likely demands for adequate levels of educated and trained staff; to ensure that there are adequate education and training facilities and places available; to help education and training providers to recruit enough students to fill those places and work with health and care providers to place the educated and trained staff into employment.

The health and care sector is too important, too big and the lead times to educate and train health and care staff is too long for the provision of adequate numbers of educated and trained staff to be left to chance or to the decisions of multiple decision makers at different locations and levels of responsibility. Instead, careful, considered and coordinated forward planning, in full consultation with all the stakeholders including health and care providers, unions, education and training providers and governments in the four nations is now an urgent priority.

Where for example education and training providers are not able to fill places, deemed by the Commission to be essential to ensure adequate levels of staff for the future of the health and care services, with students from the UK the Commission should have authority to seek students from overseas to fill those places.

Overall, the role of the Commission is to help health and care providers and education providers to plan and deliver adequate levels of educated and trained staff to help them meet the performance targets for the health and care services set by Parliament and the devolved governments. It should report to Parliament and to the devolved Assemblies on its work on an annual basis.

ISLINGTON 1 & HARINGEY BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

JOANNE RUST (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* This motion is simply calling for the formation of an organisation with a responsibility to ensure that our national health and care sector has enough trained staff to meet all our needs. There is nothing contentious about the motion but it is incredibly important for the future of our NHS and the care industry.

Health Education England is the current body which is meant to fulfil this role. It is meant to ensure that as supposedly part of the NHS they work with partners to plan, recruit, educate, and train, the health workforce. Health Education England claims that it exists for one reason and one reason only, to help improve the quality of life and health and care services for the people of England by ensuring the workforce of today and tomorrow has the right skills, values, and behaviours in the right numbers at the right time, and in the right place.

However, since splitting it away from the NHS, it has not fulfilled this function. It is clear to see that it is not fit for purpose. A robust and properly funded health and care staff commission would ensure there were instructors in place to provide the number of properly trained staff that we actually need. It would mean that did not face situations where our hospitals and care industry were having to scabble around to try to find the staff in the numbers they need, and it would mean that we would not need to beg staff not to retire and to stay on and work longer. It would mean that our NHS

and care staff could actually take their proper breaks, they could take their full annual leave entitlement, and not have to work constant overtime to cover for staff that just are not there. A properly resourced health and care commission would minimise staff burnout and help alleviate the stress and illness levels that the current staff are experiencing but making sure there were enough workers to fill the vacancies.

This motion would help boost the education and training sector by ensuring that they were offering the right courses in the right numbers at the right time. By supporting this motion Congress will be supporting our NHS and care sector and those hardworking staff that provide the service. Please do support it. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Joanne. A seconder, please? Is there a seconder for Motion 165, or is it formally being seconded? Formally. Thank you. The mover of Motion 166?

EMPLOYMENT STATUS FOR HM COASTGUARD RESCUE WORKERS MOTION 166

166. EMPLOYMENT STATUS FOR HM COASTGUARD RESCUE WORKERS

This Congress calls for proper employment status for more than 3,500 HM Coastguard rescue workers based at 310 rescue stations around the UK.

The duties of HM Coastguard rescue workers include help rescue people trapped on the coast, for example on cliffs, stuck in mud or in the water, search for missing people, report and deal with pollution and other hazards and help emergency services and local authorities during emergencies, for example flooding.

These HM Coastguard rescue workers can be called out at any time of the day or night so they work irregular hours. They may have to work in hazardous situations for long hours and may have to carry out physically demanding tasks.

HM Coastguard rescue workers can have other employment. Required skills include: first aid, water rescue, map work, search techniques, communications and skills needed for the local area, for example rope rescue, mud rescue etc.

Staff with over 30 years' experience are being axed without the basic right of being represented by their Union. The HM Coastguard rescue workers risk their lives to help and save others but are treated worse than any other Government worker. Urgent action needs to be taken by HM Coastguard and Government to show respect for these unsung heroes.

Congress calls that their status as workers is properly recognised and the work they do is properly valued and recognised. These 3,500 brave men and women who work in all weathers to rescue people and save lives are denied even the most basic rights of respect and recognition by their employer HM Coastguard.

SOUTHEND BRANCH London Region

(Carried)

MICHAEL FOSTER (London): This motion is to highlight the great work and, more importantly, the status of Coastguard Rescue Officers. We are not speaking of lifeboat crew such as the RNLI as this organisation is funded by donations and is run as a charity. These men and women work in the only national rescue service run by the Government as part of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and as such should be properly recognised as paid workers of the UK Government. There are over 3,500 people working in the rescue service across the country who can be called out at any time of the day or night, and often work in hazardous situations for long hours. They rescue people trapped on the coast, on cliffs, stuck in mud, or in the water, search for missing people, report and deal with pollution and other hazards, and help the stretched emergency services and local authorities during emergencies like flooding.

They are all treated as though they are volunteers, many with over 30 years experience, but they are not volunteers in the true sense of the term. That label says nothing about their status at times when they are attending for duty. We need to challenge the Government's definition of a volunteer, which is an area the GMB has been highlighting for over 20 years. These rescue workers are on call and available to work. They get paid expenses as other volunteers do but the difference is that they are also paid an hourly rate which is equivalent to the national minimum wage for the work they do while on call, or when they have to attend training events. There are also minimum standards of attendance at callouts and training events. They receive pay for attending training and also receive pay slips, P60s, and sometimes when things go wrong and at times when they vitally need their union's support, P45s.

I think you will agree that this goes beyond the Government's definition of volunteer as they do get payment in return for work. Their behaviour is regulated by a code of conduct and volunteer handbook which, if transgressed, can result in disciplinary action. However, as they are regarded as volunteers it means that MCA is able to deny them even the most basic right to be accompanied by a GMB representative at a disciplinary hearing. We are asking for justice, respect, and for the Government to recognise that these rescue officers are just like other government workers as the organisation they work for is government-funded and government-run.

The HM Coastguard Rescue Workers risk their lives to help and save others but are treated worse than any other government worker. Let's not let this Government shirk their responsibilities. Let this Government, the Department of Transport, act as a responsible employer and recognise that these are paid individuals and should be treated as workers and so be entitled to the most basic of employment protection, including the right to get paid annual leave and access to the full employment rights they deserve. I move. (*Applause*) Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael. A seconder, please?

BRIAN SHAW (London): Congress, let's not forget that volunteers are what the trade union Movement is built upon. As a mover said, GMB has been raising the issue and status of volunteers to the Government and making sure they are not being exploited by the use of that label of substitutes, worthless, and so cheap labour. I recall I actually had a rep who was a volunteer and he actually worked for the Government and they would not give him paid time off to actually go and do the

rescue. It was bizarre. We eventually got there but that should be enshrined in law that they should get time off. They are an emergency service.

This motion is not to ask that all volunteers are classified as workers as there are many genuine volunteers who work alongside paid staff and provided that they only receive out-of-pocket expenses are already exempt from the national minimum wage legislation. We are calling to change that. This motion is just to highlight a particular group of workers, our Coastguard Rescue Workers who in 2020 responded to 33,000 incidents providing a 24-hour service to ensure everyone's safety on our shores or around our coasts. One of our members is currently taking the matter up with a test case to an employment tribunal through the employment appeals process on behalf of 3,500 workers backed by the GMB, and we are awaiting the appeal hearing.

Congress, these women and men are not volunteers in the true sense, they are workers and should be treated fairly and in line with other paid workers. Congress, let me end by saying this year, 2022, marks the 200th anniversary of the HM Coastguard Service and what better time to celebrate and to win proper recognition for the selfless work those dedicated professionals, women and men, do across the country. I am proud to second the motion. Please support. (*Applause*) Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian. Does anyone wish to speak in opposition to these motions? No? In that case there is no CEC speaker because the CEC supported all these motions. I will put all those to the vote but can I just say can the movers and seconders of 222, 223, and 224, please be ready to come down if you are not already down. Composite 11, Motion 164, Motion 165, Motion 166, all those in favour please show. Thank you. Anyone against? They are carried. Thank you.

Composite Motion 11 was CARRIED

Motion 164 was CARRIED

Motion 165 was CARRIED

Motion 166 was CARRIED.

SOCIAL POLICY: EQUALITY & INCLUSION

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Social Policy: Equality & Inclusion. I will take the mover of Motion 222.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD – EQUAL PRIZE MONEY IN THE FA CUP FOR
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TEAMS
MOTION 222

222. LEVEL PLAYING FIELD- EQUAL PRIZE MONEY IN THE FA CUP FOR MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TEAMS

This Congress notes that for women's teams competing in the Football Association (FA) Cup first round proper, the prize money for 2021/22 season is £850 compared with £22,629 for men's teams. In the third round proper the winning women's teams get £1,250. By comparison the prize money for a men's team winning the equivalent round of the FA cup is £82,000.

Overall, the total prize money for the women's FA Cup is £309,000 which is shared by 300 teams. This compares with £15.9 million for the men's FA Cup which is shared by 735 teams.

As an average per team over the whole competition, women's teams get less than 5% of the prize money paid to men's teams.

Congress calls on the Football Association to level up the prize money available for women's teams in the FA Cup to the level paid to men's teams in the same competition.

This should be an important policy commitment by the whole football community given the fact that the FA Cup is football's oldest competition and of international significance and there is money in the game to facilitate this. One option could be to secure a sponsor who is committed to levelling up the prize money for women's teams in the FA Cup.

We call on the GMB to put pressure on the Football Association to rectify the above gross inequality in prize money for female and male teams.

REDBRIDGE BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

STEPHEN JONES (London): President, Congress, good morning. When this motion was first discussed in our branch, we could not believe or comprehend the incredible difference in prize money for men and women's teams competing in the Football Association (FA) Cup. The differences are incredibly high and it is absolutely incomprehensible in this day and age that there is such a difference of pay today, bearing in mind that all the equality work that has been done to make it a level playing field between men and women. It is absolutely incredible that we are still having these conversations today.

Pay equality for both sexes is a regular feature in the news so why there is this high difference in FA Cup prize money for men and women's teams is a mystery. I do watch football on TV and have seen many men's teams matches and some women's teams matches. I have to say I do not see enough women's football on general TV. I actually think that the women play as well as men and in some cases even better. I probably won't make myself terribly popular in certain areas saying that. We have seen bad behaviour in many men's teams matches but women's teams matches are just as enjoyable and they seem to be smoother and I would say in some cases as professional, if not more so, and they seem to be more exciting matches as well.

It is, therefore, a great injustice that the FA Cup prize money for women's teams is only a small fraction of that given to men's teams. There is a massive disparity as is laid out in the motion in the book and in the report. This is something that needs to be remedied as a matter of urgency. Please support this motion. I move. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stephen. There is a bit of murmuring in the hall so could I ask, if you have conversations can you just go outside, because it is not really fair on the speakers. Thank you. A seconder for Motion 222?

JOANNE RUST (London): I am really pleased to have this opportunity to second this really important motion, equal prize money in FA Cup teams for men and women's teams. Congress, women have been playing football since the game was first

invented. It is not new for us yet despite our longevity in the game the gap in the prize money is huge. It shows clearly how gender discrimination is rife in the beautiful game. Back in 1921 the FA banned women's football and not only did they ban women's football, they banned men from coaching and managing our teams so forcing women on to playing on rugby pitches. Why did the FA ban women's football, because they were jealous, because it was really well supported, because women in 1921 had far bigger crowds than men did: over 50,000 in some cases. So while the ban was finally overturned 50 years later in 1971 and women could once again play on FA pitches, the discrimination of the FA continues today. We all know how good women's football is, an excellent match is an excellent match regardless of the gender of the player, so the gender discrimination in prize money must end and the prize money must be made equal. Let's tell the FA that they have to make this right and let's make the GMB the trade union that brought equality to football prize money, whether it is equal pay for Asda workers, equal pay for Birmingham City Council workers, or equal prize money for female footballers, let it be the GMB union that leads the way. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Joanne. The mover of Motion 223?

MENSTRUAL CUPS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE ON ALL HIGH STREET STORES FOR SALE
MOTION 223

223. MENSTRUAL CUPS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE ON ALL HIGH STREET STORES FOR SALE

Congress, did you know that an average woman will go through around 11,000 disposable menstrual products throughout their life. That is a large amount of waste when you think how many people there are on our planet including plastic packaging, (not good for our environment).

A menstrual cup is a type of reusable feminine hygiene product. It's a small, flexible funnel-shaped cup made of rubber or silicone and should be available on all High Street stores.

Eco menstrual cups are made of 100% FDA approved medical grade silicone, they are reusable. Menstrual cups are also supplied in eco-friendly, sustainable, plastic free packaging that can be recycled.

A reusable menstrual cup is a great eco, zero waste, safer and chemical free, an alternative to disposable counterparts and take care of you and our planet.

Reusable menstrual cups are a wonderful, eco-friendly alternative in comparison to disposable tampons and pads. They are also an easy switch that is safer, greener, and just as effective.

We call on Congress to campaign for awareness of these products and to ensure that these are made available in appropriate high street stores and in major supermarkets.

NEWHAM APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SUSAN KELLY (London): President, Congress, you will all be glad to know you only have to listen to me once today. This is going to be slightly uncomfortable for some of you in all probability. For those who are not aware, a menstrual cup is a small reusable feminine hygiene product that is normally made of medical grade silicon. It is an alternative, a reusable alternative to the rows upon rows upon rows of disposable products that we see in every chemist and supermarket, and the corner shop. They are one of a variety of these products that are available on the market. These are primary sanitary towels or as they love to call them “period pants” and they are ugly. If you have ever seen period pants, believe me, they are ugly.

There are other products coming about but there are not many. I tell you where you have to buy them, online, and to shop online you need a debit card or a credit card, or Pay pal, and to have paypal you need a bank account and to have a bank account you need things like a fixed address. You get where I am going here, guys. The other problem you have is that these products are not cheap.

So, imagine if you can, and I know for some of you guys this is going to be a bit more difficult, be a young person, all right, be a young person; it takes me back quite a long way. You are just going through puberty. You are trying to work out what period products you need and you want to try a few different things. You cannot go on to the high street and buy reusable products. You have to buy them online.

Now, you might not want to ask your parents to pay for these because you might not have a lot of income coming into the household or you might be a bit embarrassed because I am telling you now I would not want to go to my Dad and say, “Dad, can you go and buy me a whole pile of reusable sanitary towels.” My Dad would go, “You what?” Then he would expect me to use them even if they did not suit me, whereas if I said to him, “Can you just go in the supermarket and pick up a packet of sanitary towels,” and they are going to cost him a pound, he would go, “Yes, fine, not a problem.” But if I ask him for something that is going to cost between £5 and £8, possibly £10 a go, he is going to look at me and go, “You want ten of those?”

A menstrual cup costs between £10 and £15. It comes in a tiny little box. It can fit on a shelf in a supermarket and they come in different sizes. Now, look, guys – and I use “guys” as a generic term for people, I apologise, I am a Londoner, it’s a term we use, colleagues – we know they are not suitable for everyone. We know we cannot force stores to stock them. We are not asking for that. We are asking for people to campaign to try and raise awareness of them and to try and ask stores to put them on the shelf as an alternative, please. We know we cannot make them, we know it is not possible, but they do not take up a lot of space and they are a lot cheaper as a change. Make them aware. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Susan. Secunder for 223?

JAN SMITH (London): Morning, President, Congress. We hope that this motion has made you aware of this sustainable period product that we as women possibly need and the cost outlined to you is the cost that can have a hard impact, particularly at this particular time. Although they are priced from around £10, as Susan has just explained, menstrual cups cost a lot more to buy but they save you money in the long run and are a green alternative to pads or tampons. We know that they will not suit all

women and we need to move on and find alternative products because a lot of people when they go through this monthly cycle will all suffer differently and need these products made available to them. Congress, we need to address the stigma around periods and menstrual products. Let's raise awareness in workplaces and schools, particularly schools with young girls coming into that period time, and let's not forget these menstrual cups, we would like to campaign to make these more readily available in the high street. Please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. The mover for Motion 224 and can I ask for the movers and seconders for Composite 10 and Motion 234 to be ready as well, please.

FREE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS FOR ALL SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND ALL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION
MOTION 224

224. FREE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS FOR ALL SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ALL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

Congress, I know, you know, she knows, he knows, they know, that the government has not made it easy for schools, Schools, Colleges and all Educational Provision to access menstrual products for free.

I know, you know, she knows, he knows, they know, that period poverty is getting worse due to the financial crisis emerging from the pandemic.

Break the Barrier, Period poverty is when lack of resources and responses are in place and difficult to ask, we know that this is a global issue, many affecting women, girls, Trans and non-binary individuals who cannot access menstrual products at their workplace or at their organisation.

During the pandemic from 2019 – 2020 food banks handed out more than 2.5 million food parcels in the year through March, up from 1.9 million a year earlier. Many people cannot afford food due to low income, lack of financial support that they cannot afford menstrual products.

Many young girls attending schools, colleges or any other educational provision are from the most deprived backgrounds, that they do not want to add to their families' money by asking for menstrual products.

All Schools, Colleges and all Educational Provision can play an important key role in alleviating these problems by providing easily accessible menstrual products to all for Free.

We envisage locally, nationally and globally in which no girl or woman should suffer from period poverty or stigma associated with their periods.

Congress – Say NO

No girl should miss school because she is on her period.

Congress – Say NO

No woman should be forced to miss work because she is on her period.

Congress - Please help us end period poverty, together – create a toolkit and training for all the reps

Menstrual Hygiene Day takes place on 28 May every year. It's a chance to highlight the importance of menstrual care and raise awareness about all the issues experienced and faced by those who don't have access to sanitary products.

NEWHAM APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

VICKY HOOD (London): I was running late to Congress today because I started my period this morning and, fortunately, I am in a position to be able to afford to buy period products and bleed in dignity. Unfortunately, many people are not and period poverty is a global issue that affects millions of women and girls who struggle to afford or access safe menstrual hygiene products.

The economic social and environmental impacts of period poverty are huge, where many of those affected are restricted from equal education and job opportunities simply due to their periods. In the UK one in 10 girls struggle to access period products because they cannot afford them; 27% have overused a sanitary towel because they have to ration them; 40% have used toilet paper because they cannot afford sanitary ware and that is not acceptable in one of the richest nations in the world.

I am proud to say that in Scotland period products are free for all but that was not always the way. When I was about 20 I remember being on a train to university and I was away from my home and started my periods unexpectedly and bleeding so heavily that it soaked through my pants, through my trousers, and on to the train seat, and stained the train seat. I could not tell anybody about it, I could not speak up because I was so embarrassed. I just waited for my stop and ran off hoping that nobody had seen. When I got to university I could not tell my friends because not only was I embarrassed about being skint, I felt dirty and disgusting that I bled through my clothes, but more than that I felt ashamed to even broach the subject of periods with my pals because it was not something that was talked about; that was not in the '70s, that was about 2013, and I was 20, so never mind folks who are 8, 12, 16 years old; 71% of young people between 14 and 21 still feel embarrassed by period products so providing pads, tampons, and cups that are visible and freely available for all not only works against period poverty but also makes periods visible and normal, and fights period shame and stigma.

Susan Kelly gave a really great speech about free menstrual cups earlier and she started by saying, "This might make some people feel uncomfortable." I think that is a really sad truth. I went to Uni that day after bleeding on the train and sat in my soaked clothes with a jumper tied round my waist wanting the ground to swallow me up but many do not, and in 2017 research by Plan International UK showed that almost half of girls surveyed had missed school, college, or university, because of their period so this is an equalities issue. It is not fair that our young women are missing out on education because of their human bodily functions. *(Applause)*

I do not want to forget our trans brothers and non binary siblings who not only experience poverty and economic vulnerability at a much higher rate than women, but

already struggle to access basic healthcare. For trans men, especially the teenagers menstruating and purchasing menstrual products often labelled women's health, and in highly feminised packaging, could be emotionally complex, contribute to gender dysphasia and carry even worse stigma and shame and putting them in unsafe situations by outing them as trans. So let's protect trans kids and trans teens as well as women and girls, and get free period products in all bathrooms. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vicky. A seconder for Motion 224?

DAKSHA PAREKH (London): Hi, President. Hi, comrades. Good morning, everyone. I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Thank you. As my colleague already explained about this one I need to tell you something more. Congress, schoolgirls are taking three days off each term due to period related issues, so they miss a lot of their learning and this is more than time taken off, there is the holidays and truancy, which is part of period poverty. Those missing school because of their periods said it was a direct result of being unable to afford or access sanitary products and they did not feel able to talk to staff at their school causing them to stay at home. Also, young girls with learning or sensory difficulties find wearing sanitary products uncomfortable, which can lead to absence from school each month. More than a third of girls aged 14 to 21 in the UK struggled to afford or access period products during the pandemic and many still do not want to add to their family's money problems by asking them to buy these products. Period poverty impacts people's development, dignity, self-esteem, and mental health, and doctors are now treating patients suffering as a result, which is upsetting and degrading. Our girls should not be embarrassed to ask for sanitary products or discuss periods with a teacher and more so if it is a male teacher. We need to be open and discuss menstruation and the effect it is having on girls and their families. Let's break the barrier. This is an issue affecting women and girls, trans, and non-binary individuals, who cannot access menstrual products. We do not think the Government has taken this serious enough so that is why we want all schools and colleges to provide free menstrual products, just like some of the more farsighted companies are doing in the workplaces. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Daksha. Does anyone wish to speak in opposition to these motions? No? Then I will ask Gaylon Brinkworth for the CEC to respond.

GWYLAN BRINKWORTH (CEC): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 223 and 224, both of which we are supporting with qualifications.

First of all, Motion 223, menstrual cups should be available on all high street stores for sale. We support the call for a wider range of different products and resources available for those managing periods, particularly whilst at work. Menstrual cups which have become more widely available and reduced in price in recent years are a less wasteful alternative and importantly can significantly reduce the cost of periods compared to disposable products. We do note they are not suitable for everybody, particularly with some people with disabilities. Our qualification is that GMB is unable to ensure that high street stores and supermarkets stock different menstrual products. We support the GMB branches and individual members campaigning with

local shops to stock these products and suggest the branches ensure members working in retail have the opportunity to lead such campaigns.

Lastly, on Motion 224, free menstrual products for all schools, colleges, and all educational provision, the CEC fully supports the call for provision of free period products in workplaces and educational establishments, and applauds the inclusive language in this motion from the Newham Apex Branch. Our qualification is only that it may not be possible for a full toolkit and training to be provided at a national level on this issue within current resources. However, we enthusiastically encourage branches and regions to organise and campaign around this issue and push our members' workplaces, including schools and colleges, to provide a diversity of free period products. Therefore, Congress, please support both these motions with the qualifications I have outlined. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gayla. Motion 222, the CEC are supporting. Does London Region accept the qualification on Motion 223? (*Agreed*) And on Motion 224? (*Agreed*) In that case I will put all those to the vote. All those in favour please show? Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 222 was CARRIED.

Motion 223 was CARRIED.

Motion 224 was CARRIED.

SOCIAL POLICY: NHS & HEALTH ISSUES

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Social Policy: NHS & Health Issues. Could I have the mover for Composite 10, please?

NHS STAFFING CRISIS AND THE IMPACT OF UNDERSTAFFING IN MATERNITY UNITS COMPOSITE MOTION 10

C10. NHS Staffing Crisis and the Impact of Understaffing in Maternity Units

Covering Motions:

151. NHS STAFFING CRISIS - YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION

234. IMPACT OF UNDERSTAFFING IN MATERNITY UNITS - MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION

This Congress recognises the dire situation that the NHS is in, in relation to the staffing crisis.

This Congress notes that:

- 1 in 5 midwifery posts in the NHS were unfilled as of April 2020.
- Black women are 5 times more likely than, and Asian women twice as likely to die in pregnancy and childbirth, as white women.
- Understaffing is raising serious concerns for patient safety, having devastating impacts on women, babies and families.
- While 1 in 5 women suffer maternal mental health problems, over a third of maternity services do not employ any specialist maternal mental health midwives.

This Congress believes that:

- Midwifery is underfunded and understaffed in the NHS.
- These inequalities in healthcare for women and especially BAME women, occur as a result of systemic sexism and racism.
- To allow their continuation is a breach of the CEDAW convention.

The GMB will take every opportunity to campaign, lobby and support legislation to ensure that the Department of Health takes every measure possible to retain and recruit staff of all grades and in all professions. We call on GMB to campaign to:

- Increase NHS funding to maternity services, including increased salaries for midwives to end the recruitment crisis.
- Provide grants for midwifery training.
- Consult all stakeholders, especially BAME women, in order to remedy the inequalities in provision and services, to prevent excess death rate.
- Provide sufficient funds to do so and continue to monitor outcomes thereafter.
- Make maternity mental health services available to all pregnant and postpartum mothers everywhere.

Moving Region: MIDLAND & E COAST

Seconding Region: YORKSHIRE & N DERBYSHIRE

(Carried)

LINDA LOWNDES (Midland & East Coast): Second-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* The impact of understaffing in NHS maternity units, President, Congress, my awareness of NHS maternity services issues began a few years ago when as a relatively new rep I represented a midwife during her sickness review meetings. She had been off sick for several months with PTSD following an incident at work.

In light of the Ockenden Report for Shrewsbury & Telford Hospitals Trust and the ongoing investigation into maternity services in Nottingham, this Congress notes that one-in-five midwifery posts in the NHS was unfilled as of April 2020. Black women are five times more likely and Asian women twice as likely to die in pregnancy and childbirth than white women.

Understaffing is raising several concerns for patient safety having devastating effects on women, babies, and families. While one-in-five women suffer maternal mental health issues, over a third of maternity services do not employ a specialist maternal mental health midwife. This Congress believes that midwifery is underfunded and understaffed in the NHS. These inequalities in healthcare for women, especially BAME women, occur as a result of systemic sexism and racism. To allow their continuation is a breach of the CEDAW Convention. We call upon GMB to campaign to increase NHS funding for maternity services, including increased salaries for midwives to end the recruitment crisis; provide grants for midwifery training; consult all stakeholders, especially BAME women, in order to remedy the inequalities in provision and services to prevent excess deaths; to provide sufficient funds to do so and continue to monitor outcomes thereafter; make maternity mental health services available to all women, all pregnant women and all postpartum mothers everywhere. These affected mothers, babies, and midwives could be your family, your friend, your neighbour, or your colleague. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Linda. A seconder?

CHRISTINE LETTIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* The Tory government has introduced a series of disasters in the NHS since 2010, the Health and Social Care Act, pay constraints, and pay

poverty. The cost of becoming a nurse or a paramedic currently stands at £27,000. There are limitations on training which has led to the prevention of promotion and development. There have been changes in pension provisions and contributions, not forgetting raising the age of retirement to 67. In 2016, this Government decided to abandon its responsibility in relation to planning and preparing for a pandemic. Well, we all know how that story ended.

Congress, all of the above measures have contributed to the NHS staffing crisis and staff are currently leaving in droves. The impact of this is deterioration in working conditions for myself and for those who remain in post. It also means we have now an unacceptable inability to provide adequate patient care for you and your relatives. The GMB needs to campaign and lobby not only this Government but future ones too to reverse the above. Thank you. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Christine. Mover of 235?

IMPROVE MATERNITY CARE FOR BLACK WOMEN
MOTION 235

235. IMPROVE MATERNITY CARE FOR BLACK WOMEN

Black Women in the UK are 5 times more likely to die during pregnancy and after childbirth compared to White Women. There needs to be more research conducted to explore the disparities and recommendations put in place to improve health care for black women. The Government must commit to funding the changes needed to eradicate such high statistics and improve healthcare solutions for black women.

K19 SOUTH LONDON BRANCH
Southern Region

(*Carried*)

AVA PAYNE (Southern): President, Congress, black women in the UK are five times more likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth compared to white women. This is a bleak picture which has not changed in over a decade, or maybe even longer. The reason I say longer is because I have not been pregnant for over 30 years. I have, however, been pregnant six times, so effectively I have dodged that bullet five times. My babies were not so lucky. They became a statistic. I only have one first child who is more precious to me than gold.

Congress should be deeply concerned that black and brown people's basic human rights to safety, dignity, and equality in pregnancy and childbirth are not being protected, respected, or upheld. We already recognise that systematic racism exists in society as a whole so it follows that it must have an impact on maternity care. We must also understand that systematic discrimination against black pregnant women during and after pregnancy prevents them receiving the best care before, during and after pregnancy, and which may result in the ultimate tragedy of a death.

Reports have shown there are many examples of clinicians withholding pain relief from black women. It must stop. There is disparity in the care given and received by black women. It needs to change. There is a lack of trust between black women, healthcare services, and the government. They must be held to account. I call on this

Congress to challenge the government to commit funding, funding the changes needed to eradicate such high statistics and improve healthcare solutions for black women. Congress, I move. (*Standing ovation*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ava.

DAVINA BROWN (Southern): Good morning, Congress, President, and delegates. Black women are five times more likely to die during childbirth. That is a scary fact that must change now. If I had known that before having my daughter, who is now six years old, I may have reconsidered the joys of starting a family. While I was pregnant a family friend unfortunately died during childbirth at the same hospital I would shortly have to be attending. She never got to see or hold her baby. The fear and anxiety was peak. Luckily I had an uncomplicated delivery. Some women who look like me are not so lucky. The death of a woman during pregnancy, at delivery, or soon after delivery, is a tragedy for her family and for society as a whole. There is a cultural assumption that black and brown women are very strong. However, we are still human and we feel physical and emotional pain too. There needs to be better training and awareness. We need more diversity and resources and support available. We need collaborations with midwives who have a long and proud tradition of providing care that addresses health inequalities. Please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Davina. Anyone like to speak in opposition? Thank you. I will now call on Arron Bevan-John to give the CEC qualification.

ARRON BEVAN-JOHN (CEC): Good morning, Congress. I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Composite 10 – NHS Staffing Crisis and the Impact of Understaffing in Maternity Units, which we are supporting with a qualification.

Congress, this is a very important composite that we support its intent but with a qualification, the qualification being that midwives' pay is determined by Government, and that comes after consideration and recommendation from the NHS Pay Review Body for all Agenda for Change NHS staff. GMB is calling for a significant increase for all Agenda for Change staff. The CEC feels that we would need more information on maternity services specifically as a separate part of the NHS to be able to campaign for the full list of asks within the composite.

GMB's NHS 2022 Pay Review Body submission references retention challenges and the staffing crisis within the NHS. The joint union submission also specifically calls for an urgent retention package. Staffing levels and the need for recruitment and retention to be a priority for Government is a central part of this year's campaigning plans. Therefore, Congress, please support this important composite with the qualifications I have laid out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: thank you, Arron. Does Midland accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Yorkshire accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried. Motion 235 is being supported. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Composite 10 was CARRIED.

Motion 235 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can we now move on to Motions 247, 248, 249 and 250.

SOCIAL POLICY: SOCIAL CARE

SOCIAL CARE

MOTION 247

247. SOCIAL CARE

This Congress is appalled at the state of the social care sector, which is not fit for purpose. Congress is particularly appalled at the Government's short-term fix relating to increasing National Insurance Contributions. This Congress notes the state of the sector in relation to pay, sick pay, training, parity of esteem, working conditions, private equity ownership, working through unbelievable hardship in a pandemic, and a range of other key matters.

Congress notes however, that a long-term funding settlement is essential for the sector to survive, thrive, and show that it values all those hard-working members who helped people and the country through the recent darkest of times.

Congress calls for a full Westminster consensus for a funding settlement, for the Labour Party to adopt this motion as part of its policy making process, and we ask that any progress is reported back at the next Congress

F29 NORTH TYNE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE BRANCH Northern Region

(Carried)

SUE SOWERBY-SCOTT (Northern): Congress, I would like to ask the delegates to support this motion on the integration of health and social care. Not too long ago most of us were sat at home knee deep in toilet rolls and pasta, vigorously bleaching everything in sight, including our groceries. However, I would like to start by talking not about care but about the events in Downing Street during the height of the Covid crisis, where Boris Johnson and his law-breaking rich pals were partying on Champagne and gin, throwing up, fighting and being abusive and disrespectful towards the cleaners and the security staff. Those rich, privileged people thought it was their right to party.

Meanwhile, in the care homes up and down the United Kingdom, there was no mood to party. A very good friend of mine, Jacqui, from County Durham, will second this motion. She is one of our shop stewards and she works in the care home which made national news. Residents were being sent into the care home without being tested for Covid, and Jackie's care home suffered a catastrophic 30 deaths. The cause of those deaths was the Government's criminal negligence on the on-going crisis in social care. *(Applause)* Yet in Downing Street, reckless, rich idiots, who earn six-figure salaries, were getting hammered and singing Karaoke songs, yet Jackie was looking after a dying person who was denied a visit from their loved one. Whilst Boris Johnson was raising a toast with a glass of Champagne in his hand, Jacqui held the hand of a desperately ill resident.

Outside the care home the vultures were circling – the media! They didn't care about the residents or the workers, like Jacqui, but they cared about the statistical death toll so that they could write or broadcast a sensational story. The big picture they all missed, because they were not interested, was why were so many residents dying, how on earth were the staff coping and how do we prevent such a crisis from happening again? Jackie risked her own life caring for others. She and hundreds and thousands of other care workers kept our society going while working in extreme danger for low and often insecure wages.

Brothers and Sisters, we need a fundamental change in how our social care system is run. The care sector should not be run for private gain with the profits being squirreled away by large corporations in a bank account in the Caribbean. The care sector and the Health Service need to integrate as one wholly, properly funded, public sector service. There needs to be long-term planning because the crisis will get worse with an ageing population and chronic staff shortages across the sector.

Most of the people in our hospitals are either elderly or younger people with chronic illnesses. In other words, people who are in receipt of residential or domiciliary care. Healthcare and social care is, therefore, one coherent whole system. It needs to be funded by taxation and those taxes should be used to pay for care for those who need it and not for the profits of shareholders. It needs substantial long-term funding, no more sticking plasters on a gaping wound and care workers need to be paid well. They need to have access to a fair sick pay and a decent retirement pension.

Finally, Brothers and Sisters, the Covid crisis has taught society many lessons and one of these is that it is not the bankers and politicians who keep this country going, but it is the skills, the dedication and the sacrifice of low-paid care workers and other essential workers, like Jackie, who are the backbone of this country. *(Applause)*
Please support.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sue. Colleagues, before I call the next speaker, some people in the hall have raised a concern about background noise levels. This is a particular problem at the back of the hall. Please can I ask that you avoid speaking loudly except when called to the front and that you keep your conversations in the hall to a minimum. This is so that everyone can hear the debate. Thank you.
(Applause)

JACQUELINE KITCHEN (Northern): Congress, I am from Northern Region. I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President and Congress, as Sue said, I have worked in the care sector for more than 20 years, and I have been 12 years in my current role. But for years we have been seen as the Cinderella staff on the bottom rung of the ladder. We are underpaid, undervalued and have been ignored for far too long compared to the NHS. It is about time something changed.

Covid was disastrous for us and it highlighted the need for good carers. During the first two years of Covid, it made many staff, myself included, question whether the risk and the heartache were worth it. This is why something now needs to change. More than 70,000 carers have left the industry due to burnout, exhaustion and a catastrophic cocktail of low wages, sick pay, mandatory Covid jobs and post-Brexit immigration rules. Most carers choose to become delivery drivers, supermarket staff

and even going to work at Amazon because, embarrassingly, the wages are a lot better than what we get paid.

Now that there is light at the end of the Covid tunnel, we have a far more serious problem. The care sector is massively understaffed, which in turn puts further strain on the carers, like myself. It is tempting to blame Covid for the mass exodus of staff but, in reality, it is the low pay that is the predominant factor in the retention and recruitment of staff. This is why something needs to be change. A lack of workforce is causing services to be stretched to its limit and to prevent the essential care going to those who need it. Would I go back and repeat the last two years? In a heartbeat I would because without the social care workforce we have no care service. I second.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jacqui. I call the mover of Motion 248.

NHS TO CARE

MOTION 248

248. NHS TO CARE

Covid has highlighted the disconnect between health and social care. Surely there needs to be joined up thinking as it's a fact that many people are still in hospital when they need to be moved to care homes or home. Maybe there could be a transitional stage? The aim is to get them to the care sector/home as soon as possible to free hospital beds.

Here's a radical idea. We read there is a massive influx of new applicants for medical and care work following Covid we also have hidden resources; the Nightingale hospitals are now mothballed, but they could be recommissioned and used for this purpose. On the subject of locations, Congress should consider calling for the use of empty spaces such as Debenhams high street stores as they are all sitting empty thus merging the NHS and care.

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

ZAHIDA ABBAS-NOORI (London): Vice President and Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

Congress, we are all aware of the amazing work put in by our NHS and social care workers, especially during the Covid pandemic. We are also aware of the continuous shortage of trained doctors, nurses, healthcare assistants, home workers, home carers, social workers, pharmacists, maintenance workers and cleaners -- really, just about any NHS and social care staff – except the management. This puts a lot of pressure on the outstanding staff we already have. This is despite the influx of the people working in the amateur sector during the pandemic.

Congress, however, we have a problem, which is a disconnect between health and social care, which causes patients to be waiting in hospitals for discharge because they are waiting for a care-home bed or for appropriate home care to be put in place.

President and Congress, this motion is calling for an investigation into a way of using previous unrecognised and unused resources, be they large empty shops or event potentially spaces previously used as a Nightingale hospital, if they are still available. These could form transitional units for those moving from hospital beds to care homes or to care in their own homes. This would not be for a long-term stay but for a short period while the care plan can be finalised when a care-home bed can be found.

Congress, this would also give a potential for the NHS and special care services to work in a more integral way to support the patients. Finally, thank you very much, Congress. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

JOANNE RUST (London): Vice President and Congress, I am seconding Motion 248: NHS to Care. The Covid pandemic clearly showed us that the NHS and the care sector must work closely together. None of us will forget the way that the care sector was left to deal with patients who had been forced out of hospital beds with no testing and little PPE to send them back to care homes to die and to infect other vulnerable patients and staff with Covid. It is a stain on this Government, as if there aren't enough already, that they deliberately sent patients home from hospitals without testing them.

On 2nd April the rules on discharging from care homes were clarified, saying that negative tests are not required prior to transfers into a care home. I repeat, "not required". Far from throwing arms round the care sector, Matt Hancock and the Tory Government left them to die. By the time this Government said that the patients should be tested, an estimated 25,000 patients had been discharged with nearly three-quarters of them untested. Up to this point, nearly 6,000 care home residents had died in England and Wales.

Research into the impact of hospital transfers found that 1.6% of lab-confirmed outbreaks in care homes that they knew about by mid-October 2020 had come from people discharged from hospitals. To ensure that this situation never happens again, we must put plans in place and that is what his motion does. It seeks to utilise the former Nightingale hospitals and empty shops in our streets, like Debenhams, and make them a transitional stage of a patient's journey back into their care home or their home. *It sounds rather like the old convalescent homes, doesn't it. Please support this motion so we don't have to risk the lives of vulnerable people ever again. Thank you.* *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Joanne. Secunder? *(Formally seconded from the floor)*

PROTECTING COUNCIL DELIVERED CARE – STOP CARE HOME SELL-OFFS

MOTION 250

250. PROTECTING COUNCIL DELIVERED CARE – STOP CARE HOME SELL-OFFS

Congress notes the extreme challenges faced by care workers across sectors and in every part of the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic. Our care workers are rightly held up by the British

public and GMB Union as heroes who care for the most vulnerable in our communities when we need them most.

Some areas decided to reward that loyalty by threatening care home closures and job losses in specific conservative-run Derbyshire County Council.

Derbyshire County Council attempted the closure of 7 homes of their 23 in March 2020, to be defeated by GMB care workers and their campaign. However, 18 months later the Council opened a sham consultation to close them again; 7 out of 23.

GMB Congress believe GMB is the Union for all care workers, both public and private sector, and all care workers have the right to job security, and Derbyshire County Council should retain its Council run service and facilities and staff in-house.

GMB Congress resolves to write to GMB care workers, offering solidarity in their campaign and to support the campaign for the retention of Council care.

GMB DERBYSHIRE COUNTY BRANCH Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

MICK BURNS (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am moving Motion 25: Protecting Council Delivered Care – top the Care Home Sell-Offs). Vice President and Congress, this Congress is aware of the extreme challenges faced by care workers across all sectors in every part of the UK during the Covid 19 Pandemic. Our care workers are, rightly, held up by the British public and us here at the GMB Union as heroes who continue to care for the most vulnerable in our communities when they are needed the most.

Some areas of the country decided to reward the loyalty by the threat of closing their homes with job losses to follow. One such council is the Tory-run Derbyshire County Council. Derbyshire County Council attempted the closure of seven of their 23 care homes in March 2020. Thankfully, this was defeated by the GMB care workers by grassroots campaign they ran. *(Applause)* Just 18 months later – September 2021 – the council opened what can be called a “mockery” of a consultation to close them again. I repeat, seven out of 23!

GMB believes it to be the union for all care workers, those in both the public and private sectors, and that all care workers have the right to job security. We believe that Derbyshire County Council should retain its council-run service and in-house facilities. We believe that GMB Congress should write to the GMB care workers offering solidarity in their campaign and support the campaign for the retention of council care. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mick. Secunder.

MILES SHORT (Midland & East Coast): The first thing I will say to do is to give you a guarantee. I will even give you a gold guarantee, which is that all of you in this room are going to die. Just think about that. You’re going to die. There’s no two

ways about that. I'm going to die and I'm getting nearer to it because I'm 72, so I'm definitely getting nearer to it.

The other thing I want to say to you is who is going to look after you when you're taking your last breath? Who's going to hold your hand when you are shuffling off this mortal world? Who is going to look after you? I'll tell you who is going to look after you: the care workers, and who is going to look after the care workers? I'll be the GMB. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 249.

SOCIAL CARE CRISIS -- TRANSPARENCY OF COMPANY ACCOUNTS AND PROFIT

MOTION 249

249. SOCIAL CARE CRISIS – TRANSPARENCY OF COMPANY ACCOUNTS AND PROFIT

This Congress notes social care workers have been on the frontline of the pandemic, underpaid, undervalued, understaffed. They carried on working as best they could in difficult circumstances. Their pay is abysmal for the work they do, yet the care companies claim they cannot afford to pay them more as they themselves are calling out for more funding to be made available.

If these companies are in such poor financial state we are asking that they are transparent in their accounts and profits and these are made freely available to the public.

We are asking GMB to put pressure on companies to publish yearly accounts and profits.

PRIVATE CARE BRANCH GMB Scotland

(Carried)

LIZ MARTIN (GMB Scotland): Congress, I move Motion 249, Social Care Crisis – Transparency of Company Accounts and Profit. This Congress notes social care workers have been on the frontline of the pandemic, underpaid, undervalued and understaffed. They carried on working as best they could in difficult circumstances, dealing with a situation that was unimaginable, putting their own lives and others at risk as well as that of their families to care for vulnerable and elderly residents. Many staff are now suffering from mental health pressures and many from the effects of long- Covid. The pay is abysmal for what they do, yet the companies claim they cannot afford to pay them any more as they themselves are calling out for more funding to be made available.

Most care home staff are paid the National Living Wage. Without these workers the care home could not function. So what they do is vital to the running of the care home, yet the companies claim that they cannot afford to pay them more. Care staff pay varies from company to company, but the pay is poor no matter what company. Again, companies claim they cannot afford to pay more. These workers' pay rates are easily accessed, but when you move up the management tree pay rates are not so easily accessed, nor are the bonuses that are paid out.

Management and CEOs sit in their ivory towers claiming that they cannot afford to pay a decent wage to the workers on the floor, then we should make it known what their salaries and bonuses are. We ask for transparency of salary and bonuses to those sitting in their ivory towers. Then they can tell the frontline workers in the care homes, who have had a horrendous past two years, that they cannot afford to pay them a decent wage. Have any upper management had to use a food bank or has any CEO has ever had to think about paying for their heating? I think not. Have any upper management or CEO had to apply for Universal Credit? I think not. Publish yearly profits, publish salaries and bonuses. Let the general public and the workforce decide that they cannot afford to pay them more. Workers on the breadline are struggling financially day in and day out. We are asking the GMB to apply pressure on the Government and private care companies to be completely transparent by publishing yearly accounts, including salaries and bonuses of upper management and CEOs. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Liz. Secunder?

SHONA THOMSON (GMB Scotland): Congress and President, I second Motion 249 – the Social Care Crisis. We are in the midst of a social care crisis, but I disagree. There’s been a social care crisis before the pandemic, pre-pandemic, and the pandemic has only highlighted new issues upon the old issues. The private care companies resisted paying full pay to staff after they were struck down by Covid in their place of work, claiming that they can’t afford to. The treatment our members *endured* was absolutely disgusting. All the while staff were receiving minimum pay and poor terms and conditions. Staff have been expected to do more for less.

Private care firms claim that they cannot afford to pay a decent wage that reflects the value and hard work that social care staff bring. Instead, they cry “Poverty” while raking in massive profits. These companies need to be held accountable. They cannot be allowed to ignore care staff. Care staff know their worth now and are demanding the respect that we are demanding in Scotland. We are demanding that £15 minimum. But it should not have to be a fight after the lengths that these workers have gone to, especially at the peak of the pandemic. The pandemic is still on-going. Let’s not forget that. It’s not gone yet.

Private companies are claiming that they can’t afford to pay a fair wage to care staff. Their bluff should be called. They are in receipt of public money and it is in the public interest to know how it is being spent, or rather how it isn’t being spent. It is certainly not being spent on wages. Most importantly, it is in the public interest to know the profits that are being pocketed at the expense of care staff and ancillary staff in these private residential care homes. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shona. Does anyone wish to speak in opposition to the motions?

CIORSTAI DH REICHL E (GMB Scotland): I am not speaking against the motion. It is a point of clarity more than anything else before NHS Scotland fires me. I want to stress something that was said earlier. Comparing the NHS and social care I don’t think is the way to go. I think we need to stick together. We need to come together because together we are stronger. We are, after all, under one umbrella. We are all

doing the same job. In the NHS a brand new staff nurse, out of university, earns £13.85 an hour. I think it is just under £14. So right across the board no one is being paid appropriately. Nobody deserves it more, I would say, than the people in social care. I am talking about the people behind the scenes who don't get highlighted all the time, and that is wrong, because the NHS is pushed to the front whereas social care is not. But it is social care that is suffering for it. It was just a point of clarity to say we need to work together as one. Okay. That was all. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call on Viv Smart to give the qualification for the CEC.

VIV SMART (CEC): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 247, 248 and 249, which we are supporting with qualifications.

Turning, first, to Motion 247 – Social Care – GMB supports the motion in that social care funding is an issue that needs resolving and has been the subject of discussion in previous Congresses. The qualification is that the motion is calling for full Westminster consensus, which will be out of GMB's control. We can, however, continue to politically campaign for social care funding.

Moving now to Motion 248 – NHS to CARE. The CEC agrees that a lack of space is a serious problem across much of the NHS estate, and that all options should be explored for addressing this issue. We are supporting this motion with qualifications. The first is to note that despite some media claims to the contrary, NHS and care vacancies have risen during the pandemic, and employers are struggling to recruit. The second is that some Nightingale hospitals have since been returned to their original use and are not available for health purposes. One example is the GMB Congress 2022 venue, which was used as a Nightingale hospital.

Finally, to motion 249 – Social Care Crisis: Transparency of Company Accounts and Profit – we fully support the basis of this motion. Our qualification is that all companies are legally required to file annual accounts, subject to a limited number of exemptions. Under section 441 of the Companies Act 2006, the law is poorly enforced and companies should be challenged if they do not meet this requirement. Therefore, Congress, please support these motions with the qualifications I have explained. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Viv. Does Northern accept the qualification on Motion 247? *(Agreed)* Does London accept the qualification on Motion 248? *(Agreed)* Does GMB Scotland accept the qualification on Motion 249? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Motions 247, 248, 249 and 250 are all being supported. I will take them all at once. Those in favour, please show? Any against? They have carried.

Motion 247 was CARRIED.

Motion 248 was CARRIED.

Motion 249 was CARRIED.

Motion 250 was CARRIED.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES

FOR THE GMB TO CAMPAIGN AND LOBBY GOVERNMENT TO CHANGE THE CLOSURE OF ACADEMY SCHOOLS PROCESS WITHOUT FORMAL CONSULTATION AT ALL STAGES

MOTION 144

144. FOR THE GMB TO CAMPAIGN AND LOBBY GOVERNMENT TO CHANGE THE CLOSURE OF ACADEMY SCHOOLS PROCESS WITHOUT FORMAL CONSULTATION AT ALL STAGES

This Congress calls upon the GMB at every level to lobby and campaign for serious change in the Department for Education's short-sighted process that allows too easily the closing of community educational assets.

In February 2021, Astrea Multi Academy Trust gave the trade unions 1 hour notice of a meeting which was to inform that they had decided to close a school in Doncaster. The process is via the DfE document 'Making significant changes to an open academy and closure by mutual agreement' November 2019.

Astrea informed the unions that we were now being notified at stage 5 of a 6 stage process which was called the 'Listening Period'. There was no consultation at any stage prior to this with parents, the community, or affected staff and their trade union.

The local authority was contacted at stage 4 to request the latest census information.

Page 1 to 36 of the DfE document talks of changes to schools, extension of a building, changing to a faith school or repurposing to SEN etc. etc. and that consultation with all stakeholders takes place at **all stages**.

Page 36 to 46, yes just ten pages Congress, is how to close a school that provides education, life skills and social understanding to our children! This cannot be, and is not right! How can the closure of a school be done so ruthlessly and without early engagement and consultation with all those affected just as they advise to do for any other changes to a school!?

The impact on all concerned is immeasurable.....

This Congress resolves to:

- Campaign and lobby this tory government through our national and regional bodies to change the process so that engagement and consultation is at the very heart of every proposed change so that reasonable negotiations can take place that may influence change.
- Write to all Labour MP's to seek their immediate backing to raise in Parliament and to also lobby for change.

To start this fight with immediate effect to prevent anymore school closures without any proper formal consultation with all stakeholders from the outset.

DONCASTER CENTRAL BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

ROZALEEN MCKENNA (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Good morning, Congress, Chair and delegates. I am from the Leeds School Support Branch. I move Motion 144. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

Imagine, if you will, for a moment being given an hour's notice of the proposed closure of your workplace. How would you plan, organise and campaign to protect our members' jobs? This is what is taking place with academies across the country right now. In many instances, if an academy provider wishes to close a school, they can do so with little or no consultation with unions and their workforce.

In 2021 an academy provider in Doncaster gave our reps one hour's notice of a meeting where they were told that the provider was going to close their school. All of this was perfectly legal under the Department of Education Guidelines, which allow multi-academy trusts to consult with unions as part of the final stages of the process.

Call me cynical, Congress, but consultations often ask a question that those in power have already decided the answer to. This motion calls for the Union to run a robust national campaign seeking to do several things. First, it calls on the Union to lobby through national and regional bodies for a change to DfE approved processes around the closure of academies. Secondly, it calls for the political support from the Labour Member of Parliament by asking the political team to write to Labour MPs raising the issue in Parliament. These two actions won't bring our members' jobs back in Doncaster, but they might help the Union fight a campaign for our members on our terms instead of the employer's. I urge Congress to support this important motion. *(Applause)*

(The President took the Chair)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Rosaleen. Can we have the seconder for Motion 144?

JAMES WILTON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate. *(Applause)*

President and Congress, like most policy decisions made in the Department for Education they are mostly motivated by money. Cash rules everything around them. That is the ethos driven by the DfE. Obviously, that ethos rarely factors in the adverse effects that their grotesque and slimy policies have on the pupils, teaching staff and care staff. The decision to academise schools with little to no warning is an attack on all of us here at Congress. It's perpetuated by the Tory myth that academies are more successful than maintained schools. It's profit over quality. It's education sponsored by.... Insert whatever corporation here. We can't sit by and let the DfE tell all of our members and pupils to jump through impossible hoops all for the sake of disgusting Tory ideology, that being privatisation.

My granddad, a GMB convenor, fought against privatisation in the Water Board. My dad, too. Now it is all of us in education who are fighting. It's three generations fighting against the same issue. So, please, Congress, let's progress education. Let's

show the DfE that we won't jump when they say how high. Back this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, James. I call the mover of Motion 146.

JOB EVALUATION IN ALL COUNCILS AND SCHOOLS

MOTION 146

146. JOB EVALUATION IN ALL COUNCILS AND SCHOOLS

This Congress calls on our local authorities to commence urgent consultation with the GMB to review their job Evaluation policies and processes. Most, if not all, are way overdue and in many cases by years. The world of work and market pay rates are unrecognizable today in comparison with yesteryears and inflation, in real terms, and the value of our members ever increasing efforts and responsibilities must reflect what that world is now and not what it was in 2008.

In Support:

Our Councils, Calderdale in this region being a good, or bad, example, have got into the habit of using their reserves to subsidize pay rates for their contractors, accepting for example, that market rates for HGV drivers have increased (e.g. Suez/Veolia refuse collection). They do this without a second thought given to the fact that their own staff have pay rates that are based on old market values and do not take into account the added responsibilities that have been forced on them as Council resources and employee numbers have shrunk.

The GMB will always fight tooth and nail for the best pay rates for our members regardless of where they work but also now demands that we bring our Councils, and the Schools that come under our Green Book, back into the real world and concentrating their efforts, and every 'pay packet penny', on their own work force. Care workers, social workers, teaching assistants and all those who have delivered our vital public services during this pandemic are just as important as those who demand pay rises where our councils have outsourced or procured their services.

BRADFORD PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH

Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

JOHN STEVENSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress and President, I have been listening to some excellent speakers and some really good stuff has been coming out. We started this morning with the Women's Campaign Unit. By the way, this motion is yet another example of how women on low pay have been unfairly treated because what happens is that we use job evaluation now to have a go at them.

What do schools and academies do? They move people on to part-time working. Then they downgrade them. Oh, yes, that's fair! Is it? We then look at what they have done. The work hasn't changed. As a matter of fact, I was in a school recently because they were making staff redundant. They worked through the pandemic, they worked through Covid but now they are going to make them redundant. That sounds fair?

I asked them “Can I see your JD?” They gave me a JD. I asked them what scheme they had used. “Oh, we haven’t used one. We just worked out what it should be”. That’s what is happening.

I used to work for Sheffield City Council. I used to be a convenor there. They don’t do job evaluation. They do ‘job allocation’. With job allocation they split you into four families. Here’s the shock. Care workers are in the people family. If you get 500 points in ‘people’, and you compare it to the value of 500 points in technical, there is a two-grade difference. Guess where the majority of women workers are? Yes. They are in the people one getting the difference. This is a scandal. It has got to stop. Women workers have the right and should be treated exactly the same and fairly under any job evaluation scheme. Congress, I commend this motion to you. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Could I have a seconder for Motion 146. While we wait for the seconder to come up, again, can I just remind delegates, as Malcolm did, and visitors to keep noise to a minimum. I ask that you don’t congregate at the back of the hall or in the foyer because it is an open space and if we still hear the stewards will be asking for you to move to the other lobbies.

SARAH SHEEN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate. (*Applause*) I am seconding Motion 146: Job Evaluation in all Councils and Schools.

Madam President and General Secretary, in consultation with the GMB Union we call on all councils and schools to reassess and implement up-to-date policies and processes regarding job evaluation. Many in-house staff are not being job evaluated against up-to-date fair market rates. Outsourced contractors are often being paid far more than in-house staff of similar or same job descriptions. This is simply false economy. Many permanent council and school staff leave council and school employ altogether or become one of a growing number of agency and outsourced staff who backfill the ever-expanding staffing gaps in our essential primary services. To be honest, who can blame them?

This pandemic and the rise in the cost of living has highlighted inequitable pay scales which has led to this critical shortage of in-house staff. These dedicated staff members simply cannot live on pay rates that are based on outdated market job evaluations. We must campaign to have our members in councils and schools assessed with up-to-date job evaluation processes to ensure their pay for a fair day’s work. Please support this important motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Sarah. I call the mover of Motion 147.

REWARDING SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF
MOTION 147

147. REWARDING SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

This Congress calls on the Government to reward School Support staff who fearlessly attended school to support our key worker and vulnerable children, they have to date not been recognised for going above and beyond in perilous and anxiety inducing conditions.

The GMB calls upon the Government to provide local authorities with funds to allow them a gratuity payment as a gesture and appreciation of their courageous contribution during unprecedented times in attending work on the front line while many of us were fortunate to have the safety net of working from home.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

CHRISTINE HOUSTON (London): I move Motion 147 on Rewarding School Support Staff.

The worst of the Corona virus pandemic is, hopefully, over, but for school support staff, as for all key workers, the trauma and memories of two frightening and difficult years are still very present. Despite assurances from this Government that they would do whatever is necessary to support local government, they have failed to deliver. That is why we are calling for a Covid-19 recognition payment which we have included as part of this year's pay claim.

School support staff continue to work in schools with our most vulnerable children and the children of key workers, taking on new responsibilities, providing covers for teachers, feeding, caring and education children. School support staff delivered more than could ever have been expected of them, yet these term-time only workers are the lowest paid staff in schools. They have had enough of being put upon and taken for granted. It is shameful that they are not properly rewarded or recognised by the employer and Government. This must change! We know our members were scared of catching Covid and many did, and they are now living with the effects of long-Covid. We know they were terrified of taking Covid home to their families and vulnerable relatives, yet they carried on. They carried on for our children and carried on for our country. That is why we are calling for the Government to fund a Covid payment as a thank you to show appreciation and recognition for the effort and hard work of support staff. They deserve it and we demand better for them. Congress, please show your support for this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Christine. Could I have the seconder, please?

ROBERT WHEELER (London): President and Congress, I am Robert Wheeler, London Region and a first-time speaker, seconding Motion 147 on Rewarding School Support Staff. *(Applause)* Thank you.

Congress, our support staff members went through personal sacrifice and displayed courage and commitment throughout the pandemic. They worried every day about putting their families at risk. Those with clinically vulnerable children and elderly relatives found it a particularly frightening time. We know that children would not have received food parcels or school meals had it not been for our members. Vulnerable children would have been put at risk if schools were not open to them. Yet, despite all of this, there has been no recognition or thanks for these invaluable school staff members who kept the schools running. That is just wrong.

For far too long support staff in schools have been undervalued and put upon. A recent poll by London Region showed that one-in-three support staff are relying on or considering using food banks. The Government should be ashamed of this situation. Our members need and deserve a pay rise of at least RPI, and they deserve a recognition payment for their hard work over the past two years. Their skills and commitment do not deserve to be rewarded with trips to food banks. Congress, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Robert. Does anyone want to speak in opposition to these motions? (*No response*) No. Then can I ask Tracey Ashton for the CEC to respond.

TRACEY ASHTON (CEC): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 146 and 147, which we are supporting with qualifications.

Turning, first, to Motion 146 – Job Evaluation in all Councils and Schools – the motion, rightly, calls on local authorities to value their workforces through proper grading and job evaluation. This motion is helpful in joining up equality pay audits with our Right-Job/Right-Pay Campaign, being led through the National Organising Unit. The qualification is that instead of launching a campaign at the same time in all councils, activists and regions should be able to target employers in local government on a case-by-case basis to make sure we are deploying resources effectively.

Next, to Motion 147 – Rewarding School Support Staff. GMB did request a key-workers' allowance in both sets of pay talks, but this was rejected. We will continue to make the case for full recognition of all our workers during Covid. Our qualification is that we will expand the scope of workers. We will ask for this. Therefore, Congress, please support these motions and the qualifications I have explained. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tracey. Does Yorkshire Region accept the qualification on Motion 146? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does London accept the qualification on Motion 147? (*Agreed*) Yes. All those in favour of Motions 144, 146 and 147, please show? Thank you. Anyone against. They are carried.

Motion 144 was CARRIED.

Motion 146 was CARRIED.

Motion 147 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: We are continuing with motions on public services. So I need movers on 150, 157, 158 and 159. We are running ahead of schedule so we are going to take some motions from this afternoon. I hope people are ready. They will be on the NHS and Health Issues – Motions 231 and 233. That is Birmingham and London Regions, and Motions (Birmingham) and 237 (Southern). If those people are ready, that means you can sit down this afternoon and not worry. Can I have the mover for Motion 150, please.

REFUSE COLLECTORS

MOTION 150

150. REFUSE COLLECTORS

This Congress notes the many disputes across regions where GMB members have been left with no alternative but to take industrial action, to further their terms and conditions of employment. Congress, in showing solidarity with our hard-working members in Refuse Collection services, calls for all employers, who provide services to the public, paid for directly or indirectly from public services budgets, to pay at least the NJC Green Book rate for the job. Congress also calls for no detriment in the implementation of this policy and for the GMB to campaign in support of members where employers are opposed to the paying of at least the NJC rate for the job.

GATESHEAD LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

ANDREW GIBSON (Northern): Congress and President, I move Motion 150 – Refuse Collectors.

Congress, it is an absolute disgrace that our refuse collectors are not paid the correct rate for this job. All members across the Union have shown tremendous solidarity and have won many pay increases in dispute after dispute. This cost-of-living crisis is making things worse. As the motion says, our members should be paid at least the NJC Green Book rate for the job. There should be no detriment. We also need to call out the bad employers and help our members to campaign against them.

Congress, let us organise to win. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andrew. Seconder? *(The Motion was formally seconded from the floor)*. Thank you. That takes us to the mover of Motion 157.

NORTH EAST AMBULANCE
MOTION 157

157. NORTH EAST AMBULANCE

This Congress finds it abhorrent that GMB members working in ambulance services have had to put up with tough terms and conditions from their employers. Congress notes that some Ambulance employers have sought to force ambulance workers to take rest breaks in public places, restaurants, and employers have failed to provide the protections of members and have sought to cut corners, to hit waiting time targets during the Covid-19 pandemic. Congress calls for a campaign in ambulance services to tackle employers who are attacking GMB terms and conditions, putting health and safety at risk, and act in hostility to GMB members. Congress calls for a campaign to be launched on that basis, and for progress to be reported at the CEC and Congress in 2023.

NORTH EAST AMBULANCE BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

NEIL COLLINSON (Northern): President and Congress, I move Motion 157 – North East Ambulance.

Congress, we are appalled that recently a senior management of the North East Ambulance Trust publicly announced amid the Covid-19 pandemic that the reason ambulances took so long to reach patients is down to the crew members driving back

to stations to take their lunch breaks. Not only is this totally untrue and the delays are beyond the crew members' control, but management went further and looked to enforce that our members ate their lunch whilst sat in the ambulance at the side of the road or at a fast-food restaurant, where they have been subjected to verbal and physical abuse. Thankfully, our Union put a stop to this ludicrous and abhorrent policy that was imposed on our members. However, other concerns continue to arise.

Congress calls for a campaign in Ambulance Services to tackle employers who are attacking GMB terms and conditions. Cutting corners on health and safety and other acts of hostility put our members at risk. On this basis, Congress, calls for a campaign to be launched on that basis, and for progress to be reported at the CEC and Congress in 2023.

Congress, while we tirelessly support our members in the Ambulance Trust, let's ensure that these members who care for us at times of need are, in turn, cared for not only by us but by their employers, too. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Neil. Secunder for Motion 157. *(Motion 157 was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you, Northern Region. I now call the mover for Motion 158.

BODY CAMERAS & STAB VESTS

MOTION 158

158. BODY CAMERAS & STAB VESTS

This Congress, in June 2021 This Government made the announcement that body worn cameras will be provided to all Ambulance crews in all Ambulance trusts for their safety, following data that showed 3,569 staff were assaulted within that year, which was a 30% increase from 5 years ago.

Although welcome, and have their place, Body Worn cameras do not offer staff any real protection from attacks or weapons used during attacks. They only provide evidence should a prosecution follow.

We ask Congress to support the motion that all Front-Line Ambulance staff are provided with proper fitting stab vests like our colleagues in the police use, as these offer protection to our vital organs at times of attack and more so when weapons are used.

Body worn cameras should be used alongside stab vests, and not instead of.

EAST OF ENGLAND AMBULANCE SERVICE BRANCH

London Region

(Referred)

MURAD ALI (London): President and Congress, I am a first-time delegate *(Applause)* moving Motion 158 on Body Cameras and Stab Vests. Before I start saying anything, I would like to give a big thank you to all the ambulance staff who risk their lives on the roads to protect our lives. *(Applause)*

In the news of 6th July 2020 and incident occurred in which two paramedics attended a scene for a welfare check on a 53-year-old man. One of the paramedics was stabbed in the back and the other paramedic was stabbed in the lungs. For the one who was stabbed in the lungs some of her nerves were damaged and one of her lungs was punctured. Whilst she was lying on the ground, according to her own words, “I lay on the grass bleeding heavily whilst people tried to help me. I drifted in and out of consciousness and thought of my family and children. I worried that I would never see them again whilst I lay in the garden dying”, she said. She got lucky. She went through surgery and she recovered, but that incident changed her life. According to her own words, “Every single day, since that date, due to the chest muscle damage caused, I have had to rely on others even to help butter my toast and wash my hair”. So it was a life-changing event for her. If she had died, her whole family would have been devastated and destroyed.

According to a GMB report entitled “Enhance Way: Confronting Violence Against NHS Ambulance Staff”. It reported that 80% of the staff who attend scenes are attacked, leaving significant physical and mental scars which affect their lives. Day-by-day these attacks are increasing due to multiple reasons. Yet we are here still debating this issue.

Body worn cameras are welcome but body worn cameras are evidence only used after the incident, but what about protection of their vital organs. Police wear stab vests, so why can't paramedics wear them. If they wear the stab vests it will protect their vital organs like heart, lungs and so on.

I understand that this motion has been referred, to be reported back to Congress in 2023. Just imagine in one year how many paramedics will be attacked and how many paramedics will suffer these life-threatening and life-changing injuries. I want all of you to think of that. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Merab. I call the seconder to Motion 158.

ANTHONY DURCAN (London): As a registered nurse myself, I was grateful to London Region to enable me to second this motion. Paramedics are the green frontline, so critical to our community and to our beloved National Health Service. Many of the paramedics are the first to assess, to triage, to make safe and to save lives. *Green on the Scene!* These people are the first people who get to the emergency and they do not know what they are dealing with until they arrive.

It is ironic that the second group of people who arrive are the police, and they wear stab vests and they wear cameras. But the guys and the girls in the green do not!

West Midlands Ambulance Trust has just completed a trial with 20 paramedics over a period of time, which proved that stab vests make a difference, so much so, to their credit, West Midlands Ambulance Trust are now introducing these vests as an essential part of equipment. (*Applause*) The cameras are still to be debated.

All we now need from GMB is that we have the evidence. We need to roll this out as a national programme. Every week 11 paramedics are seriously injured. That's 11

too many and we can do something about it by supporting this motion. Thank you very much for listening. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Can we have the mover for Motion 159, please?

CONTRACTORS IN PUBLIC SERVICES

MOTION 159

159. CONTRACTORS IN PUBLIC SERVICES

This Congress calls for the employers of contracted out public services to pay at least the in-house rate for the job and to support GMB members in their efforts and campaigns to obtain parity in terms of pay, terms and conditions of employment. Congress calls for a campaign to be initiated to ensure GMB members have the support that they need in implementing this policy and for updates to be given to CEC on progress.

NEWCASTLE CITY LA BRANCH

Northern Region

(Carried)

NEIL COLLINSON (Northern): I move Motion 159 – Contractors in Public Services. Congress, I fully recognise that services should not be put out in the first place but, unfortunately, many services have been privatised. Our members have fought campaign after campaign in public services to fight, to win, against bad employers. Congress, our members are winning. We are calling for full parity in terms of pay and terms and conditions of employment within these public services that are contracted out.

Congress, we would like a campaign to happen to ensure that this motion is acted upon. We fully understand that any campaigns are for local areas to decide where appropriate and what is appropriate. We have seen some great shared practices across the Union. We would welcome trying to bring together activities so that we can help to understand what is happening in outsourcing across the Union. This will help us work together in solidarity and win many fights against employers who are not on the side of members. Together our members can campaign to win. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Neil. Is there a seconder for Motion 159? *(The Motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you. In that case, does anyone wish to speak in opposition to these motions? If not, I ask Kevin Buchanan from the CEC to respond, please.

KEVIN BUCHANAN (CEC): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 157, 158 and 159. The CEC is supporting Motion 157 – North East Ambulance – with a qualification. The GMB supports all campaigns that seek to challenge ambulance employers who attack terms and conditions. The qualification is that ambulance employers are separate identities and implement changes differently.

An attack on terms and conditions by one employer does not automatically apply across to others. We will support local campaigning and collate and co-ordinate

issues and campaigns where appropriate, and a report can be produced for Congress 2023.

In relation to Motion 158 – Body Cameras & Stab Vests – the CEC is asking for this motion to be referred. As stated earlier, when it comes to the health and safety of our members, we take these matters very, very seriously. Aggression and violence towards our members or anyone doing their job is reprehensible. However, the issue of body cameras is something that has detailed debate and discussion at the National Ambulance Committee before arriving at our position in being supportive of them, as we recognise that not all ambulance workers want them.

The same debate and discussion needs to be held with regard to our members' position on the wearing of stab vests. The motion needs to be referred so that the national committees and membership can be consulted and review a report to come back to Congress in 2023.

Finally, on Motion 159 – Contractors in Public Services – the CEC is asking that this motion be supported with a qualification. The qualification is that contracted employers within public services are separate identities with varying recognition agreements locally. They implement terms and conditions differently. Any campaign needs to be locally determined and driven. We can bring together activists across the industries and establish a forum that can understand and recognise different rates and terms and use the forum to empower and drive the campaigns in a co-ordinated way. The report could be produced for Congress 2023.

Therefore, Congress, please support Motions 157 and 159 with the qualifications outlined, and we ask that Motion 158 be referred back. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Does Northern Region accept the qualification on Motion 157? (*Agreed*) Does Northern Region accept the qualification on Motion 159? (*Agreed*) And does London Region accept reference back on Motion 158? (*Agreed*) So we do not need to vote on Motion 158. On Motions 150, 157 and 159, all those in favour, please show? Thank you. Anyone against? Thank you. Those are carried.

*Motion 150 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 157 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 158 was **REFERRED**.*

*Motion 159 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: As I said earlier, we are ahead of schedule. We now come to motions for debate under Social Policy: NHS & Health Issues.

SOCIAL POLICY: NHS & HEALTH ISSUES

SOS NHS CAMPAIGN

MOTION 231

231. SOS NHS CAMPAIGN

This Congress notes that the Covid pandemic has exposed how the previous decade's austerity measures have impacted on all public services especially the NHS and underfunding in the NHS has undoubtedly cost lives.

We welcome that in January 2022, SOS NHS was set up by a broad coalition of campaign groups and trade unions which are demanding emergency funding for the NHS from the Government to support services and staff and not the private sector. It is heartening to know that the campaign is already backed by Keep Our NHS Public, Health Campaigns Together, People's Assembly Against Austerity, Unite the Union, GMB, We Own it, NHS Support Federation, NHS Workers Say No, NHS Staff Voices, Doctors in Unite, Doctors for the NHS and more.

This Congress believes that this crisis will not disappear as Covid recedes but will remain endemic in the future, unless urgent and drastic action is taken. We believe we will need legislation and change at the top to re-establish a fully publicly funded and provided national health service, protected from private companies who put profit before patients. We need a national care service and we need to make the NHS the default provider for health service provision.

This GMB Congress resolves to

- Endorse and support the SOS NHS campaign and its demands.
- To circulate and advertise the work of SOS NHS to our members and supporters.
- To encourage all our Regions and Branches to consider affiliation to the NHS campaign groups and to make a donation to the campaign funds.

B10 BANBURY NO.1 BRANCH Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

CHERYL PERRY (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, General Secretary and Congress, I am honoured to commend the SOS NHS Campaign to you today. This campaign is a joint statement and set of demands from the following health campaign groups: Keep Our NHS Public, Health Campaigns Together, People's Assembly Against Austerity, Unite the Union, We Own It, The Socialist Health Association and a further 14 organisations, including, of course, some GMB branches. Anyone who has worked with different campaign groups knows it is like herding cats trying to get two campaign groups to agree on anything. So this unprecedented collection of health and social care professionals and hundreds of thousands of health and social care campaigners coming together to deliver a simple message is incredible. That simple message is: The privatisation of health and social care services has not worked! Privatisation has failed us and continues to fail us every day.

The insidious creeping sell-off of our NHS continues to impact waiting lists, clinical outcomes and the working terms and conditions of everyone who works within those services.

The recent passing of the Health and Care Bill puts private healthcare lobbyists on the very commissioning boards that decide where those health contracts go. We have seen over the last two years, with the blatant disgrace of the Covid contracts, exactly what happens in that kind of system and how that plays out. The SOS Campaign calls for our healthcare services to be returned to public ownership and for profit-making to be removed from those services. The campaign supports the formation of a national care service. This motion further encourages regions and branches to consider affiliation to the SOS NHS Campaign.

May I just take a moment to thank all those branches which have already affiliated. We are in double digits already, and your solidarity is much appreciated.

I started working in the NHS just a week before my 17th birthday and I have watched for 30 years as the NHS services have been pulled off one by one from the side. I have worked as a critical care nurse. I've worked at policy level. I am now in the primary care level. I have seen from all angles the impact of the fracturing of our clinical services, a death by a thousand contracts. The private sector is not cheaper. The private sector is not more efficient. They are in it to win it, and in this case the win is profit, profit on our ill health, profit on our mental health crisis and profit on the worst days of many of our lives. It is not ethical and it does not work.

A recent court judgment has also determined that many of these contracts are blatantly discriminatory against black and minority workers. They knowingly inflict worse terms and conditions on a group, and that makes it direct discrimination. Three court judgments this year have now agreed to that. Whilst we have lost in Parliament with the Health and Social Care Bill, we are winning in the courts. We have decades of data and evidence to undermine the ideological myths of private-care efficiencies now.

On the BBC this evening, *Panorama* will show and expose how the biggest GP train in the UK is replacing GPs with less qualified staff, a clinical concern for patients and a workers' rights issue for those staff being asked to work outside of their level of competence and training. It is time to demand a change of direction through industrial action, through campaigning, through the courts and through solidarity with those organisations leading the charge. I commend this motion to you and I ask for your support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder of Motion 231.

CHRISTINA DEARLOVE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Although I am from the Birmingham & West Midlands Region, we are soon to be joining that team over *there*, London Region. I am second this motion: SOS NHS Campaign.

Congress, Ni Bevan created for us a great system that is free to everyone, to get free medical care and treatment. But right now Boris and his Tories out *there* keep outsourcing those contracts to his friends whilst partying with his mates, making waiting lists longer, seeing a specialist harder and getting the needed care even much worse, sometimes unreachable for many years.

Please join the SOS Campaign. We need to turn the NHS around and make it better. Waiting lists are way too long. People are dying. People are taking their own lives because they can't wait. In the last six months I, personally, have lost two friends, one to cancer because she could not see the specialist quick enough, and another to Corona virus because to see the specialist in London she had to wait a whopping three years!

As someone who suffers from anxiety and sometimes depression, amongst other things, I know personally how long those waiting times are and how hard it can be. For one of mine, it's been five years, and that list is still growing. Thanks, Boris and your mates. Congress, please support this motion. Let's save our great NHS.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Christina. I call the mover of Motion 233, please.

ACADEMY STYLE HOSPITALS

MOTION 233

233. ACADEMY STYLE HOSPITALS

This Congress notes with great concern the recent reports regarding Academy Style Hospitals, to be run by the private sector, as part of the Health Secretary's "reform" proposals.

Tory ideology tells us that lessons have not been learned from the previous failures of Academy Style Hospitals, at the Good Hope Hospital and more recently at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, both of which ended in failure and total and costly disaster, taking vital resources away from the NHS to sort afterwards.

This Congress therefore calls upon the Government to abandon any and all proposals for Academy Style Hospitals. Should the Government go ahead regardless; the GMB to launch coordinated campaigns, locally, regionally, and nationally, involving all like-minded unions, organisations and relevant campaign groups, to oppose Academy Style Hospitals.

BUCKS COUNTY BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

BRENDAN DUFFIELD (London): Congress, I move Motion 233 on Academy Style Hospitals. The Tory Government keeps telling the British people that the NHS is safe in their hands, but we, as a major NHS trade union, know better. Our members have been telling us for years that the crisis in the NHS is not about management structures but is about chronic under-funding.

The latest smokescreen the Tories have come up with to avoid the real question of under-funding is the proposal to create academy-style NHS trusts, run by the private sector, just like the academisation of schools and emergence of multi-academy trusts, taking control of the education of our children and young people.

Has the academisation of schools driven up standards? We all know that the answer is no. But we do know that academisation of schools has driven up the salaries of

headteachers and senior management at the expense of our members; teaching assistants, cleaning, catering staff and so on.

Will the creation of academy-style hospitals be any different? I very much doubt it. In fact, I know it won't. As the Good Hope Hospital and, more recently, the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital in Cambridgeshire experience formed to create these styled hospital ended in costly failure at the cost to the patients and the staff. Even the Tory *Daily Mail* in an article in January seemed to doubt that Sajid Javid's proposals would drive up standards in that hospital.

The NHS does not need Government tinkering with the management structures yet again. What it needs is investment and funding. The NHS does not need any more highly-paid managers and private-sector trusts. In 1948 Ni Bevan had a vision of free health care from cradle to grave. It is our duty in 2022 to protect that vision and legacy. Congress, that means we need to keep our NHS public. Thank you.
(Applause)

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

MURAD ALI (London): President and Congress, I am seconding Motion 233 on Academy Style Hospitals.

The Government have said that they want to reduce the waiting times for the patients and enhance the patients' experience at the NHS. For that purpose, they are trying to convert the hospitals into academy-style hospitals. We all know, and as Brendan said, on the contrary to what the Government says that the establishment of academy schools has improved education standards. However, we have heard in the media that there have been lots of reports of financial mismanagement and corruption in the management of the academy schools. Let me give you two examples. One is Wakefield City Academy Trust and Fowey River Academy. These are just two examples.

In the *Metro* last month, dated 10th May 2002 an article said, according to a Local Government Association report, that 92% of the council states schools received good or outstanding reports from OFSTED as compared to 82% of the academies. Why are the Government trying to convert hospitals into academies is because of privatisation and it is under the label of out-sourcing. The Government plans to convert the low-performing hospitals by deploying highly-paid management, giving them targets to achieve, and these highly-paid managers, in order to achieve their targets, they will bully and harass the staff, which is already happening in the NHS. As a result, there will be friction between the staff and the management. The staff will be demoralised because they will be under pressure to achieve the targets, and it will create high staff turnover which already exists in the NHS.

Other research shows that the highly-paid managers have the same poor performance and their low-paid counterparts, because the highly-paid performance managers only want to tick the boxes to achieve their targets.

Lastly, academy-style hospitals will also defeat the purpose of the Health and Social Care Bill, which calls for the integration of the health services to provide patient care. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Murad. I call Motion 236.

PRESCRIBED MEDICATION AUTHORISED BY GP'S
MOTION 236

236. PRESCRIBED MEDICATION AUTHORISED BY GP'S

This Congress calls upon the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) who advise doctors with the new guidance issued by the government in 2018 on prescription medications to clearly reiterate to all GP's that guidance is just that, and it does not remove the ability of clinical discretion from the prescriber in accordance with their professional duties. They are not fixed rules – they are not set in stone – and they don't apply to every single patient without exception. There is not a "one-size fits all" solution to every patient's condition, we are all individuals and should be treated this way.

The guidance is aimed at minor, short term conditions, which normally get better by themselves with time, or you can treat yourself. Unfortunately, some doctors are applying this guidance to other conditions which are long term and not minor ones thus putting cost saving before a patient's clinical care.

C15 GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

KEVIN BAKER (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am speaking on Prescribed Medication Authorised by GPs. This Congress calls upon the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) who advise doctors with new guidance issued by the Government in 2018 on prescription medications to clearly reiterate to all GP's that guidance is just that, and it does not remove the ability of clinical discretion from the prescriber in accordance with their professional duties. They are not fixed rules – they are not set in stone – and they don't apply to every single patient without exception. There is not a "one-size fits all" solution to every patient's condition, we are all individuals and should be treated this way.

The guidance is aimed at minor, short-term conditions, which normally get better by themselves with time, or you can treat them yourself. Unfortunately, some doctors are applying this guidance to other conditions which are long term. They are not minor ones, thus putting cost savings before a patient's clinical care.

Congress should note that this guidance was intended to be applied to a limited range of conditions. While the guidance states that prescriptions should not routinely be issued for these conditions, discretion remains. The guidance should not be used to restrict treatment for workers who need it. We need to protect these workers who are the most vulnerable part of our workforce. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Can I have the seconder, please?

CHRISTOPHER BETTANY (Birmingham & West Midlands): President and Congress, I am seconding Motion 236. I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Prescribed medicine and clinical care should, quite simply, be administered in the correct and most efficient way possible. Ideally, everyone who becomes poorly or, heaven forbid, seriously ill want the best treatment available. It is as simple as that. We all expect our GPs and medical practitioners to be able to use all their judgement to make us well, not just us but our families. We expect these men and women to use their extensive training and experience to preserve our lives. We put our trust in them as pillars of society as, overall, they do a terrific job. The problem is that they seem to have a carte blanche way at times to the administration of medicine and prescribed drugs as their jobs, at times, have become somewhat governed by money rather than good health.

The numbers game has been given the green light for GPs to use their discretion in what treatment to give out, a green light that has always been fine and dandy in minor cases, such as a rash or cold, but in much more serious cases it is definitely not a go-ahead to try out medication or choose cheaper alternatives. Those serious complaints must be treated with the best medicine there is and with kindness and dignity, not as some form of guinea pig.

We need legislation to make common sense as a matter of urgency and let our very experienced practitioners treat patients as they should do, not as a pawn in a drug-salesman's campaign. We want good health as a right and not as an experiment. We want this loophole closed and get back to common sense. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Chris. I know you were expecting to speak this afternoon so you can relax now and enjoy your lunch. I call the mover for Motion 237.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS DRUG FAMPRIDINE MOTION 237

237. MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS DRUG FAMPRIDINE

This Congress is asked to support the essential drug Fampridine to be made available for free to MS sufferers under NHS England. This drug is readily available for free in Wales and Scotland to multiple sclerosis sufferers as an essential drug.

Under NHS England however, Fampridine currently costs around £600 per month to be paid by the MS sufferer. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) who advise the government on these issues believe that to supply Fampridine free of charge to MS sufferers does not represent value for money. This is disgraceful, Wales and Scotland NHS recognize this is an essential drug, why can't NHS England do the same to ease the financial burden put on MS sufferers in England make Fampridine available for free to MS sufferers in England.

K19 SOUTH LONDON BRANCH Southern Region

(Carried)

MAGGIE HUGHES (Southern): Congress and President, I am moving Motion 237 – Multiple Sclerosis Drug Fampridine. It is estimated that there are more than 130,000

people with MS in the UK and that nearly 7,000 people are newly diagnosed each year. This means that around one in every 500 people in the UK have MS, and that each week 130 people are newly diagnosed with MS.

Fampridine is a drug which aims to improve walking in adults with this condition. The treatment doesn't work for everyone, but it can make a big difference to many people's symptoms. If this drug works for you, it can speed up walking by around 25% on average. It can also help manage MS fatigue and its effects. Fampridine is approved for NHS use in Scotland and also approved in Wales for eligible people living with MS. Yet it is still being charged at a rate of £600 per month to patients in England. However, NICE, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence has decided to reject Fampridine because they don't think it is cost-effective – remember the words “cost-effective” – treatment at the current price offered by the manufacturers.

Everyone deserves access to treatments, so that is why it is deeply disappointing that NICE has decided not to recommend Fampridine for MS sufferers in England.

NICE, NHS England and the manufacturers Biogen need to find a solution to make sure that everyone who is eligible can access it free of charge and not at the rate, as I have said before, of £600 per month. MS is a relentless, painful disabling condition and this treatment increases the option for MS patients to manage their MS and help to prevent symptoms.

Our community experience tells us just how big a difference having different treatments available can make. I hope that the appraisal bodies in other parts of the UK follow suit as soon as possible so everyone with MS can access this medication for free. I am asking Congress to support the essential drug Fampridine to be made available in England for sufferers of MS. We are calling on NICE, NHS England and the pharmaceutical company, Biogen, to work together to find this solution. This motion could be about me, but it could also be about you. So let's make way to a right to free access to this drug for all MS sufferers and not have this turned into a post-code lottery. Again, remember those words “cost-effective”. I would try telling those words to someone who has MS. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

ADAM HUGHES (Southern): I am seconding Motion 237 – Multiple Sclerosis Drug Fampridine. President and Congress, in England Fampridine is currently not recommended for use within the NHS. However, the ever-growing number of those with MS continues to rise.

In Scotland Fampridine was given the green light by the Scottish medicine Cortisone on 13th April 2020 with statistics of 15,700. In England, where the rates are averaging around 105,000 cases, can you hear the difference in the rates?

There have been repeated attempts to get Fampridine recommended for use for MS patients within the NHS. Can you, please, tell me why?

As a Union, we have a voice to make a change. Fampridine is a symptom management treatment that can help some people with MS to improve their walking

ability. It is already approved in Wales and Scotland. So why not here? We need your support in our movement to make a change, to enable MS sufferers not to be silenced by a non-visible disability but a shield to bring strength in our words. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Adam. Are there any delegates who wish to speak in opposition to these motions? (*No response*) No. In that case, there is no CEC speaker because the CEC is supporting all four motions, so I can put 231, 233, 236 and 237 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Thank you. Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 231 was CARRIED.

Motion 233 was CARRIED.

Motion 236 was CARRIED.

Motion 237 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. That concludes the morning's business. You have been brilliant about keeping to time. Please be back on time. Proceedings will be starting at 2 o'clock because Rachel Reeves MP, our Labour Party colleague, will be giving her talk and there will be a question and answer session with her. Enjoy your lunch.

Conference adjourned for lunch.

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Congress assembled at 2.00 p.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Could I ask Congress to take your seats, please? I call Congress to order for this afternoon's session, please. Again, can I just make sure that you switch your devices off, or make sure they are on silent, and I hope you all had a good lunchtime and enjoyed the fringes.

Before I start I have been told that somebody has lost their room card, a grey room card for the Crowne Plaza Hotel. It was found downstairs so anybody staying in the Crowne Plaza please check. If you do not have it, Sam at the back is waving there, he has it in his hand. Go and see Sam, please, otherwise you are not going to be able to get into your room.

Can I ask Helen Johnson to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 4.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 4

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

Motion 29 – Virtual Congress from Southern Region.

Motion 126 – Protection of Job Losses caused by Automation and Technology from Birmingham and West Midlands Region.

Bucket Collections: The amount collected for the Papyrus charity to date was £594. (*Applause*) President, Congress, I formally move adoption of SOC Report No.4.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen, and can I ask if there is any delegate who wishes to speak on any of the SOC's recommendations? No? In that case, I put the SOC Report to Congress. All those in favour please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you, Helen.

*The Standing Orders Committee Report No.4 was **ADOPTED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: Papyrus is an excellent charity, young suicide. This year the regions will be written to by Gary and myself saying that that is what has been collected, and then regions and regional committees will make the decision as to how much they want to add to that collection. They will be added to but in a way that the regions decide. Thank you.

I am very pleased to begin this afternoon's session by inviting Rachel Reeves, MP, to speak to Congress. Rachel is a longstanding GMB member who worked as an economist before she was elected MP for Leeds West in 2010, and she was appointed as Shadow Chancellor last years. As Chair of the Business Select Committee, she led the inquiry into the collapse of Carillion and she has worked closely with GMB on issues that include backing UK manufacturing and investment in our energy infrastructure.

Rachel, it is a great privilege to welcome you to Congress.

RACHEL REEVES, MP and SHADOW CHANCELLOR, ADDRESSED CONGRESS

RACHEL REEVES, MP: Thank you for that kind introduction, Barbara, and for the invitation to be with you today at your Congress here in Yorkshire. On behalf of the whole of the Labour Party I would like to start by thanking Gary for the leadership that he has provided to the GMB and also to our entire labour Movement. Thank you, Gary. (*Applause*)

I would also like to take this chance to thank your workplace leaders, GMB's reps, who have worked tirelessly through the pandemic, and since, who are fighting for safety, equality, and dignity at work, and are giving working people a collective voice for today's challenges.

It has not been an easy time. We have had a Covid crisis, an energy crisis, and now a cost-of-living crisis. Public services are stretched to breaking point and we have a Tory government that is incapable of governing and could not give a damn about anyone apart from themselves. (*Applause*) I also know that GMB members are not just defending members in the workplace; you are showing leadership in all of our communities. When the Government falls short, as this Tory government has done time and time again, it is decent people who step up.

I know from my own experience as a Member of Parliament for Leeds West these last 12 years that wherever there are challenges GMB members are there to support,

whether it is helping out in food banks, volunteering for community organisations, or countering bigotry from those who try to discriminate and divide us. GMB members are putting the value of social justice into practice every single day.

The trade union Movement is not just important as a defensive shield for working people, it is a source of ideas and solutions for a stronger economy tomorrow. That is why I am honoured to be with you today as Labour's Shadow Chancellor and, as Barbara says, as a proud and longstanding GMB member. (*Applause*) Thank you. I want to use this occasion to share some thoughts with you on the serious economic challenges that we all know we face today, some of their causes, and the difference that a Labour government led by Keir Stammer would make.

It is clear that this Tory government is desperately running out of ideas, totally out of touch, and cannot provide the direction or the change that our country so needs. We have been here before, have we not?

I was born in 1979 and I had to wait until I was an adult before I had the chance to experience a Labour government. Those long 18 years under Thatcher and then Major scarred our country. I have two young children who have only known Tory governments and I am determined that they and all our children and our grandchildren do not have to wait to be adults before they get a government that is on their side.

The stakes could not be higher. We all see it today, whatever job we do and whatever community we live in, our country is far less resilient to shocks and cannot meet the needs of people precisely because of this reckless, chaotic, and incompetent government.

Let me give you three examples of why and how Labour will tackle things differently. First of all, over the last 12 years the Conservative Government has actively undermined our public services. They have been cut, stretched, and many outsourced to those looking to make a quick profit.

I am the daughter of two primary school teachers in South London. My Mum helped to teach children with special needs and my Dad was a head teacher at a local primary school. I learnt first-hand that you cannot put a price on the public service ethos.

I have met with GMB members in my region of Yorkshire who told me stories about the detrimental changes to their public service jobs when they have been handed over to private companies. That is not good for those working in public services. It is not good for those using them either, and it is not good for taxpayers. I saw this first-hand when I chaired the inquiry into the collapse of Carillion. It is what some call a model of bandits capitalism, an unstable shadow arm of the state, paid for by all of us, drowning out the public voice, driving down conditions to increase profit margins and cash flowing one project with another. Then the music stops; all the risks with taxpayers, all the profit with shareholders, and no accountability to the public.

The Tories have not learnt a single lesson from the collapse of Carillion but Labour have. That is why the next Labour government will oversee the biggest wave of insourcing in a generation. (*Applause*) The second difference that a Labour government will make is to ensure that British industries succeed and people who work in them as

well. We are less resilient as a country because too many government orders are being sent overseas with no regard to the wider consequences for British industries or for British jobs. Jobs have been lost in critical parts of our economy and we are increasingly dependent on regimes that do not share our interests and do not share our values.

I remember meeting GMB reps in Appledore two years ago who knew the true value of their shipyard, its supply chains, and the local jobs. They knew these things much better than the government. This is not confined to Westminster. GMB members up and down the country have seen it all too clearly, from defence manufacturing workers who see a government apparently determined to parcel up a £1.6bn Fleet Solid Support contract to overseas suppliers, to the awarding of work for the manufacture of Moray West wind turbines to China. What a kick in the teeth for Britain's foundational industries and to our steel communities. This is the consequence of the repeated neglect of our own industries by this Tory government, which does nothing patriotic for the order books of British industries here in Britain.

Now, GMB have expertly highlighted this through your campaigns on defence jobs and your report on how public procurement can be used alongside an active industrial strategy. GMB's work has played an important part in exposing the failure of government policy as well as enriching our thinking in the Labour Party. That is why the next Labour government will buy, make, and sell more here in Britain creating good jobs and growth opportunities, using all levers at our disposal. When awarding contracts a Labour government will weigh not just the cost and the quality of a contract but the value that it brings to our communities, and for defence where there is most freedom in procurement Labour will introduce a "Buy British" by default approach. *(Applause)*

The third difference that I want to talk about today is our national resilience because that has been undermined by the inability and the unwillingness of repeated Tory governments to plan properly for the future. This Government have an ideological hostility to industrial strategy and a misguided belief that it gets in the way of businesses succeeding. Nonsense. Long-term success is helped, not hindered, by an active government, working with British industries to make the most of our great potential. We need British businesses thriving with good jobs and wages people can raise a family on.

The Conservatives always put short-termism ahead of serious decision-making and planning for our industrial future. How on earth are we going to approach our climate change commitments in a fair and a responsible way and achieve greater energy security without an industrial strategy. Congress, there is no route to net zero, and you know this too, without a new unclear energy industry yet we have seen a catalogue of dither and delay from this Conservative government. It is not just that vital long-term decisions have been put off, but bad short-term decisions have been made which has cost our country dearly.

The Tory failure on energy security has cost a staggering £9bn this year alone, and £1bn of that comes from allowing the gas storage facilities at Ruff to close, pushing up bills. Three years ago when I chaired the Business Select Committee I warned the Government about reducing investment in gas storage for the UK and to consider the

implications for future gas prices and supplies for consumers. The Government said it was okay because the market will fix it. Now we have come full circle again and after this reckless decision left our country more exposed to fluctuations of markets because we cannot store gas. Planning for the future is about grabbing industrial opportunities with both hands, making and shaping new markets whilst securing our energy supply.

A thriving hydrogen industry is vital and the potential of hydrogen is real. I saw that potential myself this year on a hydrogen-powered bus going to a hydrogen heated home, in Gateshead, with the GMB Northern Region. Labour is committed to investing £28bn a year in our climate investment pledge to meet our net zero obligations, boost the British industries, and secure decarbonised future for existing jobs and create good new jobs in the process. Crucially, it will transform our former industrial areas and our coastal communities giving new hope for the future.

Tory mistakes have undoubtedly weakened our economy and made the current cost-of-living crisis bite hard. For too many people it is not just a matter of higher energy bills, it is the pain of squeezed wages as well, and to top it off there is the Tory increase in National Insurance contributions, attacks on working people right in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis. Labour has opposed this increase because it is the wrong tax at the wrong time. By contrast the Tories never ask those with the broadest shoulders to pay more, those who get their incomes from stocks and shares, and dividends, with a portfolio of buy-to-let properties, the Tories never look to tax them more but always go after working people.

A Labour government would do things differently. We would have a fairer tax system, we would improve statutory sick pay and be a champion for better pay to raise productivity and workers' standard of living, including through a number of ambitious central fair pay agreements starting in social care. Labour will oppose the desperate and divisive stunt from the Conservatives to change the law to use agency workers when strikes take place. (*Applause*) Instead of trying to help resolve industrial disputes ministers are behaving like arsonists, fanning the flames of disputes instead of knowing the value of positive industrial relations. This Government is out of ideas and they have even started to borrow some of ours.

Rishi Sunak, here are three more Labour tax policies which I will bring in if you do not. A Labour government will end the charitable status of private schools and their exemptions from VAT. (*Applause*) Let's use that money and the extra revenue to help the overwhelming number of children in our state schools instead. We will crack down on the carried interest tax loophole rewarding private equity fund managers. It is unacceptable that their reward is lower taxes than working people pay on their earnings. (*Applause*)

Congress, Labour will do something that Rishi Sunak and the Tories will never do, we will abolish the non-dom tax status. (*Applause*) It is not right that 70,000 wealthy people can benefit from a 200-year old tax rule to exempt themselves from our tax system. If you make Britain your home you should pay your taxes here. (*Applause*)

We need more than sticking plasters to build a strong economy. We need to deal with the Tory broken economic model which has produced low growth, low pay, higher

taxes, and higher inflation. When Labour was last in office the economy grew by an average of 2% per year but since 2010 in the decade leading up to the pandemic all the Conservatives could manage was an average of 1.5%, that means fewer tax receipts to fund our public services. In terms of economic growth among the G20 countries there is only one country that is performing worse than the UK, Russia, a country facing a stagnant economy and stringent sanctions from countries round the world. That is how bad this Government is. Do not ever let the Tories pretend that they know how to run the economy; this lot could not run a bath. (*Applause*)

It does not have to be this way. Labour has a plan for a stronger more secure economy. We will get the cost-of-living crisis under control, make Britain more resilient and lay the foundations for a thriving economy in all parts of Britain, and unlike the Tories we will learn the lessons from the pandemic to make our country stronger and more resilient. We know who the key workers were who kept our country moving and as safe as we could be. It was not the management consultants or those friends of the Tory Party getting PPE contracts from a VIP fast lane. It was those working in the NHS, from paramedics to porters, as well as in social care looking after people at their most vulnerable time. It is working people who ensure that food goes from farm to fork, including drivers, workers in food processing plants, warehouses, and in supermarkets. It is those working in our schools, for our councils keeping our streets clean, and those who power our country and keep the lights on. That is what I call the everyday economy and GMB members are at the beating heart of it. (*Applause*)

The truth is too often those jobs have been overlooked, underpaid, and undervalued, yet they are vital to our country. As existing industries change and new sectors emerge, it is essential that trade unions are able to give workers the same voice today as when they were founded. So, congratulations, GMB on your ground-breaking agreement with Deliveroo, following on from your agreements with Uber and Evra. It is another example of trade union relevance for a modern economy and a fairer society.

Today I want to announce a new policy. For too long Conservatives in Westminster, and the SNP in Holyrood, have failed to use public investments in our infrastructure as an opportunity to help industries and workers in Britain prosper. Labour want good quality employment and apprenticeships, and we back our great industries to succeed. When taxpayers' money is being used to build Britain's infrastructure Labour will ensure that Britain's workers are respected and that their unions have access to workplaces.

The Tories are creating a new UK infrastructure bank but it relies far too much on old thinking. A Labour government will introduce and enforce new criteria through this infrastructure bank so that all businesses and bodies receiving public money from it must be committed to creating good jobs with decent conditions and set out a plan to achieve this. There will be contractual sanctions with real teeth to stop anyone from rowing back on commitments that they have made. I believe that meeting the ambitions of our communities with great jobs and sound investments means drawing on a range of expertise, including from the world of work.

The Chancellor is able to appoint directors to this bank, and I will guarantee that there will be a worker representative on the board to ensure good jobs are at the heart of all thinking and when I mean a worker representative I am thinking of someone from a manufacturing union, who has seen close-up the costly mistakes made to date and knows how it can do better. So get your applications ready because that will happen under a Labour government. (*Applause*)

Whether you are a workplace rep on the shop floor or a managing director of a firm investing in hydrogen technology, Labour is the party of Britain's economic future, pro-worker and pro-business, in the knowledge that the success of both is crucial to our country's economic success, a commitment to an industrial strategy with the interests of working people at its heart. Our economy will be fairer, more resilient, more regionally balanced, our everyday economy will be strengthened and families will be better off. A Labour government will tax fairly, spend wisely, and grow our economy, and the contribution of working people to this stronger economy will be understood and it will be valued.

My final message today at GMB Congress is to the Prime Minister and to all those Tory MPs I see propping him up, the party is over. You have brought shame with your behaviour and your lies. If you do not leave Downing Street the country will evict you at the next election so start packing your bags: for the good of Britain go. Let's have a Labour government again. Thank you. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rachel, for taking the time to speak here at Congress and making those commitments from the Labour Party, showing the support for GMB members and working people. We have some time for questions to Rachel from regions. There are microphones on each side of the stage. Could the people operating them just wave so that people can see where they are. Can I ask delegates, please go to the mike that is closest to you. Due to time, regions only have one question per region. We have been notified in advance of the names of delegates who have submitted questions and I will read those out. Regions will be called in alphabetical order starting with Birmingham & West Midlands. Rachel said she will take three questions at a time so I have James Barwise from Birmingham & West Midlands first, Vivien Thomas from London, if you could come down, and also Ian Clarke from Midland & East Coast if you could line up as well, please. So, James, the first question?

JAMES BARWISE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Thank you. Thank you, Rachel, for coming today. I know you are the champion of hydrogen power and we have met before on it, so my question is what is the Labour Party doing to make sure of the future of hydrogen power and energy, and resources, so we are not dependent on other countries for energy? (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, James. Rachel will take another two. Vivien?

VIVIEN THOMAS (London): Thank you, Rachel. My question is, what is the Labour Party doing to support WASPI women, that is Women Against State Pension Inequality, who were born in the 1950s? I am one of them, born in 1956, and I have lost out and been robbed of six years of state pension. I speak on behalf of all the

WASPI women, there are thousands of us, and this will have a detrimental financial impact on us for the rest of our lives. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vivien. The last speaker in this round of questions is Ian Clarke from Midland & East Coast Region.

IAN CLARKE (Midland & East Coast Region): Hello, Rachel. What is Labour's policy on supporting the rollout of small modular reactors and promoting UK nuclear jobs in their design, construction, and supply chain? (*Applause*)

RACHEL REEVES: Thank you. Thanks for those questions. Jim from JCB, I think that I am going to be coming to see you at JCB later in the year and I know the work that you guys are doing with JCB to try and move the model so using hydrogen which is really exciting. I mentioned in my speech earlier about going on the hydrogen bus and then to the hydrogen home where they got me in front of the cameras to fry an egg on a hydrogen stove which was exactly the same as frying an egg normally, but better for the environment. I am a massive fan, as you say, Jim, of hydrogen and I think it has a really important role and Labour leaders at local level, including maybe in particular Steve Rotherham in Merseyside is really keen, I know, too, on using hydrogen buses in his region. Labour is already leading the way.

You are right to say that government need to be doing more. I was looking at a statistic recently that in Germany they are spending 7bn euros on hydrogen and in Britain we are spending just £240m. It is just a drop in the ocean compared to the investment of other countries that are doing more to protect their energy security and to help create those high paid high skilled jobs whether it is at Northern Gas Networks or at JCB, or elsewhere. A part of Labour's climate investment pledge is about investing in those industries of the future and decarbonising existing industries. I know that JCB and the GMB workers at JCB have a really important role to play in that, and one that I would want to support.

Vivien, thank you for your question about the WASPI women. My Mum is in a very similar position; she was born in 1954. Sorry, Mum, for telling people how old you are. She, too, was deprived I think of six years of her pension like you. At the moment, we are in a position where the ombudsman has told the Government that they need to respond to a review that they have done of this and said there are very serious failings in the way they treated that generation of women, and Labour have been urging the Government to respond to that ombudsman report because at the women are being left in limbo with no certainty about what support they would get.

Finally, on Ian's question, and Gary helpfully told me that Ian works at Rolls Royce. I was in Derby recently meeting with Rolls Royce so it is great to have you here today, Ian. I do not know if you work there or elsewhere. Small modular reactors are incredibly important, as is nuclear more generally and that is why I touched on it in my speech. Actually, Gary and I were discussing it before I came on the stage today because I think that with Hinckley B coming off stream and Hinckley C not being ready, we could be in a situation for a few years where the only nuclear we have in the UK is Sizewell B, and so the Government for all of their rhetoric about nuclear are presiding over the biggest collapse of British nuclear that we probably have ever seen and the Government needs to get on and get moving with those projects, whether it is

at Sizewell, in Anglesey, in Cumbria, and elsewhere, because we cannot get to net zero and we cannot have energy security without nuclear power and yet this Government dragging its feet is depriving us of good quality unionised high paid jobs, and it is a disgrace that they are doing that. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I will take a round of the next three questions, so it is North West and Irish Region, GMB Scotland, and Southern, in that order. So, David Flanagan from North West & Irish Region, Tom Carr-Pollock from Scotland, and Murray Robinson from Southern. David?

DAVID FLANAGAN (North West & Irish Region): Hi. Rachel, we are currently witnessing first-hand what poor governance, deceit, and how divisive self-serving politics impacts working people and our families and communities like mine in Blackpool. With this in mind, *when* you get into power what will be your top three priorities to support GMB members, working people, and their families? (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Tom?

TOM CARR-POLLOCK (GMB Scotland): Rachel, taking industrial action, especially strike action, is a right that trade unionists fought hard to win and fight hard to keep. The silence from the Labour leadership over the rail strikes is totally appalling. Any Labour MP, especially Leader of the Labour Party, should show unwavering support to striking workers in any disputes. Why has Keir Stammer, and the Labour Front Bench, abandoned trade unionists? (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: And Murray from Southern Region.

MURRAY ROBINSON (Southern Region): More than 100 PFI contracts, that is private financing initiative contracts, are due to expire during the next parliament. Will you commit Labour to bringing these contracts back to the NHS which his where they belong? (*Applause*)

RACHEL REEVES: Great. Thanks very much. I will start with David's question. David, you said you were from Blackpool and I think some of you might have heard, you probably heard, David, last week what a Tory minister said about Blackpool. For those of you who do not know, a government minister said that they had been speaking at a conference earlier that week "in Birmingham, Blackpool, or some other god awful place," that is the view of Tory ministers about towns and cities in our country; so much for levelling up, Boris Johnson.

Now I have totally forgotten what your question was about! It was about the priorities for an incoming Labour government. I tried to set out some of them today. I guess for me what matters and what I want to see is, first of all, I want everybody who is in work to have the dignity of a good job that pays a wage that you can support your family on and the security that work should offer. Too many people who go out to work today do not have the dignity that work should provide and do not have the security that work should provide. I want to ensure that everybody who goes out to work has that dignity and security, and I will come on to a bit more about that when I answer to Tam's question.

The second is that you should not have to move away from the place that you love to do a job that you want to do. There has to be good quality jobs paying decent wages in all parts of Britain. We need a government whose ambition matches the ambition people have for their families and the places where they live. So, I want to see a serious levelling up agenda, which is not just rhetoric and slogans, but is about some of the industries that we have spoken about today, whether it is nuclear, the small modular reactors, the hydrogen industry, ensuring that every part of Britain has those good jobs and that they are supported wherever they are in the country.

The third, and I guess it sort of comes back to how I got involved in politics in the first place, I joined the Labour Party when I was at secondary school. As I said in my speech, I was born in 1979 and I grew up under a Conservative government. Our Sixth Form at school was a couple of prefab huts in the playground and they were either freezing cold in the winter or baking hot in the summer, we did not have a library at school because it had to be turned into a classroom because there were more students than space, and there were never enough textbooks to go around. I feel very strongly that public services can transform people's lives, whether that is social housing, or good schools, or good hospitals, or parks and leisure centres, those things can have a transformative impact on people, especially from working class backgrounds yet you just do not get that under the Tories because we are seeing the same today as what we had in the 1980s and the 1990s. So, dignity at work, good jobs in every part of the country, and public services that once again we could be proud of, that would be my priorities, David, for a Labour government. (*Applause*)

Tam, on your question, I am incredibly proud of the relationship between the Labour Party and trade unions. My Mum and Dad were in their trade unions, my Dad was president of his local National Union of Teachers, and my grandparents were in their trade unions when they worked in shoe factories in Kettering, in the Midlands. I joined the Labour Party and then I joined a trade union shortly after when I started work, and I think that link is really important and it keeps Labour grounded. If the Labour link were ever to be eroded or to end, the Labour Party would not be able to call itself the Labour Party because that is what we are, we are the party of work and the party of working people and I am really proud of that.

I was on the tele yesterday and I was asked about strikes and I was asked specifically about Grant Shapps' proposal that the Government could bring in agency workers to cover people who work in our rail industry. First of all, I certainly would not feel safe going on a train with a signaller who was brought in the day before from an agency. It is the wrong thing to do by public safety but I would repeal the legislation that the last Labour government brought in to stop exactly that. So, a Labour government always stands up for working people. The last Labour government brought in legislation to protect working people.

Let me tell you what a future Labour government would do. Employment rights from day one at work, ending fire and re-hire, banning zero-hour contracts, and the biggest wave of in-sourcing for a generation, all of those things would improve the quality of work and would be working with our trade union colleagues to do exactly that. So, far from abandoning trade unions, trade unions are an essential part of the labour Movement and I am proud to be a member not just of the Labour Party but of this great union, the GMB. (*Applause*)

Murray, you asked about contracts. Let me tell you what we would do. When any contract was either breached or came to the end of its term, an incoming Labour government would look at every single one of them and see whether we could bring it back into the public sector with an aim of doing just that because we know that when you have outsourced services the risk is never outsourced, it is just the profits that are outsourced and there is no accountability to the public. I am determined that as Chancellor in a Labour government that we would oversee that biggest wave of in-sourcing in a generation so when people work in public service they work for the public sector and we get better value for taxpayers, a better deal for working people, and also a better deal for those people who use public services because they are properly in the public sector again. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. The last two questions from Wales & South West, I think that is Georgia Chidgey, and I think Yorkshire is now Amjad Sati, the speaker. Yes? So, Wales & South West.

GEORGIA CHEDZEY (GMB Wales & South West Region): Our members are suffering under a Tory government but under New Labour it often felt like the party was embarrassed of its link with the unions. In Wales we do not always agree with Labour but we are building a social partnership approach that is making real progress on issues like procurements and workers' rights. Is the Welsh model something you are looking at adopting for Westminster and how would that relationship between the unions and government be different if you were in power? *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Is there a question from Yorkshire? I think it was meant to be Richard but has it been changed? Amjad, thank you.

AMJAD SATTI (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): A high proportion of our members in the NHS and local government are having to use food banks. NHS workers' pay is worth 20% less than in 2010 and the local government pay is worth 28% less. We understand you have said to wait and see what the recommendations of the pay review bodies are. Is it clear the PRB have followed the Government's position since 2010? What is a Labour government going to do to address this and support our members? *(Applause)*

RACHEL REEVES: Thank you for those questions. Georgia, in answer to your question, I think an incoming Labour government would have a lot to learn from what is happening in Wales. I am really proud that in Wales we do have a Labour government and really good results in Wales in the elections this year as well. We have lots to learn from Wales and from what Mark Drakeford is doing in a number of areas, including the way in which trade unions are brought into the decision making processes in Wales rather than locked out as they are in England. Also, there is the way the public services are run and that point I was making earlier about the in-sourcing of public services. I know that Mark and Keir work closely together, as I do with my counterpart in the Welsh Government, Vaughan Gethin. We are very much learning from them; and also from Labour's local authorities around the country and from our directly elected mayors.

It was great in the local elections this year that Labour won control of local authorities from West Dunbartonshire to Cumberland, to Kirklees, to Barnet, and Worthing, and in all of those places and many, many more besides where we have Labour in office, it is showing every day the difference that Labour can make when we have our hands-on power, whether that is reducing the cost of public transport as we are doing in West Yorkshire with Tracy Brabin, or whether it is the good work and fair work charters that all of the Labour Northern mayors are bringing in. We do not have to start from scratch, I guess is my point, that we have Labour leadership in many parts of the country where we can learn from when we have an incoming Labour government.

Amjad, you are absolutely right to raise what has happened to pay, not just in the NHS but in all parts of the public services these last few years. You just have to look at the difference between what happens to pay in the public sector with a Conservative government compared to a Labour government. When Labour was in power you did not have NHS workers using food banks, you just did not, you did not have teaching assistants using food banks, you did not have support staff in our local authorities using food banks, but you are seeing all of those things today because pay has not kept pace with the rising cost of living. Last year, we said when the pay settlements were reached that it was insulting for public sector workers. We will see what comes out this year but Labour wants our public sector workers to be properly rewarded. You deserve to be properly rewarded, especially after what you have gone through in the pandemic. Also, we see a recruitment crisis in our National Health Service and in other parts of the public sector as well, and the Government say they are recruiting more nurses and more people to work in the NHS but they cannot recruit as quickly as they are leaving, and because of the degrading of wages but also terms and conditions, and so we want our public service workers to be properly rewarded, under the last Labour government they were and under the next Labour government our public service workers will be properly rewarded again. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, delegates, for those searching questions and, Congress, can we please thank Rachel again for being so generous with her time and her work as Shadow Chancellor and a member of GMB. (*Applause*) Thank you, Rachel.

ELEANOR MARX AWARD

THE PRESIDENT: We now move to presentation of the Eleanor Marx Awards. This is our Award to recognise outstanding GMB women activists in memory of Eleanor Marx, who was instrumental in the shaping of our union. Eleanor worked alongside Will Thorne setting up our union and was elected to our executive at the 1891 Congress. I am so pleased to announce that we have three winners this year – making up for those we have missed during the pandemic. The winners are: Annette Drylie, GMB Scotland - (*Applause*) - Gemma Pemberton-Williamson, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region - (*Applause*) – and Jo Smith, Southern Region. (*Applause*) They will get a brooch, it is a beautiful brooch. We do not have them here with us today but award winners will be presented with a brooch featuring a portrait of Eleanor Marx herself after Congress. We will give them a certificate this afternoon so can I invite, first of all, Annette, to come on to the stage to be presented with her certificate. (*Presentation amidst applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can we now invite Gemma to join them on stage?
(Presentation amidst applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Now, Jo. *(Applause)*
(Presentation amidst applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, you can read more about our three fantastic award winners and the work they have done organising workers in the Awards Booklet in your delegate packs. Congratulations again to all three. *(Applause)*

MARY MACARTHUR HEALTH & SAFETY AWARD

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can we now move on to the Mary Macarthur Health & Safety Award of 2022, this is an award for GMB Health & Safety Reps who make outstanding contributions to workplace health and safety. This award is in honour of Mary Macarthur, who ended the barbaric practice of sweat workers and who organised safety standards for women working with explosives in World War One.

The standard this year was incredibly high and we also received a team nomination rather than an individual one. Therefore, I am pleased to announce, firstly, that Special Recognition goes to the Health & Safety Rep team at Serco in Sandwell: Sarah James, Angela Reynolds, Simon Gardner, Darren James, Christian Knott and Mark Shirley. *(Applause)*

I can also announce that the Runner-up for this award is Vanessa Roberts, Birmingham & West Midlands Region. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can I now invite Gemma to join us on stage to be presented with a certificate.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Christina Dearlove to collect the Silver Badge on Vanessa's behalf and the certificate on behalf of Serco Sandwell H&S Team.
(Presentation made amidst applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I can now announce that the Overall Award Winner for this award is Ben Cook of Midland & East Coast Region. Could I ask Ben to come onto the stage to receive this award.
(Presentation amidst applause)

BEN COOK (Midland & East Coast): Congress, President, Gary, I just want to say thank you very much for this. I want to dedicate this award to all the key workers that went to work. While Boris was enjoying his wine and nibbles in Downing Street our members were putting their lives at risk to keep the country going and I just want to dedicate it to them because you all deserve it. Thank you. *(Standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done to all those GMB members who have made such outstanding contributions.

SOCIAL POLICY: NHS & HEALTH ISSUES

THE PRESIDENT: We now go back to the motions, so we are on to Social Policy: NHS & Health Issues, can I call the mover and seconder of Motion 238 to come to the front and then we will be going on to Motions 275, 276, and 277, if they could be ready as well, please. Can I have the mover of 238?

LET'S TREAT DRUGS AS AN ADDICTION NOT A CRIME!

MOTION 238

238. LET'S TREAT DRUGS AS AN ADDICTION NOT A CRIME!

This Congress regrets to note that deaths from drug use have increased by 52% since 2009. Sadly, this is of little surprise considering that they have occurred against a backdrop of harsh austerity measures which have impacted sharply on the funding available for rehabilitation treatment. It has to be remembered that the first increases in heroin use occurred during the deindustrialization program which occurred in the 1980's, whereby neighbourhoods were plunged into poverty due to large scale unemployment. This is now occurring again due to austerity, however with heroin being 'cut' with substances such as fentanyl, overdoses will only continue to increase. These deaths are preventable. Congress wishes to congratulate Scotland on opening the debate surrounding drug consumption rooms which are safe, supervised sites where individuals can prepare their own, prebought heroin and use with a nurse present. To date there has not been one death from overdose and no incidences of transmission of blood borne viruses at any of the sites which are located in Germany, Switzerland and Canada amongst others. It should also be noted that injection site abscesses which are wholly preventable cost in the region of 19 million pounds a year to treat. The cost of treating hepatitis C is 15-25,000 pounds per treatment course. arguably these funds could be used to treat conditions which are not as preventable.

It is important for congress to note that the deaths of these individuals do not only impact on family and friends. Ambulance workers, police, NHS staff and call handlers amongst others also feel the brunt of these needless deaths. Not only are these fatalities preventable, there is a solution out there which will enable funds to be redirected to pay for more workers, equipment and improve the quality of life for those providing frontline services. Congress humbly requests that this motion to support and politically lobby for the implementation of drug consumption rooms in the UK, to save the lives of those most harshly impacted by austerity will be supported.

N10 BERKSHIRE and NORTH HANTS BRANCH

Southern Region

(Carried)

DAVID MCMULLEN (Southern): I am proposing Motion 238, Let's Treat Drugs as an Addiction not a Crime. Not everyone is susceptible to addiction. It is a disease linked to many factors but austerity plays a key role as does poverty, homelessness, job losses, stress, and long-term unemployment, which are all major risk factors for addiction. After more than a decade of Tory austerity inflicted upon the nation, followed by a pandemic with all the psychological and social economic impact that involves, it is little wonder that in recent years drug related deaths have increased to record levels.

In England more than half the drug and alcohol services were cut in 2019 despite addiction related admissions soaring and, regrettably, there has been a 52% increase in deaths from drug use since 2009. These deaths are preventable. Strong evidence based globally shows the progressive policies such as those of a treatment centre in Glasgow, the first in the UK to provide addicts with a safe and controlled environment that are better options than criminalising drug addicts. This seems even more obvious given a pre pandemic reform report based on HM Inspectorate of Prisons data which showed that the proportion of prisoners developing a drug problem in custody has more than doubled since 2013.

This Congress should congratulate Scotland for having the courage to launch a progressive debate around these drug consumption rooms which are safe, supervised sites, where individuals can safely use with a nurse in attendance. To date, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, and other countries, that have similar longstanding schemes, have reported no deaths from overdoses nor transmissions of blood-borne viruses at any of these sites. Drug overdose deaths are entirely preventable and affect not only the individual affected but their family and friends, and also those members of the emergency services, many of which are our members who are involved with drug overdose fatalities. Those fighting addiction need help and support not criminal records; they do nothing to address the issue but only further stigmatise the individual.

I am calling on Congress to acknowledge the need for a harm prevention approach with access to drug testing and access to safe injecting facilities, namely, drug consumption rooms. Let's not confuse ourselves, this is not about legalisation of drugs. I am not up here suggesting that we sell crack from vending machines. What this is about is dealing with it as an addiction rather than a criminal act. So, Congress, I move to propose that the union supports and lobbies politically for the implementation of drug consumption rooms in the UK in order to save the lives of those struggling with a double disease of addiction and austerity. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Secunder?

JACQUIE DAVIS (Southern): I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Vice President, Congress, our communities are struggling with underfunding which is having an impact on those using drugs, the families, and loved ones, which leads to lack of education, poverty, housing, and crime. In this current climate we need to educate. In my community there is a fellow known to myself, very polite and respectful, but due to lack of support he has reverted to drugs. His brother is a long-term user. He is begging and sleeping rough. Surely public health is better than private wealth, which is the Government's mantra. We, as the GMB union, should support this motion for our members, their families, plus the street community. Let's prioritise health, education, poverty, and housing. Congress, please support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jacquie. Anyone wishing to speak against? No? I will now call Alan Woodward to put a qualification on behalf of the CEC.

ALAN WOODWARD (CEC): Vice-President, Congress, Let's treat drugs as an addiction, not a crime. The CEC is supporting this motion with qualifications. We

recognise that the evidence strongly suggests that drug consumption rooms and access to proper treatment are effective means of reducing drug dependency along with the health and crime problems associated with long-term heroine use. This policy has been in operation in Portugal for many years and it is regarded as a success by the Portuguese government and many healthcare professionals.

We are seeking to support the motion with two qualifications. The first is to reflect information provided by the branch following an explanation query, which is that this motion refers only to heroine consumption and that it is not a call for legalisation. The second qualification is that any endorsement on the specific model pursued by the Scottish Government should be based on further consultation with GMB Scotland and the public services section. Therefore, Congress, please support this motion with the two qualifications I have outlined. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. Does Southern Region accept the qualifications? (*Agreed*) I will put that to Congress now. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 238 was CARRIED.

SOCIAL POLICY: HOUSING

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can we now move on to Motion 275, please.

COUNCIL AND HOUSING ASSOCIATION ESTATES STILL UNDER THREAT OF DEMOLITION

MOTION 275

275. COUNCIL AND HOUSING ASSOCIATION ESTATES STILL UNDER THREAT OF DEMOLITION

This Congress notes that it has been debating motions from branches with members living on estates facing demolition across London boroughs and other parts of the country since 2016.

Congress is pleased to note that progress has been made and with the help of GMB regions and branches, estates such as the Sutton Estate in Chelsea and Gibbs Green in Hammersmith for example have been saved from demolition.

Congress is also pleased to note that GMB London and Southern regions were able to help broker an agreement with the Labour mayor of London for ballots of residents to be held before any compulsory purchase and demolition of leasehold and Councils homes can go ahead.

However Congress notes that further action is required to safeguard the rights of residents for their homes to be free from the threat of demolition from both Labour and Conservative councils. The threat to estates is ongoing and widespread with over one hundred estates facing threats of demolition.

In particular, Congress notes that the requirements to reduce and meet net zero carbon emissions targets should level the playing field in most circumstances for Councils and Housing Associations away from demolition towards refurbishment.

In addition, Congress notes that the ballot arrangements are being abused or bypassed by councils and housing associations.

GMB members on some estates, where there has been a huge percentage vote against demolition, are faced with councils and housing associations rerunning the ballots until they get the result they want. On others the councils and housing associations are interfering with the ballot process. There are loopholes and exceptions in the rules.

Congress calls for

- the relevant regions to help reopen the political issue so that ballots are covered by clear and fair rules for how they are conducted, that the loopholes and exceptions are closed off and that ballot results are respected.
- the default position that estates be refurbished rather than demolished on environmental grounds. This does not necessarily exclude increased density and higher numbers of homes.
- Regions and branches to continue to support campaigns by local residents on estates defending their homes from demolition.

ISLINGTON 1 & HARINGEY BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

VICKY HOOD (London): As a first-time delegate I was glad to read about the successes that London and Southern Region had in securing a system where ballots of residents are held before any demolition of council homes can go ahead.

Unfortunately, there is still more work to be done to safeguard residents' homes from demolition by both Conservative and Labour councils. I was sad but not surprised to learn that these ballots have been often abused or bypassed by the councils and housing associations.

GMB members living on housing estates under threat of demolition have reported that within their national ballot there has been a huge percentage of the vote against the demolition. Residents have often been balloted again and again until they stop engaging in the process and the councils get the result that they want. On other estates there are reports of councils and housing associations interfering with the ballot process and exploiting loopholes in the rules.

On most of these estates there are tight-knit communities with multiple generations of the same family who have been living in their home for 30, 40, 50 years, some residents live well into old age in the home they are born in and have never known anything else. They are not only faced with the demolition of their family homes but the decimation of multigenerational working class communities and separation from their family and friends when they are evicted, their homes are demolished, and they are given new homes sometimes across the City.

This has social implications for all. It impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals as well as implications for parental and family caring arrangements. There are single parents who are forced out of work and into a welfare system which is not fit for purpose because they are unable to access free childcare that they would have previously had from family members living close by.

Residents need to be engaged not only in a tick-box ballot exercise but in a meaningful consultation about the future of their communities as a whole and about their individual circumstances. Further, housing justice is climate justice but too often green initiatives are used as an excuse to demolish homes and rebuild luxury properties that are inaccessible to ordinary working people. We need to ensure that tenants are not made to pay the price of energy efficiency through evictions and demolitions to enable refurbishment. Ensuring the housing is energy efficient and of good quality is a combined housing, climate action, economic, and public health strategy but this must be done in a way that guarantees a just transition with adequate protection for tenants and workers alike.

We need to call on the UK and the devolved governments to refurbish private, social, and council housing as a priority through providing large scale investment and refurbishment, not demolition, which will enable better jobs, more affordable fuel bills, and addressing the need for serious climate action while keeping people in their homes. We call on regions and branches to continue to engage in the housing struggle and support campaigns by local residents on estates defending their homes from demolition, and also to reopen those political discussions around the ballot process which is obviously not working. Thank you. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vicky. Secunder?

CATHERINE HANLON (London): Since 2018, London estate regeneration schemes involving the demolition of existing homes have been required to ballot residents in order to receive the GLA grant funding and we have welcomed the London Mayor's policy of balloting arrangements for residents. Our members who are residents and are faced with an estate renewal scheme on their estate are required to move out of their homes. Some of their homes they have lived in for their entire lives. Often there is a right to move back. Residents can move back to the new estates. However, the regeneration schemes produce affordable rental properties which we all know often are unaffordable for many. There are occasional social rent replacement properties built but there comes with it higher service charges which again make them unaffordable for many.

Congress, after the pandemic our members are now being faced with severe pressures on the cost of living as inflation bites on living standards. I am from the Plaistow Branch in East London and some of our lowest paid workers in London have been priced out of their homes where they have lived for much of their lives. Most cannot afford to live in London. Their homes are available for rent and generally unaffordable social rent levels. There are options where there can be investigations into the affected properties where they can be refurbished instead of being subjected to demolition. We call on the London Boroughs, the Mayor's Office, and the national government to put a stop to the demolition of these council estates and the building of homes for sale at London prices, market rents, and to build more homes at general affordable prices. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Catherine. Motion 276?

END THE HOUSING CRISIS BY BUILDING SOCIAL HOMES
MOTION 276

276. END THE HOUSING CRISIS BY BUILDING SOCIAL HOMES

This GMB Branch welcomes the housing composite resolution passed at the Labour Party conference in 2021, which included the main demands of the Labour Campaign for Council Housing.

Congress believes that it is necessary for the Government to take action now to end the housing crisis by:

- Fully funding councils to deliver the building of 150,000 social rent homes each year, including 100,000 council homes – building on commitments previously made by GMB.
- Ending Right to Buy - in recognition that previous attempts to redraw the legislation have failed.
- Reviewing council housing debt to address underfunding of housing revenue accounts
- Fund the retro-fitting of council housing to cut greenhouse gases, provide jobs and promote a shift from outsourcing to Direct Labour Organisations – in recognition of the urgent climate emergency and the looming energy bill crisis
- Ending Section 21 (no fault) evictions

Congress affirms the policy of Labour Party Conference and calls upon Labour to place these actions at the centre of its housing policies and implement them as part of the next Labour Government's programme.

We therefore

- Call on the GMB and the Labour Party nationally to implement these policies as a matter of urgency.
- Call on Labour Groups across England to propose that Councils declare a housing emergency to campaign for those key demands.

This may include lobbying local MPs, the Local Government Association and other organisations, working with tenant groups and trades unions.

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 Govt to adopt appropriate reforms.

Congress instructs the CEC and the political department to liaise with the Association of Labour Councillors, and to instruct all GMB delegates and affiliated branches to bring this to the attention of Labour Parties and Labour Groups. It further calls on GMB sponsored councillors to campaign for these goals.

LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

ZAHIDA ABBAS-NOORI (London): Good afternoon, President, Congress. First-time delegate, speaking second time. Congress, there is a housing crisis. It impacts everyone in our society and there is a very simple solution for this Government to follow: building more social housing and protecting the current housing stock. We welcome the housing composite resolution passed at the Labour Party Conference in 2021, which includes the main demand for the Labour campaign for council housing. Congress believes that it is a necessity for the Government to take action now to end the housing crisis with fully funded councils to deliver the building of 150,000 social rent homes each year, which includes 100,000 council homes on current policy. Furthermore, Congress, we must end the right to buy. The right to buy has led to three million homes being transferred from public to private ownership, much of it now being rented out to the private renting sector.

Congress, we demand that in view of the council housing debt to address underfunding of the housing revenue accounts, council housing are being starved of funding and loaded with extra debt, and without borrowing capacity the council cannot build up or cannot even commission any housing projects. In the current position of the urgent climate emergency that is looming and urgent building crisis, we must provide for the council housing to cut greenhouse gases, provide jobs, and promote a shift from outsourcing to direct labour organisations. Congress, we must end the section 21 evictions, which is a tactic that has been used by the landlords to increase the rents on the properties at the expense of the tenants who fear homelessness and lose their homes.

Congress, following the policy of LB Conference we call upon Labour to place these actions at the centre of its housing policies and implement them as a part of the next Labour government programme. We therefore call on all the Labour councils across England and propose that the councils declare a housing emergency to campaign for those key demands. Congress, this may include the lobbying to your local MPs, local government association, and other organisations working with the tenant groups and trade unions, and I think this is a need of this time, there is a shortage of housing stock, and we as a union should be working together to make sure that this issue should be addressed. Thank you very much, Congress. I move this motion. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Zahid. Secunder?

VICKY HOOD (London): I will start by saying, and this won't surprise you, that I was not around for Thatcher so you could say that was lucky for me or you could say that was lucky for her! *(Applause)* My generation continues to deal with the destruction caused by the Thatcher government in the '80s. Publicly owned social homes were being sold off for at least 13 years before I was born in 1993, and they were never replaced. When I was wee I slept on a foldout camping bed in the corner of my big brother's room until I was eight because my parents had been waiting on a council waiting list for a bigger home for 12 years before they even got a viewing.

Now as I and others of my generation reach the age where we might think about starting families of our own, council housing is sparse and even the most vulnerable in society face waiting lists of years and a postcode lottery to secure a social tenancy, often accepting properties that fall below the standards of repair and does not meet their needs, lest they be penalised and put further down the list facing years more of homelessness. Housing is a human right and social homes need to be funded by local councils and easily available to all. Many of you here probably benefited from the right to buy and my granny did too, but the right to buy has had its time, make no mistake, it has served its clearly and intended purpose to create an individualistic society and to put homeowners and renters who live side by side against each other ultimately creating division in working class communities. Many of those homes were never replaced and have fallen into the hands of parasitical private landlords who raise rents above inflation year on year in the name of sheer greed making literally millionaires of some previous proud council tenants and leaving the rest of us at their mercy.

Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has shown that the number of people living in poverty who live in the private rented sector have tripled over the last decade. I call on Congress to stand side by side with companies and the tenants unions across the UK to support the call to build more social housing and create safe, secure, affordable, homes for people not for profit. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vicky. Mover of 277?

EMPLOYERS BE ALLOWED TO INSULATE EMPLOYEES' HOMES
MOTION 277

277. EMPLOYERS BE ALLOWED TO INSULATE EMPLOYEES' HOMES

This Congress is requested to campaign for the Government to facilitate employers investing in employees' homes to upgrade and retrofit the same with energy efficiency improvements ie insulation and/or converting to renewable sources of energy when employees work from home. This to be accepted as a business capital tax allowance whereby the improvement becomes a percentage of the property value, increasing over time and consolidating the asset base of the business.

There is already a scheme to encourage employees to buy bicycles to commute to and from work.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Lost)

VAUGHAN THOMAS (London): I am moving the motion without the support of my region, London Region. First, apologies to my region and to the CEC for my obvious inability to persuade them to support this motion leading to the CEC to ask for its withdrawal. I think this has led them to misunderstand the motion. I am here now asking for Congress's support, the ultimate GMB decision maker.

There is a cost-of-living crisis right now, with gas and electricity prices skyrocketing for everyone, not just our members. If employers help insulate employees' homes it

improves their net disposable income. It is not just about our members' hourly rate, and this improvement in members' terms and conditions would uniquely extend after they left the job.

It is not unique, however, for employers to be working with and for their employees. I do not believe this initiative would have worrying impacts and it would not set a dangerous precedent that the CEC is so concerned about. There is a long history of this kind of arrangement between employer and employee. There is the history behind the Rowntree's chocolate factory in Yorkshire Region, where a model village was established in New Ears wick to provide decent housing for staff – I used to empty the bins for them actually in the 1980s as a bin man – and there is the Bourneville Village Trust and Bourneville Works Housing Society over in Birmingham and Telford providing affordable rented housing for low income families from Cadbury, and in my own region, London Region, the Colman's Mustard factory was moved from the village of Stoke Holy Cross to Carrow Road in Norwich to make it easier for staff to get to work. There was real concern for the social welfare of employees at the factory, and it established a school in 1857, that is going a long way, and also employing a nurse in 1864 for the staff.

In my own working life I was a porter at a mansion block in Central London. It provided a free flat and free electric, not bad. I wish I could go back there. The key for all these arrangements was not altruism but it was based on mutual interest by employer and employee. A happy healthy employee is a more productive worker when the family is supported and not having to choose between eating and heating. Moreover, this motion addresses climate change as well as increasing the net disposable income of our members by helping them to insulate their families' homes at no cost to employees.

This motion does not set a dangerous precedent. That precedent was set already about 150 years ago. It was anything but dangerous, just the opposite. The UK needs to retrofit existing homes to address climate change and if this can be helped by facilitating the insulation of our members' homes at no upfront cost to them, what's not to like? Congress, support this motion. Support our members to reduce their energy bills, your energy bills. I move, reserving the right to reply. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Secunder? A secunder for 277? No secunder. That falls. The motion falls. Thank you. (*Call of "Formally"*) A little late. Do we accept that, Congress? (*Agreed*) Right. Anyone want to speak against any of the motions? I now call on Carol Clarkson as a CEC speaker.

CAROL CLARKSON (CEC): President, Congress, the CEC is supporting Motion 275 and 276, with qualifications, and we are asking for Motion 277 to be withdrawn. Moving first to 275, Council and Housing Association Estates still under Threat of Demolition. Much of the motion is existing policy as carried by Congress in 2015, Motion 347, and Congress 2019, Motion 400. The motion does, however, add new policy on the environmental case for refurbishing estates. Our qualification is that the decision to support individual anti-demolition campaigns should be taken by the regions in line with resources and other relevant consequences.

Motion 276, End the Housing Crisis by Building Social Homes. This motion rightly highlights the ongoing housing crisis and this either exists in policy by the GMB such as ending rights to buy or they are in line with GMB campaigns and priorities. Our qualification is that the motion calls for a number of specific actions and these will need to be addressed against the resources available at the time.

Finally, on Motion 277, Employers be allowed to Insulate Employees' Homes, the CEC is asking that this motion be withdrawn. We would generally support actions from government to make it easier for our members to improve the energy efficiency of their homes so long as they are in line with our policies on home heating. However, to support employers taking out investment stakes in our members' homes for this purpose could have worrying impacts and set dangerous precedents. The motion calls to facilitate employers investing in our members' homes for this purpose which would allow the employer an element of power over our members' lives outside of the workplace, and the encroachment into their lives outside of their work. For this reason the CEC strongly suggests that the motion be withdrawn by the region. If the region does not withdraw the motion, we ask Congress to oppose the motion.

Summing up, Congress, please support Motions 275 and 276, with the qualifications, and Motion 277 to be withdrawn by the region. If it is not withdrawn, we suggest you oppose it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Carol. Could I ask Motion 278, 279 to come to the front, please? Does London agree with the qualification for 275? (*Agreed*) Thank you. The qualification for 276? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I will put 275 and 276 to the vote. All those in favour please vote. Those against? They are carried.

Motion 275 was CARRIED.
Motion 276 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London Region accept to withdraw Motion 277? ("No.") I will now put 277 to the vote.

VAUGHAN THOMAS (London): Right of reply.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Come on. (*Applause*)

VAUGHAN THOMAS (London): Thank you, Vice Chair. I got a phone call from a member a while ago who was stressed out of their head. It was a personal thing but it was affecting the job as well. He had already had time off but did not want to raise it with his line manager. I said, "No, you've got to. If you are going to start making a mistake," and I am sure we have all had this with members where things start to go wrong and then it is not the stresses and strains that have created the stress, it is the problems they generate at work because they start to make mistakes. I said, "You've got to raise it with your manager." That was all, just a telephone call. A bit later, a few weeks later, I got to speak to him again. I said, "Did you call, did you talk to your line manager and discuss it?" He said, "Yes, I did. Thank you, Vaughan." I said, "What happened?" "I explained the situation and he said, 'Let's go for a coffee.' We went out to a café and discussed all these issues," and his manager said, "Take time. Take time off, as long as you need to sort out the problem."

I do not know about you but I do not see many of these managers, I only see ones where they act like megalomaniacs. They are out there, they are not all bad. Quite frankly, we should be working with employers and managers who share GMB values. There is nothing bad about that. There is nothing wrong. When we can work together we should work together. Support this motion. It is about our members. It is about you and it is about reducing your energy bill. There is nothing more important at the moment during the financial crisis, and it is going to be a financial crisis. We are all individuals. Support it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Just to remind Congress, he was putting that motion forward without the support of the region and the CEC are asking you to oppose it. We will now go to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against? That falls.

Motion 277 was LOST.

SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now move to Motion 278, the mover come forward, please.

NORTHERN POWERHOUSE GROUP
MOTION 278

278. NORTHERN POWERHOUSE GROUP

This Congress calls on the CEC to mount a campaign to reinstate the Northern Powerhouse Group so the North and Midlands are able to improve our transport links, with particular reference to our rail networks, to bring our towns and cities easier to access. The Northern Powerhouse is essential to meet challenges of industry and tourism, along with bringing our industrial bases in the North and Midlands together. If we are to grow the economy, then it is essential that the Union is involved in this vitally important group.

We ask the CEC to mount a campaign that involves all groups and communities, and achieve the measures outlined in the Government's manifesto, to bring about levelling up, by developing industry and tourism links in the North, Midlands and across the North West.

GRIMSBY GENERAL BRANCH Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

DECLAN GIBBONS (Midland & East Coast): Good afternoon, Vice President and Congress. This is my first real time as a delegate and speaker. (*Applause*) This motion is asking for the CEC to mount a campaign to reinstate the Northern Powerhouse Group so that the North and the Midlands can benefit and grow as economic areas, particularly in relation to the railway networks and transport links. For years these have been neglected and have been allowed to decay and cut off people and supplies from moving freely around and between some of our greatest cities.

I know what you are all thinking, this is a totally failed Tory policy, that first Cameron and then May, and now the convict Johnson, play lip service to in order to con people out of their votes. In actual fact, they have done nothing to make this work. I accept the CEC qualification, that the term “Northern Powerhouse” has been totally tainted by Tory failure. I also accept that the Midlands Region often feel that this policy is not about them. This policy would benefit from some sort of rebranding. If we do this correctly there is mileage and good policy to be had in this idea. We as a movement need to be owning this debate and we need to be supporting the so-called red wall areas. I believe that initiatives such as this will help us do exactly that. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Declan. Secunder?

NATHAN KEIGHTLEY (Midland & East Coast): Afternoon, Vice President. When you look at a rail map of the UK the rail lines generally run North to South, the lines East to West mainly are smaller branch lines where capacity and stocks are poorer, the connections are slow and poor. 100,000 more jobs would be available in urban areas if rail issues were sorted out. Using rail to connect the North officially will change the way people live and work, and do business. Hull to Liverpool takes longer than London to Paris on the train, 128 miles versus 295. Better links will empower the Midlands and the North to advance in manufacturing, energy, health, innovation, and digital services. Transport links need to improve. It is vital that the GMB have involvement in this Northern Powerhouse Group going forward. To level up and to develop industry and tourism these transport links really must improve. The campaign to reinstate the Northern Powerhouse Group of some kind needs to happen and it needs to happen now. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nathan. The mover of 279? Can the movers of Motions 182, 183, and 185 come to the front, please?

BUS DRIVER DIGNITY

MOTION 279

279. BUS DRIVER DIGNITY

This Congress notes the lack of toilet facilities on a large amount of Bus Routes.

Most of you have been caught short while at work, for most of you, it's just a short walk to the WC, but bus drivers don't have the luxury of a warm toilet close at hand.

For some drivers, their nearest toilet is some way off. In one case if our member doesn't use the toilet at one end of their trip, its twenty-seven miles or two hours and forty minutes before they make it back to the start point of their journey, as there are no toilets at the other end. Many bus drivers in every bus company across the United Kingdom, are in the same predicament.

We as a Trade Union must put pressure on TfL(Transport for London) and all other local authorities to make sure that clean toilet facilities are provided at both ends of every bus journey.

GMB PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

MIKE TINNION (London): First-time delegate, terrified first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, I always thought that going to the toilet was a human right. How wrong could I have been. All across our nation bus drivers are not having that second cup of tea with their lunch, or staying hydrated in hotter weather all because they know there is not a toilet at the end of their route. Try having to cross your legs for 13.5 miles across London, a journey that could take up to 2.5 hours on a really bad day, and then go back again just to find that toilet. I do that journey every day. I am a London bus driver. I do not have that second cup of tea with my lunch because it could end in disaster.

Transport for London has a list of 175 bus routes which do not have a toilet at one end of their journey. The endless excuses that they use to justify not putting toilets in is amazing. I find it quite odd my bus route only has a toilet at one end and it is not on that list because there is a bus interchange at the end of the road, which is a mile away. There is a Shell garage half a mile away so if you can use it, you can use it; if you can't, you can't. There is a "pay per pee" toilet somewhere that no one has ever seen. There is a fixed toilet in place at the end of my route but we are not allowed to use it, it is only for tram drivers and TfL refuse to speak to me on that matter. I have seen drivers peeing in bushes, I have seen them peeing in bottles, running into cafes and public houses, and one man he just did not make it.

Congress, I have made light of this serious situation that has been allowed to go on for decades. We must take up a national campaign because it is not just London it is across the country, to make local authorities do the decent thing and put a toilet at each end of every route and to give bus drivers their dignity back. I hope you support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mike. Secunder?

MICHAEL HUSBANDS (London): Vice President, President, Congress, employers have a clear legal duty to provide adequate toilet facilities for their employees. The lack of access to toilets is simply intolerable and can and does lead to bus drivers developing severe health problems, such as kidney and bladder conditions, and in some cases being forced to quit their jobs due to ill health reasons. Congress, bus drivers need a comfort break the same as any other professional, but they seem to be left out and need to scramble to find toilets as most terminals are not equipped with them. This is totally unacceptable in this day and age. The GMB needs to look at this and work with the employers for proper facilities for the jobs and their employees. Please support. I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael. Congress, the mover of Motion 278 has already said he will accept the qualification, so the CEC is supporting both these motions, 278 and 279. I will put them now to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anybody against? They are carried.

Motion 278 was CARRIED.

Motion 279 was CARRIED.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: COVID-19

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Now can I have the mover of Motion 182, please.

WORKING FROM HOME (WFH) POST COVID 19

MOTION 182

182. WORKING FROM HOME (WFH) POST COVID 19

This Congress notes that following Covid 19 in March 2020, many workers were forced to work from home (WFH).

This Congress also notes that there are many workplaces where it was not possible for workers to work from home due to the nature of the job. The question of these workers being adequately protected is an ongoing concern.

Moreover, Congress notes that prior to Covid 19, many workers were working from home under their workplace's flexible working policies.

However, Congress notes that there is a marked difference from flexible working pre covid and being forced to work from home due to the pandemic. This must be acknowledged.

The new way of working: Working from Home, following the pandemic must take into account the wide range of issues, risks and impact on those workers.

Congress notes that full protection must be adequately and appropriately afforded to those WFH workers in terms of their health, well-being, industrial & personal injury and the physical impact of this way of working, particularly for example ensuring having the right equipment as provided in an office space setting/environment such as appropriate chair, table, footrest, stationery, etc.

It is essential that risk assessments are conducted by organisations as well as costs savings made by them when they gave up office space and how these savings are invested into workers well-being, etc.

Congress notes that this is an opportunity to recruit & retain members.

With the increase in the cost of living, increase in national insurance, hike in utility bills, which are all negatively impacting all workers but also those working from home post pandemic.

We therefore ask Congress to:

1. Continue to support workers who work from home following the pandemic.
2. Consider setting up a working group, if not already done so, to look at the costs incurred by workers working from home, harm on their well-being along with long term effects of WFH, costs, health insurance, TU56, industrial injury impact, risk assessment, post pandemic.
3. Carry out a survey of members, as far as is practicable to see what issues and impact members are experiencing.

4. Support, where and however possible, workers to ensure that any current risk assessments are updated to include this new way of working such as regular equipment audits, usage of light, electricity, industrial injury, health and safety, etc.

EALING BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

ABDI DUALE (London): President, Congress, good afternoon. First-time delegate, but it is not my first-time speaking, so I do not need a clap. I will take it anyway! *(Applause)* Congress, I want you to cast your minds back to March 2020, most of us were asked to stay at home and were asked to work from home. Many of us had to juggle home schooling, caring for a vulnerable relative, all whilst learning new technologies like Zoom or Teams. I say learning because I still forget to unmute myself in meetings. Two years on and working from home is now a regular feature for thousands of our members. However, some employers are using working from home to avoid their responsibility with regard to health and safety, in some cases working from home is adding to the cost-of-living crisis that we see, the increase in energy prices, using your electricity when you are at home working, and paying more for your Wi-Fi to get a better internet connection. For example, on average a worker spends more than a third of their broadband that they use a month on work. To put that in monetary terms that is £12 a month. When people are choosing between heating and eating, those £12 could be spent a lot better.

This motion calls for a couple of simple things: ensuring that employers carry out regular risk assessments and surveys, providing workers with necessary equipment effectively to carry out their roles, and reimburse staff for the extra added costs of working from home. These are, in our opinion, very simple and effective ways that employers can support their staff to work from home safely and not at their own cost. Congress, I hope you support our motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Abdi. A seconder?

DAKSHA PAREKH (London): Good afternoon, President. Good afternoon, Congress. First-time delegate seconding motion 182. We know that post Covid working patterns have changed and more people may now be asked to continue to work from home on a more permanent basis as companies downsize and cut costs. Congress, all employers have a duty of care for their workers and our motion is to ensure that for each worker at home working proper risk assessments are carried out and these are done on a regular basis. Employers should feel the need to keep in touch with all their employees and meet any special requirements and adjustments that need to be made, and also need to consider wellbeing and mental health. This should give an opportunity to retain work members as working from home makes it difficult for us to recruit new members. We would like to run a survey of members to find out their issues and produce some targeted guidance, and prepare GMB guidance for home workers in relation to surveillance, and maybe this could include health and safety and other issues with working from home. Please support this motion, Congress. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 183.

EQUAL TREATMENT FOR PEOPLE NOT WORKING
MOTION 183

183. EQUAL TREATMENT FOR PEOPLE NOT WORKING

This Congress is requested to campaign for Equal treatment of all those not working and in receipt of public funds ie Universal Credit and Furlough Payments or similar Government payments to address the Covid Crisis. This to include the way in which fraud and overpayments are addressed.

It cannot be right that both cohorts of people not working should receive radically different rates of subsidy from the Government.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

VAUGHAN THOMAS (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 183 – Equal Treatment for People not Working. Although this motion refers to furlough payments that are no more, what the motion is about is equality, which is at the core of GMB and trade unionism generally.

I should declare an interest. To put this into context, I have been a welfare rights' worker for about 22 years, representing people on low incomes and no incomes. I was right chuffed not to be furloughed at any time during the pandemic and during the lockdowns. I was able to work remotely from home, representing appellants remotely at tribunals by telephone conferences and videos.

When furlough payments came in, I agreed with this for those in work but with no work to do. More than that, though, I was really pleased for those workers it affected. Hold on a minute! I have been representing people out of work for years, and it has always been taken for granted that people in this position would gravitate onto Job Seekers' Allowance or Universal Credit now. This has been the assumption of everyone and then it struck! Richie Sunak, the Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer, came up with furlough payments. This was a bit confusing for a democratic socialist like me. This Tory Chancellor came up with more money than even Jeremy Corbyn was promising. What's not to like if the alternative was redundancy and basic benefits from unemployment? Who is going to complain about this? None of us did. But it was not equal treatment by any stretch of the imagination.

We can and do complain about unequal treatment when a member is being disadvantaged, but this cuts both ways. It reminds me of that Monty Python sketch about the Spanish Inquisition where people are tortured by a comfy chair because, as we all know, no-one can resist a comfy chair. However, the pandemic was anything but comfy. It was tragic. Who on earth was going to complain about being furloughed rather than being on basic benefits? No one. But what does this say about all those who are also out of work and left on benefits?

The Government used that tried and tested method of controlling the masses by divide and rule, and it worked. If all people not working due to the pandemic had been reduced to exist on benefits, there might have been rioting in the streets, but everyone would have realised that basic benefits are not enough to live on. Why else the growth in food banks? It's not that inequality affects us personally, but how it affects everyone else and doing something about it. Equality is for all. I don't think it is too much to ask for. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Secunder, please?

VIVIEN THOMAS (London): President and Congress, I am seconding Motion 183 – Equal Treatment for People not Working. Equality is at the heart of the GMB and trade unionism for the advantaged and the disadvantaged, for the rich and the poor. The NHS was founded on this principle.

Congress, something needs to change for those in our communities struggling to survive on a day-by-day basis. This includes those unable to work, not forgetting the sick, disabled and the elderly.

We have seen increasing demands for food banks; parents unable to feed their children in school holidays, renters in arrears at risk of eviction, astronomical fuel bills facing us all this winter and so on. We've all heard the phrase "Heat or eat". For the poorest in our society, there will be no choice. It will be "Can't heat: Can't eat". I second. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vivien. While the mover of Motion 185 comes to the stage, can I also make sure that the movers and seconders for Motions 213, 214 and Composite 15 are ready as well, please.

COVID TESTING

MOTION 185

185. COVID TESTING

This Congress recognises that Covid variants are here to stay and it is something that we will have to learn to live with. In relation to testing England only offers the lateral flow tests in the workplace, we believe that saliva tests should also be an option to encourage employees to feel confident about testing. The Lateral Flow Test does not suit all due to invasive techniques. We are calling upon all Employers, MP's and Councillors to support this motion.

L26 LB WANDSWORTH BRANCH

Southern Region

(Carried)

DAVINA BROWN (Southern): Good afternoon, Congress and President. I move Motion 185 – Covid Testing. The pandemic has had a huge impact on society. Employment has been disrupted. Around three-quarters of our families are finding it harder to manage financially, as we have heard here many times today.

There is no law that actually says that staff must be tested for Corona virus, but some employers may want to bring in testing as part of their workplace policy. Staff may

not want to get tested because they may be worried that if they test positive they will get paid less for being off work or will be treated differently.

To help reassure staff about being tested, employers could consider changing the way they deal with time off after testing positive for Covid. For example, keeping staff on their usual rate of pay instead of just paying them sick pay. Also by not counting the time off in their absence records or towards any trigger system that the organisation may have. If someone does not agree to be tested, the employer should listen to their concerns. It is important to be flexible and try to find ways to resolve any issues.

Congress, it can help for the employer and the employee to talk about the reasons why the employee does not want to get tested and how they may resolve this. They can also look at any other options that might be available.

This motion highlights the lack of widely available Covid-19 testing outside of the lateral flow test. A valuable alternative is LAMP testing. Employers, not workers, must bear the cost of the provision of any such testing. Employees have the right to choose and to work in a safe environment. Let's ensure this continues by providing alternatives. We are a hardworking nation and deserve to have our rights protected. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Davina. Secunder?

MARIA CHARLES (London): I am a first-time real-live speaker, seconding Motion 185 – Covid Testing. *(Applause)* We are all aware that at the height of the pandemic Covid proved fatal to some. Testing being made available in the workplace eased the burden of another financial outlay to households. We cannot overlook, now with the cost-of-living crisis upon us all, if charging were introduced to testing, the impact would be the difference of going to work or not. With the increase in using foodbanks and paying essential bills, we already face a lack of sick pay when off with Covid. The increase in sick leave affects not just the workforce but is a detriment to the employee as it affects their sick leave. Charging cannot be used as a means to be feeding money back into the economy, outweighing the impact it would have on employees, especially part-time and casual workers. We are asking Congress to support this motion so employees do not have to face any further monetary loss that can be borne by the employer. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Maria. Are there any delegates who wish to speak in opposition to these motions? *(No response)* If not, I ask Sue Walker from the CEC to respond.

SUE WALKER (CEC): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 182, 183 and 185, which we are supporting with qualifications.

Moving, first, to Motion 182 – Working From Home (WFH) Post Covid 19. We recognised that increased levels of working from home are likely to be here to stay, and that the develop demands an industrial response. Our qualification is that the motion calls for a number of detailed actions to be taken and our ability to progress each of them will be dependent on the resources available at the time.

Motion 183 – Equal Treatment for All People not Working. We do not disagree with the branch’s opinion on the lower-rate of benefit income, namely, those in receipt of welfare. This includes Universal Credit, which has been historically underfunded, and it is GMB policy to support linking benefits to RPI inflation and reflect the actual cost of living. Our support for this motion is, firstly, qualified by a statement for the record that while it took trade union pressure for the Government to introduce any level of support for those in work during the pandemic, furlough did still have flaws.

Secondly, the motion is asking for equal levels of financial support between those in receipt of welfare benefit and those in work. Should circumstances mean that both groups need Government support, such as during Covid 19? This would likely entail calling for a level of universal support similar to calls for a universal basic income, which is GMB policy to support, with the qualification that workers should not be forced to pay for it through higher taxes and cuts to social security.

Lastly, in line with our policy on universal basic income, what work can be done to campaign for such support in the event of similar circumstances is really a priority for an incoming Labour government.

Finally, moving to Motion 185 – Covid Testing, this motion offers a welcome highlight on the lack of widely available Covid 19 testing outside of the lateral flow test. We are aware that some workers are unable or unwilling to swab for the lateral flow test and saliva testing, also known as LAMP testing, which is a valuable alternative in such cases. The qualification is simply to clarify that employers, not workers, must bear the cost of the provision of any such testing regime.

Congress, please support Motions 182, 183 and 185 with these qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sue. Does London Region accept the qualifications for Motions 182 and 183. (*Agreed*) Does Southern Region accept the qualification for Motion 185? (*Agreed*) I will put all of those motions to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 182 was CARRIED.

Motion 183 was CARRIED.

Motion 185 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I ask the movers and seconders of Motions 225, 226, 227 and 228 to make themselves ready. I call Motions 213 and 214.

POLITICAL: RACISM & FASCISM

ANTI-SEMITISM

MOTION 213:

213. ANTI-SEMITISM

This Congress strongly challenges the disturbing rise in Anti-Semitism across the UK. This unacceptable behaviour and the perpetrators should be subjected to the full force of the law.

Where such behaviour may be present from any member of GMB Union, including social media posts, our Union should take immediate action to investigate and apply appropriate measures to address this within rule.

Congress agrees to review current GMB policies for the handling of hate crimes and all forms of discrimination to ensure they are fit for purpose. We ask that the CEC refreshes and republishes their 2018 Statement on tackling Anti-Semitism.

Congress further agrees to consider providing any necessary training or education for GMB staff and members.

REDBRIDGE BRANCH London Region

(Carried)

STEPHEN JONES (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 213 – Anti-Semitism. Our motion on antisemitism was motivated by local observations from press coverage and also the increased evidence of antisemitism, especially increased during the Covid-19 lockdown. However, it became apparent that this unwelcomed development not just in our area appeared to be widespread in England, at least. It was reported in the *Evening Standard* on 25th March 2022 that eggs had been thrown at Jewish worshippers and synagogues during a series of hate crime over a two-week period in Edgware. More importantly, the Community Security Trust, also known as the CST, a charity which provides security for the British Jewish community and monitors antisemitism, prepared a detailed report: *Anti-Semitism Hate Incidents at New High in 2021* reported by BBC on 10th February 2022. The details are alarming. It recorded reports of 2,255 anti-Jewish hate incidents in 2021, which was up 34% on 2020. Over half of these incidents – 1,254 – were in Greater London alone, the worst year ever recorded in the City.

Across the UK the number of violent attacks reported rose by 76% from 100 in 2020 to 176 in 2021. Two-fifths of these attacks occurred during May and June 2021 when the Middle East conflict was particularly bad. Indeed, one-third of all antisemitic incidents in 2021 were linked to the Middle East conflict or were due to anti-Zionist motivations.

The charity also reported a number of examples of people prosecuted for antisemitic hate crimes in 2021, including a neo-Nazi jailed in July after calling for Jewish people to be – I am not kidding you – exterminated. The CST relies on victims or witnesses to report these incidents. These developments are clearly unwelcome and we call on the GMB to reiterate their disapproval of any such incidents and take any necessary actions if such behaviour is observed within the Union or its staff. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stephen. Secunder?

UNMESH DESAI (London): President and Congress, I am seconding Motion 213. The scourge of antisemitism is something we, as a Union, have to tackle head on. No ifs and no buts. One incident of antisemitism or, indeed, any form of hate, whether

LGBT, which we talked about yesterday, or Islamophobia, which I am going to talk about later, is one incident too many. There are many things we could be doing, drawing on history, not out of sentiment but to know the past is to understand the present and to go forward into the future with confidence. The hate merchants try to divide and exploit fear. We hope, with optimism, that a better world can, must and will be built. The legacy of Cable Street where the Irish dockers joined the Jewish community to stop the Black shirts. In east London, where I come from, committed groups and trade unions came together to fight the BNP. We helped to lead in that fight. That is why I am so glad, President, that our General Secretary took the principle step of speaking at a Jewish Labour Women's fringe meeting at the Labour Party Conference last year and tomorrow in this venue. Pastor Nimbler, who was imprisoned by the Nazis, wrote a poem which reminds us why we must fight hate in all forms. This is what he said: "Firstly, they came for the Communists, and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionists. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me". Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Umesh. I call the mover of Motion 214.

ISLAMOPHOBIA

MOTION 214

214. ISLAMOPHOBIA

This Congress is alarmed by the number of discriminatory experiences in and out of the workplace being shared by our brothers and sisters who practice Islam.

Events which have been reported in the news recently have once again highlighted the importance of actively standing against hate but how many incidents of workers facing discrimination based on their religious belief go unchallenged as they are too afraid to speak out.

A survey conducted by the University of Birmingham found that roughly 1 in 4 Britons hold negative views of Islam and Muslim people and this must change.

We therefore urge GMB to work to developing a campaign and model policy against Islamophobia to ensure that our members are protected from all forms of harassment and discrimination.

S85 SANDWELL COMMUNITY BRANCH

Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

ALAN HUDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am moving Motion 214. Congress, I ask you to give your backing to this motion. People don't have the right to determine other people's racial beliefs, which allows these people to be harassed and discriminated against for what they believe in. So let's ask our Union to promote a campaign to try and change the negative views that some people have about Islam. Let's get rid of Islamophobia for good. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. Secunder?

CHRISTINA DEARLOVE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am speaking for one last time, I promise. I am seconding Motion 214 – Islamophobia.

Congress, I stood here yesterday on this exact stage speaking to you about the rise in hate crime against LGBT+ people. Guess what? We are not alone. A comrade from my region, who wrote this motion, spoke to their branch about openly witnessing workers in their workplace addressing others as “the Muslim in the corner”, rather than “You need to speak to that person, that worker, over there”. Using religion to describe someone is wrong and is certainly a hate crime.

In 2020 the Muslim Council of Britain sent a dossier of more than 300 allegations against – yes, you’ve guessed it – Boris Johnson and those wretched Tories to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. That was not the first time this was pushed for an investigation into the Party and how it is run. Guess what? Nothing’s changed.

Congress, a survey was carried out not long ago by Birmingham University, which showed that a whopping one in four Britons hold negative views on Islam and Muslim people. This needs to change and change now.

Congress, let’s all stand together to campaign and change what is happening. We are stronger together. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Chrissie. Are there any delegates who wish to speak in opposition to those motions? (*No response*) Then I ask Margaret Gregg from the CEC to respond.

MARGARET GREGG (CEC): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 213 and 214, both of which the CEC is supporting with qualifications.

Congress, firstly can I thank the branches which have brought these incredibly important motions to be debated this year. (*Applause*) The CEC wish to make it abundantly clear that racism and bigotry has no place in our Union. They have no place in our movement. We are proud of every single GMB member who stands up against these hateful views.

Yet we are experiencing a disturbing rise in antisemitism and Islamophobia across our societies. Fringe far-right conspiracies were some of the most depraved ideologies are making their way out of the corners of the internet into mainstream life, with vile antisemitism often at the centre.

We have a sitting Prime Minister who has degraded Muslim women to the point of dehumanisation, and he is still leading a party that refuses to properly investigate Islamophobia within its ranks. In the Labour Party and parts of the wider movement Jewish members have not felt safe. That must never happen again. (*Applause*)

The CEC is proud to have signed up to the IHRA definition of antisemitism, which is set out by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. We are proud to have signed up to the APBG definition of “Islamophobia”, which is set out by the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims.

We do have small qualifications on both of these motions.

On Motion 213 our small qualification is that training for staff is determined by internal management and not by the CEC. On Motion 214, our qualification is that the APBG definition should be incorporated into the future policy and campaigning work against Islamophobia that the motion calls for. Please support Motions 213 and 214 with these qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margaret. Does London Region accept the qualification to Motion 213? (*Agreed*) Does Birmingham Region accept the qualification for Motion 214? (*Agreed*) I will put those motions to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against? They are carried. Thank you to the speakers of all those motions. They are incredibly important motions. Our Union will be at the forefront of the fight against racism and bigotry. We will continue to support GMB members across our Jewish and Muslim communities. (*Applause*)

Motion 213 was CARRIED.

Motion 214 was CARRIED.

SOCIAL POLICY: HARASSMENT & ABUSE

THE PRESIDENT: We now come on to Social Policy: Harassment and Abuse. Could the speakers for Composite 15 please come to the front. Wales & South West Region to move and Midland & East Coast to second.

DRINK SPIKING AND BE DRINK SPIKE AWARE

COMPOSITE 15

C15. Drink Spiking and Be Drink Spike Aware

Covering Motions 229 and 230

229. BE DRINK SPIKE AWARE - WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

230. DRINK SPIKING - MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION

That Congress acknowledges the concerning increase in the number of drink spiking incidents, as reported by Police forces across the UK.

This Congress notes the increased numbers of young people who have been victims of drink spiking, leading to illness and dangerous situations for the individuals concerned and potentially for their family and friends.

Notes that in September and October 2021, nearly 200 cases were reported, as well as 24 reports of victims being targeted with some form of injection. While most of all cases involved young people, targets also include young men.

Agrees that everyone has the right to feel safe and to live freely while socialising and that all perpetrators must be held to account, and victims properly supported.

That Congress notes that there is currently no proper system in place to support victims but also to support night-life staff and hospitality business owners and the need for better training for staff at venues.

That Congress agrees that an important part of the response should include more practical measures such as covers for drinks, better training for night-life staff which would include how to identify vulnerable people and any potential offenders, so that they can take preventative action, and for police to conduct more rigorous searches of potential offender.

This Congress calls upon the Government and the Labour Party to mount a renewed campaign to raise awareness of this issue, and to lobby for increased fines and punishment for those found guilty of carrying out such acts.

Moving Region: WALES & SOUTH WEST

Seconding Region: MIDLAND & E COAST

(Carried)

SHARON HARRISON (Wales & South West): President and Congress, I move Composite 15. Drink spiking appears to be prevalent in the UK. This disgusting crime is committed in pubs, clubs, festivals and house parties, yet it is not often reported to the police. Many people don't report drink spiking because they don't remember details of the night or they feel embarrassed.

A person's drink can be spiked to make them more vulnerable for a variety of motives, including theft or sexual assault. The manner of spiking can take many forms, and we are hearing of the increased numbers reporting use of needles and injections to administer drugs. Unfortunately, if your drink has been spiked with a date-rape drug, it is unlikely that you will see, smell or taste any different, no matter what type of drink you are having.

A petition to the Government was started by Mair Howells, the founder of I've Been Spiked, because of this in January '22. The Government called for evidence into drink spiking as part of its Committee's work into Violence Against Women and Girls. This was a major milestone in the drink-aware campaign, but more still needs to be done. So what can we do to keep our members safe?

As a Union, we can't just focus on those attending the venues. We must work with our members who are in the hospitality, security and transport sectors and their employers. Many of us aware of the 'Ask Angela Campaign', which offers a safe escape for those in danger. Were you aware that refuge can also be sought in fire stations until help or the police arrive.

At a recent Wales TUC fringe event on night safety run by our region, we were approached by several other unions including RMT and FBU, who also believe as we do. We can't fight this alone and we need to work together to collectively protect our members and raise awareness of drink spiking and night safety.

Congress, we will be lobbying the Welsh Government to change the practices and laws around stop-and-search at venues, working to increase recruitment at unionised workplaces in the hospitality, transport and security sectors. We must also work with local authorities and police forces to ensure that this is a safe place in which to report incidents and encourage people to come forward, as well as working with employers to look at good practices and improving training for staff as well as raising awareness of the dangers and signs of drink-spiking at venues. We must work with other unions

to form a collaborative group to protect our members. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon. Secunder?

TONI YEL (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Composite 15: Drink Spiking. The Home Affairs Committee has warned that spiking will remain an invisible crime unless more is done to improve awareness and support victims. In a report to the Committee in April of this year, it was highlighted that the lack of data on spiking has made it difficult to get a clear picture of the true extent, and this will remain a barrier to policing until data collection is improved. A culture of viewing victims of having had one-too-many or not being able to handle their drink, and the lack of co-ordinated support from venues, police and health services has meant a huge number of incidents are going unreported.

We have Labour MPs who are part of the Home Affairs Committee, and we need our national GMB colleagues to work with them to lobby Parliament for increased fines and punishments for those found guilty, because what we have in place now is clearly not working.

I would like to draw to the CEC's attention that in their written response to the motions referring to women – of course, I agree with it – we must be aware that men also get spiked and are less likely to report it, so they need to be a part of the focus campaign, too.

The CEC's written response also refers to branches being best placed to work with local venues and again – yes, I agree – we need national colleagues to support on a campaign, please, with the tools to put things in place consistently across the GMB. That is my qualification to the CEC, colleagues.

Unfortunately, our family has had personal experience. My 23-year-old son was spiked on a night out. He woke up in undergrowth on an industrial estate at 6 o'clock in the morning in January. He lost six hours. We will never know what happened to him. Thankfully, he recovered and he was lucky, but I don't wish that on any family. I am sure we have many families and friends in this hall who have also been affected. Everybody should be able to go out and enjoy themselves without the fear of this happening to them. More needs to be done and we need to mount a renewed campaign to raise further awareness and to encourage victims to support the call for drink-spiking awareness. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Toni. Are there any delegates wishing to speak in opposition to this motion? *(No response)* In that case, I ask Elaine Daley from the CEC to respond.

ELAINE DALEY (CEC): President and Congress, Elaine Daley, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Composite 15 – Drink Spiking and be Drink Spike Aware, which we are supporting with qualifications.

The motion is right to call the rise in the number of reports of drink spiking in recent years “shocking”. GMB branches are well placed to undertake work with venues in

their local area and could consider partnering with existing campaigns, like the *Good Night Out Campaign*, on this issue. Venues are employers and should act responsibly, too. Branches could call for venues to outline what measures they take to eliminate drink spiking and all forms of harassment and assault on their premises, including training for workers.

An essential tool for increasing night-time safety is calling for men, who are the majority of perpetrators, to be active bystanders by holding their friends to account and not allowing these crimes to occur in the first place.

Our qualification is that the criminal justice system is known to be institutionally biased against people of ethnic minority backgrounds, especially black people of all genders. Increased powers to search suspects may exacerbate the disproportionate searching of black people without proper reason. Our qualification is that the existing punishment for drink spiking is up to 10 years in prison, which is clearly not acting as a deterrent, particularly as conviction rates are extremely low. Enhanced fines or sentences appear unlikely to reduce the offending rate. A more effective approach may be to tackle the problem at its root cause, including through sex and relationship education, which properly addresses abuse and consent as is existing GMB policy. Congress, please support this composite with the qualifications I have outlined. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elaine. Does Wales & South West accept the qualification for Composite 15? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Midland & East Coast Region accept the qualification for Composite 15? *(Agreed)* Thank you. I will now put Composite 15 to a vote. All those in favour, please show? Is anyone against? No. That is carried.

Composite 15 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to our last four motions of the day, which is Social Policy: Equality & Inclusion. Could I ask the mover of Motion 225 to come to the rostrum?

SOCIAL POLICY: EQUALITY & INCLUSION

U=U

MOTION 225

225. U=U

This Congress asks that we further support people with HIV both in the workplace and socially by supporting the campaign that U=U, undetectable = uninfected. Let's further reduce the stigma associated with people living with HIV.

AVON & WESSEX BRANCH A55

Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

JULIET JONES (Wales & South West): I move Motion 225. I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Thank you.

Congress, despite being in the 21st century, at times employers still lack proper policies to support those diagnosed with HIV. Some people still think you can catch this disease by the shaking of hands or sharing crockery. This is simply wrong. Advances have been made in treating HIV and those with HIV to lead normal lives and have a regular life expectancy. This is a fantastic milestone which we have reached, a point where “undetectable” means “untransmissible”, which means that no person can transmit HIV to any other person. This is a huge step forward. People still don’t understand and automatically presume that if someone has HIV they are gay or bisexual.

HIV does not discriminate who it infects, who you are, whether you are heterosexual, gay, bisexual or any other sexual identity. If you are having unprotected sex, you are at risk. So why do employers insist on not having proper policies in place to support them. Employers do not realise the impact on their daily lives and how tiring the medication can be. Employers believe they can treat those with HIV just the same as anyone else in absence procedures and threaten them with their jobs. This is shocking. Employers present themselves as being equal and inclusive when they are far from it.

We should be working for our members to ensure that they are not being discriminated against at work because of their HIV status. We should ensure our members get the reasonable adjustments they need. Employers should be doing more to protect the most vulnerable in the workplace and they should be working with GMB to do this. I encourage each branch and every region to help educate our members on this issue and help to smash the stigma.

Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Juliet. Secunder, please?

LINDA MOORE (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I am seconding Motion 225. Comrades, you would think today that we had learnt our lessons with HIV and the impact it has. We may have done so medically and advanced the treatment with Pre exposure prophylaxis – PREP – to suppress the viral load. Still it is used as a dog whistle against gay men and against people of colour. This is not just wrong but abhorrent.

Comrades, employers fail to train managers to be able to deal with this. As we know, a person does not need to disclose their HIV status unless they are in certain professions, such as a nurse or the armed forces, but this should not stop an employer making adjustments, training staff and ensuring that they follow their legal obligations. Employers can do more to stamp out bullying and to create a culture of respect. They claim to have respect for cultures but then allow myths surrounding this disease to flourish. These myths have been born from ignorance and fear.

Comrades, we should all work together to end the stigma. We should educate ourselves about how HIV can affect the person, how when they become undetectable they are not longer infectious or, as it is known, the virus has become untransmissible. We shall pressurise employers and managers to implement policies to protect HIV workers and to ensure they get access to reasonable adjustments. We should hold

employers to account if they are not following the Equality Act 2010 and ensure, where possible, we have advised members of their rights.

Every person's story who has HIV is different and we should always listen to them and put them at the forefront of what we do. It is them who are best placed to tell us how to approach the issue and what they want. Thank you. Please support.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Linda. I call the mover of Motion 226.

PRIDE IS A PROTEST NOT A BRAND

MOTION 226

226. PRIDE IS A PROTEST NOT A BRAND

This Congress notes that large Pride events across the country have become commercial enterprises rather than community events. As Pride events have expanded, so has the commercial revenue needed to host the festival. We saw recently 25k in funding being given to Pride Cymru by the Welsh Government with no consultation and no thought for grass root community Prides which would have benefited from this funding as would have the local towns and communities.

The original notion of Pride as a protest, is being challenged by many companies and pride events choosing it as a brand enhancement leading to prices on tickets and high cost to holding a stall during these events. Many are now too expensive for LGBTQ+ activists and families to attend.

Conference believes:

- That Pride is a protest, not a brand enhancement
- That Pride events should be promoted and supported that respect this idea rather than a commercial festival
- That GMB union should be fighting to represent the rights of all working people, and as such should be at the heart of fighting for LGBTQ+ issues

This Conference resolves:

- That GMB uses our voice and power in the Union to put Protest back in what must be community based events not large corporate advertising campaigns.
- That GMB activists, branches and officers should work to support smaller, localised prides, so they can be a staging point to tackle local as well as national issues
- Create a GMB wide campaign to encourage LGBTQ+ members to become more active and by doing such encourage new members to join us knowing they will be respected and feel listened to within our Union.
- Run events to promote the understanding and education of the rich history of Pride and its importance in our Union and communities.

ASDA JOINT BRANCH A50
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

GAVIN GALLEOZZIE (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, is Pride a protest or a marketing and money-making opportunity? It is concerning to see that so many Pride events across the country have become commercial enterprises rather than community events. The real meaning and purpose of Pride as a protest has become quickly replaced by brand enhancement and become a showcase for big business and multi-national companies to try and out-do each other and make money.

Our community – I am a bi-guy with good style – has been fighting for decades to be seen and accepted. The Pride Parade is seen by many as a celebration but at what cost? Pride is and always has been a protest. It is not there for entertainment. It is certainly not there for monetary gain. The Welsh Government recently awarded Price Cymru £25,000 towards their growing Pride event. That was without consultation and no consideration for the grassroots and smaller community events. However, Pride Cymru still expects unions, NHS trusts and emergency services to pay £750 just to march in the parade. That cost and the cost of ticket prices rising discriminates against lower-income families and community groups. This disgraces the proud history of Pride.

I grant that it is a place for large show-case events as a promoter and focuses the nation on the need for equality, but there is a greater need for local grassroots events. Colleague we need to use the voice of our Union to put protest back in what must be community-based events, not large corporate advertising campaigns.

We can work with our colleagues in local government and ask for help in providing free areas for these events to be run in, support with the provisions of facilities, bringing together our community and their allies. Conference, this motion calls for us to create a GMB-wide campaign to encourage our members to become more active, to encouraging those around them to participate and become strong supportive allies, to promote and educate in the rich history of Pride and to use our voice in our Union to ensure that Pride remains a protest.

I will finish by saying – I am stood on the podium in front of you all – please forget me because I am merely the speaker. Pride is a protest. It will always be a protest. So please don't clap me, please don't applaud me because I'm just a guy in a leather jacket. Bang your tables, wave your papers in the air, stamp your feet at the front if you would like, but let's do it not for me – forget me, I'm gone – do it for Pride. Pride is a protest, it always has been, and Pride will be strong forever, and so will our Union, so let's get on with it. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

PAUL McGUIRE (GMB WALES & SOUTH WEST): President and Congress, I am seconding Motion 226. Congress, this year Pride events have been held across the country. It is a time that highlights and recognises the contributions of our LGBTQ+ peers, to learn about their history, to celebrate diversity and to consider the ways that we can contribute to creating a more inclusive society. But ask yourself: do you really know and understand the true meaning of Pride? Is it to lift the careers of B-list celebrities, to increase the bank balance of corporate sponsors or allow business, which have shown no historic support of Pride, to display their logo in the rainbow colours for monetary gain? The simple answer to this is: No! Pride is a protest and it certainly is not a brand.

With an increase in transphobia, continued persecution of LGBTQ+ people, we must continue to work together towards a better future for everyone in our communities. This means we must focus on uplifting grassroots organisations, working with them to inform, educate and empower their communities to take action and support their LGBTQ+ people. As a Union we can use our voice and influence in workplaces to encourage the celebration of Pride all year and not just throughout Pride month. We can work with employers to educate and inform on the importance of working with and supporting local grassroots events. We can put “protest” back into the proud history and meaning of Pride by committing to a GMB-wide campaign. Congress, Pride is a protest and it is not a brand. Please support this motion. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Paul. I call the mover for Motion 227.

COLOUR VISION DEFICIENCY
MOTION 227

227. COLOUR VISION DEFICIENCY

This Congress believes that Colour Vision Deficiency or as it is commonly known as “Colour Blindness” is the difficulty to identify and distinguish between certain colours is a workplace issue.

Most people have difficulty distinguishing between shades of Red, Yellow and Green and this is known as “Red-Green” Colour Vision Deficiency which affects 1 in 12 Men and 1 in 200 Women.

It can sometimes cause issues with Learning, Identifying Warning Signs and can limit certain Career Choices and some employers are not recognising this as a disability so will not make Reasonable Adjustments and/or provide appropriate equipment to support employees to be able to undertake their full role.

This Congress calls upon the GMB to raise awareness in all of its Branches that this is a workplace issue, providing adequate resources including training on how to tackle this with employers, as appropriate.

SOUTH WALES POLICE STAFF BRANCH S62
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

PHILIP ROGERS (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I am moving Motion 227: Colour Vision Deficiency. Congress and President, very few people in the world are truly colour blind. This means you are unable to see any colour at all. The vast majority are colour deficient. People with colour deficiency have difficulty in distinguishing shades of colours. This is because some of the colour-sensitive cells in their eyes are either missing or not working properly. For the vast majority of people, this is genetic and has been inherited from their mother. There is currently no cure. However, for others this is as a result of diseases, such as diabetes and glaucoma, due to the ageing process or medication.

The most important oversight is the plight of colour deficient schoolchildren, who are left struggling in the classroom due to lack of awareness of the affects of their condition. The UK Government provides no advice or support for schools, teachers or parents. Teachers are not given any training on this issue or how to support their pupils in a school environment.

I confess that I was one of the people who knew nothing about colour vision deficiency until a member approached me about his condition and the effect it has on his daily activities. Employed as a vehicle technician within a workshop environment has caused him issues when working on complex wiring circuits, which could have hundreds of multi-coloured wires. This is why I am delivering this speech to open everyone's eyes and make you aware of this hidden disability.

Living with colour deficiency within the workplace, people have problems in fully accessing information from all kinds of everyday sources. For example, the internet, documents and presentations, photographs, maps, charts and diagrams. Drivers have difficulty, particularly with traffic lights at night, which can be impossible to distinguish from street lights under certain conditions. Hairdressers have difficulty in colouring hair. Garden centre workers would not be able to fully spot berries or flower without some difficulty. The list goes on.

Worldwide, relatively little research has been done into the effects of colour deficiency in everyday life. This is because most people are unaware of the difficulties that this can cause on a daily basis. This situation needs to change. People with colour deficiency learn to manage, but this does not mean their needs should be ignored. UK society generally does not think of colour vision deficiency as a disability, but in most cases it should be considered as one. Therefore, employers, schools and businesses must treat it in the same way they would any other disability.

Unfortunately, the guidance notes to the Equality Act 2010 are misleading, but the Government Equalities Office recognises colour vision deficiency can be a disability. Despite this ambiguity, the Department for Work and Pensions agrees that the guidance notes require amendment. With some employers not recognising this condition as a disability, they will not make reasonable adjustments or provide appropriate equipment to support employees to undertake their role fully.

This Congress calls upon the GMB to raise awareness in all of its branches that this is a workplace issue, and must provide adequate resources and training on how to tackle this with employers. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Philip. Secunder?

JAN SHUTTLEWOOD (GMB Wales & South West): President and Congress, I second Motion 227 – Colour Vision Deficiency. When I was asked to second this motion I did not realise that I have colour vision deficiency. I know there are certain colours on the spectrum that I am unable to distinguish but assumed I had inherited this from my father.

As a child I was always being accused of cheating when I was playing board games as I was unable to distinguish between the colours, such as blue and green. Whilst my

family and friends found this amusing it became an issue when I joined the Royal Air Force. I was required to work with colour-coded wiring systems, which was a time-critical task. This took me longer to complete than my colleagues as I often got the coloured wires mixed up. I was fortunate that when I brought this to the attention of my sergeant he arranged for extra equipment to be provided so that I could complete the tasks in advance.

Colour coding is very popular in the workplace and is often used on graphs, spreadsheets and power points to name but a few. Most computer systems now incorporate the use of colour on the screen to aid users. Little or no consideration seems to be given to those with colour vision deficiency. The colours used are often the ones which we find more difficult to distinguish or are too close on the colour spectrum to be of benefit.

The Equality Act 2010 needs, clearly, to recognise that colour vision deficiency can be a disability in the workplace, thereby placing an onus on employers to provide reasonable adjustments or the appropriate equipment to support affected employees. The GMB can assist in this by raising awareness in its branches and providing adequate resources and training to workplace representatives. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jan. Do I have a mover for Motion 228?

INEQUALITY ERADICATION IN THE SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY MOTION 228

228. INEQUALITY ERADICATION IN THE SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY

This Congress agrees that at the turn of this century, Britain had made great strides in making challenges to level the gap between the poor and rich, in order to achieve equality of opportunity, but latterly the situation seems to have changed drastically, and the progress to stem inequality seems to have stalled.

This is simply because we have failed to address all aspects of inequality, including supporting those who are worse off and who hold feelings of estrangement and resentment.

There have been achievements in the political, legal, and civil equality spheres, but democracy reform is in question and we still need to encourage equal and effective participation in our communities to promote effective equality.

Some of the areas we need to address are in the reform of the tax system so that poorer people and many working people will be exempt from the payment of unfair taxes when more affluent people and, in particular, these exceptionally rich multi-nationals enjoy the most advantageous tax breaks; the improvement that will allow the levelling up of life chances and expectations of the majority of the population in areas such as housing, schooling and training of young people for a role in society in the near term; and to consider the share of equality in union membership, within the nation, faith, family, and culture, and in all aspects of agenda which foster a genuine sense of equality among all citizens.

There is significant work to be done to really tackle inequality. It is difficult to appreciate that in 2010 we saw Britain as a country in which boys achieved poorly at school, vulnerable and disabled children had to confront bullying, and pay inequality remained in place for women in spite of the cry for change. Not much has changed. It is never easy to eradicate long-standing

and embedded inequalities because to make a shift will mean dismantling structures that have been in place for centuries in some cases, that form the basis of how we understand our world.

But what has changed in 2022? A previous report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission noted that 'Inequality and disadvantage don't come neatly packaged in parcels marked age, or disability, or gender, or race. They emerge as a subset of a strand'. For instance, disability may in fact be a mental health issue.

These issues throw up enormous injustices and inequality with regard to how such disadvantages are tackled. Inequality is about unfairness. Unfairness is about not hearing the cry of those who face inequality in areas of sex, gender, employment, unemployment, child labour, housing, health (remember Coronavirus) and so forth. Long-standing inequalities remain unresolved in Britain and we see this stain in the all communities, in the workplace in the public service, in the private sphere and even in the voluntary sector.

This Congress has heard these arguments before and we keep coming back to the same themes because there is very little accountability by the authorities for addressing these issues. We have Equality legislation that offers some scope for hope, but we have not fixed it.

Britain is a diverse community and much has been done but we need to move faster, spread our net wider and try harder to bring to bear sufficient positivity to really impact inequality with all the harm it brings.

We would ask this Congress to do more to bring about the change we deserve and to press the government and authorities to make that change happen to eradicate inequality. Congress, please support this motion.

EDMONTON & ENFIELD BRANCH **London Region**

(Withdrawn)

HENRY AGBOOLA (London): President and Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I want to raise the issue inequality eradication in our society and community. We have the morality and authority to continue to ask the Government on what we believe is our right to achieve. That is why we ask for equal opportunity and treatment to everyone irrespective of their individual background. There are gaps in our employment legislation. I do not see that disability and gender eradication are covered by our society and community. We must eradicate the glaring poverty in housing provision. We are suffering a lack of training opportunities for the youth. The Government does not properly identify and deal with the real background of the issue. We also want the Government to address the tax-reform system where the poor people will be exempt from unfair tax payments. Many rich people are taking advantage of tax break concessions. We need a policy to protect the poor and ordinary people from current tax contributions. I ask Congress to look into this situation again and support the motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Henry. Seconder?

ANTHONY DURCAN (London): Good afternoon, Congress and President. I have the privilege of seconding Motion 228 on behalf of the London Region. We did have a long discussion at London Region about this motion and we had a robust discussion and four votes before we agreed that we would bring this forward.

What we like about the motion is that it actually provides us with the opportunity and the platform to speak up and speak out on today's inequality in society. Yesterday we had a fringe meeting around "Red Card on Racism" and that reminded us where we were 20 years ago to where we are now through education, opportunity and attitude. Taking the knee is taking that to the next generation.

But with equality, are we going forwards or backwards? We need to be thinking of the impact and effect that Brexit has had on our society. We have already addressed the issues of the right-wing press, including the offensive *Sun* newspaper, which often blames other people without taking any responsibility. We are in absolute outrage of this pathetic Government which is rotten to the core on supporting the very vulnerable people in our society, and they are led by a corrupt leader who is only interested in his own gang and no one else.

GMB, when looking at this, will not weaken. We will keep our commitment to those who matter. We will not shy away from our commitment. We will challenge bad behaviour. We will call out bad behaviour because together we are better and together we can make a difference. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Are there any delegates who wish to speak in opposition to any of those motions? *(No response)* Then I ask Anne Dean to respond on behalf of the CEC.

ANNE DEAN (CEC): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 228: Inequality Eradication in the Society and Community.

The CEC thanks Edmonton and Enfield Branch for submitting this motion. The motion is wide-ranging and covers a number of topics, many of which are existing GMB policy.

On the topic of tax justice, for example, a number of motions, including Motions 84, 215 and Composite 6 were passed at Congress 2010. On equal pay the Equality Organising Strategy in the 2018 Special Report covers organising around equal pay and the gender pay gap. These topics are revisited in this year's Special Report on the Women's Campaign Unit.

Congress has also just debated important equality issues, particularly the Special Report on the Women's Campaign Unit and our updates on the Task Force for Positive Change. A core and enduring mission of our Union is to work towards a fairer and more equal society rooted in the workplace. While the CEC reiterates our GMB aims to eradicate inequality at all levels and in all corners of our society, we seek withdrawal of this motion as it is too wide-ranging, covers a number of areas of existing policy and does not include a specific actionable request. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Anne. The CEC is supporting Motions 225, 226 and 227, so I will put those to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried. Does London Region agree to withdraw Motion 228? (*Agreed*) That, then, concludes debate for this afternoon.

Motion 225 was CARRIED.

Motion 226 was CARRIED.

Motion 227 was CARRIED.

Motion 228 was WITHDRAWN.

THE PRESIDENT: We do have an additional item on the agenda and I know that Malcolm really passionately wants to introduce this.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, it now gives me great pleasure to ask Tommy Dawkins if he will come to the rostrum and talk to you about his experience in dealing with autism and the problems he has had through his life. Could you give Tommy a warm welcome.

TOMMY DAWKINS MBE: Friends, good afternoon. Colleagues, good afternoon. My name is Tommy Dawkins MBE. I am nearly 69 and I'm a Regional Organiser for the Birmingham & West Midlands. That is the formalities over.

I am hoping you can see *this*. Does anybody know – there are certain people in here do know – what it says? I'll tell you what it says. It says "Port Vale". I am a Port Vale nut! Every sign on every door in every book, on every bus stop looked like that to me because I was dyslexic. From the age of 12 until I was 15 I lived anywhere I could in buses, old cars, under buses, in laundrettes, anywhere, because I had a very violent father. When I left school, my dream job was to be a plumber, and off I went and I managed to get a job. I couldn't believe it. He said to me, "Tom, can you bring your school report?" So off I went with my school report and I showed it to him. He went, "Oh! That's disgusting". I said, "Look, all I want is a chance. Please just give me a chance". He said, "Okay. I'll give you a few weeks to see how you go". After a few weeks, he came to me and he said, "You're doing really well. I'll give you a few months". A few months later, he called to me and he said, "Tom, I'd love you to become an apprentice". I was over the moon. I was absolutely chuffed to the.... Me! It was the job I always wanted, to be an apprentice. So off I went. He said, "You go down to Stoke on Trent College and enrol. Off I went. I ran nearly all the way. I got down there and he said, "I've come to be an apprentice". I was dead excited. He gave me a form. He said, "Can you fill that in?" I went "Wow! Is there anybody here who can help me fill this form in?" He said, "No. You must fill it in yourself". I thought, "Right". I screwed it up, I threw it into the bin and I went back to work the next day and I said, "I've decided I want to be a hands-on lad. I don't want to be an apprentice". He said, "What's up here, Tom? Yesterday you really wanted the apprenticeship". I said, "No, no. I'm all right. I want to be hands on". He said, "Okay". A few months later I got made redundant. I then got myself in trouble and I ended up in a detention centre.

When I came out, my probation officer said to me, "I've got you a job in the Potteries". So off I went. I told them my name was Tommy. "Can I start work?" He said, "Yes. Are you willing to do this? "Yes. Anything". No paperwork. Just start.

Clock on. That went on for a good six months and everything was going great. He came to me and he said, "Could you come to work on a Saturday morning, Tom?" I said, "Yeah, of course". He said, "Right". So off I went Saturday morning, freezing cold it was and no canteen open. I got some sandwiches and sat by a kiln. If anybody knows what a kiln is, it's nice and warm. I sat there having my sandwich and along came a bloke in a white coat, and he goes, "Oi! What you doing' sitting there? Have you seen them signs? Are you thick or something?" So when he picked himself up off the floor and the two police officers came and marched me off. Again, I was in trouble a bit more. I went to prison again. When I came out this time I tried to commit suicide. I couldn't even do that right.

I then got married. Well, I had my little girl first. Then I got married and had my little boy. Then I got a job in one of the local pottery firms again. I had lost count of how many jobs I had been through. I went down and got there. They said to me, "Right, are you willing to do any shifts?" I said, "Oh, yes. Anything". There was a bloke there and it was the best thing ever. He saw me get aggressive with that manager at the other factor. So he said to everybody, "Be careful. He's got a bad temper". That was one of the best things that could have happened to me because people then left me alone. They didn't want to mess about with somebody who had a bad temper.

I went on for quite a bit. If there was any problem, I would sort it out myself, as we would say, in the car park or at the back of the kiln. That was going great. Then the union man decided to retire. The union man had saved my job more times than anyone. He came to me, and he said, "Tom, you'll make a good union rep". I said, "Oh, I don't know about that". He said, "You will. Go on, give it a go". I said, "I'll let you know tomorrow". I went home and I said to the wife, "They want me to become the union man". "Don't go there", she said. "Whatever you do, don't go there. They will realise you've got problems". So I said, "Okay, chuck". I went back to work the next day, and people were coming up to me and saying, "You can be our union man. We've seen how you grabbed those managers and you scream and shout". I said, "I don't know". They said to me, "Oh, come on. Please". I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I go and ask the union lady if there is any paperwork with the job". So I went across to her, and I said, "Joan, is there any paperwork with this job?" She said, "Hardly any". All I can say to you is that she was a bloody liar. (*Laughter and applause*)

So I started. Straightaway, I'm thinking, "I'll handle any manager who comes", but all of a sudden you realise that that doesn't work. I had people asking me, Tommy, for help. Wow! All of a sudden the Union had changed my life. I started keeping my hands in my pockets. I started talking to people proper. Everything seemed to be going well. Sometimes I would go home and get some of the letters and forms that I had had, and I would sit there and sometimes I would get into a right state.

My daughter caught me crying. She said, "Dad, what's up?" I said, "Look, duck. Your dad's got problems. I can hardly read and write". "Oh, is that all", she said. "Give us that letter". My daughter at 12 or 13 was one of the best union reps in the pottery industry. (*Applause and laughter*) Then I got this letter. It said "Tom, you've got to go to a 10-week course learning how to be a union rep". I thought,

“How can I cope with this? I know, strap the hand up”. So I strapped my hand up and pretended I’d got a bad hand.

I got there on the first day and I was pacing up and down. There’s another chap pacing up and down as well. We just nodded to one another. “How are you?” “All right”. I said, “I’m a little bit nervous”. He said, “Yeah, and me”. I thought, “Hey-up. This bloke’s like me. He can’t read and write. Oh, this is going to be great”. He said, “What’ve you done to your hand? “I said, between me and you, nothing! I’ve got this problem with basic skills”. He said, “Right”. We goes in and lo and behold he was the bloody teacher! It was his first course. (*Laughter and applause*) He was an ex-miner who had been sacked for being a flying picket. John Irwin his name was. He said to me, “Tom”. I said, “If you say anything about what I’ve told you, and me and you are in the car park”. He said, “Okay. Tom, you will tell people when you want to that you’ve got a problem”.

I managed to do my job for a long time. I went in and I was doodling when I was talking to managers. One thing I have is a brain. I am not thick. I just can’t put it down on paper. So I would go in. We had a good system with help and support. Then I got a phone call, “Would you like to become a learning rep?” I went, “Yeah”. I’ll have a go at anything, me, now, because I am super confident, I’ll tell you. Off I went. Nineteen of us in the pottery industry were picked. There’s a young lady here who was on the same course as me who I have seen today, who I haven’t seen for a bit. The nineteen of us decided to be learning reps. Somebody turned round and said, “What a waste of time and what a waste of money”, and that’s when I forgot myself. I turned around and said, “Oi! I’m one of them. I can hardly read and write. I know what it’s like to catch a bus or a train, to go shopping and to the check-in”. I turned round and the little group that we were did really well. I started doing little presentations about the problems I’ve got and how I managed to get passed it all. You would be surprised.

Let me say to all of you, when you come in and try to get new members, and you offer them a form, and they go, “Leave it ‘til later”, or “I haven’t got my glasses”, ask them if they want help and support. We are doing that at JCB at the moment. I will tell you what. You’ll be surprised how many people turn around and say to us at JCB, “I’d love to join the union but I can’t fill a form in”. We have a good set of lads at JCB who’ll go and help them. Just remember that when you are going around.

After the 10-week course, a gentleman called Sir Brendan Barber came up and he said, “I’d like you to go all round the place and do presentations, Tom. You’ll help so many”. I did a little bit of videoing and a bit of going round and talking to people.

Then, all of a sudden, I got this letter through the post. I picked it up. I was still struggling. I could see a bit of what it said: “Tony Blair”. I then threw it in the bin. The Missus said to me, “What’s that?” I said, “I don’t know. I think it’s something Tony Blair has asked me to do”. She said, “Right. Let me have a look”. She opened it up and said, “Oh! Oh my God! Get our daughter up here, quick”. So my daughter came up and she said, “Tony Blair’s put you forward for the MBE to the Queen”. I said, “I’ve been inside twice. I’ve got no chance”. (*Laughter and Applause*) My daughter said, “You never told me that”. I said, “Duck, it was before you were born”.

So I got the letter and off I went. I went to Buckingham Palace. The funniest thing about it is that I'm a pottery labourer. I'm just a common worker who knows how to look after my members the best that I can. I got there and some chap came to me, dressed up in a funny, fancy suit and he went, "Are you a recipient or a guest?" I said, "You what?" He said, "Are you a recipient?" I said, "I haven't a clue what you're on about, mate". He said, "You are a recipient and you are receiving something?" I said, "Right. Okay".

Since then, I am getting better. I don't know if any of you saw the "Write-offs" on Channel 4 with Sandy Toksvig. As you know, when I started – this was only two years ago – I'd got the reading age of a child of four. I am nearly 69. But it has never stopped me and it's never held me back. I've tried my best on everything I do. They sent me to a tutor for so many months and that got me up to the age of 11. I am at the age of 11 at the present moment in time. (*Applause*) But I want to carry it on. When we came to the last thing on the TV programme, they said to me, "You've got to put something down about yourself". I sat there at 11 o'clock at night and me and with Alexi's help, I wrote a little poem. I will just read you this poem, and then I'll finished. I call it "*The Toils of Life by Tommy Dawkins*":

"The pain, the stress in our life because I cannot read and write.

"The train and buses I cannot catch to help me through my daily task because I cannot read and write.

"The tablets, the phone the computers to help you in your life, we just don't understand because I cannot read and write.

"The jobs we have lost, the promotion I have missed because we cannot read and write.

"Shopping, children's names, letters, forms and things you take for granted, we have a problem with because I cannot read and write.

"But do not pity me, do not mock me. You supported me to put it right, so I can read and write". Thank you. (*A standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tommy. I think so much now you understand why we wanted him to speak and share his inspirational story. Thank you, Tommy, so much.

Before we go, have Regional Success videos from Northern Region, North West Region and GMB Scotland, so what a good way to end on with some real success Stories. (*Video played*)

Colleagues, have a good evening and I look forward to seeing you back here for a prompt 9.30 a.m. start tomorrow morning.

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