

CONGRESS 2018

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MALCOLM SAGE
(Vice President)
(In the Chair)

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Held
The Brighton Centre,
Brighton

on:

Monday, 4th June 2018
Tuesday, 5th June 2018
and
Wednesday, 6th June 2018

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PROCEEDINGS
DAY TWO
(Tuesday, 5th June 2018)

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SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY, 5TH JUNE 2018
MORNING SESSION

(Congress assembled at 9.00 a.m.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleagues, for making the effort to arrive early in the hall for the original schedule. We have an important agenda for today. Congress, to order, please.

GMB PRESIDENT ELECTION CANDIDATES' SPEECHES

THE VICE PRESIDENT: As debated yesterday, Congress will have the opportunity to vote for a candidate standing in the President's election. I will call each candidate to speak in alphabetical order to address Congress and why they should be GMB President. The ballot will open at 10.00 a.m. Those who are eligible to vote and in attendance today will be able to return their completed ballot papers to the ballot boxes at each end of the top table. Regional delegates in attendance today will receive their ballot papers from their regions and the CEC members in attendance today will receive their ballot papers from Steve Short. The ballot will close at 2.30 p.m. sharp and the successful candidate will be announced at the end of today's session by the General Members Auditor, John Swainson.

I will now call the candidates in order to the rostrum to address Congress. Each candidate has up to five minutes to speak. The first one is Sheila Bearcroft. *(Applause)* Could the rest of the candidates come to the front to save a little time, that is, David Hope next, then June Minnery, Andy Newman, and then Barbara Plant. Thank you.

SHEILA BEARCROFT: Good morning, Congress. Sheila Bearcroft, President of the Wales & South West Region.

Congress, although I feel so incredibly proud and privileged to have received my region's nomination to the position of National President of our great union, I, like all of you, are still experiencing a profound sense of sadness that this opportunity has arisen because of the passing of the late lamented and so dearly loved Mary Turner. It is sometimes said that no-one is either irreplaceable or indispensable but anyone who has ever been close to being both then it was our Mary.

However, it is so, so important that we continue with the legacy that Mary left us. She made such a massive difference to people's lives, was the voice of those without privilege or power, and fought tirelessly for those working people who needed help. We must ensure that the values and principles that she upheld will always endure in our union. Mary was a fearless advocate for socialism, social justice, fairness and equality, and both inspired and paved the way for women to become involved and active in our union, sometimes against the wishes of our own people. So let's not forget the importance of what she achieved and avoiding a gender divide at the very top of our own internal boardroom. Mary was a true leader and it is vital that whoever succeeds her is able to demonstrate that same ability.

I believe, Congress, that I have the necessary expertise, experience, passion, and commitment despite the odd fleck of grey hair, the energy as well to lead from the

front in making sure that GMB remains at the forefront of making trade unions a real mass movement serving the vested interests of workers in this country. I have been President of my own region for one month short of 25 years, President of the National TUC in 2007, and President of the Wales TUC in 2015.

Congress, when I left school at 15 without any qualification I would never have dreamt that one day I would stand here making a case to become the President of my union. Everything I have achieved as a working class woman I have done so because of the union Movement. I owe the union so much and wish to continue contributing to its future success.

Congress, this is a hugely difficult time for all of us as the policies of austerity have a devastating impact upon the jobs, living standards, and expectations of the working people we represent. Our mission must continue to ensure that fairness prevails over a fast buck, sustainability comes before shareholders, and public services triumph over private greed. We must also lead the battle against racism and fascism and campaign for the politics of hope and not hate to shape our future.

Colleagues, 129 years of GMB history has shown that we are not powerless to act or influence. Together we have and always will have the capacity to change things for the better but let's not forget what should unite all of us as one very simple principle, solidarity and the firm belief that we are stronger together. Let's never walk by on the other side but always have a sense of urgency and focus. What matters most, though, is not what happens here in Brighton Conference Hall but what happens in the workplace. That is why the work of our lay reps, the unsung heroes of the GMB ----

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can you close, Sheila, please?

SHEILA BEARCROFT: -- so vitally important and colleagues in the same way that the General Secretary has been ----

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Sheila, close down now, please.

SHEILA BEARCROFT – excellent President. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: David Hope. (*Applause*)

DAVID HOPE: Morning, President. Morning, Congress. David Hope, North West & Irish Region. One or two of you do know me quite well but I want to tell you a little bit about myself. When I left school at the age of 16, I started my first job at a place called Associated Dairies – I know now it is Asda. I joined the union on my first day because my Dad told me to. He said, “If you come home, David, without joining union you're in bother,” so I did. I have never, never, and I know this union has been called absolutely loads of different names, but I have never, never been in any other union because I believe, and I really do believe, that the GMB union is the only union run by members for members.

My first role in the GMB was a shop steward, like most of you. I then became the Head of Branch Youth Officer, that was a long time ago, and then the Branch Equality Officer. I first became a Branch Secretary at the age of 25 and I was one of

the youngest in the GMB; that is around 35 years as a Branch Secretary. The branch then had gas, water, manufacturing, good old days, engineering, hospitality, and local government in it.

I have worked for Wigan Council for 40 years and for round about 28 of those I was a refuse collector. I then went back to college and I became a supervisor for five years but hated it, with management, and for the last seven years I have been full-time rep and Branch Secretary at Wigan Council. If I was successful, I would bring all those 40 years experience as an activist to the President. The union is only as good as its activists, like yourselves. You need to build a good workplace organisation and when you have that in place you can service and recruit membership and the most important thing, and I have said this, is retention. You can recruit, recruit, recruit but you need to retain. Also, I help run stalls at about seven Prides within the North West. I have been on numerous committees over the years and if anybody remembers the Lancashire one, I was on the CEC for Lancashire for a short time and the Regional Committee.

That's enough about me. What I can do to convince you? These are a few of my thoughts:

Regions: The GMB is made up of nine regions which work well but I think regions need to work more closely together and share what is best practice and pass on what works and what does not, but keep each region independent.

Youth: the GMB and trades union Movement will not survive if we do not invest in youth today. In the GMB we have one of the best youth sections in any union with fantastic outstanding female activists as well as male. We need to invest heavily in the youth section, not just money but time and effort, and congratulations, I went to the Fringe Meeting for youth yesterday, an absolute lift. This union is in good hands with our youth, absolutely fantastic.

Equalities: I have been involved in equalities for 20 years holding the Youth, like I said, and Equality Branch Officer's post. I was chair at one point of the GMB National Shout, the LGBT group, and at the moment I am the Irish representative on the Regional Equality Forum and hold a seat on the National Equality Forum. I know the GMB takes equalities to its core, with the National Equality Conference every year, the National Women's Conference, and the Young Members Summit? In regions, there are the self-help groups run by members and activists. Again, we need equality groups to share what works well.

Females: I think if you look at the delegation here it is a disgrace. We are 50:50 and we are nowhere 50:50 at this Congress. If I was President I would make sure that is important. Obviously, as GMB we need to sort that gap out; that needs to be sorted out. We need to see the first Senior GMB – the first Regional Secretary, and I think we have a lot of people in there.

Asda: Sainsbury's are taking over, there is no way the equal pay is going away.

Finally, we need to take back the Labour Party because it is our party and, finally, I would be absolutely thrilled to be the first LGBT National President of the GMB and I promise you, Congress ----

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Close down, David.

DAVID HOPE: Sorry.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Come on, you are out of time.

DAVID HOPE: Cheers. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: June Minnery. (*Applause*)

JUNE MINNERY: Morning, Congress. My name is June Minnery and I am seeking your support to become President of the GMB. We are at a pivotal moment in the life of our great union and huge challenges before us: Brexit, vital changes in the retail world, and mass redundancies at key employers each with the potential to have a massive impact on the lives of our members. In terms of those challenges it is vital to keep building our union and our branches, and shop steward organisation, because a growing union is a union that can truly fight for its members and if I am elected as your President let me be very clear, this will be a union that fights for the members, campaigns for the members, and always, always puts the members' interests first.

Another priority for me and will continue to be is equality and diversity at every level in this union. Congress, we need to look and sound like our membership and I am very clear if I am your President I want to see the many capable women we have represented and leading at every level in the union, including, yes, as Regional Secretaries.

In the 30 years I have been active in this union one of the things I campaigned on and it still burns within me is the fact that women are undervalued at work and in wider society. That is why I want to work with all of you, male and female, to redouble our efforts to tackle sex discrimination at work, to fight for equal pay until we win it for all and, Congress, that includes in Asda.

We know what is coming in Asda: Asda and Sainsbury's – adverse effect on wages and jobs. Congress, as your President I would pledge that this union will not be found wanting in Asda. I have been around long enough to suspect the promises of 10% price cuts for customers, refining and cutting terms and conditions, and closing stores and depots. We need to get on the front foot here and I want GMB to lead a dynamic campaign to protect the livelihoods of our people and as President I would work with Asda reps who are already bargaining with the employer, and play an active part to support these vulnerable low paid workers.

I have been a GMB member for over 30 years and throughout this time I fought for fellow members, protecting them from abuses of bad employers, seeking to get social justice and fair deals so richly deserved. I have always been a hands-on member and activist, not only being the face of the members of my own section but campaigning for all members in all workplaces, whether that is in Asda or in shipyards, in

manufacturing workplaces, or for gas and energy workers. Right now this means battling for GMB members in British Gas, who are currently facing the brunt of years of mismanagement from bosses who want their employees to be at the brunt of management's poor decisions. I will never apologise for standing up for GMB jobs. Hunterston Power Station is on my doorstep and I know full well the impact redundancies here will have, a huge impact on the local community.

I will never allow our union to put anything before our members' jobs. Putting our members first is what makes the GMB different and I would never allow that to change. I believe that when our members, branches, regions, industries and sections, face challenges our members deserve a President who is available, engaged, and unafraid to get stuck in, someone who, when GMB members need support, is there at top speed. That is me. That is what I will do for you.

I believe in our union's aims, our values, collective principles, and a long history of practical politics. I am proud of all that we have achieved together in society as well as in the workplace but I tell you, we should not be afraid of challenging politicians regardless of their party. I promise that when the politicians come calling I will be loud and clear and leave them in no doubt as to what I am saying or demanding for GMB members.

I believe I am the right person to be the GMB President not only because I am a woman but because I have the vision, skills and commitment, to work as part of our senior team and grow this union making it a union that people want to join. I have to say that if our union is to look at the people we represent then we should be electing a woman to the most senior membership position. This is not disrespecting male colleagues but surely we need a woman at the top table. If you elect me it will send a message to all unions that GMB does look at equalities through the policies we pass here at Congress, we actively make it a reality. We lead. We set the bar for others. Congress, we are a great union, a force for good in our country, and a ----

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Close down, June, please.

JUNE MINNERY: -- and if elected I will make this happen. I will be there when you need me. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Andy.

ANDY NEWMAN: Congress, delegates, CEC colleagues, comrades and friends, I am Andy Newman and I am asking for your support to be the next President of GMB. Colleagues, this is an important election and for those of us who have a vote we have a responsibility to elect the best President for our members.

GMB is a 21st century union. For me that means a union that offers employers a choice, a fork in the road, if you like. For those employers who treat our members with respect and pay a fair wage we will work with them in a professional manner and help their businesses to succeed and grow. For those other employers who treat our members with disrespect, or bully and exploit our members, they will find GMB is a formidable opponent and be they ever so mighty we shall bring them to their knees.

I don't just talk a good fight, I also deliver it. I work well with employers who take a constructive approach. For the last 18 months I have been campaigning over violence in schools and have made some real progress working together in collaboration with employers. I have also dealt robustly with rogue bosses. I led 21 days of strike action against Carillion, who are exploiting our members, mainly Asian women, in a Swindon hospital. That dispute led to GMB taking up the blacklisting campaign. I led a successful campaign against Marks & Spencer who were abusing loopholes in the law to evade paying fair wages for agency workers. As a result, 300 members moved from insecure agency work into secure permanent full-time jobs. I fought for cleaners, again mainly Asian women, at Nationwide Building Society, who twice voted unanimously for strike action and on the back of that we pushed up their wages £2 an hour.

In all of these disputes I have been lucky to work as part of a team with our talented Regional Organisers from Southern Region and our fantastic National Officers together with our brilliant lay member activists, in our campaigns they have been imaginative and determined using a mix of industrial action, media stunts, and political influence. We did not just start fights, we won them and closed a settled deal.

GMB, employers need to know we are not just a union that fights, we are a union that wins those fights. As Branch Secretary, I build diversity with shop stewards, women and men from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, sexual orientations. This has helped us to build a diverse membership. Together we built a branch that people of all backgrounds want to be part of. My branch won a President's Leadership Award for Equality on six separate occasions. Together we have won battles in the workplace to advance the interests of our women members, our black members, our LGBT and disabled members, our young members, and every other disadvantaged group.

I look after 4,500 members and every day I support, help and represent factory workers, school staff, NHS workers, Asda staff, refuse collectors, and trades people. As President I will be an ambassador for every member in every section of this union and I will have the energy and commitment to be an active President 365 days a year.

So, who am I? When I left school my first job was a hospital porter. I worked as the skipper of a ferry boat, a taxi dispatcher, a building society clerk, in my late 20s I did a university access course and retrained as an engineer, and I worked fitting out gas-fired power stations and later in the telecoms industry. In every job I have always been union and my core belief is that every GMB member, whether they are an engineer in a nuclear power station or a contract cleaner in a supermarket is entitled to dignity and equality of respect. When we go to work we sell our time, we sell our skills, but we do not give away our human dignity.

One of my granddads worked in the steel works and the other in the print, both strong union men. My Mum and Dad both left school at 14 and went in the Army where my Dad was a lorry driver. My Mum's tough childhood in Scunthorpe made her a lifelong socialist and it is from her that I have been inspired with the politics that I have. My family raised me a socialist, they raised me as a trade unionist, and that noble cause, our common endeavour has been my life. I was a shop steward by the

time I was 19. Comrades, I will be the members' President. I have a good and frank relationship with our General Secretary, Tim Roache, as I had a good relationship with Paul Kenny before him. I speak my mind about what is in the interests of the members and the GMB. I speak it privately and, if necessary, publicly. I will always defend our union, defend its officers, employees, and activists from unfair and negative criticism.

GMB is like a family. In a family you sometimes disagree but you are always family. GMB is strongest when we stand together, when we stand together against bad employers, stand together against a Tory government, and stand together against our critics. When we stand united if they come from three corners of the world against us we will stop them. I am proud to be a member of a union that has the courage to take on tough employers but what I do and what you all do helping your work colleagues towards better pay, better conditions, being treated with respect at work, is something to be proud of. Trade unions, we are the good guys. We should always remember that.

Comrades, thank you for listening. This is a democratic choice in your hands. I trust you to make the right choice. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Barbara?

BARBARA PLANT: Vice President, Congress, Barbara Plant, Southern Region. We can and we should be proud that not only are we a campaigning union we are also a members' led one, so what higher honour could there be than to be elected by Congress to serve as your President, an opportunity to repay the encouragement, support, and opportunities that I have been given by so many in our Movement.

Like lots of you, I became a rep more by chance than choice. As a teaching assistant I was the voice of support staff in my school when the head teacher tried to change our job description. From that I discovered that I quite enjoyed being viewed as a troublemaker, somewhat holding management to account but also seeing my colleagues, low paid women like me, becoming empowered, learning their rights and standing together in solidarity. That was a transforming moment and from there I became the education convenor for the London Borough of Lewisham and in 2009 was given facility time to work out of the branch office where I still work.

My commitment to and belief in and love of the GMB is shown in my activism and participation in union democracy since that time. At present, I sit on Southern Regional Council Regional Committee, elected last year for a second term of office. In 2015, I was elected onto the CEC in the Public Services seat. I have also been a member of the Regional Equality Forum and at national level a member of the branch's new working party and the Women's Taskforce. Currently, I am chair for the National Schools Committee.

Those who know me know that I am a doer and I sit on a committee to make a difference. I am proud of the work that the Schools Committee has done around raising awareness of violence that our members in schools face on a daily basis and that we will produce a key demands charter for schools and authorities to sign up to. Promoting equality and diversity within the GMB is an issue I feel strongly about. I

believe that the leadership of any organisation should be representative of its members. That is why I am pleased that the current CEC is reviewing its make-up and has agreed to increase the representation of equality strands. We also had our first National Women's Conference in Liverpool last November. These are all changes in the right direction and as President I would make sure that we continue to put equality at the heart of everything we do.

As someone who believes in lifelong learning, I embarked at the age of 53 on a Masters Degree in International Labour and Trade Union Studies at Ruskin College. My dissertation focused specifically on the GMB as a learning organisation and by that I mean an organisation that is prepared to look at itself. We are a trade union in the 21st century but our roots and structures stem from the 19th century. Therefore, we have to be prepared to look, reflect on, and change some of those deeper structures. I will bring that insight to the role of President.

Mental health and prevention of suicide in young people are also something very close to my heart. In 2004, at the age of 14, my eldest son had a very serious psychotic episode that had devastating consequences for himself and his family. Sadly, in 2015 he took his own life. I tell you that because unless we are prepared to talk about mental health without fear of being judged, then the stigma and prejudice that is around it will not go away. *(Applause)* That is why the young members' campaigns to try to talk on mental health matters are vital and the work the GMB has done around this topic is to be applauded and so necessary. How often do we as reps see our members spiral downwards into a mental health crisis because of the bullying way they are treated by management. *(Applause)*

As Tim said at Mary's memorial service, Mary Turner is an irreplaceable person but the role of President does continue. Congress, our values, values of social justice, equality, socialism, internationalism, and solidarity, have been handed down to generations of trade unions, from Will Thorne to Tim Roache, from Eleanor Marx to Mary Turner, the passing on of those values continues and as President alongside Tim, our General Secretary, I will hold that torch so high, continuing the fight, as the Labour Party put it so well and so simply, for the many, not the few. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barbara. Colleagues, the ballot will open at 10.00 a.m. and the ballot boxes are at each end of the top table.

Congress, due to the unprecedented volume of business to get through, I am going to have to alter our running order. Motions carried over from yesterday's sessions will be planned in later sessions and so will Union Organisation, Education, and Training. Please listen very carefully to the announcements.

CEC SPECIAL REPORT ON SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

1. Introduction

- 1.1. GMB is the union for support staff in schools and colleges. Education workers have represented our single largest area of membership growth since the National

Agreement was reached with the then Labour Government in 2003.ⁱ School support staff make an invaluable contribution to children and parent's lives and GMB is proud to represent them.

- 1.2. More than 600,000 people are employed in school support staff roles in the UK. The number of support staff roles has increased significantly over the last twenty years: the number of FTE teaching assistant posts in secondary schools in England rose from 12,500 in 2000 to 50,100 in 2016.ⁱⁱ
- 1.3. GMB's position as one of only three unions recognised to represent support staff in schools at a national and local level in England and Wales was recently reaffirmed by a TUC agreement under which the National Education Union agreed not to actively recruit support staff or seek national or local recognition to negotiate on their behalf for collective bargaining purposes.
- 1.4. Schools and colleges face a funding crisis and support staff are under threat. 11,000 school caterers, caretakers and other support staff classed as working in auxiliary roles lost their jobs between 2015 and 2016, and over three thousand teaching assistant posts in secondary schools were also lost.ⁱⁱⁱ Thousands more staff have had their hours reduced.
- 1.5. Ministers hold almost no information on support staff pay, terms and conditions and skills, and no original research has been commissioned since 2010. Ministers and civil servants know far less about support staff than they do about teachers and lecturers. There are no official figures that relate to support staff employment in colleges. When it comes to policy decisions and funding allocations, our members are suffering from the soft bigotry of unequal interest and knowledge.
- 1.6. Support staff face significant challenges in the years ahead. The challenge for GMB is to defend jobs and terms of employment at a time when funding is constrained and falling in real-terms, while also raising the status of the profession to ensure that our members' skills and experience are recognised by employers and the wider public.
- 1.7. This Special Report is intended to set out GMB policies on a number of the pressing challenges which can also be used as organising priorities. As such it incorporates wording from a number of motions previously passed by Congress. Model policies have been produced by GMB for schools and academies organising activity, as well as for supporting members during appraisal, capability, disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- 1.8. Although much of the evidence on funding cuts in this report is drawn from England, the new analysis presented here on teaching assistants' qualification levels is drawn from a UK-wide sample.

2. Support staff – education’s hidden professionals

- 2.1. Hidden Professionals is GMB’s longest running education campaign. As Mary Turner said, support staff are highly skilled but ‘for too long they have been at the butt of low pay, no holiday or sickness pay, no career structure and, in many cases, no respect.’^{iv}
- 2.2. Schools and colleges rely on the skills and experience that our members provide, but support staff are finding it increasingly difficult to access training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Most support staff are stuck at the top of their pay band and too many schools and colleges fail to offer clear routes for career progression.
- 2.3. GMB fought for many years to have the professional status of support staff recognised. This work culminated in the passing of legislation that established the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) in 2009. This organisation was scrapped by the incoming Conservative and Liberal Democrat government in 2010. Plans to establish national Professional Standards for Teaching Assistants were vetoed by Conservative Ministers in 2015.
- 2.4. Instead of the status of the profession being raised, support staff employment is under attack instead. In 2013 Michael Gove, the then Education Secretary, reportedly considered telling schools to make teaching assistants redundant.^v The Department for Education (DfE) has published ‘benchmarking’ tools that encourage employers to compare their expenditure on support staff to that of other schools. GMB has used the Freedom of Information Act to obtain a document commissioned by the DfE which said that:

‘Employing fewer teaching assistants ... may be a means by which schools could operate more efficiently without adversely affecting student outcomes. ... Groups or clusters of schools, operating within relatively close geographical proximity, can share a school business manager (SBM) ... without any obvious adverse impact on student outcomes.’^{vi}
- 2.5. Schools could not function without the teaching assistants and school business managers that we represent. GMB will always fight to defend our members’ jobs and vigorously resist all attempts to denigrate support staff workers’ contributions and cut their jobs at a national, local and Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) level.
- 2.6. Any assertions that support staff are unskilled or unqualified is based on prejudice and ignorance, not evidence. GMB analysis shows that teaching assistants are more likely to hold a degree or other higher education qualification than the average for all workers. Only 2.9 per cent of teaching assistants do not hold a qualification, compared to 4.3 per cent of all workers.

Highest qualification obtained – percentage breakdown of UK workforce^{vii}

	All workers	Teaching Assistants
Degree or equivalent	34.3	29.3
Other higher education	9.7	16.2
GCE A level or equivalent	23.6	31.5
GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent	19.6	17.5
Other qualification	7.5	2.7
No qualification	4.3	2.9
Don't know	0.9	0
No answer	0.1	0

- 2.7. GMB notes that, before the National Agreement was reached in 2003, teachers spent more than two thirds of their time on tasks other than teaching, and that the expansion of support staff numbers has been proven to have improved pupil behaviour and reduce teachers' workloads and stress levels.
- 2.8. The Government's last published review of the evidence (published in 2011) on support staff effectiveness quoted several studies that demonstrated the positive impact they can have on behaviour, inclusion and academic attainment.^{viii} The evidence that critics of hiring support staff have selectively quoted is a decade out of date and fails to include a control group. Not a single GMB member should be made redundant on the basis of these arguments.
- 2.9. According to a survey conducted by GMB London Region, 31 per cent of support staff are expected to deliver lessons in the absence of a qualified teacher (of whom 70 per cent do not receive any extra pay).^{ix} It is unacceptable that many of our members report that they are inappropriately assessed against criteria that were drawn up to measure teacher performance.
- 2.10. The best way to maximise the public investment in support staff is to make training, development opportunities, and career progression the norm – not the exception. Teachers and leaders are often untrained in their responsibilities as managers and employers of support staff. The Government should work closely with the support staff and teaching unions to raise the professional status of everyone who works in schools and colleges. The SSSNB should be re-established and charged with developing national pay and career progression frameworks.
- 3. Violence in schools**
- 3.1. No-one should live in fear of coming to work but most support staff have been subjected to violent assaults. Attacks can have leave lasting physical and mental scars

and leave workers feeling powerless when management are unwilling to acknowledge the problem or take action. A GMB survey found that one in five support staff workers experiences violence at least once a week.^x

- 3.2. The rate of attacks on education workers is increasing. Figures obtained by the GMB from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) show that there was a 24 per cent increase in the number of injuries to education workers – including in colleges - caused by acts of violence reported under the RIDDOR regime between 2012/13 and 2016/17. Under current regulations, injuries must be reported to the HSE if they result in more than seven days being taken off work, or if they cause a ‘specified injury’ which can include: loss of consciousness, bone fractures, amputation, or asphyxiation.^{xi} One in ten injuries to education workers that are reported to the HSE are caused by violence.
- 3.3. Our members report being strangled, punched, kicked, attacked with compasses and sharpened pencils, and having tables and chairs thrown at them. Some members report that schools do not take attacks on support staff as seriously as they would on teachers, and that pupils know that they face little deterrent if they assault support staff workers.
- 3.4. Our members report that the majority – 57 per cent – of violence incidents come from pupils.^{xii} A substantial minority of attacks are made by adults. Parents, former pupils, visitors and intruders all pose a risk of potential violence. Gang related violence is also a factor in some schools.
- 3.5. Zero tolerance policies must be worthy of the name. All staff should have the right to feel protected at work and to know that will be treated fairly and equally when incidents of violence occur. GMB has developed materials for use by activists and members to help put pressure on schools to take stronger action to prevent violence and ensure that sanctions are issued against the aggressor whenever incidents occur.

4. Fragmentation and privatisation

- 4.1. The education landscape has changed beyond recognition over the last decade. Half of all pupils are now taught in an academy or free school in England. Vital local authority services have been broken up and de-funded. Our education system is increasingly being run in the interests of private and personal profit, not the best interests of pupils. GMB opposes the policy of academisation and calls for the local accountability of schools in England to be restored.
- 4.2. GMB regrets the fact that the academies programme was started under the last Labour Government, and we believe that the objective of securing additional funding for schools in deprived areas could have been achieved at a lower cost through other means. The policy opened the door to the wholesale fragmentation of the education system under the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. We call on the next Labour

Government to reform the education system to restore the oversight and co-ordinating role of democratically accountable local authorities, and we commend devolved governments for maintaining the crucial link between schools and the communities they were built to serve.

- 4.3. At a time when funding cuts are biting, fragmentation has also led to a sharp increase in executive salary levels. 121 academy trusts paid out individual salaries of over £150,000, and the highest paid Multi Academy Trust chief executive received £420,000 in 2016 – three times the Prime Minister’s salary and the equivalent of 35 teaching assistants’ salaries.^{xiii} The best paid sixth-form college principal received over £400,000 in basic salary in 2015/16.^{xiv} These excessive salaries all represent money that could and should be spent on pupils and improving low-paid staff members’ wages instead.
- 4.4. Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) are, increasingly, centralising funding and support staff roles at the same time as raising trust annual charges on schools. In one MAT where GMB opposed restructuring proposals, the trust raised annual charges by a total of 66 per cent in one year and increased its chief executive’s pay by 13 per cent while proposing to cut the numbers of site staff and pooling caretaker services between schools. Public money is scandalously being used to fund on expensive purchases from companies in which trustees or members of their families have a financial (formally known as ‘related party transactions.’) The Public Accounts Committee recently said that ‘the Department for Education’s rules around related party transactions are too weak to prevent abuse.’^{xv}
- 4.5. We note with alarm the example of Wakefield City Academies Trust (WCAT), which collapsed last year and announced that it was seeking to divest itself of 21 schools. WCAT diverted school reserves to the central trust, leading to allegations of ‘assets stripping,’^{xvi} and paid hundreds of thousands of pounds to a company controlled by a relative of a senior management figure.^{xvii} Approximately 40,000 pupils are trapped in ‘zombie academies’ after their schools were abandoned by, or stripped from, their parent trust.^{xviii} GMB believes that when academy sponsors fail or walk away from a school then that school or group of schools should revert to local authority maintained status.
- 4.6. Despite a national shortfall in pupil places and the failings of the academies system, and despite their legal duty to ensure that adequate numbers of school places are provided, the Westminster Government has denied local authorities the right to create new schools. GMB recognises that the new categories of schools introduced by Ministers in their place represent a threat to our members’ pay, terms and conditions. Support staff who work in free schools earn on average 12 per cent less than those employed in local authority maintained or academy schools.^{xix} It is vital that local authorities regain their right to open new schools.

- 4.7. Accurate figures on the outsourcing of services within schools are not available, but it is clear that an increasing number of jobs and services have been put out to tender – undermining collective bargaining and threatening our members’ terms and conditions. According to the private consultancy Arvato, the number of local government contracts put out to tender increased by 45 per cent between 2015 and 2016. ^{xx} The School Meal Plan Group reported in 2013 that a third of school catering services were provided by private contractors.^{xxi}
- 4.8. GMB has a long and proud history of opposing PFI and other so-called Public-Private Partnership schemes. TUPE transfers of staff under PFI deals has undermined pensions entitlements and led to ownership of public assets being conferred to speculators and non-UK taxpayers. In Scotland, more than 200 schools built under the PFI scheme are now at least in part owned by offshore investors.^{xxii}
- 4.9. Schools and colleges must be run in the interests of pupils and the people who work in them – not personal and private profit. The last decade has witnessed the creeping privatisation of education services. The next ten years must see a renewed role for local authorities, an end to outsourcing and excessive executive pay, and the injection of funding that schools desperately need to deliver teaching and learning environments that are fit for the 21st century.

5. Structures and accountability

- 5.1. Schools should be accountable to parents, staff and local communities. This is best achieved through appropriate oversight by supportive local authorities and governing bodies that represent the combined interests of those groups. GMB does not believe that pre-existing accountability structures were perfect, but the quality of scrutiny has diminished in recent years (a development that has been compounded by the loss of local authority governor support services).
- 5.2. The academies and free schools programme was designed to engineer a massive transfer of power from local communities to central government and the Secretary of State. In practice, the Department for Education cannot begin to provide meaningful oversight of the more than six thousand schools and colleges that have been transferred to academy status.
- 5.3. The Government claims that it has filled the accountability gap through the creation of Regional School Commissioners. In practice, these bodies have unclear powers and responsibilities. They are opaque, under-resourced, and removed from the concerns of our members. GMB does not believe that Regional Schools Commissioners are adequate replacements for effective local authority oversight.
- 5.4. Academy trusts are not obliged to maintain community and staff representatives – or even to retain school level governing bodies at all. This reduces scrutiny of

management decisions and removes one of the main means of redress when support staff are being bullied or inappropriate policies are being pursued. Despite clear guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office that individual school governing body minutes and MAT board minutes should be published, this frequently does not happen in practice. Even where school governing bodies are retained, they often fail to carry out their duty to regularly review the competence of senior management (including headteachers).

- 5.5. All schools should have their own governing bodies. Governing body and trust board minutes and other accountability documents should be regularly and proactively published. Community and staff roles should be guaranteed on those governing bodies; and staff governor roles should be reserved for support staff as well as teachers.
- 5.6. Problems of accountability are not confined to academies or free schools, and GMB notes with alarm the case raised by members in the Southern Region of a senior leadership figure in a voluntary aided school who is reported to have sprayed a fire extinguisher directly at a teaching assistant. This individual was subsequently charged with assault, but he has not faced internal disciplinary action (PS08, Public Services Section Conference 2018).^{xxiii} This decision was taken by the school's governors. In a voluntary aided status school, the majority of governors are appointed by the school's controlling religious body. GMB believes that governing bodies must contain a range of diverse and independent voices if they are to provide effective scrutiny, and that no single organisation – religious or secular – should be able to determine the majority membership of a governing body.

6. The education funding crisis

- 6.1. Theresa May has claimed that the Conservatives 'have protected the schools budget.'^{xxiv} The reality is that funding has failed to keep pace with inflation and rising pupil numbers. The National Audit Office estimated in December 2016 that mainstream schools face an average 8 per cent real-terms per-pupil funding cut by 2019/20 (or a £3 billion real-terms shortfall).^{xxv}
- 6.2. Funding shortfalls represents the single greatest immediate threat to our members' employment and their quality of life at work. GMB members have been asked to provide for themselves such basic essentials as soap and toilet paper because their schools say they can no longer afford them. A school in Theresa May's own constituency wrote to parents appealing for £190 so it could purchase 'pens, pencils, exercise books and paper.'^{xxvi} A recent survey by the NAHT found that 37 per cent of headteachers had cut the number, or hours, of teaching assistants within the last year due to funding constraints.^{xxvii}

- 6.3. GMB is a part of the School Cuts coalition of education trade unions which is campaigning to secure real-terms funding increases for schools to match rising pupil numbers. The campaign has produced estimates of future funding reductions to individual schools, and further campaigning work is planned during 2018/19. The group estimates that £2.8 billion has been cut from school budgets since 2015.^{xxviii}
- 6.4. Ministers' claim that an additional £1.3 billion has been found to boost the schools' budget should be treated with caution. No new money has been provided; the funding will be transferred from other parts of the wider education budget. The DfE has said that the money will be created by taking:
- £420 million from the main capital budget;
 - £280 million from the free schools programme; and
 - Reprioritising £250 million in 2018-19 and £350 million in 2019-20.^{xxix}
- 6.5. This 'new' funding is therefore the result of cuts to other parts of the education budget, including to school maintenance and building programmes which are already severely underfunded. In addition, the Department's Permanent Secretary admitted to MPs on the Public Accounts Committee in October that civil servants have so far been unable to identify the detailed sources of these putative savings and accepted that the Government's plans were 'vague.'^{xxx}
- 6.6. Non-mainstream schools also face significant funding challenges. Our classroom-based members spend most of their time supporting children with a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and special schools contain a higher concentration of support staff than their mainstream equivalents. The Higher Needs Funding block has arguably never been sufficient to meet the needs of SEND children, and recent changes have placed further strains on high needs budgets. Specifically, local authorities have lost the ability to transfer funds from the main school funding block to plug shortfalls in the high needs funding block. This change has already led to reduced provision, assessment delays and staff being forced to deliver more SEND-related work with fewer resources.
- 6.7. Agreement has now been reached between the National Employers and the Local Government National Joint Council (NJC) Trade Union Side on the local government pay offer for 2018/19 and 2019/20 following a full ballot of GMB's local government membership. This offer will raise pay for most support staff covered by the NJC above inflation for the first time in almost a decade.^{xxxi} No new money has been made available to fund these increases. GMB will campaign to ensure that all school staff covered by the NJC receive the pay rise they are due; and we will continue to lobby the Government and opposition political parties to ensure that new funding is made available to fund proper pay rises for all public sector workers. We will continue to work with employers and local authorities to ensure the best possible outcomes for our

members during restructuring and other consultation processes.

7. Pay and terms and conditions

- 7.1. Most support staff are dissatisfied with pay levels that fail to reflect their levels of skill, knowledge and experience. Pay has not kept pace with inflation as real wages have been severely eroded by eight years of pay freezes and capped one per cent increases. According to the Office for National Statistics, on average school administrators across Great Britain earned £16,262 and teaching assistants earned £12,123 (gross) in 2017^{xxxii} - by way of comparison, the average teacher's salary in state funded schools in England was £36,900 in 2016.^{xxxiii}
- 7.2. In line with our national policy on minimum wage rates, we believe that all school support staff should be paid a real living wage of at least £10 an hour.
- 7.3. School support staff have been subjected to severe real-terms pay cuts as a consequence of the decision by local authority leaders and Ministers to impose seven years of pay constraints from 2009/10 onwards. Our members' salaries have lost over ten per cent of their value in real terms, and some of our members have lost over ten thousand pounds in real-terms – imposing real pressure on their ability to make ends meet. Support staff in some colleges have not received any pay rise at all in recent years. GMB was the only union to raise the extent of real-terms pay cuts to school support staff at a national level through the Pay Pinch campaign, and we were the only union that calculated the total real-terms financial loss that support staff have suffered.

Examples of cumulative real-terms loss of earnings, 2010 – 2017

Job Role	Lost Earnings
Business Manager	£13,573
Cover Supervisor	£7,160
Higher Level Teaching Assistant	£9,200
Lab Technician	£6,351
Library Assistant	£6,659
Library Manager	£9,884
Teaching Assistant	£6,531
www.paypinch.org	

- 7.4. GMB notes that 89 per cent of support staff are female,^{xxxiv} and that women in schools are bearing the brunt of job and salary cuts. We condemn these policies that in practice discriminate against women and fail at least the spirit of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 7.5. Support staff are regularly pressured to work during otherwise unpaid breaks, and both before and after their contracted hours. GMB research shows that school administrators are twice as likely as the private sector average to regularly work

unpaid overtime.^{xxxv} School support staff should be paid for all the hours they work.

- 7.6. The overwhelming majority of support staff are employed on term-time contracts which only entitle them to 39 weeks of pay a year – in sharp contrast to teachers who are paid for 52 weeks of work. These contracts are often confusing worded, inflexible and deny staff a fair holiday entitlement (such as can be the case when staff fall ill during the school holiday period).
- 7.7. Obscure and poorly constructed regional formulas for determining annualised pay rates deny hundreds of pounds a year to support staff workers in some areas of the country, compared to workers on nominally the same annual salary who happen to live in a different region. GMB is working with other local government unions and the LGA to try to redress the failings of the term-time contract system, and it is our policy to bargain for the best possible contracts for our members.
- 7.8. Apprenticeships can be a valuable route into the world of work and GMB is working to represent and improve the position of support staff apprentices within schools. There are real fears, however, that poor quality and exploitative apprenticeships schemes are being used to undermine the existing workforce.
- 7.9. Three quarters of teaching assistant apprenticeship roles advertised during August 2017 were paid just £3.50 an hour – the legal minimum starting rate the first year of an apprenticeship – and it was unclear in several adverts what training, if any, would actually be provided. In one case, a £3.50 apprenticeship was advertised by an Multi Academy Trust that had recently attempted to make GMB members redundant. Apprenticeships must not be used as a pool of cheap labour to replace existing support staff workers.^{xxxvi}

8. Free school meals

- 8.1. GMB is the union for school catering and lunchtime supervision staff. The union has long campaigned for high-quality, nutritious school meals to be made available to all pupils. As GMB's late President Mary Turner, who was at the forefront of the campaign for universal free school meals for four decades, wrote in 2013:

'A wealth of evidence shows that good school meals improve learning and behaviour and reduce truancy. ... Tragically, hunger is a daily reality for some children in Britain today. GMB members working schools encounter children with no food at home, and see packed lunches of no more than crisps or chocolate, because parents are struggling to make ends meet.'^{xxxvii}

- 8.2. There is a strong body of evidence that supports the case for universal free school meals. 8 per cent of children who do not receive school meals bring nothing to school for lunch. In 2010 only one per cent of packed lunches were found to meet all

nutritional standards.^{xxxviii} The School Meal Plan group, the work of which was commissioned by Michael Gove, recommended in 2013 that *'the government should embark upon a phased roll out of free school meals for all primary school children.'*^{xxxix} Ministers should now adopt this recommendation.

- 8.3. The case for free school meals is strengthened by the outcomes of pilots funded by the last Labour Government in Hull, Durham, and schemes operated by Labour-led councils in London including Islington, Newham, and Southwark. GMB commends the Labour leadership of the Islington London Borough Council for making free school meals available to all children while encouraging parents to register, securing up to £1,320 per child from central government funding and helping to protect staff posts.^{xi}
- 8.4. GMB was one of the first organisations to protest against the Government's plan to impose an arbitrary £7,400 free school meals eligibility cap on household earnings where parents or carers are in receipt of Universal Credit. We were the only recognised support staff union that made a submission to the Department for Education's consultation on the eligibility changes.^{xii}
- 8.5. The Government's policy of imposing a £7,400 household earnings cap – which is not linked to price or wage inflation – will have a devastating impact on thousands of low income families. When the National Minimum Wage next rises in April 2019, a household in which parents or carers earn the NMW will have to cut one hour's work a week in order to retain free school meal entitlements. This arbitrary 'cliff edge' makes a mockery of the Government's stated intention of 'making work pay.'
- 8.6. The DfE says that around ten per cent of children who currently receive free school meals would lose their entitlement under the new criteria, once transitional protections are removed. This means that over a hundred thousand children would lose their free school meals compared to the pre-Universal Credit eligibility criteria. The Children's Society estimates that up to a million children could lose their free dinners compared to the current temporary arrangement under which all households that receive Universal Credit are entitled to receive free school meals.^{xiii}
- 8.7. Cuts to free school meals entitlements represents a threat to the jobs of catering and lunchtime supervision staff, especially in those local authorities that have a higher than average level of entitlement and uptake. GMB will continue to campaign to end this unfair and arbitrary cap and ensure that future governments expand – not cut – free school meal provision.
- 8.8. The first impacts of the new policy will be felt from the start of the new school year in September 2018, when pupils making the transition from primary to secondary education will lose their right to receive free school meals if their parents or carers do not meet the new eligibility criteria. GMB will conduct further research work and launch a national campaign that makes local materials available to activists ahead of the start

of the 2018/19 academic year.

9. The condition of the education estate

- 9.1. Unsafe buildings are a daily reality for our members. No-one should have to put up with exposed wiring and crumbling window frames, but 60 per cent of school buildings date from before the mid-1970s. Maintenance and investment funding has more than halved since 2010, and according to the National Audit Office it would cost a £13.8 billion to bring the whole of the school estate in England up to a satisfactory standard (of which £6.7 billion would have to be spent on repairing major defects and buildings at risk of critical failure).^{xliii} GMB welcomes Labour's commitment to invest £14 billion in school buildings to bring them up to modern standards.^{xliv}
- 9.2. The FE sector is also in dire need of investment. Unlike schools, colleges do not qualify for direct, guaranteed capital investment funding streams, and banks are increasingly unwilling to lend to fund projects. Capital investment has fallen by over a third in real-terms since 2010. It is vital that colleges also receive an injection of funding to pay for essential maintenance and new buildings.^{xlv}
- 9.3. Dangerous cladding materials – of the same or similar type that were used on Grenfell tower – have been installed at many schools, colleges and universities over recent years. The majority of suspect materials remain in place a year on from the Grenfell tower, despite the Government conducting an audit of potential risks. Ministers should publish a plan to install adequate numbers of sprinklers and remove any dangerous cladding materials from all schools.
- 9.4. Asbestos remains an urgent concern for education workers. Asbestos has been banned from all new school works since 1999 but the National Audit Office has said that the substance is still 'a significant, and potentially dangerous' presence in most schools.^{xlvi} Professor Julian Peto, Cancer Research UK Professor of Epidemiology, has estimated that between 200 and 300 people may die each year due to exposure to asbestos as pupils during the 1960s and 1970s.^{xlvii} Although the Department for Education requires schools to hold registers on asbestos on site, it does not collect that information itself. The true extent of asbestos prevalence in schools and colleges is therefore unknown. The Government should collect and publish information that shows where asbestos is still present in schools and other educational sites.
- 9.5. 138 people died of mesothelioma between 2011 and 2015 whose last occupation was clearly recorded as an educational role, of whom 27 can be positively identified as former support staff workers.^{xlviii} These figures do not cover all support staff roles and they do not monitor deaths over the age of 75. These factors, in addition to the fact that only the last known occupation is recorded, means that these figures underrepresent the scale of the human cost that this debilitating illness has inflicted on education workers. GMB, through its membership of the Asbestos in Schools

Campaign and the Joint Union Asbestos Campaign (JUAC), has called for the phased removal of all asbestos from all schools by 2028.

10. Services for children with additional learning needs

- 10.1. GMB believes that all children should have the right to be taught in a supportive setting that gives them their best chance of achieving their full potential. Schools can only create inclusive environments due to the skills, experience and dedication of support staff, and it is time that this contribution is recognised.
- 10.2. Support staff spend most of their time working with children who have additional learning needs, either individually or in groups. These children may have English as an Additional Language (EAL), sometimes complex medical needs, or a Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND). The average special school employs 1.8 teaching assistants for every teacher, compared to 0.6 teaching assistants for every teacher in the average mainstream school, and GMB represents thousands of support staff in special schools.
- 10.3. Many of our members have highly developed skills which they provide to schools for low rates of remuneration. These can include language skills (including signing), experience of supporting children with potentially highly complex SEND conditions, such as autism, and delivering targeted interventions.
- 10.4. Support staff's expertise is not recognised in the current system. Some of our members have been downgraded from higher level teaching assistant to teaching assistant posts due to funding restriction. Others are their school's main point of reference on SEND, but only qualified teachers are currently able to hold a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) role, which usually entitles them to a seat on the school's Senior Leadership Team (SLT). In practice, this can mean that HLTAs with a SEND specialism can be managed by a teacher who holds fewer qualifications and less experience than they do. It is a reflection of the unfair and arbitrary professional divide within the education system that becoming a school business manager is currently the only means for support staff to sit on an SLT. Support staff should be able to become their school's special educational needs co-ordinator with an appropriate increase in pay to reflect additional duties and responsibilities undertaken.
- 10.5. SEND diagnosis rates have fallen sharply in schools as funding cuts have bitten and eligibility criteria have been changed. According to the Department for Education figures, the proportion of pupils identified as having SEN in mainstream English schools fell from 21 percent in 2010 to just 13 per cent in 2016 – one of the lowest rates in the industrialised world. This means that 500,000 pupils with a SEND have disappeared from schools' rolls since 2010 (a fall of a third).^{xlix} This decline in diagnosis rates can cause resource allocation and classroom management problems due to children's needs not being identified, and it is believed to be a factor behind an

apparent rise in the number of illegal or 'informal' exclusions of children with SEND.ⁱ

- 10.6. Cuts to SEND provision pose a risk to our members' jobs. There is a proven link between a school's SEND intake and their tendency to hire support staff. In some cases, our members' contracts are linked to the presence of individual children with specific needs in a school - should that child move school, or cease to attend school, then funding for the post will be withdrawn.
- 10.7. Support staff are increasingly expected to deliver complex interventions as school or local authority specialist posts have been deleted, meaning that our members are expected to fulfil the functions previously performed by school nurses, physiotherapists, and speech and language therapists. A 2016 survey by GMB London Region found that support staff are being regularly required to carry out complex medical tasks, including supporting children with type 1 diabetes, cerebral palsy and heart conditions. Most staff did not receive additional pay for carrying out these duties, and a fifth said that they had received inadequate or no training.ⁱⁱ Many of our members do not receive paid time to plan interventions with teachers, and some report inadequate line management when they are told to work with groups of children with specialist needs.
- 10.8. Support staff should only administer medicines if they volunteer and, if they do so, there should be risk assessments in place and training made available. The Government should provide additional funding so schools can employ dedicated nurses.
- 10.9. School support staff make an invaluable contribution to the lives of children with physical, cognitive, language, medical and mental health needs in both mainstream and specialist school settings. They have been asked to take on increasingly complex responsibilities at a time when funding for training has been sharply reduced. GMB supports investment in services for children with additional learning needs, alongside improved pay and career development structures to recognise the expertise and dedication that the staff provide.

11. Selection

- 11.1. GMB opposes selection tests at eleven and all other forms of educational segregation, which tend to overwhelmingly benefit middle class children and discriminate against pupils from working class backgrounds.
- 11.2. GMB notes recent research by academics at Durham University, which found that:

'Pupils attending grammar schools are stratified in terms of chronic poverty, ethnicity, language, special educational needs and even precise age within their year group. This kind of clustering of relative advantage is potentially dangerous for society. ... There is no

*evidence base for a policy of increasing selection...The UK government should consider phasing the existing selective schools out.*ⁱⁱⁱ

- 11.3. Expanding selection and segregation and by this measure entrenching privilege is at the heart of Theresa May's vision for the UK. The 2017 Conservative election manifesto said that *'we will lift the ban on the establishment of selective schools, subject to conditions, such as allowing pupils to join at other ages as well as eleven.'*
- 11.4. This divisive policy was rejected by the electorate after school funding became one of the defining issues of that election. GMB notes that it is unlikely that the Conservatives will be able to obtain a majority for new legislation to enable new selective schools to be formed in the current hung Parliament. The Government may, however, make changes which do not require primary legislation, such as approving the expansions of existing selective schools at new sites (effectively creating new selective schools).
- 11.5. In line with Motion 327 passed at Congress 2017, GMB opposes proposals to abolish the 50 per cent cap on pupil entry in faith schools. GMB is committed to inclusive, non-sectarian education that encourages toleration, mutual respect and integration.
- 11.6. GMB believes that the nation should provide comprehensive and inclusive education for all, based on assessments of need – not subjective and discriminatory tests of ability. We will continue to oppose any proposals for new grammar schools and other forms of publicly funded selective schools.

12. Early years

- 12.1. The expansion of early years services and the creation of a national network of Sure Start (sometimes referred to as SureStart) centres was one of the greatest achievements of the last Labour Government. Comprehensive early years provision has been found to significantly improve the quality of life of both children and parents. The official evaluation of the Sure Start policy reported that:

*'Sure Start Children's Centres are well-placed to provide improved integrated services that will help support the most disadvantaged children and families and in a way that can contribute to narrowing the gap between the children of disadvantaged and more advantaged families.'*ⁱⁱⁱⁱ

- 12.2. Unfortunately, early years' childcare provision faces profound challenges. Despite David Cameron's promise that the Conservatives would lead the *'most family friendly Government we've ever had,'*^{iv} figures published in Parliament suggest that more than a tenth of Sure Start centres have closed since 2010. There were 3,210 Sure Start and children's centres in England at the end of March 2017, compared to 3,615 in April 2010 – a net fall of 405.^{lv} Eight Sure Start centres opened during the course of the last Parliament – implying that 413 children's centres (the majority of which were Sure

Start centres) closed in the period 2010 to 2017.^{lvi}

- 12.3. GMB commends the campaigns run by activists to save children's centres and community nurseries, including in Birmingham and West Midlands Region where the union is leading the community campaign against closures which, in respect of nurseries, could cost tax and ratepayers more than £2.5 million in redundancy payments and potential clawbacks on buildings^{lvii} - in addition to the unquantifiable costs that closures would impose on children, parents and carers.
- 12.4. In the wider economy, parents and carers are having to work longer hours to make ends meet as the value of wages continues to decline in real terms. This factor has exacerbated demand for pre-school childcare services and pushed up costs: the price of nursery care has risen by 47 per cent compared to eight years ago.^{lviii} The spiralling cost of childcare and sharp rises in demand is causing financial strain for our members who are parents and our members who work in early years provision.
- 12.5. Although the Government's policy of providing up to 30 hours free childcare may be welcome in principle, the funding provided to support the scheme is inadequate and it has left many local authorities facing difficult decisions when they are attempting to bridge the financial gap. The Pre-School Learning Alliance and Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years has warned that *'the introduction of 30-hours funded early years entitlement has directly threatened the business viability of nurseries in England,'* and the Conservative-controlled Treasury Select Committee has said that current funding levels are inadequate.^{lix}

13. Further and technical education

- 13.1. Unlike the schools budget, which has at least been protected in nominal or cash terms, the 16 to 19 education budget has suffered severe cuts in both relative and absolute terms since 2010. This has had a profound effect on our members in the sector, some of whom have not received a pay rise of any kind for several years.
- 13.2. The independent House of Commons Library estimates that 16-19 funding fell by 17.5 per cent in real-terms between 2010/11 and 2016/17.^{lx} The Institute for Fiscal Studies has said that:
- '16–18 education spending has clearly been the relative loser from education spending changes over the last 25 years. It experienced larger cuts in the 1990s than other sectors, smaller increases during the 2000s and is currently experiencing the largest cuts.'*^{lxi}
- 13.3. Post-19 education is beyond the scope of this special report. Colleges have however also been impacted by funding reductions due to their role as adult education providers (colleges provide educational services to twice as many adults than they do

to learners aged 16 to 19^{lxii}). Excluding apprenticeships, central Government funding for adult education fell by £2 billion, or 58 per cent, in real terms between 2009/10 and 2016/17.^{lxiii} If the Government is serious about plugging the UK's skills gap, especially in the context of potential skilled labour shortages post-Brexit, then it is clear that funding cuts to colleges must be reversed.

13.4. Workers in colleges may have previously been insulated from the threats that the academisation programme represents to their terms and conditions, but further education colleges can now be converted to academy status. We will continue to work on our members' behalf as they face an uncertain transition where they work in colleges that are undergoing conversion.

13.5. The status of colleges is changing as the University Technical College (or UTC) project has blurred the traditional divisions between further and higher education. The demands on colleges will become even greater following the expected introduction of T-Levels from 2020. Colleges, and GMB's members who work in them, can play a leading role in equipping the UK with the technical skills it needs in a post-Brexit environment, but they must receive the funding that the sector desperately requires and wage rises that are commensurate with the additional responsibilities they are taking on in return.

14. Summary

14.1. GMB is the union for support staff in schools and colleges. We are improving working conditions in the sector thanks to all our members, and especially our volunteer representatives, who give up their own time to improve the lot of their colleagues.

14.2. We welcome Labour's alternative vision of a National Education Service and we will ensure that our members' voices and experiences are represented as that policy is developed.

14.3. Support staff are the hidden professionals of the education system. They make an invaluable contribution to children's development which must be recognised by the Government and employers. It is vital the SSSNB is restored and that national standards for pay grading, career progression, and training and development opportunities are introduced.

14.4. Employers must recognise the extent of violence in schools and take firm action, based on GMB's recommendations, to provide support staff with the protection and support they need.

14.5. School and colleges face their worst funding crisis in a generation, which in England has been exacerbated by the wasteful fragmentation caused by the unaccountable academy and free school programmes. Spending cuts must be reversed and adequate

funding must be provided if the sector is to meet the challenges it faces.

14.6. GMB has done more than any other union to consistently make the case for free school meals at a national and local level. We affirm our commitment to oppose the arbitrary £7,400 free school meals cap and to continue campaigning until all children are entitled to free school meals.

14.7. GMB opposes unequal treatment and segregation in our school system. We reaffirm our support for inclusive educational settings and the provision of additional support for children who require it.

14.8. We recognise the vital contribution that early years and college workers make to the education system. Both face severe and, if action is not taken, potentially insurmountable funding challenges if they are to meet the expectations that have been set of them. The Government must act to fill the funding gap in both early years and college provision.

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(Carried)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I will now take the debate of the CEC Special Report on Schools and Colleges and can I ask that Barbara Plant come to the rostrum and move the Special Report. After Barbara has moved the report, I shall be asking the regions if they want to put up a speaker. If they are, can they come to the front and be ready, but it is not mandatory.

BARBARA PLANT (CEC, Public Services): Vice President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC and proud to be moving the Special Report on Schools and Colleges.

Colleagues, our support staff members are under attack. They are the workers most affected by education funding cuts. Education should be about cooperation, not competition, but the cuts are breaking our ability to deliver education that is comprehensive, inclusive, and free at the point of use for all. Support staff are the hidden professionals of the education system. As this report shows in detail, politicians who denigrate the skills of the support staff workers are speaking from prejudice and ignorance, not evidence. It may surprise Tory ministers to learn that teaching assistants are better qualified than the average for all workers but it will not surprise our members who know that school and colleges could not function without the invaluable contribution of all their support staff. Instead of being rewarded for expertise in education too many of our members are living in fear of the next restructure and next round of redundancies.

Colleagues, the fight to protect our members' jobs, terms and conditions, and educational services have only just begun. Congress, we applaud the industrial action taken by the members at Charlton Park, in my region, and we stand in solidarity with our members across the country where GMB is standing up for decent employment standards. This is a critical issue for our union. Support staff make up over a fifth of our membership and schools have been our most important growth area since national agreement was reached in 2003. The problem, Congress, is that too many in government see cuts to support staff as a way out for the education funding crisis at the same time that ministers are putting an extra £50m into grammar schools; that is an absolute disgrace. The reality is that schools could not function without our members. If as a society we are committed to provide inclusive and safe education that does not stress our children through over-testing, then schools and colleges must invest in their support staff.

This Special Report sets out the case for our members' jobs, it restates our existing policy in a number of areas, and it outlines new positions in response to challenges we face in 2018 that are, I believe, firmly grounded in evidence and our values. In the short time available it is not possible to do justice to the full range of challenges that run through the sector. I do, however, want to say a few words about one issue that is close to the heart of everyone in this union.

Congress, we must oppose the Tories' callous plan to cut free school meal entitlement, ensuring that every child has the right - (*Applause*) - to at least one hot nutritious meal a day has been a deciding cause for our union from the days of Will Thorne through to Mary Turner, who did more than anyone else to push free school meals up the political agenda. In her memory and as the first children lose their entitlement this summer when they move from primary to secondary education, we

must redouble our opposition to this stealth tax that is causing worry for low income families and threatening members' jobs.

Congress, the CEC believes this Special Report sets out an agenda that encompasses recognition of the skills, experience of our members. increased funding, protection from violence at work, a re-established school support staff negotiating body, fair wages, decent contracts, access to training and development and real routes to career progression for all our members in schools and colleges. I ask that you support the report. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barbara. Birmingham?

IAN PRICE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Vice President, Congress, speaking in support of the CEC Special Report on Schools and Colleges.

It has been my pleasure to work in a fantastic special needs school in Bloxwich, Walsall, for six years. I work with brilliant students and a great staff team of teachers and TAs. As was mentioned at the Public Services Conference on Sunday, teachers and TAs need each other. It will come as no surprise that not everything is rosy, though. I was delighted to see some of the points highlighted in the CEC report. Support staff are the hidden professionals of the education system, says the report. That is undoubtedly true. As the report notes, almost 30% of TAs are educated to degree standard.

I have been lucky enough to have the opportunity to study and complete an English Degree with the Open University while working and from September will have the opportunity to train as a teacher supported by school. I attend branch meetings with colleagues in other local schools that have been academised and cut to the bone and I feel like an exception. I am definitely not exceptional. I have plenty of colleagues who are skilled professionals. As the report notes, over three-quarters of TAs are educated to A-level standard or above but opportunities are drying up. The cuts in all forms of education have been hit hard and in the higher and further education sector the Open University has been particularly hard hit.

As someone who represents TAs daily and knows how hard it is to make ends meet pay is a very serious issue. It is no coincidence that a female-dominated profession, 89% of TAs are female, says the report, is also an underpaid one. The GMB's longstanding commitment to equality will help us to tackle this and to this end it was hugely encouraging on Sunday to hear from the Shadow Education Secretary and my fellow ginger, Angela Rayner MP, that the restoration of the SSMP is now not only GMB but also Labour Party policy, which will help us build a career progression and achieve the pay settlements the school support staff deserve.

Also in the report I was proud to see that our union continues to stand foursquare behind the campaign for free school meals. Marty Turner was passionate about this and, as usual, she was right. It is very simple: free school meals for all children.

The report also recognises the huge challenges ahead, the horrifyingly high numbers of school staff suffering violence and sexual abuse in schools is a challenge that has to

be understood and met head-on by us working together with schools. Our members need and deserve this.

As always, funding is a problem in education and, sadly, one thing we can trust the Tories on is their consistency in this matter. We need to engage the public and mount campaigns to oppose these cuts on a local and national basis and continue to kick back against the Tories' divisive and mysteriously welcomed new pet projects like academisation and grammar schools. On behalf of Birmingham and West Midlands Region I support the Special Report. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. London.

MARY GOODSON (London): Vice President, Chair, Congress, speaking in support of the CEC Special Report as it addresses many key issues facing our schools and colleges today.

Our region recognises the commitment of our school support staff who are working on the front line daily. Without their dedication our schools could not function and our children would not receive the education they truly deserve. The GMB are constantly fighting battles with all schools, especially academies and multi-trusts, who are only too happy to cream off as much as they can from school budgets to pay their executives and in doing so cause the financial position of schools to worsen.

The problem is that all schools, whether they are academy, part of a multi-trust, or local authority maintained, they will always look to attack our members first. Members such as site staff, business managers, caterers, teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors, and cleaners, they see as an easy target.

Congress, this is not right that so many of our members live in constant fear of the next round of redundancies or the next restructures with huge per pupil funding gap looming; the situation can only get worse. It is only too apparent that all schools for some time now do not appreciate how important the school support staff are in delivering a decent education to our children. Many of them for far too long have constantly worked way beyond their contracted hours just keeping the show on the road. Schools are only too happy to use many of the special skills support staff have but are not that happy to reward them, instead keep tapping the pool of expertise and when the budgets are stretched look to attack the terms and conditions, or even worse to get rid of them.

Congress, it is about time our schools acknowledge the true value of our sector's hidden professionals and reward them with the respect they truly deserve. Since 2010, all support staff have had their pay reviewed and their pay capped with all school support staff set to lose up to £9,000 in real terms by 2020, and half of the school support staff have faced violence in the workplace but too often they do not get the support they need. Congress, no one should have to put up with this work and we really need to campaign unilaterally on behalf of the school support staff because they have a real fight ahead. We need to support them. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Midland?

IAN BURKETT (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, proudly supporting the CEC Statement on schools and colleges.

For too long the sterling work done by our schools support staff has not been given the recognition they so richly deserve. Their work is the reason that schools have seen an increase in achievement as it enables the whole function of the school to work so much better. This Government attacks the roles of support staff as a way of saving money. What a short-sighted way to proceed. We must stop this happening as it is our children, grandchildren, and our future that is at risk. For this reason, we are proud to support this statement. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. Northern? North West.

LORRAINE WINSON (North West & Irish): Vice President, Chair, Congress, this is quite a damning report. Don't read it before you go to bed because it will keep you awake for quite a bit of the night. The damage that is being done within our schools, colleges, and the education system is an absolute disgrace. Just running through a few points in this report should have us all up in arms on the streets. Support staff in schools are under attack. There is a huge funding crisis while executives' salaries rise. There is difficulty for support staff to access training and support and school staff are facing increasing levels of violence. Jobs and services are being put out to tender and our members face threats to their terms and conditions. Free school meals have been abolished for families earning over £7,400 per annum. This will be a devastating attack on low earning families, £7,400, let that sink in, how does a family of four survive? Mary Turner would have gone ballistic. There is enough campaign material in this report to keep your branches busy for years. Even the infrastructure of our schools is struggling. A year on from Grenfell and we still have schools covered in the same cladding that caused that fire. I am sorry, I would not be sending my children into them. We need to fight the decline in the education system. We need an end to this Tory Government because under their governance this system will get worse. Please support this report. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lorraine. Scotland? Southern.

AVA WATT (Southern): Good morning, President, Congress, supporting the CEC Special Report on Schools and Colleges.

I am a TA. I work very hard. We all do. This hidden professional is getting beyond a joke. We are professionals and we should not be hidden. (*Applause*) We are so important that we cannot have a day off, ever. We have to support these children and that is what we do. We do it day in, day out. I have a degree so, yes, I am definitely one of those professionals. However, it does not matter. There is no career progression for a TA. You are a TA and you remain a TA; that is it. There is nothing to look forward to. It is love of child that keeps us doing the job that we do. We are underpaid. A lot of us depend on benefits just to make ends meet. It is not acceptable. The children are our future. Treat the TAs properly. So, as an overqualified, overlooked, underpaid and overworked TA, I support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ava. South West? Yorkshire.

PETER BAGNALL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Chair, General Secretary, Congress, supporting the report on the schools and colleges.

Congress, it is unacceptable for school staff to be punched, kicked, spat on, having school equipment and even furniture thrown at them. Staff have to deal with violent pupils in the last year, others have had to face insults, threats, bullying, and harassment. Schools must send out a clear message that there will be zero tolerance of violence against our staff in schools; not only our staff, we must include our unsung heroes the cleaning staff, the kitchen staff, and the secretaries of the school, who have to deal also with this violence. Violence toward staff in schools: we are told by members about violence against support staff on a regular basis. Members go to work because they love working with their pupils, not to accept violence as part of their job.

An obituary I would not like to see and one of the saddest days in the history of one of our schools in Leeds, one of our teachers went to school, loved, adored, admired by all pupils, and everything. She said, "Good morning," in the morning to her family and everything. She went into school, she went in the class, and she was approached by an unruly pupil. She was fatally stabbed. She was killed by a school process allowing these people to get into the schools, with knives, threatening weapons, and everything. We need more security on the school gates. We need to reinstate the nurses in all our schools. She will always be in our thoughts in Leeds and in the schools in Leeds. It is sad when she said, "Good morning," to all her pupils but could not say, "Good evening," in the evening.

The number of serious injuries inflicted on education staff has surged from 24% in four years up to 385% in 2013. There are 477 assaults reported to the HSC last year. Only serious injuries reported were made known to HSC. Under the Freedom of Information Act all attacks, no matter how minor or major, should be recorded. They should not be allowed to hide behind these facts. It is up to our staff and heads to ensure all these reports are reported in the accident book and made available to ensure all are recorded correctly. Health & Safety should also ensure that they are correctly recorded in the incident book. Investigations ----

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Peter, close down now, please.

PETER BAGNALL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): -- Tory cuts ----

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, close down, Peter. We are struggling for time.

PETER BAGNALL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I support the CEC Report.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. (*Applause*) Colleagues, the CEC is looking for support on this report so I will take the vote now. All those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

The CEC Special Report on Schools and Colleges was ADOPTED.

SOCIAL POLICY: TRAINING AND EDUCATION

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Now I go on to Social Policy: Training and Education. Could I ask the movers and seconders of Motions 342 North West & Irish, 343 Southern, 344 Southern, 345 Southern, 347 London, 348 London, 350 North West & Irish, and 351 North West & Irish, come to the front, please, and the mover of 342 to the rostrum.

RENATIONALISATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES MOTION 342

342. RENATIONALISATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

This Conference calls on the National Officer of Public Services, and the CEC, to lobby the next Labour government, and this Tory government, to bring all schools and colleges back under the control of local authorities. This will allow the GMB to negotiate with one local authority, deal with one funding budget and bring back national terms and conditions for the appropriate book/books that refer to different staff group terms and conditions rather than thousands of different school and college employers as we have now.

P42 BRANCH

North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

DAVID FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): There is a term I have discovered called Zombie schools and you are going to hear a little bit more about them shortly, but that is a school where you have the dubious honour of being transferred from one academy to another provider. According to the report there are more than 60 of these Zombie schools, a statistic that equates to nearly 40,000 pupils cast into nowhere land. There is another term for them as well, these schools are known as SNOWS – Schools that No One Wants - or Untouchables. The stories from within these places are horrifying: teachers desperately looking for alternative employment, parents looking for alternative schools, and children turning up each day becoming more and more alienated from the system.

When are we going to acknowledge that this attempt to privatise all schools to academisation simply has not worked? They have failed schools and, more important, they are failing our children, yet attempts to academise all schools at the expense of local authorities has been an unmitigated disaster. A whole generation of pupils has been subject to or should we say victim of the experiment of successive governments and can we honestly say our schools are any better. Academies making up their own rules, paying massive salaries to the top execs, and bartering as to what schools they will and will not help is no way to run an education system.

Once upon a time we actually had a stable education system. We knew where we stood with local authorities. Of course, some were better than others but in large part schools across the country felt as if they were actually singing from the same song sheet. Even Ofsted played their bit inspecting the local authorities too. This has been one big experiment which has resulted in far too many losers for it to be allowed to continue. It is time we stopped, took stock, and compared the local authority system of old with what we have now and work out what is better.

In a recent Commons Public Accounts Committee meeting Labour MPs, it pressed the Head of the Department for Education, Jonathan Slater, on the evidence behind his Department's alleged successes. He was asked, is there any evidence that rescuing under-performing schools by academisation provides better value for money than a rescue package for them inside the local authority. His response, we could have a situation where we are spending vast sums of money to transfer schools over to academy systems without really getting any additional educational output in those schools.

Congress, please support this motion for the sake of our sons, daughters, and grandchildren, for the sake of my children, Joseph and Ella, to bring an end to the academisation of schools and give them the opportunity to be educated fairly and in the best interests of their development and not in profits. Congress, please support.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Secunder? Formally? Thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: 343

**LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO BRING BACK SCHOOLS FROM ACADEMIES WHICH HAVE FAILED
MOTION 343**

343. LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO BRING BACK SCHOOLS FROM ACADEMIES WHICH HAVE FAILED

This Conference believes that Academies which have failed due to financial irregularities should be brought back into Local Authority. Each day more and more stories emerge in the media about financial irregularities in some academies. Therefore it should be the policy of the GMB to call for Local Authorities to bring back schools from Academies and or multi-Academy Trusts which have failed.

L09 LB LAMBETH BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

PATRICIA ENNIS (Southern): I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* My speech is on Motion 343. This Congress believes that academies which have failed due to financial irregularities should be brought back into local authority. Each day more and more stories emerge in the media about financial discrepancies in some academies. The money should go to pupils instead of going into the pockets of head teachers, executive head teachers, and CEOs, and sometimes even their family members. School belongs in the hands of the local communities, the residents, staff, the parents, and pupils. They are our schools, not business for profit. There should be mechanisms put in place to bring these schools back in-house. It

should not be once a school is taken out of the local authority control there is no way back. There should be a clear path on how to come back into local authority control.

Increasingly, schools in most academy trusts are not listening to local communities. The trusts are there to save money by stripping away at the integrity of the school and offering, in some instances, the bare essentials to run a school putting our members and children at risk. Therefore, it should be a policy of GMB to call for local authorities to bring back schools from academies which have failed. Let's stop having executive heads and bring back the head teachers who ran schools where the needs of the pupils came first and the welfare of the teachers a priority.

My daughter attends an academy. Within two years they have changed the executive head twice with no regard to the pupils or teachers. Back when I was attending a secondary school the head teacher was there for many years and the school was not run as a business but as a school that was dedicated to teachers and pupils. We need to bring back those days, those school days, when it is not about businesses but about pupils and teachers and where education matters. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Patricia. Secunder?

RYAN GALLAGHER (Southern): Congress, these failing academy trust heads claim that they have tried everything to improve standards. They are simply bewildered that no matter how much they pay themselves the standards have just simply gone down. In Medway schools they made lunchtime meals supervisors redundant. They parcelled the work out to already overworked teaching assistants, while the savings were dished out in whopping pay rises for senior management. When this did not improve standards, they started cutting TA numbers and forcing other TAs who stayed to do more. With the money saved the senior academy management gave themselves even bigger pay rises all the while claiming that this would somehow drive up standards but, no, Congress, standards fell further due to cuts in frontline staff. These academy heads, bless them, concluded from this that they had not quite paid themselves enough and if they just paid themselves about 10, 20, or £30,000 more then things would turn around, but they did not. Their friends and relatives even got in on the act. For example, one school in Medway, Kingfisher Primary School, paid out £800,000 to business consultants who just happened to be friends and relatives of the trust head. These academy heads are struggling with the fact that no matter how big their luxury car is or how expensive their foreign holidays are that somehow standards are not improving and in fact keep going down. So perhaps it is about time we brought these failing schools back under local authority control. Thank you, Congress. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ryan. 344?

ZOMBIE SCHOOLS MOTION 344

344. ZOMBIE SCHOOLS

This Conference, currently as this motion is being written there are over 60 "Zombie" schools in this country. A Zombie School is a school that its

Academy chain has abandoned usually due to poor mismanagement or financial difficulties. Over 40,000 children are currently affected.

Due to the precarious state of these schools other Academy chains refuse to take them over and Local Authorities cannot by law. This creates schools that cannot hire staff, give pay rises or undertake long term planning.

This motion asks that the GMB campaigns to allow these schools to be taken back by the Local Authority under these circumstances.

L16 LB GREENWICH
Southern Region

(Carried)

STEVE OAKES (Southern): It sounds like it is a B-rated horror movie. It is horrific but it is no movie and it is happening currently in 64 schools across the country. The Government, the Tories, have encouraged schools to join multi-academy trusts because they think it is the solution to everything, and this is just another example of failed Tory politics. Half of these schools are owned by two trusts and it is not a miracle solution. Some have failed. Okay, they fail over educational concerns or they fail over financial mismanagement. When they fail, obviously another academy does not want them. Who wants a failing school? Who wants a school that has a million pounds in deficit, no one. So, what happens to them is they become leaderless. They become unable to make any long-term decisions and for our members they cannot give pay rises. So, what can happen, nothing, because the local authority is not allowed to take them back.

What this motion asks for, quite simply, is that we do what we are good at, Congress, we lobby, we campaign, and we get it changed so that the local authorities can take schools out of the private sector and bring them back into the public sector, and our children will then have a decent education. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steve. Secunder?

DONNA SPICER (Southern): Forty thousand children are in Zombie academies where a new sponsor cannot be found after the previous one has dropped the school or been stripped of its powers. Wakefield City Academy Trust ran in total 21 schools in the Yorkshire region providing education to more than 8,500 children. The failed trust spent more than £1m pound of public money making staff redundant before announcing it was due to close, money that should have been spent on educating our children. Prior to its collapse the trust transferred millions of pounds funding into its own centralised accounts with significant transfers of assets also still being made right up to the point of collapse in September 2017. It then announced plans to hand the schools back to the Government claiming it could not rapidly improve them. Three primary and two secondary schools in the trust lost over £2m by this course of action.

Another trust failing our children is Bright Tribe Trust. It recently converted a school in Sunderland which went on to become inadequate, yet another example of failing government policy. The trust was lined up to sponsor other schools in the area but

withdrew blaming it on significant and increasing financial deficit and a decline in pupil numbers yet Bright Tribe Trust was given just under £1m of government funding in 2017 to set up an academy hub but is still yet to take over another school in the borough, another example of waste of public funding.

Schools never benefit from joining academy trusts. They do not provide value for money, especially for the poor and the under-achievers, and when they do fail they strip assets and steal money that is our children ----

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Close it down now, Donna, please.

DONNA SPICER (Southern): Yes. Support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much indeed. 345?

**ABILITY TO RETURN SCHOOL ACADEMIES TO LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTROL
MOTION 345**

345. ABILITY TO RETURN SCHOOL ACADEMIES TO LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTROL

This Congress should campaign for Local Authorities to be able to take over failing Academies or where the majority of parents support a school being run by a Local Authority.

Today 20% of primary schools and 52% of secondary schools are Academies in one form or another. The House of Commons Library in November 2017 reported that 24.3% of primary school children and 68.8% of secondary school children now attend academy schools.

It is clear that the intentions of the present government are for all schools to become Academies regardless of their performance or the views of parents or the local authority. Under present legislation there is no mechanism for an Academy to return to local authority control. Academies that are deemed failing or underperforming may be transferred to a Multi Academy Trust or sponsor (known as rebrokering) or subject to other intervention from the relevant Regional Schools Commissioner.

We believe that this is wrong and the GMB and CEC should campaign for Local Authorities to be able to take over failing Academies or where the majority of parents support a school being run by a Local Authority.

C60 CROYDON
Southern Region

(*Carried*)

AVA WATT (Southern): Morning, President and Congress. I did fail to mention that I am a first-time delegate and that was my first-time speech. (*Applause*) Academies were formed from local authority schools that are failing so now that academies are

failing what do we do? We believe they should be returned to local authority control. The Government's intention to change schools into academies is flawed, especially as their performance to date has not been that great. The education of our children is necessary to secure the future of our towns, our counties, and our country. So, education of children is not a business. If you are good at selling carpets, I suggest you sell carpets. If you are good at educating children, we want you to educate the children. There is no money to be made in education so do not give it to another profit-making academy, give it back to the people who know. I support the motion. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ava. Secunder?

SUE STACEY (Southern): Vice President, Congress, first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* The failure under current legislation to allow failing academies to return to local authorities is a disgrace. Failing academies fail the pupils and fail us as a nation. A good productive learning environment is a fundamental right of every child in this country. We the GMB need to take up the fight and to campaign for the necessary changes to legislation to allow failing academies to return to local authorities. This month thousands of Year 11s are taking their GCSEs. This is a very stressful time and very worrying time for pupils, even in outstanding schools. So how do you think pupils are feeling in schools that are failing? It is not acceptable that those pupils through no fault of their own are having their future hopes and dreams jeopardised by substandard schools. It is not fair on the pupils, their parents, or their teachers to be facing these terrible circumstances. All our futures depend on the children at schools now. I second this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stacey. 347? Has that been withdrawn, 347?

TACKLING SCHOOL BULLYING MOTION 347

347. TACKLING SCHOOL BULLYING

This Conference calls on the CEC in helping to tackle school bullying. We are here to help adults in the workplace who experience bullying but every day we hear of bullied children who endure huge stress levels that affect their quality of life, well-being, educational attainment and also leads to increasing numbers of suicides.

We believe this union should think of ingenious ways that school age children can be made aware of the power of the union and for schools to put in place structures that can help alleviate exposure to such behaviour. That this union looks at methods such as a no bullying approach to see if we can get this into schools so that bullying becomes everybody's problem not just that of the bullied and that the whole school community are involved in the solution as well as prevention.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Withdrawn)

MARIE McCORMACK (London): This Congress calls on the CEC to help tackle school bullying. We are here to help adults in the workplace as a union, those who experience bullying in the workplace, but every day we hear of bullied children who endure huge stress levels that affect their quality of life, wellbeing, educational attainments, and also leads to increasing numbers of suicides. We believe this union should think of ingenious ways that school-age children can be made aware of the power of the union and for schools to put in place structures that can help alleviate exposure to such behaviour. We ask that this union looks at methods such as the *No Bully* approach that is performing social miracles in the USA. If you Google *No Bully* it is actually an approach, a structure, that schools can buy into to help tackle the problem. By adopting the *No Bully* approach bullying becomes everybody's problem, not just that of the bullied and the bully, and the staff having to solve the issues. The whole school community becomes involved in the solution as well as prevention.

Can we just pause for a few seconds silence now to show our solidarity to everyone, both pupils and staff who are right now sitting in school premises worried sick about the bully's next move today. (*Short silence*) Please support Motion 347. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Marie. Secunder?

CATHY HOLLAND (London): Although this motion is about child bullying, to me this is a learned behaviour from adults. I have worked within the school network for Essex for 13 years. Along with the growth of academies and the growing competence of local academies there seems to be little heart in this sector to treat people fairly. Although teachers are now being bullied as well by senior leadership teams, I am here to talk about support staff as that is my expertise. I have seen many heads use capability to undermine and frighten staff. When a member of staff comes to me after they have been turned down for a special event in their lives – sometimes a family has booked something special – they are very stressed. So I ask them, can they get cover. Usually they line somebody up and I say, “Do you want to go,” and they say, “Yes,” so I say, “Go, we’ll deal with it when you come back.” They come back and usually they are sent for a disciplinary, which is very distressing and demeaning. They turn to us and say they have to make a point because everyone would do the same, but we usually find someone who has been given the time off without fuss and bother. As long as your face fits you are okay. Most support staff get on well with the teachers but if a teacher is failing they will make sure the support staff are blamed, another form of bullying. Another is at Ofsted report time the senior leadership team will make staff a scapegoat by saying they are in it together, but they are not. It usually falls to the lowest common denominator, yes, support staff. We must stop this in schools. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy. 348?

HELPING SCHOOL PUPILS INTO APPRENTICESHIPS MOTION 348

348. HELPING SCHOOL PUPILS INTO APPRENTICESHIPS

This Conference is aware that in certain parts of the country the system helping school pupils into apprenticeships and into decent well paid jobs is no

longer functioning properly. In the 1970s there were 250,000 apprenticeship places. This is now down to 50,000. The system that operated in the past in schools and colleges of further education to train the higher numbers has either been dismantled or is broken.

In particular certain aspects like career advice in schools, vocational training courses in colleges as well as employers offering enough good apprenticeship places are either not adequate or one or more of them are not there at all. There are parts of London and the South East for example where the levels of construction industry activities are at record levels but local schools and colleges are not plugged into the apprenticeships on these sites. This disengagement is harming local families looking for opportunities for their children at these local schools.

A properly functioning system requires that all these elements are properly directed and resourced to get all school pupils who want to secure good apprenticeships as a route into decent well paid jobs.

There is a recognition that the number of good apprenticeship places has to go back to the 1970s levels. The 0.5% apprenticeship levy is a step in the right direction. There is less recognition that schools and colleges of further education have to rebuild their capacity for vocational training and education and rebuild their careers advice away from their current total focus on preparing pupils for universities. At the very minimum, schools should be able to point pupils to apprenticeship places available locally.

Conference calls for GMB to campaign for schools and colleges of further education to work with local authorities and employers to rebuild this conveyor belt which is essential to get school pupils into good apprenticeships as a route to decent well paid jobs. It is also essential for our national prosperity.

BEDS COUNTY BRANCH London Region

(Carried)

KAREN DUDLEY (London): Vice President, Congress, this Congress is aware that in certain parts of the country the system of helping school pupils into apprenticeships and then on to decent well-paid jobs is no longer functioning properly. In the 1970s, there were 250,000 apprenticeship places. This is now down to 50,000, 200,000 fewer places. The system that operated in the past in schools and colleges for further education to train the high numbers has either been dismantled or is broken. In particular, certain aspects, like career advice in schools, vocational training courses in colleges, as well as employers offering enough good apprenticeship places, are either inadequate or do not exist any more.

There are parts of London and the South East, for example, where levels of the construction industry activities are at record levels but local schools and colleges are not plugged in to the apprenticeships available or even consider their availability on these sites. This disengagement is harmful to local families looking for opportunities

for their children in these local schools. There is recognition that the number of good apprenticeship places needs to go back to the 1970s numbers. The 0.5% apprenticeship levy is a step in the right direction but we need more. There is less recognition in schools and colleges that they need to rebuild their capacity for vocational training and education and the need to rebuild their careers advice to branch away from their total focus on preparing pupils for university. Not all children and young adults are academics. As a minimum schools should be able to point pupils to apprenticeship places available locally.

A properly functioning system requires that all these elements are properly directed and resourced to give all school pupils who want a secure good apprenticeship as route into decent well-paid jobs a fair chance. Congress calls for GMB to campaign for schools and colleges of further education to work with local authorities and employers to rebuild this conveyor belt potential talent which is essential to get school pupils into good apprenticeships again as a route to decent well-paid and highly-skilled careers. This is also essential for our country's future prosperity. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. Secunder?

SHARON WILLSON (London): President, Congress, this Tory Government had insisted it was for apprenticeships to help the young people of today better themselves but then made it harder for businesses to take them on with cuts to apprenticeship funding. Congress, I cannot express enough the importance of keeping up the fight for our children to be given a fair chance of gaining qualifications through apprenticeships. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon. 350?

SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICESHIPS MOTION 350

350. SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICES

This Conference notes that in 2017 the current government made a commitment to 'ensuring people have the skills they need for the highskilled, high-wage jobs of the future' and also made a Manifesto commitment to supporting the creation of 3 million apprenticeships by 2020. This motion calls upon the GMB to lobby both the Labour Party in opposition and the Government to seek to prevent the poor treatment of apprentices.

Whilst it is recognised that there are some excellent apprentice providers and trail blazers, it is a sad fact that a number of employers still view apprenticeships as a source of cheap labour and instead of recognising the talent and skills of young people, they instead choose to use them to complete menial tasks or in the case of one company to mass employ apprentices to cold call people for PPI and PBA claims and deny them the training to which they are entitled and that could support future employment in high skilled, high waged jobs.

However, a high number of apprentices in the United Kingdom are still being employed into poor quality apprenticeships that don't support or provide training. Furthermore, in 2016 the Financial Times reported that almost one in five UK apprentices was illegally underpaid for the hours they had worked.

Many apprentices are unaware of the benefits of Trades Union Membership and by working alongside GMB Young Members within apprentice workplaces to raise awareness around health and safety, minimum apprentice rates and access to appropriate training, this will only help to improve conditions for young workers on the whole.

B23 BRANCH North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

JO PITCHFORD (North West & Irish): Congress, on a simple search I completed using the national apprenticeship website there were 31 admin vacancies and 15 childcare roles available within just a five-mile radius from my home. However, these were not for full-time jobs, they were for apprenticeships and only a third of them guaranteed full-time employment once the apprenticeship ended, with some quoting: "Once you have successfully completed this apprenticeship there may be a permanent role you can progress onto," with "maybe" being the key word here.

Lots of employers who offer apprenticeships will complete these on a rolling basis meaning they will have new apprentices every two years to complete the works. This means keeping the cost down. So, on average, if an admin assistant can earn up to £17,000 a year while an apprentice admin can earn just £6,240 a year; that is a difference of over £10,000 per apprentice, said by an unscrupulous employer who is just valuing an apprentice at £3.70 an hour.

In schools, we know, apprenticeships are being offered as an alternative route to college and it is becoming a very popular alternative for our young people, with 494,900 apprenticeships starting in 2016/17. These were alongside apprenticeships since 2005 that have been available to workers aged 25 and over and in 2015 214,000 people or 43% of all apprentices were in the older age bracket.

My daughter started an apprenticeship this year with a law firm and during the interview she confirmed she would work 9 till 5, Monday to Friday, in the role of an admin assistant. She would be filing, she would be doing reception duty, and she would be welcoming visitors, a good career start. However, during the first day she had a total of two hours training in which she was shown, and I kid you not, how to cold call members of the general public about package bank account claims, asking them to complete forms online to create their claims, and not to mention being told that targets would involve loss of breaks if she did not meet them, quite far from the role advertised and no way of accessing any support with people who complained and being let go on the first day.

Congress, there are many roles being falsely advertised like this and often people find themselves stuck in these roles, they are trapped, they are trapped into completing an

apprenticeship by the training providers who are scared that Ofsted will destroy their rating. The individuals are scared of being blacklisted and being told by the employment agencies they are not going to find from the training providers another apprenticeship. It is only the knowledge and support with the membership of trade unions like our GMB that we can help young people to stop applying for these sorts of apprenticeships and then they can turn to apprenticeships that will offer them employment and the correct training, a full-time job and the knowledge of what their outcome will be. Good apprentice providers can sign up as trail blazer providers and guarantee to provide external quality assessments through EFA and employee-led models, professional bodies, Ofcom, or the Institute of Apprenticeships.

Congress, this motion calls for GMB to lobby both the Labour Party and the Government to introduce an effective mechanism that is not an optional extra. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jo. Secunder?

ALAN FLATLEY (North West & Irish): First-time speaker, first-time delegate. (*Applause*) As we have heard, the current government made a commitment to creating an incredible amount of apprenticeships, three million by 2020, many of whom will be our young members and people. Concerns about the wellbeing of apprentices and young workers albeit far often younger than we find today resulted in the earliest legal safeguards in factories and cotton mills, with the Health and Morals of Apprentices Act 1802, aka the Factories Act of 1802/04 and over 200 years later there is widespread consensus that more needs to be done. The Government has made no mention of how they intend to make sure these apprentices, many of whom are young people, are not taken advantage of and put in positions of danger. This is the daily life of poor quality apprenticeships where young people are treated as menial labour and very often not given training, support, or health and safety awareness. This is paramount to their wellbeing and even in some cases survival, and it is unacceptable that research from the HSE (Health & Safety Executive) in 2015 found evidence linking an increase in injury of young workers and the lack of work experience and training, poor awareness of occupational skills and occupational risk, inadequate supervision, and the statistics sadly turn out into headlines with accidents and deaths reported in our national ----

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Close it down now, Alan, please.

ALAN FLATLEY (North West & Irish): -- Okay. I support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much indeed. 351?

SKILLS TRAINING MOTION 351

351. SKILLS TRAINING

This Conference registers its concern at the way in which the Government has allocated funding for training & workforce development during 2017. This has led to the exclusion of many low skilled workers. Deep concern remains at the way in which funds were allocated to large scale training organisations

whilst many local training organisations who have contact with and a commitment to the local community are excluded. This model is increasingly failing those who need training most.

The evidence from the 2017 process of allocating the Adult Education Budget has led to the demise of good quality local provision whilst large scale enterprises, some with inadequate Ofsted ratings were awarded significant contracts and funds.

Recent evidence shows that Learndirect who were awarded a substantial contract for apprenticeships are failing to deliver the necessary quality standards and outcomes resulting in over 50% of their apprentices in 2017 failing to achieve a qualification.

To continue with this broken model is a scandal and requires urgent investigation and action as well as a revised mechanism for the funding of training and workforce development going forward.

We call upon the GMB to work with the GMB Lifelong Learning Committee, MPs, Training Organisations and Learners to highlight the failures of the present system with a view to lobbying key decision-makers for:

- A new model of funding that is inclusive and responsive to those who need skills training most.
- A fair, and transparent tendering process.
- The inclusion of smaller and community based training organisations with a track record of engaging and delivering skills to people both inside and outside the workplace.
- A reduced burden of administration for smaller training organisations and a fairer “management fee” structure for those subcontracting with larger providers to deliver skills training.

We believe by addressing these issues a greater proportion of funding for workforce and skills development will reach its intended target and lead to improved provision and less profiteering from contracts by large scale providers.

Q22 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

KEVIN FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Morning, Congress, old-time delegate, old-time pain in the backside. *(Applause)* Congress, I have to applaud the work of my colleagues who have just spoken, particularly about apprenticeships, Karen moving 348, and Jo moving 350, who have described only too well the impact that the way in which they are running the apprenticeships is having and the real

consequences upon people. This motion, Motion 351, actually deals with another aspect of that scandal.

The other aspect of that scandal is the organisation of some of the super-sized organisations now who are drawing down public sector money and spending it on the apprenticeships and other adult programmes. What has been revealed, and it was interesting, look at what happened with Learn Direct. Learn Direct is one of the biggest contractors on apprenticeships. They were given a nod and a wink in the last round of so-called tendering, which actually excluded a lot of other smaller organisations, and they were given a big tranche of money for apprenticeships and other work in the adult skills budget.

What was going on behind the scenes? Behind the scenes they were in court trying to defend their position and stop it being made public that they had failed their Ofsted. They had a Grade 4 rating in Ofsted. What did that mean? That meant that nearly 50% of their apprenticeships never achieved a successful qualification; 50%. It meant, as in the words of the inspector, not my words, they were failing to actually progress people to a sufficient level to be able to move forward in their careers. What a disgrace and yet behind the scenes this Government had given them a tranche of money without having to even bid for it and only today I read that they may well be taken over by another organisation whose actual Ofsted success rating is only just above what Learn Direct had.

Colleagues, what we need is a much fairer and honest process in terms of tendering the contracts for apprenticeships in the skills budget which has excluded many smaller and very good agencies. I work with a simple agency that has a 98% success rate, a very small agency, but we have to keep bidding and bidding and bidding to the bigger players. They walk off with the cream while we do the work. This is a disgrace.

I have to applaud the work being done in the GMB and the very successful conference we had only a few weeks ago in Camden. Across this union there is a new change, there is a new revolution on education. We must change the policies about education and training because it is the lifeblood of our members. It is the thing that takes them out of exclusion. Do read your magazine that is on the table. Go and speak to the team outside about that work. Look at the way in which the website in the lobby is looking at new ways of doing learning for our members and extending the remit. The other side of that campaign is to campaign vigorously to make sure the policies that lead to funding are fair, open, and properly transparent and actually these super organisations are held to account because it is crippling the sector, it is destroying training, and I tell you what, it is destroying the livelihoods of our people. Enough is enough. Speak loud, speak often, and show the truth of what is happening. The corruption that is taking place is not acceptable to you or to the membership. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Secunder? Formally? Thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on Kathy Abubakir to give the CEC position from Southern Region. Kathy.

KATHY ABU BAKIR (CEC, Public Services): Vice President, Congress, good morning. Speaking on behalf of the CEC, we are supporting Motions 342, 343, 344, and 345 with a qualification, asking for Motion 347 to be withdrawn, and asking for Motion 348 to be supported with a qualification.

On Motion 342 our qualification is that GMB is committed to the reinstatement of the school support staff negotiating body, the SSSNB, which was abolished by the coalition government. GMB has a longstanding opposition to the introduction and spread of academies and free schools and supports the motion to lobby the next Labour government to bring schools and colleges back under the control of the local authorities.

Whilst national terms and conditions were in the process of being agreed under the last Labour government, they were thrown out by the coalition when the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) was abolished. It continues to be GMB policy to support the reinstatement of the SSSNB as debated in 2011 Congress.

Motions 343, 344, and 345 all address the concerns regarding failed academies. Where schools fail once they have taken academy status or are part of a multi-academy trust which collapses, they can be left without a sponsor thus failing the pupils, the local community, and the staff. Academisation is essentially a process of contracting out. Where a contract fails to deliver the return to an in-house option should be available. GMB is opposed to outsourcing in all of its forms and believes that public services should be kept in the public domain and not for profit.

GMB, therefore, is in support of the motions that these schools should be brought back into local authorities where they have failed as academies. However, the qualification is that while our general position is that schools should be within local authorities, and national campaigns to that effect could be problematic, we would be better to campaign locally where communities and schools want it. There will be some members, particularly following any job evaluation, that are paid for with academy status.

We are asking for Motion 347 to be withdrawn on the following grounds. Developing curriculum and establishing policy on this particular aspect of child welfare is not within our school-based members remit. The motion is asking GMB to directly shape this policy for which we have no actual means to do so as we do not represent children in school like we do about adults in the workplace. Whilst this is an important issue, GMB does not have the capability to involve ourselves beyond representing the membership in schools. Schools should have existing policies and procedures to ensure pupils learn in a supportive environment free from fear. These policies should dictate how pupil behaviour is managed, including to prevent bullying. Parents and children should also be aware of the policy so that they are involved in the solution and prevention and can challenge those if they think that is not being properly applied. This, however, is the employer's responsibility which we would wish to be consulted on to the extent that our members will be expected to implement such policy in schools. We should be committed to supporting our members who may be facing treatment themselves and support them in doing their

job to their fullest, which will no doubt include supporting children who are being bullied.

On Motion 348, we are asking for this to be supported with a qualification, which is that GMB does not have an input into school curriculums rather we have the ability to influence employers and local authorities to ensure that they are offering the best quality apprenticeships possible. A project to achieve this is already under way so the CEC is in support of this motion and will help with the direction of how we implement the project.

Therefore, Congress, please support Motion 342, with a qualification, Motion 343, 344, and 345 with the qualification, agree for Motion 347 to be withdrawn, and to support Motion 348 with the qualification for the reasons I have set out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kathy. We will now go to the vote. Does North West & Irish accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. All those in favour please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 342 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does the Southern Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. All those in favour show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 343 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Southern on 344 accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. All those in favour please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 344 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Southern on 345 accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. All those in favour show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 345 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London agree to withdraw Motion 347? Yes you are withdrawing it? *(Agreed)* Thank you. That is withdrawn.

Motion 347 was WITHDRAWN.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: 348, does London Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. All those in favour please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 348 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: 350, North West & Irish, and 351, North West & Irish, both supported by the CEC, we will take them both together, all those in favour please show? Any against? They are carried.

Motion 350 was CARRIED.

Motion 351 was CARRIED.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I will now move on to Employment Policy: Rights at Work. Could I ask Composite 24 North West and Midlands, 152 Wales & South West, and 154 London, to come to the front, please, and Composite 24 to the rostrum.

SKILLS SHORTAGE

COMPOSITE MOTION C24

(Covering Motions 352 and 353)

352 – An Ageing Workforce and the Skills Gap - Midland & East Coast Region

353 – Skills Shortages – North West & Irish Region

SKILLS SHORTAGE

This Conference is appalled at the continuing barriers being put in place that restricts the access to adult and skills education, which reduces the prospects for workers. Budget cuts to further education colleges seriously reduce the provision to access opportunities to obtain skills that are needed, impacting on people whose choices are already extremely restricted.

The shortage of skills is now reaching a critical level, and steps must be taken to act, rather than complain about the issues facing our industries and sectors.

Like all reduction to funding, this also leads to loss of jobs. At this time when companies have identified the lack of workers with skills required to improve and expand their businesses, training either internally or externally is essential to fill the gaps.

This Conference calls on the GMB to put pressure on companies, and to lobby MPs and Government, to address the issue of skills shortages to increase funding and improve the prospects for workers and the economy and stop this worrying trend.

(Carried)

TRACEY PATRICK (North West & Irish): Vice President, Congress, we have all witnessed cuts to funding in public services. The cuts have impacted on the ability of colleges and other higher education facilities from delivering much needed adult education and have led to redundancy and job losses in further education. Education does not need to end when you start work. For many people getting additional skills helps them to progress and work and enables them to apply for promotion or change roles. We need to restore funding so we have a properly skilled and highly trained pool of workers rather than low-paid, low-skilled workers and jobs. These cuts are ruining our ability to adapt quickly and to meet the developments in technology, engineering, and state-of-the-art manufacturing. This is a false economy. We do not want to be a low-wage economy. We need to compete in the world market for highly skilled jobs and be seen and marketed as a centre of excellence. Congress, I ask you

to support the motion and support the much needed funding to develop workplace skills and training, and stop this downward trend.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tracey. Secunder?

DEVONTAY OKURE (Midland & East Coast): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Vice President, Congress, this Congress is appalled at the continued barriers being put in place that restrict access to adults and skilled education which reduce prospects for workers. Our skilled workforce is getting older. There is a lack of apprenticeships nationally across all job roles. The skill shortage is reaching a critical level. Steps must be taken to act rather than complain about the issues facing our industries and sector. The Government continues austerity policies and refuses to invest within the British workforce. Apprenticeships mean young people can earn while they learn instead of taking 30 years of debt, 9%, on future income by going to university. Cuts to adult education have also narrowed workers' prospects to retrain skills and earn a living. This is leading to job losses. Congress calls on the GMB to put pressure on companies and lobby the MPs and Government to address the issues on the skills shortage, to increase funding, to improve prospects for workers and the economy, and to stop this worrying trend moving forward. Let's invest in apprenticeships. They are the future of our members. Let's stop the skills shortage today. Congress, please support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Devontay. 152?

APPRENTICESHIPS MOTION 152

152. APPRENTICESHIPS

We call on the Government to reduce academic restraints, to allow companies to recruit more Apprentices and to help fund company run Apprentice Training Centres.

DEVON DOCKYARD BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

NIGEL WARN (GMB Wales & South West): Vice President, Congress, I do believe that the CEC is supporting this with a qualification, which I accept. The main reason for this motion is the fact that we want the Government to reduce the restraints on the academies so that the companies themselves can then reopen their apprentice training centres, which was a great thing in the late 70s and 80s, but for some reason they have closed down because of the lack of apprentices. It is not so much a lack of apprentices, it is the fact that not enough apprentices are coming through the local education. There is nothing wrong with the local education. It is the fact that the numbers cannot get through. That is why I call for the reopening of apprentice training centres. I move this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nigel. Secunder?

PAUL BOHIN (GMB Wales & South West): President, Congress, apprenticeships are available as a route into employment providing the opportunity for individuals to earn whilst they learn. However, it is essential that these schemes satisfy certain criteria. They must be well-funded, provide relevant and meaningful training, and provide the means by which they can secure permanent employment. In the current economic climate, the more unscrupulous employers may look to cut costs and exploit apprentices. Congress must ensure that the rights of apprentices are fully protected. They must be paid appropriately and be able to access high-quality training, receive adequate supervision, never used for job substitution, be able to work in a safe and healthy working environment free from discrimination and bullying, and of course be offered a job once their time is served.

As a union the GMB can provide that protection but can also take advantage of an opportunity to recruit them into our membership and encourage their involvement in the union. Whilst learning delivered in college classrooms remains important, workplace experience is vital in gaining the competency and proficiency, and the skills required of the occupation, trade or profession to which the apprenticeship relates. Apprenticeships are very much trade union business and we need to persuade more employers to use apprentices by putting the subject on the bargaining agenda and allow under-represented groups to access them. Congress, maintaining investment in training is important and organisations that continue to do this will be better placed to survive the economic challenges of the future. We need to be relevant and be open to young workers. They are our lifeblood. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. 154?

YOUNG WORKERS-MINIMUM WAGE MOTION 154

154. YOUNG WORKERS – MINIMUM WAGE

This Conference says the pay gap between all workers and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) continues to widen. This is detrimental for young workers especially the 21-24 year olds who receive a lower minimum wage.

Conference calls on the GMB and the TUC to campaign to end minimum wage discrimination and for this to reflect whichever is the greatest CPI/RPI inflation rate.

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH
London Region

(*Carried*)

JAN SMITH (London): President, General Secretary, Congress, the GMB stands for equality. Equality is for everyone hence this motion calls for the end of the arbitrary and unfair discrimination on rights of pay. All workers should be paid for what their jobs are worth, full stop, with nothing else regarding the gender within pay gaps. We have in law the Equal Pay Act which covers everybody and I mean it covers everybody. Congress, we have all suffered unfair pay rates and we are still suffering

unfair pay rates. I am sure our young members would welcome this motion to help to move them forward up the pay scale, so let's campaign to get young workers on the same playing field, on the same rates of pay that they so deserve. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. Seconder?

HEATHER HAMBLIN (London): President, General Secretary, Congress, please support this motion. We must not have a situation where it is divide and rule or where employers will only employ those on lower rates. I second the motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Heather. I now call on Anne Dean, from the CEC in Scotland, to give the CEC position.

ANNE DEAN (CEC, Public Services): Speaking on behalf of the CEC on Employment Policy: Rights at Work. We are asking that Motions 152 and 154 be supported with a qualification. On Motion 152 the qualification is that we want to ensure the good quality apprenticeships are open to everyone and it is important that young adults who do not have the same start in life as others can access a good apprenticeship. However, it is also important that employers do not abuse the apprenticeship system and a lowering of standards for an apprenticeship is not part of our agenda. Lower entry levels may be acceptable but lower apprenticeship standards are not and we need to be clear that we are about the former, not the latter.

On Motion 154, it is existing policy that there should be no discrimination in wages on grounds of age. A policy on the living wage outlines there should be a real living wage of at least £10 an hour for all workers regardless of age. Our qualification is that linking any increases to CPI or RTI should not restrict us from campaigning for inflation-busting pay awards. In April 2018, the 21-24 minimum wage rate is set to increase by 4.7% and the RPI rate at the time of writing is 4%. If this motion was implanted without a qualification there is a danger that this policy could lead to lower annual wage awards. It is important that we campaign for wage rates, even statutory rates, which go above the base cost of living. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Anne. We will now go to the vote. Composite 24 is supported by the CEC. All those in favour please show? Any against? That is carried.

Composite Motion C24 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Wales & South West accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 152 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London agree to that qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 154 was CARRIED.

SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now move to Social Policy on Transport. This involves Motions 374, North West & Irish; Motion 376, Southern; Motion 377, London; Motion 379, North West and Irish, and Motion 380, Bus Collisions. Will the speakers and seconders come to the front, please, and Motion 374 to the rostrum.

TAXI REGULATION ENFORCEMENT MOTION 374

374. TAXI REGULATION ENFORCEMENT

This Conference calls upon the GMB to campaign with representatives from the Taxi trades for more effective enforcement and investigation into the problems of cross-border hiring. This problem has led to a swamping of areas across the country by vehicles licenced in another local authority without effective legislation to enable licensing officers in the affected areas to regulate or control this epidemic.

We further call upon the Union to lobby local authorities and the Government to ensure that sufficient funds are available to enable the effective enforcement of regulations and prosecution of drivers or operating companies who deliberately flout the regulations and place the public at risk.

Members are concerned that the Government has failed to bring to a conclusion the effective enforcement of existing regulations and changes to legislation, despite the fact that this problem has been known about for many years.

Q22 BRANCH North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

KEVIN FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Vice President and Congress, I know the meter is running so I will try and be short and sweet. This issue has been before Congress quite a few times and it is useful to have a slightly different angle on this. That is the failure of some of the authorities to adequately control the way in which they are allowing drivers who are licensed in one area to operate outside the area and to operate in other boroughs and districts. This is causing in many of the major cities and other locations across the country big problems because you can get an area, for instance, in Rosendale, who managed to earn £92,000 in licensing in 2011, yet by 2015 were earning £783,000 by the increase in the number of licences that they were issuing, far outstripping the actual number of Hackney Carriage or licensed ranks in the town. It's madness! Madness! So where are these drivers going? They are going into the cities. They are going all over the place to actually get jobs into areas where they were not licensed. In fact, as the licensing officers themselves only have limited powers to do anything about their infringement when they are in those areas, we now have areas in the country where we have large numbers of drivers for whom we have no local checks being carried out and some local authorities have actually carried

lower standards of checks than apply in other areas of the country. This is not acceptable! I repeat, this is not acceptable!

You would want to now, if your son or daughter got into a cab in a town, that the taxi drivers had been properly vetted and actually overseen by that authority, but increasingly some of the other organisations who want to break open the whole market, the Uberfication of the whole market, are said to be quite happy to let drivers go into other areas. In fact, they themselves have not carried out their due diligence with drivers, etc.

The other problem with this situation is that the licensing officers in many authorities have very limited funds, and they have experienced massive cuts. So we are seeing a massive growth in some of these cross-border hiring operations, but the resources to police what is going on have diminished. So there is a complete recipe for disaster. We have more and more of these people, and our members — I applaud the Professional Drivers' Branch in the Commercial Services Section — who have, across the country, campaigned very hard on this to try and save the livelihoods of ordinary drivers. The point is that ordinary drivers are losing lots and lots of money every week and are having to work excessive hours now to try and just make a living. They can be standing at a rank a lot longer, earning nothing and waiting for enough jobs to earn a living. Why? Because the market is getting flooded with out-of-town drivers. This is not a fair and just situation. The legislation needs to catch up and there needs to be adequate funding of enforcement officers to enable it to be properly controlled and supervised.

Congress, it is time for a change. Policymakers need to make that change and we need to keep reminding them of the dangers they are placing the public in and protect the livelihoods of our drivers. Thank you. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Secunder? *(Formally seconded)*
Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PAPER ROAD TAX DISC TO BE DISPLAYED IN VEHICLE WINDSCREENS MOTION 376

376. INTRODUCTION OF THE PAPER ROAD TAX DISC TO BE DISPLAYED IN VEHICLE WINDSCREENS

This Congress calls for reinstatement of the requirement to display a current Vehicle Excise Duty tax disc on the windscreen of all vehicles registered in the UK.

In October 2014, the Government removed the need for a paper Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) disc to be displayed in the left-hand corner of vehicles in the UK. This change was supposed to save between £7 and £10m in administration costs to the DVLC.

However, this has turned out to have the opposite effect in that the number of un taxed vehicles on the streets of the UK has trebled to over 750,000 and the amount of licence fee lost was £32m in 2014/15 and is expected to rise to

£97m by the end of 2017/18. This loss of tax revenue has clear implication for government spending on roads, the NHS and education.

Not only has the removal of the paper reduced the amount of tax collected, it has made it more difficult to identify vehicle owners that have not paid their Vehicle Excise Duty.

As a side effect, the removal of the paper Road tax disc has had implications for the viability of many rural Post Offices being one less service that they can provide.

C60 CROYDON
Southern Region

(Carried)

MARTIN DOLAN (Southern): I move Motion 376 — the introduction of the paper road tax disc to be displayed in vehicle windscreens.

Showing a paper tax disc to be displayed in vehicle windscreens was withdrawn in 2014 to cut administration fees and save the Government millions. However, the amount of vehicles without tax has trebled and this has resulted in a loss of over £30 million in the year 2014 to 2015, and this figure is expected to rise in the coming years. The chances are that more cars are not taxed and they probably don't have an MOT or even insurance. The chances of being stopped on a normal road is minimal and generally reduced on the motorways. The paper tax disc was, originally, an indication that the car was taxed and could not be operated without an MOT. Bring back the paper tax disc. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

AVA WATT (Southern): Congress, I second Motion 376 — Introduction of the Paper Road Tax Disc to be displayed in Vehicle Windscreens. It is not an introduction. It is a re-introduction. It is old school. I would like it to come back because I know where I am. I can see it, touch it and feel it. When they proposed its abolition, it was supposed to save motorists the inconvenience of sticking up a tax disc. It was also supposed to save £10 million. It has not happened. I believe that the Government are losing more money than they have saved. In 2020 vehicle excise receipts are going to fund developments to the roads. I am happy to have the inconvenience of sticking my tax disc in my car windscreen if it means I don't have to negotiate pot holes in every turn wrecking my car. Bring back the paper tax disc. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ava. I call Motion 377.

**NO DISABLED BLUE BADGE EXEMPTIONS
MOTION 377**

377. NO DISABLED BLUE BADGE EXEMPTIONS

This Conference agrees the Disabled Blue Badge scheme throughout the United Kingdom should not be exempt by selected local authorities within London or town centres where local schemes are in operation.

The Blue Badge scheme should be mandated under law to be honoured in all London local authorities and town centres calling on Department for Transport in government to apply this as mandatory.

CAMDEN APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

ANDREW BROOK (London): Congress, I am a first-time speaker and first-time Congress delegate. *(Applause)* Vice President, I should like to say to my London Region thank you very much for your support. *(Applause)*

I move Motion 377 — No Disabled Blue Badge Exemptions. The Blue Badge scheme came into force in 1971. Originally, it used to be the Orange Badge for the United Kingdom. Unfortunately, changes to the Blue Badge scheme have allowed the local authorities to water down the scheme, where they charge you for use of your badge. Furthermore, the London Borough of Camden also have their own badge, which is a Green Badge. So not only do you have to have a Blue Badge but you also have to have a Green Badge if you live in the south of the borough. Westminster may have a Blue Badge but you also have to have a White Badge. Kensington and Chelsea has a Purple Badge. In the City of London, because it all became nationalised, you could park anywhere.

The Blue Badge scheme is specialised for people with disabilities to be able to park new venues, hospitals and family and friends. The scheme the way is working now does not allow that because if you have a friend in Westminster or you want to go a hospital in Westminster, you cannot park. The Blue Badge scheme costs £10 for three years and you also have to pay at least £20 for the other coloured badges. I am sorry, I can't do this any more. Thank you. *(Cheers and applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andrew. Secunder? *(Formally seconded)* I call Motion 379.

**MOTORWAY AND HIGHWAY SAFETY DURING NIGHT TIME HOURS
H&S ISSUE
MOTION 379**

**379. MOTORWAY AND HIGHWAY SAFETY DURING NIGHT TIME HOURS
H&S ISSUE**

This Conference calls on the CEC to support and put a motion to the Minister for Transport and The Highways Agency to light motorways where there is

already lighting included on the motorways and highways, to re-light these sections at night during maintenance, in the interest of our colleagues in the maintenance and construction sectors and also in the interest of public safety.

After using several motorways around the UK during night time driving, I've become rather concerned about the practice of Highways maintenance at night time. Several of these sections of motorway have lamp standards fitted and have been turned off to save money which on the face of it is a wise and sensible economic idea during these times of SO called Austerity. (Not Austerity). But many of these, especially in urban areas, are extremely busy and even grid locked at times with the weight of traffic.

There is a major programme in place to create smart motorways! Or future cash cows!

Let's use the Worsley intersection of the M60, M62 and M61 as a sample of which I have travelled through in all directions during one of the latest upgrading to Smart Motorway.

The lighting has been turned off to save money and workers are working in the centre and the sides and are using huge arc lighting to light the areas they are working in. Driving along an unlit section then suddenly hit in the face with these very powerful lights in narrow lanes with other safety lights flashing all around it's a fantastic light show. Not really in the interest of safety on our motorways and Highways! Certainly not for those workers who are earning a living on the carriageways to improve our motorways and highways. I firmly suggest unsafe working spaces.

A08 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

JOHN MERCER (North West & Irish): Good morning, Vice President and Congress. I have been told by my wife that I have say something that I did not say yesterday. I am a first-time delegate and also I am a second-time speaker now. *(Applause)* I hope she is happy.

Motion 379. Is there anyone here who has never been in a motorised vehicle on our roads? No, I didn't think there would be. So this motion affects everyone. This motion concerns motorway and highway safety during night-time hours. I call on this Congress and the CEC to put a motion to the Minister of Transport and for the Highways Agency to light motorways where light is already included on parts of the motorways and highways. These sections should all be lit especially in the interests of our colleagues in the maintenance and construction sectors and also in the interest of the safety of the public.

Reason. After using several motorways over the years in the UK during night-time driving, I have become rather concerned about the safety practices of highway maintenance at night times. Several of these sections of motorways have lamp

standards fitted and have now been turned off to save money which, on the face of it, is a wise and sensible economic idea in these times of so-called austerity. Many of these highways, especially in urban areas, are extremely busy and even gridlocked at times with the weight of traffic even at night times. I am sure a lot of people who travel at night time will agree with that.

There is a major programme in place to create smart motorways. My feelings are that it is a future cash cow. Flick a few switches, add a few programs and we will all be paying for it. Let's use the Worsley Intersection of the M60, M62 and M61 as a sample of which I have travelled more often in many directions during one of the latest upgrading to Smart Motorways. Or future cash cows!

The lighting has been turned off to save money and workers are working in the centre and the sides and they are using large arc lights to light the areas where they are working to help with their safety. Driving along an unlit section and then suddenly hit in the face with one of these very powerful arc lights is very dangerous. Remember, they also turn what they call the street lights off. They often have narrow lanes, diversions, closed roads, cars close to each other and trucks passing each other, with rain chucking down and all the rain is splashing on your windscreen with the mud and everything. You also have got a wonderful light show of flashing lights, direction boards and signs all going at you. I suggest that it is not in the interests of safety on our motorways and highways, most certainly not for these workers who are earning a living on the carriageways to improve our motorways and highways. I suggest they are working on occasions at unsafe working places. The middle of motorways are dangerous places to work when people are driving past at various speeds, even with the lower speeds. We want light savings. Congress, please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Secunder?

JEFF KEIGHT (North West & Irish): Congress, I second Motion 379. As someone who has worked in highways maintenance for 39 years, the 24 years being a street-works inspector, it is my job to ensure that any contractor working on the public highway works safely and in accordance with the Code of Practice on Safety for Street Works.

In the 24 years that I have been doing this job, I have never been asked to monitor or audit road works being undertaken of a night, and none of my colleagues have been asked, either. Contractors are setting up on site under powerful arc lights and are not considering the needs of motorists using the roads they are working on. In so doing they are blinding drivers. It is only a matter of time before serious accidents occur and people are killed, whether it be motorists or the road workers. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jeff. I call Motion 380.

BUS COLLISIONS MOTION 380

380. BUS COLLISIONS

This Conference is appalled by the number of deaths and serious injuries caused by collisions involving public transport buses. This is a matter of great concern for GMB members and their families.

Bus collisions in London for example have increased year on year since 2012, with last year's record bus collisions totalling 28,010 or over 77 bus collisions per day and 3.2 serious injuries per day.

Conference considers that 3.2 persons being seriously injured every day by collisions of London buses is totally unacceptable.

A report by London Assembly "Driven to Distraction" released in July 2017 revealed that in the two years 2015 and 2016 over 12,000 people were injured and 25 were killed as a result of safety incidents involving TfL buses.

The Mayor has a responsibility to act to reduce this unnecessary injury and loss of life. In addition, local Councillors across the country also need to act to protect road users from unnecessary bus collisions.

The numbers of collisions and the numbers injured in the rest of the country is not known as the information is not published. It is only available in London following a 5 year campaign by survivors of bus collisions to get the information published.

The Mayor of London's current contracts incentivises bus operators to meet punctuality targets, but not to reduce collisions and injuries. Safety targets and incentives are essential in all bus operations contracts.

In September 2014, TfL bus drivers protested in front of City Hall and presented The Mayor of London with a Bill of Rights, many of which deal with concerns resulting from poor working conditions and safety practices identified in the London Assembly Report. Similar cuts in terms and conditions have occurred for bus workers across the country.

Conference is concerned that even though Boris Johnson announced on 1 February 2016 that bus contracts would be updated to include safety "incentives over the next three months" that in July 2016 Sadiq Khan delayed that promised action for another 18 months until the end of 2017 and then in November 2017 TfL's response to the Bus Safety Investigation was postponed again to the end 2018.

Conference calls on:

- The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan to speed up the changes needed in the contract to reduce death and injuries in the Capital.

- The CEC to campaign for bus operators across the country to have their contracts changed to give them incentives for a reduction in the numbers of deaths and serious injuries caused by collisions by public transport buses.
- The CEC and regions to raise with local authorities the necessity of improving the monitoring and reporting of the Operational Safety Performance of public transport buses across the UK and where necessary change contracts to avoid unnecessary death and injuries.
- The CEC and regions to raise with local authorities to act on the urgent requirement for information on bus collisions to be published.

BARNET PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH London Region

(Carried)

EUTON STEWART (London): Congress, I move Motion 380 — Bus Collisions. Congress, we all use public transport, or at least most of us do. When we step on a train, tram or bus we expect to travel safely and arrive at our destination in one piece. However, recent statistics, which were only released after a long five-year campaign by survivors of bus collisions, show that collisions have increased every year since 2012, and last year a total of 28,100 or 77 collisions a day resulted in an average of just over three serious injuries every day of the week. This situation is totally unacceptable. This motion is not aimed at bus drivers. This motion is aimed at bus companies and TfL who are running buses based on unachievable timetables and punctuality targets with no consideration for passenger and driver safety.

The only figures currently available are for London and TfL, but we suspect that this picture of ever-rising accident levels is replicated throughout the country. We all know that deregulation of public transport has been a failure. On the rail network we have seen a complete meltdown on the service since the new timetable was introduced last month. On bus services, we have seen services cut, isolating communities, particularly in rural areas and even increasing numbers of accidents, serious injuries and fatalities.

Let us make it crystal clear again. These accidents are not the fault of the drivers. These accidents are the fault of the bus companies and the authorities who tender these contracts. In London the previous Mayor, Boris Johnson, and the current Mayor, Sadiq Khan, have promised action, but the only action we have seen so far is delay and promises that never materialise. The time to act is not at the end of this year but now. Congress, let us campaign to ensure that bus-operating contracts are based on safety, not just timetables; to ensure that accident reporting is both mandatory and made public, and to tighten bus regulation. Ultimately, Congress, let us campaign to make all public transport, including bus transport, publicly owned for the public service and not for private profit. Congress, let's make our buses safe again. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Euton. Secunder? (*Formally seconded*) I will now call on Gordon Richardson of the CEC, from the Birmingham & West Midlands Region, to give the CEC position.

GORDON RICHARDSON (CEC, Manufacturing): Vice President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. We are supporting Motions 379 and 380 with qualifications and are asking for Motion 377 to be referred.

As Motion 377 — No Disabled Blue Badge Exceptions — well read out by Andrew, rightly points out, the National Blue Badge Scheme is not recognised in three London boroughs, namely, Westminster, Camden and Kensington & Chelsea. The CEC supports a comprehensive National Blue Badge Scheme. We recognise that the actions of those councils are causing problems for our disabled drivers in those areas. All three authorities are within the GMB London Region and that the region would be best placed to take up this important issue with those relevant councils. We ask that Congress refers this motion to London Region so it can directly, with the GMB Council-network, help end this damaging practice. National Office will provide support if required.

Congress, the CEC supports Motion 379 and 380 on highway and motorway safety moved by John and Jeff. Our qualification is simply that some words appear to be missing at the end of the motion. Motion 379, at present, says: “I firmly suggest unsafe working spaces.” We think the qualification, therefore, says: “We believe unsafe working spaces should be brought to an end”.

Turning to Euton’s motion — 380 on bus collisions — this motion draws attention to the serious problem of bus-safety reporting. The GMB is proud to represent both bus workers and the passengers. Buses are not inherently unsafe, and when danger does arise, we must take all practical steps to protect bus drivers and other transport users. As the motion establishes, Transport for London has been slow to address the rise in incident rates and bus safety statistics are not even collected in the rest of England.

The motion also rightly points out that without proper safeguards bus contracting can lead to operators cutting corners, literally, endangering workers, passengers and road users alike. The CEC endorses both the spirit and the substance of this motion, but we do seek two small qualifications. The first is that, when it comes to political engagement on transport issues in the capital, the London and Southern Regions may be best placed to lead with National Office providing support, if required. The second is that the motion seeks to impose new reporting duties on local authorities which can create new costs in this age of continuing austerity. Our qualification, therefore, is that the Department for Transport should shoulder an appropriate level of costs and administration burdens in line with other categories of national road-safety reporting. With these relatively minor points taken into account, Congress, I ask you to support Motions 379 and 380 with the qualifications I have set out and agree to refer Motion 377. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. We will now go to the vote. Motions 374 and 376 are both supported by the CEC. We will take them together. All those in favour, please show? Any against? They are carried.

Motion 374 was CARRIED.

Motion 376 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London Region agree to the reference back on Motion 377? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 377 was REFERRED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does North West & Irish Region agree to the qualification on Motion 379? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried. Does the London Region accept the qualification on Motion 380? (*Agreed*) All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 379 was CARRIED.

Motion 380 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, instead of taking the motions on Social Policy: Energy & Utilities Market, I will now move on to the CEC Statement on Outsourcing and Public Ownership. I call on Andy Newman to move. Then I will call on any of the regions which would like to put up a speaker, so if the regions want to put up a speaker would they move to the front, please, and be ready.

CEC STATEMENT ON OUTSOURCING AND PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

CEC STATEMENT – CONGRESS 2018

Outsourcing and Public Ownership

GMB continues to oppose the privatisation and outsourcing of our public services. The collapse of Carillion should serve as a warning that the fragmentation of our services for personal and private profit has had its day. Any money saved needs to go back into rebuilding our public services and remunerating staff.

Across the country, we have seen how privatisation has hit our members' pay and terms and conditions. Eye watering PFI deals have lumbered public services with ruinous repayments while the taxpayer continues to foot the bill when private providers fail. Our schools, colleges, hospitals and councils are being parcelled up and fragmented, and ordinary people are paying the price. Public sector employment has fallen to its lowest share of the labour market since 1947 – the year before the NHS was founded.

For the last forty years we have been told that the public sector cannot be trusted to deliver essential services. The events of the first half of 2018 have comprehensively exposed that lie.

The blacklisting outsourcing company Carillion collapsed, leaving 20,000 livelihoods in the balance. The private sector failed on the East Coast rail franchise for the third time.

Conservative-controlled Northamptonshire County Council – a so-called 'easy council' local authority that outsourced everything it could get its hands on – ran itself into the ground.

We welcome the Labour Party's commitment, as set out in its 2017 manifesto, to return essential services to public ownership. We continue to express our solidarity with the members of our sister unions who work for Royal Mail, for rail companies, and in other privatised industries, who are fighting for decent treatment at work.

Our policies have not changed; the rest of the country is catching up with our way of thinking. The GMB has longstanding policy positions against privatisation, outsourcing, and PFI deals. The CEC does not believe, however, that our policies should sit on a shelf to gather dust just because they continue to be correct: we must ensure that the position we outline and the language we use remains relevant to the world of work.

The GMB's members care passionately about the future of public services and the quality of their employment. This is reflected in the number of motions submitted to Congress 2018 on the subject of outsourcing and public ownership. This Statement has been written to incorporate the concerns raised in those motions, and CEC commends it to Congress.

Privatisation – Thatcher's legacy

Privatisation has been the economic orthodoxy since the 1980s when over two million workers were transferred to the private sector. Our national assets were disposed of at artificially reduced prices – the famous 'selling off of the family silver' – while prices rose for consumers. Councils were subject to compulsory competitive tendering, with devastating consequences for services.

Despite Margaret Thatcher's insistence that

'There Is No Alternative' the Government's own official history of privatisation concluded that there was no evidence that the policy had contributed to economic growth. In the meantime enormous private profits are being made from revenues that should have been invested in services: water companies have paid out £18 billion in dividends over the last decade. Research by the University of Greenwich suggests that if the annual cost of dividend leakage and debt interest payments was removed then bills could be reduced by 25 per cent on average.

GMB recognises that the last Labour Government had a mixed record on privatisation. On the one hand, RBS and Lloyds were partly nationalised following the financial crash, and East Coast rail services were taken into ownership. However, Labour also continued to use PFI; failed to protect the pensions of TUPE transferred workers; attempted to privatise Royal Mail; and opened the door to the fragmentation of our hospitals and schools. The next Labour government must learn from the mistakes of the last.

Since 2010 the Tory policy of privatisation has reached new heights. Our national stake in Eurostar; the Green Investment Bank; the Student Loan Company debt book; the NHS's Blood Products Laboratory; and East Coast rail services have all been sold off. Instead of using our nationalised banks to promote the common good, the Government has allowed them to continue their exploitative practices while preparing them for re-sale to the private sector. The Health and Social Care Act cleared the way for further NHS privatisation, and agency payments are stretching Trusts' finances to breaking point as permanent staff leave due to overwork and the pernicious public sector pay cap.

Public sector outsourcing is now a £120 billion business, and the share of outsourced NHS estates services increased from 38% in 2009/10 to 45% in 2015/16 (despite the fact that the risk of MRSA infection is twice as high in hospitals that outsource cleaning services).

Outsourcing and fragmentation is costing public services money they can ill-afford to lose: the annual public sector bill for agency and temporary workers has risen by £2.5 billion since 2012/13.

The real cost of privatisation Price increases above inflation since sale

Electricity (1990)	+ 41%
Rail fares (1996)	+ 49%
Gas (1986)	+ 55%
Bus fares (1986)	+ 109%
Water (1989)	+ 118%

Source: The Retail Price Index (RPI)

The rebirth of public ownership

“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 Conservative Leader of Cumbria County Council

Despite the Government remaining ideologically wedded to privatisation, many public bodies are taking the pragmatic decision to bring services back in house as funding cuts continue to bite.

Councils controlled by both Labour and the Conservatives have returned services to public operation, including Bournemouth, Cumbria, Liverpool, Thurrock and Somerset. NHS Trusts including Brighton and Sussex (where GMB campaigned to bring Coperforma patient transfer services in house) and Nottingham have also insourced services. The tendency towards insourcing is not just confined to NHS Trusts and local authorities: HMRC and the DVSA have both quietly taken their IT services back in house in recent years.

New forms of public ownership are emerging too. Nottingham City Council and Bristol City Council have created wholly owned energy companies that provide tariffs in the public interest, and a number of other cities (including London) are following suite. GMB welcomes the opportunity to organise in these new municipal enterprises.

The public sector has proven that it can outperform outsourcing firms and deliver savings for the public purse. Municipal bus operators have some of the best passenger satisfaction ratings in the country, and public ownership of the East Coast rail franchise delivered record punctuality and passenger satisfaction scores and returned over £1 billion to the Treasury. As we proceed the GMB should have full confidence in the public sector’s ability to deliver.

The collapse of Carillion

GMB represents more former Carillion workers than any other union. We have long campaigned against the company’s management excesses, including through the 2012 strike at Swindon Great Western Hospital against bullying and exploitative managers. We are proud of our part in exposing Carillion’s involvement in the disgraceful construction industry blacklisting scheme.

Carillion’s collapse is having devastating consequences for its UK workforce, many members of which were originally employed by local authorities. At the time of writing, over a thousand jobs have been lost – approximately 8% of the former Carillion workforce – and the short-term of a further 10,000 Carillion jobs is still uncertain. Five hundred apprentices have still not been found replacement courses – raising questions over whether the state should step in when apprenticeship providers fail

Carillion workers below the state retirement age stand to lose 10% of the value of their pensions, and TUPE protections do not apply to employees of companies in liquidation. Thousands of additional jobs are threatened in the wider supply chain. GMB is working tirelessly to protect our members whose livelihoods are under attack.

The collapse of Carillion has sent shockwaves through the world of outsourcing. Capita issued a profit warning and questions have been raised over Babcock’s finances. The edifice of the privatised state has been shown to have been built on unsafe foundations.

Terms and conditions

GMB believes that the supposed cost savings delivered by outsourcing are a myth: where ‘savings’ are achieved, it is all too often through attacks on the pay and terms and conditions. Numerous studies have shown that, once workers are outsourced, wages tend to fall or otherwise fail to rise as fast as they would have done if the service had remain in house.

In theory the Two Tier Code used to provide a measure of protection for public sector contractors. However, the code was only voluntary and compliance was limited. Even this protection was removed when the Two Tier Code was abolished in 2010. TUPE regulations were also downgraded to state that subsequent changes to collective agreements would not affect workers who had been outsourced.

Today our members' terms and conditions are under threat in the NHS, where a number of Trusts are establishing wholly-owned subsidiary companies ('SubCos') to avoid paying tax. Staff transferred to these companies are not automatically entitled to be paid on Agenda for Change scales. The transfer of staff and assets to these companies has also raised fears that the NHS is being broken up into units for full privatisation.

Privatisation was not motivated by narrow economic arguments alone – its architects saw privatisation as a means of breaking the process of collective bargaining. We have seen the effects of this policy on our own members. Ensuring fair pay awards that keep pace with the rising cost of living are not the only casualty when collective bargaining is undermined: the fragmentation of our industries also has serious consequences for health and safety standards. Workers and their representatives are also often hampered by a basic lack of information during the outsourcing process. This should be seen as an infringement of workers' basic right to be consulted over changes to their future. As ACAS has warned:

"In our experience difficulties around outsourcing can be exacerbated by poor preparation and hasty consultation arrangements Even where there is clarity of process many aren't clear about the impact on their terms and conditions."

Our members' interests must also be represented during any future nationalisation process. During privatisation employees were encouraged to enter into share schemes, and a number of our members did so in good faith. It is important that they will not be left out of pocket through no fault of their own and GMB calls upon the Labour Party to safeguard their financial interests.

PFI

GMB opposes the use of PFI and other 'Public Private Partnership' schemes to finance public projects. PFI (now rebranded as 'PF2') has proved to be ruinously expensive and has left behind a litany of failed contracts.

By any measure, PFI represents terrible value for money. £59 billion of investment has been financed through PFI since the early 1990s but these deals will cost public authorities an eye-watering £306 billion over their lifetime. PFI repayments are costing public services £10 billion every year - money that should be spent on services instead.

It is a scandal that taxpayers are paying extortionate fees to PFI investors who in many cases are based offshore and pay minimal tax rates. GMB supports exploring all options, including negotiations and refinancing, to bring existing PFI contracts to an end without paying extortionate compensation to PFI speculators. The Government can borrow money much more cheaply directly (the nation has not missed a single debt repayment since 1694) and the base interest rate remains at historic lows. PFI is not a price worth paying to keep spending off the balance sheet. It's time to fund public projects up-front to bring down costs and end the degrading of our members' terms and conditions that has been enabled by PFI.

Organising around outsourcing

Outsourced workers urgently need union protection. GMB already represents thousands of members in the sector, but the threat of further fragmentation is real and we must be ready to meet that challenge.

GMB National Office is working with the Regions to put together a toolkit, which will include campaigning and organising materials such as checklists, for our officials to use when services are outsourced. This will build on existing organising policies for school workforces that are

undergoing academisation. Mapping exercises are also being undertaken to identify all NHS wholly-owned subsidiary companies, and an NHS contractors' forum is being created. Organising opportunities have also been identified following the 2018/19 to 2019/20 local government pay ballot.

We are also undertaking organising work around outsourcing in the private sector. GMB National Office is working with the Regions to enact Motion 157 passed by Congress in 2017, on Utilities Contractors, brought by the East of England Waterworkers' Branch. The union is currently carrying out a mapping exercise to better understand the extent of outsourcing and agency working in this sector, and this work potentially represents a model that could be applied to other sectors and employers.

Summary

Over the last forty years vital public services have been outsourced or privatised: including utilities, the railways, Royal Mail, and council services (including catering, cleaning, refuse, care and direct labour services) have all been sold off to the highest bidder. The creeping privatisation of our public services is degrading the quality of provision in our schools and hospitals.

GMB believes that services formerly provided through the public sector should be taken back into public ownership.

We oppose any further financing of projects through the ruinously expensive PFI or PF2 schemes. We support taking steps to end existing contracts early, including through negotiations, that avoid the need to make extortionate compensation payments to PFI speculators.

GMB urges a future government to use public ownership as an opportunity to improve working conditions, strengthen collective bargaining and end the exploitation of agency and temporary workers that is being used to drive down wages for the permanent workforce.

The GMB has longstanding policy in support of the nationalisation of key parts (the 'commanding heights') of UK industry and we reiterate that commitment today.

(Carried)

ANDY NEWMAN (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, Vice President, I am speaking for the CEC and moving the Statement on Outsourcing and Public Ownership.

Comrades, the collapse of Carillion should serve as a warning that 40 years of outsourcing and privatisation has had its day. As the poster boy for PFI, Carillion was a deeply immoral company. It lived as a parasite sucking money from public-sector contracts. They used an unlawful blacklist to deny employment for people who had done nothing wrong. They had a culture of bullying and exploitative managers and employed a series of sophisticated tactics to seek to frustrate effective trade unionism. They had other unions in their pocket but then they met the GMB. They tried to beat us but, comrades, we beat them. I asked Tim if I could move this CEC Statement as our industrial dispute with Carillion back in 2012 was very personal to me.

During our strike, we got a good measure of them. We learned that Carillion were even prepared to sack their own NHS clients to pursue selfish corporate interests. In contrast to Carillion's venal selfishness, our GMB members were inspirational in their courage and spirit. It was brilliant to see the confidence of our members grow

through the days of strikes. I am talking about Carillion in particular because it helps us as one example to understand how dysfunctional these PFI schemes are.

The NHS hospital trust in Swindon wanted a new shower fitted to a ward, and it took Carillion 18 months to fit it and it cost £60,000! The NHS were unable to break the contract. Instead, there is a complex trio of companies — Imagile, Semperian and the hospital company — which between them run and own the hospital. The relationship between these companies is so opaque that the NHS deals with them through a middleman, who they call the “PFI guy”. In exchange for all of this nonsense, the NHS is crippled with extraordinary levels of debt repayment.

Sadly, although it was Margaret Thatcher’s government which started privatisation, the irrational arrangements for hospitals like Swindon’s GWH, were the brainchild of Tony Blair’s New Labour. GMB told Labour at the time that it was wrong and inefficient and we were right. We need a new policy in Westminster and in local authorities that puts people before profit. Can I say how welcome it is to have a Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn, who is committed to doing exactly that. (*Applause*)

Congress, outsourcing and PFI promised the fool’s gold of short-term savings, but workers and taxpayers pay the price in the end. GMB has revealed this week that the redundancy payments for failed Carillion have cost the public purse £30 million, and thousands of workers have lost 10% of their pensions. Or look at the care sector, where the National Minimum Wage in too many places is now universal.

Comrades, we were told that privatisation would deliver choice and lower costs, but instead created new unaccountable monopolies that pay eye-watering dividends while failing to invest in people and infrastructure. Water companies have paid out £18 billion in dividends to shareholders over the past decade but charges to customers have gone up by 118% in the same period.

Yesterday, we saw our brilliant shop steward, Paulo Fernandes, win a President’s Leadership Award for Equality. Paulo told me that before he came to the UK he worked for 25 years in the public sector. I asked him what he used to do. He said he worked in shipbuilding. The fact that that is a surprising answer shows how far we have come since the 1970s when the public sector in the UK included not only schools, councils and the NHS, but also shipbuilding, gas, electricity, coal mining, railways and the car and aeronautical industries. The present situation shows the degree of democratic control that we have lost.

In the modern era the public sector has proven that it can outperform outsourcing firms and deliver savings to the public purse. Municipal bus operators have some of the best passenger-satisfaction rates in the country, and public ownership of the East Coast Rail Franchise delivered record punctuality and passenger-satisfaction scores, and has returned over £1 billion to the Treasury. Compare that to the chaos of the last weekend in the north of England.

Comrades, our opposition to privatisation, outsourcing and PFI is nothing new, but it is a long time to be debating a substantive statement of the union’s policy on this subject. The CEC believes that this is a statement of union policy that is fit for the 21st century and addresses the practical concerns of our members as we move into a

new age of public assets being run in the public interest under public ownership for the betterment of the workforce and the wider public alike. The next Labour government, we hope, will bring our utilities and privatised industries back into the public sector. Congress, I ask you to support the CEC Statement. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy. Does anyone else wish to speak? As I said, I will go round the regions, starting with Birmingham & West Midlands. *(No speaker)* London?

NATHAN CLARKE (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Vice President and Congress, London Region supports and welcomes the CEC Statement on Outsourcing and Public Ownership because this Statement captures the union's long-held position on privatisation; the penal PFI repayments, the 20,000 lives potentially ruined by the collapse of Carillion, the 100% outsourced Northampton City Council going completely under and the sheer lunacy of giving the profitable, nationalised East Coast Mainline to Virgin and Stagecoach, only for them to fail miserably and now, luckily, it will be back in public control. Colleagues, that was a Tory ideology, a right-wing ideology and, as I said, it was sheer lunacy.

If the water industry was back in public control and no dividends were payable, just think how much our bills could be reduced. This Statement also acknowledges the Labour Party's 2017 Manifesto pledge to return essential services to public ownership. However, Congress, the Statement does not acknowledge that the last Labour government and many Labour councils entered into PFI deals and privatised many services, and are still doing so! These decisions were taken by GMB MPs and GMB councillors who take our members' money on the promise of supporting GMB members. Congress, London Region supports the CEC Statement but warns the CEC to be wary of false friends. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nathan. Midland & East Coast? *(No speaker)* Northern Region?

CHARLOTTE CARLIN (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, my region is speaking in support of the CEC Statement on Outsourcing and Public Ownership. We support the CEC Statement as we seek to turn back the tide of the private finance initiative that will saddle this country with country with decades of interest payments. We know the story: £150 just to change a light bulb in a hospital; 23 30-year contracts, which will rip us all off, and we have had company pension schemes used as assets, like in a board game, just so the directors could line their own pockets. Congress, many of these companies are hostile to trade unions. That is why they seek to cut the terms and conditions of GMB members.

Congress, in supporting this CEC Statement we must send out a message loud and clear that putting jobs and services out to tender does not help local communities if the goal is just to get something cheaper. We need a complete change in policy, and by adopting this CEC Statement it will give us some tools to campaign for a much better way. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Charlotte. North West & Irish Region.

JEFF KEIGHT (North West & Irish): Congress, I am speaking in support of the CEC Statement and on behalf of the North West & Irish Region.

Me and my members in Liverpool have had personal experience of being outsourced. On 1st July 2012, Amey took over the highways, street lighting, street cleansing and ground maintenance contracts. Two weeks after arriving, they issued the whole workforce with an “At-Risk” notice of redundancy. We balloted and we returned a ballot of 98.6% for strike action and a work to rule. (*Applause*) After one week Amey rescinded these notices. It was clear to all that they had an agenda to attack our terms and conditions and to break the trade union on these contracts. Twelve months after arrival they then also took over the refuse contract. During this time the services in Liverpool collapsed and the Labour group, on seeing the error of their ways, realised that these contracts were costing them more for an inferior service. By 1st February 2018, Liverpool City Council got rid of Amey, they got rid of them by throwing them out of the City of Liverpool because they were rubbish. (*Applause*) All these services are now delivered by an Alaco, a formed and owned company by Liverpool City Council in partnership with the GMB trade union. We have seen a marked improvement on all of these services since Amey have gone, and it is costing less money. Congress, outsourcing is not the answer. In-sourcing is the solution. Please support this statement. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jeff. GMB Scotland? (*No speaker*) Southern? (*No speaker*) GMB Wales & South West?

JEFFREY SUTTON (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I am speaking in support of the CEC Statement on Outsourcing and Public Ownership. Vice President and Congress, if ever there was a rude awakening about the evils of privatisation, then it was the dramatic collapse of Carillion. Quite rightly, it has re-ignited the debate about the role of the private sector in delivering key public services. However, the GMB has known since the earliest days of compulsory competitive tendering that the provision of essential public services should not be left to a totally free market which, absurdly, a succession of governments have stated is the key to a vibrant and healthy economy in this country. Let’s be clear, Congress. The transfer of public service provisions to the boardrooms and shareholders has led to the loss of our public ethos. Britain has become the world leader in outsourcing services. The proponents of privatisation and PFI often talk about the balance between risk and return. Well, all of the risk has been born by the hard-pressed public bodies, our members, who deliver public services and whose communities rely upon them. Inevitably, all the returns have gone the way of the contracting and PFI firms who have benefited from £100 billion worth of outsourced work, often involving tax avoidance and refusing to contribute to the state from which they have creamed off their profits.

Congress, how much more economically ludicrous can we get than spending £11.4 billion to build hospitals under the PFI initiatives than having to repay £70 billion over a typical 30-year term where the facilities become obsolete long before the money is paid back?

The “Private good/Public bad” ideology was created by Thatcher, but let’s not forget that it was embraced by Labour governments, too, including that of Tony Blair, when capitalism was introduced into the NHS. That ideology has run out of breath. It has been seen for what it is; namely, a dereliction of public value for money. This report also correctly identifies how privatisation has been used as a means by which trade union collective bargaining can be weakened. That’s no surprise, really! The privatisation and deregularisation of many industries has occurred in highly-unionised industries, and this has adversely impacted upon the public sector traditions of collectivism.

As privatisation progressed, the Government shifted its focus to those industries with higher levels of collective bargaining, namely, British Aerospace, British Gas, Rolls Royce, water, electric, coal, the railways, local government and the NHS. Sadly, then, there has been a decline in the principle of collective labour standards in this country. The case now for taking back local services and ending PFI contracts, with the renationalisation of key industries, is an irrefutable one. Public polls support ending PFI contracts at a very high level and we must capture the change in mood in every aspect of our campaigning work.

Congress, this social and economic experiment on the British people has failed. The vultures have, for too long, feasted on our proud public services. The reality has been 39 years of denigration of the concept of duty in our public services. Congress —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Wind it down, colleague.

JEFFREY SUTTON: — this is an excellent report —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, no, no. Just say “Move”. Thank you. (*Applause*)
I call Yorkshire & North Derbyshire.

IAN BUTLER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Vice President and Congress, we support this statement. In Sheffield, where I am from, three massive companies, basically, run Sheffield. They are Veolia, Amey and Keir. Keir has lost the contract totally. Amey is in the process of losing the contract. They have been arresting pensioners for protecting trees that they are digging up where there is no problem with them. Half-a-dozen pensioners have already been in court and it has been thrown out. The big one, Veolia, has just signed another 25-year contract with the Sheffield Labour council. This council cannot get out of the contract. It can’t get out of the Amey one at the moment. They have got solicitors looking at it. This is what we are stuck with. These companies have got their solicitors and the councils tied up in contracts that they cannot get out of. It will cost them too much to get out of them. That’s why they have done a deal with Veolia for another 25 years because they cannot get out of it. This is what we are up against. So at some time we will have to deal with these companies if we cannot get out of the contracts. We, as the GMB Union, have a strong, strong case in Sheffield. We run every single site from the street cleansing to the joiners, the electricians and everything. We’ve got the support of all the staff. So when we go into these negotiations, we have a strong army behind us. We have had strikes and we have won them. That is what we do in Sheffield. We win because we are GMB. Thank you. We support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. Southern?

MARTHA DE BRUXELLES (Southern): Congress, I support the CEC Report on outsourcing and privatisation. What sort of person looks at a patient in a hospital or clinic and thinks, “Oh, this is a nice way of making money”? Colleagues, our National Health Service is about helping people, not charging people or making money out of people. Parasite companies, like Carillion and ISS, provide services which have drawn huge profits from the National Health Service. They have PFI companies which funded the construction of schools and hospitals and charge exorbitant interest rates, which is a huge burden on our public services by taking money away from healthcare, from our National Health Service and from our resources.

Colleague, it is the Southern Region which has fought Carillion. We have fought ISS when they sought to exploit the National Health Service, services and other places. The services need to be brought back into the National Health Service and the PFI loans need to be ripped up. This morning and this afternoon you have heard extensively the problem we have in our schools and colleges, the fact that nowadays schools are made for profit, they are built for profit and they are taken away from local controls and put into these large companies. They think they can create these micro sort-of organisations. The school system has been taken away from local authorities and given to these companies. We commend this Special Report. I ask you to support it. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martha. The CEC is asking for your support on the Statement. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

The CEC Statement on Outsourcing and Public Ownership was CARRIED.

REGIONAL SUCCESS STORIES

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now have Regional Success Stories, which will be shown by two videos from Birmingham and the North West Regions.
(Videos shown)

GENERAL SECRETARY ADDRESS AND GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I would now like to invite our General Secretary, Tim Roache, to address Congress. Tim. *(Applause)*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Congress and Vice President, I am so proud to be here today addressing you as General Secretary of our great union. The video you have just seen shows what fantastic and important work you all do every day, and I know that it is just the tip of the iceberg. That's what I want to celebrate here in Brighton. I want to celebrate the difference that our union and our activists make to the lives of hundreds of thousands of people each and every day, never simply settling for what we have but driving forward and demanding more. Never accepting the world as it always has been but fighting for it to be better and never backing down

when times are tough but always being there for each other. That is who we are, but some days that's not easy.

Shortly after Congress last year we suffered a huge loss to our GMB family when the great Mary Turner passed away. I cannot express how much it meant to me to stand in St. Paul's Cathedral and give the eulogy for a working-class woman from Tipperary who, at the end of her life, was being honoured in the same building as Martin Luther King and Winston Churchill. It was no less than "Our Mary" deserved. *(Applause)* It is strange to stand here without Mary but I want to pay tribute to our Acting President, Malcolm Sage, who has been an absolute rock. I see he has gone. *(Laughter)* He has steadied the ship and, as you can imagine, ensuring that the CEC meetings finish in record time. If you are listening, Malc, thank you, mate. Your support, your work, your loyalty and your dedication means the absolute world to me and to our great union. I also want to thank Margaret Gregg, who stepped into the breach to make sure that Congress runs smoothly. It is not a small role and I really want to place my sincere thanks to you, Margaret, for stepping up to the plate. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Congress, I stood here last year and wondered what else the world could throw at us. Already in my first term as our General Secretary we had the Trade Union Act, two Labour leadership contests, Brexit, Donald Trump and then, as we prepared for Congress 2017, a snap general election. The result of that election is about as far from strong and stable as you can imagine. We have a weakened, rudderless and in-fighting Tory Government, propped up by the DUP, who are now in-charge of negotiating our exit from the European Union. With huge changes to employment and data protection laws, I have certainly been kept on my toes. But throughout that onslaught, from the outside world, we have been getting on with the business of building a 21st century union that I first talked about from this platform two years ago.

For me as a regional secretary, a fierce defender of region autonomy, who knows and believes that our union is built in workplaces and in regions, that work meant defining and shaping the role of our national union. That role under my watch is to support, to drive, to lead, to listen and to equip our regions, officers, activists and members with every possible tool you need to build the union and make that change happen, bringing together the lives, experiences and voices of more than 617,000 people in a way that only a national union can, not topped-down imposition or lump it and like it command and control but engaging, listening and working together to advance our collective aims as nine regions and nations but also as one union.

Our training programme is vital to that, because I know first-hand that if we grow our activist base, train and support them and they will grow the union. The training review called for by Congress has concluded. Carl Parker and regional education officers have completely rewritten *GMB at Work* line by line, not re-writing our organising principles. Those remain at the core of what we do and always will. They ensure that whether you are rep in Stirling, Swansea or Southampton you get the same best-in-the-Movement training that equips you with the tools you need to represent, to negotiate and to deliver for our members. But we will not settle there.

We now need to move to look at training for those who struggle to get release, for those with caring responsibilities who cannot make overnight trips, or have to juggle

childcare with work and learning at the same time, adapting, innovating and making our union a union that responds to the changing world of work. Technology will be a big part of that, using new methods to reach out to members, helping to overcome barriers to learning, getting active and help drive our campaigns.

On that very theme, Congress, I am proud to announce the launch of a new national GMB website. If you have not already tried it, please go and give it a try in the exhibition area. This will take us to the next level, because it is not about having a place just to put press release, but it is an industrial tool that will do three things. It will help grow our membership, it will help members when they need us and it will support you all as activists and campaigners, campaign tools to hold employers and politicians to account. Activist-only areas will be tailored to your needs, where you can download resources, track your learning and share best practice at a place to show the world, and those who want to know what we do, why we exist and why they should join us. It is the difference that you make, that we make, the GMB makes every single day.

This last year alone has seen some fantastic victories, campaigns and activism. In Public Services we had the pay-pinch campaign. At the back of the hall you can see the ominous, thieving hand of the Tory Government, which was followed by the rise of the Maybots. You can just see them on the screen. Those bloody Maybots have been everywhere, on national and international news, even making the *New York Times*. The most high-profile public sector campaign that I can ever remember in all of my years with the GMB! Congress, that campaign is working. The hated public-sector pay cap well and truly busted for our members, covered by the NJC, pay rises of up to 15% over two years.

In the NHS and Ambulance Service we are currently out to a ballot of our members. We are the only union conducting workplace ballots; the only union recommending rejection. As a result, we have new members joining us daily, because a campaigning and fighting union that settles for no less than what our members deserve will always be a growing union.

Our brilliant Schools Report shows the challenges we face, but also what we are going to do about social care. GMB is building new relationships with providers, where working together will make the case to this rotten Government about increasing funding that the sector so desperately needs.

A little heads up. In just two weeks' time I will sign a new national recognition agreement with HC1, the UK's largest care-home operator, where we will organise on the back of that thousands of workers in the sector who desperately need us. But there is still more to do, Congress, as no new money was allocated to the NJC settlement, so our members may get a pay rise but that pay rise comes out of the existing pot, putting more pressure on under-funded services. Even then, half of local authorities are not covered by the NJC and we are aware of councils and schools opting out of the NJC rather than give our members the pay rise they deserve.

In further education, some of our members, again, have not had a pay rise for years, and employers this year have simply refused to take the submission from the staff side. So to those of you who will use every trick in the book to try and avoid their

responsibilities to our members, let me be clear. When it comes to GMB members and their rights, there's nowhere you can hide! We will never give up in our pursuit of getting our members what they deserve. Ever! In care there are still examples of unscrupulous employers not even paying their workers the minimum wage. When you look at our fantastic *We Care at Christmas Campaign*, that showed how our members give up their own Christmas dinner to care for others. That featured Rosemary, still caring for people, and she is at the age of 72. It is even more of a scandal that the employers in this sector treat our members like that.

The same goes for Asda. We took a bold decision to say that we would no longer put up with the discrimination against our Asda women members and we would pursue their equal pay claims. I can tell you that there have been 11,000 equal pay claims to date, Congress, and they are growing. Ten thousand members joined us last year alone in Asda! That's a record! (*Applause*) That shows, again, that where we act and support our members, they will come and join us. That is even more important in both stores and distribution as the Asda-Sainsbury's merger announcement sees uncertainty on the horizon, but as Malcolm said in his opening speech to Congress, struggle and strife is what we do. It's our business.

Our Commercial Services team continue to tackle insecure work and the workhouse conditions of global companies who refuse to treat their workers with respect. With hundreds of members recruited in Amazon, our campaigns are making headlines across the country.

Congress, workers need us like never before as the economic system is broken. Look at Carillion, a multi-national company, bosses in bed with the Tories, giving huge pay cheques to themselves as the company failed and thousands of people were made redundant. As a union, we don't accept that that is how the world of work should be. We have actually done a bit of digging on what exactly happened to Carillion workers. So far we know that nearly 7,000 people have made redundancy claims, claims costing the taxpayer more than £30 million. Those workers deserve every penny and more. They have already lost 10% of their pension and any enhanced redundancy rights because of their bosses' failures. Over a thousand jobs have simply ceased to exist! Those workers and us, we, the taxpayers, should never have been in a position to pick up that tab.

Congress, the water industry is another natural monopoly that has been plundered in a nonsensical situation where different companies flog us the same water that falls for nothing from the sky. I don't know about you, but the only taps I see on my sink are "Hot" and "Cold". There isn't one for Thames Water, one for Yorkshire Water or one for Severn Trent Water. This is at a time when three billion litres of treated water are wasted through leakages, when billions are paid to shareholders and tens of millions to company bosses, when, unbelievably, a number of water companies actually run their finances through offshore tax havens.

What does it look like for our members? Our members see a lack of investment in infrastructure. They are under-staffed, overworked, under paid and often worried about their safety and future. That is why we are launching a campaign here at GMB Congress to bring water back into public ownership for the benefit of our members who work in the water industry and every other person who drinks it! (*Applause*)

The utilities are bread and butter to us, so I could not come to GMB Congress this year and not speak about energy. Our great union was founded in the gasworks of east London, after all. Congress, facts are stubborn things, and the fact is that, very simply, homes, public services and the economy need gas to run them. Without it, we are not heating, we are not eating, we are not working and we are not making. I don't want to hear about "just transition". When I hear from politicians, those sort of words are code for "chucking our members on the scrapheap". Let me be clear from this rostrum, we will defend every single member, every single worker in the gas industry. Every single day, every breathing moment, I will defend those members against any such attacks. (*Applause*) But that doesn't make us dinosaurs, colleagues.

I am more than happy to talk about climate change. I want to leave our world in one piece for my kids and that is why investment in nuclear is crucial as well, because without nuclear we will never meet our climate goals. Our policy is very clear and always has been. We need a balanced energy policy that keeps the lights on, the economy moving and protects jobs and communities. It is not anti-renewable to demand investment in our infrastructure, skills and jobs. Instead, we have missed opportunity after missed opportunity, with no jobs being created in the supply chain and a shambles of a subsidy system. In manufacturing, where a lot of jobs rely on gas, by the way, our section is showing what it means to build a 21st century union. The last section campaign we had in Manufacturing was Remploy. That was an important and crucial campaign but, if we are honest colleagues, it was a long while ago. Equally, if we are honest, we could have been accused of accepting the narrative "that manufacturing is in decline and we don't make anything any more". So we launched the *Making It Campaign*, showing leadership, giving directions and showing that we are relevant, highlighting and celebrating what you do. It is disabled war veterans making poppies like you saw on the video. It is making everything from Henry Hoover to Haribo, Kit-Kats to chemicals, ships in all shapes and sizes, battleships, tug boats, submarines and frigates. We make bricks, beer, pharmaceuticals, furniture, furnaces, water, washers, whisky, passports, pottery, paint, plastics, steel, sausages, sauces and one million custard creams every day! When I tried to put this suit on this morning, I think I've eaten half of them. (*Laughter*)

Congress, the chances are if you are eating it, drinking it, wearing it, sitting on it, sail or sailing on it, GMB members are making it. That sounds bloody good, doesn't it? Making it and making a difference! That's GMB.

In engineering and construction we are working with our brilliant lay activists on building a structure fit for the modern world of work. In offshore working, we are now relevant to our members, supporting them as their employers attack their terms and conditions. We are balloting our offshore members as we speak and, guess what, Congress? Since we have become relevant and supported that membership, they are standing up and joining us, growing and doubling our membership in just a couple of weeks. Ceramics goes from strength to strength. In the food sector, we have had more brilliant successes.

But what about steel? We have just heard about another Trump tariff. A 25% levy on British steel is putting thousands of jobs at risk, and Theresa May saying that she's disappointed. She's disappointed! She's not half as bloody disappointed as our

steelworkers, their families and their communities are. *(Applause)* They are angry, frightened, scared and vulnerable. Theresa May, it's about time you did your bloody job and stood up for workers or move aside and get someone else who can and will! *(Cheers and applause)* When Trump's decision threatened Bombardier's workers, we went straight to work. It doesn't matter where the power lies or where the decision is made, we will never accept that job losses are acceptable or ever inevitable. So we fought, lead brilliantly by our convenor, Alan Malcolm, organiser, Mike Mulholland and Paul McCarthy. I witnessed first hand, when I visited the site, just how hard our activists and officers work. I saw organisation, determination and a campaign that GMB can be proud of. And we won! We showed the real difference that a united, organised union can and does make. But, Congress, we have not and won't stop there. It should be a matter of national embarrassment that this Government has put out to international tender a contract to build UK support ships. A £1 billion contract that could secure 7,000 jobs! Can you think of another country in this world that would have put that contract out to international tender? The likelihood is, under this Tory Government, that it will be built in France, Germany or even the States. We should ensure that those contracts are in-house, in this country, in the UK and built in Scotland, Plymouth or the north east. *(Applause)*

So we are campaigning politically as we do industrially, because decisions made by politicians impact on the daily lives of our members. Through hard work and a brilliant report from our Industrial Policy team that has been welcomed by everyone in the sector, including employers, members and politicians, I was delighted to see Jeremy Corbyn up in Scotland with Gary Smith and his colleagues, where the Labour Party committed that a Labour Party in government would build those ships here in UK shipyards. That's the right decision to take. *(Applause)*

Political organising, delivering on industrial priorities, is what we did, too, on the Protect the Protectors Bill, an issue taken from a workplace to the House of Commons. We have helped to change the law, a law that will benefit thousands of working people thanks to the huge courage of Sarah Kelly who spoke up and took a stand after being sexually assaulted at work. What bravery? God, I pay tribute to you, Sarah! *(Applause)*

Our industrial and political organising is having an impact when it comes to Brexit, too, an issue which looms large and dark on the horizon and threatens thousands of our members' jobs and industries. Already we are making a difference to Labour Party policy with members in force speaking directly to politicians about real-life and real-world challenges that we have in the coming months and years. Everything we do is, will and must be informed by the industrial and workplace needs of our members. That is why I am going to make a commitment to you here today. I visited and spoke at every section conference on Sunday. There is some fantastic work happening and amazing contributions, but if we are serious about making sure that the work we do as a national union is embedded in the day-to-day reality, challenges and needs of our members, a section conference every couple of years tagged on to Congress, frankly, is not good enough.

Congress, I make a promise to you today. We will have section activist conferences set apart from Congress every single year and I will be at every single one with you. *(Applause)* That's how we will meet the challenges that lie ahead. We will meet

those challenges together because we are GMB and that's what we do. We see it in every region every day. In GMB Scotland the battle for BiFab stood traditional trade unionism on its head. The employer said that they could not pay our members but our members turned up to work, anyway, keeping the plant going while negotiating for its future. We are not out of the woods, but that shows the power of collectivism, solidarity and a union that takes action rather than sitting back and accepting their fate. No wonder that region goes from strength to strength. GMB Scotland, I salute you. (*Applause*)

In Northern Region there has been another incredible result with Sellafield fending off yet another attack on our members by the employer. Also, the Durham Gala. If you haven't been, get yourself along. It's the biggest trade union activists' gathering in the whole of Europe that gets stronger by the day.

The North West & Irish Region has been working with a Labour council, resulting in millions of pounds of contracts being brought back in-house. What a win for our union! We haven't just been defending what we have but driving forward a campaign to pro-actively make a difference.

Birmingham & West Midlands Region has been leading the way on recruitment in the gig economy, taking on the might of Amazon and winning for over 300 members in one site alone. We never thought we would be able to do it against such a hostile employer. Birmingham, you are leading the way.

In Midland & East Coast the *Dying to Work Campaign* continues to make national waves with a regional campaign. Hundreds of thousands of workers are covered as more employers sign up to support cancer sufferers at work.

In GMB Wales & South West, hundreds of members are set to be trained as mental health champions to help address one of the biggest crises of our time that, too often, is not spoken about, alongside securing free sanitary provision in local authority areas to end the scandal of period poverty within schools. Bloody well done!

In Southern, as we saw in the video, the inspiring victory at Carlton Park Academy. I was very proud to stand on that picket line. The power of collectivism and standing strong in the face of an onslaught from an employer is an example of how workers alone may not be able to affect change but that together we can, we will and we do!

In London Region, organising student union workers, recruiting hundreds of workers who, as they start their working lives, will now understand the value and power of trade union membership. We always wanted to break into young people. That is the initiative. Great work and well done.

In my old Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, we have seen them delivering the biggest activist weekend yet and changing the law and building the union through their Ambulance Service Membership Campaign.

Colleagues, no wonder we are growing as a union. We have grown by over 3,000 members this year alone. People want to be a part of something that is successful, and that is what we are.

I want to thank the SMT that I lead, who provide leadership right across the union and whom I count as friends. I also want to thank the CEC who guide this union and have been a huge source of support as we tackle the challenges we face in the uncertain times in which we live. If it sounds like I am proud, Congress, that is because I am. That is why, when you look around this room, at our exhibition, at your Congress Guide and your Agenda, you will see a fundamental change. It is a change in how we present ourselves to the world at work. It is about putting the word “Union” back where it belongs. Our logo and our identity is how we proclaim loudly to those not yet in our union who we are and what we stand for.

Congress, there is a question, I am sure, that you have heard many times. People do ask, “What do those three letters G.M.B stand for?” I am sure you have probably heard it as well, but I have heard people say that they don’t stand for anything. We have all heard it but I don’t think any of us accept that, because our name represents our heritage, from our beginnings as a general union at Beckton Gas Works 129 years ago, from the boilermakers to the local authority workers, it represents the battles that we are fighting today and the victories still to come. Above all, GMB represents our pride, pride in our work, pride in our community, pride in our people, standing together in common cause, the campaigning and fighting trade union, winning for members and changing the world of work, making a difference. Congress, we are GMB. We make a difference each and every day. I am incredibly proud of you and incredibly proud to be your General Secretary. I commend my report to you. Thank you. *(A standing ovation)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can the mover of Motion 193 and the seconder come to the front of the hall. I think we also have time to take Composite 14 as well.

TAX ‘AVOIDANCE’ BY THE NHS MOTION 193

193. TAX ‘AVOIDANCE’ BY THE NHS

This Conference calls upon the GMB to launch a campaign in relation to NHS Tax evasion.

It is ironic that an organisation who relies on tax for its very existence (the NHS) is carrying out Tax evasion of a similar scale to our friends from Amazon, Starbucks etc.

A public campaign would gather support from the public and put pressure on HMRC to look into this Tax loophole.

BARNESLEY HEALTH BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

ALEXANDRA BURTON-KEEBLE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 193, Tax ‘Avoidance’ by the NHS. We all know that tax dodging is wrong and I am sure that lots of you boycott companies like Amazon, Starbucks and

Boots for this very reason. However, how do you feel when it is your beloved NHS that is avoiding payment of taxes? Is it now okay to tax dodge because the NHS is on its knees and it needs to save money, no matter what, to spend on patient care and staff wages? It should not matter who is doing the tax dodging. It is always wrong. In 2015—2016 alone £34 billion worth of taxes were not paid. But where does the money from the NHS comes from, I hear you ask? 99% of the Department of Health's budget comes from taxes. The remaining 1% comes from prescription charges and things like that. So, obviously, the NHS, in jumping on the tax-dodging bandwagon, is only going to add to the problem. The most common way for NHS trusts to save money is through tax loopholes and to set-up a subsidiary company. This is a fairly recent phenomenon which is rapidly increasing across the NHS. In November 2017 NHS Improvement stated that they were aware of 39 subsidiaries within NHS trusts, with more being created as I speak. Savings are made for the trusts through reductions in VAT and staffing costs, but this is at a price. Subsidiaries often lead to a two-tiered workforce which often involves the lower-paid staff having worse terms and conditions than other staff and is an obvious race to the bottom. The VAT saved by the creation of these subsidiaries is money lost to public services. Fragmenting services in this way leaves the NHS open to privatisation in the future. Apparently, the Department of Health and Social Care has already written to NHS trusts to remind them not to be involved with any activities that could be viewed as tax avoidance and that the loophole could be closed in the future, but is this enough?

Therefore, this Conference calls upon the GMB to launch a campaign in relation to NHS tax dodging in order to gather public support and put additional pressure on HMRC to close this tax loophole. I move. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Alexandra. Seconder?

PAULINE KIELY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Motion 193, Tax 'Avoidance' by the NHS. Congress, there has recently been media suggestion to increase tax by £2,000 per person per year to fully fund the NHS. If we ensured that Tory-backed millionaires, both individuals – you and me - and companies paid their taxes, such as Boots, Starbucks, and, yes, Congress, the NHS, then the NHS would have more than enough funds. There is absolutely no reason to increase taxes to fund the NHS. All we need to do is to collect taxes. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Pauline. I call Composite 14.

RE-NATIONALISATION COMPOSITE 14

(Covering motions 203, 205 and 206)

203 — NATIONALISATION OF THE SYSTEM FOR CARE — London Region.

205 — ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR THE RAIL RE-NATIONALISATION — London Region

206 — NATIONALISE ALL MAJOR SERVICES — Midland & East Coast Region.

RE-NATIONALISATION

This Conference calls on Congress to actively campaign for the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy, including the banks and financial institutions.

The collapse of Carillion is a perfect example of how capitalism wrecks and destroys people's lives.

This Conference notes that there have been three attempts by the private sector to run the East Coast Rail Line franchise. The first two failed and cost the government millions. It was in public hands and not only did it return a £1 billion fee for operating the line but also made a profit for the Treasury and won awards for its customer service.

The franchise was re-privatised in March 2015 and now Chris Grayling is paying Virgin/ Stagecoach £2 billion in a bail out to enable it to continue to run the franchise. Members residing on this route have experienced substantial fare increases and a reduction in customer service so feel that enough is enough.

This Conference is requested to campaign for:-

- The re-nationalisation of the whole rail industry, to end the gravy train for these companies who are all too often overcharging UK passengers so that they can subsidise passengers elsewhere.
- The renationalisation of the care system.
- All privatised public services to be brought back into the public sector.

We believe that the GMB should be leading the campaign, fighting for a socialist alternative to chaos madness and misery created by capitalism and the privatisation of the public services.

(Carried)

VIVIEN THOMAS (London): Congress, I move Composite 14 on Re-Nationalisation. I will be addressing two issues raised in this composite, the care sector and the rail industry.

First, on care. GMB is the largest trade union for care workers in the UK and we know the daily pressures that the social care sector is under. We know that care workers and service users invariably bear the brunt when there are changes to care funding. For many years GMB has warned that the business model used in the private-care sector was unsustainable. We will continue to fight on all fronts for the sector to be properly and adequately funded, and we support the principle that care that is administered by local authorities and public services is more stable and is our policy from the 2016 CEC Special Report on the Care Sector.

On rail, the private sector has failed on the East Coast rail franchise for the third time, and we can see the debacle with Southern Rail and other private train operators who put profit before performance. We believe that extending public ownership

throughout the rail industry can create the conditions to begin to develop an integrated and accountable transport system. We would ensure that the next Labour government carries out its commitment to re-nationalise the railways and the rest of the transport system, and we need to continue to support a campaign with sister transport unions to ensure that all services formerly provided through the public sector should be taken back into public ownership as we have full confidence in the public sector's ability to deliver. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vivien. Secunder? At this stage I ask for the mover and seconder of Composite 15 to come to the front of the hall.

TONY GRAHAM (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am proud to be a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am seconding Composite 14: Nationalise all Major Services.

Vice President, Congress and visitors, the way our rail, energy and water industries and major services are being run since they were sold off by the Conservatives is a scandal, disgraceful and abhorrent. The pledge by Labour, our next government, to take back the control of water and rail and to stop into fix a broken energy market is radically exciting and both truly inspiring and possible. These industries were privatised under Margaret Thatcher with a promise that it would increase efficiency, wider share ownership and generate investment, but the opposite happened. Rather than learning from mistakes, the Conservative-led Coalition carried on and they sold off Royal Mail for a fraction to people who didn't want to know but just wanted it to earn money. Almost three decades after water was sold off, share ownership is now largely in the hands of small investors who live in tax havens. Three of those companies in 2015—2016 actually paid out more dividends than they actually got in tax profits. I say this to you. Let's have things back in public ownership like British Gas, British Rail and British Petroleum. Let's have a government that cares and let's take back what Great Britain greatly deserves — our major services! I second this composite. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. I call the mover of Composite 15.

CARILLION COMPOSITE 15

(Covering motions 208, 210 and 211)

208 — IMPACT OF CARILLION'S COLLAPSE ON OUTSOURCED PUBLIC SERVICES — London Region

210 — PROTECTION OF FORMER CARILLION WORKERS — Southern Region

211 — CARILLION — Southern Region

CARILLION

This Congress notes that the collapse of Carillion in January 2018 exposed the corrupt business model of unethical private sector companies living like parasites off of public sector procurement. This Conference notes the impact of the collapse of Carillion has been felt throughout the industrial community. We are hearing of work outsourced to private companies like Carillion, facing challenging decisions.

This Congress notes that GMB has been raising concerns about Carillion for several years.

This Congress notes that it was GMB members at Swindon's Great Western Hospital that took 21 days strike action in 2012 against bullying and exploitative managers. This Congress notes that it was as a result of the Swindon dispute that GMB took up the blacklisting campaign. This Congress notes the exemplary way that GMB campaigned against Carillion, combining industrial action, political lobbying and pressure, through legal action, and imaginative use of events to capture press attention.

This Congress notes the GMB's victory over blacklisting, where Carillion along with other defendants made a statement in open court admitting wrong doing, and settled thousands of claims in favour of wronged and victimised trade unionists. This Congress notes that the Financial Times argued that a key turning point in Carillion's fortunes was the Great Western Hospital NHS Trust in 2014 going public with their disappointment about Carillion's poor service delivery, which included recognition of the poor industrial relations resulting from their handling of the dispute with GMB.

This Congress notes that Carillion's financial woes were in part created by their having to bid too low for contracts to compensate for their damaged reputation following GMB's campaign. This Congress believes that the role of GMB is confronting, opposing and fighting the unethical and bullying tactics of Carillion played a significant role in the difficult recent history of Carillion.

This is the time now to take stock of all the outsourcing services from the public to the private sector and to follow the lead of Councils like Ealing to bring services back into public control.

There are many more services that have been outsourced to private companies like Carillion and if they were to collapse, as like Carillion, it may mean losing some life-saving and essential public services.

In Ealing London, the Ealing Library Service has been brought back under the Council's control after Carillion's collapse. Ealing Library Services had been outsourced to Carillion under the Compulsory Tendering policy.

We ask Conference to:

1. Work with and encourage GMB endorsed Councillors and MPs to ensure that outsourced services are brought back into public control.
2. Continue to campaign on these issues by whatever means they are able to do so.
3. Consider a public enquiry into the impact of all public services that were/have been outsourced to private companies including equality impact assessments should these private companies become insolvent, or collapse like Carillion.

4. Congratulate GMB shop steward, Paulo Fernandes, and the Carillion members at Swindon's Great Western Hospital for maintaining a high level of GMB membership ever since 2012, despite hostile and aggressive management.

However, this conference is concerned that the conversation about the collapse of Carillion is focussing on the events leading up to its folding and not the events thereafter. While this needs to be examined in order to learn from it, the individual workers have been seemingly forgotten and have through no fault of their own become pawns in a wider game.

This conference seeks government reassurance that these people will not just be forgotten about and will be properly looked after. These people require a commitment that they will receive any monies they are owed for work already carried out, that any pension they may have accrued in their time working for Carillion will be protected and that they will not be left out of pocket by a situation wholly out of their control.

This conference would like a commitment that all former Carillion workers will be protected by TUPE law when transferring over to a new employer within a public contract, and that all private sector Carillion workers will be given support to help find work and not be left cast adrift in the benefit system, which is itself being attacked relentlessly by this same Tory government.

This Congress resolves to invite other companies who seek to exploit and oppress GMB members to look at the fate of Carillion, and understand that GMB will never abandon our members. GMB will never tolerate injustice, and GMB will never give up the fight however daunting the odds may at first seem.

(Carried)

JULIE CLARKE (Southern): Congress, I move Composite 15 on Carillion. I am a first-time delegate. *(Applause)* President, I am proud to move this composite because my branch, Wiltshire & Swindon GMB, took the fight to Carillion. It was our members at Swindon Hospital who took their fight to the company. Faced with bullying managers who were shaking down our members with gifts in exchange for holiday and overtime approvals, we took 21 days of strike action in 2012. We campaigned up and down the country, and it was through this strike that GMB first took up the blacklisting campaign that led to a substantial win for members who had been unlawfully excluded from work for trade union activities.

Comrades, we deeply regret that some workers, particularly apprentices, have lost work due to the collapse of Carillion, but we shed no tears for the collapse of the company. It stands as a warning to other parasitic companies which have sucked money out of our public services to stuff the wallets of shareholders.

When our members were exploited, GMB fought back. We fought back with determination and imagination, and we damaged the reputation and profitability of the

company. I commend this composite to you, and I congratulate GMB members who have stood up strong and tall against Carillion. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Julie. Is there a seconder? (*Formally seconded*) I call Composite 16, to be moved by Yorkshire & North Derbyshire.

OUTSOURCING COMPOSITE 16

(*Covering Motions 218, 219, 221, 222, 223 and 225*)

218 — OUTSOURCING OF PUBLIC PROJECTS, THE NHS AND LOCAL SERVICES — London Region

219 — BRINGING OUTSOURCED CONTRACTS BACK IN-HOUSE — Southern Region

222 — CALL TO END OUTSOURCING AND PRIVATISATION OF OUR PUBLIC SERVICES — Midland & East Coast Region

223 — PUBLIC SERVICE CONTRACTS — Birmingham & W Midlands Region

225 — P.F.I CONTRACTS — Birmingham & W Midlands Region

OUTSOURCING

This Conference demands urgent action be taken on the practice of outsourcing local services, including housing stock maintenance and housing development, to private companies. The clear failings of Carillion and the depth of their involvement in Public Service provision highlights that undercutting and devaluing Public Services can no longer be tolerated.

Such acts forced upon local authorities by this Tory Public Service hating government dilutes the quality of the service provided, cuts the terms and conditions of those staff transferred out of local authority employment and savages their Pensions to the point that the dumbing down by outsourcing then has a negative impact on the local economy as wages already cut to the bone leave less to spend on food, in the retail industries, on entertainment and health and wellbeing.

Commissioning is a soft word for outsourcing which local authorities like to use and they simply do not do enough to protect the transferred terms and conditions of our workers as well as the protection of health and safety. This is all at the cost of the quality delivered to our residents as outsourcing simply lines the pockets of the company owners, shareholders, boards and directors leaving very little for the front line staff who then have to leave and be replaced by unqualified, untrained and inexperienced staff who are brought in on the lowest and worst terms and conditions possible.

Yet these companies continue to pay extortionate salaries at the top whether still working for them or not whilst those at the bottom suffer day in day out with total disregard for their circumstances.

Buying contracts in low to win the work but maintaining the top at the expense of the bottom cannot and should not be tolerated colleagues.

This government knew of the profit warnings six months before Carillion Group collapsed yet carried on awarding contracts bought at low tender values. This practice of using private companies placing profit before people must be stopped, we ask why has this been allowed to happen and say no more should we be using public funds to pay the sums allowed by the contracts of individual CEO's and any contract should be draw up taking into account how the money will be used to fund the public and be transparent.

The Grenfell disaster and the resulting terrible loss of life has brought into sharp focus the profound lack of accountability and effectiveness of the current system. Tenants and Leaseholders had raised their concerns with the local authority about the substandard refurbishment undertaken by the private subcontractor and the neglect of health and safety procedures including non-compliance with fire regulations. These clearly played a massive part in causing this avoidable catastrophe.

Conference believes that these services should be brought back "in-house" under local authorities, and massive public infrastructure projects such as Crossrail, HS2 or NHS building development should be under government control. The failure and collapse of Carillion, a self-confessed blacklisting company whose Chairman was an open supporter of the Tories, demonstrates that a free market approach where private companies are awarded billion pound contracts by the Government, is a failed strategy and a misappropriation of taxpayers' money.

This conference notes the success of reps in Southern Region in bringing the patient transfer contract in Sussex (previously run disastrously by Coperforma) back into NHS and therefore public control. This follows similar success stories around the country, such as the Newcastle Metro system, where a contract has been brought back in-house and delivered a surplus that can be reinvested in local communities rather than lining the pockets of an anonymous shareholder.

Therefore Congress calls for

- The GMB campaign for a transparent and fully accountable system of public control to be put in place, and to support Labour Councillors who support these approaches. Conference resolves to work to ensure taxpayer investment in the infrastructure, public services and workforce be restored and maintained.
- GMB to work or fight with this and future governments to stop profiteering at the expense of our member's standard of living, health and welfare.
- The Labour Party to adopt as policy and as a manifesto pledge to commit to bringing back into public control, all outsourced and privatised contracts, whether they be central government, local government, civil service or health.
- The Government to change rules on out sourcing, and bringing services back in-house.

- The next Labour Government to repeal all legislation in relation to (P-F-I) private finance initiative no future contracts.

(Carried)

GLYN WYDELL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am from the Kirklees Council Local Authority Branch, moving Composite 16. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am here to move the following composite motion on outsourcing and public ownership. These motions call for the Government to bring to an end the outsourcing and privatisation of our public services and the end to PFI deals which are crippling our public services, schools and hospitals. This Tory Government is privatising public services using austerity as an excuse to attack the last area of organised labour in the country — the public sectors. This programme of privatisation is a direct assault on workers' terms, conditions, pay and pensions. This situation is having a negative impact on local economies throughout the country as wages are cut whilst the cost of living rises. Health and safety protection is minimised and the quality of care gets less on a daily basis.

This situation is lining the pockets of company directors with taxpayers' money, whilst at the same time leaving very little for funds for frontline staff, who are constantly encouraged and bullied into cutting corners, which in turn has a serious detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of workers in the public domain. All public infrastructure projects, such as Crossrail, HS2 and NHS building developments should be under direct Government control.

The practice of bidding low to win contracts only impacts on frontline workers keeping salaries low, with terms and conditions being reduced, in many cases to unacceptable levels of severity. No one here today will be surprised to hear that somehow, throughout all the difficulties facing these services, high-end salaries are maintained, bonus are common and large payouts to senior staff run into hundreds of thousands of pounds. This appalling misuse of public funds should be exposed, with far greater transparency being demanded from these companies in question. The Tories knew about the profit warnings and the imminent collapse of Carillion months before it happened, but still awarded them further contracts.

Congress, the fragmentation of our public services for personal and private profit has had its day. As a consequence of this, public sector employment has fallen to its lowest share of the labour market since 1947, the year before the NHS was founded. This is at a huge cost to workers and residents alike who deserve better from public provision and show the Tories' total lack of care towards the most vulnerable people in society.

These motions call on Congress to back the commitments set out in the 2017 Labour Party manifesto to return essential services to public ownership. We call upon the GMB, along with a future Labour government, to continue the fight against the outsourcing of public services and to make a commitment to bring back in-house all those services that have been privatised.

Finally, I have a message to this despicable Tory Government. If the Grenfell disaster teaches us anything, it teaches us that you can outsource services but you cannot and should never outsource responsibility. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: London to second Composite 16.

MADELINE DALEY (London): Congress, I second Motion 16. I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) As we have just heard from the mover and earlier the CEC Statement that outsourcing is increasing, this is despite the fact that more and more outsourced companies, like Carillion, have failed. Many local authorities have scrapped their outsourced housing services and brought them back in-house. Public bodies used to look at financial stability and value for money when deciding on contracts, but with the ever-increasing financial pressures now, it is often now just the lowest bid. This leads to problems when contracts fail and an ever-increasing battle over standards, not to mention the hidden monetary costs of contract monitoring means even less spent on actual services.

In schools we see the horror stories of privatising school meals and catering. Quite often companies take on the contract without understanding the costs involved. We all know that the Government are forcing public bodies to outsource more and more, thereby reducing funding to the recipients, so they can implement their failed ideologies. It is also so they can try and smash national union agreements and cut workers' rights. Please back the actions called for in this motion as we need full accountability and public services that are not run for the gain of shareholders.

We have heard and read about examples where local campaigners have worked to revise the outsourcing of local government and the NHS. It can be done, so please engage the local Labour Party to continue campaigning to get the outsourced contracts put back into public hands and then PFI. We all need to campaign to elect a Labour Government committed to revising the billions of pounds —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can you wind up now, please, Madeline?

MADELINE DALEY: — of public money which are spent on PFI and to continue campaigning outsourced contracts back into public hands and then PFI. This ideology has caused years of misery and abuse for those who are —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Madeline, wind up!

MADELINE DALEY: Thank you. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Birmingham given priority in reply. (*Declined*) That is all we have time for at the moment. I shall have to take Motions 212, 216, 226 and we will take the vote later this afternoon.

I have a couple of announcements to make. The RMA stall raised £45 for the teddy bear, and it was named Norman. Matt Buckley on the Midland & East Coast Region is the winner. Perhaps he could collect that from the stall.

At the reception of the Midland & East Coast Region and the North West & Irish Region, they raised £400. *(Applause)*

That concludes Conference for this morning. Thank you all for your co-operation in the change in sessions order. We are trying our best to make sure that all of our core union business is finished in order for all the remaining motions for today's programme to be debated. Please ensure that you are back in the hall promptly at 2 o'clock.

(Adjourned for lunch break)

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Congress reassembled at 2.00 p.m.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Could I call Congress to order, please? Could you please switch off your devices or make sure they are silent. May I remind everyone that Congress is being filmed and being streamed live on YouTube.

Congress, I have been asked to make announcements about the Care4Calais charity. Care4Calais provides essential aids, such as food and clothing, to approximately 3,000 refugees sleeping rough in Northern France. They rely entirely on donations from the public and so would like to invite GMB members to donate items that could be taken directly to these refugees, such as hotel toiletries, or unwanted items of clothing. Their stall can be found opposite War on Want, stall number 27, in the Exhibitors Hall, and donations left there will be taken to the charity's Brighton drop-off point. Your generosity will be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

As delegates will have seen, Jeremy Corbyn's team have been in to install the autocue. That does mean temporarily there will only be access to the stage and lectern via the ramp. We will ensure that the stairs are accessible as soon as possible and if anyone has any access needs please come and talk to Paula at the front desk.

Anyone who has not yet cast their vote in the election for President, may I remind them that the ballot closes at 2.30. Thank you.

Also, I would like to make an apology. Yesterday, the SOC on the Regional Secretary's pay I said was voted unanimously. It was not, it was a majority vote so I do apologise for that. The vote was not unanimous. It was a majority. Thank you. *(Applause)* I now call Helen Johnson to the rostrum.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 3

HELEN JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Vice President, Congress, moving SOC Report No. 3.

Withdrawn motions: This is to confirm that the following motion was withdrawn from the floor of Congress this morning, Motion 347 Tackling School Bullying, in the name of London Region.

We have also received two further notifications of motions withdrawn from London Region. They are Motion 97, Bullying and Harassment of LGBT Plus people, and Motion 275, UK Border Force.

Bucket Collections: It gives me great pleasure to tell you that yesterday's bucket collection from GMB Scotland for Guide Dogs for the Blind raised the sum of £580. (*Applause*) I believe the region may have something to say on this. They are adding £1,000 to that total from the region. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Scotland Region has put in another £1,000. Thank you very much.

HELEN JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Vice President, Congress, I move SOC Report No. 3.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: All agreed? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

SOC Report No. 3 was ADOPTED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: There is another £500 from Southern Region. Thank you. (*Applause*) Before I go on, is there any other region that would like to come in? Yorkshire £500, North West & Irish £500, Midland & East Coast £500, Northern £500, Tim £500. (*Cheers/Applause*)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: I did not even move my lips! Bloody hell.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: London £500. Any left? Thank you very much, that is very nice. (*Applause*)

Right, as a union we affiliate nationally to *Show Racism the Red Card*, who provide educational workshops and training on tackling racism in society. You should all have a copy of this flyer. I would like to ask those of you who are able to stand to get up and hold these up high. If you turn to face the balcony at the back of the hall, a photographer will take a photo. Please take these back to your workshops and be ready on 20th October to support the organisation. Thank you, colleagues.

Colleagues, we will now finish off on the Industrial and Economic Policy that we started before we broke for lunch with the three remaining – 212 North West & Irish, 216 North West & Irish, 226 Southern, could they come down to the front, please, and 212 to the rostrum?

CARILLION SHAME MOTION 212

212. CARILLION SHAME

This Conference calls for the creation of an independent body to scrutinise and carry out due diligence checks prior to the awarding of contracts in the Public Sector.

Following the Carillion debacle, we are now aware that despite warnings regarding the precarious state of the company finances, as far back as 2014, the Government saw fit to award them contracts putting at risk taxpayers money and our members' jobs.

Our members employed by Carillion in the Public Sector need the assurance of job and pension security. If that cannot be guaranteed, then outsourcing needs to end and services brought back in-house.

F72 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Lost)

BOB GUNN (North West & Irish): Colleagues, at the beginning of January we became aware of the collapse of Carillion leaving debts of £1.5m, a pension deficit of £800m, and thousands of jobs under threat. This came as a shock to all of us, particularly for GMB members who worked for the MoD and were TUPE transferred to Carillion Aramark on 1st November 2017 and were just three months into a contract to provide cabling and accommodation services on sites across the UK. That contract took at least four years to put together, negotiate, and tender for. We are now aware that throughout that period there were a number of warning signs that Carillion had overstretched. Those warnings were ignored not least by the big audit companies who year on year gave Carillion a clean bill of health and it is unacceptable that the Government did not see fit to heed those warnings and carry out due diligence before starting to throw taxpayers' money away.

Colleagues, we welcome this CEC statement on outsourcing and public ownership. We also welcome the Labour Party commitment to return essential services to public ownership. However, until we get to that point, we need to ensure that there will be no more Carillions and that means proper public scrutiny of any proposed outsourcing. We believe that that should be carried out by an independent body as it has become evident that the big audit companies are telling these bidders what they want to hear.

The other issue that we need to be aware of is that we need to address on behalf of our members the terms and conditions coming under attack following TUPE. We cannot allow the events of January to happen again. We must ensure that public services are protected, taxpayers' money is not squandered and, most importantly, that our GMB members have the job security which they are entitled to. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bob. Secunder?

ALAN FLATLEY (North West & Irish): Vice President, Congress, we have heard from Bob of the massive impact of the collapse of Carillion. If we had the confidence that the collapse of a large national company could never happen again, leaving contracts uncompleted, members out of work with no notice, we would not need to see the creation of an independent scrutiny body. However, the current government is hell bent on the path of outsourcing public services and when local authorities are following this path in the name of austerity, we have no guarantees that this will not

happen again. We need to protect and ensure our public services and our members are protected and not left to suffer the impact of waste of failing private companies. I support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. 216?

COOPERATIVE AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES MOTION 216

216. CO-OPERATIVE AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

This Conference in the light of the continued scandals facing the awarding of public funded contracts to the private sector and the unprecedented growth in the gig economy, asks the GMB to campaign for the support and development of worker-based co-operatives and community social enterprises.

It is clear that many workers are increasingly feeling isolated or a sense of alienation at their place of work. It is also clear that they feel little or no control over the organisations that they work for, this in turn is leading to increased stress, anxiety and insecurity in work and in communities.

The GMB working alongside our partners in the political and civic arena should seek to secure improved legislation and access to finance to help grow the social enterprise and cooperative organisations across the UK.

Furthermore we call upon the GMB to give active support through our partners to the idea of developing regional investment funds or banks aimed at the further development of cooperatives and social enterprises in their region or area of operation.

Q22 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

KEVIN FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Proudly moving Motion 216 on Cooperative and Social Enterprises. Congress, sadly as we have experienced at this Congress and many of you see in the world of work, people are becoming more and more separated from their own work. They are not feeling a sense of identity and belonging in their workplaces. They feel they are just factotums in a game that is being played by others, not to the benefit of them but to the benefit of the shareholders, and people move further away from the workplace itself. In other words, quite simply, the economic model is broken. The economic model no longer recognises the reality and the truth that work is for people, work is for communities, work is about dignity. Oh, for God's sake, when are you going to listen to the economy, when are these managers going to hear? If the model is broken, then we need to find new ways of being work cooperatives, social enterprises, provide us a way of actually doing that.

I am proud to work within a social enterprise, a simple charity that attempts –attempts – at least to live out their values that we share in this room and elsewhere, charities,

social enterprises, and cooperatives that actually give an investment of their workers and their communities into their work and into what they do but, more importantly, give them a sense of investment as to the work they are doing and put things back into the community.

Across this country there are some 500 to 800 cooperatives that work together through the co-operative agencies, Cooperative UK, to actually try and make sure food, industry, clothing, and other services, are provided in a co-operative environment. Colleagues, this is an important way, it is an important model that has been at the heart of this Movement. We must not lose sight of it. Yes, I know the Co-Op Bank did some damage in the way it acted but it did it because it lost the roots and the values on which this is based. It is the roots and the values that we share and we must make sure we restore enterprises to those roots and values. Across the world 80% of the wealth is in 1% of the population's hand, increasingly we are seeing that happen in this country, and across the world, not just in the UK, cooperatives have become the lifeblood of actually saving people's lives, and giving them a sense of dignity.

I call for you to support this motion to enable more and more people to have that sense of belonging, that sense of dignity, that sense of worth but, more importantly, that the common good in society is actually served more purposely through the work of cooperatives and social enterprises. Colleagues, you are important in this game. Help us to achieve it. Look out for the Cooperative Fortnight. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Secunder?

AIMEE MOUNFIELD (North West & Irish): First-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Vice President, Congress, in this country we have the organisation Cooperatives UK. This helps members of the Co-Op UK network to develop and start new cooperatives. They provide support, advice, and training, with over 500 cooperatives in their membership across many sectors of our economy, retail, food, community care, and many more. Cooperative Fortnight runs from 23rd June to 7th July. During these two weeks we are reminded of the benefits of cooperatives and celebrate how they are changing lives and offering new hope. Social enterprises and cooperatives offer a way of changing the way we do business and making them more community and person focused. Congress, I ask you to support Motion 216, get involved, and let's help build a new way forward. I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Aimee. 226?

BEMBRIDGE HARBOUR ISLE OF WIGHT MOTION 226

226. BEMBRIDGE HARBOUR ISLE OF WIGHT

Congress notes that the control of BEMBRIDGE Harbour on the Isle of Wight was transferred from public to private sector hands by way of The BEMBRIDGE Harbour (1963) Act.

Congress further notes that since this particular piece of privatisation occurred controversy and Financial scandals has blighted the Harbours development and undermined public confidence in the running of the Harbour for the best interests of users and residents. Such Scandals have ranged from the Local Member of Parliament and the Leader of the Council being forced from office over their attempts to make personal gain from the sale of Harbour assets to its last owner bringing the Harbour to the brink of Bankruptcy and spending time in Jail for his actions.

The Harbour is vital to the economic life of the area as well as being a wonderful environment for residents and visitors alike. Congress further notes that public confidence after such mismanagement and corruption surrounding previous owners is understandably low.

The current Owners have been asked to be Transparent in their running of the Harbour and the use and disposal of its assets particularly as the Harbour Company which is owned 100% by one family has had built around it a number of other companies with which it trades also 100% owned by the same family.

Congress further notes that amongst a number of recent concerns raised by local people has been the Disposal of a Harbour asset to one of the families other Companies for £1 which later the same day was sold to an outside buyer for £87,000. The owners has refused to explain why Harbour assets were disposed of in this way

Congress calls on the Secretary of State for Transport to conduct an audit of the Harbour Company and the subsidiary companies built around it as allowed for by the original BEMBRIDGE Harbour Act of 1963.

Congress agrees to campaign for such action from the Secretary of State in order to regain the confidence and support of the community and ensure transparency in the handling of Privatised assets such as BEMBRIDGE Harbour

Congress agrees that a public asset passed to private hands must be run with the full and Transparent disclosure of all Financial activities and have accountability to consumers and taxpayers or be returned to public or local community trust control.

Congress further notes that is unfortunate that the accountant being used by the Harbour Company and its surrounding group of Companies is called Mr Crook

And Congress regrets that Mr Crook was expelled from the Accounting Institute for failing to supply information on numerous occasions.

I15 ISLE OF WIGHT
Southern Region

(Referred)

RYAN GALLAGHER (Southern): I am going to tell you a story, Congress, about corruption and theft of public assets. When assets are transferred from the British people to private enterprise, thievery, asset stripping, and shoddy service inevitably follow. Bembridge Harbour was a public facility in the Isle of Wight transferred by a previous Tory government on the cheap to the private sector. The new owners promised to be transparent and run the facility for the public interest. This never happened. The current owners have set up a network of companies as a way to avoid transparency. It has effectively prevented any oversight or due diligence but what we do know is that the current owner sold a plot of harbour land for £1 to another company owned by the same person. That second company sold that £1 plot the same day, Congress, to someone else for £87,000. It is amazing how real estate values can fluctuate within an afternoon. All the while the harbour company pleads poverty, tinkers on the verge of bankruptcy, and says it does not have the funds to improve desperately needed facilities. Local people know a scandal when they see it. Previously, the leader of the council lost his seat. The local MP had a 17,000 majority overturned because local people knew what they were up to. There is already a law which exists that allows for the Secretary of State to call in the harbour company's books and do a proper audit. So far people's concerns have been ignored. So, Congress, let us campaign to get the Secretary of State to do a proper audit. We want accountability over the management of the harbour or we will demand its return to state control with real local accountability. Support this motion, Congress. I move.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ryan. Secunder? Formally? Thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on Gordon Gibbs, CEC for Birmingham, to respond to the motions. Gordon.

GORDON GIBBS (CEC, Public Services): Thank you, President, Congress. We are asking for Motion 212 to be withdrawn and for Congress to support Motion 216 with a qualification, and for Congress to refer Motion 226.

With your permission, Acting President, I will start with Motion 216. This motion calls on the GMB to campaign for the support and development of worker-based cooperatives and community social enterprises. We support the sentiment of this motion and recognise that many cooperatives provide an important alternative to businesses run for personal and private profit. Unfortunately, our industrial work also brings us into contact with a number of so-called social enterprises that can be terrible employers who are hostile to the very idea of trade unions. One example of this was Green Co in Sheffield, a subcontractor to Veolia where GMB Yorkshire Region had campaigned against bullying, poor pay, and poor welfare facilities, and the sacking of workers. We are therefore seeking a qualification that social enterprises and cooperatives should be supported where they are a genuine alternative to profit driven capitalist models of production and not where they are used as an alternative to direct employment in the public sector.

Motion 212 raises an important and valid point that arises following Carillion's collapse and the 40 years of outsourcing failure that preceded it. We are not against the spirit of this motion but we do think that they propose a potentially weaker policy on outsourcing and privatisation and contained in the CEC statement. Motion 212 calls for an independent body to scrutinise outsourcing contracts and states that if jobs and pension security cannot be assured, then outsourcing needs to end. Congress, we do not believe that it is up for question whether outsourcing has harmed our members' pay and terms and conditions; we know that to be the case. Congress, our view is that all outsourcing of jobs is unnecessary and we believe that this point is covered in the CEC statement. It was on those grounds that we asked the region to consider withdrawing the motion in favour of the statement.

Finally, Congress, we are asking that Motion 226 be referred to Southern Region. As you have heard, Bembridge Harbour has a complicated political history. The harbour was privatised following the Beeching axe that devastated our railways and as a result of wrongdoing in the Conservative Party, two subjects, Congress, that I believe our guest speaker takes a keen personal interest in. The privatisation of the harbour under a unique Act of Parliament causes problems for the local community to this day. The CEC recognises the concerns raised by this motion and we are in full support of its aims and objectives. Our ground for referral is that Bembridge's situation is by common agreement a special case. The issues raised by the motion are, therefore, unique and localised. It is on those grounds that we, both the CEC and the regional delegation, came to the view that this motion should be referred to the Southern Region for action. I ask Congress to endorse that decision.

To summarise, the CEC is asking that you support Motion 216 with a qualification I have outlined, for Motion 212 to be withdrawn, and agree to refer Motion 226. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. We will now go to the vote. Does Yorkshire agree with the statement on 193? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 193 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London and Midland agree the statement on ---- (*point raised off microphone*) We did so many before we broke for lunch that we never took the vote on. We are taking the vote on the whole section now. Okay? We will start again, then.

Does Yorkshire accept the statement on 193? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 193 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London and Midland agree the statement on Composite Motion 14? Agreed? (*Agreed*) All those in favour show? Any against? That is carried.

Composite Motion 14 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Southern and London agree the statement on Composite Motion 15? (*Agreed*) All those in favour show? Any against? That is carried.

Composite Motion 15 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London, Yorkshire and Birmingham, agree the statement on Composite Motion 16? All Agreed? (*Agreed*) Please show? Any against? That is carried.

Composite Motion 16 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does North West & Irish agree with the withdrawal of 212? No? So, they are not agreeing the withdrawal. The CEC are asking you to vote against. All those in favour please show? All those against show? That has fell.

Motion 212 was LOST.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 216, North West & Irish, agree the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 216 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 226, Southern, do you agree the reference back? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 226 was REFERRED.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: TAXATION & GENERAL

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you ever so much for that. The next one should be our guest speaker, Jeremy. He is not here yet so we will continue with the things and we will go now, then, to the Industrial & Economic Policy: Taxation & General. Could I ask for Motions 185, Composite Motion 13, Motions 189 and 190 to come to the front, please, for a start, and can I have the mover of 185 to the rostrum?

It is now 2.30, colleagues, and the ballot will now be closed. Is there anyone who has not done and wants to rush to the front? No? All done. Thank you very much. Thank you.

NAPPY TAX MOTION 185

185. NAPPY TAX

This Congress believes that it is unfair how some local councils are now charging households a “nappy tax” for parents to dispose of their children nappies or those who needs to wear nappies because of a medical condition.

GMB should pressure Labour run councils not to charge such a tax and to raise awareness on the cruel ways some councils are now taxing people especially those on low incomes.

G36 SECURITY Southern Region

(Carried)

IAN CHANCE (Southern): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Thank you. It is an honour and a privilege to speak to you today. Funny that those words are hardly used in today's society and why, because only those who give their time freely to protect the vulnerable, and that is exactly what we are doing today. The so-called nappy tax only affects one group who are sadly always targeted, the working person or low-income family. More and more councils are looking to bolster their housing tax in other ways by generating revenue like this. We need to make a stance on this because the working person is at breaking point. No more. Make councils more accountable for their spending. Let's take Dorset Council, for instance. Seven of the council's have introduced a nappy tax so it will be no surprise that they are all Conservative led. We and our members are truly working for a living but we are now at the point where we are working for survival. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. Seconder?

PENNY SMART (Southern): Good afternoon, Vice President. Good afternoon, colleagues. A nappy tax is unfair and unjust. It penalises both parents on low income/benefits and parents' carers for people with continence issues. This is not a lifestyle choice, this is a necessity for many. It appears that some local councils in England are charging targeted parts of the community to raise revenues. It costs up to £62 per year for a bin or bag to dispose of these sanitary products. Over a lifetime for some of our disabled communities the cost just mounts up. This is already a high price to pay for older children and adults with continence products; although these items can be prescribed they are only three per day. This means having to pay for extra supplies is costly. There are reusable items on sale but not widely available and are very expensive. There is no dignity in hanging out your pants for the whole community to see. This tax is making life harder for families with limited incomes. This tax just adds more pressure to already stretched budgets. What happened to treating members of our society with equality and dignity and what happened to treating people without discrimination? I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Penny. Composite motion 13.

PERIOD POVERTY COMPOSITE MOTION 13

(Covering Motions 186 and 187)

186 – Period Poverty – Wales & South West Region

187 – Period Poverty – London Region

PERIOD POVERTY

This Conference calls on the Union to use all tools at its disposal to help end the disgrace of period and hygiene poverty.

This Conference is concerned that girls in the UK are missing school as they can't afford sanitary products. This means female pupils could be skipping up to a week of school every single month because they can't afford tampons, towels or menstrual cups and they are too afraid to ask for them, due to ridiculous stigma and shame still attached to periods.

Research by Plan International suggests that one in 10 girls and women aged between 14 and 21 in the UK has been affected by period poverty. Thousands of women have suffered the entirely avoidable indignity of being unable to afford to buy sanitary protection, leaving them isolated when at their most vulnerable.

Women and girls are resorting to using socks and newspaper in place of tampons and towels because the Government continually refuse to offer sanitary products for free. We are urging you to support this motion and to lobby Government to recognise the embarrassing situation women and girls are enduring through poverty and to provide free sanitary products and to support the work of charities providing these products.

The Unions' Officers and branches should lobby politically; both nationally and locally, for a long-term political solution, they will also work with charities such as, but not limited to, #FreePeriods, In Kind Direct and the Trussell Trust to assist and enhance their work in this important area.

(Carried)

JENNIFER SMITH (Wales & South West): Vice President, Congress, this motion is so important to so many women and girls. They miss school and work as they cannot afford menstrual products which are classed as a luxury. Scotland is bringing in a scheme to provide free protection in schools and refuges. A bill has been passed by the Welsh Assembly to give money to councils for the next two years. Many of us give to food banks but how many of us give menstrual products. Colleagues, it is heartbreaking to think young women have to endure the shame, stigma, and health issues as they cannot afford these products. The harsh reality for many is using old socks, cutting up T-shirts, toilet roll, and even newspaper.

I am involved with WINGS Cymru. WINGS stands for Women in Need Getting Support. We donate to 48 schools and we have eight left in the county borough to go, hopefully, by the end of June. We work with the Trussell Trust food banks. We were set up by Gemma Hartnell, a forward thinking woman. We are a great team of men and women providing the service. I would like to thank John Phillips, our Regional Secretary, and Ruth Brady, for their support and donations. Please support vulnerable women and girls. We ask the GMB to help us stop period poverty. I move.

(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jenny. Secunder?

PATRICIA PINHEIRO DE VILLA (London): I second this motion because I believe that it is crucial that girls have all the sanitary products they need. Imagine how damaging and traumatic it must be for girls who have to miss school because they cannot afford to buy sanitary products. The Hendon branch has been donating money to charity in order to help end period poverty, and the GMB has been campaigning against period poverty as well. This is why I would like to ask Congress that GMB creates a campaign for particular places such as schools, so that these places can provide sanitary products in school toilets. Congress, we need to put an end to period shame with the girls. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Patricia. 189?

TAXING ROBOTS MOTION 189

189. TAXING ROBOTICS

This Conference recognises the rapid growth of robotics in all aspects of working life to reduce the mundane tasks and improve the life of workers. Conference expresses extreme concern over the loss of jobs and taxable income that results from these changes. Conference therefore will campaign to get these robots taxed to make up the shortfall in taxation. The global effect of not taxing robots is a world of diminishing revenue for governments to fund the vital needs of our populations. When workers did these tasks they were taxed for the provision of vital services for our populations and without any action we will see a vast proportion of the population living in squalor and without any protections in both their working and private lives.

Conference therefore resolves to campaign using all contacts through individual affiliated unions, the wider the trade union movement, with political parties and also to make contact around the world with all groups that have the same aim. This may be far greater than the population realises with some very strong groups in North America and Australia. Conference also needs to campaign amongst working people of Great Britain in the dangers of not resolving this matter.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(*Carried*)

BYRON COOKE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Good afternoon, Congress. Robots are a part of our life and there is no argument that they are a great invention, do a lot of work and save lives. This motion is not against robots but it is saying they need to help pay their way better. So, if we tax a robot in use, not the concept or the design of it but on the use as we would a human, this puts money back into the economy, helps build hospitals and schools, and other much needed support, and stops the money being taken by directors of the businesses in dividends given to the rich and not the many poor. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Byron. Secunder? Formally second? Thank you very much for that.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 190?

TAXING ONLINE RETAILERS MOTION 190

190. TAXING ONLINE RETAILERS

This Conference believes that the way online retailers evade paying their moral share of tax by using online hosts such as Amazon and eBay to store goods and advertise them for sale is wrong. When sold they take the money and do not pay any tax, the host companies are not liable to pay the tax on these goods as they only pay tax on the income they receive for storing and facilitating the sale of the goods.

Conference resolves to campaign to make it mandatory that all businesses who are importing any goods for resale in the UK have to declare these goods to HMRC prior to sale. Secondly, in the probability that some of these companies will slip through the net, to make the enabling companies for example Amazon and eBay and others such like facilitators liable to the shortfall in tax of all such income. Many GMB members work in retail the actions of these companies are putting those jobs at risk because they can afford to sell at cost and do not have to pay 20% VAT on goods.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BYRON COOKE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Good afternoon, Congress. Graced with my presence again, don't you feel lucky! Online tax evasion is happening and it is morally wrong. Some online retailers are getting away with not paying tax when importing goods. Then they have the cheek to use the UK distribution network to do this. As we all know, not paying tax affects our members, it affects our hospitals, schools, and many public services that are already being crippled by budget cuts. Payments are channelled through other countries, such as Luxembourg, where tax is less of a rate than in the UK. This is classed as a non-UK company and as a result does not have to pay UK taxes. That is why this motion is calling for a campaign to make it mandatory that all businesses importing into the UK have to declare their goods to HMRC prior to sale. We could also ensure that the host distribution companies, such as Amazon, are made liable for any tax shortfalls. Taxes for importers should not be an option, they should be a given. Congress, I move.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Byron. Secunder? While the seconder is coming up can I ask for Motion 191, North West & Irish, 192 London, 196 London,

197 Northern, 198 Birmingham & West Midlands, and 199 North West & Irish, to come to the front, please?

WARINDER JUSS (Birmingham & West Midlands): Good afternoon, Vice Chair, Congress. Comrades, the argument put forward by these online retailers as to why they should not pay tax is that it is a barrier to entrepreneurship but they would say that, wouldn't they? The fact of the matter is, and let's not make any mistake about it, this is tax evasion. It is a wilful attempt to avoid paying tax. If they were selling their goods on a high street they would be paying tax. It cannot be right that you have these large wealthy companies/retailers, who are making a profit by selling their goods online and not paying their fair share of tax. Because the online hosts, like eBay and Amazon, are making a profit from storing these goods and facilitating the sale of these goods, what this motion is also asking for is that they make good, they satisfy any shortfall in tax which is not paid by these online retailers. I will be speaking later on the motion about food banks. We are told that we have to have austerity because there is not enough money to go around, there is not enough money properly to provide for the welfare system so that they can care for people who actually need to be paid benefit, yet we are allowing these companies to avoid paying tax. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Warinder. 191?

HMRC ENFORCEMENT MOTION 191

191. HMRC ENFORCEMENT

This Conference registers its deep concern at the failure of the HMRC to enforce effectively the regulations relating to Tax and National Insurance paid by employers operating in the gig economy. Recent cases have identified, for example, with Uber that the operating models developed by a number of the gig economy employers are purely designed to avoid their legal obligations and duties to the common good of society and their workforce which had been proven to be employees within the meaning of the law.

Congress calls upon its partners in Parliament to instigate an investigation into why HMRC are failing to enforce legislation relating to the duties of employers under existing legislation for example IR35 (Tax avoidance legislation).

The continued avoidance and development of new employment models which avoid legal liabilities, pass the responsibility onto the Tax payer and the wider community. This is not just wrong it is immoral.

Q22 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(*Carried*)

KEVIN FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): If you don't know me, I've been up here before! I am moving the motion on tax. Isn't it a disgrace that we can have

organisations that are pretending that people are self-employed and avoid their legal and moral obligations to pay tax, National Insurance, and those things that they or we need in order to help support our communities and sickness schemes that need to support those who are disabled in this country. Yet we have an enforcement agency, the HMRC, who should actively be pursuing those people but what do we really see, we see private deals done when mega-rich organisations are actually given deals when they are found guilty: was it Google £30m? What was the settlement for, less than £10m. They do not do that with you and me. They do not do that with the disabled where they are cutting their benefits before they have even heard their case. 78% of cases on appeal on the benefits are actually won yet we have the disgrace where you can do a private deal and get away with it, but worse still, they are getting away with being able to say these are self-employment. HMRC already have regulations that are enforceable, they already have a means of actually holding these employers to account to prove that it is bogus and false employment status, that it is actually not just damaging the individuals who work for them, but it is damaging the economy of the UK and damaging the budgets that are available for social purposes, for the roads, the systems that those employers themselves rely on.

My view is simple. If they do not pay then they do not get the services that the rest of us get as employees. Why should we do this? The same employers, the ones that want all the services, the police, the protection, the security, and the roads, all the other things, are not willing to pay their fair share into the cake, I say: get out and get off, we've had enough of you. Stop scrounging on Britain. Stop scrounging on the workers. Stop taking it away. I tell you, what does it ultimately lead to, it leads to the disgrace that one-third of our children are now growing up in households that are facing poverty; one-third of our children, not because they are on benefits, not because their parents are scroungers, most of these children are now in families that are in work. This is not good enough. The avoidance of tax is, let's call it what it is, immoral – immoral. Remember the values of this Movement, it is immoral, a disgrace, and what do we say together, enough is enough. (*Congress repeated...*) Enough is enough. (*Congress repeated...*) HMRC enforce the rules. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Secunder?

KAMRAN ALI (North West & Irish): The GMB urges the Government to investigate and regulate the activities of major companies like Starbucks, McDonald's, Vision Express, Boots, Apple, the list goes on. Other industries like banks, law firms, accounting firms that devise marketing which implements aggressive tax avoidance schemes that have no commercial substance because the main aim is to avoid paying their full dues to society in the UK taxes and income profits. This enables wealthy corporate clients to avoid tax and National Insurance contributions by transfer pricing, artificial loans, inflated management costs, fictitious assets, offshore accounts, all designed to deprive the Treasury of billions of tax revenues which has a diverse effect to social investment and shifts tax burdens on to ordinary people. Please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

GUEST SPEAKER: THE RT. HON. JEREMY CORBYN MP, LEADER OF THE LABOUR PARTY, TO ADDRESS CONGRESS

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, colleague. Congress, before I welcome our next speaker I would like to ask that delegates do not approach the stage area during or after the speech for photographs to ensure that we do not hold up the debates that will follow the speech. Now it is a great privilege to welcome to the stage our second guest speaker, Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party to address Congress. Jeremy. (*Applause*)

JEREMY CORBYN: Thank you. Sisters and brothers, thank you so much for that wonderful welcome and having me here at your conference in Brighton.

The GMB conferences have a pretty important memory for me in recent times. After all, it was the very first hustings of the 2015 leadership campaign when we held the hustings at your conference in Dublin. It was an event that certainly changed my life and also changed the lives of many others by allowing for a real and genuine discussion about the kind of future that we all want for our people and for our country, and I really enjoyed that conference and the sense of inclusion and warmth that was there.

I also want to thank the GMB for all the support and all the support you have given to the Labour Party over many years from its foundation onwards, and continue to be that vital part of our Movement. I want to thank Tim Roache, your General Secretary, for everything, all the positive work that he does for the Movement, and the other part you might not be so keen on but I share it with him, I want to thank him for being such a committed Arsenal supporter as well. (*Cheers/Boos*) You see, in one sentence you can completely divide a conference! (*Laughter*)

Can I bring you back together, then? There is somebody else who should not go unmentioned, and that is Mary Turner. (*Applause*) She was a member, as you know, of the Labour Party National Executive as well as being your very longstanding President. I first met Mary in what were very dark days in the early 1980s when we were both campaigning together to prevent the privatisation of public services and the damage being done by the Tories to the school meals service in the Borough of Barnet, particularly, where I was an organiser for NUPE. Mary and I got along very well. She was a real fighter, campaigning for people, and a true comrade. I am sure on behalf of you I say to Mary and her family, thank you for all that you did for our Movement during your long and wonderful life. (*Applause*)

Mary was one of the great trade unionists of her generation that paved the way for a new generation of young and dynamic trade unionists, active as labour movement activists, and we rely on them for the future. I congratulate the GMB on your young members work as well because whatever they say the place for every young worker to be, and I make this appeal I am sure on behalf of you, is in a union, join a union for your protection in the future. (*Applause*)

Our party, Labour, is no longer just a political party in Parliament but a genuine mass movement of people across the UK brimming with energy and ideas about how to transform our society for the better. We have fantastic new initiatives, such as our

Community Organising Unit, getting people organised in their local communities around the issues that matter to them, wages, housing, safer streets, better youth facilities, all the things that strong and vibrant communities need.

We have new types of political events, such as the Labour Live Festival, which is happening next week on 16th June. We will have musicians, speakers – I am a speaker, not a musician – activists, trade unionists, all coming together in one place to learn from each other but also to enjoy ourselves, and reflecting on how Labour has come on as a movement. The GMB is providing its members with tickets. The code should have been emailed to all of you telling you how to redeem them. I would encourage you all to do so. Do not miss out. Join us next week for Labour Live.

As a lifelong trade unionist myself, I know how necessary your strength is and how vital it is when we are in government. Your strength to empower and organise workers will, alongside a Labour government, challenge the powerful and transform and change our society and economy. You will keep us honest, making sure we are a government that actively invests in jobs, housing, the National Health Service, and our children's education.

We need a government that includes everybody and excludes nobody, ensuring investment in every community in the UK to encourage high waged, high skilled, secure jobs, and full employment for all. It must be a government that ends the continual privatisations and deregulations of the past 30 years, which has allowed a tiny elite to grow obscenely rich on the back of everybody else. (*Applause*)

Look at the water industry, which was privatised in England and Wales by the Thatcher government in the late 1980s. I remember it well. I was in Parliament at the time. I opposed the move then and I oppose it still. Whichever way you look at it, the privatisation of water has failed and been an unpopular experiment. It has been bad for workers in the industry and bad for bill-payers. The only people it has not been bad for are rich shareholders who extract huge amounts in dividends and interest payments on the back of household bills. So, it is clear that we must take back control of water in the UK just as we must take back control of other vital utilities and industries, such as energy, the railways, and Royal Mail. (*Applause*)

Bringing water into public ownership would stop the siphoning off of money into the pockets of shareholders and reduce payments on the debts in the industry. This alone could lead to savings of up to £100 for every household in England every year, potentially bringing families' water bills down by one-quarter or allowing for the investing of those savings back into the water or other public infrastructure that will benefit everybody.

The Tories and their friends in the media whip up controversy about this topic trying to claim that giving people control over the water and other industries somehow signals the end of Western society as we know it, even though public ownership is the norm across most of Europe, and indeed most of the United States, but we know that their scaremongering does not work. It is not fooling the people of this country.

In a recent survey a staggering 83% of the population found in favour of taking the water industry into public ownership. It is no wonder when you consider that bills

have risen by 40% in real terms since privatisation. The Tories insisting that water and other utilities cannot be run by and for the public are trapped, they are trapped in an outdated irrelevant world view that serves the interests of the few. You can see why that elite few would do everything to make sure that nothing changes.

In the last decade alone the private water companies have paid out nearly £18bn in dividends to shareholders. That is the equivalent of £750 for every household, and it gets worse. Three of the nine water and sewage companies, Anglian, Severn Trent, and Yorkshire, paid out more in dividends than they received in pre-tax profits. So, those companies are borrowing money to pay their shareholders bigger profits and the public are being forced to pay the interest on the debt on their borrowing.

When we say that our economy is rigged, this is exactly what we mean. That is why Labour is offering public ownership of water and other industries with profits fed back to consumers in reduced prices and bills and/or reinvested in infrastructure. *(Applause)* Public ownership will deliver a better deal for workers in the industry, which is why we are fully signed up to the GMB's six pledges for water, as well as better value for individuals and families.

So, in opposition and in government we want to work with the GMB to design a new structure of public ownership for the water industry. Collectively as a society we need a water supply that everybody has access to, so why shouldn't we collectively own the infrastructure that supplies it. Because this funnelling of wealth out of the pockets of working people and straight into the bank accounts of the rich is something which can be observed right across the British economy, it is only commonsense to want to change that and to ensure that those who work and actually create our society's wealth should get their fair share of it.

Instead of investing in our industries and our communities successive governments have been far too willing to give up their responsibilities to ensure people's wellbeing by saying they have to listen to the so-called free market. So we have democratic governments who the people elect and are supposed to represent us being dictated to by bond markets, the bankers, and the City of London who have no accountability to the public whatsoever, and the consequences of this must be obvious to all: house and rent prices out of control as homes are turned into speculative investments for the few; our NHS and its staff struggling as it is underfunded, broken up, and sold off piece by piece; people's pay falling as trade unions are held back from organising; the longest decline in living standards in this country since the 19th century; and British industry on its knees as governments have repeatedly refused to support it.

These are symptoms of a failing rigged economy that is running down people's living standards and running down our society, and there are new threats to jobs and prosperity, both here and abroad. The US President, Donald Trump's latest unilateral steel tariffs are wrong. The Trump tariffs risk hurting workers in the United States and around the world by sparking a tit-for-tat retaliation. US workers, whether in steel or any other industry, are not wrong to want a government that actively supports them and the real everyday economy. For 40 years they have seen a completely rigged system shift more and more power and wealth to a tiny financial political elite. Donald Trump's government does not support workers. Trying to hold back the tide with one hand and giving eye-watering handouts to the super rich with the other is no

substitute for a government taking a proactive role in modernising and upgrading industry so that it is cleaner, more efficient, and works, works for the many, not the few.

That is why the next Labour government will work with the real experts, workers, technicians, engineers, designers, their unions, consumers, and communities, to upgrade our economy by taking on the power of the tiny elite that is holding us back with their failed free markets fundamentalism.

Empowering people and standing up for the many, not the few, is what the labour Movement is all about, but the Tory Government's timid response shamefully fails to stand up to Trump. We have seen it time and time again. Theresa May and her government were too weak to stand up to Trump over the Muslim ban, or his promotion of the disgusting Britain First, or his plunging the future of the planet into ever greater danger by pulling out of the Paris Climate Change Accord, or his punitive tariffs on Bombardier, or his ripping up of the Iran nuclear deal, or his reckless threat to peace by recognising Jerusalem, including occupied Palestinian territory, as Israel's capital. The Tories are too weak to stand up to the powerful and too in hock to them even if they wanted to. Theresa May is appeasing Donald Trump in the hope of getting a race to the bottom trade deal with the US after we leave the European Union. The Trump trade tariffs show that it is a Tory pipedream.

Labour, on the other hand, is unapologetic in our desire to take this country forward. We said from the very beginning that we respect the results of the referendum as that is what the British people voted for, but that does not mean that we will accept the Tories' vision for Brexit that wants to turn back time and encourage a race to the bottom that will leave people poorer and less safe.

Our priority has always been to get the best deal possible for people's jobs, living standards, and our economy. We know that the most important thing for people across the UK is access to high waged, high skilled and secure employment that will enable people to live the healthy prosperous and well-rounded lives that they deserve and desire. That is why it is vital we secure a Brexit deal that works for everybody in the UK.

In government Labour would seek to negotiate a new partnership with the EU that includes a comprehensive customs union, continued access to the internal market, and a commitment, an absolute commitment, to protect and enhance existing rights of work standards and protection of our environment and consumer rights. This is vital not only to ensure there are no tariff and non-tariff barriers in future trade with Europe, but also in helping ensure there is no return to a hard border in Northern Ireland. (*Applause*)

Of course, the option of a new UK customs union with the EU would need to ensure the UK has a say in future trade deals and any future single market relationship would also need to come with assurances, clarifications, and even potential opt-outs to ensure that future EU rules will not impede our commitment to public spending and investment in our economy. However, we are confident that under Labour we can build a new relationship with the EU that can help deliver our transformative programme and build an economy for the 21st century.

I know some people are calling for Labour to support a Norway style model but we must understand that a Norway model is specifically designed to serve the interests of Norway and would not work for the UK. Labour wants the UK to have a better deal with Europe than the Norway model offers and this includes continued single market access. We should not just settle for the status quo, instead we need a deal that is fit for the 21st century.

Because the status quo is not good enough for people, for families, or the economy as a whole, we need to move forward and to do that we must be proactive. If there are not enough jobs we must create those jobs. If people are not paid well we must legislate to ensure that they are. If investment is helping speculators and gamblers but not people who make and create things, then the Government must invest because at the moment the Government is completely refusing to support jobs and industry that people need.

Take, for example, shipbuilding. The Tories are trashing a long and proud tradition of shipbuilding in the UK by farming out government contracts overseas. It is a terrible mistake being made by this Government, turning its back on our industry, local economies, and on the working people of those communities. That is why Labour is proud to support the GMB's campaign to ensure the Government's upcoming order for three new ships for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary are built here in domestic shipyards. *(Applause)*

Shipbuilding is an important industry for our economy and it would be negligent not to support it. When you have huge global economies such as China subsidising their shipbuilders by up to 20% in recent years, it is no wonder that their shipbuilding industry is increasing while ours shrinks. A Labour government would never allow this to happen. We would never allow for this potential loss of jobs and never allow for the potential loss of skill as highly trained and skilful engineers and technicians, welders and riggers, are cast aside and undercut.

We would use this potential for public contracts as part of our bigger plans to upgrade our economy, with jobs that pay on average 45% better than the average for all jobs in the UK. The high skilled jobs profile in shipbuilding puts it alongside aerospace and other engineering sectors in being exactly the type of jobs we need in a 21st century economy. We must make sure this happens by rejecting the Tories' outdated obsession with free markets that gives too much power to out of control multinational companies who have no care for the everyday needs of workers and consumers.

The upcoming contract for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships alone could offer opportunities for 450 new apprentices, the engineers of the future, and almost 5,000 jobs in the wider supply chain, on top of the shipyard jobs and the other additional employment created in the local communities. Your union, the GMB, has estimated that the total shipbuilding workforce are paid about a billion pounds annually, £238 million of which is returned to the Exchequer in taxes, money which goes to fund our National Health Service, our children's schools, and money that would be lost if the Government sent the contract overseas.

The opportunity for this investment is obvious. The only thing holding back that investment is the ideological obsession of the Conservative Government too interested in the whims of the market, too disinterested in the needs of the people of this country. Why waste this chance for more high waged jobs for people in our society who are currently stuck on low pay or zero hours contracts? I ask the question. Let's take the opportunity now. *(Applause)*

Low pay and insecurity are endemic in our economy. Too many people are held back as they struggle to earn enough money to give them a decent standard of living. We need bold action to quickly get more money into people's pockets at the end of the month. That is why in our last manifesto, for the many, not the few, Labour promised to ban zero hours contracts and introduce a real living wage of at least £10 an hour by 2020. *(Applause)*

That is why today here in Brighton I am announcing that the Labour Party, under our new General Secretary, Jennie Formby, is committing to pay all our staff at any level in our organisation no less than £10 an hour. *(Applause)* That is us, Labour, putting our money where our mouth is. We believe in a high waged economy so we are committing to pay all our staff a decent wage. I want to pay tribute to the GMB along with Unite the Union that represent Labour Party staff. You have raised this issue in the Labour Party itself and along with many other trade unions and campaigning bodies you are leading the fight across our economy for decent pay for all.

So, conference, in many ways this development in the Labour Party itself reflects how a future Labour government will continue to work with the trades union Movement. We will work with you to transform our scandalous economy that allows the richest to luxuriate in wealth and power while the majority are denied the full fruits of the work they do. We will change the British state from one that holds people back to one that invests in education, in healthcare, in housing, and in our future by handing power to communities and workers but, conference, none of this will be possible without your help. The power of the labour Movement, but also of Labour governments, lies in the strength of our members and our trade union affiliates. We rely on as many people as possible being as active as they can spreading our message and making sure our arguments are known. You know many of the media do not always carry our message very accurately so it is up to us to do it on their behalf instead and make sure our co-workers and others understand what our policies are, what our hopes are, and what our demands are, and we all rely on trade unionists to fight to get the best possible deal for their members and all workers. We have to have confidence not just in ourselves but also in the people of this country, who for too long have been ignored.

So, let's go forward together to deliver that better society, that richer society, that fairer society, that really does and really will work for the many, not the few. Thank you. *(Standing ovation)*

(Presentation of gift amidst applause)

JEREMY CORBYN: Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, as you probably have just seen by now, GMB has launched a campaign to put the water industry back into public hands and you

have heard Jeremy back our call to take back the tap. Jeremy and Tim will now sign our pledges and have a photograph with GMB reps from the water industry. I will remind other delegates that Jeremy will be available for photographs outside the conference hall, if anyone would like a photograph with him. Straight after this he will be going out so you can go out and have your photograph taken.

Right, Congress, we will continue. We have a very big agenda. Can I first of all apologise to Motions 192 and 196, 197, 198 and 199, I did call you earlier and you came down. I did not expect Jeremy to come as quickly as he did. I was hoping to have completed that. Can I now ask you to come down again? Can the movers of 192 London, 196 London, 197 Northern, 198 Birmingham & West Midlands, and 199 North West & Irish come to the front, please, with the mover of 192 to the rostrum? Could Congress just be a little quieter for the speeches, please?

**INCREASE IN NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS, INCREASE TO BE RING-FENCED FOR NHS
MOTION 192**

**192. INCREASE IN NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS,
INCREASE TO BE RINGFENCED FOR NHS.**

This Conference requests that GMB and all relevant MPs lobby Government for an increase to NI contributions. All people in employment must pay relatively the same contributions towards NI.

At present, if you are self-employed you pay a lot less than someone on PAYE. The increase must be ring-fenced for NHS as at present NI is supposed to be ring-fenced for 4 things.

NHS
Sickness and Disability Allowance
The State Pension
Unemployment Benefit

However, the Government at present borrow against this for:-

The Police and Schools

This has to stop

BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

DOUGLAS RIGBY (London): Congress, Vice President, this Congress requests that GMB and all relevant MPs lobby the Government for an increase to NI contributions. All people employed must pay relatively the same contributions towards NI. At present, if you are self-employed you get most of the benefits of PAYE but you make less contributions. We also demand that the tax giveaways to big businesses must stop. They must be made to pay higher taxes and contribute more as a contribution

rise should not be a burden on the ordinary working person. At present, all contributions of NI are supposed to be ring-fenced for four things, NHS, Sickness and Disability allowance, the state pension, and unemployment benefit. However, this is not the case as the Government borrow against this to prop up the police and schools. The practice of borrowing money from this pot has to stop and a proper funding by slight increases to everyone's NI ring-fenced would bring in the money needed. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Douglas. Secunder?

MOHAMMAD AKBAR (London): Vice President, Congress, ladies and gentlemen, this motion is self-explanatory. It is simply about what the GMB stands for, equality, in and out of work, we protect all, whether you are self-employed or PAYE, and equal pay, equal and fair protection comes with equal and fair contributions. The NHS is not for the few, it is for each and every one of us. I believe we must all contribute equally to fund the future of our NHS, our health service. We have a duty to protect the most vulnerable in our society. In 2017 a study by the *Guardian* showed that the average earnings/salaries in Britain are for about £25,000, or middle-class individuals earning about £40,000 enjoy among the lowest personal tax rates of the advanced countries while the highest earners on £100,000 see less of their income taken in tax than anywhere else in Europe. I know how important it is for our police and our schools to be funded properly. However, to borrow a sentence from the PM, National Insurance (NI) is meant to be ring-fenced for four things, as Douglas explained, for NHS, sickness and disability, state pension, and unemployment. I call on the GMB to lobby the Government to ensure the increase in National Insurance contributions and ring-fence them for the main purpose, to protect those most in need. We will find them in our NHS. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 196?

TAX AVOIDANCE MOTION 196

196. TAX AVOIDANCE

This Conference recognises that although tax avoidance is not illegal, it is certainly immoral and does have a major impact on the economics of the UK which we all rely on.

We have seen reports from the Panama Papers, and Luxembourg leaks highlighting the fact that there are thousands of companies who are avoiding paying full tax in the UK. This results in depletion of money from the economy and many large organisations such as the NHS suffer from money starvation.

Conference therefore demands that the GMB starts to campaign where, if a named company is identified as a tax avoider, and fail to pay the appropriate rate of tax to the UK like any other business, then the Government will legislate where these companies cannot sell their products and/or services in the UK until the full rates of taxes are paid.

In addition we must stop large organisations negotiating their tax with the government in ways to reduce tax and make them pay their way leaving a level playing field for all tax on all businesses.

ISLINGTON 1 & HARINGEY BRANCH London Region

(Referred)

DANNY FAITH (London): Vice President, Congress, on 13th July 2016 on her first day of office Theresa May stood on the steps of Downing Street and said, “The Government I lead will be driven not by the interests of the privileged few but by yours. When we pass new laws we will listen not to the mighty but to you. When it comes to taxes, we will prioritise not the wealthy but you.” She did not mean a word of it. In fact, corporation taxes in the UK are set to fall from 28%, which is what they were when the Tories came in, in 2010, to 18% next year. That is just the tax that they do declare. As in every area of life, if you are rich enough or if you are powerful enough, then you are subject to a completely different set of rules. For all of us here we are subject to PAYE and National Insurance. There is no escape. If you are a big corporation you pay virtually nothing. Let’s take Amazon as an example. In 2016, they paid just £15m in tax across European revenues of £20bn, that is less than one-tenth of 1%. In the same year Amazon were able to halve its corporation tax bill from £16m to just over £7m. There are no shortages of ways of doing this. According to HMRC’s own figures, nearly £6bn was avoided by one measure alone last year; that is booking profits to overseas entities. At a time when the NHS and all our services are stretched to the limit, this is not just immoral, it is outrageous. We should support any measure that helps put an end to this immorality. I therefore move this resolution. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you Danny. Secunder?

KRISSY O’HAGAN (London): Congress, I am seconding Motion 196 on tax avoidance. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Tax avoidance involves bending the rules to gain an advantage. It involves operating within the law but not in the spirit of the law. This motion is asking that we have laws and statutes to legislate these businesses as individuals who avoid paying tax. It is a disgrace that these big companies are getting preferential treatment whilst we, clearly, need this money so desperately to fund the deficiencies in the NHS, public services and schools. Exploiting the tax system to reduce tax should be a crime and GMB should fight this. I urge you to support this motion. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Krissy. I call Motion 197.

WINDFALL TAX ON COMPANIES MOTION 197

197. WINDFALL TAX ON COMPANIES

This Congress calls on a windfall tax to be imposed at the earliest opportunity on those companies who are evading and exploiting the tax system for their own ends, and in so doing fleecing the taxpayer out of billions of pounds of

lost revenue. Offshoring and social media outlets are just the latest example of companies who are simply and deliberately avoiding their corporate social responsibilities to wider society by being able to avoid and evade tax liabilities. Congress calls on Labour to adopt a windfall tax as part of its on-going platform for government.

Z21 HEBBURN 1 ENG BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BINA TUBURU (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker, moving Motion 197 — Windfall Tax on Companies. *(Applause)* The way that companies like Carillion took money from the taxpayer for contracts that should have been kept in the public sector is a disgrace. Companies take advantage of contracts that are paid for by the public. These are the companies that regard, as their main priorities, paying dividends and paying themselves fat-cat salaries, pensions and shares, and company bosses that then benefit from paying dividends to shareholders and companies that exploit their workforce pension schemes. Congress, this is daylight robbery, but paid for by the taxpayer! Many of these companies rake in profits but pay only a little back in tax. I am also talking about companies that place their profits off shore from the UK and out of the reach of the British tax authorities. It is no wonder that we had the price of austerity when the bosses are getting away with riding on our backs. We now have social media and internet companies which, for years, have paid virtually nothing in tax. They have been allowed to get away with it by tax authorities that roll over at the first challenge. Congress, there is one rule for us and there is a different rule for the bosses. We call for a windfall tax to ensure that those companies which are exploiting the tax system to be paying their full tax liability. We ask our friends in the Labour Party to adopt a windfall tax as it prepares for the next election and to implement it when it forms the next government. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bina. Secunder?

SUSAN BIRNIE (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I second Motion 197 — Windfall Tax on Companies. If companies paid their taxes and stopped trying to avoid paying them we would have much more money for the public sector. We have already heard about Carillion, but the whole system of us allowing companies to win contracts paid for by the public purse and paid for our members in the public sector should be stopped. Companies that want to tender for work should recognise trade unions like the GMB. Their owners should live in the area where they want to provide services and they should pay the going rate for the job. That is at least the rate that was being paid in the public sector. They should have to pay for and provide a good pension scheme, and they should be paying their taxes in the UK, which means the correct amount. This should apply to social-media companies who see themselves as above the law on a whole range of matters from dealing with abuse online to using the tax system to avoid their fair share of tax. Congress, if Labour does decide to put a windfall tax into its manifesto, it will get huge public support for such a move. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Susan. I call Motion 198.

**STATUTORY BODIES & OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS
MOTION 198**

198. STATUTORY BODIES AND OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS

This Conference demands that statutory bodies do not use offshore accounts to avoid taxes and matters such as stamp duty on local authority purchases or investments. Conference strongly condemns those who do and whilst not unlawful, such practices in the public sector are reprehensible and give validity to the private sector in such tax avoidance.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRYON COOKE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 198 — Statutory Bodies & Offshore Accounts. Paying our taxes is something everyone in this room has to do. So why do so many companies and the rich get away with it? In some cases, it is not just the rich but public authorities and public bodies. It is not right. On the one hand, we are saying that the rich are not paying their taxes and we are penalised for it but, on the other hand, some of our public authorities are doing exactly the same, using offshore accounts. Public authorities and local authorities have to have a spare amount of money available in case of emergencies if there is a disaster or such things. They often put that money into offshore accounts which are not taxed, which is not right. This motion is saying that we can't say to the rich "You're not paying your taxes. Do so" if our public authorities and bodies are not doing the same. That is what this motion is asking for. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Byron. Secunder? *(Formally seconded)*
Thank you. I call Motion 199.

**COUNCIL TAX REVENUE
MOTION 199**

199. COUNCIL TAX REVENUE

This Conference calls on the next Labour Government to enact legislation to allow Local Authorities to increase Council Tax to a level that would allow adequate funding for all Council services.

B16 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

DAVID FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 199 — Council Tax Revenue. Councils are on the edge. They are, for the most part, holding services together, although a significant minority are not. They can only do this by

raising council tax, increasing charges and draining their reserves. Councils are perilously close to the financial edge, and many more face huge challenges in setting budgets for the coming year. Extra council tax-raising powers will give some councils the option to raise some extra income, but will not bring in enough to completely ease the financial pressures they face. This means many councils having to ask residents to pay more council tax. Please support this motion calling on the next Labour government to enact legislation to allow authorities to increase council tax. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Seconder? (*Formally seconded*) Thank you. I now call Elaine Daley of the CEC and Birmingham Region to respond to the motions. Elaine.

ELAINE DALEY (CEC, Commercial Services): Vice President and Congress, I would like to stress that we have no quarrel with the principles that underpin this group of motions. Our tax policies must, of course, adapt as the world of work changes. Tax avoidance is immoral and it must be opposed, whether it is pursued by individuals or corporations.

We are seeking a small number of qualifications to these motions. These are simply matters of scope and I hope they are not controversial. I know that time is limited so I will try to be brief.

On Motion 189 we agree that robotics should be taxed where they displace workers so that our public services can continue to function. Our qualification is that robotics also has a potential to enhance existing jobs, particularly for our members whose roles involve heavy lifting. We would not wish to discourage investment that could reduce physical strain and muscular-skeletal disorders. We are asking for a degree of flexibility rather than a blanket tax on all spending on robotics.

Motion 192 calls for an increase in National Insurance contributions to plug shortfalls in funding the NHS and other public services. Our concern is that the burden of funding public services must not fall solely on the backs of working people. Employers should pay more, especially those that avoid tax. That is the extent of our qualification.

Congress, Motion 198 condemns the use of offshore accounting by public bodies. The CEC wholeheartedly agrees. Our qualification is that we want the record to show that these condemnations should also apply to all individuals, organisations and businesses both in the public and the private sector. I believe that this qualification is in line with the spirit of the motion.

Turning to Motion 199, we ask Congress to adopt the qualification similar to that of Motion 192. This motion calls for an abolition of the cap on council tax rises, which currently stands at 5.99%, including the social care pretext. Our concern, Congress, and our qualification does not go further than this, is that we should also be pushing for reversals to the short cuts in central Government funding and an end to tax giveaways for multi-national corporations.

Finally, we are suggesting that Motion 196 should be referred. This motion demands that the union launches a campaign whenever any companies are identified as avoiding tax and support laws to prevent the sale of products produced by those companies. Congress, the day-to-day reality of our union is that we have finite resources and our activists and officers have many competition demands on their time. This motion could lead us to having to launch hundreds of campaigns a year, including against companies with which we have no industrial links. We would also have to consider questions around the cost of enforcement and also the potential consequences for our members where they are employed by such a company. It is existing GMB policy to oppose and tackle tax evasion and avoidance, and we support changes to the law and better funding for HMRC so that it can more effectively investigate and prevent corporate tax avoidance. We, therefore, agree with the sentiment behind this motion, but we are asking that it be referred so that the CEC Organisation Sub-Committee can make an assessment of the practicalities of its demands.

Congress, I ask that you support Motions 189, 192, 198 and 199 with the qualifications I have outlined, and agree to refer Motion 196. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elaine. Congress, we will now go to the vote. Motion 185 and Composite 13 are both supported by the CEC. We will take them together. All those in favour, please show? Any against? They have carried.

Motion 185 was CARRIED.
Composite 13 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: In relation to Motion 189, does Birmingham & West Midlands accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 189 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motions 190 and 191 are both supported by the CEC. We will take the vote on them together. All those in favour, please, show? Any against? They have carried.

Motion 190 was CARRIED.
Motion 191 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London accept the qualification on Motion 192? (*Agreed*) All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 192 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: On Motion 196, does London agree to refer back? (*Agreed*) All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 196 was REFERRED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 197 is supported by the CEC. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 197 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Birmingham & West Midlands accept the qualification on Motion 198? (*Agreed*) Thank you. That is carried.

Motion 198 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 199. Does North West support with the qualification? (*Agreed*) All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 199 was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: FINANCE & CONTRIBUTIONS

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will move on now to Union Organisation. I ask got the movers of Motion 40, London; Motion 50, London; Motion 51, London; Motion 53, London and Motion 65, Yorkshire to come to the front of the hall, please. I call the mover of Motion 40 to come to the rostrum.

TRANSPARENCY MOTION 40

40. TRANSPARENCY

This Conference agrees that the highest levels of transparency and governance are required within the GMB particularly by those charged with negotiating and awarding any GMB commercial contracts.

To ensure no unwanted suspicion or criticism surrounds any employee or contractor a register of all gifts of hospitality of any sort and in any form be introduced immediately following Congress and be available on line for scrutiny by any member of the Union.

This register should also contain any corporate hospitality provided for individuals and groups.

BUCKS COUNTY BRANCH London Region

(Referred)

WENDY WHITTINGTON (London): Congress, I move Motion 40 on Transparency. Council workers are expected to refuse offers of inappropriate and disproportionate hospitality and gifts as part of the discharge of their duties, unless there are compelling reasons or exceptional circumstances for doing so with their employer's permission. Where hospitality and gifts are deemed as being acceptable, this fact is to be recorded in a Register of Gifts and Hospitality. Members of Parliament, through

the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, are subject to a strict gift and hospitality code, which places transparency, honesty and accountability at the highest level to ensure that no one puts themselves in a situation where they may be said to be acting improperly. Our friends at the Information Commissioner's Office hold a register and when you examine it gifts or hospitality range from a bottle or two of wine to a T-shirt, a business lunch or dinner, a toy car, biscuits and also accommodation and travel costs. Interestingly, some of the consumables are noted as being given to staff or they were raffled or donated to Christmas charities.

This is something that the decision makers in our union may well wish to consider going forward. These are just a few examples of how gifts are registered in the public sector. There are many more besides in the education and health sectors. However, it is not just the public sector where registers are part and parcel of day-to-day business. Many commercial businesses also have strict policies and codes in place to ensure that nobody receives special treatment or offer favours.

Under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1916, it is an offence to accept a gift as a reward in a corrupt fashion, and rightly so. So, colleagues, why should we in the GMB be any different? What sets us above these standards? By not having a register, we are failing in our duties to our members. That said, we are pleased that the CEC may propose adopting a code of conduct. However, to suggest that the publication of a hospitality register may prove counter productive and arm those who wish those to attack our union is only going to add fuel to the arguments that we are not being an open and transparent 21st century union that we all aspire to be. We have absolutely nothing to hide by publishing a register which would ensure that we have the highest standards in place at all times. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Wendy. Secunder?

JAMES DOHENY (London): Vice President and Congress, I second Motion 40 — Transparency. Transparency in an organisation such as a trade union is a means to an end, and that end is trust. Trust, as we know, is both fragile and strong. It can be destroyed in an instant and yet it can hold an entire nation together. All human relationships require it and, going back to our motion, have to find the right degree of transparency to maintain it. So the question which underlies this motion is how much transparency does the work of our union require?

The motion, as it stands, calls for absolute transparency or, as they say in California, “radical transparency” when it comes to the area of corporate hospitality, particularly in procurement. Publish everything to everyone in the union, it says, and let the guilty be damned. The CEC has expressed fears that this approach might be counter-productive for the union, as my colleague said, not least in providing ammunition for those hostile to the union's work. Indeed, there is never a shortage of those. They have called instead for a code of conduct to apply across the union. As a matter of internal government, that is an excellent idea. Indeed, it would be very surprising if one does not already exist, but it does not meaningfully address our call for some membership scrutiny in this particular area. By all means let us have a code of conduct, but if a question of trust has been raised the answer will lie in how any such code of conduct is policed and to what degree the membership or their representatives can be involved. Those are questions of detail which can be determined at another

time. What matters today is that increased transparency is on the agenda for our union as a principle. Let's keep it there by supporting this motion and keep it moving forward until we can arrive at a position that satisfies everyone. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, James. I call Motion 50.

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING (SRI) MOTION 50

50. SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING (SRI)

This Conference strongly supports Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) and Environmental Social Governance (ESG) issues and demands that GMB equity investment policy take this into account taking along with financial factors to minimise any potential negative impact on its investment returns.

The particular concern is the call for the GMB to adopt an ethical investment approach via investment strategies that seek to minimise or ideally eliminate irresponsible corporate behaviour leading to:

- Environmental degradation (low or zero carbon assets, climate change)
- Armament sales to military regimes
- Human rights violations
- Tobacco production, cultivation and manufacture
- The exploitation of workers
- The institutionalisation of poverty through discriminatory market practices
- Giving or receiving of bribes

This Conference wants an investment charter that will use its best endeavours to operate its investment policy to support the above objectives.

In addition, this Conference wishes the GMB to influence corporate behaviour via judicious acquisition, divestment and engagement.

LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

ZAHIDA ASLAM (London): Congress, I move Motion 50. Despite numerous attempts and a one-to-one to get an answer on how the CEC claims that it monitors SRI and ESG issues closely on their investments, it remains unsubstantiated. There is no investment policy in operation, thereby reinforcing why this motion is so fundamentally important.

Congress, we have just heard from Jeremy about the powers that companies hold over their workforces. But what about the power that trade unions can employ through their multi-million pound investment decisions? Few would disagree that trade unions should be concerned with ensuring that their financial assets are invested in a way that does not conflict with their principles. This requires reviewing the approach that the GMB takes to the investment of their assets, both in their pension funds of £401 million and other investment portfolios.

A growing number of investors, including trade unions, are demanding investments which can combine the desire to invest in a responsible way with the need to generate decent returns. This demand has led to the development of socially responsible investment or SRI. This type of investing strategy is known as sustainable, socially conscious, green or ethical investing. SRI avoids corporate harm, such as dumping toxic waste into waters and encourages corporate practices that promote environmental stewardship, consumer protection, human rights and diversity. Investors are choosing companies which support these ethics, as SRI is growing into a wide-followed practice. To evaluate a company's practice, the criteria used are the environment, social justice and corporate governance issues and also people at ESG.

The ethical investment strategy will assess ESG reporting and also consider corporate social responsibility, known as CSR, which describes a company's commitment to greater accountability and better engagement with the workforce, community and environment. Trade unions stand to benefit from SRI ethical and CSR engagement programmes. How is this the case? Workers struggle, often against great odds, to build unions in many of the most globalised sectors of production and commerce, such as agriculture, clothing and electronics. CSR can help those workers without organisations to defend them. Nurturing CSR to its full potential includes workers rights to organise and to bargain collectively to improve their working conditions and supplement labour-law enforcement.

Socially responsible investing has become an important principle guiding the investment strategies of various funds and accounts. Options include negative screening, such as excluding certain securities from investment, like tobacco companies, which are harmful to health, or positive screening, making investments in companies believed to have a positive social impact, such as human rights, divestment, such as from fossil fuels, and further SRI strategies include shareholder activism and engagement.

Unions do not use their financial investments as effectively as they could. Few have control of shareholder voting rights and specific SRI strategies are rare. However, a growing number of unions, such as UNISON, PCS, TSSA and the TUC, have taken a more progressive stance with their investments and, as such, there is experience in the Movement that other unions can draw upon including the Trade Union Investor Group. Using SRI strategies to maximise financial returns and attempting to maximise social good —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can you close down now, please, Zahida?

ZAHIDA ASLAM: — should drive the future direction of development. Congress, this motion calls —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No! Now! Everyone else has had to do it. We will be miles behind otherwise.

ZAHIDA ASLAM: Okay. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder, please?

KIM HENDRY (London): Congress, I second Motion 50. President and delegates, there are a number of reasons why GMB needs an ethical and socially responsible investment charter and policy. Firstly, social and economic justice is at the heart of everything we do, so we have a responsibility, a responsibility to our proud history of fighting oppression and exploitation, and a responsibility to our current reputation as a union which opposes inequality and employer abuse wherever we find them to ensure that GMB money does not fund corporations which are guilty of the very practices which we condemn.

Secondly, as the mover said, we are punching below our weight. GMB pension funds have assets worth just under £402 million, most of which is invested in shares or their equivalent. We have other investments worth millions of pounds. So we are not exploiting the leverage this gives us as shareholders to influence corporations to carry out more socially-responsible policies. We are not using the power available to us.

Congress, let us be as principled and as ethical in our investment strategy as we are in our campaigning and bargaining, and let's use this additional weapon in our armoury, the huge funds built up by hardworking members and our leadership to fight some of the worst abuses of capitalism and be a force for good in whatever we do. Please support Motion 50. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kim. I call Motion 51.

CREDIT CARD FACILITY MOTION 51

51. CREDIT CARD FACILITY

This Conference agrees that all employees who are given a Credit Card Facility by the GMB in order to assist with the undertaking of their duties should have all such expenditure published in a GMB members only area of the Union's website to allow full membership scrutiny of members' money spent in their name.

Corporate credit accounts or card expenditure where it is incurred on behalf of several people or by a department of the Union shall also be included in this transparency process.

Conference further agrees that the publishing of this information on a quarterly basis should commence 3 calendar months following this 2018 Conference.

BEDS COUNTY BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

KAREN DUDLEY (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 51. We, as an organisation, need to be open and transparent to our members on what we spend their money on. So all those who have been given the responsibility to use a GMB-funded credit card should have to identify what they are purchasing or paying for, not just a figure on a credit-card statement on a regular basis. We need to show all expenditure as a form of public account to be published on our Members' Page on our website on a quarterly basis following this Conference. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. Secunder? *(Formally seconded)*
Thank you. I call Motion 53.

**ACCOMPANYING REPS ROLE REVIEW
MOTION 53**

53. ACCOMPANYING REPS ROLE REVIEW

This Conference feels that the time is right for the Accompanying Reps expenses to be reviewed, through a motion debate.

For so long Accompanying Reps have been attending meetings with travelling times of up to 3 hours, only to be able to claim approximately 6hrs work for £30 before tax.

This amounts to almost a day's work for less than £5 per hour. Less than legal pay for a teenager's hourly wages.

Colleagues, let's be sensible about this debate, we as the GMB collective are fighting for better pay as equals, but we are losing out ourselves.

STANSTED AIRPORT BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

WAYNE OSWICK (London): Good afternoon, Congress. I am moving Motion 53 — Accompanying Reps Role Review. This Conference feels that the time is right for accompanying reps' expenses to be reviewed through motion debate. For so long accompanying reps have been attending representations for our members with travelling times of up to three hours and only being able to claim, approximately, a six-hour working day for £30 before tax. This accounts to almost a working day of less than £5 per hour. That is less than the recognised liveable wage which we, the GMB, are campaigning nationally to be paid to our members. The daily account of £30 needs to be reviewed because it does not take into account all other work that their representation entails. We make numerous telephone calls, help with emails,

support through emails and just, as a generalisation, we would have been helping the member for almost a year before the case is concluded.

It has also been brought to my attention that a colleague has claimed payment from several attendances on behalf of one branch, and he states that over the working amount of time that he has put in it equated to £6.33 per hour and the honorarium took up to six months. There must be a more simplistic way of payment.

We, as a GMB collective, are fighting for better pay as equals, but we are not being offered a fair rate ourselves. Let's be sensible in having this debate. There is a general consensus that there is a gap supporting our membership between the regional offices and the workplace organiser due to our memberships being split across regions in various different workplaces without attending reps. This suggests that there may or could be a role within the organisation for an accompanying rep as a full-time position. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Wayne. Secunder?

MARIA JENNINGS (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate, seconding Motion 53. *(Applause)* You have heard from my fellow delegate about the valuable work that accompanying reps do. GMB, as you heard earlier from Jeremy Corbyn, has been campaigning within the Labour Party for all workers to be paid at least £10 an hour. Let's follow the example of the Labour Party and make sure that all accompanying reps are paid at least £10 an hour. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Maria. I call Motion 65.

APPRENTICE RATE MOTION 65

65. APPRENTICE RATE

This Conference believes that the GMB Apprentice Rate should only be available to Apprentices

WILKO HARDWARE BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

JOHANNA EARLY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 65 — Apprentice Rate. Vice President and delegates, the GMB stands for equality and fairness. Apprentices are a very vulnerable group in the workplace. The GMB is there to protect against any unfair treatment by employers. The GMB works with employers to ensure high-quality apprenticeships, fair pay and good training. Young workers are the lifeblood of the union and having apprentices in our workplaces can create a training culture in an organisation that benefits us all.

Apprentices must be paid and, thanks to trade union pressure, there is now an apprentices rate. However, that rate is very low, just £3.50 an hour. In the GMB that low rate of pay is recognised and apprentices pay only £2 per month in subs. For that

£2 they get all the benefits and support any that any other member gets. I know from my own experience as a rep in the workplace that our apprentice members get very good value for that £2 a month.

The GMB is a family. We all support each other. The apprentice rate is there to support our lowest-paid young members starting out on their chosen career. When they complete their apprenticeships, hopefully they will move into full-time work. What should happen is that they move on to the correct rate of subs, which, in turn, will support new apprentices following on behind them. Apprenticeships take between one and four years to complete. In some cases, members continuing the apprentice rate long after they have completed their apprenticeship and moved into full-time work. Also in some workplaces, my own included, apprentices are on very good rates of pay well above the statutory minimum. The fact that they are on the apprentice rate of only £2 a month in subs could be causing inequality amongst our members.

I opened by saying that the GMB stands for equality and fairness. It is only fair that all of us as members pay the correct level of subs. The financial stability of the union ensures that the GMB can continue to be effective and fight for all members today and in the future. Please can GMB review the criteria and process of establishing which members qualify for the apprentice rate? Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Johanna. Seconder? (*Formally seconded*) Thank you. I now call on Tim Roache, our General Secretary, to respond to the motions.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you very much, Malcolm. I am replying on behalf of the CEC to Motions 40, 50, 51 and 53.

Motions 40 and 51 both deal with transparency in the way we do our business and the CEC is very firm in the view that everything that all of us do — union employees and activists — is seen to be above reproach, otherwise we, rightly, would lose the trust of our members, the only people who matter in this debate.

The CEC does, however, believe that publishing every instance of hospitality provided to groups of members or officers, or putting credit card bills on line, is not practical or useful. Credit card bills in themselves are sometimes not explicit, and the amount of detail involved means that the hospitality disclosure could be misleading. In fact, this could easily be ammunition for those who would attack our union. So to be helpful, the CEC is suggesting that we develop a code of conduct to cover all employees and post holders. This would incorporate policies against bribery, corruption, dishonesty, nepotism and waste, and set standards of behaviour. The main point of this is to ensure that our people can go about their union business confident in the knowledge that they are protected against charges of inappropriate behaviour, charges that officers and others, too often, are subjected to.

Whilst I am recommending this code of conduct, Congress, I need to stress that it is a fallacy for anyone to make the impression that somehow our expenditure is not currently audited. It is life managed, it is checked and it is audited by external auditors every single year.

Motion 50 sets out criteria for socially responsible investment in the union's funds. The CEC agrees that this needs to be set out more clearly and comprehensively, and I will be working with the union trustees to compile a statement of investment principles which will be made available on line. The CEC is grateful for the motion, with the qualification that the CEC is not going to take actions or join in investment-boycott campaigns which attack our members' jobs. In fact, the mover actually said that other unions are looking at campaigns that divest from fossil fuels. I am sorry, but that is not our way. We have many members who would negatively be impacted on that; gas workers, to mention but one.

The other thing I need to make clear from both the mover and the seconder is that when you make reference to the GMB pension fund, that is not a matter for Congress. How the GMB pension fund, which is GMB employees' money, is invested is a matter for the GMB pension trustees.

Motion 53 relates to our valuable accompanying reps. This system is used in a number of regions, and it is for those regions to decide on any payments through the honorarium process. We know that these payments are sometimes linked to the loss-of-earnings rate, so if Congress agrees to raise those rates in line with the CEC Report, this should help accompanying reps, too. If the mover accepts reference, we can report on that next year. Please accept Motion 50 with the CEC qualification, and refer Motions 40, 51 and 53. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tim. We will now go to the vote. Does London agree with reference back on Motion 40? *(Agreed)* All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 40 was REFERRED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London Region also support the qualification on Motion 50? *(Agreed)* Thank you. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 50 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London Region accept the reference on Motion 51? *(Agreed)* All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Does London Region also accept reference on Motion 53? *(Agreed)* Thank you. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 51 was REFERRED.

Motion 53 was REFERRED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 65 is supported by the CEC. All those in favour? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 65 was CARRIED.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FINANCE REPORT

Financial proposals for Congress 2018

GMB in recent years has achieved a degree of financial stability which is essential to be able to operate as a campaigning union in the twenty-first century, always ready and equipped to fight for our members individually and collectively. We've focussed hard on membership growth and development and on building the union's reputation for tireless work challenging bad employers and bad policy. But that financial stability is relatively new, and the lessons of the past are that we can never afford to spend more than the union earns in membership contributions every year. The increase in inflation in 2017 has led to our contribution income coming under strain, and our budgets for 2018 were set at a figure just above the breakeven level. That means this year we have very little buffer to protect the union from unexpected costs or dips in membership.

In preparation for this year's Congress the CEC's Finance & General Purposes Committee, over several of its meetings, carried out the review called for in referred composite 1 from Congress 2017. In particular, the Committee considered the contributions charged by other unions, the possible need to increase the number of grades in the GMB system, the idea of switching to a wage-related structure and the difficulty of recruiting workers in the unstable gig economy.

A number of unions charge contributions related to a member's earnings. This has the attraction of theoretically benefitting the union when wage negotiations are successful, but it has been discussed and rejected by Congress on numerous previous occasions. It would be difficult to apply in GMB due to the huge range of our members' pay rates and the probable need to rely on "self-certification". It would also be disruptive and could be unpopular among members whose contributions would have to rise to maintain the union's income levels. When, in the past, GMB colleagues visited another large union which operates a wage-related system, we found that the absence of fixed rates meant that the quality of data in the membership system, particularly for check-off members, was inferior to GMB. Finally, GMB's contribution structure is better for our democracy, as it obliges Congress to have an annual debate on finance, which is often side-lined in other unions.

The Committee also looked at applying additional rates, and whether we should respond to the growth in zero hours and other unstable employment by making adjustments to contributions. The Committee noted that the rule book currently allows the application of promotional rates to meet particular problems identified in any part of the membership, and these are successfully and flexibly applied across the union. A further fixed rate would have to be paid for by an additional increase to the main grade rates, and it is far from clear that the lower rate would result in an increase in recruitment. The rapid growth of the gig economy means that it is starting to appear in areas where GMB is already organised, making it hard to decide who a special gig rate would apply to and running the risk of multiple rates applying to similar members in the same workplace.

Composite 1 also suggested investigating a family membership rate. This is another proposal which has been repeatedly rejected by past Congresses. It could prove difficult to administer, for example in identifying who exactly are family members, and there is a risk that family membership could significantly increase the cost of employment law support.

The Finance & General Purposes Committee concluded that the current system of two rates, complemented by the promotional rates, sick and unemployed reductions and the rates for students and apprentices, is well understood throughout GMB, is simple to apply, straightforward to administer and is flexible enough to meet Regional needs. This was endorsed by the CEC. The Committee also considered a report from Labour Research, which is available to Congress delegates, which shows that GMB rates for most members are lower than for the significant majority of other unions, and particularly our “competitors”.

Inflation of course affects not just the union’s finances, but impacts on lay member activists. Over recent years, the mileage rate payable to members who use their own car on union business has been increased from 25p to 35p. The Finance & General Purposes Committee conducted research into the level of mileage payments in various organisations and employers. Based on that, the CEC recommends a further increase in mileage rates to 40p per mile.

The Finance & General Purposes Committee also reviewed the level of lost earnings payments where members have foregone wages while on union business. For some time this has been recognised to fall well below actual lost earnings, and the fact that the payment is less than the union’s aspirations for minimum hourly rates is frankly embarrassing. Accordingly, the CEC is recommending an increase in the daily rate of lost earnings compensation to a maximum of £80.00.

It has been the longstanding policy of GMB Congress to link contributions to cost inflation by increasing rates by RPI each year. This year, the Committee proposes using the lower inflation measure of CPI, which at the start of 2018 stood at 3%. To the nearest round number, this produces a weekly increase of 10p on grade 1 and 5p on grade 2. All other rates remain unchanged.

Taken together with tight control of cost budgets, consistent successful recruitment and improvements in retention through much better focussed member communications, this increase provides the union with a stable platform to face the challenges of this year and into 2019.

The CEC is recommending the following rule changes:

CECRA11

Rule 45 Clause 1,

Line 3: Delete “join”, insert “joined”

Line 4: Delete “£3.05”, insert “£3.15”

Line 9: Delete “£1.78”, insert “£1.83”

Line 11: Delete “£3.06”, insert “£3.16”

Line 12: Delete “£3.05”, insert “£3.15”

Line 17: Delete “£1.79”, insert “£1.84”

Line 18: Delete “£1.78”, insert “£1.83”

Clause will now read:

1 Once they join the union, members will pay a contribution in line with this rule. Members who joined before 1 March, 2018 and all members in Northern Ireland will pay £3.15 a week and be classed as grade-1 members, **unless** they are:

- part-time members employed for 20 hours or less;

- young people under 18; or
- recruited as being unemployed;

in which case, they will pay £1.83 a week and be classed as grade-2 members.

Members who join on or after 1 March, 2018 will pay £3.16 a week if they opt in to the political fund and £3.15 if they do not, and be classed as grade-1 members, **unless** they are:

- part-time members employed for 20 hours or less;
- young people under 18; or
- recruited as being unemployed;

in which case, they will pay £1.84 a week if they opt in to the political fund and £1.83 if they do not, and be classed as grade-2 members.

Grade-2 members can choose to pay the contribution rate for, and be classed as, grade-1 members.

The above grades are only used for deciding what contributions members should pay and the benefits they may receive

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CECRA12

Rule 45, Clause 2,

Line 4: Delete “£3.05”, insert “£3.15”

Line 5: Delete “£1.78”, insert “£1.83”

Clause will now read:

2 Branch committees will have the power to fix the amount lapsed members (members who joined but later stopped paying contributions) need to pay to rejoin. This amount will be between £3.15 and £10 for grade-1 members and between £1.83 and £5.50 for grade-2 members, except in particular circumstances when we may increase the amount with the approval of the regional committee.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

(Carried)

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL RULE AMENDMENT 14

CECRA14

Rule A3.1

Line 2 Delete “two years” insert “year”

Delete Clause A3.2. Insert new clause:

“2 National conferences will be held every year at a time decided by the Section National Committee. There will be one regional delegate for every 1,500 financial members of the section in each region. Regions shall take steps to ensure the regional delegation properly reflects the balance of the

regional section membership in respect of industry, geographic spread, ethnicity, gender, disability, youth and sexual orientation. Delegates will hold office for one year.”

Clause A3.1 and A3.2 to read:

Rule A3 Section national conferences

1 We will hold a national conference for the members of each section every year. The conferences will report to and advise the Central Executive Council and the union negotiators, and all decisions of the conferences must be approved by the Central Executive Council and Congress. The conferences must not consider any matter Congress is responsible for. The Central Executive Council and Congress may, from time to time, issue guidelines on what matters the conferences can consider.

2 Section national conferences will be held every year at a time and location approved by the Central Executive Council. There will be one regional delegate for every 1,500 financial members of the section in each region. Regions shall take steps to ensure the regional delegation properly reflects the balance of the regional section membership in respect of industry, geographic spread, ethnicity, gender, disability, youth and sexual orientation. Delegates will hold office for one year.

(Carried)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now go on to the CEC Finance Report, and I will call on Tim Roache to move the CEC Report and Annual Accounts and CEC Rule Amendment 14.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Strewth! I’m up here more than Kevin Flanagan today! I couldn’t resist, brother. I’m not as good. Now I know I’m not as good!

I am speaking on the Accounts and the CEC’s financial proposals. Colleagues, no questions have been received on the Accounts, so I will move to the adoption of those Accounts. Then I will introduce the financial proposals and move CEC Rule Amendment 14 on Sectional Conferences.

You will find the 2017 Accounts in the document entitled *Financial Statements*. I am pleased to report that the union has, once again, returned a surplus by holding true to our strong principle of not spending more than we earn in contributions from members. With every year that passes it becomes harder to remember how bad our finances were when we did not achieve that. But we must never forget those days. I am grateful to regions and all those who take part in our budget-setting process for their continued financial vigilance and discipline.

The growth in the union’s assets has been helped by a strong investment return and this has also led to a further improvement in the union’s pension fund, bringing closer to the day when we can finally eliminate that pensions deficit. I know there are a number of sister unions which would give anything to be in the same position as we

are. Growing investments enable us to invest in the union's infrastructure, but in the world of Trump and Brexit, we cannot afford to be too exposed to volatility in the markets so the trustees, during the past year, have been working on investing in funds which reduce our risk whilst maintaining or improving our returns.

Membership was slightly down on the year, but much of that was down to further tidying-up of our membership lists now that we are finally receiving ehck-off data from Asda.

The fact that income has increased again this year shows that the membership loss was largely a paper-only exercise. I am pleased to report that at the end of May this year, membership in the GMB has increased in 2018 by more than 3,000, thus wiping out all the losses of last year's figures. So we are strong financially, which is essential if we are to be able to face the challenges ahead for our members. Our costs are kept under tight control but they are, of course, subject to inflation. That's why Congress policy has long been linked to contributions to RPI. The CEC is this year, again, able to propose an increased link not to RPI but to the lower measure of CPI. The CEC spent time this year reviewing our way of setting contributions compared with other systems in other unions and looking at the impact of casualisation. We concluded that the grade 1 and grade 2 rates, supplemented by a special promotional rate for specific circumstances, remains the best system for the GMB well understood by members and subject to annual Congress control.

The CEC also considered an LRD report, which includes a summary of other unions' rates. If you have a look at it, please do. It is on your desks. You will see that. Compared with other unions, GMB members get pretty good value for money. We are also proposing to change some of the expenses rates for lay member activists. The mileage rate for members using their own vehicles on union business will be raised by 5p to 40p a mile. This will apply to everyone, not only where there is no public transport alternative. The loss-of-earnings rate needs to be reviewed, not least because the full-day rate was less than our £10-an-hour minimum. So we want to increase this to £80.

There is one final change which is not in the paper but which was agreed by the CEC on Saturday, and you heard me speak about it earlier. It will add cost, but I think it is essential that the CEC seek the improvement of sectional conferences. Most of you will have been at sectional conferences on Sunday. These biennial conferences were incorporated into Congress week some years ago as a necessary cost-saving measure. I do not think that that is sustainable any more. We have an annual Congress and that is never going to change under my watch. We, quite rightly, have developed an annual Women's Conference, an annual Equalities Conference, an annual Retired Members' Conference and a Young Members' Summit, all of which I am immensely proud of and have played a significant part in achieving. But to have national industrial and bargaining strategies decided at conferences, which are at best a side show to Annual Congress, is no longer acceptable. I am proposing that sectional conferences meet separately from annual Congress to allow much better focus on our members' world at work and also to encourage broader participation from members across all sectors of the economy. Colleagues, we want the sectional conferences to meet annually, at a time and a place agreed by the CEC. The framework for this is in CEC Rule Amendment 14, which I urge you, please, to support.

Congress, please accept the CEC financial proposals and rule changes, including the increase of 10p to grade 1 contributions and 5p to grade 2. Please adopt the Annual Accounts, and please support Rule Amendment 14 on annual sectional conferences. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tim. If regions wish to put a speaker in, can they come down to the front, please. We will start with Birmingham & West Midlands. *(No response)* London?

EVELYN MARTIN (London): Congress, I am speaking in support of the Finance Report. We are pleased to see the mileage rate for lay members using their own car increased to 40 pence per mile.

Rising contributions for members has not been a popular move in our region. However, we also understand and accept why this is required in order to continue to invest in front-line services, a resource that will help to defend our members against this Tory attack, which this Tory Government continually tries to force on our members. We support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Evelyn. Midland & East Coast Region?

CAROL CLARKSON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am speaking in support of the Financial Report. Vice President and delegates, every year we vote on whether we have a small increase in union contributions. Then the scaremongering starts. "Oh, my members won't be able to afford it", "We'll lose members", and so on. Well, I'm sorry because the figures prove that we don't lose members when we have a small increase. Most of our members can't afford not to be in a union. The 10p a week will not get you a wee in a train station, because that costs 20p. I don't think that anyone will vote against the 40p a mile or the £80 loss of earnings. So let's be realistic. Our union is growing and modernising. We need to finance that, so please support. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Carol. Northern Region? *(No speaker)* North West & Irish Region? *(No speaker)* GMB Scotland?

JOHN DOLAN (GMB Scotland): We support.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Southern Region? *(No speaker)* GMB Wales & South West Region?

SARAH ALLEN (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I am responding to the CEC finance proposals on behalf of Wales & South West Region. I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Vice President and delegates, this Congress is no different from any other in that the decision as to whether or not to increase contribution rates, and if so by how much, is one of the most challenging and responsible decisions that we will be making this week. Obviously, union contribution costs are similar to any other charges that we have to pay for our consumption of other goods and services in the course of our daily lives. We would

prefer for them to remain static and never increase again. However, this is neither realistic or achievable.

Several motions were submitted to last year's Congress proposing changes to our contribution structures and arrangements, and the Finance & General Purposes Committee was asked to carry out a thorough feasibility study to ensure that the GMB continues to be sufficiently affordable and cost competitive. In the intervening year it has critically evaluated the thoughts and suggestions put forward and responded with rational explanations as to why each of those is not appropriate or viable. This year's paper, in the view of my region, is both reasonable and well balanced in terms of the proposed scale of increase and the up-rating of mileage and loss-of-earning payments. It recognises not only the need for the union to generate enough revenue to pay for member services but also for the need of our valued representatives to be fairly reimbursed for the vital work that they undertake on behalf of our members.

Congress, we have said this many times since Newcastle in 2005, but it cannot be devalued by repetition. We have to cover our expenditure from income subscription otherwise we will become entrapped in a spiral of drawing down upon our investment base in order to meet the shortfall. Operating losses cannot be sustained for any length of time and it is of paramount importance that we continue to live within our means. Although we must always ensure that our contribution rates never reach a level where membership of our great union is priced outside of the reach of those who need our advice and support. We have to be very clear with one another that our ability to deliver on the promises that we make to our members depends on our success in delivering to our budgets. We must always have sufficient treasury to fund the incredible amount of servicing, organising, representation and campaigning that we undertake each and every year. This is a very fair and thorough Report that reflects the disciplined approach that we have to take to the funding of our union. Our experience has firmly taught us that our future destiny lies firmly in our own hands, and that the survival and growth does not come from mergers or by managing decline, but by developing the GMB —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Sarah, can you wind up, please?

SARAH ALLEN: Congress, GMB Wales and South West fully support this report.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region.

BRIAN GOLDING (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Vice President and Congress, I am speaking on the financial proposals. Being here as delegates this week brings with it no greater responsibility than being custodians of the business-end of our union. All the great campaigns we run, the disputes we lead and the activities we engage in are built on a strong foundation of financial stability. Balancing our books protects our ability to protect our members. We must always have regard to the cost of membership to ensure that joining the GMB is never beyond a worker's reach. We believe that this report achieves that. Our subs are reasonable and competitive. Our duty is to ensure that they stay that way. We have two main rates: full-time and part-time, and the position is clear. We have reduced rates for the sick and unemployed and free for life-time retired is right and proper. Let's keep our finances solvent and

our joining fees clear and affordable. Yorkshire Region supports this report.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now go to the vote. All those in favour to adopt the Annual Accounts, please show? Any against? That is carried.

The Annual Accounts were ADOPTED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Do you agree the CEC financial proposals? All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

The CEC financial proposals were CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Do you agree to CEC Rule Amendment 14 on the Annual Sectional Conferences? Please show? Any against? That is carried.

Rule Amendment 14 was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: UNION BENEFITS & SERVICES

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now go to Union Organisation: Union Benefits & Services. Could I ask for the movers and seconders of Composite 6, Composite 8 and Motion 78 to come to the front, please.

APPLICATION FOR TAX RELIEF ON GMB MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS COMPOSITE 6

(Covering motions 67 and 68)

67 — TAX RELIEF FOR GMB CONTRIBUTIONS — London Region

68 — TAX RELIEF ON GMB MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS — London Region

APPLICATION FOR TAX RELIEF ON GMB MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

This Conference notes that some Trade Unions in the public sector have arrangements with HMRC which allows them to define themselves as a professional organisation which allows their members to claim tax relief on all or part of their union subscriptions. This can place the GMB at a disadvantage when recruiting new members or retaining members.

This Conference therefore calls on the CEC to examine whether the GMB can apply to HMRC to be classed as a professional organisation to allow members' to claim tax relief on their contributions or enter into similar arrangements with HMRC in relation to our membership subscriptions.

(Carried)

SANDRA SMITH (London): Congress, I move Composite 6 on applying for tax relief on GMB Membership contributions. I am a second-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, GMB has many low-paid members who have not

had a pay increase or a working-reduced, non-guaranteed hours. Many of these low—paid members have to use food banks to make ends meet for essential items as they face increased living and energy costs. This composite is asking GMB to support our members in any way they can to cushion the blow of increased union contributions and to stop our members leaving the union. We should work with HMRC to get our union subs tax deductible. After all, this has been our union policy since it was agreed at Congress 2013, and also carried at Congress last year.

Union membership fees are exclusively for the purpose of work and ensure that the workplace is a safer place to work and better paid than non-unionised workplaces. Colleagues, this is an equality issue as professionals can have their subscription fees deducted against their tax. We should not be restricting tax allowances to professionals. We are professionals. We understand that this project has begun and that changes in HMRC registration and processes take time but we need to speed this system up so that we can retain our members.

The Composite also makes reference to this as an aid to recruitment. I went to a fringe meeting yesterday on the recruitment of young workers and phone calls for old. I have witnessed for too long the decline of the collective power and influence of working people in our trade union and labour Movements. We must use every tool we can to recruit and develop new members, especially the young. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sandra. Seconder?

WENDY REIS (London): Vice President and Congress, I second Composite 6: Applying for Tax Relief on GMB membership contributions. This Congress notes that that some trade unions in the public sector have arrangements with HMRC which allows them to define themselves as professional organisations. This, in turn, allows these members to claim tax relief on all or part of their union subscriptions.

On the HMRC website there is a list of organisations that can claim. UNISON is on this list and advertises the fact, although they do not specify that this arrangement only covers the healthcare sector. With the current state of the NHS, surely, it would be beneficial for the GMB to have the same arrangements with HMRC, even if only for the healthcare sector. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Wendy. I call Composite 8.

GMB CREDIT UNION COMPOSITE 8

(Covering Motions 75, 76 and 77)

75 — INVESTIGATE MAINSTREAMING THE GMB CREDIT UNION — London Region

76 — GMB CREDIT UNION — Midland & East Coast Region

77 — GMB CREDIT UNION — Midland & East Coast Region

GMB CREDIT UNION

This Conference instructs the CEC to promote the GMB Credit Union via National and Regional websites as an ethical alternative to Wonga.

This Conference directs the CEC to:

- (i) Investigate and determine further ways and means to mainstream the GMB Credit Union in the daily lives of our overall union membership
- (ii) Duly promote the GMB Credit Union on the national GMB website and all regional websites.
- (iii) To seek practical steps, in negotiation with the Credit Union to increase the net disposable income of our members i.e. by redesigning and reconfiguring the GMB membership card as a Debit card to be seen and be relevant in our members' daily lives as residents and consumers outside the workplace.

(Referred)

BEN COOK (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Composite 8: GMB Credit Union. Vice President, Congress, the GMB Credit Union is a fantastic benefit to our members. It provides affordable, financial support to our members and our members' families who have been financially decimated under this discriminatory Tory Government, myself included. The reason why it is important to me is that, as a young dad when I was in my 20s on a low income, in order to live independently, to buy a car and to provide for my son, I have had to take out loans. I have credit cards with bad interest rates. The debt is still something I am paying off, and it has had a knock-on effect on my life. The GMB Credit Union offers a fair and ethical alternative to the likes of WONGA with its extortionate interest rates. I tell my members how the GMB Credit Union has helped me. To get the message across to all nine regions, I want you to tell all of your members how it can benefit them and their families, and tell them that GMB really is on our side. Please go to stand 11 and speak to David and Tony, and if we push the Credit Union it will grow and, potentially, being able to provide affordable mortgages to our members. Can you imagine the difference that will make to our members? Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you Ben. Secunder?

VAUGHAN THOMAS (London): Congress, I second Composite 8 — Investigate Mainstreaming the GMB Credit Union. Vice President and Congress, this motion is about mainstreaming the GMB Credit Union with the overall union membership, not just providing information to newly-recruited members. I do not want to repeat all the reasons for joining the Credit Union — there are many — but there is one coming down the road which will have a major impact on many of our members who are in receipt of a low income and dependent on Housing Benefit and tax credits. That is the implementation of Universal Credit, not that I see Universal Credit as a positive selling feature. The reality for thousands has been huge delays in processing new claims for this benefit. This is extremely bad news for those relying on in-work benefits and tax credits, particularly for those in the private-rented sector.

The positive, though, for all those members on low incomes who joined the Credit Union is the possibility of some measure of financial stability, which is by having

access to low-interest loans to iron out those financial blips, blips that can be disastrous if you are in the private-rented sector and you breach your tenancy agreement.

There are, of course, a multitude of other financial blips when you are on a low income and they can be as mundane as getting the kids new shoes for school. I am sorry to say that financial blips are mainstream for many of our existing members, let alone any new members. Universal Credit is not the only or main reason to be in a credit union, but if you are on a low income currently getting Housing Benefit and/or tax credits, the odds are that there is a financial blip coming your way. Prepare for it! Get yourself into the Credit Union. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. I call Motion 78.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS MOTION 78

78. MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

This Conference calls for the GMB to widen the members benefits available by looking to offer a greater range of discounted offers on presentation of the GMB union card, to help recruit and retain members and be of more direct appeal to younger people who already use sites like Groupon.

CARDIFF & DISTRICT BRANCH Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

MARIE McDONALD (GMB Wales & South West): Congress and delegates, I move Motion 78: Membership Benefits. Everyone here would accept that the core purpose of the GMB is to provide all necessary industrial advice, support and representation at the workplace. The premium attached to being a member of our union clearly shows itself in terms of better wages, holiday entitlement, sick pay, enhanced health and safety, training opportunities and many other advantages that derive from being organised at the workplace and able to collectively bargain with the employer. However, membership benefits available within all unions are not restricted to matters of an industrial or legal nature. In recent times unions have been intent upon giving members more for their subscription rates by way of providing them and their families with an increasingly wide range of benefits and services.

If you look around you will see features, negotiated offers, discounts and rewards on products from recognised items such as finance, health, home and IT to lifestyle and travel. Special rates on motor and home insurance, mortgages, independent financial advice and even job-finding services are all available. Arrangements have been made with numerous partners who have strong market reputations, and these type of benefits are becoming more and more common and popular.

Congress, the GMB's priority has always been to offer strong protection at work at both the individual and collective level. However, members also expect more from their contributions and there is an increasing interest in accessing enhanced

membership benefits. Whilst we offer car insurance with Liverpool Victoria, competitive domestic energy deals through Union Energy, home insurance through UIA, a dental plan and family protection insurance cover, benefits do appear to vary from region to region. There is room for improvement in the way that some of these benefits are being advertised and promoted. Obviously, those types of discounts and deals are never reason enough to join the GMB, but they are an important added bonus of membership. Whilst many unions use the same provider and can offer very similar benefits, there are variations between them and some are, clearly, more enticing than others.

The GMB can save its members money in many areas and every last penny counts in these austere times in which we live. It is always good when you can make your money go a bit further so let's ensure that our members can taken advantage of as many exclusive offers and discounts as possible. The market for union membership can be very competitive so it is important that we offer the best possible deals to our members.

Congress, agrees, therefore, that a review of our current facilities should take place in order to ensure GMB is able to provide the best possible access to members. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Marie. Secunder?

CAROLE ESTABANEZ (GMB Wales & South West): Vice President and Congress, I second Motion 78: Membership Benefits. The mover has clearly indicated ways of how we can make the GMB even more attractive to both existing and potential members by providing benefits on top of the more familiar services that are available to all members and how useful a tool for recruitment and retention they are. We need to attract the attention of today's youth. Mobile companies have given first options on tickets when concerts or festivals were announced. This would have the potential to increase recruitment amongst our younger workers. At a time when organisations are themselves are struggling for survival, I am sure the retailers and other organisations would buy into a scheme that would give them the edge on their competitors. We ask Congress to explore all areas that will be of benefit to our members, thus having the possibility to increase membership at the same time.

Members often think, and rightly so, of their joining the GMB as a form of insurance, and that still stands, but it is important we stress the core reasons, which are the protection and education of our members. These functions will never diminish but we need to be more focused and have a flexible approach to our member needs.

Colleagues, this motion is not a criticism of the services that the GMB provide, but a chance for a reality check on what effects austerity cuts are having. We need to evaluate what we have and what scope there is to relieve the pressure on members' terms. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on Shailesh Gaglani of the CEC and London Region to respond to the motions.

SHAILESH GAGLANI (CEC, Manufacturing): Vice President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, replying on Composite 6, covering Motions 67 and 68; and Composite 8, covering Motions 75, 76 and 77.

Congress, Composite 6 calls for the GMB to register with HMRC so that membership contributions are tax deductible. Our policy is that all union workers' contributions should be tax deductible. The present law discriminates against manual workers by giving tax breaks to professionals only. However, we are already working to get on the register as some other unions have. The CEC's qualification is that it is unlikely that we will be able to get all of our members on to the register, as we have been turned down in the past. For example, UNISON is only registered for the professional healthcare grades. Even then, only a part of their subs are tax deductible.

The CEC also points out that in the professional grades GMB contributions are lower than UNISON's, even after the tax deduction.

Composite 8 concerns the GMB Credit Union. The CEC, this year, received a financial report which allowed us to start promoting the Credit Union nationally, so GMB members across the country will now be able to take part in this exciting venture. The CEC is asking for reference so we can investigate some of the ideas in the composite, such as adopting the membership card.

Congress, please support Composite 6 with the qualification and, please, refer Composite 8. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shailesh. I now go to the vote. Does London accept the qualification on Composite 6? (*Agreed*) All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Composite 6 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Do Midland & East Coast and London Regions accept the reference back on Composite 8? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Composite 8 was REFERRED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 78 is supported. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 78 was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: UNIONLINE

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now go to the Union Organisation: Unionline. Can I ask for the movers and seconders of Composite 7 and Motions 71 and 72 to come to the front, please. Composite 7 to the rostrum.

PROMOTION OF UNIONLINE COMPOSITE 7

(Covering Motions 69 and 70)

69 — UNIONLINE — London Region

70 — PROMOTION OF UNIONLINE — London Region

PROMOTION OF UNIONLINE

This Conference congratulates and thanks all the staff at UNIONLINE and our panel solicitors for providing the most exclusive and easily available legal service in the Trade Union Movement.

Conference also notes the excellent work done by our National Legal Officer, Maria Ludkin and the Senior Management Team who has steered the dream of our Union and our members controlling a comprehensive framework of legal support for the members when they need it, into reality.

Conference further recalls that GMB members' contributions amounting to millions of pounds per year used to end up in the partner dividends of many of the legal firms we used to use.

This Conference is concerned that not enough promotion of UNIONLINE our own legal service is being undertaken.

Conference agrees that the GMB should promote the work that UNIONLINE does and that every branch should receive a quarterly bulletin from UNIONLINE showing amongst other things the total number of individual members' queries that are dealt with, the number of claims being actioned and highlighting successful cases where consent is given by the member. This would ensure all GMB branches had identical and up to date information on the UNIONLINE service.

Conference further reminds post holders from Workplace and Branch Officers to Regional, National and General Secretary that it is vital that no undermining of UNIONLINE takes place in furtherance of passing our Union's assets and services to other legal firms whose business is to reap profits from our members' cases as they have done in the past.

UNIONLINE may continue to allocate work to National and Regional nominated legal firms as determined by the National Legal Department, SMT and the CEC.

Conference agrees the GMB has a strong legal service which should be managed well, constantly improved and should never again be allowed out of our own control and passed to external profit making legal outfits who see our members as money earners.

The use of external legal specialists for campaigns on equal pay or litigation against rogue employers is sometimes required and for the GMB to retain its ability to fund these expensive legal challenges it must retain control of its core legal service through UNIONLINE.

Conference also welcomes an annual statement on the business plan and market value of UNIONLINE. Conference further instructs the GMB management board members to deal with any failure of service, improve delivery and develop new services for the membership. Conference is proud to have a legal service we can devote to our members unlike other unions who are at the mercy of the legal markets and those who have made profits of millions on our backs.

(Carried)

ELIZABETH HUGHES (London): Congress, I am proud to be moving Composite 7 on Unionline. Vice President and delegates, in moving this composite, please ask yourselves this question: Where else in the trade union Movement can members access a legal service and advice as easily as through our own GMB legal firm—Unionline? There is nowhere else.

I ask Congress: Do you want to go back to the days where reps have to pass files to branch secretaries, branch secretaries sending the files to officers, officers sending them to legal officers and legal officers then sending them onwards to panel firms, all within strict and tight deadlines to ensure that limitation is not missed? No, I don't think anybody wants to go back to that. How would this better help our members when what they need is somebody at the end of a phone to give them reassurance or to advise if they do have an employment-law claim? It won't.

Today, in the real world, independent law firms up and down the UK are closing or they are being swallowed up by larger, predatory firms, but our GMB law firm, Unionline, keeps going from strength to strength, working for all members.

When Unionline was set up, there were a number of naysayers from within our union who said that it would not work. Instead of acknowledging and promoting the positives and the very good work of Unionline, they have been needlessly critical and continue to know those responsible for setting it up. Those same knockers don't have any suggestions for anything better that could replace Unionline. Perhaps they would rather see the continuation of the practice where partners in the trade union panel firms profit personally rather than support Unionline, all of whose activities directly support and benefit our members.

Can the legal services we provide improve? Yes, of course, they can. Could the monthly Unionline newsletters contain more information? Of course they could. Could individual branches receive regular bulletins and reports outlining the cases of branches members? Of course this could happen, if we asked for it, and if we worked for it because, colleagues, we are an open and transparent organisation. Let's have sight of the business plan and tell us the value of our law firm. Is this too much to ask? I don't think so. I am sure that all of us here in Brighton this week will welcome any commitment to improve the marketing strategies of Unionline. But let's not forget that we already have a management board in place, all of whom signed up to take on the responsibility to ensure that Unionline works. Let's make sure they do.

I also want to ask that a bit more recognition is afforded to our previous legal executive officer, Maria Ludkin, who not only set up Unionline but who continuously

promoted the GMB in many of our many very successful campaigns, including Uber, Hermes, Addison Lee, the despot blacklisting companies and many more. If you are watching, Maria, thank you!

Finally, comrades, the banner outside this Congress Hall, proudly says: “GMB Union. Join now for protection, support and advice”. Let’s keep our law firm working for our members. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elizabeth. Seconder?

FEVZI HUSSEIN (London): Congress, I rise to second the composite on Unionline. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Union line is the way forward for trade unions. As the composite rightly points out, why be at the mercy of other law firms who charge thousands of pounds? No offence meant to our GMB lawyers in the hall. In March 2014 Union went live after the GMB and my employer, the CWU, went into partnership. Since then millions of pounds in compensation has been won for GMB members. Other trade unions are now seeing the value of this initiative, which was set up as a trade union law firm, so much so that they are coming to seek the services of our trade union law firm. Unionline, officially, launched exactly four years ago this week at GMB Congress 2014. It started with 27 members of staff and today Unionline has more than 90 staff members, and they are all represented by the GMB.

In fact, one of their former employment lawyers, I believe, now works for the GMB Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region as an organiser. Unionline has also opened Unionline Scotland, which has office space in the GMB offices in Glasgow. Unionline is a not-for-profit trade union-owned model and it has attracted other trade unions and surprised them with a legal service as a panel firm to their members, too. I will not go into the list of law firms. Basically, there are a lot of other initiatives that Unionline gets involved with as well. Only last month Unionline played a major role in an important aid convoy, interestingly, to Moldova for our sister trade union’s, the CWU, in-house charity CWU Humanitarian Trust. A children’s orphanage in Moldova was provided with lots of aid —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Put the motion, Fevzi, please.

FEVZI HUSSEIN: Okay, Chair. We second the motion. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, very much.

HELEN O’CONNOR (Southern): President, I wish to move an amendment to Composite 7.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, if you want to.

HELEN O’CONNOR (Southern): Thank you, Congress and President. I move, in speaking for the Southern Region, an amendment to Composite 7. Paragraphs 6, 7 and 11 of Composite 7 suggest that issues relating to (a) the choice of panel firms; (b) allocation of work to Unionline and panel firms and (c) quality of legal services

should be taken centrally by the National Legal Department, the SMT and CEC. We are seeking an amendment to the motion to be extended at the discretion, regarding choice of panel firms, allocation of work to Unionline and panel firms and issues relating to the quality and regulation of legal services should all remain matters of discretion for the relevant regional secretary. That is to say, they should stay in the region.

This is especially important for us in the Southern Region for all of our employment work, complex personal injury work and regulatory work, as done by our excellent and cost-effective trade union panel firms. Please support the amendment to this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

DAVID McMULLEN (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Vice President and Congress, I would like to speak in support of the proposed amendment to Composite 7. Whilst I applaud Unionline and the good work that it does, I note that Unionline is not just GMB's law firm. It is also the CWU's law firm and I understand that Unionline also acts for one other union and is probably looking for other clients. To protect GMB members, therefore, it is important that overall control of legal services rests with the regions. Under rule, all legal assistance is at the discretion of the regional secretary and this should be maintained in the fullest sense for the benefit of members. Please support the amendment. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, before we go on, I am going to ask you if you accept the amendment. If you do accept the amendment, it would come in line with the common factors. So all those in favour to accept the amendment, please show? Any against? Then the amendments will be put in and spoken about.

The amendments to Composite 7 were CARRIED. (The amendments were subsequently WITHDRAWN by Southern Region – see SOC Report No.5)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 71.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE MOTION 71

71. LEGAL ASSISTANCE

This Conference has considered the good work of the GMB legal assistance partner UNIONLINE and the overall legal assistance our members have access to. Whilst the legal assistance our members can access is not in question, we are deeply concerned about the problems members of our union face who do not speak fluent English or have a clear knowledge and understanding of the British legal system.

Our concerns are that the above described members do not know how to fully express themselves as clearly as a native speaking UK resident and/or answer the questions put by UNIONLINE at the initial stages of raising a complaint.

Furthermore, it is felt that unless there is a trained English speaking person with a member who has a poor grasp of English then the complaint being brought to UNIONLINE might fall as the dialogue is not fully understood.

We ask the union to look into and explore a way to encourage greater success in promoting UNIONLINE to non-English speaking members and for a survey of the initial complaints from non-English speaking members that result in a successful outcome in comparison to English speaking members. We ask this to assist with the problems outlined above which non-English speaking members face when accessing legal assistance.

CENTRAL WEMBLEY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

ROHIT RUPARELIA (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I move Motion 71 on Legal Assistance.

When organising workers who do not have English as their first language, our union has successfully promoted the benefits of GMB membership in the main due to leaflets in the membership form which has been translated into different languages. This is a tried and tested tool and it works. But there are more than 300 different languages spoken in the United Kingdom. We must consider that. Approximately 13% of our total population was born abroad. It makes absolute sense for our members who want to access law firms to access Unionline, they should be accommodated and, more importantly, understood. If we cannot provide our members who are unable to speak English fluently, then how are we able to prescribe ourselves to being an all-inclusive trade union. At our branch, we receive reports from our friends in Unionline who ask our regions if we have any officers, for a start, who can translate into different languages. We are aware that the GMB has built a database of languages spoken by the employees of the union, but has this information been shared with Unionline? I suspect not.

Be assured that the motion is not calling for Unionline to have fluent speakers in all the languages affecting our union. However, Unionline having access to interpreters internally and externally may be a solution. This motion, in part, calls for a survey. If the Congress passes this motion, it is of the utmost importance that any surveys fully reflect our membership. This includes reaching out for the members whose principal language is not English. The survey also considers social statistics, populations and communities which we want to communicate with, but our terms of reference must reflect this. If we choose not to do so, then we take the undertaking of the major survey only to receive appropriate information. How can this be helpful or of any use? Congress, others have mentioned that we should work very hard for our Unionline, and it has made many provisions since its launch in 2014. Let's applaud the fantastic work that our Unionline staff — solicitors and advisers — and ask them to go a little extra mile to ensure that non-English speaking members are never failed upon the basis of different languages spoken. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rohit. Secunder?

JAICUCLAL DARCI (London): Congress, this Conference has considered the good work of the GMB legal assistance partner UNIONLINE and the overall legal assistance our members have access to. Whilst the legal assistance our members can access is not in question, we are deeply concerned about the problems members of our union face who do not speak fluent English or have a clear knowledge and understanding of the British legal system.

Our concerns are that the above described members do not know how to fully express themselves as clearly as a native speaking UK resident and/or answer the questions put by UNIONLINE at the initial stages of raising a complaint.

Furthermore, it is felt that unless there is a trained English speaking person with a member who has a poor grasp of English, then the complaint being brought to UNIONLINE might fail as the dialogue is not fully understood.

We ask the union to look into and explore a way to encourage greater success in promoting UNIONLINE to non-English speak members and for a survey of the initial complaints from non-English speaking members that result in a successful outcome in comparison to English speaking members. We ask this to assist with the problems outlined above which non-English speaking members face when accessing legal assistance. Congress, support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. I call Motion 72.

REGIONAL TALENT POOL LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS MOTION 72

72. REGIONAL TALENT POOL LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

This Conference, over the decades the United Kingdom has employed people from all over the world. Taking into account the trade union also has members from different nationalities and vast amount of these members don't have English as their first language.

We recognise the cost implications but believe the investment and benefits for the future of obtaining and retaining the membership outweighs this.

Therefore, Congress is asked to consider a recruitment process where each region will identify and employ interpreters that can speak to members where reps are unable/struggling to understand the full issue and requirement of the member due to language barriers.

This can be considered as a voluntary or paid basis. There are hundreds of GMB members with dual or multiple languages that can sign up to the scheme.

LEEDS LOCAL GOVT STAFF BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

HASHIM EQUIANO (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 72. Imagine emigrating to a new country. In some cases, this can't be easy, especially when there may be a language barrier. It is true that a lot of people leave their country of origin due to persecution. When someone of a different nationality obtains a job for a better lifestyle, they would or may seek to join a trade union for security. When a member contacts a trade union by the telephone, they want to ensure that the person on the other end fully understands what they are saying without any misinterpretation regarding their issue. Unfortunately, we live in the real world, and this is not always the case. I, personally, have encountered this situation when working for the GMB. I find it frustrating having to ask a member to repeat themselves. Sometimes the caller feels that they are not getting through clearly enough to the person on the other end, and in frustration they just say, "It doesn't matter" and put the phone down. Not able to give a member your full support is disheartening. But what if the GMB had a regional talent pool of language interpreters where calls could be diverted to? These members, in privacy, could speak to the caller where there are language barriers. Congress must agree that to speak to someone who understands that member fluently and their problems, gives them peace of mind. It gives them not only peace of mind but the assurance that their issues can be dealt with accurately.

Yes, we know that members who are identified to take on this responsibility need to be trained in confidentiality, but I am not asking for regional interpreters to take on a case but to act as a standby, when needed, to support reps who are dealing with a query. Asking for volunteers to take on this role will not cost the GMB, but look at the benefits that a regional talent pool of language interpreters will have. It will attract membership from the regions, foreign nationals and their families, getting the correct details regarding the member's query and able to divert the members to ensure they receive the right information, retention of membership and also putting the GMB on a pedestal to outside unions. What could be a better advertising platform for the GMB when members and potential members know about the GMB providing services for all?

As a GMB rep supporting all membership gives me a sense of pride and achievement. For someone to say "Thank you" for your help, even in a different language, puts a smile on my face, and I am sure it would on yours. Like I said, retention of our membership is also a key factor to keep the GMB going. Why would anybody want to leave a union when they know that they are getting help and support, regardless of where they may be? As a GMB member, I expect someone out *there* to deal with my issue. If I am a member and I am not able to speak good English and I get the exact support I need, what do I do next? I would encourage family, friends and colleagues to join. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hashim. Secunder?

GARY WILSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, our union should be proud of our inclusivity but there is always more to do. We have members from many different countries speaking many different languages, but most of us cannot communicate with these members in their preferred language. Many of our friends,

neighbours and colleagues whose first language is not English. We should not assume that speaking about emotional or stressful workplace issues in English is even acceptable in meeting our members' needs. Can complicated workplace issues, policies or laws be communicated effectively to a person whose second or third language is the one we are using? Can a member speak about the sensitive issues comfortably in a language that is not their first? Why do we insist that people communicate to us in English if that is not a person's first language? Imagine having a reputation for the union that, no matter what language you speak, GMB is there for you! Imagine what a union that can fully understand your needs and your issues and a union that can communicate with you in your preferred language would do for recruitment and retention. GMB should pride itself on its pro-active attitude towards equality. Let us, again, pride ourselves in eradicating the language barrier by having interpreters on hand. I, therefore, second Motion 72 and ask Congress for its full support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. I now call on Sue Harris, our National Legal Director, to respond on the motions. Sue.

SUE HARRIS (National Legal Director): Vice President and Congress, I am responding on behalf of the CEC in respect of Composite 7, Motion 71 and Motion 72. I am a first-time speaker, as you know. *(Applause)*

Congress, the CEC is asking for Composite 7, Motion 71 and 72 to be supported with the qualifications that I am going to take about in a moment. As many of you know, I have worked with the GMB for many years. I vaguely remember a time when Tim had less lines on his forehead, and I certainly had less chins. I was thinking, when we were doing the gig economy workshop the other day, that it was about 27 years ago that a rather fresh-faced new officer walked into the law firm that I worked for and suggested to me that he needed to look at some action for women who he was recruiting in the Leicester hosiery industry because they were classed as being self-employed but he was bloody adamant that they were proper employees of the company that he took the view was exploiting them. Together we ran some of the first litigation on the issue of what we are now calling the gig economy 25 or 26 years ago. What changes, really? Well, apart from your lines, Tim, and my chins, I guess.

I started in this role on 12th March 2018, and one of the first tasks that I was given by the General Secretary was to look at Unionline. Did I really want Unionline to be great, given where I had come from? Honestly, Congress, I was sceptical about what I was going to find in terms of Unionline, its set-up and the work that it was doing. But I had been to Sheffield on numerous occasions, and I am really, really amazed, in some ways, but pleased to tell you that you have assembled an absolutely fantastic group of people in Sheffield who are doing a really good job, in my view. I think you should be immensely proud that you have a unique thing in our Movement. *(Applause)* You have a trade union-owned law firm. Let me say that again. You have something unique. You have a trade union-owned law firm, not for shareholders, not for partners' profits but to deliver a service to members. That is what, obviously, as Legal Director, I want us to continue to do.

You have heard some stats from the speakers over the four years that Unionline has been in existence. They have dealt with something like 34,000 personal injuries

enquiries, some 15,000 employment law matters with nearly £16 million won in compensation for your members. Like any young business, we are learning as we go along and there are clearly plenty of things that we could do better. We need to build understanding and support about Unionline, what Unionline does and what Unionline is across the branches and GMB workplaces. Frankly, we need to better market the service of Unionline to our members.

In response to Motion 71 in particular, can I just say, Congress, that we do produce leaflets in a variety of languages within Unionline to try and promote Unionline's services to those where English is not their first language. We also have an internal directory within Unionline which sets out the number of languages that members of staff within Unionline speak so that if there is an issue in terms of somebody phoning through, where English is not their first language and they would like to speak with somebody in their own tongue, then that is, hopefully, a possibility in terms of the languages that are spoken by our staff. Also we have a situation where, if they would like to nominate somebody to speak on their behalf — say, a family member or a friend — then that is equally possible. I know whilst I have been standing on the Unionline stall today a comrade came and spoke about members in general sometimes having difficulty speaking to lawyers or being concerned about speaking to lawyers, and saying that was a barrier to them getting legal assistance. If somebody is concerned about speaking to us, as long as they are there for them to give permission for the solicitor to speak to the nominated person, then that can happen. That is something we can deal with.

Having said that, as I said to you, there is a need for us to be better in terms of the services that we provide, and in particular in terms of marketing the services that we provide to members. I can report to Congress that this week we have launched a survey which is going out to the membership, either by email or by telephone call, so that we can gauge what the awareness of Unionline is, what your members know about it and the services that we provide. Do they know that it is owned by the GMB, and what services would they like to see your union firm actually provide? Once I have got that survey information together, then I will be in a better position, I think, to look at a marketing strategy. I am very clear that the website needs a major overhaul, and that is on track. The communications team tells me that we need something called "Live chat". I am not absolutely convinced that I understand what that is, but none the less we will get there.

We need to make sure that our members are using Unionline and not taking their cases to high street firms of solicitors, that they are not being exploited and losing part of their compensation and that they need to be coming through to "our firm".

Congress, the CEC supports Composite 7 and Motion 71 with the qualification that we would like to consider the various very practical suggestions that have been made in the motions and report back next year.

In respect of the amendment, which was rushed up a moment ago, obviously, we note the spirit of the amendment and the authority to deal with panel firms. Who is instructed is clearly an issue for the regional secretary and within the gift of the regional secretary.

Motion 72 seeks to increase language and translation resources in the GMB to support the linguistic diversity of our membership. The qualification that the CEC has is that in employing translators direct would be a significant undertaking for each region, given the large number and changing range of languages within our membership. So the CEC is going to ask our Equalities Department to assist regions in preparing literature in the appropriate languages and we will work to expand the pool of volunteers in our membership who already presently provide such a brilliant service to the union and their fellow members.

Congress, please support Composite 7, Motion 71 and Motion 72 with the qualifications that I have given. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thanks for that, Sue. We will now go to the vote. Does London Region accept the qualification on Composite 7? (*Agreed*) All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

Composite 7 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London agree with the qualification on Motion 71? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 71 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire agree the qualification on Motion 72? (*Agreed*) All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 72 was CARRIED.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call the movers and seconders of Motion 156, 161, 165, 166, 168 and 169 to come to the front, please, and the mover of Motion 156 to the rostrum.

INEQUALITY OF SICK PAY MOTION 156

156. INEQUALITY OF SICK PAY

This Conference notes that many workplaces still use a manager's discretionary decision for employees to get sick pay etc. This very often leads to unfair treatment of staff and creates an atmosphere of bullying and animosity amongst staff – if your face doesn't fit and you are not in favour of the manager, you can be subjected to all kinds of detriments.

We call upon this Conference to instruct equality groups to work on a briefing to post holders and organisers to campaign to stop this unfair practice so that

workplaces have a fair and transparent equalities policy which does not allow any so called managers discretion within its policies.

NORWICH GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

VAUGHAN THOMAS (London): Congress, I move Motion 156 – Inequality of Sick Pay. Vice President and delegates, as a union rep I rely on policies and procedures of all those companies and organisations where our members work whenever they need representation. Unfortunately, this does not always result in a positive outcome for our members. I don't come with guarantees, I am afraid. What I do guarantee is that I will do my best for members, even those members who confuse me with Harry Potter and think I can get them off regardless of what they have been up to. The guarantee I am talking about is that our members will be treated fairly, irrespective of outcome, but if they have been up to something they should not, then it is about mitigating those actions and getting the sanctions minimised.

To be treated fairly means being treated consistently according to the organisation's policies and procedures. That said, workplaces can throw up some complex situations, ones that might not have been anticipated. When that happens, I am more than happy to see common sense prevail with managers exercising some measure of discretion. Unfortunately, not all managers are good and some abuse this discretion, making a mockery of our organisation's policies and procedures, and there is evidence of this in respect of sick pay. When one of our members is off sick, it should not be down to a manager whether our member gets sick pay or not. A sick note is as good as a get-out-of-jail-free card as far as I am concerned, and a manager's discretion should not come into it. Any arguments should turn on the organisation's pre-existing sick-pay policy, not on the whim of a manager.

Our members require and demand fair and consistent treatment, equal treatment, in respect of the application of an organisation's sick-pay policy. Anything less is unacceptable. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE CHAIR: Would the seconder come forward, please?

CATHERINE JONES (London): Congress, I second this motion on Inequality in Sick Pay. Delegates, people do not get sick on purpose. People do not have operations on purpose. Disabilities and mental health problems are not a life choice. I know. For many people sick pay for time off when they are ill is paid at the discretion of their manager, especially in cases of long-term illness. Most workplace managers are not qualified as doctors or health professionals, but they are in a position to decide how deserving employees should have the benefit of being granted sick pay. Most companies do not pay employees for their first three days of illness absence. The first three day's waiting period can sometimes apply to lower grades of workers but not managers. This is wrong. We believe that all workplaces should have a proper structure for sick pay. Sick pay policies must be transparent and clear to understand. They should be the same for everybody. Some companies are very good at managing sick health and long-term illnesses, but there is not a clear structure

about this. People who feel that colleagues are unfairly treated need the situation to improve. We call upon this Conference to instruct equality groups to work on a briefing to post holders and organisers to campaign to stop this unfair practice and to campaign to promote the core values of members.

THE VICE CHAIR: Please finish, colleague.

CATHERINE JONES: We need to campaign for manufacturers, retailers and —

THE VICE CHAIR: Please finish.

CATHERINE JONES: I support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE CHAIR: I call on the mover of Motion 161.

**PROPOSAL TO AMEND LEGISLATION IN ORDER TO ENSURE
FAIRNESS IN TREATMENT OF EMPLOYEES DURING ALLEGATIONS
MADE AGAINST THEM
MOTION 161**

**161. PROPOSAL TO AMEND LEGISLATION IN ORDER TO ENSURE
FAIRNESS IN TREATMENT OF EMPLOYEES DURING ALLEGATIONS
MADE AGAINST THEM**

This motion has been prepared in response to the seemingly epidemic levels of situations where employers are suspending their employees without notice, sending them home without any discussion as to the allegation/s against them and not giving the employees concerned any opportunity to respond to the allegations and sometimes dismissing the employee without further discussion, or correspondence.

These practices can often result in traumatic and devastating affects on the employees concerned, which, unfortunately some are unable to deal with and can have serious and long-term effects on their health and safety, wellbeing and esteem and also can be financially devastating. In truth, no one who hasn't gone through such a cruelly isolating and dehumanizing situation can have the slightest idea of the deeply hurtful effects resulting from it.

This motion proposes that it be passed as a breach of Criminal or Employment Law if an employer suspends an employee, and or sends them home without notice and alleges charges of gross misconduct, or misconduct without first ensuring the following takes place;

1. Outlines fully to the employee the exact nature of the allegation/s against them in a reasonable manner and does not unreasonably withhold any information from the employee that may assist them in resolving the allegation/s against them.
2. Gives the employee a reasonable opportunity to respond to such allegations straight away and before taking any further action against them and also to contact their Union, or other representative at that point.

3. Does not enter into, or undertake such a procedure without first ensuring that proper evidence has been produced to give reasonable credence to such allegations and particularly not to act on hearsay, or the allegations of one employee to another.

Furthermore, should the employee be sent home and suspended, it is the employer's duty of care to ensure the employee is regularly updated on where any proceedings are against them and reviewed and supported in terms of their health and well being and to take any steps necessary to ensure, as far as they can, that the employee is receiving the best care possible.

The employer must not take an unreasonably long period of time to conduct any investigations and proceedings against an employee and certainly not leave them to sit at home for excessively long timescales in a completely isolated situation.

N10 BERKSHIRE AND NORTH HANTS Southern Region

(Referred)

MARTHA DE BRUXELLES (Southern): Congress and delegates, Motion 161: Proposal to amend legislation in order to ensure fairness in treatment of employees during allegations made against them. This motion concerns the high level of situations where employers have suspended their employees without notice, sending them home, without any discussions on the allegations against them, and not giving them any opportunity to respond to the allegations and sometimes dismissing the employees without further discussion or correspondence.

On a personal case, when I left Congress, I opened my email and I have a correspondence from a person who I represent in my job. This is a lady who was suspended three months ago — it is not an exaggeration — because someone said something because they saw something. She has no clear idea of the details made against her. She was unable to tell me because she was in such a level of distress. She has not had any pay. The only call she got was from the head teacher who said that he did not have any other choice because the allegation was made directly to the county council. The county council called her one afternoon when she was wandering around the streets. She was told that she needed to go because she was suspended. So now when I go back home on Friday I will investigate the case.

This motion proposes that it be passed as a breach of criminal or employment law if an employer suspends an employee without ensuring the following takes place; first, the employer must outline to the employee the exact nature of the allegation or allegations in a reasonable manner and does not unreasonably withhold any information from the employee that may assist them in resolving the allegation/s against them; secondly, give the employee a reasonable opportunity to respond to such allegations straightaway and before taking any further action against them and also to contact their union, or other representative at that point; thirdly, the employer must not enter into or undertake such a procedure without first ensuring that proper

evidence has been produced to give reasonable credence to such allegations and particularly not to act on hearsay, like the case of the lady I am talking about.

If an employee is sent home, the employer needs to keep the employee up to date to make sure that preventative measures are taken to avoid further incidents and to do a comprehensive health and safety check. Furthermore, the employer must not take unreasonably long periods for the matter to be resolved so that the employee is not left sitting at home wondering what the hell is going on. I ask you to support this motion because by supporting this motion you are supporting our members. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE CHAIR: Do we have a seconder?

JAMIE DENNIS (Southern): Congress, I second Motion 161. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) This motion draws attention to the fact that employers who suspend their employees as a kneejerk reaction to allegations, often without any consideration as to whether there is a case at all. This is despite the fact that the courts have, on several occasions, ruled this behaviour as potentially unlawful and unjust.

Being suspended carries a stigma and can lead to the employee feeling like a pariah, unsupported, isolated and alone. I myself know how it feels to be suspended in such a kneejerk manner. I would in the energy industry and, after a training course, I received a phone call during the weekend asking me not to attend the next training course and, instead, to come in for a meeting with my line manager, who then told me I was suspended. He took my pass away from me and I was escorted off the site by security. The only thing I was told was because I was exhibiting behaviour unbecoming of an EDF employee. Fortunately, I was in the GMB and they backed me up. They made sure that the proper process was followed and I managed to keep my job, even though the station manager was calling for me to be sacked on the spot. Being suspended in this fashion is extremely stressful and could potentially lead to profound, long-lasting mental health issues and, as such, should not be tolerated by us within the GMB. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE CHAIR: Thanks, Jamie. I call Motion 165.

RIGHTS TO APPEAL FROM JOB INTERVIEWS MOTION 165

165. RIGHTS TO APPEAL FROM JOB INTERVIEWS

This Conference notes there is no appeal process following job interviews. Some interviews are preconceived giving the role to a selected individual, however to justify this wrongdoing is to appeal about the process. Unfortunately, this procedure is not part of employment law even if the procedures were discrimination or prejudicial towards the individuals. There is no right of appeal

This Conference calls for the right of appeal to be mandatory.

CAMDEN APEX BRANCH

London Region

(Referred)

PAUL HARRINGTON (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate, a first-time speaker and slightly reluctant, I have to say. *(Applause)* I am moving Motion 165, the Rights to Appeal from a Job Interview. In contrast to many of the motions that we have seen passed at this week's Congress, this one really relates to something much more grassroots for us which we deal with in our workplace day in and day out. I think it is one of the obvious and glaring bits that is missing from our arsenal of weapons that we can use under employment law.

We have all witnessed or experienced nepotism or preferential treatment through the recruitment and interview processes. Although we know it to be unfair, there often is little we can do. So I ask that Congress moves to make appeals to the outcomes of these job interviews and an employment right to make our workplaces more transparent and fair. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE CHAIR: Do we have a seconder for Motion 165. *(Formally seconded)* Thank you. I call Motion 166.

PUT AN END TO HIDING JOB EVALUATION SCORES MOTION 166

166. PUT AN END TO HIDING EVALUATION SCORES

This Conference calls for an end to the hiding of job evaluation scores and the continuous refusal to provide these scores. Without the scores it is impossible to see if a job has been properly evaluated to the level of which is expected of the job. These scores had been available to those involved in the process until so called desk top evaluations came around and now the scores are hiding. If the employer has nothing to hide there should be no problem but time and again we are refused them.

N89 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

The Motion was formally moved and formally seconded.

THE VICE CHAIR: I move on to Motion 168.

WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY MOTION 168

168. WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY

This Conference is requested to campaign for:-

Increased workplace democracy so that existing employees in the public and private sectors have to be:

- (i) genuinely consulted and;
- (ii) be allowed to vote on work related issues affecting them and for that vote to be decisive in determining the development or otherwise of the organisation or company that employs them.

This to establish equal rights for employees (labour) to that of shareholders (capital).

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

VAUGHAN THOMAS (London): Congress, I move Motion 168, Workplace Democracy. This motion does what it says on the tin. For the removal of any doubt and in the interests of clarity, the democracy I am talking about is in respect of employees, not shareholders. It is also not confined to outsourced services and taking utilities back into public ownership. It is for the private sector as much as it is in support of the aforementioned.

Congress has already considered supporting North West & Irish Motion 147: Protection of Workers During Hostile Takeovers. So, hopefully, I am pushing at a door half open already.

Of course, we all support genuine consultation, do we not? It is as if anything but is a truism, but what other sort is there? I cannot be the only one, though, who has been through “consultations” with members who appear anything but genuine and seemed, in reality, just tick-box exercises masquerading as consultations. Genuine consultation, then, is to attribute to some management and shareholders a benign nature that stretches the credulity of our members to breaking point.

Employees, genuinely, need to be listened to. They need to have at least as much power and influence as management and shareholders. They need a vote to be decisive in determining the development or otherwise of the organisation. There really is nothing unclear about this when it is, necessarily, something to be determined collectively. That is amongst employees, not something to be foisted on them by others, usually managers and shareholders.

There is a cruel irony currently going on when the country is run as a democracy but companies and organisations are run as dictatorships that can end your livelihood at the press of a button on some share register. This cannot be right in the 21st century, but we all know that if employers could operate without our members, they would not flinch at pressing that button. There is no doubt that market-operating systems with checks and balances need a radical overhaul. The GMB needs to be integral in shaping how workplaces operate under a future Labour government, giving workers greater say in their future. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE CHAIR: Can we have a seconder to Motion 168?

VIVIEN THOMAS (London): Congress, I second Motion 168: Workplace Democracy. I am hoping the days when capital takes precedence over labour will be a thing of the past under a Labour government. We need to see an end to employees being treated like chattel. Employees need tangible rights over their own destiny in the workplace by a vote in the workplace that management has to listen to and pay heed to. Nothing less will do. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE CHAIR: We can go on to the next motion, 169.

NHS EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES MOTION 169

169. NHS EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

This Conference deplores the current laws that cover the changes and variations in terms of contracts. Resignations for breach of contract is an archaic legal ruling which should be modernised.

We ask for a suitable alternative legal remedy to be designed by the GMB and for this remedy to be put forward and tested where appropriate with the aspiration to be a modern equitable remedy that renders obsolete the current unjust remedy.

EAST & ESSEX NHS BRANCH
London Region

(*Referred*)

DENISE SHILLINGFORD (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I move Motion 169 on NHS Employment Practices on behalf of London Region. We have seen more and more private contractors infiltrating the NHS. The impact of private contractors coming into the NHS workplace means new contracts, new terms and new conditions. You can have a model employee working for 10 to 20 years happily with the stability of his or her initial contract suddenly being told that their contract is to be changed. If the employee is not happy with the contract, they have no alternative but to accept the contract or to reject the contract. If they reject the contract they will either be dismissed or forced to resign. This will fall under the criteria of a breach of contract. The option they have to challenge the unfairness is constructive dismissal. The solicitors and unions would never recommend this process as it has been stated that it is extremely difficult to prove that your employer seriously breached your contract. It is a known fact of a highly unsuccessful rate in the employment tribunal.

We believe that the constructive dismissal process is ineffective and failing employers and members. In this situation and predicament, there is a need for modernisation for the process to be brought up to date. We suggest that the race is not for the swift or the strong but to the wise. We need to be wise and bring in new laws, statutes and regulations for the employees and the unions to have a fair and level ground to challenge terms, conditions and contracts. At the moment we do not have this. The employer has a more favourable hand when it comes to terms, conditions and

contracts. It has been a common thread throughout the Congress so far that this is the biggest and major problem, to press private contractors to improve terms, conditions and raise wages, to seek ways in which private contractors are obligated to provide a high standard of excellence and terms and conditions towards NHS staff. We call for the Legal Department to collect evidence, to build a case and a portfolio that highlights the problems regarding a breach of contract and constructive dismissal. As the employers use the law to protect them, we must do the same to protect our employees, our members, to proceed with a legal team, the lawyers, the solicitors and barristers, with legal academics, with legal institutes, with legal forums and politicians to push for changes for modification regarding breach of contract and constructive dismissal to produce a reasonable standard of a 50/50 chance to win in the employment tribunal regarding breach of contract by the constructive dismissal route.

We must put a stop to privatisation by the NHS. I urge Congress to support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE CHAIR: Can I have a seconder to Motion 169? (*Formally seconded*)

I call on Mark Sykes from the CEC and Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region to respond to the motions.

MARK SYKES (CEC, Public Services): Congress, the CEC asks you to refer Motions 156, 161, 165, 168 and 169, and to support Motion 166 with a qualification.

Dealing, first, with Motion 156 on Inequality of Sick Pay, the national industrial sections will be best placed to review the ways in which they negotiate company policies regarding sick pay. Engagement with our National Equality Forum would be sought if there are impacts on equality while negotiating sick-pay agreements. In view of this, the recommendation is to refer, as we will need to assess how deep the problem really is.

Dealing, next, with Motion 161, on suspension of employees, the motion and explanation from the branch helpfully confirms that the motion is, in principle, very much in line with GMB policy by highlighting a particular problem, which is the suspension of employees and proposes minimum safeguards. The motion proposes that an employer should not act on the allegations of one employee to another. This is understandable. However, there may be circumstances where such a general approach might not always be appropriate; for example, in some sexual harassment cases and in sensitive areas such as education, health and social care. The motion is thoughtful in its approach and referral would allow the union to explore this issue further.

Dealing, thirdly, with Motion 165, on appeals from job interviews. The CEC will, naturally, support the principle that jobs are appointed based on merit and not on favouritism. However, the explanation received from the branch speculates on the outcome of Brexit and the impact on foreign nations. The motion does not distinguish between recruitment and internal appointments. In the case of internal appointments, members already have the right to lodge a grievance with the right to appeal, including the statutory right to be accompanied at any meeting with the employer. The explanation and the motion appears to be proposing a shift away from the protection provided to the most vulnerable groups in society. That is those with

protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 towards a more general one-cap-fits-all approach. This raises some policy questions that would need to be referred to the union's equality strand, and the recommendation, therefore, is to refer.

Dealing, fourthly, with Motion 168 on workplace democracy. GMB core rules are in favour of increased industrial democracy. The CEC supports genuine consultation over industrial matters, such as pay and terms and conditions of employment. However, the motion is unclear about the definition of work-related issues. It is not clear whether it refers to straightforward industrial relations matters or to other matters such as acquisitions, mergers, executive pay or investment policy. Although the motion is unclear, the Shadow team for business and the Shadow Chancellor have raised the issue of industrial democracy in the context of taking outsourced services and utilities back into public ownership, whereby the workforce has a responsibility for running the company through the principles of a co-operative ownership. The emerging debate on the meaning and the practice of collective ownership will give the GMB opportunity to influence the terms of the debate and engage with regions and branches. In view of this, the recommendation is to refer.

Dealing next with Motion 169, on NHS employment practices. GMB has existing policy on this issue by way of Motion 87: Termination of Contract by Notice from Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region carried at Congress in 2012. The 2012 motion focused on dismissal and re-engagement.

Motion 168 builds on the other aspects of the enforced changes; and that is unilateral variation of contract. This has been a problem for many years, and whilst it may be difficult under our legal system to produce an alternative remedy, the recommendation is to refer, to allow the union to consider how this might be done. Of course, from a trade union point of view, we know that the most effective way of dealing with any proposed changes is not the law but through ourselves, the trade union.

Dealing lastly with Motion 166 on job evaluation scores, in principle the CEC supports the idea that job evaluation scores should be made available so that the individuals can see where they are placed in the organisation's pay structure. The CEC supports the objectives of the motion but on the basis that some further investigation is required as the motion seems to be referring to a specific issue that may be best resolved industrially or by way of the adoption of a policy to make changes to the present mechanisms for addressing job-evaluation issues. For example, the provision of information for collective bargaining.

So, Congress, the CEC is, therefore, asking you to refer Motions 156, 161, 165, 168 and 169, and to support Motion 166 with the qualification as outlined. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you, Martin. Does London accept reference back on Motion 156? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Those in favour, please show? Those against? That is carried.

Motion 156 was REFERRED.

THE VICE CHAIR: On Motion 161, does Southern Region accept reference back? (*Agreed*) Thank you. We will take the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That is carried.

Motion 161 was REFERRED.

THE VICE CHAIR: On Motion 165, does London accept reference back? (*Agreed*) Those in favour of Motion 165, please show? Those against? That is carried.

Motion 165 was REFERRED.

THE VICE CHAIR: On Motion 166, North West & Irish, do you support with the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. We will take the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That is carried.

Motion 166 was CARRIED.

THE VICE CHAIR: On Motion 168, will London accept reference back? (*Agreed*) Those in favour of Motion 168? Thank you. Those against? That is carried.

Motion 168 was REFERRED.

THE VICE CHAIR: Lastly, on Motion 169, does London accept reference back? (*Agreed*) Those in favour of Motion 169, please show? Those against? That is carried.

Motion 169 was REFERRED.

THE VICE CHAIR: Just to let you know, you know we are running a bit late with the report. It has been suggested that we stay on until 6 o'clock, and then at 6 o'clock we will stop whatever we are doing. You will get notification of the result of the vote and of the Standing Orders Committee Special Report at that time as well. Is that agreed? (*Agreed*) Thank you. We will continue on as far as we can.

POLITICAL: BREXIT

THE VICE CHAIR: We now go to section 10: Political: Brexit and the applicable motions. This section concerns Motions 238, 241, 242 and 244. We will try those. Can the movers and seconders come to the front, please.

SCRAPPING THE CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS MOTION 238

238. SCRAPPING THE CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Congress stresses that the UK was instrumental in drafting the Charter of Fundamental rights and that as a country we have frequently been at the forefront of European efforts to protect and promote human rights.

Congress is deeply concerned by government plans to use the EU withdrawal bill to abandon the Charter of Fundamental rights.

Failure to copy the Charter into UK law will remove rights protections for everyone in the UK. The Charter contains important rights that do not have domestic equivalents under UK law, including protections for workers, consumers, people with disabilities, LGBT people and elderly people. It should therefore be copied into UK law in the same way as the rest of the current body of EU law.

Congress considers that all agreements on the future relationship must ensure the UK maintains equivalent levels of human rights protection with the EU – which includes keeping the Charter, and congress will oppose any agreement that removes rights protections for UK citizens and EU nationals.

B59 BRUSSELS
Southern Region

(Carried)

DONNA SPICER (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 238 — Scrapping the Charter of Fundamental Rights. When I was asked to move this motion I did not have a clue what the Charter of Fundamental Rights was or meant. As I started to research it, I realise that it is vital that we keep this in our law after we leave the EU. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights embeds certain political, social and economic rights in EU law. For example, LGBT rights, consumer rights, rights for the elderly and people with disabilities. EU Member States, such as the UK, need only respect these rights when they are implementing EU law. Even inside the EU, these rights are not taken into account in areas outside of EU law. This is already a loophole.

The Government has clearly said that the Charter of Fundamental Rights is not part of domestic law on or after exit day, making it clear that they intend to scrap it. We should be worried that when the EU Charter loses effect in the UK some rights that are not protected by the Human Rights Act will be lost. When important EU laws covering workers' rights and environmental law are returned to the UK, the Government will not be obliged to make laws that respect these rights. We could see a huge loss of the fundamental rights enjoyed by people in this country.

As a union we cannot allow this Government to weaken the rights of workers any more than they do so already. This Government must be prevented from scrapping this important piece of legislation after we leave the EU. Let us campaign to have the Charter of Fundamental Rights fully enacted across UK law. I urge you to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE CHAIR: Thank you, Donna. Do we have a seconder for Motion 238?

KARIMAH KELLY (Southern): I speak in support of Motion 238: Scrapping the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Even that title itself annoys. Scrapping anything with this is ridiculous. So we already have more than 883,000 people working on zero-hour contracts in this country today. Employers already totally abuse this, and I am sure that they would like to continue to do so. So with the removal of this Charter, you and I could both end up with having no rights at all at work. So far as I am

concerned, we cannot and must not allow this to happen. So please support this motion. I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE CHAIR: I call Motion 241.

ARE WE WITH EU OR WITHOUT EU MOTION 241

241. ARE WE WITH EU OR WITHOUT EU?

This Conference is concerned that too many fake news items were aired in the run up to the referendum vote! People are concerned about what the future holds when and if we leave the EU. Workers' rights, employment law and immigration are but a few questions that people have.

We have to ensure that we have no detrimental changes to the above questions. There is much still to fight for.

We call on MPs to lobby for a second referendum.

TU3 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Referred)

DAVID GRAY (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 241. Chair and Congress, this Conference is concerned that too many fake news items were transmitted to the UK electorate in the run up to the EU referendum. I am sure you can all remember Barmy Boris with his bus carrying the slogan that leaving the EU would generate £350 million a week, which would go to help the NHS. But even he admitted that that was a lie, admittedly after the referendum.

We cannot get away from the fact that the main drivers in the Brexit victory was the perception that the UK was being swamped by EU migrants and Brussels' bureaucrats were eroding British sovereignty. You may recall Nigel Farage's scare stories of a mass exodus of criminals from Turkey when the EU gives them membership, which turned out to be a load of Eurosceptic rubbish.

Brexit supporters frequently raise their concerns about the strains on the welfare state because of migration. The majority of the migrants who have come here have come here to work. They are mainly doing jobs that local people didn't want to take. They are also, in the main, younger people who don't use NH services as much. As far as social housing is concerned, they have only taken up 5% of the social housing provision in the UK. You could also argue that the tax receipts from migrant workers helps to support the welfare state.

Another thing that the Brexit faction placed great emphasis on was the perceived loss of sovereignty by the British Government to Brussels bureaucrats. However, the fact is that apart from EU immigration, the British Government still determines the vast majority of policy which concerns voters, and that includes health, education, pensions, welfare, monetary policy, defence and border security. The UK Government

controls 98% of its expenditure. Therefore, it could be argued that Brexit may well reduce UK sovereignty because within the new globalised world, not the one of 1973, our ability to negotiate trade agreements would be greatly diminished, I think.

Another important concern is the open border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The open border and the right to yield nationality were major factors in the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. A few weeks ago we were fortunate enough to be given a tour of Belfast by our colleague, Alastair, showing us the sites of a time when there was sectarian violence. He showed us the Peace Wall and things like that. We believe that the Belfast Agreement has served to remove sectarian violence which has blighted the lives of working people in Northern Ireland. Therefore, as the open border and rights to yield nationality are major tenets of the agreement, an unsatisfactory settlement on the border problem may well put the said agreement in jeopardy.

I know that Jeremy Corbyn has said he is opposed to a second referendum. However, we are not attempting to subvert democracy, but we are highlighting that the electorate was not in possession of all the facts regarding the EU and that the vote was manipulated by a right-wing Brexit-supporting media controlled by the likes of Rupert Murdoch and the Barclay brothers. Little emphasis was placed on the complexities of leaving the UK —j

THE VICE CHAIR: Please stop, David.

DAVID GRAY: We ask the Government to publish details of a no-deal Brexit which could result in the biggest incidence of economic self harm. Therefore, give the people the facts and support the referendum. *(Cheers and applause)*

THE VICE CHAIR: Can we have a seconder to Motion 241? *(Formally seconded)*
Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 242.

LABOUR PARTY & EUROPEAN UNION MOTION 242

242. LABOUR PARTY & EUROPEAN UNION

This Conference calls on the CEC to recognise that the United Kingdom is philosophically as well as geographically part of Europe.

When a Labour government is elected we have no wish to see it unable to implement its policies because the economy is in freefall.

N45 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

ANDY COOPER (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 242 for the GMB to recognise that the UK is physically as well as geographically part of Europe. Since the Brexit vote, which was narrowly in favour of leaving the European Union, we have seen an increase in phoney nationalism which is fuelled by the patriotic right-

wing media within the UK. It is clear that the only passion that the owners of the media have shown towards the electorate is how best to siphon money out of the UK into tax havens, whilst gleefully watching over the further oppression of working class people using austerity measures.

We should reject this backward-looking nationalism that appears to insist we ignore our social, democratic next door neighbours in order to pursue trade agreements with those who insist of ripping up the values and institutions that the UK can justifiably be proud of. We have seen Donald Trump tear up existing trade agreements with countries, and despite whatever special relationship may exist between the UK and the US, that is a clear sign of things to come. We all know that the Tories will do deals that further privatise the National Health Service, they will further erode trade union rights, they will opt out of working time regulations and as many other pieces of red tape as they can. Red tape, which has supposedly stifled big business, has given workers protection and safety in the workplace and the hope of economic security.

Zero-hour contracts are not allowed in Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain. Yet they are increasing to the point of catastrophe in the UK. This is where the Tories are taking us. The worrying thing is that the right-wing media will persuade the electorate that not only is it a good thing but it is what they have asked for.

Obviously, a Labour government, particularly under Jeremy Corbyn would be better placed to deliver a strategy which would benefit the working classes. Renationalisation of the water, energy and rail would be easy to achieve out of Europe than in. However, the GMB has been unequivocal in its message to whatever Government that it can only be in the UK's best interest that we reclaim as close a ties as possible with Europe. It is in the interests of the economy, our security and, most importantly, the interests of the working people.

The electorate voted by a small majority to leave. The votes have been cast and the results are in, and we should abide by the vote. However, the fact remains that, given a tiny majority, we should not look back into the corner. Despite the hysteria, it is clear that the UK has benefited from elements of its EU membership.

Congress, we may be closing the door but there is no need to lock it. Please support Motion 242. *(Applause)*

THE VICE CHAIR: Is there a seconder for Motion 242? *(Formally seconded)* We move on to Motion 244: Impact on UK Working Drivers.

IMPACT ON UK WORKING DRIVERS' CONDITIONS DUE TO BREXIT MOTION 244

244. IMPACT ON UK WORKING DRIVERS' CONDITIONS DUE TO BREXIT
This Conference is asked to support this motion to lobby government to change current legislation within all regions.

With the UK's exit from the EU, it jeopardises the working conditions of drivers in the UK. The current domestic driving hours limit needs to be shortened to ensure the safety of all road users and passengers on public transport.

With the EU border next to Northern Ireland, it is even more pressing that we get these changes as soon as possible to ensure there is clarity of regulations between the UK and EU.

U88 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

ALLISTER TAYLOR (North West & Irish): Congress, I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Delegates, I want to talk about the fact that this is going to have with EU regulations being removed after Brexit. I am a professional bus driver along with a lot of colleagues within the haulage industry, bus and coach. Our issue is that once we leave the EU I am concerned that the Tory Government and the fat-cat businesses are going to alter the driving regulations which are currently in place and, under the EU, we have a situation where after four-and-a-half hours working we are obliged to have, by law, a break. My concern here is that once we are out the Tories will alter that legislation and cause all sorts of difficulties for myself and other colleagues within that industry. It is going to jeopardise safety issues and other road users who may be in a situation with ourselves. I would urge you to back this particular motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE CHAIR: Thanks, Allister. Is there a seconder for Motion 244?

PAUL FRANCEY (North West & Irish): Congress, I am a second-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I second Motion 244. In December 2017 a close personal friend of mine was involved in a road traffic accident. He had been working for 14 hours delivering for a company. That was classic self-employed. He crashed his van into a tree after falling asleep at the wheel. This close friend is now confined to a wheelchair. The company that employed him washed their hands of him because they classed him as self-employed. We have all seen the pictures a number of years ago where a coach crashed and a number of young children were badly injured and some were killed. Last week in the press and on the TV we saw a bus that had crashed into 15 cars, allegedly through mechanical problems. In 2017 there were over 20,000 road traffic accidents resulting in serious life-changing injuries or deaths.

For reps and officials in the GMB health and safety is our bread and butter. Having to continue to hold our employers to account for unsafe practices can be seen not just on the shopfloor but on our roads. Our concern is that with the possible upcoming of Brexit the EU legislation, specifically around health and safety for those working in public transport, haulage and freight, will be watered down. Congress, we must keep up the pressure and continue the fight against rogue companies and employers for the safety of our children, our families and our friends who use our roads. Safety before injury and life before money. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE CHAIR: I think we can take another motion, so I call Motion 245:
Oppose Hard Brexit.

**OPPOSE HARD BREXIT
MOTION 245**

245. OPPOSE HARD BREXIT

This Conference notes that the minority Tory Government has no mandate for hard Brexit. The economic fallout of hard Brexit would be disastrous for working people and Conference affirms that nobody voted to be made poorer by the Tory's disastrous mishandling of the negotiations.

Congress notes that full access to European markets can only be achieved if the UK government abandons its ideological approach to hard Brexit.

V15 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

ARTHUR MOSS (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 245 — Oppose Hard Brexit. You will have heard what Jeremy said when he said that he wants a soft Brexit. My problem is that if we don't get a soft Brexit, what is he going to do, and what are the rest of our MPs going to do if we don't get a soft Brexit? Because then we will have a real problem! I am a trade unionist, not a politician. I have been in trade unions for all my life. I have been in this one union all my working life, for over 50 years. We have major problems coming, and if we don't have — I know that some people in this hall will say that they don't want it — a second referendum, and if we don't fight, we are going to be in a lot of trouble.

The worst thing that is going to happen to us is that they are going to attack our NHS. Then you won't need to work because if you are sick, you've had it. We are going to need help and support from our political friends, who are our MPs. They need to support it. We need Jeremy to get off his backside and say that he will support it, because he never supported him for years. I know he has come to the front now. I know you all clapped him, but I sat here and I have seen MPs and Prime Ministers come here answering questions. You've got to be joking! They've got to tell us the truth and we have to make a fight of what we've got coming because you lot are going to face a lot of trouble. I'm an old fart now so I don't have to worry. You need to get off your backsides and fight like hell. I recommend you support. *(Applause)*

THE VICE CHAIR: Is there a seconder for Motion 245? *(Formally seconded)*
Thank you. We will go on to Motion 246. Can we have the mover of Motion 246.

**BREXIT — INTERNAL MARKET & CUSTOMS UNION
MOTION 246**

246. BREXIT – INTERNAL MARKET & CUSTOM UNION

Congress Recognises the EU Referendum vote and the narrow majority of those voting, wishing to leave. The result must be honoured, but the method

of leaving is unclear and future UK/EU relations uncertain. There has been more than 40 years of involvement, interaction, harmonisation and alignment and the UK is part of the world's largest market and trading bloc. In austerity Britain people do not wish to be poorer.

In the Ports and Shipping industry, working in conjunction with Border Force, HMCR, Freight Forwarding, Import Export Agencies and the many trade related organisations, we recognise the vital importance of Free Trade and Frictionless Borders. In the vital trade corridor of shipping from Dover and the Channel Tunnel 40% of UK/EU trade is moved. Dover ships 10,000 trucks daily. Only the slightest delays to the movement and there will be gridlock on either sides of the English Channel.

Congress demands that our leadership works and campaigns within the labour movement, within our affiliated federations and with all its political influence to ensure that when we leave the Customs Union, we remain within a Customs Union and with tariff free access to the Single Market. We also fight to ensure, that in restoring the desired sovereignty to Parliament, the final exit deal is subject to a meaningful vote with the clear aim that the economy of Britain is paramount.

The GMB is about work, trade, industry and jobs and Congress demands economic reality over ideological fantasy.

X23 DOVER FERRIES Southern Region

(Carried)

STEPHEN MASON (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 246: Brexit — Internal Market & Customs Union. Nearly two years ago the British people voted in a referendum to exit the EU with a simple in/out question. Around one-third took the opportunity to vote leave, but we recognise that in electoral terms that was a small majority on the leave side. We reluctantly accept that decision in principle, but have to face the facts that the method of leaving and the deal that must be negotiated with the remaining 27 nations to depart is far more straight forward. We have more than 40 years of developing involvement with the EU and more than 20 years in an internal market allowing goods to move freely in a manner not dissimilar to goods taking the Dartford Crossing from Essex into Kent. It is 21 miles from Dover to the start of mainland Europe and, clearly, in a trading bloc of more than 400 million people. The UK's no. 1 trading partner will be the European Union. Business, industry and job are inextricably linked and no-one voted two years ago to become poorer.

In east Kent 40% of all UK-EU trade goes by the port of Dover and the Channel Tunnel. Ten thousand trucks shift daily, and £120 billion worth of imports/exports move annually. Trade with the EU works with no border restrictions and without friction. Current infrastructure is geared to these free movements and relationships. We move away from this at our peril. The haulage industry and other related bodies have all said: "We do not need something close to the current seamless trade. We need the exact same frictionless trade that we currently enjoy". In Ireland, we do not

need something close to what we currently have in the terms of a no-hard border. We need exactly what we currently have. Boris's kind of soft-hard border is an absolute nonsense. Studies and investigations, including the involvement of Commons Select Committees, have highlighted the potential meltdown in supply chains of even the slightest delay to each vehicle travelling by, for example, the port of Dover. Currently, the occasional technical, weather or industrial difficulty can bring large areas of Kent to a standstill and the implementation of Operation Stack is well documented. This costs UK industry millions daily. It is not just an inconvenience to the residents of the region. Studies show that delays of just a few minutes due to new customs practices will create miles of tailbacks leading to the Channel ports. The Shadow Chancellor has serious concerns and is clearly at odds with the ideological-driven Rees-Mogg, Fox and Johnson, who do not understand, or do not wish to understand, the practicalities of international trade.

Sir Keir Starmer, the Shadow Brexit Minister, has visited Dover more than once and met with local lay GMB officials and, through their arrangements, met with people from the haulage business, customs, exporters, importers, freight forwarders and so on. He recognises that we must have some form of customs union to continue the frictionless trade and, as stated, if we get this wrong the first open manifestation of the problems will be shown by gridlock in areas like Kent and a complete breakdown at the port of Dover and the Channel Tunnel. He recognises that the over-simplifications by Tory ideologically-driven ministers is neglect.

The hard Brexit group always argued of the great trade deals we will be able to negotiate around the world when totally free from the EU, but we already have trade deals with other parts of the world through our membership of the EU. Who gets the better deal: a sole nation of 60 million or an economic bloc operating solidarity in excess of 400 million? Our economic ties with the EU and being in a customs union will bring tariff-free access to the single market. Please support this motion. It is vital for all our futures that we maintain close economic ties with the EU. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE CHAIR: Can I have a seconder for the motion?

MARTHA DE BRUXELLES: Don't panic. I am not going to keep you very long. Chair and Congress, I second Motion 246. We seem to be living in an illogical fantasy. When we leave the EU some foreign arrangements like the Customs Union we have to continue. This is in international trade. Any changes to the current seamless frictionless border will in fact adversely affect business and trade and will, ultimately, cost jobs. However, the notion that we can leave the EU, leave the single market, leave the Customs Union and avoid our responsibilities and obligations to the EU, but then somehow be allowed to trade with all the benefits of our membership is, quite frankly, frightening.

Following the Lisbon Treaty and the Single European Act in the 1990s creating the international market, the system and methodology of movement of goods changed from removing barriers and allowing for much quicker transportation of goods. If one feature encompasses the UK-EU trade it is "Just in Time". We normally associate this method with food and perishables goods, but the slightest delay with the new customs arrangements will be a spiral effect that will jeopardise the system and

ultimately become an impediment to trade. The GMB is about work, trade, industry and jobs. We need to make this a reality. We need to keep our economy moving. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE CHAIR: I now fall upon Helen Johnson, the Chair of the SOC, to give her report. Thanks, Helen.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 4

HELEN JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee, Midland & East Coast): The SOC notes that, regrettably, Congress is running significantly behind time. As you will be aware from the Guidelines for Congress Business, it may be necessary at times for speakers to be curtailed and the SOC shall recommend revised times. In order that Congress may conclude its business in a timely manner, the SOC is making the following recommendations for amended speaking times: On motions, movers' speaking times reduced to three minutes. For seconders, motions to be formally seconded unless there are pertinent issues not addressed by the mover. Other speakers should only be taken if they are in opposition to the motion and will be given two minutes. Movers of section reports will be given three minutes. For Special Reports on CEC Statements, the movers to be given four minutes, reports to be seconded formally and other speakers only to be taken if they are in opposition and will be given two minutes. The SOC is also recommending that Congress starts at 9 a.m. tomorrow morning. I move SOC Report No. 4.

A DELEGATE FROM THE FLOOR (No name given): That's ridiculous!

THE VICE CHAIR: That's democracy. We will put SOC Report No. 4 to the vote. Those in favour, please show? Those against? That is carried. (*Calls of "Card Vote" and "No"*) It is the Chair's discretion on the voting. It was carried. So we will continue on if you want to know the exciting news of the new President of the GMB.

A DELEGATE (No name given): I want to make a point of order.

THE VICE CHAIR: No. There will be no points of order. I am sorry.

RESULT FOR THE ELECTION OF GMB PRESIDENT

THE VICE CHAIR: I am delight the general member auditor, John Swainson, to announce the result of the election for GMB President.

JOHN SWAINSON (GMB General Member Auditor): Vice President and Congress, I am reporting the result of the election for National President. Four hundred ballot papers were distributed to Congress delegates and members of the CEC in attendance who are entitled to vote. Voting closed at 2.30 pm and votes have been counted by myself, witnessed by two members of the Standing Orders Committee, the secretary to the General Members Auditors and the Executive Officer. I can tell you that 388 ballot papers were returned, four ballot papers were spoilt so 384 ballot papers were, therefore, valid. The result is as follows:
Bearcroft, Sheila: 72 votes;

Hope, David: 55 votes;
Minnery, June: 64 votes;
Newman, Andy: 55 votes;
Plant, Barbara: 138 votes. (*Cheers and applause*)

I, therefore, declare Barbara Plant duly elected as National President. May I be the first to congratulate Barbara on her election. Good luck.

THE VICE CHAIR: Congratulations, Barbara. That is the end of business for today. We will see you all tomorrow at 9 o'clock sharp. Thank you all for your co-operation this afternoon.

Congress concluded at 18.07 hours.