



# General Secretary's Report



# 2018

**General Secretary's Report**  
**GMB Congress 2018**  
3rd to 6th June 2018  
Brighton



**MAKING  
A DIFFERENCE**

# GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTRODUCTION

## GMB CONGRESS 2018

The last year has been eventful to say the least!

We left Plymouth to hit the doorstep in a snap General Election that had been called just weeks before. The election baffled the pundits and pollsters, returning a weakened Tory Party to Downing Street, propped up by the DUP.

In the year that has followed, I've travelled over 10,000 miles, visited every region and nation and spoken to thousands of activists and members.

From meeting each Regional Committee, to visiting workplaces and speaking at branch activist weekends, it's an absolute honour for me to be able to see and support the work our members, activists and staff do every day.

GMB makes a difference, that's what we're celebrating at this Congress.

On pay, working conditions, supporting people when they are being exploited, bullied or harassed.

Helping each other, helping communities, helping people to learn, helping people to get on in life.

That's what I want to talk about this Congress.

Energy workers who, since the founding of this great union, have kept our lights on, homes heated and the economy moving.

Public sector workers who care, who put themselves in harms way to look after the rest of us.

Our Bombardier activists saving jobs and industry.

Our Regions who lead on the ground, in every sector.

Our reps, who volunteer their time to make their workplaces better for their colleagues.

We are GMB. We are proud to be GMB. And we make a difference each and every day.

Looking around the hall you'll see some changes. The first is the GMB logo. After a lot of discussion, with our CEC and Senior Management team, we decided it was time to put the 'union' back in GMB.

GMB@work is and will remain a fundamental set of organising principles that underpins what we do as a union and how we do it, but it is an internal message. In an age where not everyone grew up in a trade union family or knows a fellow union member, being proud of who we are and putting it front and centre is crucial and common sense.

This comes on the back of a year of victories, where we really have made a difference.

Our groundbreaking Public Sector Pay Pinch Campaign has busted the pay cap for local government workers – making international headlines along the way.

The Making It Campaign is truly making a difference – showing the best of British manufacturing while building credibility with employers and politicians. From workplaces to Westminster, we have secured commitments from Labour on new shipbuilding contracts with the government finally giving in to pressure and awarding contracts for new submarines too.

Our Political team – who have dealt with one political crisis after another over the last few years – are driving the industrial agenda politically, winning campaigns for more free childcare for foster carers, changing legislation for front line emergency service workers and making sure politicians hear from our reps in everything from utilities to shipbuilding to the gig economy.

And with all of those campaigns and successes, never have more people seen or heard about what we do as a union than they do now thanks to our Communications Team. Always ready to respond to events as we did when Carillion went bust and when the Asda announcement leaked but driving forward the agenda too securing front page coverage throughout the year.



Despite all the excellent work, we still face challenges ahead.

In the coming year we have to address the real issue of union member retention, we lose tens of thousands of members each year. If we can show people the value of their membership, if those members stay, our union will continue to go from strength to strength and be an even more powerful voice in our movement and workplaces.

The Asda merger is not something that will move quickly, we will be working on that for more than a year to come as the competition regulator assesses whether that merger can go ahead at all.

The Tories continue to attack public services and starve NHS, care and local government of the funding they need.

Those challenges are not reasons to despair. They are reasons to show why unions matter, why GMB matters and why and how we make a difference. We were born out of struggle, it's all our movement has ever known, we'll meet these challenges too.

I've been General Secretary now for just over two years. The work we have embarked on is coming together, from the new training for reps to the new GMB website, through to equality organising and the fruits of section platform campaigns. I'm proud to be your General Secretary; together we'll continue this work in the coming year.



**TIM ROACHE**  
General Secretary



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## BRANCH REVIEW WORKING PARTY UPDATE

The Branch Review Working Party met in February 2018 for a presentation on General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and discussion on how this will impact upon Branches and Branch Secretaries, prior to guidance being issued to Branch Secretaries.

The Working Party also received updated reports on the number of open branches which had fallen to 838, and the number of branches under non lay member control which had fallen to 103, although they noted that many of these branches fell into this category as their bank account was administered by the Regional Office, even though many had lay members holding Branch office. Since April 2017 ten Branches had closed and twenty Branches had returned to lay member control.

The Working Party agreed to continue to meet again after Congress 2018 and would continue to receive updates about, and focus their attention on, the number of internal branches, branches under non-lay member control and non-recruiting branches and intend to analyse how active these Branches are - how often they meet, whether they submit Branch Development plans, and whether they submit motions and nominate for delegates to Congress. The Working Party also wish to analyse the use of the online branch accounting system, and look at greater access for Branch Secretaries to Branch membership information, as well as Branch Secretary training and mentoring.

## DECISIONS OF CONGRESS 2017 AND PROGRESS ON 2017 MOTIONS

Decisions of Congress 2017 can be found on the GMB website ([www.gmb.org.uk/congress](http://www.gmb.org.uk/congress)) Furthermore, in accordance with Motion 7 agreed by Congress 2015 a progress report on all carried motions from Congress 2017 is available to members in the Members area of the GMB National website and this report will be kept updated. If any GMB member or Branch would like further information on the progress of their motion or have any policy enquiries, please contact Anna Barnes directly on [policy@gmb.org.uk](mailto:policy@gmb.org.uk).

## UNIONLINE / LEGAL SERVICES

UNIONLINE remains the only trade union owned and operated law firm in the country providing a one stop shop offering a broad range of legal services, largely free to members, and with some non-employment services being available to their families. This is our commitment to providing a quality legal service to our members.

UNIONLINE is operated from a head office in Sheffield where it employs 95 staff directly. They work with the nominated Regional Officers to ensure that we do everything we can to support members within the union. A proportion of the work is dealt with in-house in Sheffield, whilst more complex work is sent out to a network of highly regulated panel firms across the country who act as agents for our law firm. UNIONLINE also monitors and controls the quality of service provided by these law firms to ensure we have the best, most effective legal service for our members across the entire country. UNIONLINE is constantly adding services and making improvements. They operate a GMB rep focus group to gather feedback, and regularly circulate news and information to branches.

### Employment Tribunals

GMB was able to maintain services to members despite the introduction of fees for employment tribunals in 2013. In July 2017 the Supreme Court ruled that fees were unlawful and they were abolished following the court decision. The Government has indicated that there may be a new fees scheme introduced in the future but so far no new proposals have been made. Because the tribunal service was cut back as the number of claims fell delays are now occurring as the number of claims starts to return to the pre-2013 levels. Currently UNIONLINE has over 400 active cases in employment tribunals across the country and additional cases in multiple claims.

### Collective Rights

We continue to brief and support Regions and Officers on collective rights such as industrial action, statutory recognition applications to the Central Arbitration Committee, and collective labour law matters. The new restrictions on industrial action under the Trade Union Act 2016 are now in place and we continue to brief Regions on these developments providing advice and training. Further developments are

awaited regarding other restrictions under the Act coming into force including restrictions on public-sector check-off and enlarged powers for the Certification Officer to investigate and take enforcement action against unions.

### Individual Rights

The onslaught on individual rights by the present Government has continued, as the impact of changes to the law on unfair dismissal are felt alongside other adverse developments.

### Litigation

We continue to manage large multi-party cases in all areas of the employment rights field in order to assist Regions. GMB is involved in some of the most complex and large scale employment litigation in the UK including equal pay in ASDA. GMB is at the forefront of litigation in the "gig economy" and is recognised as the union for workers in this area. Cases have involved:

- Uber, already won in the Tribunal and now on its way to the Court of Appeal in October 2018.
- Hermes- due to commence 5 days in the Tribunal on 30th April 2018, hopefully by the time of Congress we will be able to report another successful finding that establishes worker status for our members. Addison Lee- already won in the Tribunal and on its way to the Employment Appeal Tribunal in June 2018.
- UK Express Logistics and DX, which goes to hearing in June 2018,

### Policy

We continue to contribute to union policy in areas such as industrial action, trade union rights, minimum wage, and zero hours contracts. The Department will be contributing the union's response to the Taylor Review later in the year.

### Brexit and Employment Law

The vote to leave the European Union raises profound questions for the future of collective labour law and employment rights in the UK and remains an area of great uncertainty. We will aim to contribute to the campaign to protect workers' rights post-Brexit and keep the union informed of developments.

### Personnel

The Department comprises Sue Harris and Barry Smith.



# EXTERNAL RELATIONS & TRAINING DEPARTMENT REPORT, INCLUDING EQUALITIES REPORT

## COMMUNICATIONS

GMB's National Communications Team have continued to raise the union's profile and support the industrial work of sections and regions.

### Annual coverage summary

GMB has always punched above our weight when it comes to communication, and I'm proud to say we're continuing that trend. With just one Press Officer in the National Campaigns, Media and Communication Team we routinely secure more coverage than unions like Unite, Usdaw and the TUC.

Some of our big hits in the last year have been from GMB proactively driving the news agenda. The Pay Pinch Maybots and research that came together jointly between the Comms Team and Industrial Policy Team got coverage across the length and breadth of the country and internationally. We had organisations getting in touch to ask where they could find Maybot masks to join in!

Other coverage included front pages in The Guardian, Mirror and Morning Star on GMB research and FOI requests that highlighted the scandal of NHS car parking charges. A similar tactic was used to receive headline coverage on the number of days ambulance service workers lose from the job each year due to stress. In

the lead up to the Protect the Protectors Bill, the Industrial Policy Team also expanded on this to highlight the number of assaults emergency service workers experience and show just how many frontline staff suffer PTSD. In all instances, this involved the Communications Team working with the sections and activists to develop a press agenda that relates directly to the lives on our members, using coverage to try and effect change.

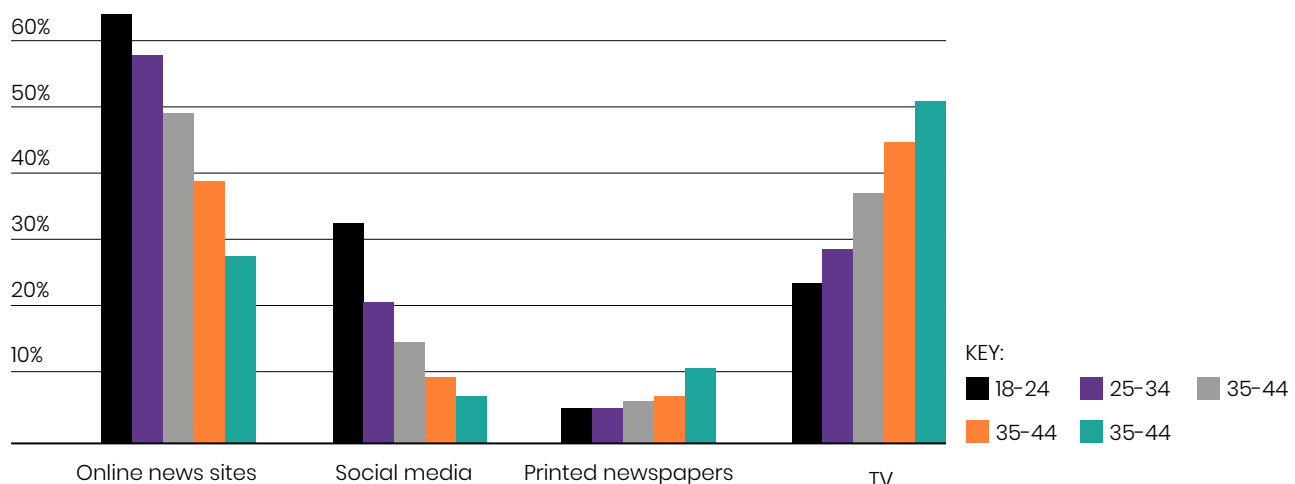
As well as proactive press coverage, we often have to respond to changes by employers. Asda coverage had a readership reach of over 800 million readers in the weekend the potential Sainsbury's merger story broke. This was coupled with member communications, tailored social media communication, a branch newsletter update and recruitment materials in order to ensure we had impact, kept members up to date and made sure all Asda workers knew that it was a good time to join a union.

### The stats

The state of the national communications scene is ever changing. Print press remains in decline, while people continue to watch TV news and get an increasing amount of their news from the internet or social media.

A recent global study by the University of Oxford and Reuters showed that fewer than 10% of people cite printed newspapers as their 'main' source of news. TV remains the top outlet among the over 55s, with online news sites

### Main Sources of news by age







being overwhelmingly favoured by 18 – 34 year olds, but also ahead in the 35 – 44 years age bracket.

As this report discussed last year, that has implications for how we disseminate, use and drive the agenda as a union.

An overall breakdown of coverage shows that:

GMB's Press Office issued 616 press releases across the course of 2017. This is the primary method of releasing information, but a lot of work has also been done on building and maintaining relationships and proactively pitching big stories to journalists.

As per GMB Congress Resolution, the press office does not speak to The Sun newspaper or website journalists.

### Print

We know that print press continues to struggle in an age where people consume news online. Despite a trend emerging where people trust print more than social media news (in an era of Fake News), every major outlet saw a decline in circulation year on year up to December 2017 (except the free paper the London Evening Standard, and a negligible 0.01% increase at The Times).

- GMB achieved coverage in **4,483** print articles in 2017 – slightly down on 2016 figures (but holding it's own given the simple fact that fewer newspapers are being printed), up by 1.5% increase on 2015.
- The combined audience reach for GMB's 2017 print coverage, derived from circulation figures, was **1.06 billion**.
- Using the industry standard advertising value equivalent (AVE) measurement, GMB's 2017 print press coverage in column inches would have cost the union **£4,000,000** if purchased as advertising.

### Online

- GMB achieved coverage in **40,352** online articles in 2017 – a 6% increase on 2016 and 35% increase on 2015.
- The combined potential audience reach for GMB's 2017 online coverage, derived from circulation figures was **41.9 billion**.
- Using the industry standard advertising value equivalent (AVE) measurement, GMB's 2017 online press coverage in column inches would have cost the union **£241,000,000** if purchased as advertising

### Broadcast

- GMB achieved coverage in **4,723 TV and radio broadcasts** in 2017. We do not have a comparative year on year figure because as a union this was not something we measured previously, 2018 will be the first year we can measure this.
- The combined audience reach for GMB's 2017 broadcast coverage, derived from circulation figures was **877 million**.
- Using the industry standard advertising value equivalent (AVE) measurement, GMB's 2017 broadcast coverage in column inches would have cost the union **£8,800,000** if purchased as advertising.

These are good figures, and a result of focussing more on broadcast because we know it is where people get their news. We are building on this in 2018 by developing and providing more training to ensure more GMB people are trained to appear on TV and radio.



### New GMB website

One of the major pieces of work this year has been the development of the (long awaited!), GMB website, which you can find more information about on the National Office stand in the congress exhibition.

The new website will mean that GMB has all the modern campaign tools we need to take on employers and politicians who don't stand up for our members. We know that regions and branches often want to rerun petitions, email MPs and Councillors or put together quick surveys. The website will mean that we can do that quickly, securely and without GMB members handing over their details to their parties like Change.Org or 38Degrees.

The 'front' of the new website is launched at Congress 2018, with a new members' area, campaign tools and email system to follow soon behind.

### Social Media

People don't just get their news from social media, they plan their lives through it, stay in touch with friends and family and interact there. Increasingly, GMB gets member inquiries and joining requests through social media. Our following has increased by tens of thousands, in the last three years and will continue to do so when the website is fully launched, as the site

will offer social media log in function.

Most GMB members prefer Facebook to other forms of social media, there we have, at the time of writing, 7,300 followers – a 64% increase over the last year. We get fewer interactions with members on Twitter, but a number of branches, activists, journalists and politicians who are GMB members are active there so we do get a decent amount of traffic and have a higher follower count at 22,200 followers – up by 26% over 12 months. We have also re-launched a GMB Union Instagram profile, with pictures and videos from campaign days, demos and other events.

Our reach goes far beyond just those who actually follow our pages. By encouraging sharing through our army of activists, relations with politicians and connections with other online influencers, over the last 12 months our posts were seen by over 10 million people across both Facebook and Twitter.

Some of the posts which travelled furthest related to: the backing Bombardier campaign, our tributes to Mary Turner, the Protect the Protectors campaign, Carillion's collapse, Making It, the Asda-Sainsbury's merger, the Pay Pinch campaign and of course the Maybots.

## Industrial campaigns

The bulk of the work the Campaigns, Media and Communications and the Political Teams do is to support industrial campaigns, be they assisting in disputes or helping to drive forward campaigns like End the Pay Pinch or Making It.

The Public Sector Pay Pinch Campaigns included tools such as workplace packs and posters, a calculator to help members decide whether to accept the local government pay offer and to see how much they'd lost due to the pay cap, events and stunts, press releases and pitching stories and training members to appear in the press. Politicians asked questions in parliament, posted about the campaigns on social media, attended constituency and Westminster events and met with members.

Equally with Making It, the Team produced a video to promote the campaign, member and branch packs, placards and posters and worked with the Industrial Policy Team to release research making the case for defending and expanding UK manufacturing. This has included promoting shipbuilding and ensuring government contracts come to UK firms, showcasing the ceramic industry and calculating the economic boost of the UK food and drink industry. MPs got involved signing the Making It pledge and supporting us in Parliament and constituencies.

That sort of work is replicated across sectors and in supporting regions as needed, on campaigns like securing 30 free hours of childcare for foster carers on the back of a Yorkshire region campaign; backing workers at Bombardier in Northern Ireland against US imposed tariffs; providing materials and support for regional campaigns and demonstrations against Amazon's working conditions across the country; and fighting ISS' outsourcing in the NHS in London and Southern Regions.

## Political

This time last year, we were cutting congress short in order to get back to constituencies and campaign in a snap General Election.

The election did not turn out as most people – especially the Tories – expected. A poor show from the Tories a great campaign and manifesto from Labour led to a hung parliament, Coalition government and very unstable Prime Minister.

Team GMB campaigned across the country to support candidates, no matter what wing of the party any of us consider ourselves on, because the manifesto our Party stood on was the best manifesto for working people many of us had ever seen.

Since the election, our political team has worked hard to raise GMB issues at all levels – as you will see from the CEC Special Report. The change in how the Party relates to unions was never more evident than in the Party response to the Carillon crisis. Within hours of events unfolding, Shadow Cabinet Ministers had called a meeting between senior Labour politicians and the unions to make sure everyone was on the same page, and that our Party fully understood what was happening on the ground and what our members needed.

Another example of linking our parliamentary work to membership issues can be seen through the Protect the Protectors Bill. GMB's support for this legislation – which was a Private Members Bill – came from a case in Yorkshire region, which engaged the local MP. From a member being sexually assaulted on the job, through to being supported by her region and the campaign taken up by the national team we believe we will change the law to ensure that sentences are increased for those who assault frontline workers, and that sexual assault will be included in that legislation (which was not initially the case). The Political Team worked with the Region, the Industrial Policy Team and Communications Team to make sure that every possible lever was pulled in order to secure a victory for our members – and a victory we had!

It is incredibly important that our political work is driven by the industrial needs of our membership, and that that is happening is evident in the issues we raise and the number of reps and activists who have visited parliament this last year to make the case directly to politicians.

One instance that was particularly powerful was the delegation of steel and shipbuilding members from across the UK who lobbied MPs in Parliament. The result of that lobbying – and the months of political work that had gone before and a remarkable report from the Industrial Policy Team that was hailed by everyone from politicians to employers – was an announcement from Labour that the official Party position is to lobby for the building for 3 new RFA ships in the UK. Those contracts would secure nearly 7,000 jobs in the industry.



This focus on industrial political work has and will continue and, as the special report to congress highlighted, is something that should be further expanded into local government.

Alongside our parliamentary work, we've been busy working on candidate selections. A number of GMB members have stood successfully for selection in the seats Labour must win to form a government. GMB officials Deanne Ferguson (Morley and Outwood) and Gill Ogilvy (Walsall North) are both now PPCs, with Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaigner and GMB Councillor Chris Peace standing as Labour's candidate in North East Derbyshire, Sarah Church in South Swindon, Charlotte Holloway in Plymouth, Charlyne Pullen in Milton Keynes and Josh Fenton-Glynn in Calder Valley.

As the selections in key seats wrap up, we will again focus attention on local government and supporting regions to delivery change on the ground, and to train members as candidates for office. This is part of looking at longer term political development of activists as detailed in the special report.

## **EQUALITY**

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As it says in the CEC Special Report on Equality Organising, equality is at the heart of everything we do. 10 years on from Equality Through Inclusion, and with CEC strand seats coming online next year, it is the right time to look at what we do, how we do it and to push forward the organisation agenda.

There is so much potential to change the lives of our members and grow the union through the equality agenda, much of that work has already started.

Last November we held our first Women's Conference. The conference was run by GMB Women for GMB Women and focussed on issues such as tackling domestic violence, the barriers to women getting involved in the union and how to overcome them, and organising women workers.

The Young Members' Summit had a similar industrial focus, with Young Members' holding an organising school in advance of the main Summit business – they even recruited 5 new members there and then as part of their training exercise 'phone a friend'!

Working with London region, and now looking to expand the model further afield, the Young Member Leads are working hard on Student Union recruitment. Piloted at the University of East Anglia, this initiative focusses on workers within the Students' Union (many in bars and hospitality). GMB has come to an arrangement with the SU that the SU will pay a reduced membership fee for their workers, if they workers choose to join the union. As of writing, 130 members in UEA have joined and are setting up their own branch. If we are going to help people understand what unions can do in there world of work, as more people go to university, catching them at the start of their working lives could prove to be incredibly important.

The Equality Team also delivered National Equality Conference and supported the five TUC strand conferences. Other events include the Young Members' Political School at Durham Miners' Gala and the Tolpuddle History School.

If Congress accepts the CEC Special Report on Equality Organising, it is set to be an exciting year ahead with the department looking to embed equality within industrial organising, providing new national resources to support officers, regions and reps in delivering on equality issues in the workplace and developing training to ensure that equality is something all reps understand and advance on a daily basis.

## **TRAINING**

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Much of the work within Training for the last two years has been to implement the CEC Special Report on Training which called for a review of training across the union. That review has led to the training for new reps being updated and re-written to ensure that all reps come out of their training ready to represent members and recruit in the workplace.

Congress heard the update on this work last year from the National Training Officer, and the progress on that work is available on the National Office stand in the congress exhibition where you can find sample materials and highlights of the last year. These materials and an overview of the new course was launched at a GMB Training Launch attended by all regions in late April. Officers from across the Union with an interest in and responsibility for education and training attended the event Camden Town Hall in April.





New training materials are now being used in GMB regions, with a new reps quick start guide on offer for new reps and alongside entirely new materials for the following modules of the new rep induction course:

- Introduction to the role of the rep
- Representing members
- Building GMB and recruiting new members
- Health and safety

Alongside developing materials to train our reps, the National Training Officer has been working on how we can best monitor and progress learning. Now the bulk of the materials for training have been completed, work is underway on piloting the best way to track progress and help reps to manage their own learning alongside their officers. It is possible a Learning Management System will be made available via the website, should the pilots work.

### **Webinars and e-learning**

Over the course of the last year, a number of Web based seminars – Webinars – have been conducted with specialists from National Office and in some cases in conjunction with the GFTU.

Pensions has been a topic of specific interest, with the National Pensions Department running courses from introduction to advanced to help officers and reps understand the issue and the organising potential behind it. Over 300 reps and officers attended webinars during 2017 and it is intended to deliver a wide range of subjects during 2018. Feedback on the webinars has been overwhelmingly positive with attendees appreciating the ease of taking part and the amount that can be covered in a short period of time.

Work is also underway to develop e-learning modules that can support GMB reps and provide easy access to learning. Such modules will be to enhance our face to face training and not to replace it.

### **Apprenticeships**

GMB has been working with the NUS – who run the National Society for Apprentices – on what a trade union offer could be for their members. If GMB are able to recruit and represent apprentices, it builds on the principle of our Student Union recruitment campaign, in that we are reaching out to people at the start of their working lives.

Guidance on organising and bargaining apprenticeships has also been issued to help ensure that apprenticeships are seen as an industrial issue.

### **Organising Scholarship in Scotland**

The National Training Officer has supported the piloting of an advanced organising programme for a small number of reps in Scotland. The programme saw 7 reps spend six months seconded to GMB to attend training courses and to engage in a wide range of organising and recruitment projects across a number of different employers. The programme was a great success and is being run again in Scotland in 2018 and it is being delivered by the Scottish Education Officer.

## **NATIONAL POLICY AND RESEARCH**

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National Policy and Research is split between the industrial sections and External Relations and Training. Both teams work on advancing the industrial aims of the union through industrial, political and campaign aims, with the Industrial Policy Team taking on the additional work of supporting national pay bargaining and representation.

Big areas of work this year include:

### **Workers' Brexit Working Group**

Brexit is such a huge area of work, it cannot be worked on by one department. In order to ensure that the changing nature and policies on Brexit had regular and continual input from GMB's lay members and executive, the Workers' Brexit Working Group was brought together. This group aims to ensure that GMB is able to respond to developments, opportunities and threats for our members from the government's approach to Brexit. It is a subcommittee of CEC/PEI committee which means elected GMB members help shape and inform our ongoing work responding to Brexit as it happens.

Work this year has focussed on ensuring politicians better understand our members' issues and are able to speak up for them throughout the Brexit process – this is done by working alongside European, International, Political and Industrial Policy colleagues.

GMB has continued to lead the charge for the government to publish Brexit impact assessments so that people know how they might be affected. We arranged for Shadow Brexit Minister Keir Starmer MP to visit Dover and hear first-hand GMB's concerns about the lack of adequate plans in place and the impact this could have for many of our members throughout the country, and after surveying members on the impact of Brexit in their workplaces have worked with Labour MPs and Lords on those issues.

GMB has given evidence to a number of Business Energy Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Select Committee inquiries on the impact of the government's approach to Brexit might have on sectors such as food, drink, aerospace and pharmaceuticals. We will continue to put our members' jobs first.

### **Members' experiences shaping policy**

Additional work this year as included turning Congress policy positions and GMB members' experiences into positive political proposals. That involves engaging with Labour's shadow ministerial and policy teams, using our representation on Labour's National Policy Forum, Labour's manifesto process and working with individual MPs or Select Committees. Policies such as a £10 an hour minimum wage, four additional bank holidays, free hospital car parking throughout all parts of the UK and statutory bereavement leave for parents are examples of the policies GMB has fought for.

Longer term policy work includes working with the National Officer for Energy, GMB's Water Forum and Labour to turn our policy of bringing water back into public ownership into practical plans which will benefit GMB members working in the water industry.

### **Tackling insecure work**

GMB continues to be campaign for more secure jobs for our members and their families and we do not flinch from spelling out our aspirations. We have spoken at countless events so that policy makers better understand the reality of what GMB members have to face day in day out.

Last year we published a report which showed how countries across the world are taking radical action to provide more secure contracts and this raised awareness of what is possible.





The Taylor Review for the government was in many respects a missed opportunity for ministers to act. However, there are a number of proposals we pushed for that were accepted by Taylor such as equal pay for agency workers by ending 'the Swedish Derogation' which we will keep pushing for ministers to back.

The National Research and Policy Officer (ER&T) has worked with our Parliamentary Officer to support GMB members in different types

of insecure work and help them share their experiences in parliament. GMB members working for Amazon, Hermes and Uber gave powerful spoken evidence to the Business Select Committee. We have worked with Labour MPs to help draft bills in parliament that would turn our values into possible laws. Members' testimony at our Insecure Work and Gig Economy summit in parliament is further proof that more politicians are listening to GMB members and understand the need for action.

# ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF OFFICIALS

1 MAY 2017 – 30 APRIL 2018

## APPOINTMENTS OF SENIOR ORGANISERS

<b>London Region</b>	Richard O'Leary
<b>GMB Scotland</b>	Louise Gilmour
<b>North West &amp; Irish Region</b>	Denise Walker
<b>GMB Scotland</b>	Paul Arkison

## APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

<b>London Region</b>	Colin Greer
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## ELECTION OF ORGANISERS

<b>Southern Region</b>	Sheila Berry Katie Feighan Gary Palmer Patrick Thompson Carole Vallely
<b>GMB Scotland</b>	Liz Gordon Karen Leonard
<b>GMB Wales &amp; South West Region</b>	Adrian Baker
<b>Yorkshire &amp; North Derbyshire Region</b>	Neil Cole Deanne Ferguson Lou Foster-Wilson

## APPOINTMENTS OF ORGANISERS

<b>Birmingham &amp; West Midlands Region</b>	Ian Edwards
<b>London Region</b>	Steve Garelick Trevlyn McLeod Gordon White
<b>Northern Region</b>	Paul Clark Michael Hall
<b>GMB Scotland</b>	Melanie Greenhalgh David Hume Paul McLaughlin Rhea Wolfson
<b>Yorkshire &amp; North Derbyshire Region</b>	Will Dalton

# TUC CONGRESS AWARDS 2017

**Taranjit Chana**, London Region was nominated for the **TUC Women's Gold Badge award**. Unfortunately the nomination was unsuccessful.

**Steve Garelick**, London Region was nominated for the **TUC Organising Award 2017**. His nomination was successful and Steve received his award at TUC Congress 2017.

**Lee Hillam**, London Region was nominated for the **TUC Health & Safety Rep Award**. Unfortunately the nomination was unsuccessful.

**Gillian Otley**, North West & Irish Region was nominated for the **TUC Learning Rep Award**. Unfortunately the nomination was unsuccessful.



# COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION, INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY AND PENSIONS REPORTS

## COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION REPORT 2018

The Commercial Services Section membership stood at 194,716 in March 2018, representing 31.5% of the Union's membership. Net growth in the first quarter of 2018 has been 2,450 and Commercial Services remains the fastest growing Section, having recruited 46% of all new members over the last 12 months. This success was achieved through a tremendous joint effort by lay activists and full-time GMB staff overseen by the Section National Committee chaired by President Kevin Flanagan. The industries and companies in the section are covered by Bob Crosby (including Thompsons, Swissport, Gentings Casinos, Morrisons Data Services), Gary Carter (Retail including Asda, Wilkos), Roger Jenkins (Security Industry, G4S, Securitas, Geoamey, Loomis, Yodel), Mick Rix (Aviation, Transport & Logistics, and Gig Economy, including DHL, Wincanton, Bidvest/ Bidfood, BA, Dnata, Taxis & Professional Drivers), Stuart Fegan (Gas and Water, including Thames Water, British Gas, Cadent, SGN), Justin Bowden (National Secretary, Energy and Nuclear including EDF, SSE, E.On, Magnox, Biffa Industrial and Commercial).

### Amazon and "The Gig Economy"

High profile activities have included a coordinated long-term plan to achieve GMB recognition and collective bargaining in Amazon. Currently regions have different levels of organising activity, with some very innovative initiatives.

Organising activities also include the last mile drop deliveries- an 'Achilles heel' of the company.

A number of GMB regions have pursued other postal delivery companies on the last mile drop, including Hermes, DPD local, DHL/UKMail, DX, UKXD (where we won significant compensation for drivers delivering Amazon products). Special use of social media targeting has been developed, extending outreach and developing new contacts and membership.

GMB has also taken part in a number of studies and research programs around public safety issues resulting from all risk being passed to drivers, and the cost to the public purse from companies avoiding tax and their public safety obligations. These matters will be key to linking the organising, industrial and political campaigns.

### ASDA Distribution

New distribution sites seem to be springing up all along the motorway network as the growth in online shopping migrates demand from High Street shops to vast warehouses. Asda has a well-established network of food and clothing distribution centres across the UK which serve its supermarkets and superstores. Asda is also growing its click-and-collect operation, and providing delivery and returns for an increasing number of retailers. In a very competitive market, Asda is always looking to increase efficiency and lower costs. The 3-year pay deal in Asda Distribution has come to an end and following agreement on its content from the National Shop Stewards Forum (NSSF), the 2018 pay claim was submitted in December 2017. Pay negotiations have started and are expected to take months to complete. The Asda proposal to close the Step Up Pension Scheme has rightfully been met with outright resistance and anger from GMB members in Distribution. They are united with GMB members in Retail in opposing the changes and fighting for a decent Asda pension.

Work has been done to improve the check-off information we get from Asda, update records and maximise membership density levels. Recruitment been steadily improving and doubled in the first three months of this year compared with 2017.

### Asda Retail

Over 10,000 new members were recruited in Asda Retail in 2017 and recruitment so far this year has been equally strong.

The retail sector has remained fiercely competitive over the last 12 months and all the major supermarkets are trying to drive down costs to maintain market share as the low cost operators continue to gain ground on the Big 4. Nevertheless, Asda is a large and very profitable company whose prospects seem to have turned the corner; they did well at Christmas and have reported consistent levels of growth.

There have been several rounds of redundancy consultation since August 2017 and our reps have worked hard to mitigate and reduce job losses. We succeeded in our campaign to keep supermarket security in-house, and GMB equal pay claims continue to be actively pursued through the Employment Tribunal process with the numbers of members signing up to be part of the claim continuing to grow.

GMB has mounted a national campaign across retail and distribution to oppose Asda's plans to close the Step Up Pension Scheme, reduce pension contributions to the statutory minimum and reduce death in service benefit to 1x salary.

Asda has announced that it will be merging with Sainsbury's. GMB was not given any prior knowledge of this and members are rightly anxious and worried about their job security. At the time of writing we have requested urgent talks with the Company. It is inevitable that the proposed merger will go to the Competition and Markets Authority and it could be over a year until the merger of the two companies take place or not. GMB are supporting our members throughout this and making sure that jobs and pay are protected.

### **Aviation**

GMB leads the campaign for the expansion of Heathrow. Aviation ground handling services continue to suffer the merry-go-round of contracts being won and lost. Dnata pay deal for 2017 was 2.6%.

British Airways made record profits, yet the final salary pension scheme has been closed, along with their defined contribution scheme. Whilst our team provided excellent support and left no stone unturned in the efforts to save the schemes, others walked away from a fight, believing that closure was inevitable at an early stage.

### **Blacklisting**

Following the recent admission by the Metropolitan Police that undercover special branch officers spied on construction workers and environmentalists, and passed information to the employers' secret blacklisting organisation The Consulting Association, GMB has called on the Met to come clean and share all that it knows. A Freedom of Information Act request has been made for release of the Met's full internal report and all emails, letters and details of meetings between police officers and the blacklisting firms.

### **Bidvest/Bidfood**

There continue to be good organising opportunities in Bidvest and Bidfood from connecting organising initiatives to industrial issues such as pay bargaining. Membership density is increasing, but there is still for improvement. Bidvest lost the Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) contract in February 2018, resulting in around 400 redundancies and the near collapse of the KFC logistics operation. A huge media-led campaign by GMB resulted in a third of the contract coming back to Bidvest and many of those made redundant gained their old jobs back.

### **British Gas**

British Gas owner Centrica issued two further profit warnings in the last 12 months confirming a loss of 1.3 million customer accounts in 2017, and announcing another 4,000 jobs cuts by the end of 2020, on top of the 5,500 jobs lost since 2016. These previous job cuts have inevitably had a detrimental impact of our membership levels. The failures at British Gas rest firmly with the top management. GMB will fight any further compulsory redundancies of our membership.

Despite the overall loss of membership, we have managed to maintain membership density levels in our bargaining groups through assertive campaigns over pay and working conditions. We concluded a bargaining agreement for the Smart Energy Managers and, at the time of writing, have agreed recognition in principle for the Coventry Distribution Centre.

### **Cadent Gas**

A pay agreement for the Field Force Industrial Membership has concluded and we are currently negotiating pay for our staff members. Pay surveys and workplace ballots have realised good membership growth in areas where we believed previously we had good density of membership already.

**DHL**

GMB successfully campaigned for improvements to the defined contribution pension scheme. Our stewards will meet shortly to develop further awareness of industrial issues within the company and new membership and workplace organiser opportunities. We have highlighted the terrible treatment of DHL/UKMail drivers, and started organizing the workforce to challenge the company.

**Distribution & Logistics**

The court victory over Uber in October 2016, was a massive victory in the campaign against forced self-employment in the so-called "gig economy", opening up organising opportunities all around the economy. The Section has focused particularly on the logistics sector and companies like DX, Yodel, Hermes, DPD Local and DHL/UKMail. We have challenged HMRC that it should not be the individual's responsibility to take their company to Employment Tribunal to prove their employment status, rather the burden of proof should fall on employers to prove Employment Status. We have campaigned hard for HMRC to more effectively challenge tax avoidance by gig economy employers.

**EDF**

Construction of the first new nuclear power station in a generation is well underway at Hinkley Point in Somerset. GMB was instrumental in ensuring Hinkley happened and continues to campaign for at least another six new stations, with attention now turned to Sizewell in Suffolk and Bradwell in Essex. The amount at which any government energy price cap is introduced will have significant implications for our members in Customer and Field, and GMB has submitted evidence to the Ofgem consultation regarding this to ensure our members' interests are represented. Members in Nuclear Generation successfully saw off attempts to undermine their outage agreements when members voted by over 8 to 1 to take industrial action if the company continued to renege on its Agreements. Separate 3-year pay deals were agreed for Generation, Customer and Field.

**E.ON**

Members will be consulted over the summer and autumn on a negotiated package of measures designed to address the company's financial difficulties. The proposals include changes to pensions, future employment commitments and a two-year pay deal worth 3.5% this year, and the greater of 3% or CPI next year.

**G4S**

Secure Solutions: The largest security contract in the country, covering the DWP Job Centres, was recently awarded to G4S. The new contract has brought significant change to our members with different working practices and new technology, but the engagement between reps and the company has ensured both a smooth transition and an uplift in pay.

Cash: Extreme financial pressures persist in this part of the industry, predominantly due to significant high street bank closures and the move in society to cashless pay. This has resulted in 114 potential redundancies at the 8 legacy cash centres.

Public Services: The GMB signed a National Recognition Agreement for Patient Transport Services which covers all current and any future contracts.

**Genting Casinos**

A small rise in membership was achieved over the last year, but Regions report difficulties recruiting in workplaces with many different nationalities and language barriers. To address this the Media Department are putting together membership form templates in different languages.

**Geo Amey**

GEO Amey have won the Scotland prisoner transport contract, where GMB has significant membership opening up. Talks continue on recognition.

**Loomis**

Members rejected a 1.5% pay offer, with further negotiations taking place at time of writing.

**National Grid**

Following the sale of Grid's Gas Distribution Business last year, negotiations on pay for the reduced GMB membership have been painfully protracted. More generally, it is pleasing to note that the National Grid has now caught up with GMB Energy Policy. In a new report published in March, Grid said no credible scenario exists for hitting the UK's 2050 de-carbonisation targets without continued reliance on gas, and to meet peak heating demand during the winter with electricity would require a seven-fold increase in generation capacity from the current 50 gigawatts to 350 gigawatts, with 20,000 existing gas boilers replaced every week for the next 30 years – clearly neither realistic nor affordable.

### **Nuclear Pensions**

The introduction of the new pension changes for members in defined benefit schemes at Sellafield and Magnox have been again delayed by government. The earliest they will now be introduced is April 2019.

### **Securitas**

As part of the agreement with GMB for Securitas to move towards being a Foundation Living Wage Employer (the first in the security industry), over 1,500 employees received an uplift in pay in April to a minimum of 20p above the minimum wage. This also brought 2,000 employees under a single bargaining unit. GMB has agreed with Securitas to bring the majority of their 15,000 employees into a single bargaining unit by 2020 maintaining significant organising opportunities across the country. Through pressure from the GMB at a national and European level, Securitas will now fund all future SIA licenses.

### **Security Industry**

A Security Conference in May 2018 for senior reps, activists and officers, along with key companies and organisations from across the security sector, will provide a springboard for our campaigns against precarious employment and low pay in the sector, and assist with organising and professionalising the industry.

### **SGN**

Our 'C' Business Membership rejected an extension to their current pay agreement in November 2017 and senior reps are currently negotiating a new deal (anniversary date 1st July 2018). Our 'D' Business membership are currently following a six year pay agreement (from anniversary date 1st April 2015). Membership growth has been strong.

### **SSE**

In a surprise announcement, no doubt linked to energy price capping, SSE and NPower intend merging their retail businesses to create a new company. The merger has yet to be agreed by the Competition and Markets Authority, but if endorsed will have implications for our members employed in both companies. Talks with SSE produced a bottom-loaded one-year deal to increase pay by between 3% and 3.6%, fully consolidated for the first time in 6 years. In addition, the hated performance related pay scheme has been binned and a skills and competency based alternative will be negotiated to replace it.

### **Swissport**

Members agreed the January 2018 pay offer of a 3.75% uplift and free car parking for all staff annually (worth £240). Against the background of a number of redundancies due to the collapse of Monarch Airlines, there is a growth of 150-plus new members.

### **Taxi & Professional Drivers**

In the last twelve months the national committee and our activists in branches and regions have continued to organise and build. Demonstrations, lobbying and media campaigning have produced significant outreach in this growing area. The Labour Party manifesto contained commitments, secured from GMB Lobbying, to bring much needed regulation back to the industry and we secured a Private Members Bill on the issue. GMB has become the voice of common sense and unity across drivers of the differing trades. We played a significant role on the Transport Minister's Task and Finish Group. Membership has increased and our campaigns are active and ongoing.

### **Thames Water**

GMB fought an assertive campaign with our sister Unions following Thames Water's announcement in September 2017 to close both their Defined Membership Pension Schemes. Currently there is an agreement in place to maintain the two schemes until at least April 2020, pending a further review in 2019. The company can afford to keep these schemes and GMB will continue to campaign hard for them to remain open.

### **Thompsons Solicitors**

In May 2017, a pay award of 1.25% consolidated and a lump sum of £1,250 per person in two instalments was accepted by members.

### **Wilko**

The High Street retail market is volatile and a number of established brands have gone out of business. In August 2017, Wilko commenced a major restructuring and put nearly 4,000 level 2 and 3 employees across its 400-plus stores at risk of redundancy. This was an extremely stressful time for GMB members who were told they might lose their jobs, or have their contractual hours reduced. GMB reps worked tirelessly representing members. An agreement was reached with the company to protect hours, as far as possible, which helped reduce the numbers of compulsory redundancies.



Over 1,000 Wilko employees took voluntary redundancy, other employees either accepted new positions or redeployment into level 1 roles. In the end there were less than 20 compulsory redundancies.

After 7 years of declining profits, Wilkin posted a loss for 2017.

Pay talks took place in January 2018 following a pay survey of GMB members. This resulted in a two stage pay offer which takes the level 1 base rate for aged 25 plus from £7.73 per hour to £7.84 from April and then to £8.00 per hour from the end of September 2018. This is a 2.46% increase for the 12-month period and is a 3.49% increase on the hourly rate. The offer was accepted by 81% to 19% in a ballot of GMB members. Wilko security was outsourced to Mitie. This affected approximately 130 guards. GMB has represented members throughout and maintained union recognition.

### **Yodel**

Following years of financial losses, 2017 saw significant change to members' contracts, working patterns and overtime rates. This was sold to our members as a way to protect jobs and move the company to a break-even position. So far the changes seem to have had little impact, with the company reporting a £30 million operating loss so far in 2018. In what is a growing market, the company continues to fail, leaving members rightly nervous about the future.

### **International**

Through our affiliation with UNI Global, GMB has seats at the UNI Europa steering group, at the Social dialogue within the European Parliament and the holds the only Trade Union seat on the European Security Standards Committee. This gives us considerable leverage and influence from working directly with European trade unions on common issues across global companies such as G4S, Securitas and Loomis.

GMB actively participated in the UNI Global Amazon Alliance, where unions across the world discuss and plan organising activities and share research. Later in 2018 the next meeting of the Global Alliance may take place in the UK, which will add to GMB's growing profile as the gig economy union.

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## **HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

**Grenfell Disaster:** On Wednesday 14th June 2017, a fire at the Grenfell residential tower block in North Kensington, London caused catastrophic loss of life. This disaster focused major attention on the deregulation and cuts that saw failures in inspection, and allowed the potential for unsafe materials to be used in refurbishment works. We continue to campaign politically and through the media to ensure that cuts to safety regulation and resources are reversed, so that this never happens again. We have spoken at public meetings, sit on expert groups on construction safety management, and have developed guidance on fire risk.

**Health and Safety Executive:** HSE launched their new health strategy at a major conference in September 2017, which we attended. The strategy focuses on three major ill-health conditions: Musculoskeletal Disorders (joint and back pain); Occupational Lung Disease; and Work-related Stress. We are using the new strategy to push for new regulations on mental health and stress at work, and for greater enforcement of asbestos legislation in particular. We participated in HSE's Occupational Lung Disease summit in November 2017, and presented at the March 2018 MSD Summit. We are maximising our engagement with HSE on these issues across the range of sectoral forums that we attend.

We have secured a seat on the Steering Group of the reconstituted (Construction Industry Advisory Committee), giving us parity with Unite even after their absorption of UCATT. We continue to play leading roles in advisory groups on plastics, paper & board, food manufacture, ceramics, and work-related violence. Lynsey has been appointed as Chair of the Worker Engagement and Leadership Group of the HSE Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum. The group has already delivered a new guide on worker involvement, and has helped to develop guidance on topics such as waste fires and noise from glass collections.

**Brexit:** The complications and consequences of leaving the EU have dominated the policy agenda over the past year, and will continue to do so until April 2019. Our major concern is that the Brexit process will be an excuse for

further deregulation as we seek trade deals with nations with lower standards of protection. We have attended a number of conferences and workshops in Brussels over the course of the year, as we need to be involved in such EU-wide discussions until the UK leaves the EU. EU standards will impact on the UK post-Brexit, and we want to influence the agenda as much as we can. Dan gave the keynote speech on the implications of Brexit for H&S and the environment at the National Hazards Conference at Keele University at the end of July.

**Mental Health:** We participated in a EU-level workshop on mental health in April 2017. This gave an insight into how work-related mental health issues are managed across Europe, and also how policy is likely to develop post-Brexit. We are also founding members of a campaign group on work-related suicide. Research published by the Office for National Statistics in March 2017 identified that suicide rates are highest in jobs such as construction, engineering and care work, where GMB has substantial members. We published guidance for members on talking to suicidal colleagues to mark World Suicide Prevention Day on 10th September, which has unfortunately already been used widely across GMB. We also provided briefings on mental health for fringe meetings at TUC and Labour Party Conferences.

**Women's Health and Safety:** The guide on Women's Health and Safety is our most requested guidance document. Lynsey ran a workshop on the health and safety implications of pregnancy at the National Women's Conference in Liverpool in November, and spoke at the London Regional Equalities Conference. She also presented a number of workshops on the health and safety implications of menopause.

**Asbestos:** We successfully managed to rebuff HSE proposals to reduce the frequency of medical inspections for workers in the licensed asbestos industries from 2 years to 3. This would potentially have resulted in members' development of lung disease being delayed or missed altogether. We calculated that the total cost saving from the changes was estimated by HSE at £3 per worker per week. As such, the proposals were indefensible. We have also been providing support to London Region on asbestos management issues at Heathrow Airport. We were heavily involved in organising

the first national Asbestos in Schools conference, held in Birmingham on 4th July 2017, with over 120 delegates in attendance. Rachel Reeves MP gave the keynote speech. We are also founder members of the Mesothelioma Alliance, a cross-sector body of charities, medical professionals and trade unions, who are lobbying for better recognition for mesothelioma, in terms of funding for research and treatment

**Environment:** On Saturday 16th September 2017, The Guardian published a major article on occupational ill-health caused by diesel emissions, for which we provided by the key quotes. The article received widespread coverage, and as a result, HSE announced on 21st September that they are to review their policy position on diesel emissions, and that the Workplace Health Expert Committee (WHEC) is going to consider the available evidence. This is a major U-turn, and is at least in part due to our campaigning on the issue. On 9th February 2018, we hosted a workshop which focused on practical steps that reps can take to get action on air quality at work. We are in the process of developing new guidance on air quality and pollution. We are also exploring joint work with the British Safety Council looking at developing an app to identify areas of hazardous air quality and provide relevant guidance.

**Violence in Schools:** We will shortly be publishing new guidance for members on tackling violence in schools. Developed with the National Schools Committee, the guide gives detailed advice on how to tackle violence in schools, whether it is from pupils, former pupils, parents, visitors or intruders. It makes clear that violence is not simply part of the job, and that there are actions that can be taken to manage and reduce the risk of violence and abuse.

**Food Manufacturing:** We visited McVities Glasgow Tollcross factory on 7th August, at the request of GMB Scotland. Our members, led by Phyllis Riddell, had raised a number of health concerns around the production of cream filled biscuits. Our inspection identified issues around the pace of work and working time; potential risks caused by stretching, vibration and lighting due to poor work equipment design; and issues around reporting and managing occupational ill-health. We are continuing to provide ongoing support.

**Asda:** We concluded an agreement with Asda Retail to ensure that every Asda store has a monthly health and safety meeting with GMB. This is a ground-breaking result for GMB, as the legal requirement is only one meeting every 3 months. The Retail H&S Forum has tackled a diverse range of issues over the past year, including new till layouts; procedures for delivering inside customer properties; carry shopping deliveries up stairs; and new systems for stocking shelves.

**Support to Regions:** We have provided case support to a number of Regions, including security, asbestos and Drug & Alcohol issues in the London Region; Radon exposure and extreme weather policies in West and South West Region; occupational chemical exposure and carcinogens in GMB Scotland, and sensitisation to environmental biological hazards in Southern Region.

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## PENSIONS SECTION REPORT

The Pensions Department continues to see every pension change as a campaign and every campaign a chance to grow, organise and win for GMB members. Often through pensions – an issue that affects all workers – GMB can use the opportunity to access workers beyond our recognised workplaces.

### Private Sector

We continue to see a squeeze towards the closure of the final remaining open Defined Benefit pension schemes. However, we know where we campaign and organise around pensions we can resist unacceptable closures and benefit cuts. The key always is workplace engagement on the issue of pensions and we have delivered this engagement across the country.

Noticeably with advent of an increase in the minimum contribution levels of Auto-Enrolment we are seeing employers looking to level down their current provision. This is the case with ASDA and the campaign around their pension change has shown that when we discuss negative pension changes with our members it is something they are clearly motivated to resist and help grow and strengthen the GMB in the workplace.

### Public Sector

GMB sits on the Scheme Advisory Boards for the NHS, LGPS and Civil Service Pension Schemes.

The yield produced by the NHS Pension Scheme is falling due to the increased subsidy required to fund the greater number of low paid members who have joined. Additionally possible changes to the NHS pay structure may require examination of member contributions in the near future. GMB will continue to monitor developments to ensure members' best interest are served.

The LGPS scheme received a better than expected Actuarial Valuation and is now going ahead with pooling which should realise greater cost transparency, reduced asset management costs and economies of scale. Most pools are welcoming pensioner and member representation, GMB is working hard to ensure this is standard practice.

**Policy** GMB continues to campaign around pension policy and has been voicing the opinions of its members especially to better minimum pension; auto-enrolment with no eligibility restrictions and WASPI. We are pursuing an agenda around the state pension age review to take in to account, fitness to work, physicality of work and regional discrepancies in life expectancy.

**Communication** GMB members value our workplace communications and the simplification of pensions and we will strive to increase production of workplace newsletters focusing on specific pensions matters. GMB continues to develop its voice in the pension's community. Currently the envy of other trade unions, we aim to be the go to voice for working people on the issues of pensions.

**Education** Development and education of activists and all officers is key to GMB's success in delivering the best pension outcomes for our members. The department continues to offer, develop and deliver activist and officer training for every region of the GMB. Pensions Department has been the first to offer online training via interactive webinars, we will continue to evolve how we can best deliver training to activists.

**Casework** The department assists with over 250 pieces of individual member issues and casework every year and continues to provide support that our members require.

# FINE MANUFACTURING SECTION

Membership for the section as of the end of March 2018 was 3,471. The ceramics industry continues to operate in a tough climate that continues to compete against cheap imports of goods and raw materials being “dumped” in the UK. This makes the work of the MTRA group vital in trying to secure a robust UK mechanism that protects Industry and therefore jobs against unfair dumping and price undercutting. We have continued to work closely with the British Ceramics Confederation on areas of mutual interest and political lobbying.

As part of the Manufacturing Campaign “Making It” a “Proud to be Potters” has been launched focusing on the high skills, innovation that the industry had to offer and the need for investment. The second ceramics national lay activist event is being planned, ensuring we continue to build a high profile for this important heritage industry known as “the Stoke Potteries”

Members have voted to accept the following pay awards : Geberit 3%, Steelite, 17pence per hour and improvements on bereavement leave and holidays, Venator 2.7%, Johnson Tiles 2%, Royal Stafford Tableware, an increase of 32 pence per hour, Building Adhesives 2.5%, Denby & Burleigh 2.5%, Churchill China 2.4%, Manteca 2%, Fairey 2%. Members in Ideal Standard had recently voted to eject a 2.5% offer and negotiations were still in play at the time of writing.

## **Moorcroft**

A potential loss of jobs has been avoided by members agreeing to a reduction in hours.

## **Royal Crown Derby**

Following a number of years where members have been on short time working, the company is now experiencing an upturn in business which will hopefully see members returning to full time hours.

## **Ceramics**

Have seen an increase in work due to ceramic parts made for Rolls Royce engines used in the aerospace industry and as a result has taken on more employees which has also resulted in GMB membership growth.

## **Morgan Advanced Ceramics**

The Company has unfortunately opened negotiations to discuss the closure of the final salary pension scheme.

## **Redundancies**

Unfortunately the last year has seen job losses in Johnson Tiles and Ideal Standard.

# MANUFACTURING SECTION, INCLUDING INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND RESEARCH, EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL REPORTS

## MANUFACTURING SECTION

GMB's Manufacturing Section membership as of March 2018 stood at 108,117 which is a net loss of 2,527 members on last year's figures. Whilst we have seen periods of membership growth the general trend is still one of decline. The uncertainty over Brexit and the government's failure to set out a clear robust industrial strategy for manufacturing has done nothing to support vital, high skilled jobs. Hence members continue to be at the sharp end of job losses, lack of investment and an uncertain future in many of the industries that GMB organise in.

Since last Congress the Manufacturing Section National Committee, chaired by Section President, Andy Irving, has met regularly to review section activities and receive industrial reports. Last year's initiative to establish Lay Activist Industrial Committees, has been successful with Committees coming on stream for Supported Employment, Food and Drink, Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals Ceramics, Building Materials, Shipbuilding, Engineering and Construction sectors. At the time of writing the activists group for Furniture is being established. Importantly these groups are vital in creating a structure that ensures lay activists working in their industries are at the centre of driving and developing the Sections organising and industrial priorities.

The Section's platform campaign "Making It" has been successfully launched, which focuses on jobs, skills and investment. Seven activist events have been held across regions to date, including launches at the Welsh Assembly, and the House of Commons. All events have been well received and supported by activists, attracting political support with local MP's signing up to support the GMB Manufacturing Charter. A member's campaign film has been made and has gained huge coverage and support through social media. A "Making It" campaign website is due come on stream and new campaign and organising packs have been launched. The campaign continues to grow and gain traction

in both raising the GMB profile within the world of manufacturing, amongst our own membership and the media. The campaign's first report "Turning the Tide" has launched in parliament, with reps attending from all UK shipyards and steel industry as part of the GMB shipbuilding campaign.

The Manufacturing Section, with the support of the National European Officer and the Industrial Policy Team have also been at the forefront of the Brexit debate and are part of a newly formed alliance group, Manufacturing Trade Remedies Alliance (MTRA) that brings together industry federations and trade unions on a joint platform to press government on trade issues, which is vital in protecting manufacturing jobs post Brexit.

The diverse range of industries and employers that make up the Manufacturing Section are covered by National Officers: Eamon O'Hearn (Food & Drink, Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals, Furniture and HS2); Ross Murdoch (Ship Building and Engineering); Steve Kemp (Fine Manufacturing Section, Bricks, Aggregates, Building Materials and the Wood Sector); Phil Whitehurst (Construction, Paper, Cardboard and the Glass Sector); Jude Brimble, National Secretary (Supported Employment and Remploy).

### Food and Drink Industry

The Food and Drink section membership is increasingly under pressure from Brexit, the big supermarkets and employers who are all seeking ways to continually cut costs. Investment in the industry is still at pre-global financial crash levels, and productivity has stagnated. Many employers are closing profitable sites purely to chase more profit margins without having to invest for growth.

In Nestle over the last 18 months confectionary sales slumped and the business indicated circa 360 employees were at risk. Changes to shift patterns were agreed to avoid compulsory redundancies, albeit there were still a number of voluntary redundancies. There are early signs of



sales recovery across the business. The defined benefit pension has been under threat, and many current members maintain a DB scheme. A National Learning Agreement has been agreed and at the time of writing had just voted to move to national pay negotiations. Elsewhere in Unilever/Colmans, Britvic/Robinsons and Coca Cola, we know that the pending announcement of factory closures will not only result in the loss of thousands of high quality jobs, but the devastation such loss of industry will have in the local communities and supply chains.

On the back of these closures work has been undertaken, with the support from the National Political Department to ensure the Section build very strong links, with the Labour Shadow Team and local MP's affected. This relationship will help continue to raise GMB's profile in Parliament, and assist GMB in scrutinising employer decisions in this critical industry.

Through the Lay Activist Industrial Committees, we have been working to identify issues that can form a strong basis on which to defend our members' terms and conditions, but also to push for enhancements in key areas.

The Section's coordination activities across Food and Drink employers continue to build intelligence and information sharing across the industry and in particular where national employers, operate site recognition and bargaining. Work also continues to map contractors operating, within key companies that hold recognition agreements with GMB, so as to gain access to organise the significant numbers of workers employed through third party employs within the food and drink sector.

At the time of writing plans are underway to again survey our members in both food and drink, and chemical and pharmaceutical industries on the impact of Brexit to date. It is critical we understand how Brexit is affecting our members' workplaces and the behavior of their employers regularly, rather than relying on the media reports that are merely political spin. Disappointingly the Government has shown real lack of concern for workers views by establishing a Food and Drink Sector Council that has no workers' representatives as members.

Much work has been undertaken with the support of the Industrial Policy Team to re-establish a strong GMB presence within the International Union of Food Workers (IUF) including securing a GMB seat on the Executive Council. For the first time in many years a lay

reps delegation also attended the 2017 IUF Congress, making contributions in debates and through a number of amendments to motions. The Section have also ensured that we are participating in EFFAT, including being the only UK trade union to be a member of a key steering group for a European Commission project on digitisation and high level training skills. Raising GMB profile and influence within these international federations reflect the high volume of members GMB has in the sector and in particular within multi- national employers.

### **Chemicals Industry**

Work around the Brexit impact is also being undertaken with the Chemical Industry Association to jointly lobby on key issues like REACH that affect a significant number of our members directly and indirectly employed in the Chemical industry, and again the National Political Team have been instrumental in this work. We hope to capitalise on the joint lobbying to secure access to unorganised Companies in the Sector in a structured manner coordinated with Regions.

### **Furniture Industry**

Within the British Furniture Manufacturing Industry the 2018 national pay talks concluded with members voting to accept an offer that included wage rate rises from 2.1% to 3.93%. There were also a number of other enhancements including uplifting the base calculator rate on benefits to the National Minimum Wage. The ballot was also used to undertake a much needed mapping exercise to better identify membership, but also the key elements of the agreement that our members' employers adopted. This will now form the basis of a renewed focus on those employers, and members. As such a new Lay Activist Industrial committee is in the process of being established, and a survey on the current agreement and 2019 pay launched following Congress to enable timely meeting. Work to modernise the agreement has commenced and will be the subject of consultation with members and Regions, to ensure that the agreement is more accessible and understandable.

### **I BO – Institute of British Organ Builders**

Following an overwhelming rejection of the employers pay offer, negotiations finally concluded with a new improved offer of 3.5%. A joint working group has now been established to modernise and improve the terms and conditions.

### **Brick and Building Materials**

Within the Brick and Building Industry, Brexit and its possible implications for the industry are creating a high degree of uncertainty, which is palpable across the majority of employers. However whilst the industry is notorious for extreme peaks and troughs, in amongst the uncertainty, there are signs of positivity as a result of the building trade picking up. Across a number of employees our members are working flat out with production. This is in stark comparison to two years ago where brick supplies were at an all-time surplus and stacked high in the yards. Today we see bricks coming off the production line and being shipped out across the building and construction industry. In this regards GMB have continued to press the government to adopt a joined up strategy, to ensure any projects to build social housing are down so using UK made bricks. At the time of writing and following members pay surveys, claims have been submitted and national pay negotiations are underway in Monier Redland, Aggregate Industries, and British Gypsum.

The Lay Activist Industrial Committee, being newly established have undertaken initial political lobbying and have met with Ruth Smeeth MP, to present arguments on the challenges members as facing across the Brick, building materials and aggregate sectors.

Work also continues to build a strong activist base across this traditionally difficult to organise sector, where members are often located in isolated workplaces with difficult working conditions. Given this backdrop its testament to our workplace reps continued commitment that a second successful activist organising event was held in November and a follow on is planned for later this year. The input and support from GMB National Training and Education Officer has been vital in developing this much needed training and benefits are showing in small but sure membership growth and an increase in reps coming on stream across this industry.

### **Metsä Wood**

The 2017 pay dispute was resolved following a month long Industrial action, resulting in a 24 hour all out strike. Recognition must go to the determination of our members at the Boston Site for the determination they showed in the face of an intransigent employer. This action brought the employer back to the negotiating table. Recognition must also go to the reps for their leadership and ability to build a stronger

GMB organised workplace. At the time of writing the 2018 pay talks have just concluded with a 2% increase on all pay rates and allowances.

### **Shipbuilding**

With GMB at the forefront of lobbying and campaigning to secure more work in the future for all shipyards, as part of GMB's wider Manufacturing 'Making It' campaign, GMB is pressing the UK Government and lobbying hard to ensure the 3 Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) Fleet Solid Support (FSS) ships will be built in UK Shipyards and not, as before, awarded overseas. GMB believes these can be built in an alliance similar to the modular block build on the aircraft carriers, which would share the work and benefit all shipyards. The international tender process opened up on 30 April 2018 and unlike the previous order a few years ago, due to intensive GMB lobbying with the major UK shipbuilding company's, there will this time be a UK bid for this work.

At the time of writing we also await an announcement as to who will be awarded the 5 Type 31e Frigates. Given the teaming arrangements in place from the leading shipbuilding employers, this again will guarantee work potentially for a number of shipyards depending on how the successful lead employer decides to carry out the work. All of this builds on the Type 26 Frigates contract currently being built on the Clyde which will guarantee work for the next 20 years and the major investment at the Submarine facility in Barrow-in Furness, including a new Apprentice Training Centre. There are currently around 1,000 apprentices on site and will have a new intake of around 220 Apprentices scheduled for September 2018. GMB campaigned robustly on both the Type 26 Frigates and the Successor Submarine work and is rightly proud of the jobs and apprentices that have come about as a result. All of this shipbuilding work builds on GMB's wider manufacturing campaign to support skilled jobs in manufacturing and provide opportunities for Apprentices and Trainees, making sure that we safeguard skills for the next generation.

### **Tata Steel**

Talks are currently taking place between Tata Steel and the German steel manufacturer ThyssenKrupp about a potential joint venture, which if realized would create Europe's second largest steel group. GMB is campaigning hard as part of these discussions, both in the UK and in Europe, that significant investment in UK facilities needs to form part of any deal to get GMB

buy in. If this investment is secured it will bring much needed security and prosperity for GMB members and steel communities in the UK.

### **Speciality Steels and Liberty Steel Group**

We reported last year that Speciality Steels had been bought by Liberty House

Group (Liberty). GMB members subsequently transferred over from Tata to Liberty. Since last Congress the Hartlepool 42" saw mill and the Hartlepool 84" saw mill has transferred from Tata Steel UK Limited ("TSUK") to the Liberty House Group ("Liberty"). The facility manufactures steel pipes. There is a strategy from within the new company to grow the business, which if realised will retain jobs and introduce new ones for our GMB members in the Hartlepool area.

### **British Steel**

GMB has secured improvements on pay and is currently finalising a European Works Council for this relatively new business.

### **TICA**

GMB has secured improvements on the pay, terms and conditions for our members who work in the Thermal Insulation industry.

### **OCA**

The long drawn out 2017 pay dispute was finally concluded after a revised offer was accepted. 2018 pay negotiations have also resulted in a rejected offer. At the time of writing negotiations are back in play, along with discussions to modernise the Offshore Contractors Partnership Agreement (OCPA) which formed part of the previous 2017 offer to close off the dispute. Therefore by default RMT are also involved in these talks even though they are not a signatory to the current agreement. The OCA is seeking to include RMT in the new agreement and Unite have indicated they are also comfortable with this. GMB is currently opposed as there are potential ramifications for areas outside the OCPA.

### **National agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry (NAECI)**

At the time of writing national pay and conditions negotiations were underway for the NAECI agreement, which still stands out as the best agreement within the industry. The agreement is still also used by employers outside of its scope as a template for good practice and setting of minimum standards. GMB continue to robustly promote NAECI as the agreement of choice throughout the industry.

### **Hinkley Point C (HPC)**

The HPC agreement continues to be the best "Stand Alone" Project agreement in the UK, with terms in excess of the NAECI. A long running dispute regarding bonus payments off civil engineers was resolved at the end of 2017. The National Project Board continues to meet on strategic issues, whilst site level negotiations are now managed through the region and site reps. The focus now is on growing GMB membership as construction and engineering work starts to ramp up.

### **Energy from Waste (EfW)**

The Energy from Waste Activist Committee (EWAC) continue to meet and play a vital role in setting the GMB strategy and organising agenda for the EfW sector. The "Pay the Rate" campaign continues to be of importance in campaigning against contractors who continue to refuse to adopt the NAECI arrangements across many of the EfW projects. As such demonstrations have taken place against CNIM, contractors at Parc Adfer and GMB pressure continues on employers such as Burmeister & Wain, Babcock & Wilcox Volund

### **CJIC**

At the time of writing a joint union national pay had been submitted to the employers' side and negotiations were underway.

### **BOC Ltd**

All of the bargaining groups within BOC Ltd reached two year pay deals in 2016 so much of the last year has been focusing on campaigning for average holiday pay for members and understanding the proposed Linde (owner of BOC Ltd) merger with Praxair which is currently subject to an investigation by the European Commission.

### **Air Products**

Membership and density levels have been improving across this employer particularly as at the time of writing we have now secured in principle a collective bargaining agreement which covers the 87 MicroBulk Drivers (formerly Cyrocase Drivers) and the 10 Ex-Hunts Drivers based out of Bardon in Leicester. Pay Agreements have been secured for our existing membership in the three bargaining groups of Bay Cylinder Operators, Package Gas Drivers, and Liquid Bulk Drivers until July 2018

### **Remploy**

In December 2017, Remploy Limited entered in to redundancy consultation, due to the ending

of the Government's Work Choice programme. Due to a range of mitigations, overall job losses were reduced, albeit some 200 plus people were still made compulsory redundant across England, as a result of no government contracts being awarded to Remploy. This is in stark contrast to the Scottish Government and Welsh Assembly awarding the new contracts that support disabled people into work, to Remploy and whilst we envisage some restructure, this hopefully won't mean job losses. At the time of writing a new consultation period for further redundancies across England was in play as a result of other Government contracts coming to an end and a need to restructure the central support services, given the Remploy business was now much smaller.

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## INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND RESEARCH

The industrial research and policy team provides support to the three industrial Sections to aid organising, bargaining and campaigning activities. In 2017 the team took on a number of additional responsibilities relating to Congress. In February 2018 the team welcomed Charlotte Nichols, which makes it a team of three.

The industrial research and policy team provides membership and jobs mapping services to the Sections, which are being progressively integrated with the development of the National Bargaining Calendar, and contributes to the development of recruitment materials. Bargaining support activity has expanded during the last year and the team regularly responds to information requests from Officers and lay officials at a national and regional level. The team has drafted a number of national pay claims and it produces a monthly wages and inflation report to all GMB staff which covers a range of detailed labour market statistics.

The team has supported wider campaign work by producing written and statistical information, principally in support of the Public Services Section's Pay Pinch campaign (including an online local government pay calculator tool) and the Manufacturing Section's Making It campaign, and helped facilitate campaign meetings in a number of Regions. Industrial research and policy officers have produced detailed reports in the last year on subjects including public sector pay for workers not covered by pay review bodies, shipbuilding

procurement policies, and violence against ambulance workers. The team works closely with the Political, Communications and International Departments to secure positive coverage in support of GMB's industrial objectives and raise the GMB's profile in Government Departments and the Westminster Parliament.

In the last year the industrial research and policy team has produced written evidence to the NHS Pay Review Body; submissions to Government consultations on planning guidance on fracking, water resources management plan, Universal Credit and Free School Meals, and the Competition and Markets Authority's consultation on the SSE/npower merger; and responses to House of Commons Select Committee inquiries on the Bombardier trade dispute and the financing of Hinkley Point C. The team has also contributed material to a number of other GMB submissions prepared by different teams and Departments. Over the last twelve months the industrial research and policy team has also facilitated and attended meetings with the Labour Party, the Department for Education, the Department for International Trade, the Ministry of Defence, the TUC, international union federations, and other cross-union campaign groups.

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## EUROPEAN SECTION

GMB is committed to campaigning to ensure that our members do not pay a price for Brexit in relation to their jobs, rights, conditions and standard of living. The focus of GMB's European work has shifted from influencing EU level policy to preparing for- and protecting our members' interests as the UK leaves the EU. The European Officer has been supporting the sections and regions on a range of issues relating to Brexit, and in matters relating to European and Global multinationals. We have been actively campaigning at EU and national level to ensure that UK Workers' maintain their EU employment rights and protections after Brexit, which are coming under increasing threat from areas of Government.

Reflecting the changing focus of our European work, and with the European officer now UK based, GMB has taken the financial and legal precaution of a triennial break clause in the lease to close the GMB Brussels office with effect of the end of May 2018. Regularly in Brussels, the European officer continues to protect



and promote the interests of our members at European level working with the European Institutions and EU trade union colleagues.

GMB has established a Brexit working group involving a number of CEC members to assist with guiding GMB policy in relation to Brexit. The Union has been very vocal in its concerns about the Government's refusal to publish impact assessments on Brexit across sectors and regions, which is vital in allowing industry and unions to prepare for the future. GMB is monitoring regional and sectoral developments closely, and is working with industry where there is mutual benefit in this approach.

GMB has undertaken industrial and political campaigning work to maintain regulatory standards for the Chemicals Industry (REACH) to ensure UK based industries continue to meet regulatory requirements to trade post Brexit. We are also campaigning to protect and develop jobs in the Whisky sector, and protect the origin status of our products. Supporting nuclear sector members, we are working with EU trade unions and the wider industry to ensure UK remains in EURATOM until acceptable future structures can be developed.

The UK's future trade relationship with the EU and globally is a major issue for our members and their jobs. GMB has been working closely with a group of key industry federations (Manufacturing Trade Remedies Alliance – MTRA) including Chemicals, Ceramics, Glass, Steel and building products to urge the UK Government to ensure future trade policy properly protects and promotes UK manufacturing and wider industries.

GMB submitted a detailed and critical response to the UK Government consultation on future UK trade policy in October 2017. We were dismayed when the Government brought forward the first of two draft Trade Bills only hours after the deadline for responses, showing contempt for those who had serious concerns about the direction of Government trade policy.

GMB's European officer took part in an evidence panel on the Public Bill Committee on Taxation (Cross Border Trade) Bill in January 2018 to raise our concerns with MPs.

Written evidence was also submitted to the Scottish Parliament Finance and Constitution Committee for their scrutiny of the Trade Bill, which led to an invitation to give oral evidence to the Committee.

GMB played an active role in seeing off the US/ Boeing trade complaint against Bombardier, which threatened thousands of our members' jobs in Northern Ireland. GMB arranged a delegation of our GMB stewards and officers to meet with the EU Commission Trade officials and MEPs in November 2017, gaining a lot of support for our campaign to protect jobs and the future of the company and supply chain jobs in Northern Ireland. Following weeks of working with the EU institutions, GMB was delighted and relieved when all four judges at the US international Trade Commission found in favour of Bombardier and rejected Boeing's complaint in January 2018.

The EU responded to US tariff threats on steel and aluminium products announced by President Trump in March 2018 with speedy counter-threats of retaliatory action. GMB responded to an EU Commission questionnaire raising our concerns about the threatened increase in tariffs, as well as calling for the exclusion of sectors, including ceramics and tableware, from the EU list for retaliatory action, given there would be a disproportionate negative impact on UK jobs and industries.

GMB has a considerable number of representatives on the European Works' Councils of several multinationals. We have been working with the TUC and Government Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to ensure ongoing UK involvement in these structures.

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## INTERNATIONAL

GMB's International Officer continued to represent the union's interests on the "Domestic Advisory Groups" annexed to the sustainable development chapters of the free trade agreements with Central America and Colombia/Peru/Ecuador but will be standing down this year because of the UK's impending departure from the EU. He has also been asked to represent EFFAT (European Federation of Food Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions) on the EU's new body of trade experts which will give GMB the opportunity to ensure that the Commission meaningfully engages with workers and Trade Unions.

GMB is now part of the Trade Justice Network that is campaigning for the introduction of more transparent and accountable UK trading

regime. We have participated in discussions with Labour's shadow trade team to come up with a more equitable trade brief to deploy if and when they are elected.

GMB still works closely with unions grouped in the Latin American Coordination of Banana and Agro-industrial workers (COLSIBA) and the International Officer was invited to attend their fourteenth conference that was held in Honduras last October. Conditions for plantation workers around the region remain difficult, not least because of supermarket price wars, selling bananas at a loss for the perceived commercial advantage it gives them over each other.

A rare bright spot came from Colombia where SINTRAINAGRO negotiated the latest of a series of two year contracts with the employers, giving their 22,000 members in the banana sector a substantial improvement in pay, terms and conditions. In November, the multi-stakeholder World Banana Forum convened in Geneva. One of the driving forces behind the Forum is our NGO partner, Banana Link and our relationship was strengthened earlier this year when GMB accepted their invitation for the International Officer to become a member of their Board.

One of our current priorities is the Central American state of Honduras where there has been a wave of repression directed at human rights defenders following the blatantly fraudulent re-election of President Hernandez. Since Congress last convened, the difficulties for Fyffes workers in both Honduras and Costa Rica have not improved and women workers in both countries have been hospitalised following poisoning by noxious chemicals against which they had no protection. Despite these developments, Fyffes are still proud members of the wholly discredited Ethical Trading Initiative.

Latin America in general is still the focus of much of our international activities because our comrades there are on the sharp end of the global assault on organised labour. GMB plays a significant role in the ETUC's Latin America group and strong links have been established with trade unions in the Southern Cone in our common fight against the pending free trade agreement between the EU and Mercosur (South American Common Market) that would be disastrous for workers on both sides of the Atlantic.

Outside of the Americas, GMB and others launched the campaign to free Kurdish leader, Abdullah Öcalan in 2016. Since this launch, support from other unions has steadily increased to the point where most of them in the UK are on board. It is also become TUC policy and the 2018 Miners Gala in Durham City will feature the campaign as one of its themes when it takes place in July.

Other international business during the past year had included our collaboration with third parties such as the Western Sahara Campaign, Venezuela Solidarity, Cuba Solidarity, Argentina Solidarity and the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign. In common with practically every other trade union, GMB continues its support for the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

# PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION, INCLUDING NATIONAL ORGANISING REPORT

## PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION REPORT TO CONGRESS 2018

The Public Services Section membership as of April 2018 stood at 310,327, remaining the largest section in the GMB. Whilst seeing decline over the last year in membership, the start of 2018 has seen some positive growth and recruitment activity with month on month membership increases. The Public Services Section membership accounts for 50.3% of the total GMB membership as of March 2018, and has been responsible for 41% of recruits into the union of the past 12 months. The section focus is to use the key industrial issues across the sectors to build solid organising membership campaigns around pay bargaining. The GMB pay pinch campaign is an example on how we are doing this.

The Public Services Section Officers and their responsibilities are currently Rehana Azam (National Secretary, Local Government, Public Service Section & Organising); Sharon Wilde (National Officer, Care Sector, Environment & Legal Aid Agency), Karen Leonard (National Officer, Schools & Academies); Sharon Holder (National Officer Academies, HE/FE); Kevin Brandstatter (NHS, Police, Civil Service, & National Organising). Additional support provided by Bert Schouwenburg (International Officer, Contractors); Bob Crosby (National Officer Academies, MOD & Prison); George Georgiou (National Pension Officer supporting Justice & Board member for Local Government & NHS). The GMB Public Services Section work is overseen by committees of lay members, led by the Public Services National Committee which was chaired by Mary Turner GMB President until her passing. The gender breakdown of the Committee currently is 10 Female and 12 Male. The ethnic composition is 21 White and 1 Asian.

The National Committee are very sad to see the passing of Mary Turner. President of the section since 1993, Mary's leadership and support to the section is greatly missed and the committee are determined to carry Mary's legacy and support for the Public Services Section in years to come and will be launching the Mary Turner Award for 'Outstanding Public Services Organising Project' award at the section conference.

On the 8th March 2017, the Section launched the 'Public Services Pay Pinch' Campaign in order to end the 1% pay cap and presented a robust report to government and the public. In December 2017 the local government pay talks smashed the pay cap. Whilst there is still some way to go in achieving fair pay and real term pay uplifts across public services we are proud the campaign the section started supported by the regions has started to see the first round of pay uplifts after 8 years of pay capped at 1%.

### Local Government

The Public Sector pay freeze started in local government and the GMB pay pinch campaign has helped to end it there. The GMB Pay Pinch Campaign has helped bust the public sector pay cap and we want to say a huge thank you to all GMB members that have taken part in this campaign. This is the first time in eight years where the local government pay cap has been busted.

An independent national ballot was organised on the local government pay offer across the GMB membership in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in the first quarter of this year. 94% of members that took part in the ballot voted to accept the offer.

The offer included a two-year pay increase from 1 April 2018. The three key features of the offer is worth 5.6% on the pay bill over two years:

- 1) The majority of staff - those on salaries starting at £19,430 per annum - would receive an uplift of 2% on 1 April 2018 and a further 2% on 1 April 2019.
- 2) Staff on the bottom of the national joint pay spine (Spine Column Point 6 - 19) will receive higher increases than 2%. In year 1 this ranges between **3.7% - 9.3%** and then in Year 2 this ranges between **2.6% - 5.9%**. The starting rate will move to £8.50 on 1 April 2018 (**9.1% increase**) and will further move to £9.00 on 1 April 2019 (**5.9% increase**). Almost a third of workers will receive an inflation linked pay rise in year 1.

3) The offer also includes the introduction of a new national pay spine on 1 April 2019.

Separate pay offers have been made for craft and chief officers. *The latter was a disappointing one year offer of 1%, and at the time of writing GMB is challenging this on behalf of the trade union side with the employer.*

Our priority now is to ensure all employers balloted apply the uplift and use the success of the pay pinch campaign. Our priority is focused on building strong sector organising campaigns to support regions in achieving membership consolidation and growth. In addition the section is keen to scope a campaign to take on contractors that take on staff only not to apply the national minimum terms and conditions.

### **Schools and Academies**

The relentless and damaging restructures continuing in schools and academies as a result of squeezed schools budgets have had the impact on children, families and our members' jobs that GMB predicted.

The number of restructures has soared, with multi academy trusts centralising support staff roles without fully understanding the breadth of roles these staff cover, or the huge impact it will have on pupils. We are increasingly seeing highly paid consultants with no knowledge of schools or how they operate, advising trusts to save money by centralising roles in estates, finance, HR, administration and IT, leaving a skeleton of educational staff at the chalk face. Executive salaries, conversely, have inflated, with over 120 academy trusts paying out individual salaries of over £150,000, in 2016. GMB has long campaigned for employers to acknowledge the skills and expertise well trained support staff bring to our schools, and continues to challenge employers to recognise the professional nature of the roles, as well as challenging each restructure where jobs are under threat.

Removal of support roles has had a direct impact on safety in schools. A recent survey in a large MAT highlighted major health and safety concerns around fire safety, asbestos management and safe handling of bodily fluids. GMB, with the other unions, is challenging this as a matter of urgency.

The steady increase in academies and contrasting decrease in local authority schools has continued and it is vital that GMB ensure we have robust organised structures within academies. At the direction of GMB's National

Schools Committee a range of organising materials have been produced to support this activity. Safeguarding has been identified as a major issue, and so Safeguarding files and inserts have been produced. To support regions in their efforts to achieve a minimum of a school contact in each school, School contact packs have been produced with the aim of achieving more contacts, and converting many contacts into representatives in the medium term.

As a result of the cuts in school budgets it was inevitable that serious injuries from attacks on education workers would increase. GMB launched its 'Stop the violence' campaign in 2015, and this campaign has achieved consistent media interest. As part of our continued campaign against violence, GMB are producing a guidance document for members about violence in schools, and also a set of 'Key Demands'. This will enable us to give the campaign a new direction, by challenging employers to sign up to them in the coming months.

2017 saw the merger of NUT and ATL into The National Education Union. Following repeated attempts to gain recognition for school support staff, GMB, along with the other support staff unions, successfully challenged the NEU and achieved a robust agreement that they would not 'actively or knowingly' seek to recruit support staff under the auspices of the TUC. GMB has now put systems in place to monitor any attempts to recruit support staff by any of the teaching unions.

### **National Health Service**

Since Congress concluded last year the pace of change in the NHS has continued to speed up. Transformational changes, such as the development of the "Sustainable Transformation Projects" (STPs), have seen NHS services centralised, facilities marked for closure, and a drive for so-called efficiency. Accountable Care Organisations (ACOs) are being established bringing local government and NHS provision under a single banner. These ACOs are being developed according to an American model, and the contracts to run the organisations are ending up in the private sector.

In a further unwelcome development, NHS Trusts are establishing wholly owned subsidiaries. The not-for-profit subsidiaries are owned by the relevant Trust, but operate independently, do not pay VAT, and new staff are employed on inferior terms and conditions of employment.



The past year has also seen direct negotiations with the NHS employers on pay. GMB proposed a formal pay claim be submitted, and it was and negotiations began. A framework agreement emerged, which a GMB Pay Conference discussed. The Conference decided to recommend a rejection of the agreement and a ballot is taking place, concluding on 6 June.

The negotiations were conducted against growing crises in the NHS, with ambulance response times worsening, and a winter crisis, which the NHS should have planned for, seeing hospitals overcrowded and staff at breaking point. GMB secured significant media coverage during the winter months and has become an effective voice of staff and patients alike. The crisis saw a substantial rise in vacant posts, with 100,000 NHS vacancies in early 2018.

At the time of writing a major survey of violence against ambulance staff was due to be published, including not just facts and figures, but also the stories of members assaulted in the course of their work.

### **Social Care**

GMB launched 'We Care at Christmas' campaign over the week before the run up to Christmas day. This successful media campaign highlighted the invaluable work that GMB care professionals do especially over the Christmas period and included a delegation delivering a Christmas card by hand to Downing Street jointly signed by GMB and HC-One.

GMB and HC-One are in discussions regarding a joint initiative which will be launched at an event where we will formally sign a new recognition agreement which will encompass all recent HC-One acquisitions.

This initiative aims to make caring a profession which is respected and valued. The strategy seeks to create a new era of caring through professionalising the career, to recognise the invaluable and hard work carers undertake every single day. It will also help to ensure the sector has the necessary support, progression and pay structures in place to retain and recruit outstanding staff.

HC-One is now the biggest care provider in the UK due to the recent acquisitions over the past 12 months. The latest acquisitions include the former Helen McArdle homes (Beamish Homes), RV (Retirement Villages) and the former 110 BUPA homes (Oval Homes). The new GMB recognition agreement will give us access to

all of these sites which will provide substantial opportunity for organising. The Oval homes have 10,000 employees working in this part of the business equal the total number of employees across the rest of HC-One. We have produced bespoke organising materials to assist regions to organise when visiting these homes.

### **Justice Sector**

GMB continues to represent Chief Officers of Probation under the SCOOP Banner. Its officers have been trained and supported and a network of national representatives established. Unfortunately there is hardly a National Probation Service anymore; it has been replaced by some 25 privately owned Community Rehabilitation Companies (mainly owned by Sodexo and Interserve) who operate contracts on behalf of the government. This privatisation has jeopardised the quality of probation work, worsened accountability, undermined workers conditions and increased dangers to public safety. Every single government report into the system has shown it to be not meeting its targets yet last year the government handed out more money to the private contractors, because of 'unforeseen challenges' that the contractors had faced. The National Audit Office investigated these changes and found that the CRCs had underperformed, and been rewarded with a pay rise

- Since privatisation, the number of convicts committing a serious further offence while under probation supervision has risen 20%.
- CRCs are failing to meet 2/3rds of their targets on average - with the worst performing company only meeting 4 out of 24 target measures.

Working alongside our fellow Trade Unions in the sector we are attempting to campaign within the companies for improved terms and conditions to counter the worse working conditions, increased workloads, lower morale and threats to safety faced by our members. (A recent survey showed that more than half of those working for private firms in the probation sector are now looking for new employment).

GMB is also spearheading a political lobbying campaign to highlight the dangers to the public and waste of money that is the essential story of probation privatisation

In the Prison Service we continue to work closely with fellow Trade Unions to campaign for better terms and conditions for those working in the prison service which has suffered as much as

the probation service in terms of worse working conditions and decreased morale in a failing system of privatisation. At least the government in this case has committed to recruiting an additional 2,500 Prison Officers.

### **Higher Education and Further Education**

Mapping GMB membership remains challenging because of the mergers and re-organisation of institutions, both within and across the HE and FE sectors. Despite this, the public services section continues to concentrate on its aim to expand membership and urge greater service sector participation from workplace organisers in each sector. In addition attention will be given by the section to the extent of excessive workloads being worked by HE support staff, arising from the results of GMB HE Support Staff Survey conducted earlier this year. Along with a continued concern about the gender pay gap in HE.

In FE joint DOCAS and Facility Time guidance has been agreed and circulated to colleges.

On higher and further education pay GMB stays resolute on pressing employers for a minimum starting pay rate for all staff of £10 per hour. However In 2017 FE support staff accepted an offer of 1% or £250. Whilst in HE the pay offer accepted by support staff ranged between 2.43% and 1.7%. Another key element to the offer includes continuing joint work on measures to close the gender pay gap in HE.

### **Contractors**

Carillion collapsed in 2017 despite Government's best efforts to bail them out. The collapse left creditors unpaid and thousands of people out of work, and public money was spent on redundancy payments for workers subsequently employed by other private sector providers who inherited Carillion's work on the cheap. Far too many GMB members in the NHS, Local Government and the defence sector are on, or near to, the legal minimum wage: an unacceptable situation that must be challenged at every level on both an industrial and a political basis.

### **Civil Service**

GMB is the dominant Trade Union in the Legal Aid Agency that now comes under the Ministry of Justice. Members in the Civil Service have suffered worsening terms and conditions under successive Conservative led governments who are now attempting to increase working hours and reduce long held conditions of service. Negotiations are under way which should lead

to a ballot on the latest proposals by the end of the month.

### **MOD**

MOD still continues to be a difficult place for our members to be employed.

Continuous outsourcing of contracts and a pay cap by government are biting deep into our members pockets.

Pay claims have been lodged with DE&S and MOD and we are expecting these to be as difficult as previous years.

### **International Affiliates**

GMB took part in the European Public Sector day organised by EPSU. The section is reviewing affiliations post Brexit as the landscape will change as will priorities.

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## **NATIONAL ORGANISING REPORT**

Following the reorganisation of the Sections, the Department was placed under the management of the National Secretary for Public Services. Kevin Brandstatter is Lead National Organiser and Mark Wilkinson, Southern Region is chair of the NOT.

The NOT discussed how it could focus its efforts on supporting the Regions and the National Sections, to drive recruitment and organising forwards. It made a number of recommendations to the SMT, designed to fulfil this task. In doing so, it recommended at the SMT endorse three national targets for organisation and recruitment. The three are ASDA, Schools and the NHS.

The NOT has monitored progress in the three national targets over throughout 2017 and 2018. In ASDA membership in the stores continues to grow, schools membership likewise, although the increase in membership in the Academies has seen a welcome increase. At the time of writing GMB Regions were about to conduct an exercise involving workplace ballots and postal ballots of GMB members working in the NHS. Public Service Senior Organisers, NOT members and organising teams are working well together.

The NOT has also been reviewing successful organising and recruitment activities in Regions to spread best practice and to coordinate cross regional activity in particular employers.

The NOT continue to discuss and develop an effective retention strategy and have tabled a report to the General Secretary which highlights some of the reasons as to why GMB members leave. It became clear from feedback that the first two years of a new members experience in GMB were incredibly important, and what was most likely to retain members was strong communication and involvement.

The NOT continues to work to improve the accuracy of the GMB membership system, and a small working group has begun the task of reviewing how the membership system is used and will put forward recommendations to the SMT.

The aim of the NOT is to drive forwards recruitment and organising by consensus between GMB regions in order to ensure the future growth of the union.

## BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS REGION

Last year at the commencement of my report I pointed out that our financial membership figures looked somewhat stark compared to the previous twelve months. I am delighted to commence this year's report by pointing out that our membership is in growth. At the end of March 2018, our regional membership stood at 54,799 financial members which was an increase on 230 on the month previous and an increase overall in the twelve month period of 105 members which is a 0.2% growth, not amazing but heading in the right direction. Our target by the end of 2018 or preferably before is to hit 55,000 members. The thrust of the growth appears now to be predominantly in Commercial Services as Public Services, although still delivering a healthy amount of members each month is not the cash cow that it once was but obviously we must not ignore this area of potential membership either.

A decision was also taken early last year to move to a sectional structure within the region whereby rather than have officers doing a variety of disciplines, we concentrated them on one particular section. This has hopefully cut down on officers' unnecessary travel and allowed them to concentrate their time and effort on one particular section while still enabling them to dip in and out of other sections when assisting with regional campaigns.

On the issue of regional campaigns and regional success stories, the region is obviously as prominent as possible in lots of areas but there will always be specific campaigns that come up every year. A selection of those are, the Jo Cox Community Event, our Regional Women's Group (BOSS) the Birmingham Organised Sisters Society have been working with the Welcome Halesowen Group which welcomes refugees to the area to help them establish themselves and get the basics such as clothes, toiletries etc. so when the Jo Cox Coming Together event was launched it seemed an opportune moment for the region to host a community BBQ with food, games, face painting etc. and activists were introduced to the new community members that had settled in the Halesowen area. The theme of the BBQ was



obviously to commemorate Jo Cox's life whilst linking it to diversity by the buzz phrase; We are far more united and have far more in common with each other than things that divide us.

Also in July we had the Women Chainmaker's celebration, this as stated is a celebration because it is victory for the women's movement and for trade unionism. We celebrate it each year, commemorating the 1910 strike of the Women Chainmaker's in Cradley Heath which formulated the first ever national wage. This also brought Mary McArthur, a founder member of our union when forming the National Federation of Women Workers.

Another of our success stories, which I believe is a major success within the region and it is getting more widespread is the Bleeding Insane Campaign. This is being run and promoted by our BOSS Group which is to fight to eradicate period poverty and collecting sanitary products for a local Women's Refuge. The aim of the campaign obviously is to ensure that women do not have to pay for sanitary products when they cannot afford to. In an effort to lead by example, because we within the regional are calling for





employers and public bodies to provide sanitary wear free of charge, the Region has now made a policy whereby we provide sanitary products free in all of our regional offices women's toilets in the hope that this will encourage others to do the same. As the campaign states, women do not have a choice and they have to bleed and it's bleeding insane to force them to purchase such products.

On International Youth Day in August, our Young Members group YOUF (Young Organised United Fighters) launched their postcard campaign, Wages Not Based On Ages. The campaign centres around paying young people the pay they deserve instead of the discriminatory practice of having different minimum wages based on how old someone is.

Our young members turned out in force hitting the bars and talking to young workers and members of the public about support for the campaign and filling out post cards for MP's in the constituencies.

We had a very successful Black History Month event in October where we had an exhibition of posters of black minority and ethnic heroes displayed throughout the month and an exhibition of African artefacts were loaned from the Birmingham Museum. Over 60 people attended regional Office looking at the black history within the Birmingham and West Midlands Region and all enjoyed Caribbean food, reggae music along with very inspirational speakers.

On Women's History Month in March of this year, it marked 100 years since the first women won the right to vote. The month commencing with the opening of an exhibition of inspirational women throughout the years and a lecture by our Regional Political Officer on the Suffragette Movement with Tracy Brabin, Member of Parliament for Batley and Spen and Shadow Minister for Early Years giving a very inspirational speech and she became the first MP to sign our Bleeding Insane Sanitary Towel post card.

Other campaigns and issues were the Public Services Pay Pinch Campaign which saw the region undertake of lobby of local government employers and a regional launch of the very successful Maybots.

Birmingham City Council Community Nurseries where under threat of closure yet again when we in the region led a high profile campaign striving to keep open the last fourteen remaining civil run nurseries. We secured a 1,500 strong petition and undertook a range of events to fight the closures. This had the desired effect of getting the council to reconsider their plan and look at the sustainability and locality provision as well as the options for keeping the nurseries open.

The Dying to Work Campaign which has now been picked up by the Regional Midlands TUC after being launched by the GMB Midlands and East Coast Region has now secured agreements with Birmingham City Council, Dudley MBC, Sandwell MBC, Northampton Borough Council, Acivico and Sandwell Leisure Trust. All of them have now signed up to the Dying to Work Voluntary Charter.

The region also hosted the launch of the national We're Making It Campaign in our Stoke Office. The national campaign is designed to raise the profile of manufacturing, bringing to the fore the need for a good deal from Brexit negotiations focusing on investment and skills in this very important sector of the West Midlands economy. We also used the event to launch the Proud To Be Potters Campaign which highlights the challenges and the importance of the pottery industry in the local community within the Stoke area. Bespoke ceramic mugs were specially commissioned for this event made by our members at Dunoons Pottery. The launch was also attended by local MP's, Ruth Smeeth and Gareth Snell who both signed the We're Making It Charter and offered to support this important campaign.

Finally with regards to campaigns, as a trade union we obviously campaign to support communities and groups but on occasions our core campaigning goes to representing and in most cases protecting our members. This was the case where one of our regional members taxi drivers from Oxford had his contract taken away from him after he was encouraging his driver colleagues to join the GMB union. We immediately launched a major campaign against the employer, 001 Taxi's and on 10 February 2018 we held a massive demonstration in Oxford City Centre calling for our member, Mo Fadlalla to be given his contract back. This has had a significant detrimental impact upon 001 Taxi's which shows the power of trade unionism when channelled in the right direction.

In conclusion of my report I would like to as usual, commend all officers, staff and especially the representatives and activists within the region who continue to meet the threats that arise and turn most of those threats into opportunities to organise which continue to help us grow. I say on many many occasions and I reiterate now, if it were not for our activists and representatives, our organisation would grind to a halt. They give up their time freely, voluntary and with gusto to ensure that the members they serve are represented to the highest possible standard and they need to understand, hence me emphasising this, how much they are valued by us as an organisation.



## LONDON REGION

London Region continues to deliver on our successful "Members First" organising Agenda where our members are at the heart of our strategy, democracy, and operations. We have turned this into a Regional Priorities Programme endorsed by the Regional Management Team and Committee and we will be monitoring our progress on a regular basis.

### **Membership**

Since our last Congress, London Region has experienced a slight decline in its overall membership however; there has been a major reorganisation taking place to strengthen our activist and branch engagement. A stronger emphasis on organisation and recruitment throughout 2018 has been our main objective so far.

### **Tribute to Mary Turner**

In July 2017 we sadly lost our inspirational National President, Mary Turner - 'Our Mary'. Mary Turner was a servant to the people and hero of GMB, she gained the respect and recognition of everyone in GMB, the wider Trade Union and Labour movement as well as those from all political spheres.

Mary was a tenacious and unflappable trade unionist, combining toughness and care and soared through against all the odds. She was known throughout the Labour movement for her indomitable stamina, kindness and compassion.

Mary was everything that an outstanding Trade Unionist and Socialist should be. Mary inspired so many to realise their potential in life as she dedicated her life to helping others. The World and GMB has lost a giant, warm giving person whose passing will be mourned by all. **"Mary Turner, remembered forever."**

### **Regional Governance & Management**

Our newly elected Regional Council took office in April 2017 and held its first meeting in October 2017. At that meeting, the new Regional Council elected Penny Robinson as our Regional President and we paid a sad farewell to our previously longstanding President Roy Dunnett who decided to stand down after more than 25 years in active post. We currently have 91 lay delegates who make up our new Council. Congratulations also go to our newly elected Regional Committee which took shape in October 2017, bringing with it a richness of diversity to the Region.

### **Branch Activity**

During the last 12 months the Region has been concentrating on rebuilding branch structures. We have focused heavily on returning **all regional branches** to lay member control and ensuring all branch rule book positions are occupied by election. We have opened new Branches for our members employed in the NHS and more recently have now opened a new University of East Anglia (UEA/SU) Branch following the signing of our Recognition with the Students Union.

The number of Women elected to the position of Branch Secretary has increased significantly and this is largely attributable to the increased engagement of Women through our Equalities activities and our extremely successful Women's conference which is in its third year.

We have encouraged wider interest and enthusiasm to increase the sign up to online branch accounting and have now run several training sessions across the Region for Branches.

### **Staff Changes**

Congratulations go to Colin Greer appointed as Membership Development Officer, and Richard O' Leary appointed as Senior Organiser in May 2017 and also Hilda Tavolara who has been undertaking the GMB staff to officer development programme since May 2017. The Region was pleased to appoint Gordon White and Steve Garelick to the positions of Regional Organiser. Gary Doolan joined us permanently from National office and now heads up our Regional Political Department and Organising activity. Bryony Newstead joined and is based at the Norwich office.

We say goodbye to Marie Campbell and Dawn Francis. Also Dave Powell, Senior Organiser who retired on 30 April 2018 after serving more than 20 years as an Organiser / Senior Organiser in GMB London Region. Glenn Holdom also retired in July. We wish them both a long, happy and healthy retirement with their families.

Finally, Gary Carter also moved to National office after being successful at Interview for a National officer position. Good luck and best wishes Gary from all your colleagues here in London Region.



## Policy & Operations

We have introduced a Research, Policy and Operations role and we are extremely pleased Ida Clemo joined us from National Office. She has produced Briefings for Staff and Branches on GDPR and Bank Holiday Working and Information Resources and has been working with the Mayor of London on his Good Work Standard.

On behalf of the Region, we have responded to Government Consultations on the Funding of Supported Housing (DCLG/DWP) where we raised concerns on the supply and funding of women's refuges and responded to Mayor of London consultation on the London Plan looking at future planning and infrastructure carrying forward GMB Congress policies. Ida will also be involved in a Branch Training road-show ensuring that our Branches are aware and supported in their development and participation of GMB democracy, governance and policy.

## Press & Media

Over the last 12 months, London Regional Press and Media Department distributed over 185 press releases and gathered over 1000 press mentions. Of note is a local story of an 81-year-old woman who sadly died due to pressure on ambulance response times. This gathered momentum and national press attention leading to an NHS enquiry on the winter crisis. In addition, the Colman's factory closure shocked the public and attracted a number of well-known public figures to prevent the closure of the site.

The Regional Press and Media Department manages, produces, coordinates and supports all Regional artwork, press releases, member communications, translations, photography, filming, online surveys, website and all social media channels. We launched the first edition of the Regional magazine "**Members First**" in October 2017 and the second issue was sent to all members in March 2018 as well as sending out across our social media channels and uploading it to our website. These editions have given updates on the region's success stories and general news.

In addition, the department has produced five professional videos: March 4 the NHS, RMA on the General Election 2017, GMB Local Government Councillors, A day in life of a GMB rep and an animation. A short video for the Regional Women's Conference 2018 is currently planned to be filmed in May and launched in the summer.



The Regional website launched in April 2017 receives an average 3,500 visitors a month and provides vital information for our members and the general public on sections, departments, member groups and regional news and campaigns. This is in addition to YouTube, Flickr, Facebook and Twitter channels active on the homepage.

## Education & Training

We are constantly improving our communications to members on training and we are developing regional IT systems to invite and record member training and progress. As a result, we have scheduled extra Induction and Health & Safety courses throughout this last year.

We are in the process of offering more briefings and bespoke training to Branches and activists and have delivered Mental Health awareness training to Branches and reps in the water industry. We have involved members of our H&S forum in the updating of our Health and Safety training module and given all officers the opportunity to participate in the Train the Trainers programme.

We are now the second GMB Region to have established a Lifelong Learning Committee and this will feed into the National Forum as well as developing specific Regional initiatives. Videos following a 'day in the life of a rep' in Harrow and an animation promoting Union led lifelong

learning have been produced in conjunction with our Press and Media department. We have reviewed and re-established our Regional Training Fund (the John Cope Trust) to make it more accessible to members in lower paid work and the gig economy.

### Political

Since Congress 2017, London Region's political strategy has expanded as we have adopted the "**Members First**" agenda and increased engagement of many members within local CLPs in political organising. This was organised by the Region's Political Forum introduced 4 years ago to build political awareness and get GMB members fully engaged. This forum was Officer Lead.

The aim of the new local political strategy is to build a local team in every branch, train activists, encourage more political activity in branches, and our communities, organise local campaigns, build the labour movement so as to build autonomous structures and help our candidates win elections.

A Branch Political Officers Conference in April 2018, led to changes to the political forum and a move to a larger "Regional Political Organising Committee". This is now **all lay member led**, giving our members a real say in Regional politics and aims to expand from just organising politics within the workplace to move politically deeper into our communities.

This initiative has allowed a much wider base of members to join our political campaigns and join with us in fighting a common goal. The committee is not just lay member lead, it's a committee made up of Branch Political Officers, who act like a TULO Organiser in every branch, building the politics and membership of local political teams within our branches and building Local Teams within each constituency that can be called on at any time to help Labour Win Elections.

London Region has opened up an activist database enrolment list which is linked to the GMB membership system, and members can simply scan a logo on the printed cards and enrol on line to become a GMB activist. Within the first two weeks we've had over 500 enrol, and the numbers are growing. The region will build on this as time moves on.

Wherever London Region has engaged in election campaigns we have produced significant results. In the 2017 General Election all four target areas we chose to support won by increased majorities thanks to the hard work of the Officers and Activists. The next steps are to build on the foundations we have created and move into turning activists into an army of candidates to stand for office when required.

London Region has redesigned the TULO Handbook and distributed this to branch activists. This is a great asset in how to organise at a community level and already we are seeing very positive returns from this document.

In November 2017 the Region invested in a **#TeamGMB** battle-bus and this has already made several appearances on the campaign trail including its maiden voyage to the Burston Rally!

### Equality

During the Regional Equality Conference in November 2017, we launched our Equality Organising Strategy which is primarily aimed to enshrine equality in all that we do. As a Region we ensure that Equalities work is proactively implemented in workplaces/branches via the equality bargaining agenda and is a tool to recruit, retain, empower and activate membership.

We now have a larger Regional Council (extra 3 seats due to the equality strands), we are soon to launch the updated Regional Branch Equality toolkit and throughout 2017/18 we've been producing a quarterly Regional Equality





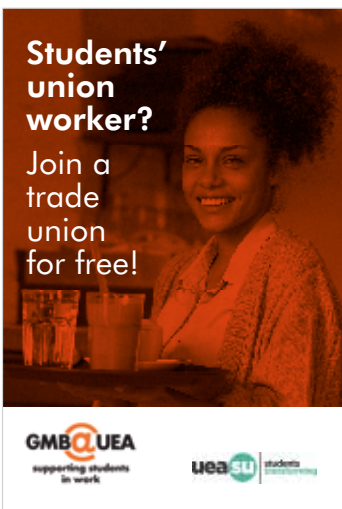


newsletter which is sent out to all members.

Regional successes at Congress 2017 include Taranjit Chana winning the Eleanor Marx Award and the Region winning the Presidents Leadership Award for Equality for our Mental Health project.

**Congratulations to all of our Equalities Activists for another successful year!**

At the end of 2017 the Region signed a momentous agreement with the University of East Anglia Students Union covering all working students ensuring they are paid the living wage and have access to GMB union. This has resulted in several new workplace reps and a new branch being opened. We are pleased to



see membership continuing to grow and working students getting more involved in GMB union activities.

A special note of thanks must go to our Young London members for supporting the Region and its organising activities throughout this campaign so far.

**Health & Safety**

Over the period, an increased number of our members have raised concerns over health and safety issues in their workplace and at times, risking their own jobs by doing so. We continue to highlight where members have been put at risk and have called on HSE to investigate concerns highlighted by our members.

In response, we have now constructed our very own Regional H&S Activists Forum to help us identify campaign initiatives and lead on these across our workplaces and branches. Regular Health & Safety bulletins are now being produced for our members and activists.

**COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION**

2017/2018 has been challenging on many levels throughout the Section, none more so than at British Airways where a restructuring programme has continued at a pace to significantly reduce the headcount at Heathrow. The situation does not appear to be any brighter for 2018 where the intention is to halve the amount of customer service staff by the end of 2018 with the potential for a further 800 job losses. In a well organised workplace like British Airways, such numbers have obvious implications for our membership. Although these losses have had an effect on the Regions membership, overall the London Region Commercial Services Section has seen a small increase in membership over the last twelve months due to the "Members First" principles adopted by everyone throughout the Region.

Organising targets for this year include Wembley Stadium, static guards on the HS2 rail project and guards on the Thames Tideway Tunnel.

In the Energy sector, Centrica announced job cuts of between 4,000 and 5,000 in British Gas by the year 2020. Regardless of these announcements, our representatives in Cadent have recently recruited over 80 new members on the back of holding workplace pay ballots. Proof, if ever it was needed, that by applying the culture and disciplines of our well established **GMB@Work** policy, growth can still be achieved despite the odds being sometimes stacked against us.

We have been campaigning against the closure of the Anglian Water Pension scheme with Frank Fields MP and have called on OFWAT to speak out on the unfortunate trend of water industry companies closing pension schemes.

Unfortunately, job losses are common across all sectors and we highlighted the announcement to close the XPO Logistics Warehouse in Neasden as M&S move their operations to Welham Green.

In the Security sector, there has been an extremely high volume of TUPE transfers, mainly at sites involving small numbers. Keeping track

of these members is challenging in its own right and it remains a high priority for our officers to retain the membership. Voluntary recognition agreements have been negotiated with security employer Wilson James, at the Natural History Museum and at Christies Auction House. A recognition agreement with S.H.Pratt (Bananas) was signed on 7 March 2018. The company import, ripen and distribute bananas to all the major supermarkets.

Our Asda stores membership has increased by 1199 over the last year – a fantastic achievement and congratulations to all stores reps, activists and officers involved with our on-going organising campaign.

Following our ground breaking, landmark victory in 2016 against Uber, which gave worker status and rights to our members, Uber appealed to the Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT) in 2017 and lost, again! The EAT decision was further vindication of our GMB campaign to ensure drivers are given the rights they are entitled to. In another 2017 case involving London Region Members. The Employment Tribunal found in favour of our Addison Lee member drivers being an integral part of the business and confirmed they are not self-employed but workers. Finally, in September 2017, our Professional Drivers Branch Secretary, Steve Garelick won the TUC Congress Award for Organiser of the Year.

### MANUFACTURING SECTION

As Manufacturing sites have announced closures we have been supporting our members at Colman's Norwich, Coca Cola, Milton Keynes and Britvic in Norwich involving MPs and calling on the Business Secretary to intervene.

The Region is pleased to have taken part in the National Campaign "Making It" road-show where we officially launched our campaign for manufacturing jobs in London with a ceremony at City Hall London on 14 March 2018.

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan addressed the event speaking about why manufacturing matters and signed the GMB Manufacturing Charter. Activists and members from the Manufacturing Section took part in a panel discussion with the London Mayor and a number of the Regional MP's on why Manufacturing matters in London.

In order to effectively plan our targets throughout the year, we have produced a London Region Manufacturing Organising Calendar based on highlighting pay anniversary dates. This will assist Officers and Activists to plan



early access to the workplace in order to consult with members and non-members on any potential claim, to further consult on the content of the claim and final access to consult on the offer and ballot on site.

Recent pay negotiations and workplace ballots have proved successful in the recruitment of membership within the London Region. From the 1 May 2017– 18 April 2018, 740 members have been recruited in the London Region Manufacturing section.

We also signed a new recognition agreement with Bombay Halwa. Membership continues to grow at both EAT, Wembley and London Linen, Southall. We continue to work on the West London Park Royal Project and continue to recruit members within the target companies. In particular, during the first 4 months of 2018 around 300 new members in Noon Products have been recruited during the pay negotiations which are on-going.

During the pay consultation at Mizkan, Bury St Edmunds, we managed to secure, after several meetings, a 2½% pay deal and managed to recruit new members where there is already a high density. Finally we managed to get a substantial 3 year pay deal in Rom Ltd in Witham Essex after 10 year pay freeze.

### PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION

Since Congress 2017, a key priority in Public Services has been the conversion from check off to Direct Debit. In the last 10 months the Region have transferred a further 3,013 members from check off to Direct Debit and 3,983 members have been recruited within the section.

This campaign remains on-going, regardless of the Government announcement on 8th March to delay implementation of the Trade Union (Deduction of Union Subscriptions from Wages in the Public Sector) Regulations 2017. Despite this, the Region has been proceeding with securing service level agreements with all public

sector employers where we have members on check off. To date the Region has 32 service level agreements which should ensure the continuation of check off is in place.

As part of the Region's "**Members First**" strategy, since Congress 2017, a further 106 Workplace Organisers have been elected within all areas of Public Services.

We are seeing an impact on our membership within many Civic Centres / Town Halls as a result of the Governments on-going austerity measures on Council budgets. More redundancies are taking place following further restructures and reorganisations and streamlining of Civic Centres, however, our Branches and officers through their involvement in taking the lead in these budget discussions are limiting the numbers of redundancies on our members.

More and more councils are now looking at alternative models of service delivery through in house trading companies and many already have these in place.

Moving the Public Service Lay Activists meetings from a reporting session on issues within their Local Authority to providing briefing sessions on specific issues has now provided activists with a clearer focus which will be integral to developing collective organising strategies in regards to the setting up of in house trading companies across local Authorities, and subsequent TUPE Transfers of employees in consolidating workplace organisation and ensuring membership retention.

The Region are updating and reissuing Branch toolkits and developing template letters for all workplace reps to use for many areas of negotiations, TUPE, Redundancy, Equality Impact Assessments etc.

**NHS:** In advance of the consultations on the NHS pay offer, as a supplement to National materials, the Region produced a bulletin which was emailed to all members directly employed by the NHS setting out the facts why GMB took the position to reject the 3 year pay offer. This was well received by our members.

The Region have put in place an organising strategy where officers with NHS responsibility have identified at least one NHS Trust to organise and hold work place consultation ballots on the offer, in addition to the individual postal ballot process.

The NJC consultative ballot and the NHS ballot were used by the Region as a data cleansing exercise to ensure that membership records are up to date. Within the contracted services in the NHS, the Region are developing a strategy to target specific contractor(s) who have contracts within a number of Trusts by submitting collective Regional Pay claims to the parent Company. This will give members confidence within their individual Trust, that the campaign against their specific contractor is a collective campaign.

**Schools:** The Regional School Board continues to meet on a regular basis, with the primary focus to establish cohesive strategies that will build wider engagement with members across all schools within the Region to meet the many challenges Support Staff are facing in Schools as a result of budget deficits and changes to the funding formula.

We have continued our recruitment activity in Schools and held the second Schools Conference for our Schools based members and activists where over 60 Regional delegates met to discuss issues facing our members and to decide on future regional Schools campaigns. This successful conference has led to more school appointments and a bigger growth in school membership. The region has also launched an online petition for the government to increase school funding.



**Warren Kenny**  
GMB London Regional Secretary



## Midland and East Coast Region

The Region continues to support its members, activists and branches under the Regional Secretary with three Senior Organisers and their respective teams, Central, Northern and Southern. Below is a selection of the projects and campaigns which we have been involved in.

Reps and Convenors at Leicester Services Branch have become very involved in the GMB pay pinch campaign. Not only did they encourage everyone they met to sign up to the petition but also they raised the profile of the campaign and talked about it at every meeting that took place with members. Encouraging members to get involved too. An invitation to the Authorities Black Workers Group event day provided an ideal opportunity to spread the word even further and the response to this excellent campaign was incredibly positive.

The next big event came on the 8th December with convenors and reps handing out information and raising awareness outside the City Hall, the Authorities administrative HQ. Although a little chilly all in attendance were warmed by the response that they got.

The GMB, along with our Unite colleagues, have been actively campaigning at a "new build" construction site on King George Dock in Hull. All construction employees are on zero hour contracts but are being forced to work up to 77 hours per week on basic pay for every hour and below nationally agreed rates of pay. We have demonstrated on four separate occasions over the year against these unscrupulous employment tactics by the contract company



"Harris Pye". We have had colleagues from across the country showing their solidarity with us on the demonstrations on all occasions. We have also put a "Minimum Standard Construction Charter" to the Hull City Council some 18 months ago and we await a date to get it agreed and signed off.

Summer 2017 – joint Hull Shop Stewards, working with Collective Youth and other Unions. GMB had a fantastic day in the centre of Hull, Queens Gardens. Local MP for Hull West (Labour), Emma Hardy (pictured) joined the campaign signing the petition and speaking on stage along with local activists and international activists from Spain. Emma spoke about Tory austerity – which mirrored the Tories attacks on the most vulnerable in society in the UK. Music and face painting gave the event a festival feel, also food and dancing. Hull No 1 proudly displayed the new Branch Banner with Albert Rollinson, aged 88, a life long activist supporting the day (pictured). The Pay Pinch Campaign attracted GMB activists from the food industry too who said we all have a vested interest in protecting Public Services and that included fighting against austerity and the pay cap which would only drive workers out and privatisation in to Public Services.

### Northamptonshire County Council – Final Closing Down Sale Campaign

In March 2017 we decided to start running a campaign around Northamptonshire County Council. The latest round of cuts for 2017 amounted to £58 million. Vulnerable essential services were being hit and GMB were continuously advising the Council that the continual cutting of staff and services would eventually lead to financial collapse. We produced a campaign leaflet and arranged campaign days in Northampton, Kettering and Corby on market stalls engaging with our members and the public, it was shocking to hear



that most people didn't believe it! In October 2017 the Chief Executive, Paul Blantern, resigned and there was outrage from the general public that amidst millions of pounds of cuts and the failure of his "Next Generation Council" model he still walked away with a £95,000 pay off! In the meantime, Damon Lawrenson, was appointed into the Interim Chief Executive's position in November 2017, earning an eye watering £1,000 per day! In January 2018 the Secretary of State, Sajid Javid, ordered a probe into the Council's finances. In the meantime on 2nd February 2018, the Council issued a 114 Notice (the first one to be issued in 20 years) effectively banning all or any new spending. On 20th February KPMG said that the Council's 2018/19 Budget may be unlawful and on 28th February a revised budget was issued which involved a pay freeze for staff even though the Council had budgeted for a 2% rise. On 15th March the Government Inspector produced a damning 50 page report quoting financial incompetence at the heart of the Council's problems. On 19th the GMB attended a staff briefing with the Chief Executive where we called for his resignation and on Wednesday 21st March he resigned. GMB are currently balloting staff on their pay freeze and terms and conditions. The Prime Minister continued to deny that Northamptonshire's financial collapse is a direct result of the Tory Government's continuous cuts to services and a Tory Council's mismanagement of its budget – half a billion pounds every year.

The GMB in Peterborough continues the fight!

### **Forterra Drivers – New Recognition Agreement**

Back in October 2017 we started discussing voluntary recognition for the Forterra Drivers. The company were slightly reluctant initially, however after three meetings we managed to get agreement and in March of this year I signed the new agreement off. The agreement gives the Drivers a separate bargaining unit, facilities to negotiate pay rises and a Joint Negotiating Committee to be able to raise issues of concern.

### **Matalan Distribution, Corby – Reinstatement of two dismissed members**

In November 2017 two of our members were unfairly dismissed by Matalan in Corby for allegedly being under the influence of alcohol in the workplace. It was very clear to me from the start that these two members were being dismissed unfairly despite us representing them through disciplinary, appeal and advising the company of their unfair decision. We lodged with ACAS for early conciliation where I insisted

that the members wanted their jobs back and full reinstatement. The company finally contacted me in February 2018 and agreed that they would reinstate both members with continuation of contracts and no loss of money and employment rights. The members both returned to work on 6th March very happy to get their permanent jobs back as both had only been able to get agency positions after being dismissed.

### **British Gas**

Having fought off an aggressive recruitment campaign by Unison at the Leicester ASC in which GMB members were targeted, our reps have re-grouped, strengthened their team and are mounting a strong campaign of their own. Pictured below are Senior Rep Nat Dyson, Branch Secretary Jahira Ravat and Vikki Ognissanti from GMB Scotland region who assisted at the most recent recruitment day. We have recently had 3 new workplace organisers elected at NDC and also one at CDC, where we are fighting for recognition following a TUPE transfer from DHL.



### **Leicestershire County Council**

Following a review of the Highways Delivery Operation, we had to enter a collective grievance on behalf of members involved in the winter gritting on-call service. The Authority were proposing a reduction in the terms and conditions of drivers involved. The members stood firm and after a protracted series of negotiations, a deal was achieved to buy-out some aspects which the members have accepted.

The academy conversion rate among schools left under Leicestershire County Council control has now slowed considerably. A trend seems to be developing whereby localised groups of schools are forming multi-academy trusts (MAT's). In some instances these can be quite large and recognition agreements have been signed with the latest two MAT's covering some 12 schools.





### **Industrial Action at Metsa Wood, Boston**

For the second year running over 100 members at the Metsa Wood plant in Boston, Lincs undertook a 24 hour strike in protest at the imposition of a pay freeze by the company. It seemed inconceivable that after the similar dispute the year before the company would make the same mistake twice but they did so spectacularly. A pay freeze was never going to be acceptable to a workforce that had been galvanized by the success of the dispute the year before. The company seemed unable to comprehend this concept as it sleepwalked into a second strike in 12 months. This time there were three new stewards for GMB who did a fantastic job in organising their members through newsletter and fantastically well attended meetings out of working hours. The membership were fully supportive of the action so once again on the back of an overtime ban running for several weeks membership took 24 hour strike action in November 2017. The strike was brilliantly supported and once again media interest led to greater exposure for their cause. Eventually the company relented on their pay freeze stance and offered a one off payment to end the dispute which was accepted by the workforce. The stewards Andy Robinson, Paul Gregson and Ivars Danilenko made a well received and ad hoc presentation at the Region's "Making It" conference last year. Andy Robinson made the point. "This dispute was about ordinary GMB members organising themselves and refusing to accept what they were told by the company that a pay freeze was inevitable. When members stand together there is no limit to what can be achieved".

### **A Rejuvenated Branch fulfils GMB@Work**

Boston No.1 Branch is a small local branch in the Lincolnshire town of Boston with about 250 members primarily employed at Fogarty's and Metsa Wood. When the former branch secretary, Mick Wilcock, had to step down from the role due to serious ill health there was a fear that the branch may have to be merged. However an extraordinary AGM was called and the members of the branch responded fantastically and on the back of successful campaigns in both workplaces a number of new stewards were ready to inject new life into the branch. Andy Robinson from Metsa Wood became the branch secretary and a new branch committee was elected. The branch immediately set about getting the finances and accounts back on track as these had been left dormant due to Mick's illness. They also established much

better links between the workplaces and Andy built customised noticeboards to put up in the workplace so GMB members were kept informed via regular newsletters. Suddenly ordinary members began to attend branch meetings enthused by a sense of activity. The branch spent some money on merchandise for their members' which was greatly appreciated. Also they made a point of honouring two long servicing stewards Geoff Burch from Metsa Wood and Becky Green from Fogarty's, who had both moved on from their workplaces, with a branch presentation award. Small things such as this were just the right thing to do and again much appreciated by the recipients. But the real success of the branch has been in the workplaces. Membership and organisation have improved dramatically. GMB members feel they belong to the organisation and that the branch truly belongs to them. This is just what GMB@Work is all about.

### **GE ALSTOMS - WEST BURTON POWER STATION**

Following a recruitment campaign and a statutory application to the CAC the proposed bargaining unit voted to accept the GMB to be the recognised trade union for collective bargaining. 2 reps have been elected and are undergoing training. The company has since been TUPE transferred to HARGREAVES INDUSTRIAL SERVICES in January 2018. The company are negotiating with the GMB regarding extending the bargaining unit to encompass Cottam Power Station employees.

### **NHS**

#### **Doncaster & Bassetlaw NHS Hospital Trust**

Historically the region has not been able to identify members from the nursing profession who were prepared to become workplace reps at the Trust. Although the membership at the Trust had been well represented, the local structure required somebody with the required knowledge, experience and skill sets to advise, support and represent members on all nurse related issues. In May 2017, the GMB wrote to all members at the Trust inviting them to express an interest in becoming a workplace rep. In June 2017, Denise Butcher, a nurse with over 20 years' service, expressed an interest. After completing her GMB Induction Training, Denise has become a very competent and active lay rep at local, branch and regional level. Denise has vastly enhanced the services which the GMB can now provide to members of the nursing profession working at the Trust. Since Denise became a rep there has been an increase in the number of nurses joining the GMB at the Trust.

### Ashfield District Council

In March 2017, the Deputy CEO invited the joint trade unions to discuss changes to terms and conditions. The employer proposed 10 changes including 5 changes to National Terms and Conditions. The GMB were extremely disappointed that the Labour Cabinet had given the employer authority to consult on changes to nationally agreed conditions such as, reduced sick pay and a reduction of 1 hour in the working week and others terms. The GMB made it very clear that members, many of whom are loyal Labour voters and supporters, would not accept such an attack from the Party. After numerous meetings with the employer and Cllr. Cheryl Butler the Labour Cabinet agreed on 25th October to remove the National Terms and Conditions from the list of 10 the employer wanted to change. After a difficult and challenging consultation, the employer proposed one change which was to remove the Essential Car User Allowance and move away from the JNC mileage rates. The GMB managed to successfully retain a lump sum payment and JNC mileage rates but had to compromise and accept amendments to the qualifying criteria.

### NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

We have appointed the new senior convenor, Jo Matthews (pictured). Jo has been a great asset and has been doing some fantastic work on health and safety, supporting our members within Nottingham City Homes.

### NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

GMB continue to strengthen their position within Nottingham City Council and the branch N55 continue to defy all logic in keeping our membership stable since 2014, even though there has been substantial reductions in the

overall working population within Nottingham City Council. They have done amazingly well in the 56 restructures that have happened and to date recruited another 10 reps to the GMB.

### Severn Trent

The Region acknowledges the sterling work that Jason Evans, Senior Representative Midland and East Coast Region, has done with the support of his junior reps. Severn Trent Water Authority became one of the latest signatories to the Dying to Work Campaign on 10th April 2018. The GMB Shop Steward and Branch Secretary, Jason Evans is pictured above, signing the Charter.

### FURNITURE TRADE

The furniture trade in manufacturing continues to have a rough time of it with foreign imports being one of the greatest threats to our members. We have had several redundancies over the last year. We have managed to negotiate these down to smaller figures but the key issue is the continued pressure in getting work into the Long Eaton factories. To date this has been done well at the Welbeck site. Duresta seem to have turned a corner with the work they are doing but Wades Upholstery unfortunately have had several job losses within 2017 period, although this now seems to have stabilized and we hope to be able to move forward into 2018 with increased production of our members.

### Meggitts Polymers and Composites

This company acquired two new sites some time ago and we have been in discussion with them since about gaining access to the site in our Region. We now have that access and are in the process of looking to recruit Reps to support the membership at the site. The existing Meggitts site in our Region is only just across the road and yet pay rates and culture are totally different. We are currently looking to engage with the Company in relation to looking to harmonise pay rates across the new site as there is quite a variance. Membership at the older site remains high and Reps and our teams Organising Officer are doing a great job of ensuring that all new starters are spoken to as well as existing non members.

### Asda Distribution

It is very positive that we now receive information from Asda in respect of membership updates. However, it has meant that we have removed a lot of members from the system who were not paying subscriptions. This has obviously not impacted on income but has impacted on membership numbers. The reps on site have been working very hard to recruit new



members to address the numbers deficit. The Asda pension issue has obviously impacted on many members in distribution and has created a massive strength of feeling amongst them and Reps, which I hope we will be able to utilise to effect a positive outcome for them. I am also pleased to report that we continue to have a full complement of Reps across all sites. There is always keen interest in these roles.

### **Leicester Services Branch Equality success**

When a request came in to Leicester Services Branch to consider sponsorship for a male amateur boxer, Women's Officer, Mary-Louise Harrison, was quick to point out that the Branch should really consider sponsoring a female boxer also, just to ensure some gender balance. So it came about that Joe Godfrey and Paige Murney both received sponsorship. Both are amateur boxers at a club in Leicester. The Branch are delighted to report that Paige has been chosen to be a member of the England Team at the Commonwealth games. As this is being written Paige is currently out in Australia preparing to compete as a light weight. Joe has also been doing amazing things within the community, volunteering to teach youngsters at the club where he trains, visiting schools to teach combat education and continuing to train for his own boxing career. This just shows what local young members can do with just a little support from their GMB Branch.

### **Robin Hood Energy**

Since Robin Hood Energy was established over 12 months ago we have been in discussions with them over recognition. We started off with membership numbers in single figures and throughout last year through a significant level of engagement with employees that was co-ordinated by Sarah Worth, we were able to increase our membership into double figures by the autumn of last year. As well as the outstanding Recognition Agreement, the newly formed company wanted to implement a proposal that changed various terms and conditions which would have had a detrimental effect on our members that had transferred from Nottingham City Council into the new company. Sarah Worth and myself spearheaded the consultation and negotiations in relation to this, and as a result the initial ballot on the terms and conditions reflected that our members were not satisfied and that the company made a number of changes to the proposal which in the most recent ballot were accepted by our

members. As a result of the GMB's position on this, we have increased our membership from barley being in double figures to 45 in the last few months. In addition, the company has now signed the Recognition Agreement and we have two newly elected representatives who are being trained.

### **Nottinghamshire County Council**

Within the past several months the newly formed Nottinghamshire County Council branch has gone from strength to strength, not only has the membership increase, but the current proposals from Nottinghamshire County Council to change terms and conditions has been met with overwhelming resistance through the ballot box with 85% of the members who voted, voting to reject. However, the big success story has been about member engagement as part of the consultation. The Branch Secretary, Shane Hodgkinson and myself arranged several meetings at different sites and invited members to drop in. Over a period of two weeks we had face to face discussions with over 200 GMB members and the quality of the information they provided has assisted us in being precise in our representations to management. There has also been a massive response via email and text that shows that our members are alive and alert and wanting to participate in activity to resist. This, I believe bodes well for the future in terms of growth, but also in terms of the quality of our negotiations because we can rely on our member to be very clear when they contact us about how they feel and what they think we should do. The negotiations continue and if we are able to change the proposal in line with what our members have told us, then I believe the branch will benefit with more activists and members joining the GMB.

### **Two Counties Academy Trust**

I have been dealing with The Two Counties Trust for the last 6 months. Two Counties Trust have taken over a number of schools within Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and there have been ongoing discussions regards policy and procedures and terms and conditions

### **East Midlands Ambulance Service**

The branch is very active; particularly the branch secretary Mark Dawn, and membership continues to grow. We have had a turnaround in reps and some of the new people are proving to be very able. Tony Davies is a full time rep and attends the National ambulance committee



and takes one other with him which is being rotated to give everyone experience. The other full time rep is Nige Beasley. We are currently looking at reviewing the partnership agreement. Post the rota review, the main issues are related to HR's interpretation of policies, particularly the absence policy. This matter is being taken up by me with the CEO and director of workforce.

### **Amazon**

The Regional membership in Amazon on the Coalville sites has seen an increase due to organising gate jobs and representing members at Disciplinary, Grievance and PIP meetings.

BAE Systems Brough is in the first of two years of organised staffing and manufacturing reduction at this site. The lack of a UK strategy of air defence and politically motivated decision making has put all UK air defence manufacturing at serious risk of closing UK manufacturing of completed aircraft and yet further building up contracts around the world to produce these aircraft. BAE are currently trading with Billions of pounds of profit and have an order book in the trillions of pounds, the company will continue to do very well using and selling our world leading technology but produce abroad. Every western and eastern power with capability want the latest Typhoon and will get it made though in Turkey, India or the Middle East, shamefully the RAF will not ! The GMB have raised protest and awareness at the highest level including a group visit and questions to parliament. Locally we are working through the horrible situation of agreeing long-time members exit agreements after many years of dedicated skills workforce commitments.

GMB Regional President Phil Soper, Patron of the Dying to Work campaign Jacci Woodcock, presenting Luke Pither with the man of the match award this year. GMB are proud to work with the Panthers in the community supporting NHS staff and visiting schools.

The Region continues to support its members, activists and branches under the Regional Secretary with three Senior Organisers and their respective teams, Central, Northern and Southern. Below is a selection of the projects and campaigns which we have been involved in.



# Northern Region

## 1. GMB@Work

Workplace consolidation is focused on the Region's approach to implementation of GMB@Work. Our GMB@Work strategy continues to be based on where we have less than a 60% density. Full-Time Organisers continue developing membership with specific support from the Regional Organising Team (ROT) on National Targets in Team Areas.

In addition greenfield recruitment leads and applications for recognition through the voluntary and particularly CAC routes, are essential parts of our workplace organising. The Regional Organising Team is integral to the Region's GMB@Work process and organising culture.

Supporting the Region's GMB@Work strategy is education and training of Shop Stewards as Workplace Organisers, as part of the GMB@Work National Training Programme, with specific workplace and targeted training to support the education and training programme.

The Region's Finance Department incorporating Membership and IT monitoring and support systems track recruitment by Team Area. Training records of Shop Stewards are integral to Regional ROT Reporting Systems. Management of these processes and functions support regional performance. The Regional Legal Department is a key part of recruitment, organising and retention, in respect of the whole range of support legal services to members.

Recruitment and recognition opportunities and action form part of the Northern Region's approach to recruitment, workplace organising and retention. We have been successful in this approach and the Northern Region was able to achieve recognition through the CAC and Voluntary Agreements in: Washington Metal Works, Aviator Newcastle Ltd - (Newcastle Airport), Active Northumberland, Thirteen Group Ltd (Housing Company), Willmot Dixon Partnerships (Home Group).

Recruitment and recognition opportunities from Greenfield sites continue as we try to extend our range of operations across the region in terms of recruitment, workplace organising and retention.

Recognition Application to the CAC was made in respect of W.D. Close & Sons Ltd, Wallsend Tyne and Wear. The region made an application on the 21st March 2017 for a bargaining unit comprising all employees, excluding office staff, senior managers, and supervisors at the company's premises in Wallsend. The application was accepted by the CAC on the 18th April 2017. The employer agreed the bargaining unit. The CAC carried out a membership check on the 7th April 2017. This indicated that 45 out of the 88 workers in the bargaining unit were union members (51.4%). The CAC subsequently awarded recognition without the need for a ballot on the 15th June 2017.

The Region also achieved successful new recognition agreements at AD Astra Academy Trust;

City Hospital Independent Commercial Enterprise Ltd (CHOICE); Karbon Homes; Stranton Academy Trust; SLS (Cumbria) Ltd; The Holy Family Education Trust.

## 2. Recruitment Targets and Campaigns

The Region is focused on the need to organise around the National Targets Strategy. Recruitment activity has been focused in areas where the GMB's organising is under threat from the Trade Union Bill and particularly the issues around check off and our strategy regarding migration to direct debit. Organising priorities continues to be in Asda; School Support Staff in Team Areas; Security; Greenfield opportunities. Securing new recognition agreements is embedded into our regional culture so that our focus is to develop new opportunities to develop membership and density.

We have also continued to focus recruitment activity in Construction; Energy and Utilities; NHS; Private Contractors; Apprentices; ASDA; Schools; Academies; Local Authorities and Associated Contractors.

The Region has a vibrant Young Members' Section in developing our network of Young Members within Branches, to build into our GMB@Work and Regional Equality Agenda, where we have an active Regional Equality Forum. Our Retired Members' Association (RMA) continues to provide vital work that helps the Northern Region's focus on industrial and political matters that support our regional and national objectives.



### 3. Overview of Regional Developments

The cuts from central government mean that the Northern Region is suffering disproportionately from austerity. Infrastructure development from public resources is lagging, education funding is being cut and the effects of Universal Credit which hit many in work, is biting. The impact of any devolution of business rates to local authorities will have an adverse effect especially as councils have had to make hundreds of millions of pounds worth of cuts since 2010 and which will continue until 2020/21.

Some local authorities are struggling to survive this Tory led onslaught. The Government's Northern Powerhouse shows no sign of real benefit in Region. Indeed our focus on the North of Tyne Deal is on the industrial aspects in protecting and enhancing GMB members working in public services in the Deal Area.

Government continues to attack the fabric of our Region, with no discernible regional economic policy or progress on Government procurement or infrastructure support.

This Region desperately needs support in public and private investment, with huge potential in the provision of energy and defence, public infrastructure and manufacturing, especially post Brexit.

Off shore wind, gas, oil, hydro power, nuclear power and green coal, could all be part of a balanced energy policy. The Northern Region could be a key hub for the development of the sector, bringing jobs, income and regional regeneration. Government inactivity is hampering a strategy to get businesses interested in making the move.

In civil engineering, key areas of the region are crying out for council housing and infrastructure schemes such as regeneration, new road building and maintenance. Government investment is essential and any delay will put back vital regeneration work.

In terms of organising we have had several disputes across the Region, but it is worth noting that at the Sellafield Nuclear Decommissioning Plant in West Cumbria, we have had three separate industrial disputes involving strike action of GMB Members, all of which have fully met the new threshold tests under the Trade Union Act. These strikes led to successful outcomes for GMB Members and which were the focus of regional, national and international coverage.

That being said, the GMB Northern Region has a really good working relationship with some excellent Labour MPs and Councillors. Their support is essential as we seek to integrate our industrial and political wings of our Region.

Our good working relationship continues with some excellent Labour MPs, Council Leaders and Councillors, many of whom are GMB Members. Their support is essential in industrial and political matters effecting GMB members, their families and our communities.

# North West & Irish Region

The North West & Irish Region continues to recruit at a consistently steady level. The total average monthly recruitment is 742. It is felt within the Region that this figure can be increased and this is the challenge we will set ourselves this year. To achieve this growth, we will continue to follow GMB@Work.

Organisers have dedicated recruitment time. Branch Development Plans are submitted and monitored throughout the year. Workplace reps have a key role to play in future growth of the Region. For many members they are the faces of the GMB and as such it is vital we maximise their potential to recruit and organise. To do this we need to ensure they are trained and provided with the relevant support.

Education has always been paramount within the Region and this year:

- The amount of members and new workplace organisers attending courses has increased on last year.
- Particularly pleasing is the 30% increase in the number of women attending our induction courses.
- There are also more young members taking up roles as reps and workplace organisers.
- There has been a growth in the follow up support/mentoring in the last six months, after all courses. Site visits mainly for health and safety have been a good source of improving levels of on-going support and engagement, especially with new reps.
- A new set of Mental Health Awareness and Health and Safety modules are available to pilot.
- Six form students/members who have attended induction courses have also been progressed through teacher/tutor training and have been accepted as new TUC tutors.

Public Service members continue to be the hardest hit across the Region. This was highlighted by a National successful Pay Pinch campaign. A number of events were held around the Region highlighting the impact on Public Service pay following the austerity measures. At the time of writing the Report, meetings are taking place with our NHS members in relation to the pay offer.

The Region's use of social media continues to grow. The Regional website, Facebook and Twitter accounts are linked to enable members and non-members to follow news items. The on-line, bi-monthly magazine is now fully integrated in the Region's communication strategy.

In October, the Region's Manufacturing Section launched a successful campaign highlighting how our members at the Bombardier site in Belfast would be impacted by the punitive tariffs imposed by the US President Donald Trump's administration. This campaign included meeting the Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. A delegation of Bombardier workplace reps, Regional CEC and Committee members went over to Brussels to meet MEPs. Our delegation received tremendous support from Parliament and on behalf of the Region, I would like to thank all those involved in this successful high profile campaign.

Commercial Services membership across the Region continues to increase, in particular Asda and security. The growth in the Section also highlights the continued increase in individual members joining GMB.

In the eleven months from 1 May 2017, the Region has recruited 8172 new members of which 7081 remain in membership. Of those remaining, 332 were check off, 3941 were direct debit and 8 were cash payers.

The breakdown by Section, remaining in membership, is as follows:

Commercial Services	-	3694
Manufacturing	-	932
Public Services	-	2455

The breakdown of each Section by check off and direct debit is as follows:

Commercial Services – d/d	-	2060
Commercial Services – c/o	-	1634
Manufacturing – d/d	-	583
Manufacturing – c/o	-	349
Public Services – d/d	-	1305
Public Services – c/o	-	1150



Out of the remaining 7081 remaining active new members, 2956 were recruited on the web.

**Asda Stores**

The Asda Campaign continued with all Asda stores' recruitment being focusing on Pensions, Equal Pay and Contract issues by the ROT in the NW. The overall recruitment in Asda stores in the last 11 months has resulted in 1458 new members and every store in the Region has now been visited as part of the continuing access campaign.

**Schools**

ROT targeted school recruitment has continued to focus around the Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland. Within the NW part of the Region, Regional Organisers have been targeting schools as part of their stand down days and the ROT has targeted some school kitchens and cleaners. New recruits in schools (including Academies) since 1 May 2017, are 500 with 40% of this total coming from Northern Ireland.

**NHS**

The National targets for the NHS are now NHS Trust, NHS Contractor and North West Ambulance Service. Total new recruits since 1 May 2017, is 305 with the Ambulance Service (National target) accounting for 171 and East Lancs Hospital Trust (National target) 43.

**Care Sector**

The NW Care Sector campaign has been predominantly led by the ROT in the North West and the Northern Ireland ROT continues to target Care Homes as Asda recognition does not cover Northern Ireland. The remaining active new members recruited in the Care Sector was 730, with the majority coming from Four Seasons 229, HC-One 153, Minster Care 57, Praxis Care (NI) 55, Larchwood 39, Meridian (HC-One) 52, Runwood 17.



**Other Areas of Recruitment**

During the last 11 months, Officers and Branches have recruited around various issues such as TUPE Transfer, Wages, Pensions, etc. Below are branches and companies where we have a decent return on recruitment activity.

**Local Government Branches**

L25, L32, L33 Liverpool City Council	243
M15 Manchester City Council	163
A08 Tameside MBC	94
K28 Knowsley MBC	49
TU3 Trafford MBC	42
S05 St Helens MBC	41
A76 Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council	36
LCC1 Lancashire CC	35
N89 Causeway Coast & Glens Council	32
W87 Wigan MBC	30

**Commercial & Manufacturing**

G4S (including 80 at Altcourse Prison)	209
Matalan Retail (Warehouse)	125
Asda Distribution	118
Swissport	96
Cadent Gas	88
Geoamey	84
British Gas Field Ops	83
United Utilities	65
Astra Zeneca	63
Tanslink NI	57
Securitas Security	46
Gtr Manchester Police	41
Cammell Laird	37

The Region continues to show its strength and passion by holding its annual Justice Campaign Conference in Liverpool. This event brings together people from different backgrounds and communities with one common goal "Justice." With over 400 delegates attending from across the country over the 2 days, the speakers

included Ali Ilyas (Remembering Srebrenica), Frances Molloy (#oldtyreskill), David Hencke (investigative journalist) and Sara Rowbotham (Rochdale Child Grooming).

As part of its on-going campaigns throughout the Region and communities, other issues we support include Total Eclipse of the S\*n, Justice for Cammell Lairds, as well as established campaigns like Save the NHS.

The Region held a very successful 17th Women's Conference in Liverpool with in excess of 100 activists attending over the two days. As is tradition, the Women's Network Group put on a play around Suffragette Annie Kenney in support of a fund raising campaign to erect a statue of Annie in her home town of Oldham. Speakers included Denise Walker (Abortion rights), Kathleen Walker Shaw (Europe/Brexit), Lynn Collins (TUC), Francine DE Mariel (domestic violence), Claire Doherty (United Utilities Shop Steward) and Phil Heyes (Mental Health).

In support of our campaign for justice for the Cammell Laird workers, the Region sponsored a play which was held at The Casa, Liverpool over 5 nights and sold out at every performance. It highlighted the injustice our members endured at the hands of the Thatcher government and the intention is to take the play around the Region. In addition, the play will be shown at the Labour Party Conference in September.





## GMB Scotland

Since we last met GMB Scotland has continued to go from strength to strength. After being in uninterrupted decline for over a decade GMB Scotland went through a period of stabilisation moving into growth in 2017. GMB Scotland grew at a rate of 3.4% in 2017. At the time of writing the union will have grown for 15 consecutive months, a feat not achieved for many years in Scotland. Our growth is testament to the hard work and commitment of our activists and employees.

In 2017 GMB Scotland launched a scholarship programme for activists. The scholarship involved classroom based training and work in the field. After many years of having no in-house training provision, development opportunities for our activists were almost non-existent. The scholarship programme is designed to improve the skills of our activists whilst better preparing them to apply for jobs in the organisation as and when there are vacancies. It was explained very clearly to the applicants for the scholarship that there was no guarantee of a job with the union at the end of the programme. However, in the end, two graduates from the scholarship did successfully apply for jobs when they became available and advertised. There were a lot of learnings from the 2017 scholarship programme. Some of those learnings are being applied in the programme now running for 2018. Our aspiration is to be constantly improving our scholarship programmes to give our activists the best opportunities possible to develop.

In GMB Scotland we have put campaigning at the core of how we seek to build the union. Over the past year we have been running training in campaign skills and techniques for our employees. The ability to identify and run effective campaigns, that make a difference for our members, whilst also building the union, are really important skills for our employees. Following on from the campaign training, officers are now running campaigns across Scotland. Our lay activists will already be very involved in the campaign activity but later this year, and if there is support, our aim is to provide specialist campaigning training for activists too.

We have run successful campaigns the length and breadth of Scotland. From the Borders through the Central Belt to the Highlands and



Islands, our union has been campaigning and building on the back of workplace issues. It is impossible to do justice to all the hard work that has gone on across the country but in Dundee, for example, we stopped the implementation of split shifts for the predominantly female workforce in local homecare. We are running campaigns across the public services including in the Highlands and Islands over proposed cuts to terms and conditions as well as payments for care staff. In the Ayrshire councils we have secured three recognition agreements with the contractor Mitie. In ASDA all our campaign work has brought through a new generation of activists and seen membership go up significantly. In the Bakkovar food manufacturing plant a campaign over pay bargaining has seen membership hugely increase and again a new layer of Shop Stewards have come to the fore. In Glasgow City Council our members balloted for strike action to successfully ensure 134 agency workers who joined the union were given permanent jobs and campaigns are on-going over the terms and conditions of Glasgow homecare staff too. Campaigns are also under way amongst school support staff, in private care and over workers in local government being issued with multiple contracts. The fight to safeguard shipbuilding jobs on the Clyde and at Rosyth is on-going too, whilst in Scotch Whisky and spirits we have reasserted our right to collectively bargain and achieved a positive outcome at Diageo for our members over pensions.



One of the most significant battles we have taken on in the past year is the fight to save the three BiFab fabrication yards at Burntisland and Methil in Fife and at Arnish on the Isle of Lewis. In late October all three yards, where work was ongoing on a renewables contract, faced closure because of a dispute between contractors. In response, our members occupied the yards and organised a work-in. With just 36 hours notice nearly 2000 workers and supporters marched down Edinburgh's Royal Mile and onto the Scottish Parliament. It was the most significant demonstration of its type in a generation and it shook the Scottish political establishment to its core. After months of negotiations it was announced in April that a new buyer had been secured for all three yards with the Scottish Government taking a significant share in the new business. There are still tough times ahead until new contracts for the renewables industry, as well as oil and gas work, can be secured. The campaign at BiFab has already become iconic showing what a well organised union, a disciplined workforce, hard work and courage can achieve. The campaign also blew open the great myth about jobs in the renewables sector in energy-rich Scotland. It served to prove that yards like BiFab are getting scraps from multi billion pound contracts and that what work they do get is precarious, linking back to our policy work in calling for a credible and balanced energy plan for Scotland which places value on the importance of energy as a source of employment.

In March GMB Scotland ran our 2nd Activists' Weekend. The event was addressed by the General Secretary and a range of other speakers, workshops and activities. The weekend was a great success building on the attendance and learnings from our first such event last year. Our Scotland Committee is due to discuss the plans for an even bigger event in 2019. At the Activists' Weekend we launched a pledge card, setting out simply the priorities for our union in Scotland. Over the coming months we will be rolling out our pledge card, sharing it with activists and members and new recruits.

We have been very clear that equalities is strategic a priority for our union in Scotland. Our union must look and sound like modern Scotland if it is to succeed. Whilst there is a lot of work to be done on equalities much has been achieved and as ever the Scotland Equalities Forum and equality strand activists deserve great credit for the work they are doing. In 2017 we held our second activists' weekend for women and we

also appointed our first ever female Senior Officer. It is embarrassing that it has taken us so long to promote a woman to the role of Senior Officer but it is also a sign of some progress. In a previous report we made the point that successful organisations have senior women in leadership and decision-making roles and we believe the promotion and development of women leaders at every level of the organisation is vital to the future of GMB Scotland.

The treatment of women at work and the 'value' placed on work that is predominantly done by women has been the common theme that has come out of many of the campaigns we have launched around Scotland. The issue of the value placed on work predominantly done by women and the treatment of women in the workplace are likely to be significant areas of continuing work for GMB Scotland in the months ahead. Part of that work is continuing to deal with Equal Pay. A huge amount of time and resource has gone into dealing with legacy issues around Equal Pay in places like Glasgow. However there is more work to be done on Equal Pay, including new campaigns and 3rd wave claims have begun.

GMB Scotland continues to be the highest profile Scottish trade union. We have enjoyed a very significant amount of media coverage since we last met. Most importantly, in terms of communication we put a big focus on communicating directly with members via text message in particular. Whilst we are doing more work on retaining leavers from the union, our belief is that retention starts in the workplace and communications about workplace issues are vital to keeping individuals in membership.

Politically, GMB Scotland were pleased to endorse Richard Leonard, a former employee well known across the union, in his successful campaign to become leader of Scottish Labour. The political realities of Scotland mean though that we need to engage on a cross party basis, working regularly with the SNP minority Scottish Government in particular. We are very clear that for us in Scotland, politics is a means to an end. Our priority is always the interests of our members.

Finally, but by no means least important and challenging, is the issue of Brexit for our manufacturing membership, in particular. GMB Scotland commissioned a major report, the first sector-by-sector analysis of the impact of Brexit, by the leading Scottish economics



**OUR PLEDGE**

- **CAMPAIGN TO DEFEND YOUR INTERESTS**
- **NEGOTIATE MORE PAY, EQUALITY AND SECURITY IN YOUR WORKPLACE**
- **TAKE A NO-NONSENSE APPROACH WITH EMPLOYERS AND POLITICIANS**
- **GROW OUR TRADE UNION TO BE BETTER AND STRONGER**

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research body the Fraser Of Allander Institute, which tells us that tens of thousands of jobs are at risk across Scotland. In key areas like Scotch Whisky and spirits we have already seen jobs go because of Brexit, making a mockery of talk of a “jobs-first Brexit”.

GMB Scotland has enjoyed a good year since we last met. There is a busy summer of campaigning planned which should ensure we continue to go from strength to strength in the public and private sector.

## SOUTHERN REGION

GMB Southern Region has progressed with its campaigning and organising approach over the last year. The efforts of Officers, Branches and activists, has bred confidence into GMB members to be able to stand up for their rights in the face of adversity.

We have secured a number of Recognition Agreements in greenfield sites by building our membership and not over-promising anything to our members that they, themselves, could not secure as an organised workforce.

Our actions have led to some significant pay increases of 10% and above, following years of stagnant pay as non-unionised groups.

In the Region we have exposed bosses' pay at the expense of low paid workers and again secured significant deals for members.

The collapse of Carillion has rewarded us with recognition opportunities where Carillion contracts have been awarded to more union friendly companies. Everybody will be aware that the now infamous Carillion dispute began in the Southern Region, in the NHS in Swindon.

The Region's success over the years in recruiting school support staff is now maturing to GMB having to stand up and be counted in support of our members in schools and academies to defend terms and conditions of employment. This has brought us into direct conflict, especially in academies, and a recent notable success has been at Charlton Park School in Greenwich where GMB successfully had sick pay reinstated and our membership numbers grew from 37 to 90.

Car parking contractors recently paid above inflation pay increases and the London Living Wage following a campaign by the GMB.

In the 2018 Local Government pay increase, we selected a number of Councils where we did workplace ballots with notable membership increases.

In ASDA stores, we have surpassed our recruitment expectations and we continue the store visits through our Regional Organising Team.

When the Sussex Patient Transport Services were handed over to a private company called Coperforma, the GMB supported our members and campaigned tirelessly until we ensured that the services were brought back in house.

The Patient Transport Services in Kent were taken over by G4S, where we now have a single union agreement that stretches across the county.

The GMB is in negotiations for recognition with the South Central Ambulance Service and there is an ongoing joint campaign with Southern Region and the Wales and South West Region, to support our members in the South West Ambulance Service.

The Region gave up their Unionlearn project but maintained an element of learning that supported at least 200 members in distance and workplace learning. Much of this was to support Ambulance staff to secure paramedic training.

Despite the Conservative south of England, the GMB has 14 Labour MPs and has as many Labour Councils within the Region and this is down to a good political strategy and motivation of our members on the ground.

## GMB WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

Once again, in the interim period since Congress 2017, the region has achieved modest recruitment and membership growth. This has been due to the application of GMB@Work principles and the organising strategy that underpins them.

### **PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION**

The main focus of all public sector organising activity has been the Local Government Pay Pinch Campaign, which was officially launched in the Region in June 2017, involving a presentation by the Public Services National Secretary and the National Public Sector team; this took the form of a conference held at regional office in Cardiff and was well attended by our key Branch and workplace organisers, as well as regional Public Services Organisers.

Schools and academies have also been a key priority for organising activity within the Region, and within the South-West area we continue to experience the negative impact of the academisation programme with an increase in stand-alone academies forming part of multi-academy trusts, primarily brought about due to budget deficits.

The Region has organised a number of proactive consolidation and recruitment campaigns within the NHS and care sector, and recently participated in a joint initiative with Southern Region, targeting SWASFT which saw an increase in membership and the identification of a number of a new workplace organisers. The Region is currently organising workplace meetings within the south-west area of the Region in relation to the recent terms & conditions offer. This does not impact within Wales as, due to the devolved administration, all matters relating to pay and conditions are dealt with separately. There have been a number of initiatives involving the care sector around consolidation and various pay claims involving the main care providers, although the care sector generally continues to face significant challenges.

The police authorities across the Region have formed an important part of the Region's



organising activity and consolidation campaigns have been organised within the South Wales police authority around the annual pay and conditions claim, and in addition with the merger of Devon & Cornwall and Dorset police authorities, recruitment activity has been undertaken, although the Region still continues to pursue formal recognition with Dorset police authority.

The public sector across the Region is experiencing outsourcing issues, where the services transfer direct to private enterprises and/or through arms-length organisations such as ALMOs and Teckals, although the recent collapse of Carillion has demonstrated that public services are exposed to risk when transferred to the private sector.

The Region has also nominated delegates to the recently formed National Public Services Committee, which has been created to assist the organising and recruitment activity both regionally and nationally, and to share best practice.

The Region would like to place on record thanks to all our Public Services branches and workplace activists and Officers and staff ensuring that the section continues to remain a strong voice for and on behalf of public sector workers.

### **MANUFACTURING SECTION**

#### **National Shipbuilding Strategy**

This has now been published and a press release issued via the local CSEU district of which our officer is chair. Mostly positive, but we believe it is wrong that the surface support ships (RFA's) are to be built overseas, and that there are no guarantees on British Steel being used in shipbuilding. Luke Pollard MP and Nia Griffith MP have both engaged in the GMB campaign regionally.



### **Devonport Royal Dockyard**

Work scope at Devonport is vibrant, three Frigates in refit, all at different stages, V boat in refit, advanced stage, T boat in refit and one on sea wall doing system trials. New apprentice intake is now complete and first year now attending College, second years about to enter the Dockyard proper after completing their College year. As the Shipbuilding Strategy has now been adopted, further discussion will have to take place to define the role of Devonport. Pay discussions are not progressing as hoped, two meetings have taken place, no formal process reached to date. The pay claim submitted in April was the most comprehensive ever produced, and was mainly developed by GMB.

### **Appledore Shipbuilders**

Irish Navy 4th ship about half way through the build programme on time and within budget, with delivery July 2018. Other potential contracts on-going, with possible work from Devonport. Initial pay talks started this week for 2017-18, now awaiting response from the company, similar initial talks started regarding redeployment document and programme. 5 apprentices started at college this week. Following a direct action point from the GMB Defence Workers Conference in the Plymouth Office, we have now secured one of our Workplace Organisers to sit on the apprentice selection panels.

### **Gates & Fences UK – Torquay**

The site continues to be very volatile with members coming and going, and various factions on site. A director was also sending threatening communications to the officer and trying to complain to Regional Office. This was due to a dispute over a newsletter pointing out issues on site. However, despite the hostility and issues within the membership base, there is a long term trend of increased GMB membership and engagement within this very small employer. We now have 15 members which is the most we have ever had, and is a high density of the shop floor as there are only about 18 manual workers. The officer previously had to put the recognition process on hold due to factions and volatility within the membership, but the members recently held their own unofficial ballot on the shop floor where 100% vote in favour of GMB pursuing recognition. The officer has now engaged the services of ACAS to try and work towards an amicable signing of a recognition agreement. This will no doubt be a long term project with twists and turns along the road.

### **Thermofisher**

As a result of the economic conditions, and fluctuations in the pound, the overall company performance is not as good as projected, and much of the work that had been done to move the site into profitability has been undone. This has resulted in fixed term contracts not being renewed and a change of shift pattern for a significant number of the workforce. The Company is also looking at ways to lower its cost on raw materials, but due to the nature of the business this will take some months.

### **Aggregate Industries**

The pay negotiation process has been conducted and resulted in a 2.75%, 1 year, no strings attached deal being accepted by GMB members.

### **Hinkley Point Construction Site**

Membership continues to grow slowly in what has been a traditional UCATT area of civil engineering. UCATT have now merged with Unite and therefore now have a significant membership within this sector.

We currently have one WPO and one H&S rep working in contractors Bylor and Kier. These reps, together with the site GMB convenor Brendan Stack, are working tirelessly to increase membership and identify new WPO's.

### **Norgine Pharmaceuticals**

Extensive campaigning at Norgine Pharmaceuticals has seen membership double in the past 6 months. Members' issues have ranged from the Company's bonus and pay awards being removed from all production staff, along with a new system of performance management distributed unequally and unfairly across the Norgine site. Workplace surveys are being conducted to gain a better understanding of issues affecting staff, and whether there is an appetite for the GMB to seek a recognition agreement. Early indicators with Norgine management is that they see the GMB, unsurprisingly as an added complication, however if there is sufficient support within the group, the intention will be to move forward on the matter.

### **Welcome Furniture**

This workplace is currently being assessed for recruitment purposes and, although the Company has not engaged in any dialogue regarding recognition, it is expected that this will be a recruitment target in the near future.



### **Kautex – Hengoed Engineering**

Membership within Kautex has remained solid and the workplace has a 95% GMB density with a fully active Branch. A new WULF project is underway and a new Equalities Rep has been elected this year. There are no major changes within the Company at present.

### **Proctor Bros Limited**

GMB membership within Proctor Bros remains solid. The Company are in the process of updating the Company Employee handbook via consultation with the GMB. A pay rise has been negotiated effective from 1 September 2017 of 2.5% with an additional increase of 0.75% to be applied in April 2018 bringing the anniversary date at the Bedwas site in line with their site in Leeds.

### **'Making-It' Campaign**

Two very successful events were held in Plymouth and Cardiff, attended by numerous activists, Officers, employers and politicians.

The case for a strong manufacturing base within this country was forcibly made and commitments secured on a way forward.

## **COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION**

### **ASDA Stores**

ASDA officers continue their programme of store visits throughout the region. Store density information has been analysed and officers will strive towards higher membership density within stores which are increasingly challenging. There has been a re-organisation of stores over the past few months with consultation on-going. Vast changes have been taking place with massive reduction in hours and a flexible working process being introduced by ASDA House.

The ROT officers completed a recruitment drive in North Wales stores to enhance our presence and develop and organise membership in difficult areas of the region. This was also a communication campaign arising out of the vast reduction to members Pension step up scheme.

We have had productive RSSG meetings over the last twelve months, implementing training sessions on ACAS, recruitment, Unionline, pensions and representing members in consultation.

We continue to promote the Equal Pay campaign which has unfortunately not contributed to a large increase in membership. All Officers have been tasked with collating data and recruitment figures for new members who join directly because of equal pay.

### **Bristol Airport**

The GMB team at Bristol airport of Donna Eley and Frank Francis have been working hard supporting GMB members throughout re-organisation of security services at Bristol Airport.

Donna, in her capacity as Health & Safety Rep, has also carried out an extensive workplace survey on the safety footwear that Security Operatives have to wear and which some members have experienced discomfort with. As a result of a simple GMB survey, ICTS are looking into their footwear provision which, hopefully will result in a new supplier of more comfortable and practical footwear.

This is a textbook example of 'GMB@Work' and highlights how Workplace Representatives can make a positive difference not only to the working lives of GMB members but also their health, safety and well-being.

Our pay negotiations at the airport have also resulted in a significant 8.2% pay increase for Level 1 Security Compliance Officers and a 6.38% pay increase for Level 2 Team Leaders.

### **Utility Companies**

Preferential pay settlements have been achieved in each of the major utility firms within the region during the current round.

Our priority within these companies has been to attract apprentices into membership of the GMB.

### **DPD**

We have completed a number of site visits within the region, ensuring that good contacts were made within the sites and we are still in the process of visiting and gaining support. Swansea DPD Campaign gained 40 new members within one day and we will continue to visit all sites throughout 2018.

## Wilkinson

Wilko Retail and distribution in the Region has undergone a significant restructure during 2017/18 which has seen the outsourcing of Security to MITIE, outsourcing of transport to WINCANTON and a full restructure within the retail portfolio. GMB has, as always, been at the forefront of negotiations with the employer, and I would like to express my thanks to all of our GMB Workplace Organisers, Convenors and National Officer Gary Cook for their ongoing commitment to our members in the Wilko Family. In addition, I would like to extend a special thank you to our new Convenor based at DC2, Paul McGuire, who has worked tirelessly for the benefit of our members.

In recent weeks we have worked closely with Wales TUC/WULF Co-ordinators Deri Bevan and Mike Wilson, alongside senior staff at the DC to bring a programme of education to staff which has resulted in the appointment of two new ULR (Union Learning Representatives) within the DC. Our main training focus will be mental health, and WULF will be delivering a programme of training to GMB reps and Wilko management over the coming months.

The restructure of Retail has seen a reduction of GMB Workplace Organisers, and we are looking to recruit new GMB Workplace Organisers within Retail. We have had success in some stores and RO are delivering IST's in Bristol and Cardiff, but there is more work to do.

## LGBT EVENTS

*Bristol Pride:* 8th July 2017 – thousands of people brought colour to the centre of Bristol with the 2017 pride parade. As sponsors of the event for the third year running, the main stage was festooned with GMB flags, bunting, and banners.

*Plymouth Pride:* 5th August, Plymouth Pride took place on the Hoe with the amazing vista of Plymouth Sound and the iconic Smeaton's Tower forming the perfect backdrop for the event.

*Pride Cymru:* 26th August 2017 people joined the parade, which weaved its way along some of the city's busiest streets, as hundreds of flag-bearing supporters lined the streets in a show of solidarity.

## Regional Equality Conferences

*Women's Conference:* held on the 8th March, we celebrated International Women's Day covering a number of important issues. Dawn Bowden,

Assembly member, gave an overview of women in poverty within the Welsh Valleys.

*WTUC:* Women of The Isles, launched the Menopause toolkit, after two years of intense data collection, surveys and reports. The GMB has been heavily involved with the compilation of the report and has implemented this into the regions bargaining agenda.

*Regional Equality Conference:* Last year's equality conference was held on Saturday 21st October with an overwhelming attendance, and without a spare seat in the room. The delegates showed their respect to Mary Turner, sharing her inspiring work and remembering her as a truly motivating individual.

Delegates received a great speech from Carolyn Harris, MP, who updated conference on WASPI and where the campaign currently stands within Parliament. PC Darren Hembrow from South Wales Police, educated us on new hate crime activities and how we could recognise incidents and address the situation.

The following motions were debated:-

- 1 – Period Poverty
- 2 – De-Criminalisation of Sex Workers
- 3 – Modern Day Slavery
- 4 – Working Carers
- 5 – Immigration detention centres

Motions 1 & 4 voted to GMB National Equality Conference.

*Equality Campaigns:* The REF has focused on the following campaigns – Dying to Work, Menopause, Period Poverty and Mental Health Matters.

*Mental Health Matters:* We have 110 activists who have undertaken Mental Health Awareness/Champions training between December 2017 and April 2018. All have a development plan to complete with the Mental Health First Aid course.

*Young Members Network:* We are planning public speaking training for young individuals who need motivating and have previously been suffering from mental health issues. We are closely working with activists in Cardiff Council. Our Young Members Network have been focusing their actions on the national campaigns and are planning to target the hospitality industry to identify young members and exploit any modern day slavery activity.

## POLITICAL CONTEXT

The 2017 General Election saw the Labour Party gain seats in 6 constituency areas within the region – 3 in both Wales and the West Country. The Tories lost their control in the Gower, Vale of Clwyd and Cardiff North constituencies in Wales and in Bristol North West, Stroud and Plymouth (Sutton and Devonport) in England. Significantly, no seats were lost.

In all areas, our campaigning work was effectively targeted and well-coordinated both independently of, and through TULO. I would like to thank all of those Officers and activists for giving of their time to assist with the Election effort and for their contributions towards a very successful outcome for both Welsh Labour and the Party generally.

The region's Social Partnership-based relationship with the Welsh Assembly Government continues to be both very positive and to work effectively to the benefit of our members. We have been particularly successful in bringing about legislative change through our own and Wales TUC structures, with the Trade Union (Wales) Act, the Ethical Procurement Code and the intended Fair Work Act all being valid examples of what can be achieved through effective lobbying at a devolved country level.

## EDUCATION

The region continues to develop our Education programme to ensure it is both accessible and cost effective. We have over the past 12 months delivered courses across the whole of the region, utilising all of our Offices from Cornwall, Plymouth and Bristol in the South West to Cardiff, Swansea and Colwyn Bay in Wales.

Our 10 day GMB Induction courses for new Representatives have in the last 12 months seen in excess of 150 Workplace Organisers complete training across all sections of the Union. The knowledge and confidence our new representatives are gaining from the training is essential to help build a strong, effective GMB that represents our members in the workplace.

In addition, the region has provided bespoke follow on training covering key topics such as Equality, Mental Health Awareness, Employment Law, Health & Safety and Accident investigation. These stand-alone courses have been attended by over 200 activists and members across the region since Congress last year.



The above courses have proved to be extremely popular throughout the region and our education programme continues to expand and develop in order to give our representatives every opportunity to develop and achieve a learning pathway that provides for functional and essential skills relevant to GMB@Work principles.

In Wales we provide essential skills training concentrating on English Literature, Maths and Information Technology through our Wales Union Learning Fund and in the South West we mirror this provision through our Hinkley Point Project and funding initiative that provides for essential skills training, not just at the Hinkley Point site but the wider scope of our membership in the South West.

There are many different roles our representatives can get involved in and the region will continue to invest in Education and Training that opens doors to our members and provides them with the necessary learning opportunities to equip themselves to build GMB and successfully support our members in the Wales and South West Region.





## HEALTH & SAFETY

The region continues to campaign for better safer working conditions for its members, risks that are associated with poor working practices and inadequate protective clothing are at the forefront of our campaigns.

We have been raising awareness of Asbestos related diseases such as Asbestosis, Pleural Thickening and Mesothelioma and will continue to do so in our schools and industrial strongholds such as Babcock's shipbuilding facility in North Devon. This debilitating industrial disease effects not only effects workers but can have a huge impact on their families.

Our campaign to ensure that the Health & Safety 1974 at Work Act which states:

'It will be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees.'

...is adhered to and we recognise the importance of well organised strong GMB workplaces such as Appledore Shipbuilders, have with our support, the means to introduce safer working conditions for our members.

## LEGAL

The provision of Legal Services remains a key and important benefit to our members in the region. Unionline is working closely with our Legal panel firm to ensure the legal advice, support and representation available to our members is of the highest quality and can adapt to the ever changing workplace environment.

Throughout Unionline there is a focus on providing expert employment law advice covering a broad range of issues. Since Congress of last year the region has been instrumental in fighting for our members rights, settling litigation disputes through meaningful conciliation and negotiation.

Through our extended legal services such as road traffic accidents and unrelated work personal injury claims, we will have achieved settlements close to half a million pounds.

In addition, our members have access to a range of legal services such as the Free Will Service, fixed rate conveyance, a free motor claims service with discounted insurance and preferential rates relating to Power of Attorney.

**John Phillips**  
Regional Secretary  
**Wales & South West Region**

## YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION

The region has grown over the past 12 months and at the time of writing membership is up by 620 and now stands at 62,778.

We have invested heavily in our communications with our workplace organisers and contacts and continue to produce a monthly newsletter for activists called 'The Activist.' This is supplemented by quarterly editions of a Political newsletter.

In January 2018, we launched a monthly email communication to members, 'GMB Matters' which delivers a punchy, informative reminder to members of why their union membership is important. We hope that this is useful to members in its own right but also aids with our retention efforts.

Our regional website continues to reflect the message of activities, officers, reps and branches across the region and is widely visited.

#GMBbigweekend - our regional event of the year was held on 10th and 11th February. This event is growing year on year with over 180 activists attending, taking part in debates and workshops. Our workshops this year were:

- Sexual Harassment - how best to support our members
- Building the Workplace
- Active Campaigning and Union Communications

It was great to listen to the enthusiasm and great ideas from our activists and it was good to see branches working together in the interest of serving the membership. One example of this is our Migrant Workers' branch helping out other branches to recruit, organise and support migrant workers.

The weekend was closed with a 'question time' panel, the line-up included Yvette Cooper MP, Richard Burgon MP, Alex Sobel MP, and a number of Yorkshire council leaders.

As a region we have rolled out sexual harassment training across all staff, as this is something we have zero tolerance for within the region and we also want all our staff to be able to spot the signs and support members who make contact with the region.



### Manufacturing

We ran our second Manufacturing Forum in October, which was well attended and gave us a great platform to launch the GMB's 'Making It' campaign. Neil Derrick and Jude Brimble gave the GMB's regional and national perspectives behind this new initiative and local MP's Paula Sherriff and Tracy Brabin were on hand to ensure we got political support going forward. The biggest message to come out of this forum was that we sit smack bang on the M1/M62 corridor and are surrounded by manufacturing hubs, with membership density running in this sector at less than 30% we need our 'Making It' campaign and politicians working hand in hand to increase membership and more secure and well-paid jobs for our region's economy to grow.

### Rugby League Re-launch

Our biggest area of growth has been within Rugby League. We started the campaign to re-launch the GMB as the 'one' true voice for players and team staff in November 2017. We employed Garreth Carvell, a former Rugby







League international and long standing GMB activist, through our Learning Project. Garreth has worked closely with the RFL, his branch secretary, Geoffrey Burrow and the League's welfare programme. In this very short space of time he has helped to develop a new learning programme for players and increased our membership by over 300%, making us the one and only trade union to be recognised within the sport. 2018 will see a new recognition and learning agreement that will give players a voice at every level and on every aspect of the sport, both nationally and internationally. We will address the all parliamentary Rugby League Support Group with regard to our progress in May at the House of Commons.

### **New Office – New Activists' Centre**

Plans to refurbish the current Sheffield office had to be shelved during 2017 when an asbestos survey highlighted high levels of asbestos throughout the building. Immediate remedial work was carried out to make the building safe and a decision made to relocate. A new property has been purchased and will provide a modern, safe working environment for our staff, officers and activists to use. The new office will provide conference/training facilities and will house an activist centre. The new property is based a couple of miles out of the city centre and will be ready for us to move into in the summer (July/August time). The current office is up for sale and is gaining significant interest from property developers. Negotiations have been on-going with Sheffield City Council to find suitable new premises in the city centre for our team of Sheffield city convenors who currently work out of the GMB Sheffield office.

Offices have been found which the convenors are happy to move to and will be ready in a few weeks for the convenors to move into. This will give GMB a great profile in the south of the region with both a city centre convenors' office and a new sub office on the outskirts.

### **Equality & Diversity**

The last year has been a seen a continuing trend in growth in attendance and participation within the equality agenda.

Social media has been utilised to widen the message of what we do and as a result we have seen new attendees to our meetings.

We participated in the 'More in Common' event alongside Hope Not Hate in Rotherham and have continued this work with Hope Not Hate by being a joint signatory on a statement opposing the appalling 'Abuse a Muslim Day' that you may have seen in the press recently.

We have been working with Tell MAMA on the design of materials for a campaign around the issue of hate crime and this is nearing fruition.

Delegates were sent to the National Equalities Conference and all TUC strand conferences, many of whom were first time delegates and we will continue to aim for this to be the case.

### **Young Members**

The region's Young Members' Committee is growing in numbers and in strength. We have new post holders on the committee as Chair, Secretary, Deputy Chair, Women's Officer and Equalities Officer. We continue to work very closely with the region's Equality Forum and will be combining our flagship Mental Health



Matters campaign with the region's Pride events. Our young members came up with this year's Pride slogan 'Can't even think straight' and are playing a leading part in designing promotional materials for the events. We were also successful in winning the vote at Young Members' Summit to ensure our motion of getting political education to be on the curriculum in schools to be submitted at the TUC Young Workers' Conference. We are also now focusing our attentions in specific campaigns within workplaces and aiming to get more young workers active. We remain heavily involved with local Labour Party activities and hosting our own campaigning days.

### **Political Weekend School**

The third GMB annual Political Weekend School took place at Wortley Hall in November, with GMB members from across the region coming together to take part. The two-day event was opened by Regional Secretary, Neil Derrick, who gave an overview of planned activity and reflected on GMB's political activity and successes during the previous 12 months. Workshops were held over the weekend which looked at four sections of the Labour manifesto. These covered: Towards A National Education Service, Secure Homes For All, A Fair Deal At Work and Health Care For All.

Organiser Deanne Ferguson has successfully been selected as the Labour Party Candidate for her home constituency of Morley and Outwood (Leeds) and has been fully supported both regionally and nationally by GMB.





# MAKING A DIFFERENCE



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