

GMB

CONGRESS 2019

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BARBARA PLANT
(President)
(In the Chair)

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Held in:

The Brighton Centre,
Brighton

on:

Sunday, 9th June 2019
Monday, 10th June 2019
Tuesday, 11th June 2019
Wednesday, 12th June 2019
-and-
Thursday, 13th June 2019

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PROCEEDINGS

DAY FIVE
(Thursday, 13th June 2019)

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FIFTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 13TH JUNE 2019

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Delegates, good morning. Could I call Congress to order, please. *(Video shown)* Thank you. That reminds me of *Countdown*. I have two announcements to make this morning. The York Disabled Workers Co-operative has raised £1,300. *(Applause)* They wish to thank Congress delegates.

A DELEGATE (Speaking from the floor): Double it!

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Who is that? North West. Do you say that National should double it? *(Calls of "Yes")* Okay. They wish to thank Congress delegates for the tremendous support. This will enable the Co-operative to continue helping young disabled people into work. They still have some hard-carved items left, so "Make us an offer" it says.

Also the winners of the Credit Union Prize Draw, the first was Lynette McGaffin, from North West & Irish Region; second was Barbara Stoddart, North West & Irish Region, and the third was Kenny Gilberthorpe, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region. Well done.

We are now on to Standing Orders Committee Report no. 6.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 6

HELEN JOHNSON (Chair of SOC, Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move SOC Report No. 6. Withdrawn motions. Just to confirm that the following motion was withdrawn from the rostrum on Tuesday — Motion 386, Fracking, standing in the name of Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region. The following motion was withdrawn from the rostrum yesterday — Composite 2, Accompanying Reps Funding, standing in the name of London Region. This comprised Motions 59, Revised Payments for Accompanying Reps, and Motion 60, Accompanying Reps. , Accompanying Reps Funding, standing in the name of London Region.

Bucket Collections. Have you got your hands in your pockets? Right. Yesterday's bucket collection by Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, for Jessica's Sarcoma Awareness, raised the sum of £370.32p. *(Applause)*

A DELEGATE (from the floor): What about doubling that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, the region will add to that. Anybody else?

A DELEGATE: £500.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Let's hear it for £500 from anybody else?

A DELEGATE (Midland & East Coast): Midland & East Coast.

THE PRESIDENT: Midland & East Coast, thank you. I am going round the room. Southern? Okay. That's a yes. Thank you. Northern? Yes, thank you, Billy. Scotland? Yes, thank you, Gary. Wales & South West? Thank you, John. North West & Irish? Thank you, Paul. Birmingham & West Midlands? Thank you, Joe. Finally, London? Thank you, Warren.

HELEN JOHNSON (SOC, Chair): Thank you very much, everyone. I move SOC Report No. 6. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone want to speak against? (*No response*) In that case, I will put Standing Orders Committee Report No. 6 to the vote. All those in favour? Anyone against? Thank you.

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 6 was ADOPTED.

THE PRESIDENT: We are nearly there. Congress, our first item of business is Social Policy: General, which includes Motions 325, 326, 327 and 328. Will the movers please come to the front of the hall? Also, I am going to call the next set of motions – I think there are enough seats — which are Motions 393, 394, 396, 397, 398 and 400 on Social Policy: Housing. So I call Motion 325.

JAN SMITH (London): Madam President, may I raise a point of order?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

JAN SMITH (London): Congress, raising a point of order. I think it is only right that you should know that yesterday, when the CEC gave their response on the four motions that were spoken on by myself in one go, the CEC said that there had been no dialogue with the branch. I want to confirm that there was never any communication to the branch whatsoever. In fact, you might have seen me go and speak to Tim, our General Secretary. The dialogue was in the normal manner where it went to the region, and *here* are the communications that went back to say that there was an explanation for those rules. Some of you may have wanted to have voted for it, but from the explanation given by the CEC you voted against. There has been a slur on my branch, which I have taken deeply and personally. So, please, Congress, accept my point of order. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for that. I am sorry that that is how you feel, I really am. Obviously, any complaints will be dealt with in the appropriate manner. We now move on to Motion 325.

GAMBLING ADVERTS MOTION 325

325. GAMBLING ADVERTS

This Congress asks the CEC to support this motion to stop all gambling adverts in between live sporting events before 9.00 p.m.

We believe this encourages younger people to bet on their phones or devices.

If you can't advertise cigarettes and alcohol before 9.00 p.m. why should we advertise this addiction.

M01 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

JEFF HOLLOWAY (North West & Irish): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I move Motion 325 — Gambling Adverts. We ask Congress and the CEC to support this motion to stop all gambling adverts in between sporting events on the media before 9 pm. We believe that this encourages younger people to bet on their phones and their mobile devices.

People with a gambling problem are 15 times more likely to kill themselves according to the largest study of its kind. Academics at Lund University in Sweden monitored more than two thousand people with gambling disorders found significantly elevated risks of suicide among participants compared with the general population over an 11-year period. If the results were applied in the UK, that would indicate around 500 suicides a year in which gambling played a part, out of more than 10 a week in this country.

The owner of one gambling company paid themselves £260-odd million last year. Gambling used to be just in the bookies for adults. Now kids are being bombarded with it. Every time you turn the TV on for sporting and football, which loads of children watch, we are getting bombarded with these adverts. It is immoral. We believe that no advert of a gambling type should be shown before 9 pm. If the programme goes on past 9pm the adverts should still be banned.

The Government don't care because they're making millions in taxes, but it is damaging our communities. It has led to a lot of problems in homes, with people losing their houses. It has also been linked to domestic abuse. We can make a start by banning all adverts that relate to gambling. We can't advertise cigarettes, which is an addiction, so why are we allowing gambling adverts when children are watching the TV?

There are more than 400,000 gambling addicts in the country. Gambling affects about two million people and their families. Last year alone one hundred people with pathological gambling addictions were hospitalised. The gambling industry is making out in their adverts that it is easy to win. You don't see poor bookies. Young children are spending £16 a day on gambling. When they have no money left to gamble, they will resort to stealing from their families and other places. This affects the whole community. We see what happens to drug addicts. I know people who spend all their wages chasing their losses, which means their families go without. By banning adverts before 9 pm on all commercial platforms should not only stop thousands and thousands of gambling addicts but it will help to stop the recruitment of our children and grandchildren becoming new addicts. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jeff. Secunder?

LEESA LLEWELLYN (North West & Irish): Congress, I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am seconding Motion 325 — Gambling Adverts. As Jeff rightly said, gambling is having an impact on all of our communities. If you look at any high street or shopping centre, betting shops and opportunities to bet are everywhere. On the short walk to this conference centre, on one street, I counted 10 shops or opportunities to bet. It is on our high streets and in our living rooms. Congress, I ask you to think about that for one moment. How dare they — how dare they — invade my home that I worked hard as a single mum to provide for my children. My home is supposed to be a safe haven, a place to feel protected, safe and secure, a place to close the door and forget all pressures of the outside world. They seem to think it's okay to do this, to glorify, advertise and sell addiction and temptation to my children, to your children, to all our younger generation who are our future! Well, Congress, not on my watch. I ask you, please, to support this motion that I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Leesa. You've had to wait until the last morning to make your first speech, so well done. I call the mover of Motion 326.

SCAM ROBOCALLS FROM ABROAD NEED TO BE MADE ILLEGAL MOTION 326

326. SCAM ROBOCALLS FROM ABROAD NEED TO BE MADE ILLEGAL

This Congress calls on the GMB to look into the worrying rising trend in scam phone calls. 'Robocalls' for marketing purposes in the UK are illegal, but calls from other countries are permitted. UK law does not cover these.

We call on the GMB to lobby MPs to ensure that calls to this country have to comply with UK law, thus safeguarding our vulnerable members against scams.

HULL PAINT & ENGINEERING BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

MARY LOUISE HARRISON (Midland & East Coast): Good morning, Madam President, Congress and delegates, I am moving Motion 326 — Scam Robocalls from Abroad need to be made illegal. How many of you have received scam 'Robocalls'? In 2018 alone more than 4.5 billion of these calls were made. Scam 'Robocalls' from abroad need to be made illegal. For the vast majority of us, these calls are annoying and invading our privacy but nothing more. But for others, they have a devastating effect. Their lives and those of their families ruined. They don't just rob people of their money but their independence and, in some instances, have led to them taking their lives. We must do more to stop them.

At the moment, the emphasis is on us, the consumer, to try and protect ourselves, but call blocking or signing up to the Telephone Preference Service does not offer full protection, and things are about to get worse. It is estimated that soon 90% of all 'Robocalls' will falsely appear as if they were coming from our contact books. No longer will we hear that phoney automated voice. Instead we will have voice manipulation, impersonation and automation technologies to fool us into thinking and accepting their scams. We need to work now and we need to work fast. We need to

outlaw all 'Robocalls'. We need to outlaw the sale of our personal details to third parties for the supposed purpose of marketing and communication. This can be done but our politicians don't seem to want to do it. Why? Because they can gain from this practice, as we have demonstrated with Cambridge Analytica during the EU Referendum.

The emphasis should not be on us as consumers but on those companies and individuals whose sole aim is to use and abuse us for their criminal ends and to steal from our hard-earned money.

Congress, I ask you to support this motion, and stop scam 'Robocalls' once and for all. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary Louise. Secunder?

KEVIN DUDDING (Midlands & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 326. Brothers and sisters, my colleague has stated some of the facts about these scam calls. I would say that quite a lot of us have personal experience or members of our families have been involved in all these type of scam calls. I will give you a personal one which occurred with my mother when I was visiting her. The phone rings and my mother answers the phone, "Hello". A male voice says, "Is that Mrs Dudding?" Mother: "Yes". Voice: "I'm ringing up about your internet and the effect it has on your computer". Mother, looking puzzled, "The internet?" Voice: "Yes". Mother: "I do not have a computer. Is the internet some sort of café?" The line goes dead. Fortunately, my mum at 89 has the full width of her faculties about her. Unfortunately, many elderly who have been targeted by these people are not in the same boat. Due to illness and dementia, they have lost thousands from their accounts. As my colleague said, some have taken their own lives because of it.

What is worse is that recently four companies in this country have just been fined for making scam calls and then ringing the people who they made the calls to to then sell their products to block scam calls! They were fined from £70,000 to £80,000 a piece. It's about time that more should be done by the Government and not by the individuals. Congress, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Kevin. I call the mover of Motion 327.

FILM PRODUCTION IN THE CITIES

MOTION 327

327. FILM PRODUCTIONS IN THE CITIES

This Congress. Where is the money from the production of films or tv work that is done in our cities all over the UK?

Is there a vast amount of money being exchanged between the film companies and the councils of the cities where they are filming, if so where is it?

In Glasgow since 2017 the Film Broadcast and other media productions have generated 15 million for the Glasgow economy.

Under the freedom of information act, Glasgow city council was paid less than £35,000 over a 5-year period by the film companies for numerous street closures and located film shooting in the city centres.

The film productions are happening all over the UK in our cities, causing disruption to the residents, there are the rescheduled bus times and bus lanes, closures of streets for days at a time.

Are the citizens of the cities being rewarded for the disruptions by the film makers, some of which are multi-millionaires, the answer is no, the public put up with all the inconvenience and the disruption of the films being made.

Congress we ask.

That the GMB lobby the MP's of the government to find out where is the money going from the film productions.

For the GMB to work with the city councillors, asking the question where is the money, and where is this being used, and for what.

GLASGOW NE & SW HEALTH SERVICE BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

MARGARET BOYD (GMB Scotland): Congress, I move Motion 327 — Film Production in the Cities. Film production and TV work in our cities and towns is happening all over the UK, so what do we know of compensation from film companies to city councils? Is a vast amount of money being exchanged? If so, how much? And is it being put back into the cities and towns?

In Glasgow, since 2017, filming and broadcasting generated £15 million for the Glasgow economy. One Freedom of Information request made to Glasgow City Council came back with the response that the council had been paid less than £35,000 over a five-year period by the film companies to compensate for street closures, rescheduled bus times and routes for days at a time.

We all enjoy the movies, but are the citizens of our national cities and towns being rewarded accordingly for the disruptions and inconveniences caused by the film companies? Do we believe the FoI findings from Glasgow City Council? We need more transparency and what the funds are being spent on to further improve our cities. Congress, we ask that GMB lobbies the MPs of the UK Government and work with city councillors for a clear response as to where the funds are placed and spent in our cities. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margaret. Secunder? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 329.

NO LEGALISATION OF BANNED DRUGS MOTION 329

329. NO LEGALISATION OF BANNED DRUGS

This Congress notes that there is a push from time to time for the current illegal markets in illegal drugs to be legalised on the grounds that the war on drugs is being lost and that the

benefits of legalisation is that crime would fall and the Exchequer would benefit from taxes from legalisation of the hitherto illegal market.

Congress calls for GMB supported MPs to press the Home Affairs and Health Select Committees to set up a joint enquiry to learn lessons for policy on legalisation of banned drugs in the UK from the devastating experience from the United States on the backdoor legalisation of dangerous extremely addictive narcotic painkillers in the 1990.

Congress notes that the story of how extremely addictive and dangerous "prescription grade heroin" came to be legalised in the USA, and its devastating consequences, is told in the 2018 book "American Overdose" by Chris McGreal.

Decisions in the 1990s, based on lax drugs regulations, junk science, and a profit driven health and pharmaceuticals industry, led to over 2 million people being hooked on dangerous addictive drugs and deaths from overdoses running at 200 per day in 2018. Official figures from 1999 to 2016 show the death toll related to these drugs was 350,000 people.

Contrary to theory the legal market actually fuelled illegal trading in these prescription drugs due to colossal corruption. It further fuelled the growth in cheaper illegal heroin by illegal drug cartels to supply those hooked on the more expensive prescriptions drugs.

It is estimated that a further 500,000 drugs related deaths will occur over the next decade making it the largest cause of death for the under 50s.

The social and economic consequences for working class communities and families and particularly children has been nothing short of devastating. It is hard to imagine the misery and heartbreak of an epidemic derived from legal medication routinely used for non fatal conditions that kills patients so frequently.

Congress notes that strict rules about putting drugs on sale were introduced in the wake of the thalidomide scandal in the 1960s.

Congress is not in favour of legalisation of dangerous extremely addictive narcotic drugs in the UK. Congress calls for policy makers to learn from the opioid epidemic in the USA when the lessons from the thalidomide scandal were not followed.

BARKING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

GAVIN DOWNEY (London): Congress, I move Motion 329 — No Legalisation of Drugs. The main point about this motion is not how terrible were the consequences of ordinary communities across America after the legalisation of prescription-grade heroin in the form of opium-based painkillers, oxy-codeine and bio-codeine, produced by big American pharmaceutical companies. These consequences were truly shocking. The sheer scale of the numbers killed by being prescribed the drug for non-fatal conditions is truly shocking. The consequences for the children of the adults who became addicted to what junk science claimed were not highly addictive drugs were utterly terrible!

The main point is that we in the UK need to learn lessons from this shocking story. These same painkillers are available here today. The first lesson is what happened following the legalisation of what had been an illegal drug? It's the exact opposite of what are claimed to be the benefits of legalisation of drugs, namely, displacing the gangs with legal outlets on which purchasers would pay taxes and be controlled.

Patients were able to get prescriptions for these drugs from their doctors, but the drugs were expensive and doctors were reluctant to prescribe these drugs due to fears of addiction. First, the drugs became street drugs in an illegal market. Second, the Mexican drugs cartels decided to under sell the American pharmaceutical companies by increasing production of heroin and cutting the prices. They also increased its potency. So addicted Americans found illegal Mexican cinnamon heroin was cheaper and stronger than the legal pills. There has been an explosion in the illegal market. We need to guard against this happening in the UK.

The best guide to any theory about the legalisation of drugs is what happens in practice when it is tried. This is the reason why the motion calls for GMB supported MPs to try to get Parliamentary Select Committees to examine this terrible story and set out, again, the reasons why dangerous drugs should be strictly controlled and not legalised.

The second lesson is that of the thalidomide scandal, learned in this country first, which should not be forgotten. Dangerous and highly addictive drugs should only be allowed in strictly controlled conditions after their safety and effectiveness has been properly tested and scientifically proven. Yes, this means opposing the legalisation of drugs outside this process, no matter how vociferous those calling for legalisation happen to be. Yes, illegal markets cannot be totally eliminated. They can and should be driven underground and kept there. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gavin. Secunder? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you. In that case, does anyone wish to speak against? Yes. Would you make clear which motion you are speaking against?

DAVID TUCKWELL (Southern): Congress, I am not speaking with the backing of Southern Region on Motion 329 —No Legalisation of Banned Drugs. During the '60s and '70s there was, obviously, a major problem with barbiturates and tranquilisers, such as Valium, Librium and so on, or what were termed as “Mother’s little helper”. They were the kind of drugs that came into everyday life with everybody. It was not something that was sold on street corners. They were prescribed by doctors, we realised the problem and we changed the nature of that prescribing. Thalidomide, which is also mentioned in the motion, was also something that caused problems. As soon as those problems were recognised, the drug was withdrawn, although it still has a valid medical use but it is much more strictly controlled.

I think the motion confuses the legal and illegal drugs market. It confuses opioids with heroin. Opioids are a legal product; heroin is not a legal product. The markets that the motion refers to are also illegal and legal. Obviously, opioids that are sold on the black market are illegal, but they are actually a legal drug. Also the US drugs regulations authorities are not ours. The drugs companies in this country are completely differently controlled and we have different controls on the management of drugs.

Bringing these drugs into state management is not legalisation. Many countries and US states have legalised some aspects of the drugs markets, most notably cannabis. We need to monitor, control, tax and manage these drugs so that we can also manage

the problems. We can starve criminals of the funds that they would get and use elsewhere to damage our lives.

Whilst I understand and sympathise with this motion, as I say, I think it is confused, ill-considered and ill-conceived. I ask you to vote against it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Does anybody else want to come in on this debate? Yes.

PAUL RYMER (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I think that everything I was about to say has been said very well in opposing this motion. The one thing I would add is that I thank London for putting on the agenda, because when I did some research on it this morning and our policy document, in 163 pages of text, I did a word search and there was nothing in there about drugs and there wasn't a word in there about cannabis. When we talk about social exclusion and social inclusion, if we don't approach this problem properly, which affects all of our members' families, I am sure, in one form or another, then just oppose so we can get it on to the agenda for a proper debate. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Is there anybody else who wants to come in on this debate? (*No response*) Gavin, do you want the right of reply? (*Declined*) Are there any speakers on any of the other motions? (*No response*) In that case, I ask Gordon Gibbs, on behalf of the CEC, to respond.

GORDON GIBBS (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motions 326 and Motion 329 with qualifications. On Motion 326, the CEC is concerned about duplicating efforts made by the organisation *Which*, whose Calling Time campaign has already amassed more than 500,000 supporters on this issue. If this motion passes, the CEC is calling for a qualification to affirm our commitment to working in support of them and others to apply pressure and awareness, including exploiting responses within the region to prevent international Robocalls where these are not currently covered by UK law.

On Motion 329, the qualification is that the CEC has interpreted the wording of the motion to be in relation to highly addictive and dangerous synthetic opioid drugs, such as Fentanyl. We agree that these highly dangerous synthetic drugs should not be legislation of other drugs, such as non-synthetic cannabis. If a demand for such a debate arose, there would have to be a dedicated and informed debate on those topics and we wish to reserve our right to consider these questions separately to this motion.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking for Motion 326 and Motion 329 to be supported with the qualifications I have laid out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I will put those motions to the vote. Motion 325, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 325 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Midland & East Coast, do you accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) I will put that to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

Motion 326 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 327, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

Motion 327 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 329, London Region, do you accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) So I shall put that to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is also carried.

Motion 329 was CARRIED.

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: Before I move on to the next debate, tomorrow is the second anniversary of Grenfell. So I am going to ask us to stand for a minute's silence to remember the 72 victims of that tragedy. (*The Congress stood in silent tribute*) Just so you know, there is to be a silent walk tomorrow and a national rally on Saturday in central London. Could I ask the mover of Motion 393 to come to the rostrum.

SOCIAL POLICY: HOUSING ACCESSIBLE HOUSING MOTION 393

393. ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

This Congress must be made aware that finding the ideal property in the current housing market can be difficult for our able-bodied members and presents extra challenges for our members who self-define as disabled who need additional information on accessibility to make an informed decision.

Currently this important and vital information is **not** readily available as it should be to our members who self-define as disabled.

We call on this GMB Congress and its associated disability groups to:-

- Actively and positively support this motion.
- Fully engage in meaningful and constructive consultation with leading estate agents, housing associations, and local authorities to ensure they include all the appropriate accessible information as part of the standard information they supply to prospective home buyers.

This will achieve what is **not** an unreasonable request if we truly wish to **live** in an all-inclusive accessible and equality led society.

SECURICOR 1 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

GORDON BRUNNING (London): Congress, I move Motion 393 — Accessible Housing. As individuals and as a collective we have spent the past few days debating with humour, with sadness and with passion important matters which need informed and important decisions made. However, before those decisions can and were made, we were given all the relevant information to allow us to do so and to make those informed decisions.

When it comes to the housing market and accessibility, this frustratingly and disappointingly is not the case, as our disabled members are finding. We all know that finding the ideal property in a turbulent housing market can be difficult for everyone. Able-bodied members find it difficult to choose and decide. This is further hampering our disabled members when it comes to the challenges for our disabled members who need additional information on accessibility to make an informed decision. Currently this important and vital information is not regularly available as it should be for our disabled members to make that important life-changing decision.

We call on this Congress and its associated disabled groups to actively and positively support the motion to fully engage in urgent and meaningful dialogue with all leading estate agents, housing associations and local authorities to ensure that they include all the appropriate information as part of a standard information pack that they now or should supply to prospective home buyers.

In supporting this motion, we can and will achieve what is not an unreasonable or unrealistic request if we truly wish to live in an all-inclusive accessible and equality-led society. Please support the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Secunder?

STEPHEN JONES (London): Congress, I second the motion on accessible housing. As we have just heard from the speech of Gordon a moment ago, disabled people have always been disadvantaged and have always faced a bit of a uphill struggle than able-bodied people and normal people.

Conference, we have heard about the many problems and difficulties faced by our disabled members when trying to make an informed decision about where and why to purchase a new home. Purchasing a new home, by the way, is a very big and massive undertaking. It is one of the most stressful things you can do in your lifetime. It is clear to me, and I hope you will agree, that the standard information that the estate agents hold and provide on properties they have for sale currently is inadequate and they have to be improved significantly. Such things most people do not think about, such as door widths, curves and ramp adaptations and accessible improvements, such as side entrances. The only way to get this vital information and important information across and to ensure that we live in a truly all-inclusive and accessible society is to engage in urgent and meaningful consultation with the estate agents, local authorities and housing associations. That is why I fully endorse this motion and would encourage you all to support it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stephen. I call the mover of Motion 394.

SQUATTING LAWS TO BE REVERSED MOTION 394

394. SQUATTING LAWS TO BE REVERSED

This Congress is requested to campaign for recent changes to Squatting Laws to be reversed so that persistently vacant properties can be used to house homeless people.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

THE PRESIDENT: I have called Motion 394. That will fall if nobody speaks on it. *(The Motion was formally moved and formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 396.

TEMPORARY HOUSING FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE MOTION 396

396. TEMPORARY HOUSING FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

This Congress calls upon all MPs and other services to put into use all Ministry of Defence buildings, i.e old barracks that have the infrastructure already in them, bedrooms, shower blocks, cook house.

In this day and age we should have very little or no homeless people with all the buildings that are not in use.

The support of ex-military personnel should also be a priority to rehouse people.

We call on all Parties to ensure housing is in place as temporary accommodation.

BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

DOUGLAS RIGBY (London): Congress, I move Motion 396. We live in one of the richest countries in the world. In this day and age, we should have people sleeping rough or homeless people.

In November 2018 an analysis was carried out by Shelter, and it found that 320,000 people — yes, 320,000 people — in the UK living on the streets. Within Brighton & Hove this week, and in autumn 2018, there were 64 people counted as sleeping rough. Brighton was ranked to be the 10th local authority with people sleeping rough. London was reported as the highest with 170,000 homeless people. The London Borough of Newham had the highest number of homeless people, the number being 14,611, with 76 people sleeping rough.

There should be more emphasis in looking after our ex-forces' personnel. There are hundreds of Ministry of Defence buildings that have closed and remain closed. They are empty. Most of the infrastructure is in them already and should be put into use and not remain empty. While we are aware that some people choose to sleep rough,

most — most — however, would prefer shelter and food; basics, just basics. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Douglas. Secunder?

JACQUELINE BURNETT-PITT (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am a first-time delegate to the GMB Congress. *(Applause)* I second Motion 396 — Temporary Housing for Homeless People.

As a homeless prevention officer myself I have firsthand knowledge and experience in dealing with the lack of temporary accommodation provision for homeless families. Most if not all local authorities are having to place families into hotels as temporary accommodation, where the families may have to be moved week by week as the hotel is getting booked up. Some of the hotels can be more than 10 miles or more away from the area that the families have actually been made homeless from, which causes the families more stress on top of the stress that they are facing in becoming homeless.

As the motion states, this is 2019. Homelessness is at an all-time high. It is ludicrous, really, as the UK is a rich country. Local authorities should not be placing homeless families into Travel Lodges, which are widely used, at astronomical cost per week. A lot of this has happened since the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2018. It has made matters worse, not better. Before the HRA I could make a decision about someone's eligibility for permanent accommodation within 28 days. Since the introduction of the HRA, this has to be after 56 days. I am not going to bore you with all the legal details, but it is actually after 112 days. Being homeless is stressful enough without having to move from hotel to hotel. This is due to the lack of available temporary accommodation for homeless families. I am talking about self-contained accommodation, not hotels. I've got the red light. Okay.

Congress, it is imperative that the GMB calls upon MPs and other services to put into use not just old Defence Ministry buildings for accommodation but also to James Brokensure, Minister of housing, Communities & Local Government UK to make more self-contained properties available for use as temporary accommodation. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call the mover for Motion 397.

PROTECTING THE ELDERLY MOTION 397

397. PROTECTING THE ELDERLY

This Congress is aware that it's difficult to protect the older and more vulnerable members of your family especially if you live miles away. They can fall victims of scams or cowboy builders. Saving them from the former is difficult but we can do something with the latter.

We call on the Government to legislate to allow local authorities set up voluntary registers of the elderly and vulnerable. Anybody wishing to carry out maintenance work for the registered property would have to be registered with the local council.

This would protect the bank accounts of the most vulnerable and give peace of mind to their relatives

(Carried)

BRENDAN DUFFIELD (London): Congress, I move Motion 397 — Protecting the Elderly. This Congress is aware that it's difficult to protect the older and more vulnerable members of your family especially if you live miles away. They can fall victims of scams via telephones, websites or to doorstep criminals who call at the adults' homes under the guise of legitimate businesses and offer to fix often non-existing problems within their properties. This is financial abuse, and the adults at risk can often be persuaded to part with very large sums of cash and, in some cases, even their life savings.

According to Age UK the average of male scam victims is 74. A third of older people who fell for scams may have lost a thousand pounds or more. Shortly before this motion was written, the Vulnerability Register Service was set up nationwide. This allowed the vulnerable individuals to register with the service. Reputable organisations, such as utility companies and financial services, are able to check the services to see if an individual who they will be working for is registered as vulnerable and needs to be treated in an appropriate manner and with the right level of sensitivity. This service is available across the UK. This register is for reputable companies.

What, then, of the rogue traders? Councils, since the creation of the Care Act 2014, have been responsible for the creation of Safeguard Adults Boards. The duty of such a board is to protect adults at risk and raise awareness of safeguarding adults throughout any area.

We propose that the GMB lobbies both councils and the Vulnerability Registration Service to work to extend the scope of registering services. Rogue traders will not pay attention to the register. However, the service that uses the registration service, particularly banks, are best placed to notice unusual activities, such as the withdrawal of large amounts of cash. The unusual activities can then be referred to the Safeguarding Board. With the two groups working together it should be possible to catch the financial abuse of the vulnerable as it happens. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Brendan. Secunder?

CATHY HOLLAND (London): Congress, I second Motion 397. I have worked in the care sector for most of my working life, and part of that was with the elderly. My daughter, who is now following in my footsteps, made a valid point the other day. The DBS (*the Disclosure and Barring Service*) is only valid for that day, unless you choose, like she has, to pay for the live version. So what protection does it give our most vulnerable? The sad fact is that it can also be from their own family, like I have witnessed. But, as far as I can see, the only total protection is monitoring from another person, which would seem to be impossible. But the local authority could put in support for a list of approved contractors to help. We would like GMB to lobby the Government to put this small measure in place. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy. I call the mover of Motion 398.

PRIVATE RENTAL DISCRIMINATION KNOWN AS ‘NO DSS’ MOTION 398

398. PRIVATE RENTAL DISCRIMINATION KNOWN AS ‘NO DSS’

This Congress feels that letting agents should be ashamed that tenancy discrimination is still happening today in the form of an outright ban on women, disabled and the most vulnerable people simply because they depend on housing benefit or Universal Credit. Though the Department for Social Security now ceases to exist since it was disbanded in 2001, the practice of advertising vacancies with ‘no DSS’ has lingered on. This echoes the private landlords of the fifties and sixties who would discriminate against potential tenants with the racist signs saying “no blacks, no dogs, no Irish”.

The GMB calls on the next UK Labour Government to introduce a ban on blanket ‘no DSS’ policies with harsh penalties for those who still perpetrate this form of discrimination. We also call on any future Labour Government to commit in their next manifesto to introduce regulations to help improve the attitude of greedy landlords and letting agents. This would go some way to help and encourage fair and unprejudiced letting of accommodation to tenants who happen to depend on housing support payments.

B10 BANBURY NO.1 BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

STEPHEN ROBERTSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 398 — Private Rental Discrimination Known as ‘No DSS’. This Congress welcomes the fact that in April of this year a House of Commons All Party Work & Pensions Select Committee finally recognised the burning injustice of ‘No DSS’ and the wall of prejudice that stops hundreds of thousands of renters who need to claim benefit from obtaining good quality and well-managed accommodation. Because of the lack of availability of social housing, more than one-fifth of those who rent privately are reliant on housing benefit to cover their rent, according to figures in 2017.

‘No DSS’ policies are as outdated and unwelcome as the ‘No Blacks, No Irish and No Dogs’ discrimination of the 1950s. It is an outrageous example of how blatant prejudice is still prevalent today. The ‘No DSS’ practice amounts to indirect discrimination and breaches of equality law because it disproportionately affects women and those people with disabilities.

Congress also welcomes the work of the housing charity Shelter, which now has about 20 legal cases in the process and progression against landlords and agents who refuse to rent to people with housing benefit. But, unfortunately, these cases have to be tackled independently through the courts, one by one. Letting agencies and landlords often claim that they do not have any choice but to insert these clauses because the mortgage and insurance companies demand it. So the greedy bankers, the mortgage lenders and insurance companies are also complicit and guilty of this form of discrimination. We could all just wait for the Commons Select Committee to make their recommendations and hope it makes a difference, probably and only to find that the recommendations are kicked into the long grass and the practice carries on. This is not good enough, and we cannot rely on this lot to believe anything that they say.

This is why the GMB calls on a future Labour government to commit in its next manifesto to introduce legislation to put a stop to ‘No DSS’ policies, with harsh penalties for those who perpetrate this form of discrimination. The GMB says that we want more blacks, more dogs, more Irish and more DSS! Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Stephen. Secunder?

CHRISTINA DEARLOVE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress and President, I second Motion 398 — Private Rental Discrimination otherwise known as ‘No DSS’. The struggle for renters on housing benefit is real. Successive governments have failed to prioritise this need: good homes for people on low incomes. Many people are stuck on social housing waiting lists for years on end. The dwindling numbers of social homes and the home-help crisis leaves people with the only option of staying in the expensive and unstable private-renting market.

The ‘No DSS’ policies and the practice of barring tenants on housing benefit is wreaking havoc on people’s search for a home. It is locking people out of private renting when it is increasingly their only option, and as a worst case it leaves families facing homelessness. This is clearly visible if you just walk through our towns and cities.

Five of England’s leading letting agents actively are discriminating against tenants on housing benefit according to a report by Shelter and the National Housing Federation. A 2017 survey by YouGov of more than 1,000 private rental landlords confirmed this widespread prejudice showing that six in every 10 would not accept it. Another survey of 4,000 people done by YouGov showed that a third could not rent a property and ended up homeless. Given there are more than one million private rental households in the UK alone who receive housing benefit, it means the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of people who may have come across this problem. This has to stop and it has to stop now! The next Labour government needs to stop this ‘No DSS’ policy and get it banned. It is blatant discrimination. The greedy landlords and letting agents need dealing with. By doing this, it would go some way to show support and encourage the fairer and unprejudiced letting of accommodation for tenants and not just those rich ones. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 400.

ESTATE DEMOLITION MOTION 400

400. ESTATE DEMOLITION

Congress notes that the 2015 Congress carried a motion calling for GMB to support residents on estates facing demolition and redevelopment with private dwellings for sale in place of social housing.

Congress notes that there have been positive developments for the residents of the 100 plus estates facing demolition in London and the South of England.

The Leader of the Labour Party has pledged that residents in these estates facing demolition have to be offered binding ballots. The Mayor of London has now produced a policy that residents on most of the estates facing demolition in London must be offered binding ballots.

Congress welcome these positive developments. On the ballots for the estates in London Congress calls for any loopholes and exception to be closed and for residents and the Mayor of London to agree fair and transparent ground rules for the conduct of the ballots.

On the 34 estates facing demolition in London not covered by the Mayor's ballots Congress is calling for the Mayor of London and the entire labour movement to campaign for the individual boroughs to make arrangements to ballot residents on these estates or to explore other options like Community Land Trusts to take over the estates. It's not acceptable for Labour Councillors to ignore Labour Party policy by pressing on with the demolition of estates against the wishes of the residents which they are doing.

Congress reaffirms its commitment to the residents of these estates facing demolition. Congress is delighted to offer congratulations and solidarity to the residents of the Sutton Estate in Chelsea who have so far successfully resisted attempts to demolish their homes which would have seen the developers pocket a profit of £120m from this wrecking a community. These residents can rest assured that they can call on GMB in resisting this land grab by the property developers and speculators.

C28 PETS BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

DOTUN ODUMOSU (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 400 — Estate Demolition. This particular motion deals with a subject of which I am very aware. I was one of the original advisers to John Prescott when he was the Deputy Prime Minister. Congress notes that the 2015 Congress carried a motion calling for GMB to support residents on estates facing demolition and redevelopment with private dwellings for sale in place of social housing. So they set up the NDC programmes so that they will regenerate them and give them the power to rule in their own communities and manage the housing resources.

Congress notes that there have been positive developments for the residents of the 100 plus estate facing demolition in London and the South of England. We went all over the UK to see good examples and we could advise government ministers about things they could do to make sure that the communities are integral to everything they do while regenerating buildings.

The ironic thing was that the work that was done in Liverpool and Glasgow by that time were being managed by the communities themselves. But what is happening in London are being managed by speculators like Lease Lending and all those grey people who just come in to make money. They are building homes whereby the communities that used to live there before can't afford to live there any more, and they call it by the crazy name of "affordable". I don't know who its affordable to, but most of the people who used to live there before cannot afford to buy anything in those places any more.

The ironic thing is that where I live in Southwark, in Elephant & Castle, the local community members who moved away have been moved so far away that they don't know, according to the rules and the conditions that they all signed up to initially, that they have the right to come back. Nobody tells them that. Then with the influx of people coming from Asia and Russia, who are buying apartments in the Elephant & Castle and all of those places, nobody can come back and buy because the

competition for the places has meant that the rents have gone up. When people come with suitcases full of money, nobody asks them where they got it from. If you or I went into the bank and took £5,000 out they would be asking how we got it. That is crazy, but that's how people come in and buy things, which makes it impossible for us to buy our own home.

The estate demolition idea was a good one when it started, because the environment could be made good and make it neater. I remember coming home in the middle of the night and seeing a big rat in front of my door, having a cigar and not even running away when it saw me. (*Laughter*) Once the greedy people came into it, it became something else. Once our brothers from eastern Europe were then brought in to build the places, quality control went out of the window. Because the councils were deprived of that department, so nobody was going out to see what kind of materials or kind of things they were building for us. It is very bad when people who are in the community cannot have influence on what is happening. Congress reaffirms its commitment to the residents of these estates facing demolition and that the residents can rest assured that they can call on GMB in resisting this land grab by the property developers and speculators. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: KEVIN QUINN (Southern): Congress, I'm a first-time delegate and a second-time speaker. (*Applause*) In 2015 it was agreed at Congress that we, the GMB, would support citizens, many of them members of the GMB themselves, who resided on housing estates facing redevelopment or demolition and subsequent relocation, sometimes several hundred miles from home. With this, giant steps have been made but there are many more to be gained.

We all know that the vast majority of those people under threat and likely to be affected are working class and either on low pay or with little job prospects. Their further punishment is one of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

In agreement with the GMB, Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn, and London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, have stated a policy of all residents to receive binding ballots, like when, as a union take forward disputes and we ballot our members. This motion is a continued endorsement of the policy that members are entitled to a properly constituted ballot. We welcome Corbyn's and Khan's policies, especially with the stipulation that any ballot is free from loopholes. Property developers and councils will do everything within their power to circumvent the rules. The former are driven by corporate greed and the latter are impotent and incompetent. Democracy needs to be defended.

As the left and estimable *London Evening Standard* reported on 31st May, confirming to little surprise, 80% of the new homes that are topically named as "Regeneration zone: Elephant Park", formerly the Heygate Estate in Elephant & Castle, London, have been sold to overseas investors. This systematic dismantling of communities in the name of progress and the crass label "gentrification" is far from gentlemanly and must be resisted at every opportunity. Crucially, this is a nationwide issue and not just a southern one. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Perfect. Well done. Does anyone want to speak against these motions? (*No response*) If not, I ask Margaret Hughes to respond on behalf of the

CEC. Whilst she is coming to the rostrum, can I ask the movers and seconders of Motions 416, 418, 419, 420, 421 and Composite 20 to come to the front as well, please.

MARGARET HUGHES (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 394. The CEC is asking for Motion 394 to be referred. The CEC wholeheartedly supports the principle of tackling the current homelessness crisis, but it is important that we get it right. Referral would give the CEC an opportunity to speak with relevant organisations with regards to the squatting law and homelessness. We understand what the consequences will be as to what would be required to change the law and what role members working in local government would play. Local authorities already have powers to Empty Dwelling Management Orders, and it would be good to consider our members' experiences as to what currently works and what does not.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking for Motion 394 to be referred for the reasons I have laid out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margaret. London Region, do you agree to refer Motion 394? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I will put that to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 394 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: I can take Motions 393, 396, 397, 398 and 400 as a group as the CEC is supporting all of those motions. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are all carried.

Motion 393 was CARRIED.

Motion 396 was CARRIED.

Motion 397 was CARRIED.

Motion 398 was CARRIED.

Motion 400 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: We now go on to Social Policy: Welfare. I all the mover of Motion 416.

SOCIAL POLICY: WELFARE
UNIVERSAL CREDIT CHILDCARE POLICY
MOTION 416

416. UNIVERSAL CREDIT CHILDCARE POLICY

This Congress calls for change and is deeply concerned with the Universal Credit Scheme Policy on childcare which is forcing the poorest in society to pay childcare costs up front, then face weeks or even months before being reimbursed. This Congress is aware that many such households are in precarious financial positions and half of low-income families have no savings.

It is a fact that some of the poorest 100,000 households will receive less for their childcare costs under the new system. Currently, tax credits cover up to 70% of childcare costs for children in working families. Low-income families can get up to 96% of childcare costs through Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. Under Universal Credit this additional

support is lost. This will leave some of the lowest income families paying up to 7.5 times as much towards childcare than under the current system. This Congress finds this unacceptable.

A report published on 23.12.18 by the Work and Pensions Committee shows Universal Credit is in fact stopping people returning to work and that the way childcare costs are paid is in direct conflict with the Governments key aim of getting more people into work.

While we wholly support Frank Field (Chair of the Work and Pensions Committee) in his statement that if the Government had set out to design a system to make it harder for parents to get into work, it could hardly have done better.

Congress, we believe that many parents will face a stark choice – turn down a job offer, turn down additional hours at work or get themselves into debt in order to pay for childcare. This is supported by the report into Universal Credit carried out by the charity, Save the Children.

Congress recognises that the requirement by childcare providers for costs to be paid in advance risks tipping many families over the financial precipice. On average in England, costs are up to £1,000 per month for a full-time place for one child.

It is strongly believed this policy is driving parents into despair and debt and causing untold stress. This policy also creates problems for childcare providers and in reality is actively working to prevent the Government achieving its aim of getting more people into work.

We are disgusted at the Governments suggestion that the solution is for struggling parents to take on more debt.

The Universal Credit childcare payment arrangements are part of an inherently unfair system which benefits those on far higher incomes, who receive help with their childcare through the tax system.

The Congress must call on the Government to carry out a comprehensive redesign of the childcare element of Universal Credit to mitigate the impact on poorer families before the rollout of this benefit accelerates. It is critical that sufficient support is provided to enable work to always pay and be sustainable.

Congress, we must recommend to the Government that parents should get the 85% of the money they can claim for childcare up front not in arrears.

We should ensure that the Government should introduce upfront direct payments to childcare providers where possible. This would lift the burden from working parents and give providers greater certainty over their income.

The Government is funding support for households earning up to £200,000 a year via tax free childcare and 30 free hours of childcare schemes. This Congress urges the Government that funding should be diverted from these schemes towards improving Universal Credit childcare support.

Helping people move into work benefits both the economy and the Government finances. Good quality childcare enhances a child's life chances which in turn enhances both our society and our economy. Congress is well aware of these facts and would ask the Government to acknowledge and ensure that both are a priority.

C15 GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

KEVIN BAKER (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am speaking on Motion 416 — Universal Credit Childcare Policy. This Congress calls for change and is deeply concerned with the Universal Credit Scheme Policy on childcare which is forcing the poorest in society to pay childcare costs up front, then face weeks or even months before being reimbursed. This Congress is aware that many such households are in a precarious financial positions and half of low-income families have no savings.

It is a fact that some of the poorest 100,000 households will receive less for their childcare costs under the new system. This Congress finds this unacceptable.

A report published on 23rd December 2018 by the Works and Pensions Committee shows Universal Credit is in fact stopping people returning to work and that the way childcare costs are paid is in direct conflict with the Government's key aim of getting more people into work.

While we wholly support Frank Field, the Chair of the Work and Pensions Committee) in his statement that if the Government had set out to design a system to make it harder for parents to get into work, they could hardly have done better.

Congress, we believe that many parents will face a stark choice — turn down a job offer, turn down additional hours at work or get themselves into debt in order to pay for childcare. This is supported by the report into Universal Credit carried out by the charity Save the Children.

It is strongly believed that this policy is driving parents into despair and debt and causing untold stress. This policy also creates problems for childcare providers and in reality is actively working to prevent the Government achieving its aim of getting more people into work.

We are disgusted at the suggestion of the Government that the solution for struggling parents is to take on more debt.

The Universal Credit childcare payment arrangements are part of an inherently unfair system which benefits those on far higher incomes, who receive help with their childcare through the tax system.

This Congress must call on the Government to carry out a comprehensive redesign of the childcare element of Universal Credit to mitigate the impact on poorer families before the rollout of this benefit accelerates. It is critical that sufficient support is provided to enable work to always pay and be sustainable.

Congress, we must recommend to the Government that parents should get the 85% of the money they can claim for childcare up front not in arrears.

Helping people move into work benefits both the economy and Government finances. Good quality childcare enhances a child's life chances which, in turn, enhances both our society and our economy. Congress is well aware of these facts, and we should ask the Government — no, we should demand! — to acknowledge and ensure that both of these are a priority.

How dare the Tories mess with our benefits system and better themselves and not the most vulnerable in our society. A wise man many years ago said something as true then as it is today. That man was Nye Bevan and the Tories are still lower than vermin. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Secunder?

ADAM WILKINSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I second Motion 416 — Universal Credit Childcare Policy. I work as a gas engineer in social housing. I see firsthand on a daily basis how this Government is putting families into more and more debt. We can't standstill. We must act now. We need to get this Government to pay in full and not in arrears. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Adam. I call the mover of Motion 418.

NO DEDUCTIONS FROM WELFARE BENEFIT PAYMENTS MOTION 418

418. NO DEDUCTIONS FROM WELFARE BENEFIT PAYMENTS

This Congress is requested to campaign for no deductions (third party or other) to be made from any in-work or out of work Welfare Benefit payments including Tax Credits and Universal Credit payments, or repayment of previous debts.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

JAN SMITH (London): Congress, I am moving this motion on behalf of one of our delegates who could not be here due to health reasons within their family.

This motion is fairly self-explanatory. We are calling for the GMB to set up a campaign to go to other organisations to seek that there are no deductions, third party or otherwise, be taken out of our claimants' benefits. As a retired magistrate of 29 years' service, I have witnessed people being brought to court and having money deducted out of their benefits, or money has been tried to be deducted from their benefits. I have witnessed the hardship that they are suffering and also the debt that they have got into.

Congress, please support this motion. I move that we have a campaign that there is no money deducted out of their benefits, whether it be tax credits, universal credit or anything. They are in a state of hardship to start with, or they would not be making claims. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. Secunder?

MARK WATSON (London): Congress, I second Motion 418 — No Deductions from Welfare Benefit Payments. As you heard from Jan, people who receive benefits or Universal Credit can be debited for previous household debt. The Department of

Work & Pensions, or DWP, can only take three payments at any one time, but that is enough to take from some claimants 40% of their awards. To add insult to injury, some of the debt was created by the DWP. Advance payments were made to most people to tide them over whilst they waited the five weeks it took for Universal Credit to kick in. Recent figures show that there are around 850,000 claimants with an advance repayment in place.

Data published only last month is damning about the system. It shows the total amount of money withdrawn from claimants' monthly allowance under the new system has increased from £30 million to £39 million in the year to October 2018. This debt is forcing a growing number of claimants to sacrifice the basics and fuelling dependence on food banks. Faced with these figures, the DWP is back-tracking a little. By the end of this year, they will only be able to take 30% of your award. That is still too much. Congress, please carry this motion and vote to eliminate in-benefit debt. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mark. I call the mover of Motion 419.

WELFARE BENEFITS PAID IN ADVANCE NOT IN ARREARS MOTION 419

419. WELFARE BENEFITS PAID IN ADVANCE NOT IN ARREARS

This Congress is requested to campaign for all in-work and out of work Welfare Benefit payments, to include any Tax Credits and Universal Credit payments, to be paid in advance and not in arrears to help work towards the eradication of Food Banks.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

GORDON BRUNNING (London): Congress, I move Motion 419 — Welfare Benefits Paid in Advance Not in Arrears. Think on this. As a benefit claimant, the in work and an out of work benefits you are entitled to are tax credits and universal credit. However, you are not simply paid as you should be by the DWP, but when you attend your first Job Centre interview the first thing you are asked is this: “Do you want a loan?” “Why would I need a loan?” is the response of most claimants. The DWP response to that question is: “Quite simply, it could and in most cases often does take us eight weeks before you”. What a ridiculous and unworkable state of affairs. People cannot simply live on air alone, goodwill and good wishes.

This is not just the case for new claimants but for existing claimants who are simply being moved from existing benefits to the new tax credit and universal benefit. We call on this Congress to develop and champion campaigns for all in-work and out-of-work benefit payments to include any tax credits and universal payments to be made in advance and not in arrears, which is the current practice. Claimants should not be forced into unnecessary poverty because the system that is in place is not fit for purpose and should be scrapped as soon as practicably possible.

In supporting this motion, we have a clear opportunity to show this Tory Government that, as a trade union, we will no longer tolerate the humiliation and underpayment of

those entitled to benefits. Enough is enough! Please support this motion. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Spot on. I call the seconder to Motion 419.
(The motion was formally seconded from the floor) Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 420.

WELFARE BENEFIT PAYMENTS TO COVER THE ACTUAL COST OF RENT
MOTION 420

420. WELFARE BENEFIT PAYMENTS TO COVER ACTUAL COST OF RENT

This Congress is requested to campaign for the housing costs element of in-work and out of work Welfare Benefit payments, to include any Universal Credit payments, to cover the real and actual cost of renting a property.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

GARY HARRIS (London): Congress, I move Motion 420 — Welfare Benefit Payments to Cover the Actual Cost of Rent.

President and Congress, private-sector landlords don't hesitate to charge the maximum rent possible. This, however, comes as a detriment to many claimants as they are left to pay the shortfall or to find cheaper accommodation. Prior to the introduction of Universal Credit, landlords were consulted and informed that the council would not pay over the market rent. The basis of the assessment of Universal Credit stems from the rent officer's decisions on the market rent as of 2015. Each area is given a housing allowance based on household compositions, such as the number of persons in a property and the number of bedrooms, which cannot exceed four, and the market rent area. To clarify, let me give you a scenario. A young mother and her baby were placed in temporary accommodation after she separated from her partner and lost her job. She was forced to leave her former property after falling into arrears of rent, utility bills and council tax. After the DWP assessed her claim, it was deemed that she had made herself intentionally homeless. How? This is ridiculous! This is a young woman with a small baby and no income. Has the system gone mad? Is this system not designed to help the most vulnerable and not to create further hardship?

Due to the failure of the current system, claimants can be forced into homelessness with no alternative but to apply for discretionary housing payments, look for cheaper housing accommodation, use their own finances or seek help from homeless organisations. The system is not working, and those who are already vulnerable are suffering.

Congress, we call for a cap on the amount of rent that landlords are able to charge and for it to be in line with market rent. This will allow for a fair assessment and to ensure that this covers the true cost. In addition to this, as the assessment of Universal Credit currently includes the assessment of rent, we would like to see this separated, due to the complexity. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. Secunder? Formally. *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you, London. The mover of Motion 421.

LOCAL COUNCILS TO TAKE OVER THE PROCESSING OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT MOTION 421

421. LOCAL COUNCILS TO TAKE OVER THE PROCESSING OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT

This Congress proposes that the GMB asks the Government to look at asking Local Councils to run the Job Centres and Universal Credit. Local Councils know their clients and can provide a better local service than the current national policy, this will save our members' jobs in housing benefits who will now process all claims locally and it will also give job centre staff the chance to move into Local Government and provide a more dedicated service.

This move will also reduce the waiting times and hopefully prevent hardship for many of the claimants of Universal Credit,

ISLINGTON APEX
London Region

(Carried)

PATRICK BONNER (London): Madam President, Congress, this resolution 421 is dealing with the administration process of Universal Credit requesting that it be transferred to local authorities. Universal Credit encompasses all the benefits that were spoken of by other speakers here today, child tax credit, housing benefit, income support, income based job seekers allowance, income related employment support, working tax credits, disability premium, among loads of others. The application process is purely online at the moment, anyway. You have to check your own eligibility, create an account, make a claim, apply for an advance if you are wanting the first payment, then you have to repay it of course, which was mentioned by others. You have then to attend an interview at the job centre with all your documentation, which is a load of stuff, and then you might get your payment after five weeks but it could be as much as eight or more weeks if the documentation, or whatever it is, is not in line with what they require.

Housing benefit today, which is a large part of the benefit process, is with local government but it is progressively being transferred to Universal Benefit so that means meeting real people has been transferred to this process of dealing with people over the telephone and dealing with it online. There are redundancies as a result in the housing benefit administration. If the calculations are incorrect for what you receive after all this process, there is a mandatory reconsideration that you can request but other benefits like child benefits, tax re childcare, guardians allowance tax credits, and housing benefit, are calculated separately so there is a different process for those. If you are successful in getting the Universal Credit you then have to manage it virtually on a daily basis or a weekly basis, whatever it is. Everything has to be introduced like a new job, extra hours you work, new child, change of housing, care arrangements, rent changes, and of course if you are on part-time irregular work or zero-hours contracts then you will be on it every day. It is just a bit of madness.

What this motion is saying, Congress, is that a lot of this expertise is already there. It exists at local level and this expertise is being dismantled in favour of computer input and telephone centres; higher paid jobs to lower paid jobs. There is more pressure on staff dealing with desperate customers. We have all seen *I, Daniel Blake*, at least he went to a local job centre and had to deal with people who were real people. Today a lot of the problem is that people have to do everything online, guided by someone on the other end of the telephone sometimes. It highlighted the plight, *I, Daniel Blake*, highlighted the plight of the ordinary workers navigating the system but also it hinted at the stress among staff managing this process. Since the Universal Credit office was set up in Glasgow there have been five suicides in the office. That means that managers in that office have doubled back trying to get urgent mental health training to their managers. What we are offering here in this motion is that the whole process be brought back to local authorities where we get local support, local offices, local knowledge, and a saving of the jobs in housing benefit. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Perfect timing, thank you. Well done. Secunder?

MAUREEN MALONE (London): Morning, Congress, President. Congress, Universal Credit and its lack of timely delivery has caused a lot of hardship to GMB members and their families. Over the years as a result of this several GMB members have fallen into debt and the worst case scenario losing their homes and having to go to food banks to feed their families. Congress, something needs to be done and it needs to be done quickly to ensure that GMB members receive their much needed benefit before the wolf comes to the door. Congress, by moving Universal Credit to the local authorities it would be a better streamlined service. This would ensure that GMB members received their benefits on time as well as saving many GMB jobs in housing. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Maureen. London Region to move Composite 20.

PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT

COMPOSITE MOTION 20

(Covering Motions 422 and 423)

422 – PIP (Personal Independence Payment) – London Region

423 – PIP – Birmingham & West Midlands Region

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

This Congress notes that since 2013, this Government has been moving claimants (our members who self-define as disabled) from DLV (Disability Living Allowance) to PIP (Personal Independent Payment) and we are aware of GMB opposition to the PIP assessment and review process.

We call on this GMB Congress and its associated disability groups to:

- Fully support this motion ensuring our members who self-define as disabled get the support they need and are clearly entitled to when having to continually go through PIP assessments and reviews.
- Lobby **all** political parties at the highest levels demanding a timely and much needed urgent review calling on this Government to overhaul the PIP assessment and reviews process and how the process is managed.

- Utilise expert legal (UNIONLINE) advice to achieve what is **not** an unreasonable or unrealistic expectation.
- Raise awareness and call for a campaign to stop the ridicule of people who are genuinely ill. No one should go into these interviews alone. These interviews are unprofessional and a large majority are questioned so intensely and disrespectfully that they break down and don't pursue their claim from fear. No one should be treated like this; they should be treated with compassion.

This will ensure our members who self-define as disabled get the benefits they are entitled to.

(Carried)

GORDON BRUNNING (London): On an almost daily basis we read in the national press that this Government are making changes to the PIP assessment and review process. Since 2013, this Government has been moving our disabled members from DLA to PIP. As a trade union we stand in clear opposition to the PIP assessment and review process, as we rightly should. However, we must continue to challenge and demand changes to a system and process that is broken and does nothing more than cause unwarranted stress and anxiety to our disabled members living and dealing with long-term physical and hidden disabilities. We call on this GMB Congress and its associated disabled groups actively and positively to support this motion, ensuring our disabled members get the support they need and are clearly entitled to when having to go through the PIP assessment and review process, and sometimes, in most cases, needless reviews, to fully engage in urgent meaningful consultation with all leading political parties at the highest level raising awareness of these unacceptable and disgraceful working practices, demanding a timely and much needed urgent review and calling on the Government to overhaul the PIP process and how this process is managed, and to utilise legal expert advice to achieve what is not an unreasonable or unrealistic expectation.

Your support for this motion is essential in ensuring our disabled members retain their dignity and are given the respect they deserve during this difficult and stressful process, and ultimately receive the benefits they need and are clearly entitled to. Please support the motion. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Seconder, Birmingham?

LISA McCREADY (Birmingham & West Midlands): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Thank you. Thousands of disabled people are left in poverty and emotionally broken because of unfair PIP assessments. These assessments are often done by people who have little or no medical background. The decisions made to reduce or remove payment can have serious consequences for the people who need these payments the most. If someone loses their payment, the appeal process can take years leaving people financially destitute. Sometimes the stress of this is too much for people to take.

Theresa Rose Smith was a bubbly outgoing 27-year old. Her mother said how she loved people and laughing but found social situations difficult. Theresa was facing eviction because her PIP payment had been reduced. With a history of mental health issues, she was sadly let down by a cruel system. Theresa took her own life in March

this year. One death is one too many. 17,000 sick and disabled people have died while waiting for payment. Families and lives have been destroyed. This needs to stop and stop now. I second. Congress, support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Lisa. That is hard having to wait until the last day to make your first speech. Does anyone wish to speak against any of these motions? No? I ask Viv Smart to come and give us the CEC position and can I then call the last movers of the day, 431, 432, 434, 435, and EM1, please.

VIV SMART (CEC, Public Services): The CEC is supporting Motions 416, 421, and Composite 20 with qualifications.

On Motion 416, we recognize the importance of affordable childcare and the proposals in this motion could make a difference to those who do not have a high disposable income or savings to pay for all their childcare costs upfront. The qualification for the motion applies to the paragraph which suggests that funds from the current scheme of tax free childcare and 30 hours of free childcare for households earning less than £200,000 per year should be diverted to improving universal childcare support. The vast majority of our members, and indeed a great number of the general public, live within this threshold and we would not want to see them at a detriment.

On Motion 421, we recognise there may be advantages to administering benefit, such as Universal Credit, within local government. The CEC qualification, however, is that any proposed government system of administration should take full account of the views of the current workforce in the DUP and their union.

The qualification for Composite 20 is that while our Unionline can provide some initial advice to members we do not have the expertise or resource for more detailed benefits advice or to represent members on individual disability issues, such as appeals. Equally, while we support the view that no one should be forced to face appeals alone, being accompanied should be an option, not a requirement.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking for Motion 421 and Composite 20 to be supported with the qualifications I have laid out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Viv. Does Birmingham accept the qualification on Motion 416, or have I got the wrong script? Does Birmingham accept the qualification on Motion 416? Yes. Thank you. I will take the vote then. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 416 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motions 418, 419, 420, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? Thank you.

Motion 418 was CARRIED.

Motion 419 was CARRIED.

Motion 420 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: London Region, do you accept the qualification on Motion 421? Yes. Thank you. All those in favour please show. Anyone against. Thank you.

Motion 421 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Do London Region and Birmingham accept the qualification on Composite 20? Yes. Thank you. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? Thank you.

Composite Motion 20 was CARRIED.

INTERNATIONAL

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to our final debate, so can I have the mover of Motion 431, please.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE KURDS IN TURKEY AND ROJAVA MOTION 431

431. SOLIDARITY WITH THE KURDS IN TURKEY AND ROJAVA

This Congress notes with pride the significant role that GMB have played in the Freedom for Ocalan campaign and the Kurdish Solidarity Movement 2019 marks the 20th year of Abdullah Ocalan's imprisonment in solitary confinement on Imrali Island. It is crucial that all efforts are made to end his isolation and to achieve his freedom and the freedom of all political prisoners including HDP politicians, MPs and leaders.

This Congress further notes with serious concern the deteriorating situation in Turkey. Under President Erdogan all opposition of the government, Kurdish and Turkish Civil Society, trade unionists, teachers, journalists and elected officials face extreme repression, violence, detention and imprisonment.

This Congress notes the mass wave of hunger strikes in Turkish prisons aimed at ending Abdullah Ocalan's isolation, including that of Leyla Guvan, who was released from prison on the 79th day of her hunger strike but is continuing her protest from home.

President Erdogan's war on the Kurds has extended outside of the borders of Turkey. The GMB has been part of the international condemnation of the illegal invasion and horrendous ethnic cleansing and genocide that has been waged on the previously peaceful Kurdish canton of Afrin in Northern Syria by Turkey and allied jihadists, including Daesh.

Following the decision by President Trump to pull out US troops from the region and despite some backtracking, there is now a very significant threat that Turkey will invade the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria (Rojava). Rojava is a beacon of light in the Middle East which must be protected. The people of Rojava have constructed a society based on grassroots democracy, tolerance, equality, ecology and women's self-liberation inspired by the writings of Abdullah Ocalan. Their society represents a historic step forward for the entire Middle East and an inspiration for all in the trade union movement.

This Congress resolves to:

- Reaffirm and continue to support the Freedom for Ocalan campaign for the release of the Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan and political prisoners held in Turkey as a crucial step in restarting the peace process;
- Promote the Freedom for Ocalan campaign in the GMB, TUC, Labour Party and the wider and international labour movement;
- Stand in solidarity with Leyla Guvan and all those on hunger strike to end the isolation of Abdullah Ocalan;
- Reaffirm solidarity with the HDP, independent trade unions in Turkey and the wider Kurdish liberation movement;
- Campaign for the immediate release of all trade unionists, teachers, journalists and campaigners for peace imprisoned by the Turkish state;

- Recognise and build links with the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria (Rojava).

GMB UNITE BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

GORDON CULLUM (London): Congress, comrades, 2019 marks the 20th year of the solitary confinement and imprisonment of Abdullah Ocalan by the State of Turkey. Abdullah Ocalan is the forefather of the Kurdish liberation struggle and his ideology laid the foundation for the liberation of Rojava region in Northern Syria, a region that now is working towards a feminist multi-ethnic democratic cooperative society. The recent struggle for Kurdish independence and for freedom in this area was also born out of the fight against ISIS led by the YPG and the YPJ, the latter being all women defence army-led not only in the defence of Kurds but an example of feminist socialist organising created and led by women in the defence of all ethnicity and religious make-up in the area. *(Applause)* International leftist volunteers from around the world rightly saw this battle as a modern anti-fascist one with correlations between the Spanish Civil War and the resistance against Franco fascism which saw over 30,000 volunteers join the International Brigades. In this recent struggle for liberation eight volunteers from the British Isles have been killed, including Anna Campbell, an heroic young woman who originates just down the road from Brighton, in Lewes. The absolute tragedy being her family was not able to bring her body home due to a callous Erdogan regime that routinely oppresses and murders Kurds and their allies.

This oppression and abuse of human rights stretch also to political opponents such as the imprisonment of HDP Party Co-Chair Selahattin Demirtas and former Chair Figen Yuksekdag. We call for the release of all Kurdish political prisoners held in Turkey to reaffirm solidarity with HDP and with independent trade unions, unions which have seen a massive crack down, including the imprisonment of hundreds of union representatives but also the Turkish regime that has jailed teachers, civil servants, and now has the largest amount of journalists in prison than any other country in the world. Finally, we move to recognise and build links with the democratic federation of Northern Syria, i.e. Rojava. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Secunder?

BRETT CONNORS (London): The role of women in the Kurdish liberation movement will be known to many people, especially after the YPJ was dedicated to the defeat of ISIS and its capital, Raqqa, in October 2017. To all the women of the world, alongside the human banner of Abdullah Ocalan, whose ideology was in creating a feminist multiethnic democratic and cooperative society from the start of women's influence on a diverse ideology. Ocalan is currently serving a life sentence in solidarity on the Imrali Island, where over 1,000 Turkish security personnel are stationed around him. He is allowed no contact with the outside world, not even with family. Only recently, after heavy international pressure from the Kurdish people in support of the movement launching worldwide hunger strikes including 3,000 Kurdish prisoners who have been holding hunger strikes since November, he was allowed a meeting with his lawyers. In 2005, the European Court of Human Justice ruled on the Turkish violation of Art. 1.5 and 6 of the European Convention of

Human Rights which granted him no remedy to appeal his arrest and sentence that can lead to death without a fair trial. I support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brett. Well done. The mover of Motion 432.

PALESTINE SOLIDARITY MOTION 432

432. PALESTINE SOLIDARITY

This Congress notes the continuing oppression faced by Palestinian people in the areas throughout Palestine.

Congress also notes the commitment of GMB to support a peaceful outcome to the Palestinian problem by the introduction of a 2-state solution.

Congress instructs GMB to organise a solidarity trip to Palestine with the main purpose being to engage with our brothers and sisters in the Palestinian Trade Union Movement and raise greater awareness of the oppression being faced by their people.

CWU STAFF BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

FEVZI HUSSEIN (London): Colleagues, the situation has gone on for far too long for both Palestinians and the Israelis. While the Israeli Palestine conflict is now the oldest of the conflicts that are ripping the Middle East apart, it is also the only one where a solution is known and widely shared with the international community. Despite the constant deterioration of the situation on the ground, the parameters of a future agreement have not changed, two states living in peace and security with contiguous secure and recognised borders drawn on the basis of the 1967 demarcation lines and mutually agreed land swaps, with Jerusalem as the capital of both states, and within an agreed and realistic just and equitable solution for Palestinian refugees. So Mr. Trump, we do not accept your imposition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and your decision is condemned by this Congress. (*Applause*) For Palestinians and Israelis the situation is both physically and psychologically devastating and it has to come to an end. We talked yesterday of the Jallianwala Massacre exactly 100 years ago. The Israeli defence force also uses live ammunition as a means of addressing unrest. The Israeli government is the only government in the world that automatically prosecutes children in their military courts. Israel has prosecuted and arrested at least 8,000 Palestinian children since the year 2000 and Tamimi was one of those arrested and prosecuted.

This motion calls for more to be done to support our Palestinian brothers and sisters. This motion calls on the GMB to organise a solidarity trip to the region. It is excellent that both our President and Vice President have recently been to Palestine and I am sure their experiences there will tell us that we must do more to help these vulnerable people. I am incredibly proud as a Labour Party member that one of the things in our brilliant socialist manifesto created under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn is that when Labour comes into power they will immediately recognise Palestine. (*Applause*)

In addition to the solidarity trip we must have greater awareness of the plight of the Palestinian people. Congress, before I close I will leave you with a quote from one of my all time heroes, Nelson Mandela: “We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.” Free Free Palestine. Long live Palestine. Long live Gaza. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Fevzi. Seconder for that?

MILLIE BOUNDY (London): Palestine is such an emotive subject. The ongoing and under-reported horrific conflict and the humanitarian crisis which has been going on for over 50 years, it is shameful. We need to recognise Palestine. We need to understand the struggle, recognise the oppression of these people on behalf of all the innocents involved, the children who are regularly blindfolded and marched out of their house in the middle of the night and who have seen their Mums and Dads beaten up, battered, and abused repeatedly, and possibly even murdered. There is humanity in this room with speakers from within who have moved us all to tears. There was Leroy Rosenior, who described how it feels to be an outcast. On behalf of all these innocents, the outcasts, the children, I move you to support this motion. We need the GMB to reassess the area and go into discussions with the Palestinian trade union movement. Free Free Palestine. Long Live Palestine. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Millie. The mover of Motion 434.

CHINESE DETENTION CAMPS FOR MUSLIMS MOTION 434

434. CHINESE DETENTION CAMPS FOR MUSLIMS

This Congress to bring pressure to bear on our Government to join other countries' condemnation of these camps and join the international call to close them down.

The Chinese Foreign Minister has said it is gossip that approximately 1 million Muslims are being kept in internment camps in the Xinjiang region and he hoped people would support the regional government's efforts to fight terrorism. The Foreign Secretary at that time, Jeremy Hunt, has stated this is 'broadly true' speaking in the House of Commons.

B01 BIRMINGHAM FORWARD BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(*Carried*)

IFTKAHAR UMAR (Birmingham & West Midlands): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Thank you. I am moving Motion 434, Chinese Detention Camps for Muslims, and calling on this year's Congress to bring pressure on the UK government to join other countries on the condemnation of these detention camps for Uighur and Kazak Muslims and also join international communities to have these camps closed down, where approximately one million working men and women are being detained.

The Chinese Foreign Minister has said this is gossip that approximately one million Muslims are being kept in internment camps. As they denied their existence China has begun to acknowledge them but describes the camps as vocational training centres and embodies the humane management and care campaign in the name of counter-

terrorism in the Xinjiang province and he hoped that people would support the region's government in an effort to fight terrorism.

Since 2014, the Chinese government has significantly intensified the size and the number of these camps to 44. Since Cheng Quanguo took charge of the region in August 2016, these camps have reportedly been secret and outside of any legal system, many Uighurs and Kazaks have been locked up without trial and charges being levied against them. The local authorities have reportedly been holding hundreds and thousands of Uighurs and Muslims, and other ethnic minorities, in these camps for the stated purpose of countering extremism and terrorism. A Chinese government official rejected international criticism of these internment camps in the Xinjiang region calling them job training centres that will gradually disappear if one day the society no longer needs it.

Beijing has also denied the accusations and saying people are attending vocational education centres to rid them of any extreme thoughts in a region that was hit by deadly riots and attacks in recent years. These so-called attacks were demonstrations due to the Chinese government's policy to force Uighur Muslims out of their own region which they have resided in for over a thousand years. This is due to the region's rich oil and gas minerals.

As a crackdown the Chinese government is restricting the amount of places where Muslims can worship forcing Muslim communities to worship in censored mosques which can be controlled. There have been 31 mosques and two shrines which have suffered major damage and investigators have also identified nine further sites which have been completely destroyed.

British diplomats who visited the Xinjiang region in August 2018 have confirmed that the report of mass internment camps for Uighur Muslims were broadly true. The Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, has told parliament that any future trade deals with China must address this issue. If you would like to read more on the subject the BBC has done a documentary called China Hidden Camps and *The Guardian* has also done a very comprehensive report on it. I therefore ask Congress to support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Iftkahr. Iftkahr is a first-time delegate and has had to wait all this time to make his first speech. Well done. Secunder for Motion 434? Formally. Thank you. The mover of Motion 435.

DELEGATION TO CUBA MOTION 435

435. DELEGATION TO CUBA

This Congress proposes that in 2020 a delegation is sent to Cuba, drawn from its older and/or retired members to investigate and report on the provision of support to Cuba's older population and supportive role they play with younger generations in their society. The programme should include visits to older people's Day Centres, meetings with the CDR (Committee for the Defence of the Revolution) and Trade Union representatives, and the opportunity to share experiences of working within our respective Trade Union and Labour Movements.

DERBYSHIRE COMMUNITY BRANCH

Midland & East Coast Region

(Referred)

JASON EVANS (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, this motion calls for Congress's support in sending a delegation of older members to visit Cuba in 2020 in order to gain insight, share experience, understanding, and solidarity. Cuba has just celebrated the 60th anniversary of its revolution and the 80th anniversary of the formation of the CTC, which is the Cuban equivalent of our TUC. Cuba is also developing its new constitution and in doing so has consulted over the draft at over 130,000 meetings across the island in workplaces, schools, and community centres; what a great example of real social democracy in action. If only we could do the same over Brexit rather than pull our nations apart through continuous squabbling in parliament. *(Applause)*

There is obviously a lot we can learn from Cuba. The CTC Congress recently focused on the growing non-state sector in Cuba where over 29% of the Cuban workers are employed. Clearly, this is a crucial time for our Cuban comrades and it is certainly a critical time for us in the UK. Our international links build our strength, support, and influence. The time is definitely right for such a visit. Congress, please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jason.

MILES SHORT (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, Cuba is a beautiful, proud, and principled nation which has struggled against adversity for many a decade, such as the US blockade, with the Cuban training of its health workers, doctors and nurses, not only in the private Cuban nation but South America as a whole Cuba is developing and we are needed to play our part in supporting and understanding.

Congress, we have had another great Congress here in Brighton this year building on our Congress visit to Dublin in 2015. I am considering a motion for next year to hold Congress in 2021 in Havana. Congress please, support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Miles. The mover of Emergency Motion 1.

VIOLENT COLLAPSE OF THE BANANA SECTOR IN CAMEROON EMERGENCY MOTION ONE

This Congress notes that the political crisis in Anglophone Cameroon is putting in jeopardy the livelihoods of thousands of banana plantation workers and the continued existence of the Fako Agricultural Workers Union (FAWU) that represents them. The Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) is one of the biggest private sector employers in Cameroon, but as a result of violence on the part of both the security forces and Anglophone separatists, the company has had to close 22 of its 29 plantations costing the company 53 million Euros and this figure rises daily. Since mid-February 2019, not only have the workers been forced to flee from their homes and work, but the FAWU union has virtually collapsed - with no income and no work. Workers have been attacked including having their fingers cut off and many plantations have been cut down leaving decaying banana crops. GMB, through its International Solidarity Fund has supported the work of FAWU, which is a fellow member of the International Union of Foodworkers (IUF), in particular an education programme for union

representatives on plantations run between 2013 and 2016, which was supported by IUF and Banana Link. We call on our international trade union affiliates including EUROBAN and the UK Government to lobby the Government of Cameroon to engage in dialogue with the Anglophone separatists, with the aim of bringing peace to the region and rebuild the union structures. We call on Congress to send a message of solidarity to FAWU and to work with IUF and Banana Link to set up a fundraising appeal to save the union from complete collapse.

LOWESTOFT BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

NATHAN CLARKE (London): President, Congress, right now as I speak to you here a civil war rages on in Cameroon, which is largely unreported in this country. Cameroon itself is a country divided between the French-speaking Francophone majority and the English-speaking Anglophone minority, although officially it is one country. Most of the wealth and governance is concentrated in the Francophone area leading to resentment and anger in the Anglophone community which has in turn given rise to a rebel separatist movement. Much of the banana industry is based in the Anglophone area. The banana workers and ordinary civilians in the Anglophone area are now stuck between rebels and government military forces.

Since April, the banana plantations have been razed to the ground. The workers' villages attacked with some torched, displacing innocents everywhere. Most people have fled the area and have become unwelcome refugees in Nigeria or in the Francophone area which has led to many being attacked or threatened. The latest figures state that at least 1,850 people have been killed, 35,000 people have fled to Nigeria and half a million people have been displaced.

GMB has a fine record of supporting banana workers and the Food & Allied Workers Union (FAWU) in Cameroon. The FAWU Women's Committee established a relationship with London Region's very own GMB sisters and after a four-year education project run by Bananalink with support from GMB FAWU representatives were able to recruit over 2,000 new members and set up the Women's Committee. Now, in 2019, the union is virtually non-existent. FAWU officials are only able to get to the office on rare occasions and certainly not out to the fields. There is zero income and since February the situation has become critical with the likelihood that the union will collapse completely. Thousands of people are homeless without any means of support. The banana industry, the main source of work, is in tatters and it will take some years to re-grow and rebuild the plantations, even after there is some resolution to the conflict, which right now is unlikely.

The Cameroon government seems to be in no hurry to resolve the situation in South West Cameroon. Our government should be making representations to the Cameroon government to find a solution. This Congress calls upon GMB to use the means at its disposal to pressure and lobby our British government to fight its Brexit paralysis and work to promote a resolution in Cameroon and save not just a major industry but the lives of countless people across the country.

I do have a little bit of time left so I would just like to take a moment to say how privileged and honoured I feel to have stood at this rostrum so many times this week speaking on important critical matters and I am incredibly proud to be part of this

amazing, hardworking, dedicated, dignified, powerful trades union Movement. Congress, I move. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Nathan, we have enjoyed listening to your passionate speeches. Thank you. Is there a seconder?

OBI AMADI (London): I do not know what I can add to what my previous colleague has said but here goes. Congress, GMB and members of the International Union of Food Workers, we should work with them to support the Cameroon workers who have been suffering due to the collapse of its industry. Sisters and brothers, I ask you to pass this resolution and to raise money through a branch appeal and from the union's funds to support a small but active and hardworking union to survive until a proper solution to the situation is established.

We have a proud record of supporting workers in the global south who are less fortunate than ourselves and in Cameroon GMB is highly regarded as a sister union. If and when the conflict is resolved and the banana industry is revived, the union will need a lot of help and support to rebuild the organisation. When the banana industry is rebuilt it will be vital that the FAWU can organise and negotiate terms and conditions. This will take time and it will take sensitivity given that workers have fled and allegiances will be challenging, not to mention the replanting and reconstruction of the plantations.

With the help of Bananalink and GMB the FAWU would be able to build the union using the educational programme and strategy that was developed before the conflict. Clearly, this is going to require funds which could be raised through GMB's good offices and would mean the difference between life and death of this hard working union and its needy members.

So, Congress, I ask you to support this resolution and in these difficult times support our brothers and sisters in Cameroon. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Obi. Perfect timing. Does anyone wish to speak against any of these motions? Let s know which one it is you are speaking against.

DAVID McMULLEN (Southern): I am speaking without the support of my region and speaking against Motion 435, to send a delegation of older members to Cuba. Congress, the GMB is all about inclusion and I just have an issue that a very small demographic of our members would be going out to Cuba. I feel actually we should be sending a delegation open to all members, that can be a fair and transparent process for that. For that reason I wish to speak against and would urge Congress to vote against that motion for the reason I have just detailed. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Any other speakers?

MARY LOUISE HARRISON (Midland & East Coast): Speaking on behalf of myself against Motion 432. In essence, I agree with this motion. I agree that we should be creating links and working with our friends and partners in Palestine but I would also ask that this motion expand, expand also to working with those in Israel who want peace. Nelson Mandela was quoted. Nelson Mandela would never have just spoken

to one side. He was always there to look for and to bring about peace. Palestine is controlled by Hamas, which to the Israelis is a terrorist organisation. They have financial support from other big players in the region, such as Iran. We need to be creating a link to create peace across the divide so I would ask that any trip to Palestine also looks at working with those in Israel who want to bring about peace, and work with their brothers and sisters in Palestine because there are such groups, particularly the Mothers of Israel and Palestine. That is what I wanted to say. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary Louise. Are there any other speakers on this? Does Jason on Motion 435 want the right of reply?

JASON EVANS (Midland & East Coast): Congress, we had the debate that has been raised by my brother from London Region at the pre-Congress meeting of the Midlands & East Coast Region. The motion from the branch is quite specific but our debate included the likelihood of a challenge and I believe we would be open to an inclusive sub-delegation, although the wording of the motion was quite specific. I accept the challenge and I just want Congress to be aware that it was recognised and has been debated in the region on the same principle. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jason. Fevzi, do you want the right of reply?

FEVZI HUSSEIN (London): Briefly, the sister who got up in opposition – I am not sure it was opposition, maybe technical opposition – I am sure the GMB will take that on board in the facilitation of any trip, but I think the motion was specifically about Palestinian solidarity. I think no one disputes that there are incredibly brave Jewish people in Israel who are fighting for the rights of the Palestinians as well, and I absolutely take my hat off to them, but the motion is about Palestinian solidarity. Gaza is the largest open air prison in the world with over two million people there. (*Applause*) I just wanted to make that point. I am sure it was taken on board. That is my right of reply. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Fevzi. Can I ask Gordon Richardson to speak on behalf of the CEC?

GORDON RICHARDSON (CEC, Manufacturing Section): Good morning, everybody. President, Congress, first of all, I would like to take this opportunity publicly to apologise to Jan in the London Region for the last time I was up here if my previous CEC response unwittingly caused any distress. I am sorry. (*Applause*)

So, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 431, 432, 435, Emergency Motion 1.

On Motion 431, Solidarity with the Kurds in Turkey and Rojava, the CEC is asking for this motion to be referred. With the thrust of the motion in keeping with the GMB's existing policies on the issue of Kurdish solidarity and freedom for Ocalan, the CEC is asking for the motion to be referred so they can look into what a relationship with a democratic federation of Northern Syria, Rojava, looks like.

On Motion 432, Palestine Solidarity, the CEC is supporting this motion also with a qualification. This motion is in line with the GMB's existing policy on Palestinian

solidarity, a cause which this union has been proud to support for many, many years, affirmed by successive Congresses. The motion requests that the GMB organise a trip.

Our qualification is that there are a number of organisations that the union works with who have existing programmes for members wishing to engage more on the issue. Members are able to request financial support from the union for participating in and including their branches. Since this motion was submitted, there has been a delegation of GMB activists, including our national president and national public services president, who have visited the occupied territories in solidarity. The report has been brought back from this trip and will be part of the union's political agenda in the future.

Motion 435, Delegation to Cuba. The CEC is asking for this motion to be referred. This motion asks the GMB to send a national delegation of older or retired members to Cuba and the Cuba Solidarity Campaign in 2020. The union on a national level does not usually organise and sponsor international delegations with a particular section of membership so we need to be inclusive and on such a specific issue as this the GMB has actively sent delegates to Cuba with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign for wider solidarity and educational purposes with a number of young members attending the Young Trade Unionists May Day Brigade each year. However, this was not organised nationally but rather on the members or branches, with the regions, own initiative and agreement to financially support the member in paying the costs of attending.

It is recommended that the motion is referred to the CEC Political, European, and International Committee to consider further whether the delegation programme that the motion proposes is something the union can organise and sponsor on a national level.

For Emergency Motion 1 we are supporting with a qualification that the Finance & General Purposes Committee set up an appropriate fundraising appeal for FAWU and the banana workers.

Therefore, Congress, please agree to refer Motions 431 and 435, and agree to support Motions 432 and Emergency Motion 1 with qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. The last speaker of the day. Okay, London Region, do you agree to refer Motion 431? Yes. Thank you. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 431 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: London, do you accept the qualification on Motion 432? Yes. Thank you. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 432 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 434, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 434 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Midland & East Coast, do you accept to refer Motion 435? Yes. Thank you. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 435 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: Emergency Motion 1, London, do you accept the qualification? Yes. Thank you. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried. That is the last motion of the day.

Emergency Motion 1 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Could I just say to any of the regions, but to Fevzi in particular, June and I did a fringe event yesterday on Palestine and a lot of people could not make it because they went to *Show Racism the Red Card*, which we understood, but we are offering any region if they would like that PowerPoint presentation that we have done we will be happy to come and deliver it to any group. Please take up that offer. We would like to do that because we are really passionate about what we saw and how it has affected us. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

ANY OTHER CONGRESS BUSINESS

THE PRESIDENT: Is there any other Congress business? Before we move into the formal close of Congress for this year, I have a few quick announcements.

Can I please ask Regional Secretaries to ensure that Regional Banners are removed from the Congress Hall at the close of Congress.

Can I just say thank you for my first Congress. Thank you to delegates. You have been stars, you have kept to time. It is a bit like a swan, all things look smooth on the surface but underneath there are lots of people running around. I would personally like to thank SOC, all the team upstairs, the comms team, all the office staff, I will stop naming names because I will get somebody wrong, but I want to say thank you because you do not know what goes on behind the scenes. Thank you. (*Applause*)

CLOSING PROCEDURE OF CONGRESS

THE PRESIDENT: We are now commencing the closing procedure of Congress, which will start with the Omnibus vote of Thanks to be given by Martin Jackson.

OMNIBUS VOTE OF THANKS

MARTIN JACKSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire) and CEC delegate: Congress, it is a great honour to be nominated to give the Vote of Thanks on behalf of the CEC. I feel proud and privileged to be nominated to deliver it.

Can I first give thanks from the CEC to our worthy national President – (*Applause*) –

who has done a fantastic job in her first Congress and, delegates, there are no practice runs, there are no rehearsals. Barbara, you have delivered brilliantly, you have run Congress providing a clear agenda fluently and faultlessly, allowing Congress to progress smoothly through a very demanding agenda in the GMB tradition with honour, with humour, and with compassion. Well done, Barbara. (*Applause*)

To June, our last-minute temporary Vice Chair, thank you, June, for stepping up to the mark so well and so competently with very little notice. (*Applause*)

Both Barbara and June gave our delegates confidence, especially the first-time speakers to get up here and to give it everything. Thanks to both Barbara and June, and perhaps with Malcolm's advice in relation to the trigger finger with the red button.

A very special vote of thanks must be given to our worthy National Secretary, Tim Roache. (*Applause*) Tim, you have been through a difficult patch in the last couple of weeks and it is a great credit to your strength of character and your professionalism, your public persona, that you have continued leading and guiding the debates this week whilst going through a period of personal emotional fantastic distress. Thank you, Tim, your knowledge of our issues is remarkable, and your leadership guiding us through these issues is invaluable. Well done, mate. (*Applause*) Tim, I hope that now Congress is over GMB gives you a couple of days off take a bit of a breath, mate, and catch your breath. (*Applause*)

Congress, the SOC has yet again provided invaluable guidance and support to Congress. Thank you to Helen and the whole team for their brilliant support.

To Steve Short and his team, thank you for providing a great venue and a smoothly run well organised Congress. As ever the back room staff have been a credit to the union. (*Applause*)

Thank you, too, to all the staff and volunteers in this centre for your hospitality this week. Your contribution has been tremendously appreciated and we valued all your free tea and coffee. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Most of all, Congress, the CEC would like to give thanks to you, brothers and sisters, the delegates. Year after year it amazes me and others how we continue to find delegates new and old who deliver such fantastic motions, but we do. All delegates make Congress what it is. You give us the issues and you explain them with a passion, enthusiasm, and vigour. Issues such as academies, it is scandalous, comrades, that whilst we are creating fat cats in our schools, our kids cannot eat, they cannot even read and write because there are no books and pens, and yet the senior managers and fat cats have been created in these academies. It is disgraceful.

Asda, Congress, Tim and Justin, it is time we stopped pussyfooting around Asda. (*Applause*) Let's do what the GMB does best and deliver what we deliver in relation to Amazon and other places, where we campaign and we get out there and we show our face. Asda would crumble within a week if we started organising a campaign at each outlet. (*Applause*) If they want to kick us out of the canteen into the car park,

yet again that is the way we do our business best, we can deliver. Let's deliver at Asda. *(Applause)*

In the steel industry, the car industry, shipbuilding, we must put every resource that we have into getting a long-term future of steel and other industries back on the agenda. Congress, if we get a Labour government back into power for the first time since the 1950s, a proper Labour government, their policies will generate production in manufacturing and we will see what we deserve, equality; in gas and water as well, let's get back to proper Labour, comrades. *(Applause)*

The Labour Government will also invest in the future of our public services, the NHS, schools, local authorities, funded to deliver for our future. They do not need extra funding, Congress, they already have it; all they need to do is to make these fat cuts and multinationals pay tax. It is as simple as that. *(Applause)*

Retired Members Association. We fantastically value your contribution and I will personally be moving into your sphere in the near future. However, retired members are represented by everybody in the GMB, over-represented in most of them. There is only one where they are not represented and that is in the Young Members, and even Tim can't get a foot in that door! *(Laughter)* So, to get places and seats on different committees you have them, RMA, and we welcome your contribution and value your contribution massively. Let's move together forward and try and develop policies that encompass all.

Delegates, over 400 motions were delivered, debated and decided. Over 20 rule changes were delivered, debated, and decided. Special reports were delivered, debated and decided. Job well done, delegates. Industrial, political, and social GMB policy set up for another 12 months delivered by you, debated by you, and decided by you.

Now, Tina - Tim - Barbara - *(Applause/Laughter)* - Tim, I am sorry, I just let that slip out. Tim, Barbara, and the senior management team and the CEC will now scratch their heads and go away and try and deliver. Congress, thank you very much for your support. *(Applause)*

GENERAL SECRETARY SPEECH

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martin. I now call on the General Secretary, Tim Roache, to speak.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, Brendan. Thank you Marion! Thank you very much, Martin, brilliant. Thank you. What a good fellow you are. You would think we had never met.

Congress, 40 years next month I will have been working for this organisation and genuinely this has been one of the best Congresses I have ever been to. Who has enjoyed it? *(Applause)* Amazing delegates, incredible speeches, so many people here for the first time, too. You are so very welcome. I hope it is not your only time. I hope you come back year after year after year. There were such powerful contributions on steel, on Asda, on cars, on energy, on public services, on

manufacturing, London raising so many crucial international issues where our brothers and sisters genuinely are in fear of their lives for daring to be a trade union member.

Huge thanks to our guests, our very own GMB sister and now leader of Brighton & Hove Council, Nancy Platts, Alison Phillips, the brilliant woman editor of *The Daily Mirror*, Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, and the incredible Leroy Rosenior, single-handedly the best contribution I have ever heard at a GMB Congress, and I mean that. (*Applause*) So many people came up to me and said how brilliantly eloquent Leroy was, and it was not just the content of what he said, Congress, it was the way he delivered it and he had everyone of us hanging on his every word. He was an absolutely outstanding contributor.

Thanks to the speakers on Congress fringes, especially our great friend Angie Rayner, talking about women in the world of work, Keir Starmer, who met a number of our regions to talk about Brexit, Richard Burgon speaking on Access to Justice, alongside discussing Unionline, our GMB Credit Union, Barbara and June briefing delegates on their recent delegation to Palestine, health and safety issues, mental health issues, young members issues, the gig economy, such a fantastic range from a fantastic union that shows the length and breadth of the work that you do every single day.

None of this happens by chance, of course, Congress. The team work so incredibly hard throughout the year to make it happen and I kid you not that we are genuinely working already to prepare for Congress 2020 in Blackpool. First of all, all of our Standing Orders Committee, you are a fantastic team, you are a brilliant class act, led by Helen, with Craig, Barry, every single one of you, thank you so much, you sit in that room and you do so much work. (*Applause*)

Steve Short, sitting at the back, not just our Executive Officer but my bloody good mate. You are always there for me, mate, you always have been. Nothing is ever too much trouble. Thank you, Steve, for everything you do. (*Applause*)

Thank you for shepherding our smiley stewards, thanks again, Steve. Thanks to our wonderful stewards who greeted us every day with a big smile, and showed us our way. (*Applause*)

Three other people who work tirelessly to ensure Congress business goes so well, Anna Barnes, Laurence Turner, Charlotte Nichols, Thank you the three of you very much. (*Applause*) It is only their second year, it is only our second year working as a team putting Congress on and we have learnt so much from last year. There were things we needed to improve, we promised you we would improve them, and I think we bloody well have, and I think it has been a fantastic event. Thanks to all three of you. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Congress, I have never seen a place looking better when you walk from outside in the street, you come in here, you look at the set, that is incredible, the agenda, the stage, the video, the graphics really look like the modern fighting trade union that we are.

Over the week we have listened to some of the statistics about how we have reached people. More than three-quarters of a million people have seen GMB contact in

campaigns throughout the week. On Asda alone we reached over 100,000 people, over 4,000 news items with the potential reach of billions across online, print, and broadcast press. We have only five people in our comms team, other unions have half a dozen just in their digital department. Our team work so hard, so thank you so much, Alex, JPD, John, Jack, Lauren, and Ross, thank you so much for the work that you do. *(Applause)*

Our whole external relations and training team work behind the scenes on Congress for months and months, thank you also, therefore, to Neil, to Sarah, to Tom, to Nell, to Mel, to Karl, and to Paula. Thank you so much. *(Applause)*

Thank you also to Audrey, to Lynsey, and to the T5 team, and talking of the T5 team, Phil, I believe it is your birthday today, mate, so Happy Birthday to you, and it is also his 25th year working on GMB Congress making it look as brilliant as it does. Thank you T5 team. Happy Birthday, Phil. *(Applause)*

The rest of our national admin unit and our tellers, Helen Blair, Graham Dow, Pat Gannon, Sangeeta Gilani, Emma Golding, Sue Harris, Monica Julius, Nick McGhee, Kevin Panton, Kevin works tirelessly and makes sure that everything is in apple-pie order, thank you for your hard work. *(Applause)* Catherine Rackham, Dan Shears, Karen Smith, and Kerry Smith, thank you all very much for everything that you do. *(Applause)*

To the irreplaceable and unstoppable Hilary Perrin, for organising our exhibition. I had to say that otherwise she would never let me off.

Seriously, all of our exhibitors you are so welcome, not just for your financial contribution but you make the real difference for our delegates to come and see you, and I know the retired members accrued a lot of money during this week. We can raise that with the Finance & General Purposes Committee to see if we can match that on behalf of the national union. Well done to the retired members. *(Applause)*

A huge thank you to my PA, Wendy Bartlam, not just my right but my left arm as well. I get up in the morning and I know exactly where I need to be, where I have got to go. Wendy, I value working with you so much. Thank you for your skills and professionalism. Thank you. *(Applause)*

To Malcom Sage, Malcolm, I know you are not here, mate, I hope you are watching. You have been sorely missed and I look forward to seeing and welcoming you next year. Thank you to June for stepping into Malcolm's shoes and filling them with such aplomb; again, so gracious, so warm, and so welcoming. Thank you, June. *(Applause)*

To Barbara, what a class act! What an absolute class act. I am so proud to work with you, mate. You have been incredible this week, so inclusive, so supportive, and firm but fair all the time. You have led with real aplomb and shown exactly how a 21st century union treats its people. Thank you so much. *(Applause)*

I am going to get emotional now, I know I am, but I can do it now because we are at the end. Thank you to my wife, Mand, who is sitting there. *(Applause)* I honestly

was not sure I would get here this week. As I said, my Dad died last Friday and you kept me going, Mand. Thank you so much. (*Applause*) Your support always carried me through. Thank you so much. I love you from my heart. Thank you. To my daughter, too, Ellie, who is sitting over there. (*Applause*) A true story this, Congress. Ellie worked at the children's nursery which she and her sister, Brogan, went to and she was like the pied piper, all the kids loved her and then all of a sudden she said to me, "I've got a new job, Dad." I said, "What job's that?" She said, "I'm working for the GMB in Midland & East Coast Region." I said to her, "Why didn't you tell me?" She said, "Because I didn't want you to have anything to do with it at all." Well done, sweetheart. (*Applause*) Of course, to my wonderful son, Nick, and my other beautiful daughter, Brogan, for all your unstinting support and caring, particularly in these last three difficult weeks. I love you both so much, it's incredible. Thank you. (*Applause*)

As I said, I did not know if I would get here this week, I genuinely did not know if I would be here all of the time. The SMT have been incredibly supportive, every single one of you, thank you, and to all of you as delegates, and I would not have wanted to be anywhere else. Your warmth, your friendship, your camaraderie, your skills, your professionalism, your passion, has lifted me and lifted our whole organisation right on through this week but we know it is not what we say standing here, it is what we do when we get out there in those workplaces. We are together building and creating a 21st century union, one that stands proud, one that will always be upstanding for our members. We will grow, we will build, we will change, we will make a difference to working people's lives, and it is you that makes the difference to working people's lives day in, day out, and sometimes you do not even realise what a difference you, our activists, make. You ensure that people have a secure job, have decent pay, decent conditions where they are safe at work and go home to their families at night because of the work you do. Thank you. Walk tall. Walk 10 feet tall out of here as together we go forward. I am so proud to be your General Secretary and I long to work with you for many years to come.

Have a safe journey. I love you all. Thank you. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tim. As Tim said, our comms team have been working hard this week and have been collecting clips from all your debates and getting some great photos for our end-of-Congress video. I have no idea what they have put on there. We hope you have all had a great time here in Brighton for Congress 2019. Then it says, "cue for the video to start".

HIGHLIGHTS VIDEO.

THE PRESIDENT: That was really lovely. Thank you, comms team.

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

Conference sang The Red Flag.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. Have a safe journey home and see you again soon. Bye.

Congress concluded.