

Transcript of Day 3 of GMB Congress 2021

Tuesday 8 June, 2021

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT: Could I call Congress to order. Delegates, welcome to the final day of Congress. I now call on Jan Smith from the Retired Members Association to address Congress.

JAN SMITH (RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION): Good morning, can you hear me?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we can hear you, Jan.

JAN SMITH: OK, good morning, Congress, Jan Smith, moving the National Retired Members' Association report. Congress, it was quite a surprise late last night to get an invite to give this speech. Welcome to Congress. This is my tenth year as the National Secretary giving this report. This past 15 months have been difficult, not only for the RMA but for everybody and during this past time, we sadly lost two of our members - Ian Blackman and Joe Isaacs. We hope that they are watching down on us and they are both greatly missed. We have resumed our meetings on Teams and we have been doing this since November 2020. It's been a success and at least we are getting back into order. We have a national conference this year and it's going to be on virtual conference, the same as Congress, and that is on 19 October. We have got speakers, which is Barbara, our President, and George, the National Pensions Officer, so, George, if you are watching, please don't double-book your diary like you've done for us the last two years! And I've also sent out an invite to Gary, our new General Secretary, which we welcome you Gary and look forward to working with you, and in doing so, Gary, we would like the points made and honoured that were made at the hustings when questions was asked about the RMA. Congress, can I give thanks to Steve Kemp, our national coordinator. Steve has done a massive job working with us as our coordinator, and we wish him a very happy retirement and, in doing so, we look forward to knowing who are new coordinator would be, and to work with that person. I'd like to also extend my thanks to Pat Gannon from the National Office. Pat works very hard for the RMA and, Pat, thank you for everything that you do. I would like to extend my thanks to Warren Kenny. Not only as my regional secretary, but also for stepping into the brink in the short-term as acting as our national coordinator. Warren, once again, thank you, and thank you for the support. I hope you will all bear with me, Congress, as we send our best wishes to Monica Smith. She's now in her 90's - our president and honorary member of the National RMA. Monica has had some ill health this past few months, but we wish her well and I'm sure she is still around, active as she normally is. She still has her smiley face - very cheerful, especially when she rings me up. And to finish, Congress, the National RMA has made a first, and that first is by having our national banner in the banner parade at National Congress. Thank you, Barbara, for your help, because you took note of that in my annual report at the 2019 conference, that you spoke on, so that was a first for us and that I am truly grateful for. And hopefully next year, in the opening of the Congress, when we will all be live together, and meeting up and renewing old friendships, that we could have the London region RMA banner. So far, unfortunately, although it was launched at our regional council meeting in October 2019, unfortunately we haven't been able to use it due to COVID. We as the RMA - we seek, we work, we campaign. We are not a sitting duck, we are not second-class citizens, as some of us seem to feel. We just want our right within the GMB and be recognised and not as unpaid officers to the organisers, so Congress, enjoy the rest of the

day, I won't say, "Safe journey home," because we are at home, but enjoy the rest of the day and thank you and good luck to you all. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan, and I look forward to seeing you and all the retired members on 19 October, thank you for the invitation. Before we start this morning's debate on NHS and health issues, can we please go to a video on key workers.

(MUSIC PLAYS)

(Video with subtitles plays).

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you and I think we all know what a debt we owe to our key workers over the last 15 months. We now come on to item four, which is social policy debate, NHS and health issues. If anybody wishes to speak in opposition to any of these motions, please raise your hand and send a message to the chat box. But can I ask Mark Roe from Northern region to move Composite 8, please?

Composite 8

Covering Motions:

Motion 191 NHS Wholly Owned Subsidiaries Northern Region

Motion 192 NHS Wholly Owned Subsidiaries Southern Region

NHS WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARIES

This Congress deplores the way that the NHS is being privatised via Trusts using Wholly Owned Subsidiaries to engage in "off balance sheet activities" in order to blatantly avoid any tax liabilities with the HMRC.

Now that we have left the EU, Congress believes that it is imperative to ensure that the NHS is safeguarded against further privatisation going forward. The NHS is the jewel in the UK's public services crown and Government should ensure that focus is on patient care and the employees who give a great service to the public.

NHS Managers who seek to further their own careers on the backs of exploiting the public purse should be exposed for what they are.

Congress opposes NHS Trusts setting up Wholly Owned Subsidiaries which will be used as a vehicle to privatise non-clinical services.

Congress further resolves to expose the use of VAT refunds to establish these privatisation vehicles that will only serve to externalise large swathes of NHS services and property at a cost to the taxpayer.

Congress calls on the CEC to mount a campaign of resistance to NHS wholly owned subsidiaries including through our industrial and political channels and for a report back to the 2022 Congress on progress in our campaign to prevent the use of this tactic to further the process of NHS privatisation.

MOVING REGION NORTHERN

SECONDING REGION SOUTHERN

(Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: No? We do seem to be having trouble getting Mark in, so could I ask the Region if they will formally move that motion, please, Northern region? Yep, thank you, Northern region, that means we'll go to Geoff from Southern region to second.

GEOFF HOUGH (SOUTHERN REGION): Good morning, President, Congress, Geoff Hough, first-time delegate and speaker, Southern region. With the enforced rationale of

efficiencies and savings, actually now seeking profitability rather than focusing on patient care, greedy NHS boards will continue to transfer services out of the NHS with the hope of using loopholes to evade tax and when doing so meaning the rise of the wholly-owned subsidiaries will continue unless we stop them in their tracks. The if you are issues with the wholesale transferring of large numbers of staff into wholly-owned subsidiaries is that larger, private providers are carefully watching trusts who have gone down this route, waiting in the wings for cost effectiveness to, by chance, diminish over the years so they can offer a lump sum as an enticement to perhaps help balance NHS Trusts books by buying out the business. As always, those discarded by NHS employers are the staff, and our members already the ones most likely to see diminishing or salary cuts as a way to increase profitability even further, when fully outside or even the Trust's own wholly-owned subsidiaries scheme. The good news is that the GMB Union are already leading the way in defending NHS services against outsourcing and privatisation through wholly-owned subsidiaries. GMB Southern members were successful in preventing three NHS foundation trusts from transferring out over 1,000 non-clinical staff, with industrial dispute and two days of strikes action organised by GMB and our workplace reps and members did, after negotiations and further threats of disruption, see the Trust officials step back and cancel continuing with their foolish privatisation plans. The organisation's strategy and the growth in GMB membership within that Trust against this campaign has and will continue to stand us in good stead with what is now a very empowered workforce going forward. The model and arguments for successfully stopping trusts from going down this route is, of course, transferrable - we just need to share it and carry it out. A strategy of public engagement, along with local, national, political support, challenging the business case, backed up with good, old GMB organising, recruitment and industrial muscle, is what was and still remains the best way to defeat such backdoor privatisation. We must work collectively with other unions when and where we can, but importantly, GMB can and must do it alone if it has to. Not doing anything must never be an option. We second this motion. Many thanks.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, it is always difficult to be a first-time speaker and have to wait until the very last day to make that speech - well done. Can I ask Raj to move Motion 198, please?

198. HOSPITAL AND KEYWORKER PARKING

This Congress notes the Government announcement in September 2020 that “free parking for disabled people, frequent outpatient attenders, parents of children staying overnight and staff working night shifts” will become mandatory from January 2021.

Whilst these proposals are welcomed, they do not go far enough and there appears to be no additional central funding for the NHS to implement these proposals.

All hospital visitors should have free parking without the extra worry of being fined.

We understand that it is GMB policy to campaign for free hospital parking for all, but this policy was established over 10 years ago and the goalposts have moved and we see that Wales does not charge for hospital parking and Scotland has lifted charges during the pandemic.

During the COVID pandemic we are pleased to see that Hospital parking has been made free for NHS staff and some local authorities and private providers have also extended this and offered free parking to health and social care staff.

Therefore, we call for GMB to lobby the Government to ensure that all NHS and care workers will be able to park free at their “workplace” after the pandemic is over where such facilities are in place.

We call for a fresh GMB campaign for the proposals to be implemented across the board without impact on central funding and for true free hospital parking across the whole of the United Kingdom.

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: You're on mute, Raj.

RAJ PUDASAINI (LONDON REGION): Thank you, Barbara, can you hear me? Can you hear me now? Thank you, Barbara. President, Congress, Raj Pudasaini, London region, moving Motion 198 on hospital parking. I work in a hospital and have seen how the Government has had a knee-jerk reaction for free parking for NHS staff. Only after pressure in campaigning organisations, but this is short-lived. Congress, our motion recognises that free parking for disabled people and frequent visitors was only just granted from last September, as more and more visitors use the NHS hospitals and we are pleased about this. Our workers work 24/7 at all hours of the day and night, and put themselves at risk. During the pandemic, public transport was either scarce or more dangerous to use. We need to ensure that staff feel safe to be able to travel to work and from their work. We are aware that Congress agreed this policy in 2009, 12 years ago. GMB agreed to campaign for free parking for NHS staff, but we really need GMB to make this a more visible and higher profile campaign. There needs to be unity across the nations - Wales and Scotland have made concessions. Our motion goes further than our current policy as we want a campaign to ensure that the NHS and care workers are allowed to park at their workplaces, as all have proved to be essential workers. Please support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: And London are formally seconding that motion, so we can move to Motion 200 and I call Taranjit Chana, please.

200. PrEP FOR BLACK LGBT+ COMMUNITY

This Congress is aware that when it comes to health issues it is known that the BME communities face barriers to accessing even basic life-saving support and help.

For the BME LGBT+ community the barriers are even greater.

We see mainstream sexual health campaigns often solely feature white, gay men. So those who may be at risk believe that they are not and they remain unaware or uninformed about the benefits of the drug PrEP.

PrEP is a drug given to HIV negative people to reduce risks of HIV. If taken as prescribed PrEP is up to 100% effective in stopping HIV transmission. It is hugely beneficial to those who use it, can access it, and know about it.

Data from the Naz Project revealed that 82% of women living with HIV in the UK are from BME communities and 75% newly diagnosed with HIV from BME communities. This places women from BME backgrounds at a higher risk of sexual and reproductive health inequalities.

As trade unionists, we can help to break down the barriers that prevent BME LGBT+ women in particular having access to PrEP.

We call upon Congress to:

1. Highlight the benefits of PrEP through workplace campaigns.
2. Ensure that campaigns around this are decolonised so that any material/resources are inclusive.
3. Work with communities through health awareness days to raise awareness.

EALING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

TARANJIT CHANA (LONDON REGION): Thank you, Taranjit Chana, London region, moving Motion 200. President, Congress, four years ago this month the first case of a rare pneumonia known as HIV/AIDS was officially recorded. The last 40 years or so have seen a drastic reduction in the incidence of HIV and this has been through services such as routine HIV screening, over-the-counter self-tests, improvement in HIV diagnosis and T-retroviral therapy and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, known as PrEP. It is almost 100% effective when taken as subscribed. It provides protection to the many people who continue to be vulnerable to HIV both in the UK and around the world. The target for Public Health England is to end new HIV transmissions by 2030. PrEP can be an important HIV prevention tool for many people at risk of HIV. The NAS project, a specialist sexual health service for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and LGBTQ+ communities not only tackles the disproportionate impact of health inequalities faced by our communities but also provides support for people living with HIV. When mainstream media talk about PrEP and HIV they talk through a lens that doesn't represent me or the medical community. The voices and the experiences and visibility of black and brown people, in particular women and queer folk of colour, are not heard. There is a disconnect between the numbers of women at risk of contracting HIV and the number of women accessing PrEP. This is concerning for black women, as we make up for over two-thirds of women living with HIV in the UK. Factors include lack of representation, underfunding for specialist sexual health provision, under-resourcing of community organisations, booking an appointment or unable to attend with children. Which prevents us accessing PrEP. Organisations such as PrEPster who educate and agitate for PrEP access are working to improve the visibility of people of colour around sexual health. Congress, much more needs to be done to support such specialist services to enable all those who could benefit from PrEP being able to access it. The inequality in access to PrEP is not acceptable and we don't want to be left behind. So, Congress, please support this motion, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Taranjit. Can I call Fevzi to second, please.

FEVZI HUSSEIN (LONDON REGION): Thanks, President, Congress, Fevzi Hussein, London region, to second Motion 200. I think Taranjit has laid out perfectly the reasons why this motion needs to be carried. The creation of the drug PrEP - Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis - has revolutionised protection in terms of HIV and underlines the excellent advances made in medical science. PrEP is a pill that is taken before and after sex and protects and stops the HIV virus transmission. Essentially it works to block HIV. According to the Terence Higgins Trust there are over 100,000 people confirmed as living with HIV in the UK. This study dates back to 2019, and of these about 5% don't actually know that they have the virus. Of the 4,000 people diagnosed with HIV in 2019 40% were gay or bisexual men and of the 1,559 heterosexual people diagnosed 77% were black African men and women. The motion is really important as the risk groups, according to some of the research available, demonstrate that black members of the LGBT+ community are being disproportionately affected by HIV and as Taranjit has pointed out there are known issues around the black community accessing health benefits, throwing the stigma of HIV diagnosis and the picture becomes even more difficult. The motion makes four very sensible demands and these will go a long way in helping to break down the barriers that prevent many LGBT+ women of colour accessing PrEP. So I would ask Congress to unanimously support this motion. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: And that takes us to Motion 202 and Stephen to move, please.

202. PODIATRY AND OTHER SPECIALIST CLINICS

This Conference notes that many elderly and otherwise infirm people develop problems with feet, due to diabetes, infections or injury.

Podiatrists are specially trained people who look after peoples' feet and ankles, especially the elderly and infirm. They are based at Podiatry Clinics which are specialist centres for the diagnosis and treatment of foot and ankle problems.

These play a vital role in the early effective treatment, avoiding the need for future treatment which could include amputation or treatment of infections. Treatments would be unnecessary if these vital services were accessed earlier. They and other similar specialist clinics play a vital role in preventing future more costly treatment.

We note that access to some of these free services have often been cut or withdrawn as part of cuts in health treatment. We note these short-term cuts can actually lead to more advanced, costlier treatment in the future.

These services are not only cost effective in preventing future more serious problems; they can mean that other health problems are also diagnosed.

We urge the GMB to actively campaign with Local Authorities and the NHS to widely publicise these services which are often Local Authority driven. We also campaign to reverse cuts to these and similar services, which are short-sighted as they have future cost and health implications for patients and health services.

REDBRIDGE BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

STEVEN JONES (LONDON REGION): Thank you very much, President, Congress, Stephen Jones, London region, moving Motion 202 on podiatry and other specialist clinics. Many of us know that the elderly and other infirm and disabled people tend to very many problems with their feet and legs for a number of reasons. For example, diabetes, infections, injury, lack of exercise, circulation problems - the list goes on and on. This is a vital surgery and there are vital surgeries available. Chiropodists who cut toenails can take care of some of the problems but more serious complications can develop like infections and ulcers. If these are not treated properly early on, infections can affect the bones and at that stage it can be the first step to potential amputation of a toe or a limb or a leg. If lucky, a chiropodist will inform the person's GP and ask for a referral to a podiatry or leg clinic, which do now exist in some areas, including the London borough of Redbridge where I live. These clinics have staff who are trained to deal specifically with such problems and will do all they can to preserve a person's limb and prevent amputation. Unfortunately, the existence of such clinics appears to be not well-known or publicised and only a chance tip from a chiropodist or nurse may need to the affected person being able to get help, advice and treatment from such specialist clinics and their staff. It is also very important that these vital services are not targeted in cost-cutting exercises. We call on the GMB to press for wider publication of these facilities by local authorities and the NHS, who are fully aware of these services, to enable greater use for many needy people and people in need. To prevent much unnecessary suffering and potential later high costs to the NHS. Thank you, I move.

BARBARA: And Jonathan to second, please?

JONATHAN COLES (LONDON REGION): President, Congress, Jonathan Coles, London region, seconding Motion 202. Podiatry is an example of a service that is a vital additional preventative service that people with some conditions need. It's a service that is quite often

restricted to certain age groups and not well publicised. This, of course, leads to services not being fully utilised - and then cut. As a diabetic, I am not given access to this service, as I'm not old enough. Yet, if I was to show you my feet, you would see why - don't worry, I'm not going to put you off your lunch by showing you! However, my dad does benefit from podiatry, and fortunately they have now reopened since COVID. These services are more important now as the knock-on effect over the last 18 months, clinics have been cut and some people's conditions have become worse. These services need to be better publicised both within the health and care services and outside. As the motion says, this can save the NHS a lot of vital resources by preventing future unnecessary treatments from being needed. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jonathan, and then to Motion 204, Jan Smith to move, please.

204. MENTAL HEALTH

This Congress deplores the continued practice of Mental Health patients being cared for out of their living area with the consequent distress to the patient and expense to their families. This increases the likelihood of said patients, especially the young, committing suicide.

We call for a campaign to ensure there are placements available to enable patients to be treated and cared for within their own areas.

We also call for extended training on mental health awareness and suicide at work to be made available in schools and workplaces.

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

JAN SMITH (LONDON REGION): Hello?

THE PRESIDENT: You're on, we can hear you.

JAN SMITH: OK, thank you, Jan Smith, London region, moving Motion 204 on mental health. Congress, I want to talk to you about OAPs. This is not what you think, but it stands for Out of Area Placements, which is where people with mental health needs are admitted to units that do not form part of their local network. That is because, particularly in our area, where we've had people being moved hundreds of miles away from their homes. This is relatively a new problem in the NHS, as this wasn't happening ten years ago. It's a direct result of austerity and the gradual but significant reduction in mental health beds over the past few years. Some patients can travel up to 30km/miles, this separates families and loved ones and leaves patients alone and vulnerable, which directly affects young people. That can also result in them committing suicide. No-one should be in a bed from home, but this has commonly been the case. Congress, what makes matters worse is that this comes at a time when mental health services pre-pandemic were already buckling under the levels of demand, coping with the effects of the recession and desperately needing additional resources and of course enough staff to run them. The pandemic resulted in a huge increase in demand for mental health services, as more people experienced added trauma as a result of having COVID-19 or those with pre-existing mental illness found they were not able to access their usual treatments. As GPs' services stopped being face-to-face, more people with depression and anxiety stopped coming forward to see GPs, so we have seen untreated mental illnesses across the country. Congress, the time has now come for the NHS to end out of area placements once and for all. Congress, please support, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, the CEC is supporting all of these motions - sorry, that's going to be formally seconded by London, that is why I'm not calling in a speaker. But the CEC are supporting all of these motions, so we can go straight to the vote. Composite 8. That's carried. Motion 198. That's also carried. Motion 200. Also carried. Motion 202.

THE PRESIDENT: We are going to go to the vote on 202 again because there is a problem. It looks like Motion 202 has been carried. We seem to have sorted out that problem now. So, we are back on, and we'll move to Motion 204. Thank you that vote is carried. Just a slight technical problem with the timer on 202. People can only vote once, we know that your vote went through. That is fine. Item 5. We move on to the CEC's statement now so I'll explain the procedure for the debate. The statement will be moved and seconded by members of the CEC and then I'll invite regions to speak on the statement. I'll just take the speakers as they are lined up on the screen because I think that is the easiest for me. Sarah from London region, please move the statement for the CEC.

CEC Statement on Pay and the Cost of Living

Principles

GMB believes that it is essential that our pay claims remain relevant to changes in the cost of living as it is experienced by our members.

Congress does not seek to 'bind the hands' of our negotiators by dictating the detail of negotiations. At the same time, Congress as the supreme policymaking body of the union does establish important principles that reps and officers should have regard to in negotiations.

Much has changed since Congress adopted a Real Living Wage demand of £10 an hour in 2014. This Statement establishes the principle that our headline Real Living Wage claim must always keep pace with the cost of living. It must also remain a clear demand that is straightforward to communicate to members and non-members.

Our ability to bargain for our members depends on access to good quality information. The RPI inflation index is the closest measure to the true cost of living, and it is under attack. The Government plans to scrap the measure in 2030. This could cost our working and pensioner members thousands of pounds over time. It is vital that the whole labour movement campaigns to protect the rate.

We further believe that the GMB@Work principle carried by Congress 2006 of always having 'a claim on the table' as a precursor to organising has stood the test of time. This Statement is intended to help keep our national campaigning claims – through the Low Pay Commission and other bodies – fit for the early 2020s.

Background

Wages should be something more than a minimum payment that enables us to live. Working people should be rewarded with their full share of the fruits of their labour. Each worker should be guaranteed a minimum standard of living that allows them to pursue their own interests, enjoy recreational activities, provide for their families and take full part in the social life of their community.

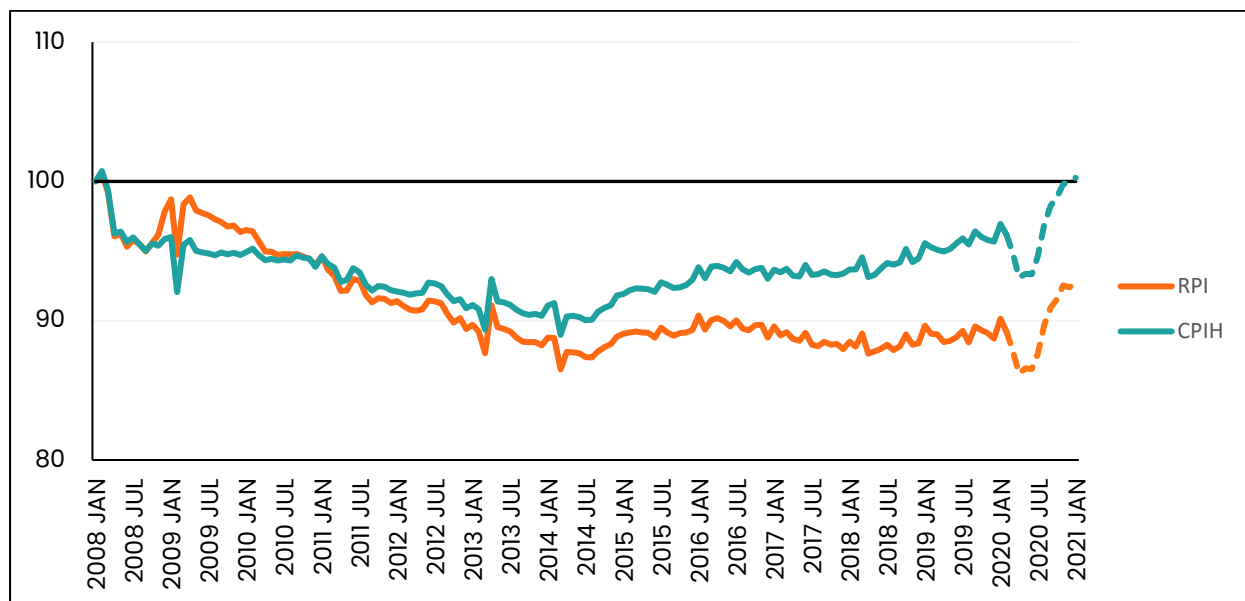
However, we have to be realistic about the challenges that face us. Across the UK, union membership, bargaining coverage and the union 'wage premium' have fallen. The wage differential fell from 15 per cent to 10 per cent between 2009 and 2019 (and in the private sector, the difference has fallen to 3.6 per cent).

While GMB supported the creation of a National Minimum Wage, we have argued over many years that the initial rate was set too low, and it has not caught up with the real minimum cost of living.

GMB's policy since Congress 2014 has been to campaign for the National Minimum Wage to be replaced with a Real Living Wage of £10 an hour (Motion 79 – Minimum Wage). This rate was itself updated from the previous policy of £8 an hour (Congress 2012 – Composite 7). We campaign for the abolition of discriminatory lower age-based NMW rates.

While profits have boomed in many industries, wages have stagnated. Average real wages had still not recovered from the financial crash at the point that the pandemic hit. Real wages were still 10 per cent below January 2008 levels when measured against the RPI.

Real Average Weekly Earnings 2008 to 2021, where January 2008 = 100



GMB calculations based on ONS data. Average wages since March 2020 are skewed upwards due to low paid workers disproportionately losing their jobs.

Against this backdrop, it is more important than ever that our core Real Living Wage demand remains relevant to the world of work.

Living Wage Rates

The £10 an hour demand is clear and simple to communicate, but it must keep pace with the times. We believe the time is right to update the demand made in 2014. If we do not do this then we risk being overtaken by events.

The Foundation Living Wage rate is already £9.50 (and £10.85 in London). The Government said in March 2020 that the full National Minimum Wage rate should read £10.50 by 2024. Adjusted for RPI inflation, the 2014 £10 an hour demand was worth £11.50 at the start of 2021. Our headline claim must at least keep pace with the cost of living.

We note that the Government's so-called 'National Living Wage' is simply a rebranding of the National Minimum Wage for people aged 25 and over, and that even the current full 'National Living Wage' rate falls below the minimum living standard as calculated by the independent Living Wage Foundation.

We further note that the Living Wage Foundation aims to set a rate that 'meets everyday needs' and establish a Minimum Income Standard. It is an average rate that is not high enough to meet the basic living costs of all workers (as set out in the Appendix to this statement). The Living Wage Foundation rate serves an important purpose, but it is not an aspirational rate for a decent living standard, nor is it high enough to compensate for the sacrifices made during the more than a decade of real terms wage cuts.

Finally, we note the motion carried by TUC Congress 2020, which said that the National Minimum Wage should be raised to £10 an hour, and further called ‘for £15 per hour for all workers’ (Composite 09 – in context, £15 an hour is the median average for full-time workers). However, our minimum Real Living Wage demand has already been £10 an hour for some years.

Therefore, we commit to:

1. **Immediately increase our core campaign demand for the National Minimum Wage Living Wage rate to be replaced with a Real Living Wage of £12 an hour** in recognition of the changes to the cost of living and low-paid workers’ sacrifices during the pandemic **and for all workers to be eligible for this rate – wages not based on ages.**
2. **Keep our headline Real Living Wage demand simple and in line with changes to the cost of living** – Congress therefore instructs the GMB to continually review inflation rates and all the evidence on the true minimum income required to maintain a decent standard of living, and from time to time to bring further proposals for uprating our headline demands for debate at future Congresses.
3. **Recognise the 2020 TUC Congress call for a £15 an hour claim** and seek opportunities to integrate this higher demand into our own campaigning, within our democratic industrial structures.

We recognise, and welcome, the fact that GMB has led ground-breaking campaigns for higher rates (including for £15 an hour) in particularly high cost areas, and in particular industries and occupations. The adoption of uprated minimum demands in no way limits these campaigns.

Measuring the cost of living – save the rate

Our ability to bargain depends on our industrial strength and our access to relevant, high quality information.

We need a reliable measure of how our members’ costs are changing. The establishment and defence of such an index has been a longstanding objective of the labour movement. For many years, trade unions have seen the Retail Prices Index (RPI) as the best measure of inflation. But the RPI is under attack and its future is in doubt.

There are stark differences between the RPI and the alternative Consumer Prices Index (CPI), and its derivative the CPIH, which includes some housing costs. The difference between the two RPI and the CPI averages between 0.5 per cent and 1 per cent a year.

The RPI was developed in the UK to be a workers’ cost of living index. The CPI was developed by the European Union to measure member states’ economic convergence. RPI excludes the richest households; the CPI includes prices should as stockbrokers’ charges. The RPI measures owner-occupier housing costs; the CPI does not measure housing costs at all, and the CPIH uses rent costs to estimate owner-occupier costs. GMB has said that this is like using the price of apples to estimate the price of oranges.

We note that the Royal Statistical Society has said that ‘*CPIH and ... CPI ... are an unsatisfactory measure of inflation as it affects British households.*’

RPI remains the most referenced index in pay bargaining and private sector pension schemes. But since 2010, a powerful coalition of interests has sought to scrap the RPI, and replace it with the lower CPI and CPIH rates. While the union movement including GMB helped to secure a six year delay in the plan, the Government still intends to effectively scrap the RPI in 2030.

Despite the Government’s intention to scrap RPI, many of our members’ costs continue to rise with the higher rate, including: private rents (where index linked), mobile phone contracts, interest on student loan repayments, and commuters’ rail fares.

Employers can use the lower CPI and CPIH rates to create a misleading impression of wage changes. For example, in adult social care in England, it has been claimed that average wages have increased by 90p (or 12 per cent) an hour since 2012. But measured against the RPI, real average wages have changed by just 41p (or 5 per cent), despite the huge rise in demand during that time.

Ministers dress up the plan to scrap the RPI in 2030 as a complex, technical change – but its effects will be simple: another devastating attack on the living standards of many of our members. We note that the trustees of some of the country’s biggest pension schemes (BT, Ford and Marks and Spencer) are currently seeking a Judicial Review of the decision.

Inflation – the cost of different rates

If the uprating of wages for someone paid £18,000 a year was switched from RPI to CPIH, the change would make a dramatic difference over time.

After ten years, they would be paid £21,744 – this would be £1,895 less than the £23,639 they would have been paid under RPI. They would have lost out on £10,022 on a cumulative basis over the decade.

The Royal Statistical Society and the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committees have called for the RPI to be reformed (in line with past practice), but Ministers have rejected this sensible approach.

GMB calls for:

- **A national campaign to save the RPI rate** and for the Labour Party and the wider labour movement to take an active stance in defence of the rate.
- Where possible, **the use of the RPI to be defended and extended.**
- The implications of the planned change to be communicated to our members as 2030 approaches, and for alternative measures suited to measuring working people’s cost of living to be sought if the change is pushed through.

RPI and CPI/CPIH – some of the main differences

RPI	CPI and CPIH
Measures housing costs including owner-occupier costs	CPI does not measure housing costs. CPIH only directly measures rent costs.
Excludes richest 4% households and state pensioners	Measures all households’ expenditure
Developed in the UK to measure living costs	EU measure of economic performance (the ‘real’ name of CPI is the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices)
Includes holiday spending	Includes university accommodation, foreign students’ tuition fees, and stockbrokers’ charges
Uses the simple ‘arithmetic’ mean to calculate averages of change – some claim this has an upwards bias	Uses the more complex ‘geometric’ mean to calculate averages of change – some claim this has a downward bias

Appendix

Estimated hourly rates required to maintain a Minimum Income Standard in 2020 (unadjusted for inflation in 2021)

	Single, working age		Couple, two children aged 4 and 7		Lone parent, two children aged 4 and 7	
	Tax credits	Universal Credit	Tax credits	Universal Credit	Tax credits	Universal Credit
Hourly earnings requirement	£9.82	£9.82	£9.56	£7.57	£16.31	£11.97

Source: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, A Minimum Income Standard for the United Kingdom in 2020

(Carried)

SARAH HURLEY (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): Good morning, President, Congress. Sarah Hurley, London region, moving the statement on behalf of the CEC. Congress, we support the principle of the national minimum wage but the rate was too low when it was introduced in 1999 and it is still too low today. That is why GMB has rightly campaigned for a real living wage of £10 an hour since 2014. But we must also keep up the pace with the times and the cost-of-living is rising.

This statement does two things; it updates our minimum headline demand for the real living wage for £12 an hour is in line with inflation since 2014 and independent calculations for a minimum income standard. And the statement endorses calls for campaigns at a higher £15 an hour rate. These must be the decisions of our sector committees and our other democratic structures.

Congress, the statement also sets out GMB's position on RPI. This is our oldest inflation rate. It is the only inflation rate that was designed to measure the cost-of-living for working people. The Tories want to replace it with a lower CPIH rate, but this alternative measure is flawed. It underestimates the cost facing our members. Unlike RPI, it includes the wealthiest households. It does not include all housing costs. But it does include stockbroker fees. The government wants us to think that this change is a technical issue, but let's call a spade a spade. This is yet another Tory stealth attack on our members' pay and pensions. It will leave millions of workers and retired workers poorer. We have until 2030 to overturn this plan. We must fight to keep RPI to keep our political work and collective agreements working through the TUC, the Labour Party and other pensioner organisations. Congress, if you approve this document, you will give us a mandate to launch a national campaign to save the rate and carry others with us. This is a fight that we must win. Please support the statement. Thank you. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, we now go to Samanta from Midland & East Coast to second, please? We can see you, you can start, please?

SAMANTA ZUBRUTE (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): Good morning. President, Congress, this is Samanta from Midland and East Coast region seconding the statement on behalf of the CEC. There is a pay crisis in this country. We have not recovered since the financial crash and pay is under attack again during the COVID 1 pandemic. Some of our members who've risked the most are paid the least. In social care, security and other key workers' occupations and Congress, our women workers are discriminated against, paying the same bills but they are not entitled to the full minimum wage. Wages are not based on ages. Our members need a pay rise. Congress, GMB will continue to fight against the public sector pay

freeze. We need to keep our own demands up-to-date. This is what top statement seeks to do. It gives a commitment that our demands will stay in line with the real cost-of-living. With any further proposals to vote on by the Congress. We think this sets out a clear policy on the issues facing members. Please vote in favour of this statement. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. We now go to the regions for their speakers. So, London region and Pushpa?

PUSHPA MAKWANA (LONDON REGION): Can you hear me. Yes, thank you very much. CEC statement on pay and cost-of-living, President Congress, London region speaking in support of CEC, I am Pushpa. Statement on pay and cost-of-living. London region supports the government's national living minimum wage as when we first called for £10 an hour. Back in 2014, the minimum wage was £6.50. Then just like now, seven years on, the minimum wage is not enough for the members to make ends meet with the rate now at £8.91 this calls for an adopted policy for the £12 an hour with a system negotiator and help other members to move toward the true living wage that means the real cost-of-living wage. We welcome the flexibility to use the TUC £15 rate as this benefits members in the high cost-of-living in the region. But there is more to do. We need to continue to expose bad policies hoping on the minimum or just above that. There is hardship to staff. They choose to pay 5p or 10p above minimum level paying, they say they are good employers when we know they can pay more and it's affordable. We need to ensure all members are included in being paid this. Also for those who are in the gig economy and self-employed. They need to be paid a true living wage regardless of age. We need to move age related discrimination. We welcome the campaign to return the safe RPI. I leave you with a question as to why it's a transparent and the utility companies are increase prices in line with RPI but we, as a union, are forced to accept settlement based on the lower CPI rate, the report will be, we continue to fight for fair play. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Ben from Midland and East Coast, please?

BEN COOK (MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION): Ben Cook, Midland and East Coast region speaking in support of CEC's Special Report on the cost-of-living. I'm going to tell you all a story. I work for ASDA and I work in a low-paid job. And I live in a one-bedroom flat with my partner and we've got three disabled children. We can't afford to private rent and we can't afford a mortgage and the council just don't give a monkey's. When you have bills to pay, and food to provide, and clothes to provide, just to keep a roof over your head, it's difficult to find a deposit. But we are just five people out of 15 million that are living in poverty. And it needs to change. That's why we are all at Congress is to make that change. I've said it before and I've said it again - we need real people working in Parliament that understand what it's like to struggle and to go without. The politicians just don't get it. As a union, we do. One voice, one union, please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Birmingham, Northern and North West & Irish region if you want to put a speaker up can you let the policy team know? I'll go to GMB Scotland Annette?

THE PRESIDENT: Bernadette then? You are on.

BERNADETTE DANIELS (SOUTHERN REGION): Bernadette Daniels, first time speaker delegate. President, Vice-President and Congress. Southern region would like to thank the CEC for the 2021 report statement on pay and the cost-of-living. I am addressing the poverty pay that exists within the UK which affects the vast majority of members. We recognise the need for members to seek nothing less than the RPI as a very minimum when negotiating pay claims. The GMB is a campaigning organisation. If an employer does not recognise why our members should be at least afforded RPI, which is the closest indicator we have to the cost-of-living, then as a campaigning organisation we indeed should consult with members

to take the appropriate level of industrial action to move away from this poverty pay. Congress, this government wants to remove the RPI from negotiations by 2030 and the GMB cannot allow this to happen. We must engage other groups along with the Labour Party to support us in campaigning against this. Congress, we agree a minimum real living wage should be a minimum of £12 per hour. We should be actively campaigning constantly to increase the £15 per hour. The report states we must move away from the values of this on caring. This is just a rebrand of the national minimum wage. The real living wage should apply to all groups. We must rage against the age. Southern region endorses the CEC proposals to replace the national minimum wage with the real living wage, keep the headline of the wage simple and in line with the cost-of-living. Recognise the call for £15 an hour and mobilise to support the campaign for, this organise and campaign to save RPI. All legislations use RPI as the first line in all claims. The government doesn't care for the works class. They make up the vast majority of workers though. Thank you Congress for your time in solidarity.

THE PRESIDENT: It's sad that the first time speakers aren't getting the applause they deserve. Thank you. Paul from North Derbyshire?

PAUL HOWARD (YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION): Good morning President, Congress. Paul Howard, Yorkshire and North Derbyshire, supporting the CEC on the cost-of-living. Colleagues, we know PRI is always going to give us a better measure than CPI. We know that our own £10 an hour campaign has only been appropriate when we are dealing with employers who have always relied on UK living wage. A title stolen from the foundation living wage which was higher and getting too much attention from the public at the time. We have run £15 an hour campaigns when and where we can realistically hope to gain support and must recognise that our own aspirations must set rather than keep pace with our members and the public's. To that end, this report recognises that we have to move to a minimum of £12 in these circumstances and support the TUC and GMB campaigns for £15 wherever we can. When we are dealing with employers who are funded through the public sector we should be demanding nothing less than the job evaluated pay rates and terms and conditions that we have secured for our own battles with government departments and councils.

When my own region have tabled these arguments in care and explained that we seek nothing less than our own job evaluation rates for care, we are looking at like something from another planet. It's not built on minimums. Our missions are to achieve the best possible terms and conditions for our members, but scrapping the RPI, a UK-based calculation and replacing it entirely with CPI, and the Tory cons are too far. Plan for the best and support this report, colleagues.

THE PRESIDENT: That is all our speakers on the Special Report. Before I go to the vote, can I ask speakers on Motion 94, Emergency Motion 2, to make themselves ready after Motion 114. I can put the CEC statement pay and cost of living to the vote, please. That has been unanimously carried. Thank you. We now go to item 6, industrial policy and we are on Motion 114 and I ask Joe Smith from North West & Irish region to move, please.

114. BETTER PAY FOR WORKERS IN THE SECURITY INDUSTRIES

This Congress recognises the millions of low paid workers, many working unsociable hours and working under extreme pressure on minimum wage.

The Pandemic has shown to us how important the Government's under investing in the NHS has affected us all.

There are a group of workers, many we do not often think of, work unsociable hours and work in the security industry.

These workers are normally paid minimum wage and are an army of dedicated workers who protect our schools, hospitals and our streets and shopping centres.

Our cities and towns, public surveillance cameras worked by CCTV Operators working 24hrs 7 days a week, 365 days a year, protecting the most vulnerable and helping to reduce violent crime, in both rural and urban areas.

We call on the GMB to mount a campaign that will force local authorities and private companies to pay the real National Living Wage.

A code of practice to be introduced to safeguard all those who work in the security industry.

W87 WIGAN BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Withdrawn)

JOE SMITH (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): President, Congress, good morning. Joe Smith, North West & Irish Region, moving Motion 114 better pay for our workers in the security industry. Congress, security workers right across the country are in decline when it comes to pay, not an increase. Security companies have taken advantage of the government's minimum wage policy. To be part of any job relating to the securities, we need an SIA licence at a cost of £220. It has to be renewed every three years. So can you imagine a person that's been in a job for 30 years, this would have cost this person £2,200 to obtain their lie sent. Before the person can apply for the licence, you have to go on the relevant courses depending on what job applies. This is an additional cost of between £50 and £250. Depending on what job description comes out, many have to be police vetted. Jobs can be declined, even after paying out. It doesn't necessarily mean that person has a criminal background, it could be very unfortunate to be a financial background.

I for one along with all my reps ex-Remploy colleagues have seen a decline in wages. Site supervision have not seen a pay increase in years, dragging them down to minimum wage. We are a dedicated body of workers, many working unsociable hours with no extra pay, providing a service, protecting schools, hospitals and our streets. The pandemic has shown how the government is under-investing in the NHS, police, and it's affected us all. Bringing in low-paid security workers who all have been key workers throughout the pandemic.

Congress, many will have had the COVID vaccine. They are the one who is make contact with the general public, the security, they are the persons taking temperature, advising social distance and cleansing. All these are low paid workers. Many face verbal abuse, physical altercation and in some cases serious assaults and most of the security workers being paid just minimum wage. Congress, work starts here. We call on the GMB to mount a campaign that will force all local authorities to pay the same real living wage to all its workers including private contractors. A code of practice to be introduced to safeguard all those working within the security industries. Congress, please support. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Joe. Can I call Lynsey to second, please?

LINDSAY ENGLAND (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): President, Congress, good morning. President, Congress, good morning. Lindsay England, feeling fabulous to be a first time delegate and speaker from the equally fabulous North West & Irish team. Seconding Motion 114 better pay for workers in security industries.

Congress, the vast majority of security industry personnel have not had a pay rise in several years or more. Often they have to exist on minimum wages or just above, amounting to having to increase their already extensive weekly or monthly schedule in order to obtain an acceptable standard of living. Alongside of this, much of the work taken on is either freelance or contracted through zero hours which in turn leaves them without sick pay, holiday pay or often any means of recovery, of uniforms or long distance travel expenses. Invariably, taking time off can be seen as refusing to work and the workers are added to the bottom of the list

or not even considered at all for many future available opportunities. When working during times of a national crisis or austerity, often in isolation, as part of the job role itself, there is little to no opportunities of asking for support, let alone enhancement of pay for working nights, for weekends, for overtime, requesting anything he's issue related, making complaints for harassment or taking the option to strike. Many security personnel or agency workers speak out and will be considered to be easily replaceable if they are considered to be militant. These frontline key workers are easily forgotten yet they turn up and continue their duties, putting themselves at risk. Using coronavirus as an excuse to drive down pay and employment conditions is totally unacceptable. Congress, I second this Motion, please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lindsay and can I ask Shane Alison to respond to the Motion on behalf of the CEC, please?

SHANE ALLINSON (CEC, MANUFACTURING): Good morning. Shane Allinson responding to Motion 114, better pay for workers in the security industries. Congress, the CEC is asking for the Motion to be withdrawn as it stands in opposition to the CEC statement on pay and the cost-of-living. As the CEC statement sets out, GMB believes that an hourly pay rate that could be considered a living wage should now be at the very least £12 an hour and should apply across all sectors and age groups. This rate is far higher than the so-called national living wage that Tory Governments have promoted which we believe falls way below the cost-of-living. While it should be recognised that Motion 114 advocates for a real living wage, it refers to this national living wage bar name. If passed, this will commit the union to supporting a far more unsatisfactory minimum rate of pay for members than what has been already passed in the statement. We can however certainly consider how to apply the policy passed in the statement to our campaigns and on a sector basis including the security industry. Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking the withdrawal of Motion 114 for the reasons set out. If the region do not wish to withdraw Motion 114, I'm afraid the CEC stance will be to ask Congress to oppose this Motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shane. So I just need to ask North West & Irish region do you agree to withdraw the Motion? If you could let the policy team know your stance, please. You don't have a right of reply to the CEC. You only have a right of reply when somebody comes into the debate and opposes your Motion. So can we have a stance on whether you are agreeing to withdraw, please? The only option you have got North West & Irish region is do you agree to withdraw the Motion, and thank you for that decision. Thank you.

That means that we can move on to item 7, employment policy. Sorry, we are having some problems calling in the next set of speaker so we are just maybe rejigging things. OK. Until we can call in those speakers, we are going to move on to item 8, social policy which is Motion 177. So on your programmes, you have also got Motion 175, but that has been accepted and existing policy, so following the passing of the SOC report 1 it's adopted without debate. We move on to Motion 177 and Richard... no. Have we got a speaker for 177? Is it Richard? We are just getting Richard in to speak, we hope. Well done, nice to see you! Richard, it's all yours!

177. DIGITAL INCLUSION

This Congress notes that companies and providers are offering better and cheaper offers to users if goods and services are purchased online. Congress believes that this discriminates against older people who are trying to access services on a whole range of matters such as heating, insurance, ordering prescriptions and booking GP appointments, to name just a few. This Congress believes that some pensioners are unable to access IT or receive training to develop IT skills and are missing out on digital inclusion. Congress notes that this situation is exacerbated in rural areas. Congress calls on the Government to provide older people with the opportunities to access IT. Congress asks for a report back at a future Congress on progress in implementing this motion.

C52 – SOUTH EAST NORTHUMBERLAND GENERAL BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

RICHARD SPEAKMAN (NORTHERN REGION): Good morning, Richard Speakman, Northern region.

THE PRESIDENT: Richard you are on, we could hear you. We can hear you, Richard.

RICHARD SPEAKMAN: Richard Speakman, Northern region speaking on Motion 177, digital inclusion. Isn't technology great! President, Congress, I'm a bit of a dinosaur. I try not to buy things online. But I admit I renewed my car insurance via the Internet. Congress, hopefully you will have read the wording of the Motion and possibly agree with it. Without pre-empting the national equality conference Motion, it seems my area is now at a disadvantage over the Internet use. To give you an example, my mother is 90 years young, can't work a computer, hasn't an e-mail address, so she's missing out on any services and discounts on offer by firms and GPs. She can't be alone. Many families are the same. In the countryside with services being cut, bus services nearly extinct, older people face being cut off and isolated. Congress, please support this Motion to bring the older generation back to the Future. Thank you. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for being ready to come in when we had a slight problem there. And Northern region have agreed to formally second the Motion, so unless anybody wants to speak in opposition, I'll call Shane Allinson to respond.

SHANE ALLINSON (CEC, MANUFACTURING): Shane Allinson speaking on behalf of the CEC on 177 digital inclusion. The CEC is supporting this Motion but with a qualification. We support the proposal of all the people having access to courses that will improve their day-to-day lives and as such the Government should fund such initiatives and programmes. The qualification is that it is not necessary to produce a separate report on the progress of this motion other than what is produced on the website. We will use our political influences to ensure that this issue is up for debate in the appropriate channels in front of an austerity minded Tory Government. Therefore the CEC is asking for 177 to be carried but with the qualification set out. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shane. Northern region have agreed the qualification. We can move straight to the vote. And that's carried. Congress I am now going to call for a short break, see you in 15 minutes at quarter to, cheers.

[BREAK]

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Congress. We will try and go back to item 7, employment policy rights at work, which is Motion 94 and the Emergency Motion 2. So, I am hoping that Toni is online to speak, to move Motion 94, please.

94. MINIMUM WAGE FOR SHIFT WORK/ UNSOCIABLE HOURS

This Congress agrees that there should be a minimum wage for shift work/unsociable hours.

A minimum wage of at least £10 per hour for every worker who works shifts in all industries.

We recognise the sacrifices made by shift workers, and support anybody who works shifts/unsociable hours.

ALIDA PACKAGING BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

TONI YEL (MIDLAND & EAST COAST): Moving motion 94, minimum wage for shift work, unsocial hours. Since writing the motion the GMB special report has been developed. We have just had the CEC response. Although this motion called for a minimum wage of £10 per hour the GMB will increase the core campaign, demanding for the national minimum living wage rate to be replaced with a Real Living Wage of £12 per hour. We wanted to add that as we know, working unsocial hours that extend into the night is known to have a negative impact on health. Extensive research has shown shift work disrupts the body's daily cycle. There is evidence that the more years spent shift working the greater the impact on health, both physical and mental. It is really important that we campaign to ensure that our members get the wage they deserve. We thank the CEC for the qualification and accept that within the special report on statement of pay, the proposal for the £12 per hour, and members who actually work shifts and unsociable hours are attracting a higher rate. I move. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Dawn to second, please.

DAWN LOVATT (MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION): Morning comrades. Dawn Lovatt, seconding this Motion 94. Congress, I have been a shift worker for many years through the pandemic. As my colleague said, it does have an impact on your life and the other side of it is when you work as a key worker, as my colleagues have done this past year, you often go beyond what is expected of you. And therefore, yes, of course it is going to have an impact on your life and the fact that we live in a system that continues to offer cuts and under this Conservative Government, as you can see, with the NHS, it is still debating whether to give the NHS and to be fair all key workers, whether private or public sector, a decent wage - just reflects where we are. And this is why we're very grateful that the GMB is asking for a proper living civilised wage because now, without it, people like us that do shift work, whatever form it comes in, are going to feel like we're working for nothing. And it is also going to take its toll on us physically. When we want to do a proper job and we want to look after the people that we look after, as in like with us in the care sector, to the best of our standards. It's very hard to do that when you are not treated with respect. So, please second this motion. Please support it. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Toni and Dawn having patience for your patience in being called in after the break. We are going to try and call in Nicola Warr to move emergency motion 2 but we are having trouble. I will ask Unmesh to move the motion, please?

EMERGENCY MOTION 2

JUSTICE FOR GMB WORKPLACE REPS

This Congress is appalled to see some Labour Councils using flimsy catch-all accusations of so-called breaches of Codes of Conduct to discipline and dismiss long-standing union reps for standing up for their right to protest and express their views.

The most recent example arose in April 2021 when a Labour Council, Islington, dismissed a loyal, long-standing member of staff and GMB representative, Gary Bolister after 24 years of service and a previously completely unblemished disciplinary record.

Our member has in effect been dismissed for speaking out and taking part in peaceful and lawful protests (in line with Covid restrictions) as an Islington resident, against the implementation of Low Traffic Neighbourhood Schemes (LTNs).

Congress calls upon the CEC to:-

- Lobby and campaign for the rights of free speech and lawful peaceful protests;
- The right of council and other public sector employees to lawfully express their views without views of being disciplined;
- Campaign against the use of employers Codes of Conduct to silence political opposition;
- Support and protect our reps when they stand up for their lawful beliefs whether during their working or personal time;
- Raise the profile of the campaign calling on Islington Council to reinstate Gary Bolister.

Islington & Haringey Branch
LONDON REGION

(Carried)

UNMESH DESAI (LONDON REGION): Yes. Can you hear me? Congress, in April Gary Bolister, one of our long standing reps was dismissed under a flimsy charge of a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct and social media policy. Gary gave the Council 24 years loyal service. As a housing caretaker he was well liked by the residents. Up to this point, he had a completely unblemished disciplinary record. But despite this, the council decided that alleged breach amounted to gross misconduct and moved straight to dismissal. This dismissal has been confirmed on appeal and Gary now has no choice but to seek legal redress unless the council sees sense, even at this late stage, and listens to the demands of the GMB and local residents and the campaign for Gary's reinstatement. Gary had been taking part, as a resident, I stress, in a protest against the council's introduction of low traffic neighbourhoods. These protests were legal. Fully in line with COVID restrictions, and organised by local residents. Unfortunately a video Gary was captured in also exposed a local councillor and this is what led to the allegation Gary had breached social media policy and Code of Conduct. Congress, the motion is not about... it is biased and prejudicial to a fair hearing. The council had one objective, that was to dismiss Gary. It is not about traffic calming measures, not about traffic at all. This motion is about an employer using flimsy charges. This is about the freedom of free speech, protest and the rights of public sector staff to have their voices heard. Congress, we should not and cannot accept the situation where residents' rights are curtailed and work for the local council. Never. Never can you accept the council dismisses a GMB rep, who was there lawfully and peacefully to speak out. Islington Council can still do the right thing and listen to and reinstate Gary. It is not too late. It is never too late. If they do not, the message from this GMB Congress must be loud and clear - we will defend Gary until he gets justice. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, thank you for stepping in at the last minute to move. Can I ask the Region to formally second that motion. Yes, they are agreeing. Thank you. That means, can I ask Ann Dean from CEC to respond please.

ANNE DEAN (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): Thank you. President, Congress, Anne Dean speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 94, Emergency Motion 2. The CEC is supporting these motions with a qualification. On Motion 94, we support the principle that shift work and unsocial hours should always be paid at a higher than standard rate. Our qualification is that it has been GMB policy to call for a national minimum wage of £10 for all hours since 2014. The 2021 CEC statement on pay and costs of living proposes a minimum hourly rate of £12 an hour. We believe that shift and unsocial hours rates should be in excess of this figure. It is GMB's policy to support a shorter working week, with no loss of income. On emergency Motion 2, we are also supporting this motion with a qualification. Sorry... a wee blip there. We support this Motion and absolutely believe that our rep in London region should be reinstated. It is a gross, unjust, it is grossly unjust what has happened to him and the CEC

fully supports him, as we do many of our hard-working reps. To be a trade union rep takes courage and we stand for dignity. We are the first to the fire and always put others first. We often walk with targets on our backs because we adhere to stand up for what is right. With that comes great responsibility for upholding the values of our trade union. We know that our colleague in Islington and Haringey branch did nothing wrong. Has been the victim of a spurious attack. We will commit to ensuring justice is served. Our small qualification is on the point where the motion is asking us to support and protect our reps when they stand up for their lawful beliefs, that during their working hours or personal time. We would like to qualify that when providing support to our reps, we would need to consider not solely the lawfulness of those beliefs but also whether they are in line... sorry... a wee blip here. It's not working! Bear with me. Sorry... with... I will start again. We would like to qualify providing support to our reps we would need to consider not solely the lawfulness of those beliefs but also whether they are in line with our rule book and the aims principles and beliefs of the GMB. We would like to make it clear that we do not consider this to be a factor in this specific case raised by the motion. Therefore, please support Motion 94 and emergency Motion 2, with a qualification set out. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Anne. Our Midland & East Coast are accepting the qualification. Does London region accept the qualification on the emergency motion, please? Yes, thank you. That means I can move to the vote. So, Motion 94. That's carried. And Emergency Motion 2, please. And that's carried. And can I ask you to please show your solidarity to Gary by signing the petition which is on the London region website and on Facebook @reinstateGary - let's get him reinstated, thank you. We now move back into the normal business and item 10, employment policy rights at work, Composite 6, Motion 99, Motions 100, 101 and 102. Can I ask London region to move Composite 6, please.

Composite 6

Covering Motions; Motion 97 Parental Bereavement Leave London Region Motion 98 Parental Bereavement Leave Southern Region

PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

This Congress welcomes the new Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Regulations known as "Jack's Law" which comes into force on 6 April 2020. This gives a statutory right to a minimum of two weeks' leave for all employed parents if they lose a child under the age of 18, or have a stillbirth from the 24th week of pregnancy. This is a giant step forward for parents in the aftermath of a child dying.

However, we would call for our political groups to push the Government to amend this legislation so that it covers miscarriages which can occur before 24 weeks.

We urge our reps to ensure their companies are aware of this new legislation and ensure that the two weeks is paid leave where a worker has been employed for less than 26 weeks. We also want companies to consider that partners should be able to take compassionate leave to support women and this should be paid as well.

We also ask this Congress to support this motion where pregnant members of staff can take the 11th to the 13th week of a pregnancy off without affecting their annual leave. This is due to the increased risk of miscarriage during the transition between the first and second trimester.

We ask the GMB to lobby parliament to look at adding this to their current maternity entitlements.

This Congress calls on the government to simplify the notice provisions regarding parental bereavement leave and pay arising out of The Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018. The complex notice and counter-notice requirements at a time when bereaved parents are dealing with unspeakable tragedy are, quite simply, shameful.

MOVING REGION LONDON
SECONDING REGION SOUTHERN

(Referred)

BISMILLA MAHOMED (LONDON REGION): Good morning, President, good morning, Congress, I'm Bismilla, moving the motion on parental bereavement leave. In 2006 we implemented the Pay Act which we see in the 2020 implementation of the regulations. This is a step in the right direction for parents. When a child dies under the age of 18 or from stillbirth from 24 weeks, onwards. What our motion is asking is that these regulations need to go further, as one in four of our pregnancies end in miscarriage. We're asking that we should lobby for more changes in the law so that it covers miscarriages that occur before 24 weeks, as this is a difficult time for all parents, and all parents need every support they can get. We also want to see paid leave extended to partners, as they need to be there to comfort and support these women. Congress, I want you - I want to update you about a ground-breaking agreement in our region. Inspired by New Zealand, the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham is the first UK council to offer paid miscarriage leave to women and their partners, to a man or woman whose partner has miscarried, or has a stillbirth, they will get the same amount of time away from work to support them and help them come to terms with their loss. The council is also offering a buddy system to help the parents return to work. Let's shout about this and ask our workplaces to follow this lead. It is time all employers embraced this opportunity to do the right thing by their workers. Please support Composite 6, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Bismilla. And Steve to second, please, from Southern region. You're good to go, Steve.

STEVE HUTCHINGS (SOUTHERN REGION): Yes, President, Congress, I am seconding Composite 6. Congress, it is true that, as a union, we need to lobby political parties for changes in the law for stillbirths before 24 weeks. When there is a stillbirth the family will be stressed and upset and the fact that the partner may have to return to work. There could be further stress or upset should the parents not be treated properly or fairly in the workplace and they would have to go through a grievance and then maybe a tribunal, which would add a bigger burden on the family. I ask Congress to support this motion. I second.

BARBARA: Thank you, Steve. Motion 99, Claire to move, please.

99. GUARDIANSHIP LEAVE

Congress believes that paid leave should be put in place regarding guardianship when taking on the responsibility of a child under a guardianship order.

Congress notes that at present there is no legislation for paid leave when taking the responsibility of a child under a guardianship order. Previous petitions have been submitted in the past, however due to the low number of cases at the time this was not guaranteed, as this is now the preferred choice for social services these are on the increase.

Congress believes this needs to be looked at urgently. At present if you give birth to or adopt a child this is covered through statutory paid maternity leave or statutory paid adoption leave. If you however foster or become a child's special guardian, you currently have no rights to time off and therefore any time taken must be unpaid and only if the company agrees.

Congress is aware that it has been recognised that bonding time is very important with the child and the primary carer, hence the maternity and adoption leave, and believes that guardianship orders require the same

recognition. In most cases the child has been removed from their current home resulting in a stressful upheaval for the child who needs time to bond with their new guardian. As well as this, taking on a child under special guardianship is a huge responsibility for the guardian and not being entitled to any sort of paid leave or financial support will only add to their stress.

Congress believes that this lack of financial support could and will affect someone's decision to take on a child if they are not able to afford unpaid leave or if they work for a company that would let them take this.

Congress believes that this is an extremely unfair situation, where workers require time off from work to look after a child under the current guardianship order scheme, without being granted paid leave and therefore that paid guardianship

leave should become policy urgently and progress on this is reported back to Congress 2022.

N26 NORTHERN ELECTRIC IND BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

CLAIRE CONWAY (NORTHERN REGION): Good morning, President, Congress, Claire Conway, Northern region, moving motion 99, guardianship leave. The whole issue of being a guardian lacks the priority that it especially when compared with other leave arrangements for birth and adoption. More and more the need for fostering and becoming a guardian is becoming a pressing issue for people who take on responsibilities that will have an impact on lives. The reality is that there are over 55,000 families in the UK providing much-needed support on a daily basis. There are over 65,000 children living with families in a fostering environment daily. On top of that, people who are guardians do so without any special leave support. Not having rights to take time off means that it must be taken unpaid, or even then only if the employer agrees. Children and families in these situations desperately need support and policy in this area needs to be updated and modernised to reflect the modern Britain. Lack of support and especially financial support will deter some great people who have the skills to take on responsibilities but just can't afford it. Congress, let's help change social policy again for the better, help widen the scope of access to paid leave, and help those very people who just want to help others. I move.

BARBARA: Formally seconded, that motion, so Motion 100 I ask Kevin to move, please.

100. COMPASSIONATE LEAVE FOR FAMILY PETS

Congress, the loss of a family pet is a very traumatic and sad event which can result in a vast amount of stress and anxiety for all the family. Our beloved pets are a part of a family and when they pass away there is most definitely a period of grieving.

To date when a family pet sadly passes away our members have no choice but to take annual leave or unpaid leave to cover any absence. In having compassionate leave for family pets this would ease this painful experience and allow a much-needed healing process to begin.

L16 LB GREENWICH BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

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

THE PRESIDENT: We can hear you clear - we can't see you, but that's fine, we can hear you, Kevin.

KEVIN PINK: OK, thank you, President, Congress, Kevin Pink, GMB Greenwich branch, Southern region. It is a well-known fact that the 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 operations. 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 hide 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 dependency leave so it includes time off for pet-related emergency. I am a first-time delegate and I move this motion.

BARBARA: Thank you, can I ask Luca to second, please?

LUCA BEE (SOUTHERN REGION): Luca Bee, Southern region, London Borough of Southwark branch and I'm here to second Motion 100. Kevin has already said many things that are quite true regarding asking for time off for pets. All I wanted to add is that pets are members of the family. Many people in the UK, many people in the world, they could gladly say they have a better relationship with their dog or their cat, or their hamster, I would say, than with other humans and the fact that this is not recognised under employment rights, in order to get them time off if they have to take care of them, I think it's really sad. Because very often it is - people overestimate or underestimate, I would say - underestimate the importance of this relationship, or how much a pet means for a person. How much social connection they can get to them. And also how difficult it is when this pet dies to basically be left alone, sometimes having to endure sad comments from their colleagues or their friends, "It's just a pet, it is just a cat, you can get another one, why are you so upset". The thing is, you cannot get another one - that pet was a very valued family friend and the fact that an employee cannot be given the appropriate time to grieve for them, to care for them, is just not right. That's the reason why I really ask Congress to support this motion, and if you are an animal-lover, if you have your own pet, if you have a special little furry friend that gives you companionship, you know how important it is. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I call on Kenneth to move Motion 101, please.

101. PHASED RETURN TO WORK

This Congress asks that a campaign for anyone who has been on long term sick due to a severe/disabling illness needing a phased return should be paid sick pay on the hours or days that they aren't in work.

Both ACAS and Law at Work state that the employee should be paid sick pay, if entitled to, on the day where they won't be attending work.

Most of the members we deal with who have been on long term sick have done so due to a debilitating and life changing conditions. Many will need adjustments to be able to carry on doing their job. If there is an opportunity to return to work on a phased return and not loose holidays or income then the employee will be more willing to return earlier as they gain confidence in being able to complete their work and for any reasonable adjustments to be put in place as they go along. This in the long term will benefit the employee and the employer as time goes on.

A08 TAMESIDE BRANCH

North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

KENNETH GRIFFITHS (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): President, Congress, Kenneth Griffiths, North West & Irish region, first-time delegate and first-time speaker moving Motion 101. When colleagues have been off work due to debilitating circumstances what incentive is there to get them back to work? If they come into work for the hours they work, the rest of the time they have to make up using their holidays when this should be their work/life balance. When we suggest is when returning to work, we do not want to be off work but unfortunately sometimes this is out of our control. With the backing of the union we can show that this has added value to both the employee and the employer. The employer benefits from a phased return by better statistics on sickness levels and an increase in productivity. Also less stress to staff who have been coping with less work colleagues in the workplace. They also benefit from the holidays being accrued by the person off sick for work done. The employee benefits from a wellbeing feeling and a higher morale feeling, with thoughts that the company is great to work for and with help provided they can go from strength to strength. Also if staff are back on full pay it is an incentive to return to work. Otherwise they may as well stay off and that way they use their holidays for what their true intention is for. Congress, please support.

THE PRESIDENT: The region have agreed to formally second this motion so we can go to Motion 102, and ask Billy to move, please.

102. FLEXIBLE WORKING

This Congress calls on the Government to look at flexible working across all industries.

Currently in the Water Industry this is not working. The workforce has become so diverse in age groups that flexible working has become more important to allow people to spend time with their families. Therefore, we need change by the Government that will allow all employees to access family friendly policies, rather than only at the manager's discretion which is the case in our industry.

N45 NORTH WEST WATER BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Referred)

BILLY GOULDING (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): Congress, can you hear me?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we can.

BILLY GOULDING: Congress, Billy Goulding speaking on behalf of 102. President, Congress, this motion calls on the government to look at flexible working across all industries, currently this is not working. The workforce has become so diverse with age groups that flexible workers become more important to allow people to spend time with their families. Therefore, we need to change... By the government that will allow all to access family-friendly policies, rather than by discretion, which is the case in our industry. We heard yesterday of the number of unpaid carers and we know that the cost of child care is prohibitive for many. People have many family responsibilities, be that caring for older parents, looking after children or grandchildren, and this is regardless of their gender or age, providing workable, robust flexible working arrangements will enhance the working lives of our members. Congress, please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Billy. And again the region have agreed to formally second this motion, so I can't see any speakers wishing to come in in opposition, so I'm going to ask Nathan Holman to respond on behalf of the CEC, please. Nathan?

NATHAN HOLMAN (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): President, Congress, Nathan Holman, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Composite 6, Motion 101 and Motion 102. The CEC is asking for Composite 6 to be referred. The motions in this composite are very much in line with existing policy, as illustrated by two motions carried by Congress 2019. These were Motion 194 - the parental leave and pay - and Motion 196 - a time to grieve.. removing the stigma surrounding miscarriage and infant loss. The motions in the composite raise some new issues, with Motion 98 in particular raising the issue of notice provisions. It would therefore be helpful if they could be referred back to allow us to develop policy. On Motion 101, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. We support the principle that a member returning to work after a severe or disabling illness who needs a phased return to work should be provided with support. The CEC's qualification is that, as a matter of policy, we should be arguing for full pay for these days they are not working, and not just sick pay. On Motion 102, the CEC is asking for the motion to be referred. The right to ask to work flexibly is currently available to all employees who have at least 26 weeks' continuous service. But the right is only a right to ask to work flexibly. Not a right to work flexibly. A full consultation is expected and while an upcoming employment bill has once again been delayed by this government, we understand it is likely that this bill will introduce a provision for the new right. The CEC would like to refer the motion to assist in developing union policy pending consideration of the new measures. In the meantime, it is open to the region to pursue matters through collective bargaining and on an industrial basis. Therefore, the CEC is asking for the regions concerned to agree to refer Composite 6, for Motion 101 to be carried with the qualification set out, and for the region to agree to refer Motion 102. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nathan. Can I have some feedback from London and Southern as to whether you agree to refer Composite 6, please? Yes? Is that from both regions? Just London - yes, and Southern, thank you. And do North West & Irish region accept the qualification for Motion 101? Yes? And also for Motion 102 to be referred back? Yes, brilliant. So we can go to the vote. So we can go to - because the Composite 6 and 102 have been - reference back has been accepted, we can go to a vote on 99. That's been carried. Motion 100. That's been carried. Finally, Motion 101. That's also been carried.

We move on, then, to item 11, which is social policy, justice and Motions 179, 180, 181 and 182. You may have 178 in your programmes, but this has been accepted as existing policy, following the passing of the Standing Orders Committee number one, therefore it is adopted without debate. So can I call on Naome to move Motion 179, please? All good to go, Naome.

179. IMPACT OF LEGAL AID

Legal Aid reductions which came into effect in 2010 are impacting on the judicial services.

A decade later, in 2020, the impact on the legal systems throughout is now at breaking point. Legal Aid assistance is currently down more than half in the last decade.

What was once a strong legal aid system, providing a fruitful legal service for the people and the judiciary has resulted in judges, barristers, solicitors and clerks, who rely on work through the legal aid assistance, becoming unprotected via contracts and scratching for work. This impacts on the future of our legal system and the demise of our judiciary services. If this continues to diminish into the next decade, our judicial system is at risk, and will only be for the few and not the many, leaving the unthinkable. There could be no legal aid system in the next decade.

We call for GMB to set up and organise a legal strategy in organising and recruiting in this field with the view to take up the legal aid fight from within the legal system using UnionLine as a tool to assist with this programme as there is no union protection within this sector.

CAMDEN APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

NAOME KYOKUSHABA-KATSIGAZI (LONDON REGION): Thank you, President, Congress, Naome Katsigazi, London region, moving Motion 179. It is well documented that the changes to the legal aid system brought about by the legal aid centre on mental unfairness in 2012 have had an unfair impact on people's access to justice. Before our most vulnerable in society have been disproportionately affected creating a widened gap between those that can access justice and those who can't. Justice for all is no longer a principle that is upheld. Justice for the wealthy is now the word of the day. As a union we have already set policy on this issue and campaigned relentlessly for reassessment of legal aid funding as well as supporting our members working in the legal aid sector. This motion seeks to lessen the impact on those who work in justice and supplement our policy, and add to what we are doing as a leading trade union in the sector. Congress, the statistics speak for themselves. In 2021, nearly a decade on from the Act coming into force, 1 million fewer legal aid claims are being made each year. In 2013, the government argued that access to justice would be enabled to the most needy by providing exceptional funding for 5-7,000 cases annually but such is the complexity of the forms that very few people accessed the funds last year. This has impacted existing professionals in the sector, as well as those who are due to work in it. In 2010, the Ministry of Justice controlled a £10.9 billion budget on legal aid, provisions and the services, in 2019-2020 that has reduced to £6.38 billion - a fall of more than 40%. Many firms across the country have given up their provision of various legal aid services entirely because it's so un-practicable. And more and more applicants are having to pay contributions to their defence if their income is above a certain threshold. This makes everything so prohibitively high in costs, in addition to removing the right to recover legal costs for those who are bringing cases. As the head of the Law Society said, if British justice still exists it's only for the wealthy and a small number of very low incomes lucky enough to find a solicitor willing to climb the mountain of red tape to secure legal aid. There is a lot of bureaucracy that accompanies legal aid work. What does this say about our justice system? Congress, we need to confront the crisis facing our justice system and that is why we must strategically organise from inside and ensure that justice for all is restored. Congress, I urge you to support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, and the region have agreed to formally second that motion, so can I ask Emma to move Motion 180, please.

180. DIGNITY FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

This Congress notes no action has been taken by government or parliament a year and a half after the Supreme Court gave its judgement about criminal records from childhood offending.

On 31 January 2019 the Supreme Court found that the system for disclosing the records for convictions that have taken place in childhood is unlawful (2019UKSC3). Fiona Broadbent is one of the women involved in the legal action, who has given up her anonymity to speak out publicly. Fiona was trafficked into prostitution as a child and sexually exploited but she was not recognised as a victim. (Source: BBC NEWS website: "Sex abuse victim "vindicated" after High Court win" – 02 March 2018). Fiona was instead convicted a number of times for the prostitution offence of "soliciting and loitering" contrary to Section 1 Street Offences Act 1959. The men who sexually abused her walked away unchallenged but Fiona, and many women like her, are still being punished

today, as their convictions haunt them. These women have been prevented from working in schools, as carers and even from entering university. These survivors are also prevented from entering the professions and taking up roles such as serving as a magistrate or Police Special Constable, where their experience would be invaluable in reducing crime and helping victims.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 changed the law so that children can no longer be criminalised for their exploitation by the prostitution offence of "soliciting and loitering" contrary to Section 1 Street Offences Act 1959. This decriminalisation provision however, is not retrospective. Since 2017, 15,000 gay and bisexual men have been able to apply for their convictions for sexual offences that have been decriminalised to be posthumously pardoned. There is no such right for the survivors of child sexual exploitation.

Congress cries out that it should be unthinkable to any civilised country that the victims of child sexual exploitation should be criminalised by the records of their abuse. The survivors of child sexual exploitation deserve justice and dignity.

Congress calls for a GMB campaign for a new law to clear the convictions of survivors of child sexual exploitation.

ISLINGTON 1 & HARINGEY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

EMMA BOOTH (LONDON REGION): President, Congress, Emma Booth, London region, first-time delegate, first-time speaker, moving Motion 180 regarding justice for victims of child sexual exploitation. Congress, this motion goes to the heart of the things that GMB stands and fights for - equality, fairness and dignity at work. As if the physical and mental effects of the abuse suffered by these child victims is not burden enough for them to carry through their lives, they are often victimised for a second time where they've been convicted for soliciting. These convictions have a profound and unjust impact on their future employment opportunities. Some progress has been made. The Serious Crime Act 2015 decriminalised soliciting by children, meaning that children forced into criminal acts by abusers do not end up with a criminal record as a result. But this decriminalisation is not retrospective and so does not protect those with historical convictions. Then in November last year, the government introduced changes to the automatic disclosure of past convictions by the Disclosure and Barring Service. The changes mean that some offences, including soliciting, can be filtered out and will not be disclosed to employers carrying out DBS checks on prospective employees. However, this still does not fix the issue, as eligibility for filtering depends on the part of the UK the person was convicted in and, even then, only applies once 5.5 years have elapsed since the conviction. This means that convictions can follow victims into adulthood. Victims of child sexual exploitation should be free to try and move on from their abusers and have the dignity to pursue work in whatever profession they choose. To be judged on their skills and abilities and not be criminalised for the acts of their abusers. This proposes a change to the law, clearing historic al convictions of victims of child sexual exploitation. Congress, please support this motion - I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Emma, well done, and I hope all first-time delegates are enjoying this very strange Congress, but we'll see you again at other ones, and I hope you haven't been put off by this odd one! Can I ask Naome again to come in and second?

NAOME KYOKUSHABA-KATSIGAZI (LONDON REGION): Thank you, madam President, Congress, Naome Katsigazi, London region, again, seconding Motion 180, dignity for survivors of child sexual exploitation. Congress, the clue is in the name - dignity. Is this too much to ask? I concur with the points raised by the mover, Emma, but additionally wish to

stress that survivors of child sexual exploitation are victims of a crime to begin with. It is therefore hard to believe that the same system meant to be protecting them is the one punishing them further. This is all with due regard to their vulnerability, mental ill health, low self-esteem and stigma they suffered. Coercion and manipulation often feature in abusive situations so the perception of what is happening sometimes is difficult to understand by the victim. On that note, therefore, why penalise these victims twice for something that was no fault of their own? I ask the Congress today to advocate for trauma-informed approaches, as these survivors integrate into society as individuals in their own right, and not purely defined by the history of abuse they suffered as children. This can only be achieved by quashing previous related convictions. Congress, please support this motion. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Naome. Can I call on Linda to move Motion 181, please?

181. UNDERCOVER 'POLITICAL POLICING'

This Congress notes with concern that police chiefs have admitted that undercover infiltration of political, activist and justice campaign groups in the UK has been consistent since 1968, in the form of the Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) and the National Public Order Intelligence Unit (NPOIU).

Firmly opposes this type of political undercover policing and believes that infiltrations of this kind have no place in a democratic society.

Understands that a tactic of these infiltrations was for officers to form long-term intimate relationships with women activists, to bolster officer's cover identities in activist circles.

Further understands that police were forced to admit that they infringed upon a woman's right not to be 'subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'.

Notes that the Metropolitan Police Service has admitted these practices and apologised for behaviour of their undercover officers which in their own words were 'abusive, deceitful, manipulative and wrong', and were a 'gross violation'.

Notes that Assistant Commissioner Martin Hewitt furthermore publicly stated that these abuses were a 'violation of their human rights and caused significant trauma'. (1)

Notes that while the existing Undercover Policing Inquiry covers England and Wales, as of this time the victims of related undercover operations in Scotland and Northern Ireland currently are excluded from seeking justice under this Inquiry.

This branch believes that this reveals that institutional sexism has been endemic within these police units and other state bodies that sanctioned this behaviour.

This was a violation of the women's guaranteed legal rights to privacy, freedom of expression and freedom of association and assembly.

This was a violation of the women's rights to a home and family life, and to privacy of communications.

This was an infringement of the women's right to participate in the struggle for legal, social and environmental justice.

That the use of sexual relationships has no place in any form of undercover policing and the Regulation Of Investigatory Powers Act (2000) should be amended to reflect this.

Congress asks the CEC to call for the Undercover Policing Inquiry (UCPI) to be extended to Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Call for the UCPI to undertake a fully transparent and truly public inquiry, providing disclosure to those whose rights have been violated by undercover operations and recommending legal changes to ensure this type of spying never happens again.

Support the appointment of a panel of experts with understanding of the issues of institutional sexism and institutional racism to assist the Chair during the inquiry evidential stages.

Profile the work of Police Spies Out Of Lives in members' bulletins and newsletters.

Publicise this motion to regional and national union structures and wherever possible within the labour movement.

A08 TAMESIDE BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

LINDA MERCER (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): Hello, am I in?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, you're in and on the screen.

LINDA MERCER: Right, brilliant, thank you. President, Congress, Linda Mercer, North West & Irish region, speaking on undercover political policing. We note with great concern that police chiefs have admitted there has been undercover infiltration of the police into political activists and justice campaigning groups since 1968, by the special demonstration squad and the national public order intelligence unit. We firmly oppose this type of political undercover policing, infiltrating of this kind has no place in a democratic society. Worst of all is that it is believed that one tactic was for officers to form long-term relationships with women activists to assist them to cover their identities while in activist circles. We understand that police were forced to admit that they infringed upon women's rights not to be subjected to torture or to human or degrading treatment or punishment. The Metropolitan Police Service has admitted these practices and apologised for the behaviour of their undercover officers which, in their own words, were, "Abusive, deceitful, manipulative and wrong" and were also "A gross violation". Assistant Commissioner Martin Hewitt further publicly stated that these abusers had committed a violation of their human rights and caused significant trauma. While the existing undercover police inquiry covers England and Wales, the victims of related undercover operations in Scotland and Northern Ireland currently are excluded from seeking justice under this inquiry. This branch believes that this reveals that institutional sexism has been endemic within these police units and other state bodies that sanction this sort of behaviour. This was a violation of the women involved, guaranteed legal rights to privacy, freedom of expression and freedom of association and assembly. This was also a violation of the women's right to a home and family life and to privacy of communications. This was an infringement of women's rights to participate in the struggle for legal, social and environmental justice. That this use of sexual relationships was no place in any form of undercover policing and the regulation of investigatory powers 2000 should be amended to reflect this. Congress, I ask the CEC to call the undercover policing inquiry to be extended to Scotland and Northern Ireland, call for the UCPI to undertake a full transparent and truly public inquiry, providing disclosures to those whose rights have been violated by undercover operations, and recommending legal changes to ensure this type of spying never happens again. Support the appointment of a panel of experts with understanding of the issues of institutional sexism, institutional racism, and assist the chair during the inquiry's evidential stages. Profile the work of police spies out of lives in members' bulletins and newsletters and finally publicise this motion to regional and national union structures and wherever possible in the Labour movement. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: And the region are agreeing to formally second this motion. So can I ask Nicola from Wales & South West to move Motion 182, please?

182. DISHONOURABLE DISCHARGE

This Congress notes that prior to 2000 those who were found to be gay and employed by the armed forces received a dishonourable discharge from service with loss of their pension rights. This has continued to impact those discharged. We welcome moves to discharge previous convictions under the so-called Turing amendment to the Police bill, but this issue for former armed forced personnel needs now to be addressed urgently.

This Congress calls on the GMB to create a campaign to lobby government and achieve a legislative change in this area.

M18 SECURICOR BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

NICOLA GRIFFITHS (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): Thank you. President, Congress, Nicola Griffiths, first time delegate, first time speaker moving Motion 182. Dishonourable discharge.

Congress, LGBT and citizens have been allowed to serve openly in Her Majesty's Armed Forces since 2000. The United Kingdom's policy is to allow homosexual men, lesbian women and transgender personnel to serve openly and discrimination on a sexual orientation basis is forbidden. It's also forbidden for someone to pressure LGBT people to come out of the closet. All personnel are subject to the same rules against sexual harassment, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Colleagues, this Motion calls for all members to support a campaign to reinstate pension rights to service personnel who are dishonourably discharged from the Armed Forces because of their sexual orientation. Until January 2000, members of the services who identified as LGBT were dishonourably discharged and lost all their pension rights. Colleagues, it beggars belief it took so long to put an end to this blatant discrimination and a disgrace that we have had to wait for the European court of human rights to rule that discharging members of the Armed Forces on the grounds of their sexuality was illegal. This Motion call force the ENF and CEC to campaign and lobby government to restore the pensions earned by those who're treated in this way. The GMB, as well as many other Trade Unions, had members serving in one capacity or another in the Armed Forces and we owe to it them to put this right.

We can look back with pride at the role the GMB has played on the role to achieving equality and justice for all. There is still work to do and this Motion highlights one such injustice that remains untouched. Conference, please support this Motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Nicola. And Paul to second, please?

PAUL McGUIRE (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): President, Congress, Paul McGuire Wales & South West region, seconding Motion 182. Colleagues, for decades, gay people were not allowed to serve in the Armed Forces. The Ministry of Defence was forced to change its stance by a court ruling that came into effect in 2000. Individuals, not only had their career taken away but stripped of their medals and pension rights for which they dedicate their lives to the country. They would need to apply for the restoration of the medal under the terms of being offered under the Cabinet Office. Colleagues, all of this is unbelievable and discriminatory. The MoD advise they accept this was wrong, discriminatory and unjust to individuals. They not only lost their jobs and income but also their home, friends and pension. Congress, this Motion not only calls on the GMB to lobby government for pension rights to be instated but calls on you to support this Motion to ensure that these individuals are given back every penny that they are entitled to and every medal that they

well deserve and earned. In stark contrast and despite the passing of over 20 years since the gay ban was finally lifted, no attempt has been made to support the recovery of the thousands of LGBT+ service personnel dismissed or forced from service prior to the year 2000. Congress, colleagues, please support this Motion for the sake of those who served their country who were dishonourably discharged just for being themselves. Congress, please support. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: That is really nice to have some cheering there! Thank you, Paul. The CEC are supporting Motions 180 and 182, but can I call on Warinder Juss to respond to Motions 179 and 181, thank you.

WARINDER JUSS (CEC, COMMERCIAL SERVICES): Good morning, Congress. Speaking on 179 and 181. The CEC is supporting 179, the impact of legal aid with a qualification. We recognise that members of the legal protection. I became a GMB member 30 years ago. We organise workers in the legal aid agency and the union is currently carrying out campaigning work on membership in the judiciary as was reflected in the national press work in March this year.

GMB has a long-standing policy to oppose cuts to the legal aid. The only qualification that we make is that union line is a joint union resource with the CWU and therefore it cannot be bound by the Congress of one union and to also recognise that opposing cuts to legal aid will involve public policy and political campaigning work.

The CEC is also supporting Motion 181 undercover political policing with a qualification and we fully endorse this important and timely Motion. We have been discussing this book actually, Undercover, the true story of Britain's secret police, at our local trades council. The use of undercover police to spy on Trade Union activities and also non-violent political groups is a permanent stain on the integrity of this state. We utterly condemn the practices of stealing dead children's identities and of officers engaging in deceptive sexual relationships, sometimes resulting in children being born. Just to be able to uncover and have police spies into activities and into people's lives.

We recognise that there is a complex overlap between undercover policing and the related scandal of systemic nationally organised blacklisting of workers that has left behind a trail of broken lives and we salute the undercover research group and other organisations who support this work to expose this scandal. We deplore the continued delays of the undercover policing inquiry and also their refusal to disclose some records belonging to Trade Unionists and also their apparent view that it's more important to preserve the identities of undercover police rather than bring a measure of closure to those who have been affected and targeted by this. We cannot allow the establishment to suppress this long history of abuse of power and therefore we do ask Congress to extend its full solidarity to all those who are fighting for truth and justice. The only qualification, and it's a minor one, is that when it comes to promoting particular groups, that those requests should be referred to the CEC Finance and General Purposes Committee which is in line with long-standing practice and policy. So, the CEC is please, asking you support 179 and 181 and subject to the qualifications that I've set out, thank you so much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I know London region are accepting the support with qualification and can I ask North West and Irish region to let us know if you will do the similar thing, support with qualification? North West and Irish region? Yes. Thumbs up. Thank you. Then I can move to the vote so. That takes us to Motion 179, please. That is carried. Motion 180. That is carried. Motion 181. That is carried. Finally Motion 182. And that is carried. We can move on to item 12, which is social policy, equality and inclusion and I will first take Motions 184, 187 and 188. So, can I ask Bernadette to move Motion 184?

184. DEAF EDUCATION IS IN CRISIS

There is a lack of teachers of the deaf at a rate of 14% a year. Many are in their 50' and 60's and there are not people undertaking the training and qualification.

Hearing impaired units are being cut around the country as many authorities feel all deaf children can be educated in mainstream school with little support.

Many children do not have:

Access to regular Teachers of the Deaf.

No access to radio aid technology to support their hearing in the classroom and give them better access to their teacher's voice.

Hearing impairment services as their caseloads are large, there is lack of qualified staff. Lack of understanding deafness has on education right from birth.

If deaf children do not have the right support from the point of diagnoses they will struggle and permanently be behind their hearing peers.

Deaf children need access to sign language, for a rich full vocabulary.

Access to a qualified teacher of the deaf to ensure that all their educational needs are met either through the EHCP, specialist provision. Regular monitoring, training and support.

Our Deaf children deserve the same opportunities in life as their hearing peers. Deafness is not a the barrier to learning. Lack of vocabulary. Deaf Awareness Teachers of the Deaf specialist provision

Technology

Resources ARE!

Let's not fail Deaf children .

Let's see them reach their full potential.

L32 LB SUTTON BRANCH

Southern Region

(Carried)

BERNADETTE DANIEL (SOUTHERN REGION): Thank you. Good day all again. Bernadette Daniel, Southern region. President, Vice President, Congress, speaking to move a Motion 184, deaf education which is in crisis. Education has been on record in international law since 1948 as a basic human right. The right to inclusive education of children with any form of impairment is indeed a human right.

Children with hearing impairment should therefore not be disadvantaged. Across the world, it has been established that the three top factors that impact access to learning for children are lack of teachers and or on trade teachers and availability of resources. Indeed, there is a real dearth of teachers for the deaf and it's falling at the rate of 14% a year. There is a real lack of qualified teachers for the deaf. Many of the teachers are reaching retirement age, and there are concerns around the lack of people understanding these rules on and during the required training. Hearing impaired units around the country are being cut and local authorities feel that deaf children can be educated in mainstream schools with very little support. It is really scandalous that today, many children do not have proper access to qualified teachers of the deaf, many have no access to radio and technology and a lack of understanding of their needs or indeed the need for them to be able to hear the teachers' voice and be able to learn and attain their educational needs. This requires Congress to

support and enable children, deaf children, to be able to access all and be equal to their peers. They should have correct support, they deserve the same opportunities in life as their hearing peers. We therefore call on you to support this Motion so that deaf children can access sign language for vocabulary development, access teachers of deaf to ensure their needs are met and adequate provisions in order for them to have equal opportunities in line with the motto - quality for all! And enable them to reach their potential. I move. Please support this Motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bernadette. The region are formally seconding that Motion, so we can move on to Motion 187, and if we can call in Margaret Boyd. We might be having a few problems. No, she's on, well done, excellent. Ready to go.

187. ACCESSIBLE HOUSING FOR THE DISABLED

This Congress Notes that over seven years ago a House of Lords enquiry concluded the UK Government and society were woefully under prepared for the needs of the aging and the disabled population, the need for the adaption to their homes, disabled people in general and the young and old.

Not forgetting our brave disabled men and women who have fought for their country and are now in need of assessable housing.

There are just 7% of England's housing stock that provides even the most basic features of accessibility to make a property visit able by the disabled person.

Outside of London only 23% of homes due to be built by 2030 are planned to the basic accessibility criteria, where you 1% will wheelchair accessible, this is obviously not good enough.

The NHS estimates that there are 1.2 million wheelchair users in England alone.

The national picture looks a little better because of the Greater London Authority, as since 2004 there was a requirement that all new homes meet access standards.

The Scottish government have a Disability Delivery Plan to aid independence living and preserve the rights of disabled people.

The building standards of accessible homes from the government have to change.

Congress asks that the GMB

Take this issue of standards to the government and committees in Parliament that deal with the Building Standards for social housing for the disabled.

Ask congress to liaise with local authorities asking what are their plans for new homes for disabled people.

GLASGOW NURSES BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

MARGARET BOYD (GMB SCOTLAND): Hi, can you hear me? Can you hear me? Yes you can. Thank you. President, Congress... ageing and disabled population, the need for the adaptation to their homes, disabled people in general, young and old. Not forgetting our brave disabled men and women who fought for our country and are now in need of accessible housing. There are just 7% of housing stock that provides the most basic features of accessibility to make a property viable by the disabled person. Outside of London, only 23% of homes due to be built by 2030 are planned to the basic accessibility criteria where only 1% will be wheelchair accessible. This is obviously not good enough. The NHS estimates that 1.2 million wheelchair users in England alone. The national picture looks a little better because of the Greater London Authority, since 2004, there was a requirement

that all new homes meet access standard. The Scottish Parliament have independent living and preserve the rights of disabled people. The standards have to change. Congress asks the GMB to take this issue to the government and to those in Parliament that deal with the building standard for social housing for the disabled. Also, to liaise with local authorities asking what their plans are for disabled people's homes in the future. I move, thank you Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: The region are formally seconding the Motion. So can I ask Martin to move Motion 188, please?

188. HOUSE OF LORDS ATTACK ON PENSIONERS

This Congress is appalled at the House of Lords Report into tackling Intergenerational Unfairness. Congress believes that quilted unelected Peers have little idea how pensioner poverty exists or how benefits provided by a previous Labour Government help older people.

Congress is also disgusted that in areas like the BBC where the free TV Licence for over 75s resides, the BBC pays top executives eye watering sums of money on the backs of the very people who they seek to reduce benefits to. Congress believes that you do not tackle the absolute unfairness in society across different age and demographic groups, by robbing one group to help another. This Congress believes that it is the system that is broken. Congress therefore calls on the attacks on Pensioner benefits to be reversed and for resources to be made available by Government to help age groups across the board.

C52 – SOUTH EAST NORTHUMBERLAND GENERAL BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

MARTIN ROBSON (NORTHERN REGION): Thank you. President, Congress, Martin Robson, Northern region, moving Motion 188, House of Lords attack on pensioners. Congress, the House of Lords report as highlighted in the Motion shows how out of touch the great and good are. The House of Lords has people within it who are incredibly rich and have little knowledge of how the other half live. A typical example is the free TV licence for the over 75s. It really is not good enough, Congress. For the BBC to treat pensioners like criminals. Especially when you think that top BBC executives are paid huge wages out of the public purse. The way that the BBC has gone about this issue shows that they are out of touch with us all. And it has to be recognised that, as George Osborne, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, he set things in Motion by removing government funding for the free TV licence for the over 75s, and passed the buck to the BBC.

It's therefore a dereliction of duty for the Tory government to stop the system funding for the free TV licences. The GMB has been at the forefront of opposing the removal of the free TV licence. But, we need to keep the pressure on to ensure that pensioners are not treated unfairly in how poverty is tackled. Please support. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martin. And the regions agreed to formally second this Motion. I have not got anybody coming in to speak in opposition, and the CEC are supporting all the Motions and therefore I can go straight to the vote so. Motion 184. That has been carried. Motion 187. That has been carried. And Motion 188. Thank you, that has also been carried. I'll take Motions 183 and 186 on social policy, equality and inclusion. Again to remind people if anyone wishes to speak in opposition to any Motion, send a message through the chat box to let us know, but can I call on Christina to move Motion 183, please?

183. LGBT+ SEX & RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

This Congress recognises that no child is born with any type of prejudices or discriminatory thoughts or traits. Whether it be racism, homophobia, transphobia or any other forms of discrimination and intolerance, these are all learned behaviours and characteristics, hate and narrow-mindedness are the teaching of bigots.

Therefore it stands to reason that love, kindness, respect and tolerance towards all the different types of people and families, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) families and people, must be taught in an age appropriate way at a suitably early age. Schools need to be self-assured that they're right to make sure that any Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) education is inclusive of all families and relationships, including LGBT+ people along with all other equality strands. RSE is part of the school curriculum where the experiences of LGBT+ students and parents need to be included if we want to break the cycles of discrimination.

Last year Primary Schools in Birmingham faced weekly protests from parents over LGBT+ lessons as were part of the No Outsiders programme which uses story books to teach about acceptance of same-sex couples. This saw Mr Moffat the head teacher at Parkfield Community School, who is openly gay, along with other staff being abused, threatened and targeted amid the protests.

The GMB welcome new statutory government guidance that was issued in 2019 on Relationship and Sex Education (RSE). From September 2020, all primary schools will be required to teach relationships education and all secondary schools will be required to teach relationships and sex education including LGBT+ education, this needs to go further than just a bit of guidance.

This Congress asks the GMB to join other education sector unions to campaign to persuade the Department of Education to offer clear, strong and enforceable legislation, policies and guidelines on LGBT+ relationships education. This will support and help schools carry out their public sector equality duty, in order to create a teaching environment with a truly inclusive curriculum.

This Trade Union Congress calls for the development of a country wide, whole school approach, to try to entrench equality and tolerance to help tackle all forms of discrimination in all its forms in every school. We also call on tougher legislation to protect teachers and school staff from being targeted and subjected to abuse or threats for doing their jobs in educating our children, whilst trying their best day in day out to help in the fight to eradicate the scourge of homophobia, transphobia and all other forms of discrimination.

B10 BANBURY NO.1 BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

CHRISTINA DEARLOVE (BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS REGION): Good morning President, Congress, Christina Dearlove, Birmingham & West Midlands region moving 183, LGBT+ sex education and relationship education in school. Congress, equality inclusion are at the heart of Trade Union politics. We are all here because we want the world to be a better, more accepting place for everyone. In the 2021, LGBT+ people still faced discrimination every day, despite the fact that legal things exist. One in five LGBT+ people have been harassed at work. The last year, living in a lockdown has particularly impacted on our community. Especially those who are not out, live alone, and are not accepted at home. If we want to truly tackle the issues, we need to start at the beginning. Children are not born with prejudice, they are taught them. Teach love and acceptance. Section 28 is legislation that forced teachers into the closet and destroyed generation of children's self-worth including myself. This stopped people being able to be who they were and bred ignorance and hatred in our community. Congress, we are not living in 1988 any more, and yet, in 2021, it doesn't feel much better. We all know how little trust we have in our current government, I know I don't trust them. In April 2020, Liz Truss, Minister for Women and equalities announced plans to reform the gender recognition act, including setting back the

age of those who identify as trans. In December, that same minister referred to her strategy of inequality led by facts not fashion. I for one am not fashion. In May this year, she disbanded the LGBT+ Advisory Panel. Earlier this month she instructed all government departments to withdraw from the Stonewall diversity champions programme. When I was at school in the 80s and 90s, they didn't teach same-sex relationships, kids were bullied for being LGBT and it seems like we are heading back that way now. There is guidance to teach LGBT+ education in primary schools and LGBT plus relationships and sex education in secondary schools, this guidance does not go far enough. Although it's now mandatory that this is taught. Congress, I ask you to join me in requesting GMB to stand side by side with other education-based unions, to campaign and persuade the Department of Education to off clear, strong enforceable legislation policies and guidelines on LGBT+ education and protection from our teachers and school staff. It's time to stand up once again for our rights to fight and win in the BATOD against hatred and tolerance. It's time to finally put an end (loss of audio) acceptance of kindness for everyone regardless of their class, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, gender, religion or anything else. Let's get education in place and properly stamp out hatred from the early years. I urge you to support this Motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Christina. Cassie to second, please?

CASSI PERRY (BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS REGION): President, Congress, Cassi Perry, Birmingham & West Midlands branch. Hopefully you can hear me better today than yesterday. I am very proud to second Motion 183. Every move forward in human rights and equality faces road bumps and challenges along the way. Right now the hard-won rights of LGBT+ brothers and sisters are facing a push back from many directions. While there are some bad faith actors in the group and right-wing groups stirring the pot, much of the kick back comes from can campaign groups misunderstanding what inclusive education looks like. LGBT+ education in schools is age appropriate, focusing on healthy relationship, keeping ourselves safe, autonomy and basic sexual health care. It's so important we protect this vital programme to keep all children informed, healthy and safe. A national level of consistency on this will produce a generation of young people free of the fears and prejudices of some of their parents. Most importantly, it gives LGBT+ youngsters a safe welcoming environment in which to grow. As a psyche therapist in the NHS who works with trans adults, I know the difference a positive education environment makes and the life-long damage a non-inclusive school experience can cause in a person's life. I'm very pleased and proud to support this Motion. I second.

BARBARA: Thank you, Cassi and we heard you perfectly. Can I call on Nicky to move Motion 186, please?

186. DYSLEXIA DIAGNOSIS PAYMENT

This Congress is concerned about the costs of booking diagnostic assessment for Dyslexia especially as this is classed as a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

In order to be properly assessed, all people, young or old, have to pay to recognise this learning difficulty.

We feel that this cost is detrimental to young people- they should not have to pay for these tests due to their lack of income. Sometimes a school may pay for half of the test, however, the tests are expensive.

More needs to be done to ensure children especially those from low-income households get the help they need and that includes support after diagnosis.

With a cost-free diagnosis, more children's grades and mental health will improve.

We urge GMB to raise this issue and work with the Government to look into ways of funding these tests for school aged children.

This will ensure equality of opportunity for all those in primary school, secondary school and university and give young people more confidence in finding a career and allow them to access a wider range of employment opportunities.

GMB FULHAM 1 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

NICOLA WARR (LONDON REGION): President, Congress, Nicola Warr, London region moving Motion 186 on dyslexia diagnosis payment. Congress, we want to draw your attention to the cost of a dyslexia diagnosis assessment. These start at around £500 and are often as much as £700 plus VAT. Whilst dyslexia is considered a disability under the Equality Act and therefore affords individuals protection from discrimination, unfair treatment and should provide for equality of opportunities, first you need to be assessed and diagnosed. Many people go on undiagnosed struggling throughout their education, often leaving school before a diagnosis is received, exacerbated by the extortionate costs of the assessments and the fact that whilst schools will screen a child for dyslexia, most do not contribute or pay for the cost of the assessment. Once again, this Tory government favours the rich and penalises the poor. More needs to be done to ensure that children from low income households get the help that they need. Cost-free diagnosis will enable more children to have better access to help and schooling throughout their adult life and it will have an added bonus of improving mental health. It's vital this matter is raised and investigated because it will give children and young adults an added confidence and open up wider employment opportunities. We need to ensure equality of opportunity for all those in primary schools, secondly schools and those in higher education. Congress, I move.

BARBARA: And can I ask Sam to second, please?

SAMANTHA McLAUGHLIN (LONDON REGION): Can you hear me?

THE PRESIDENT: All good.

SAMANTHA McLAUGHLIN: Can you hear me.... OK. President, Congress, Sam McLaughlin, London region first time delegate... I am proud to move 186. If anyone is having any (inaudible) problems these need to be diagnosed as soon as possible to they can get the best help and support and should be available for all, regardless of your earnings. We have seen over the pandemic many children have been home-schooled, thus meaning they have been left isolated and maybe without the correct support. I hope this motion is agreed and we will campaign for free assessments to be made available for dyslexia and other conditions. Conditions such as dyspraxia and I know first-hand how I have had to adjust and how I work and interact with people. Please support this motion. Thank you.

BARBARA: Thank you, Sam. Nobody has indicated they wish to speak in opposition. Can I ask Amanda Burley to respond on behalf of the CEC, please?

AMANDA BURLEY (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): President, Congress, Amanda Burley, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 183 and 186. The CEC is supporting Motion 183 with a statement. The CEC fully supports this motion, it is our union's policy to support a fully inclusive curriculum and we must stand by that principle when it is under attack. We express our opposition on all attempts to stigmatise sex and relationships education. That is inclusive of LGBT+ in schools today. We recognise that homophobic bullying and other forms of intolerance are still all too common in schools and that these protests by a small number of people outside... excuse me, I lost my place... a small number of schools has had much a broader negative impact in education and in wider society, too. All children should be taught

about kinds of relationships. LGBT+ children have a right to see positive role models in the curriculum that are relevant to them. Just as other pupils do. LGBT+ staff should have the right to be identified if they choose to do so without fear of harassment, bigotry and prejudice. We condemn the Department of Education's weakness in not taking a strong enough stand on a fundamental principle we recognise the Government is bringing in new statutory guidance which will apply them from school year 2020-2021 onwards. Also this guidance does not go far enough and should be strengthened. The CEC expresses our solidarity with everyone targeted by these protests and asked Congress to support this motion. On Motion 186, the CEC is asking Congress... to support this motion with two qualifications. The CEC supports the aims of this motion, which would bring our policy on childhood assessment and diagnosis in line with the position adopted for adult workers by Congress, 2019, in the special report on disability and supported employment. The CEC wishes to make two qualifications. The first is to note that current practise on funding assessments varies between schools and that while dyslexia is likely to be considered a disability under the equality act and associated guidance in most cases, very few conditions are automatically classed as disabilities under the current legislation. The second qualification is that we would seek free assessments to be made available for the other neurodiverse gent conditions such as dyspraxia and... the CEC is asking for 183 to be carried a statement set out and for Motion 186 to be carried with a qualification set out. I thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Amanda. And London region have let us know that they accept the qualification. And I don't need to ask Birmingham & West Midlands because it is a strong statement from the CEC that we support this motion and whole heartedly. Can I go to the vote? Motion 183... that is carried. Motion 186. And that is carried. Congress, we now move to our final block of motions. Item 14, social policy, education and training, that is Motions 210, 212, 213. Can I call Nicoletta to move Motion 210?

210. NO CHILD IS LEFT BEHIND!

This branch supports the following motion at congress:

This Congress instructs the senior officers to raise awareness and organise campaigning around the following in schools:

That no child left behind by ensuring TA (Teachers Assistant) support at point of need. Due to the significant gap of several months between a child being identified as in need and receiving financial support for a TA; the school SENCO (Special Education Needs Coordinator) can assess a child for fast funding in 4 weeks and draw down funding from a central pot to support TA support while a formal EHCP (Education Health Care Plan) is pursued.

K19 SW LONDON GENERAL BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

NICOLETTA PALERMO (SOUTHERN REGION): Moving Motion 201. This Congress instructs the senior officers in GMB to raise awareness and organise campaigning around the following in schools: That no child is left behind. By ensuring teaching assistants support children at point of need. Due to the significant gap of several months between the child being identified as in need and receiving financial support to pay for additional teaching assistant hours, the school SENCO, special educational needs co-ordinator should be able to access a child for fast funding in four weeks and draw down from essential pot. This additional fast track funding will fund teaching assistant support while a former EHCP, an educational healthcare plan is pursued. The outcome of accessing this vital funding will be that children are supported and able to progress and not fall significantly behind their peers.

The current timescale and gap between identifying a child's need and a school accessing the vital funds necessary to support the children is far too long. So long that many children are left behind. Developmentally, academically and in many other ways. It is time for this to come to an end for schools to be able to access interim funding and for every child's needs to be met with fair and immediate funding. I move this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Can I ask Jubril to second, please?

JUBRIL AMOO (SOUTHERN REGION): President, Congress, Jubril Amoo, Southern region, representing L26 branch. First time delegates, second time speaking. I am seconding Motion 210. I strongly agree with Nicoletta Palermo. I ask Congress to support Motion 210, that GMB raise awareness and a concern around concerns that some children in schools are not receiving support from teaching assistants at the point of need. This because there could be a gap of several months. In some circumstances, when a child which has been identified has needed extra support is left waiting for that help due to financial restrictions. Special educational needs co-ordinators in schools, the co-ordinator can access a child for fast funding in four weeks and draw down funds from a central pot to fund the teaching assistant to support the child concerned. This should be done while a full medicational healthcare plan is pursued. Please support. I second. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Can I ask Jennifer to move Motion 212, please?

212. PUPIL BEHAVIOUR AND MENTAL HEALTH

Congress is alarmed at the reports that serious violence involving children and young people is a significant and growing problem within schools and our streets and notes the increasing concerns being reported about youth violence, knife crime and the behaviour and mental health of children and young people.

Congress deplores the decline of services under austerity, pushing families and communities to breaking point and seeks concerted government action to address the causes of disaffection and violence.

Congress deplores the government's failure to respond appropriately to preventing and addressing serious violence involving children and young people and notes with concern the devastating impact of serious violence, including knife crime on children and young people's society, well-being and future life chances.

Congress applauds the commitment and efforts of public sector workers who are dedicated to working with children and young people suffering under austerity policies, deeply regretting the violence they may face and further applauds the work of teachers, support staff and head teachers who, every day, seek to ensure that schools are safe sanctuaries for all children and young people.

Congress rejects the expectations that teachers and other public service workers should accept violence as part of the job and applauds the efforts of unions in taking industrial action to protect their members from pupil violence and abuse.

Congress calls on CEC to lobby government to:-

- Support schools and colleges in dealing with violence and disruption.
- Substantially to increase the levels of investment in specialist education provision, welfare and support services for children, young people and families.
- Reverse the effects of austerity policies.

C22 CAERPHILLY COUNTY BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

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

THE PRESIDENT: We can.

JENNIFER SMITH: Motion 212. Pupil behaviour and mental health. President, Congress, Jennifer Smith, Wales & South West region moving Motion 212. Congress, throughout the last year, many children have borne the brunt of the pandemic. Services that were already critically underfunded were closed because of COVID. Leaving many young people with no support or a place of safety. Over the last ten years, we have seen austerity ripping apart the services that many children and young people rely on. Many of these services are already reliant upon volunteers. And donations to keep the services within the streets, towns and cities viable. The UK Government must stop making empty promises to the next generation. Our young people deserve to live in a safe place, without fear of guns, drugs and being dragged into a life of crime through county lines because they have no other way to live a life without fear. The cuts to Universal Credit has also disproportionately affected children, who face the harsh reality only receiving one hot meal a day at school. It took a footballer to shame the UK Government into providing meals during school holidays for Children In Need. The UK Government should have hung its head in shame. They are failing our young people, pushing many into desperate situations with no way out. Our public sector workers and those that volunteer are left to pick up the broken pieces of a failed generation. Without the efforts of people such as teaching staff, youth workers and foster carers, these young people would be left with no hope for the future. These workers should not have to face the risk of being injured due to violence and this Government must do more to protect these front line workers. Please support this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Jennifer. I ask Yazmine to second.

YAZMINE ALIMI (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): President, Congress, Wales and South West region. Seconding Motion 212. Congress, school for many young people is their only safe place during COVID. Although many schools were open for online lessons, many young people did haven't the facility such as PC, broadband or space at home to be able to join in, leaving many isolated from their friends and families. It had an impact on their lives and learning. We have seen pupils leaving primary school to come to secondary school and within months we had a lockdown at school. Missing out on the vital social development that schools bring with it. Many young people have not had the ability to join clubs, youth clubs, after school clubs, which were available prior to the COVID crisis, which has left young people even more isolated. The UK Government must do more to support and invest in mental health for young people. Please support this motion. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Now I call on you again to move Motion 213, please. It might take a little while, just to recall her back in. No. Are we having problems? We are going to try one more time.

213. CAMPAIGN FOR BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE

This Congress notes one in four babies are born with a hearing impairment. According to figures by the Government Child Department there are 45,000 children who have this disability. Schools are not doing enough to help alleviate this issue.

Congress resolves to call upon the GMB to back a campaign to bring this issue to the forefront of the Government to make British Sign Language part of the National Curriculum within schools.

A55 AVON & WESSEX BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

YAZMINE ALIMIM (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): President, Congress, Yazmine Alimi, Wales & South West region, moving motion 213. The prospect of placing British Sign Language on the National Curriculum has repeatedly been raised in Parliament. On 18th March, 2003, is when the UK Government formally recognised British Sign Language as a language in its own right. It also promised to look into the legal status for British Sign Language. 18 years on, we are still waiting. Choosing the right primary school or secondary school for your child is very important, as it will influence their education, social and emotional development. However, with one in four children born with a hearing impairment, the lack of support inclusion of British Sign Language on the curriculum is clearly putting these children at a disadvantage.

According to the National Deaf Children's Society, at present 78% of deaf children are attending mainstream school with little or no specialist support in place. The debate was held in Parliament for British Sign Language to be on the National Curriculum. Prior to this a survey was commissioned. As of 2,000 young people, hearing and deaf, who took part in the survey. 91% thought they wanted to learn sign language. 92% thought schools should offer British Sign Language GCSE. 97% thought British Sign Language should be taught in schools.

During the debate, MPs acknowledged there was a definite shortage of British Sign Language interpreters and it was leading to a higher cost for Government programmes like access to work and therefore making it harder for deaf people to enter the workplace and be supported. If schools were encouraged to teach British Sign Language in primary settings and also at GCSE level, it would lead to more people considering being an interpreter, thus bringing Government costs down in the long run and supporting deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the world of work. Even though the UK Government has recognised British Sign Language as a language, the absence of GCSE, discourages schools and academies from teaching sign language. We would like the UK Government to explain how other languages such as French, German and Spanish are recognised but the first language of 87,000 deaf people in the UK is not?

Conference, this motion calls for the CEC and the GMB to lobby Government to include British Sign Language on the National Curriculum throughout the UK to make available support and training for these individuals already in mainstream schools and break the barriers that children, adults who are deaf, or hard of hearing face, not only at school but in the wider world. Conference, please support this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, that was good going one speech after the other. Can I call Gavin to second, please?

GAVIN GALLEOZZIE (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): Yeah, can you hear me guys?

THE PRESIDENT: All good

GAVIN GALLEOZZIE: Pop the champagne cork shortly! Gavin, Wales and South-West region, seconding motion 213. British Sign Language is a recognised language and is used in preference by over 70,000 deaf and hard of hearing people in the UK. BSL should be introduced to all UK school children through the curriculum and to be taught basic sign language during the early years. And foundation phases and to include the provision of BSL as an option of choice for GCSE. We must not forget those deaf and hard of hearing children already in mainstream schools, many without the necessary support. If provisions for BSL were to be put in place in schools, these children would not be disadvantaged and could

interact and learn with their peers. I just would like to highlight the talent of a lady, Maisie Sly, a six-year-old deaf actress, from the film the Silent Child, which centres around a young girl living in silence until she's taught BSL by a social worker. It inspired her classmates and indeed her teachers to learn BSL. Congress, this motion would provide a foundation for raising awareness and respect for our deaf and hard of hearing communities. I am proud to second it. Thank you Congress. Much love. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gavin. Congress, the CEC are supporting 212 and 213. Before we move to a vote, can I call on Lorraine Winson to respond on behalf of CEC to Motion 210? All good, Lorraine.

LORRAINE WINSON (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): Thanks Barbara. Good morning President, good morning Congress. Lorraine Winson, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 210. The CEC is supporting Motion 210 with a qualification, and notes the unacceptable delays in awarding educational health and care plans, known as EHCPs and the attempts made too often to deny EHCPs on unofficial rationing of funding grounds. The CEC's qualification is to note that EHCPs are not the only designation of special educational needs and disabilities and that this policy should also apply to children assessed to be in the SEN support category. Therefore the CEC is asking for Motion 210 to be carried with a qualification as set out. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Lorraine. So, we are just waiting to know whether Southern region accept the qualification for Motion 210. Southern...? Can somebody let us know or let the policy team know whether you accept the qualification? Yes. Got the thumbs up. So I can go to the vote. So Motion 210. That is carried. Motion 212. That is carried. Finally, Motion 213. And that is carried. Congress, that does conclude the business of motions this morning. Before we go to lunch, we will show a short video of a 12-month review, then I will ask you to come back at 1.30pm. OK? Thank you.

LUNCH BREAK

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT: Could I please call Congress to order. Delegates, welcome to the last session of Congress - we're making it, we're getting there! We're on to item three this afternoon - employment policy: Health and safety and environment. Again, if anybody wishes to speak against these motions, please send a message through the chat box. I start by calling Kevin Flanagan to move Motion 72. All good, Kevin.

72. EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS AND SAFETY STANDARDS POST-BREXIT

This Congress registers its concern at the decision by the Department of Trade to start reviewing Employment rights following our departure from the EU. Leaks in The Times and information within some proposed Trade deals appear to be significantly reducing laws on protection of the Environment, Food Hygiene and other measures like the Working Time Directive which protects workers

We ask the GMB to work with our Partners and Members of Parliament to campaign for the translation of EU Worker Rights, Environmental Legislation and Food Hygiene Regulations fully into UK Law as a minimum condition within any Trade Agreements with countries outside the EU.

We believe that there should be a guarantee from the Government that they will not reduce the standards that exist at present. In fact, we need to strengthen the legislation to protect employees, families, the environment and our food safety from unscrupulous employers and organisations seeking to reduce the current EU Standards that are in place within the UK.

Q22 MANCHESTER CENTRAL BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

KEVIN FLANAGAN (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): Conference, Kevin Flanagan, North-West & Irish region moving Motion 72. I wish to draw to your attention the most important thing that probably is affecting the Brexit situation that we've faced since we've left the Euro. One of the positions is that we've lost, as you know, the European regulation which Boris said originally he would protect and would retain.

However, at the first opportunity, as was leaked by The Times, ministers decided not to include employment rights in the transitional legislation that has already been through parliament. In other words, it's an opportunity for them to not only not include it, but potentially to roll back the standards that we're used to, that the European Commission and our partners in the unions across Europe have fought so much to ensure that were there - things like the working time directive, things like care for families. But not only that, colleagues, we have to bear in mind that at this particular time, the European partners are already looking for the right to be forgotten and also not to be pestered outside of working hours. There are many new forms of legislation for platform workers that they're thinking of introducing later this year. However, unless we map ourselves against that legislation, unless we retain a link to it, then we will be behind employment rights not in other parts of the world, but in Europe. This is not good enough and the promise he made was to keep us in there and we're not hearing any messages whatsoever that the rights of workers will be retained. Colleagues, I congratulate you on your marriage, Boris, in the Catholic Church, and I hope, you know, it's not a marriage of convenience, but one of the things that Catholic social supports at the heart of it is the rights to work, so I hope you will see a motion on that and sign up to that as well. Food rights are important as well, colleagues.

We've seen a rollback also of the potential protections that exist in legislation at present in terms of the safety of our food. We already know that in trade talks they are in discussions about the possible inclusion of things like chlorinated chicken and hormones in animals that promote growth that could be allowed, which are not allowed under European regulation at present. So these are serious matters in terms of where we will be as we start to develop the new agenda after leaving Europe. Colleagues, I ask you to support this motion, and to campaign for fair workers' rights and for animal rights and for farmers and the food industry in this country. Congress, I want you to support this motion overwhelmingly, but most importantly, to remind government of its obligations and what it promised leading up to Brexit. Thank you, conference.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin, great speech to start off the last session this afternoon. North West & Irish region have agreed to formally second the motion, so can I ask Ian to move Motion 73, please?

73. DEVOLVED HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SCOTLAND

This Congress recognises the vital role that GMB Health and Safety representatives have in keeping members safe, healthy and alive at work, denounces attacks on the Health and Safety Executive and welcomes work being done by the GMB, Scottish Hazards and the wider trade union movement to make Scotland a safer, healthier and fairer place to work.

Workers in Scotland are more likely to be killed at work and lack of enforcement by the HSE in sectors other than those decided by the UK Government may well have had an impact on fatal injuries at work particularly in the agricultural sector, no longer considered a priority for unannounced proactive inspection.

Congress welcomes efforts made by the trade union movement to keep workers safe including the long established Healthy Working Lives, the Partnership for Health and Safety in Scotland, ground breaking work previously undertaken to combat violence against workers serving the public, and support for asbestos groups and the late Frank Maguire's of Thompsons Scotland efforts to secure fairer compensation for asbestos victims while still alive, the latter two have been replicated in England and Wales.

The attacks on health and safety enforcement; 45% cuts in their budgets and head count reduced by a third leave the organisation leave the HSE open to increased commercialisation and revenue generation, moves that the Conservative Government have continually demanded.

Congress believes that devolving health and safety should be supported and should include;

- a fully funded tripartite Scottish Health and Safety Agency
- developing regional occupational health and safety centres managed through social partnership built in the model found in some Nordic countries.
- enforcement resources and policies that ensure all workplaces are proactively inspected
- development of health and safety priorities after scrutiny of Scotland's health and safety performance by the Scottish Parliament
- an occupational health service delivered by the NHS and open to all that supports workers rehabilitation after sickness and injury
- adequate prosecution resources and criminal sanctions that act as a deterrent to those who injure, maim and kill their workers.

GLASGOW GENERAL APEX BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

IAN TASKER (GMB SCOTLAND): Yes, President, Congress, Ian Tasker, GMB Scotland, Glasgow General Apex moving Motion 73. COVID is not only a public health crisis but is undoubtedly one of the biggest health and occupation crises in the recent times. The UK government has failed to recognise it as such, providing a paltry £14 million to the HSE to fight the pandemic in the workplace. Our HSE is no longer autonomous, and it has been subjected to excessive UK government interference over many years and massive ideologic cuts.

The minister was in the very department responsible for the cuts inflicted on the health and safety executive. That's why GMB in Scotland believes now is the time for our union and our sister trade unions and others such as occupational health and safety charity, Scottish Hazards, do demand the devolution of health and safety and let us build a Scottish occupational health and safety authority that meets the needs of our modern-day workplaces and protects our modern-day workforce.

So how would a modern health and safety regulator work differently? We would establish a work environment act that would provide properly funded support to health and safety agencies in Scotland. SOCA should operate within a well-resourced labour inspector and be an essential component of fair work. It would work with the new NHS occupational health service, an existing policy from the SDUC and Scottish Hazards. It would afford the Scottish mechanism for enforcing the relevant laws, not the current light-touch enforcement and deregulatory systems imposed on us by the Conservative government. SOCA would apply a precautionary principle and all policy developments, i.e. if the risk of an activity is not fully

known or understood, then it should not take place. It would be fully accountable to this and not politically ideological governments. Congress, every nation and region should have more control of our health and safety at work, particularly in enforcement in our nations and regions. The government central control is not working. Let's start to rebuild our health and safety system. Please support this motion - I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian, and GMB Scotland have agreed to formally second this motion. So can I ask Christina to move Motion 74 for Birmingham, please?

74. SICKNESS AND WAITING DAYS

This Congress recognises that when people go on sick leave they have to have waiting days before sickness payments start. People who have to take sick leave due to operations shouldn't have to have waiting days and should be paid sick pay from day one. Also many operations need a certain length of time to return to normal health before returning to work depending on your job, but a lot of sickness agreements only pay a percentage of sickness for a short period which leads the person to return to work too early either being under pressure from the employer or financial pressures leading them to return to work not fully recovered leading to stress. This needs to change and employers need to be more considerate to the employee and individual circumstances.

S75 STOKE UNITY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

CHRISTINA DEARLOVE (BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS REGION): Good afternoon, Congress, President, Christina Dearlove, Birmingham and West Midlands region again, moving Motion 74, sickness and waiting days.

I for one must have a life-saving and life-changing operation which requires me to have a minimum of eight weeks off work to recover in the future and right now my workplace sick policy wouldn't cover me for any wages payment for the first three days and then when I work, I'd only get statutory sick pay, a measly £96.35 a week. I cannot afford to live on this and I'm sure everyone here at Congress wouldn't be able to, either. Often employers also put pressure on people to come back before they're ready and the lack of company sick pay for me would mean me needing to go back before I'm ready health-wise and I know I'm not the only one in this case that this has happened and would happen to. We don't have a choice to have an operation. We need the operations to make us better and sometimes operations are needed to save our lives. So why should we lose money? And why should we be made to feel like we have to go back before we are ready? We shouldn't. We should be paid from day one and paid in full until we're fit to go back to work. Comrades, I urge you to support this motion. Let's make sure that no-one is left out-of-pocket and made to go back to work after operations before they're ready. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Christina, and the region are formally seconding this motion. So the CEC are supporting all of these motions so I can now put them straight to the vote. Motion 72. That's carried. Motion 73. That's also carried. And Motion 74. And that's also carried. That takes us to item four, social policy transport, Composite 10 and Composite 11. Again, if anyone wishes to speak against these, can they please send a message through the chat box, but can I call on Joe to move Composite 10 and then Kevin to second?

Composite 10

Covering Motions; Motion 239 Total Disability Rights to Travel on UK Train Stations Birmingham and West Midlands Region

Motion 240 Access Available for Disabled People Travelling on Public Transport

TOTAL ACCESS AVAILABLE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE TRAVELLING ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND AT UK TRAIN STATIONS

This Congress would like to raise awareness about how difficult it is when using public transport as a disabled person.

When a disabled person needs to travel across the country by rail, they must book well in advance to ensure a service is available for them to board the train.

Disabled people are treated like second class citizens, disabled people should have the same facilities it they need to travel urgently, just like able bodied people and be able to arrive at the station and have access available to travel when needed.

Disabled people have every right for free movement and if a disabled person needs to travel urgently by rail then this service should be available.

We are asking the CEC to raise this issue with MP's, GMB councillors and the relevant rail regulatory bodies. We need a rail system that is accessible for all, not just on planned journeys but also when the unexpected happens.

More staff should be trained in helping disabled people to board trains if a planned journey is diverted or cancelled, nobody should be left stranded without someone able to assist.

This Congress calls on the government to place pressure on all UK train stations who are denying disabled people the right to have access to travel in total contravention of the disability discrimination legislation.

MOVING REGION NORTH WEST & IRISH SECONDING REGION BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS

(Carried)

JOE SMITH (NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION): President, Congress, good afternoon. Joe Smith, North West & Irish region, moving Composite 10, available access for disabled people when travelling on public transport. Congress, the latest government spending review it was announced at £2 billion subsidy was available for the rail network. On top of this announcement, every year it shows rail companies increasing rail tickets well above inflation and no improvements whatsoever for free movement when disabled people want to use our rail network. In a modern society, disabled people should have every right for free movement when needing to use our trains - not needing to book well in advance and having to plan in advance for the safest and most convenient route to gain access to travel. More than 40% of our UK stations do not have step-free access to facilitate disabled people.

The facts show 50% in Scotland, 40% in England and 32% in Wales do not have step-free access. I've witnessed this first-hand when travelling with a wheelchair user, having to travel 20 miles north just to return on the southbound platform to gain access to a lift. Congress, I travel to York on a regular basis - I walk with an aid, one of the largest stations in the country where trains pass through. And on more than one occasion, all lifts could be out of action. Congress, disabled people should have the right to travel when they need to and not be treated like second-class citizens. Brothers and sisters, we all know this government stopped support for employment for disabled people and it is obvious they must be more independent, must disabled people, and this is what disabled people want - they want to go about their daily business just like able-bodied people. But not at an inconvenience and time-consuming. Poor public transport and limited access at over 40% of our nationwide railway stations is forcing disabled people to miss out on social events and on employment opportunities, where able-bodied people can take it for granted. Disabled people cannot continue to put their lives on hold. Rail operators must take responsibility, so disabled people have a free movement to travel anywhere on the rail network. Congress, I call on the CEC to

take this motion to the Tory government, address these issues to the Transport Minister and the shadow minister for transport, send a message out to your local MPs and all the relevant rail regulators. Congress, I move, thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Joe. And Kevin to second?

KEVIN BAKER (BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS REGION): Kevin Baker, Birmingham & West Midlands region, seconding Composite 10. President, Congress, this Congress knows that more than 1,000 railway stations in Britain lack disabled access according to the analysts of the Office of Rail and Road Data by the disabled charity Leonard Cheshire. The RMT rail union shows the charities findings are enforced by the information given by the rail staff in the stations. The RMT secretary Mick Cash described the figures as shameful. Congress we need to issue the government with a wake-up call and get them to get themselves in order, stopping de-staffing trains for profit. Leonard Cheshire found over 40% of the country's stations do not have step-free access and says this is barring disabled people from travelling independently. The Equality Act 2010 requires all station operators to take reasonable steps to ensure that they do not discriminate against disabled people. Our code of practice provides guidance to all station operators on the standards required so that they can continue to improve access to their services. As part of a train operating company's licence, they must adhere to these standards set out in this code. Congress, your stations need to act now. Any further delay will simply cause more suffering for disabled people. Congress, the people paying the price for these decisions are the most vulnerable in society - disabled people. Congress, disabled people do have the same rights to have access and egress at all UK stations and should not be ignored. Please support this composite.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Kevin. Can I now call Dave to move Composite 11 and then Brendan to second?

Composite 11

Covering Motions;

Motion 241 Save Our Bus Routes London Region

Motion 242 Buses Northern Region

SAVE OUR BUSES AND BUS ROUTES

This Congress notes that

- the bus service is an essential part of the commuting and recreational transport system of the United Kingdom.
- there is a move in Government and Opposition to improve the service quality of the UK's buses network.
- the level of investment and the way that the buses network and market has been structured for decades, has led to a post code lottery in terms of bus coverage.

Where rail systems are limited in the extent the bus service can fill the gap, keeping cars off the road and reducing pollution. A "decent bus" service connects people who might otherwise become isolated and promotes mental wellbeing. The words used are "decent bus services".

GMB members working within the industry have been saying for years that more investment in people and capital is desperately required, as well as a change in the culture of rewarding fat cats and corporate failure. Councils often rely on subsidies to provide these services but there is not enough money.

In recent years, outside of Greater London, the operating costs for running bus services has increased, the number of people making journeys has declined, the number of cars on our roads has increased and bus routes have closed. All this at a time of climate change.

Congress believes that if the country's buses network is to be levelled up a change in culture and a massive uplift in resources is needed to make the industry fit for the current age.

This Congress calls upon the Government and Opposition to

- urgently address the growing funding gaps facing local services in the provision of bus services.
- commit to sustained resourcing of the buses network across the country to help those in most need to get to work and meet the challenges of this decade and beyond.

MOVING REGION NORTHERN
SECONDING REGION LONDON

(Carried)

DAVID RIDDLE (NORTHERN REGION): President, Congress... President, Congress, David Riddle Northern region, moving Composite 11, save our buses and bus routes. Congress, bus services are an essential part of the public transport network across the country. In our region, we have good networks in urban areas but in semi-urban areas and rural areas, the bus networks are patchy to say the least. In some areas the bus networks are a disgrace. In the northern region we have some councils involved in more than commissioning of services. Together, some of the councils in the region extract guarantees on service delivery before public funds are handed over. Congress, we are all well aware of what our members tell us about working in some of the bus companies. We know that they're involved in fire and rehire practices. What we are looking for is a fully funded bus network. A network that works in urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Where there is integration within train networks, where there is a public transport that puts people and communities before pure profit. Where public investment provides a fabric to enable local bus routes to be preserved and, indeed, to thrive. Congress, we want both government and the Labour Party to commit to much better-funded bus network so it is seen, as it should be, as an essential public priority. Please support - I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. And Brendan to second?

BRENDAN DUFFIELD (LONDON REGION): President, Congress... President, Congress, Brendan Duffield, London region, seconding Composite 11 - save our buses and bus routes. I grew up in London, and took for granted the public transport. Then several years ago, I took early retirement and moved to a rural area. I discovered that I needed my car. There are bus services and train stations in the country where I live, but they do not often go where I want or need to go at the time I want to go there. In recent years, the bus service to rural communities like mine have fallen significantly. The total route mileage across the UK has dropped 6%. A good bus service provides a multitude of benefits - it provides access to education, health and care and takes us to our work and our play. A good bus service moves people and their money around and where we are end up we spend in shops, cafes, pubs and it knits together local society, providing essential social connections with friends and family. On top of that, a good bus system helps the environment make it far less essential to use cars and for us it cuts down harmful emissions and fumes. In rural areas, we often do not have an adequately funded bus service for various reasons - for example, local authority buses tend to favour transport to shopping and health services, rather than work. In addition, they favour daytime over night-time and the result misses out shift workers travelling at unusual hours. The result of the failure of the travel system is devastating. Businesses and society are damaged and growth is slowed. Unfortunately, the control is in too many hands with too many vested interests. We need the government to commit to a much better-funded

and integrated bus network - one that takes into account the needs of persons of all ages. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: The CEC are supporting both of these composites so I can put them straight to the vote. Composite 10. That's carried. And Composite 11? That's also carried, thank you. That takes us on to item 5, social policy, transport. Motions 245 and 246. Again, if anyone wishes to speak against these motions please send a message through the chat. You will see Motion 244 on your programmes however Southern region have withdrawn this and so it will not be debated.

245. CONGESTION CHARGING

This Congress notes the increase in charging in some cities outside of London as part of a drive to deal with climate change. However Congress notes that some Councils, including Labour ones, are seeking to bring in charging in provincial areas, that may affect the lowest paid and those with the greatest needs in terms of access to work and at key times of the day such as at the beginning and at the end of the school day.

Congress calls on much greater work to be done by way of research and consultation with local people, businesses and social partners, before embarking on a regime of restricting access to city centres, based on decisions of

Councillors and Officers who themselves may be out of touch with the areas they seek to serve and manage.

D43 – DURHAM COUNTY LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Northern Region have indicated they wish to formally move and second Motion 245, so I will go to Tony to move Motion 246, please. Tony, we are ready for you, we can't hear you yet but we can see you.

246. ARE STREET CLOSURES UNDER THE GOVERNMENT FRIENDLY STREET SCHEME REALLY FRIENDLY FOR USERS?

This Congress notes that LTNs (Low Traffic Neighbourhoods) have been rolled out throughout London Borough's without consultation.

Emergency services were never considered or consulted with and still we are finding emergency times becoming longer due to these LTNs.

The disabled were never considered within this draconian roll out which is an assault on their human rights and freedoms.

The councils are siphoning money off local residents when they should be helping the residents to get back to a normal way of life with covid-19 crippling families and ways of life.

For Councils to be using this virus as a means to push these measures through is unlawful and this has been confirmed in a recent judgement.

We ask Congress to campaign against these schemes being implemented without full meaningful consultation of all communities affected and give us back our streets.

ISLINGTON 1 & HARINGEY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

TONY CHOLERTON (LONDON REGION): President, Congress, Tony Cholerton, London region, moving Motion 246. Our street quotas under the government's friendly streets

schemes are not friendly for users. Low-traffic neighbours have been rolled out in London without consultation. No consideration was given to the impact on the emergency services and to how quickly they could respond. Low-traffic neighbourhoods only take into account the few who are better off and show total disregard for everybody else. I saw the direct result of this poorly thought out policy last September, when I attempted to visit my sister for her birthday. This is a 6-mile journey that normally takes 20 minutes. However, the South Circular road was closed in both directions. I know this area well, so I tried to take an alternative route, only to find out that all side roads had been made into low-traffic neighbourhoods. No attempt was made to ease the congestion, so the result was gridlock. After three hours, I gave up and went home - a total journey time of four hours. The gridlock caused pollution to rise to dangerous levels. My journey alone produced six times the pollution it would normally produce. Emergency services could not move. The authorities that implemented the LTNs did nothing, even though their actions were contributing to chaos. The cost to the people who depend on the roads was not considered. Many of our members are delivery drivers, taxi drivers, carers, and emergency service workers.

Most carers depend on their cars to get to the people they look after. Those most in need were left to suffer for the sake of opening a few roads. The impact on the disabled would have been severe, but nothing was done to help sort out this mess. Often these LTNs are set up with cams because they know they cause serious disruption to road users and it is a good opportunity to raise funds. All of this done at a time that is unprecedented. Coronavirus has caused immense stress on everyone and the implementation of LTNs has shown the "Don't care" attitude that is disgraceful of this time. One of our comrades was sacked for taking part in a local protest against the impact of LTNs on the emergency services. For cities to work, they must work for everyone and not just the few. Congress, please support this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. And Paul to second, please? No? Have we lost Paul? OK, we're just trying to get Paul back in again.

PAUL BLOCK (LONDON REGION): Seconding Motion 246, are street closures under the government's friendly street scheme really friendly for users? Good afternoon, President, good afternoon, Congress. I'm Paul Block from the energy central branch London region. The pandemic has been used as an excuse to change many things, very often with just or understandable cause. The introduction of low-traffic neighbourhoods, however, does not seem to have been implemented well or indeed in an appropriate manner. The reason I say this is due to the lack of consultation. Emergency services were not consulted, and this, to me, seems negligent. I don't need to explain how delaying an emergency response vehicle could be disastrous. Residents in roads where these schemes have been implemented may have been put at risk by having emergency response times increased. The very fact councils have neglected to consult with residents, in some cases, as well as other relevant parties such as emergency services must be wrong. After all, this is using residents' money, which is gathered through taxation, in ways that would arguably have been better spent to assist those in most need during the pandemic. For councils to be using this to push these measures through are unlawful and this has been confirmed in a recent judgement. Some roads now prohibit vehicular access or restrict it to small vehicles. I work for an electricity supply company and have had to cancel jobs because I cannot get to them, as workers have to pay driving and parking penalties now, so we don't take the risk. How terrible it must be if you are a disabled person. How can you leave home and return OK to your home? Surely common sense would indicate the requirement for some vehicles to be identified by a sticker as exempt for these schemes or using a vehicle registration plate. Congress, I ask you for your support with this motion so the GMB can lobby government to stop this being done in

future without meaningful consultation. I would also like to express my sincere solidarity with Gary Bolister and I ask the council if they are listening to reinstate him and reinstate him now. Thank you for listening.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. I believe that Michael Needham wants to come in to speak in opposition to 245, Michael?

MICHAEL NEEDHAM (GMB SCOTLAND): Thank you, President, Congress, Michael Needham, GMB Scotland, speaking against Motion 245, speaking without the support of my region, mainly down to not really having the opportunity to talk about it since Congress started. More my issue there. But, Congress, we need to recognise that the climate emergency is real. Things need to change. These changes won't always be easy and we will not always have the solutions for everyone. The clock is ticking and there won't always be time to consult in normal ways. In reality, the next ten years are make-or-break - if we don't have annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, we'll overshoot safe limits of warming. And cities that already have congestion charges such as London - there is a flat £1.55 bus journey charge. Even motor pool buses as long as you don't exceed an hour by the time you've got the second bus - that's one of the cheapest journeys in the you can UK and that is in London. Durham is about £2 a day for bus travel and there's park-and-ride facilities. While I understand congestion charges cause difficulty for some people, our Congress needs to take environmental issues more seriously. Just because the UK has an unambitious deadline of 2050, we don't need to mirror that as a union. Congress, I oppose.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael. Northern region you do have the right of reply. Do you want to exercise that right of reply to Michael's opposition? Just waiting for northern region to give us their response. (Pause) they've formally moved it and seconded it so it may be a problem with a speaker. Yes. Northern region if we don't get a response we'll have to take it to the vote. No. I'm going to assume you don't want the right of reply. They don't. OK. Thank you for letting us know. In that case, the CEC are supporting both of these Motions, therefore I will put them to the vote, Motion 245. That is carried. And Motion 246. That is also carried. Congress we move to item 6, the first of our International Motions. Again if anyone wishes to speak against the Motion, please let us know through the chat box but can I call on Taranjit to move Motion 255 please?

255. SOLIDARITY AGAINST THE CAA

Congress notes that the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which has recently been passed by the Indian Parliament is an attack on the very basis of Indian citizenship.

The laws allow migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan to become Indian citizens provided they are either Hindi, Sikh, Parsi, Jain or Christian, by doing this they are excluding Muslims.

In the UK following Brexit we have seen a rise in hate crime in particular Islamophobia where people have become emboldened to make such remarks.

In the UK many of our members and their families are likely to have been caught up in this draconian and exclusionary legislation to divide communities.

As trade unionists we must stand in international solidarity with workers at the universities which have been attacked along with students, women, children, the vulnerable whose voices have been curtailed.

We therefore urge Congress to:

- Highlight where it can, the impact of the amendment on our members affected.
- Make contact with GMB supported MPs to discuss avenues of repealing the CAA.

- Offer support where requested, appropriate or possible to members and families caught up and impacted by this action.

EALING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

TARANJIT CHANA (LONDON REGION). Thank you, Taranjit Chana London Region moving Motion 255 solidarity against the citizenship amendment act. On the 14th December, Congress, 2019 a group of women staged a sit-in in Finlay. This iconic occupation became known as the Shahin resistance against the Modi Government's discriminatory and fascist amendment act, the first step on the road to ethnic cleansing and genocide. I'm going to quote Amrit Wilson speaking on the million woman rise March at Trafalgar Square on 8th March 2020. She said "this is a global agenda, linking India's Prime Minister Modi with Trump, Netanyahu, Boris Johnson, linking the suffering of Kashmir, Myanmar, Palestine and India to the US and the UK. In India this fascism takes the form of upper class supremacy. The Indian Government are demanding people prove their citizenship with documents going back generations. If you are a Muslim and have no papers of this sort you will be locked up in a detention centre, even if your family's always lived in the country. Massive detention centres have already been set up and many who have been detained have died there. The citizenship laws make religion central for the first time. In this country we know about the horrific injustice of Windrush, we know about Yarl's Wood, these are symptoms of fascism. In India we can see the next terrifying stage, as in Hitler's Germany denying citizenship to millions is likely to be followed by genocide." In those dark days of wonderful inspiring flowers of resistance bloomed with the sit-in protests blocking the major road using non-violent resistance against the genocide laws. Congress, as Trade Unionists let's stand in international solidarity against Islamophobia and fascism in whatever guise it comes in. Please support this Motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Bismilla to second, please?

BISMILLA MAHOMED (LONDON REGION): Congress, madam President, good afternoon. Bismilla Mahomed, London region first time delegate, third time speaker. As my sister so eloquently put it, the CAA, the citizen amendment act by definition isn't an amendment, rather a religious act of discrimination and it only excludes Muslims but also it incites acts of hate crime across the globe. The truck driver in Ontario in Canada who premeditatedly drove into a family on Sunday evening killing five Muslims. The only survivor was a nine-year-old boy who woke up this morning to find out the rest of his family had been killed just for being Muslim. Congress, I call upon the GMB to use its power to lobby Parliament to push the India government to repeal the CAA, it's criminal, should be called the criminal amendment act, therefore I second this Motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. You have the Congress bug doing three speeches in your first Congress, well done. Brian to move Motion 256, please?

256. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

This Congress recognises the work of Amnesty International in defending the human rights of Trade unionists around the world. Further, Congress congratulates the Amnesty Trade Union network committee on its 40th anniversary in 2019. The network co-ordinates the work of Amnesty International UK (AIUK) in regards to its engagement with and campaigns on behalf of trade unions in the UK and around the world.

Congress notes with gratitude the support of AIUK in our current Amazon campaign on behalf of the workers at Amazon.

Congress further notes that GMB is the only large Trade Union in the UK not affiliated to the Trade Union Network of AIUK.

In recognition of this work and in order to advance it still further, congress resolves to instruct the EC to affiliate GMB nationally to Amnesty International UK and the Trade Union Network Committee. At the Unions current size the cost of affiliation is approximately £500 per Year.

Congress requests that a report on the progress of this work and GMBs involvement with AIUK be made at Congress 2022.

GMB @ PCS BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRIAN SHAW (LONDON REGION): President, Congress, Brian Shaw London region, moving Motion 256. Amnesty International has been running for 50 years campaigning around human rights around the world, highlighting cases of human rights abuses as well as current campaigning around asylum and refugee rites, LGBT women rights, against female genital mutilations and forced marriages and defends the rights for free, independent Trade Unions. All things this union campaigns over and supports. For 40 years, there has been a Trade Union section as part of Amnesty International UK. We are the third largest union in this country so we need be involved in shaping that organisation. £500 annual affiliation allows us to be involved in the Trade Union board and part of the democratic Trade Union structures of Amnesty. I never understood why we don't vote in support or opposition of affiliations on the proviso the Finance and General Purposes Committee will look at or indeed for that Committee to review prior to Congress and make recommendations. But that is for another year. For ease the Region accept the reference back. As this is the last opportunity I have to speak at Congress 21, thanks for all who have worked hard to make this happen. I would also like to pay tribute on behalf of all those who've been involved in equality over ten years to Sue Hackett who is retiring at the end of June as our Regional Equality Officer. You have inspired, delivered and motivated and worked tirelessly for the team in London. You have rocked our world. Let's make this, your last equality conference, another great success. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian for those words. London region have agreed to formally second the Motion so can I ask Obi to move Motion 257, please?

257. PALESTINE

This Congress is appalled at the deteriorating situation facing Palestinians.

The unrelenting violence; the demolition and destruction of homes; the ongoing occupation and the expanding of illegal settlements of the West bank, East Jerusalem and the siege of Gaza, undermine any prospect of a just and lasting peace and leave millions of Palestinians vulnerable and in poverty.

The GMB welcomed and supported the motion at the TUC Congress of a policy to work with international partners and "urge them to join the international campaign to stop annexation and end apartheid".

The GMB also acknowledges the extremely important recent report by the highly respected human rights organisation B'Tselem, which concluded that in looking at the impact of Israeli policy on the Palestinian people "It is one regime between the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, and we must look at the full picture and see it for what it is: apartheid."

The GMB is also appalled at the ongoing medical apartheid that Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza face in the current Covid crisis, with Israel refusing to vaccinate those whose land they occupy.

The election of President Biden provides an opportunity for a reset of American policy following the outrageous approach of the Trump administration that has so damaged prospects for peace. The GMB calls on the new US administration to reverse their unilateral recognition of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, end plans for the movement of the US Embassy to Jerusalem, immediately restore funding to the crucial UNRWA program and reinstate the position of Consul General who acts as the diplomatic mission on behalf of the US Government with the Palestinian administration.

This Congress therefore instructs the Central Executive Council to ensure that the GMB:

- Gives its full support for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign, called for by Palestinian society in support of full equality and justice for the Palestinian people, and the right of UK citizens, public bodies and civil society organisations to campaign on BDS.
- Supports the work of Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and others in campaigning to oppose proposed laws to prohibit bodies from supporting BDS campaigns and encourages all regions and branches to affiliates to the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign.
- Support PSC and international campaigns demanding Israel upholds it duties, especially regarding Covid-19 vaccinations, under Article 56 of the fourth Geneva convention, in that as the occupying power it ensures to the fullest extent of the means available “the adoption and application of the prophylactic and preventative measures necessary to combat the spread of contagious diseases and epidemics”.
- Support the work of Labour and Palestine in developing progressive Labour Party policy on Palestine.
- Raise awareness and support for the Palestinian cause amongst GMB activists, members and officials.

GMB UNITE BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

OBI AMADI (LONDON REGION): Good afternoon. My name is Obi from London region, moving Motion 257 on Palestine. Colleagues, we are pleased this Motion is on the table and urge everyone to give it full support. If anyone doubted the need for a Motion on this issue, or for GMB to take a position, the events of the last few weeks should have dispelled the rights. We'll rightly mourn the loss of all lives but this latest bout of fighting, but let us be under no illusions about who the aggressor is and where the fault lies. This recent eruption of violence stemmed from the latest attempt of the Israeli state to ethnically cleanse Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarah and the storming of the a Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The resistance of the Palestinians is in no way comparable to the massive military might of Israel. Palestinians have the right to resist this ethnic cleansing and we'll stand shoulder to shoulder in their struggle. It's Israel that's occupied Palestinian lands for the last 54 years. It is Israel that has moved nearly 700,000 illegal settlers into the West Bank. It's Israel that has been actively ethnically cleansing Palestinians from their homes and lands. And, it's Israel that has inhumanely blockaded Gaza for the last 14 years. For too long the world's stood idly by doing nothing except watch as the Palestinians have suffered under the massive expansion of illegal Israeli settlements and the denial of the most basic rights we expect to enjoy. Those of life, freedom, justice and equality. We have even seen the Palestinians denied protection from this global pandemic with Israel refusing to vaccinate those whose land they occupy. We welcome the comments of GMB on the importance that it attaches to the human rights reports that identify Israel as a state practicing apartheid. We welcome too that the CEC believe there is a proper role for sanctions in the situation that

faces Palestinians, given the most recent events that took place after the Motion was submitted, we hope, that the GMB would agree that if the evictions in Sheikh Jarah go ahead, sanctions should be called for. It's shocking that sanctions do not already apply for the settlements that are universally recognised as illegal under international law. If you have any doubt that the BDS campaign is becoming more effective, you don't need to look any further than the attempts of the vile Tory government.

Colleagues, I am immensely proud of the Trade Union movement's history of standing on the side of those who are opposed and down-trodden and really proud that GMB and other Trade Unions are part of the Palestine solidarity campaign and the work we have done in building solidarity for Palestinians in this Trade Union movement. I urge you to support this Motion and, end violence, end the siege of Gaza, end the ethnic cleansing, end apartheid and bring life, freedom, justice and equality to the Palestinians. Please support this Motion. I move. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Obi. And can I call Kim Hendry to second but also Kim, you are also moving the next one as well 258 so I've been advised to stay on screen then we won't have to keep calling you in. Yes?

KIM HENDRY (LONDON REGION): I can do that thanks Barbara. Congress, President, Kim Hendry London region pleased to be seconding Motion 257 on Palestine. Congress, never has it been more important to show our solidarity with the Palestinians and demand an end to the increasing violence and oppressive actions of the Israeli state. The demolition and destruction of homes, the ongoing occupation and expanding of illegal settlements on the West Bank and east Jerusalem, the siege of Gaza undermine any prospect of a just and peaceful end. It's been caused by the Israelis in an attempt to make way for Israeli settlers. The media and politicians portray this conflict as a war between two equal parties, but as Obi says, this false equivalent, one is the occupier, one is the occupied. Our movement has a proud history of anti-racism. We have stood shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in Colombia and South Africa and those fighting oppression where whenever it occurs. No state should be exempt. There is a widespread international recognition that Israel is practicing a system of apartheid, systemic domination of one racial or ethnic group over another. As Obi said, Israeli human rights groups as well as Human Rights Watch have said exactly the same thing in recent months and in the last year. GMB supported the Motion last year and it was unanimously adopted. It identified Israel as practicing a system of apartheid. Let's not forget the last time such a system of racial discrimination existed in South Africa, the boycott disinvestment and sanctions were brought in to address that. This Motion argues for the same. Congress, the Palestinians have been abysmally treated over many decades, please support this Motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kim. Take a deep breath and move Motion 258, please.

258. PALESTINE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

This Congress applauds GMB for its support of Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) initiatives over the last few years including the TUC Women's delegation and generous support of the successful Trade Union Conference held in 2019. Congress recognises that the immediate future will again be extremely challenging for Palestinians.

Congress is aware that it is existing policy to encourage branch affiliation to PSC but notes that regrettably few branches are. Congress therefore requests the CEC and Regions to take appropriate steps to encourage more branch affiliation.

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

KIM HENDRY (LONDON REGION): And a glass of water! Thanks, Barbara. Congress, President, Kim Hendry London region moving Motion 258 on affiliation to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign or the PSC. Congress, the previous Motion 257 set out why solidarity with the Palestinians is essential for all Trade Unionists, particularly right now. This Motion, 258, gives concrete form to how we can pursue that solidarity by affiliating to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Affiliating to the PSC is one of the best ways that GMB activists and members can support Palestinians and it's long-standing GMB policy to encourage GMB branches to affiliate. However, despite this being official GMB policy, currently only four branches have affiliated. Congress, this is really regrettable, hence why this Motion is being submitted. This Motion instructs the CEC and regions to take the necessary steps to fully implement the existing GMB policy by actively and successfully encouraging GMB branches to affiliate to the PSC. Congress, as I said, the Palestinians need our solidarity more than ever and one of the best ways to deliver that that is through affiliation and active participation and it campaigns. For those not familiar with this work, the PSC is the biggest organisation in the UK dedicated to securing Palestinian human rights. It's a grassroots campaign which campaigns for an end to the occupation of Palestine for the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and for peace and justice for everyone living in the region. GMB's affiliated to the PSC and has been for some time, as in most of the major TUC affiliated unions. GMB representatives have long been active in the PSC Trade Union liaison group and this Motion was written by the previous holder of that role, the delegate Dick Pole. It's been taken on by a member of the CEC showing the importance the CEC attaches to the solidarity. The PSC Trade Union group is coordinating many initiatives which GMB have participated in support. The trade union conference on Palestine support for demonstrations, participation at AGM where policy is decided. The fee is just £25 per year, and it's a major source of desperately needed income for the PSC. So a very simple demand and easily achievable one. Congress, I ask you to vote for this Motion and I also ask you to look to your branches and get them to affiliate to the PSC. During this current period, the PSC needs this income to found their essential campaigning for the rights of Palestinian people at this crucial juncture in the Palestinian people's history. Comrades, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Kim. Two speeches one after the other. Can I ask Fevzi to second the Motion, please?

FEVZI HUSSEIN (LONDON REGION). Thank you President, Congress. Fantastic speeches by Kim and Obi there. Proud to second Motion 258 and make no apology for the repetition that is going to be made here. Congress, the trade union movement has a proud record of providing international solidarity over many decades, whether we are supporting the injustices faced by Venezuela or Trade Union brothers or sisters in Colombia and the Philippines, we have never been scared as a movement to take the right position and to fight oppression. This was never more greatly underlined than when this movement led the way in pushing a boycott of South Africa and supporting our brothers and sisters in the African National Congress to end apartheid as both Obi and Kim touched on.

Congress, the CEC are supporting this Motion. But with a qualification. Until such time as that apartheid in Palestine has been smashed, this has to be the last year that we have any qualification or strings on supporting the Palestinian people. PSC have a brilliant comprehensive strategy of support for Palestine and this involves boycott divestment and sanctions. How do you think we managed to win the apartheid battle in South Africa anyone who follows that will know exactly how it was done. Everyone in the GMB and I mean

everyone, must understand that, apartheid is alive and kicking in the state of Israel. Gaza is the biggest open air prison in the world. Children are routinely detained. The IDF, Israeli Defence Force, routinely use skunk water. There are routine human rights abuses by Israeli settlers and quite frankly I could go on and on. Fishermen and women of Palestine can't even fish their own waters without being shot at. The Jarah neighbourhood property land grab and the attacks at the worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque are the latest instances of oppression. I don't want us to support a two-state solution any more as some kind of solitaire justified position on Palestine. Congress this is not enough. Support of a boycott divestment and sanction strategy has to be the way forward. This is how we ended apartheid in South Africa and this is how freedom will come to the people of Palestine. Don't just support this Motion, go back to your branches and please affiliate to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Solidarity, peace and love to us all. Free Palestine - I second.

THE PRESIDENT: No speakers in opposition so I'll ask Robbie Scott from the CEC to respond on behalf of the CEC on 255, 256 and 257.

ROBBIE SCOTT (CEC, COMMERCIAL SERVICES): President, Congress, Robbie Scott on behalf of the CEC on Motions 255, 256 and 2725. The CEC supporting Motion 255 with a qualification. We stand in solidarity with workers and students speaking out against the citizenship amendment act in India. The CEC's qualification is firstly that the Motion asks for the union to provide support for those affected by this legislation. This may prove impossible on a practical level as what influence GMB can have in legislation of another sovereign nation is unclear. Secondly, any requests for support which is of a financial nature would need to be subject to consideration like the CEC finance and general purposes committee in line with all requests for financial assistance. On Motion 256, the CEC is asking for this Motion to be referred so that the requests for affiliation to Amnesty International can be further questioned. There have been disputes with Amnesty, as first reported by Unite in August 2019. We must be mindful of the working conditions and treatment of workers and their engagement with unions when we consider affiliation. Motion 257, the CEC is asking Congress to support this Motion with qualifications. The CEC's horrified by recent weeks of escalating violence in the occupied Palestinian territories in Israel. It's been made that this escalation of violence has root causes. This includes the illegal attempts by Israeli authorities to forcibly displace Palestinian families from neighbourhoods like Sheikh Jarah. The CEC endorses the findings of several human rights organisations that such actions and policies of the Israeli authorities when taken together with others amount to crimes against humanity. This includes that of apartheid as defined by international law. The CEC's first qualification is that we ask for the call to support the Labour and Palestine group to be referred to the Financial and General Purposes committee in line with long standing practice to assess whether this group is in line with GMB aims, values and policies, secondly the Motion calls for GMB to extend full support for the boycott divestment in sections campaign. This has not been GMB policy, however we believe it would have serious unintended consequences. Without a qualification this would move the union policy away from boycotting companies that profit from illegal settlements and the occupation and instead move it instead towards boycotting wider Israeli civil society. The companies we target would also be determined by an outside body without GMB representation. It can have unintended consequences for policy elsewhere, given the BDS national committee campaigns against the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism which GMB has adopted and has been used in internal disciplinary cases. Congress, we are proud to express our solidarity with the Palestinian people. There are qualifications trapped into our policy in this important sensitive area while also retaining the current process of carefully weighing the evidence and determining an industrial response when a company profits from the occupation. That is consistent with the

policy passed by Congress. Therefore Congress the CEC is asking for Motion of 255 to be carried out, to agree to 256 and 257 to be carried with the qualifications set out. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Robbie. And London region, Brian already said in his speech that London region accept the reference back from 256 and they've also notified us they accept the qualification on 255 and on 257 so I can put, well I will not put 256 to the vote but 255 please. Carried. 257. That is carried. And 258. Also carried. Congress, we now come to the last of our international Motions, 259, 260 and composite 12, again if anybody wishes to speak in opposition, please let us know via the chat. I start by calling Raj to move Motion 259.

259. SOLIDARITY WITH INDIAN FARMERS IN LARGEST GLOBAL PROTEST

This Congress notes the Indian Farmers protest which began in November 2020 as being one of the biggest ever seen against States draconian farmers laws. The world has witnessed the unprecedented movement of farmers and their supporters travelling by tractors, many of the convoys being led by women, to the capital city New Delhi. Some travelling for several days before they reach New Delhi. The Farmers are calling for agriculture laws which threaten to put them in a vulnerable position against large corporations with exploitative potential. Agriculture is the farmers livelihood. It has been passed on from generation to generation.

As tens of thousands of farmers in India drove their convoys of tractors to protest against the government's new agricultural laws, we have seen global support of solidarity from farmers in the UK too.

The strike action by the Indian farmers is the largest civil society action by the agricultural community for three decades and they have been protesting for several months.

Congress welcomes the GMB's actions of publicly signing a statement by War on Want along with other trade unions coming together in issuing a joint trade union charter of demands in support of the farmer's protest.

We call upon Congress to:

1. Send out further statements of solidarity, where appropriate, in the continued support of the Indian Farmers.
2. To continue to work with War on Want on the trade union charter of demands and update on its progress.
3. To highlight the arrest of any union and farmers organisation leaders by using the excuse of the global pandemic to suppress the protests.
4. Lobby and work with Labour MP's to highlight the plight of the Farmers and their demands and the impact on their livelihood and highlight any Human Rights abuses that they are being subjected to.
5. To offer, where possible support, signposting and information to GMB members and their families who are being affected by this.
6. To work alongside relevant community and other organisations both in the UK and abroad on this issue such as War On Want.
7. Take any other appropriate action or steps to show continued solidarity to the Farmers protest.

SECURICOR 1 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

RAJ PUDASAINI (LONDON REGION): Thank you Barbara and President. Motion 259, India farmers in the largest global protest. It's now been just over six months since farmers from across India rose in an epic struggle against farmers in the Parliament last year authorised

by the Modi government. The display of solidarity and resolve have been global. We have seen farming unions here in the UK show their solidarity toward the farmers in India. The GMB under the leadership of acting General Secretary Warren Kenny are showing a statement of support of the India farmers' uprising. Why are we seeing ordinary people rise up in their thousands? Many have been through generations. They are responding to their calls to rise up and fight by whatever means necessary. The fight remains with us and not in the hands of big corps races. The response by the India government to the resistance has been to ignore the protests, that they'll get tired and go back. Despite some months through harsh winter, blaring sun and rain, they have not done so. The India government is putting up barricades and firing water cannons and beating with sticks. None of this has worked as farmers remain determined to persist. No matter how long it will take. This is why we as Trade Unionists must show solidarity to the protesters. This is one of courage, determination and resistance where there is no anger or hate, just a fight for their land not to be taken away from them and handed over to big corporations. I move. Please support. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. And seconder, Varsha, please.

VARSHA UNADKAT (LONDON REGION): I am Varsha Unadkat. London region, Wembley branch. Congratulations Gary. Second Motion 259, solidarity with Indian farmers in the largest global protest. President, Congress in November 2020, the world saw one of the largest uprisings of worker farmers in India. This is being attempted by the Indian Government to take away their livelihoods. We saw on social media farmers, workers, trade unions, those supporting the farmers' plights down tools and join the convoy of tractors and some were on foot. Taking a day or week to get to Delhi, to sought a resistance against the anti farm laws. The Indian Government was to shut down all social media reports the resistance by the farmer, the violence at the hands of the Indian Government, including 24-year-old - an activist who was sexually assaulted whilst in the police custody. Since then, just over a month in a jail just daring to show solidarity and to resist anti-farm laws. It is undoubtedly one of many who were subject to violence, abuse and at the hands of the state. As trade unionists this solidarity is important to those on the front line so, they are not alone there and- their voices and resistance, to take over the livelihoods are being harmed by the international community. I second. I support. Thank you Wembley branch: Thank you London region to support me.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Varsha. Well done. Can I ask Dean to move the Motion 260, please?

260. SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA: FIGHTING THE US BLOCKADE

This Congress recognises that 2020 marks the 61st anniversary of the Cuban Revolution and the 81st anniversary of the Cuban trade union federation the CTC. GMB congratulates the Cuban people on the impressive achievements made in health care, education and international solidarity during this time. Cuba has some of the lowest illiteracy and child mortality rates and percentage of students in higher education in the region, plus greatly improved life expectancy rates. It also ranks among the top countries in the world for percentage of women MPs and sustainable human development.

GMB applauds Cuba's outstanding international humanitarianism with 65,000 Cuban health professional working in 89 countries; emergency medical brigades providing vital support during natural disasters, notably the Haitian earthquake and West African Ebola outbreak; and sight restored to more than four million people as part of the Operation Miracle programme. Cuba's Latin America Medical School which celebrates its 21st anniversary in 2020 has also provided medical scholarships for more than 30,000 students since opening in 1999.

GMB notes that these achievements have been made while Cuba has suffered under the inhumane US blockade for more than 56 years. While we welcome the reestablishment of diplomatic relations made under President Obama in 2014, the blockade is still very much in place. GMB expresses serious concern at the return to the aggressive "Cold War" rhetoric and tightening of the blockade made against Cuba by the Trump administration which constitutes new and real threat, not just to the Cuban people, but progressive movements in the region as a whole.

We support the UK government joining 190 other countries in condemning the US blockade at the UNGA in 2017. However, it should take concrete measures to punish British organisations or companies that comply with extraterritorial US blockade legislation over UK sovereign laws. We note the recent example of this in the Open University ban on Cuba students and congratulate the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and the British trade union movement for its work to pressure the Open University to overturn this decision.

GMB agrees to support the proposal of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign to celebrate Cuba's achievements and strengthen links between British and Cuban trade unions.

GMB Congress agrees to: -

- GMB regions to be affiliated to CSC to show solidarity and participate on a regional level with CSC, and encourage individual GMB members to affiliate directly to the campaign;
- Participate in Cuban solidarity by giving them the access to the technology they lack because of the US Blockade;
- Affiliate GMB Regions to Cuban provinces to show solidarity with the Cuban people and to allow the exchange of workers and technology;
- Call on the UK government to take robust action against UK-based companies that comply with extraterritorial blockade legislation;
- Fully support participation in CSC delegations to Cuba in future by sending GMB delegates in the brigades mainly the May Day brigade.

C02 GLOUCESTER COMMUNITY BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

DEAN ISMAY (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): Moving 260. I have seen first the effects of this is having on the Cuban people from my visit with the Cuban solidarity campaign in 2019. The blockade legislations give the USA powers to sanction businesses in countries, including our own. Many have had huge multimillion fines and foreign assets control that enforces this blockade. Blockade has cost the Cuban economy \$933 billion since 1962. This has an impact on accessing every day and vital supplies to the islands. This has made been made worse under the global pandemic and led to shortages in these areas. The Trump admission placed an additional 243 sanctions against Cuba and tightened the blockade more than ever before.

The UK Government, along with the EU and other European countries, has passed antidote legislation to protect the companies that want to trade with Cuba. In practise it has not been implemented and companies prefer to pay the fines to continue to trade with the United States. British companies live in fear of US sanctions, examples are the Co-op Bank which closed the Cuba Solidarity Campaign bank account and the Open University who banned a student from applying to study there. They both cited the blockade as their reasoning. During the pandemic Cuba sent medical brigades to 40 countries, we should commend them for the work during this difficult time. In April 2020, when the British ship was stricken with COVID-

19, the USA refused our ships to dock despite our special relationship and instead the Cuban Government gave them permission. Cuba has the right to self-determination the same as everyone else. We should respect that right of self-determination and allow the Cuban people to determine their own future and the US should respect the decision by the Cuban people. Support this motion to show solidarity and work with Cuban people at this time. (Inaudible) I move.

BARBARA: I loved that Dean. Thank you. We have missed that clapping and cheering this week. Can I ask Paul to second, please?

PAUL BOHIN (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): Thanks, Barbara. President, Congress, Paul Bohin, Wales & South West region, seconding Motion 260. Congress, Dean spoke about the hard work the Cuban people and their Government has done during the coronavirus pandemic and this work is commendable. They have faced many challenges as a nation during this difficult time. Lack of access to PPE and vital supplies, this is very tragic. They are a country that believes no-one should go without medical care and have sent their brigades to countries such as China and Italy, to name two examples during the pandemic out of the pandemic out of the 40. They pride themselves on putting humans first. They did it with the Chernobyl accident by offering those devastated by the nuclear reactor exploding free healthcare for life. It is a shame that British companies live in fear of this illegal blockade. Instead of trading with Cuba would rather pay the fines of the US or not trade with them at all because of fear of losing access to the US markets. We have helped secure Cuban nationals the ability to stay in Hilton Hotels in the United Kingdom during 2007. Despite the chains in the blockade and contravening US law, we should always work with companies on a case by case basis and work with the Cuban solidarity campaign to help to build those trading links. As Dean has rightly said, it is about being human. They should be treated the same as everyone else and we should respect their right to self-determination. Please stand with Cuban in solidarity. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Can I call on Sarah to move Composite 12, please?

Composite 12

Covering Motions;

Motion 261 No Trade Deal on Our NHS with the USA Yorkshire & North Derbyshire

Motion 262 The NHS and Future Trade Deals Wales and South West Region

THE NHS; FUTURE TRADE DEALS AND THE USA

This Congress is deeply concerned that our NHS is under threat from commercial interests. Congress notes that it has been British Government that opened up the NHS to EU competition laws, leaving our Health Service more exposed to private intervention than any other EU country. This Congress is taking seriously, following Brexit, that any trade deal with the USA will put our NHS under attack from US pharmaceutical companies who will be able to profit from drugs we use within the NHS. It was Trump in a speech in 2019 that any trade deal with the UK would include the NHS with everything open and on the table. This was quickly retracted in the days following. In the UK we pride ourselves on our NHS being free at the point of care and publicly owned. Although by stealth, this is slowly being broken down with wholly owned subsidiaries and private interests taking precious NHS contracts out of public ownership. Our NHS is never safe during a Tory Government whoever is prime minister. To keep our NHS public, we need a government committed to doing just that. The GMB is committed to protecting our NHS which is the envy of the world. However, this new threat from the USA of the NHS being on the table in a trade deal, must be addressed as such. This could lead to the USA model of insurance based private healthcare instead of National Insurance based care which is universal for all. This could lead to people paying for health care or not being able to access health care at all because they have no money. Our NHS should not be open to privatisation in any shape or form. Our NHS cannot be placed on the table for trade deals

in a post Brexit UK and we must stand strong together to protect it from such threat. Therefore, Congress reasserts its policy that we reject a vision of free trade that offers up public services like the NHS to rapacious multinational companies. Congress calls on the CEC to demand that the NHS is specifically excluded from any future trade deals. GMB calls on Congress to reinstate the NHS as a national target in order to protect the NHS in the best possible manner and further campaign to abolish the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to prevent any private interest and profiteering from OUR NHS.

MOVING REGION YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE
SECONDING REGION WALES & SOUTH WEST

(Carried)

SARAH YOUNG (YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION): President, Congress, Sarah Young, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region. Moving Composite 12 - the NHS future trade deals and the USA. This motion included in this Composite it was with the worrying thought that Trump would get a second term in office and what he had said in the 2019 speech, that any trade deal with the UK and US would include the NHS, which was quickly retracted in the days after, following a back lash. Trump is now, hopefully, assigned to the history books. But our NHS is still under threat from trade deals. The threat has not gone away from US pharmaceutical companies and opening up to the EU imposition laws.

No-one can trust this Tory Government with our NHS. Boris and Matt Hancock are treating it as jobs for the boys, with contracts. PPE contracts have been a disgrace. With out of dated equipment, with dates with the original used by date and sometimes these were out of date themselves. Plastic aprons with other items not fit for purpose. Track and trace, again worth millions, that just doesn't work. With phone calls that seem to harass, rather than help COVID victims. If anyone questions Hancock he just looks like a rabbit caught in the headlights and doesn't answer. That cannot be trusted with our NHS. I don't trust anything they say.

They said (inaudible) the council for their actions. Our NHS should not be open to privatisation in any shape or form and should not be on the table in any trade deals in a post Brexit UK. The greed of US pharmaceutical companies could lead to the model of private healthcare which means that people pay for healthcare or they cannot afford to access private healthcare because they have no money or their insurance runs out. Our NHS the NHS is the envy of the world. (Inaudible) paid for by national insurance contributions that ensures everyone gets treatment, regardless of their situation.

This is (inaudible) stand together to protect from such threats. We call on Congress to reject any free trade deals that offers our NHS to private companies that will profit millions from healthcare and that the CEC demand the NHS be excluded from any future trade deals. We also call on Congress to reinstate our NHS as a national target in order to protect it in the best and strongest manner. We must also work to abolish the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to prevent profiteering through this self-privatisation of our NHS. Through this speech, I have said our NHS many times. This is because it is our NHS. Paid for by us and it must always remain that way. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sarah. And Keith to second, please.

KEITH RIDLEY (WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION): President, can you hear me? President.... President, Congress, Keith Ridley, Wales & South-West region. First time delegate, first-time speaker. I would also like to congratulate Malcolm and Barbara on their re-election and Gary on your election as General Secretary and also I would like to invite Gary to visit Torbay as soon as he is available. Regarding the NHS future trade deals in the

USA. Congress our beloved NHS has been a beacon of light for many people since its inception in 1948. And held up by people around the world as the proudest achievement of the Labour and trade union movements in the UK. Colleagues, in the last 12 months, we have seen our health service under the most severe pressure, overwhelmed by patients suffering from COVID-19 because of the Tory Government's failure to act quickly enough or decisively enough. The staff have endured against the most severe threats faced by our NHS and stood strong in the battle against COVID-19, we owe all those people a debt of gratitude. However, colleagues, what did show up loud and clear in the NHS during the last 12 months was a massive lack of investment. After ten years of Tory austerity and a lack of joined up services because of increased commercialisation within the NHS in England, I say in England because thankfully in Wales we have a Labour Government that believes in Bevan's principles of service free at the point of need, irrespective of one's ability to pay. Congress, despite the Welsh Government's efforts and the love of the British people, for our NHS it is facing its biggest risk ever. Tories strive for free trade deals and legislation like the internal market bill could undermine every Government's efforts in the UK to maintain the NHS in its current form. Congress, Trump may have been displaced in the USA but Johnson and his cronies with their ideology of private profit are still here. Let me be clear - if the Tories get their way, they will open our beloved NHS to privatisation, with companies who sign free trade deals being given access to contracts in the NHS. Leading to a rush to the bottom. Contracts based on price and not quality, trade instead of transparency, and commercialisation instead of care. Congress, we cannot allow this to happen, we must stand firm to protect all our NHS staff as they have stood firm to protect us. Let us keep Bevan's dream of a free at the point of access NHS free to all, irrespective of ability to pay. Support. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Keith and well done. A first time speaker and having to wait until almost the last debate to come in so brilliantly. Gary tells me he accepts your invitation to Torbay. OK, I have not got anyone speaking in opposition. Can I ask Dean to respond on behalf of the CEC, please? (Echoing)

DEAN GILLIGAN (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): Before I start, can I congratulate Barbara, Malcolm on being re-elected as President and Vice-President? And I congratulate Gary Smith, General Secretary & Treasurer. Can I thank Warren Kenny for the work he did. And can I thank Tony Warr who covered our region. I'm feeling positive, thank you. President, Congress Dean Gilligan on Motions 259, 260 and Composite 12. Motion 259 asks the union to continue solidarity with farmers in India fighting for a just future. The CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification that any external organisations which the union is asked to work with, who are not already existing partners, would need to be subject to consideration to ensure they are in line with the aims and values of the GMB.

Also, any forms of support requested which are of a financial nature would also need to be subject to consideration by the CEC Finance and General Purposes committee. Motion 260 calls for the union to take a number of actions as part of its commitment to standing in solidarity with the Cuban people against illegal US blockade on Cuba. As a result, the CEC is supporting this motion, but does have qualifications. The motion asked GMB regions and members to affiliate for the Cuban solidarity campaign. The CEC's qualification is that GMB's existing policy, particularly asks Branches to affiliate through the campaign. Individual members or regions also wish to affiliate is a decision that is solely for them to make. Secondly, the motion asks the union to take part in several initiatives.

The CEC's qualification is that these initiatives would need to be further considered with advice from the Cuba solidarity campaign. They would need to be considered by the Finance

and General Purpose committee if they require financial costs to the union. Thirdly, the motion asks for the union to call on the UK Government to take action against UK-based companies who comply with the blockade on Cuba. The CEC's qualification is that while GMB fully opposes the blockade, any action it can take in this regard will need to be further considered, keeping in mind how our members could potentially will be affected. Motion lastly calls for the union to support sending members on brigades to Cuba.

The CEC's qualification is as agreed by Congress 2019, any proposal to nationally organise and sponsor sending members to Cuba would need to be considered by the CEC Political, European and International committee, and Finance and General Purpose committee.

Composite 12 rightly makes clear that our NHS, our National Health Service, should not be on the table of any future trade deals. It also calls for Congress to reinstate the NHS as a national target.

The CEC is supporting this Composite with a qualification that Congress will not be able to decide on whether to set the NHS as a national target, the union organising. As such decisions are made by agreement from regions through the national organising team. Therefore, you are not going to cut me off, are you? I have not finished! Asking for 249 and 260 to be carried with the qualifications set out and for Composite 12 to be carried with the qualification set out. I thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dean. So, London region have accepted the qualification and Wales & South-West have accepted the qualification, we are just waiting for Yorkshire & North Derbyshire - and they have. OK. Thank you very much Regions. We can go to the vote. Motion 259. That has been carried. Motion 260. That is carried and finally Composite 12. And that is carried. Congress we now come to the motion received from GMB National Equality conference. Again, if anybody wishes to speak against this motion, can they send a message through the chat box? Can I call on Annette to move this motion?

263. DIGITAL INCLUSION AND UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Conference notes that the key component of Universal Credit was the digitalisation of the service for recipients. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Scotland has the one of the highest % of non-internet users in the UK.

Regional Breakdown

- Scotland 10.7%
- North East 12.1%
- Yorkshire and the Humber 12.0%
- North West 10.8%
- West Midlands 11.1%
- London 7%
- South West 10.2%
- Northern Ireland 14.2%

Shrinking support services including assistance from job centres' coupled with Council budget cuts, assistance available in this new infrastructure is limited to setting up Universal Accounts but does provide for ongoing support. However, the irony is there is no further support to maintain their claims which is crucial to avoid sanctions.

This digitalisation process extends to applying and searching for jobs, this is a consistent barrier to the most vulnerable groups.

Conference resolves that GMB lobby parliament for 360 support to be made available to recipients of Universal Credit. That an assessment of individual Digital Literacy is included as part of this 360 support. That GMB asks that parliament carries out a full Equality Impact Assessment on the effect of the digitalisation of Universal Credit and the removal of support infrastructure.

NATIONAL EQUALITIES CONFERENCE

(Carried)

ANNETTE DRYLIE (GMB SCOTLAND): Annette Drylie GMB Scotland, moving motion 263, digital inclusion and Universal Credit on behalf of the national equality conference. President, digital inclusion in Universal Credit has been thrown together by the UK Government and Congress, what awkward bedfellows they are. On making it an on-line process, communities have been disenfranchised from the very support they need. With Job Centres being mothballed, support moved to local libraries and voluntary sector to pick up the slack, however, this support only extends to setting up a claim with no additional support to maintaining the Universal Credit claim. The Office for National Statistics reveals less than 10% of the population of London don't have access to Internet. It is above 10%.

These higher percentages are concentrated in our poorest communities, the people who need access and the skill set the most. Problems run deeper still around connectivity and if COVID has taught us anything, it has been exacerbated in areas where in-work poverty is present. Lack of education has led to ill litter racy labels. We note with interest that Finland has recently got Internet access for all citizens as a legal right from July 2021. Perhaps this is something to follow. We believe that Internet access and education should be a legal right in this country. And in particular that we lobby the Government for 360 wrap-around support for universal claimants, with continuing support for maintaining their claims going pore ward. We ask that the Government provides an assessment for individuals, for computer litter racy as part of this proof success. Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. GMB Scotland have agreed to formally second this motion. Can I call on Fiona to respond on behalf of the CEC, please?

FIONA HENEGHAN (CEC, PUBLIC SERVICES): Good afternoon President and Congress. Fiona Heneghan speaking on behalf the CEC on the conference Motion 263 - digital inclusion and universal credit. The CEC is supporting this motion with qualification. GMB has long argued that public services must be fully available without detriment to people who do not and cannot access services online. This motion highlights an important issue in relation to the administration of Universal Credit and removal of the support infrastructure. Our qualification is that Parliament would not normally carry out an equality impact assessment and that it may be better to also call upon Government to produce and publish an EIA, alongside lobbying through the relevant parliamentary committees. Therefore, Congress, please support this motion with the qualification, which I have laid out. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Fiona. Can I just say, well done to CEC members who are first-time delegates to Congress - CEC members and first-time speakers some of them, so thank you. GMB Scotland have accepted the qualification. Annette accepted it on behalf of the National Equality Conference. So can I move to the vote, please? And that is carried and that was our last motion to vote on this afternoon. We are now commencing the closing procedures of Congress, which will start with the vote of thanks to be given by Viv Smart from Birmingham region.

VIV SMART (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress. Viv Smart, Birmingham & West Midlands region, very pleased to give the vote of thanks on behalf of the CEC in our region. Where do I start? This has been like no other Congress before and hopefully like no other going forward. The challenges thrown at the top table have been many and varied. But before I touch upon some of those issues, I just want to firstly congratulate Gary Smith on his election as General Secretary & Treasurer. I am sure Gary wouldn't have expected his first Congress to come so soon after his election. Usually successful candidates have more time to settle into the role before dealing their first Congress. We are sure that Gary will do everything he can, as quickly as possible, to bring stability and just as importantly unity to our great union to put us back where we belong as the leading trade union in the movement.

Setting standards and campaigning and fighting for our members within the workplace. At this point, Congress, it would be remiss of me not to say a massive thank you to both John Phillips and Warren Kenny who both stepped into the fray to give our union some relative stability while we were awaiting our democratic process of electing a General Secretary to conclude. Thank you John and Warren for everything you have done. I would like to congratulate both Barbara and Malcolm our national President and Vice-President on their re-election. We know how seriously you both take your roles and have the members' interests at heart. First and foremost, and we look forward to continuing to work with you towards this aim. Thank you to you both of you for your resolve in guiding our union through the turmoil thrown at us over the last 15 months. As I said colleagues, this has been like no other Congress, there have been problems, technical and logistical due to the nature of the format, but as is always the case with GMB, we have handled it with, in ways you would expect with as little fluster as possible. And the relatively smooth way Congress is run is down to the professionalism of the top table, never looking at as if they were panicking during the procedures and the national office staff who have been beavering around in the background to ensure things went as smoothly as they could, a thumbs up to everyone.

Thank you Barbara, Malcolm and Anna and all the back room staff that worked tirelessly on our behalf. Also a big vote of thanks needs to go to T5, who are the tech people that have made a virtual Congress a reality, if that is not a contradiction in terms. I must say it will be good to get back so some normality in terms of Congress, although we don't have people shouting at the screen while pointing at their ears "can you hear me now. I can see you but not hear you." We have enjoyed some noises you would enjoy on an episode of Dr Who. A big thank you to first time delegates.

They did not have the support they would have had at a live GMB conference. We heard from Keir Starmer. His vision of what we need to do to regain power the country so our members and society as a whole have a future they can look forward to, with hope and optimism, rather than the despair and pessimism we are suffering under this Conservative Government. Maybe he will be able to sort out the Wi-Fi in Parliament, too. We had a moving speech from Deborah Goodman, Will Thorne's great-great granddaughter to remind us of the struggles, which was a reminder of where our great union came from. She told us about the struggles her family has had with Huntington's disease. We have also heard from our new General Secretary, his vision for the future for us, the GMB going forward as a fighting trade union. The GMB's unafraid to take on bad employers unafraid to take on issues on behalf of members who are treated unfairly in the workplace. I am sure I speak for every region when I say that we look forward to working together with Gary to win for our members. The last year-and-a-half have been traumatic, to say the least. With COVID-19 and our own internal problems, but as our national President said in the Congress opening speech - we have hope. Where there is hope and the will, the desire to change and improve,

we will prosper and we will succeed. We have total faith in our national leadership to get us there.

The final thank you must always go to the lay members, who make Congress what it is our lay democracy. It is the most important thing we have. We must guide it with our whole being and continue to encourage lay activists to take part in our processes. Without you, the activists, we are nothing. The majority of our activists have been at the forefront in the workplace, protecting our membership from injustice while at work all through this pandemic. They are stars, one and all. Thank you to each and every one of you and we look forward to meeting with you all again, in person, and in better circumstances. In closing, I will finish with a quote from Nelson Mandela. Which we should all hold on to. He said, it always seems impossible until it's done. Thank you. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Viv. Now it takes us - I call on the General Secretary, Gary Smith, to speak to Congress.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you very much, President. Thank you for officiating over the past few days with Malcolm and doing such a fantastic job at our first digital conference. Before I get into saying 'thank you's' proper, I do have an apology to make and that is to all my comrades and friends in Scotland - I'm sorry I had to bail out at the end of last week. I'm sure you'll understand the circumstances. You've always been challenging, but so supportive and loyal, and together we've done some fantastic things and we will continue to do great things together in this union, no doubt, and I'll look forward to seeing you all when I get back up the road and maybe we can get a wee sherry on Friday when I'm home. In terms of before I say the digital thank you's, if you want, there are a couple of acknowledgements I do want to make because this will be Allan Wylie our finance director's last Congress.

Allan isn't rushing off the stage at the moment but it will be his last congress - after an incredible 30 years he will be hanging up the calculator and rulebook and spending more time with his red wine. Allan has been with us through thick and thin over all these years and even in the last few days has just been so fantastically helpful to me. We'll have a proper send-off for Allan in due course but it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge Allan's contribution today.

And of course Billy Coates, regional secretary, northern region, he is a proud ship-maker and shipwright by trade. Billy is due to retire from the union and I think nothing was handed to Billy, when the boilermakers merged with the GMB, he has fought to build a career in the union, starting in 1997 as a recruitment officer, and he will proudly sign off as regional secretary in Northern region. So Billy, from all of us, a sincere thank you for all your service. It falls to me to say a big thank you to the team for T5 - you don't see the set-up in this room! It has been an incredibly difficult few days, but what a fantastic team we've got from T5 and Change Lab, I think we are showing you all on the screen, so thank you all so much for being so patient with us. (APPLAUSE) you've done a great job, you really have. The staff at the conference centre who have kept up safe, fed and watered, thank you for looking after us this week.

I feel a wee bit hypocritical about this one - the Standing Orders Committee - it is a wee bit butcher and gamekeeper, this, because when you are in the region and you are at Congress and you are trying to get emergency motions onto the floor of Congress and they don't get through the Standing Orders Committee, it is enormously frustrating, but now you are sitting at the top table, you really, really appreciate the invaluable job that you do. So a huge thank you, Helen, and all the team at the Standing Orders Committee, you do a wonderful job and

of course, Barry Smith, the secretary of Standing Orders, thank you very, very much. (APPLAUSE)

I never thought I would be saying that! (LAUGHS) But thank you for that! The general member auditors, your diligence is so appreciated, thanks for that, and to the wonderful Karen Smith for the support that she gives to the general member auditors.

To Nic McGhee and all the team at my new NAU home in Paisley, I'll see you tomorrow. Much appreciation for all you have been doing. The comms team, John, Mel, Jack, Dean, again, really important contributions at Congress and leading up to Congress, so thank you. Dan Shears and the health and safety team for ensuring the risk assessments and health and safety assessments were all in place for the event, thanks so much. Wendy Bartlam will be working with me in the office and she has been with me for three days now and people are already talking about her being the 'long-suffering Wendy Bartlam', but thank you for being here as I stumbled down on train to get here in time, but it has all gone smoothly, so thank you to you, Wendy.

And the research and policy team - Laurence, really impressed by the stuff you do, fantastic. Anna and Ross, great to work with you, great team, a fantastic piece of work this week and you really have done some great work. (APPLAUSE) and I guess there's some people in the union who don't know him but if you work in this union there is a long-suffering individual and he is an absolute legend - that's Steve Short, thank you very much. (APPLAUSE). Above all, Viv said, really this is about the delegates, so thank you to you, all of you, for participating and for making the contributions that you did. For the first-time speakers, and I know I talked to Barbara about this as well, I'm so sorry that you didn't get the chance to speak at Congress and to feel all the energy and love in the room - I hope many of you will get the chance in the future, but you have done our union and yourselves proud, and thank you so much for making this first digital conference what it is. And of course I want to salute the shop stewards and activists the length and breadth of this country, you are the absolute backbone of this union and I do want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the invaluable contribution that you make in this union.

Thanks, of course, to all the members for your support, for paying your contributions, for maintaining your membership - I promise you that, together, we are going to build a better and stronger union as we go forward.

Thank you, again, for electing me as your General Secretary. The history of this union is diverse, and we celebrate all of it, but for me it is a gas workers' union and for me as a former gas worker to be elected as General Secretary & Treasurer, I really cannot find the words - it's incredibly humbling. Now, going forward, I will say this - I don't know if I'd ever admit this in Scotland, but it's true - I will make mistakes. I'm going to need your help, I'm going to need your support as we turn things around in the union, but I would say this to you - my intentions will always be positive. I care passionately about this union. I care passionately about our membership. I care passionately about our employees in the union as well. So when I make mistakes, please understand it is on that basis. And we will argue and we will disagree, but let's do that in the spirit of comradeship and let's never forget this old union is more precious and it is bigger than any one of us and together we have a job to secure the future of our union. We are just temporary custodians. In the election - and this is not empty rhetoric - I made a number of - well, I said a lot, actually I was being reminded that by the President today, in fact, and some of the things I can't remember saying, but I'm going to make good on what I said, and it is not empty rhetoric what I said during the election process. We are not a political party. We are a proud, independent, working-class organisation and our members always come first. I made it clear we need to be more

affordable as a union, and we've started that process yesterday by freezing subs. I've talked about our commitment to equality - it is going to be absolutely at the core of what we do, including delivering economic equality, and we are going to change for the better the culture within the union. And absolutely our focus will be about jobs and work and pay and the priorities of the members in the workplace. We will get back to campaigning and building the union around the issues that matter to our members and our future members as well. And the principles of GMB at work, which allowed us for many years to build a union, will be brought back into absolute focus as we move forward. Every day, our people do great things and we have a wonderful history as a union, and I assure you, we are going to build on everything we do and everything we've done and we will do very special things together in the years ahead. Hope and solidarity, everyone, thank you. (APPLAUSE)

THE PRESIDENT: Now, as traditionally, we will formally close Congress, with the singing of The Red Flag.

Thank you. I've just got a few closing remarks of my own that I'd like to make. I echo the thanks in Gary and Viv's speeches, but also I would like to add my thanks to the British Sign Language interpreters and those doing the live subtitles. But also, my own personal thanks to both John Phillips and Warren Kenny who did step up in very difficult circumstances, almost overnight, but I look forward to working with Gary from now on. On behalf of myself, Malcolm and the Congress team, to all delegates and Congress leads, thank you. Thank you for your continued communication and co-operation this week. It has been absolutely brilliant. It's you that has made it run smoothly. Delegates, you've kept to time. You've got to grips with difficult - you know, the technology, for some of you who are not used to it, and we really appreciate the work that you've done to get us to this position and to make sure that our congress has gone as well as it has. We hope that it has been a good week for you - or no, it feels like a week, it has only been a few days! We hope that it has been a good few days for all of you, too. I'm proud to be your president, be proud of yourselves, too. Stay safe, fingers crossed see you in Harrogate, and, Dean, no, it's not near the seaside. Hope and solidarity. Take care.

CONGRESS CONCLUDED