

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 TWO
(Monday, 10th June 2019)

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SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY, 10TH JUNE 2019

MORNING SESSION

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, good morning and welcome back. I hope you had a really good night last night. Yes? *(Calls of "Yes")* Thank you. Good. The first thing we are going to take is a new Standing Orders Committee Report, Report No. 3.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 3

HELEN JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee, Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move SOC Report No. 3. Withdrawn motions. The SOC has been informed that the following motions have been withdrawn: Motion 115 — Voting Rights for Retired Members — standing in the name of Wales & South West Region; Motion 127 — Campaign to Support Those With Hidden Disabilities — standing in the name of London Region; Motion 128 — Hidden Disabilities — standing in the name of Birmingham & West Midlands Region; Motions 127 and 128, which formed Composite 8 — Hidden Disabilities Campaigning; Motion 199 — Mental Health and the Equalities Act — standing in the name of Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region; Motion 211 — Development in Retail Supermarket Sector — standing in the name of Northern Region; Motion 238 — GMB Local Government Members — standing in the name of Northern Region, and Motion 366 — Social Care — standing in the name of Northern Region.

Bucket collections. The SOC has given permission for the following regions to hold bucket collections: Midland & East Coast Region for the Butterflies – Memory Loss Support Group in Hull. The SOC recommends that this takes place at the close of the morning session today; GMB Scotland for Guide Dogs for the Blind. The SOC recommends that this takes place at the close of the morning session tomorrow. Finally, for Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region for Jessica Sarcoma Awareness, the SOC recommends that this takes place at the close of the morning session on Wednesday. Would regional secretaries please note that once the collection has taken place, the region should provide the SOC with a written note saying how much has been collected so that we can report this back to Congress. President and Congress, I move SOC Report No. 3. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Does anyone want to speak against? *(No response)* In that case, can I put SOC Report No. 3 to the vote. Those in favour, please show? Thank you. Is anybody against? No. Brilliant! Thank you.

Congress, we had a really good day yesterday. We were on time and people were very respectful. We have a heavy day today. We have more motions. Again, I ask you to be mindful of the red light. If you do your best we will have another good day.

This morning we will debate motions relating to public services. Please can speakers for Motion 233 make their way to the stage, and speakers on Motions 234 and 236. We will shortly be debating the Special Report on Local Government and Austerity, so can the one speaker from each region on that report please be ready to speak.

**INDUSTRIAL POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES
GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR REGIONAL PAY IN PUBLIC SERVICES
MOTION 233**

233. GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR REGIONAL PAY IN PUBLIC SERVICES

Congress finds it appalling that once again Government seeks to drive a wedge between communities by rehashing work on regional pay and performance related pay in the Public Sector.

Congress notes that the Tory record on public services is austerity and cuts.

Congress believes that the Tory views on regional and performance related public sector pay, is a blatant attempt at a race to the bottom culture by a Government that is increasingly out of touch.

Congress believes that regional pay is a post code lottery and this would widen inequality leave poorer areas even more worse off.

Congress calls on the Government to give a guarantee that they will not bring in regional and performance related pay into the public sector and if it does not give such a guarantee, then GMB members will be able to make their own minds up on this Government's commitment to public services.

Congress calls on the Labour Party to provide a specific commitment to scrap any plans that this Government brings in on this policy area and to commit to GMB Policy on regional pay in public services in its policy programme to return to Government.

G13 – GATESHEAD LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

KIMBERLEY INGLIS (Northern): Good morning, President and Congress. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause and cheers)* I move Motion 233: Government plans for regional pay in public services.

Congress, this Tory Government is no friend of public services. It does not care about local communities. If they did care, they would not cut spending in some of the most deprived areas in this country. What makes matters worse is that the Tories carry out these promised spending cuts as though they enjoy what they are doing.

You will recall that the Tories tried to bring in regional pay models for public services during the Tory and Lib-Dem Government about seven years ago. Thankfully, they did not bring in their proposal. Nevertheless, the Tories are hell bent on bringing in regional pay for the public services. Congress, it shows how out of touch this Government really is, because not only have they got the worst Prime Minister in living memory but they also have the worst Chancellor in Philip Hammond. The Tories really don't know what it is like in the world of work. The millionaires in the Cabinet haven't got a clue about working at the sharp end in public services. They are not interested in the dedication, hard work and commitment of GMB members.

Congress, as we move into what looks like a general election on the horizon, we seek a guarantee that the Tory Government will abandon their plans. We also seek support

from the Labour Party and will welcome their views on this matter so far. Congress, when the election is called, the GMB will call those to account for the way they treat our members working in public services. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Kimberley. Do we have a seconder for Motion 233? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* I call Motion 234.

PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONS MOTION 234

234. PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONS

This Congress notes the on-going reviews within Government public sector pensions where the GMB has members affected.

Congress calls for any reductions in some of the deficits in these schemes, for whatever reason, to be matched by a serious consideration of the reinstatement of some of the benefits given up in previous scheme reviews.

Congress notes that a decent pension scheme, in an era of austerity, is perhaps one of the few key financial benefits left for our vital public services sector GMB members and we call on Government and indeed the Labour Party, should it become the Government this year, to confirm their intentions on the pension schemes of public sector workers.

W22 – SUNDERLAND CITY LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

DAVID CLEGG (Northern): Congress, 30 years ago part-time women workers were prevented from paying into the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Government have attacked people saving for retirement. Now the Government are holding back more than £2 billion from over four million public sector workers who have been overcharged for their pensions. Congress, this Tory Government are acting like the disgraced Robert Maxwell by raiding our members' benefits to pay for the reckless decisions of Government Ministers on public sector pensions.

A few years ago under the Tories, we had a public sector dispute on pensions. This was due to the threats to cut pension benefits. In public services a decent pension in retirement is one of the few key benefits we have left to look forward to. Now we have the Tories again wanting to raid pension funds. This Tory Government is no friend of the public sector worker by their actions on the pensions.

Congress, after cutting benefits a few years ago, it is clear that some of the assumptions about living longer have not been proven to be correct, and it has an impact on the pension forecasts. The fact that the pensions deficits have reduced over time, especially in the schemes in the public sector, now this Tory Government is holding back money again where they should be putting it back into the pension schemes and improving benefits for all members so that our members get a decent pension when they finish work. It shows how out of touch Government Ministers are when they react to decisions that go against them in court.

What the Government should be doing is to recognise when they are wrong. They should put back the benefits that they have taken away from our members and their families. We call upon the Labour Party, the trade union Labour Party, our Labour Party to confirm their intentions and ask them to support members in their policy and public sector pensions. Thank you..

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Is there a seconder for that motion? (*The motion was formally seconded from the floor*) I call the mover of Motion 236.

LOCAL AUTHORITY RUN TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND LIBRARIES

236. LOCAL AUTHORITY RUN TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND LIBRARIES

This Congress recognises that the contribution of volunteers or low paid workers at local authority run tourist attractions and libraries be recognised for its crucial role in the cultural growth of communities. We need to campaign to raise awareness and support.

A15 ASDA BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

MERVYN EDWARDS (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I'm a first-time speaker, speaking on behalf of Motion 236. (*Applause*) Thanks. You have impeccable taste.

Arnold Bennett believed that self-education was the best education. It's a view that accords quite comfortably with that of the Workers Educational Association, and decades before that the appetite of thousands of working people for self-improvement was one of the great rallying calls of the Victorian age. Many of our comrades here today will have used museums, art galleries and libraries. They'd offer us the chance to broaden our minds and to self improve, but how many of these amenities are propped up by low-paid workers and volunteers as local authorities across the country compete with one another for the honour of City of Culture status?

It is well to remember, as reported in late 2018, that nearly 130 libraries had closed in Britain in the previous 12 months. The knock-on effect has been that full-time library workers have lost their jobs, and volunteer numbers at libraries have increased dramatically. The local authority funding gap has resulted in fewer libraries, significant stock loss and poorer customer service, but it is not the fault of volunteers that this situation has occurred. What is more, those volunteers deserve greater recognition for the revenue that they have helped to generate for our towns and cities. Free libraries, museums and other attractions are a social lifeline for the many, as well as being pillars of democracy.

What do I mean by that? When the Public Libraries Act was passed in 1850 there was much hostility to it from Conservatives who bellyached that the upper and middle classes would be paying for a service that would be used merely by the lower classes. It was stated that the more education people get, the more difficult they are to manage. This, of course, is why tyrants and extremist regimes have burned libraries throughout history. Damned dangerous things those books!

It is not only in libraries where we will find volunteers willing to impart knowledge or to help family histories to find out whether they really were descended from Jack the Ripper.

Across the Birmingham & West Midlands Region we have numerous award-winning tourist attractions that boost the local economy by attracting visitors from far and wide. At our industrial museums volunteer workers might explain vanishing skills. These decent, passionate people are part of what I call “Self-Help Britain”, a Britain that has been sold short by the establishment and whose public cultural amenities are sustained through the goodwill of ordinary folk making a special contribution to society. I move that Congress recognises their crucial role in the cultural and intellectual growth of our communities. *(Applause)*

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

PAULA DEFRIEZ (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am a first-time delegate but a second-time speaker. *(Applause)* I second the motion for the following reasons. Volunteer work in the leisure and recreation sector is increasingly challenging. Not only to library volunteers have to acquaint themselves with developing technology and systems, but they also have to evince people skills in what is now a challenging social environment. Volunteers at local authority tourist attractions usually have to absorb information like a sponge, and even then they stand to be caught out by an offbeat question from a visitor. Perhaps that is why they enjoy it so much. To be honest, they are probably like most of us at Congress today: very open-minded people wanting to create a better society through the communication of knowledge. I am sure they don't actively seek credit for a job well done but that's where we should come in. I, therefore, second the motion that the contribution of volunteers or low-paid workers at local authority-run tourist attractions and libraries be recognised for their crucial role in the cultural growth of communities and that we campaign to raise awareness and support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Paula. Thank you. Does anyone want to speak in opposition to any of those motions? *(No response)* No. In that case, the CEC is supporting all of those motions, so what I am going to do, because apparently I can do this, is to take all three motions in one vote. So Motion 233, Motion 234 and Motion 236, which the CEC are supporting, all those in favour, please show? All those against? They are all carried. Thank you.

Motion 233 was CARRIED.

Motion 234 was CARRIED.

Motion 236 was CARRIED.

SPECIAL REPORT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND AUSTERITY

Introduction

- 1.1. GMB is proud to be the union for local government workers and all those who deliver local government services.
- 1.2. Austerity is pushing local government to breaking point. The world was not plunged into financial crisis because councils employed too many refuse workers. Care

workers were not responsible for the bankers' sub-prime mortgage feeding frenzy. But, over a decade on, low paid public service workers and the people who rely on the services they provide are still paying the price.

- 1.3. Local government is in the grip of a financial stranglehold that is threatening the future of even statutory services. Billions have been stripped from local authority budgets and almost a million jobs have been lost since 2010. The cuts are disproportionately falling on women workers, and women who rely on council services.
- 1.4. This CEC Special Report is intended to set out the background to the local government funding crisis and the devastating impact that austerity is having on GMB members, whether they work in local government or depend on local government services.
- 1.5. Building on existing Regional and national activity, this report aims to set out a policy and organising agenda that will deliver a fairer and more sustainable future for local government.
- 1.6. The report does not address matters directly related to schools as GMB policy on this area was recently set out in the CEC's Special Report on Schools and Colleges that was carried by Congress 2018.

Funding cuts

- 2.1 Local councils have been forced to accommodate devastating budget cuts since the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats came to office in 2010. Local government budgets suffered the most significant cuts of any department as the Conservatives – and their allies in the right wing press – demonised councils as 'bloated bureaucracies' that were paying the price for a supposed 'decade of profligacy.'ⁱⁱ
- 2.2 As a consequence of these extreme cuts, the National Audit Office has warned that trends in local councils 'are not financially sustainable over the medium term' and that 'there are risks to statutory services.'ⁱⁱⁱ
- 2.3 Central government funding for councils fell by 49 per cent in real terms between 2010/11 and 2017/18 in England, according to analysis by the National Audit Office. Even after taking business rate retention into account, councils' overall spending power has fallen by 29 per cent over the same period despite a rise in demand for services.^{iv}
- 2.4 Budget cuts in England have had serious consequences for council financing in the rest of the UK due to the effects of the Barnett Formula, which adjusts devolved nation funding following spending decisions made at Westminster. GMB recognises that, up to a point, the devolved administrations were able to take different, and often difficult, decisions which have avoided the very worst excesses of local government funding cuts compared to England.
- 2.5 One recent study found that, on average, spending cuts on local government services were twice as deep in England than they were in Wales and Scotland between 2009/10 and 2016/17, although cuts in some areas (such as Glasgow) have been particularly harsh^v and Scottish local authorities have taken on a number of new responsibilities over the same period.
- 2.6 Local authority total income (including grants, business rates and council tax) in Wales fell by 7.5 per cent between 2009/10 and 2016/17. There is some evidence

that the scale of grant reductions has been marginally more severe in West Wales and the Valleys – where deprivation rates are higher – than in East Wales.^{vi}

- 2.7 Audit Scotland recently warned that ‘between 2013/14 and 2019/20, total revenue funding has fallen six per cent in real terms [and] Scottish Government funding to councils is forecast to continue to reduce in the medium-term.’^{vii} Scottish councils faced a funding gap of around £300 million in 2018/19.^{viii}
- 2.8 A 2017 report by the Fraser of Allander Institute found that Scottish local authorities’ financial settlements had declined by around ten per cent since 2010/11. It warned that, as Scottish local authorities have also taken on a number of ‘new burdens,’ the true scale of the funding reduction is likely to be significantly greater.^{ix} There are significant differences between funding systems in England and Scotland: grant funding in Scotland includes school funding and business rates revenue, but it does not include fire and rescue or public health funding, and as such funding reduction figures are not strictly comparable between nations.
- 2.9 It is more difficult to obtain figures on local government finance in Northern Ireland than it is for the rest of the UK. In addition, councils in Northern Ireland discharge fewer functions than their counterparts elsewhere. Nevertheless, councils in Northern Ireland spent more than they received in revenue in 2016/17, and the Local Government Auditor noted that councils had raised financial ‘pressures resulting from constraints on central government budgets that impact on local government.’^x
- 2.10 The Conservative-controlled Northamptonshire County Council effectively ran out of money in 2018. Two Section 114 notices were issued – banning new spending on non-statutory services – the first time that the measure had been taken since 2000. ‘Inappropriate approaches’ to budgeting and a ‘truly perilous’ financial situation were blamed, but the council’s workforce and local residents are paying the price.^{xi}
- 2.11 Shortly after Northamptonshire County Council collapsed, it was revealed that Conservative-controlled Surrey County Council had an anticipated £105 million budget gap, despite the council representing an area with some of the highest average levels of wealth in the country.^{xii} More councils are believed to be in serious financial trouble, posing a risk to jobs and terms and conditions. An investigation by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism last year found that ‘Somerset, Norfolk and Lancashire county councils are showing similar signs of financial stress as crisis-hit Northamptonshire.’^{xiii}
- 2.12 Cuts have not been distributed evenly between councils. As Parliament’s Public Accounts Committee has warned, under the Conservatives the areas with the highest levels of deprivation – and consequently the highest levels of demand for services – have been hit by the greatest cuts.^{xiv}
- 2.13 According to recent research by the Labour Party, the ten council areas in England that have suffered the worst cuts funding cuts are all controlled by Labour. Meanwhile, the areas that have received comparatively generous settlements are overwhelmingly controlled by the Conservatives. In 2017, leaked text messages and recordings emerged which showed that the Conservatives had put in place a ‘gentleman’s agreement’ to bail-out Surrey County Council – support which would not be available to Labour areas.^{xv}

Biggest cuts in pounds per household - The areas seeing the ten biggest cuts to spending power per household in pounds are all Labour-controlled.

Rank	Council	Political control	Change in spending power per household 2010/11 to 2019/20 in £
1	Hackney	Labour	- £1,432.03
2	Newham	Labour	-£1,356.83
3	Tower Hamlets	Labour	-£1,305.20
4	Knowsley	Labour	-£1,079.52
5	Southwark	Labour	-£1,059.66
6	Islington	Labour	-£1,026.64
7	Camden	Labour	-£980.41
8	Haringey	Labour	-£965.51
9	Hammersmith and Fulham	Labour	-£957.46
10	Liverpool	Labour	-£942.25

Smallest cuts in pounds per household- Eight out of the 10 areas seeing the smallest cuts to spending power per household are Conservative-controlled.

Rank	Council	Political control	Change in spending power per household 2010/11 to 2019/20 in £
1	Isles of Scilly	Independent	£347.51
2	Horsham	Conservative	£12.00
3	Hart	Conservative	£5.63
4	Uttlesford	No overall control	£2.11
5	Stratford-on-Avon	Conservative	£2.09
6	Surrey	Conservative	£0.19
7	Tonbridge and Malling	Conservative	-£0.06
8	Wokingham	Conservative	-£1.78
9	Vale of White Horse	Conservative	-£9.39
10	Tewkesbury	Conservative	-£9.50

Labour party analysis based on House of Commons library research of local authority spending power 2010/11 and DCLG, core spending power, 29 January 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/core-spending-power-final-local-government-finance-settlement-2019-to-2020>

2.14 The overall scale of the financial challenge facing local government is difficult to overstate. The Local Government Association estimates that councils face an overall funding gap of £3.1 billion in 2019/20 which will rise to an estimated £8 billion by 2024/25 without urgent action. These estimates can be broken down as follows:^{xvi}

Area	Funding gap in 2019/20	Funding gap in 2024/25
Adult social care	£1.03 billion	£3.5 billion
Children's services	£949 million	£3.1 billion
Homelessness support	£110 million	£421 million
Public health	£473 million	£665 million

2.15 Councils are being pushed to breaking point by a ferocious and unsustainable financial assault. The Government must restore funding levels based on need for all the constituent parts of the UK and ensure that future funding allocations at a minimum keep pace with inflation and rising demand.

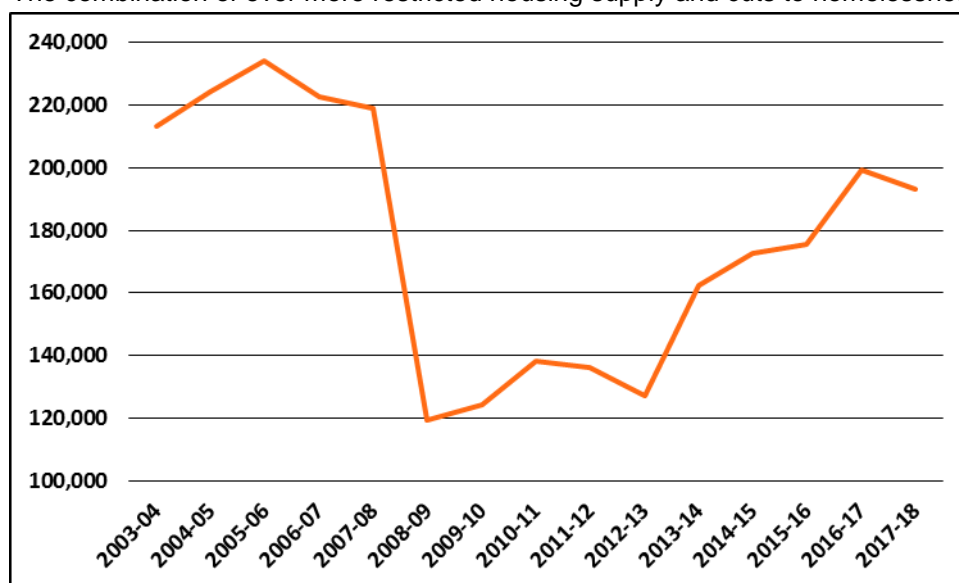
- 2.16 Additional funding is needed, but reversing the cuts will not be enough. There is a growing body of evidence that current local government funding structures are flawed and harmful to ordinary working people.
- 2.17 Much of the current local governing funding structure dates from the early 1990s when the Major Government replaced the poll tax in a hurry. As a result, we have inherited a system that is based on often outdated and inconsistent valuations. It is also deeply regressive. On average, the poorest households spend seven per cent of their gross income on council tax after rebates – the richest households spend just one per cent.^{xvii} The Resolution Foundation has warned that ‘council tax has come to look increasingly like’ the poll tax it replaced.^{xviii}
- 2.18 Business rates are another important source of local government revenue. The Government intends that business rates will replace support currently provided through central grant funding. Unlike in Scotland, councils in England will not be protected against the risk of business rate revenue falling (which could be due to factors beyond a council’s influence, such as a collapse of a local industry). The Institute for Fiscal Studies has warned that without ‘significant redistribution of tax revenue capacity between councils, their ability to fund local public services would vary greatly’^{xix} – leaving poorer areas at risk of falling behind.
- 2.19 In addition to these problems, the business rates model has not kept pace with a world increasingly dominated by online purchases. Amazon pays just 0.7 per cent of its UK turnover on business rates. By contrast, some retailers with a physical presence on the high street pay 6.5 per cent. Without reform, there is a danger that brick and mortar businesses will disappear, along with hundreds of thousands of jobs. MPs have recently warned that ‘high street retailers are paying more than their fair share of tax, while online retailers are not contributing enough.’^{xx}
- 2.20 Designing new tax systems is a notoriously complex activity. There are also relevant factors that are subject to fast-changing events: to take one example, if business rates were to be replaced with some form of sales tax then compliance with EU VAT rules would need to be established, but this factor may not apply in the future. Nevertheless, we believe in principle that reform to local government funding – including council tax and business rates - is urgently needed if we are to establish a system that is fair, progressive, and redistributive so that the local authority areas with the highest levels of deprivation can be fully funded after the age of austerity has finally been lifted.

Impact on services

- 3.1 Funding cuts have been matched by savage cuts to services. Whatever fat might once have been found in the system has long since been expunged. Funding reductions are cutting straight into sheer bone. While non-statutory services are most at risk, statutory services are also under threat. The situation in adult social care is so acute that it is discussed in a separate chapter in this report.
- 3.2 Despite David Cameron’s promise that the Conservatives would lead the ‘*most family friendly Government we’ve ever had*,’^{xxi} the Government’s own figures show that at least a fifth of all Sure Start centres have closed since 2010.^{xxii}
- 3.3 House building collapsed in the aftermath of the financial crash and recovery has been hindered by cuts to local authority housing, planning, and economic development services. Housing starts remain at 12 per cent below their pre-crash level despite a recovery in recent years.

UK house building starts (permanent dwellings)^{xxiii}

3.4 The combination of ever more restricted housing supply and cuts to homelessness



services is both tragic and deadly. The ONS experimentally estimates that almost 600 homeless people died in England and Wales in 2017 – an increase of 24 per cent in five years.^{xxiv} When adjusted for population, the local authorities where homeless people were most likely to die were Camden, Blackburn with Darwen, Westminster, Oxford, and Lambeth.^{xxv}

3.5 According to the housing charity Shelter, 55 per cent of families who are in temporary accommodation are also in work, and the number of homeless families in work increased by 73 per cent between 2013 and 2017.^{xxvi}

3.6 Two-thirds of councils have cut their support for refuge services for women and children since 2010.^{xxvii} This in turn has increase pressure on homelessness services. Domestic violence is the third most common reason for local authority housing relief applications.^{xxviii}

3.7 Councils in England and Wales have reduced funding for bus services by 46 per cent in real terms since 2010, resulting in over three thousand routes being cut completely or downgraded^{xxix} - cuts that hit young people, pensioners, disabled passengers and those seeking work the hardest.

3.8 The condition of our pothole-ridden local authority-maintained roads have deteriorated to the point that councils now have a £9.8 billion maintenance backlog that would take ten years to fix even if the funding became available.^{xxx}

3.9 Funding for council youth services has been cut by a third since 2010. These cuts have been linked to the increase in gang crime by a coalition of organisations including Action for Children, Barnardo's, NSPCC, The Children's Society and the National Children's Bureau.^{xxxi}

3.10 Local authority funded Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) services are being cut back due to a combination of financial restrictions and changes to funding formulas. Statutory services are increasingly stretched, and local authorities are cutting discretionary services such as advisory teachers, expert case workers, dyslexia support, and provision for people who have hearing and/or visual impairments.

- 3.11 Council spending on waste collections declined by 17 per cent in real terms between 2010/11 and 2017/18, according to analysis by the BBC. Residents' complaints on the grounds of missed collections rose by a third since 2014 as GMB refuse members are expected to do ever more with ever less.^{xxxii}
- 3.12 Life expectancy is falling after many years of progress. The causes may be complex and disputed, but some academics have linked the trend to 'poverty, austerity and cuts to public services.'^{xxxiii} These factors are likely to have been compounded by cuts to local authority funded preventative healthcare services.
- 3.13 There is no sign that cuts to services are slowing: last year the mostly Conservative-controlled County Councils Network warned that 'the worst is yet to come.'^{xxxiv}
- 3.14 All GMB members are affected by cuts to local government services – whether as local authority workers or as residents. GMB resolves to defend both statutory and non-statutory services and to seek a new political settlement that delivers the funding needed to sustain them.

Outsourcing and privatisation

- 4.1 Outsourcing is no stranger to local government. However, in the current financial climate, outsourcing and austerity have become twin perils as councils chase any apparent means of reducing costs. GMB's policy, as set out in the 2018 CEC Statement on Outsourcing and Public Ownership, is to oppose attempts to outsource or otherwise privatise public services, and to seek to return services previously provided through the public sector to public ownership.
- 4.2 From 1980 onwards the Thatcher and Major governments forced an ever-increasing share of local government services into private hands through the Compulsory Competitive Tendering requirement, which was originally focused on Direct Labour Organisations. In reality, apparent savings from outsourcing were all too often realised by undermining wages and terms and conditions. One example can be seen in the bus industry following the break-up of most municipal bus companies: the real value of drivers' wages fell by 12 per cent between 1985 and 1994.^{xxxv}
- 4.3 We recognise that New Labour reduced some of the pressure to outsource on local authorities by replacing the Compulsory Competitive Tendering requirement with its alternative 'Best Value' framework. However, the climate of job insecurity in local government continued, and in some ways it was exacerbated after New Labour embraced the Conservative's ruinously expensive Private Finance Initiative model. GMB has been clear that the next Labour government must learn from the mistakes of the last.
- 4.4 GMB analysis suggests that local authorities in Great Britain still owe a staggering £37 billion in future PFI charges – more than three times the value of the original investments that PFI funded. The figures would be higher still if school building charges were included. This is money that should be spent on services – especially against the current backdrop of austerity.

Region	Amount invested	Amount still owed
East of England	£0.8 bn	£3.3 bn
East Midlands	£0.9 bn	£1.9 bn
London	£2.2 bn	£4.8 bn

Local authority PFI charges (2019/20 to 2044/45) – not including schools^{xxxvi}

North East	£0.6 bn	£1.9 bn
North West	£2.1 bn	£7.3 bn
South East	£1.3 bn	£5 bn
South West	£0.6 bn	£2.2 bn
West Midlands	£1.2 bn	£4.4 bn
Yorkshire & Humber	£1.6 bn	£4.8 bn
Not assigned	£0.1 bn	£0.2 bn
Scotland	£0.3 bn	£0.7 bn
Wales	£0.5 bn	£1 bn
Great Britain	£12.2 bn	£37.3 bn

4.5 Although case law has evolved, workers

transferred under TUPE (whether as a result of PFI awards or otherwise) are not automatically entitled to transfer their full pension rights. This remains a significant area of apparent 'cost savings' for outsourcing authorities. GMB supports a review of the TUPE regulations to ensure that they provide more comprehensive protections for workers.

4.6 The liquidation of Carillion was a stark reminder of the risks that outsourcing poses to workers and contracting authorities. In the past year Interserve has collapsed into administration, and serious questions have been asked about the financial stability of other big outsourcing firms.

4.7 GMB welcomes the decision that some authorities have taken to pursue an alternative path based on insourcing and the retention of public sector spending within local supply chains. These policies are at the heart of the much heralded 'Preston Model,' and we look forward to similar approaches being developed in other areas. We are already organising in new municipal enterprises such as local publicly owned utility companies.

"The government says that outsourcing is everything, but while it might get you an initial cheaper price, that price simply doesn't last, you lose flexibility, and it causes a great deal of unrest."

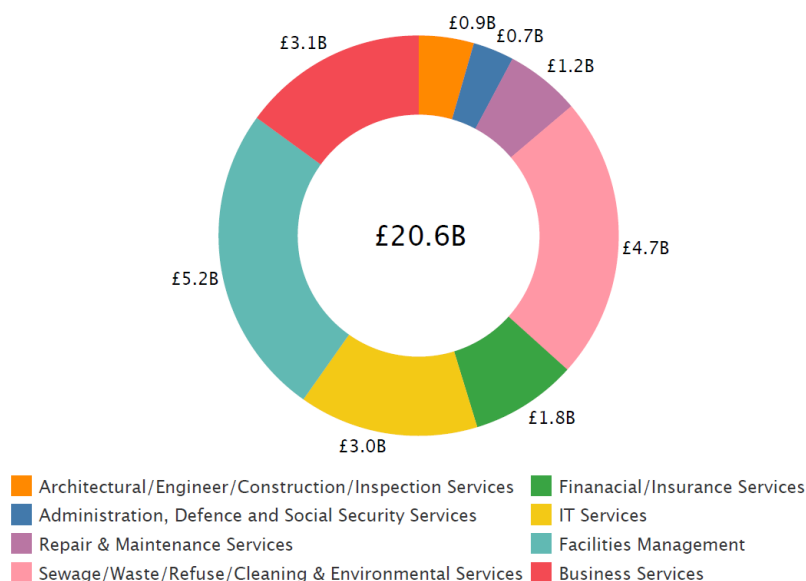
Eddie Martin, former Tory Leader of Cumbria County Council^{xxxvii}

4.8 The outsourcing industry is notoriously opaque. Core principles of accountability and transparency are sacrificed as the cloak of commercial confidentiality envelopes ever-greater swathes of public services. The secretive nature of the sector means that even the amount of public money spent on outsourcing is withheld. The Cabinet Office recently refused a GMB Freedom of Information Act request on the grounds that releasing information on public spending on outsourcing would 'prejudice the commercial interests' of the Government and outsourcing companies.^{xxxviii}

4.9 However, exclusive figures produced for this Special Report by Tussell, a consultancy that specialises in analysing outsourcing data, reveal that outsourcing contracts worth £20 billion have been awarded by local authorities (and associated bodies) in the UK over the last three years. Facilities management and waste management were the sectors at the highest risk of outsourcing.

Tussell breakdown of Local Government outsourcing for GMB

Total Award Value – Sector Breakdown



Total Award Value – Devolved Breakdown

Region	Year	Value (£B)
England	2016	£4.40B
	2017	£6.90B
	2018	£4.97B
	Total	£16.27B
Northern Ireland	2016	£1.10B
	2017	£0.27B
	2018	£0.29B
	Total	£1.65B
Scotland	2016	£0.93B
	2017	£0.43B
	2018	£0.12B
	Total	£1.47B
Wales	2016	£0.74B
	2017	£0.11B
	2018	£0.31B
	Total	£1.16B
Grand Total		£20.56B

4.10 Similarly, although anecdotal and employer-level examples of terms and conditions being undermined by outsourcing are common, robust evidence of the sector-wide effects of outsourcing is notoriously difficult to obtain. However, good quality data can be accessed for the social care sector in England. This data allows for direct comparisons to be made between local authority employed care workers and care workers employed through private providers.

Comparison of LA-employed and privately-employed care workers Data from the Skills for Care National Minimum Dataset^{xxxix}

	LA	Private
Workforce jobs (headcount)	33,600	795,000
% on zero hours contracts	10.1	35.8
Average pay per hour (£)	9.8	8.12
Average annual pay (£)	18,900	15,700
% with no relevant social care qualifications	19.3	51.5
Annual turnover rate (%)	12.5	38.5
% employed in sector for less than two years	12.9	36.1
Average annual sick days = 0 (% of workforce)	33.2	54.8

4.11 This data provides a sobering insight into the condition of privately employed care workers. They are more than ten times more likely to be employed on a zero hours contract than the average worker. Earnings are 17 per cent lower on average than their LA-employed equivalents, and four in ten workers leave their jobs every year. The only measure that the private sector appears to perform better on is days taken as sickness absence. This is, however, likely to reflect a lack of access to enhanced sickness schemes and high levels of presenteeism in the private sector.

4.12 In addition to welcoming proposals to end or restrict outsourcing, such as those recently put forward by the Labour Party,^{xl} GMB supports the extension of the

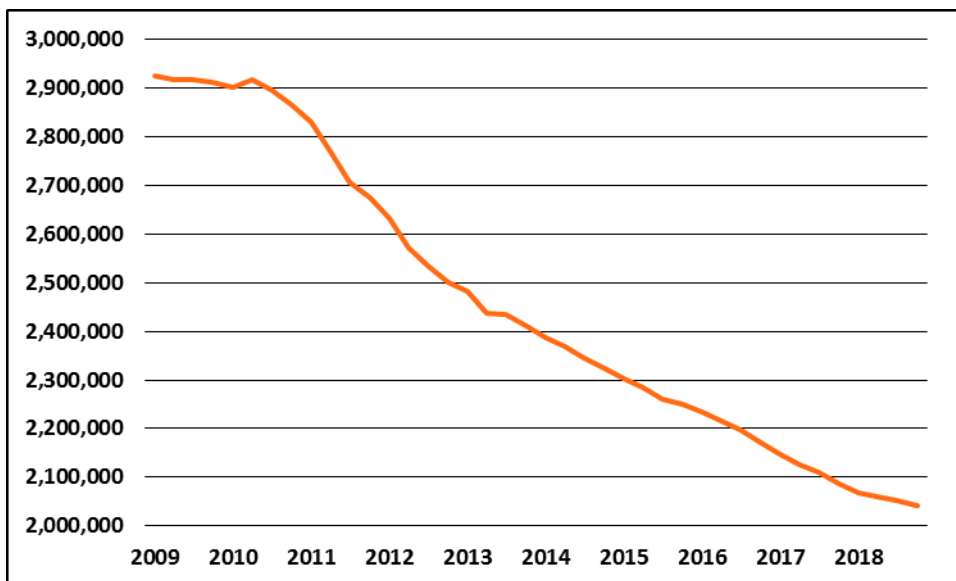
Freedom of Information Act to private sector providers of public services. We call on the Government and the Office of National Statistics to collect and publish robust information on outsourcing contracts, including on the pay and terms and conditions of outsourced workers. We want to see legislative reform to better protect outsourced workers and an end to the two-tier workforce with equal rights from day one.

- 4.13 Outsourcing places unacceptable risks and burdens on workers and local authorities. Especially at a time of constrained budgets, GMB supports insourcing and measures to retain spending in local economies, and we also support greater oversight and accountability of existing outsourcing firms.

Impact of austerity on jobs

- 5.1 Funding and staff numbers have suffered sharp cuts at the same time that demand is rising. GMB members describe being trapped in a vicious cycle as cuts to services lead to greater long-term demands on councils’ resources.
- 5.2 Across the UK, an estimated 876,000 jobs have been lost in local government since June 2010 – a reduction of 30 per cent. Local government has arguably been hit by more severe job losses than any other part of the public sector. Redundancy payments have cost councils an estimated £4 billion in England alone.^{xli} As funding cuts continue to bite there is no sign that the trend is abating.

UK local government employment (headcount)^{xlii}



- 5.3 Mass redundancies have inflicted misery on the workers who lost their jobs, and also on their families. It has also led to an explosion of pressure on the remaining workers who are constantly expected to do ‘more with less.’ A GMB study found that local government workers are significantly more likely to work unpaid overtime compared to those in other occupations.^{xliii}
- 5.4 Measures that were supposed to reduce the impact of cuts to funding and staffing levels have not delivered. A recent academic study found that the move to shared services did not cut the cost of delivery.^{xliiv} It has however left many of our members with higher workloads, more complex duties, and longer commutes.
- 5.5 Funding cuts have also been cited as a justification to undermine pay and terms and conditions. GMB has fought against attempts to undermine the National Joint

Council agreement^{xlv} and it remains our policy to resist attempts to opt-out of the national agreement.

5.6 Shamefully, some of the worst attacks on terms and conditions have been led by Labour councillors who have forgotten – or never learned – that the cause of the Labour Party is labour. GMB has even been faced with outrageous threats to ‘break’ the union by Labour authorities. In accordance with the 2018 CEC Statement on Political Strategy and Labour Party Reform, GMB will continue to hold Labour leaders to account and to push for structural changes so that affiliated trade unions and members have a say in the selection of council leaders.

5.7 Policies that target the local government workforce are likely to have negative equalities impacts. Three quarters of local government workers (and 84 per cent of care workers) are female.^{xlvi} The Government’s own impact assessment on public sector pay – which was obtained by GMB under the Freedom of Information Act – states that public sector workers are also more likely to be BAME and disabled than the average for all workers. These workers are at a higher risk of outsourcing, with knock-on adverse consequences for their pay and terms and conditions.

5.8 In line with the rest of the public sector, local government wages increases were held below inflation for almost a decade – an era of parsimony that was initiated when the local government employer side failed to make a pay offer in 2009/10. GMB estimates that most local government pay points have lost more than a tenth of their real value, costing workers thousands of pounds in cumulative lost earnings.

5.9 Where official data is collected for occupations that are clearly linked to local government services, it is possible to compare changes in average real earnings since 2011 (strictly comparable data is not available for 2010 or earlier). According to these statistics the most significant erosion in real earnings has occurred in refuse and waste services. This may reflect higher average increases for the least well rewarded spine points, and increased outsourcing activity in refuse and waste services. These real-terms cuts in earnings have had a severe impact on our members’ quality of life.

**Estimated median occupational earnings in Great Britain
Figures in 2018 prices (uprated using the Retail Price Index)^{xlvii}**

	2011	2018	Change
Refuse & salvage occupations	23,907	19,592	-18.1%
Local government administrative occupations	23,609	21,713	-8.0%
Caring personal service occupations	14,976	13,990	-6.6%
Teaching assistants	13,137	12,551	-4.5%

5.10 Despite Ministers’ often-repeated claim that they have no role in local government pay setting, hundreds of millions of pounds were removed from councils’ grant funding in an attempt to enforce the pay cap (a decision that also lowered devolved nations’ funding allocations).^{xlviii} A GMB Freedom of Information Act request revealed that Conservative Ministers continued to enforce their cap despite receiving advice that it would worsen child poverty rates and have a ‘negative impact on family relationships.’^{xlix}

*'Our economy should work for everyone, but if your pay has stagnated for several years in a row and fixed items of spending keep going up, it doesn't feel like it's working for you.'*¹

Theresa May, October 2016

- 5.11 Local government pay was already below that of comparable roles elsewhere in the public and private sectors before austerity hit. Local government wages are 20 per cent below wider public sector rates on average. In 2012 the average annual payment from the Local Government Pension Scheme was around £4,200; for women it was just £2,800. This compared to an average UK occupational pension of £8,740 a year.ⁱⁱ
- 5.12 GMB's *Pay Pinch* campaign played a critical role in breaking the punitive public sector pay cap policy. In 2018 a two-year deal was agreed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland that is delivering real-terms pay rises for low-paid GMB members. GMB recognises the critical role that Labour Party employer representatives played in pushing for a deal that was acceptable to our members.
- 5.13 In Scotland the union side agreed an improved offer in March 2019 worth 9.8 per cent over three years. This was despite the fact that the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities initially stated that its first offer was 'final.'
- 5.14 These pay agreements, which reflected long and difficult negotiations, were achieved without additional funding from Westminster. When the next round of pay talks begin, it is vital that new money is provided by central government. If this does not happen then the Prime Minister's pledge to end austerity will have been exposed as nothing more than a hollow sham.
- 5.15 Cuts to local authority funding continue to impact on our foster carer members. Cuts to children's services directly impact the fees and allowances that foster carers receive. These cuts have also impacted on the access to training and support foster carers can receive from their local authority. GMB has been able to assist with this in some Regions with offering access to learning and education courses.

Social care

- 6.1 Social care is at the crumbling front line of austerity. More people need assistance with tasks such as washing, dressing and eating than ever before, but funding levels have fallen. GMB members take pride in their profession but a combination of austerity and rising demand has pushed the sector to breaking point.
- 6.2 Medical advances mean that people are able to live longer and accommodate a more complex range of conditions than before. This welcome achievement has increased pressure on care services – the number of people in the UK aged 80 or over increased by 11 per cent between 2010 and 2017.^{lii} As a 2018 joint Select Committee investigation concluded: 'the system is not fit to respond to current needs, let alone predicted future needs as a result of demographic trends.'^{liii}
- 6.3 Despite growing demand and councils prioritising care budgets at the expense of other discretionary spending areas, funding for social care has fallen in real terms. Councils reduced spending on social care by 3 per cent in real terms between

2010/11 and 2016/17, and two thirds of local authorities with social care responsibilities drew down their financial reserves in 2016-17.^{liv}

- 6.4 The value of local authority fees to care providers has been steadily reduced. In 2017 it was reported that some local authority fees for residential care services equated to as little as £2.44 an hour.^{lv} Council scrutiny functions have also been reduced, contributing to widespread violations of minimum wage legislation.
- 6.5 MPs have warned that 'non-payment of the national minimum wage is widespread [in the sector] as a result of providers failing to pay care workers for their travel time, travel costs and 'sleep in' shifts.'^{lvi} Shamefully, instead of confronting non-compliance with minimum wage legislation following Employment Tribunal judgements, Ministers decided to 'temporarily suspend minimum wage enforcement activity'^{lvii} – thereby denying care workers an estimated £400 million in back-pay. At the time of writing, an appeal to the Supreme Court is due to be heard.
- 6.6 Although some additional funding has been provided through local and national sources, including through the introduction of the local government social care precept, a significant funding gap remains. A number of estimates put the funding gap at around £1 billion, and MPs warned last year that the gap could be as high as £2.2–£2.5 billion.^{lviii}
- 6.7 Three years ago Congress carried a CEC Special Report on Social Care. The issues identified in that report have not been resolved in the intervening period. They have deepened as austerity continues to bite. Low pay, poor terms and conditions, lack of access to training and progression, and inadequate recognition of care workers' skills and experience continue to hold the sector back.
- 6.8 Brexit has introduced new uncertainties. Over 200,000 health and social care workers are EU nationals, a figure that has increased by 72 per cent since 2009.^{lix} In the event of a Brexit that restricts the current labour market, on current recruitment and retention trends, it is difficult to see how the sector can meet its workforce requirements.
- 6.9 Social care is trapped in a national crisis that demands a national solution. That is why, alongside organising in the workplace, GMB is acting as the secretariat of the new All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Care. We have also formed the Careforce initiative with HC One, the UK's largest care home operator. This initiative seeks to promote the professionalisation of the social care workforce at a national policy level, and celebrate, promote, and develop care work as a positive career option.
- 6.10 GMB has been clear that the fragmentation of the social care market can only be addressed through the establishment of national standards and national collective bargaining, in line with the commitment by the union (which has also been adopted by the Labour Party) to extend collective bargaining into those sectors that are currently denied it.

GMB - campaigning in local government

- 7.1 GMB is a modern, 21st century campaigning union. At a time when services and our members' jobs are under threat, we know that the best response to austerity is to fight back and organise.

- 7.2 Nationally, our campaigning response is being carried forward under the banner of the *GoPublic* campaign. This national campaign builds on the outstanding work being done every day by GMB activists. While GMB undertakes more campaigning activity than can be captured in a single Special Report and the cases listed here are examples and not a definitive list, it is important that the work and achievements of our members is recorded and celebrated.
- 7.3 GMB has been at the forefront of the battle to protect services at risk from austerity, such as when Birmingham and West Midlands Region led the campaign to save Birmingham City Council children's centres from privatisation and risk of closure.
- 7.4 GMB has organised to prevent outsourcing both industrially and politically. Earlier this year North West and Irish Region successfully lobbied to prevent the planned outsourcing of leisure facilities by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council.^{ix}
- 7.5 In 2018 Labour-controlled Reading Borough Council proposed 'huge scale' outsourcing and privatisation plans. The majority of those proposals were defeated after GMB Southern Region led intense lobbying of the council and Labour Party, with activists commenting that 'Labour Party councillors were elected to manage public services, and not give lucrative contracts to private companies.'^{lxi}
- 7.6 We are fighting to bring outsourced services back in-house. London Region secured a commitment to insource services in Brent after the union warned that workers at one cleaning contractor's site were expected to use a hole in the floor as a toilet.^{lxii}
- 7.7 In some council areas a significant portion of services have been parcelled out into long-term contracts that are difficult to unpick. In Sheffield, services have been dominated by Veolia, Kier and Amey. GMB Yorkshire and North Derbyshire have responded to this fragmentation by building density and improving the union's organisational strength at sites across the city. This work has given GMB the strength to resist attacks on our members, including through strike action where necessary.^{lxiii}
- 7.8 GMB Wales and South West Region works closely with the Labour Welsh Assembly Government to develop policies that champion the interests of working people. The Welsh Assembly Government has developed positive policies including an ethical procurement charter, a two-tier code, and policies to tackle blacklisting, unfair employment practices and false self-employment. GMB has contributed to the work of the Welsh Assembly Government's Fair Work Commission, which had not reported at the time of writing.
- 7.9 When Northamptonshire County Council collapsed and its ruling politicians failed, GMB Midlands and East Coast Region was there to support the workforce and the Region ran a high-profile campaign for fair treatment and a sustainable financial settlement.^{lxiv}
- 7.10 GMB is leading the way in organising and campaigning in the care sector. GMB Northern Region recently secured a commitment from Cumbria County Council that it intends to sign up to the Careforce campaign.^{lxv} Earlier this year GMB Scotland defeated 'horror show' split shift proposals in Dundee that would have seen some care workers losing out on up to £4,500 a year.^{lxvi}
- 7.11 GMB supports foster carers in their disputes locally and this year we were successful in protecting pay and allowances of foster carers in the Nottinghamshire area. This achievement comes on the back of other local successes in previous

years.

- 7.12 The last year witnessed one of the significant industrial disputes in GMB's history as thousands of women struck for the pay justice that had been denied to them by Glasgow City Council. The strike was the biggest industrial action in Glasgow since the 1970s, and the biggest equal pay industrial action in the history of the UK.
- 7.13 The strike was won by GMB Scotland members and staff who persisted despite threats to engage Tory anti-trade union legislation, and vile, personal attacks on social media. GMB extends its congratulations and solidarity to all those who fought and won this historic dispute.
- 7.14 The resolution of a dispute dating back over a decade was justly celebrated by the women who fought for and won what was rightfully theirs. But for the union, as GMB Scotland has said, the strike's aftermath should be a cause for reflection and honesty about our past decisions and priorities.^{lxvii}
- 7.15 We must be honest about times when the union's past actions reflected a failure to fight for the people who pay our wages and depend on us for a fair deal in life. Equal pay has shown us how to campaign and fight as a good trade union should. We cannot change the past but together we can change the future.
- 7.16 The Glasgow equal pay strike embodied the best traditions of our union. We should be proud to carry forward the legacy of Mary Macarthur and the National Federation of Women Workers. It was the GMB's predecessor unions that brought the first successful claims of equal pay for equal work, and equal pay for work of equal value.^{lxviii} Our union is always at its best when it campaigns fully to defend our members' interests.
- 7.17 Consequently, activism, organisation, and the fight for pay justice, wherever it needs to be had, are at the heart of the *GoPublic* Public Services Section national platform campaign.

GoPublic

- 8.1 *GoPublic* is the GMB Public Services Section platform national campaign for public services, and against austerity, outsourcing, and pay injustice. It is based on the based on the five following core principles:
- 8.2 Campaigning for public services funding**
Public Services have been starved of resources following years of underinvestment and austerity. GMB will step up its campaign to make the case for fair funding for all our public services. Unlike the private sector, public service has no alternative but to develop strong campaigns to challenge government ideology on funding and budget allocations to government departments.
- 8.3 Challenging outsourcing and privatisation**
The collapse of Carillion was a warning that the fragmentation of our services for personal and private profit has had its day. We need public services that are accountable to the communities they serve, not to fat cat executives or shareholders. We continue to make the case against public money lining the pockets of business at the cost of service delivery and workers. Outsourcing is a bad deal for workers and a bad deal for the public.

8.4 Winning pay justice for public service workers

A truly high quality public service means good pay terms and conditions not joining the race to the bottom. We will fight for equal pay, challenge the narrative of how women's work is arranged and campaign to change this. Continue to campaign to improve pay terms, conditions; restore earnings and pensions that fairly reward the work of public service workers regardless of what sector they work in including outsourced workers.

8.5 Celebrating the role of public service workers

Public service workers are the backbone of this country, yet too often their contribution is overlooked. GMB will continue to raise the profile of public service workers from across the sector, in all their diversity through the GMB public service super hero campaigns and look to hold campaign days to celebrate the tremendous role of public service workers.

8.6 Building public services fit for the future

Fundamentally, public services should be available, free at the point of use, from cradle to grave for everyone. Our members who deliver these services are the experts on how as a society we meet this challenge and we're here to make their voices heard on why we need fit for future public services for the public delivered by public service workers.

Conclusion

- 9.1 GMB is the union for local government workers and all those who deliver local government services. We are working to defend and improve conditions of employment thanks to our growing army of activists, who give up their own time to improve the lot of other workers.
- 9.2 The pattern of the cuts to local government services – which have fallen heaviest on economically deprived areas, and on low-paid workers, women workers, and vulnerable members of society – are an offence to the fundamental values that GMB was founded to uphold.
- 9.3 Local government in the UK is facing an unprecedented financial challenge that demands a combined industrial and political response.
- 9.4 GMB resolves to defend local jobs and services in an approach informed by the principles set out in the *GoPublic* campaign.
- 9.5 At a political level, we will continue to put pressure on the Government, employers, and the Labour Party for a significant injection of new funding that replaces the money that has been lost during a decade of austerity, including the provision of new money to fund future pay settlements.
- 9.6 We recognise that the position of the social care sector is especially acute, and GMB will continue to develop its campaign for a fair funding settlement, full compliance with minimum wage legislation, respect and fair compensation for care workers, and the introduction of national bargaining in the care sector.
- 9.7 In line with existing GMB policy, we will continue to push for an end to privatisation and outsourcing, an end to zero hours contracts and bogus self-employment, and the introduction of a real living wage of at least £10 an hour.

9.8 In this anniversary year of the union's creation, we are determined that GMB will continue to represent the interests of municipal workers for at least another 130 years as we redouble our efforts to grow and build the union.

THE PRESIDENT: We now move to the first of our CEC Special Reports on Local Government and Austerity. I will now explain again how I intend to take this debate. The Report will be moved and seconded by members of the CEC. I will call on one speaker from each Region that wishes to speak. We will then move on to the vote on the Special Report. Can speakers on Motions 227, 228 and 272 please get ready for the next debate, so they need to come to the front. June Minnery, CEC, President of the Public Services Section, GMB Scotland, is to move the CEC Special Report. Thank you.

JUNE MINNERY (CEC, Public Services): Good morning, President and Congress. As President of the Public Services Section, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC and proud to move the Special Report on Local Government and Austerity.

Colleagues, the situation in local government is desperate. A decade has passed since the financial crash, and councils are still buckling under remorseless cuts. Almost a million jobs have been lost, wages have been suppressed, demand continues to rise whereas resources diminish, particularly in adult social care. Our members perform vital services: refuse workers, care staff, council officers, homelessness support workers and all our other local government members. They are an essential part of the fabric of our society. They strive every day to improve and save people's lives, despite inadequate pay, a hostile right-wing press and continual funding cuts.

As the report states, GMB is fighting back in every nation and region. GMB has led the battle to defend services and to reject outsourcing. We have won the first of above inflation pay rises that some of our members have seen in a decade, and we are fighting for other forms of pay justice, too. Nowhere was that better shown than during last year's Glasgow women's strike, which will be debated in more detail tomorrow. Glasgow's women workers, supported by GMB Scotland staff, won an outstanding victory in the face of shameful threats to use Tory anti-trade union legislation against them and a barrage of vile, racist and on-line abuse. I want to take this opportunity to express the CEC's total support and solidarity. I am sure that all of Congress will wish to do the same with everyone who was involved in fighting and winning that truly historic dispute. *(Applause)*

As we said when the strike was won, victory was a moment of celebration for the women who secured what is rightfully theirs. But it was also a moment for self-reflection and asking hard questions about our own Union's past approach. We must always make sure that GMB actions match the values that we cherish. That means challenging pay inequality wherever we see it. That's why pay justice is one of the key pillars of the public service's section Go Public campaign, alongside fighting for improved funding and against austerity and outsourcing.

Congress, local government workers did not cause the financial crash, but they are the ones paying the price. Austerity is and always was a political choice. The time to end it is long overdue.

The CEC believes that this Special Report sets out an industrial and political agenda for defending and rebuilding local government services. We urgently need to improve and reform council funding. We need to end the destructive drive towards outsourcing. Congress, when our members are denied their rights, we must always be at their side. I ask you to support this report. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, June. Gordon.

GORDON GIBBS (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I am speaking on the Special Report for the CEC. I will try and speak in English, if I can. Congress, austerity is hurting but it isn't working. It's clear that austerity was never anything other than an attack on working people. Just look at what has happened in our councils. We were told that money could be saved though sharing services. Of course, that meant job losses. And, as this report sets out, it hasn't delivered what was promised. The Tory's other bright idea was outsourcing. Congress, we have endured the curse on our local services since the 1980s. It has achieved nothing other than driving down wages and service standards. I am sad to say that some privatisations have been pushed through by Labour councillors, who have forgotten what Labour values mean, despite the appalling way that Carillion collapsed last year.

The amount that local authorities spend on outsourcing is treated as a state secret. However, in this report, we have a firm estimate of £20 billion over the last three years in new contracts. And local authorities still are close to £40 billion in PFI debts alone. That figure would be even higher if school PFI debts were included. This is money that could be spent on services. Congress, this is a moral disgrace. We need a better way forward. We need an approach based on protecting national agreements, bringing services in-house and returning spending to local communities, not gifting it to offshore taxations. Please vote in favour of this report. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. I will now call on one speaker from each region which wishes to speak on the report. So I am going to go in reverse order this time, starting with Yorkshire & North Derbyshire. Yorkshire, would you like to come up and speak on this special report?

PAUL O'BRIEN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am speaking on the CEC Special Report 2019 on Local Government and Austerity. Madam President, brothers and sisters, Government-imposed austerity is pushing local government to breaking point. In fact, it has broken some. Councils have been forced to accommodate devastating and on-going budget cuts with services lost, cut to the bone, outsourced, terms and conditions slashed and many jobs have been lost. This situation has been on-going since the Coalition led by the Tories came into power. Who can forget the ideological zeal that it was clear to see on George Osborne's face when he announced the £81 billion spending when he first became Chancellor. Congress, now the cuts have become unacceptable and still the Government's agenda is to change the face of public services for ever. They are even destroying local government in their own backyard.

The Conservative controlled Northamptonshire County Council, effectively, ran out of money in 2018. Congress, even in leafy Tory suburbs. The county council had anticipated a budget gap of £105 million, despite the council representing an area

festooned with millionaires and some of the highest housing levels of wealth in the country. Congress, this simply will not do.

The Government must restore funding levels based on need for all the constituent parts of the country. They must ensure that future funding allocations at the very least keep pace with inflation and rising demand, as anything less achieves nothing. Outsourcing and privatisation have become part and parcel of local government. As a result, our members suffer while the fat cats become richer.

Congress, this report builds upon the GMB's police as set out in the 2018 CEC Statement on Outsourcing and Public Ownership. We will continue to oppose attempts to outsource or privatise public services. We will seek to return services previously provided by local government or the public sector back into public ownership. This report makes our position clear. All public services should be available free at the point of use from cradle to grave for everybody. The heaviest cuts have been imposed on economically deprived areas and on low-paid workers, especially women workers and the most vulnerable members of our society. The current Government policy is an offence to the fundamental values that GMB was founded to uphold.

We call upon Congress to accept this disturbing report, to campaign to fight this reckless and irresponsible Government. It is their current flawed, neo-liberal economic strategy that is leading to poverty and unemployment for many local government workers. We have pledged to fight to defend local jobs and services by the principles set out in the Go Public campaign. We will continue to push for an end to privatisation and outsourcing. We will campaign to end the misery of zero-hours contracts, the exploitation of bogus self-employment and the introduction of a real living wage of at least £10 an hour. Congress, this is the anniversary of the Union's creation. We are resolute that GMB will continue to represent and fight the interests of local government workers for at least another 130 years. We will redouble our efforts to grow and build this great Union. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Next is a Wales & South West speaker, please.

MAXINE BUTLER (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I am speaking in support of the Special Report. President and delegates, since 2010 there has been a relentless onslaught against public sector funding from a hostile government with a clear private-sector ideology. Whilst their austerity policy has focused on across-the-board budget cuts to Government departments, the largest impact has been on local government which lost more than half its funding between 2010 and 2015. Congress, Mrs May's statement that the end is in sight is as hollow as can be as the Government's spending plans have not changed. Hard-pressed councils have cut services to the bone to the point where the axe may well have to fall statutory areas of provision as well. Indeed, aspects of welfare saw our vulnerable citizens suffer a budget decline in real terms, whilst quality levels have reduced and eligibility thresholds have needed to be raised.

Unsurprisingly, colleagues, the Tories have promoted privatisation and outsourcing at every opportunity, awarding contracts for those who have an interest only in profit and have no commitment to services to the public. Hiving off work to the private

sector has resulted in increased worker vulnerability, inferior terms and conditions of employment, reduced health and safety protection and little control over their lives at work. The tide, however, has firmly turned with councils and other bodies realising that privatisation has failed them, even though the Government still invokes it as a necessary first course of action. The political cover has now been blown and has been seen for what it really is — a way of redistributing wealth from the poor to the rich, with an associated harmful effect on people and communities.

As the report correctly notes, the social care sector has been a car about to crash for many years, with less money, fewer staff and more people needing access to services. Many firms are under a huge financial pressure, as seen with the recent Four Seasons' announcement, whereas others have gone bust, largely because of the needs of a small percentage of the population at a time of austerity and cuts. The courage of our carer members is as inspiring as the position that they have been placed in, maintaining their commitment despite ever-diminishing resources.

Congress, it is about time that this Government accepted that there is a crisis in care. Care needs to be planned on an equal basis with the NHS, state owned and state provided, with fully integrated services, funded out of general taxation and with staff directly employed, properly trained and, most importantly, decently paid, treated with dignity and respect and valued. The pernicious Health and Social Act precludes any of those objectives being met, so there is desperate need for dramatic change before it is all too late.

Congress, this is a comprehensive and compelling report that sets out the problems and the potential solutions. Sadly, unless we have a change of government with an ideology based upon the importance of fully-funded and directly-delivered public services, then the chances are that a car crash will inevitably happen. My region fully supports this excellent report. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Bang on time. Thank you. Southern Region, please.

SHERINE THOMPSON (Southern): Madam President, it is, truly, an honour to be standing *here* to support this CEC Special Report on Local Government and Austerity. In 2018 Theresa May declared that the Government's eight-year austerity programme was over, yet public services suffer and local government workers continue to go that extra mile. Maybe we will find better days ahead because of our ethics and the hope to fight the next walking nightmare, who appears to create even more fiasco on Brexit.

As a child growing up I always heard the saying "The rich get richer, the poor get poorer". Now, as an adult I finally realise the truth of this saying with this terrible Government word "Austerity". Congress, it is time that we fought back against austerity. We will not sit in silence and allow the Government to put such cruel, degrading austerity measures in place, who they themselves have never experienced for one night of what the impact of their austerity does!

I believe in leading by example and I expect our GMB leaders to provide, hope, support and strategies in addition to this report, for us to fight the Government on behalf of local government workers and the impact of extra austerity. Maybe,

Congress, we could do a family swap; allow the fat cats and the Government who make these cuts to experience, even for one night, or maybe a month, if they could survive, of what their measures have done to families like you and me. *(Applause)* How could they survive on reduced pay and yet still provide such valuable services on such great cuts? Billions have been stripped from local authorities' budgets and millions have lost jobs. Since 2010 this Government's cuts have been falling disproportionately on women workers and also on council workers like myself. For the past nine years I have survived eight restructures — I'm now in my ninth one — and not knowing what the outcome will be.

Congress, as a parenting officer, I see first hand every day what austerity has done to our workers, our colleagues and to families who are struggling on the breadline, and yet are still offering a very valuable service. I see and witness the humiliation that the families go through, and yet they still get up every morning and perform the valuable service that is so needed.

Congress, Southern Region supports this Special Report on Austerity, and I ask that we continue to fight, fight, fight! Whoever comes in as the next Government, let us fight and win. GMB! *(Applause and cheers)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. GMB Scotland.

STUART ROSS (GMB Scotland): President and Congress, there are some people in Scotland who like to spin the myth that Scotland is different. You would be forgiven at times for thinking that austerity stops at Carlisle. I can assure, Congress, that it doesn't. Scottish local government has been savaged for years through consecutive Budget cuts totalling an estimated £1 billion. Nine years of real-term pay cuts for staff and tens of thousands of jobs and livelihoods have been lost. Scotland has suffered from the Tories' failed austerity agenda, but it is an inconvenient truth that the SNP have accelerated that austerity, not least with an eight-year council tax freeze, a political sop to the middle class that starved councils of vital funding when they needed it most.

Congress, austerity is evidenced all across Scotland. Examples are school cleaners working two jobs in the same council to make ends meet. We see 70-hour working weeks for home carers, refuse workers struggling to deal with the mounting rubbish or classroom assistance facing rising levels of working abuse. But we can fight back!

This year, thanks to GMB Scotland and our members' pay campaign, workers in Scottish local government received their first above-inflation pay increase for years. We achieved this because we said enough is enough!

Our job is to ensure that this is not a main beam of success. A second decade of austerity is not inevitable, but unless we are prepared to fight as a movement, as labour should, then we will always get less than we deserve. Let's take a no-nonsense approach to purveyors of austerity at all levels of government, defend the interests of our hardworking members and lead the way in the trade union Movement. Support the CEC Report. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Stuart. Thank you. I call North West & Irish Region.

LINDA MERCER (North West & Irish): President and Congress, I am please to put forward my opinion and the opinion of the North West & Irish Region on the Special Report on Local Government and Austerity.

Homelessness, food banks, children and families in poverty, the elderly struggling, the disabled lonely and isolated, pot holes, wonky pavements, crime, young people on the streets, fly tipping, less housing, shops and people working, with less money to spend and less support. All costing more in council tax.

We welcome this report and the plans they have to support not only our local government workers but everyone, because everyone needs a local government. Everyone needs support from social workers to waste services. From cradle to grave we need excellent services to ensure our lives are worthy of the help we need. Outsourcing is not the answer. It has proven with the collapse of Carillion that, in actual terms, this has led to local authorities having to spend more and are now in financial demise in having to cover the cost of Carillion's collapse with little or no help from central Government.

After all the cuts to staffing, it has left our members in poverty, even some who are working, and those who are working are at the point of exhaustion. Long-term sickness figures show that the majority of those who are ill are ill because of work-related stress. This often leads to job losses.

My local authority is in the throws of integrated services in the hope that sharing services will save jobs and improve services. Does it save jobs? Does it improve services? Integrated care services, where the primary care services are working alongside social care, means several councils sharing services for children, waste services and other service areas. I am sure there will be more of these.

I was speaking to the head of engineering this week who asked if there was any way in which the unions could get the council to change what we pay our staff for overtime because these overtime rates were cut three years ago. He has a very capable staff, and they are award-winning staff. They are having to turn down overtime because it is not worth the pay. As a result, he is having to employ contractors which are costing more than his own workers.

THE PRESIDENT: Linda, I remind you that you have the red light.

LINDA MERCER: Thanks. The present system doesn't work financially. It is putting more people into deprivation. The Go Public campaign will give hope to those who work in local government. Let's all put pressure on the Government, the employers and the Labour Party for more funding to our local governments. We have been told that austerity ended. I want to know when! Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

BINA TUBURU (Northern): Congress, I support the CEC's Special Report on Local Government and Austerity. In supporting this report, it is really good news. The GMB has been heavily involved in working with Parliamentary groups on social care.

The Government have been pitiful in taking so long to produce Green Papers on Health and Social Care. The Government have spoken about putting health and social care under one Cabinet post. What is required is going to go with it. We need a fully-funded sector for the NHS as social care. After years of austerity, councils have suffered huge cuts to social care, both in care homes and care intervention at homes. That has an impact on clients, families and all our members working as carers in care homes or as home helpers. Congress, the system is broken and the GMB has been in the forefront. Trying to develop an agreement is paramount on funding, which is needed now and not in the future. Please support, support and support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Midland & East Coast.

ANTHONY DAVISON (Midland & East Coast): Congress and President, Midland & East Coast supports the CEC Special Report on Local Government and Austerity. Nearly 10 years of austerity has devastated public services and the living standards for millions of working-class and middle-class people. For example, in Hull the Tories have cut £130 million from the council budget. This has meant horrendous cuts in children and adult services. Places for children in special needs schools cannot be found because of cuts in high-need funding. They are excluded from mainstream schooling in fear that they will bring their Ofsted ratings down. In Hull, mental health services are almost non-existent, but with suicide rates among young people such as they are now are more than vital! Care workers are only able to spend 10 minutes a visit with vulnerable, elderly people. In Hull 40% of households take home below the poverty-level in wages, and many of those are our members.

Since the Tories introduced Universal Credit, claimants for state benefits are kept weeks on end with no money. There is evidence of women turning to prostitution in order to avoid being evicted of non-payment of rent. Our education system and the National Health System are in desperate crisis. Yet millionaire Chancellor, Philip Hammond, in an interview on BBC, rejected the idea that there was poverty in Britain. He was responding to a United Nations' report which described poverty in Britain as "systematic and deliberate", and that 14.2 million people, a fifth of the population, currently live below the poverty line. It is an utter disgrace. This state of affairs takes place in the fifth richest country in the world, and there is more than enough money for everyone to have a decent quality of life! Austerity is a political choice of the Tories. They are telling us that they've got no money! They found a billion pounds to bring on board the DUP when they lost their Parliamentary majority. (*Applause and cheers*)

Comrades, a hero of mine is Terry Fields. He was a worker's MP on a worker's wage, and he used to say to his audience, "Comrades, if all the CEOs in the FTSE 100 companies took the first two weeks in August for their holidays, what would happen?" Yes, exactly! If all the workers took the second two weeks in August for their holidays, what would happen? I put it to you that all over the country the workers would take power! Thank you. (*A standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Follow that, London.

GARY HARRIS (London): Congress, I speak in support of this report. During these times of austerity our union has seen cut backs to staff causing stress and uncertainty.

We have also been working hard to ensure that all councils implement the previously agreed two-year NJC pay deal. We have been working with Southern Region on this and we have used joint events to build membership across schools and councils and to share Best GMB at Work practices around the organising and campaigning agenda directly on issues raised by members at face-to-face workplace meetings. It is disappointing that the Report does not mention the attacks that our union and its activists have been under, occasionally from councils where you would least expect them to come from.

By doing a detailed audit of all public service branches we have identified a number of local authorities and councils where, besides having no facility times, the regional officers have agreed a strategy to target a number of local authorities, councils and schools, and encourage lay members to become active. This has so far proven positive, and it is beginning to show large numbers of lay members coming forward as workplace shop stewards. Our region fully supports a national drive to end public sector outsourcing which is used to undermine NJC terms and conditions and avoid local government pension schemes.

In London Region, we have a secured commitment to bring services back in-house but this can be a long process. Our late President, Mary Turner, spearheaded a campaign to bring the Wetlands Estate cleaning contract back into the control of Brent Council. I am very proud to report that this was finally completed this year and will remain as part of her legacy. (*Applause*) Another positive example is Islington Council, where the Labour controlled council came up with ingenious ways to fight Government cuts while working with the GMB and other trade unions, ensuring that there is no impact on front-line services and staff. However, sadly, the same cannot be said for all councils.

We want to make all Congress aware that where councils use the law to set up their own companies as an alternative to outsourcing, this is a Trojan horse. On the surface it looks as if it should be a good thing, but we see councils, like Dagenham & Barking, where the board of this local authority trading company has no connection with the local area. The treat staff as two-tier employees where new employees get inferior terms and conditions to those directly employed.

We would add that, historically seen, that this is the approach in some Tory-run councils, yet the leader of Barking & Dagenham Council seems proud to outsource the council's services and set up third-party trading companies, like Be First, attack trade union activists and renegotiate facility time in the process.

THE PRESIDENT: You have the red light. Just wind up, please.

GARY HARRIS: We need to keep challenging these actions. The Labour-run council in Barking & Dagenham must be no exception. If they act more and more like the opposition, then residents will treat them as such when they next visit the ballot box. Thank you. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. I call Birmingham & West Midlands.

STEPHANIE LOWE (Birmingham & West Midlands): I'm a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, I am proud to work at Stoke-on-Trent City Council and I have done for nearly 10 years. I have seen many members, colleagues and friends lose their jobs or be TUPE's out under Tory austerity. It is heartbreaking and demoralising to see people I know crying because of the fear of what their future holds and what may happen to their dependents.

When a person is vulnerable, made homeless or in an abusive relationship, it is our members, our reps and our activists who are there to help and support. We are constantly facing cuts to services, and it is the most vulnerable who need and deserve help.

The outsourcing and TUPE-ing of GMB members has become normalised and are being treated like second-class citizens. Members are regularly facing attacks on their terms and conditions or having their disciplinary meetings and sickness meetings dealt with underhandedly. Employers are doing this because they know they can exploit and employ people on a lower wage and get the same high level of work for less pay. For those who are TUPE'd out, this could also affect their terms and conditions. Some local authorities are bringing services back in-house, I am proud that our GMB is helping the drive towards this. In my local authority, we have succeeded in bring some services back in-house.

The Tory Government say they haven't got the money. They can fund a trip for Trump that nobody wanted, but they can't provide money to local governments. "We have no money", they say, but they can award a contract for ferries to a company with no ferries. "We have no money", they say, but the cost to the tax payer is £50 million. Private business invest in their future profit and their pockets. We get a government that won't invest in services and that can't protect the futures of our local governments.

When we hear the words "Tory Government" you automatically say, "Cuts", "Privatisation" and "No workers' rights". For how much longer can local government continue with the brutal and, on occasions, life-changing attacks? Our members cannot continue to face attacks when their futures are at risk. Our communities deserve better. They deserve social equality. They deserve more. It is time to rebuild local government. It is time to end social inequality. We must build safer futures. With a strong GMB membership and a united Labour Government, we can put an end to Tory austerity, we can build our futures, our members' futures and look after a further Labour Government. We support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you to all those speakers. I now put the CEC Special Report: Local Government and Austerity to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Thank you.

The CEC Special Report: Local Government and Austerity was CARRIED.

**INDUSTRIAL POLICY:
PUBLIC OWNERSHIP & PUBLIC SERVICES**

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to the next debate on Motions 227, 228 and 272. While that is happening, could speakers for the next group of motions, that is 185, 187 and 188, please make themselves ready and come down to the front of the hall. Thank you. Can I have the mover of Motion 227.

LOCAL AUTHORITY TRADING COMPANY (LATCo) MOTION 227

227. LOCAL AUTHORITY TRADING COMPANY (LATCo)

This Congress congratulates those Labour Councils who have set up local authority trading companies for the purpose of bringing previously out sourced services back under the control of the council.

Where Labour councils have set up a LATCo, Congress calls on the Labour party to adopt a policy whereby staff who are employed by or transferred to a LATCo, are allowed to join the local government pension scheme.

Congress calls on the CEC to campaign within the Labour party for the adoption of this policy.

L33 BRANCH

North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

DAVID MONTAGUE (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 227. First-time speaker. *(Applause)* President and delegates, I would like you to support this motion on allowing all LATCos', local authority trading companies, employees access to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Just over three years ago Liverpool City Council set up and fully-owned Liverpool Street Cleaning Services Limited. Within this LATCo there are, approximately, 750 employees, yet only around a quarter of them have access to the Local Government Pension Scheme. With your support, we would give a clear mandate to the CEC to lobby all Labour councils when setting up a LATCo, to allow all its employees the same pension rights. LATCos, unlike local councils, can make a profit of up to 20% of their contract value. These profits could offset any additional pension contributions that they would have to incur. Only with your support can we eradicate two-tier pension systems within LATCos and finally get a decent pension for the many and not the few. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, David. Thank you. Secunder.

JEFFREY KEIGHT (North West & Irish): Congress and President, I second Motion 227. Our union has always been against two-tier working, and what we have with this LATCo is staff is staff doing exactly the same work on inferior contracts as they are not members of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

A LATCo, a solely-owned company of Liverpool City Council, needs to address this. I feel that our union needs to lobby Parliament and the Labour Party to adopt a policy that all workers in LATCos should be able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. Failure to allow this will cause the scheme to fail as members retire and no new members are joining to support the scheme. Please support. *(Applause)*

PUBLIC CONTRACTS TO GOOD EMPLOYERS

MOTION 228

228. PUBLIC CONTRACTS TO GOOD EMPLOYERS

This Congress believes being a good employer should be a requirement of winning public contracts and licenses. This includes not engaging in blacklisting or other serious labour law breaches, recognising and negotiating with trade unions, paying full taxes and practicing due diligence when it comes to protecting workers throughout its supply chain – both in the UK and abroad.

This Congress calls on national and local government to include a ‘good practice’ clause in all public contracts.

V15 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

MATTHEW DENTON (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 228: Public Contracts to Good Employers. Every year the Government spend billions of pounds on thousands of private-sector contracts, ranging from global companies to sole traders. But how do private companies win contracts in the first place, and what precautions do the Government take to protect taxpayers’ money? The National Audit Office estimates that just over £250 billion of central and local government money went to private suppliers in the 2015/2016 financial year. That’s about one-third of the total Government spend. Central Government Departments and the NHS accounted for around £136 billion.

In the past, some of these contracts have been awarded to companies which have engaged in blacklisting or other serious labour law breaches. Blacklisting is a nasty, secretive and unaccountable practice that causes untold misery for individuals who are entrapped unwittingly by its covert nature, incapable of challenging what is being said and used against them. They are also unable to understand why their lives are being blighted by the failure to secure work.

In relation to the blacklisting of trade union members, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills defined it as, “The systematic compilation of information on individual trade unionists and their use by employers and recruiters to discriminate against those individuals because of their trade union membership or because of their involvement in trade union activity”.

We believe that the time has come for a change in direction. We need a new approach to public service commissioning, procurement and delivery. This Congress calls on national and local government to include a ‘good practice’ clause in all public contracts. This would include not engaging in blacklisting or other serious labour law breaches, recognising a negotiation with trade unions, paying full taxes and practising due diligence when it comes to protecting workers’ rights throughout the supply chain, both in the UK and abroad, providing full transparency about who runs our services and how they perform, promote inclusive and high-quality social, economic, employment and environmental standards, and promote sustainability and the highest standards of corporate governance and accountability for those organisations which we choose to partner with. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the seconder.

KAY DOHERTY (North West & Irish): Congress, I second Motion 228. I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President, you will recall the collapse of Carillion in January 2018 with debts of £1.2 billion and a cost to the taxpayer to the tune of £148 million. The story of Carillion is a story of recklessness and greed. It was the same old story and the same old grief; a board of directors too busy stuffing their mouths with gold to show any concerns for the welfare of the workforce or their pensions. Then there were problems which came after the failure of Carillion. Ministers have learned absolutely nothing from the Carillion collapse. The Carillion collapse has also brought into focus the actions of the four main accounts: PWC, KMPG, Deloitte and EY.

For some time now the four big accountancy firms have put their own finances above guarding their clients. They have a stranglehold on the market. They now audit 97% of the top 350 listed companies. Colleagues, we require real reform beyond merely breaking up the big four. Most importantly, it is time for service providers to be audited by a public body answerable to Parliament and the public interests rather than fee generation.

Colleagues, it is great to see that our union, the GMB, was a leader in the campaign referencing the collapse of Carillion and the problems it caused.

Also, on blacklisting, the GMB, with its rigorous campaigning and determined legal stance, secured compensation for workers who lost their jobs and had their lives ruined for carrying out legitimate trade union activities. Please support this motion — Public Contracts to Good Employers — with proper and accountable audits. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kay. I call the mover of Motion 272.

IMPACT ON WORKERS OF SELLING OFF OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS MOTION 272

272. IMPACT ON WORKERS OF SELLING OFF OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS

This Congress notes that the current government's long term strategy of selling off Public buildings is having a detrimental impact on workers.

The selling off of public buildings, more often than not to private developers means they turn them into flats/houses /living accommodation thus making profits.

However what is not recognised or thought about and addressed is the impact of having more flats which means more people living in the building and thereby increasing for example refuse collection.

The people may increase but the public workers like refuse or street cleaning will not. They have the prospect of doing the same work for a larger population for the same wages. This can impact on the workforce's well-being and health.

We call on Congress:

1. To campaign on this issue, highlighting the unfairness of same work, same pay, but more duties.
2. Carry out a survey in the areas of the workforce affected by the selling off of public buildings to find out its impact
3. To work, where possible, with GMB backed MPs /Councillors to see the impact on workforce and possible ways to challenge and address this issue.

4. Possibly, if felt appropriate, to raise a question in Parliament to address this unfairness.

EALING GMB BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

ERIC ODJEAKU (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I will be moving Motion 272 on selling off public buildings, but may I, before then, capitalise on this opportunity to thank, and if permitted on behalf of all first-time speakers and first-time delegates, for the Union as a whole and London Region for giving us this opportunity and experience. *(Applause)*

We wanted to raise awareness on this issue. Firstly, the GMB is absolutely opposed to the selling off of our public buildings. A prime example is when you have the local council proposing to sell off the Canning Town Library. This was the place where, back in 1889, Will Thorne formed the National Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers, which later became the GMB. This Grade 2 listed building has also heard from speakers such as Kier Hardie and suffragette Silvia Pankhurst. Congress, if it had not been for the GMB which led this campaign, this historic building would now be a Nando's. We know we need extra housing but the selling of public buildings to turn them into extra homes impacts our hardworking public service workers, who have taken on more work for the same money. Turning buildings into more residential accommodation, also impacts schools and doctors' surgeries, amongst other things. Congress, we need to continue to campaign on this motion: the impact on workers of selling off of public buildings. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Eric. Thank you. Is there a seconder for Motion 272.

COLIN GADSDON (London): Congress, I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President and Congress, as the mover just said, we need to work with our councillors and MPs to ensure that development plans acknowledge the impact on workers. Our motion calls for a survey to be carried out. We understand that the CEC has reservations about this, which we appreciate. We can consult our members in other ways. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Colin. Does anyone want to speak against any of these motions? *(No response)* In that case, I ask Mary Hutchinson, on behalf of the CEC, to respond.

MARY HUTCHINSON (CEC, Manufacturing Section): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 272: Impact on Workers of Selling Off of Public Buildings. We are supporting this motion with a qualification. We recognise that the conversion of worksites to residential use may lead to an increase in the burdens on refuse workers and those in other connected occupations. When workload and duties increase, this should be properly compensated. Our qualification is that carrying out a survey may not be the most effective way of canvassing opinion on this question, given that we already send members a number of surveys each year, and engaging through our rep structures may be a better option as they may wish to

take this up as a bargaining issue locally or nationally. Congress, please support this motion, but with the qualification explained. Thank you, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) In that case, I will take Motion 227, which the CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 227 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 228, which the CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? That motion is carried.

Motion 228 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Lastly in this group, I come to Motion 272. The CEC's qualification has been accepted by London. All those in favour, please show? Anybody against? That is carried.

Motion 272 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: We will now debate Motions 185, 187 and 188. Could speakers for the next group of motions; 152, 153, 154, 157 and 158 also get yourselves ready. I call the mover of Motion 185.

BIOMETRIC CHECKS AT THE WORKPLACE MOTION 185

185. BIOMETRIC CHECKS AT THE WORKPLACE

This Congress calls for an awareness campaign against employers taking biometric information to sign in and out of work without reasonable grounds such as security and privacy. The companies that are insisting on fingerprinting employees or eye scans usage are doing so to impose more control and subservience on employees and to save money.

We object to biometric data being collected in the workplace without reasonable grounds. Collecting data without safeguards puts personal data at risk and confidential and private information are in great danger of being breached.

We call on GMB to inform members of their rights in this area of employment and understand that not all workplaces will be able to withstand by industrial means, employers undertaking such practices.

CENTRAL NORTH NHS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

DAVE LEVY (London): I move Motion 185. This motion addresses the growing use of biometric data capture and it is used as a bogus authentication mechanism, where its real purpose is to increase both surveillance and control.

As Europeans, we have, for good reason, given our history, developed strong laws of privacy. These rights are specified to defend our privacy against both the state and business, although in the 21st century we are now in a position where we can see that

in a surveillance society the difference between the two is somewhat strained and difficult to tell. This excessive intrusion is unnecessary. It is designed to intimidate and control, and the use of biometric data such as fingerprints or even eye scans, but more commonly portrait photographs, is wrong in principle. The rules of authentication require something you have and something you know. Nothing requires that the something you have is biometric, although the obvious advantage to management is that it cannot be forgotten. The obvious advantage to MI5 is that it is hard to forge.

As ever when introducing these security measures, no account is taken for the reasons why visitors wish to enter the building. In some cases, such as lawyers visiting their clients, the visitors have privilege, which is diminished by excessive monitoring and opens those individuals up to inference attacks in the surveillance society.

In addition, these tools are a gateway effort monitoring. The number of times I have heard of the use of proximity passes and door controls to determine whether people were together and capable of conversations is enough to be reported here. This data is categorized by the GDPR as “special”, thus the use and processing of such data is actually prohibited. Of course, there are some ‘unlesses’, but these unlesses are not available to the average private sector employer, nor most public sector employers. The lawful purpose of consent is unavailable for employees of the data controller. You’re not allowed to give your permission that this data can be used.

Personally, I don’t see eye scanners or fingerprints so often, although I have had to use them when visiting a member on public sector sites, but the use of photographs is now ubiquitous, and these, too, are special data since they document the ethnicity of the subject. The prime beneficiaries of these investments are almost certainly the systems vendors. We also need to talk about the storage limitation principle; how long will the data be kept, who has access to it and how will we know? We also need to talk about the jurisdictional control. Where is the data held? Is it held in the EU? Is it held in countries with adequacy decisions? Is it held in the USA, with or without a privacy shield guarantee, or is it held elsewhere?

I am grateful that the CEC is recommending support, but in their comments they question if this should ever occur, and I tend to agree. So let’s inform our members and let’s inform our workplaces, let’s tell our branches and make sure people know their rights and can defend their right to privacy. Let’s use the full strength of our union to support those of our members where our organisation is not strong enough to stop these machines. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

DANIEL DURCAN (London): Congress, I’m a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am seconding Motion 185: Biometric Checks at the Workplace. We have already heard a lot at this Conference about the declining quality of work, and part of this is biometric checks at the workplace. There are particularly dehumanising aspects of it.

Biometric checks take fingerprints, eye scans, photos and personal data. They can be used as surveillance on employees. They can make sure that employees are doing

certain tasks at certain times. It is a shield if employees are about to break some code of conduct. It treats them as criminals in the workplace. It is creating a police state within the workplace and it is something that we must fight against. Employees who are most likely to be at risk here are young, women and those of a black and ethnic minority background. The irony of this is that we, as trade unionists, know that the companies that are making money here are sweating their workers and they are the criminals. This motion is about dignity in the workplace, so we must support it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dan. I call the mover of Motion 187. No? It will fall if there is no mover for Motion 187.

EMPLOYMENT SLAVERY MOTION 187

187. EMPLOYMENT SLAVERY

This Congress believes that the GMB should raise awareness of employment slavery by way of a national campaign. Recently in Lambeth we have companies who have staff working 20 hour per week contracts. This entitles employees to access council tax and housing benefits through universal credit. Employers are aware of this and are forcing staff to work over their contractual hours without pay. In some cases it affects their benefits and the paperwork and time involved in declaring the extra hours which disrupts their benefits. Employees are so afraid of losing their benefits that they take on the added hours for free, trapping them into a circle of employment slavery.

L09 LB LAMBETH BRANCH
Southern Region

(Referred)
(The motion was formally moved and formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: I call the mover of Motion 188.

ZERO HOURS CONTRACT MOTION 188

188. ZERO HOURS CONTRACT

This Congress demands that GMB nationally and regionally should widely publicise victories where the GMB have managed to persuade employers to stop using zero hours and limited hours' contracts without reductions in wages.

Zero hours contracts are a modern name for casual employment last seen in large scale in the docks and building sites in this country 50 years ago. We are fighting to turn the tide and when there have been victories in this area by publicising them and keeping a record for activists we can encourage and give confidence to workers that the GMB do not just say they will win and here is the evidence to build that confidence to challenge zero hours contracts in their workplaces.

CENTRAL NORTH NHS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

PUSHPA MAKWANA (London): Congress, I move Motion 188 on Zero Hours Contract. I am sure that most of you have heard and spoken to members about zero hours contracts and I understand. This affects more than 800,000 workers in the UK. We understand that zero hour contracts may be good for some employees as they provide them with ultimate flexibility, also allowing them to hire and fire as they like. But for workers, they provide zero security, no guaranteed work with no benefits and jobs that can be cancelled at the last minute.

Congress, there are people who find it difficult to get a mortgage or get on the property ladder or applying for credit to meet their ends. Zero hour contracts are not what we have come to understand as jobs. They provide no security, no income and no security for workers to plan their lives away from work. Not knowing one week to another what money is coming in to buy food and pay the bills makes it impossible to budget.

Staff on zero hour contracts have also shown themselves to be more open to abuse and harassment than staff with regular, permanent contracts with full rights. Having your hours varied at short notice is also stressful and dispiriting. It makes planning child care arrangements and budgeting hard, which can lead to stress and mental health issues within the family. Having varied earnings thrown into doubt, an individual's eligibility to claim various forms of benefit — for example, the working tax credit — means that for a single person to claim that person must work more than 16 hours a week. Whether it is access for an individual, these hours can vary from week to week under a zero hour contract. This creates great uncertainty over income.

Zero hour contracts have come to symbolise a wider concern within the labour market. It is moving towards low security and a more exploitative form of employment. BAEM and young members, aged 16 to 25, are forced into working zero hour contracts because they have no choice due to the present economic climate. They are like to face insecurity at work. Black workers appear to be disproportionately affected by examples of being cleaning and kitchen staff. A majority of these forms of the workforce are women. Also they are low paid.

What is clear is that there are growing numbers of workers who have no regular hours find it very difficult, every week, to pay the bills and rent. What is GMB doing about this? As a union, GMB wants to see zero hour contracts banned. We have made presentations to this effect. GMB has recently announced a landmark agreement with Hermes, forcing them to guarantee a minimum number of hours for the workers, should they choose to do that. We need more and more agreements like this one to be implemented in our workplaces and we need to shout about the positive things we are doing at GMB.

Congress, at GMB we need training and tools at branch level. I urge you to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Pushpa. I call the seconder.

LORNA GAYLE (London, Aviation Security): Congress, I speak in support of Motion 188, Zero Hours Contract. President and delegates, the Mayor of London has

said that he promises to abolish all zero hour contracts from the workplace by 2020. Perhaps we ought to ask him to confirm this statement this afternoon. We know that this decision did not come easy. A lot of hard work has been done around the Heathrow area towards achieving this victory. We know that it did not come easy, not without the continuous campaign and hard work of every active member of the union. Officers and reps have worked hard to persuade the employers and the Government, although not to their liking, to do away with zero hours contracts. Why not use the success stories to advertise and promote the union? Surely, this is what members and others want to hear about. This will help the workforce to understand the importance of being in the union and also the help and support available within. It will help to highlight the fact that their money is being put to good use and not, as the saying goes, “Money for old rope”!

Advertising and letting a wider audience know the work that we are doing helps to lift the spirits and gives zeal and commitment to the individual who has worked hard to help to secure these victories. Hard work, success stories, commitment and victories are what makes the union. We are a great union, of which I am proud to be a part, and we want to use every opportunity to tell the world how great we are. I ask the CEC, please, to support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lorna. Does anyone wish to oppose these motions? No? Can I ask Peter Kane of the CEC to summarise the position.

PETER KANE (CEC, Commercial Services): Speaking on Motion 187, Employment Slavery. Congress, we are asking for this motion to be referred. The motion raises an important point and I raise the specific area of unscrupulous employers exploiting the vulnerability of workers’ pay and benefits. This motion refers to an issue in Lambeth. It is our position to refer this motion to see if it is a wider issue across the country. We would encourage our colleagues in Lambeth to campaign lawfully to ensure that workers, and certainly our members, are not being exploited having to work extra hours unpaid. Universal Credit and the benefits system in the UK is broken and although it has been discussed at Congress since it came into force, this motion alludes to the systemic column of workers not being paid enough to live on that the GMB has and will continue to campaign to rectify. Congress, we are asking for this motion to be referred for further consideration. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Peter. Southern Region, do you accept reference back? Yes? Thank you. I will now put the motion to the vote. The CEC is supporting Motion 185. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? Thank you.

Motion 185 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 187, Southern Region has accepted the reference back. All those in favour please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 187 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 188, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 188 was CARRIED.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND ENVIRONMENT

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we will now debate Health, Safety, and Environmental Motions. Could the speakers on Public Services Industrial Policy motions also get ready, that is Motions 249, 251, 253, 254, 255, and 270. Could I have the mover of Motion 152, please?

AIR TODAY GONE TOMORROW MOTION 152

152. AIR TODAY GONE TOMORROW

This Congress, the air that our members breathe on a daily basis is not acceptable. The contaminants within the working atmosphere can lead to such debilitating diseases such as silicosis, pneumoconiosis, asbestos, lung disease and many more. Although a substantial amount of work and campaigning has been undertaken by respective bodies, employers are still falling short of their duties in their lack of protection of their workforce.

This motion highlights these concerns and calls upon the union to put more pressure onto employers to take more proactive action.

SHEFFIELD MCP & LIGHT BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

KEVAN HENSBY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, there are many, many industrial processes that we deal with on a daily basis that produces all sorts of contaminants within the workplace, such as dust, gases, liquid, mist, vapours, microorganisms, you name it, it is out there. Just because we do not see it does not mean it is not going to harm or affect us. We have a problem. Many diseases now that are coming to a head were formed many, many years ago. Look at some of the diseases that are caused by some dust, gas, mists, and vapours. We are talking asbestosis, mesothelioma, silicosis, pneumoconiosis. Some of the explosives happened up to 40 years ago. If we do not have health and safety legislation in place now what chance do we have to protect our workforces from all those years ago?

Unfortunately, a lot of these processes that we do have are self-inflicted. We only have to look at the pollution that is actually being caused to our environment. We are looking at now some of the planes, trains, and automobiles that we have, we go from A to B, and we are causing diesel fume pollution within our atmosphere. The cost to the nation is tenfold. We are looking now across Europe alone, where £240bn is spent annually protecting and looking after our fallen friends, people who are suffering injuries and ill health.

When we look at the word “employee”, what is an employee? It is not just a worker that turns up every single day for work whatever shift they are on. It is the family of the employees, their brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, all these people are being exposed, some inadvertently exposed, indirectly exposed, by just wanting to be

around their father when he comes in from work with a bit of dust on their clothing. That has happened in the case of asbestos.

The biggest one for me, folks, is, as I said before, diesel fume emissions. This is still a problem that we have that is creating climate change across our globe. One thing is for certain, folks, if our employer is willing to expose us to those fumes we are willing to expose them? That is what we need to do. That is part of what it is all about with regards to protection of the workforce.

Some of you here might remember a lady called Greta Thunberg, a 16-year old Swedish schoolgirl that brought the Swedish government to heel. One day in March 2019, she actually organised a strike in which 1.4 million school children went on strike with a view to climate change. Fantastic. Why can't we do that? She came to this country and she met heads of state, even our own Jeremy Corbyn. Did you know about that until I just told you? She actually met with Jeremy Corbyn. What is the result from it? We do not know.

The fact is, though, it is having an impact, in fact not for today, not for tomorrow, but for our children and our children's children. This is why we have to take action now. We are on the verge of having a public health emergency in our country and the NHS is overstretched and it will also be overstretched until we bring these diseases, these conditions, to task.

There is a solution. We can bring it back from the brink of disaster by simply looking at what we have in place and what we need to do to improve upon it. Now, if you go by what they told you, they tried to deregulate health and safety legislation. What! They cannot deregulate health and safety legislation. By doing that it will be at the cost of more lives, more pain, more suffering. How can we do it? I have just a few ideas that I have come up with and from what I have read. There is something like the new Clean Air Act that gives the power to governors. Let's have people formally sit down with governing bodies and work out exactly what we want in those documents. Look at the outdated legislation. The cross-party legislation first came out in 1989 and was amended in 2002. This piece of legislation is outdated and needs to be amended, needs to be brought into such a situation whereby emissions into the atmosphere, into our workplace, needs to be addressed.

THE PRESIDENT: Kevin, you have the red light, just to make you aware.

KEVAN HENSBY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): All in all, thanks for listening, folks. It has been a nice day. Hope it will continue. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Sorry. A seconder?

JOHN STEVENSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Kevin, like you, I have done a lovely speech and now you have gone and destroyed it because you have covered all my points. However, it has turned out nice again. It's raining cats and dogs. A breath of fresh air. Don't we as a country love talking about the weather. I thought about that when I walked in here this morning and everyone is moaning about the weather and talking about it. The problem is Kevin has covered the pollution, the pollution goes wider.

I will give you a little short story. I went on holiday recently in Scotland. Is the Scottish delegation awake? I said Scotland! Thank you. At least somebody is listening. I went to the Crannog Centre. Now, for those who know what a crannog is, or do not, it is a Stone Age construction, wooden hut, sleeps about 20, built on stilts as it is in the water. When the Iron Age people did it the archaeologists tell us it usually lasted about 100 years. They have a modern one, same construction, very, very similar material. Because of pollution in the loch through the atmosphere they estimate it will only last 25 years and that is in a section of Scotland that is beautiful, it does not have heavy industry, it does not have massive diesel going past, but it is affecting all parts of the country. I am really pleased to second this motion. I second. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, John. Thank you. The mover of Motion 153.

LONDON ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS MOTION 153

153. LONDON ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS

This Congress is aware that the Mayor of London has himself committed to achieve zero carbon emissions from vehicles operating in London by 2050. This will require a major shift in the way businesses operate in London to move from fuel dependent vehicles to zero carbon emission vehicles.

We call upon Congress to support not only the Mayor and lobby subsequent Mayors to stick to this pledge, but also to lobby for support for small businesses through further financial incentives for committing to zero carbon emissions.

LONDON STORES GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

NATHAN CLARKE (London): Good morning, Congress, President. It was a really good President's do last night but as a consequence I am a little worse for wear so please bear with me.

THE PRESIDENT: We all are; don't worry.

NATHAN CLARKE (London): Looking at our running order I see that our friend, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, will be joining us later this afternoon. As this motion alludes to the Mayor has set targets for our capital to be a zero carbon city by 2050, a truly ambitious goal with plans such as to cut food waste in half, massively increase our solar capacity and protect London's rivers and wetlands. I hope he takes note of our support of his commitment to the idea of a cleaner, healthier, better London and in fact next week on 1st to 8th July will be London's very first climate action week, a dedication to the idea of making our capital as green as it possibly can be, both figuratively and literally with the promotion of attending and improving London's green spaces.

Congress, studies are now saying that poor air pollution alone is responsible for more deaths than smoking and that is without thinking about the longer term consequences

our carbon footprint is having on our environment. Many have argued that we as a country are one of the most progressive in terms of bettering our impact on the environment so why should we keep working on it, but that is a poor excuse. Our environment is in a critical state, it is in crisis and it will require every single one of us working together to change that.

Congress, what this motion sets out to do is to ensure that we work as a union to support our members in adoptions of environmentally friendly policies. Our members will be working in businesses who might think it easier and perhaps cheaper to move away from or to challenge the ultra low emissions zone as opposed to supporting it. We will also have GMB members who are part of or who own small businesses which will in some cases struggle to comply with these changes limited as they are by their tight margins and we need to make sure they are given the chance. Also, we need to make sure that our low paid members are not left at a detriment by these changes and they are given the ability to affordably and easily adopt an environmentally friendly way of life.

Congress, this motion seeks to ensure our members are supported by continuing to incentivize being part of a clean London through financial support or otherwise, and it also seeks to continue to strive for this pledge to be stuck to in the years and decades to come so that we can be leaders on the world stage with our clean and healthy capital. Thank you for listening. Please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Nathan. Well done. Seconder?

ANDREW CLARKE (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) How can I follow what the mover said? President, Congress, I think we can all agree that the idea of a cleaner environmentally friendly London is what we all want to see, especially us from London. Is that true, London? (*Cheers*) We cannot shy away from the fact that the air pollution in London at the minute is at critical point. Recent studies showed there are 5,900 premature child deaths every year, and that is linked directly to air pollution. We think it is an unacceptable figure and something needs to be done immediately like the mover said. We need to take action now. As to our members and their businesses we want to give them the support and the help they need to get themselves in order to become environmentally friendly in the future, and for years to come. Thank you. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Andrew. The mover of Motion 154.

CRISIS AT LONDON HAZARDS CENTRE MOTION 154

154. CRISIS AT LONDON HAZARDS CENTRE

This Congress should be aware that London Hazards Centre (LHC) may close their offices due to funding problems.

A number of organisations they normally approach for grants have changed their application criteria meaning that traditional funding routes have been exhausted. This has also happened to many other charities and community groups.

Highlighting and promoting Health and Safety issues and awareness is vital when organising workplaces, recruiting new members or engaging with employers. We need to ensure that we support organisations such as LHC who value our working relationship.

GMB nationally and regionally have a long history of close working with LHC and we value their support and expertise. LHC lead on many campaigns on issues from asbestos in our schools, supporting families of those killed in the Grenfell tragedy and raising awareness of the health hazards associated with increasing levels of air pollution across the City.

We call on Congress to consider national affiliation to London Hazards Centre to secure their future and continue to work closely with them to highlight and campaign on occupational health and safety issues.

GMB @ UEASU BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

CATHY HOLLAND (London): President, Congress, I have over many years attended the National Hazards Conference and must add that it is an enjoyable and informative conference and a valuable tool for health and safety reps. Although Unison sends many reps, GMB reps are sadly in absence in the same numbers. This leads me on to the London Hazards. It would be nice as this can be a valuable health and safety resource for the union, if the funding streams have dried up, to be able to help and support and see what can be done to help the London Hazards. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Cathy. Thank you. Secunder?

DANNY BYRNE (London): President, Congress, I am seconding Motion 154. The London Hazards Centre was established as a company and a charity in 1984 and has been helping Londoners enforce their right to live and work in a safe and healthy environment ever since. It works for trade unions, tenants, community-based campaigns, and is run by its members who elect the directors and trustees at the annual general meeting. It provides an indispensable service for Londoners through its support for campaigns like Safety on Construction Sites and more recently through its asbestos work in schools. The London Hazards Centre also provides assistance for Grenfell support groups and helps deal with air pollution and a range of other environmental issues.

The motion explains the reasons for the current financial crisis and asks Congress to approve GMB national affiliation to the London Hazard Centre to help secure its future and enable it to continue to highlight and campaign occupational health and safety issues. I would also like to encourage branches in the London and Southern regions who are not currently affiliated to do so, I believe it only costs £75, and also for colleagues and branches in other parts of the hall to support their Hazards Centres in Manchester, and Sheffield. Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Danny. The mover of Motion 157.

RECYCLING BOXES MOTION 157

157. RECYCLING BOXES

This Congress notes with approval the increase of recycling.

This Congress further notes the research from the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health that shows that increased box type collections for recycling and garden waste since 2014 have led to a 25% increase in back injuries for refuse collectors.

This Congress notes that the IOSH report recommends that Wheelie bins are best for avoiding strains, in contrast with boxes which involve bending down. This Congress resolves to support the recommendation by the IOSH that local authorities should discontinue 'box type' collections as a matter of urgency.

W15 WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

PAULO FERNANDES (Southern): Dear Visitors, Congress, and the President, first-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I have spoken twice at this stage in 2012 when we were speaking for hospital staff against Carillion and in 2018 last year I appeared here for our ceremony and had spoken on the result of the Carillion where we were fighting the threat of no more Carillion, no more companies. Just to give a reply to one issue I spoke on, the Tory government has not bailed out Carillion to continue the business. No, no, because the Tory government does not have anything left but they have bailed out the board of directors just to get this conduct prima facie. Thank you.

So I am moving Motion 157 on recycling boxes. GMB welcomes the increased recycling. However, this motion raises the increasing number of back injuries that is causing long-term problems due to the use of recycling boxes. Since 2014 there has been a 25% increase in back injuries due to the use of boxes. Wheelie bins are much better as they do not require refuse collectors to bend down. The Institute of Occupational Safety and Health has recommended that all authorities move to the use of Wheelie bins instead of boxes for recycle waste. Comrades, please support this motion for GMB to do its work behind the campaign, to discontinue recycle box collection and instead move to wheelie bins. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Paulo. Thank you. A seconder for Motion 157?

JEFF HECTOR (Southern): President, Congress, I am seconding Motion 157. I am sure you are already aware how vital it is to recycle household plastics, etc. and avoid unnecessary landfill where, if at all possible, local authorities should supply households with wheelie bins and the box-type recycling boxes phased out as soon as possible as a matter of health and safety. The risk of back injuries or repetitive strain as a result of lifting these boxes must be acknowledged and acted upon. As we all know, back injuries can be a life-changing event. Support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jeff. The mover of Motion 158.

BLADDER CANCER MOTION 158

158. BLADDER CANCER

This Congress congratulates GMB on its awareness campaigns for those with work related diseases such as mesothelioma.

However, we note that there is a link between people working in certain industries and bladder cancer – another working person’s cancer.

There are an estimated 100,000 men and women living with bladder cancer in the UK and approximately 15,000 new cases are diagnosed annually, making it the 5th most common cancer overall – the 4th most common cancer in men. The majority of individuals that are diagnosed are over 55 years old, but increasingly people of all ages are affected.

Workers in male dominated industries and particularly from chemical dye and rubber industries are exposed to substances linked to this cancer.

The compounds have been detected in hair dyes, paints, fungicides, cigarette smoke, plastics, pollutant emissions from industrial installations, and metal and motor vehicle exhausts.

We call on the Union and branches to raise awareness for our members who work in these sectors and work with the HSE and “Fight Bladder Cancer” charity.

We call on UNIONLINE to consider setting up a register similar to the asbestos register to record cases.

BARKING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

GAVIN DOWNEY (London): Congress, our great union has led some successful awareness campaign for those with work-related diseases, namely, mesothelioma, but I wanted to address the less talked about form of cancer, bladder cancer, often described as a working-man’s cancer. According to the Fight Bladder Cancer charity it is the fifth most common cancer overall and the fourth most common cancer in men. Why is that? It is a work-related cancer and occurs mostly in workers in male-dominated manufacturing industries such as chemical, dye, and rubber industries. However, exposure to compounds in hair dyes, paint, fungicides, cigarette smoke, plastics, and pollutant emissions from industrial installations, metal, and motor vehicle exhausts are also high risk.

From this list you will appreciate that it can affect both male and female and even those not directly exposed to chemicals. For example, painters are at a significantly increased risk of developing bladder cancer with the risk increasing the longer you work in the trade. The risk arises not solely from exposure to paint but to factors that can occur in the environment in which painters work, such as the stripping of old paintwork, sanding, or exposure to asbestos. Painters typically are 30% more likely to develop this type of cancer. We know that today’s paints are greener but it is too soon to say as the disease can take 10 to 50 years to develop.

We need to put a spotlight on bladder cancer by working with the Fight Bladder Cancer charity. Together we can provide a much needed focus on this overlooked cancer and help to provide access to decision-makers in industry and governments who can help address the shortage of research funding and poor prioritization of bladder cancer. We are asking for an awareness campaign for our members working

in high-risk industries and also for GMB to work with the HSE on this. We appreciate that this motion needs further discussions with Unionline and we are also asking for Unionline to set up a similar register to that of asbestos and open up their register to other work-related cancers so that we can gather evidence and record instances. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gavin. Secunder?

RACHAEL HOOKWAY (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Last month was Bladder Cancer Awareness Week and we heard of a young 28-year old mother who survived bladder cancer while six months pregnant. She observed that GPs often dismiss the potential for bladder cancer in younger people and women believing symptoms like blood in urine could be the sign of something less serious or being menstrual or pregnancy related. This mother is trying to raise awareness and is calling on the Scottish government to provide more funding for the condition as 62% of those diagnosed die prematurely as a result of their illness. She is also trying to get the charity Fight Bladder Cancer UK set up in Scotland and for there to be awareness for young people.

The Fight Bladder Cancer charity is led by patients and carers and with other cancer charities they are struggling with funding and support as money goes to the larger cancer charities. They rely on the work of volunteers in communities. We need to work on increasing early diagnosis of all types of cancer. Early diagnosis can save lives. Please work with us to raise awareness and support this charity. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Rachael. Does anyone wish to speak against any of these motions? No? Can I ask Elaine Daley, CEC, Birmingham and West Midlands, to give the CEC position?

ELAINE DALEY (CEC, Commercial Services): The CEC is asking Congress to refer Motions 153 and 154 and is supporting Motion 158 with a qualification which I will outline shortly.

Turning first to Motion 153, GMB has long supported initiatives to improve the air quality of the country and the environment in which many people work. The air quality in London, in particular, has reached dangerous and critical levels of pollution breaching EU standards over the last few years. The current Mayor is committed, as the motion states, to improve the air quality of the capital so it is safe for workers, citizens, and visitors to the city to breathe. The CEC is, however, asking for this motion to be referred as it concerns political issues specific to the London and Southern Regions and so the CEC believes it is best for them to consider, particularly in the lead-up to the 2020 London Mayoral election.

Moving next to Motion 154, as the motion notes GMB has a longstanding history of support for London Hazards Centre, along with its counterparts in Manchester and Scotland. The CEC position is that affiliation is a reserved matter for the CEC through the Finance and General Purposes Committee. We are seeking to refer the decision on affiliation to that body after consultation with London and Southern Regions.

Finally, on Motion 158, occupational bladder cancer claims thousands of lives per year and it is likely that official statistics are underestimated as there are many causes of the cancer meaning the link to work is often not made. Due to the long latency before symptoms manifest, it is often perceived to be an older person's condition. As such there has been little campaigning for preventive approaches and such an approach is long overdue.

There are two qualifications to this motion. The first relates to the demand for a register of exposed workers. As there are many potential causes it will not be straightforward to compile a register and we would need to take advice from Unionline on both the value of such a register and how we would operate one in practice.

The second qualification relates to the suggestion to work with Fight Bladder Cancer. This is undoubtedly an important and worthy charity but it is not focused on prevention and, as such, our interactions with them would be limited as we would seek to focus our campaigning on the removal of exposure risks.

Therefore, Congress, please agree to refer Motion 53 and 154 due to the reasons set out above, and please support Motion 158 with the qualification that has just been outlined. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Elaine. London Region, do you accept the reference back on Motion 153? Yes? Thank you. Motion 154, do you accept the reference back? Yes. Thank you. Motion 158, do you accept the qualification? Yes. Thank you. Motion 152, we are supporting. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 152 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 153, London accepts the reference back. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 153 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 154, London accepts the reference back. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 154 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 157, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? Thank you.

Motion 157 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 158, with a qualification, all those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 158 was CARRIED.

INDUSTRIAL POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES

THE PRESIDENT: Excellent. We will now debate the final group of motions this morning on Public Services/Industrial Policy. Can I have the movers for Motion 249, please?

TEACHING ASSISTANTS – PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS EXPECTED FOR NON-PROFESSIONAL PAY MOTION 249

249. TEACHING ASSISTANTS – PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS EXPECTED FOR NON-PROFESSIONAL PAY

This Congress notes that the concept of professional negligence is increasingly being applied to TAs through the disciplinary procedure.

This Congress notes that professional negligence exists in law to hold those in professional fields such as medical professionals, accountants, lawyers and teachers, responsible for damaging acts or omissions. The law holds such professions to a high standard due to the fact that these professions require specialist degree-level training.

This Congress notes that our TA members are paid far below degree level for carrying out their roles.

This Congress believes that this situation is not sustainable and schools should choose to pay TAs as professionals, or if they do not they must not impose unfair standards on underpaid TAs.

This Congress resolves to campaign to end this unfairness.

X17 MEDWAY GENERAL BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

KAREN TURNER (Southern): President, Congress, and visitors, teaching assistants have a varied and often very demanding role in schools. They are often called upon to cover classes when teachers are absent, sometimes with little or no prior notice, but these lessons have to be covered to a high standard so that children still receive an excellent education. Teaching assistants are often left alone to work with some of the most demanding children who have complex needs, challenging behaviours, and complex special needs, but teaching assistants complete these challenging roles again to a high standard of professionalism, working beyond their contracted hours for no extra pay and without the reward of professional pay. It is, therefore, an injustice to hold teaching assistants to account under professional negligence as a disciplinary procedure when they have not been trained to a specialist degree standard. Congress, I ask that you support this motion to end the unfairness of this practice. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. Secunder for Motion 249?

WESLEY STRELLEY (Southern): I am seconding this motion on the grounds that it is unfair practice. Teaching assistants are not given the recognition they deserve for

the roles which they carry out in many cases. They take on teachers' roles and duties but the Government do not believe they deserve to be treated as professionals, or their pay. The Government expects teaching assistants to demonstrate professional standards but not get paid for that professional standard and for the flexibility in their approach, and are holding teaching assistants to account on the grounds of negligence as a disciplinary procedure and not applying a negative law which is for a specialist degree level. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Wesley. Thank you. The mover of Motion 251.

ACADEMY TRUSTS MOTION 251

251. ACADEMY TRUSTS

Congress has noted with growing concern the way in which Senior Executives of Academy Trusts are exploiting the public sector purse, by paying themselves eye watering pay and rations.

Congress notes that some Academy Trusts have presided over failure of students, their families and the workers who provide vital services in these academies.

Congress calls for the Government to immediately review how academies are financed and their governance regimes for top management pay.

Congress calls on the Labour Party to commit to a thorough overhaul of the Academy Sector to provide proper due diligence in funding regimes including the governance arrangements so that GMB members and local communities can see the importance of driving out of the sector those people who just want to make a fast buck from public money.

W22 – SUNDERLAND CITY LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

TRACEY GABBERT (Northern): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, at the outset of this speech I would like to make it clear that we oppose academies. We want to see them scrapped and we want local authorities to have a local say in how schools are run. Congress, when academies were set up we said it would lead to the very problems that we have now and, let's be honest, Congress, governments of all types push forward for the academies. What we have seen over the years is that this has got worse and more and more money that should be spent on education is being spent on pay for senior executives. Congress, this is yet another shocking example of the public purse being ripped off by those at the very top. What makes matters worse is that the Government lets this happen; in fact, they want it to happen.

Congress, what we need is a full overhaul of this sector. It is a scandal which students, their families, and the workforce, are getting less while senior executives are getting more. You could not make it up if you tried. If money is being used for top management, and we know it is happening, then those academies should be shut down and the services returned to local authority ownership. That, after all, is how democracy works. Academies are a way of top executives getting rich on the back of the next generation. This cannot and should not be allowed to happen. We have seen

what happens when executives and academy trusts dine out on the taxpayer. Those academy trusts fail.

We also call on the Labour Party to explain what they would do when they get back into power because the longer the gravy train in academy trusts is allowed to continue the worse it will be in the education sector. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. A seconder for Motion 251? Formally. Thank you. The mover for Motion 253, please.

HIGHER EDUCATION MOTION 253

253. HIGHER EDUCATION

Congress calls on a review of the way that employers are treating GMB members and the wider workforce, in an era of a captive market in student and accommodation fees and spiralling executive pay.

Congress believes that the sector is a recipe for executives to pay themselves eye watering pay and rations, with relative impunity, at the same time as GMB members working at the sharp having to exist on low or outsourced pay, terms and conditions of work, and quite possibly topped up by in work benefits.

Congress calls for a fundamental review of this sector and an end to privatisation within it. Congress calls on the Labour Party to adopt our policy as it prepares to potentially form the next Government.

W22 – SUNDERLAND CITY LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

ALAN HOOD (Northern): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, the higher education sector is fast becoming a scandal in how it operates. There are high tuition and accommodation fees that are being paid out. As a result the universities are cash rich; in fact they are amongst some of the richest places in the UK. As the system has gone the way it has, senior executives are being paid eye-watering sums of money and what makes things worse is that the governing bodies in higher education seem to be totally weak in calling these people to account.

Congress, top executives in the sector have a captive market as the system is set up for high tuition fees. Accommodation is more and more being provided by the universities who in turn charge high rents in the process. At the same time, top executives are seeking to privatize more and more services. We know that many workers providing vital support services are being paid low wages as overtime work has been contracted out. Many will have to claim benefits to make ends meet.

Now we have the disgrace of top executives getting rich simply because the system allows it to happen. Congress, this sector urgently needs to be fully reviewed. Privatisation must stop and we call on our friends in the Labour Party to adopt our policy as they seek to become the next government. Thank you. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Do we have a seconder? Formally. Thank you. The mover of Motion 254, please? Thank you.

THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY MOTION 254

254. THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

This Congress agrees that the GMB Public Services Section has made fantastic progress in breaking the austerity pay cap in many areas. The improvements in pay for workers in Local Authorities, schools and the NHS have been highly commendable, and though they have not made up for so many years of austerity, those successes have been a welcome start to ending the misery of pay stagnation for so many public sector workers. However, workers in the Environment Agency - and other areas of the Civil Service - have not seen similar improvements. This year, the derisory 1.3% pay offer, overwhelmingly rejected by our members as well as those in all other EA unions, was nevertheless imposed by the employer, leading all unions towards indicative and/or formal industrial action ballots for the first time in many years.

The Environment Agency are vital emergency responders; crucial in keeping the UK's air, water and land clean and healthy for all. We are 'the fourth emergency service' to so many, and are treated so by our employer, but unfortunately we are not commonly valued as such within wider society and the public understanding of our work.

Congress resolves that GMB raise the profile of the Environment Agency workers substantially in 2019, and to ensure that Go Public campaigning puts their crucial work in the spotlight.

GMB also agrees to try to utilise the current public appetite for environmental issues and the vibrant campaigning by other groups to benefit EA staff. GMB should ensure that we frame EA pay issues and the Government's responsibility to pay Environment Agency workers fairly and equally, as a crucial part of not only economic justice for workers but as a key strategy in the wider public aim to improve the environment in the UK. A high profile campaign, lobbying of local and national government, demonstrations and social media campaigning linked with environmental issues should all be utilised as appropriate to make a dramatic improvement to the public understanding of EA workers and their crucial contribution to the UK.

E38 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

CAROLYN BARNES (Southern): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, the GMB Public Services has made fantastic progress in breaking the austerity pay cap in many areas. The improvement in pay for workers in local authorities, schools, and NHS, have been highly commendable and although they have not paid up for so many years of austerity those successes have been a welcome start to ending the misery of pay stagnation for so many public sector workers.

However, workers in the Environment Agency and other areas of the Civil Service have not seen similar improvements in their pay. Since 2010, civil servants have been subject to a pay cap. This year the derisory 1.3% pay offer was overwhelmingly rejected by our members as well as those in other Environment Agency unions yet it

was nevertheless imposed on us by our employer leading all unions towards indicated and formal ballot actions for the first time in many years.

The Environment Agency are vital emergency responders. We are crucial in keeping air, water, and land clean and healthy for all. We are the fourth emergency service to so many and are treated as such by our employer but, unfortunately, we are not valued as such within the wider society and the public. We ask that GMB helps raise the profile of the Environment Agency workers and what we do substantially in 2019 and ensure that the public campaigning put our crucial work in the spotlight. We would like the GMB to utilize the current public appetite for environmental issues and vibrant campaigning by other groups to benefit the Environment Agency staff. We would like the GMB to ensure that we frame Environment Agency pay issues and the Government's responsibility to pay Environment Agency workers fairly and equally as a crucial part of not only economic justice for workers but as a key strategy in the wider public aim to improve the environment. A high profile campaign lobbying of local and national government, demonstrations, and social media campaigning linked up with environmental issues should all be utilized, as appropriate, to make a dramatic improvement to the public understanding of the Environment Agency workers and our crucial contribution to the environment. Please support. I move. Thank you very much for your time. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. A seconder?

LEON MAUGEY (Southern): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* The Environment Agency protects and improves the environment. They help people and wild life adapt to climate change and reduce its impact. These include flooding, drought, waterways, and coastal erosion. They improve the quality of our water, land, and air by tackling pollution head-on. This is just a tiny piece of all the hard work the Environment Agency does to help improve the quality of our everyday lives. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Leon. The mover of Motion 255?

TOILET DIGNITY AT WASTE HANDLING FACILITIES MOTION 255

255. TOILET DIGNITY AT WASTE HANDLING FACILITIES

This Congress notes the recent campaign for toilet dignity whereby female toilets and reasonable facilities for the provision of and disposal of sanitary products should be provided on building sites.

This Congress notes with approval the annual marking of "World Toilet Day" which focuses on the need to provide clean toilets in the developing world, however, it is a scandal that in too many UK workplaces, female workers face toilet indignity on a daily basis.

This Congress notes that on some depots for refuse and waste handling there are modern and suitable toilet facilities for both men and women staff. GMB notes that on these sites there are often both women and men employed as manual workers.

This Congress notes that on too many other sites for refuse and waste handling, there are only male toilet facilities for manual staff; and these are often unclean and degrading. Female staff, or visiting female GMB officers, are either redirected to toilets in a remote administration

block, or expected to use the male toilets. GMB notes that on these sites there are very rarely any female manual workers.

This Congress resolves to campaign for all waste facility and refuse facility depots to provide suitable and separate toilet facilities for both male and female manual staff.

W15 WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

ROBERT DONNELLY (Southern): This Congress notes that the recent campaign for toilet dignity and female toilets and legal facilities for the provision of and disposal of sanitary products to be provided on all building sites. However, it is a scandal that in too many UK workplaces female workers still face toilet indignity at work on a daily basis and this is often the case in many male-dominated industries, such as the waste industry. Figures put females at just 2% of workers in waste handling and in the workplace where our sisters feel they stand alone companies are reluctant to pay for a separate female toilet. Employers fall back on HSE guidelines which state: “Men and women can use the same toilets so long as that toilet is in a lockable row and separate from urinals.” However, what we find this leads to is in waste sites there is a unisex toilet but females, and GMB officers, are often left using an unclean and degrading toilet or redirected to use toilets in a remote admin block. This is not limited solely to private sector companies, such as Virador, WNS, Viola, etc., it also happens in the public sector. In Dorset Council they have a small yard in Sherborne which has no toilets at all and the female staff and female workers are expected to go down the road to use the public toilets in the public car park. You would not go to Disneyland in Paris and then go, “Well, we can find toilets because they can go into Disney World if they want to,” it is completely unacceptable and these Mickey Mouse excuses of saying, “We aren’t providing toilets because we have them 15 minutes or 20 minutes walk down the road,” is basically unacceptable.

This Congress resolves to campaign that all waste facility depots provide suitable and separate toilet facilities for both male and female manual staff, with sanitary waste disposal facilities for female workers. With that, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Robert. Thank you. A seconder for Motion 255?

CHRIS HIBBERD (Southern): First-time delegate, first-speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, this Motion 255 addresses toilet dignity at waste handling sites where manual workers, both men and women, are employed. Men and women waste handling staff are entitled to adequate toilet facilities, instead women workers in particular are too often subjected to the indignity of enduring unacceptable toilet arrangements and facilities fitted with urinals. Employers have an obligation to provide suitable, adequate, and properly functioning male and separate female toilet facilities. Furthermore, these essential toilet facilities should be regularly cleaned, replenished with soap and towels, and maintained with running water and drainage to an acceptable standard. Waste handling toilet facilities should be presented in a manner that anyone would like to use them. GMB members, wherever and whoever you are should never be subjected to substandard levels of sanitary management. I

have been a local government officer with responsibility for public conveniences. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Chris. Thank you. The mover of Motion 270, please.

TAKE BACK OUR SCHOOLS

MOTION 270

270. TAKE BACK OUR SCHOOLS

This Congress resolves to pursue this, and subsequent Governments, to establish a route whereby schools that are failing whilst under the umbrella of an Academy, can legally move back under Local Authority control, whether that be at the request of the parent/governors or the Local Authority, in order to provide secure education for our children's future. Also, that the schools assets/funds are protected and re-couped through this process.

LEICESTERSHIRE 2000 BRANCH

Midland & East Coast Region

(*Carried*)

STEPHEN ALEXANDER (Midland & East Coast): Madam President, comrades, two-thirds of academy groups are failing disadvantaged pupils a five-year study by the Sutton Trust has just revealed. The director of the Institute of Education at University College London, who is the co-author of this study, states that the Government should capitalize on the successes of local authorities. A recent report commissioned by the Local Government Association clearly shows that the schools with lower Ofsted ratings are more likely to improve under local authority control. The study covered 16,000 schools over the last five years and shows that of the schools that required improvement 88% of those remained under local authority we see good or outstanding compared to only 59% of those who became academies. The chair of the Local Government Association states this clearly shows that under local authority control more keep their high Ofsted ratings and a significantly greater proportion are turned around from struggling or failing into highly performing.

So, why with this wealth of evidence, aren't local authorities just stepping in when an academised school is failing? That is because, quite simply, they cannot. The Academies Act 2010 put in place by this Tory government makes it legally impossible to do so. When a school becomes part of a multi-academy trust it ceases to be a separate legal identity. There is no instrument of governance. Its staff all become employees of the trust. The local governors only hold their position if appointed by the trust and only exercise powers that are delegated by the directors of that trust. These can be amended or removed at any time as can the governors. This means that the school cannot remove itself from the control of the academy trust and its powers, as with the local authority. Indeed, the only control in this sorry scenario is the Regional Schools Commissioner, a directly appointed Department of Education official whose role is to oversee the move to academy status or to re-broker any schools that are out of the trust and into another trust. There is no option to return them to maintained status. Re-broker, that is dealing with your schools like they are a commodity, selling them around, "Who wants this one," and offering incentives to get it.

Anyway, this is old news and GMB has a policy statement that our belief is all schools should be under local authority control. However, it is the finances of our

schools that we also need to protect. They are stealing your money. There is nothing on the statutes that prevents trusts from hiving off funds intended for the schools under its control, even if they are under-performing ones. There is no transparency required for their accounts. The only requirement on the statutes is that they are independently audited. They are not open to public scrutiny in any way, not even the elected local authorities. There are many instances of very underhand practices with regard to public money these trusts control. Nepotism is commonplace with lucrative business contracts to companies belonging to the very trust directors. Congress, we as a union need to pursue this and future governments to establish a way where not only our schools can return to maintained status but their assets and funds are recovered and protected through the process. Let's act to safeguard our children's education and stop them stealing your money. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stephen. Secunder?

MICK WIDDISON (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, this Congress notes that we in the GMB have an agreed policy with regard to schools and our view has not changed, that the schools should be under democratically accountable local authority maintained status. Unfortunately, we are in the grip of an academy trust system that works as a business, playing fast and loose with our children's education and potential future. These trusts do not have a good track record of bringing real improvements to schools that have disadvantaged pupils and are failing. The GMB has always been of the opinion that where these fail the schools should immediately revert back to local authority control. However, there is absolutely no protection for the finances of these schools. Money can be transferred into the trust's central coffers at any point without breaking any laws, even if that is just prior to the termination of the trust as an entity, as in the case of the Wakefield Schools Trust in 2018. There is also no requirement of transparency in the trust's accounts or the way they use public money. The accounts only need to be independently audited. They are not open to public scrutiny.

Congress, we need to resolve to pursue this and any subsequent government to enable a route whereby schools can legally return to the local authority maintained status and crucially this route must ensure that the funds and assets of these schools are not only protected but are recouped from the trust control. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mick. Well done. Does anyone wish to speak in opposition? This is all going too smoothly at the moment. In that case I shall ask Kathy Abu Bakir to give the CEC position.

KATHY ABU BAKIR (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 249, 251, 254, and 255.

On Motion 249, Teaching Assistants – Professional Standards Expected for Non-Professional Pay, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. The CEC recognizes that teaching assistants and other school support staff workers are hidden professionals of the education system. We continue to campaign for recognition of their skills and experience and we note with regret the decision of ministers in the

2010/2015 government to veto the establishment of professional standards for teaching assistants.

Our qualification is that we believe the status quo of poverty pay and lack of recognition for teaching assistants is unsustainable and that its continuation should not be an option.

On Motion 251, Academy Trusts, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. The CEC agrees that there is an unacceptable rise in the levels of executive salaries in schools at the same time that support staff roles and terms and conditions are being squeezed.

Our qualification is that established GMB policy is to oppose academisation, to push for return of democratically accountable local authority oversight, including under a Labour government.

On Motion 254, the Environment Agency, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. Our members in the Environment Agency deserve a decent campaign to improve their working conditions and should feature in the *Go Public* campaign.

The qualification is that we need to ensure that our campaigns around environmental issues are not in conflict with other Congress policy we have.

On Motion 255, Toilet Dignity at Waste Handling Facilities, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. We support the principle of inclusive and appropriate toilet facilities, and other amenities, and we support dignified facilities for women and all workers. The position of clean and regularly cleaned toilet facilities is the clear responsibility of the employers.

Our qualification is that it is a longstanding principle that branches should be able to determine their own bargaining priorities in the field of the provision of amenities and facilities. In some areas there may be a demand for gender neutral toilet facilities such as a means of sensibly accommodating transgender workers. We do not believe that it should be Congress's role to override local bargaining priorities in this matter.

Congress, please support all of these motions with the qualifications for the reasons I have explained. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Kathy. Now I will take the votes on the following motions. Southern Region do you accept the CEC's qualification? Southern? Are you awake up there? Southern, do you accept the CEC's qualification? Yes. Good. Northern Region, do you accept the CEC's qualification on Motion 251? Yes? Thank you. Motion 254, Southern, do you accept the CEC's qualification? Yes? Thank you. Motion 255, Southern Region, do you accept the CEC's qualification? Yes. Thank you.

I will take those motions to the vote. Motion 249, with the qualification, all those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 249 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 251, all those in favour with the qualification please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 251 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 253, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 253 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 254, all those in favour with the qualification please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 254 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 255, all those in favour with the qualification please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 255 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 270, which the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Thank you.

Motion 270 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: That concludes the motions this morning but we now move on to the first of our regional success stories and we seem to be going up North first of all because we have Yorkshire & North Derbyshire, North West & Irish, and Northern Region up first this week. Please could delegates be advised – look, it is all women at the top table. (*Applause*) Just saying! Just saying! (*Cheers*) Could delegates be advised that some of these videos contain flashing images? I am not sure that reads very well, actually, but off we go with the videos, please.

Videos shown to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely brilliant. Well done. Thank you. That was really enjoyable and very uplifting to end this session with the motions. It is what we do on the ground that counts and that just shows how much is going on out there for our members. Thank you.

Congress, it is my great pleasure to introduce our next speaker, Alison Phillips, Editor of the *Daily Mirror*. Ordinary working people do not have many friends in the media but the *Mirror* has been a constant champion of our members and their interests. I am delighted to say that the *Mirror* now also has its first female editor. (*Applause*) She has also been a voice for progressive causes more widely. You might recognize her from last week's Question Time.

Alison, thank you for always being willing to listen to this union and our Movement, it really is invaluable. Delegates, you can pick up your free copy of today's *Daily*

Mirror from the National Office stand. Don't look at the front page because that is Michael Gove. I can't stand the man. (*Laughter*) If you go to page 2, there is an exclusive story from GMB on fat cat pay. Congress, please welcome Alison Phillips to the stage. (*Applause*)

ALISON PHILLIPS, EDITOR, DAILY MIRROR, ADDRESSED CONGRESS

ALISON PHILLIPS: Good morning. Thank you so much for the invitation today to address your annual Congress. As Barbara mentioned, I took over as Editor of the *Daily Mirror* just over a year ago and although I am not one for generally quoting Theresa May where possible, it has been the privilege of my life. Please bear with me, it is my first Congress, first-time speaker. (*Applause*)

The *Daily Mirror* has been fighting for fairness and social justice for 116 years and we have regularly worked alongside the GMB and your members on campaigns against the gig economy and insecure work, on zero-hours contracts, and low wages, and all those forms of modern exploitation that we really thought we had left behind in the pages of Dickens.

Now, we do these campaigns because we share your values and we do these campaigns because we believe we have a role to play in changing this country for the better but mostly we do it for exactly the same reasons that you people are sat here today, that is, because it is the right thing to do. Sometimes it is the simplest reasons that are the most effective. Sometimes it is just about doing the right thing.

When the Titanic went down in 1912 I had a day off that day and as you may recall there were only enough lifeboats for the Kate Winsletts on board but it was the *Mirror* which campaigned that no ship should ever go to sea again without enough lifeboat places for everyone on board.

Then in the 1960s, we helped the launch the WWF and our famous front page picture of a seal being clubbed changed the course of the fur trade in this country for ever.

More recently, we have successfully campaigned for a change in the law on organ donation which could save up to 300 lives each year.

We are fighting very hard at the moment to prevent the Tories getting away from a manifesto betrayal, which is that they will end free TV licences for the over 70s. (*Applause*)

We also want to thank the GMB particularly for all the support they have shown to our campaign to Save our Steel. Yes, a lot of work still to be done there but let's keep going.

I am here today with two messages from our readers, that is the 9.5 million people who buy us in print every week, and the 70 million who read us online every week, or through their social media feeds. Hopefully, that does include some of you here; if not we have a very good offer that I can arrange later.

The first message from our readers is a massive thank you, thank you for all the work you do week in week out to help the working people in this country. (*Applause*) Thank you for taking on Sports Direct, Hermes, Uber, Deliveroo, any other business who sought to exploit our readers when they were at work. Thank you to every local member who has given a smile and a bit of support or advice to one of their colleagues. Sometimes it is the little things that can have the most impact.

When the GMB does the work you do, big or small, it is not just your members who benefit, it is all working people. We benefit by you shining a light on what can be achieved and how anything can be achieved when working people work together in solidarity.

The political and economic landscape is dark right now. You know as well as I do that we have greed exhibiting itself in board room remunerations greater than ever before. We have bosses telling us insecurity at work is an inevitability of progress. We have Brexit mayhem all around us. We have candidates desperate to be our next prime minister clambering over each other in their race to the right. We have tax cuts for the rich and the value of our NHS being judged in dollars rather than in lives saved. There are fewer youth centres, teaching assistants, libraries, and SureStart centres. There is much darkness around but your work shines a light of hope amid that gloom so from the *Mirror* readers, thank you.

Now, my second message from our readers is this. Help us, please. Help us fight the poison of fake news which is polluting our national conversation. We know you have plenty of battles of your own but this one is big and only by working people from across this country demanding truth have we got the merest hope of achieving it. Actually, let's not even call it fake news because this is nothing to do with news. News, I would say, is what the *Mirror* and other established news brands do, we owe our survival to having bonds of trust with our readers. We have a strict regulatory code that we have to live by with penalties up to a million pounds for breaching that. If I get things badly wrong, there is always the chance of banging me up in Holloway, which did happen to a *Mirror* reader at the start of the last century and, do you know what, there are some days when I think it would be a blessing. Anyway, let's not call it fake news. What I am talking about today is simply lies, mendacious, devious, corrosive lies dressed up to look like news.

In a 1951 book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arrans wrote: "The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not a convinced Nazi or the convinced communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction and the distinction between true and false no longer exist."

In the world we live in today lies are being manufactured in Russian troll factories like they once built ballistic missiles. We have a President of the United States for whom truth has become an utter irrelevance and perhaps more worryingly vast numbers of US citizens who no longer seem to care that their President now regards truth as an irrelevance.

This country has no reason to look down our noses at the United States on this. Our next prime minister may well be a man who lied about Brexit in black and white on the side of a double-decker bus. (*Applause*) If it is not him, it might be a man who

said the British people are sick of experts. What does that mean, sick of people who have studied and are knowledgeable in their field, sick of people who believe the right thing to do is to tell the truth, and it is not just politics.

This Spring there was a measles outbreak in parts of the country as a direct result of the number of anti-vaccination fake stories that have been circulating on social media. Of course, any parent who reads one of these stories, whose main concern is their child's health, is going to be terrified and they may wrongfully refuse to vaccinate their child, but that is exactly what those who create these posts, some of which have been traced back to Russian troll factories, want to happen. They want to create fear, confusion, and a breakdown in trust between organisations that keep our society functioning. It is the same on climate change, on the Holocaust denial and white supremacy.

We used to laugh at people who believed Elvis was still alive and living with Shergar somewhere outside Wyoming, but there is nothing funny about an American President who lies or made misleading claims 2.140 times in his first year in office. There is nothing funny about a baby at risk of pneumonia or death from measles. There is nothing funny, certainly nothing funny about the rise and rise of the Far Right in our country and whose success has been built on a constant stream of social media lies which are dividing our nation. So, yes, it is bad.

We in the *Mirror* will continue to do our bit but please do join us in this fight because lies are being used to divide the working people of this country and you know better than anyone that what gives us strength is unity. We need to root out the misinformation that threatens to divide us. We need to encourage those around us to question and rationalize to try to ensure that emotion is at least balanced with informed thought. Like tooth decay, truth decay requires total extraction of the rot.

I know what you good people in this room are capable of. I have seen it. We at the *Mirror* are in awe of it. So, I know if we need anyone to fight the good fight for truth in this country it has to be you. Thank you very much. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alison. Congress, that concludes business for this morning. Fringe events, please enjoy them. If you go to them, or go to the workshops, do not forget also to visit the exhibitors behind Congress Hall. Please be back in the hall promptly for 2 p.m.

There is a bucket collection today from Midlands & East Coast for the Butterflies Memory Loss Support Group.

Enjoy your lunch. Okay, see you back at 2 p.m.

Congress adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Congress reassembled at 2.00 p.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: I call Congress to order. I hope you all had a good lunch. Let me remind you, once again, to switch your devices off or make sure that they are on silent.

Congress, unfortunately, Sadiq Khan is running a little late. I think he is due to be with us at about 3.40, but it is because he has been visiting families affected by the fire that took place yesterday in Barking. That is where we want him to be, giving them his support. But we do have a jam-packed afternoon. We have a lot of motions to get through. We will get stuck in and start with the motions programmed on social policy, the NHS debate. Could we have at the front of the hall the movers and seconders for Motions 349, 350, 356, 358, 361, 363 and 364.

SOCIAL POLICY: NHS

NHS ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY MOTION 349

349. NHS ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

This Congress to support the NHS in seeking how to increase the workforce.

Since September 2008 until March 2018 the average age of staff in the NHS has increased by 3 years from 43 to 46.

During the same period of time the age of staff has been rising from 29% to 39% with 56% of support services staff now at 50 years or over.

There are only two Health Boards that have ties with local universities that are working with groups of students, such as Skills Scotland, but there is a greater need to promote the schemes that are out there, not just for students at university or college, but for people who are unemployed but want to work.

There are school's engagement programmes and modern apprenticeship programmes that are great if you are still at school, but if you are not at school where would you find this information.

This information was found while trying to find out about why there is a problem in the NHS with an ageing workforce, and what was the average age.

This information should be more assessable for every person seeking work and to help entice more people into the NHS, it has to be promoted big and loud for everyone to see, that there is a career in the NHS for all of the departments.

We ask the GMB to get behind the universities, colleges, schools and the job centres, to help promote all working services in the NHS.

We ask the GMB to lobby the local MP's to help increase the workforce of the NHS by supporting this motion and helping to achieve more staff in the NHS.

GLASGOW HEALTH SERVICE (APEX) BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

MARY MULLIGAN (GMB Scotland): Congress, I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* The National Health Service is our greatest achievement and our most valuable asset. As a nation, every day in every part of

Britain, the sick and injured are attended to by NHS staff, Ambulance Service staff, supported by an army of cleaners, porters, cooks and specialists of every kind, from doctors to receptionists. One-and-a-half million men and women keep our hospitals operating safely. Without the hard work of our health workers in our NHS, our NHS could be facing sale and/or trade deals taking it into the private sector.

In Scotland, GMB has been leading the fight back for decent NHS staff wages and to expose bullying from management. We have done this against the grain, whilst other health service unions have been content to take what they are given or have been sucked into partnership models with management. Just as in other parts of the UK, our members have suffered during the long pay freeze and years of cutbacks, leading to a lack of resources to do the job and sufficient staff to get the job done.

During the last decade, since September 2008 until March 2018 the average age of staff in the NHS has increased by three years from 43 to 46, with more than half — 56% — of support staff are now over 50. Recruitment remains low versus demand, and our members are bearing the brunt of more work and less time to do it.

NHS careers are not being promoted to young people and too many of the roles in which our members work remain undervalued. Pay and working conditions are an important part of the story but we also need to give pride back to our NHS staff, who are often demoralised because the services they care about are under pressure. We should be celebrating and thanking our serving NHS staff members, but today, Congress, we are also asking GMB to champion our NHS as a career and to campaign for more opportunities to join NHS and for the people we need to keep our NHS going for tomorrow. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Mary. Is there a seconder for Motion 349? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you, Scotland. I call the mover of Motion 350.

NHS WHISTLEBLOWER MOTION 350

350. NHS WHISTLEBLOWER

This Congress instructs GMB to campaign to establish an independent, properly-resourced, NHS regulatory body with investigatory and disciplinary powers. The remit of this body will include:

- Investigation and responsiveness to serious incidents and concerns regarding poor patient care and clinical negligence in NHS Scotland
- The establishment of a national whistleblowing hotline to provide advice and anonymity to those reporting wrongdoing and to assess such reports with a view to further investigation
- Monitor adherence to national standards of care
- Investigation of outstanding cases of wrong doing within the NHS Scotland towards patients and families and also towards NHS staff (e.g. whistle blowers)
- On concluding investigations, provide recommendations and direction on improving practice and delivery of services.

- Monitor the schedule of implementing recommendations
- Ensure accountability through formal independent regulation informed by evidence from recognised sources
- Establish a people led NHS addressing patient safety concerns and deficiencies in the current NHS Scotland highlighted by professional bodies working alongside advocacy organisations acting on behalf of patients and the people of Scotland

EDINBURGH & LOTHIAN BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Referred)

(The motion was formally moved and formally seconded from the floor)

THE PRESIDENT: I call the mover of Motion 356.

GMB AMBULANCE SERVICE MEMBERS MOTION 356

356. GMB AMBULANCE SERVICE MEMBERS

This Congress is appalled that public money is being used by Ambulance Services Management to privatise emergency and non-emergency patient transport.

Congress notes the recent GMB research that shows that over three years, £235 million was spent on private ambulances.

Congress calls on public money to be spent on recruitment and retention of staff and the purchase and operation of new public sector vehicles, not pay for private companies to cream off public money.

Congress calls on the Government to signal that Ambulance Services will be fully provided for within the NHS as a fully public service and asks the Labour Party to commit to our policy in the run up to forming the next Government.

C52 - SOUTH EAST NORTHUMBERLAND GENERAL BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

STUART LANE (Northern): Congress, first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause and cheers)* I move Motion 356 — GMB Ambulance Service Members.

Congress, the way the Ambulance Services staff across England are being treated is getting worse by the week. We know that managers are privatising all types of patient transport. Management in some ambulance services do not value their ambulance workforce. We are handling more problems in the workplace. It is a disgrace that during the past three years more than £200 million has been spent on private ambulances.

Our members in the Ambulance Service are being put upon. The penny-pinching and top-down way of operating shows that top managers do not value the publicly-funded Ambulance Service. The way that some executives in the Ambulance Service are

operating shows that they are not fit to run vital ambulance services. We know that experienced and highly-trained staff are fed up. We desperately need to change the culture back to that of a public service. The private sector should not be allowed to earn profit on the backs of members and public money. We do not hold out much hope that this Tory Government will provide the funding for a properly and publicly-funded Ambulance Service. But we need to continue to make that case to Government, anyway. What we do need is the money that has been spent, which is, after all, public money, to be spent on recruitment and retaining staff in the public sector.

We also need public money to be used for the purchase and operation of up-to-date vehicles. Public money should not be spent on privatised ambulance vehicles. Politically, we hope to have much more hope from the Labour Party. We want the Labour Party to place our policy as part of its policies for the next Labour Government. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I have a seconder for Motion 356? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 358.

GP CONSULTATION MOTION 358

358. GP CONSULTATION

This Congress takes great concern over the granting by the Conservative Government of licences to run telephone only GP diagnostic by Babylon Health. Where any member of the public can consult over the telephone or other media devices with the doctor 24 hours a day, who can then organise appointments for treatments for any ailment that had been diagnosed. This on the face of it seems a very good idea where as members of the public do not have to wait to see a doctor but will be diagnosed in real time. There are several drawbacks to this scheme.

You have to deregister with your own GP surgery before you can use Babylon Health. The range of treatment is limited to what they can provide but they do say that they can arrange private treatment for conditions that cannot be covered under NHS treatments. A very dangerous conflict of interest.

There are also concerns that the information Babylon provided to the health service was not as accurate as it should have been. They claimed that automated diagnosis proved as good as any that could be done by an individual doctor, however the BMA has tested out the Babylon system using the training that is used for GP's and have found that in all cases it is no better than a face-to-face doctor consultation and in some cases, failed to diagnose correctly.

This will also put members of the public at risk especially those who are old and frail to understand or hear what is being asked of them, those who suffer from mental conditions who have difficulty with telephone use. Doctors and patients prefer to meet face-to-face whenever possible for consultations in order that the whole patient can be diagnosed correctly.

This of course will cause a lot of GP surgeries to have to close due to not having the workload required and therefore making it difficult for those who will find GP surgeries difficult to find and then to be able to visit the GP's practice which is close enough for them to reach.

The Conservative Government stated that they wish to roll this out over time nationwide and also grants other private companies licenses to carry out a similar sort of practice.

Congress therefore calls upon the CEC, all of our staff and affiliated MP's to campaign vigorously to get this stopped in its present form and to make sure patients have the opportunity if they so wish to be able to consult face-to-face with the doctor.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRYON COOKE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Good afternoon, I move Motion 358 — GP Consultation. This is a long motion, so I will not read it out to you, but I will say is that if we continue to let private companies, like Babylon Health, take just some of our doctors' work, how long will it be before there are no doctor's surgeries and we lose the face-to-face GP contact? If this happens, we will lose support not just for physical conditions but mental health diagnoses and things that only a doctor can pick up on.

The elderly is just one party who will struggle with telephone and webcam consultations, and people like myself who cannot see very well. There is a reason why blind people don't do first aid. Only last week Trump said "Everything is on the table in a trade deal, even the NHS", and that's scary. If we let companies like Babylon Health take our doctors, we will, in the words of Bony M, "Be sitting by the rivers of Babylon weeping". Congress, I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

CHERYL BARNETT (Birmingham & West Midlands): President and Congress, I second Motion 358: GP Consultation. I have been a mental health nurse for a long time, and worked in a wide variety of settings with many different people, some who had obvious needs and some who did not. It is worrying as mental health needs cannot always be seen over the phone or via a video chat. Can you see depression? Can you see mental health needs? Can you see vulnerable people who are crying out for help? An example would be the person who visits his doctor because of a painful leg. These are sometimes psychosomatic symptoms. The doctor prescribes medication. The question: "How are you feeling?" "Well, doctor, last night I stood on a bridge and I want to end it all. Please help". If we have virtual doctors, we become just a number, a tick box on a fact sheet by a person who may not be medically trained and may miss vital signs. This is life and death. It's real people. We're only human after all. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 261.

IVF MOTION 361

361. IVF

This Congress could lobby the Government to implement some sort of order to the postcode lottery of IVF in the NHS. Some regions' NHS only allow one session, others more.

We treat smokers, obese, drinkers free which are all self-inflicted. Mostly the couples wanting a family are being penalised when due to nature can't have children naturally.

ASDA SOUTH BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

RON POWELL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First time at Congress and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President and Congress, I move Motion 361 on behalf of A56 ASDA South Branch. Just over one in 10 areas in England offer the recommended three cycles of IVF treatment for families who are struggling to conceive. Many clinical commissioning groups are making up their own rules when it comes to affecting the lives of hopeful parents. These commissioning groups are clearly not following the guidelines as set out by the National Institute for Care and Health Excellence. It will be fair to say that the national picture of IVF treatment is nothing but crazy, disjointed and certainly unfair.

Evidence also suggests that the effects of failing to provide NHS funding for infertility can be both financially and emotionally devastating for the couples wishing to conceive. If the psychological effects of infertility are left untreated, it can cause unnecessary and long-lasting harm to an individual's mental and general wellbeing. The failure of the National Strategy on IVF is one thing, but the emotional roller coaster that couples face as a result of this failure is even more worrying. From the knowledge and research that hopeful parents undertaking before embarking on this life decision, they will clearly see that within a few miles of their home addresses other couples and hopeful parents have been offered more choices and more opportunities for treatment.

For example, in the neighbouring areas of Sheffield, Doncaster, Rotherham and Bassetlaw, in our region alone, these health trusts and clinical commissioning groups all offer different treatment programmes. Therefore, for families and individuals to witness and experience this inequality in IVF provision is an absolute injustice and a total disgrace. It can be suggested that it is social engineering based on financial demarcation and the willingness of Government and governmental departments to follow a national strategy.

Congress, some of these couples and individuals will be our members, our members who are not only facing difficulty in the workplace but have the problem of having to deal with the failures of the post code lottery for IVF where their hopes of bringing up a new born into the world, raising a family and a future are cast aside by these inequalities and injustices.

Congress, we are a campaigning trade union. We are placed to recognise and act on injustice. Let us give some direction and advocacy to the moral and ethical maze that the National IVF Strategy has become. Surely, this is a key element of the social responsibility that we have as a trade union.

I, therefore, call on Congress to lobby the Government to implement the fair and equal application of the IVF strategy of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and to end the post code lottery that currently exists. Please support.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done.

IAN BUTLER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I'm a first-time speaker and a first-time delegate. (*Applause and cheers*) I'm not really. I just wanted the cheer. (*Laughter*) Sorry about that.

There are people in this hall who have children. So put your hand up if you have children. Put your hand up if you haven't got children. It's the same people. We're away from them for a week so enjoy it. There are people who want children but will never have children if it weren't for IVF. Even with IVF, only a third succeed. A close friend of mine is an Indian doctor and when I told him I was going to speak on IVF he said, "Post code lottery". He is a senior consultant in Sheffield. This guy knows it's a post code lottery. There are people who move 200 miles so that they can have three treatments. Some places only give you one treatment. If you go private, the cost is between £5,000 to £20,000. So how can a working man afford that for him and his wife? This is what we are up against. It is not a post code lottery. It's a National Health Service. So let's move on this, comrades. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. I call on the mover for Motion 363.

SUPPORTING THE GUTS UK PANCREATITIS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN MOTION 363

363. SUPPORTING THE GUTS UK PANCREATITIS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

This Congress, 4 in 100,000 people in the UK suffer from Pancreatitis each year and many do not know what it is until it's too late.

Acute Pancreatitis can be a life threatening illness which sadly claims many lives, yet it remains a mystery to the general public.

There is little information or education to ensure people are aware of the signs and symptoms that lead to Pancreatitis and how serious the illness can be.

GUTS UK is a leading UK charity that raises awareness about digestive disorders such as Pancreatitis, Crohns disease and Coeliac disease. GUTS UK is leading the way with research on how to prevent Pancreatitis, what to look out for and how to live with the aftermath of developing the life changing disorder.

We call on Congress to support this charity, help awareness of Pancreatitis and be passionate about our guts.

ASDA STORES BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(*Carried*)

GINA HARDING (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Cheers and applause*) President and delegates, one in a 100,000 people in the UK suffer from pancreatitis each year, yet many people have not yet heard of the condition and the extent of its severity. The pancreas is an essential part of our digestive system. Acute pancreatitis is a sudden inflammation of the pancreas. The pancreas goes red, angry and swollen, and in severe cases the pancreas and the fatty tissues surrounding it can become damaged beyond recovery. Those parts of the pancreas die. One in four people who have an attack of acute

pancreatitis develop problems with other organs; for example, lungs, kidneys and can need treatment in intensive care. Exactly why this happens to some people and not to others is not completely understood. The damage that results from pancreatitis is unpredictable and can be minimal, lasting for just over a week, or in some people complications of the pancreas and surrounding tissues can persist on for many months. Fortunately, most people who have an attack of acute pancreatitis recover completely, although those people who need intensive care may be left with life-long problems.

Gallstones and drinking too much alcohol are two of the most common causes, and together account for eight out of 10 attacks of acute pancreatitis. Gallstones cause problems when a small stones or those to as large as a pebble pass out of the vulva into the bowel duct and temporarily block the pancreas. These are often triggered by a high-fat diet and alcohol. Those who are over 40 and overweight are particularly at risk of developing pancreatitis. Also, alcohol is a toxin to the pancreas, damaging occurring both through binge drinking and regular excess drinking. However, for those one in 10 people who have attacks of acute pancreatitis, no clear cause is identified.

Conference, this time last year, one of members, who is here today, fought the deadly condition, before which neither of us knew anything about the disease. This comrade suffered from a rare and severe case of the condition and encountered every complication associated with it. We spent every day not knowing if she would survive the next. After six months in intensive care, luckily, she survived. After the operation, her surgeon admitted that only two people had survived in the last 10 years. Sadly, many others are not so lucky. Please support this motion to allow our activists to raise awareness and support the charity GUTS UK. The charity works hard to raise awareness for digestive diseases such as this. They also provide support, research and essential information for these life threatening and life changing conditions. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Is there a seconder for Motion363?

AMANDA BURLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Motion 363. Delegates and visitors, as you have heard, pancreatitis affects hundreds of people across the UK and not a lot is known about this condition, nor is there any effective treatment at this present time. In fact, the NHS lists this condition as one of the most painful health conditions that anyone can suffer from. The diagnosis can be acute and chronic.

Acute pancreatitis can be so severe that some people die. The charity GUTS UK state that one in 20 people will die from this condition. As a union, we could assist this charity by supporting and raising awareness about this condition throughout the year, and especially in the month of November, as this is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month. Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month sees charities across Europe on purple alert. The idea is to raise awareness by lighting up monuments in purple.

By raising awareness and funds, this will assist the charity to have high-level research into causes and effective treatment for this condition. I urge you to support Motion 363. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Amanda. I call the mover for Motion 364.

GAY BLOOD DONATION REFERRAL PERIOD

MOTION 364

364. GAY BLOOD DONATION REFERRAL PERIOD

This Congress welcomes the Government's announcement last year to reduce the deferral period from twelve months to three months.

The new three-month deferral period follows reviewed calls from a number of organisations such as, Stonewall, Freedom to Donate, Terence Higgins Trust are calling for a fresh review by the Government's Advisory Committee on the safety of blood, tissues and organs, to ensure blood donor criteria is based on up to date medical evidence and screening technologies.

However, while a shortened deferral period is an important move, the reality is that most gay, bisexual men will still be excluded from donating blood.

We call on the CEC to lobby Government to implement a system based on individualised risk assessment of blood donors, rather than excluding an entire group.

At a time when the amount of people donating blood is in decline, these steps would be the best way to ensure everyone equally who wants to, can donate safely.

CITY & COUNTY OF SWANSEA C01 BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

GEORGIA CHEDZEY (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I move Motion 364; first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Cheers and applause)* Congress, just to explain the contents of the motion, in 2011 the 12-month deferral period was a momentous move. It replaced the lifetime ban on gay and bisexual men donating, established in response to the rise of HIV in the 1980s. Alongside many other organisations, the GMB pushed for this discriminatory rule to be reviewed and overturned. Colleagues, the referral period is the time that men who have had sex with men need to have had no sexual activity before donating blood.

We welcome that the deferral period was reduced from 12 months to three months last year. However, while a shortened deferral period is an important move, the reality is that most gay and bi men will still be excluded from donating blood. Like most people, we want to see a system that allows the most possible people to donate safely.

We know that statistically men who have sex with men face higher rates of blood infections, an inequality that should be taxed by itself. We must be clear that safety of the blood supply is paramount.

Congress, it is simply not true to say that every gay and bi man is a high-risk donor. This Congress is calling for a system based on individualised risk assessment of blood donors rather than excluding an entire group. At a time when the amount of people donating blood is in decline, these steps would be the best way to ensure that everyone who wants to can donate safely.

Congress, it is World Blood Donation Day on Friday. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Georgia. Secunder.

SHARRON HARRISON (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I second Motion 364: Gay Blood Donation Referral Period. Surely, we would lobby to see a system where everyone is screened on an individual risk. We are encouraging the Government to implement a robust system to enable all gay and bisexual men to give blood. The fact is that high-risk extra sexuals a less controlling risk than gay men. A gay man in a monogamous relationship who has only had oral sex will still automatically be unable to give blood when an extra sexual man who has had multiple partners and not worn a condom will not be questioned about his behaviour will even be excluded.

Since November 2017 a new blood donation policy within Scotland, England and Wales went into full effect. This does not affect Northern Ireland, which still has a 12 month referral period in place, which needs serious review and campaigning. There should be a campaign which stands alone and supports our colleagues and members within Northern Ireland. Blood donation is an incredibly simple thing to do and can save lives. Every donor helps to ensure that the National Health Service has the supply it needs of the different blood groups and blood types to enable those in need.

Colleagues, those restrictions on who can donate with shortages and vital donations, the restrictions should be evidently based to ensure that as many people as possible can donate safely. We must campaign along with other organisations, such as Stonewall, to review the current systems and allow these risks to be managed without stopping a whole group of potential donors from being able to donate. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharron. Does anyone wish to oppose these motions? *(No response)* Then I will ask Neil Collinson to respond on behalf of the CEC.

NEIL COLLINSON (CEC, Public Services): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 350, 361 and 363. On Motion 350 — NHS Whistleblower — the CEC is asking for this motion to be referred. GMB Scotland should take all necessary steps to ensure that a robust regulator is in place in NHS Scotland. The CEC is asking for this motion to be referred so that GMB Scotland can assess whether the motion fully encompasses the industrial needs of the country.

On Motion 361 — IVF — the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. GMB supports the premise of this motion but the post code lottery of IVF is unfair. It means that families who need support conceiving are able to access this in some areas and not others. Even couples who are able to conceive through IVF may need to have multiple rounds to have a successful pregnancy. The costs can be tens of thousands of pounds.

The qualification is that we cannot support the inclusion of the line. We treat smokers, those who are obese and drinkers free, which are all self-inflicted. There are many complex factors at play with these issues, and we would not wish to demonise

those affected by them, or imply that they should not be eligible for treatment on the NHS.

On Motion 363 — Supporting the GUTS UK Pancreatitis Awareness Campaign — the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. GMB supports the importance of raising awareness of pancreatitis, which, as this motion rightly states, can have life-changing consequences for people suffering from it. The only qualification is that it is unclear what kind of support the motion is asking for with GUTS UK. However, the CEC will commit to contacting the charity with regards to working together on developing appropriate briefing materials for our members to raise awareness of this condition and to signpost them to where they can receive support.

Therefore, Congress, please agree to refer Motion 350 and to support Motions 361 and 363 with the qualifications I have outlined. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does GMB Scotland agree to refer Motion 350. (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region agree to accept the qualification to Motion 361? (*Agreed*) Thank you. And the qualification to Motion 363? (*Agreed*)

With that, I shall put the motions individually to Congress for voting. Motion 349, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 349 is CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 350. Scotland accepted the reference back. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 350 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 356. The CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 356 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 358. The CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? Is anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 358 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 361, the CEC is supporting with the qualification accepted by Yorkshire & North Derbyshire. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 361 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 363, the CEC is supporting with a qualification which, again, has been accepted. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 363 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Finally in this group, Motion 364, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 364 was CARRIED.

SOCIAL POLICY: CARE

THE PRESIDENT: We can now move on to the Motions 365 and 368. Can I also ask the movers and seconders of the motions on Industrial Policy: Public Services debate, which are Motions 239, 240, 243, 244, 245 and 256 also to come to the front, please.

We will now move to the Social Policy: Care motions. Can we have the mover and seconder of Motion 365?

DIGNITY AND CARE MOTION 365

365. DIGNITY AND CARE

This Congress notes that Professor Majid Ezzati writing in the Lancet (Public Health Journal) in November 2018 confirmed that life expectancy is no longer rising for the least affluent half of the population, life expectancy is falling for the bottom 20% of the population and life expectancy is falling on average for women over 85. Our members are working in an underfunded, de-professionalised and privatised, but highly lucrative business that profits from low pay and zero hours contracts, with minimal training and support for our members' valuable work. The worse the conditions of employment – the greater the profit. This puts our elders at risk. We are clear that the exploitation of GMB carers, who are mostly women and often from minority ethnic communities or migrant workers, is devaluing our communities and elders by the profiteering and dehumanising acts of private companies and must end.

Congress applauds the policy for a National Care Service as laid out in the Labour Party's manifesto for the 2017 General Election. Investment in care services is an investment in social infrastructure, and increased public funding for social care would generate jobs and significantly boost the national income. The re-organisation of social and health care must form an integrated general welfare system, which is sufficiently staffed by professionals, our GMB members, with high quality, nationally accredited training, and national agreed pay and conditions. Our members deserve wages with dignity.

Congress calls for a professional skilled, user responsive National Care Service meeting the needs of our communities, publicly provided and free at the point of use to deliver comprehensive, safe, high quality health and social care.

Congress calls for an end to privatisation and bringing contracts with private companies back into public ownership.

Congress calls for the General Secretary to work with sister Trade Unions to formalise a universal pay structure with excellent terms and conditions.

Congress calls for fair recognition and support for unpaid carers and a real increase in carer's allowance.

Congress calls on the CEC to use the policy for a National Care Service to launch a campaign to recruit care workers to GMB, providing dignity and care to our members and the communities we care for.

ISLINGTON 1 & HARINGEY BRANCH
London Region
(Carried)

EVELYN MARTIN (London): Congress, I am speaking on Motion 365 — Dignity and Care. You don't need me standing before you to tell you that our care system is in crisis. It has been crumbling beneath us for many years, and each time more sticking plaster gets put on to it for a quick fix. As the union for care workers, we have known for some time that the sector is under funded with poor working conditions. We have raised this on many occasions. The lack of funding is putting the professionals and the industry in danger. It is a dire situation for all.

As part of the austerity measures, councils which are responsible for providing social care and services are facing huge budget cuts, which means that they cannot allocate as much money to care. Care homes are facing rising costs, making recruiting and retaining quality staff — a tight budget — one of the most challenging issue that providers face. This is all too real, as many private-sector employers put profit first. At the end of April, another one of the largest care home groups, Four Seasons Healthcare, went into administration, affecting 20,000 workers and around 17,000 residents in their 322 care homes. We thought that lesson had been learned when South Cross collapsed, but not so.

Our members need reassurance as to the vulnerability of residents. Care workers are facing pressure. Social care is one of those low-paid sectors that has a bad record both in terms of zero hour contracts, poor terms and conditions and workers not being paid the living wage. Care workers in the private sector are three times more likely to be on zero hour contracts than those in the public sector. Their wages are 17% lower than their public sector counterparts. Four in 10 leave the job every year. Also more than 50% of private carers have no relevant social care qualification. That compares with less than 20% in the public sector.

Our care workers do a crucial professional job, but are not paid the same in their sector, as the public sector workers. Our members in this sector have insufficient staff on the rota. Care workers are still working in care homes which don't recognise trade unions. So they are being exploited. We need action. GMB has a crucial role to play in providing recognition of workers in this sector, particularly regarding improved terms and conditions, and we need our dedicated care workers to be recognised and treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve. We are pleased that GMB helped to launch the All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Care. We need this group to look at all aspects of the care system; funding, staffing and training. We need to raise the profile of the sector and ensure that the workers get the recognition and dignity they deserve. I am pleased to report such. Thank you, comrades. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Evelyn. I call the seconder for Motion 365.

MAUREEN MALONE (London): Congress, I second Motion 365 — Dignity in Care. The decline in our care system started in the '90s with the local authorities closing the homes and the transfer of patients to the private sector. We all know what the private sector is for. This has now reached crisis point and beyond. The elderly, the disabled and the most vulnerable in our society are the people who are at risk and are suffering as a result. With private care companies cutting the visits to the housebound down, sometimes, to 15 minutes a visit, how can anyone possibly deliver care of a good standard or preserve the dignity of a client in 15 minutes and also write a report? The care workers are under so much pressure.

We, as the GMB union, have a crucial role to play in getting the Government to recognise that the care profession is a vital part of the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable people. Care workers need to be rewarded with a more professional qualification, good terms and conditions and be paid a living wage. Above all, we must see the scrapping of zero hour contracts to enable care workers to make a career in the care profession, thus delivering a good standard of care to the most vulnerable in our society. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Maureen. Thank you. Can I have the mover of Motion 268.

DEFENDING CARERS AND THE CARED FOR MOTION 368

368. DEFENDING CARERS AND THE CARED FOR

This Congress expresses its concern about the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and the misuse of suspension orders against under-supported and low paid care workers. Whilst Congress supports every effort to ensure safety and dignity in the care sector for carers and cared for alike, it does not consider that the burden of regulation is being applied fairly in Scotland. UNIONLINE Scotland have exposed the SSSC for handing down suspension orders, which prevents carers from being able to work, in 90% of the cases referred to it at the preliminary stage and considers that this is far beyond normal in any comparable regulator. Acting on behalf GMB Scotland, UNIONLINE Scotland secured the first successful appeal against the use of Temporary Suspension Orders before a Scottish Sheriff in 2018. Congress supports GMB Scotland in taking on the SSSC's disciplinary process where it is iniquitous and too often punitive; and calls on GMB, in every part the UK, to continue our campaigns to ensure that the increasing pressures on care workers are matched with proper support and reward for those who strive to deliver the best possible care to those who need it.

G1 GLASGOW HOMECARE
GMB Scotland

(*Carried*)

THOMAS GRANGER (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Everyone in care deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, which is in direct contrast to the reality of the daily working life for carers.

I am proud of the ground-breaking work that GMB Scotland has done in tandem with UNIONLINE Scotland to tackle the barbaric and abusive process of the SSSC, namely, the Scottish Social Services Council, in exposing the SSSC for handing down

suspension orders, orders which prevent people from being able to work as carers for up to a period of two years. In 90% of cases referred to it at the preliminary stage, acting on behalf of GMB Scotland, UNIONLINE Scotland secured the first successful appeal against the use of temporary suspension orders before the Scottish Sheriffs Court in 2018.

There is already a crisis in the care sector, which is chronically under-funded and at the same time the demand for care home places is said to sore by more than three-quarters in the next 20 years. It is carers who are bearing the brunt of this crisis, which are low-paid jobs, predominantly employing women, with under-staffing rates in the private sector. Carers are being hung out to dry and then being through a meat mincing machine via the regulator.

Congress, the care sector needs safeguards, not scapegoats. If we are to deliver a quality care system, we need to invest in the poor amount of resources that we have; that is carers themselves. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Thomas. Is there a seconder for Motion 368? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you. Does anyone wish to oppose these motions? *(No response)* In that case, because the CEC is supporting both of them, I will take them as a group. All those in favour of Motions 365 and 368, please show? Anyone against? Both of those motions are carried.

Motion 365 was CARRIED.

Motion 368 was CARRIED.

INDUSTRIAL POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES

THE PRESIDENT: We can now move on to Motion 239.

NHS PAY AWARD 2018

MOTION 239

239. NHS PAY AWARD 2018

This Congress extends congratulations and support to the GMB NHS National Negotiations who refused to accept the NHS pay offer in April 2018. We recognise the pressure to fall in line with the other Unions who decided to support and accept the dismal NHS pay offer without a challenge for a better deal. Well done to the GMB team!

Our members continue to support GMB's decision for an increase in pay. We will endeavour to campaign for a better pay rise and conditions. We ask Congress to support this motion.

We call for GMB to remind the Government that their 10-year NHS plan will never come to fruition until we have "fair pay" for ALL NHS workers and that the chronic staff shortages is resolved as they seem to have forgotten that it is NHS workers who make the NHS run on a daily basis.

EAST AND ESSEX NHS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

ESME CHOONARA (London): Congress, I move Motion 239 on the NHS Pay Award 2018. I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, I work as a paramedic in London. I love my job and I love working for the NHS, but the truth is, as we have heard from other delegates, the NHS is in an absolutely terrible state due to this rotten Government's systematic under-funding, cuts and privatisation. The NHS is held together at the moment simply by the goodwill and determination of overworked, under paid, under staffed and under supported health workers who keep it going. *(Applause)*

Since 2010, with the public sector pay cap, health workers have effectively lost thousands of pounds in real terms in pay. For us in the Ambulance Service, we have lost the equivalent of a fifth of our pay over that period of time in real terms. Pay is particularly bad for NHS staff who are black or from other minority ethnicities who, thanks to institutional racism, are concentrated on the lower grades with the lower pay.

Then last year along comes a new pay offer from the Government, a three-year pay deal which was bandied about as smashing the pay cap and offering us huge sums of money. Up to 29% were the figures bandied about in some of the papers. Now, needless to say, it doesn't take a genius to work out that the Tories were not going to give health workers 29% pay rises. It was based on some very dodgy accounting that I do not have time to go into. Behind the lie, there was another round of three years of complicated pay formulas with a lot of strings attached that, actually, resulted for most of us in below-inflation pay rises yet again!

I am proud to say that our union, the GMB, was the only union out of the 14 unions in the Health Service that rejected the deal outright and campaigned for a rejection of it. *(Applause)* I am proud to be in this union because of that because pay matters. For most of us who work in the NHS it isn't pay that gets us out of our beds at 4 o'clock in the morning or into work. It's being, in some little way, a part of something so brilliant as our NHS. So we don't do it for the pay but pay matters, because if we don't have enough pay to live on how can we deliver the quality of care that our patients and the public deserve? *(Applause)*

Where I work I have seen colleagues leaving the Ambulance Service to work in shops, to drive taxis and to go to other jobs where they earn more than they do working as a frontline paramedic. I have worked alongside colleagues who have gone without vital medication because they can't afford to pay their own prescription charges in order to take the medication that they need to keep themselves well when they are looking after other people. I know of nurses who use food banks in 2019, in the UK, in our Health Service. I see exhausted health workers who are trying to fit in yet another overtime shift in order to pay the bills, endangering their own physical and mental wellbeing because they are trying to fit in enough hours to be able to pay their bills, their mortgage and to put food on the table for their families. So no wonder, Congress, that there are over 100,000 unfilled vacancies in our NHS when this is the way that NHS staff are treated.

As I have said, for us it is not about the pay, but pay does matter. One of the reasons why pay matters is because pay is how you tell people whether you value them, and this Tory Government has given us a very clear message that it does not value the

work that NHS staff do but we, as a union, certainly do. The other reason why it matters is because, actually, for me the NHS is about delivering a brilliant service but it is also about saying what sort of world do we want to live in. I want to live in a world where healthcare is free to everybody at the point of need. *(Applause)* I am proud of my union. Please vote for the motion that I am moving, but more than that, wherever you come from, be part of the campaigns to save our NHS because it is on the brink and we need to save it. *(A standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the seconder.

STEPHEN JONES (London): President and Congress, I second this motion, and I am honoured and delighted to be able to second it. The NHS, as we all know, is very, very close to our hearts. The first thing I want to say, which is not in my speech, is no, Mr Trump, you're not getting your hands on it! *(Cheers and applause)*

All of us, undoubtedly, recall last years protracted consultations and negotiations regarding the claimed, wonderful — it was called “(wonderful)” — 6.5% pay increase over the three years awarded to the NHS staff, a rate which was contested only by the GMB, but supported by all other unions. I believe the GMB was the only union to ballot and consult with its members, as all other unions decided to do it unilaterally and make their own decisions. How undemocratic is that?

The reasons for the GMB's rejections were quite simply. An annual increase of 1% had already been agreed for 2018 and beyond, thereby reducing the proposed real increases to 3.5% over the three-year period. There was a gap between the implementation of the new increased rate and the already-promised increases by 1%, which meant our members lost out on several months' increased pay. Furthermore, at least at our local hospital, which I have quite a lot to do with because I do a lot of representation with them, car-parking charges for staff increased by a massive 50%! So they talk about pay rises and then they increase the charges by 50% and neutralise a lot of this. This occurred at about the same time which was a huge additional expenses from our members. So far from leaving them better off financially, following this 6.5% increase over three years, they were financially worse off in the long term. Therefore, the GMB had good grounds to reject this, and I know that we were aiming for an 11% increase over three years. I fully endorse and second this motion. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Brilliant. Thank you, Stephen. I call the mover of Motion 240.

PAY WITHIN AMBULANCE SERVICES MOTION 240

240. PAY WITHIN AMBULANCE SERVICES

This Congress notes the disputes that have taken place within this sector where GMB paramedics have had to take industrial action to back up their pay claims, due to employers failing to listen to our members.

Congress believes that a proper fit for purpose job evaluation programme is required within Ambulance Services and that employers are playing fast and loose with workers who not only provide vital services to the public, but also have to withstand difficult working conditions on the front line.

Congress notes the very helpful support from the Labour Front bench to the plight of GMB Paramedics.

Congress calls on the Government to urgently address the failing by employers of GMB Ambulance Service workers and calls on the Labour Party to explicitly say what they will do in Government, so that GMB Ambulance Members know on whose side politicians are on, as the very real prospect arises of a general election in 2019.

D43 – DURHAM COUNTY LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

MARTIN ROBSON (Northern): Congress, I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause and Cheers)* I am moving Motion 240: Pay within Ambulance Services. Congress, the way that Ambulance Service staff across England are being treated, it is getting worse by the week. Management in some ambulance services do not value their ambulance workforce. We know this because our members tell us every week. For GMB members working in ambulance services to take industrial action shows the level of anger with employers. Working conditions on the front line are difficult. All that GMB members want is for their job to be valued by managers the way that the public value them. Our members want a job-evaluation scheme that recognises the level of risk that takes place on the front line and the fact that paramedics are doing more complex work. What employers want is for our members to do more work for less pay. That is the employers' approach to job evaluation. This is typical of how ambulance services are being led and funded.

Our experience is that the employers have no idea about what is happening on the ground. We welcome the support that the Labour Party has shown for the GMB members in dispute. What we need is for the job evaluation to continue and for a job evaluation system to be provided that is fit for today, not based on what the employers dictate. We need well-trained and committed staff working in ambulance services. Our members do the job because they know they are providing a brilliant service.

As we move towards what could be a general election, if the Government can't see when they are in the wrong, then our members will show what they think when they cast their vote. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Martin. I call a seconder for Motion 240. *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* I call the mover for Motion 243.

NHS STAFFING MOTION 243

243. NHS STAFFING

This Congress regards the shortfall of NHS staff of nearly 100,000 workers, to be an appalling failure of Government to ensure that the NHS is providing the services that we need.

Congress calls on the Government to urgently address this disgraceful shortfall in its Plan for the NHS. Congress believes that the Government's pronouncements on the NHS is pure spin while such a huge gap in numbers exists.

Congress calls on the Labour Party to signal how it will urgently address this employment and funding shortfall as it could be the new Government in 2019.

N39 – NORTH WEST DURHAM AHA BRANCH

Northern Region

(Carried)

JULIE MITCHELL (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker, moving Motion 243: NHS Staffing. *(Applause)* The Tory Government's plan for our NHS shows what they think of NHS staffing. The fact is that we are 100,000 workers short of what we need. Let's be clear, this is part of the Tory approach to the NHS. The approach is all about running the NHS down and more and more privatisation. Tory proposals on the NHS will break the services.

What we have now in the Tory NHS plan is a total lack of focus on how the NHS is going to cope. More importantly, how the NHS is going about making up for the shortfall in the number of workers that is needed.

Congress, day in and day out the pressures on the workers in all areas of the NHS is getting worse. More and more work is being provided in vital services with less staff. If our NHS is going to continue to be regarded as a great service by the public, then the Government of the day must — must — provide the resources to provide great service, not seek to run the service down. This is what the Government are doing. You can't provide services that the public want by just bringing out policies that are more and more about public relations than actually supporting the services.

Congress, we know that the GMB is being very detailed in how we have responded to the NHS consultation on the Government's plans, but we also seek to support the NHS staffing for the Labour Party and for them to spell out how they will address emergencies in the NHS, especially as they are preparing to put together their manifesto for the election. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Julie. Can I have a seconder for Motion 243. *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you, Northern Region. I call the mover for Motion 244.

QC-LED REVIEW INTO BULLYING CULTURE AT NHS HIGHLAND MOTION 244

244. QC-LED REVIEW INTO BULLYING CULTURE AT NHS HIGHLAND

This Congress is dismayed to learn of a culture of systematic bullying within NHS Highland. GMB Highland branch and NHS staff whistleblowers ran a successful high-profile campaign on this issue which gained extensive national media coverage.

We met Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Health.

The campaign was successful.

We secured a QC-led Independent Review into the NHS Highland bullying culture. This will report directly to the Cabinet Secretary for Health.

Hundreds of staff have come forward to give evidence.

The outcome from this ongoing review will have implications for every NHS Board in Scotland and many thousands of NHS staff.

Congress is requested to pass a Motion of Censure on NHS Highland Board for the toxic bullying culture within NHS Highland.

HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS.BRANCH

GMB Scotland

(Carried)

GAVIN SMITH (GMB Scotland): I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am moving Motion 244: A QC-led review into bullying culture at NHS Highland, and requesting that Congress passes a motion of censure on the board of NHS Highland.

For years we were told that there was no culture of bullying at NHS Highland. During this time, a deep and destructive culture of fear and intimidation was allowed to prevail for too long, ruining livelihoods and lives. The behaviour of some senior directors and managers was never properly dealt with and bullying claims were handled in an inconsistent and often unfair way. Bullying in NHS Highland became a full-blown crisis. That's why GMB gave a collective voice to whistleblowers. It's why we demanded an independent inquiry into the crisis and it's why we fought a very public campaign in the second half of 2018 to make this happen. The interests of staff had to be defended, change had to happen and GMB acted like a good trade union should.

We got our independent review. That was a big win. The independent review, led by John Sturrock QC reported in May 2019. The toxic culture of bullying and harassment was, and I quote, "significant, harmful and multi-layered at all levels". NHS Highland, which denied the existence of a problem, were given 65 detailed recommendations. The Cabinet Secretary for Health in Scotland has instructed all NHS boards to follow up on the Sturrock recommendations.

GMB has won a major victory that will affect many thousands of staff across Scotland. GMB walks the talk and makes a difference!

The findings and recommendations of Sturrock represent the starting point and the fight to eradicate bullying and harassment in NHS Highland and across NHS Scotland. We will now have an independent National Whistleblowing Officer, and whistleblowing officers appointed to every NHS Scottish health board. There are many detailed recommendations which will improve things for staff. We will work hard to make sure that these are implemented. Staff deserve no less.

Congress, we must recognise and pay tribute to the NHS Highland staff, both past and present, who stood up and spoke out. These people said "Enough!". Without their bravery and testimony the deep-rooted problems would have persisted and change would not be possible, but change is now possible. We look forward to a time of healing but the lessons must be learned. We need leaders who will deliver a learning and supportive culture and a clear plan to make sure that this never happens again.

Congress, you can be assured that GMB Scotland will play a full and constructive role in this process, speaking truth to power and giving our dedicated NHS staff a banner under which they can organise with confidence. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Gavin. Is there a seconder to 244? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you. I call Motion 245.

CARERS LEAVE MOTION 245

245. CARERS LEAVE

This Congress recognises that staff members in employment may one day have to take Carer's leave for a loved one in their family whether this is for a parent who suddenly falls ill or a child who has had an accident at school etc. This can cause considerable emotional stress and anxiety and can be physically exhausting.

For employees with family members with long term diseases such as dementia, palsy, cancer etc., 3 days' carer's leave is extremely low to support our members in the workplace.

The NHS had granted all employees under Agenda for Change Terms and Conditions 5 days Carer's leave for all employees, but in recent years carer's leave under the NHS has gone down from 5 days a year to 3 days per year.

Three days Carer's leave is not enough.

We would like Congress to support our campaign to increase Carer's leave under the NHS to rise from 3 days entitlement to 7 days minimum a year.

EAST AND ESSEX NHS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

WILL CONWAY (London): I move Motion 245 — Carers Leave. Carers UK reckon that one in eight working people is a carer. 67% of working-age carers are working and half of those not working want to but cannot. Carers are reckoned to contribute £132 billion to the economy and save the NHS a fortune. As our population ages and with the threat of Brexit to our available workforce, we are going to need everyone working. Responsible employers are going, increasingly, to cotton on to the fact that having family-friendly policies is the way forward. All employers should offer reasonable time off, flexible patterns of work and should allow staff with caring responsibilities to undertake them. At the end of the day, it makes economic sense. It helps to retain staff, decreases absenteeism and helps morale and general wellbeing. Properly written policies, agreed in consultation with the unions, should give an appropriate balance that allows everyone to look after their loved ones and helps balance work and home responsibilities. Where arbitrary numbers are used, such an allowance of three days, these numbers should be avoided. It should be made clear that there is an appropriate, proportional allowance and process that is fairly consistently and can be appealed against. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Will. Seconder?

EVELYN MARTIN (London): President, I move Motion 245 on Carers Leave. Congress, this motion came from the NHS Branch and primarily relates to NHS workers. We should be trying to retain our compassion and caring for our NHS workers and not finding ways to cause them more stress. The NHS has reduced carers leave from five days down to three days. Our NHS workers feel that three days a year is not enough so they are asking our NHS negotiators to re-visit the impact on our members, both as NHS workers and NHS service users.

We are living in an ageing UK population with a rising retirement age. More people will need to both work and care for longer than ever before. Care is part of everyday life for some. Seven million people juggle work and caring with millions giving up their jobs to care for a spouse, relatives or a child, and this is a cost to business. Surely, it is better to retain staff? Juggling work and care can be very challenging for all who do it, and we need to support our members who have caring responsibilities as this will affect their work performance. We should use this opportunity to campaign across all employers, not just NHS employers. Most employers say that staff can have three days on pay to deal with an emergency, but if you are caring for a person living with dementia, every day is an emergency.

Last month one GMB-recognised employer is leading the way. They are calling for mandatory paid leave for carers and for between five to 10 days. Please support this motion as this is the motion that can stand. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Evelyn. Thank you. I call Motion 256.

COMPANY SICK PAY — SOCIAL CARE SECTOR MOTION 256

256. COMPANY SICK PAY – SOCIAL CARE SECTOR

This Congress believes that it is grossly unfair that so many Social Care employers not only pay just the minimum wage, but only pay Statutory Sick Pay for workers who qualify to receive it.

This means that many staff go into work whilst sick to care for our vulnerable adults and children, as they cannot afford to be off work. This creates an additional risk to the elderly in their care.

Working whilst sick causes stress and anxiety and longer sickness absences in the long term. Staff working whilst sick are not able to work to their full capacity which, in turn, puts additional stress and anxiety on the whole workforce.

We ask that the GMB Social Care Sector launch a Campaign to strongly encourage our Care Providers with Recognition Agreements to provide a suitable Sick Pay Scheme and research the real cost of SSP on our Care Sector workers.

We ask congress to support this Motion.

HC1 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(*Carried*)

ANN STODDART (North West & Irish): President and Congress, as I trust Congress to support this motion, we ask that the GMB Social Care sector launches a campaign to strongly encourage care providers to provide a suitable sick-pay scheme. The Government's statutory sick pay amount is far too low, and our members are turning up for work still recovering from illnesses having cared for our loved ones. They do a 12-hour shift, with a one-hour unpaid break. Congress, they don't do this lightly. They are aware of the effect that this can have on the residents they care for and themselves. They do it because they can't afford to stay home and get fit for work.

These cuts to social care have to stop and they have to stop now. We have to stop MPs allowing them to make broken promises to gain votes. (*Applause*) They must start to look after our members who work endlessly every day to look after our loved ones. Congress, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ann.

BARBARA STODDART (North West & Irish): Congress, I second Motion 256 — Company Sick Pay. President and Congress, our members, my colleagues, work in a minimum-pay job. They are mostly female, and some do not have a second income. The effects on our members' lives when they become sick is one step away from becoming homeless. Congress, let's do what we do best and make sure our members no longer have to return to work not fully recovered because of no company sick pay.

We are a profession and we take care of our elderly. We do that unbelievably well. Our society is now failing all of us. This Government continues to take, and we together should stop this. Please support Motion 256. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Barbara. Does anyone wish to oppose any of the motions? (*No response*) In that case, the CEC is supporting all of these motions. So I will take them as a block because that is what I am allowed to do, apparently. So Motions 239, 240, 243, 244, 245 and 256, all those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are all carried.

Motion 239 was CARRIED.

Motion 240 was CARRIED.

Motion 243 was CARRIED.

Motion 244 was CARRIED.

Motion 245 was CARRIED.

Motion 256 was CARRIED.

SOCIAL POLICY: JUSTICE

THE PRESIDENT: We will now move on to Social Policy: Justice. I call the movers and seconders of Motions 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 337, 340 and 341. Will you all come to the front of the hall, please.

CAMMELL LAIRD 1984

MOTION 330

330. CAMMELL LAIRD 1984

This Congress calls on the CEC to instruct one of our sponsored MP's to ask the question at Prime Minister's Question Time:

"Why have you not apologized for the jailing of 37 trade unionists for a month in 1984 for carrying out legitimate trade union activities in defense of jobs, as per the ruling of the European Courts in 2014?"

Eddie Marnell has consistently asked this at the CEC only to be told that it's a lottery.

When Cammell Laird went on strike in 2018, Dan Carden, the MP for Walton, Liverpool, was able to ask a question about the strike at Cammell Laird within five days of the start of that dispute. This is too much of a coincidence - Congress, instruct the CEC to act now.

Z15 BRANCH

North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

PAUL RICHARDS (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 330 — Cammell Laird 1984. Since the European Court’s ruling back in December 2014 which stated that the British Government should apologise immediately for the jailing of the 37 trade unionists who went on official strike to save jobs in the shipbuilding industry at Cammell Laird back in 1984, to date this Government still has not apologised, which is a total disgrace.

Eddie Marnell, who sits alongside us in the hall today, was shop steward at the time and was also one of the 37 jailed. Eddie has repeatedly asked our CEC to instruct our sponsored MPs to raise this issue at Prime Minister’s Questions. The response back from MPs has been, “It’s a lottery for your question to be heard”. Congress, this is not acceptable. Our 37 comrades were unlawfully detained without trial. Many of these men are no longer with us today and have, sadly, not seen justice served.

It is disappointing that a Unite-sponsored MP, Dan Carden, was able to ask a question at Prime Minister’s Questions about a strike at Cammell Laird in 2018, only five days after the strike had begun. Five years on, since the European Court’s rule in 2014 and despite all positive work and support to those who took strike action at Cammell Laird, GMB appear unable to get this important issue raised on the floor of the House of Commons. Congress, please support this motion to have this matter brought to the limelight, and that the nasty party are being held to account for the injustice served to our trade union colleagues. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

KAMRAN ALI (North West & Irish): Congress, I second Motion 330. To date 12 of the 37 have, sadly, passed away, one, Francis Albertina, just recently. That member waited almost five years for an apology from this Government at Prime Minister’s Question Time. For those who were jailed, it is totally unacceptable and long overdue. It is too late for 12 of our comrades. Let’s see actions now. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT (June Minnery): Thank you. I call Motion 331.

**TRUTH AND JUSTICE FOR THE VICTIMS AND FAMILIES OF THE BIRMINGHAM PUB BOMBINGS
MOTION 331**

331. TRUTH AND JUSTICE FOR THE VICTIMS AND FAMILIES OF THE BIRMINGHAM PUB BOMBINGS

This Congress calls upon the GMB to support the group ‘Justice4the21’ in their campaign for truth, justice and accountability for the families and victims of the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings.

T10 TAMWORTH BRANCH

Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

JACKIE INGLEBY (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 331. President and delegates, it is now nearly 45 years since Birmingham shocked to the sound of exploding bombs in its city. On that fatal night, 21 people who went out for a drink with friends and family never returned home. At the time, it was the largest loss of life as a result of a terror incident on the UK mainland. Since then, families of those 21 victims have suffered, and continue to suffer, at the hands of the police, the judiciary and state as they search for truth and justice for their loved ones. These failings consist of police failings to adequately respond to the IRA warning on the night of the bombing; the corrupt police investigation in 1974 that led to the wrongful conviction of the Birmingham Six, accepted as one of the worst miscarriages of justice in British legal history; the loss of crucial evidence from the 1974 investigation, which in 2014 acknowledged would make any successful prosecution highly unlikely; the judiciary's decision not to prosecute three former detectives of West Midlands Police, yet the Court of Appeal had previously concluded that they had lied to secure the wrongful conviction of the Birmingham Six and, finally, the failure of the state to provide legal aid to the families of the 21 in their search for justice, despite overwhelming public and political support.

The decision is even more remarkable when the state has funded fat-cat lawyers and barristers, acting on behalf of the Coroner and West Midlands Police out of the public purse to the tune of £2 million. Indeed, a further £1.3 million has been claimed for subsidiary expenses, including a bill of £200,000 submitted by a public relations company dealing with the media on behalf of the state.

Prior to the hearing Justice for 21 relied on public donations and bucket collections from the people of Birmingham to cover their legal expenses at the recent coroner hearings. This unfairness in society makes me angry and saddened. We continue to see a systematic cover-up from the establishment as to what happened on that fateful night and their incompetence afterwards.

The individuals responsible for the bombing remain at large. The corrupt police officers have not been prosecuted and, finally, while lawyers and solicitors working on behalf of the state get rich, the families struggle to cover their legal costs. This motion, respectfully, asks Congress and our great Union to support the work of the families in delivering justice for the 21, to hold the police and the judiciary accountable for their failings and to support the campaign for legal aid in their fight for truth, justice and accountability. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

WARINDER JUSS (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I speak in order to second Motion 331. The Birmingham pub bombing of 1974 was one of those events where you remember exactly where you were when you heard the news of the bombings. I was an 11-year-old who rushed downstairs, having been asleep, because there was a lot of noise coming from the living room and the television was on very loud. Then I saw the scenes of carnage as the bombings were being reported on the television.

Congress, there is obvious grief, anguish and heartbreak when a loved one dies, and this is increased when you know that the loved one who you have lost has met a violent death fuelled by anger and hatred. This grief, anguish and heartbreak is further increased when those who killed your loved ones have not been brought to justice because of corruption and incompetence. The inquest into the bombings recently concluded that the victims were unlawfully killed. But rather than the police carrying out proper investigations to bring the perpetrators to trial, six men from Northern Ireland, who had lived in Birmingham since the 1960s, were tortured and framed, beaten, subjected to mock executions, whereby shotguns and dogs were brought into their cells and burned with cigarettes just to elicit false confessions by the now defunct West Midlands Serious Crime Squad. As my colleagues mentioned earlier, it resulted in one of the worst miscarriages of justice in Britain, with the Birmingham Six spending nearly 17 years in prison. None of the police officers have been prosecuted and we still don't know those responsible for the pub bombings.

One of the Birmingham Six — Paddy Hill — when he was released, said, “We were put into prison just to satisfy and to quell the public outcry. In the end it was the public outcry that got us back out again”. Congress, let that public outcry continue to finally provide the truth, justice and accountability for not only the 21 families of those who died but for the Birmingham Six as well so they deserve the justice and accountability that they get. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT (Barbara Plant): Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 332.

CHILDREN'S VOICES MOTION 332

332. CHILDREN'S VOICES

This Congress urges the Government to make urgent changes to the way family law is conducted.

In 2015, Women's Aid conducted a study of Serious Case Reviews between 2005 and 2015. They found that 19 child homicides had occurred whilst under Family Law jurisdiction and carried out by known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Congress believes Family Law proceedings must change and that no more children's lives should be lost because their voices were not listened to.

In March 2018, Theresa May launched the consultation for a new Domestic Violence Bill, within this are objectives:

To keep children at the heart of decisions

To have all judges trained to understand issues around domestic abuse

An end to aggressive cross-questioning in Family Courts

We ask for the GMB to support The Child First Campaign which is to ensure that children's voices, their wishes and feelings are heard and to keep them at the heart of Family Law. They are also pushing for a change to Practice Direction 12J of Family Law which recommends contact with both parents is in the best interest of the child and which judges take direction off.

The GMB should put its full weight behind this campaign to protect children who are at risk from an abusive parent during a break up.

B19 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region
(Carried)

LINDA MERCER (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 332 — Children’s Voices. I hope you will bear with me with this motion because it is quite an emotion topic.

President and Congress, we ask that this Congress supports urgent changes to how family and children’s law are conducted to prevent children’s lives being lost because their voices were not listened to, and that GMB supports The Child First Campaign, which ensures that children’s voices, their wishes and feelings are heard, and to keep them at the heart of family law.

Claire Trussell was a victim of domestic violence. She escaped and thought that herself and her children were safe. This was not to be. Claire was fighting a custody battle. The children had expressed a view that they were seeing less of their father. On 22nd October 2014 they had an unsupervised contact with their father who, in a prepared act, took his own life and that of Jack, aged 12, and Paul, aged 9. He had actually used petrol and covered them all in petrol. Then he set fire to them.

When the firemen came, Jack was still alive. He told the firefighters, “My dad did this and he did it deliberately”. Jack died a few days later. I believe that Practice Direction 12J of Family Law, which recommends contact with both parents, is in the best interest of the child and which judges take direction of, is out of date and is not best practice. The child should be at the heart of any decision relating to seeing both parents, especially in the case of domestic abuse. Just because a perpetrator has abused their partner and not a child, it does not mean that the child is safe. If a child says that he/she does not want to see a parent, then that should be taken into consideration, and the reasons why they don’t want to see that parent should be considered.

Between 2005 and 2015 Women’s Aid conducted a study, a serious case review, that proved that during this period 90 children were killed and they occurred whilst under family law jurisdiction. That means that the professionals were involved, they knew the risk of abuse and still allowed the abuser to have unsupervised contact with the child as a result of this direction in family law. The direction states that it is in the interests of both parents to have contact with their children. Congress, I ask that you support this campaign. On Friday evening there is a fringe meeting where Claire will be telling more of her story. You can find more information on the internet. Please support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Linda. That was a difficult speech. It’s Wednesday evening, not Friday. I call the seconder for Motion 332. (*The motion was seconded formally from the floor*) I call Motion 333.

PROCEEDS OF CRIME DECLARATION MOTION 333

333. PROCEEDS OF CRIME DECLARATION

This Congress is requested to campaign for all ownership of property, shares, rights etc. to be transparent to show they are legitimately owned and bought and should be declared as such as part of annual accounts for tax purposes and the prevention of crime. To effectively eradicate and outlaw the anonymous ownership of same.

If such a declaration is not possible as it cannot be established, then said property, shares, rights etc to be sequestrated by the state.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region
(Carried)

CATHY HOLLAND (London): That was a tough subject. I have to say that I have been involved in some of that. President and Congress, I move Motion 333. We have all seen the programmes of people using property and goods to wash their dirty money. In the last year, I have sold a house and bought a house with the same solicitor. Despite them knowing where our funds came from, the said sold house, they had to investigate in case we were money laundering. We also lent our daughter some money. They had to investigate that as well in case we were money laundering.

So why are people managing to slip through the net? I can only imagine that they have some very clever people helping them in their dishonest endeavours. So the Government must do more to eradicate this vile bunch of people and make sure that their ill-gotten gains are recovered, including property and fast cars and that a prison sentence follows. I would prefer their prison sentence is served on an island in the Atlantic with none of their ill-gotten gains. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy. Secunder?

MARIA JENNINGS (London): Congress, I second Motion 333. Internationally, if you read the *New York Times*, the UK, the City of London, is the money-laundering capital of the world. Who was the woman who spent £16 million in Harrods? It is a Miss Zamira Hajiyeva. I hope I have pronounced that right. She had a £12 million house and a £10 million golf course. She was from Azerbaijan and her husband was a bank clerk! She arrived here in the UK on a tier-one investor's visa, perhaps not with Ronnie Biggs' proceeds of crime but her husband's? No questions were asked because she was an investor. Her husband was convicted of stealing more than £20 million. So how did she get away with it? The answer is that her property was owned through an offshore company so there was no need for detailed investigation. There are 97,000 properties in the UK owned by overseas companies, 23,000 of which are owned by companies based in the British Virgin Islands, which is actually a UK territory. There are, actually, only 28,000 inhabitants of the British Virgin Islands. Do they each own a UK property? I don't think so.

The City of London financial and legal firms benefit hugely from this inflow of dirty capital. The UK Land Register does not reveal who the real owner is, and this is at the heart of the problem.

THE PRESIDENT: Maria, you have got the red light.

MARIA JENNINGS: We need to know who owns UK property and also who owns trusts. Thank you. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: We are close to Sadiq Khan joining us on the stage, so I will keep going with the debate but then we will suspend the debate and then re-start when he has left. I call the mover of Motion 334.

WHISTLEBLOWERS TO RECEIVE COMPENSATION MOTION 334

334. WHISTLEBLOWERS TO RECEIVE COMPENSATION

This Congress is requested to campaign for whistleblowers to be remunerated for their initiative to expose wrong-doing, as in America.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

DAVE KENT (London): Congress, I move Motion 334 — Whistleblowers to receive compensation. My comrade from Norwich, Vaughan Thomas, was meant to be moving this motion but due to a family emergency he has not been able to be here this week.

However, Vaughan has found time to send me his personal experiences with whistleblowing, and I will read it word-for-word in a moment. After that, I will hand over to my comrade, Brett, who will be seconding this motion and who will be speaking a little about how whistleblowers are rewarded in the USA and about how whistleblowers could be rewarded in the UK.

These are Vaughan's own words: "I have to declare an interest in this. I was a whistleblower and, in an odd way, this is what led me to where I am today; a trade unionist, a socialist, a Labour Party member and political activist. Declaring an interest might, in other circumstances, bar me from talking on this but, conversely, personal experience does give me some measure of insight that I feel is invaluable. I was working as a manager of an energy company, one that I had written the business plan for to get the finance and other resources to get it up and running. It was a successful plan and I was subsequently asked to manage the company. I was the manager, though, not a director.

"At the first meeting with the financial backers of the company I was told not to make any comments on the company accounts or cash flows. I was in a new job and wasn't, at that stage, going to start arguing with my boss, one of the company directors. At that first meeting, I sat there as the accounts were passed around along with the most recent cash flows and I didn't recognise the figures. I looked up to see the director staring at me, presumably, to see what kind of reaction I would give. The directors were putting people who did not exist through the books. After the meeting I raised my concerns and did more digging and delving to find out that the company was also getting paid twice for the same contracts. I made it quite clear that this wasn't acceptable as we were talking about public monies here.

"The directors took an alternative view and seemed to think that they had arrived in Nirvana. At the next meeting with the backers of the company I was required to

submit a report on the progress of the company. The directors thought that they could direct me as to what to write, but once you know something you cannot unknown it. I have five sons and I want them to make the right decisions in life, not just the easy ones or the convenient ones. So I wrote a report and sent it direct to the financial backers of the company and not to the directors. I was sacked the next day. This was before the Public Interest Disclosure Act. Truth to be known, I then no longer wanted to work with the directors. I understood why I had been sacked but I would not have made a different decision. It was the right decision but for me and my family an extremely painful one. My subsequent job applications went into four figures and I was getting pretty downhearted, depressed even. It was bloody hard going.

“With that kind of feedback coming in rejection letters in that volume, you have to have a belief in yourself in what you are about. Long-term unemployment followed. The car was repossessed, the phone cut off and debt collectors were knocking on the door. I wouldn’t wish what me and my family went through on anyone for doing the right thing. It’s a price your family should never have to pay. We need to recognise the reality of everyday business, that for every action there is or can be an equal or, all too often, an unequal reaction when it goes against vested interests.”

Congress, thanks for your attention. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: We will finish this motion with the seconder.

BRETT THOMAS (London): Congress, I second Motion 334. Whistleblowing, in the past, as I can remember as a 16-year-old apprentice working for Roneo Vickers in Hornchurch, was nothing unusual, but you were frowned upon. Whistleblowing today can be a termination of your employment, legal action against you and maybe even imprisonment.

Hundreds of laws grant us protection in the UK but with serious stipulations. Meeting those stipulations can be contentious and, therefore, be very vulnerable to people who have made whistleblowing accusations. Normally, they are always true.

Whistleblowing in the US became a legal action in 1989. A federation law of the USA protects people who whistleblow with full compensation if needs be. EU regulations of 2019 back compensation for whistleblowers in the EU and in the United Kingdom, but it does not come up to any standard of compensation to what the Americans pay. We, therefore, need to look at this legislation being more advanced. I give the example of one US citizen being paid \$101 million because his life was ruined by others. All I can ask you to do is to support this motion and I second Motion 334. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brett.

GUEST SPEAKER — SADIQ KHAN

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, as you can see I am now joined on the platform by Sadiq Khan, the Labour Mayor of London. (*Applause*) Sadiq is a GMB member and we’ve been proud to support him over the years — first as the MP for Tooting and

now Mayor of London. So it gives me great pleasure to invite Sadiq to take the stage. *(Applause)*

SADIQ KHAN: Thank you, Barbara, for that introduction. Let me say that Barbara is doing a fantastic job as President of the GMB. *(Applause)* You see, I can be nice about Presidents. *(Laughter)*

My name is Sadiq Khan. I am the Labour Mayor of London or, as some would say, one person in particular, “A stone cold loser!” *(Laughter)* I have turned my mobile phone off for this speech, so if anybody Tweets about me, a president or two and it’s abusive, just let me know, please.

It is a pleasure to be here at this Congress, a Congress which marks the 130th anniversary of this great Union. The GMB was born 130 years ago in my home city of London on 31st March 1889. It was founded by one of the greatest pioneers of the trade union and labour Movement, Will Thorne. The Gasworker & General Labours Union, as it was first named, won its first victory within just a year of its birth, securing the 8-hour working day for working people across our country. Will Thorne went on to be one of the first ever Labour politicians elected to Parliament, servicing as the MP for Plaistow from 1918 until 1945.

In the 130 years since the GMB and the Labour Party, which he helped to create, there have been huge improvements in the lives of working people that you have helped to win; securing the right to vote for women, safety standards in the workplace, creating the minimum wage, outlawing racial discrimination, decriminalising homosexuality, legalising women’s rights and ensuring that our NHS stays free at the point of need, a battle that still continues to this day. Congress, whatever Donald Trump says, our NHS will never be ‘on the table’! *(Cheers and applause)*

As officers and members of this great Union, you should all be immensely proud, because I am, not only for what you have achieved during the past 130 years but of what you are doing today. You have picked up the mantle from previous generations and are running with it faster than ever, fighting tirelessly to defend your members in a changing world of work and building a 21st century from the workplace up.

Will Thorne might not recognise the shirts normally worn by your fantastic General Secretary, Tim Roache. What a beautiful sight his shirts normally are. I must say that I didn’t recognise you with that white shirt on. *(Laughter)* But Will Thorne would definitely recognise Tim’s brave campaigning, whether it is fighting for warehouse workers to get the rights they deserve, not to be treated like robots, championing careers in the care sector and pressurising the Government to put manufacturing at the heart of a proper industrial strategy, or ensuring that Uber treats its drivers like workers rather than taking them for a ride. The GMB, with Tim as General Secretary, is now leading the way around the world showing how a modern trade union can continue to secure progress for working people. Let’s, please, hear it for your General Secretary, Tim! *(Applause)*

I am incredibly proud to call myself a trade unionist and a GMB member. I want to take this opportunity to say how incredibly grateful I am for your support throughout my life. When I was an employer helping to run a law firm, it was the GMB that my

staff joined. The GMB backed me when I first stood to be a councillor in 1994. The GMB backed me when I stood for Parliament in my home constituency of Tooting. And the GMB consistently supported me in my campaign to become Mayor of London and during the last three years in City Hall. That is something I will never forget. I want to thank you all, my GMB family, for all your support. *(Applause)*

You know, the Tories see my relationship with the GMB and other trade unions as a weakness for them to attack. But I will always see it as an enormous strength. A lifelong bond that helps me to deliver meaningful change for the people I represent. Trade unionism is personal to me. It is part of who I am and always will be. Growing up in London I saw first hand the power of trade unions from a young age. I don't talk about it much, but some of you might have known what my dad did for a living. He was a boilermaker. I'm only joking. He was a bus driver, of course. *(Laughter)* I saw the difference that being a member of a trade union made to my dad's life, and the lives of everyone in my family, from standing up for him when he was racially abused at work and securing fair pay and conditions which, in turn, gave me and my siblings access to great opportunities, to my favourite part, which was my first ever trip to the seaside courtesy of the trade union Movement. That's why I have been determined to do everything in my power to improve City Hall's relationship with trade unions. I am proud of how we have transformed the way we do business, benefiting our workforce and those who use our services alike.

We have shown that fostering good relations with the workforce, ensuring a constructive relationship between employers and trade unionists, benefits everyone. It is this approach that has helped secure a better pay deal and working conditions for bus drivers in London and a 65% reduction in days lost to strikes on the Underground. It is this approach that has helped us to develop the "good work" standard which is about making London the best city in the world to work. It is this approach that has seen the number of employers paying the London Living Wage increase by 50% during my time in office, with the rate increasing from £9.40 per hour, before I became Mayor, to £10.35p now. It is this approach that is helping us to deliver real change across the board for all Londoners, from building a record number of council homes to taking the boldest action of any city in the world to tackle air pollution.

Another example from just a few weeks ago was when the London Fire Brigade's training partner, Babcock, made moves to derecognise trade unions. It was the GMB who brought this to my attention and I am pleased to say those moves were stopped within a number of days. *(Applause)*

Despite the progress we are making in London and the GMB is making across the country, life is still getting harder for working people across Britain. Wages have still not reached the levels they were before the financial crash. People are working harder and longer but feel less secure in the workplace, and millions of young people are still being held back by the housing crisis, particularly in London. Some of these challenges have been decades in the making, but they have been made infinitely worse by this terrible Tory Government, not only through their actions but through their inaction to protect workers and to intervene in markets where necessary.

Some of the things that the Tory Government have done lead to the question being asked: What are they on? Well, after this weekend's revelations *(Laughter)* we can

have a guess! (*Applause*) Your members know more than most that the Government's austerity programme has gone from bad to worse. Our schools are in desperate need of more teachers. Our NHS is stretched to the limit. Our police are under-resourced and over-stretched. Our local authorities and youth services have been cut to the bone. The Tories have also neglected our key British industries time and time again, whether it is British Steel or shipbuilding at Appledore and/or Cammell Laird. Congress, this Tory Government are letting British workers down. They are letting Londoners down and they are letting our entire country down! We can't let them get away with it.

The stakes couldn't be higher. As inequality has continued to grow, far-right politicians, like Nigel Farage and Donald Trump, are playing on people's fears and blaming the vulnerable. Our democratic values are under threat, and the Tory Government are doing nothing to stop it and nothing to address the underlying causes.

Take the gig economy. At their worst, some of the new digital platforms for freelance work are driving down pay and scrapping workers' rights and safety standards. Without proper regulation and oversight, this new way of doing business risks being nothing more than a cover to break up decades of hard-fought rights.

Like the GMB, I am not against innovation, new technology, or change, far from it, but let me be clear, no business or industry should ever be allowed to wriggle out of basic responsibilities to their workforce. In London we have told Uber and other companies that everyone, no matter how big or small, must play by the rules: no ifs, no buts, no exceptions. Of course, there are some companies in the gig economy that are acting responsibly, engaging constructively with trade unions, and I want to take this opportunity to praise the GMB for your landmark agreement with Hermes. The onus should not be on just some companies, it should be on the government to fix things when regulation is behind the kerb.

Congress, friends, this is why it is so important that we work together as a movement to get Labour back in power once again so that we can have a Labour government working alongside Labour mayors and a great trade union like the GMB to fight for equality, fairness, and justice for working people across our country.

Before I finish I will briefly touch on an issue that I believe is the ultimate example of how some of the most vulnerable people in our society are being let down, that is the housing in the aftermath of the horrific Grenfell fire, which took place two years ago this week. Grenfell shocked us all in many ways. As well as the pain and heartache it shone a light on the stark and growing inequalities in our country, one of the richest in the world. It should have fundamentally changed the way the Government treated social housing. It should have led to an immediate commitment that we would never again have a situation where communities like the working class immigrant residents of Grenfell are so ignored, so neglected, and so powerless. It should have led to new laws and national investment to protect people.

The reason why I am late today is I spent this morning in Barking where residents are coming to terms with an awful fire yesterday that spread in minutes leaving 20 homes destroyed and more than 100 households evacuated for safety. Two years on from Grenfell and too little has changed. Lax building rules have been left untouched, too

little action has been taken to change how people in social housing are treated, too many families are still living in emergency and temporary accommodation, and thousands of people are still living in homes with dangerous cladding.

In her resignation speech, Theresa May held up her response to Grenfell as one of her biggest achievements. Congress, nothing can be further from the truth. The reality is the dismal lack of action from her government has been utterly shameful. Will Thorne once said: “There is a world of freedom, beauty, and equality to gain where everyone will have an opportunity to express the best that is in them for the benefit of all making a world a place more to our heart’s desire and the better to dwell in.”

Sadly, we still have a long way to go to reach this goal but despite massive challenges we face I remain optimistic and hopeful that we can make a difference because of people like you. Friends, you should be so proud that the GMB is leading the way showing how trade unions can adapt and stay relevant in the 21st century. You should be proud of what Labour is doing in London showing how we can create a fairer more equal city that works for all and, friends, the next step must be, must be, getting a Labour prime minister into Number 10 and forming a government that can work with us, not against us, to deliver real change. (*Applause*) Let’s make it happen. Thank you very much. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for finding the time to come and I am going to say it is quite nice to stand next to people that make me look taller!

We now return to the debate, the mover for Motion 337, please. Is there a mover for Motion 337?

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS – UNENFORCEABLE MOTION 337

337. NON DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS – UNENFORCEABLE.

This Congress is requested to campaign for Non-Disclosure Agreements, past, present and future to be made unenforceable in the public and private sectors, notwithstanding present libel laws.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region
(*Carried*)

STEPHEN JONES (London): How do I follow that: with great difficulty. I do not know how many people – hands up how many people have actually done settlement agreements before? (*A show of hands*) There are a few of you. It looks like I have a bit of explaining to do on this one, then.

Basically, to put it in a nutshell, settlement usually comes into place where somebody is having a dispute with their company, council, NHS, whatever, and there is no real way forward other than, say, a disciplinary, or whatever. You hit an impasse and then either side will ask for a settlement. It can be done through ACAS or it can be done through Unionline, and the rep himself. Some of these things can also be with a lot of gagging clauses. They all come with gagging clauses and some of them are really unacceptable and should be completely and utterly unenforceable. The reason why

they should be unenforceable is there are people in America who use this to their advantage to behave in the most disgusting way possible and behave totally inhumanly and treat other people in an inhuman way and they just think, “If I give you a bit of money, you get a gagging clause, you cannot talk about it, and my name is nice and clear.” It is unacceptable. It is used by the rich. Sometimes it can be a get-out-of-jail-free for companies as well. Basically, it is a potential way forward but, as I say, the fact is that they are gagging clauses which should be legally changed to make these completely and utterly unenforceable.

I have had some experience of dealing with settlements in the past and some of them have been because people have suffered from disabilities or mental health issues and it was felt that the company would either discipline the person or go down the settlement route. We decided to go down the settlement, that it would be far easier, a nice brokered deal, some of them might be very good, some of them have not been very good, but basically these non-disclosure agreements or gagging clauses within a settlement should be made unenforceable. Thank you. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stephen. Secunder?

BRETT CONNORS (London): As you just heard from the mover, gagging orders today is an issue in the workplace, people do feel that they are being discriminated against, and they do feel that they are vulnerable when they disclose or take other actions against other people or they have to be sectioned aside. All I can say is I think we seriously need to look at this motion and I second it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brett. The mover of Motion 340, please?

KNIFE CRIME MOTION 340

340. KNIFE CRIME

This Congress – This is a stand, an opportunity, an obligation to tackle a nationwide outbreak, plaguing our streets – Knife crime.

This is a chance to tackle an epidemic which has made us all fear late nights and be suspicious of those who in the majority are innocent.

This motion is the start of a battle, of a campaign to see our own heroic police service and justice system be given the support, tools and education to fight back against this wave of uncertainty and fear.

AVIATION SECURITY BRANCH
London Region

(*Carried*)

LORNA GAYLE (London): Congress, knife crime in Britain, across England and Wales, has escalated with London being the most affected. Never before has this country seen anything like it. People are being killed up and down the country on a weekly basis and in many cases on a daily basis. The problem seems to be getting worse. Figures released from the Home Office in April show that over the last five years going back to the ending of March 2014 there were 23,945 offences. Figures

today show that there were 39,818 knife crime offences in the 12 months ending in September 2018. This amounts to a 15,873 rise and overall a two-thirds increase in comparison to the numbers in 2014. I am sure you have been listening to the news or watching the news; these figures would have gone up since April. A total of 1,012 people aged between 10 and 19 were admitted to hospital with wounds caused by knives or sharp objects last year in the 12 months ending 19th February 2019.

The epidemic sees a 54% rise in young stabbings and injuries in the last five years. More and more young people are getting involved. Children as young as 10 years old are being groomed. This type of violence seems to be gang related where the gang tends to focus on crime and the very young and vulnerable. What is the reason behind such extreme violence no one knows. Families have lost children and loved ones. In towns and cities they have been left traumatised, frail, and frightened to walk the streets without looking over their shoulders.

In an attempt to send a message to the Government, family and friends took to the streets on April 17th in a protest demanding action. The question is, where is the Government and what are they doing to control the situation. (*Applause*) The Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, speaking on the news on April 15th said that the streets are not safe, not even for his own children. He also said that knife crime is a growing concern and stop-and-search is part of his vision to tackle the problem, and he pledges to put £50m into the project. On the same programme Diane Abbott also said police cuts by 18,000 is partly to blame and there is a call for stop-and-search. Senior officers and ministers say they need more funding while the Government is blaming austerity in central government for the lack of policing in the local area. It is not just policing but the closure of hundreds of youth centres has left our youth to become more susceptible to gang culture.

Whatever the reason is, we know that the Government is not doing enough. We understand that knife crime is a very sensitive subject and I call on the union as a matter of urgency to encourage the Government to take action. Together we can make a difference and if we can help to save one life it will be a positive move in the right direction. I move. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lorna. Secunder?

DAVE LEVY (London): First-time delegate, seconding Motion 340 on knife crime. The mover focused on the impact of knife crime and the scale of knife crime, the aspect of the increasing violence in our society, and particularly the motion refers to violence and emergency worker members. I live in New Cross, Lewisham, it is one of the epicentres of youth violence in London and my Labour MP, Vicky Foxcroft, is chair of the Violence Commission, which was established by parliament as part of the response to the epidemic and crisis. This has published an interim report and I commend you to read it. I am going to give you some idea of what it says.

The first thing that needs to be given to people is hope, hope for a better life, and why would people choose that better life if they have no hope for it. In order to give back hope we need a macro and a micro approach.

A micro approach involves the focus on early years and early intervention, a fundamental reform of youth services and businesses supporting schools. Once a child is excluded from school, hope has gone for most. We need investment in the community policing and review of the approach to drugs. These constitute the public health approach to youth violence which requires sustained, committed, and integrated response to the causes of youth violence.

The macro dimension refers to macro economic policy. While the provision of jobs and education programmes to allow people to work and fulfil themselves is crucial, without early years intervention, the graduates and the without hope youth will not take advantage of it.

Austerity must be reversed, we must invest in high skilled jobs and we need the education system for life. These are things that traditional politics can and must do. We cannot rely on a brave and increasingly thin blue line often traumatised themselves by being the first responders in a primary response. Our members deserve our support but so do all young people. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Cheers, Dave. Thank you. The mover of Motion 341.

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND THE POLICE MOTION 341

341. MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND THE POLICE

This Congress notes that non-crime related issues/incidents account for 83% of all calls for service.

With the ongoing radical cuts to policing going ahead, we ask, have the police officers had the correct training to deal with people with mental health problems.

We call on the GMB to support our members in the police, and commission a study into this worrying statistic.

Fight the cuts, but moreover, train the front line to protect the public and the officers.

HULL PAINT & ENGINEERING BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Referred)

SHANE ALLINSON (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, and visitors, this motion was written on the back of a truly worrying statistic that 83% of all calls for service are non-crime related, i.e. cries for help and mental episodes. Already, over-stretched police forces are having to pick up the pieces of a broken mental health system. More than half of all mental health patients who need help in a place of safety are taken there in a police car rather than an ambulance. On average, the police deal with a mental health call once every four minutes but send an officer just to deal with an issue every 12 minutes. These calls are taken by police staff, not police officers, and decisions are being made at times without adequate training in mental health. It is actually written that some health professionals are even telling patients in need to call the police in order to beat the long NHS waiting lists. How is this right?

Come on. An officer responding to a cry for help and taking patients to hospital is then tied to the incident and not policing our communities.

Police staff members need the training to recognise mental health and be able to direct these people to the correct service. This training must be robust and fit for purpose. The pressures put on our police staff members have to be lessened so that they can keep their own mental health in tact. Wrong decisions that cause harm cannot be allowed to impact our members and our job is to protect them. This training is tying up stretched police services at a time when they are facing increased demands to tackle knife crime, child exploitation, and the race terror threat.

Colleagues, we need the GMB to commission a study in all regions into this really worrying trend. Our members need our help and as a union we have never left anyone behind. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shane. Is there a seconder?

ALAN WOODWARD (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, with the sweeping and radical cuts to policing and public services cutting deep, the services for mental health care is in a rapid decline leaving the police to respond to calls for help. These calls should not require policing resources being deployed to non-crime related issues and incidents. We call on the GMB to support our police staff members and commission a study into these worrying trends to ensure our police staff members are receiving sufficient training in mental health so the cry for help is channelled into the correct service. Our police staff members are increasingly being required to make decisions which should be made by trained experts. We need to look after the mental health of our police staff members to help them to provide this invaluable link. Congress, please support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. Does anybody wish to speak against, first? No? I am asking Tim to come to the rostrum because before the CEC speaker responds there has been a slight change to our stance, which Tim will explain.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you very much. Good afternoon, Congress. On Motion 341, the motion clearly says, police officers, and GMB does not have police officers in our membership and on that basis and on the wording only the CEC considered the motion and was seeking withdrawal – that was on the basis we do not have police officers that are GMB members. Now it has been made abundantly clear by both the mover and the seconder that they are talking about police support staff of which GMB have many members and, indeed, a number of branches across the UK. On that basis, after a quick word with the President, we would prefer to seek referral of the motion back to the CEC for us to look and consider how we can work with our police support staff to ensure that we deliver the sentiment of the motion, if that is acceptable.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tim. Could I ask Ray Dowson to respond on behalf of the CEC with that extra qualification?

RAY DOWSON (CEC, Manufacturing Section): Speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 330, 333, 334, and 337.

On Motion 330, Cammell Laird 1984, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. The CEC wholeheartedly supports the call for the Government to apologise for the treatment of the Cammell Laird 37 and to publish any papers they hold on this disgraceful event. Delegates, we have seen the full CEC response to this motion which lays out work and lobbying done by the political team to get this on the agenda in the House of Commons. The qualification is that we are not technically able to instruct MPs to raise questions in parliament and there is a ballot process for questions for Prime Minister's Questions which we have no control over.

The GMB will continue to lobby MPs to keep this on the political agenda, not only by getting questions in parliament but in the Labour Party manifesto, which was a commitment that they made in the 2017 election.

The issues of shipbuilding and the current struggles faced by shipyard closures and the Tory government's policies of inviting tenders from overseas has been challenged many more times in both the Commons and in the Lords and will continue to be a priority.

On Motion 333, Proceeds of Crime Declaration, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. The GMB already has a longstanding policy of opposing tax avoidance and evasion and central to that are principles of transparency. This motion goes further to make it harder for the products of criminal tax avoidance, money laundering, and fraud to be accepted in the UK. The qualification is that where assets have been illegally obtained the CEC believes they should be returned to the rightful owner or country, otherwise there is a danger that the UK could benefit from assets effectively stolen from poor countries simply by the presence of the individual criminal in the UK.

On Motion 334, Whistleblowers to receive Compensation. The CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. This deals with Congress Motion 35, Protection of Whistleblowers 2012, which highlighted the important role whistleblowers play and the importance of their protection. The qualification is that whistleblower legislation in the USA focused mostly on public sector federal government employees and the CEC may want any new whistleblower legislation to include all workers, including those in the private sector.

On Motion 337, Non-Disclosure Agreements – Unenforceable, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. Non-disclosure agreements have come under particular scrutiny recently since the allegations of sexual abuse and harassment are most prominently in the entertainment industry and in politics. The Parliamentary Women and Equalities Select Committee has reported on their use and made a number of recommendations. The committee is also hearing evidence.

The CEC will naturally be opposed to any situation where the rich and powerful will be able to use their money to cover up wrongdoings and in some cases crimes. Transparency is important but at the same time there may be circumstances where confidentiality is advantageous to members, for example, in some severance or settlement agreements perhaps to avoid the risk of blacklisting.

Congress, the CEC is asking for Motion 330, 333, 334 and 337 to be accepted with the respective qualifications. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Ray. Does North West & Irish Region accept the qualification on Motion 330? (*Query from floor re right of reply*) No, not to the CEC you do not. I am sorry. You have the right of reply if somebody has opposed it from the floor. If it is the CEC, I am afraid you do not. Does North West & Irish Region accept the qualification on Motion 330? Yes? Thank you. Does London Region accept the qualification on Motions 333, 334, and 337? Yes. Thank you. Does Midlands & East Coast agree to refer, as suggested by Tim, Motion 341? Yes? Thank you very much.

In that case I shall now go to the vote. Motion 330, all those in favour, with the qualification, please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 330 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 331, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 331 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 332, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 332 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 333, the CEC is supporting with a qualification that is accepted. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 333 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 334, the CEC is supporting with a qualification. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 334 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 337, the CEC is supporting with a qualification. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 337 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 340, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 340 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 341, the CEC is asking for it to be referred, which was accepted. All those in favour please show. Any against? Thank you.

Motion 341 was REFERRED.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK

THE PRESIDENT: We are now moving on to Employment Policy: Rights at Work, which is Motions 171, 172, 173, and 174, if the movers could come down, please. Then after that will be Motions 296, 297, and 298. Can I have a mover?

EMPLOYMENT LAW – ACAS MOTION 171

171. EMPLOYMENT LAW – ACAS

This Congress wants the GMB to raise objection to the ACAS Code of Practice.

The guidance allows employers to hold disciplinary meetings without the need for those who have made and supported allegations against our members to be questioned by the member in a disciplinary hearing.

We accept that this may not always be desirable or logistical, due to holidays, sickness, distance or fear of intimidation. However, these circumstances are not the rule. Members have a right under natural justice to face their accuser. This right is denied every day at work in many cases to the detriment of our members.

Members of the GMB with long service records and in other cases can suffer false allegations made against them by faceless accusers who will not be examined by the accused because the employer will cite the ACAS Code of Practice which does not guide the employer to act justly.

The TUC have influence on the Code of Practice and GMB should use that influence to overturn this pervasive injustice and restore and maintain natural justice inside the workplace.

CENTRAL NORTH NHS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

NICOLA WARR (London): Congress, how many of us here today have found ourselves in the frustrating position in a disciplinary hearing of wanting to cross-examine witnesses who make allegations against our members only to find ourselves being denied the opportunity. Why is this, because ACAS in its wisdom decided it is not necessary for employees to be afforded a fundamental and fair opportunity to challenge the evidence of their accusers, which, in many cases, would be discredited under cross-examination. In virtually any other setting, particularly in the legal arena, not to cross-examine witnesses would be unheard of. By denying this access facts that could be extracted are never considered to the disadvantage of the employee.

Let me give you an example of a recent case where I represented a school-based member the outcome of which would have been very different if we allowed the school to apply the strict ACAS principles. Our member, who I will call Maureen, was accused of swearing at a Year 6 pupil. Maureen had 20 years of service as a teaching professional and was just three months away from retirement. An initial single accusation turns into multiple allegations including failure to provide a safe working environment, numerous safeguarding and child protection issues, failure to provide a duty of care, loss of trust and confidence, offensive, abusive, and indecent

behaviour, and of course our old favourite, bringing the employer into disrepute. The list of allegations ran on and on into three pages of A4 all of which were classed as gross misconduct. Maureen found herself in this dreadful situation because she was left in charge of an over-excited class at Christmas without any support from her senior colleagues and a minor incident between two pupils turned into a witch-hunt blown out of all proportions.

At the disciplinary hearing the presenting officer set out the employer's case against Maureen in such a way that you would think they were calling for life imprisonment or worse. After careful and thorough preparation, many hours of scanning through statements and other documents, we managed to put together a strong case to be argued. Despite protests I insisted on cross-examining not only the presenting officer but two other witnesses. Once in full flow, the case against Maureen crumbled and eventually fell apart. As a consequence, Maureen, who we thought was facing dismissal, ended up with her job saved and is now looking forward to her retirement. Maureen's case is an exception and fortunately had a satisfactory ending. However, as we know, far too many of our members end up with sanctions and disciplinary records just because we are not able to cross-examine. Congress, the time has come for the ACAS Code of Practice to be significantly overhauled in order to redress the balance and allow our members to face their accusers and to stop employers hiding behind the ACAS code. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

TONY CHOLERTON (London): President, Congress, this Congress notes that employers are changing the way they conduct disciplinary and grievance procedures in a way that is detrimental to our members and flies in the face of natural justice. More and more often our members are subject to these procedures without the ability to cross-examine their accusers. Although we accept that this is not always possible for a number of reasons, we see cases where this should be allowed so that people we represent can defend themselves by finding out what lies behind the accusations they face. Unfortunately, many people are learning that they can make accusations without having to justify their actions. It is also encouraging some people to collude with colleagues knowing that the person they have accused will not be able to speak with them directly.

I have personally represented two people who were falsely accused and in order to protect their accusers they were suspended and prevented from communicating with anyone at work except me as their trade union representative. The accusers were allowed to communicate without constraint. This instantly sends out a signal that they are guilty before the procedure. I am pleased to say that I was able to defend my members successfully but the process that they had to endure was life-changing. This motion calls upon GMB to raise objections to the ACAS Code of Conduct practice. It is necessary to stop people making accusations knowing full well that they will not have to face the accused. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Motion 172, the mover?

STOP ABUSE OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES FOR TRIVIAL OR MINOR INDISCRETIONS

MOTION 172

172. STOP ABUSE OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES FOR TRIVIAL OR MINOR INDISCRETIONS

This Congress notes that as Representatives we often have to attend many disciplinary hearings – often labelled gross misconduct, for trivial or minor matters by our members.

There is increasing evidence that particularly members of minority groups are being targeted for such actions as a means of cutting costs and often to get rid of staff. It applies across the board both in the public and private sector and has become quite noticeable since the 2016 referendum and the spectre of Brexit.

Examples include, amongst others, school support staff having to take a few days of “unauthorised leave” whilst abroad due to family illness; a hospital porter collapsing into a wheelchair and falling asleep for a few minutes due to effects of cancer medication; a young member failing to spot a spec of faecal matter on a toddler’s leg when changing a nappy; countless cases of minor medication errors made by members in the care sector under pressure.

These practices are very stressful for our members; they are very time-consuming and costly to both employers and the GMB.

We ask that the GMB campaigns to encourage employers not to take formal disciplinary action for trivial or minor offences.

REDBRIDGE BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

STEPHEN JONES (London): If you have read some of the inappropriate and gross misconduct cases that were listed in the motion it speaks for itself. I have been involved in a lot of the cases that I am going to talk about today. I am pleased to say that all of these were trivial and minor offences and we managed to get them all off the hook, and they have all kept their jobs. I am delighted to say that at the end of the day which is good news. We have here some good results; some have amounted to a verbal warning or worse. Nobody lost their jobs. There are many more similar cases, of course, that I have not listed and one of them I want to refer to and one that goes back a couple of years ago when I was last at Congress.

Do you remember the bacon butty incident? It was in local papers and it was all over the national press as well. It was someone within the NHS who actually worked in the private sector, I will not name them, but one day left their wallet at home and was not able to pay for a £4 lunch, which was a bacon butty and a cup of coffee. They were suspended and disciplined and were going to be dismissed but we managed to save their job. That was absolutely brilliant. There have been numerous other occasions, not all within the NHS it has to be said, where people had been disciplined allegedly under gross misconduct because they suffered an industrial injury while conducting military service and they had to lie down for just a few minutes in a dark room to support their back, but they were accused of being asleep and disciplined under gross misconduct. Also, people have been suspended under gross misconduct for allegedly sleeping on duty even though they have actually only been taking medication, and if they took it in the wrong format and at the wrong time it caused them side effects and one of the side effects was that they nearly lost consciousness.

The organisations did not have that, the NHS did not have that, and therefore they were disciplined under gross misconduct. I managed to get them off with a verbal warning, by the way. That is more good news. The list goes on and on.

I am calling on the GMB to campaign and encourage employers to refrain from taking formal disciplinary action for minor or trivial offences. I am also requesting that it should all be referred to the ACAS guidelines and that should be reinforced as well. I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stephen. Is there a seconder for Motion 172? Formally. Thank you. The mover of Motion 320, please. Have I got the wrong page? Am I on the wrong page? It is 171 and 173. It is all right, I did not turn over the page. The mover for Motion 173. Thank you.

GRIEVANCE HEARINGS/TIMEFRAMES MOTION 173

173. GRIEVANCE HEARING / TIMEFRAMES

A fundamental part of employment law is the right of an employee to raise a grievance. within the ACAS code of conduct and indeed across a number of employers.

We are probably all aware that a grievance or disciplinary is expected to be heard within a **reasonable** timeframe however, when an employer decides that a disciplinary should be heard within a **specified** timeframe to ensure the needs of the business, the employer often does not seek to apply the same speed of scrutiny to a potential wrongdoing for which they are potentially culpable or that they can directly address which impacts an individual or a group of workers.

If an employee has seen a short payment to their wage which is not addressed swiftly, this can have an impact not just on themselves but more often than not on their family life and those within their family and beyond.

When poor conditions in the workplace are raised to line management yet ignored leaving the only mechanism to you and your colleagues to be a grievance.

If an employee is subject to bullying, abuse or harassment in the workplace, should they have to wait to address the matter until the employer feels it reasonable. An underpayment, an intimidating colleague or simply slip and trip hazards.

We often hear from employers that their "most valued assets" are the employees why is it then that for these most valued of assets that they can be left to wait for their grievance to be heard for weeks or indeed months when it is quite clear that these same employers can seemingly address a disciplinary at the drop of a hat

Any one of the previous examples mentioned would impact an individuals mental wellbeing, it will play on their mind. and if not addressed can have a negative impact on their overall mental health

GMB A10 Retail Branch propose that GMB campaign to seek a minimum timeframe under which any grievance should be heard which should be no longer than seven working days.

A10 ASDA RETAIL AREA 1 BRANCH
Southern Region

(*Referred*)

JEFF HECTOR (Southern): The GMB is a recognised trade union within my workplace, Asda. You will be aware that from previous Congresses we have had issues with Asda but one stands out as a major recurring problem. We all know there is a difference between disciplinaries and grievance hearings. In respect of any disciplinary Asda management swing into action with obscene haste making sure there is always a suitable manager available whatever is required, be it gross misconduct or a minor altercation, and pressure is placed swiftly on our members to organise their representation at short notice, sometimes asking members to appear without any representation at all, practices which I am sure you recognise of those employers seeking to undermine the rights of their employees. However, when one of our members takes a brave step of submitting a grievance the management go into hibernation, and everything grinds to a halt, sometimes taking five months.

One of the most important roles as a GMB rep is to give confidence to our members that we are doing everything we can in their best interests. It is, therefore, unfortunate, that members perceive our inability to get grievances heard in a timely manner as union weakness when in fact it is just Asda management dragging their feet. Currently, Asda management barely pay lip service to the grievance policies and reasonable timeframes. What can we do about it, comrades? We insist the following actions take place. Our GMB national reps and national officer needs immediately to meet with Asda management to discuss the following. If the average time to address a disciplinary is six days, then why can this not be for grievances; reasonableness works both ways. We need to draw up a fair and transparent disciplinary and grievance policy and do it now. Beyond Asda we need to start a campaign that gives assurance to all employees, a campaign that assures that employees everywhere who raise a grievance will have the confidence that it will be heard in an acceptable timeframe. This will give our members hope and knowledge that we are a strong and progressive union for the 21st century. We have many potential members who are just waiting to see what we can achieve and once they see that we are a union of doers, they will be knocking at our door to join. Congress, we demand that Asda's in-house policy of delay after delay ceases, not next week, not next month, but now. Congress, I would ask you to support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jeff. I am sorry I confused you there. Secunder?

DAVID TUCKWELL (Southern): We cannot allow Asda to undermine justice in the workplace. It is only fair and decent for our members, and all other Asda workers, to be treated with respect by their employer. If an employee has a problem with the manager or their employer, they have recourse to the grievance or complaint procedure and they are often encouraged to resolve any matter informally. If the manager or employer has a problem with an employee, they have access to the disciplinary procedure, much more intimidating, and the penalties and sanctions it contains. As if this imbalance was not enough, our members and other workers have to put up with employers, in this case Asda, not treating a grievance as seriously as a disciplinary and allowing the timescales to slip. This not only makes GMB appear ineffective but it is at the expense of our members and their wellbeing. This motion seeks to address this imbalance. I second this motion. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. The mover of Motion 174.

SUSPENSION FROM WORK MOTION 174

174. SUSPENSION FROM WORK

This Congress notes with approval the evolution of case law concerning suspensions from work. The cumulative effect of the judgements of Agoreyo, Crawford, Mezey and Gogay represent a significant shift away from unfettered management discretion.

This Congress believes that the “knee jerk” suspension of employees accused of potential misconduct is often abused by managers.

This Congress notes that, far too often, managers and HR professionals continue to suspend, and disregard recent case law.

This Congress notes that GMB representatives often have to support members who have not only suffered from cruel injustice, but who have suffered acute and lasting mental distress as a consequence. Employers often fail woefully to support staff placed in this situation.

This Congress notes that although a member may have been unlawfully suspended there is often no legal remedy that they can seek.

Congress resolves to ensure that all employers and their HR advisers are made fully aware that GMB expects their suspension policy to follow recent case law.

Congress resolves that GMB will highlight to employers the impact on the mental wellbeing of staff who are unjustly suspended from work.

Congress resolves to seek improvements to employees’ legal rights, so that there is an effective remedy for workers who are unlawfully suspended.

W15 WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON
Southern Region

(Carried)

PAULO FERNANDES (Southern): Dear colleagues, let me tell you a story of what happened to one of our members, who worked with vulnerable young children. After a normal day at the school, she was telephoned by her boss while she was shopping in Tesco and told her that she was suspended at work. The employers could not tell her why. She was not to contact anyone else from work and that the police and the council of safeguarding were being informed. There followed months of stress which had a serious effect on her mental health. She was interviewed by the police and they advised her that she had no case to answer. They could not understand why they had been involved. It turned out that her suspension was due to a false allegation from a client who had a history of making false allegations and who had a medical condition leading her to make serious complaints. Despite 17 years of professional experience our member was not asked for her own side of the story before they leapt to their conclusion and suspended her without any attempt to find out the facts. Our member was ignored and her work colleagues obviously thought the worst of her believing that there is no smoke without fire.

Colleagues, in recent years the courts have become clearer and clearer that this sort of knee-jerk suspension is unlawful but employers and other professionals keep bringing it. What is more, on the first suspension that is often unlawful employees have no legal remedy. Colleagues, we need to ensure that employers obey the law and the law

is central to allow workers a legal remedy if they are unreasonably suspended. Please support this motion. I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paulo. Secunder?

SYED RAZA (Southern): Congress, many employers are misusing their right to suspend workers. Some employers are disregarding the law when they decide to suspend an employee from a workplace. Too many employers are using suspension as a disciplinary measure designed to punish workers rather than the method of placing a worker on limited break from the workplace. A limited break from the workplace should be as short as possible.

I ask that Congress resolve to ensure GMB makes all employers aware that GMB expect employers putting an employee on suspension to adhere to all employment law, including all case law. I ask that Congress resolve to ensure that the GMB will communicate to employers the horrendous ill effect on workers' mental health when they are under suspension from work. I also ask that this Congress resolve to ensure that GMB will seek improvements to workers' legal rights to make sure there is a legal remedy for workers who are unlawfully suspended from work. Congress, I second this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Syed. Thank you. Does anyone wish to oppose any of these motions? No? Can I ask Kevin Jones to respond on behalf of the CEC, please.

KEVIN JONES (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, speaking for the CEC on Motion 173, grievance hearings/timeframes, which we are asking to be referred. The CEC understand the frustration outlined in the motion that there is no specific timescale for any grievance hearing or grievance appeal hearing. The ACAS court says there should be no unreasonable delay. Case law indicates that the employer owes an implied contractual duty to deal with a grievance promptly, effectively, and an employer will deal with it in a reasonable time or is likely to be in breach of an implied duty. The GMB should negotiate grievance procedures which can include timeframes for dealing with grievances and appeals. However, a seven-day timeframe would create huge difficulties for the GMB to arrange representation, the right to be accompanied, and allowance for postponement up to five working days. We would also be nervous about inadvertently introducing a general timeframe that might allow an employer to tie us up in procedures, the statutory procedures. Between 2014 and 2019 there may have been a case that has arisen and therefore the recommendation is to refer back to the CEC so we can make further considerations on the way forward. I thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Does Southern Region agree to refer Motion 173? Yes. Thank you. In that case, as the CEC is supporting Motions 171, 172, and 174, I will take those all as a group. All those in favour please show. Any against? They are all carried.

Motion 171 was CARRIED.

Motion 172 was CARRIED.

Motion 174 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 173, the region accepts reference back. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried. Thank you.

Motion 173 was REFERRED.

POLITICAL: DEMOCRACY AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

THE PRESIDENT: Now moving on to Political: Democracy and Constitutional Reform. We have Motions 296, 297 and 298.

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT MOTION 296

296. REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

This Congress supports the principle of Regional Government and local accountability.

We therefore seek support politically, the implementation and support of a law making assembly for Cornwall, recognising its distinctive history and culture.

CAMBORNE C21 BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Referred)

JENNIFER SMITH (GMB Wales & South West): There are longstanding distinctions in the ways that different parts of the United Kingdom actually work. This is evidence from the creation of the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, and the Northern Ireland Assembly over 20 years ago. The principle of transferring power from central to regional basis is a sound one and it enables different areas to decide for themselves what is most appropriate for them. Whilst measures have been brought forward from Westminster to increase power to the devolved governments in Scotland and Wales, only a limited number of city regions have been given extra levels of control over key decisions.

In my region, or at least the Welsh part of it, the use of primary lawmaking powers has helped in shaping policy in vital devolved areas and permitted the Welsh government to address its own needs by legislating accordingly. However, as devolution has started momentum over the years, the English regions have been largely left behind despite a government commitment to devolve power to them. So-called devolution deals have been struck in several areas, including Greater Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Nottingham and Bristol, each of which confers freedom to take charge of how in areas they should develop in terms of economic growth especially.

Congress, ministers and civil servants in London rarely, if ever, have sufficient knowledge and understanding of issues as locally elected politicians. Devolution permits the cultural identity of each part of the UK to find appropriate expression and allows for different policies to develop in disparate parts of the country and encourages innovative thinking. Those of our members who live in Cornwall will claim that it is as much a country as Wales and that it should have its own

independence and should have its own devolved lawmaking assembly. When Cornwall County Council became a unitary authority in 2009, the idea was based upon giving the country a stronger voice and being a stepping stone to a Cornish Assembly. The Government of Cornwall Bill was introduced to parliament 10 years ago. Regrettably, it did not succeed. Cornwall is a distinct region with clearly defined economic, administrative, and cultural identity, and deserves the autonomy to make crucial decisions for itself based on the special needs of its people.

Congress, devolution in areas of transport, energy, health, social care, housing, and others, has popular support so let's build upon the political expressions of health made on a cross-party basis and push for autonomy in the form of a Cornish National Assembly. My region is happy to agree reference on this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jenny. Secunder?

MICHAEL WILSON (GMB Wales & South West): The concept of Cornish identity dates back many centuries and has been the subject of a revived interest in recent years. It has been recognised and accepted that Cornwall has a special case for a devolution status as there should be a form of modern governance that strengthens it and positively addresses the structure and other problems that arise out of isolation and loss of confidence. As the mover has said, important decisions about the country's future are being taken by the unelected bureaucrats in London, decisions that are often inappropriate or even in conflict with the needs of our local communities.

As is the case with the other nations, Cornwall should have a greater say in how it is governed with a Cornish Assembly that has the ability to frame the correct democrat priorities for the area. What we have currently is an unequal constitutional relationship between the various regions and nations of the UK and too much of a centralising influence being exerted from London. The devolution deal, whilst welcome, conferred very limited new powers to the unitary authority and did not even merit a description of devolution. Cornwall is deserving of a proper devolution achieved through standalone legislation on par with our Celtic brothers and sisters. It has no form of an effective so-called self-governance and cannot make any of the critical political, economic, environmental, and social decisions for itself. The bodies, agencies, and quangos, that make these choices are not accountable to the people of Cornwall. The only way to deliver this is by way of a democratic settlement that devolves significant powers to the National Assembly of Cornwall. A National Assembly would have the capability to introduce primary legislation within defined areas of competence, such as in Wales. Without reference to Westminster such economic development, health, housing, energy, and education, matters of a specific type could still be within the jurisdiction of Westminster, for example, defence.

THE PRESIDENT: Michael, you have the red light. I am sorry.

MICHAEL WILSON (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, we need a system that makes a real difference to Cornwall. We are not seeking independence but we are campaigning for an assembly within the wider framework. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Motion 297 mover, please.

FAIR VOTES THROUGH PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION MOTION 297

297. FAIR VOTES THROUGH PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

This Congress recognises that FPTP was previously supported as the most likely voting system to deliver a Labour Government and avoid coalitions; however, politics is changing and the outcomes of elections are less predictable than ever before. The past century has seen far too many decades lost to Tory rule at Westminster when a majority of the country did not vote for this and this has been contrary to the interests of trade unionists.

Further, huge swathes of the UK have been denied a party representative of their choice despite often having a notable vote share in that locality, region or nation. Trade unionists and working people need a voting system in which every vote is equal, and every vote counts the same. It's time that we abolished a system set up by the establishment to benefit the establishment, and replaced it with a system in which every vote has equal worth and equal power.

We therefore instruct Congress to:

- a) Adopt a policy in support of proportional representation for all levels of government across the UK. This needs to be a genuinely proportional system and not the Alternative Vote or a variant of it.
- b) Affiliate to the Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform and Make Votes Matter.
- c) GMB representatives within the Labour Party to use their influence to change party policy to promote fair votes.
- d) Provide political education to union officers, representatives and lay members in support of proportional representation.

TORBAY & SOUTH DEVON T28 BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Referred)

ELAINE MORGAN (GMB Wales & South West): President, Congress, the political party system in this country is in a state of flux and our electoral system is being pushed to breaking point. The breakaway of the independent group and the creation of the Brexit Party and the results in local government and European elections all serve to illustrate the move away from the traditional two or three-party dominance in British politics. Congress, it is time that traditional first past the post system comes under critical review as a means of sufficient representation of the people. The Tories came to power in 2017 following a hung parliament with just over 42% of the total vote despite other parties winning a substantial share. Is this a democratic or representative outcome.

Congress, the system is broken. It requires a solution. We need a new system that allows people to be adequately represented in parliament and this requires a thorough and innovative based approach to alternatives. The system of proportional representation would allow multiple parties to compete fairly for seats in parliament, with representation decided in line with the electoral support. Congress, this is not a new idea. Roughly four out of five of the world's democracies now operate such a system with multiple parties contesting elections. Experience shows that these countries generally have a more political stability, higher voter turnout and

participation. Voters are more satisfied with the enhanced democracy involved. It provides more seats for women and specific minority groups and policy of presenting a much more progressive stance on politics generally.

The fiasco of Brexit has understandably caused people to have a dwindling faith in the institutions of democracy in Britain where they feel betrayed by politicians, not abiding by the decisions made by the electorate at the ballot box. An overhaul of the present winner-takes-all principle would undoubtedly help restore some trust and confidence and its replacement by a system whereby minorities are adequately represented. We have had a monopoly-like situation electorally for far too long with limited choice election providing little opportunity to challenge conventional wisdom.

Congress, the CEC is opposing this motion by reason that PR is not the best voting system to achieve power for the Labour Party.

THE PRESIDENT: We are not opposing. Okay, carry on, but you will get the explanation from the CEC.

ELAINE MORGAN (GMB Wales & South West): Thank you. The Labour Party remains the only social democratic party in the developed world that officially supports first-past-the-post. However, within the party itself demand for reform of the voting system has grown since 2017 with Labour voters and MPs backing the need for a modern, proportional, democratic model fundamental to the challenges facing the party.

In 14 of the last 15 general elections the majority have voted for parties to the left of the Tories, including throughout the entire Thatcher era, but they have still governed for most of that time. Congress, we need to give a fair and equal voice to those voters who want a better society. It is clear many voters are choosing to shop around and results are becoming distorted. The current electoral system cannot keep up and fails to represent the view of the voters. Congress, the time has come for change. Let's have a structured and sensible debate within the GMB on this matter. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elaine. A seconder for Motion 297?

ROGER HUNT (GMB Wales & South West): President, Congress, my seconding speech has been written on the back of the CEC's opposition that is formulated upon the belief that existing GMB policy supports first-past-the-post as the best way to ensure a Labour party comes to power with a majority and that its concessionary power sharing is unacceptable. That view ignores the very real debate within the party itself about the logistic ability of proportional representation.

Before the 2017 general election the party captured much public support by setting out a new and vibrant political vision for the future. That vision was particularly attractive to younger people who were dissatisfied with the cynical and archaic electoral systems that do not produce better income, equality, fairer distribution of public goods, services, resources, and better environmental protection and faster action on climate change. That vision, along with the party's socialist values, is

undermined by the insistence upon taking power with a majority in parliament which does not reflect the overall wish of the electorate.

Congress, even the party itself recognises the deficiency of the system which excludes many from political decision-making for the benefit of the few. It acknowledges that first-past-the-post fails to perform even the simplest task expected of a developing voting system and contradicts democratic principles. Congress ----

THE PRESIDENT: Roger, you have the red light, if you could wind up, please.

ROGER HUNT (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, so why can't we have this matter referred to our own committees for meaningful discussion. The motion stifles discussion and ignores the need for progressive change. I urge Congress to support Motion 297. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. The mover for Motion 298.

VOTES FOR 16- AND 17-YEAR OLDS MOTION 298

298. VOTES FOR 16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS

This Congress notes that GMB Policy is for a reduction in the voting age but as 16 year olds were allowed to vote in the Scottish Referendum, we urge GMB to push for full voting rights for all 16 & 17 year olds in local and national elections and in particular should there be a second referendum or Peoples' vote.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

NATHAN CLARKE (London): President, Congress, good afternoon. Congress, this should be relatively brief and it is already GMB existing policy for 16- and 17-year olds to have voting rights as per GMB Congress 2012 motion, Votes at 16, and 2013 motion, No Taxation Without Representation. Really, this is a small detail policy change. This motion as highlighted by the CEC in their report sets out that in the event there is a public vote upon the deal, GMB should campaign for 16- and 17-year olds to be given a vote in the referendum. I would also like to highlight that this motion did not campaign itself for a public vote in the deal or a people's vote but it does make a qualification upon how it should be handled should it come about.

Now, comrades, oddly enough, by pure coincidence the day after the referendum results back in 2016 was my 25th birthday and that was quite an unusual birthday present for me to get. Personally, I wish I had kept the receipt but that is just me. The thing is I would not have been the only one whose birthday was the day after, or the week after, and there will probably be quite a few 17-year olds who turned 18 next day, week, or month, who had strong opinions and a vested interest in the outcome of the referendum be their contribution for leave or remain. Their voices were not heard and for the past three years since we have seen the cries of injustice from those individuals who wanted to put their points forward and were denied.

Congress, we are already committed to giving young people a voice in other votes and in elections. Let's not break that obligation in the possible event of a public vote. Let's maintain it and give young people their voice. Thank you for listening. Please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nathan. Secunder?

DANIEL DURCAN (London): Thank you, Nathan, for summing that up very well so there is not too much to add as it is already our policy. I do not think there is a better day to raise this than the current show that is happening with the Conservative party and the state of our politics. How can anyone realistically say with a straight face that 16- and 17-year olds are not mature enough to make these decisions when you have incompetent liars and egotistical idiots running around snorting cocaine trying to run our country. (*Applause*)

So, given that the future affects young people more, given that they have been excluded from decision-making on things like Brexit, on housing, and tuition fees, clearly the policy here is to support in any future vote that we give young people the chance. Thank you very much. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dan. Does anyone wish to oppose any of those motions? No? That will give me a moment to clarify the position – sorry, there is. Come down if you are opposing. Make it clear which motion you are opposing.

PATRICK BONNER (London): I wish to oppose Motion 297 and I would expect quite a few people to have opinions on that but maybe do not want to raise issues. First-past-the-post we have had for a long, long time but it seems we are dealing with the idea to have what seems like a more democratic process to elect our government. At the end of the day with first-past-the-post we know who our MP is, we know who the target is when we have problems, we know who to support when they have problems, but with the other way to elect MPs, proportional representation, you will have, for example, in London a long list of 30-odd or maybe up to 70 MPs and nobody knows who their MP is. It will be the same as the existing members of the European Parliament, no one knows who they are, no one meets with them, so far as our members are concerned maybe the elite from the Labour Party meet with them, and we do not know how to control them or make them accountable. I would say that that system is not really what I would like to see.

Now, on the issue of a fairer system, every vote counts and all that stuff, who would be the beneficiary of that, would it be the Tories or would it be Labour? Let's put it this way, we might think that it would be better for the Tories to be in a coalition with the Liberals, if they do not get a majority. That is what you would get. What happened the last time was austerity. We have had austerity from the Liberals as well as the Tories so it does not really improve things for us, but if a Labour government gets into power in a proportional representation system would it be a permanent Liberal Labour coalition? Is that all we would get? I do not think that would improve things for us either. We would be faced with a situation of how do we elect the government. I have prepared this in the last few minutes because I did not really know this was coming up.

THE PRESIDENT: You have a red light there, please.

PATRICK BONNER (London): Okay, just one more point, then.

THE PRESIDENT: Quickly.

PATRICK BONNER (London): The accountability of our MPs is important and to reach an accountable system is important as well but you could have one simple variation to the current system and that is a single transferable vote, so that in your local party and your local election you can transfer the vote if you do not get the person you want.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, thank you. (*Applause*) Does anybody else want to come in on this debate? No? Could I ask Andy Newman to respond on behalf of the CEC. I am sorry, it has been a long afternoon. Does the mover want to have the right of reply? No. Okay, all right. Andy, third time lucky.

ANDY NEWMAN (CEC, Commercial Services): President, Congress, comrades, responding to Motions 296 and 297.

With Motion 296, as the mover and seconder pointed out, Cornwall is an anomalous place because whilst it is an English county it is also a duchy and a Cornish nation. There is support in the county for devolution for a Senedh Kernow or Cornish Assembly. We wanted to refer this back to the region because we think the region is the best place actually to make the judgements about the model of devolution that they would support, or not. Some models of devolution can be a fig leaf for Tory cuts. It also has to navigate the issue of what levels of support there are for an assembly. In 2014, the Party of Cornwall, the Senedh Kernow, conducted an online survey that only got 2,655 signatures in support of the Senedh. Our recommendation is that that is referred back to the region for them to deal with.

Our response to Motion 297 on proportional representation is reference back so we can give this further consideration. However, I would like to make clear that from the CEC's point of view the purpose of the electoral system is to deliver a Labour government with a parliamentary majority that can govern this country in the interests of working people. (*Applause*) Comrades, first-past-the-post has delivered majority Labour governments but never with a majority of the popular vote, even Clement Attlee in 1945 secured 47%. No Labour election campaign has won more than 45% of the vote since Harold Wilson in 1966. Look what those majority governments achieved. If you read Will Thorne's biography, the founder of our union, he left school aged eight to become the sole breadwinner in his family, in a system that had no welfare state, no pensions, and no public health service. Look what those governments achieved. We brought in employment rights, we brought in the NHS, we brought in the welfare state, we brought in health and safety at work, and we abolished the ability of people to discriminate over race or sex. We abolished clause 28. We built millions of houses. We brought in the minimum wage. We brought in working tax credit. We made a fairer society and we lifted millions of people out of poverty.

Comrades, if we had to do backroom deals with other parties all that might have been compromised. Look at Bolton Council, only in the last two or three weeks where although Labour is the largest party and has the largest number of votes of all the parties, UKIP and the LibDems have gone into coalition with the Tories to exclude Labour from power. Is that what we want to see? Comrades, first-past-the-post also holds the Labour Party together. The party would not exist in its current form without first-past-the-post and adding the big broad church of Labour when we have a structural role within that party increases the influence of our party. Comrades, look at the Peterborough election only last week, it demonstrates that there is a unique opportunity for us. With only 31% of the vote we won that seat because the Brexit Party split the Tory vote. That could happen around the country, that our party, our voters are more loyal to us than the Tory voters are to them.

Now, I stood for our party in 2017 for Parliament and that fantastic manifesto inspired millions of people, people who had never voted before, young people who wanted to see Jeremy Corbyn in power. I know there have been some people in our party who poured negativity on to us because of the European elections. Comrades, there have always been people that are negative in our party. We even sing a song about it, *When cowards flinch and traitors smear We keep the Red Flag flying here*. Comrades, bring on that general election. GMB is not pessimistic. Bring on that general election and we will campaign enthusiastically and with determination to put Jeremy Corbyn into Number 10 Downing Street. We will defeat Farage and the politics of hate and division. We will sweep aside the tired gang of coke heads who are stomping from crisis to crisis. We need to concentrate on the goal, comrades, a majority Labour government with a socialist programme that will build a stronger economy, will make a fairer society and will govern for the working class. The electoral reform we want to see is more Labour MPs voting for socialism in the House of Commons. On that basis we ask you to refer this back. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Right. He nearly got the red light, never mind the Red Flag. On that, do GMB Wales & South West agree to refer 296? Yes. Thank you. And 297? Agreed. Thank you. Can we take the votes, Motion 296, all those in favour with reference back please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 296 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: On Motion 297, all those in favour with the reference back please show. All those against? That is carried.

Motion 297 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: On Motion 298, we are supporting. The CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 298 was CARRIED.

SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL

THE PRESIDENT: We have about another ten motions to go. I am going to keep going. I would rather get it over and done with today. All I ask is that people, as they

have done for the last two days, be very respectful of time limits. Thank you. Can I ask for Motions 314, C16, 319, and 320. The mover of 341? I should have said 314. I am going dyslexic.

SUPPORT FOR OUR EMERGENCY SERVICES AND ARMED FORCES MOTION 314

314. SUPPORT FOR OUR EMERGENCY SERVICES AND ARMED FORCES ...

This Congress fully supports our emergency services and Armed Forces which so brilliantly and courageously serve and protect our nation so well. In doing so, Congress

Congress notes that in 2018, the Inaugural Emergency Services Day was established with memorial ceremonies being held across our United Kingdom whereby service personnel, their families, and communities came together to remember those fallen in service as part of our emergency services at the ninth hour of the ninth day of the ninth month. Scotland will host the 2019 National 999 Services Day with Northern Ireland hosting in 2020 and Wales in 2021.

Congress also notes that 2018 marked the 1918 Armistice that brought an end to the Great War. We must never forget both the sacrifices and service of those that served and came home as well as those who served and did not. We too must remember the families and the diverse communities that served and continue to serve today in order to bring peace and harmony to the world.

Therefore, Congress will:

1. Pledge its full support for Emergency Services Day, Armed Forces Day, and Armistice Day.
2. Explore how the GMB Union can participate in and contribute to Emergency Services Day.
3. Encourage all branches of the GMB Union to send representation to local Emergency Services, Armed Forces Day and Armistice Day events and parades.
4. Write to the UK, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish, and Local Authority Governments to ensure both our Emergency Services and Armed Forces are both properly funded through the annual budget process, and equally protected through reviewing and amending Hate Crime and other Legislation.

SCOTTISH PRIMARY CARE NURSING BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

USMAN ALI (GMB Scotland): Congress, let me start by reading out some names – Desmond Acreman, Raja Ahmed, Nicola Hughes, Fiona Bone, Robert Bain, William Croft, Nicola Hughes, and Kelly Davies. These are just some of the brave members of our emergency services, police, fire and ambulance, who have lost their lives while on duty – on duty – serving and protecting us. Congress, over two million people serve our nation in our emergency services. They all do us proud as they do keeping us safe. Be it our police officers, fire-fighters, ambulance workers, or coastguards, all of them working to protect us from harm's way. Did you know that 7,000 emergency service personnel, who are volunteers from across our United Kingdom, have paid the ultimate price during the course of their public duty. Congress, let us remember them and let us thank them and their families for their service and sacrifice for our security and sanctuary.

Last year saw the inaugural emergency services day established with Manchester Cathedral hosting the first National 999 Services Day and at the 9th hour of the 9th day of the 9th month our nation shall fall silent to pay respect and remember the fallen amongst our emergency services. I am proud that Scotland will host this year's National 999 Services Day and that Northern Ireland and Wales will do likewise in 2020 and 2021. Congress, I hope our union, and all of us, will play our part in this act of remembrance from sending union representatives to services or having branches to donate to the fund for an emergency services cenotaph, or simply contacting local emergency service personnel and thanking them for their service. All of us can do something and I hope all of us will. An act of remembrance does not just apply to our emergency services. Of course, at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month since 1919 our nation has to stop to pay homage to the brave men and women of our Armed Forces. Just days ago our nation stopped and thoughts centred on another southern coastal city, Portsmouth, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings. The stories of Harry Deed and John Hutton were shared and we remembered those lost at battle never to return, lest we forget.

Congress, let us pledge here in this southern coastal city of Brighton and Hove to ensure that our union sends union representatives to local Armed Forces Day events and Armistice Day services. Let's call for our Armed Forces to be properly funded, to be properly equipped, and to be looked after properly whilst they are on tours of duty and once they return home. Valuing and respecting those who protect us in our emergency services, and remembering those who fight for us, our Armed Forces, that is how our United Kingdom was built, how it grew, and how it changed, like the story of our great union followed too. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. A seconder to Motion 314?

STEVIE TRAYNOR (GMB Scotland): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. I believe that we take our emergency services and the Armed Forces for granted. There is not one person in this hall who at some point has not needed the help, support, and guidance of our emergency services, be it the police, the fire service, the coastguard, nurses, doctors. Some of you, maybe all of you, every single night when you go to your bed you are protected by our Armed Forces and security services because, sadly, we live in a society now that every night you go to your bed you have to be protected. As a former soldier, I am well aware of the need for your support and, indeed, if it had not been for our emergency services and emergency care at a frozen roadside 10 years ago I would not be standing up here today. I am so grateful for them all, for the men and women who risk their life and limb every single day and to have given their lives for us all. Friends, they ask nothing from us other than our support, remembrance, and recognition. I passionately second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Stevie. Thank you. Composite 16, Birmingham to move and London to second.

TV LICENCE FEE FOR 75-YEAR OLDS

COMPOSITE MOTION C16

(Covering Motions 317 and 318)

317 – The Withdrawal of Free TV Licence Fee for 75 Year Olds – London Region

318 – TV Licence – Birmingham & West Midlands Region

This Congress calls upon the Government to stop the withdrawal of TV licence fees for 75 year olds and over.

This Congress is concerned about the plans to end free TV licences for those people over 75 years old. This will leave our older generation who are less mobile and possibly living on their own to attempt to find finance for the current licence fee out of very often meagre retirement pensions. Originally the Labour Party awarded free TV licences to all 75 year old pensioners, understanding that very often this is the only entertainment and information platform they will have but a Conservative Government decided pensioners weren't worth this, cleverly putting the burden on the BBC to fund this. They have now put pressure on BBC to reduce costs and resulting in this valuable asset being very likely to be removed.

At the moment we are aware that the BBC wants to withdraw this so called perk or privilege to 75 year olds.

All pensioners of 75 years old or older will be disadvantaged by this but especially those with disabilities both physical and mental and those who are isolated from society this may be because they live in the countryside many miles from anywhere or because like a lot of older people the social interaction between them and their neighbours is non-existent. In today's world with the pressures on ordinary peoples' time and accessibility means neighbours will have less chance to interact with our elderly residents, also in today's world a lot of children have moved to live around the world and cannot be near to their parents.

Most pensioners only have their TV licence as a comfort.

If the BBC want 75 year olds to pay for the privilege of watching BBC1 and the repeats then give them the option.

If you want to watch SKY you have to pay.

We therefore call on the CEC to mount a vigorous campaign with the Government to restart the funding for this scheme in order that those of our population who have built this country to what it is today enabling them to enjoy their retirement. This is only fair now that the Prime Minister is asserting that austerity has finished, therefore give these people the justice they deserve.

I call on Congress to support this motion.

(Carried)

ALAN DUDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, we call upon the GMB with the support and the TUC and all the unions to ensure that the transfer of the free TV licences for the over-75s from the Government to the BBC continues to be at no cost to the BBC budget and continues unchanged since its introduction in the year 2000. It is important that Government funding is provided to cover the cost of the transfer and to enable the BBC to continue to provide important services to those over 75 who experience loneliness, isolation, or disability, free of charge. This must not go unchallenged. We also need to ask ourselves is there a hidden agenda and what will be next, perhaps the winter fuel allowance? This is a fight we cannot afford to lose. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. Seconder?

DOUGLAS RIGBY (London): The withdrawal of the free TV licence for people over the age of 75: in this day and age we get nothing free except breathing fresh air. I am sure the Government would tax us for that if they could. Most if not all pensioners have already paid in advance for this so-called free TV licence. The only thing a lot of pensioners now get comfort from is watching TV. If you go to prison you watch it for free. However, just this afternoon we had breaking news, as of June 2020 pensioners will have to pay for TV licences. The BBC is withdrawing the so-called privilege and it will affect 3.7 million over-75s. If they are going to take it away, at least give people the choice. If like a lot of people they want to watch Sky or other providers, they pay for the privilege. In this day and age TV should be built with an option, to pay for BBC packages or channels with other providers. The TV in a lot of people's homes is the only comfort they have. To take this away would be a travesty. We must ensure that small things like free TV licences and a few other small things that OAPs get are not eroded. This must stay. Just recently MPs have been discussing taking away the heating allowance, bus passes, and decreasing old-age pensions. If you have another pension, the small allowances that OAPs now receive must stay. Congress, we are all getting older and I ask you to support this motion. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Doug. The mover of Motion 319.

FOOD BANKS MOTION 319

319. FOODBANKS

This Congress urges support for London Food Rescue. As part of a growing number of food banks arising as a response to Tory driven austerity. It's one of a few that caters for the working poor. Branches can get involved by encouraging members to volunteer with deliveries.

Trained counsellors and nutritionists are also needed.

Congress, food banks are a sad indictment of our times however, it's solidarity not charity that is needed.

CITY OF LONDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

EVELYN MARTIN (London): We are saddened to hear that there has been a record rise in people using food banks with almost two million emergency parcels being distributed in this year, the biggest annual increase in over five years. These should be issued in emergency only but food banks are finding that users are coming to them on a regular basis. Most people use food banks as a result of cuts to benefits, the Universal Credit delay, and rising poverty, especially in London, a fact which the DWP continually denied. Workers no longer have any savings to fall back on and are forced to turn to food banks. Food banks are a symptom of our system, not a solution to food poverty and inadequacy. They provide a vital life link to many families struggling to cope. I know about this because I have lived this as a child. I have seen this food poverty firsthand. A regular helper out at community projects you will find me campaigning outside restaurants and cafes making myself a nuisance, and they

give me the leftovers which I use to feed the homeless people. I know what they are going through. It is going deep down inside. Nobody in our society should be forced to turn to food banks to survive. Britain is one of the richest countries in the world with 14 million people still living in poverty. Austerity is not over and as it bites the voluntary community sector has to pick up the pieces to support vulnerable people.

We should now be concerned at the long-term effect of food insecurity and food poverty where many go hungry on a daily basis. This takes its toll on both physical and mental health. We need to act now before it is too late. It makes my heart bleed when we see this happening. I am so sorry that Mr. Khan is not here to hear this but we put these people in position not to act like a bunch of kids fighting for a packet of sweets, and they ought to know better. Ministers they call themselves, arguing over this and arguing over that; arguing over rubbish. They need to understand it is not what the people put them there for. They are a bunch of lunatics. I say get rid of the lot. They do not know what is happening. They are a bunch of clowns. (*Continuous cheering*) I feel passionate about this. This is my country. I come from the shores of Jamaica, come over here with nothing. It was this country that taught me to read and write, and it is the union that will stand by me, people like Paul Kenny and Joe Isaac, those people are the yesterday men, they were good men who taught us so I am not going to stand by here and watch them destroy the country that made me. Yes, Britain has done wrong, yes, Britain has done a lot, but they have done good too, and we should back the country and these men that we paid thousands to educate and are now acting like a child, oh, no, we are not going to put up with this. We want good government ---- (*continuous cheering*). (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Evelyn. Secunder?

DANNY BYRNE (London): President, Congress, when I saw Evelyn's script none of that was in there! (*Laughter*) I will have to bear that in mind as I try to follow that now. When I first started coming to Congress some 25 years ago I had never heard of food banks and I never expected to experience them in the UK during my lifetime. Equally, if anyone had suggested the concept of in work benefits would be a reality before my retirement, I would have thought the idea completely ridiculous. However, the reality is that there are 14 million people currently living in poverty in the UK, including 4.5 million children. There are more than 1,200 food bank centres in the UK that share the aim of providing a minimum of three days worth of nutritionally balanced emergency food to people who have been referred in a crisis.

The primary reasons for referral, according to the Trussell Trust food bank in Neasden in North West London, are given as one, income not covering the cost of essentials, that is 33%, benefit delays 20%, changes to the benefit system quite recently 17%. Between April 2018 and March 2019, food banks in North West London Region provided a record 1.6 million food parcels to people in crisis, that is an increase of 19% on the previous year.

Most of this can, of course, be linked to the politics of austerity and food banks will never go away until we get rid of this callous government and replace it with one that wants to help working class people and improve living conditions rather than deliberately condemning people to a life of poverty. I second the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. Motion 320 mover?

OAPs

MOTION 320

320. OAP'S

This Congress should call on and lobby this Government to rescind or to police the BBC re the change to free licence as a possibility. This Government pledged to keep them until at least 2022. This seems to be a scheme to take them off the hook for blame.

Also there seems to be rumours about possible loss of national bus passes and then now a call from some areas to alter the current system i.e. over 70's driving.

This seems to be a slight against OAP's.

ASDA SOUTH BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

RON POWELL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, once again our older population is under attack and under attack for all the wrong reasons. The benefits they have worked for all their lives are being threatened. The support they receive to enable them to enjoy a reasonable quality of life, to tackle loneliness, to give an independence and mobility are once again back on the table for consideration. Why? Are we only a week from a D-Day remembrance where as a nation we thanked the role of that generation of women and men who fought for freedom and to preserve our way of life. Heroes for a day, then, eh?

Congress, at this time we should be preserving the rights of our older population who have contributed to the richness of this country, worked all their lives, paid their taxes, and made such huge differences to society. The talk now is of a generational rebalance because of the younger generation missing out because of the benefits that older people receive, to introduce means-testing for older people to see if they need a winter fuel allowance, a bus pass, or a television licence. Congress, this is not about pitching one generation against another, the reality is that it is about supporting all generations regardless of age, all generations who are struggling to live and in need. The elderly people who I know need their winter fuel allowance to keep warm, they need their bus pass to allow them to access ever-diminishing out-of-reach services, and if they are lucky to have a bus service at all it is the only way they can be mobile.

What I just found out this afternoon, surprise, surprise, the Tory broadcasting company, the BBC, have just announced that they are scrapping free TV licences for up to 3.7 million pensioners over the age of 75 in June next year. The Department of Culture, Medium & Sport, hands over its dirty washing to the BBC and, guess what, they have gone and done it. The BBC has said that it is fair. They have consulted; they have consulted with 190,000 people. I wonder who they were because my 91-year old mother was not one of those. Congress, it is a disgrace. 190,000 people have determined the lives of 3.7 million older people; an absolute disgrace. Something else, of these 190,000 people 52% were in favour of abolishing the free licences. 52%, doesn't that ring a bell from somewhere else? The BBC spends nearly

£100 million on a new Eastenders' set but puts 3.7 million older people into TV licence poverty.

Congress, we need to change this. On the wider front we need to protect our older people's rights and benefits that will be attacked. Means-testing has already come in. As of this afternoon, we need to fight for the reestablishment of a free TV licence for over 75s and fight for this to be included in the next Labour Party manifesto because, hopefully, we will have a general election before June next year. Congress, support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ron. Secunder?

SHELAGH CARTER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Imagine if you will, you have worked all your life, you may well have fought for your country in the hope that when you retire apart from a pension you also get a few concessions, a free TV licence being one of them. Last week we had the 75th anniversary of D-Day where we praised the sacrifice that some of our senior citizens made to give us our freedom. In the last few hours the BBC has announced that they will scrap offering free TV licences to the over-75s. Having a free TV licence for some of our pensioners is one of life's comforts, especially if they live on their own and do not see anyone for days on end. Why should they have to choose whether to buy a TV licence or other household necessities. The most recent rise in pension age means anyone born after 1978 will be 68 before they can claim their state pension. I do worry what will be left for those people.

We should call upon this union to lobby against this cruel cut to the well-earned concessions. It would seem free TV licences have gone, what will be next, free bus travel, free prescriptions, winter fuel payments. A famous quote from Mahatma Gandhi springs to mind here: "The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members." Surely to goodness, as a rich and developed country we should treat our OAPs with the respect they deserve and have worked for, or to paraphrase the words of the old-time comic George Formby, "It won't turn out nice again, will it." Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shelagh. Does anyone wish to oppose the motions? No? Before I take the vote can I ask the movers of 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, and 150 to come to the front, please, so we get in as much as possible. The CEC is supporting all of these motions so I will take them as a block, 314, C16, 319, 320, all those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are all carried. Thank you.

Motion 314 was CARRIED.

Composite Motion 16 was CARRIED.

Motion 319 was CARRIED.

Motion 320 was CARRIED.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

THE PRESIDENT: The mover of 144?

SHIFT WORKING

MOTION 144

144. SHIFT WORKING

Congress. In order to satisfy our contractual obligations many of our hard working members are undertaking shift patterns and extended hours in order to provide for their families. Now, we know employers are constantly striving to race to the bottom when offering new terms and conditions. I'm sure we have all experienced this backwards progression to an earlier industrial working model in our workplaces? Our members from the gas, electric and water industries as well as paramedics. Not to mention Doctors and nurses. (some evidence needed here. [Myself and any number of my colleagues have worked 26 hours without a break. Only last month I worked for 23 hours straight myself.] Paramedics I believe work a 12 hour shift. But may have to work-on to effect a patient transfer. How do I gather this information to be able to cite it?) All working with fatigue playing a huge part of their working life.

We believe there is an increase in employees suffering from fatigue, as employers seek to wring another bead of sweat from the brows of their workforce. Extended hours. Shift patterns. All seek to throw into turmoil and undermine the Circadian rhythms we have evolved over the millennia, that best place us to act at our optimum performance. We ask delegates, how much trust would you place in the ability of these safety critical members to undertake their duties after working for more than 20 hours? I leave you to ponder the potential impact of a wrong decision or act being carried out. Attending a patient; excavating on a live damaged electrical cable at two in the morning, or attending a gas escape with the rain lashing down on a cold February night after already being at work for 15 hours. Just think of the multitude of possibilities to make the wrong safety critical choice. Leading to a potential catastrophe.

We believe this pernicious modern day scourge is affecting our members to their detriment. Suffering physical, psychological and emotional damage. These antiquated working conditions. The remnants of a Dickensian era, should be banished to the pages of history.

We ask congress to lobby the government to set up an All Party Parliamentary Group to investigate and deal with the very real issue of this pernicious modern day industrial disease – Fatigue.

S68 SGN SOUTH EAST GAS BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

OLIVER CRUICKSHANK (Southern): Afternoon, Congress, Madam President. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Thank you. Many of our hardworking members are taking on unrealistic shift patterns and extending their hours to be able to provide for their families due to austerity and high cost of living, and pressure from employers, some up to 20-hour shifts. Long hours and shifts cause many health problems affecting their family life and health. Long-term fatigue is one of the major causes of mental health in the workplace. Long hours and fatigue can lead to the wrong decisions being made and maybe accidents happening. This is astonishing and has an impact on our members. There is a 13% increase in workplace injury caused by fatigue. Studies have also identified that fatigue has high risk health issues identifying there was a 29% increase of developing cancer or obesity due to fatigue, and 74% of employers underestimate the impact fatigue has on staff.

Congress, our members' health and lives are at risk. We ask Congress to lobby the Government and Labour to set up an all-party parliamentary group to investigate and deal with modern day industrial disease fatigue. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Oliver. Well done. Secunder?

JAMIE DENNIS (Southern): Many among us here today are shift workers, myself included. I work in the energy industry, a nuclear power station, and I am contractually obliged to cover the compliance role whether acting as a member of the fire team, first-aider, or the intervention team. Currently, the only way we can cover these roles in my workplace is through the use of overtime and extended shifts to allow other workers to get their right to paid holiday. We do not have it as bad as many other industries as at worst we will only work an extended 15-hour shift and there are structures in place to ensure it is not commonplace. Other industries do not have the same luxuries, paramedics, nurses, doctors, to name but a few, with many working a minimum 12-hour shifts, sometimes working in excess of 20 hours to keep our hospitals manned.

Fatigue is a real issue among all of these industries. Whether it be long shifts, irregular shift patterns, or extended shifts, fatigue plays a serious part and leads to many serious issues not least of which is the impact it has on our decision-making. Poor decision-making could have far-reaching and long-lasting effects. I am sure many of you may have seen the Chernobyl series recently on the television and the consequences and impact that has had. For those who are not aware Chernobyl is a Russian nuclear power station that in 1986 suffered a catastrophic failure resulting in a nuclear event the effects of which were felt even here in the UK. That entire event could have been avoided had the correct safety critical decisions been made initially. Although the circumstances are slightly different, many of these poor decisions were made on the night shift that the event happened. Fatigue severely impacts our decision-making process and wrong decisions could cost lives in many of our critical services. As we heard yesterday ----

THE PRESIDENT: Jamie, you have the red light; sorry.

JAMIE DENNIS (Southern): Sorry, I will wrap up now. As my colleague said, an all-party parliamentary group should be formed. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jamie. The mover of Motion 145.

VITAMIN “D” DEFICIENCY MOTION 145

145. VITAMIN ‘D’ DEFICIENCY

This Congress is concerned by the lack of information about the effects of not enough Vitamin ‘D’, particularly in the case of night workers, who rarely get enough sunshine to produce it naturally.

The GMB should use all its influence to work with employers for the use of Vitamin ‘D’ supplements, and as it is a welfare issue, provide access to them in the workplace.

TRANSPORT AND DISTRIBUTION BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

DOMINIQUE GILLOTT (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I ask Congress to agree that the subject of vitamin D deficiency amongst night shift, office, factory, and retail workers trapped inside stores all day is one that requires attention and action on our part, hopefully, to persuade employers to provide supplemental vitamins. What is vitamin D? Vitamin D is a type of hormone produced by the body in response to direct sunlight upon the skin which in turn helps the body absorb calcium and helps to promote health bone growth. Unfortunately, from October to March every year the UK gets the wrong type of sunshine and during these months most adults suffer from vitamin D deficiency. From March to October we do not get any sunshine either.

Congress, in one small Leeds-based office three workers had blood tests for other conditions and all were found to be vitamin D deficient. Isn't it our duty to keep our members safe at work? There is a bone condition called osteopenia, which is literally thinning of the bones. There are people in this hall who have this condition now and do not know it. It causes no pain, has no visible symptoms, and your bones do not break any easier than before. You may never know you have a disease and most people find out by accident.

Congress, we must take all employers to account over a duty of care because osteopenia is not a stagnant condition and unless vitamin D supplements are taken may become osteoporosis, which at this time is an incurable debilitating disease. Ask anyone with osteoporosis if they would have taken vitamin D supplements and they would respond with a resounding yes. For all the 30-year olds out there who think they have nothing to worry about, it is time to realise that from the age of 30 you start to lose bone density. Night workers rarely or infrequently see the sun because of their sleep patterns and office, shop, and factory workers are inside during the relevant periods of the day and also miss out on the necessary exposure to the midday sun. There is no excuse for employers not to provide supplementary levels of vitamin D as a two-month supply is available from most supermarkets for as little as a pound and next to nothing as a bulk purchase by employers. I therefore call on Congress to support this motion calling on employers to provide vitamin D supplements as a matter of course to ensure a healthy workforce for the future. Congress, I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

RON POWELL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, there is a vitamin D deficiency epidemic in our members, our country's workforce and the cost to the wider community is as follows. The cost to the NHS alone to deal with 200,000 osteoporotic factors in 2020 will be in excess of £2bn. In work 6.6 million days were lost last year due to muscular skeletal disorders. The costs that are hidden for our members is the pain and suffering that living with the consequences of osteopenia can bring you in later life. The final onset of osteoporosis, development of weak and little bones, leads in the majority of cases to problems with the hip, back, and wrists, to carry out simple bodily movements such as bending, or even coughing, can cause a fracture. With a bone breakage an individual could spend weeks in hospital and then a life of fracture and care where cost is of great importance. Taking vitamin D supplements can help prevent the onset of osteopenia in our most exposed work communities.

THE PRESIDENT: Ron, you have the red light.

RON POWELL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry. I am getting harsher now. The mover of Motion 146.

PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE MOTION 146

146. PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE

Congress agrees that many jobs directly cause our members various illnesses or injuries through repetitive, physical work. Most commonly, back pain, shoulder pain and other muscular skeletal injuries are prevalent across every sector of our union. Some employers do provide workers with health support, such as physio or chiropractic treatments, but many do not and simply shirk their responsibility to help their staff.

We ask the GMB to launch a campaign across the breadth of the union, using all appropriate tactics of lobbying, legal recourse and public pressure, to raise awareness of the costs our members have to pay to continue working in the jobs that persistently harm their health. This could also include the development of a charter that employers could endorse showing that they take some financial responsibility for supporting their own workers when their job roles cause these types of persistent and painful injuries.

H25 ASCOT AND WINDSOR PARK BRANCH
Southern Region

(*Carried*)

STEPHEN CHAMPAN (Southern): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. Congress agrees that many jobs directly cause our members various illnesses or injuries through repetitive physical work, most commonly back pain, shoulder pain, and other muscular skeletal injuries, not to mention mental health issues are prevalent across every sector of our union. Some employers do provide workers with health support such as physio or chiropractor treatments but many do not, they simply shirk their responsibilities to help their staff. The cost to do this to our members and to the economy is enormous.

Let us, therefore, focus on one of the particular benefits of encouraging employers to be proactive, that is, the impact on our amazing National Health Service. I am sure many of our colleagues in the NHS will agree that their resources are stretched to breaking point, with the additional threat of breaking up this jewel in our crown to those across the pond as part of unsavoury trade deals is becoming even more important. Speaking personally, I have been a tree surgeon for most of my working life. The strain on my physical wellbeing has been incredible. My back and every limb have been compromised and this in turn impacts on mental wellbeing. Only now are we encouraged to talk about this. Just consider the benefits, therefore, in the long-term to our members, families, business, economy, and community.

We ask the GMB to launch a campaign across the breadth of the union using all appropriate tactics of lobbying, legal recourse, and public pressure, to raise awareness of the costs our members have to pay to continue working in their jobs, and consistently on their health. This could also include the development of a charter that employers endorse to show that they are taking some financial responsibility for

supporting their own workers when their job roles cause these types of persistent and painful injuries. Congress, please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Stephen. Thank you. Secunder?

DAVINA BROWN (Southern): We all know that prevention is better than cure. Sick days cost employers millions of pounds every year and it has negative effect on the employee. If employers invested in preventative measures they would have a healthier, happier workforce. The benefits of preventative healthcare include increased staff engagement, increased productivity, it can prevent health problems from developing or worsening and, basically, improves the employee's health outcomes overall. By strategically incorporating preventative perks in employee benefits a significant number of staff could be spared from developing serious health conditions. Preventative healthcare is one of the most cost effective methods of decreasing the number of sick days and reducing the burden of healthcare costs on the society at large. Congress, please support. I second the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Davina. The mover of Motion 147.

REGULATION OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROVIDERS MOTION 147

147. REGULATION OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

This Congress calls for a change in the occupational health dynamics for companies used for the purpose of employment medical interventions of business workplace illness. Examples of these are stress injuries, ill health plus many more. This usually entails giving the occupational health provider that the company provides, access to the employee's medical records.

Unfortunately, some or most occupational health providers operate outside the boundaries of medical ethics as your personal medical data reports are being looked over by a "medical adviser" not a "practitioner" which could be anyone from a nurse to a student or neither and your "occupational assessment report" is returned to you by the adviser. This puts into question the validity of the occupational service provided by the employer as some assessments are also done via a telephone conversation.

We would like occupational health providers to be brought under regulation and monitored by the professional body, the Medical Council as more often than not reports are being provided by non-professionals.

CAMDEN APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

FRANK OSEI (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, it is time for change. Most occupational health providers dealing with the prevention of work related injuries are self-regulated. As delegates within this Congress any of us could set up our own occupational health company and this would then allow us to collect the personal medical information of others. Most local authorities throughout the UK use occupational health companies mainly for the purposes of the medical and primary intervention for work related illness, such as stress, mental health, injuries, and many more. However, if we all decided to start our

own occupational health companies, we would then be able to gain the personal medical records of employees without being a member of any professional medical council. Surprisingly, you do not have to be a doctor, a physician, or a practitioner in order to retrieve personal medical data of employees. You do not even have to be medically qualified. Practices such as this make a mockery of medical ethics and this is unacceptable. Medical advisers, which could be anyone from a nurse to a student, or a leader, are reviewing medical reports and data of employees. Sometimes medical assessments are taken over the phone with your data being used to confirm that you are who you say you are but what about the voice on the other end of the phone, are they who they are claiming to be. These conversations are then followed up by a report of an unknown adviser or whoever it was that happened to be on the phone at the time. Employers using these service providers knowing that they are unregulated brings their ethical and moral principles into question.

Congress, occupational health providers need to be brought under a mandatory regulation monitored by the professional Medical Council as more often than not reports are being provided by non-professionals. Congress, please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Frank. Secunder?

GARY HARRIS (London): President, Congress, occupational health providers are providing a service towards the workers throughout the United Kingdom. These are business run providers, unregulated by any governing bodies. However, if you find yourself being assessed through your workplace they can ask for all your medical records although they are not regulated. Your medical information is being disclosed to the company that your employers have chosen to provide without any thought for you having to disclose your personal medical details and without you knowing if they are a professional practitioner. They are specifically chosen to assist your employer to draft what they claim to be a medical report unregulated by a medical council. Clearly, this is unethical given there is no regulating body to ensure good practices, bringing into question what professional practitioners are looking at on your medical records, or perhaps none at all. However, the reports are sometimes signed by an adviser, an adviser to what and an adviser to whom?

Congress, we need to regulate occupational health companies through the professional Medical Council. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Brilliant. Thank you, Gary. The mover of Motion 148.

ACCURATE INDUSTRIAL DISEASE STATISTICS MOTION 148

148. ACCURATE INDUSTRIAL DISEASE STATISTICS

This Congress is alarmed to find that the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) does not record deaths from industrial disease, or the last occupation, after the age of 75.

As the UK population ages it is increasingly important that the true scale of deaths from such industrial diseases such as mesothelioma are recorded both for compensation and statistical purposes.

GMB pledges that it will campaign for changes to be made so that the true picture can be used in the future.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

GORDON CULLUM (London): It is highly alarming to find that the Department of Work & Pensions does not record deaths from industrial disease after the age of 75. There are 12,000 lung disease deaths estimated each year linked to past exposures at work and with our ageing population it is essential that we have a true scale of all deaths from industrial diseases, recorded both for compensation and statistical purposes. Let's also get a true picture of safer working practice and to hold those responsible to account. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. A seconder?

ALLAN THOMPSON (London): President, Congress, diseases related to work are the primary cause of death among workers and older workers are particularly vulnerable. The ageing population means that an increasing number of older people have to work. This is why it is so important that the Department for Work & Pensions record deaths from industrial diseases for those after the age of 75. Every death caused by an industrial disease is a tragedy. For a family to know that the death of a loved one could have been prevented, I can only imagine the anger then that the reason for their death might not be accurately recorded; a death that is ignored by their government. Do not let the DWP get away with ignoring these deaths. Help families get the recognition and the justice that their loved ones deserve. Support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Allan. The mover of Motion 150.

CORPORATE KILLING MOTION 150

150. CORPORATE KILLING

This Congress is asked to support this motion to prevent Corporate Killing in the workplace.

In the last 12 months over 1,500 people were killed at work. In this day and age of health and safety awareness there is no excuse as to why this should keep happening.

Laws are in place to strengthen health and safety work which clearly are lacking in preventing these killing fields to continually happen with all the resulted misery and hardship which has such tragic results.

Despite GMB lobbying, the current Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 falls short and while our policy is to press for provision to bring individual prosecutions for directors, nothing has changed which seems to go together with the lack of enforcement of health and safety laws generally.

We believe that this country should now tighten up the law to make companies much more responsible if and when these tragedies happen and to make the CEO's, directors and owners more accountable.

We call on GMB to:

- Step up our campaign for changes to health and safety legislation;
- Work with organisations such as Families Against Corporate Killing (FACK) to ensure fair and just treatment for families of those killed by employers' negligence including financial compensation for all affected family members, not just those legally dependent;
- Call for a naming and shaming regime and stronger penalties where our members are seriously injured at work through no fault of their own;
- Campaign to appoint an explicit champion of workers' health within the HSE.

With the threat of a charge of corporate murder a possibility, then the likelihood of dangerous profit motivated short cuts ignoring health and safety standards would be much more encouraged thus preventing this terrible loss to working class families.

KING'S LYNN NO 1 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

ALAN LAW (London): The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act was introduced in 2007. For the first time a company or organisation can be found guilty of corporate manslaughter. This would be as a result of serious management failures resulting in gross breach of duty of care. The HSE welcomes and supports the Act. Although the offence is not part of the Health and Safety law, if an offence has been committed it is brought forward by the police and not by the HSE. Prosecution will be of the corporate body and not individuals. Liability of directors, board members, or any other individuals will be under Health and Safety law or general criminal law. There have been hundreds of prosecutions since the Act was brought in. The majority of these are fines, which are based on the company's turnover with a starting fine of £300,000 with no maximum limit. Companies and organisations all have a duty of care. As we all have seen over the past 18 months some companies have decided to cut corners and as a direct consequence employees have died and in some cases the public have also died. Convictions over the past years with various amounts of fines do not seem to be making a difference. Whether a senior manager of a company thinks they are above the law, I am not sure. They are not. Things must change. This tells you that the Act is not working. There have been over 1,500 people killed in the last 12 months.

Like most things in life we have to go back to basics. The Government needs to employ more HSE staff, that means the ones they disregarded, and many more. This means they could do their own safety inspections. If things are not to their liking, a piece of machinery may be stopped and may be locked off, or some part of the process can be switched off. The company can be closed down. Everything has to be right and in good working order, and safe. Give the HSE the time to look at this. Looking at past fines they can see there is a huge amount of "working at height" accidents but they still happen. Why? Allow the HSE into companies and organisations and educate them, give them no excuse to cut corners or budgets, and certainly not to risk lives. Make them safe. Prison sentences need to be used more often, also fines. These can go to the families of the bereaved so they do not have to fight the case in court. Double the court costs which can help fund the HSE to do their jobs. Hopefully, this Act will act as a deterrent. Companies and organisations are not playing the game. They are playing with people's lives. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Very good. Thank you, Alan. A seconder of 150?

CLIFF RONEY (London): This is a subject very close to my heart as a few years ago a colleague and friend of 20 years was killed whilst working at a pumping station in London. As a result of this I witnessed the devastating fallout this tragedy brought to his wife, his children, his family, and his friends. Brothers and sisters, we must do all we can to prevent this tragedy continuing. The next time you or your members are asked to cut corners, hurry up, save money, yes, brothers and sisters, save money, when it is at the detriment to your health, turn to them and say, "Preservation of life is far more important than time and money." Don't add to this preventable 1,500 people who have lost their lives in the last 12 months.

As we have seen from this austerity loving Tory government, the reduction in the HSE staff has cost lives. Brothers and sisters, at the end of the day what is important is that your members come home safely from work. Congress, please give your full support to this motion. God bless, Ray. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cliff. Does anybody wish to oppose any of those motions, if you are brave enough to come up! I will ask David Hope to respond on behalf of the CEC.

DAVID HOPE (CEC, Public Services): We are supporting Motion 144 with a qualification, and supporting Motion 147 also with a qualification. I shall detail both qualifications now.

On Motion 144, the GMB is already supporting research into fatigue in the construction and gas industry. This motion fits well with our existing activities in this subject. The qualification is that the issue is better tackled by the existing all-party policy parliamentary group on occupational health rather than setting up a new one solely on fatigue, which may become entangled with other issues, such as, for example, fatigue caused by medication.

Turning to Motion 147, occupational health support, and provision, is currently self-regulated and anyone can set up as a provider. There is a scheme SEQOHS - Safe Effective Quality Occupational Health Services – which is operated by the Royal College of Physicians on behalf of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine. I will give up! (*Laughter*) This is effective in raising standards within the membership but being a member is not compulsory and mandating a compulsory scheme requires legislation and to achieve this would need to secure the support of bodies such as IOSH, the British Safety Council, and the TUC.

The qualifications are, first of all, that we would seek to operate a scheme via the RCP/FOM rather than the General Medical Council, which only is concerned with GPs. Secondly, we would seek to make a wider campaign with support from many groups rather than just a GMB campaign. Congress, please support Motions 144 and 147 with the qualifications I have just stated. Cheers. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Dave. It has been a long day, Dave. That is fair enough. Does Southern Region accept the qualification on Motion 144? Yes. Does

London Region accept the qualification on Motion 147? Yes. Thank you. In that case Motion 145, 146, 148 and 150, the CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are all carried.

Motion 145 was CARRIED.

Motion 146 was CARRIED.

Motion 148 was CARRIED.

Motion 150 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 144, the CEC is supporting with a qualification that the region has accepted. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 144 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 147, support with a qualification. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 147 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for working that half an hour later. I have an announcement from the Retired Members, apparently there was a Guess the Name of the Monkey on their stall, it was called Chester, and was won by Pat Gannon of the National Office. (*Ooooooh!*) The name of Twinkle Little Star doll was called Rosy and that was won by Wendy Freeman on the Dental Plan stall. They raised £60 towards their funds and there is a thank you to you all.

I will just say thank you, Congress. That concludes our second day. We are still on schedule. We will be reconvening at 9.30. Have a great evening whatever you are doing. Cheers.

Congress adjourned.

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