

Transcript of Day 2 of GMB Congress 2021

Monday 7 June, 2021

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT: Could I call Congress to order.

Delegates, welcome back to Congress. I know that yesterday was a new experience for all of us, but there is a busy agenda for today, so can I please ask speakers on this morning's motions to make themselves ready. But thank you for yesterday. Before we start I wanted to say a few words about sound quality issues. I know that we are all doing our best with the equipment and connections available. We are all doing our best with the equipment available. At the same time, where calls have had high levels of feedback, this has caused discomfort for some delegates and I apologise to those people. For the remaining two days, we'll intervene earlier where there is a very poor quality connection but we will call you back immediately so that we can then try it again but if on the second time that happens, I think we are just going to have to move on. I would be grateful if delegates could take the following steps. Setting your own volume low when call to speak and we can adjust it apparently at this end if it's too quiet. Wear headphones if possible and use laptop or desk top devices in preference to tablets and phones. Again, only if possible.

Switch off other devices in the same room or neighbouring rooms and only have the democracy platform open in one tab.

Also just a reminder to regional delegation leads who are doing a brilliant job in keeping us updated. Make sure to indicate to the delegate decision on whether to accept the CEC stance on their Motion by sending a message in the chat box. Click chat with top table on screen, and type in a message. Then press "send" and thank you again, because it's really difficult. You are doing a delegation lead without seeing your delegation so everyone's doing a fantastic job.

The first business is a standing orders committee report. Please bring Helen Johnson on to the screen. No? No. No, we are not bringing Helen Johnson on to the screen. No, we have not got a standing order committee report. Even better, no standing order committee report.

CONGRESS LOCAL GIFT

The next item is then item 3, local gift. I will ask Gwylan Brinkworth to speak from Wales & South West Region who this year they have chosen to give the local gift to a school in South Wales and the Julian Trust which provides a night shelter in Bristol. Can I also ask speakers on Motions 104 and 105 on rights at work get ready to speak. Thank you. Can we please go to Gwylan.

GWYLAN BRINKWORTH (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): Good morning. Speaking on behalf of the Wales and South-West region to accept the local congress gift. The Wales and south-west region are delighted to be the recipient of the Congress gift this year and have decided to split this between two very worthy causes. The first is Headlands school in the Vale of Glamorgan, providing day care. Headlands school strives to provide quality education in a caring and nurturing environment. They are thrilled with the gift which will go towards their active music and performing arts group. The pupils are preparing for their summer performance. We'd like to mention one of our members, Kirsty, the granddaughter

of our regional President, Sheila. She was a dedicated teacher at Headlands who loved her job and was totally dedicated to her pupils but sadly passed away from cancer last year. We will remember her. The second is the Julian Trust who provide emergency shelter for homeless within the Bristol area. The Trust is wholly managed and staffed by volunteers and financed through voluntary contributions of funds and food. Other services include meals, health facilities, and laundry to name a few. It's vital that people who use these facilities are given the help they need to nurture future prospects, to turn homelessness into hope and impossible into possible. Thank you, Congress. From the Wales and South West region, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Two brilliant causes there. So we move on to item 5, rights at work Motions 104 and 105. Can I ask Kamran, North West & Irish region to speak on Motion 104, please?

104. REDUNDANCY CONSULTATION

This Congress believes due to the legal minimum requirement from employers any voluntary redundancies under 20 don't have to legally notify the current practicing body and a law change to reduce this figure should help manage minimum loss of jobs/members in the future.

RMB1 ROBERT MCBRIDE BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Referred)

KAMRAN ALI (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): Morning. North West & Irish region moving Motion 104, consultation. This Congress believes due to the legal requirement from employers who don't have to apply the current legislation on voluntary redundancies by Law under 20 employees being made redundant on a voluntary basis have no legal obligation to notify the redundancy payments at any one establishment within a 90 day period or less. This needs to change to a more up to date figure as employers are using this as a getaway clause to offer voluntary redundancy at a small scale and the actual figures remain under the threshold which damages the current employment of our members at this regular 90 day period could sustain the unionised employment members under the 60% ruling seen by companies who trim regular to damage the union membership or long term employment across the manufacturing industry in particular.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kamran. And the region have agreed to formally second the Motion. So can I ask Diane to move Motion 105, please?

105. NOTICE HOLIDAYS DURING REDUNDANCIES

Congress, during the last year this branch has had to deal with an unprecedented number of redundancies and changes of contract. During these times some employers have stooped to new lows to deprive our members of their proper entitlements. Under the circumstances when faced with a redundancy situation our members are reluctant, with reason, to challenge their employers if the employers are taking liberties. This is more so when members are not clear as to their legal entitlement.

One example is when members are working their notice period employers are instructing those members to take annual leave during that notice period. This deprives those workers of their full statutory entitlement to notice or their full statutory entitlement to holiday pay.

The law is clear in the Working Time Regulations 1998, Compensation related to entitlement to leave¹⁴.—(1) (a) a worker's employment is terminated during the course of his leave year, and (2) Where the proportion of

leave taken by the worker is less than the proportion of the leave year which has expired, his employer shall make him a payment in lieu of leave in accordance with paragraph (3).

It is clear Parliament intended that workers should have compensation if they had holidays left when their employment is terminated. Also, Entitlement to annual leave Regulation 13. Supports the case that workers can have holidays left at the end of their contract. Regulation 13(9)(9) Leave to which a worker is entitled under this regulation may be taken in instalments, but— (b) it may not be replaced by a payment in lieu except where the worker's employment is terminated.

It is clear what Parliament intended when the workers contract terminates, the accrued holiday is offset by the monetary value so that the worker when they start a new job they do not have to accrue payment for holidays.

If employers are allowed to tell staff to take holidays during notice, then the intention in the Regulation is undermined. Workers can start their new employment and will be deterred from taking leave because they will not have the money to support them during that leave other than that which their new employer owes them.

This branch asks Congress to support a challenge against this practice outlined above and to argue for a change in the law to ensure that the statutory entitlement to holidays and notice cannot be offset against each other.

HOTELS AND CATERING BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

DIANE TIMMINS (LONDON REGION): Okay, President, Congress, Diane Timmins London region, first time delegate, moving Motion 105 on notice holidays during redundancies.

The hospitality sector has seen mass redundancies, we all know the reasons. But what came to light was the lengths of many employers who would go to avoid paying their loyal staff their proper pay which we sadly found was not illegal.

But by the evil practice of instructing staff on notice of redundancy to take their holidays during the notice period, so the employer can avoid paying holiday pay when the employment was terminated. They're saving the employer money, thus saving the employer money. Many know of the statutory right to a notice period when an employee is made redundant as there is a right to holiday pay. The Working Time Regulation allows for unused holidays to be paid on the termination of employment. The reason the law allows this is so that employee starts a new job, they will have money to take holiday and will not need to wait until holiday with pay is accrued. This is what the law intends to happen. However, we see this being undermined by unscrupulous employers wanting to squeeze the last drop of blood from workers facing unemployment. If this practice is legal, we ask that the GMB fight to change this. Currently, employers determine when staff take holiday. We are not challenging that. But an employer must act reasonably when deciding when an employee takes holiday, furthermore an employer should not act in a way that may deter staff from taking holidays. We say that this is not reasonable to demand that staff on notice are told to take holidays during the notice period. And that the practice will deter staff taking holidays when they regain employment because they will need to wait until paid holiday is accrued. Many employers in other industries may be using this method to save money at the expense of working people. We can't allow this widespread abuse which is unchallenged to continue. The law on paid holidays has progressed with the good work of our union. We should use these progressive steps to put an end to this shoddy practice. We say that if Parliament allows a legal entitlement to a notice and holiday pay or anything else, then these legal rights should be upheld in Parliament. Our unions exist to improve the lives of members and all working people and this practice can't remain whilst the GMB is in a position to fight back. A

thing that is said to be legal does not mean we sit back and accept it. This has never been the way of our union and our intentions must be clear, we should make this challenge and if it means appealing to High Courts or changing the law, then this is what our union should do. Congress, I ask you support the Motion, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Diane, well done first time speaker, sorry you are not getting the applause and claps you deserve. Can we move on to seconder Mike?

MIKE FOSTER (LONDON REGION): Yes, good morning. Morning President, Congress, Michael Foster, London region branch secretary, first time delegate and speaker, seconding Motion 105. Our Motion seeks to outlaw the practice used by employers to the statutory entitlement. We have the right to notice when being made redundant and the right to be paid for holidays when we leave employment this. Does not ask for the earth, nor do we ask our union to do what is impossible. We are asking to challenge with all our resources and unfair practice. The London region hospitality branch saw how quickly the practice of instructing staff to take holidays during the notice period became the norm. This caused us to assume that bad employment practices can quickly take root and spread affecting all sectors of the economy. We can't allow this as it will be harder to challenge what becomes accepted practice. The union did not sit back and allow injustice. We recently championed Uber drivers, ASDA workers and the Scottish care workers, victories that will benefit many working people and improve their lives. Why not continue on this great road? We must do everything in our power to stop the sharp practice of employers. We should fight to ensure our members are not denied justice and fairness at work. Many people here will have been put on notice and will have lost their jobs, the fear and you uncertainty that creates is well known. Those on low incomes feel this fear. We know when your job is terminated you will need every penny you can get for the uncertain future. When you are made redundant that is not the time to allow employers to con you out of money you are entitled to and what you need. Members asking us for help and we can't say we can't do anything. Doing nothing is never a GMB Conference option. The road may be a tough one but we have taken up challenges in the past. We need to change the law or take the employers through the courts as we have done in the past. Congress, I'm proud to second this Motion, please support. Thank you for listening.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done Michael, another well done first time speaker. Don't believe there's anybody speaking in opposition? So can I ask Gordon Gibbs to speak on the Motions for the CEC and ask Cath Pinder and Kevin Buchanan to get ready on the Special Report on procurement and public spending.

GORDON GIBBS (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): Okay, thank you, President. President, Congress, Gordon Gibbs, speaking on behalf of the CEC on motions 104 and 105. I'll try and speak in English and not Dudley if I can! On Motion 104, redundancy consultation, the CEC is asking that the Motion be referred. UK law on collective consultation over redundancies is based on the EU redundancy directive. This gave member states alternatives to trigger consultation. The UK opted to consult over a period of 90 days at least 20 days whatever the number of workers normally employed in the establishment in question. The CEC can support the principle that the collective redundancy rights should be improved and the removal of the 20 at one establishment rule could be part of that.

By referring the Motion, it would allow us to develop policy to put in place an alternative trigger mechanism which could be based on the alternatives already set out in the directive or some other alternatives.

On Motion 105, notice holiday during redundancies, the CEC is supporting this Motion with a qualification. The general rule is that statutory annual leave can't be replaced by a payment in lieu. The rationale under the working time directive to allow a payment in lieu of statutory annual leave on the termination of employment was that it ensures that the worker is financially capable of taking a period of paid rest before embarking on new employment. The Motion is calling for a change to the law to ensure that during redundancy, statutory entitlements to holidays, and notice, can't be offset against each other.

This may be a particular issue that's risen in the hospitality sector, the qualification is that there are unfortunately no grounds for a challenge as the law is clear at present that the employer is able to do this. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. We understood every word you said. North West & Irish have indicated they accept reference back. Does London accept the qualification, please? Yes, thumbs up. Great. We can move to the vote. We only need to take the vote on Motion 105. And that vote is carried. We now move on to item 6, the Special Report on public spending and procurement and can I ask for it to be moved and seconded by members of the CEC then invite regions to speak in alphabetical order. Cath would you like to move the report for the CEC, please?

CEC Special Report on Procurement and Spending

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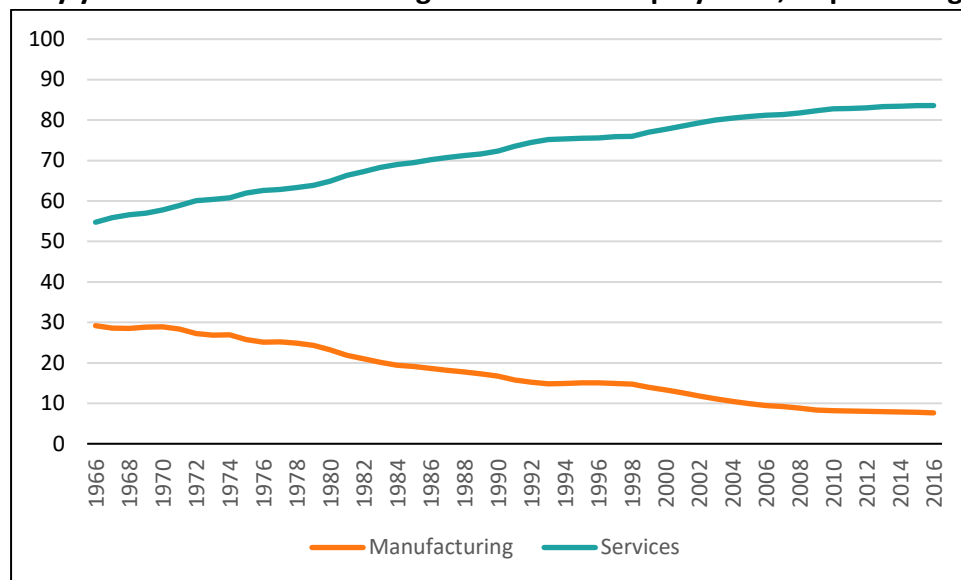
1. Introduction

- 1.1 The UK's economy has changed fundamentally over recent decades. Before the pandemic struck, more people were recorded as working than ever before, but the quality of work has been undermined. The national accounts said that we are richer than ever before, but some areas have never recovered from the decline (and in some cases destruction) of traditional industries. Reforming our approach to spending and procurement will be a vital component of how we build an economy that is fairer and more rewarding than the old.

1.2 The coronavirus pandemic has plunged us into a new recession and ruthlessly exposed deep-seated inequality and discrimination in our economy and our society. While key workers were denied proper PPE, a small group of well-connected profiteers were awarded lucrative contracts by their cronies. There has been no real accountability for a series of procurement scandals which have seen billions wasted while key workers were left without the PPE they needed.

1.3 The dominance of the service sector has been accompanied by a drastic reduction in jobs in the manufacturing and production industries. Five million manufacturing jobs have been lost in the last fifty years. Manufacturing has fallen from a third of jobs in the mid sixties to around eight per cent of employment today. A nation with a once-extensive textiles industry was unable to meet its own needs for PPE. GMB is proud to represent workers in both services and manufacturing, and we support a rebalancing of the economy to rebuild our industrial base.

Fifty years of UK manufacturing and services employment, as percentages of all jobsⁱ



1.4 The effects of poor procurement processes can be seen around us. More than 320 combined years of shipbuilding history were almost extinguished at Harland and Wolff Appledore yards while the Ministry of Defence prepared to send the £1.5 billion Fleet Solid Support shipbuilding contract overseas. The vast majority of the jackets for the new £1.4 billion Neart Na Gaoithe windfarm are being built in Indonesia, while BiFabs yards have been reduced to a shadow of their former selves. Ministers claim that they cannot afford public sector pay rises after wasting billions on a failing contract tracing system.

1.5 At the same time, inadequate funding and contracts for social care and other public services have encouraged a race to the bottom. In many cases, contracts are not sufficiently resourced to even fully fund the National Minimum wage. Government policy has focused on short-term and narrow assessments of cheapness without regard to

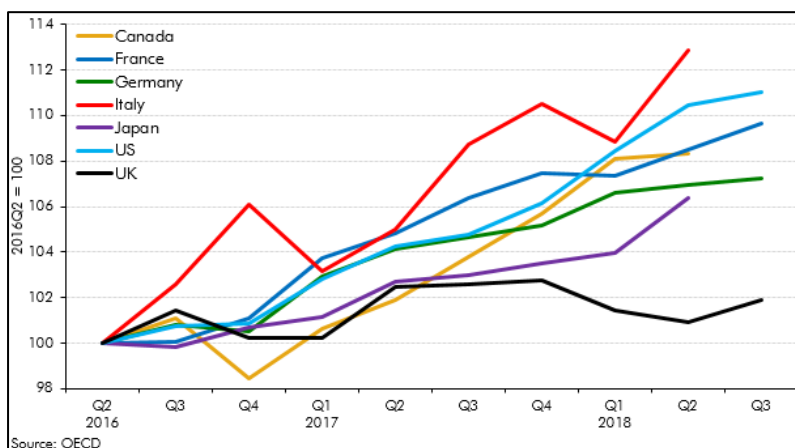
long-term costs, leading to a system that knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

- 1.6 Against this backdrop, there has been demand for work by GMB on how public spending could be reformed to secure good quality jobs in the UK. The Westminster Government is also proposing changes to its procurement and subsidy rules now the UK has left the EU. A National Procurement Policy Statement – which would bind local authorities in England as well as UK Government Departments – is due to be published later this year.
- 1.7 The immediate economic outlook is frail. Even before the pandemic struck, the OBR estimated that business and government investment is 5.5 per cent lower than it would have been without Brexit uncertainty.ⁱⁱ In February 2021, 4.7 million jobs were furloughed and the claimant count has risen by 1.4 millionⁱⁱⁱ – with redundancies falling hardest on younger and low paid workers. As the nation faces competing visions of what the post-coronavirus economy should look like, now is the right time to set out our stall on spending and procurement.
- 1.8 Some of the issues discussed in this report are not straightforward. Our international obligations which limit the UK's freedom of action did not end once the Brexit transition period finished. We can campaign to change those rules, but we are also bound to fight for our members who work in exporting industries whose livelihoods would be at risk if we walked away from those obligations without a new system in place.
- 1.9 GMB firmly believes that public services should be delivered directly by the public sector, under the relevant negotiated terms and conditions (see Congress 2018 CEC Statement on Outsourcing and Public Ownership). The collapse of Carillion and the coronavirus outbreak have exposed the fundamental failings of outsourcing – both patients and staff are significantly more likely to be infected in care homes that have been contracted out.^{iv} There is a historic opportunity to deliver the 'biggest wave of insourcing for a generation' promised by the Labour Party, particularly as PFI contracts begin to expire. In line with longstanding GMB policy and campaigns, we call for a national programme of insourcing and – in the meantime – better guidance for public authorities on their legal rights to insource services.
- 1.10 This Special Report sets out a GMB policy position for spending and procurement, including: the need to raise spending across our nations and regions as part of a real levelling up agenda; that examines the procurement rules we will work under now that the UK has left the European Union; argues that more could be done with the powers public bodies have now; and makes the case for reforms so we can have a system of rules-based local contents requirements, so that UK jobs can be secured in critical and vulnerable industries.

2. Public spending in the UK

- 2.1 GMB has long argued for higher public spending. Austerity was not over even before the pandemic struck: NHS trusts in England reported a combined deficit of £827 million in 2018/19,^v and local government faced a £6.5 billion funding gap by 2025.^{vi} Public sector wages had not recovered in real terms after a decade of freezes and caps, as reflected in the recent ‘catch up’ claims submitted by GMB and other public service unions.
- 2.2 While the UK is likely to emerge from the pandemic with a debt-to-GDP ratio that is unseen since the late 1950s. The former Conservative Chancellor George Osborne has already called for a return to the damaging politics of austerity.^{vii} However, the cost of servicing the national debt is at its lowest in over a hundred years and has actually fallen during the pandemic.^{viii} Instead of balancing the books on the backs of those who have risked the most during the outbreak, the UK should pursue a new economic model based on growth and investment instead.
- 2.3 The UK historically has a poor record of delivering investment. Excluding the property market, OBR analysis of OECD figures shows that the UK has seen the weakest growth in investment in the G7 since the Brexit referendum. The think tank IPPR has argued that if spending up on public services was brought up to the same levels as similar European countries then austerity would effectively be reversed, and spending on health, education and social security would increase by £1,800 per person annually.^{ix}

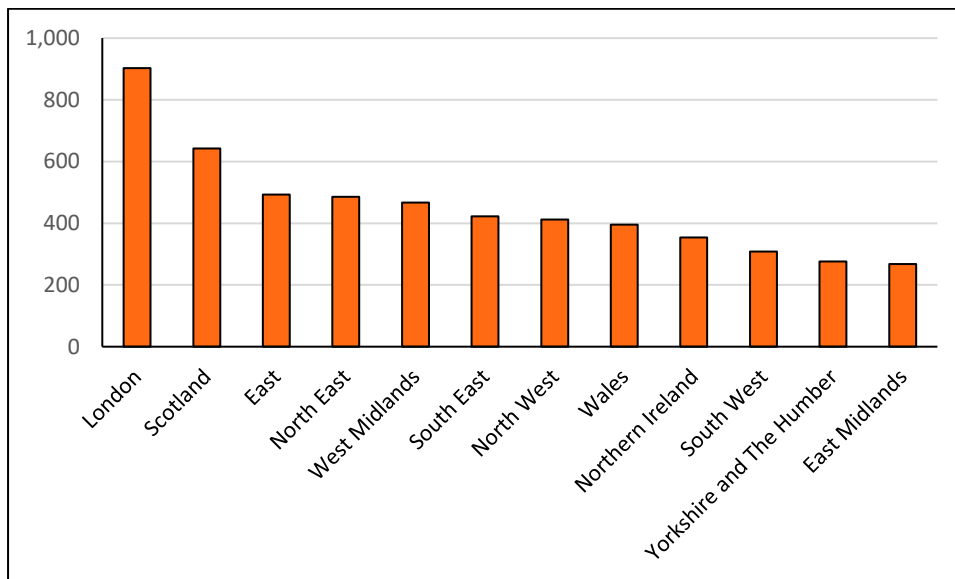
Comparison of G7 public and private investment (excluding investment in housing)^x



- 2.4 Public spending is not distributed evenly: in fact, the disparities between the UK’s regions were believed to be more stark than in any other member of the EU.^{xi} To take one example, the current Government has set great store on the economic benefits of transport spending, but public spending on transport per head is more than three times greater in London than in the worst supported region (although this picture should be alleviated somewhat in future years through investment in vital strategic projects that GMB believes must proceed, including Sizewell C and HS2). It has been argued that public procurement rules, which focus on returns on a simple Gross Value Added per

head measure, result in spending being targeted in areas that have already received the greatest investment.^{xii}

Government spending on transport per head in 2018/19, £^{xiii}



- 2.5 Some of the nations and regions worst served by current policies are also those most hit by decades of deindustrialisation. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has calculated that in the 1970s wages in the Midlands were slightly above the UK average, but now they have fallen to 6 and 9 per cent below the UK average in the East and West Midlands respectively. Wages in Wales and the North East have fallen further behind the UK average over the last forty years.^{xiv}
- 2.6 Even where the UK Government was able to spend money on direct support for industry and regions under EU rules, it mostly chose not to do so. In 2017, the UK spent just 0.37 per cent of its GDP on permitted state aid – this was half the EU average, and far less than France or Germany. By contrast, at the top of the scale, Sweden spent 6.7 per cent of its GDP on support for its industries and regions.^{xv}
- 2.7 In addition, where the Government has intervened to support particular technologies and ‘pick winners’, it has failed to support UK jobs and build strong domestic supply chains. As discussed in the accompanying Special Report on Energy, significant investment has been made in the offshore wind industry, but under a third of capital expenditure is reportedly placed with UK suppliers and the jobs return on investment is very low.
- 2.8 GMB does not believe that the answer to these disparities is to tear down London and the South East. Rather, we should prioritise bringing up spending levels in other nations, regions, and low-funded areas within regions, and bring overall public spending in line with comparable European countries.

- 2.9 We further believe that the decline of traditional industries, and the resulting loss of skilled and well-paid jobs, has been particularly concentrated in areas that are now sometimes referred to as ‘left behind,’ and that this trend has fuelled disengagement and a loss of faith in the political system by many.
- 2.10 The Westminster Government says that it is developing a ‘UK Shared Prosperity Fund’ to replace EU regional funds, but despite the UK having now ended the transition period, few details of the new scheme are available. It has been indicated that the overall level of funding will at least initially be lower than EU structural funds. The Government has indicated that the Shared Prosperity Fund will be directed from Westminster, with an implied loss of autonomy for the devolved administrations.
- 2.11 Ministers have also recently announced plans for a new central Cabinet Office unit to coordinate procurement policies across government, alongside vague plans for a new ‘independent’ body to oversee decisions of subsidy awards. There are no stated plans for union representation, or even consultation rights, for either body. In submissions, GMB has stressed the dangers of democratic accountability being replaced by new organisations that are remote, technocratic, and politicised.
- 2.12 Procurement and other relevant areas of policy (including food standards and environmental standards) were devolved in the late 1990s, within the wider framework of EU rules. Yet the Westminster Government’s policy is that there must be ‘mutual recognition’ within the new UK internal market – in other words, a product sold in one part of the UK must be sold in another (with some exceptions in Northern Ireland). In light of fears that the UK is engaging in a ‘race to the bottom’ on standards in order to agree rushed trade deals, GMB has opposed any loss in autonomy for the devolved administrations.
- 2.13 GMB calls for:
- Full funding for public service contracts and direct services
 - Regional funding to initially at least match and then to exceed the levels under the previous EU system
 - No loss of power or autonomy for the devolved administrations under trade deals or new spending, procurement and subsidy regimes

3. Covid procurement scandals

- 3.1 The coronavirus outbreak exposed the reduction in the capacity of the UK’s public services and manufacturing base. Our hollowed-out services were left precariously exposed, and Government had little understanding of how domestic manufacturing

capacity could be reutilised to produce PPE and medical equipment. The crisis represented a moment when the rundown in this essential capacity could be reversed: instead, the Government's record has been characterised by incompetence and crony contracting.

- 3.2 Staffing for NHS Nightingale hospitals was passed to outsourcing firms, instead of being provided under the terms of the Agenda for Change national agreement. While NHS and care workers fashioned makeshift PPE from binbags, £156 million was spent on a private equity contract for 50 million facemasks that provided no protection against Covid-19.^{xvi} Private contractors provoked outrage after they sent free school meals parcels that fell woefully short of basic nutritional standards.
- 3.3 A National Audit Office investigation into the Government's handling of procurement during the pandemic found that, even allowing for the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic, Ministers had 'diminished public transparency' and fallen short of the 'standards that the public sector will always need to apply if it is to maintain public trust.'^{xvii} Trust in the Government was further undermined as the true scale of the 'cash for access' lobbying scandal emerged.
- 3.4 There is no shortage of examples: a former pub landlord with no experience of providing medical supplies was able to gain a lucrative NHS contract for medical vials after messaging Health Secretary Matt Hancock directly.^{xviii} The High Court subsequently found that the Government had acted unlawfully when it failed to advertise details of dozens of Covid contracts that were awarded without competition, including for PPE.^{xix} We note that Labour Party research has found that almost £2 billion worth of public contracts have been awarded to companies linked to Conservative Party donors since the start of the crisis.^{xx}

'Covid-19 has unleashed state corruption on a grand scale, and it is harmful to public health. Politicians and industry are responsible for this opportunistic embezzlement.'

The BMJ (formerly the British Medical Journal)

13 November 2020^{xxi}

- 3.5 Alongside this scandalous waste of public resources, it was revealed that former Prime Minister David Cameron had launched a lobbying blitz of Ministers on behalf of the now collapsed financial services firm Greensill Capital, which was given a role in paying advances on NHS wages. Cameron – who once said that lobbying was 'the next big scandal waiting to happen ... the far-too-cosy relationship between politics, government, business and money'^{xxii} – pushed for Greensill to have access to the Government's Covid Corporate Financing Facility funds.

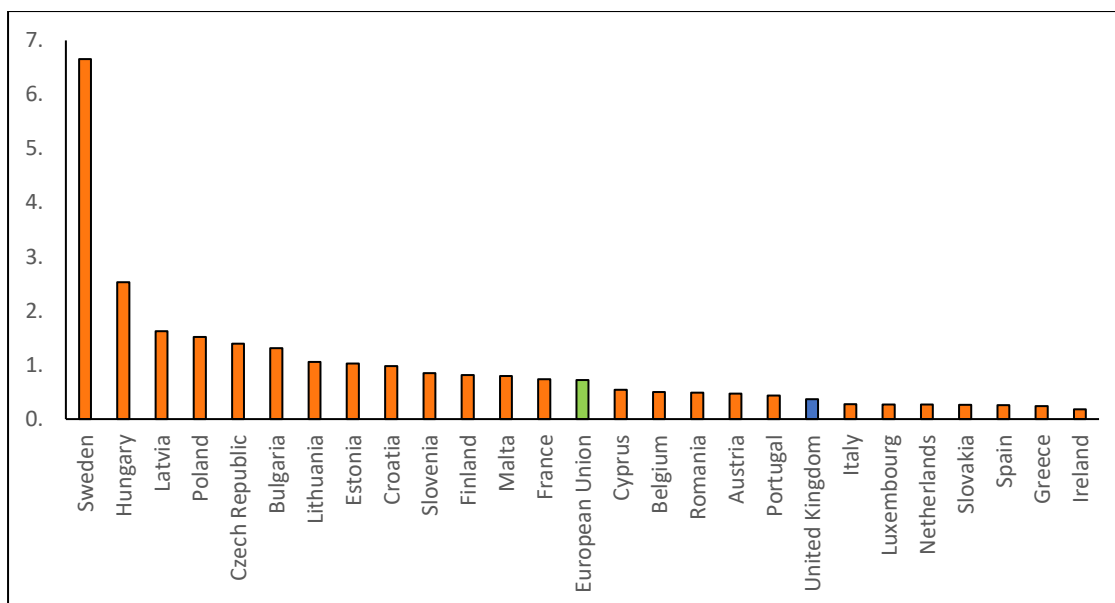
- 3.6 The collapse of Greensill could still have serious consequences for our members. Greensill was one of the main financial backers of Liberty Steel, the future of which is in doubt. Greensill also reportedly planned to convert future NHS wages into bonds to be sold on the international market.^{xxiii} Yet, without any apparent sense of irony, the Government has appointed a private banker with links to Conservative Party donations to lead the investigation into the Greensill lobbying scandal.^{xxiv}
- 3.7 We note the package of reforms proposed by Shadow Cabinet Office Minister Rachel Reeves in February 2021, including: ‘introducing the biggest wave of insourcing of public services back in-house for a generation’; extending the Freedom of Information Act to providers of public services; and introducing a new Commissioner to replace the ineffective ‘anti-corruption tsar’ role created by the Conservatives.
- 3.8 GMB:
- Condemns the misuse of public funding during the coronavirus pandemic; and
 - Calls for a full and independent inquiry into the improper awards of contracts during the coronavirus outbreak, including but not limited to the Greensill lobbying scandal; and
 - Welcomes the package of reform proposals announced by the Labour Party in February 2021.

4. Restrictions on spending and procurement after Brexit

The Trade and Cooperation agreement

- 4.1 The UK’s membership of the EU imposed certain restrictions on procurement and spending, particularly around the use of subsidies to support specific companies or industries. However, GMB has long argued that Ministers in successive governments also routinely ‘hid behind’ EU rules. Interventions were possible within a range of categories: such as spending on infrastructure; training; regional aid; and environmental protection. Our spending on such ‘permitted state aid’ was well below the EU average. For politicians who have an ideological aversion to state intervention, it has suited their purposes to claim that they had less power than was often the case.

Spending on permitted state aid as a proportion of GDP in 2017, %^{xxv}



4.2 On 24 December 2020, the UK and the EU agreed a Trade and Cooperation Agreement (the TCA). The TCA requires the continuation of features of EU procurement rules. Among the terms of the TCA are requirements for publication of contract notices, ‘no less favourable’ treatment for EU suppliers compared to UK suppliers, and a means for prospective suppliers to challenge an award decision (a ‘review procedure’). The Government is currently consulting on how these rules will be implemented.

4.3 The TCA states that public bodies ‘may take into account environmental, labour and social considerations throughout the procurement procedure.’^{xxvi} This provision will be based on the social value framework that is discussed in the next section. However, only limited detail of the Government’s intended approach is currently available.

4.4 While the TCA requires that the UK must introduce a new system of subsidy controls, the agreement does provides for subsidies to be awarded in cases of ‘social difficulties or distributional concerns,’ and for rescue packages for individual firms ‘if they contribute to an objective of public interest by avoiding social hardship or preventing a severe market failure, in particular with regard to job losses or disruption of an important service that is difficult to replicate.’^{xxvii} However, the Government’s stated plans make little allowance for such interventions. GMB has argued that Ministers are once again showing an unwillingness to fight for jobs in the UK.^{xxviii}

The World Trade Organisation

4.5 The UK’s international obligations do not end with the EU. Our commitments to the World Trade Organisation, which predate our membership of the EU, also impose significant restrictions, which have not received the same public attention. The WTO’s rules make little allowance for the sort of social or environmental considerations that GMB would wish to see.

- 4.6 Congress has received a number of motions over the years, including to Congress 2021, which call for UK-based companies to be preferred in tendering processes, or otherwise for a fixed percentage of contract awards to be domestic suppliers.
- 4.7 Unfortunately, such policies – which are sometimes known as ‘local contents requirements’ – are not compliant with the various WTO-linked treaties that the UK is a signatory to, with the notable exception of the defence sector for which specific exemptions exist. For example, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), originally signed in 1947, states that:
- ‘No contracting party shall establish or maintain any internal quantitative regulation relating to the mixture, processing or use of products ... [that means they] must be supplied from domestic sources.’*
- 4.8 Similarly, the Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) agreement prohibits rules that require *‘the purchase or use by an enterprise of products of domestic origin or from any domestic source,’* and the Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM) Agreement further prohibits *‘subsidies contingent, whether solely or as one of several other conditions, upon the use of domestic over imported goods.’*
- 4.9 Finally, the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA), which is a voluntary treaty, commits us to *‘no less favourable treatment’* of other signatories’ products than the UK gives to *‘domestic goods, services and suppliers,’* and further commits the UK to not *‘treat a locally established supplier less favourably than another locally established supplier on the basis of the degree of foreign affiliation or ownership.’* The UK has now become a signatory to the GPA in its own right following the end of the transition period.
- 4.10 Local content requirements are a popular measure for building up industries, particularly in developing nations. A large number of new requirements were imposed in a number of countries in the aftermath of the financial crash – by one assessment, more than a hundred new measures were created across the globe, including in WTO nations.^{xxix}
- 4.11 It is not difficult to find other, more longstanding examples of local content requirements being used by other nations. In the United States, for example, cargo ships that serve trade routes between US ports are required to be built domestically under legislation dating back to 1920, and the federal rail company Amtrak is required to purchase a certain number of new vehicles from home providers. The Buy American Act has required some degree of local content purchasing since 1933, although its provisions have been greatly weakened in practice under successive WTO treaties.
- 4.12 It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the United States enjoys a special status because of the WTO’s reliance on the USA’s continued membership. Our politicians have been too accepting of the existing rules, and they have not fought for equivalent protections for UK industry

- 4.13 Local content rules became particularly popular over the last two decades as countries seek to build up renewable energy manufacturing industries. This has led to a justified sense of unfairness in those countries, such as the UK, that have not put equivalent measures into place.
- 4.14 Unfortunately, independent assessment of these policies has found that almost none of the local content requirements that have been put in place around renewable energy were compliant with international law, and that they ‘rarely can survive judicial scrutiny.’^{xxx} This assessment is borne out by high profile cases. In 2012, the state of Ontario’s Feed In Tariff programme which tied wind subsidies to local contents was found to be unlawful.^{xxxi} India was found to be in breach of WTO treaties in 2016 when it tried to use local content requirements to build up its solar panel industry,^{xxxi} and in 2019 the similar programmes of eight American states were also found to be in breach.^{xxxiii}
- 4.15 The evidence points to the hard conclusion that, as things stand, it is likely that, even outside the EU, the introduction of similar requirements in the UK would be overturned, and our members’ jobs in other exporting industries could be placed at risk. However, there is a growing coalition of interests who are promoting reform.
- 4.16 The blanket ban on local content requirements dates from an age the world was recovering from war and the free flow of trade was seen as a guarantor of peace. The rules date from a time before the negative consequences of globalisation, including deindustrialisation, were understood - but there are signs that the mood is changing. The new Biden administration is committed to:
- ‘Work with allies to modernize international trade rules and associated domestic regulations regarding government procurement to make sure that the U.S. and allies can use their own taxpayer dollars to spur investment in their own countries.’^{xxxiv}*
- 4.17 GMB believes that it is time for change. A crude prohibition against all local contents requirements can no longer be justified. It is clearly in the public and environmental interest for strong renewables manufacturing supply chains to be built up, and the UK should not be punished in perpetuity because our government and industry was slow off the mark. Local contents requirements should be an appropriate response where an industry faces unfair competition, such as in the steel industry which has been particularly badly hit by the dumping of cheap, subsidised competitors’ products, especially as existing trade remedies procedures have not proved up to the task.
- 4.18 For all the WTO’s many faults, the UK’s economy is reliant on international trade, and the only large nation that has not joined the WTO (or is not seeking membership through observer status) is North Korea. Leaving the WTO would expose our members in exporting industries (and those who rely on imports) to punitive tariffs. We could not endorse a position that could lead to a dramatic rise in consumer prices and the

wholesale destruction of our members' jobs in exporting industries.

- 4.19 We believe that the answer lies neither with the current blanket ban on local contents requirements, nor with a free-for-all that could see our members' employers locked out of key export markets where genuinely reciprocal trade exists. There is a clear case for employing local contents requirements where there is a strong social or environmental justification, such as in renewables manufacturing, or where our members jobs are being destroyed by unfair, artificially subsidised international competition, such as in steel. We should argue against special treatment for some countries and not others. Instead of special treatment for the USA, we should have a clear, rules-based system for local contents requirements that is open to all.
- 4.20 As a secondary issue, the WTO's rules do not prohibit local content *reporting* – which would take the form of suppliers of contracts above a certain value being obliged to publish the share of value that they are procuring from within the UK. This approach has been used to a limited extent for offshore wind. If UK content was regularly reported then we could put pressure on private sector contractors to make better use of UK supply chains. We would support a robust system of UK content reporting being included as a condition of major government contracts.
- 4.21 It should be noted that the future of the WTO has also appeared to be precarious in recent years, and the Trump administration for a time effectively rendered the body inoperable by refusing to nominate a new member of its appeal panel. The WTO is not an all powerful body, and we should have confidence in our ability to make a convincing case for change.
- 4.22 While GMB's direct power to influence already-signed international treaties may be limited, our prospects are much stronger if we work through the wider labour movement and our international affiliates. If this Special Report is adopted by Congress then GMB will have a mandate for campaigning in favour of a rules-based system of local content requirements to be adopted by the UK labour movement (including a future Labour Government) and amongst our international federations.

5. Strengthening the tools we have now

- 5.1 GMB has argued that, across a range of industries, Ministers and other parts of the public sector are failing to use the powers they have already to support jobs and good quality employment. This section of the report looks at some of the approaches that could be implemented now to secure and improve the quality of employment in the UK.

Defence procurement

- 5.2 It was recognised when current procurement rules were drawn up that the UK and other nations need to maintain strong sovereign defence manufacturing capabilities. For that reason, clear exemptions from competitive tendering requirements were written into EU

and WTO rules.

- 5.3 The Ministry of Defence's own guidance makes it clear that the need to 'maintain national industrial capability' is a valid security interest for the purposes of invoking the exemptions from compulsory international tendering.^{xxxv} As the lead maritime union in the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU), these protections are of great interest to GMB. On this unchallenged legal basis, for many years all Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary orders were placed with UK yards.
- 5.4 Disgracefully, successive governments have gradually loosened their industrial policy and encouraged non-UK bidders to compete for warship contracts. Under the 2017 National Shipbuilding Strategy, only destroyers, frigates, and carriers were exempted from international competition.^{xxxvi} Orders for our ships were put out to overseas tender, despite the fact that internationally shipbuilding is characterised by closed markets and hidden (and sometimes overt) subsidies.
- 5.5 In 2012 a £550 million contract to build new tankers was awarded to South Korea's DSME, a company that has received heavy state support. The order was eventually completed late and over initial budget. The Ministry of Defence started an international competition for a £1.5 billion support ship order, before halting the competition in November 2019 following the prominent *Turning the Tide*^{xxxvii} campaign by GMB to secure a UK-build for those vessels, which is part of the wider Manufacturing Section *Making It* campaign for manufacturing jobs. Meanwhile, the future of the Appledore and Harland and Wolff yards has stood on a knife edge, and jobs have been lost at other yards.
- 5.6 In March 2021, the Ministry of Defence published a new Defence and Security Industrial Strategy which ended the previous policy of 'competition by default'. Under the new regime, it will be decided on a case-by-case basis whether contracts should be put out to international tender, and Ministers will consider 'where we need to sustain industrial capability onshore in the UK' when making that decision.^{xxxviii} While this change represents a significant campaigning victory for GMB, it does not go far enough – and the continued lack of certainty over future orders will continue to damage investment.
- 5.7 GMB believes that as much defence spending as possible should be retained in the UK (particularly where the UK is not part of an international supply chain) and that there should be a guarantee that all Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary orders will be placed in UK yards. This policy would benefit not just shipbuilding but the steel industry and the wider supply chain too. We secured a commitment to that end in the 2019 Labour Party manifesto, and we will continue to campaign to secure corresponding change in Westminster Government policy.
- 5.8 We also note with alarm the recent case of the UK's development of 5G network infrastructure, where it was eventually decided that Huawei's involvement must be

withdrawn on security grounds. The decision to first engage and then ban Huawei will cause lengthy delays, and it could reportedly cost taxpayers' billions.^{xxxix} GMB believes that the UK left itself exposed because it had failed to work with other countries to build up alternative providers. In such cases where it may not be practicable to establish a solely domestic provider, GMB calls on the UK to work with other nations to develop collaborative cross border supply chains that build on the example of Airbus, and for this model to be applied for building an alternative provider of telecommunication services.

Social value

- 5.9 Most procurement decisions hinge on the most economically advantageous tender criteria (or MEAT). This approach initially included a requirement that tenders would be assessed on the basis of the lowest price, but unions including GMB successfully secured an amendment to allow other factors to be considered in 2014. This approach has been criticised on the grounds that it failed to consider wider social and economic benefits, and leads to short-term decision making.
- 5.10 A second approach to procurement policy was introduced through the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. Under this legislation, most public bodies must consider 'how what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area.'
- 5.11 In practice, this means that a weighting can be given to factors that go beyond a narrow cost/benefit analysis. The range of measures that can be included are very wide. Examples of factors that could be included in an evaluation of social value include (and are not limited to):

Examples of social value considerations^{xl}

Category	Type of measure
Skills and employment	Workforce training and local employment (see below for more detail)
Diverse supply chains	Increased representation of under-represented people in employment, such as BAME and disabled workers
Taxation paid	Workforce taxation and national insurance payments (see below for more detail)
Gender pay gap	Action to narrow and eliminate the gender pay gap
Living wage	The Living Wage Foundation advises that payment of their real Living Wage rate can be included
Mental health	Bidders can be judged on their commitment to offering high quality mental health support for staff
Environmental sustainability	Commitments to energy efficiency measures and other sustainability measures
Safe supply chains	Assessing for modern slavery in supply chains

- 5.12 The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 go further and explicitly allow contracting authorities to incorporate social and environmental aspects into specifications, award

criteria and contract conditions. This could include promoting innovation, employment and social inclusion, protection of the environment, energy efficiency, and combating climate change. The social value model was updated in late 2020 to explicitly allow factors relating to support for the economic recovery from Covid-19 to be taken into account.^{xli}

- 5.13 The Government says that contracts awarded under the social value should include a minimum weighting of 10 per cent.^{xlii} The LGA advises that assessment of social value should form between 10 per cent and 20 per cent of the evaluation of bids for contracts worth over £100,000.^{xliii}
- 5.14 GMB believes that the inclusion of social value in contract evaluation represents a potentially very valuable approach that could deliver more and better jobs in the UK. But the Government should go further. It should be mandatory for social value to be included in all public contracts above a certain value. ‘Good employer’ weightings should be a ringfenced requirement. The employment of a permanent workforce, with clear criteria for how that is defined, should be developed and promoted by government as part of social value. A 10 to 20 per cent weighting range is too low – all public contracts should have a social value weighting of at least a quarter.

Local Labour Agreements

- 5.15 Local labour clauses have a longstanding history in public procurement. ‘Local Labour in Construction’ requirements entered a number of Section 106 requirements on developers during the 1990s as concerns around skills shortages grew, especially areas of high unemployment. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation argued in 2000 that Local Labour in Construction ‘schemes can make a major contribution to ensuring that the future labour needs of the construction industry are met.’^{xliv}
- 5.16 A number of approaches have been developed to ensure that jobs can be guaranteed to be created in local areas, without violating EU principles of non-discrimination against migrant workers or non-UK bidders, and to provide the appropriate rate for the job. It is also longstanding GMB policy to not discriminate against workers in the UK on the grounds of country of birth. Such agreements, done properly, will tend to have the effect of creating more jobs that are available for local people than would otherwise have been the case.
- 5.17 Over the last decade, such agreements have generally been assimilated into the social value framework. The UK Green Building Council advises that:^{xlv}
- ‘Local Labour Agreements are a common example of a planning conditions that specify a group of social value outcomes (in this instance, those relating to jobs creation and skills development).’*
- 5.18 GMB calls for Local Labour Agreements to be made standard practice across the public sector.

Protection for National and Local Agreements – the fair wages resolution

- 5.19 One of the key provisions of the International Labour Organisation is the ILO Convention 94 on Labour Clauses in Public Contracts, which was sometimes known as the fair wages resolution. The UK was a signatory to the convention until the Thatcher Government denounced it in 1982. To date, the UK remains the only country to have withdrawn from the convention.
- 5.20 The Convention requires that contracts awarded by central public authorities must include clauses that ensure that wages, hours of work, and other conditions of work are 'no less favourable' than those established for work of the same character in the trade or industry concerned, on the district where the work is carried out. In practice, this was a requirement that at least the core employment terms of the relevant national agreements (or, where applicable, local agreements) would apply, and it provided a considerable incentive for workers to campaign to extend collective bargaining.
- 5.21 GMB calls on a future Labour Government to re-join the ILO Convention 94, and when implementing the Convention in domestic law to provide for its extension to other public bodies, such as local authorities. This action would provide a ready-made framework for ensuring that the terms of the relevant national agreements would apply on projects such as local authority Waste to Energy plant contracts, which has long been a campaigning priority for our members in the engineering construction sector.

Tax and national insurance

- 5.22 Traditional procurement practices have ignored the returned taxation that flows to the Treasury when public contracts are awarded in the UK. This 'discount' to the public purse is lost when contracts are awarded overseas. According to estimates by the Royal United Services Institute, around a third of the cost of placing defence manufacturing orders in the UK is regained through tax and national insurance contributions.^{xlvi}
- 5.23 The 2019 update of Treasury's manual for public spending, which is sometimes known as the 'Green Book,' makes it clear that returned taxation can be included in public bodies' assessment of social value:

'Payments of tax and national insurance made from an employee's gross earnings are part of the output or value produced by the workforce ... and should be included where relevant in calculations of social value.'^{xlvii}

- 5.24 This provision turns many traditional procurement assumptions on their heads. If returned taxation was factored into procurement decisions then many more contracts would be retained in the UK, leading to the development of more stable supply chains and the reshoring of jobs. It would help provide a level playing field for UK suppliers who are undercut by competitors who enjoy hidden subsidies and other state support that artificially deflates their prices.

- 5.25 Taking account of returned taxation would aid working people in other areas. For example, analysis by the think tank IPPR which was sponsored by GMB found that more than 40 per cent of the cost of raising public sector pay is recouped by the Treasury, but Ministers do not take this factor into account when making pay setting decisions.^{xlviii}
- 5.26 Unfortunately, no examples are known of central government including returned taxation in procurement. This should be included as a standard feature of all major procurement decisions. GMB calls for urgent guidance to be issued on the need for returned taxation to be factored into government procurement decisions, and also for this approach to also be adopted by other public bodies, including local authorities.
- 5.27 GMB believes that the Government should undertake a full review of the benefits of placing contracts in the UK, and also how to account for the artificial barriers enjoyed by international competitors in some industries.

Working in social partnership

- 5.28 Under Welsh Labour, the Welsh Assembly Government has put social equality at the heart of its spending and procurement decisions, in sharp contrast to the approach of its Westminster equivalent. GMB has played a key role in supporting and shaping that agenda.
- 5.29 The Welsh Assembly Government has committed to bringing forward a Social Partnership Bill in response to the recommendations of the Fair Work Commission, which made a series of proposals for improving the quality of work in Wales.
- 5.30 GMB and other unions have already worked through the Workforce Partnership Council to help secure a number of important and distinguishing achievements, such as re-establishment of a two-tier code, repeal of the worst aspects of the Trade Union Act 2016, and reached an agreement on non-use of exploitative zero hours contracts.
- 5.31 The draft Bill includes clauses to establish a Social Partnership Council, putting social partnership arrangements on a statutory footing; place a duty on public bodies to work in social partnership and promote fair work goals; and require specified public bodies to produce a procurement strategy in line with statutory guidance.
- 5.32 The new legislation represents a new approach that – if passed - the GMB should monitor at a UK level and consider promoting more widely. We applaud GMB Wales and South West Region for working closely with Welsh Labour and demonstrating the difference that Labour in government can make, including in the field of procurement and spending, with trade unions around the table.

Supporting local supply chains

- 5.33 Local government has an important role to play in rebuilding fractured local economies. One of the most exiting examples of a council leading the way is in Preston, which has

pioneered the growing international approach known as Community Wealth Building (CWB) in the UK. CWB seeks to build local economic resources and power in a way that is democratically accountable, including through procurement.

- 5.34 Under this model, as much spending as possible is retained in the local area. The argument is that this creates a virtuous circle, as money spent with local companies in the local area, leading to an employment multiplier effect. Before the CWB model was adopted, only 5 per cent of public spending in Preston was retained in the local area.
- 5.35 Preston pursued this model after 2010, when a major shopping centre investment fell through. Instead, the council decided that – in partnership with other local public bodies - it had to look to its own resources to regenerate its local economy. Under CWB, public bodies reduced barriers for local firms to bid and used a strong social value framework to retain spending in their local economy.
- 5.36 Consequently, spending with local firms increased from £38 million to £111 million.^{xlix} Preston went from being recorded as the 20th most deprived area in 2007 to the 60th in 2015. According to a 2019 assessment by the think tank Demos, *'neither EU treaty principles nor its specific procurement directives (or, for that matter, the World Trade Association's (WTO) plurilateral Government Procurement Agreement) are violated'* by this approach.^l
- 5.37 GMB believes that the Community Wealth Building approach pioneered in Preston is a promising model for other areas to consider adapting to their own circumstances, and that the UK Government should evaluate, support, and promote this approach including through financial support where required.

Assessing Equality Impacts

- 5.38 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act, all public bodies have a duty to have due regard to the need 'eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation' faced by people with relevant protected characteristics (including race, sex, and disability), and 'advance equality of opportunity.' This provision applies to procurement as much as any other area of policy, but contracting authorities frequently do not take equality impacts into consideration when awarding contracts. Public authorities that do not comply with the Duty open themselves up to the risk of legal challenge.
- 5.39 One example – as raised by GMB members at Congress 2021 – is the replacement of specialist Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities' refuge services during the pandemic on cost grounds (Motion 139) by more general providers, who do not provide the same standard of expertise and service. By contrast, the EHRC advises that compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty can lead to 'increased value for money' because contracts will be better matched to users' needs.^{li}

5.40 GMB calls on all public authorities to integrate the Public Sector Equality Duty into each stage of the procurement process, to conduct meaningful Equality Impact Assessments when making procurement decisions, and for equality requirements to be advertised in Invitations to Tender.

6. Campaigning for change

6.1 The UK's economy has been profoundly changed by decades of deindustrialisation. Some communities have never recovered, and policies that fail to support UK industry have fuelled mistrust in the political system.

6.2 GMB has campaigned at every level of political power in the UK and Europe for an active industrial strategy that supports high quality employment and the reshoring of jobs. We have had notable successes, such as winning widespread support for our call for all Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships to be built in the UK (including amongst the Conservative-majority Defence Select Committee). But we know we can do more.

6.3 This report is put forward for consideration by Congress at another time of fundamental change. The UK has left the EU and the Government is designing a new system for supporting industry outside of EU rules on subsidies and state aid. Whitehall is drawing up new plans for its approach to procurement policies. For the first time, there is an administration in the White House that is committed to reforming international rules that hold back our ability to support the growth of critical industries. Now is the time to set out our stall.

6.4 GMB has prepared a practical Public Procurement Manifesto for use in campaigning and adoption by public bodies, which is included as an appendix to this report, and which summarises many of the key recommendations

6.5 We ask that Congress supports this report and the manifesto, and provides GMB with a clear mandate for influencing those decisions.

6.6 There is no single action that will bring back the jobs we lost. But we believe that a combination of new policies could make a significant difference to the quantity and the quality of the jobs in the UK.

In summary, this report sets out a GMB position that calls for the following demands to be adopted:

- A national programme of insourcing in pursuit of public services that are delivered by the public sector and in the public interest.
- UK Government spending plans should address national and regional funding inequalities, and bring overall public spending in line with comparable European

countries.

- Post Brexit regional funding plans must match and then exceed current EU funding levels.
- There must be no loss of autonomy for the devolved administrations under new trade deals or public subsidy, procurement or spending regimes.
- A full and independent inquiry into procurement scandals and cronyism in public contracting during the pandemic.
- GMB supports the introduction of a rules-based local contents requirements system to be introduced, and for the GMB to argue for this through its domestic and international federations.
- Public reporting of UK content should be introduced as a mandatory feature of all public contracts above an appropriate threshold.
- In line with GMB's *Turning the Tide* campaign, the defence procurement exemptions from international competition should be much more widely used, including a guarantee that all Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels will be built in UK yards.
- The social value framework should be compulsory for all public contracts above an appropriate value, with 'good employer' weightings as a ringfenced requirement, and assessment of social value should make up at least a quarter of the weighting for all public tendering decisions above the value threshold.
- Local Labour Agreements should be standard practice across the public sector, within the social value framework.
- The UK should re-join the ILO Convention 94 (the 'fair wages resolution') to promote a level playing field on pay and to extend the reach of collective agreements through central government procurement, and for this approach to be extended to other public bodies.
- The taxation and national insurance contributions returned by the UK workforce to the Exchequer should be factored into all major public spending decisions.
- We support GMB and Welsh Labour's work to bring forward a Social Partnership Bill, which should be monitored as a possible model for implementation at a UK level.
- We believe the Preston Community Wealth Building model is a promising example of procurement and spending policies being used to secure good quality work, and we

call on the UK Government to evaluate, support, and promote this approach more widely.

- We call on public authorities to conduct meaningful Equality Impact Assessments when tendering and to integrate the Public Sector Equality Duty into each stage of the procurement process.

Appendix: GMB Public Procurement Manifesto

‘Public contracting that works for people’

GMB believes that public money, *our* money as taxpayers, should be spent to the benefit of people and communities across the UK. Public spending is a vital tool for ensuring a successful and sustainable post-pandemic post EU exit recovery. Its importance cannot be underestimated in protecting and promoting jobs, pay and conditions, trade union access and collective bargaining, training, addressing inequalities, advancing social and environmental objectives, economic development and community wealth building.

Time for a step change

The UK is reviewing public contracting legislation following our exit from the EU. This presents the opportunity for government, devolved administrations and contracting authorities across the UK to develop public contracting policy and rules that put people and communities at their heart rather than lowest price and profit. The priority objective for future public contracting should be to ensure every penny spent delivers benefit locally, regionally and nationally.

Our members make goods, provide services and works that supply public authorities at every level. We believe we have an important voice to be heard in the reform and delivery of public contracting and public spending policy at central, and devolved government level as well as regional and local contracting authority level.

GMB believes that the Social Partnership approach being developed by the Welsh Government together with trade unions should be the model for all levels of contracting authorities.

Promoting In-house provision and insourcing

GMB believes that the most effective model of delivering public services is direct (in-house) provision. It is time to reassert and promote the legitimate right of contracting authorities to deliver public services and provision in-house and give recognition to the benefits this delivers in providing quality public services free from marketisation and outsourcing. Public, health and social services should be clearly and fully carved out from the scope of all UK trade agreements with global partners.

Putting people first

Where contracting authorities decide to go out to contract, GMB urges contracting authorities to move away from lowest price award and ensure public money delivers positive and progressive benefits for people across communities, including:

- generating good secure jobs, skills development, training and apprenticeships
- promoting collective agreements and access for trade unions, to develop fair pay, safe workplaces and good working conditions
- developing local, regional and national supply capacity across key products and services
- ensuring ethical supply chains, and strengthening control and liabilities on employment standards in sub-contracting chains
- addressing inequality in communities and society, and promoting community wealth building and well-being to level up on sustainable economic development
- promoting equality and equal treatment across all strands
- advancing environmental protection and addressing climate change
- promoting the highest levels of food standards and safety across all health, social, education and wider public service functions and establish the principle of the right to food.
- protecting and promoting devolved competence and local and regional powers on public spending.

Delivering Change

GMB believes positive and progressive change must be delivered at all levels of contracting authorities. We call on:

Central Government to:

- Ensure that any bodies or structures overseeing public procurement policy and delivery are based on a social partnership approach with full involvement of trade unions
- Move from lowest price contracting and develop maximum scope to include social and employment objectives in public contracting priorities in line with GMBs people-centred principles above
- Protect and promote sovereign capacity in security and defence spending and support wider domestic manufacturing capacity
- Promote in-house provision in public spending over outsourcing and marketisation
- Respect and support the powers of the devolved nations in pursuing their own progressive public contracting policies
- Ensure that the powers of the devolved nations in this area are not undermined or compromised in future UK trade negotiations and agreements, and that devolved parliaments and assemblies are fully involved and consulted in the development of such agreements
- Push for progressive reform of WTO, Government Procurement Agreement and global trade policy to move away from polarised views on trade policy in favour of a common-sense balance to global trade which puts people before profit, ensures compliance with employment rights, labour standards, human rights, protects public

and health services with carve outs, and accepts the legitimacy of local contract clauses and environmental and climate change priorities.

Devolved Governments to:

- Develop a formal social partnership approach to development of public contracting policy and delivery with full involvement of trade unions
- Move from lowest price contracting and develop maximum scope to include social and employment objectives in public contracting priorities in line with GMBs people-centred principles above
- Protect and promote domestic capacity in manufacturing and services
- Promote in-house provision in public spending over outsourcing and marketisation
- Ensure devolved powers in public contracting are not undermined by central Government policy or through trade negotiations and agreements

Local and other public authorities to:

- Develop a formal social partnership approach to development of public contracting policy and delivery with full involvement of trade unions
- Move from lowest price contracting and develop maximum scope to include social and employment objectives in public contracting priorities in line with GMBs people-centred principles above
- Protect and promote local and regional capacity in manufacturing and services
- Promote in-house provision in public spending over outsourcing and marketisation

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CATH PINDER (CEC, MANUFACTURING): Good morning, President, Congress, Cath Pinder, Manufacturing section and Yorkshire and North Derbyshire region, moving the procurement and spending Special Report on behalf of the CEC.

Congress, as we meet in the middle of a pandemic, it is more important than ever that we debate the government policies on spending and procurement. Almost £2 billion has been spent on contracts for companies linked to Tory party donors while our key workers were denied the PPE they needed. Instead of using these contracts to rebuild our textiles industry, ministers awarded contracts worth millions to their cronies and imported PPE that couldn't be used.

For all the talk of levelling up, the regional and local balances within our economy persist. These problems have been brought into sharp focus by the pandemic. But they pre-dated it. You all know the problems. Procurement has been turned into a weapon against workers. Many of our public sectors have been broken up, outsourced, privatised under policies from compulsory competitive tendering to PFI. Public spending in industries from ship building to renewable energy, has been sent overseas, while our factories and yards are crying out for work.

The rules are written by the people who know the price of everything but the value of nothing. In our region, we all know too well the devastating impact to communities of job losses in tradition AI industries. It's no passing crisis. It endures through the generations. We urgently need new policies that support jobs and rebuild the industrial capacity we have lost.

Congress, the Conservatives aren't going to change their spots. We need an agenda that future governments, a future Labour government can deliver. That is why this report sets out a commitment to the direct delivery of public services by the public sector and in the public interest. To a real levelling up of public spending, not in setting the regions and communities against each other. And guaranteeing that orders for our navy are placed with UK yards. It sets out our support for good employment weightings in contracting, equality impact assessments and local labour in construction clauses. We need to take account of the national insurance and tax that flows back to the public purse when orders are placed in the UK and are lost when contracts go overseas. We need to learn from the social partnership model that a labour government is building in Wales with unions around the table. This sets out our international policy for recommitting the UK to the ILO treaty that the Thatcher government walked a long way from, to require public contractors to pay the fair rate for the job as established by collective agreements.

Finally, Congress, we need to reform the World Trade Organisation's rules, working through our international affiliates so that we can introduce UK content clauses and guarantee the investment in renewables will deliver jobs in the UK. Congress, this report sets out practical policies to deliver more jobs and better jobs. It builds on the manufacturing sections making its campaign for rebuilding the UK and it includes the GMB manifesto for better procurement for organisations to adopt. Congress, we believe these are the right policies for what we now face. Please support this report, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: We now go to Kevin to second, from GMB Scotland.

KEVIN BUCHANAN (COMMERCIAL SERVICES): Kevin Buchanan, GMB Scotland, commercial services section seconding the report on behalf of the CEC. Congress, in Scotland, we know well the cost of field procurement policies. We have lost 20,000

manufacturing jobs in the last decade alone. We were promised Scotland would become the Saudi Arabia of renewable energies. The yards have been reduced to shadows of their former selves. Congress, we are fighting tirelessly to secure the viable future for the yards. But our policies need to change. We were told that once we'd left the EU we'd be free to award contracts to our own industries. However, we are still bound by World Trade Organisation rules that have not been reformed since the 40s. As this report sets out, when we are facing both an environmental crisis and a jobs crisis, we must have the power to use the power of public spending to build up industries in the UK. Otherwise, we will be dependent on imports from dictatorial and exploitive regimes. Congress, we want to lead the campaign to change the rules and take the rest of the UK labour movement and the Labour Party with us. This is the policy that the new Biden administration's adopted. It's time our politicians here did the same. Please vote in favour of the report. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you to the regions who've notified us of the speakers. I'll now go to London.

FEVZI HUSSEIN (LONDON REGION): In response to the CEC report, we welcome the report and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the authors for bringing this to Congress.

Congress, it's important that we understand we were in a position where we had more people working than ever before. Obviously, we have suffered major economic downturns with the pandemic which has plunged us into a new recession that is exposing inequality and discrimination throughout our country.

As usual, those most vulnerable in society suffer the most. I would like to draw your attention to point 3 in the report, procurement scandals under COVID. COVID is being used by the UK as a means for certain employers to cut the number of employees drastically and detrimentally. This in turn of course opens up the opportunity for corruption on the worst possible scale. London region believes that we must get control of the misuse of public funding, we must ensure that there is a full, independent inquiry into the travesty of the green shell capital collapse. Congress, we must also understand the effect Brexit is having on our economy for far too long ministers and governments have hidden behind EU rules. Our spending is well documented to be below the EU average. It's critical that we have Labour agreements which are robust, accessible and meet the needs of our members working in the coal face. There is a long standing history in the public procurement and the good example most recently is the progress that was made on the HS2 project. Congress, in line with GMB public procurement manifesto, it must be time that we spend public money from our taxpayers to help our members, our people, across all communities within the UK. There is time for a step change. We know the UK is reviewing public contracting legislation following our exit from the EU. This is a real opportunity for the government to develop and take positive steps to bring an end to the race to the bottom for maximum profit. Let's have more in house provisions. It's time for the government to put our people first. After all, it's essential that GMB strive to support all workers, in all workplaces, to earn a decent and fair living to be in a safe environment and to have proper procurement measures in place. Congress, I urge you to support this report.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Now we go to Declan from Midland and East Coast region.

DECLAN GIBBONS (MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION): Good morning, President, Congress, Declan Gibbons, Midland and East Coast region. First time delegate and still first time speaker after some technical difficulties yesterday. This is an important document and, as we hopefully emerge from the COVID 19 crisis, with the ramifications of Brexit becoming

known, it's vital we change our procurement and spending operate. We can't change the past but we can shape the future. I support this Special Report and I call on this Congress to do likewise, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Really glad you managed to get on this time, well done. That takes us to North West & Irish region and Kevin Flanagan.

KEVIN FLANAGAN (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): Good morning. Kevin Flanagan North West & Irish region speaking in support of the Motion and Congress 2021 Special Report on procurement and spending. Colleagues, for too long, we were told there's no money tree. It's very interesting isn't it that under COVID, they managed to not find a money tree but a money orchard. But did they do any of that for the good of people? No. What they decided to was have a system which actually procured money for their friends just give us your e mail, give us your WhatsApp group or send me a text message and you were on the list. This is an absolute disgrace, one of the scandals and reasons why this government doesn't want an inquiry into what happened on the guise of COVID. Colleagues, I welcome this report on behalf of the North West and Irish region. And on behalf of the commercial services section as President. It's a very good report, one of the best reports I've read on this issue. We need to make procurement a public resources accountable to the public. We won't let vipers into the orchard to strip out all the good apples and leave us just the cause for the poor and for those who need it. Colleagues, we need to make the decisions accountable for people and for communities and for the common good of society. We can't be going on in a way in which the fruits are shipped away and put into the barrel while the rest of the workforce and community struggle and it's left for footballers to plead for food for the poor. This is a disgrace. We must hold them to account and the principles that are in this document are so important. I ask you to support the report and the principles in it. Thank you, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Wales and South West and Paul?

PAUL HUNT (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): President, Congress, Paul speaking in support of the CEC Special Report of procurement and spending. Congress, I do not have time today to go into all of the issue us surrounding the abuses that are taking place at the UK level with regards to UK government procurement. But it's clear to all to see that this Tory government are not interested in clear, open and transparent procurement processes. It's even more clear that even after legal challenges, Tory ministers do not want to show the electorate how they are spending taxpayers' money. A few examples are, Matt Hancock getting PPE comforts to Tory donors despite them having no involvement in the manufacturing of PPE in the past. Despite being found guilty of breaches of the ministerial code, he still refuses to publish the contracts. The track and trace system introduced in England has been given to private companies who've given donations to the Tories despite having no experience of public health. That has led to a costly, inefficient system that has put the lives of people in England at risk. Surely, people will remember that one minister gave a contract to a company that didn't even have ships.

Congress, this can't be allowed to continue. In stark contrast in Wales, the Welsh Labour government is in the process of introducing a social partnership and public procurement Wales Act that will see all companies who seek to operate public sector contracts in Wales have to sign up to the ethical procurement code and will make companies transparent and implement processes and publish stopping exploitation in the supply chains across the world and not just the UK. They'll sign a contract banning zero hours contracts. They'll pay the minimum wage and give access to Trade Unions to ensure workplaces that have been denied access previously to ensure expansions of collective bargaining. Congress, this is

clear difference between a corrupt and uncaring Tory government and a Welsh Labour government which governs in partnership with the labour and trade union movement to implement policies based on fairness for all. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: And our last speaker, Julie, Yorkshire and North Derbyshire.

JULIE GLEDHILL (YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE): Good morning, Congress, I'm Julie Gledhill, I'm as you know speaking on behalf of Yorkshire and North Derbyshire. We very much welcome this special report. We live and work in an area that has not yet recovered from the decline of our traditional industries and agree that changing our approach to spending is necessary in order to build a fairer economy. As an example, the short-sightedness of the UK in allowing the decimation of our manufacturing industries was brought into sharp focus when we were unable to manufacture PPE to meet our needs during the pandemic. To address this shortfall, lucrative contracts were placed with well-connected people, who made vast profits at our expense while key workers, including many GMB members, were left without the PPE they needed. Further, billions were wasted on a private sector contact tracing system when the people with experience are public sector, public health officers were side-lined. This is just one example which supports the GMB stance that public services should be delivered directly by the public sector. The GMB has long argued for higher public sector spending in order to reverse austerity - a stance supported by the think tank the IPPR as outlined in the report. The government, however, has repeatedly failed to spend money on direct support for industry and the regions. When it has intervened to support particular apologies, such as energy, it has failed to support UK jobs and build strong domestic supply chains. This situation needs to change. We in Yorkshire and North Derbyshire welcome this report and recommend its manifesto to Congress. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done to all the speakers. Before I move to the vote can I ask speakers on Motion 7, COVID-19 motions, to get ready and - yeah, rebuilding the economy motions and COVID-19 motions to get ready. I will now put the special report to the vote. And that special report is carried, thank you. So moving on to item 7, as I said, COVID-19 and rebuilding the economy, and we have motions 139, 140, 142, 143 and 148. So can I ask Naome to speak on - to move Motion 139, please.

139. COVID 19- IMPACT ON BY AND FOR BME WOMEN SPECIALIST SERVICES

This Congress recognises that BME Women Specialist services provide a lifeline to this vulnerable group of people who experience domestic violence and honour killings. However, Central government and local authorities are neither providing nor commissioning services that meet the needs of BME Women and children fleeing domestic violence, like pledged in the strategy to combat Violence against Women (VAW) and Equality Act 2010, Care Act 2014 and the code of practice for victims of crime.

In March 2020, the Government introduced the Domestic Abuse Bill. However, this bill despite reaching the House of Lords stage has failed to deliver and include the most vulnerable in society: migrant women. Once again, this forms one of this Governments hostile environment approach. Many women subject to immigration control and with no recourse to public funds makes it incredibly difficult to escape a violent relationship.

Moreover, the pandemic has made this increasingly more difficult to leave a violent relationship. It has also impacted on specialist services like refuges not only having to close but restrict their support.

For example, in June 2019, after 32 years of providing lifesaving refuge accommodation to BME women, a local authority decommissioned the contract held by a specialist BME women's organisation to generic white led Housing Associations.

Not only has this meant that specialist women's services for BME women by BME women will be diluted into generic services, it will also mean that BME women workers will face being TUPED on conditions possibly less favourable to them.

The issues of BME women fleeing domestic violence are unique so the place/services they access must also be unique.

Four in five BME women are turned away from lifesaving accommodation space because of language issues. These women then turn to life saving specialist BME women's refuges for support.

Reports from organisations such as Refuge; shows that BME and refugee women suffer high levels of domestic homicide and are 3 times more likely to commit suicide than other women in the UK. 76% of the homicide usually happen shortly after the woman has left the perpetrator, and also about 50% of BME women victims are abused by more than 1 perpetrator. Majority of the BME Women experiencing domestic violence live in absolute poverty in deprived areas, and unlike other women are prone to discrimination and racism.

The government's decimation of the BME women sector including the erasure of BME Refugee women from the Domestic abuse bill will cost the lives of BME women and children fleeing or considering fleeing violent relationships. This has been further highlighted during Covid-19 pandemic.

Therefore, we ask Congress to:

1. Continue to highlight the issues of funding being removed from specialist BME refuge services and the impact of Covid-19.
2. Continue to highlight violence against Black Asian minority ethnic women fleeing domestic violence & honour killings,
3. Work alongside and lobby GMB supported councillors and MP's to stop the erasure of these specialists' services and a call to action to ensure that communities are aware of this.
4. To raise awareness of the institutional racist nature of the procurement process which disproportionately discriminates against the BME women sector, and favours all white generic non specialist organisation.

SECURICOR 1 BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

NAOME KYOKUSHABA-KATSIGAZI (LONDON REGION): President, Congress, I'm Naome, London region, moving Motion 139. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. By and for women's specialist services. A very powerful sentence that resonates with me and perhaps many BAME women at Congress today, as such as I'm pleased to be moving this motion as a Black, African woman. This motion is more relevant now than ever before, a situation exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The statistics are dire, as you read, and the government policies, especially driven by the pandemic, such as stay at home, which was a death sentence to many BAME domestic violence victims. According to Women's Aid 2021's report, there were only 18 refugee services run by BAME and ethnic minority women's in 2020. To the victims and survivors, there is no such thing as a safe place, they need services they can access with minimal barriers such as accessibility, language and communication, racism and stigma. I therefore call on Congress to share the plight of these specialist BAME services and advocate for the end of the BAME women violence and lobby the government to enable there to be specialist service and mitigate the institutional racism within the existing procurement process. Congress, please vote to support the motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Naome, well done, first-time speaker. Secunder, Taranjit.

TARANJIT CHANA (LONDON REGION): Thank you, President, Taranjit Chana, London region, seconding Motion 139, COVID-19 impacts on services for BAME women and services. The government has shamelessly passed what they consider a ground-breaking domestic violence bill but it is discriminatory because it excludes BAME women. This bill, now law, was described as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to address domestic abuse in our society. This government has yet again failed us. Abused migrant women are denied vital life-saving routes to safety. We need to prioritise safety over immigration status. A campaign by Latin American women's services, step up migrant women. During the pandemic the very few by and for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women's specialty services continued to struggle to save lives, the Black Women's Project, Sister Space in London, Shaktheen in Scotland and others across the UK, as a workplace we continue others to adopt our domestic abuse charter. A quote from a survivor saying, had it not been for a service that looked and sounded like me, me and my children would have died. Special ethnic services saves lives. Please support this motion - I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Taranjit. Motion 140, Neil to move.

140. SUPPORT FOR LONG COVID SUFFERERS

This Congress recognises that around 10 per cent of people experience prolonged illness after covid-19 and calls upon the Government to regularly report on the number of those living with long covid and follow up on those with confirmed diagnoses of covid-19.

This Congress notes that research into the disease should encompass both those who were and were not hospitalised to understand the true scale of the morbidity of the virus.

Congress calls on the Government to implement measures to support those living with long covid, including offering information and incentives to employers to retain their recovering staff who may or may not have confirmed cases due to limitations in testing, and ensuring that the NHS can support patients in their longer term recovery.

V15 CEREAL PARTNERS BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

NEIL O'HAGAN (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): Thank you, President, Congress, Neil O'Hagan, first-time speaker, North West & Irish region. Support the motion, long COVID sufferers. A friend and colleague from our branch contracted COVID-19 early last year, Ben was hospitalised moved to an ICU and eventually put into a medically induced coma. Recovering from all of this he was left unable to return to work due to the condition known as long COVID. Compared to a lot of other workers, Ben is a member of a recognised union with the security of a contract with sick pay and pensions benefits. It was also a clear diagnosis that we could use when dealing with occupational health and HR to ensure he received his due. His received full pay while he was ill and when the worst came to the worst and Ben was declared incapacitated he received full retirement and a pension. Even a case as seemingly clear-cut this this one was a battle due to the newness of the disease. Many of the workers in the UK are affected by this. COVID-19 has effected 7% of the population, that's nearly 5 million people. The risk of overwhelming the NHS meant people with symptoms seen as mild were advised to stay home. We were assured that most mild cases would resolve within two weeks. Well, for many, this is far from the case and a pattern of illness has emerged completely at odds with early assumptions about the disease. There now exists in the UK many thousands of people who contracted COVID-19 and continue to

suffer an array of debilitating symptoms persisting for weeks or months and more are being infected each day. Research has been limited, testing was unable for a long time, those suffering from symptoms were incorrectly diagnosed, probably over the phone, suffering from anxiety, post-viral syndrome, fatigue. Countless sufferers have been forced to return to work, risking serious consequences for their recovery. The government is not paying attention to the health of thousands of people, and it is imperative these sufferers are addressed and given the support they need. Continuing action is a potential calamity for each individual and for the economy. Research is urgently needed to establish how many are affected and to identify potential therapies. The government needs to address the economic implications of long COVID, including making provision for long-term sick leave and taking steps to ensure that employers are fully aware of the reality and the implications of long COVID. Please support the motion - I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Neil, and well done, as another first-time speaker. I hope all our first-time delegates and speakers are enjoying this experience of Congress, albeit a very odd one. And the Region have agreed to formally second, so then I can move to the Motion 142 and ask Wayne to move.

142. SAVE OUR AVIATION SECTOR

This Congress recognises that the Aviation sector has been decimated due to the Covid 19 pandemic. This will take years to recover as thousands of Aviation jobs have already been lost and workers and their families within the Airport communities are struggling.

We call on Congress to support our "Save Our Airports" campaign.

We demand that the Government provides a sector specific bespoke financial package to support Aviation and key airports such as Heathrow to protect jobs

To protect this vital sector, GMB are calling on the Government to stop dithering and:

- Recognise the damaging effects the collapse of the aviation sector will have on the economy across London and the South East and must commit to supporting the sector in its hour of need, through an economic package that helps both airports and the wider supply chain to survive without redundancies.
- Recognise the vital role aviation workers continue to play in ensuring food and medical supplies still enter the country.
- Extend the 80% furlough scheme for 12 months for workers in the aviation industry but with the possibility to 'taper' where necessary.
- Ensure that any state aid comes with guarantees to protect jobs before shareholders and with environmental safeguards to create a greener industry. State aid discussions should not take place behind closed doors. Trade unions must be involved in those negotiations and powerful airline companies should not be at the front of the queue (the supply chain and regional airports are just as important).
- Stop putting further restrictions on air travel and publicly support our air and tourism sector
- Ensure that all trade unions are part of any sector recovery talks to ensure that front line transport workers' voices are brought to the fore.

AVIATION SECURITY BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

WAYNE OSWICK (LONDON REGION): Thank you, madam President, and good morning. Wayne Oswick, London region, Motion 142, save our aviation sector. Congress, madam President, like every branch, this motion was submitted in January whilst under so much uncertainty within the aviation sector. Ruthless employers had made numerous job cuts on the back of major airline applications of millions of pounds in losses. The withdrawal of aircraft and trade from the regional airports like Southend, Luton and EasyJet were one instance but worst off to be affected was Gatwick Airport which basically closed down after the actions of British Airways and Virgin Atlantic. Placing all their aircraft at Heathrow, this was a blow to the second largest airport in the south of England, later stating that Crawley and other areas had the lowest employment rate. Luckily furlough slowed that process down and it has been extended until the end of September this year. I waited for the 17th for the government's announcements of opening of airways due to foreign travel but we still have confusion with an inappropriate traffic line system. This has resulted in holiday travellers not knowing should they or shouldn't they travel due to the UK restrictions, which don't apply to European countries. After much hope for foreign travel in one week and the reports that thousands of aviation jobs were being required, low and behold, Johnson and his cronies stopped that by announcing that instead of adding countries to the green list they removed Portugal - the only true holiday destination on the list - causing a lack of confidence again. The GMB has an ongoing campaign to save our airports and the London region has been very vocal on social media and petitions raised to parliament. National officers have met with local MPs, but still haven't had a sector-specific financial package offered to protect jobs. Now we have learned that our members are being attacked by Heathrow Airport Authority from an under-handed 135% car park hike and the removal of a concession for public transport for airport employees. Obviously this will affect the lower pay scale and the hardest hit who rely on public transport to get to work. The reasoning for this unscrupulous attack is they claim the government's refusal to increase business grants. To protect this vital sector the GMB are calling on the government to stop dithering and ensure that any state aid comes with guarantees to protect jobs before shareholders. Stop putting further restrictions on air travel and public support to our tourism sector, because the general projection is that the aviation sector will probably recover - sorry, will not possibly recover substantially until the year 2023. We also request that a trade union collective are part of any aviation recovery plan to ensure that transport workers are brought to the fore. I urge Congress to support. I move this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: And the region formally seconding to that, so we can move on to Motion 143 and is it Anthony?

143. ZERO COVID STRATEGY

This Congress notes the worsening coronavirus crisis in Britain, as new cases of the infection and hospitalisations increase and a second wave of the pandemic advances - in a country already suffering one of the highest Covid-19 deaths per capita in the world.

We believe:

- The Tory government strategy is wrong and that it is reckless and dangerous to continue forcing people back to workplaces and easing the lockdown
- Reducing the virus to minimal levels is a precondition for economic recovery - the two are not in contradiction • we cannot live safely with the virus and we should not attempt to
- Britain needs a zero Covid strategy - that would put the health of people first, as has been successfully implemented in countries, such as New Zealand, which have effectively eliminated the virus or reduced it to minimal levels

- A zero Covid strategy is possible here - in fact, the virus was declining rapidly until the Tories introduced easing measures

Congress notes the calls for a zero Covid strategy from the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs and urge the Labour Party and trade union movement to support a zero Covid strategy and to campaign for the government to adopt this course.

M96 MACCLESFIELD BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: No? OK, that's not been able to connect, so they're formally moving and seconding that motion? Can I ask North West & Irish region if you formally move and second Motion 143? Because we're having problems calling in your speakers. Yep, thank you, North West & Irish region. That takes us on to Motion 148 and Brendan to move.

148. WORKING FROM HOME: THE NEW NORMAL?

This Congress notes that from the announcement of the lockdown in March 2020, many more people have been asked to work from home whilst the country adapts to the new normal.

The new normal is now here and councils and businesses have discovered the benefits that come to them from this approach.

- Keeping your staff at home eliminates the need for heating, lighting, office space and welfare facilities.
- Keeping your staff at home means that they are working in the spaces that they maintain themselves, using their own WIFI and their own lighting and heating.
- Contracts are being rewritten to keep people permanently at home. Homeworking is a flexible choice but now it is not a choice. Managers now manage your lunch break and toilet breaks they are watching you in your house like Big Brother.

Homeworking is isolating and no matter how we talk about the problems of stress and mental health we don't seem to be able to deal with them. Worst of all is that homeworking will inexorably lead to a reduction in staff, increased hours and eventually reduced grading and pay. This makes it increasingly hard for trade unions to mobilise a dispersed workforce or even recruit them to union membership.

This Congress calls upon the GMB to investigate the very rapidly changing face of unregulated home working that is occurring and will in time reduce trade union membership and damage workers health and decrease workers' wages.

BARKING & DAGENHAM LGO BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRENDAN DUFFIELD (LONDON REGION): Good morning, President, Congress, Brendan Duffield, London region, moving motion 148 on working from home, the new normal. Working from home used to be a privilege enjoyed by only a few staff - mainly managers. Fast-forward to last year, when so many of us found ourselves working from home. It was amazing how this privilege quickly became the new normal - even those workers who had been told home-working was out of the question because of GDPR were suddenly allowed to do it. Now that we have - now we are all trusted to do this, many of the workplaces are trying to close their offices and that will leave the burden on homeowners who are then paying for their own electric and WiFi. In Barking and Dagenham, entire workforces and

departments are not returning. In six months, sections have been restructured, contracts rewritten, and people are staying at home permanently. It has started with the obvious, like these call centres, but it will spread. If you are a steward, have you ever tried to organise and keep tabs on 30 people working from home? Even with online Teams meetings, staff quickly become isolated and can have mental health issues as a result. We are dealing with company restructures, jobs being downgraded, but what about the rest - those who have to open and work in physical buildings with real people? We are starting to see two classes of workers - those who can work from home and those who cannot, such as those in customer-facing roles. It's time the GMB flexed its muscles and get the best deal for our members. Staff shouldn't be discriminated against. Those working from home need to see their terms and conditions and grades looked at - we should watch the Trojan horse which is the using your own equipment at work policy that will mean that workers will provide the tools. We need to campaign for a right to turn off, or our work will invade and take over our own space. In all, we need a proper policy that sets out the GMB red lines before those red lines are decided for us and we do not have much time - Congress, if this is to become the new normal, then GMB need to look at how we can adapt our system and structures so that we can reach out and recruit the new remote workforce. There is much more to be debated and discussed on home-working - the new norm. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Brilliant, thank you, Brendan, and we're just waiting for the region to confirm that they're formally seconding this motion. No? Got the thumbs up, thank you, London region. I've not been notified that anybody wants to speak in opposition to these motions and the CEC is supporting this group of motions, so I will put them straight to a vote. Motion 139. And that is carried. Motion 140. That's also carried. Motion 142. Also carried. Motion 143. That's also carried. The last motion in this group - 148. And that's also carried, thank you. We now go on to three more motions on COVID-19, and rebuilding the community - 138, 141 and 144. Can I please go to Omatayo to move motion 138?

138. BELLY MUJINGA AND THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT OF COVID ON BAME COMMUNITIES

This Congress notes that Belly Mujinga died of Covid-19 in April 2020 after being sent to work out on Victoria station's concourse despite having underlying health conditions and without PPE. That she and her colleague were accosted by a man who said he had Covid, but that no action was taken by her employer, Govia Thameslink Railway and the police were not called.

This Congress further notes that Doreen Lawrence's report An Avoidable Crisis, highlights the disproportionate impact of Covid on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) workers who are over-represented in key worker jobs and 'over-exposed, under protected, stigmatised and overlooked.' BAME people make up one third of Covid patients in intensive care, two-thirds of NHS staff who have died and almost all of NHS doctors who have died.

Congress resolves to join the call for a public inquiry into the disproportionate deaths from Covid in the BAME communities and add GMB's support to the "Justice for Belly Mujinga campaign"

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

OMOTAYO OBADINA (LONDON REGION): Good morning, President, Congress. Omatayo Obadina, moving Motion 138 on Belly Mujinga and the impact of COVID on BAME communities. Someone who claimed to have COVID and her colleague while they were on a concourse without PPE. Both colleagues contracted COVID could and two weeks later, Belly died of COVID leaving behind a daughter she adored, an 11-year-old. There has been no prosecution and a complaint has been made to the police watchdog over the British

Transport Police's handling of the investigation. Sadly, though, Belly's experience is not unique. COVID has had a disproportionate and devastating impact on ethnic minority communities. Inequalities have contributed even further to the toll COVID has taken. Inadequate PPE, risk assessments not being implemented and a lack of guidance from government on what protection there should be have all affected Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers more, and this is not acceptable. There needs to be a public inquiry into this and as Baroness Lawrence stated in her report - an avoidable crisis. The impact of COVID is not random but foreseeable and inevitable. The consequences of decades of structural injustice, inequality and discrimination that blinds our society. We must never forget that behind each and every number there is a human story of a real person whose life was loved and cherished. Everyone has the right to dignity and justice. Congress, please support this motion for a public inquiry into the disproportionate deaths from COVID in the BME communities and add GMB's support to the justice for Belly Mujinga campaign, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Is London region formally seconding this motion? OK, sorry, yes, thumbs up, thank you. That means we can move to Motion 141 and Andree, is it? Have I pronounced that wrongly? You're on, but we can't hear you, I think you need to unmute yourself, please.

141. SECURITY OFFICERS APPRECIATION WEEK

Congress, we are calling on the GMB Union to call on our affiliated clients G4S and Securitas and other affiliated Security Industries to have a "Security Officer Appreciation Week".

The international week of recognition provides a great opportunity to acknowledge and thank the important security staff that keep us, the workplaces and buildings we occupy safe and secure.

In recognising dedication and bravery and working in partnership with a range of clients, the management teams should be visiting sites over a week to thank their security colleagues in person as well as sharing stories across several social media platforms to acknowledge those who go above and beyond, delivering an unprecedented level of service.

Congress, the government's decision to classify SIA licence-holding security professionals as critical keyworkers has meant that in a number of cases they were the last people standing in many buildings – closing down facilities, supporting skeleton staff, getting premises ready for reopening and generally supporting people as they navigate the new workplace normal. This is an opportunity for us to recognise their dedication and thank them for their service.

The London Security Branch knows that the past six months have been particularly challenging, as our security colleagues have been on the front-line of the coronavirus pandemic and some have sadly passed away.

GMB LONDON SECURITY

London Region

(Carried)

ANDREE BOWEN (LONDON REGION): OK, can you hear me now? Hello? Right, good morning, President, Congress, Andree Bowen, London security branch 42, first-time delegate, first-time speaker. The office for national statistics have updated their figures regarding COVID-19 deaths by occupation and again reveal a higher death rate amongst the security sector. The very nature of the role of a security officer influences their risk of COVID - being a frontline key worker may mean encountering conflict when trying to enforce COVID-19 guidelines and this may make social distancing even more difficult. Congress, in recognition of security officers' dedication and perseverance during the COVID-19 pandemic, the appreciation week of recognition provides a great opportunity to acknowledge

and thank the importance of security staff that keep us, the workplace and buildings we occupy, safe and secure. During the pandemic, security officers were the last people standing in many buildings - closing down facilities, supporting skeleton staff, and getting premises ready for reopening and generally supporting people as they navigate the new work normal. This is an opportunity for us to recognise their dedication and thank them for their service. Congress, on 27 March 2021, at London's security branch meeting, Marcia Durke, one of Securitas's NFC reps meeting had a conference with the CEO of Securitas, and they've agreed security officers' appreciation week will be added to Securitas's to-do list. Thank you, Marcia. The London security branch knows that the year 2020 was challenging and as some of our colleagues who have been on the frontline have sadly passed away. Congress, please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, and well done, another first-time speaker, brilliant. So pleased to see so many of you. And to move, Sam, please? Sam, are you there? I can see you are in the queue, but I don't know... You need to press accept. No, we have lost Sam. Can I ask the region to formally second? Yes, thank you. That takes us on to Motion 144. I will ask Kim to move the motion, please.

144. CORONAVIRUS, ECONOMIC SUPPORT AND NON-PHARMACEUTICAL INTERVENTIONS (NPI)

Congress views with frustration and anger that we were plunged into a third national lockdown. This is largely due to the incompetence and mishandling of the pandemic by this Tory government.

Congress resolves that to ease the burden and hardship of this and any future lockdown we make the following demands for Keir Starmer to place before the Government and then for the Labour Party and trade unions to join a campaign to fight for them.

1. furlough pay to be 100% of current salary during the duration of the NPIs.
2. statutory sick pay to be paid at 100% of wages when isolating.
3. parents to be entitled to ask for and be given furlough pay while schools remain closed.
4. Universal Credit uplift to be made permanent and include all affected by unemployment including the disabled.
5. subsidy for the self-employed during the duration of the NPI's should be made easier and available for more recent start-ups and in line with the PAYE furlough scheme. This should include all workers not covered by the current schemes and ensure it covers all workers with no worker left aside.
6. We call on the Government to extend or reintroduce the "pause on evictions" until the 3 months after the lifting of NPIs
7. two weeks redundancy pay for each year worked with the weekly cap doubled, until 3 months after NPI's have been lifted.
8. all street homeless to be housed without exception during the duration of NPIs
9. a second winter fuel payment to be made.

LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

KIM HENDRY (LONDON REGION): Congress, I am actually seconding the motion, Barbara.

THE PRESIDENT: We cannot get your mover in. So, I am going to go to the seconder. So, just and take you as the mover. Then we will ask the region to formally second. That is the way it is going to work.

KIM: Thank you. I was not aware of that. I will read from the speech. If you give me two seconds, I'll just quickly find the speech. Obviously, it was written by the original writer. I have got it here. I can read from my speech if I have any time left. Can you... oh, sorry, can you start me again, Barbara. I was not told there was going to be no mover. So, OK... well...

THE PRESIDENT: It is probably my fault. No, don't worry. It is just we cannot find, we cannot manage to get ((loss of audio) your mover in and we will go to the seconder. You are on. You are clear.

KIM HENDRY: I am looking at the time. President, Congress, Kim moving Motion 144, very pleased to do so. This motion was written over the winter of 20 and 21. It was written at a time when the Labour and trade union movement's response from the Government's crawl away from and back to lockdown was quiet and uncertain and not what we would expect from an organization called Her Majesty's opposition. These demands are as relevant today as when written. The uncertainty we face as we approach 21st June and the autumn with a possible third wave suggests we need to be clear. People need to be able to make themselves safe. These demands were developed by the branch. Serious case workers on observing the changing nature of help that the members need. Many GMB members cannot afford not to work. Sick leave and redundancy compensation have shown to be inadequate. Lockdown taught us essential work. Incomes to be protected against sickness and redundancy. Redundancies have led to higher workloads and increased the pressure on carers and the vulnerable to return from furlough when their choice would be to keep safe. Some of these redundancies have caused a drop in business, others by the growing industrial failure in our SM e-businesses caused by the future relationship with the EU. The demands on Universal Credit are too late and the Labour Party's record is poor. We should stand by these demands. Universal Credit is a digital age equivalent of the Victorian poor law and housing and security is the essential split or one of the essential splits in British society. Throughout the lockdown, financial support for the self-employed has been poor. Only those with two records over two years is supported. Without isolation as a society, we are left with herd immunity, which is a cruel... for some. Congress, we can do better than that. Barbara, that is the motion. As written by the speaker. I just want to add a couple of points. I know I have gone over. That was primarily because of the confusion at the start about the moving and the seconding. I just want to add a couple of points as well it is about inequality. For more than a year we have been living through a pandemic...

THE PRESIDENT: Kim, I am not trying to be rude. You have done a brilliant job. Sorry I confused you. You have moved the motion brilliantly for London region. OK? The region are seconding it formally. So, thank you. You have done really well. Sorry for that confusion.

KIM HENDRY. Thank you. Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. (Loss of audio) and that takes us to the end of the three motions. I have not been told anybody wants to speak in opposition to the motion. I will call Gary Harris to respond to the motions on behalf of the CEC.

GARY HARRIS (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): Can you hear me Barbara?

THE PRESIDENT: You are on and loud and clear.

GARY HARRIS: Gary Harris speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 138, 141 and 144. Firstly, on Motion 138... and disproportionate impact of COVID on the BAME communities. CEC supports this with a qualification. Coronavirus has exposed deep seated structural racism in the economy and wider society. We deplore the failings of employers to keep workers safe during the pandemic and we extended our condolences and solidarity to the family of Belly Mujinga. There remain unanswered questions over the Government's handling of the pandemic. And we support the calls for a full, independent public enquiry into disproportionate deaths in BAME communities. The CEC support the motions, our qualification is that requests for support, or named campaigns, such as the justice for Belly Mujinga campaign should be referred to the CEC finance and general finances committee, in line with long-standing practice. Motion 141, security officers appreciation week. The CEC supports this motion with qualification. There is no doubt the CEC appreciates and applauds our security officers. We will encourage branches to celebrate our security officers and should host their own events how they think fit. The motion calls for G4S and Securitas to be approached for the managers for the respective companies to conduct their celebratory events. The qualification is that it should be left to the members of those respective companies to decide on whether they want their employers to host events like. This there may be groups of members who do not wish to engage with their employer in this manner. Finally, on Motion 144, coronavirus economic support and nonpharmaceutical interventions. The CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. The motion makes a number of demands that the union made during 2020. And to put together will have provided much greater security for people during the COVID-19 and therefore could have prevented the spread of the virus and saved lives. The qualification will be that it may be, it may not be suitable to adopt a blanket policy approach for the future. The calls made by the union should be relevant to circumstances. The union and our members find themselves in at that time. Therefore, Congress, the CEC asks, is considering that Motions 138, 141 and 144 all be carried with the qualification I have just outlined. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you London region you accepted the qualifications. Motions 138. That is carried. Motion 141... that's carried. Then, lastly, Motion 144... thank you and that one is carried also. Again, I apologise Kim for asking you to move something that you'd prepared to second. But, thank you for being understanding. That takes us to Motion 146 and 147. Can I ask Pushpa to move 146, please?

146. COMPULSORY HOLIDAYS DURING FURLOUGH

This Congress notes that employers in the hospitality industry are telling staff to use their holidays up before the end of their holiday year or they will lose the right to take those holidays.

By doing so, employers many who are multinational hotel chains are using taxpayer's money to offset the amount of money they pay to their staff for their holiday allowance. Employers have it in their power to use the provisions set out in the Working Time (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, which allows workers to roll holidays over into 2021 and 2022.

Many of our member are being told to take holidays and effectively stay at home in their own homes and have been deprived of the protection the new legislation affords them if they work for unscrupulous employers who demand that all holiday is taken in the holiday year.

This branch calls congress to support a campaign to highlight and reverse the practice of employers

We ask that all means including legal, industrial and the media are brought to bare to stop employers from taking advantage of our members and the taxpayers and to fully support our branch members who challenge this practice.

HOTELS AND CATERING BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

PUSHPA MAKWANA (LONDON REGION): Can you hear me? Yes. President, Congress, Pushpa, London, moving 146. Compulsory holidays during furlough. This relates to the Government system. Many people... getting 80% of their wages as opposed to no wages to be seen as a benefit. Hand in hand with this, the law on holidays, the working time regulations, were amended in April 2020, to allow workers to carry holidays over the one year to the next year. Before this, workers who did not take holidays in the holiday year it was due, could lose their right to take that holiday and could not carry that holiday forward into the next year's holiday. Congress, it was meant to avoid workers taking holiday entitlement. In the same years when they return to work following the end of lockdown. This amendment was a sensible and... piece of legislation to allow workers to have their statutory right of holidays. To a longer period and ensure that business could get up and running immediately following lockdown. Without the problem of workers using their, all their holiday entitlements before the end of the year. However, in hospitality industry... reporting they are being forced to take holidays during the lockdown. Meaning those members could not take advantage of the amendment holiday legislation. Congress, employees were in the receipt of Government's... they were telling staff they must make and take their holidays during lockdown. The bosses could use 80% of Furlough money and top it up by 20% when staff took compulsory holidays. They used cash to offset the obligation of paid holiday. This is misuse of the fund and members could not benefit from their holidays if they were to stop at home under lockdown. It could be said that it is miss appropriation of the... fund and take holidays. What they do not see, is we see staff taking holidays at a later date, but the... means we have to pay for that. We call on Congress to support a campaign to end this practise and highlight the abuse of this - many multinational corporations... I urge, on this furlough scheme to end September. It is scheduled to end several times and was extended so we do not know if it appears again. But more important point on that is should our members not... this problem, should issue not by GMB, shall remain silent or should we at least say the GMB are not allowed this practise to continue without showing our... from penny-pinch from the taxpayer. It not be used in to line the pockets. We should not remain silent. GMB will not remain silent. I ask to move this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you and London region have agreed to formally second this motion. So I can ask Andre to move Motion 147.

147. REIMBURSEMENT OF CONGESTION CHARGE AND ULEZ FOR SECURITY OFFICERS (WORKING IN HOSPITALS, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, CARE HOMES AND GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS)

Due to coronavirus, the Mayor of London expanded NHS staff and patient eligibility for Congestion Charge reimbursements. Under the eligible Congestion Charge reimbursement the Mayor failed to mention Security Officers as part of the frontline.

At the height of lockdown, key workers were able to drive into work and park up at their convenience. This was particularly useful for our Day/night security officers. Now they fall into the congestion charge and as a result are forced to use public transport which runs a Sunday service, which no one wants at this particular time.

Congress, Night Security officers have been disciplined and dismissed for leaving their posts during their breaks, for moving their cars into the Congestion zones within the unrestricted hours. The Mayor should know that, The London Security Branch campaign aims to change perceptions of security officers in the long term and to reset the perception of the security officer as a respected, valued, professional service provider, contributing to and

creating a safe and secure environment that is critical to protecting people, places, and property – a key worker that is acknowledged and embedded in our daily lives. We call the Mayor for exemption for Security Officers as frontline workers.

GMB LONDON SECURITY
London Region

(Carried)

ANDREE BOWEN (LONDON REGION) OK. Good morning again, President, Congress. This is to for the reimbursement of congestion charge... working in hospitals, local authorities, care homes and Government buildings. Right, due to the coronavirus, the mayor had extended the NHS staff and patient eligibility for congestion charge reimbursement. Under that charge, he failed to mention security officers as part of front line workers. At the height of the lockdown key workers were able to drive and park at their convenience. This was particularly useful for our day/night security officers. Now they fall under the congestion charge, they have been forced to use public transport. Which runs on Sundays as well, the congestion charge. OK. Congress, night security officers have been disciplined and dismissed for leaving their posts during break to move their cars during congestion charge time, which instead of 6 o'clock is now 10 o'clock. This branch campaign will aim to change the perception of the security officer for the long-term and to reset the perception of the security officer as a respected, valued professional service provider. I urge the... sorry... I urge Congress to support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Andree. Brilliant. Can I, I don't believe there's anybody who wants to speak in opposition. Can I invite the CEC to respond, please?

ARRON BEVAN-JOHN (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): Good morning President, Congress. Arron Bevan-John, Wales and South-West region, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 146 and 147. Firstly on 146, compulsory holidays during furlough, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. The motion is addressing affecting specific good for members in relation to furlough and the job retention scheme. Therefore it appears to be more of a collective bargaining shoe and industrial matter for the region. Qualification, therefore, is that support should apply in the existing time-limited circumstances on furlough and the job protection scheme, so that members should not be required to take leave but be allowed to roll it over. Furlough is due to continue until the end of September, 2021. Under rule 26, it will be for the region to decide whether it wishes to support any legal cases in the usual way. On Motion 147, reimbursement of congestion charge for security officers, working in hospitals, local authorities, care, care homes and Government buildings, the CEC is also supporting this motion, with a qualification. Security officers have had to continue working away from their homes during this pandemic. And the GMB supports the aims of this motion. The qualification is that we can't suggest what the mayor knows. The London region, southern region will have to consider how best they might campaign around this issue. And this issue affects specific parts of London and those regions. Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking Motions 146 and 147 all be carried with the qualifications I have outlined. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. London region have agreed to accept both of those qualifications. Thank you. I can put those to the vote. Motion 146... that is carried. Motion 147... and that is carried. Time seems to be flying by this morning. So we will go to a short break. 15-minute break. Can I ask speakers on 150, 154 and 166 to be ready. If we get through business early today I am asking for, can you remind me again Lawrence? 249 and 254. So be prepared to speak earlier than maybe you thought. Thank you.

(Break)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Welcome back, colleagues. We will now turn to political Motions and may I remind delegates if they wish to speak in opposition to a Motion, they should notify the top table at the start of the debate through the message function. Can I ask Robbie and Luca Southern region to move and second Motion 150.?

150. SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

This Congress calls on the government to require all paid advertisements on social media to state who paid for the advert and to state on whose behalf the advert is published.

C23 CARSHALTON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

ROBBIE DONNELLY (SOUTHERN REGION): Hello Congress. Robbie Donnelly Southern region moving Motion 150 on social media advertising. Audiences see many adverts on social media without knowing what company, group or individual is behind them. Sometimes the audience may not even realise they are looking at an advertisement. This is particularly true of social posts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter etc by influencers who may have received money or other benefits such as free products as payment to create posts and show a product or say specific things.

When it comes to political adverts, such as for government elections, leaflets and print adverts must say who has produce and paid for them. However there is no regulations for political adverts on social media. This is very much left to the platform companies to self-regulate. It was reported that Tories spent 1.2 million on negative anti Corbyn social media adverts in the 2017 election, yet many of these adverts had no disclaimer saying the Tories were behind them. In more recent years, Facebook said it's constantly working to increase transparency and election integrity on its platforms. They go on to say "we do not allow political adds to run without a political disclaimer with more information about who is running them." That same transparency does not apply to non-political ads on its platform and even with, is only picked up often when somebody complaints. Managing digital imprints could make it clear who is behind adverts on social media. That would mean that users could see who was trying to influence them and how watchdogs keep track on false advertising. I move this Motion to call on the government to require that all paid advertisements on social media to state who paid for the advert and to state on whose behalf the advert is being published. Please support this Motion.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you.

LUCA BEE (SOUTHERN REGION): Congress, President, I wish to support Motion 150. Social media is here to stay like it or loathe it. With it the positives and negatives are staying as well. The problem with social media advertising is the highly targeted nature of it. As an example, a billboard on the M25 doesn't know where you live, what you are, what you like, where you travel, what you buy, what job you do, what are your passions, the billboard stands there and hopes someone who is interested will see it. Social media instead knows all of that and wants to know even more. All this data helps advertisers to identify which people will be receptive to their ads which can sometimes be great. Targeted ads show you a place. Other times not so great. Think about the Brexit campaign, the 2019 USA election, COVID 19 conspiracies theories and misinformation, QAnon, you get the gist. People harnessing good people were successfully targeted by campaigns based on fear and division, all that you can to the nature of need advertising. More than half of the world

population, 4.2 billion people, are active social media users. 45 million in the UK alone. Anyone with a message and the right budget can have immense reach irrespective of intention, good or bad. It is crucial that whenever the people are being exposed to ads while on social media, they know where they come from. Therefore, I ask Congress to please support this Motion. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Next we have motion 154 on the EU nationals living in the UK, can I this time ask Luca to move this Motion, thank you?

154. EU NATIONS LIVING IN THE UK AFTER BREXIT

This Congress is concerned that EU nationals living in the UK after Brexit are denied their full democratic rights as they are only entitled to vote in local elections and for those to the Welsh Assembly and to the Scottish Parliament. Preventing them from voting in general elections and referendums is unfair, discriminatory and undemocratic.

Congress calls upon the GMB to campaign for all EU nationals resident in the UK to have the right to vote in all future UK elections, including general elections, and in any referendums, that are held in our country.

B40 BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

Southern Region

(Carried)

LUCA BEE (SOUTHERN REGION): Can you hear me? Yes. Hello. Here again! I wish that this Congress instruct the GMB national office and political department to start campaigning immediately for the rights to all European nationals settling in the UK to be able to vote in all future UK election including general election and any referendums. As of December 2019, 3.7 million European nationals were living in the UK. As of today, 3.7 million people that are living in the UK working raising families, fuelling the British economy, are denied the right to have a say when it comes down to elect those who should represent them in Parliament. Many of those millions of people, most probably the vast majority of them, have made the UK their home, and even if they are legally entitled to the same rights as British nationals, they are denied one of the most important amongst those rights. Out of over 600,000 members the GMB has, a considerable chunk is made up by European nationals. Campaigning for the right to vote for European nationals means also campaigning for those members to be able to fully participate in the UK political life which I would argue it includes those who've been part of a Trade Union. Allowing no citizen to vote in national election is not something uncommon, as an example New Zealand does. All that is required to just to be a legal permanent resident. paradoxically, in the UK, Irish citizen are allowed to vote provided they meet the requirement. I do understand the historical ties that tie the UK and the Republic of Ireland but as it stands, Irish citizens are European nationals. So, why not extend to the same rights to all other Europeans that have made the United Kingdom their home and their contributions towards British success? It's clear that campaigning for the rights to vote for European nationals will only benefit the GMB and help makes it stronger. It will help many of the Europeans and most probably some of your friends, colleague, partners and comrades that have felt and are still feeling like they are being just tolerated to feel a bit more included. A bit more part of the place they have decided to call home. I hope you will agree with me. I move this Motion and I ask Congress to support it. Thank you very much.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you. Martha to second?

Martha having trouble? Can the regional the formally second it? Thank you move on then. The final Motion in this group is 166 on proportional presentation. Can we ask Linda to move?

166. PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION FOR UK ELECTIONS

This Congress believes that the time has come to change Britain's unfair voting system.

A First Past the Post system is easy to understand and to administer. It's more likely than other systems to deliver strong majority governments.

It's often criticised though for being undemocratic:

- The distribution of seats between parties may diverge widely from their actual levels of support.
- Some votes count for more than others: the outcome of UK elections is determined by a few dozen battleground seats. There's little incentive for national parties to devote much money or resources to seats that are unlikely to change hands.
- The system encourages tactical voting. In every UK election millions of people vote for parties that don't best represent their values. This is bad on principle, as it stands in the way of a more value-based politics, and in practice leaves voters at the mercy of those who seek to misinform.

Along with Canada and the USA, the UK is one of only three major developed countries to use a First Past the Post voting system for general elections. This is at odds with the Scottish Parliament, and the Welsh and London Assemblies, which all use the Additional Member System – a form of PR which retains the benefit of having an MP or Assembly Member representing the local constituency.

In December 2019, a YouGov poll found that 76% of Labour Party members believed that the Party should back PR, with just 12% opposed and 12% 'don't know.'

This Congress believes we need a Labour government to reshape society in the interests of workers and our communities. But it is imperative to realise that the current voting system offers no protection against later Conservative governments tearing up these hard-fought gains as they have in the past.

Congress therefore resolves:

- To abandon the policy of supporting First Past the Post and instead supporting moves to explore, select and introduce a new voting system for the UK.
- To call for the Labour Party to do the same, and to commit to including the voting system for general elections in the remit whenever it reviews its policy on constitutional issues.

X24 APEX COMPOSITE BRANCH

North West & Irish Region

(Lost)

LINDA WALL (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): President, Congress, Linda Wall North West and Irish region speaking in support of Motion 166 PR for UK elections. Congress, opposition to changes in our electoral system puts the GMB on the wrong side of the argument from the point of view of fairness and of democracy and at least in recent years it puts us out of step with the views of the people that we represent. That is not a good place to be, Congress. You have to believe the Westminster voting system is superior to the voting systems in every other European country, if you vote for this, including those in the Scottish and Welsh Parliament. It really isn't. Our Parliament is the least representative in Europe because seats don't reflect votes cast the vast majority of votes are wasted because there's

only one party that can win. This Motion doesn't single out any one system of PR, that is where the consultation would have to come in. There's various options which keep a constituency link. You can have a top up list like they do for the Scottish Parliament or a single transferrable vote like an island. The CEC say the system we have for Westminster works better because MPs are more accountable. Congress, think about this for a minute. How easy do you find it to get your MP to represent your views? How easy is it to remove your MPs? And isn't it likely they are under a system where one MP would have more accountability? First past the post benefits the Labour Party is what I hear often. Academic studies carried out show that if there is any bias it's in favour of right wing parties and less progressive governments. Congress, the 2011 referendum was a big choice. Look at the opinion polls now. PR is strongly supported and it's a very real issue for a lot of people. Over 200 CLPs, the past Motions calling for PR and the other day ASLEF joined the ranks of Trade Unions supporting it. For the GMB to use its voting power within the Labour Party to try to block this movement for change would be bad for the GMB, it would be bad for Labour but most importantly, it would be the wrong thing to do. Please support this Motion. I move.

NEIL O'HAGAN (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): Thank you Congress. First time delegate and second time speaker, Neil O' Hagan. Seconding Motion 166. Since the last general election there's been a campaign to encourage Labour Party CLPs to pass Motions in support of PR. The count currently stands at 232 and is rising every month. 96% of CLPs discussed the Motion and passed it. I believe support for change is growing because people can see the current voting system does not work for our movement. 19 out of 20 elections, the majority of people voted for parties to the left of the Tories, and yet our political system is ruled by Tories for 63% of the time. I refuse to believe that a right wing country by nature. The majority of Britons support a fairer society. We have one of the most unequal societies in the developed world. Our political system lets the Health Secretary hand private contracts to his family and friends and produce a White Paper that will make privatisation easier. We live with some of the trickiest Trade Union rules in the world. The voting system consistently gives large majorities to right wing minority governments, it's a barrier to works' rights. If we look at the most common argument for retaining first past the post, there is a constituency link that makes individual MPs accountable. Anyone who thinks our current system somehow embodies individual accountability needs only look at the blatant corruption and cronyism of this current government to see that it doesn't work. Do what we always did, we'll get what we always got, something's got to change. Please support the Motion. I second.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Could I ask David Berry to put in the chat why he wishes to speak? In the meantime can I ask Margaret to respond on behalf of the CEC? Can I ask David Berry who wishes to oppose on 166? David, can you come in?

DAVID BERRY (YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION): Can you hear me?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Yes.

DAVID BERRY: Dave Berry, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region. Dave Berry, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region opposing Motion 166. I've been a member of the Labour Party for 45 years and in that 45 years, I've probably disagreed with some Labour Party policies every year of that 45. But as we heard yesterday, I'm stronger as a collective in the workplace, I'm also stronger within the Labour Party and within the political movement as part of a collective and the Labour Party has been that chosen vehicle. PR will destroy the Labour Party and it will destroy more importantly the Trade Union link. It's a failed Liberal policy based on individualism and weakens the collective. In the British social attitude survey, 60% of this country describe themselves as working class. Can it be beyond the wit of us as a movement to unite that working class of 60% whatever the voting system? Politics is not a

pick and mix. We live or die as a class. We need policies that unite the working class and its policies that unite it not voting systems. We heard yesterday in Motion 42, we need more working class MPs. The mover is right, we need more capability and the opportunity to reselect our MPs. The PR system is individuals, forgot for a class such as ours. It also lets minority right wing groups. If you think it's successful look at Israel. Look at Belgium without a government for two years run by technocrats and look at Italy when they failed to form a coalition they appointed a banker as Prime Minister to run the country. PR is the end of democracy for the working class and welcome to the technocrats. Thank you, Congress.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Ben Cook?

BEN COOK (MIDLAND AND EAST COAST REGION): Ben Cook speaking in opposition of 166. I've been a Parliamentary candidate in a general election and I don't agree with this Motion because, as a former CLP from a safe Tory seat, which it has been for a long time, the way that I believe that we win these seats is by organising these constituencies through the Labour Party and with the support of Trade Unions. We are in a campaigning union and organising union. I firmly believe that the way to win elections is to bring people with you and it's about developing strategies on how to get your campaigns out in the local community and how to utilise the tools of the 21st century and let them allow you to campaign. So, I am sorry but I disagree with this Motion and I'm asking for Congress to oppose the Motion. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: I'll now call Margaret to respond on behalf of the CEC. Would you like to exercise your right to reply?

LINDA WALL: Yes. Yes.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Carry on.

LINDA WALL: On the points that have been just been made, absolutely the Labour Party still has to organise in a way that's been organised to win the votes. It will help that if the Labour Party has a strong position in support of PR that that will increase the Labour Party's credibility and increase the Labour Party's likelihood of winning the election because it will put the Labour Party in step with the voters who support it. By the way, the idea that it's adopting PR will favour right wing parties actually, if we had, if America had some form of PR, then Donald Trump would never have been elected with a minority of the popular vote. Voting for this Motion is voting for fair voting. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you. I'll now invite Margaret.

MARGARET GREGG (CEC, COMMERCIAL SERVICES): Margaret Gregg. President, Congress, Margaret Gregg speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 166. The CEC is opposing 166, proportional representation for UK elections. GMB has not supported changes to the electoral system previously and for good reason. It diminishes the direct accountability that MPs have under the current system. If an MP is failing a new job, they can be removed but this is not possible in a list system. A hybrid system in which some members are directly elected and others are elected through proportional representation would create a two tier system in the House of Commons with some MPs having the direct accountability of a set of constituents and others no direct accountability. The preferential system of voting which maintains a direct constituency link but which eliminates the need for technical voting was defeated 68-32 in a referendum in 2011. Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking that you oppose the Motion as well for the reasons I have laid out. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: After the vote, we will debate the Labour Party and constitutional issues starting with Motion 156. So please can speakers on these Motions make themselves ready. We will now take a vote on 150 and the CEC are asking for support. That's carried. 154 and again the CEC are asking for support. That's carried. 166, the CEC are asking you to oppose for the reasons you have just heard. That is lost. We move on now to item 11, political and Labour Party constituent issues, we start with Motion 156 and Labour organisation, can Nigel from Northern please move.

156. LABOUR ORGANISING

This Congress notes the way Labour has moved away from constituencies twinning in the run up to the general election of 2019.

Congress notes the success with which twinning constituencies in close proximity or within areas has had over the years. Congress notes with dismay how Labour has become fragmented and disorganised in moving away from sound techniques implemented by good organisation.

Congress believes that as Labour seeks to avoid irrelevance, it needs to get back to sound local political organisation.

Congress believes it is essential that twinning is used and returns to becoming embedded in Labour's organising in areas going forward.

Z46 – STOCKTON NO.3 ENG BRANCH

Northern Region

(Carried)

NIGEL COOKE (NORTHERN REGION): Good morning, Congress, Vice President, Congress, Nigel Cooke Northern region moving Motion 156 Labour organising. Over many general elections, the affiliates like the GMB have been the bedrock of Labour's organising. In the heady days when Labour won general elections, such as in the run up to the 1997 and subsequent elections, CLPs were twinned. In our region, traditionally, there were a handful of marginal seats. If only that were the case now. What has happened to that red wall? Twinning CLPs was an essential tool to both protect your base as well as organise to win those key marginals. It was a strategy that served Labour well in three consecutive elections from 1997 to 2005. Over recent years, it's been almost unbelievable that Labour has seemingly gone away from these tried and trusted methods of winning to new methods of losing. In the 2019 general election, it was galling to see vital resources just moving without planning to CLPs that would normally be regarded as safe.

Congress, in our region, we know why that was. In 2019, the fact is that if the Brexit party had not stood, there were eight key iconic Labour seats that would have gone Tory. One such seat was Hartlepool. Labour's lack of basic organising from the top is lamentable. Unless and until the Labour Party gets back to basic political organising, a general election victory will be out of reach for some time. Please support. I so move. Thank you.

MALCOLM: Thanks, Nigel. The region has formally agreed to second the motion, so we will move on to Composite 7 now. Can I ask Loraine to please move. (Speaker muted). Are you muted, we can't hear you?

Composite 7

Covering Motions;

Motion 155 Labour Party Post the General Election 2019 Northern Region

Motion 157 Labour Campaigning Northern Region

LABOUR PARTY CAMPAIGNING POST THE 2019 GENERAL ELECTION

This Congress notes the absolutely dire result for the Labour Party in the General Election of 2019. This Congress notes that the Labour Party in its campaigning appears over recent years to have moved away from organised techniques around identifying potential voter preferences. Congress understands that messaging and policy is important for winning over the public to lending Labour their votes at elections.

In receiving the Party's biggest setback since 1935, Congress notes that in many parts of the country Labour could have lost another 50 seats and notes with astonishment, at the move away from professional and tried and trusted voter id models, to a more evangelical approach on the doorsteps.

Congress believes that persuading voters on the doorstep and being indignant if voters do not respond positively to persuasion, is a sign of a Party that misunderstands what is required to put policies into power and to win elections.

Congress believes that never again can the Labour Party allow naval gazing and poor campaign command at the centre to be a blight on the hard work and good campaigning on the ground.

Congress therefore calls for Labour to reinstate essential and intensive campaign tools such as voter identification, basic and practical get out the vote techniques, all signs of good political organisation as opposed to reliance on telling voters what is good for them.

MOVING REGION NORTHERN
SECONDING REGION NORTHERN

(Carried)

LORAINÉ FOX (NORTHERN REGION): Can you hear me now? Sorry. Good morning, President, Vice-President, Congress. Loraine Fox, Northern region, delighted first-time delegate and first-time speaker, moving Composite 7, Labour Party campaigning post- the 2019 general election. Congress, the defeat in the 2019 general election was Labour's worst since 1935. In the so-called 'Red War' there is no doubt that leadership in Brexit played a role - MPs or former MPs citing one or the other are probably saying the right things for the wrong reasons. In our region, supporters of Corbyn cited Brexit was a reason to cover for failings of a leader they supported. Supporters of Remain cited leadership to cover for failings of a policy that they supported and which proved to be out of touch with voters. Congress, to be frank with you, both supporters were and continue to be in denial. That is part of the reason for the crisis Labour finds itself in. There is also no doubt that a failure of organising, including how to identify supporters, was a factor. The simple fact is trying to convert people on the doorstep as election time and being angry at the response on the doorstep is no way to win power. Indeed, the outcome should come as no surprise to anyone. It is hard work, built over years of policy-making, narrative, having a message that chimes with the public, and, crucially, having good and targeted organising on the ground. If Labour ever wants to win power again, it must remember and learn the lessons of what it took to win, become relevant and adopt policies and organisations that inspire confidence among the electorate. I move.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you. The region has agreed to formally second it, so we'll move on to Motion 162, on your programme, but this has been accepted as an existing policy following the passing of SOC Report No.1 and is therefore adopted without debate so we'll move on to our final motion, which is 163, and can I ask Jamie to move.

163. A MOTION FOR THE CREATION OF A VETERANS & FAMILIES NETWORK WITHIN THE LABOUR PARTY ALONGSIDE VETERANS & FAMILIES OFFICERS WITHIN CLPS - SUPPORT STATEMENT.

This Congress calls upon GMB to lobby the Labour Party to adopt the following implementation of a veterans family officer.

1. As of January 2019 there were 146,500 active personnel within the British Armed Forces with another 44,250 in reserve. The most up-to-date figures from 2017 estimated that there were 2.4 million veterans spread across the U.K. making up roughly 5% of the adult population, a significant portion too large to be ignored.
2. Veterans have disproportionately high rates of homelessness, addiction, mental illness, suicide and violent prison convictions for their social demographic. Though not a new phenomenon, the aftermath from the futile and continuing 'War on Terror' is highlighting that Veterans should be recognised as a group of individuals with complex needs, that could require lifelong support as a result of military service.
3. Presently no significant measures are being taken by the MoD to reverse or rehabilitate the psychological and cultural conditioning implemented through military training within in the discharge process. Neither are there any psychological screening or mental health checks being made prior to release from service.
4. The Armed Forces Covenant nationally is being perceived as little more than lip service with Liverpool being one of the few exceptions forming its own successful co-ordinated support service between veterans and the Local Authority via a Labour controlled Council and Mayor. It has made significant efforts to support and integrate the Armed Forces Community successfully securing Gold Standard in the MOD Veterans Employment Recognition Scheme, one of the first Authorities in the UK to do so, and it is now pushing to share and develop its Veterans Welfare Model through the Core Cities and Key Cities Groups.
5. The reality is that our Armed Forces Community nationally and locally has been neglected by the MoD and Central Government as a standard practice for longer than we care to imagine. Right now, mental health and welfare support services for serving and discharged military personnel alike has been passed almost entirely on to the third sector.

We as a union must encourage the Labour Party to accept responsibility to change this broken system following the conflicts that have led to the current state of welfare for the Armed Forces Community and its veterans.

6. There is currently no effective representation of the Armed Forces, its veterans nor their families within the mainstream party infrastructure nationally or locally. Nor is there any effective representation of the Armed Forces Community within the Trade Union movement. This has created a devastating political void that is rapidly being filled by members of the Far Right. A growing number of veterans and family members feel that their views, needs and requirements are not being met, leaving them open and vulnerable to public figures and political groups affiliated to the Far Right. This has become evident during the recent mass protests of ex-servicemen and women against the prosecution of Northern Ireland veterans the organisation of which involved Far Right groups the DFLA, Veterans Against Terrorism and UKIP, with Gerrard Batten leading one protest in London. We as a party need to act and act quickly to right this imbalance.

S71 SLOUGH BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

JAMIE DENNIS (SOUTHERN REGION): Vice-President, Congress, Jamie Dennis, Southern region, moving Motion 163 creating a families and veterans network within the Labour Party alongside veterans and family officers in the CLPs. I would like also to note to the top table, this motion will be formally seconded. As I'm sure you are aware, there is little to know support for ex-servicemen and women or their mental health when they try to leave the service and transition back into civilian life. That transition can be tough - I know this from

personal experience, being an ex-serviceman myself, often finding I had to adjust my behaviours or speech to fit back into society, and I had my own initial struggles with mental health as well. The most up-to-date figures suggest... (BARKING)... Sorry. Rogue! Sorry, Congress, apologies for that - the postman is daring to deliver a parcel! The most up-to-date figures suggest that around 5% of the UK's population are veterans and many veterans have complex mental health needs and in some cases will need lifelong support as a direct result of their military service. Many ex-servicemen and -women feel they don't have a voice and that the country they have given up so much for doesn't care enough about them to provide them with the help they need for their mental wellbeing after their service. They feel abandoned and that they don't have a voice in political forums and this leaves them vulnerable to radicalisation by far-right groups. This is especially evident when we see issues such as the prosecution for ex-service individuals for carrying out their orders during times of conflict, for example in recent times the mass protest against ex-servicemen and -women against the prohibition of veterans, the organisation of which involved far-right groups, the DLA, and UKIP. This Congress calls upon the GMB to lobby the Labour Party to adopt the implementation of veterans' family officers. This has seen some success in Liverpool with the formation of a co-ordinated support service between veterans and the local authority and a Labour-controlled council one of the first UK authorities in the UK to do so and it is now pushing to share and develop its veterans welfare model through the Core Cities and Key Cities groups. This will make sure veterans have a voice and an involvement in Labour constituencies who will be looking out for them and feed in any concerns. An individual who can feed any big-ticket issues back into the Labour Party itself to ensure their issues are being heard by the government. Veterans have a disproportionately high rate of homelessness, addiction, mental illness, suicide and violent prison convictions. This is due in part to the fact they've not had the help they need in order to successfully integrate back into our communities. These officers can help to ensure that veterans get access to the help they may need with their mental welfare and also provide veterans with the help they need to move back into society. Congress, apologies for the dog again, I move.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thanks, Jamie. Can I call upon Brian again to respond for the CEC? (Muted). Are you muted, Brian? No, I can't hear you still. No, I think you've got problems there, Brian. No, you're still not coming through.

(PAUSE). No, we still can't hear you, Brian. (PAUSE). We think you're stuck on mute. Brian, we're going to have to leave you - Barbara is going to do it instead. Catch you later.

THE PRESIDENT: President, Vice-President, Congress, Barbara Plant speaking on behalf of the CEC on Composite 7. Unfortunately, Brian couldn't get in. The CEC is supporting Composite 7. Labour Party campaigning post- the 2019 election, with a qualification. As the composite states, the general election result for Labour was the worst since 1935. The targeting of seats that were never going to be won and the lack of support for seats that lost a Labour MP were certainly a contributory factor in the loss. However, this alone cannot explain the loss and more should be considered when making a contribution to the analysis of defeat. CEC supports the motion with this qualification - well-organised, local campaigns are an important part of winning election. The qualification would be that an effective ground game is not sufficient - there needs to be genuine engagement with voters on the issues that concern them. A further qualification would be that Labour has not moved away wholesale from these traditional methods of organisation. CEC supports the Composite with these qualifications. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barbara. Congress, just as a reminder, the CEC are supporting both of these motions with a qualification to Composite 7. Does the Northern

region accept that qualification? Northern region accept? Quickly, Northern region. Right, thank you - accepted that, so we now go to the vote. 156. That's carried. Composite 7. That's carried. 163? That's carried. Before we go on, Thomas Hunter has asked for a point of order. Could he put it into chat what his point of order is for, please? (PAUSE)

It is not explained at the moment so we will have to move on. Our next business is motions on immigration and migration. Can I ask speakers on 168, 170 and 172 to get ready. Our first motion is 168 and could I have Obi Amadi to move.

168. IMMIGRATION AFTER FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

This Congress notes:

- The Tory government has introduced a regressive points-based immigration system to replace Freedom of Movement following Brexit.
- Such a system puts increased power over migrant worker into the hands of the most unscrupulous employers and undermines collective bargaining for all workers.
- This system is a continuation of the vicious “hostile environment” policy within the workplace.
- That border controls that criminalise migrants have consistently failed. Our union’s approach to immigration must prioritise protections for all workers, including migrant workers.
- That the objective of our union is to ‘organise, recruit and represent workers’, and ‘to defend and improve the social and economic well-being of members and their families.’ This applies to all GMB members, regardless of their country of origin, and immigration status.

This Congress resolves:

- To oppose any regressive immigration system proposed by the Tory government which divides and threatens diverse working class communities.
- To develop proposals for labour protections for migrant and UK workers which include:
 - o Sectoral collective bargaining
 - o Legal extension of collective agreements to cover posted workers
 - o Regulation of employment agencies
 - o Employer liability through subcontracting chains
 - o Legal obligations to pay posted workers the union-recognised ‘rate for the job’
 - o Strict enforcement of employers in sectors most exposed to exploitation of non-UK labour.

GMB UNITE BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

OBI AMADI (LONDON REGION): Can you hear me? Can you hear me? Shall I just start?

SPEAKER: Thank you, Obi, yes.

OBI AMADI: OK, thank you. President, Congress, my name is Obi Amadi and I'm speaking in support of Motion 168 on behalf of London region. This Congress calls for action on immigration after freedom of movement. Following Brexit this government has introduced a regressive points-based system. The system hurts migrant workers as the employers have

power and control over them because of their status. This system leaves people scared and wary, for example, of going to hospital to seek treatment for COVID because of possible repercussions. Have we not learned from Windrush? Well, obviously not. These were people who were legally here and invited and look how they were treated. The Windrush scandal was not an accident - it wasn't an oversight or an error, and nor is this. The government has decided their stance is to have and operate a hostile environment. What this does is make you ask the question, what does this country represent and what does it mean to be or want to be a citizen of this country? The migration issue is a much bigger issue than just bringing skills into the country and so boosting the economy - there are the other benefits of bringing close relatives too and the richness we in the UK have benefitted from, the culture, inclusion and diversity. Also it supports and values the family unit and keeping the family together. So what does this mean for working people who have lived their lives here being good citizens? They could still lose their homes, their jobs, their pensions and their rights to healthcare. Why is it that they could be hauled away from their homes and imprisoned in the detention centres to await deportation to a country that is now unfamiliar to them? Remember the incident just last week in Glasgow where the citizens intervened and their protests were successful? Remember the actions of the government were planned, were calculated, were intended. Whitehall bureaucrats cannot be allowed to have their way, Congress. What they are doing, there's a word for it. This is an expression of deep systemic racism and our movement must never hesitate to shine the light of scrutiny on it where it works. We need sectoral collective bargaining, legal extension of collective agreements to cover posted workers, regulation of employment agencies, employer liability through subcontracting chains, legal obligations to pay posted workers the union-recognised rate for the job, strict enforcement of employers in sectors most exposed to exploitation of non-UK labour. Let us reflect on the fine traditions of our movement. Let's close ranks, UK citizens, citizens of the world, trade unions, all who call this country home. Let's stand together now, our collective strength is so much more when we act together. We have the voice and the numbers. Congress, please support this motion, thank you.

SPEAKER: The seconder?

BISMILLA MAHAMED (LONDON REGION): Hello, my name is Bismilla. I'd like to second this motion. As Obi mentioned, in Glasgow a couple of weeks ago there was an 8-hour stand-off with about 800 people and they managed to stop two gentlemen from being deported. I don't think it should have to come to this sort of situation where the public have to step in. I think the Tory government are a bit heavy-handed on how they deal with migrants and illegal immigrants, et cetera, and I call for the GMB to lobby the government to stop this sort of activity. I'd like to second this motion.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thanks, we'll move on to Motion 170 and can we have Steve to move?

170. BORDERS CONTROL

Congress does not support changing to a "no borders" position on migration.

Congress supports the electorate's insistence on proper controls on the borders for reasons of law enforcement, national security, social solidarity and a variety of other reasons like trade, disease controls, etc.

Congress recognises that passports, visas, etc are essential to securely operate borders and that the status, rights and duties of citizens and all those who have a legal right to be in the UK are wholly different to what is applicable to all other persons seeking to come to the UK.

Congress considers that this does not cut across international solidarity within the 170 million strong trades union movement worldwide. Neither does it lessen support for international treaties, international organisations and

international cooperation aiming to promote prosperity, economic development and economic integration. It does not lessen support for a fair and non-discriminatory immigration system to meet the economic needs of the UK or for UK meeting its international obligations on, for example, aid and asylum for those fleeing wars and conflict.

Indeed, secure borders and international solidarity and cooperation are two sides of the same coin.

Congress considers that requirements for control of borders are real and continuing. Congress rejects a “no borders” position as it is not consistent with these necessary requirements.

X17 MEDWAY GENERAL BRANCH

Southern Region

(Carried)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: No? Can the Southern region formally move and second, then, Motion 170? Southern region? Move and second 170? Right, thank you very much for that. We'll move on now, we have 171, and can we have Henry to move - sorry, Unmesh Desai to move?

171. WIDEN WINDRUSH; AMENDING THE WINDRUSH SCHEME – A ROUTE TO CITIZENSHIP FOR DESCENDANTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS.

This Congress notes that that to 30 April 2019 a total of 1445 applications to the Windrush Taskforce under the Windrush Scheme were refused, 796 were refusals of people currently residing in the UK. Many are refused because they joined their Windrush Generation families in the UK after 1988 as adults. The deliberate racism of immigration laws from 1968, 1971 and to date, exiled them from their UK-based families; the Windrush Scheme can be used to reverse this injustice, and it must.

Congress further notes the excellent campaigning work being done by trade union activists, community organisations like Movement for Justice (MFJ), and the determination to expose the truth by those journalists, councillors and MPs prepared to speak out on the Windrush scandal and racism of the hostile environment for immigration policy. The #WidenWindrush campaign started by MFJ is championed by Janet Daby MP, and seeks to amend the Windrush Scheme to provide a route to citizenship for descendants and family members of the Windrush Generation currently excluded.

The 5 test cases of Windrush-connected people, being brought by Movement for Justice to challenge the narrowness of the Windrush Scheme in the courts.

Congress believes that the injustice of the Windrush Scandal cannot be remedied while the descendants and family members of the Windrush Generation continue to face detention and deportation.

Congress resolves to:

1. To affiliate to the #WidenWindrush campaign organised by Movement for Justice for the passage of an amendment to the Windrush Scheme which will open up a route to citizenship for descendants and family members currently excluded.
2. To work with the Labour Party to champion an amendment to the scheme.
3. To inform our membership about the #WidenWindrush campaign and legal challenge to the Windrush Scheme, and encourage those potentially affected to get in touch with Movement for Justice.

LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

UNMESH DESAI (LONDON REGION): Hello, can you hear me? Congress, Unmesh Desai, London region delegate and a proud GMB Labour member of the London Assembly. President, I'm just checking you can see me. President, can I firstly congratulate Gary on his election as secretary, an important record, and my thanks to Barbara, Warren and other colleagues for all the work that they have done over the last year in taking us through some difficult times. Congress, Tuesday 2 June marks 73 years since Windrush arrived in the docks bringing 400 people from Jamaica to the UK, at the request of the British government to help rebuild our country in the aftermath of World War II. What subsequently became known as the Windrush scandal, a sign of the hostile environment created by Theresa May, was generations of people wrongly detained or not having access to legal documents despite legally living in the United Kingdom for years. Many were deported to countries where they have not lived since they were children, people who were required to demonstrate lawful immigration status despite never having been given the means to do so. As David Lammy, MP, said, so eloquently, when this treatment of the Windrush citizens hit the national headlines, this is a moment of terrible national shame for the United Kingdom. Downing Street has since admitted that the way the Windrush generation has been treated to be a matter of regret and appalling, but these are weasel words and the scandal continues to this very day. The Windrush scheme was set up to allow people to apply for a document that proves they can live and work in this country and the Windrush compensation scheme was set up in 2019 but as was said last week, the Home Office continues to operate a bungled compensation scheme. It gives citizens and descendants of the Windrush generation - there are cases that have been taken to court because this cannot remain unaddressed, while people continue to face detention and deportation. This is a trade union issue - these are our people who have worked and given their time and lives to build Britain. They are part of the trade union movement, including the GMB, and so we must all stand up for all the workers in the Windrush generation facing discrimination. Congress, I urge you to pass this motion so we can better publicise the Windrush scandal to our members and then urge the Labour Party to champion this amendment. Thank you, Congress.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: The region has agreed to formally second the motion, so we'll now move on to our final motion in this group, which is 172, from the Northern region. Sue?

172. SOCIAL CARE

This Congress calls for the Social Care sector to be given special status within the EU Settlement Arrangements. Congress notes that there is a deadline of 30th June 2021, under the Withdrawal Agreement. Congress notes that very little has been done by way of help and support to those EU nationals, and their partners who may come from outside the EU, who wish to access help in order to obtain settled status. Congress notes that within social care there is an acute problem, where workers who need settled status, desperately need some support so that a sector that is already at crisis point, does not break apart. Congress believes therefore that the Government should implement special arrangements to give certainty to workers from abroad who are working within such a vital sector and provide such vital services to the vulnerable.

F29 – NORTH TYNE SOCIAL CARE BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SUE SOWERBY-SCOTT (NORTHERN REGION): Hello, can you hear me?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Yes.

SUE SOWERBY-SCOTT: Hi, President, Congress, Sue Sowerby-Scott, Northern region, first-time speaker, moving Motion 172, social care. First of all, congratulations to Gary Smith from all the Durham branch on your recent election. Congress, during the period from 2016

to the agreeing the trade agreement with the EU, there's very little progress on resolving settlement agreements for workers and their families. This covers both EU nationals and the partners of EU nationals who might come from outside of the EU. In social care, key services are provided by this group of workers and let's be honest, Congress, they were used as a political football by the Tories in negotiations with the EU Commission. Many of these workers are vital. Many are GMB members. Congress, we will remember the forms to gain settled status that were not available in different languages, applications at one time could only be done on an Android device, hard-copy documents were massive, and it was all done to stifle applications. Even council websites had virtually no information, as central and local government played politics with the lives of hard-working people and their families. Congress, the deadline is fast approaching for replying to be settled in the UK. We call on the government to provide additional help to give workers who qualify extra time to apply and to make special arrangements to assist in social care, which is already overwhelmed by the unbelievable efforts of our members during the pandemic. Please support this motion - I move.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sue. I would now like to go to Shailesh to respond for the CEC.

SHAILESH GAGLANI (CEC, MANUFACTURING): Hello, can you hear me?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Yes, yes, OK.

SHAILESH GAGLANI: Yes, thank you. Vice-President, Congress, Shailesh Gaglani speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 171. The Windrush scheme to help these poor descendants and families members. The CEC is supporting this motion with qualification. We support the motion and we will be happy to work with the Labour Party colleagues on this matter. We have offered support to our members who have been affected by the Windrush scandal. The qualification is that this will need to be rectified by the finance and general purpose committee, thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I call upon Thomas Hunter? No? Not coming in? Right, we'll take the vote then.

Motion 171. Does the London region accept the qualification? Thank you, London region. We'll now go to the votes then. 168. That's carried. 170. That's carried. Motion 171. That's carried. And 172. That's carried. Our next business is Composite 14. I'll ask Wales and South West region, who submitted the emergency motion, to move the composite. Then I will ask Birmingham and West Midlands to second. Can the mover come forward, please.

Composite 14

Covering Motions;

Motion 174 Gypsy and Traveller Discrimination & Exclusion - Birmingham and West Midlands Region

Emergency Motion 1 Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Community a direct attack with the Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill - Wales and South West Region

GYPSY AND TRAVELLER DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION, AND THE POLICE, CRIME AND SENTENCING BILL

This Congress welcomes the fact that there have been gypsy and traveller families and communities in this country for hundreds of years.

GMB are appalled to see the government legislating what can only be described as pogroms against the most vulnerable and poorest families from the Gypsy and Traveller community.

We urge the government to consider providing more places to settle.

We are disturbed to see the group with some of the worst outcomes in our society in every respect criminalised, and have their assets stripped and prison sentences and fines imposed upon them.

We also note that gypsies and travellers are being 'hounded out' of parts of England as a growing number of local authorities impose sweeping injunctions and bans to prevent them from settling on land, in what has been described as a form of social cleansing.

These injunctions criminalise the normal activities of daily living for gypsy travellers, make accessing healthcare, work and education increasingly difficult and increase tensions between traveller and settled communities. The government's and local authorities response has been to talk up the enforcement side of the equation without doing very much to address the supply side.

Local authorities are increasingly using these injunctions to mask their own failure to provide more official designated sites, instead of looking for positive solutions.

What Gypsies and Travellers need is an investment in their youth etc and help.

What they do not need is more of them ending up in a justice system that doesn't value their lives and gives upon them, and further criminalises them or persecutes them for their way of life. Why isn't the government ensuring local authorities are providing enough places to stay and doing negotiated stopping schemes where bins etc are provided

This congress resolves:

- To stand in solidarity with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities facing persecution and criminalisation from the UK Government.
- For the General Secretary and the Central Executive Council to work with at a national level with our sister Trade Unions, via the TUC to oppose any introduction of legislation, that will further the divide in society, and marginalise them even further.
- To oppose any introduction of such a bill that brings in draconian laws, and that effect any minority community.
- To work with the Labour Party, MPs and Councillors on opposing the introduction of this bill, and if made an Act of Parliament to seek the repeal of the legislation under a Labour Government.
- Calls on all Labour MP's and Councillors to oppose the use of these injunctions by local authorities that exclude traveller communities from whole regions or areas.
- Demand that Labour MP's and Councillors oppose any hostile policies that lead to exclusion of nomadic groups and openly campaign to address the site supply issue and encourage inclusion.
- The PEI Committee to work with the Labour Party on a local, region and national level to listen to the concerns of the GRT Community and a commitment to end Anti-GRT racism from the party and within society.
- To commit to ending Anti-GRT racism and discrimination in workplaces and within GMB structures.

MOVING REGION WALES & SOUTH WEST
SECONDING REGION BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS

(Carried)

DEAN ISMAY (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): President, Congress, Dean Ismay, Wales & South West region moving composite 14. This Tory Government has decided this

year to start an attack on the most vulnerable in our society. And the most poorest. Attacking the GRT community, the PCS Bill passed, makes for difficult reading and promotes a problem towards this community. It was bad enough in the run-up to local election catching a Labour PRC. This bill seeks to split this community, disenfranchise them from our community. The Tory Government has no issue with attacking people of all backgrounds. We only have to look at Boris Johnson and his string of racist remarks over the years and the policies they implement through Parliament, not just directed towards people of colour. But towards those who are from other marginalized groups. Most councils fail the community in terms of dealing with refuge or encampment. By providing no alternative. Even then they are at risk of gaining criminal convictions of having their homes seized because of a failure within the system itself. We should be calling out racist in all forms. And within all forms, and within all parts of our society, and colleagues, it does start with us. We should be demanding better. We should be demanding this is taken seriously. There's the legislation is disgraceful and the Labour Party should be fighting to oppose this legislation. This legislation needs to be stopped and rethought and we must put an end to Tory Government trying to divide and conquer and equally put an end to racist legislation. Please stand with us, please support. I move.

CHAIR: Can I ask Cassi to second, please?

CASSI PERRY (BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS REGION). Good morning, Cassi Perry. (Loss of audio). In the fight for equality and human rights... there is... also... a community under assault by discriminatory legislation... (loss of audio) knowing where the battle lines are (loss of audio) only protect them, but we protect... (loss of audio) the last five years have seen wave after wave (loss of audio)... way of life, an (loss of audio)

CHAIR: Sorry, we are having problems with you. We take it you seconded it, anyway. Sorry about that. You are coming through very poor. We'll have to move on. I will ask Rachael to respond on behalf of the CEC.

RACHAEL HOOKWAY (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES). President, Congress, Rachael Hookway speaking on behalf of the CEC on Gypsy and traveller discrimination and exclusion and the police, crime and Sentencing Bill. This composite consists of Motion 174 and emergency Motion 1. The CEC is asking this composite be supported with a qualification. We welcome this motion. We recognise that the rights and inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and traveller groups is an important issue. We further recognise that the lack of suitable sites is a serious problem which must be addressed. No-one should be hounded and we condemn the hostile actions some local authorities have taken against these communities and the appalling shortfalls that the Government has in protecting people. We are committed to challenging and tackling any anti-GRT racism in our structures. Should that occur and we are committed as trade unionists to educate members on this racism. The Labour Party has voted against part three and four of the bill at second reading. Part four of the bill includes most of the hostile measures against GRT communities. We have concerns over potential new restrictions to the right to protest if the bill was carried in its current form. However, part one of the bill amends, the act from 2018, which introduces tougher sentences for perpetrators of attacks on emergency service workers. This is an essential part of our protect the protectors campaign, led by our ambulance service workers and other GMB public service members. GMB supported the toughening of sentences for choose who attack members when it was put out to consultation. Our qualification, therefore, is that we wish to focus our energies on opposing this abhorrent racism in the bill and other areas of concern with the legislation. While also recognising that the bill does contain proposals that GMB does support when they stand in isolation. If this qualification is accepted, then GMB will work with the Labour

Party and use our influence to pressure other political parties to vote down and if the legislation is passed to repeal these parts of the bill. Therefore, Congress, please support this motion with the qualification that I have laid out. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: The CEC are asking that you support this motion with the qualification. Can Wales & South-West and Birmingham & West Midlands indicate whether they accept the qualification? We will now put Composite 14 to the vote. Carried. Congress, we come to motions on housing. Our first motion is 232, on new types of house building. I have Andrew Blunt to move.

232. NEW TYPES OF HOUSE BUILDING

This Congress notes the use of wider techniques at increasing volume and sustainability of new house build as a way of tackling the housing crisis.

Congress notes the increasing use across the world of wood as a key component of new building techniques. Congress believes that these are exciting new developments. Congress notes that if combined with a tree planting programme in key areas of the UK, these developments could provide a steady supply of indigenous resource as well as employment and income for years ahead, that would both help deal with housing policy as well as improve the UK's carbon footprint, provide vital green jobs and income for communities across the UK. Congress calls on the GMB to lobby Government and the Labour Opposition in seeking to urgently develop housing policy new build.

H40 – NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

ANDREW BLUNT (NORTHERN REGION): President, Congress, Andrew Blunt, Northern region. Moving Motion 232, new types of house building. Congress, we have many members working in the aggregates of building materials industry, which includes the timber sector. Our members are vital the future of the wide and diverse house building programme. This will provide long sought after affordable housing. It will provide energy efficiency and produce long-term answers to housing shortages and provide much needed work. One of the more exciting developments in the building industry in recent years has been the move to utilise timber in housing construction. Across the world, in places like Scandinavia and Canada, timber is used effectively and provides sustainable housing on a larger scale. Congress, currently, the UK is net importer of timber that is used in house building. There are environmental benefits to using new techniques such as timber in helping to solve the housing crisis. Planting and utilising home-produced timber within the UK which could be treated and used in construction will have a number of benefits in housing costs and jobs for the future. It is something that the GMB should engage the Labour Party on as we seek to promote our housing policy going forward. Congress, as we come out of the pandemic, there'll be a whole range of housing needs and issues, utilising timber as part of a diverse policy will be a sustainable way for the UK to meet the housing challenges that we face. Please support. I move.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: The region has indicated that they are formally seconding the motion. On to 236 from London and Diane to move.

236. NATIONAL GMB CAMPAIGN TO END CLADDING SCANDAL

This Congress calls for GMB to set up a National campaign to demand a deadline for creating safe housing without flammable cladding following the Grenfell Fire.

It is 3 years since the Grenfell disaster, and not enough has been done to make the 23,000 households with Grenfell style ACM (Aluminium Composite Material) cladding, and up to 500,000 people living with other non – ACM flammable cladding, safe from fire. The problem is further magnified by COVID 19 and the fact we are being asked to stay in our homes more than ever before.

The government's new fund for remedial work on high rise blocks to remove flammable cladding, a step forward. However, it's estimated the fund will only cover ⅓ (a third) of households and it's offered on a first come first served basis, there is no commitment from government to a deadline for completed works, and it does not cover buildings under 18m.

We call for the Government to commit to a deadline for safe housing for all, provide a detailed timeline, and hold themselves accountable.

CITY OF LONDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

DIANE TIMMINS (LONDON REGION): President, Congress, Diane Timmins, first time delegate, second time speaker, moving 236 on ending the cladding scandal. Congress, later this month, it would be four years since the Grenfell fire where 72 people died. Sadly an estimated 11 million people across the country are still caught in this cladding scandal caused by dangerous, come bust table wall cladding and inadequate fire safety regulations. Tenants living in buildings which have failed safety inspections have had to find their own money to cover the costs of interim things such as waking watch services in the absence of fire alarm systems K you imagine what the hard working householders are going through. Take Rebecca, a charity worker, who lives in constant fear after Grenfell-style cladding was found on her building. She waited almost three years to replace the material. Now more tests are needed. Last year UK cladding action group found 90% of the residents they surveyed said their mental health had deteriorated as a direct result of the discovery of fire safety problems at their building. Nearly a quarter reported suicidal feelings or considered self-harm. Last month, another fire broke out over three floors of a tower block in Tower Hamlets which had the same dangerous cladding as Grenfell Tower. Luckily, no-one died. Much longer do we have to wait before the Government gives this the attention, support and funding to resolve this disgraceful situation? On the 28th April, this year, for the fifth time, MPs in the House of Commons voted against banning building owners passing on remediation costs to the leaseholder. Our motion calls for a deadline for safe housing for all. Sadly, this Government, hasn't met any of those promises. As a trade union, we must acknowledge this is a national scandal that for too long has been allowed to hide in the shadows, allowing politicians, property developers and builders to move at a snail's pace to rectify this terrifying and deadly scandal. Our motion calls for the GMB to campaign nationally to end this. Let's work together with end the cladding scandal campaign and other resident-led groups across the country to fix this. Their campaign sets ten steps. One is to remove dangerous cladding by June 2022. We need more pressure. This is not just happening in London. Let's get together with our housing groups, and campaign on safe housing for all. Let's make sure the building safety build, just announced in the Queen's Speech is residence a stronger voice and developers in accountable frameworks that all homes and high-rise buildings are fit for purpose and safe. I urge you to support our motion and end our cladding scandal. I move.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Ready now.

UNMESH DESAI (LONDON REGION): Congress, President, at the heart of the building safety scandal, are ordinary people fighting a system stacked against them. A system which puts profits before people. Across my constituency, in East London, there are thousands of... in living in high-risk buildings who need immediate help... unimaginable before the Grenfell Tower tragedy. Thousands of people paid thousands of pounds because they cannot re-mortgage. The insurance costs are spiralling. They are to pay for insurance services which tell them their homes are worthless. They pay money for waking watchers. They are struggling emotionally and mentally. They need support and they need it now. Yet the Government's approach to redress is an inadequate patchwork of sticking plasters which is useless to heal the broken system that brought us here. The Government offer a fund here or there, but this provides less than a third of the total money estimated necessary to for high rise buildings. Offer no hope at all for those in dangerous buildings. What's more leaseholders pay out thousands, the Government has stump odd out... the same cladding which spread the fire at Grenfell and... it is still being used in schools and other buildings under 18 metres in height. Each... building should lower the number of people living with ACM. These are being replaced in new buildings, with risk. This is ridiculous. The Government must... this is a national scandal. It needs a national response. We must support people living in dangerous building and protect them from further suffering. Put people before profit. And with GMB member... also GMB... supporting the GMB campaign.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: The last motion of this group is 238, on rough sleeping. Can I call James for Yorkshire and North Derbyshire? I move to James.

238. LET US TACKLE ROUGH SLEEPING ONCE AND FOR ALL

This Congress notes the plight of rough sleepers never seems to end, and we still see many people sleeping on our streets across the cities and towns in the UK.

We saw the amazing work at the beginning of the pandemic to create the Nightingale Hospitals across the UK in a very short space of time.

We could totally eradicate rough sleeping in 2021 by establishing something similar in each of our major towns and cities – especially over the winter months – to ensure rough sleepers have a warm and safe environment to sleep in whilst receiving the necessary medical care and support to find them a permanent place to live.

B05 – GMB ORGANISING BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

JAMES COOPER (YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION): Thank you. Good afternoon, Congress. First time delegate and speaker from the Yorkshire and North Derbyshire region. Congratulations to Barbara, Malcolm and Gary on their recent successes. I move 238 - let's tackle rough sleeping once and for all. We heard from madam President raising the issues of poverty and hardship that exists across this country right now. The scale of homelessness is disgracefully difficult to quantify. There are many different types of homelessness. Not just rough sleeping, there are people trapped in temporary accommodation, hostels, shelters. Crisis, the national charity for homeless people, estimate by 2020 2,000 people were experiences the most severe form of homelessness. The money in the scheme launched by this Government in the first lockdown helped to tackle it. It is only a plaster on a gaping wound. The Government pledged to end homelessness by 2024. Unsurprisingly they failed to provide a strategic plan on how they propose to do it homeless link, rough sleeping figures have increased by 52% by 2010 and have been volunteering in the sector for over 10 years I have witnessed the negative impact in our communities. We saw the incredible speed at which the nightingale hospitals were created during the UK, the

same could be done for rough sleepers. We call on the Government to make available facilities such as the nightingales to eradicate rough sleeping once and for all. To provide a warm and safe environment to support their varied needs whilst finding a permanent place for them to live. I hope Congress adopt this motion. Congress, I move.

CINDY GAVIN (YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION): Hi, Yorkshire and North Derbyshire motion. Let us tackle rough sleeps once and for all. A huge well done to all of our new delegates within this region doing this virtually is a nightmare. Well done everybody. This pandemic has brought home to many of us how close we are all from losing our homes, our jobs and possibly our families. Furlough, redundancies, job loss. People living below the poverty line. Homelessness in itself is not an issue which can be given a quick fix. This Government does not have currently a formalised strategic plan to end homelessness. Its approach is active rather than proactive. We saw at the beginning of the pandemic an effort to clear the streets of people to fudge those numbers. In March the Government produces a paper called rough sleeping accommodation programme, a prospectus in guidance which meets the needs outside of the Greater London area. There'll be a pathway to settled accommodation. In other words, interim housing - a way to fudge the numbers and so-called end to rough sleeping by the end of the term. This document sets out to place responsibilities on local councils and bidders to purchase and repair properties, refurbishment, re-purposement of the stock and leasing. This paper in itself is long and complicated to read. Tied up in legalities and unscrupulous land lord's will work through. Our rough sleepers often have complex needs and their need is more than just accommodation. We need the after care and support services. To end this crisis of rough sleepers, of homelessness, we need comprehensive plan of affordable housing. Clearer tenancy agreements and support for vulnerable people. We ask this motion to call upon Congress to lobby the Government into making comprehensive long-term plans, in adapting existing, unused building such as the nightingale. How fast did they sweep in and adapt those buildings? And be able to give somewhere warm, safe and secure for our homeless individuals of those families, for a chance to create a better future and a way out of the endless cycle they have found themselves in, often through no fault of their own. Congress, I second. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you. Can I ask John to respond on behalf of the CEC?

JOHN WARCUP (CEC, COMMERCIAL SERVICES): President, Congress, John Warcup speaking on behalf of the CEC. National GMB to end cladding scandal. The CEC is supporting the motion with a qualification. The simple qualification is since the motion was submitted, there have been additional points from Government to address dangerous cladding and to have done so by June 2022. The funds however are still not enough to address the issue. GMB has been working the Labour Party front bench who attempted a forced vote on the issue in Parliament as well as put amendments down to the fire safety bill which could have prevented building owners from passing on costs to leaseholders. The housing, communities and Select Committee also recommended that the Government must lead an urgent effort to remove all dangerous cladding from buildings by June 2022. The bill is currently going through its final stage in Parliament without these recommendations. For this reason, the CEC is supporting this motion with the small qualification. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: The CEC are supporting 232 and 238 and supporting 236 with a qualification. And the London Region has already accepted the qualification. But just before we take the vote, can I ask speakers on 247, 248 and 252 to be ready. Well will now go to the votes. 232. That's carried. 236. That is carried. And 238... and that is carried. Congress

we will move on to 247 which is London Region, Universal Basic Income. Can I have Cathy to move and Brian to second?

247. UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

Congress notes the alarming increase in working poor, the lack of decent employment opportunities and the vindictive nature of the reviled Universal Credit that has proved wholly inadequate to meet people's needs.

Congress also notes that, since 2016, it has been TUC policy to support the introduction of a Universal Basic Income (UBI), sometimes called Citizens Income, a payment made to everyone, regardless of their employment status, that would sweep away the costly, bureaucratised (and now privatised) indignities of means tested benefits.

However, despite its innovation being TUC policy, it is rarely if ever mentioned by General Secretary, Frances O'Grady who prefers instead to advocate higher payments under Universal Credit.

Congress agrees that UBI is a concept whose time has come and instructs GMB representatives on the TUC General Council to vigorously pursue a campaign for its inception.

WALTHAMSTOW BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

CATHY HOLLAND (LONDON REGION): Good afternoon. Can you hear me? Good afternoon. Can you hear me?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Yes, we can.

CATHY HOLLAND: Good afternoon Congress - Motion 247. Cathy Holland Essex Public Services. This is not my idea of heaven, but here we go - this is what we have got at the moment. I'm moving Motion 247, universal basic income. Congress notes the alarming increase in the working poor. The lack of decent employment opportunities and the vindictive nature of the reviled Universal Credit which has proved wholly inadequate to meet people's needs as I have been saying for years. Congress also notes that since 2016, it has been TUC policy to support the introduction of the universal basic income. Sometimes called the citizen's income. A payment made to everyone, regardless of their employment status. That would sweep away the costly bureaucratised and privatised indignities of means-tested benefits. However, despite this innovation, being a TUC policy, it is really if ever mentioned by the general eke, Francis O' Grady, who refers to advocate higher payments under Universal Credit. Congress agrees that the UBI it is a concept whose time has come and instructs GMB representatives on the TUC general council to vigorously pursue a campaign for its inception. I move.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Secunder? You're on Brian.

BRIAN SHAW (LONDON REGION) Vice-President, Congress, London region. Seconding motion Motion 247. Universal basic income is a policy whose time has come. The Labour leadership missed a trick by not calling for a universal income at the start of COVID. If we are serious about tackling poverty then universal basic income is a policy which needs to become reality. UBI system will eliminate absolute poverty in the UK as it is currently measured. It will reduce the numbers below the official UK poverty line from 16% to 4%. And will almost eliminate poverty among children and the elderly. The estimated cost in the UK is around £67 billion, compare that to the £93 billion paid to industry in Government subsidies and tax loopholes which more than easily would cover the cost. The proposed pilot looked at by the Wales Government is to be applauded. To talk of a new normal, post COVID needs to

include universal basic income. And GMB needs to ensure the Labour Party policy UK wide. I second. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: On to 248. It is Viv to move.

248. MAXIMISE BENEFIT TAKE-UP VIA HMRC

This Congress believes that everyone should get what they are entitled to in terms of Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits and everyone should pay their taxes. This is not happening for our members and people in the wider community, locally and nationally.

In order to facilitate greater Social Justice, reduce inequality and poverty, we need to ensure everyone is claiming all that they are entitled to. This isn't happening with about £16bn of unclaimed welfare benefits and tax credits annually across the UK. It is a financial scandal that is repeated every year.

HMRC is the responsible Government Department to enforce the National Living Wage (previously National Minimum Wage but not the real Living Wage) on employers and to ensure everyone pays their taxes via Tax Inspectors. We ask that HMRC be charged with "balancing the books of UK Plc" to ensure everyone is getting what they are currently entitled to but are not.

We ask Congress to campaign for proactive measures by HMRC to ensure that everyone can and does claim their right to welfare benefit and tax credits and for this measure to be adequately resourced for the benefit of our members and the wider community, including local business, that will benefit from this.

This is not a change in the current system but a measure to make the existing system work more effectively and efficiently to the benefit of all.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

VIVIAN THOMAS (LONDON REGION): Vivian Thomas. London region, moving 248, maximise benefit take up with HMRC. Vice-President, Congress, what this is asking for is not controversial. Who doesn't want everyone to get what they are entitled to? It is not too much to ask. £16 billion rebates unclaimed every year. The system is failing too many in our communities often the most vulnerable and those living in poverty. The rise of food banks which have become a permanent and vital support for those in need, in every town and city, are a symptom of this failure. So what is to be done? This motion wants the existing system to work more efficiently and effectively. Government and existing institutions working for all of those they exist to serve, leaving no-one behind. The HM revenues and customs department is best placed to make this a reality with the necessary resources needed. Responsible for enforcing the national living wage, it is not unreasonable for it to also enforce the existing minimum income for all. Congress, we must end this injustice and ensure that all of those currently not receiving what they are entitled to are informed and facilitated to receive it. I move.

VAUGHAN THOMAS (LONDON REGION). Thank you. Vaughan Thomas, London region. 248 to maximum benefit take up by HMRC. This is, as Vivian said, uncontroversial we want everyone to get what they are entitled to. Given that the £16 billion of unclaimed benefits and tax credits every year, DWP are failing. It is surprising their accounts are qualified year after year. But we have HMRC. And it shouldn't be just about collecting taxing. It is about balancing the books. Making sure everybody is getting what they are entitled to. Quite some time ago, I had a fraud, a social security fraud investigator contact me about a client, saying, they are not claiming everything they are entitled to. I was chuffed. I thought, this is a turn up for the books. I couldn't help but not very often, I sent a letter of compliment back to the

fraud investigator. That is what it is about. Checking everyone is getting what they are entitled to. Not just chasing people getting what they are not entitled to. I make no apologies for caring about all those who don't get what they are entitled to. It is about balancing the books. HMRC are ideally placed for it. They deal with the finances. So, yes, it is a no-brainer to me and I think it would be a no-brainer to everyone out there to charge the HMRC with that responsibility, given that the DWP have repeatedly failed year on year for those people living in poverty. It is about making sure everyone is getting what they are entitled to. I second this motion.

THE vice-president: We will move on now to 252. Barbie?

252. RIGHT TO FOOD

This Congress recognises a crisis of food poverty born out of the political choices and systemic failings created over the past four decades, which have now reached a tipping point for so many in our communities. The figures are devastating for one of the richest nations in the world and highlight the inequality of the UK in 2020.

The Trussell Trust reports a soaring 81% increase in emergency food parcels from food banks in its network during the last two weeks of March 2020 compared with the same period in 2019, including a 122% rise in parcels given to children as the coronavirus pandemic continued to unfold.

Liverpool City Council notes the consistent high rates of poverty across the city. We recognise the growing concern amongst our health and care professionals of the current situation and the likely exacerbation of poverty figures through the impact of the Covid19 pandemic and economic uncertainty as we enter 2021.

From April to October 2020 in Liverpool, the Council has seen 10,296 Urgent Needs Awards (emergency cash awards to low income households for essentials such as food and fuel); an increase of 56% compared to the same period in 2019.

DWP data reports that households on Universal Credit in Liverpool has increased from 30,700 in February to 58,500 by October, a 90.5% increase.

The National Food Strategy is the first independent review of England's entire food system for 75 years. Its purpose is to set out a vision for the kind of food system we should be building for the future, and a plan for how to achieve that vision. It is headed by Henry Dimbleby and next reports to Government in early 2021.

The Right to Food campaign is arguing that the 11 million people in food poverty should be central to this strategy.

Enshrining the 'Right to Food' into law would clarify Government obligations on food poverty and would introduce legal avenues to hold Government bodies accountable for violations.

This Congress calls for the 'Right to Food' to be incorporated into the 'National Food Strategy'. We ask the Chief Executive to write to Henry Dimbleby to further this request.

HC-ONE BRANCH

North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BARBARA STODDART (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): Hi. President, Congress, Barbara Stoddart moving Motion 252 right to food. We've all witnessed food poverty and seen the devastating effects this has had in our communities. This widespread disease has become so widespread it's moved in with our families, friends and our work colleagues. It's heart-breaking to watch parents starve in order to feed their children. We need to top this now. This situation has arisen plainly and simply from political choices and a failure to act. But there is now an opportunity to do something and this Congress calls for the right to food

to be incorporated into a national food strategy. Congress, hunger is not an issue of charity, it's an issue of justice. Congress, I move.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: The region has agreed to formally second that Motion. But before we move on, can I ask Dave Berry who wants to speak against Motion 247 to come in?

DAVID BERRY (YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION): Thank you, Chair. Dave Berry from Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region speaking against Motion 247 but not on behalf of my region. UBI is another shiny policy come along that people have as a cure all. We had a decent system, it was called a welfare benefits system without the need for means testing. UBI is not a new idea. It was tried in the 18th century with a system which the last Labour government tried with the Tax Credit system. When you begin to pay money to everybody, regardless, all that becomes then is a subsidy to employers and they take the opportunity to force down wages even further.

The union should be focused on increasing wages alongside a welfare benefits system that doesn't rely on means testing but provides people with a decent standard of living. UBI is just at clever diversion from what is our basic need of fighting for our members, better wages and a state that supports workers and not employers. I would ask people to vote against this Motion and think about better solutions that are better than a failed historic experiment. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Does Cathy want the right to reply? Cathy, if you want to exercise your right to reply, come in? Cathy, can't you get back in

CATHY HOLLAND: Can you hear me. Yes. Sorry, it's a bit disconcerting the screens. Yes, it's okay. Yes. I understand. I agree. I'm fine with the... er okay? Hello?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Hello? You are very happy with it?

CATHY HOLLAND: Yes, I am.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: David Flanagan on behalf of the CEC.

DAVID FLANAGAN (CEC, COMMERCIAL SERVICES): Thank you. Vice President, Congress, Dave Flanagan speaking on behalf to have CEC on Motions 247, 248 and 252. Firstly, on Motion 247, universal basic income the CEC is supporting this Motion with a qualification. Existing GMB policy already supports the principle of universal basic income, however the qualification on this Motion is that CEC believes that we should not commit to support every form of basic income given the wide variety of levels it should be set at and different methods to pay for it. The CEC strongly believes that universal basic income can't be an attack on dismantling social security leading to anyone becoming poorer or leading to higher tax for working people. We recognise there needs to be a lot more work to adequately identify the additional funding required for a decent level of basic income. While recognising that the top priority must be for an incoming Labour government is to rebuild our public services from the wreckage of Tory austerity.

Secondly, on Motion 248, maximised benefit take up via HMRC, the CEC is supporting with a qualification, our qualification is that we are already working with groups like the Child Poverty Action Group to train officers and activists on Universal Credit with some regions like my own in the North West and Irish region providing welfare advice services. CEC supports this position and will action in line with resource. Lastly on Motion 252 right to food, the CEC is again supporting this Motion with a qualification. The Motion rightly highlights the increasing numbers of those in food insecurity in the UK. Part 2 of the national food strategy is yet to be published and reports suggest that this is delayed, however this may have

happened before congress meets. The qualification is that the review is independent of government and any recommendations made by the review will not automatically become law.

We will continue to work with and support MPs in particular Ian Byrne MP who has let on getting this issue on the Parliamentary agenda. Therefore, we are asking that Congress adopts all these Motions with a qualifications that I explained. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: The CEC is asking you to support these Motions with qualifications. And the London region has already accepted qualification for Motion 247 and 248. Does North West & Irish accept the one for 252? They do. Thank you for that. We'll go straight to the votes. 247. That is carried. 248. That's carried. And 252. And that is carried. Colleagues you have done that well this morning we have been able to bring two Motions forward from this afternoon's agenda and they are on welfare rights and they both from the Midland & East Coast region and they are Motions 249 and 254. Could I have Motion 249 please, Vicky?

249. BENEFIT TRIBUNAL COSTS – WELFARE RIGHTS

This Congress is concerned with regard to the price that vulnerable people are having when they have to pay towards letters of medical history and doctors' letters towards their benefit tribunals. These members are the most vulnerable in our community and costs can have a detrimental effect on their diminished living standards.

Therefore we call on this Congress and the GMB and sponsored MPs to campaign to get these charges removed/abolished.

NOTTINGHAM NO.1 BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

VICKY WASS (MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION): Vice President, Congress, Vicky Wass Midland & East Coast region moving Motion 249 benefit tribunal costs welfare rights. In Midland East Coast region, we are very fortunate to have with the support of the region a small but very effective group of retired members who give support and advice to members on welfare rights an example that has been brought to our attention is where one of our advisers was supporting a GMB member and at the medical appeals tribunal, the judge asked for all the members' medical history records then went on to adjourn the case. The members' DP refused to give the member whose medical record without a significant payment. The member was vulnerable and was using a food bank. The last thing the member needed was to be asked to pay for his medical records and he simply couldn't afford it. So the GMB got involved and contacted the judge. They had to write to the members' GP and demand the release of the member's medical records free of charge. This is not right and it's immoral. We therefore call on Congress and the GMB to raise this injustice and to work politically with the GMB laboured sponsored MPs to get this costly charge removed and abolished for everyone. Please support. I move.

(Applause)

DAWN LOVATT (MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION): Hello, can you hear me?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Yes, carry on.

DAWN LOVATT: Vice President, President, Congress, I find it ironic, if this was a case of no win no fee, then it's ironic that a fee would probably be not be asked and I know from personal experience that when I went through something, that when I was asked to get my

medical records for something as serious as what we are discussing now, my GP never charged me nor the solicitor. Yet here we are discussing an issue demonstrated by a member that was asked, using a food bank, to pay for her own records. Bear in mind that most GPs now have given all their patients access to get their records, to see their records anyway. Isn't it a travesty in this day and age, bearing in mind we are already under austerity measures, and we have been ravaged through COVID, that this situation exists? So therefore, it's important that GMB support this Motion, don't fight for our members and remove this disgusting embarrassing situation where members are having to pay for something when they can't even often pay to get food on their tables. Please support this Motion.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: 254. We have Declan.

254. FOOD BANKS

This Congress calls upon the CEC to lobby the Labour Party and Government to put the Trussell Trust's 2019 General Election manifesto, and asks as part of Labour Party and Government policy and campaign to end the use of food banks in the UK.

The three asks were:

1. Ending the five weeks wait for Universal Credit
2. Ensuring benefit payments cover the cost of living
3. Investing in local support

To quote, "these three changes will put money back into the pockets of people who most need our country's support. It's not right that anyone has to walk through the doors of a food bank in the UK. But it is our power to end the need for food banks – this can change."

It is the aim of the Trussell Trust to end hunger and poverty in the UK. They state "between April 2018 and March 2019 food banks in their network provided a record 1.6 million food supplies to people in crisis. A 19% increase on the previous year". They go on to say "we know it takes more than food to end hunger. That's why we bring together the experiences of food banks in our network to challenge the structural economic issues that lock people in poverty, and campaign to end the need for food banks in the UK."

GRANTHAM COMMUNITY BRANCH

Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

DECLAN GIBBONS (MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION): Hello, Vice President, and congress. Declan Gibbons, Midland & East Coast region, now a second time speaker. I'm here to move the Motion food banks. When this Motion was first drafted in 2019, we had no idea COVID 19 was around the corner. What we did know with us that food bank use was at an all-time high. In the year prior to COVID 19, the Trussell Trust provided a then record of 1.9 million supplies to people in crisis. We also learned that more and more people were forced into using them. Furlough and redundancies will not have improved the figures. As in the Motion, the aim of the Trussell Trust is to end hunger poverty in the UK. The Trust has drawn up a five year strategic plan which you can find the details of on their website. It's an ambitious plan and it needs to be, as this is now a crisis. The Trust believes that by working together for change, we can make it achievable. Congress, I move.

TONI YEL (MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION): Vice President, President, Congress, seconding Motion 254, food banks. We call on the GMB to support the campaign to end the use of food banks. As COVID 19 hit the Trust saw an immediate and sustained surge in

need for their food banks, around half of those people forced to use them were doing so for the first time. Levels of need are also forecast to remain high over the coming winter with 670,000 people forecast to be pushed into destitution. We are clear that food can't be the answer to people needing food banks, instead we need to ensure that everyone has enough money to afford essentials. Whilst it is vital that steps are taken to strengthen national social security, we also need welfare, local welfare safety net for times when people are faced into unexpected crises and adverse life events. We need to challenge the structured economic issues that lock people into poverty and campaign to end the need for food banks in the UK. We thank the CEC for supporting this Motion and look forward to seeing the GMB lobbying and working with the Labour Party and challenging the government on the waits that people have to receive Universal Credit, benefit payments that actually cover the cost of living and invest in local support. I second.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Colleagues, the CEC are supporting both these Motions so we'll go straight to the vote. The first one is 249. That is carried. 254. And that is carried. Colleagues, that concludes our Monday morning session. We will have a number of important items this afternoon, including guest speakers and the financial report, as well as the General Secretary's report. So, can I ask you all to be logged in for 2 o'clock this afternoon and I'll now adjourn conference until then. Thank you very much. Bye.

(Break)

AFTERNOON SESSION.

THE PRESIDENT: Could I call Congress to order, please? Delegates, thank you once again for your patience and for your good debates. Before we start business, I want to read a solidarity message. We are appalled at the booing by some England fans at the England-Romania match held yesterday evening. The GMB stands in solidarity with all of the England players, who continue to take the knee to push the important message that there is no room for racism in sport or society. Black players are applauded and celebrated by some fans when they score goals but when the players wish to highlight that racism is unacceptable, they are targeted by this unacceptable racist behaviour. We further condemn the abhorrent abuse that Ian Wright and others have received in speaking out against this. The GMB will challenge racism, wherever it raises its ugly head. Our first business is a new report from the Standing Orders Committee. Can we please bring Helen Johnson on to the screen? Oh, no...

HELEN JOHNSON (CHAIR, STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE): We have been notified that Motion 96 has been withdrawn, a decent living wage standing in the name of Midland & East Coast and Motion 244, Section 88, standing in the name of Southern Region. President, Congress, I formally move adoption of report number three.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. I don't think anybody wishes to speak against that Standing Orders Report. I will take it to the vote. And that report is carried. Thank you.

Congress, we will start this afternoon's session with a guest speaker. It is my great pleasure to introduce Deborah Goodman. Deborah is a motivational speaker and author and she is the great, great granddaughter of our dear founder Will Thorne. You were due to speak in 2020 in Blackpool. I am sorry it has taken a year longer to get you here than we hoped but I am delighted that you are able to join us today. I am sure it will be a fascinating speech. But just before Deborah speaks, I would like to report to Congress that Deborah is also the recipient of this year's Eleanor Marx award. This is the fifth year we have made this award to

recognise outstanding GMB women activists in memory of Eleanor, one of our founders. The award is a brooch and certificate, which we will make arrangements to send to you, Deborah, following Congress. I know you didn't know you were getting this. I will hold it up and they promised me they would be able to zoom in and let you see what you are getting. A certificate and it says, there is a world of freedom, beauty and equality to gain. I know you will know where that quote comes from and the brooch, I think it is also, it can also be used as a necklace. And a picture of Eleanor Marx. Thank you. Deborah, welcome to Congress. And if you would like to start your speech.

DEBORAH GOODMAN: Thank you. Well, I am blown away. I didn't know about that. Thank you so much. Wow! OK. So, basically at some point in my childhood, I heard that I had a famous ancestor and that he was a politician. A Labour MP for 40 years and the founder of a great union. In future years I looked him up on the internet. Will Thorne, MP, my great, great grandfather on my mother's side. I found he had written his autobiography. My Life's Battles and it has been republished. Because of this book, my family were able to get a very good picture of how tough life was for our ancestor and what an incredible, brave and inspirational man he was. After reading the book, my family and I went to London... I lost my place... and we went to the, to visit the pavilion at Beckton park which is named after him. He went to the name in West Ham, where he lived, then on to Stratford Library, where they showed us masses of information and photos they had relating to him and his life in politics. It was an incredible day. And a few years past, I joined a public speaking group. I had the idea to email your London region and ask if I could speak at one of their meetings. It was just a thought and I didn't really know if anything would come of it. Well, I was invited to, along to meet Warren Kenny and others and I don't have time to tell you how that meeting went. Let's say, wow! It was incredible and I spoke at the London meeting. Wow! Again, it was incredible and my brother, Stephen, said that it was the first time he'd had a standing ovation just for being born and I thought that was quite funny! So basically, it was not for my great-great grandfather, your union as it is today would not exist and neither would I. So, for this reason, we are linked together by the actions, in some way or another, of Will Thorne. So, I would like to tell you of some of the struggles that he went through, struggles that led him to want to, need to change things for the better. I would also like to tell you a bit about my own life's battles. And of the courage of Will Thorne's great daughter, who is my mum, Heather, who faced 14 years in prison for standing up for what she believed was right. The Will Thorne blood is definitely in our veins. So, let's go back to 1857, when he was born in a working class district of Birmingham. His father was a drinker and he was killed in a fight when Will was just 7. And Will became the main breadwinner of the family. Can you imagine that!? Seven years old. Before that, at 6, he was working long hours for a rope and twine spinner. He worked 12 hours a day on weekdays and seven hours on Sundays and he went to his uncle's barber's shop and helped him. That is about 82 hours a week he was working as a young boy. I mean, I find this hard to imagine, especially as the working cons were so challenging and desperate at that time. Even though Will worked hard all day, every day and his mother worked as well, they were still poor and at the end of the week, all the money and food was gone and they were hungry again. Will's employer wanted to reduce his wages by two shillings a week. So Will went on his first ever strike. And this was a telling start of what was to come. He had various labour-intensive jobs in the next few years where the intensity and the conditions were far from satisfactory. I think it is an understatement. At nine years old, nine, he was getting up at 4am to walk four miles to work. Did a 12-hour day of hard labour. He walked four miles back home to eat a scanty meal and go into bed. He was getting a hump on his back. His mum put a stop to it. He was out of work. Heavens only knows how they managed at this time. At 14, he was working at the metal works. The acid they used badly stung and scarred his hands for life. At 15, he took part in an organised

strike. At 16, he went on his first strike over pay. His fourth strike came while working at a metal rolling mill. He was taken off the job and replaced by a man who earned two shillings more. The man couldn't do the job and Will was put back on his previous wages of two shillings less than the other man was earning. Can you imagine how he felt? He wrote in his book, the system that we lived under at the time, the poverty and the hardships workers had to endure. The hard work and the tender age at which we were thrown into the industrial battlefield made us rebels. I was only 15 when I swore that I would do everything in my power to help prevent other children going through the same hardships. Misery and suffering that I had to go through. His fifth strike came at 18 years old. When he was working for his cousin, a brick-maker. His wages were being reduced and once again he left. When Will was 18, his mother remarried. His step dad was a drinker, worse than his dad with a violent temper. Will left home. He found work in railway construction. Most of his wages went on food and lodgings. And with very little to spare, that he finally saved up enough for his train fare back to Birmingham. He found a job there hauling bricks, but had to walk seven miles each way every day. And again, he says in his book - if you can imagine how I felt after doing a 14-mile walk and a hard day's work handling heavy bricks every day, you can begin to realise what general working conditions were like in those days before the workers had trade unions strong enough to protect their interests. He worked at the gas works, where the work was hot and very hard. Working seven days a week meant that at the end of a two-week shift he would work 24 hours straight. And Will referred to this as "inhuman labour." He gathered works together to ask for the abolition of Sunday working. The men were resistant but Will finally won them around. He was very persistent. He threatened the management with a mass walkout and finally, after some consideration, Sunday working at the gas works was abolished. He learned during this dispute the absolute necessity of workers to form a union. There were many struggles for him in trying to persuade the men and he nearly gave up. Thank God he didn't. As I read his autobiography, I was drawn into the story of terrible hardship and unfairness of this young lad's life. And at the same time I was astounded by his courage and spirit, and I felt extremely proud of my ancestor. A boy, he was a boy with an unbeaten spirit and a sense of justice, so strong and knowing of what is right and wrong from such a young age. Great strength and courage that he could not fail to act upon that burning passion of his to fight for what was right for himself and his fellow workers. In the 1880s, he moved his wife and three children down to London. He attended different political meetings, mixing with influential people. And they started to hold public meetings. Will talks about the fights that broke out as exciting scenes. There was great deal of unrest at this time. Massive unemployment. Many men and children, sorry men and women and children were literally starving and Will and his friends would visit shops to get bread and ingredients to make soup for them. It seems to me like my great ancestor was a very kind, heart-centred man. Despite of the workers and the selfishness and greed of the employers just caused the unrest to grow stronger. Two attempts were made by others to form a union of gas workers and general labourers. But both failed because the men were too afraid of losing their jobs. Will did not give up hope. He was an uneducated man, but he had learned a lot. And he had great powers of persuasion. He spoke of unity and said that simple justice was their right. He was threatened with the sack and even though he had a wife and children to look after, this did not deter him from his cause. In 1889, the union was formed. At the first meeting, 800 people signed up. News spread like wildfire. Everyone was talking about the union. Within two weeks, they had 3,000 members. Within six months, membership had reached over 20,000 people. The dockers wanted to join the union but the union couldn't take them on. But they were battling for work tickets. Some were crushed to death in the struggle to get a ticket for a few hours' work. Can you imagine that? They were literally dying of starvation. Something drastic needed to be done. Will appealed to the dockers to form their own union and they refused en masse to go to work. Every single man voted to strike and that was the

beginning of the great dock strike in 1889. Will was working harder than ever. He was addressing meetings day and night for both unions. It seemed to me that he would have very little time for family life. Saying that, he was married four times because he outlived his first three wives. I am a descendant from his first wife. They had six children. The elderly of which was my great grandfather. William had three girls. One of which was my Nan. Sadly William was killed at war when his Nan was three years old. The granddaughter had four children, one of which was my mum, Heather and my mum had five children, of which I am the youngest. I hope you could follow that. And my family has had great battles of its own. When I was eight years old, my father was diagnosed with a neurological condition called Huntington's disease. Huntington's disease is a very cruel and complex condition. It is like having motor neurone disease, depression and Alzheimer's all rolled into one. There's no effective treatment, still no cure. Huntington's disease is hereditary which meant me and my four siblings all had a 50% risk of developing the condition later in life. That is a one in two chance. There was no test available back then and we all grew up under a big black cloud of fear and doubt. Over the next ten years we watched the slow decline of our father in a psychiatric hospital. My dad died when I was 17 years old - he was just 44. Two of my brothers went on to develop the disease - my brother Philip died from the usual causes of the illness, after suffering for many years. My other brother, Nigel, was an independent man and he didn't want to live in a care home or a hospital, slowly declining, and ending up trapped in a body that could do nothing for him. He tried to starve and drink himself to death and was admitted to several occasions to the psychiatric hospital until he decided that enough was enough. He knew that he had a slow decline ahead of him and he chose not to continue. He didn't want a violent or lonely death, so he asked my mum to be with him when he died. My mum is a very compassionate and very brave lady. She helped him to end his life in a peaceful, a loving, way. She knew that she could get up to 14 years' imprisonment for aiding and abetting his suicide - that was far from her mind at the time. Her heart was full of love and compassion for her son. She was charged first with murder, which was lessened, thankfully, to a charge of aiding and abetting a suicide, which she pleaded guilty for, because that's what she had done. Thankfully the judge at the Old Bailey said that she had suffered enough and did not send her to prison - he gave her a year's conditional discharge. It was a very difficult time for everyone. At 37 years old, I myself had a major meltdown. After dealing with depression, suicidal thoughts and years of negative thinking, I just couldn't access that strength anymore. When I did manage to pull myself out of it, for the first time since I was 8 years old, I could actually see a future ahead of me, and I wanted to do something meaningful to help others, too. I left my corporate job and I retrained as a holistic therapist. I did some fundraising and I raised over £20,000 for the Huntington's Disease Association, and in doing so I trekked the great wall of China, the Inca trail and I summited Mount Kilimanjaro and I would not recommend that to anybody! I published my own book years before I knew about Will's book and it is on Amazon, if anybody wants to read it, and it has a different title, it is called Hummingbird and the more I learned about Will Thorne as I read his book, the more I saw his attributes of courage and strength in my own family. My mum had five children to bring up when my dad was sick and she worked hard to keep the house and family together. She had numerous jobs and life was tough, but I never once - this is true, ever - heard her complain. Even though she knew that some of her children were likely to develop this dreadful, incurable disease, it was a ticking time bomb. She had the courage and strength to do what she thought was right, even though she faced imprisonment and she held her head up high, inspiring others to speak out for a change in the law. My mum became a patron of Dignity in Dying, an organisation that campaigns for a change in the law on assisted dying and has given many media talks and interviews to raise awareness of Huntington's disease and the assisted dying bill, so that dying people can have a choice at the end of life to die with dignity, if they so choose. My brother, Steven, is an

activist, mostly for environmental issues, and he is passionate about the causes he believes in. Personally, myself, I am currently standing up for our freedoms that are rapidly being taken away from us by the government and the world alliances, so it's amazing that I've received that Freedom Award and I know people are on a different page but this is what I believe and this is what I'm standing up for. I'm protesting against the lockdowns and the proposed medical Apartheid that the media and government are pushing because, as with the assisted dying issue, I say - my body, my choice. Our freedom of speech is being taken away by social media networks and by the very biased mainstream media, but thankfully there is much going on to create other networks of communication that are not controlled by the 1%. I'm quite outraged and saddened, as you can probably hear, by what's going on and happening to us right now. I can feel Will Thorne's blood pulsating in my veins for sure. I wonder what he would make of this current situation? He had a vision of a better future and in life we all have to look forward. Energy flows to where our attention goes - focusing on the negatives and the anti-this and anti-that, pointing out our differences, it just brings more of the same into being. It is much more beneficial to focus on the world we want to see - a world of inclusion, love, compassion and caring. We can always keep at least two future generations of our children at the forefront of our minds. When you work towards what is really best for your children and your children's children, you will always be on the right path. Will Thorne's battles came to an end when he was 88 years old. He died of a heart attack at home. But through the GMB Union, his legacy lives on and I am thankful to you, the people of the union, for carrying on his work and for continuing to remember and honour this incredible man, my great-great-grandfather, the founder of your union. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I wish you were here in person and we could have a proper Congress where we could give you the ovation you deserve. Thank you so much for that fascinating history of Will Thorne, who understood the importance of the collective power of workers, but also that very personal story of your own family and your mum. I've had the privilege of meeting you and your mum and your brother - I hope we can meet again soon. Thank you so much, and just look out in the post for the certificate and the brooch. Thank you, Deborah. Congress, we will now welcome our second guest speaker, Keir Starmer, leader of the Labour Party. Keir has been a steadfast supporter of GMB in the British gas dispute and you may have seen him recently speaking movingly about his family and early life. Keir, it is a great privilege to welcome you to Congress. Hopefully you will be joining us very, very soon! OK, there just might be issues with Wi-Fi at parliament, that's the problem. We're going to try again. Fingers crossed!

(PAUSE).

THE PRESIDENT: We're trying one more time - third time lucky, hopefully.

THE PRESIDENT: Maybe if we can't get Keir live, maybe he could video something and we could show it as a video later on - would that be possible? Yes? OK. In that case, I'm really sorry, but we will get Keir in some form with us, but that takes us on to item 5, which is the finance. Congress, we now move on to the debate on the annual finance statement, including the CEC rule amendments and the financial report to Congress. I'll explain the procedures for this debate, because I need to be clear, and it is a bit convoluted. First, financial motions and rule amendments submitted by regions will be heard. I will then call the General Secretary to move the finance report and proposal, including the revised CEC rule amendments 5 and 6, which you have received by email. Gary will also respond to rule amendments and motions on behalf of the CEC. Each regional delegation will then be invited to speak on the financial proposals. If the financial proposals are approved, then motions and rule amendments that stand in opposition to the report will fall. Regional

motions that do not stand in opposition to report will be voted on individually. Congress, we will now debate rule amendments containing financial proposals from regions. Off first, we have rule amendment 268, and I have Alan Law down to speak from London region, please. Alan?

RA268

RULE NO: 18. CLAUSE: 2

TITLE: QUALIFYING FOR OFFICE, AND THE DEFINITION OF OFFICERS

Print Existing Rule or Clause:

During their whole term of office, the following holders in both lists 'a' and 'b' below must pay the full amount of their union contributions in line with rules 45 and 46.

State Amendment:

Remove "and" between 45 and 46 and replace with a comma and insert "and 47" at the end

Print how amended Rule or Clause is to read:

2 During their whole term of office, the following holders in both lists 'a' and 'b' below must pay the full amount of their union contributions in line with rules 45, 46 and 47.

KING'S LYNN NO 1 BRANCH

London Region

(Lost)

ALAN LAW (LONDON REGION): Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Brilliant, yes, we can see you.

ALAN LAW: President, Congress, Alan Law, London region, moving rule amendment 268 in line with rules 45 and 46. Over the past 18 months, life has changed for most of us. Unfortunately, not for the better. A huge number of members are being made redundant or also many members are being furloughed. When we have our regional virtual meeting we can see how the memberships are dropping like a stone. People are lost and carrying on with their membership - they simply can't afford it. GMB members have been financially stretched for whatever reason over the years. They are now unable to pay their membership fees. Lots of us work hard to make this a great union. The support that each member is allowed to give needs to be the highest level, whatever grade they are paid. A member cannot hold office if they don't hold a Grade One membership, so we are discriminating against our own members in our own union. Some would like to hold office, but cannot because they cannot afford it, and the union won't allow it. The rules need to be brought up to the 21st century so that they support all disabilities in life. Stop discriminating against our members. Let's make this union one to be a proud member of. Change the appropriate rules to allow all members to hold any office. If it helps serve our members, think of all the experience our union will gain by letting a member who wants to hold office just do that. Let's help and support our members. Let's stop discriminating against our members, because of finances. I was made redundant in April 2020 and am still paying a Grade One membership. I was also offered a life membership for the number of years I've been a full member, as I believe I can help make a difference, but I shouldn't have to pay to do it. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. And the region are formally seconding? So I can move to rule amendment 271 and Jan Smith to move.. Jan? Would you like to move rule amendment 271? We're just trying to call her back in.

RA271

RULE NO: 48

CLAUSE: 1

TITLE: QUALIFYING FOR BENEFITS

Print Existing Rule or Clause:

A member will be entitled to any benefits (except the disablement grant, funeral benefit and fatal accident benefit (occupational or non-occupational), paid in line with rules 52, 53, and 56) as long as they are a grade-1 or grade-2 member and a full financial member at the time they claim. The Union will not pay the disablement grant and fatal accident benefit (occupational or non-occupational) until the person has been a continuous member for 12 months and has paid contributions for 53 weeks in a row. Funeral benefit is not payable to any member with less than five years' continuous membership. Whether they are entitled to any benefit will depend on whether they keep to the conditions set out in this rule and the appropriate rules relating to those benefits. We will not pay any benefit if the member owes more than six weeks' contributions on the date they claim.

State Amendment:

In line 10, remove the word "five" and replace with "3"

Print how amended Rule or Clause is to read:

A member will be entitled to any benefits (except the disablement grant, funeral benefit and fatal accident benefit (occupational or non-occupational), paid in line with rules 52, 53, and 56) as long as they are a grade-1 or grade-2 member and a full financial member at the time they claim. The Union will not pay the disablement grant and fatal accident benefit (occupational or non-occupational) until the person has been a continuous member for 12 months and has paid contributions for 53 weeks in a row. Funeral benefit is not payable to any member with less than 3 years' continuous membership. Whether they are entitled to any benefit will depend on whether they keep to the conditions set out in this rule and the appropriate rules relating to those benefits. We will not pay any benefit if the member owes more than six weeks' contributions on the date they claim.

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH
London Region

(Fell)

JAN SMITH (LONDON REGION): Can you hear me?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, you're on, Jan.

JAN SMITH: Right, OK. President, Congress, Jan Smith, London region moving rule amendment 271 on qualifying for office. Congress, our branch wanted to change the qualifying period for funeral benefit, but in order to do this, we have been a victim of this year's limit on how many motions and rule amendments a branch can submit. We have to change both rule 48.1 and rule 53.1 to make the rule book consistent, so you will hear from me twice. This rule amendment 271 is calling for the qualifying period to be reduced for all benefits from five years to three years. Our reasoning is that the average time members stay in the union is 2-3 years, so reducing this qualifying period, we don't...

THE PRESIDENT: No, we're losing... We're losing you, Jan. I think we think Jan has got two devices going, which is why we're getting the feedback. We'll try her again. If not, could we just make sure London region are going to move and second that formally, please? Rule amendment 271? Maybe you could let the policy team know. Yep, OK. We're also down to take rule amendment 272, which is also Jan to talk.

RA272

RULE NO: 53 CLAUSE: 1

TITLE: FUNERAL BENEFIT

Print Existing Rule or Clause:

If a full financial member, who has been a continuous member for 5 years dies, the regional secretary will, having been given a copy of the death certificate, pay the widow, widower, member of the family or nominated person a funeral grant of £375. (This person will need to show that they are responsible for paying funeral expenses.)

State Amendment:

On Line 1 delete "5" replace with "3"

On Line 3 delete "£375" and replace with "£500"

This is because of the increasing costs of funerals

Print how amended Rule or Clause is to read:

If a full financial member, who has been a continuous member for 3 years dies, the regional secretary will, having been given a copy of the death certificate, pay the widow, widower, member of the family or nominated person a funeral grant of £500. (This person will need to show that they are responsible for paying funeral expenses.)

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH

London Region

(Fell)

THE PRESIDENT: So again, formally? We're just going to... Yes, so rule amendment 272 is formally moved and seconded, thank you. We now have motions that contain financial proposals. First we have Motion 28 on membership fees and I have Cathy Holland down to move and London region have agreed to formally second. Cathy?

28. MEMBERSHIP FEES

This Congress agrees that it is now time for a change in the GMB contribution structure especially as we have seen many members leave this year.

GMB needs to be the Union of choice for all workers across all Sectors. Therefore, Congress instructs the CEC to look at this issue with a view to implementing a more modern contribution structure

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH

London Region

(Fell)

CATH HOLLAND (LONDON REGION): Hello, yes, I'm here!

THE PRESIDENT: You're on, Cathy!

CATHY HOLLAND: Right, I would just like everybody to know I have this book - My Life's Battles, by Will Thorne, a great book. Anyway, yes, Cathy Holland moving Motion 28. Essex Public Services. Hello, everybody. I know maybe I shouldn't be saying this, but I'm going to - please tell Keir that the government would be doing wrong to stop the money going to the poorer nations. Sorry, I know I shouldn't say it, but I feel I need to. But anyway, getting back to the motion, it's Motion 28. The Congress agrees it is now time for a change in GMB contributions structure, especially as we have seen many members leave this year and all who know me know that has been a recurring motion of mine for many years, since I support all low-paid workers and very low-paid workers and school staff. GMB needs to be a union choice of all workers across all sectors. Therefore, Congress instructs the CEC to look at this issue, with a view to implementing a more modern contribution structure. As someone on low pay can often tell me they can no longer afford to pay for their subs. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy, and London region have agreed to formally second, so we can go to Motion 30 from Yorkshire and North Derbyshire, Hashim to move and Dave to second.

30. ADVERSITY SUPPORT FUNDING

This Congress, unfortunately many people who have been in a union such as the GMB can find themselves out of a job due to ill health, industrial injury, disease, or find themselves adversely affected by situations such as Covid-19.

But not only out of work but struggling when there are on long term sick and go on to half pay or no pay. This is extremely harder for members who are part time workers and their wage is their only source of income. GMB have always been good at supporting members who go on strike financially, shouldn't we also be supporting our members who lose pay due to sickness. Not only don't our members have to find monies to put food on their tables, but also heating and getting medication where they don't have an exemption.

Like another trade unions we believe that GMB should also be able to give financial aid to our working members that have lost pay due to a pandemic and viruses. We should consider where we can retain membership and not lose membership where we are not offering support like those others.

Giving someone financial help in such adversity is actually worth more than the money, it's the right thing to do, and can go a long way in to restoring people who have been let down by the system they work in. It is the last flicker of light in a darkened room. I hope GMB can understand why it is the right thing to do for the reputation of the GMB and those members in need.

We acknowledge that branches do cover for members when they go on to no pay, one thing is do we reduce members contribution to part time rate when they go on half pay? Why not show non-members the benefit of joining GMB if these are all implemented.

L30 – LEEDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Referred)

HASHIM EQUIANO (YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION): Good afternoon, President, afternoon, Congress, and welcome, Gary. Hashim Equiano, Yorkshire and North Derbyshire region presenting Motion 30, adversity support funding. Congress, just imagine working for many years and not having a day off sick. Over the years, you are happily meeting up with friends, family and colleagues, enjoying your job, not having any debts and paying your bills on time. Then imagine, Congress, your world comes crushing down on you. Congress, you are stuck with an illness that leaves you incapacitated, unable to work or do anything you took for granted. You end up being dependent on family, friends and even

have to turn to loan companies. This incapacity could lead to long-term sickness of a member who eventually goes on to half-pay and then some go on to no pay. In some cases it could lead to termination of a contract due to ill health and if you are self-employed or on zero hours contracts, you may not even receive sick pay. The member starts to get themselves into debt, unable to pay their mortgage, council tax or utility bills, and on some occasions are unable to put food on their table and are relying on food banks. We do recognise that a branch would cover a member's membership when they fall into no pay, but who covers the rest of their bills and puts food on their table? It has been known that some other unions have a hardship fund. When it comes to members' sickness, GMB should have one, too. Over the last 12 months, GMB, like other unions, have lost members due to the pandemic. Where our members know that one of the benefits of being in GMB is financial support when they're sick, that would be a great incentive. This is especially beneficial if any of our members have been self-employed. Remember that song what have you done for me lately well GMB has. Giving someone financial help in such adversity is better than money and can restore people left by the system. What our members try to say is that GMB sorry what our members are trying to say is let GMB give the members some support where they haven't before. Congress, why I am asking is not for GMB to take a member's financial circumstances, but for GMB to have hardship funds, one off payments which will help a member when things are rough after they go through qualifying membership period. Not everyone would need this but sometimes they need our support. Congress, I ask you to move this Motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hashim. Dave Berry to second.

DAVID BERRY (YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION): Thank you, President. Dave Berry, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region seconding Motion 30. Two years ago when Sheffield office moved when discovered over 100 years of GMB archives and alongside that we found even older union, the Butchers Blades and Scissor Sharpeners' Union going back to 1830. Among the record were 12 ledgers setting out benefits for members, a health fund, a housing fund, hardship fund. It was clear at that time that the union was the welfare state. Thankfully we abandoned those times and the NHS is thankful to the Tredegar Miners Health Association. This Motion doesn't seek to replace the Motions on rebuilding the welfare state that we heard this morning. I live in Sheffield. Three years ago, I began donating to our local food bank, a small room in a church at the bottom of the hill. It served 20 families a week. It feeds 1,000 members a week. 25% a week including GMB members. This is a hardship that some of our members fall into and we ask the CEC to look at this as an issue to bridge this gap until the welfare state can be restored. It's too big to be tackled at branch level, it's something we should do as a union to retain and help our activists. I thank you and ask you to support this Motion. Thanks a lot.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. That takes us to Motion 32 for Midland & East Coast. Ben are you the mover of this Motion?

32. BRANCH ACCOUNTS

This Congress asks for the online Branch account system to be simplified. The current system has been in place since 2011 and could be made more user friendly.

MIDLAND HEALTHCARE BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Lost)

BEN COOK (MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION): Yes. I'm the mover, yes. Ben Cook, moving Motion 32 branch accounts. The CEC are asking us to withdraw the Motion as a

region. We are not withdrawing. I'm a branch secretary and let me tell you it's a lot of responsibility looking at members' money. As a branch secretary, you have to do a lot. Branch finances is one of the key things that makes you scratch your head from time to time. And as a branch secretary, generally as a rule you are left to run your branch on your own. The accounting system is complex and is confusing and it needs simplifying. So that our branches can run more efficiently. A lot of our free time goes into this. The finances are very consuming as a job and we have to balance jobs and families as well on top of that. After all, it's members' money and they deserve to access it if it's needed as swiftly and as soon as possible.

I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ben. Toni to second?

TONI YEL (MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION): Yes, thank you. Midland & East Coast region seconding Motion 32 branch accounts. The sentiment of this Motion is trying to support the use of online branch accounts and to develop it further with appropriate technical support. As Ben said, the Motion is requested to be withdrawn on the question of the majority of users acting on the system but this is not about how many people use it, the about how easy it is for branches to use it. We are asking for the branch accounts system to be developed to be more user friendly. We are now in an age when a lot of people utilise online banking, shopping, with ease, and those systems are developed in order that the end user has the best experience. There are national systems that are available to support the union. The fact that 76% of branches use the online system is not a reflection of the ease of the use, but the fact that it's available, irrespective of how the users find the system. In today's environment, of course people choose this option of health to do things and we support an element of the stands that support the environment which is absolutely what we need to do. We want to work with national colleagues to encourage the other 24% of branches not using them is and we'll be happy to set up a small group to look at how we can make it more user friendly and input from the appropriate digital experts. Branches who are using the system may think it's even better when it is simplified, so actually let's aim for 100% utilisation. I would urge the regions to support the Motion. Please be assured that we are wanting to support the use of the online system but we want to make it better for everybody. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Toni. Finally, we have Motion 37 and I ask Wayne to move.

37. NATIONAL DRIVERS FUND

This Congress requests that in order to better assist and retain members, a GMB national drivers fund is established.

At present some Regions offer this facility to drivers which pays fines or parking tickets in certain situations but not all Regions offer such a facility.

Based on the "One Union" approach we request a centralised scheme is adopted for the benefit of all members UK wide.

Currently, there is an inequality across Regions and as sister Unions offer a national scheme this seem incongruous to a general union such as GMB. Such a scheme can be managed on a rotating basis by regions to keep administration to a minimum or by a national office administrator

GMB PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH

London Region

(Lost)

WAYNE OSWICK (LONDON REGION): Thank you madam President. President, Congress, Wayne Oswick London Region moving Motion 37 on the national drivers fund. CEC seeking to withdraw. Firstly could I remind congress Trade Union membership in the UK has risen for the fourth year in a row so the GMB needs to embrace this and we continue to find ways to attract and retrain members. GMB initiated led and followed through a great victory in the Supreme Court winning all demands against the international(?) despite what others may have claimed. Uber and GMB have signed an agreement which recognises our union and enables us to represent our members across the country. Opening up the union to some 90,000 new members. This great victory should be celebrated and promoted as such. Congress, you the current position is some regions operate a drivers fund that provides support to the drivers in various varieties of situations. This varies from region to region and leads to different treatment and the view amongst drivers' members of inequality, this is not sustainable. We have thousands of members who drive for a living such as our local authorities, aviation, Uber, Bolt, Hermes, Yodel ASDA, Best Food and Wincanton. To name but a few. Having a solid option in addition to Unionline is not only pragmatic but proportionate. Furthermore, our presence in the gig economy is growing. We need to use our success from Uber to raise our profile amongst this group of professionals by setting up a national drivers fund to assist and retain members.

Based on one union principle, we are asking for the centralisation, national scheme to be adopted for the benefit of all GMB members UK wide. Sister unions offer national schemes to their members, why not the GMB. The current scheme costs just 86p a month in one region. Costs can be kept to a minimum by the administrator. Congress, I suffered at one time and didn't know that this fund was available. We have heard why we need the fund. You will hear the CEC saying no to change but if you want to see this happen, vote for the Motion, vote for the membership growth. One union, one vision. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. The region has agreed to formally second, so thank you. I will now call on Gary Smith, General Secretary & Treasurer to move the finance report and proposals to Congress, including CEC rule amendments and respond to the debate. Thank you.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you. President, Congress, this afternoon I am charged with speaking on a series of important financial matters. First I want to present the union's financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2020. And answer written questions. Then I will be proposing acceptance of the CEC proposals for the coming year. Finally, I will be responding to Motions 28, 30, 32 and 37 and to rule amendment Motions 268, 271 and 272. First, a question or the question on the accounts from Ian Birkett from Midland and East Coast region and Ian thank you for your kind words for myself. Ian asks, as a former GMB general member auditor, I was very concerned to read in the press and see in social media that over £2 million has allegedly been spent on GMB credit cards at National between 2016 and 2020. Will you as GMB Treasurer confirm the alleged spend is either untrue or was spent on GMB authorised business and provide a full detailed report back to the CEC and to regions in due course? Thanks for that, Ian. I'm not sure if the question is actually one on the accounts and I would remind Congress that our accounts are signed off by our internal member auditors and our external auditors. And as Congress will know, I was only elected on Thursday so it's difficult for me to give the personal assurances you seek. The CEC however and our acting General Secretary at the time, Warren Kenny, did take action over credit cards, including ordering additional audit work on national credit card spending. We should also be sceptical about much of what appears in the press and in social media. But there is an important principle at stake and I do appreciate that Ian and will get a full brief in the coming days and report back in due course. And Ian and Congress I assure you in my

tenure as General Secretary we will bring about change in the culture of this organisation. Some of that was highlighted in the Monaghan report. I will build on the work of the CEC and the acting General Secretary and in due course, I will say a bit more about cost control. Congress, 2020 was a hugely difficult year for GMB and our members in so many ways. And financially, it was unusual. There was a very serious deterioration in our membership numbers, sorry, the very serious deterioration in the membership numbers we feared thankfully did not materialise in the way we first feared. We can't escape that our financial membership is in decline and it is a growing threat to our union. Now, in 2020, our income was up 1.5% on the previous year. In terms of costs, the CEC did take pre-emptive action by instituting a freeze on recruitment for GMB jobs. But most of the savings on our budgets were forced on us by the lockdown.

As a result, the operating surplus in the accounts is above £8 million. Investments have also performed well and I am pleased to say the pension fund is now in surplus for the first time in more than 20 years, a fact that should ease the burden on the finances in the years to come. Our figures are currently strong and the CEC is now making provision for Unionline to move into profit. There has been change in the Unionline business and we will need to continue to work on Unionline to ensure that the profits anticipated are realised. The net assets of the union now stand at £121 million which if we take the right steps going forward, will provide us with a firm base for the fights ahead.

Colleagues, and I say this to you in all candour, we are going to have to change. The Pandemic has been and will continue to be a huge challenge for our union. But, there is a deeper malaise and when we exclude retired life members, we now have around 480,000 paying members in the union. That is the lowest level of financial membership in living memory. Our focus over the past five years, I have to tell you, has too often been wrong. We moved away from our focus on industrial campaigning and our organising policy GMB @ Work. Congress, we will recover and we will restore our union and with it our finances but it will mean us refocusing and properly prioritising on campaigning and building the union.

I will be working with the CEC to examine everything we spend, challenge it and cut it if it doesn't fit with our priorities and that applies right across the union.

Now I know we cannot cut our way out of the challenges we face. And I am clear we need to support and invest in our loyal and dedicated staff. And I want to protect frontline support for our members. But we need to use our members' money better, be prudent, be disciplined and absolutely clamp down on excess largesse and waste wherever we find it.

Colleagues, the financial proposals sent out ahead of Congress summarises the current position and make a series of changes dealing with some of the Motions from Branches. The CEC recommends increase in funeral benefit of 7% which is in line with long standing policy although we do not agree that shortening the qualification period is right or appropriate. We also recommend the change to the political fund levy which protects the political fund following Tory attacks. I do give notice that our spending on politics like everything else will be subject to overall budget review. There will be no blank cheques to political parties or politicians. I want our CEC to consider carrying out impact assessments before we make commitments on political spending. Again, we can look at this as part of any Financial Review.

I said a moment ago that we need our resources directed into organising, investing in our future and delivering for our members. Not increasing contributions, as the paper says, cuts across long held congress policy. And it does pose risks. I know this. But I also know that we can run our union at a cost which is affordable to our members and future members whilst

investing in our staff, activists and improving support to our members. The former General Secretary Paul Kenny used to say, there are three levers we can pull on our finances. One, we grow the membership. Two, we cut costs. And three, we put up the subs. The truth is, we have failed to grow and we have failed to properly manage our costs. And we have been too reliant for too long on putting up subs. Following my election on Thursday, I sought the CEC's agreement on Saturday to an amendment to the proposed financial rule changes. The changes now confirm the necessary increase made by the CEC in 2020 but as I promised, we are not going to be asking for an increase in contributions in 2021. Contributions will stay as they are now. And I want to be very clear, Congress, it has been said that this could be seen as a gimmick. It is not. Managing our members hard-earned money properly. Focussing on how we spend our money. Financial discipline and prudence are here to stay. With that amendment, I urge you to agree the financial proposals and rule changes. Turning to the motions, the CEC is asking for the withdrawal of Motion 28. On change contribution structures, but as I have alluded to, in future, nothing can or will be off the table. We ask you to refer Motion 30, which proposes a big financial welfare function for the union, so the CEC can consider this in a bit more detail. We are seeking withdrawal of Motion 32 on branch accounts. What is needed is more branch accounting to be done online, as only then can we properly review and develop our systems. Motion 37 seeks to establish a national driver's fund. We are seeking withdrawal as regions have built up and designed their funds to suit their own needs and we don't want to cut across that. Particularly with Uber in mind we are consulting on how it can be deployed and the benefits augmented so there can be an offering across the whole of our union. On the rule changes, rule amendment 268, this seeks to reverse the principle if you hold office in GMB you should pay appropriate contributions and the CEC ask for withdrawal. But Alan I did note this point in your contribution, you don't have to pay full rate, as I understand it, you could be paying a part-time rate or indeed a promotional rate. I hope you will discuss that within the region. On rule amendment 271 and 272, which want to amend the amount and qualification for funeral benefit, we ask for withdrawal in favour of the financial proposals. Congress, by executing financial discipline, I am being focussed on our spending and by getting our membership growing again we will build a better and stronger union. Congress, please accept the annual financial statements and amended financial proposals. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. Could I ask Malcolm from the CEC to second those CEC rule amendments, please?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Secunder present.

THE PRESIDENT: I will call regions to contribute to the debate. I will just take them as being indicated on the queue. Some regions don't seem to have put forward a speaker so. The first is Kevin Flanagan. North West and Irish Region.

KEVIN FLANAGHAN (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): Thank you conference. Thank you conference. Kevin Flanagan North West and Irish Region, speaking in support of the financial paper. Gary, that was a strong speech. We believe it was right this year not to raise the subs. We felt strongly that while our members have suffered, it is only right that we also take some of that pain as a movement. You are absolutely right - it is about where we put the money, how we get that money and how we put it to good use for the grassroots of this movement. We will support you in that. But most importantly of all, the resources of this movement must be used to strengthen and to enable it to be a campaigning and forthright union. This year alone, I believe we spent over £3 million in supporting gas workers in order to take the battle to the front line. The priority has to be that we build a movement that is strong financially, that is robust, but most important is transparent, that we know where the

money is spent. That it is held accountable by the CEC and we are able to hold our heads up in front of our members. We don't want any back-door deals or any expenditure which is not known about by the members. That is the minimum standard. So, we are happy to support you in the battle to ensure that we... the money. I would like to say thanks though to the GMB for the agenda. Different regions have used it in different ways. I applaud North West and Irish as it retains the learning for the members right times right places with the money where it is required. That is what our finance is for. That is why the membership give it to you and a campaigning organization, like the GMB will attract members if we campaign. Congress, I support the paper.

THE PRESIDENT: Wales, Southern, Scotland and Midlands, let us know if you want to put forward a speaker. If not to Jan Smith from London Region.

JAN SMITH (LONDON REGION): Hello Congress. Can you hear me?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. That is much better, Jan.

JAN SMITH: Ok. I apologise before... I had already got one of the computers switched off. But anyhow, Jan Smith London Region. President, Congress, speaking in support of the CEC report. Although we understand the difficult decisions the CEC made last year, the 10p and 5p increase was hard to swallow. Having to explain to our low-paid members facing redundancies or financial difficulties due to pandemic. We welcome you, Gary, the new General Secretary, starting as you mean to go on. And freezing contributions. We know this will be difficult and we will all need to tighten our belts. Gary, our Regions still also wants you to carry out a full review of our contribution structures. To make us dearer and more attractive to our low-paid workers. This is normally rejected each year but we hope you will honour your pledge of reducing the cost to be a GMB member and include regions as part of the consultation exercise. We had some great ideas of what would work to ensure equality, fairness for all. Can we also ask the CEC to look at what we can do for those members and reduce contributions?

We are pleased to see a modest increase to the funeral benefit. But Gary this does not go far enough. In the ten years the rate has only increased by 75p. Sorry, £75. And that the cost of funeral has risen by £120... sorry 20%. I am getting myself muddled now. Bearing in mind, in saying that, last year we didn't have a conference, and therefore, it wasn't increased. In 2020. Finally we are disappointed the qualifying period has not changed from three years to make all our benefits available to more members and be a real retention and recruitment initiative. Can I add in the booklet, or in the report, it says that funeral benefit is for the benefit for long-standing members. Can I say, are we not all beneficial to the funeral benefit? And therefore, three years would make it be more beneficial - we are all important to the GMB. So, I am appealing to you, Gary, please can you look at this? And possibly do something about it? Like you have on your reduced contributions - taking this on board, London support these financial proposals. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Glad you were able to get on this time and from Yorkshire North Derbyshire, John Stephenson.

JOHN STEPHENSON (YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE: Congress, can you hear me?

THE PRESIDENT: You are a bit loud. If you could... no we can do it this end.

JOHN STEPHENSON: John Stephenson, North Yorkshire and North Derbyshire. This region supports the finance report, the freeze on subs. Welcomes the full root and branch

review of all costs. That needs to also look at how subs are generated. How we do it. Other unions do it differently. I'm not saying they are right. But it needs reviewing. But it also needs to be remembered that everything that we as a union do costs. We have heard some great motions this week. And these motions have actually incurred costs. We have to look at what we're going to do, what it costs and how we do it. It becomes imperative that once this review is complete and been fully undertaken and costs the outcomes are communicated to all regions as soon as possible. Yorkshire and North Derbyshire support. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: For Midland and East Coast, Yvonne.

YVONNE DAVIDSON (MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION): President, Congress, Yvonne Davidson, Midland and East Coast region. First time delegate, second time speaker. Initially the region were going to vote against this report. We raised concerns we've all had a difficult year, just over a year, due to the pandemic. Yet again the Tory Government are using public sector workers to balance their books and pay for the pandemic through freezes in pay rises. I am sure other employees will follow suit and blame the pandemic and be unable to afford pay rises for our members. If we had raised the GMB subscriptions it would have been in a position where my members would have looked at whether or not they pay into the union or whether they put food on the family's tables. That is how bad it is. We welcome the amendment to the CEC special report, financial proposals for Congress 2021 and thanks to the CEC members for looking at this report again and not raising member subscriptions this year. We fully support the remainder of the report. Other unions also have a wage banding which helps lower paid workers. I hope we can also look at introducing this in our union as well. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: No other speakers lined up from other regions. We will take a vote on the financial proposal to Congress and CEC rule amendments.

THE PRESIDENT: And that report is carried. Thank you. So because that report has been carried, rule amendment 271, rule amendment 272 and Motion 28 fall. But we'll have to move on to the votes on the other rule amendments and motions. Bear with me - I want to get this absolutely right. OK. So the remaining ones are rule amendment 268. Motion 30. Motion 32, and Motion 37. So, in regards to rule amendment 268, does London region agree to withdraw? No. OK. In that case, the CEC will be opposing it. Motion 30, I know that you have agreed to refer. So that doesn't need to go to a vote. Motion 32, I think Midland & East Coast have already indicated they are not going to withdraw. And Motion 37 does London region agree to agree to withdraw? No. OK, so I will have to put all of those to the vote but the CEC are asking you to oppose. So, vote on rule amendment 268... that has been lost. Motion 32... and has also been lost and motion 37... that has also been lost. Thank you. Congress will be adjourned for a 15-minute comfort break. Please can you be back in and be ready to continue at, whatever that time is, after now... half past Malcolm tells me or just after half past, maybe. OK. Then employment policies.

(Break)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Welcome back, colleagues. We'll now start this second part on employment rights. Congress, you have Motion 128 marked on your programme, but that motion has been withdrawn. So we therefore move straight onto the rights of work starting with Motion 84, statutory sick pay. Can Robert Wheeler move and Adrian to second for the London region?

84. STATUTORY SICK PAY FOR ALL

Congress notes that:

1. The current statutory sick pay is not paid to any employee who earns under £118 per week (before tax).
2. Employees ineligible for SSP may have to claim Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit to make ends meet whilst sick.
3. Universal Credit is still undergoing problems with claimants waiting weeks for any pay.

Congress believes that:

1. Penalising the poorest paid employees is discriminatory against those in low paid, insecure and part-time jobs.
2. As women with family commitments make up the majority of low paid, part-time employees, this cap is tantamount to sex discrimination.
3. SSP should be paid to all employees, no matter what their wages. This could be proportionate to those who earn less than £118 per week.

Congress resolves that:

1. A national campaign be launched to highlight the injustice of withholding SSP from our most vulnerable workers, and to put pressure on government and all political parties to end this injustice.
2. The Union's national and regional leadership makes this campaign a priority in the coming year and urges all units within our union, from regional organisers to workplace reps, to engage with their members to end this iniquitous practice at the earliest possible date.

HENDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

ROBERT WHEELER (LONDON REGION): Hi, can you hear me?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Yes, OK, Robert.

ROBERT WHEELER: President, Vice-President, Congress, good afternoon. Robert Wheeler, first-time delegate, first-time speaker, moving Motion 84 on SSP. Congress, one of the greatest scandals in British workplaces is low pay. But an even greater scandal is low pay and inadequate sick pay or, in some cases no sick pay at all. Statutory sick pay is one of the greatest offenders in this respect, as workers earning less than £120 a week are not even entitled to SSP. Sick pay is low and falling. This year's increase saw the benefit rise to £96.35 a week, an increase of 50p a week. This is totally unacceptable at a time when the coronavirus pandemic is making life almost impossible for workers, many of whom are being plunged into poverty or forced to come into work when ill. Sick pay is forcing people into hardship. Many workers are unable to feed their families, as the miserly increase from the government is below inflation, making it hard to pay bills. Congress, this government doesn't care about workers. There was no mention of any changes in the Queen's Speech - in fact, there was no reference to anything relating to employment rights. Sick pay riddled with inequalities. The TUC report on sick pay issued in February said that white, black and minority ethnic employees are as likely as white employees to receive only SSP. BME employees are more likely to receive no sick pay at all - 12% compared to 9% less likely to receive full sick pay, 53% compared to 58%. Young workers are more likely to receive only SSP and young workers and older workers are most likely to receive no sick pay at all. The report also points out that a fifth of workers have been forced to self-isolate, but are unable to work at home, and they have received no sick pay at all. This is a disgrace and it is now clear that we need to organise a campaign to stop employers giving workers unacceptable

sick pay increases, or none, and force our colleagues to continue working when they are frequently too unwell to do so. It is time to unite against this scandal, and to force the employers to provide fair sick pay to all and to defeat the COVID pandemic, which is saving employers a fortune while making life miserable for our work colleagues and their families. Congress, let us all agree this action and vote for Motion 84.

CHAIR: Thank you, Robert. Adrian?

ADRIAN STOHR (LONDON REGION): Vice-President, Madam President, Congress, Adrian Stohr, Braintree and Bocking branch, London region, first-time delegate, seconding Motion 84. As the mover outlined, statutory sick pay is paid by the government, but you need to earn a minimum amount to qualify and if you are part-time or have other work patterns, you may not qualify. Let us remind ourselves, it was the unions who fought for the sick pay during the pandemic, and the London region had some ground-breaking victories in the NHS. We highlighted that millions of vulnerable workers put their lives at risk to keep the country afloat and their only choice when they fell ill was to rely on statutory sick pay. Some did become sick and £96.35 is how they were paid then, as they suffered COVID and mental health issues. Even the health Secretary Matt Hancock said it wasn't enough to live on, and we all know about those Tory handshakes that took place. The public knows the true value of our frontline essential workers, who kept us safe at the cost of their own health, keeping our country moving, and this is all they can cough up with when someone is sick. People cannot go off sick because they are left to decide if that will be enough to pay their rent, feed their children or would they face getting their electric cut off? It's time this government woke up and started paying proper sick pay for all, especially those paid workers on living wage, the same. We are GMB, and we fight for all. Congress, I second this motion.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Sarah to move and Kerry to second on Motion 85. When you're ready, Sarah?

85. UNFAIR TREATMENT OF SICKNESS ABSENCE DUE TO MAJOR OPERATIONS / TREATMENT

This Congress recognises that employers use sickness absence management procedures as a tool to use against us. Managers will issue warnings or targets when members of staff have been away from work stating that the employee's attendance level is not acceptable and they are treating everyone with fairly – a blanket approach.

There is some validity in their argument for consistency and fairness, but this 'management instruction' is often invoked without a review of the sickness policy to ensure that it caters for those individual circumstances that would have relied on management discretion to 'bypass' elements of the sickness management process and so the policies in the workplace are unfair.

A concern has arisen in relation to lengthy sickness absence for major surgery followed by an expected / lengthy absence leading to full recovery. For example; hysterectomy, hip replacement surgery, which the NHS advise can be 6-12 weeks recovery.

Without any 'management discretion' the sickness procedure will initiate sickness management meetings, which ultimately could lead to the employee's dismissal.

We have members who have already suffered the consequence of this action, making extremely stressful situations worse, when they need support to return to work.

We ask Congress to launch a campaign to challenge the way sickness is managed in relation to major surgery / treatment and if 'managers discretion' cannot be relied upon, then Occupational Health Service (as medical professionals and using NHS guidance) should be used to define what is a reasonable recovery period / absence

dependent on treatment, and only if absence continues after that period should sickness management stage 1 be triggered.

S85 SANDWELL COMMUNITY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Referred)

SARAH JAMES (BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS REGION): Thank you. Sarah James, Birmingham and West Midlands region. Congress, imagine struggling with pain on a daily basis - not being able to concentrate at home or work fully, worried about making mistakes and letting people down and not being able to live your life to its fullest or undertake normal daily duties without the need of regular rest, medication or putting on a brave face around those nearest to you. Now considering with all of these concerns and then add the threat of potentially losing your job if you have time off to recover following major surgery to rectify or alleviate these health issues. Congress, this is the reality for many of our members in the workplace - those who have been waiting sometimes years for surgery, whether it be joint replacements, gynaecological surgeries or transplants to name but a few and then there are also those who have to undergo emergency major surgery at short notice and then may have to spend a period of time in rehabilitation - an issue that is hampered, as the need is greater than the number of rehab centres across the country. So you have the physical and mental trauma to deal with, then you are hit with a letter from your employer, calling you to a meeting where you are told that your absence is not acceptable to the organisation. Employers are using sickness management capability or even disciplinary procedures as a tool to manage people out of the workplace, rather than supporting them when they need it most, and it's something GMB reps see more and more and, dependent on the situation, could even be deemed discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010. For many, the extremely stressful situation leading to major surgery is exacerbated by these policies and can hinder the recovery of the individual. However, as is clearly stipulated, these recovery timescales are a guide, and should not be taken as set in stone, and as we know, we are not carbon copies of each other and do not recover at the same speed. Congress, such accounts as the two I'm about to set out put all of what I have said into reality. A worker suffering with gynaecological issues for many years which impacted on their ability to have a 100% attendance level at work required a hysterectomy. This surgery would rectify the condition and once recovered would allow them to live a happy life and this should have been welcomed by our member but they were more worried about losing a job they have done for over 20 years than the actual surgery. Rather than supporting this worker, the employer tried to dismiss them after 16 weeks, as this was in their sickness policy. Another member... Another member having to have surgery to relieve a condition impacting on their back as an office worker also had the same impact. Like the first case I spoke of, the member was more worried about their job. Congress, in what world do we live that workers are more worried about losing their jobs than having surgery that allows them to live their lives free from pain? I'm pleased to report that in both of these cases, GMB reps argued the cases successfully, but how many employers have not done the right thing by their workforce? How many employers have not used discretion, but followed policies blindly, and ultimately how many of our members have lost their jobs as a result of undergoing major surgery? Congress, we call upon you to support our motion calling for a campaign to support our members when undergoing major operations.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Sarah, you are almost a minute over, can you finish up?

SARAH JAMES: I can, yes, a guide to move...

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Just move your motion, please.

SARAH JAMES: ..members taking time to recover. Congress, I move.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can we have the seconder, Terry?

TERRY DINGLEY (BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS REGION): Yes, we can indeed, so President, Vice-President, Congress, Terry Dingley, first-time speaker and first-time Congress, Birmingham West Midlands region, seconding motion 95. Congress, it is very troubling that companies have introduced sickness policies that on the face of it promote care and compassion but all too often they turn into management tools of oppression, conflict and coercion that leaves our members feeling bullied and intimidated. Imagine being diagnosed with cancer and the effect that this will have on your life, your mental health and your wellbeing, then within a few weeks or even days in some cases, you are advised by your employer to attend a sickness review meeting, sometimes being called from your hospital bed, when the policies are structured so you must reply before triggering the next step in the sickness procedure, adding pressure and anxiety for members to deal with on top of the illness. Where you are treated as a commodity that has stopped working and needs to be got rid of. This is the stark reality for some of our members. Employers will, and have weaponised sickness policies and we need to hold them to account. I second the motion for a GMB campaign to support our members when undergoing major operations, demanding employers be considerate and compassionate when members are dealing with sometimes very traumatic issues. Congress, I second.

SPEAKER: Thanks, Terry. The next motion is 91 and can I ask Jennifer Smith to move and Dean to second?

91. GMB CAMPAIGN TO GET LONGER TERM AGENCY WORKERS EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

This Congress is conscious that many employers are still misusing agency workers by employing them to cover permanent positions for long periods of time.

Any agency employee who works for an organisation for more than two years should be automatically considered and slotted into the post with that employer without any agency penalty or restriction, likewise any such long-term agency contract coming to conclusion then redundancy payment should be a mandatory option available to the incumbent employee.

Therefore we ask GMB to campaign for stronger employment rights for agency staff to protect and give them a parity of terms and conditions to other employees they work alongside. To campaign for regulations that effectively restricts employers using agency workers on a permanent basis in post for more than two years unless they are prepared to give a contract of employment or redundancy but preferably get longer-term agency workers slotted into posts that they have covered making them employees of the organisation they have dedicated two years or more in supporting.

R45 RHONDDA CYNON TAF BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

JENNIFER SMITH (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): Can you hear me?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: I can hear you, Jennifer.

JENNIFER SMITH: Thank you. Vice-President, Congress, Jennifer Smith, Wales and South West region, moving Motion 91. Congress, this motion identifies the detrimental impact on long-term agency workers and a clear transparent need to campaign for fair treatment for these workers. Agency working is perceived to resolve a fundamental problem of demand

outstripping supply. This includes addressing issues around staff shortages, training, workforce planning, recruitment and retention. Overall, agency staff are perceived to be an important and effective means of covering inevitable temporary staff shortages. Therefore, if monitored correctly, both agencies and public sector employers suggest that the use of agency staff could become - and indeed in some cases continue to be - an effective means of providing a flexible workforce. Colleagues, a flexible workforce for agency workers means being moved to different jobs day in, day out; covering permanent employees' sickness; they have minimum training and are just left to get on with it. These agency staff also gain more skills and adaptability. Employers are keeping workers on their books for many, many years - sometimes up to seven years without being offered a permanent position. Colleagues, if there is a position in a company for seven years, then this is permanent. And not an agency-classed post. Employers are using these workers without giving them the respect and employment stability they rightly deserve. This motion calls for an automatic right to give a permanent position to agency workers who have been dedicated staff for more than two years. Redundancy payments should be mandatory option for workers whose contracts are coming to a conclusion. We are asking for the GMB to campaign for shorter employment rights and for workers to give them a purpose and a sense of stability and self-worth. Please support. I move.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Dean?

DEAN ISMAY (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): Vice-President, Congress, Dean Ismay from Wales and South West region, seconding Motion 91. Congress, agency work no longer appears to be a stepping stone to secure employment in any sectors and industries. Instead, agency workers can remain trapped in low-paid work with fewer advancements. Workers are losing out on progression and while some claim they have a choice about what form of work they accept, again this is a poor choice. Large numbers of agency workers employed by the same company on a long-term basis shows that many employers are using agency workers not as a temporary stop-gap when somebody is on leave or when there is a short-term pressure to respond to demanding working times, but as a long-term strategy to keep costs down. Many of these workers are being used to undercut the wages of permanent staff and also continuing to offer unstable and unfair terms and conditions to agency workers. We ask Congress to support the campaign for stronger employment rights, for agency staff, to protect and give them terms and conditions similar to the employees they work alongside. Colleagues, please read the contents of this motion. I urge you, please support - I second.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dean. I move on to Motion 93. Can Kevin move it and Laura second.

93. CALCULATION OF OVERTIME

Congress,

Our members work hard and spend a vast amount of time away from family life and face the prospect of earning less money to support their family because of the calculation in overtime rate. I strongly believe that any additional hours that are worked are not calculated by the actual basic working hours but rather employers are calculating this using a system that reduces the amount of money that our members should be earning and yet again increasing the profits of employers at the expense of our members.

L16 LB GREENWICH BRANCH
Southern Region

(Lost)

KEVIN PINK (SOUTHERN REGION): Hi, Congress, can you hear me?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Yes, carry on.

KEVIN PINK: Yes, President, Vice-President, Congress, Kevin Pink, GMB Greenwich branch, Southern region. It's a well-known fact that a vast majority of GMB members will have animals as part of their family and, unfortunately, when they become unwell, our pets need our help and support to recover. This can mean that we need to take time off from work to care for them and undertake regular visits to the vets for medication and sometimes operation. To date, most employers do not afford time off for unwell pets, but I know that anyone who has a pet, who has previously been unwell, will understand the difficulty in obtaining time off. It should not be the case that those with pets should use annual leave for this purpose. Those who live as a couple, or on their own, and choose not to have children, or in fact cannot have children, often substitute this with having animals for comfort. Animals often high pain and therefore rely on their owners to help in times of need. Congress, this problem intensifies when a family pet dies and often owners are left grieving without support or compassion from their employer. On a personal level, I have lost family pets in the past and more so very recently and the healing process does not get any easier. We ask that the GMB campaigns to modify compassionate and dependence leave so it includes time off for pet-related emergencies. I am a first-time delegate and speaker, and I move this motion.

CHAIR: Thank you, Kevin. Laura?

LAURA MILLAR (SOUTHERN REGION): Good afternoon, President, Vice-President, Congress, Laura Miller, Southern region. I'm moving Motion 93, calculation of overtime. But Kevin was talking about pets so I think there has been a bit of a crossed wire here. So I'll carry on talking about the calculation of overtime. The calculation of overtime payments should reflect the hard work and extra time that our members are away from their families and the hardship this causes. Any overtime worked above members' contracted hours should be paid at a fair and agreed overtime rate. Um... Please support the motion, thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you for that. Can I now invite Carole Robertson to respond on behalf of the CEC. Carole?

CAROLE ROBERTSON (CEC, COMMERCIAL SERVICES): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 84, 85 and 93. Turning first to Motion 84, statutory sick pay for all, the CEC is supporting this Motion with a qualification. The TUC has called for the eligibility of SSP to be extended to test mated two million workers who do not earn enough to be eligible by abolishing the lower earnings limit. The Motion reflects this call. The qualification is that it's down to the regions to determine the take up of these campaign effects.

Secondly, on Motion 85, unfair treatment of sickness absence due to major operations or treatments, the CEC is asking that this Motion be referred.

The Motion highlights the issues of members having to rely on management discretion to avoid sickness procedures being initiated in such cases.

This is an area that it would be helpful to investigate further to draw up some specific proposals that could address the issues raised.

Lastly, on Motion 93, calculation of overtime the CEC is asking that this be withdrawn. Based on the contents of the written Motion, it unfortunately does not offer a context on which the issue is or how to come to a solution. Unfortunately, it does not offer actual examples or data for us to work with.

Employers have different overtime rates and it's largely down to industrial relations between Trade Union members and workers to determine these rates. The CEC is asking this Motion be withdrawn as it does not offer a practical solution to a problem that might not be viewed universally as one. Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking that Motion 84 be carried with its qualification that Motion 85 be referred back and that Motion 93 be withdrawn by the region. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Does London region accept the qualification? Yes. Thank you. Does Birmingham accept 85 and refer? Not London. Does Birmingham accept reference back? Yes. Thank you.

91 is supported. 93, does the southern region agree to withdraw? No. Right. We'll to the votes then. 84, London region accept the qualification? So, all those in favour. That is carried. Birmingham's accepted reference back, so that is no need to go to the vote. 91 is supported by the CEC, all those in favour...

That is carried. Southern region will not withdraw 93, so I've got to ask you to oppose. That is lost.

Before we go on, I would just like to explain that we've had a point of order from the Midland & East Coast region over the last debate. The debate was scheduled on the basis of advice. The question has been raised with the Standing Orders Committee and we await their response and we'll let you know that later. Now, before we go on, can I say that we have a video of Keir Starmer.

Sorry, Ian Birkett?

IAN BURKETT (MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION): Hi. I would like to raise a point of order, as you said. You have had three Motions, that is 32, 37 and 93, where the CEC have not accepted the CEC' decision and you have not given the movers of the Motions a right of reply. That is out of order, so on that basis I would like you to reconsider the fact that we should give people the right of reply and retake the votes. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you for that Ian. As I said, it's in the hands now of the standing orders, so we await to see what their verdict is, and we'll come back to you when we've got it. Can I say now that we are going to a video from Keir Starmer before we continue with the order?

SIR KIER STARMER, LEADER OF THE LABOUR PARTY

Thank you to the GMB for inviting me to speak today and to Barbara for the introduction that she made beforehand. It is a mark of how strange and frustrating the last year has been that this is my first chance to speak to GMB Congress as Labour Leader and I'm having to do so from behind a Zoom screen. Just me and a laptop and all the problems that that brings.

The last time I was at your congress was two years ago and it was a glorious sunny day in Brighton with lots of people around. I had the chance to meet a GMB delegation including Gary Smith, reps and delegates, to discuss the changes that were coming to manufacturing, to workers' rights, to post Brexit trade and of course to the scotch whisky industry.

Well a lot has happened since then. But, as our brilliant NHS continued to make the impossible possible, with the vaccine roll out, I hope, sincerely hope, that this will be the last time that there's a screen between us and I look forward to being back together very soon.

I want to congratulate everybody at GMB for putting on this conference in the most difficult of circumstances. And on behalf of the whole Labour Party, I want to thank you for your

incredible support over the last year. I value it immensely. I want to start by congratulating Gary on his election as General Secretary. In summer Gary and I had a pint in Edinburgh during those occasions when it was allowed. We spoke about how we could rebuild working class support in Scotland and I asked him to help us on our constitutional commission. It was clear then from that discussion that Gary had such a passion for the Trade Union he now leads and for the Labour movement and for his country. Gary, I'm really looking forward to working with you on the next stage of this journey.

I also want to pay tribute to Rehana and Giovanna for the way they have fought this election and of course to Warren Kenny for stepping up and steadying the ship as acting General Secretary. Thank you, Warren for everything you have done and for providing stability at such an important time. These last few months have seen major successes for GMB and for our members. I say our members because I joined GMB when I was a lawyer many years ago. I'm still a proud member. So let me reflect on some of these recent successes. The recognition agreement with Uber is truly ground-breaking for the union movement and for working people. It means GMB will be able to help 70,000 Uber drivers to organise and to negotiate terms and conditions for the first time. It builds on the huge progress you have made earlier this year on pay, on pensions and on holiday entitlement.

It shows how Trade Unions can raise standards and protect workers even in the gig economy.

I'm so proud of GMB for fighting this case and for making a real difference, not just for Uber workers, but for all those who will follow. I want to congratulate Mick Ricks and all the GMB reps, all your work on this campaign, not just in the last few months, but over many years. I know it's been a real David versus Goliath case. It takes me back to fighting and winning against all odds in court. But that is why I may be the only former lawyer to say this, but I want to lead a government that makes sure that working people and Trade Unions don't have to go to court and don't have to spend huge amounts of time and money just to get a fair deal. The government I lead will be one that changes lives, tackles injustice and is always on the side of working people.

I also want to pay tribute to the way GMB have fought tirelessly against fire and rehire. When I spoke at the TUC Congress last September, yes once again that was from behind a Zoom screen, only on that occasion if I remember I was self-isolating so ended up doing my speech from my loft. But, as I said then and I say it again today, we have to outlaw fire and rehire. These tactics are wrong. They punish good employers, they hit working people and they harm our economy. When I spoke back then at the TUC conference, you had seen this first-hand with workers at Centrica and ASDA, starting even before the pandemic. But it's now much more widespread. British Airways, Weetabix, Tesco, and across a range of sectors, including those previously thought to provide more secure employment. The TUC estimates that one in ten workers have been threatened with fire and rehire during the pandemic one in ten. That is a truly shocking way to repay the sacrifices of so many working people. This levelling down of our economy and workers' rights can't continue. After everything the British people have been through in the last year, we can't go back to business as usual, back to where we started and try to patch it up, and we can't continue the slide towards a low rights low pay economy. As we recover from this pandemic, we have to build a more secure economy. To rebuild the foundations after a decade of neglect and to get Britain ready for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

That is the central task of the Labour Party I lead. Not to tinker around the edges, but to transform the country and to transform our economy so it works for working people. So that

everybody can earn a wage that they can bring up a family on. So that we can support British manufacturing and bring good quality jobs back to Britain.

So we can lead the world in energy with the infrastructure and jobs of the future created here, not just overseas. And, as our new Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves has set out, so we can deliver the biggest wave of in sourcing in a generation and bring public services back in public hands for the benefit of all of us.

But as Gary said in an article at the weekend, these aren't times of harvest, we face the threat of a new wave of austerity and a Conservative government that has no interest in delivering real change for working people. They've dropped the employment bill they promised two years ago. They won't outlaw fire and rehire. As Labour would. They want to toughen anti Trade Union laws, rather than to repeal them as Labour would. And in the last week, we have seen what levelling up really means for kids' education. One tenth of the funding that's needed. The most disadvantaged children falling further behind. And our teachers, including school support staff once again being asked to do more but with less. It shows you everything you need to know about this government's priorities. In the coming weeks and months, I'll be setting out the next stage of Labour's plan as we build towards the next general election. I'll be out across the country talking directly to the British people. And I can assure you that work and building a more secure economy will be central to that.

Labour is, was and will always be the party of work and the party of working people.

I want people to know once again that under a Labour government, they'll earn a decent day's pay from a job that they are proud of. That will end the race to the bottom on rights and standards. On the other hand will rebalance our economy so it works for all parts of the country. And so it's focused on the long term, not short term shareholder gain. In the last year, we have taken a number of important steps on that journey. In particular, I want to thank Andy McDonald for the way he's led the task force on power in the workplace. I'll be working closely with Andy and with Angela Rayner as we continue to drive that agenda forward. If we are to achieve everything we want for this country and for this movement, we are going to need your help. This party was borne out of the Trade Union movement and it's only when we work together, as we have done in the last year, that we can stand up for working people. Stand up against this Conservative government and set out the transformative change Britain so desperately needs. That's the task ahead of us. And I'm looking forward to achieving it with you. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Congress, we'll go back into the business. I have a reply now from the Midland & East Coast point of order from the SOC and it says "although Gary did state the CEC position, he did not comment on the Motion so there is no right of reply."

Move now on to item 7, which is industrial public policy service 125, 126, 127. Congress, we'll now debate the Motions and the first one is 125. Is that Annette to move?

125. LOCAL INTERPRETATIONS OF APPROVED JOB EVALUATION SCHEMES

This Congress recognises that all Local Authorities have a job evaluation scheme in place, to determine the grades that roles will be. Many Local Authorities will operate via the same scheme and these schemes are normally Local Government Authority (LGA) or Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) approved.

However, there is a facility for local interpretation of the said schemes.

Local interpretations lead to similar roles, being graded differently, from one Local Authority to another. For example, a home carer in one Local Authority will be graded a 3, whilst another Local Authority it will be a grade 4. The grade 3 has a higher level of responsibilities and functions i.e. administering medication and stoma care.

Congress calls on GMB to campaign to both the LGA and CoSLA to abolish local interpretations so that all employers are evaluating approved schemes in the same way, so that all GMB members and Local Government employees are not subjected to a postcode lottery.

FIFE PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

ANNETTE DRYLIE (GMB SCOTLAND): President, Congress, Annette Drylie GMB Scotland Fife Public Services branch proposing Motion 125 local interpretations of approved job evaluation schemes. Congress, this Motion calls on GMB to campaign to both the local government authority and Cosla to abolish local interpretation so all employees are evaluated in the same way so all GMB members and local government employees are not the subject of a postcode lottery. In workplaces across every region and nation, GMB is active, improving the terms and conditions of our members. Members tell us that one of the primary concerns at their work is pay, along with security and safety. Pay keeps a roof over their head and food on the table, free from impact of poverty. We know the effect of in work poverty, a situation which is heart-breaking. Given the union's progressing towards the living wage. Congress, the ethos and values within GMB challenge us all to call out this inequality and act together. This comes with a weakness, this weakness is the ability to have employers reach local interpretations directly leading to similar job roles resulting in different grades. Let's be clear that similar job roles in public services being paid different across the country and let's also be clear that the likelihood that employers will use local interpretation to justify differential pay which directly impacts on our members. It's fundamentally unfair and we're calling it out. This motion seeks to begin the campaign to accomplish local interpretations within their approved job evaluation schemes. We seek equal pay for a similar day's work, regardless of local rules. Let GMB put an end to this postcode lottery. Congress, I move.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Does Scotland formally second? Come in, Scotland - do you formally second? Thank you. We'll move on to the next motion, which is 126 and can I call Philip to move and Janet to second?

126. FUNDING FOR POLICE STAFF

This Congress calls on the GMB to lobby the Government to afford more funding for Police Staff.

Since 2010 as a result of brutal budget cuts imposed by the Tory governments Police forces have cut 21,700 Police Officer and at least 23,500 Police Staff posts.

Police staff undertake a range of roles within the police service from taking 999 calls, crime scene investigation, Custody Detention Officers, engaging with local communities as Police Community Support Officers, working as Management of Sexual and Violent Offenders officers and in Hi Tech Crime not just the more traditional roles of keeping the IT systems running and managing payroll. As a result of this austerity agenda which has seen cuts to overall Police Staff numbers as high as 47% in some forces and so it is little wonder that only 7% of crimes are currently being prosecuted.

On July 26th last year the government pledged to recruit an additional 20,000 Police Officers, but without a similar corresponding investment in Police Staff these 20,000 new Police Officers will be unable to carry out their roles to the full extent and crimes will continue to go unprosecuted and lives will continue to be put at risk.

S62 SOUTH WALES POLICE STAFF BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

PHILIP ROGERS (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): Phillip Rogers, Wales & South West region. Moving Motion 126: Funding for police staff. Congress, President, Vice-President, in July 2019 the government pledged to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers by March 2023. Getting more police on the streets is an absolute priority and giving the police the resources they need. Having more bobbies on the beat means more work produced for police staff, our members, who carry out essential duties to assist the officers with their roles. Without similar corresponding investment in police staff, these 20,000 new police officers will be... (Poor connection)..their roles to the full extent. Crimes will continue to go unprosecuted and lives will continue to be put at risk. Police staff are our unsung heroes. They've borne the brunt of the austerity cuts over the last decade and continue to be completely overlooked by this government. Thus an increase in officers will help provide better services to the public and reduce crime, but for this to work we need more police staff, otherwise these additional police officers will not thrive and deliver better outcomes for victims. We know that's what the public want. There's little point in having more officers if there's not enough people to take 999 calls or repair the extra cars or process detainees in custody after they have been arrested. There needs to be a corresponding investment in staff roles like crime reduction and victim support, who work tirelessly to help victims and trying to stop further crimes. More officers, but more extra police staff will mean our members are under even more pressure at a time when they are already at breaking point. Just employing police officers without any backup is setting the system up to fail. The police officer in 2021 was 8,000 police officers recruited and we are calling for the correct police staff being funded to carry out the extra workload these officers will produce. We call upon the GMB to lobby more government for more funding for police staff, making the police service a force for all - not just police officers. I move.

MALCOLM: Thank you. Sharon?

JANET SHUTTLEWOOD (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): Janet Shuttlewood, Wales & South West region, first-time delegate, first-time speaker, seconding motion 126: Funding for police staff. Vice-President, Congress, when Boris Johnson pledged to recruit 20,000 new police officers, he said he would give those officers the resources to do their job. However, it seems that Mr Johnson forgot a small but significant detail - there is little point in increasing police officer numbers if there's not a corresponding rise in the number of police staff. We all want to see more cops on the streets, to see the visible face of policing and provide public reassurance but what the government seem to have forgotten is police staff provide the majority of support that is essential to enable police officers to be able to serve their communities. Police staff are primarily the first point of contact that a member of the public will have with the police service, whether this is face-to-face with the station crime clerk or via the telephone with a call handler. It is police staff who determine the response required, undertake the necessary checks on police systems, allocate appropriate resources and monitor and operate radio communications. Police staff maintain these systems which are essential to the police service. Without these roles, members of the public could not report incidents, and police officer safety could be compromised. Police staff, our members, play a central role not only as crime scene investigators, police community support officers, custody detention officers, but also in areas such as public protection, and counter-terrorism. What is evident is that police officers would not be able to perform their duties without the support of police staff. These roles are key to the success of modern policing. Therefore, it is essential that the government recognises that with the addition of 20,000 police officers, there needs to be funding to provide the associated rise in the numbers of police staff. Conference, please support this motion, I second.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Janet. Now we'll move on to Motion 127. Can I have Sharon to move. Sharon, have you got problems? No? (PAUSE).

127. CAMPAIGN TO END REGIONAL PAY

This Congress should be at the forefront to end what can be called "postcode pay scales" where a national employer pays different rate of remuneration for the same task completed in different parts of the country.

As an example my membership employed by SUEZ, a national company, in Cornwall are paid at a lesser rate of pay than their identical colleagues employed in Plymouth and Devon.

Colleagues, please support my motion.

C21 CAMBOURNE BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: No, can't get in. Can Wales & South West then move and formally second that motion? Sharon, are you in?

SHARON HARRISON (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): Yes, can you hear me?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Yes, we can hear you now, carry on.

SHARON HARRISON: President, Congress, Sharon Harrison, Wales & South West region moving Motion 127. Congress, a number of representatives across the region have been advised by members that the disparity working for the same company - the contracts in which they work at different rates of pay. The disparity on the way the contracts are geographically based. Colleagues, this is prevalent but not restricted to the refuse, waste and recycling industries. This practice is completely unacceptable and should be stopped. However, this will take changes to the equal pay legislation so as to include same-sex comparators. Colleagues, it cannot be right that employers use a loophole in the law to maximise profits on the backs of our members by paying people differently, despite carrying out work of equal value. We call upon the GMB to support a fair work element in the equal pay act to allow for members to challenge the fact that they are facing a pay disparity because of where they live and because they do not have an opposite sex comparator. We must campaign for fair and equal pay for all, irrespective of where they live and the sex or gender of the employee. Congress, please support this motion, I move. (CHEERING).

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Wales & South West have already said they will formally second the motion, so can I now ask Penny to respond from the CEC. (Feedback).

PENNY ROBINSON (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): Vice-President, Congress, Penny Robinson speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 127: Campaign to end regional pay, which we are supporting with a qualification. The principle of workers being paid the same for the same work is one that we agree with, that is fair. The qualification is that contractors with site-by-site agreements engage in their own payments and conditions bargaining and are not always covered by national bargains. Shop stewards should be sharing their local pay information to help colleagues in other parts of the country to help campaign for best-in-class pay but Congress cannot set the terms of members' bargaining rights. As referenced in the motion, Suez have contracts in local government and commercial recycling and there are often disparities in pay between the two, as commercial is the more profitable for the business. We do not have any national relations with Suez and recognition is on a contract-by-contract basis. Some sites will have recognition with other trade unions, depending on who they took the contract from. Members and shop stewards should be co-ordinating as

best as they can to ensure that there are no rate disparities in any pay rates and any interference by Congress on these issues would be inappropriate. Therefore, Congress, please support this motion with the qualification for the reasons I've laid out. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: We'll now go - does Wales & South West accept the qualification? Right, thank you. We'll now go to the vote. 125, please vote. That's carried.

126. That's carried.

127. And that's carried, thank you for that. We now move on to Motion 118 and can I ask Adrian to move and Robert to second?

118. THE NEED FOR TEACHING STAFF TO GET BETTER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE IN RELATION TO REDUCING WORK RELATED STRESS

This Congress wishes to express solidarity with our colleagues in the teaching profession and school support staff, many of whom report negative effects on their lives caused by issues at work. This is especially so since the Covid-19 pandemic occurred.

The Ofsted survey of school staff published in July 2019 found issues including high workload such as excessive marking and clerical work, long hours, poor pupil behaviour, dealing with sometimes unreasonable parents, and high workload associated with Ofsted inspections!

Added to these issues are fears caused by being potentially exposed to corona virus infection, with school staff experiencing a lack of clear guidelines, a reluctance to allow wearing of facemasks and the doubtful government mantra that 'children don't pass on corona virus infection'! These issues cause many qualified teachers, who enjoy the actual teaching part of the job, to leave the profession to escape the stress and have a better work life balance. This is bad for the whole education system!

As front-line staff, they need far more clear guidance and, with the help of the unions, a say in the arrangements for working safely during the pandemic rather than being told from above what they must accept. It should also be accepted that staff being off sick or isolating is causing many workload issues. School staff need looking after, or they won't be there to look after the children of the NHS, police or firefighters!

As well, teachers often report unreasonable communication from parents and sometimes disrespectful demands for an instant reply. Schools could set up a system where all parents contact the school office with concerns, and that teachers are assisted with their response by school management and not subject to direct questioning and unreasonably expected direct response with parents.

Teachers report high stress levels and workload associated with Ofsted inspections, yet Ofsted states that this is not its intention! Obviously, there is a lack of information and clear communication, whether from Ofsted or perhaps from school leaders! For example, a new inspection format is called a 'deep dive' into a particular subject. Instruction to teachers includes the fact that if your subject is chosen you will very much be 'in the spotlight' which seems very stressful! - But is this Ofsted's intention?

Clearly, much more information and discussion is needed, so that unions and school staff from teaching assistants through teachers to school leaders can challenge if unreasonable demands are made.

Congress, it is time that teaching and school staff had more say over their role, including the ability, with the assistance of their union, to raise these issues during Ofsted inspections, without suffering any detriment. (Remember, parents have the right to make representations directly to Ofsted, surely teachers should have similar rights!) This would help ensure that School managers and leaders took account of teaching staff's concerns, and adjusted their systems where needed to improve things.

BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

ADRIAN STOHR (LONDON REGION): Madam President, Vice-President, Adrian Stohr, Braintree and Bocking branch, London region. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. Moving Motion 118: On staff and schools. Every day we send our children into school into the care of support staff and teachers. We trust them and, importantly, our children trust them. Support staff and teachers support, nurture, encourage and educate our children, and yet the system does not support them. Throughout the pandemic, support staff kept our schools open, educating and looking after our most vulnerable children, and the children of key workers. It was our members who were on the frontline in schools every day, and yet the responsibility placed upon them and the stress it frequently caused has not been acknowledged. The focus on schools is purely about results and Ofsted frequently slams staff for being inadequate but never looks at what is happening to them, the stresses and pressures they may be under. Schools are under increasing financial pressures, especially because of COVID-19 and the cuts being made to support staff. The work is still there, though, and cuts just make the work harder. Teachers and classroom-based support staff are being pushed to deliver more, but without being given anything extra. To achieve the best outcomes, there needs to be proper investment in the schools and children, and that starts with proper funding and investing in and valuing staff and schools. Let's recognise the work our school support staff members do and reaffirm a commitment to ensuring their voice is heard and that they can get the recognition they have earned and deserved. There is a duty of care to protect both the children and staff in our schools, but all too often, the duty of care to staff is overlooked. Let's also show our solidarity with teachers, who our members work closely with to keep our children safe, and prepare them for the future. All workers in schools deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and valued for their outstanding contribution. The pandemic has shown schools are now dealing with more than ever before, at a time of natural crisis. It was the catering staff and support staff who not only prepared but also frequently delivered the food parcels and lunches to our most vulnerable children. Congress, let's support our schools' support staff and show our solidarity with teachers, whose dedication and care for our children sees them going above and beyond every day. Congress, please stand together and support this motion. Congress, I move.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Are you ready, Robert?

ROBERT WHEELER (LONDON REGION): Yes, I am. Vice-President, Madam President, Congress, Robert Wheeler, London region, first-time delegate, seconding Motion 118. Congress, we have seen school support staff continue to work diligently throughout this pandemic, putting their lives at risk to provide the best quality care and education for vulnerable children and the children of our key workers. They are unsung heroes of our schools. The UCL Institute for Education reported that 88% of teaching assistants had supported vulnerable and key workers' children in schools during lockdown, including managing a whole class, or a bubble, on their own, as teachers prepared and delivered remote lessons, often from home. It has been the school support staff that has opened schools, cleaned schools to keep them safe, fed the most vulnerable children in our society and supported children with their wellbeing and education. Our members deserve to be recognised, supported and valued for the work they do. Congress, I support this motion.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Where are - I've lost Robert.

NICKY PALERMO (SOUTHERN REGION): Is it me, Motion 119?

119. VIOLENCE ON TEACHERS ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT AS VIOLENCE ON TA'S.

Teaching Assistants offer just as much value to our children in the classroom, as qualified Teachers.

In this era a single qualified teacher cannot successfully manage the requirements of delivering a class without their TA. Therefore why should assaults on Teachers be of more value and treated more favourably than teacher assistants. Are they all not human? Dont this both have feelings?

It has become the norm for me to see my sister black and blue each week. Her norm is to receive violence each day, at times multiple times a day. No support given my the school, other than being told 'it's part of the job'.

However, when Teachers are victims of assault there's often an urgent urge to enact and instill discipline. Such as calling the police, placing the child in isolation or excluding the child. The disparity in this need to close immediately.

The Department of Education states that BOTH Teachers and school staff have a right to be safe while doing their jobs and Violence towards them is completely unacceptable.

School leadership teams need to use their professional judgements and apply appropriate and proportionate sanctions to assaults on BOTH Teachers and TA's NOT just teachers alone.

Our union needs to encourage and support our TA Members to have a voice and challenge any disparities in the handling of assaults on our TA's from pupils. We can do so by encouraging schools to adopt the "Assaults on Staff Code of Conduct" recognising assaults on support staff, as a way of ensuring that this is being managed effectively.

I move

K19 SW LONDON GENERAL BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Yes.

NICKY PALERMO: Vice-President, President, Congress, Nicky Palermo, first-time delegate, first-time speaking, Southern region, B50. Violence towards support staff has been on the rise. There has been a feeling within education that when a teacher is an assaulted by a pupil this is taken more seriously than an assault on teaching assistants, or INAs - Individual Needs Assistants. It is as if this is regarded by managers as an unfortunate element of a support staff's job, rather than a preventable situation. However, as we know, and as the law sets out, violence towards anyone is unacceptable and must be dealt with robustly. The first part of dealing with this very urgent matter is to challenge the cultures and attitudes within organisations so that assaults on support staff are dealt with in the same manner and with the same level of importance as results against non-support staff such as teachers. Within the code of conduct, the section regarding assaults on staff members must be embraced by a reorganisation and acted on in the case of violence towards support staff. Appropriate and proportionate sanctions as outlined must be implemented and school leaders must apply these equally regardless of whom the victim is.

It must also be made clear that differentiating between, for example, assault on a teacher and assault on a TA is unacceptable and unfair. I move this Motion. Thank you.

MALCOLM: Does Southern formally second the Motion? Thank you. Moving on to Motion 120. Can I ask Joe to move.

120. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SECTOR

This Congress calls on the CEC to put pressure on this Tory Government to review and regulate how “looked after children sector” are funded. This is one of the highest costing of all the sectors in the Public Services, but children and staff are being cheated by the Sector’s employers.

The children are not being looked after by the correct staffing ratios and the care staff who are being paid minimum wage not reflecting the qualification care staff require to deal with the children in their care.

Our members are being used and abused and are at constant risk of allegations being made against them for just the minimum wage.

P42 PRESTON BRANCH

North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

JOE SMITH (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): Vice President, Congress, Joe Smith North West & Irish region. Moving Motion 120, looked after children's sector. Congress, this sector is one of the highest costing for all public services. Children and staff are being cheated by sector employers. Children are put in these homes not for want of choice. The high risk factor and vulnerability factor is there. Many children suffer from mental health problems growing up. Break up of marriages again has a huge impact on children and can cause serious implications to the livelihood and upbringing from a very early age. These homes are there to provide care and safety, they are given a comfortable room and meals provided. On site staff who work unsociable hours and working on minimum wage, operating on minimum staff, employers who put profit before care, not providing adequate training, these are low paid staff who come in contact with persons, these persons in care on a daily basis. On a regular basis, staff are abused by youths in care. Vandalised their rooms beyond repair. Without pointing the finger at anybody, these youths have suffered from a very early age. It will have had a huge impact on their lives when growing up. Prohibition orders are in place sometimes when children are not allowed to see their parents. This must have a daunting effect to any child in care. Some sometimes the youths go missing, it becomes a police matter and all persons under adult ages, they are treated a top priority when they go missing. When police investigate their backgrounds and can see the mental health and vulnerability issues, it's all hand on deck and becomes very expensive and time consuming to police and ambulance services. If money provided was put to better use, increased staff levels, more adequate training, increased pay to the living foundation rate and better youth facilities was there. Congress, in my line of work, involved in youth when a youth goes missing. I have seen them on a bridge with legs on the wrong side. I've seen them with a bottle of vodka, speaking to the wrong people. Congress, speaking to adults offering drugs and money for sexual activity. Congress, much needs to be done, not the wealthy reaping the benefits but the vulnerability in staff and child needs and funds distributed where needed. I call on the CEC to put pressure on the Tory government to review the childcare matters. Congress, please support. I move.

MALCOLM: Thank you Joe. The region has already agreed to formally second. You have a Motion, 121 listed. This has been withdrawn so can I ask Arron to respond for the CEC?

ARRON BEVAN-JOHN (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): Vice President, President, Congress, Aaron Bevan-John, Wales & South West region, Public Services speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 119. Violence on teachers are just as important as violence on teaching assistants. We fully support the Motions called for violence against support staff workers taking it seriously as violence against teachers. Too many employers do not treat violence against support staff with the seriousness it deserves and many fail to enforce disciplinary

action against offenders. When they do so if the same assaults were committed against teachers. The Motion rightly calls for this issue to be treated as an industrial and campaigning priority.

Our qualification is that it's unclear what the document, what document the assaults conduct as described in the Motion refers to. GMB produced a list of documents entitled "preventing violence in schools." Key demands which calls on employers for staff to be treated fairly and equally regardless of perceived status and that all staff are consulted on violence issues, not just teachers. We'd encourage the use of this document through the union. Therefore, Congress, please support this Motion with the qualification I've laid out. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Does Southern support the qualification? Southern support? Can you come in? If you don't support it, it closes. Thank you. So the CEC are supporting all three Motions. We'll go to the vote. 118. Carried. 119. That is carried. And 120. And that is carried. Can I now call Ian Burkett from the Midland East Coast region?

IAN BURKETT (MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION): Hi. We need to go back to Motion 32. I raised point of order last time and from the chair you said that Gary Smith did not make a comment on the Motion. So I was not, our reading was not entitled to a right of reply. I have to disagree. Gary Smith referred to the CEC response and said that most branches are using it. If that is not a comment, I must be mistaken because it was. It's a fundamental part of our reasons of policy and Congress. We have a right of reply. Once again I ask the President, can we have the right to reply to that Motion? And put it back to the vote? Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Full statement from the SOC if I read that out now, it might help the region. It says, "on Motion 32, Midland & East Coast region there is no right of reply. The region were given the CEC stance on the Motion prior to Congress. It was not part of the finance report. The CEC were asking the region to withdraw the Motion prior to Congress. The General Secretary read the CEC stance to all Motions not relating to the finance report. But finance related. There is no right of reply just like with other Motions where CEC members deliver the CEC stance. The region also had an opportunity to respond to the report but they did not put up a delegate speaker to do so. There is no right of reply.

Move on now to motions 123, 124. Mover of 123 Stephen with Mo to second.

123. DNR (DO NOT RESUSCITATE)

This Congress needs to look into the legal positions on DNR's.

DNR Orders are issues that affect medical staff working in hospitals as a rule, but can also affect staff working in care homes or residential care properties.

The GMB has had cases where management instructions to staff working in care homes/residential facilities were designed to over-rule an existing live DNR and demand that staff resuscitate patients/clients in all cases, regardless of an existing DNR.

Such situations cause our members a great deal of stress and appear illegal. The law is ambiguous and needs clarification and strengthening.

We call on the GMB to liaise fully with our solicitors to seek clarification and take steps to strengthen the law on this issue.

Similar steps should also be taken to put pressure on the Government to act likewise.

Never has this issue been more important than now, with thousands of cases of Covid 19 deaths.

SOUTHEND ON SEA BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

STEPHEN JONES (LONDON REGION): Stephen Jones. Most of us will have heard of DNRs, do not resuscitate orders, medical documents signed by two doctors at a patient's request and they are quite difficult to obtain as well. To be implemented in the case of a patient where the patient may need emergency revival procedures should he or she suffer from sudden heart attack or stroke, for instance, such revival procedures will involve the application of CPR and I will leave that part for the following speaker to explain more detail because I believe he works in the ambulance services and does that on a day to day basis.

One would think that such documents and the required implementation would be respected by any medical and care staff. Sadly, that is not necessarily the case. Some of us know this from representing our members in care homes with a religious background, i.e. Catholic run organisations may have senior staff or management who feel their own religious beliefs and ethos have to be followed regardless of any existing live DNRs, therefore staff may be asked to look into and face potential challenges and face potential problems regarding do they or don't they resuscitate.

Such situations cause our members immense distress and very difficult situations and potentially controversial and confrontational situations can arise between family members and staff of a care home in particular. It also means that they are potentially threatened with disciplinary action and potentially dismissed as well.

Surprisingly, the law as it stands does not appear to offer precise advice and guidance in such cases. On the other hand, for staff not to provide CPR in cases where no DNRs exist because of the patient's age or general poor state of health, would be not tolerated under any circumstance.

So here I come to the call. That is why we call on Congress to request our solicitor's union line to look into these issues and if necessary take appropriate actions to request greater legal clarity on these matters. This is potentially and particularly important now due to the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic which sadly means many people face possible death and may or may not wish to be resuscitated. I move. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: You are on, Mo.

MO AKBAR (LONDON REGION): Good afternoon, welcome, can you hear me? Malcolm can you hear me?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: We can hear you.

MO AKBAR: Good afternoon. Congress, President, friend and family, seconding Motion 123. This Motion is very important to all of us. As our population continues to age, we want to make sure that we are respecting the wishes of those who face a conscious decision to mandate a DNR. Many people suffer with illnesses that means they have to live with pain and discomfort. There comes a time when this is no longer an option. There is a little evidence that suggests that performing CPR will bring a person back to a normal comfortable standard of life. I have worked for the ambulance service for over 29 years and know it well that when a 999 call is made, whether they are in care home or in their own home, the first question is always, "is the patient breathing?" If not, then start CPR. However, they should be asking, "does this patient have a DNR?" This will protect the health

care of the professionals and the wishes of the person who made this conscious decision to put a DNR in place.

I call on the Congress to take this Motion to the Parliament calling for a DNR patient to be given a wrist band that makes it clear to health care professionals while protecting the rights of the people to choose their life's destiny. We shouldn't say it's a Motion, it's a live Motion of those who carry on CPR on other people when they are requesting not to be CPRed. I second.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mo. Motion 124 and it's Stephen and Mo again. Stephen?

124. SAY NO TO ATTACKS ON SOCIAL CARE WORKERS

This Congress is greatly dismayed by the assaults on Social Care workers with little or no protection for them. The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 and the Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005 do not include the Social Care workforce who are one the largest employment sectors and a hidden/invisible workforce.

We call on GMB to lobby the Government and campaign to amend this legislation and highlight the fact that Social Care Sector Workers are just as vulnerable and as valuable as other emergency services such as the NHS, Police and Fire Services.

HENDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

STEPHEN JONES (LONDON REGION): Thank you. I wasn't aware that I was down to speak for this Motion. I think you might have gotten me by mistake. Not speaking on this Motion, sorry, you called me by mistake.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Mo, seconded?

MO AKBAR (LONDON REGION): You want me to move it?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: You are moving are you, OK?

MO AKBAR: OK. Congress, Vice President, President, friends and family, moving Motion 124. It's shocking to imagine that in 2021, there are still people who go to work in fear and with little respect for their profession. Since we have started this Congress, every 30 minutes a social care worker has been assaulted, colleagues are literally being attacked for doing their job. The statistics get worse. Nine out of ten social workers have suffered abuse, assault and threats. And there has been over 45,000 incidents against our colleagues in the last three years alone. I call on this Congress to lobby the government and campaign for change legislation for the workforce that is one of the largest employment sectors in the country.

We must remember that the social sector care workers are just as vulnerable and valuable as other emergency services professions. We know, and the recent TV show, that there was lots of attacks on ambulance staff. This is no different to social workers, there are a lot of staffs that do not report some of the incident. We need to be very vigilant and given the opportunity to them to make sure that they report every incident that takes place in their role. I move. Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Robert, are you seconding?

ROBERT WHEELER (LONDON REGION): Yes, I am. Congress, I am Robert Wheeler, first-time delegate, seconding Motion 124. Congress, I am a paramedic so I have first-hand experience of what the mover has outlined just now. I face daily battles at work trying to stay safe. COVID hasn't helped, as members of the public have suffered extra stress and increased mental illnesses. There has been a 32% increase on assaults in paramedics over the last year. I'm pleased to report that this week NHS England decided trial-equipping ambulance crews with body-worn cameras in 10 NHS Trusts in England. This is a welcome step, but as always, this needs to be enforced properly. We need a zero tolerance approach against attacks on any workers. It's about time this government started taking the unions seriously when we approach them with experiences. I only hope that once this trial concludes, that this might be extended to other workers, as identified in this motion. Please support Motion 124.

MALCOLM: Both of these motions are being supported so we will go straight to the vote. 123. Carried. 124. Carried

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. We move on to item 10, social policy, NHS and health issues, motions 194, composite 9, and Motion 207. These will be our last business of the day before the General Secretary's report. We have Motion 194 on NHS funding. Can I please ask Martin Thompson to move.

194. NHS FUNDING

Congress deplores the actions of the Government's funding promises for the NHS.

Over 60 new hospitals are promised but only 6 can be identified. One of these in Canterbury in Kent that neither the Council nor the NHS Trust knows anything about.

£500million was promised to renovate Epsom General hospital but the money is being used to downgrade the hospital and St. Helier General hospital in favour of an acute unit. The proposed unit is only accessible by a consultant appointment or a Blue Light admission. This is out and out preparation for privatisation of Clinical Services

The 50,000 new nurses that were promised are made up of 20,000 already working in the NHS.

The number of consultants and doctors that have been promised won't make up for the cuts over the last 10 years.

Congress agrees to expose the funding myths and campaign for a return to full and proper NHS funding.

C23 CARSHALTON BRANCH

Southern Region

(Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: No? (PAUSE). Is it Toni to move? OK, thank you, Toni. (PAUSE). No? I'm just waiting for instructions, sorry! OK, can we ask Southern region to formally move and second that motion, please, 194? Just hang in there, Toni, I'm calling you in soon. Yes, thumbs up, thank you, Southern region. So we now have Composite 9 on mental health, so now I can call Toni in to move from Midland & East Coast.

Composite 9

Covering Motions; Motion 205 Mental Health Southern Region

Motion 206 Dealing with Suicide Midland and East Coast Region

MENTAL HEALTH AND DEALING WITH SUICIDE

This Congress notes that suicide rates are going up. Rates are highest in men and particularly those aged 51 to 60 years of age. Suicide is more prevalent than most people realise, with 6507 suicides registered by Coroners in 2018; a rise of 11.5% on the previous year. Sadly, this figure is likely to be much higher, as many cases are not recorded as such, due to inclusive evidence, and can be often received as 'undermined'.

It goes without saying that the impacts of suicide are deeply felt, not only by loved ones, but also by colleagues in the workplace and the wider community. Those who have been bereaved or affected by suicide are at an increased likelihood of suffering from mental health themselves.

Poor mental health, depression, worries about money, unemployment and isolation are all key risk factors for suicide. Prevention must be the key strategy.

This Congress calls for the GMB to provide specific training for awareness and the effects of suicide.

Therefore we call on the GMB to: develop and deliver an appropriate training course to increase awareness of suicide and equip our workplace representatives in their role of supporting their members. [This is] to help shop stewards and members to identify the signs of increased risk of suicide and poor mental health, and to ensure members know where to go for help and are helped.

GMB workplace representatives need to be equipped with the right information to signpost people to appropriate support and have the confidence and skills to deal with such sensitive conversations.

We also call on the GMB to work with other groups in the community to raise awareness and build preventative measures designed to reduce the risk of suicide and poor mental health.

MOVING REGION MIDLAND AND EAST COAST SECONDING REGION SOUTHERN

(Referred)

TONI YEL (MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION): Thank you, President and Congress, Toni Yel moving Motion 206 Composite 9 dealing with suicide. GMB reps being equipped with the right information to signpost people to appropriate support and have the confidence and skills to deal with such sensitive conversations is imperative. Suicide is more prevalent than most people realise, with over 6,500 suicides registered by coroners in 2018. A rise of 11.5% on the previous year. Sadly, this figure is likely to be much higher, as many cases are not recorded and, as such, due to inconclusive evidence, they can often be received as undetermined. It goes without saying that the impacts of suicide are deeply felt not only by loved ones but also by colleagues in the workplace and the wider community. Those who have had bereaved or affected by suicide are at an increased likelihood of suffering from mental ill health themselves. We call upon the GMB to deliver appropriate training courses to increase awareness of suicide and equip our workplace reps in their support to members. There are nationally approved NHS training that could be accessed which has been developed by mental health professionals. We request that the CEC looks at all of those options available and not let the perceived funding push this down the priority order of training that is required as soon as possible. We note that the CEC has asked that this is to be referred, and appreciate that it will be given due consideration, knowing that we need to look at external expertise to potentially deliver any training, and whilst we support that, can we just remind our CEC colleagues that we have a number of reps working in mental health trusts where training is a free resource and those discussions need to be had with the available resources. As we are aware, the COVID pandemic has had a significant impact on people's mental health and we need the appropriate skills to support our members. I move. (CHEERING).

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Toni. Is there a seconder from Southern region or - they're formally seconding, thank you, Southern region. So last in this group is Motion 207 from London region and Alan Law to move, please.

207. WALK THE WALK

This Congress notes that suicide is one of the leading causes of young deaths in the UK. Sadly, every year over 1,800 young people take their own lives including over 200 school children. As a national caring union, we should have a role in preventing these deaths.

We note that during the lockdowns of 2020/21, many more young people have struggled with home or school life as social contact has not been possible and we have seen huge increases in calls to helplines where young people have thought more about suicide.

We also note that as the pandemic has spread across the UK, many fundraisers' dreams of marathons, swims, runs and walks were dashed, leaving charities struggling to raise valuable funds.

The Union and region have done some excellent work and training on making our reps more aware of mental health issues. We also welcome the GMB guides on mental health and "Work and Suicide" and urge our reps to read these especially if they identify someone at risk. We need all of our organised workplaces signed up to GMB mental health at work pledges.

As a start, we would like to see GMB affiliated nationally to PAPYRUS UK, one of the charities listed in our guide and urge GMB to promote this charity through our members and their families. This would make our members extremely proud if the GMB were to wholeheartedly support this charity.

This charity strives to help the prevention of young suicides of those under 35. Statistics show there are more young person suicides than road traffic deaths so we need to wholeheartedly support this worthy charity.

We are also calling to lobby the government for more funding for young people's mental health issues.

KING'S LYNN NO 1 BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

ALAN LAW (LONDON REGION): President, Congress, Alan Law, London region, moving Motion 207: Walk the walk. Congress, for quite a few years, several of our brothers and sisters have given speeches on mental wellbeing. It's very disturbing reading now of the facts and figures of suicide. I said in my motion to Congress that there are more suicides than road traffic deaths. The figure hasn't been released for 2020, when I was doing my research. For 2019, the facts are: Road traffic deaths, 1,752. Suicide deaths, 5,691. Of those, 4,303 suicides were men and boys, and 1,388 were women and girls. In these figures there was an increase of 14% in the age group of 10-24-year-olds. This brings the national rate to 11.2 suicides per 100,000 of the UK population. Looking at the figures over the last decade, since figures have increased every year, in all age groups, God knows what today's figures are, especially for the young living in the COVID world. So how can we change things? Now, we do fantastic work within the GMB. We've had some training. We make sure our reps are made aware of mental health issues. We have excellent guides on mental health work, and suicides. We also urge our reps to read - especially in identifying someone at risk. I believe the GMB needs to work hard at lobbying the government for more funding on young people's mental health issues. We can also sign up and work with Papyrus, as we have done in the past. This is a national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicides. Papyrus was founded in 1977 by Gene Kerry. Gene lost her son to suicide. It was initially set up as the parents' association for prevention of young suicides, hence 'PAPYRUS'. This charity can also provide prevention and counselling for young people

facing thoughts of suicide. They are a longstanding member of the advisory group in England and Wales on suicide prevention. So, Congress, we have talked the talk many times, and it is now time to walk the walk and sign up to help this charity and help others. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. And Cliff Roney to second, please?

CLIFF RONEY (LONDON REGION): President, chair, Congress, brothers, sisters, good afternoon, I'm Cliff Roney from London region and I'm seconding motion 207, walk the walk. National suicides are now at a 50-year high and, sadly, very high percentages of those involved are younger people. As you have heard Alan say, the GMB worked very hard to help and support their reps who are dealing on a day-to-day basis with mental health in the workplace. However, we firmly believe that it is now time for the GMB to become affiliated to Papyrus UK, who as you have heard from Alan, are working alongside the government bodies on a regular basis to support and help those who are most at risk. As we all feel the fallout from the pandemic, it has yet hit home firmly to believe that it is prudent to get as much in place for the future for our younger members. As the title says, it is now time for the GMB to walk the walk. Congress, that's part of my scripted bit, but as always I have an unscripted bit as well! As you all know, part of the problem here is the government cutting funds - the Tory government, as we know of old, will continue to cut wherever possible the funding to local authorities, causing many people to have to wait in some cases three months for their first contact with a mental health provider. This cannot be right. We must, as a union, fight for every single member who is in need of backup and support during what is often the most traumatic period in their lives, be it young or old. We must never forget that the preservation of life is paramount. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cliff. There is no opposition so can I ask Kevin Jones to respond to this group of motions for the CEC, please?

KEVIN JONES (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): Thank you, Madam President. Kevin Jones speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 194, Composite 9 and 207. Turning firstly to Motion 194 - NHS funding. The CEC is supporting the motion with a very small qualification. We agree that the lies and misleading statements made by the Tories on the NHS during the 2019 general election must be exposed. Our qualification is that the Conservative Party promised 40 new hospitals, which is a slight correction on the figure of the 60 in the motion. Moving on to Composite 9, mental health and dealing with suicide, the CEC is asking that the motion involved be referred back. This Composite includes motions 205 and 206, which both deal with mental health issues. This is undoubtedly an important area where we need to ensure that the right approach is taken across the whole of the GMB. We would almost certainly need to have outside expertise to develop the course and content, as well as our internal education and training officers. As there would be a need to look outside for resources, which would inevitably incur costs, the CEC is asking that the motion be referred back in order to research how best to implement the asks in the motion. Finally, Congress, on Motion 207, walk the walk. The CEC is asking this motion be supported with a qualification. We have previously worked with Papyrus's chief executive on a programme on work-related suicide and we have a joint campaign along the lines of which we are already developing to fight the bladder cancer. Our qualification is that all requests for GMB affiliation must be referred to the CEC finance and general purpose committee for consideration to ensure they are in line with the aims and values of the GMB Union as a whole. Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking that you support motions 194 and 207 with those qualifications, and that the region concerned in Composite 9 accept the reference back to the CEC. Thank you, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Kevin. Can I ask Southern region, do you accept the qualification for Motion 194, please? Southern? Yes, thank you, Southern. And for Composite 9, Southern, do you accept the reference back as well? Midland & East Coast have already said they accept the reference back. Yes, thank you. And London region, thank you, you've said you'll accept the qualification. So I'll put those two to the vote. That's - Composite 9 doesn't have to go to the vote because the referral has been accepted. So that's 194. That has been carried. And Motion 207? And that has been carried. Congress, we also have a group of NHS and health motions listed on your agenda as Motions 196-203. These motions have been accepted as existing policy and are therefore carried without debate.

And before we go to the General Secretary and Treasurer's report, I would just like to read out this statement: Earlier we heard from Deborah Goodman who spoke very movingly about dignity in dying and her ancestor Will Thorne's struggle to build our union. We do respect the freedom of speech of our delegates and speakers but for the avoidance of doubt without repeating the comment, I need to set out the position of the union. We have lost too many of our members to this terrible disease, and we need to be clear that misinformation about vaccination must be confronted. It is not appropriate to compare vaccination policies to racist regimes or to criminal acts. This is not the view of Congress, and it is not the view of our union. Congress, I felt it was important to make that clear. Now, I'd like to move to the General Secretary's report and it gives me great pleasure to introduce your new General Secretary & Treasurer, Gary Smith.

GARY SMITH (GENERAL SECRETARY & TREASURER): Congress, Gary Smith, moving the General Secretary's report. I think I have been given a wee bit of latitude around the report, given the circumstances that we find ourselves in and my speech will be posted on the One Drive and I understand from Standing Orders that we will take questions in writing on the report. Congress, President, I am genuinely humbled to be elected General Secretary & Treasurer of our great union. It is the honour of my life, and I am very aware of the responsibility this carries. I pledge to work tirelessly to ensure that you can, once again, have confidence and trust in the leadership of our union. I would like to thank both Giovanna and Rehana for our comradely election. Putting yourself out there to make the case for what you believe in isn't easy - I know. I look forward to working with you both, as we move forward to build our union. I'd like to thank the fantastic staff who are working to bring us together in this digital space, so that we can exercise the union's democracy. Arranging and delivering Congress is a huge amount of work in the best of times, and I am very grateful for everything that everyone is doing for us all. I would also like to thank our union's recent Acting General Secretary, Warren Kenny, our President Barbara Plant and Vice-President Malcom Sage. Warren's leadership steadied our ship in waters arguably being one of the most difficult periods in the history of our union and what a way to sign off, Warren, as part of the team who got that agreement with Uber. And Barbara has truly been the union's moral compass. Malcolm, well, he is the rock of this union and a great comrade and friend to me.

I joined GMB at 16 as a gas apprentice. From a young members' activist to shop steward, organiser, national official and then GMB Scotland Secretary, this union is my second family. It's educated me, it's been my hope, and my purpose. I hold it dear as I know you do too.

And ultimately, that is why this is not about me, this is about us and what we need to do together to ensure that our union can afford the new generation of people the same hope and purpose that we have been given. We hold in our hands a very special gift, a Trade Union that can make a real difference to the lives of ordinary working people and their families, but with that power also comes great responsibility and that is why I want to be

clear with you all from the very start. We are a proud union, a great union, but we are also a union that is declining. It's been tough and, in many respects, an unprecedented year. But these events should not be used to hide the hard truth. Over the last five years, we have been steadily losing our financial membership. A failure that has put the long term future of the union in a precarious position. So the first step in solving a problem is recognising that there is one. So, if we want to protect everything that this union has built over the last 130 years, if we want GMB to thrive and prosper for generations to come, then we must accept now that our current course is simply not sustainable and that we will come together to resolve this challenge together.

Congress, I will never, ever accept the decline is inevitable. Wherever I've been in this union, we've campaigned, we have grown, we have fought, and we have won. As a senior official in the Southern region we campaigned and grew, as a National official we campaigned and the union grew, and in Scotland, not only have we grown but we have rediscovered our purpose and learned to fight again whether it's nationalising ship yards, fighting over pay and pensions in the whisky industry or organising that historic Glasgow women's strike, we have come together, we've fought and we have won.

The length and breadth of this union every day, we have extraordinary people doing extraordinary things and now we are going to build on that work and get our union growing again. In terms of politics, let's be very clear, no favours, no fear, members first, always.

Congress, as we discussed in the financial section, we need to make tough choices. We can't keep turning up the dial on our existing membership. Union dues need to be more affordable, not more expensive. Our members cannot pay the price for our failures to organise and grow the union as we should have. It's also an inescapable fact colleagues that I would not be addressing you today if others in our union hadn't lost sight of their own power and responsibility. It's been a retched year for our union and our people on so many levels. But to see our union dragged through the gutter has been despairing and shameful and it still hurts. If our union does not stand for decency and equality, then we stand for nothing. Be in no doubt we'll implement in the full recommendations on the Monaghan Report, I'll work relentlessly with you and be guided by you and our President to make it happen, no ifs, and no buts. Never again can we lose sight of the duty we have to our people and with a renewed focus on equality and justice, we will properly resource this process of change. The women's campaign unit, we will establish will ensure our commitment to equality, including economic equality is enshrined and our industrial work as we grow our organisation again.

We are a union of action, not words.

Everyone deserves to be part of a union that brings people together in good faith to build a better future. The journey will be hard as we rebuild our membership and restore our reputation. But I am hugely optimistic about our future because we have a big advantage. We are in control of our own destiny. We can decide our own future together if we organise and campaign like a good Trade Union should. It's why I made three clear pledges to our members, to fight for good jobs and proper pay, to achieve pay justice for working women, and to reduce the cost of being a member of the union.

Our future is about doing the hard work of organising, campaigning and fighting and never being afraid of picking aspirational fights. No employer is going to welcome us with open arms. There will be no political super heroes that will ride to our rescue and there will be no constitutional debate or settlement that will help us build.

If we want to make work better, then we must do the hard work ourselves. And hopefully, as we emerge from the grip of COVID, we will have a relentless focus on the workplace, defending the interests of our members so we can secure the future of our union.

Great power and great responsibility are in our hands. So we will organise, we will change, we will be different, we will be better and we will win together. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Gary. As Gary said, he'll take questions in emails in written form. We now move a vote on the General Secretary's report, take a vote on the General Secretary's report. That has been carried. That is a good way to end the day. Thank you again for your contributions and patience. There is a fringe event on India farmers from 6.30 to 7.30, the details of which are in your delegate's email. Thank you and see you tomorrow morning at 9.30. Have a good evening.

(The end)

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